

# Mid-Manhattan Urban Renewal

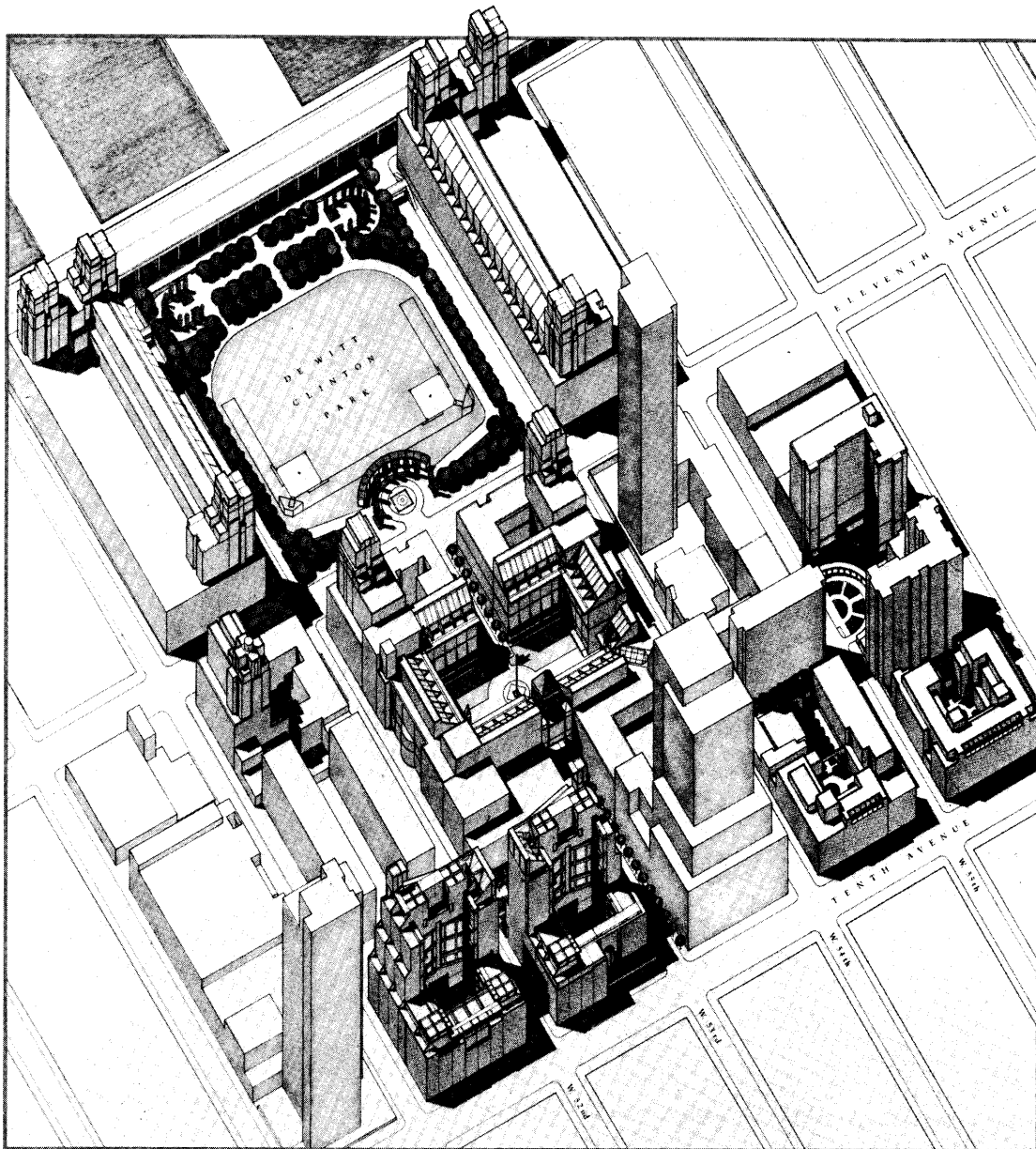
**Peterson, Littenberg, Architects**

**Project:** Clinton Community Master Plan, New York.

**Site:** A 6-block area between 10th and 11th Avenues in West Midtown Manhattan.

**Program:** A comprehensive urban design for completion of the Clinton urban renewal area, including specific proposals for all remaining open sites.

**Solution:** The premise of the new plan, developed in close collaboration with Clinton community residents, reverses many of the intentions of the original renewal plan, which involved complete clearance and new construction, with no allowances for light industry or commercial uses. It establishes a system of linked public spaces in addition to a new central square for the entire neighborhood, which is linked axially to the existing De Witt Clinton Park. All existing residential buildings are retained and integrated with new construction. Likewise, all existing commercial and manufacturing structures are preserved except for one-story buildings. Open spaces required from each building lot were assembled to create the main public space, Clinton Market Square, which comprises mixed-use buildings intended primarily for light manufacturing and existing services, with artisan lofts on the upper floors. On weekends, the square is envisioned as the site for public fairs and performances. In a more specific proposal for twin apartment blocks, the architects reversed New York City building norms for avenue-facing structures, opting to place the taller masses toward the rear of the site, rather than on the avenue, and evolving a higher coverage type rather than free-standing towers. The twin blocks contain 652 residential units, of which 80 percent are designated as low- or moderate-income housing. The design turns "leftover" block interiors into positive courtyards, which are linked to a midblock "triangle park" that results from the elimination of scattered peripheral plazas. Each side of the buildings is articulated as a different wall—a strategy that accommodates incorporation of existing structures.



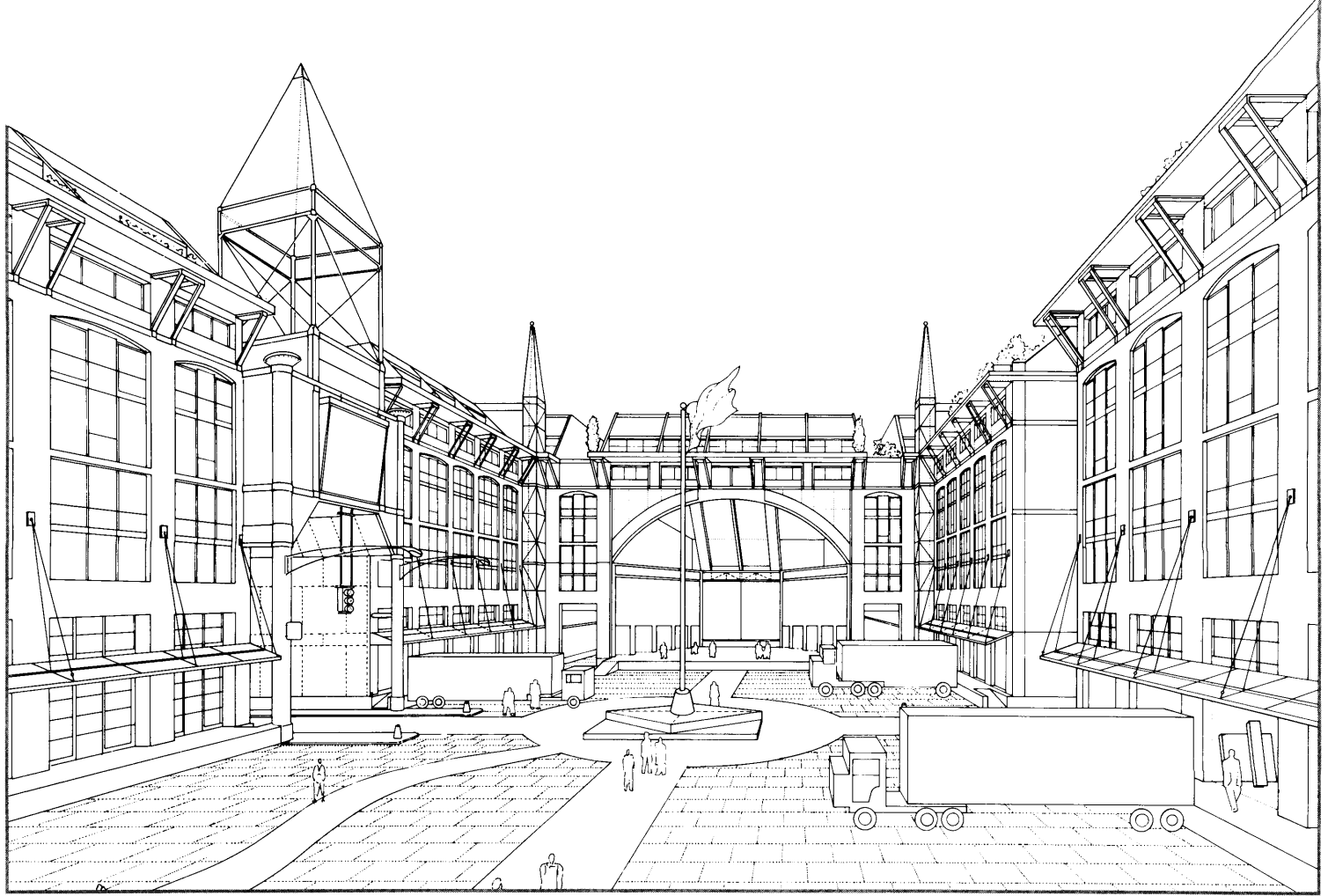
AXONOMETRIC OF URBAN RENEWAL AREA

**Architects:** Peterson, Littenberg, Architects, New York. (Barbara Littenberg, Steven K. Peterson, principals; Loren E. Canon, project associate; Stephen Moser, project architect; Cary Bernstein, Kent Peterson, Kristi Woolsey, Hui-Lay Yeo, project team.)

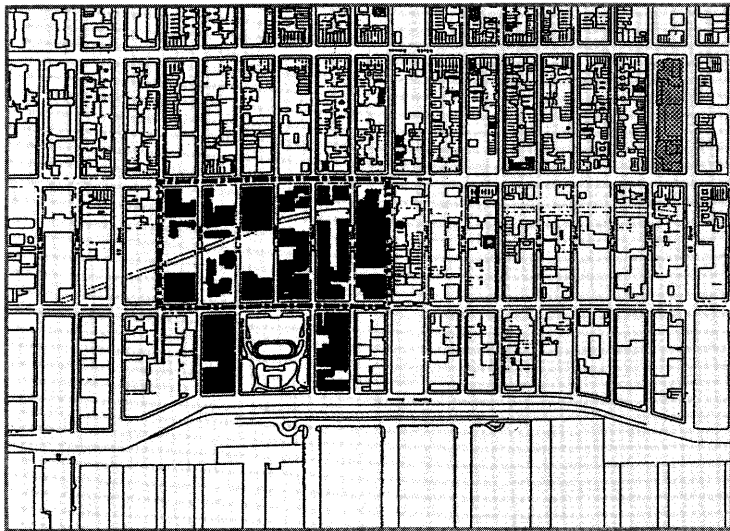
**Client:** Clinton Preservation Local Development Corporation, New York. (John Glynn, executive vice president.)

**Consultants:** Michael Kwartler & Associate, (Michael Kwartler, Dennis Ferris), zoning; Allee, King, Rosen & Fleming (Debra Allee), environmental impact; Robert Silman Associates (Robert Silman), structural.

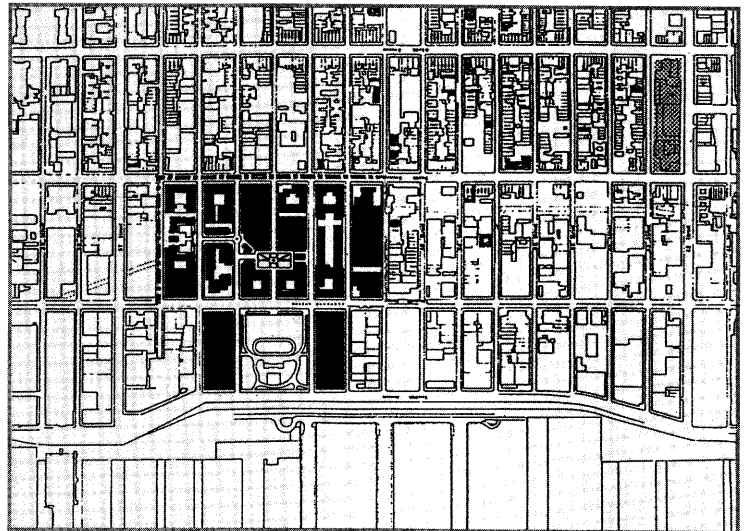
**Model photographer:** Jock Pottle.



PERSPECTIVE OF CLINTON MARKET SQUARE



SITE PLAN, EXISTING STRUCTURES



SITE PLAN, PROPOSED URBAN RENEWAL

N ← 400/120m

## Jury Comments

**Koetter:** This is an infill within a strong existing situation. You can say it's a reconstitution of the grid, but in this particular case, the solution recognizes the possibilities of the long block by identifying spaces within the grid. The spaces were formerly residual and can afford new kinds of uses, which aren't the same uses as purely public spaces. One of the questions I have is what ultimately becomes the quality of those spaces that are drilled between the avenues. Is it typologically dubious or not? I think the evidence here indicates that these spaces are not necessarily problematic.

**Fain:** The history of this is very interesting because it's an urban renewal area that was identified for commercial development and during the last 10 or 15 years the community has shaped this plan. They've changed the land uses from commercial to residential. The ground plane has some very interesting kinds of pedestrian spaces. In many ways the market square and the triangular square are very unconventional. They are conventional in the sense that they don't violate the Manhattan grid, but the triangular square, for instance, creates some eccentric spaces, which are really quite special. There's a combination of various types of plazas and squares that

are still within the context of the grid. And the scale of the buildings is good, too. The asymmetry of higher slab on one side and lower slab on the other helps to allow natural light into the courtyards, which are well related to the street and plaza areas.

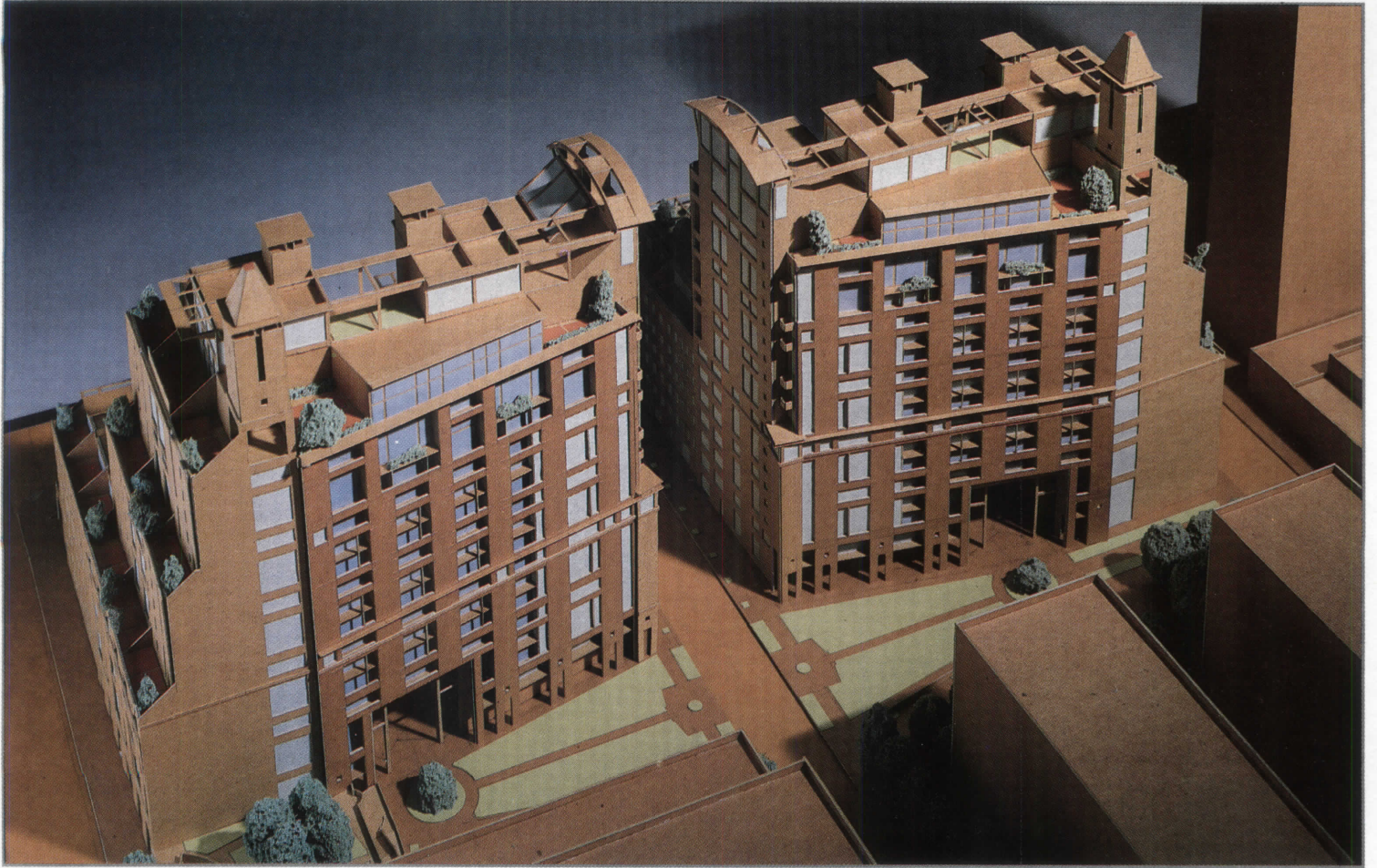
**Solomon:** Does it say how prescriptive the apartment block plan is, and to what degree the individual development of each of these blocks has to follow these plans?

**Koetter:** They're illustrating one way of manipulating it within those constraints, but I think the massing is prescribed.

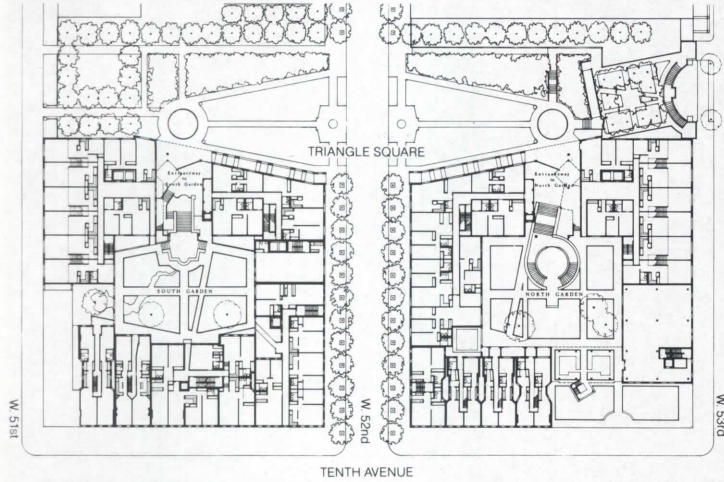
**Fain:** And the ground plane is prescribed too.

**Koetter:** To me it's a fantastic New York-related building type . . . I think we were generally disappointed with that aspect of the overall group of projects in that very few of them actually went into specifics . . . This is the only one where you get a connection with what the specifics of the situation might be. We didn't find that in other submissions, where things were not taken that next step.



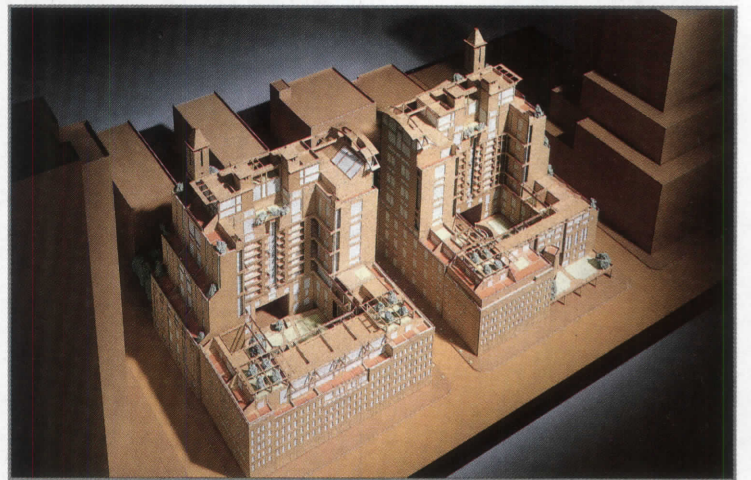


MODEL, TWIN APARTMENT BLOCKS VIEWED FROM WEST



GARDEN LEVEL PLANS, APARTMENT BLOCKS

N → 100'/30m



MODEL, TWIN APARTMENT BLOCKS VIEWED FROM EAST