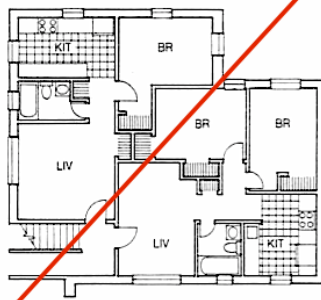


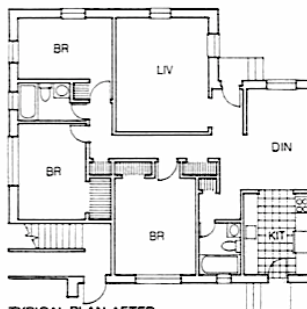
Lane/Frenchman; Goody, Clancy
Peterson, Littenberg

Beyond cosmetics

Not by Peterson Littenberg



TYPICAL PLAN BEFORE



TYPICAL PLAN AFTER

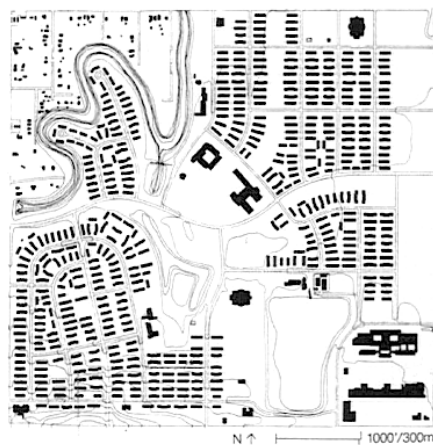
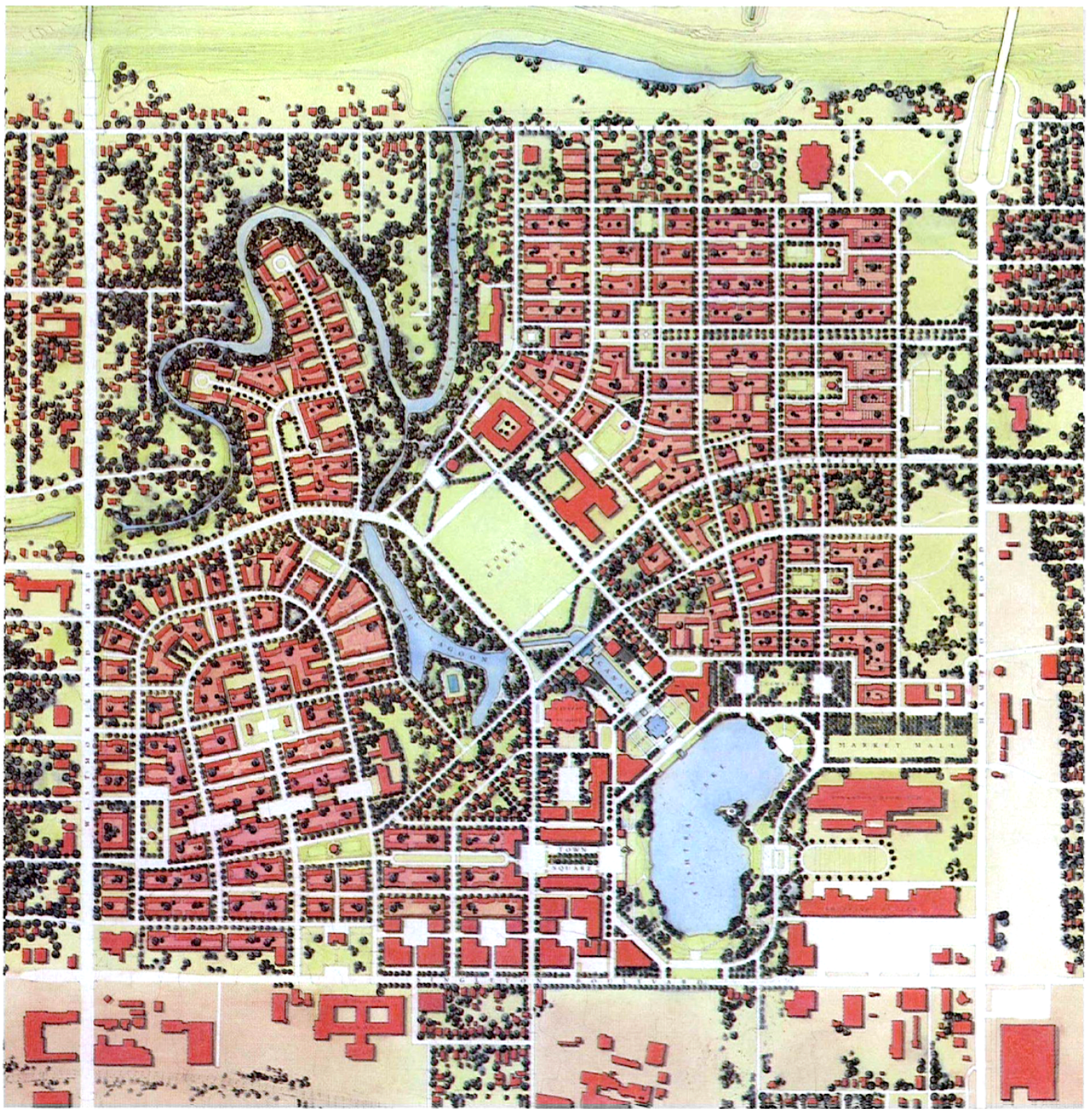
The partial demolition of Pruitt-Igoe dramatized the physical and social problems of public housing in this country, but as a solution applicable to similar projects, it had little relevance. Most cities have not nearly enough new public housing to justify demolishing what they have. And as all types of rental housing become more scarce, cities have begun to see their public housing, however deteriorated, as a valuable commodity, often conveniently located and structurally sound. Rehabilitation, rather than demolition, has become the course cities now follow.

Unfortunately, because of inadequate funding, most of the rehabilitation that has occurred has focused on cosmetic improvements such as painting or recladding build-

ings rather than on substantial improvements to the layout of the buildings and grounds or to job opportunities and social services for the residents. What distinguishes the following projects is how far they go beyond cosmetics.

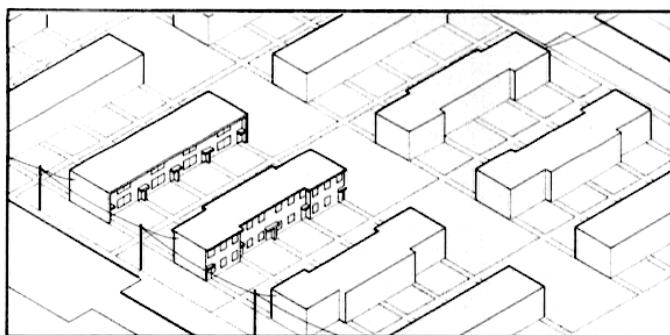
Lake West

What makes Lake West, a proposed rehabilitation of the public housing in West Dallas, significant is not just the size of the project (its 3500 townhouses made it the largest low-rise public housing project in the country), but its ambition. The scheme, developed by Peterson, Littenberg, Architects, with

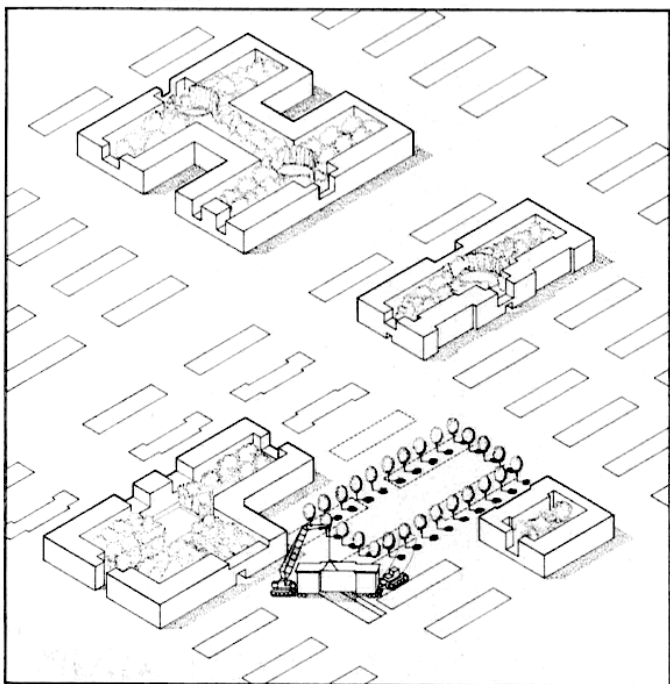


associated architects Selzer-Volk-Borne, engineers Carter & Burgess, and Real Estate Research Corporation, has some elements in common with the Boston project. It increases the number of through streets to give each unit an address and curbside parking; creates urban blocks and squares by demolishing or rearranging the monotonous rows of buildings; provides semiprivate courtyards with walls, gates, and landscaping; and improves the residential image of the project with the addition of gabled roofs, doorway hoods, and classically inspired trim.

Where Lake West differs is in its creation of a multidimensional town, with a mix of incomes, building types, and job opportunities. The proposal calls for a sizable town



EXISTING BARS OF HOUSING

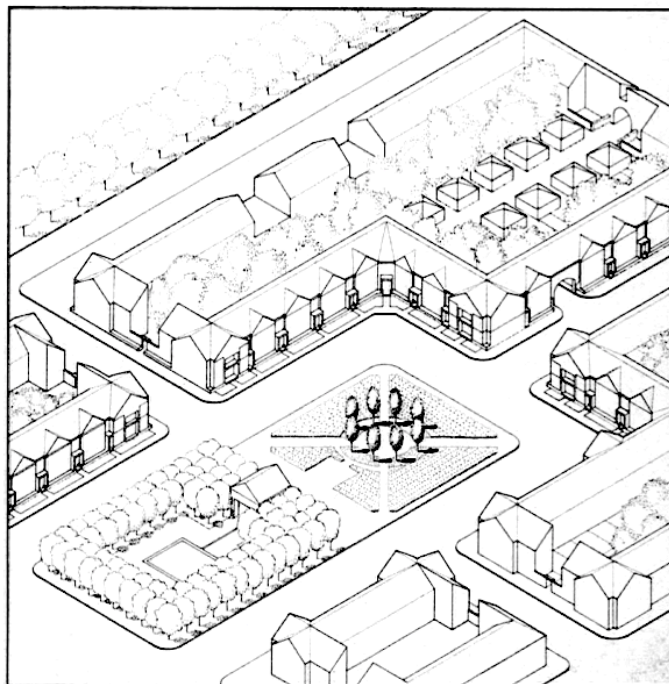


HOUSING MOVED OR DEMOLISHED TO MAKE BLOCKS

center containing retail space, multifamily housing, a community campus, elderly units in twin towers, and extensive landscaping forming an amphitheater, canal, lagoon, and town green. Even more daring than these grand public spaces, though, are efforts to make the project function as a town. Offices and warehouses at the southern edge of the site provide jobs and job training, market rate as well as moderate rate and subsidized rental units attract a greater diversity of people and incomes, and condominiums (with private yards and garages) and detached houses (some moved from adjacent neighborhoods) encourage home ownership—something that many tenants indicated that they wanted and, with a subsidized mortgage program, could afford.

Both the Boston and Dallas projects apply—brilliantly—the lessons learned about public housing over the last 20 years: lessons about defensible space, residential imagery, and low-rise family housing. And both present a new vision of what public housing could be: collections of semiautonomous villages or self-sufficient towns that are socially and economically integrated and that act as their own magnets for jobs and services. What's lacking from our policy makers is an equivalent public vision and as strong a commitment to preserve what has become a valuable resource: public housing. [Thomas Fisher]

The existing and proposed site plans (opposite) show the conversion of the parallel bars of buildings into blocks that enclose private courts and define public squares. The extent of conversion is apparent in the axonometrics (left and below). The rectangular blocks will enclose private yards and pedestrian walks; the L- and H-shaped blocks also will have parking garages. The buildings themselves will receive gable roofs, porches, gateways, and added trim.



RESULTING HOUSING BLOCKS DEFINING SPACE