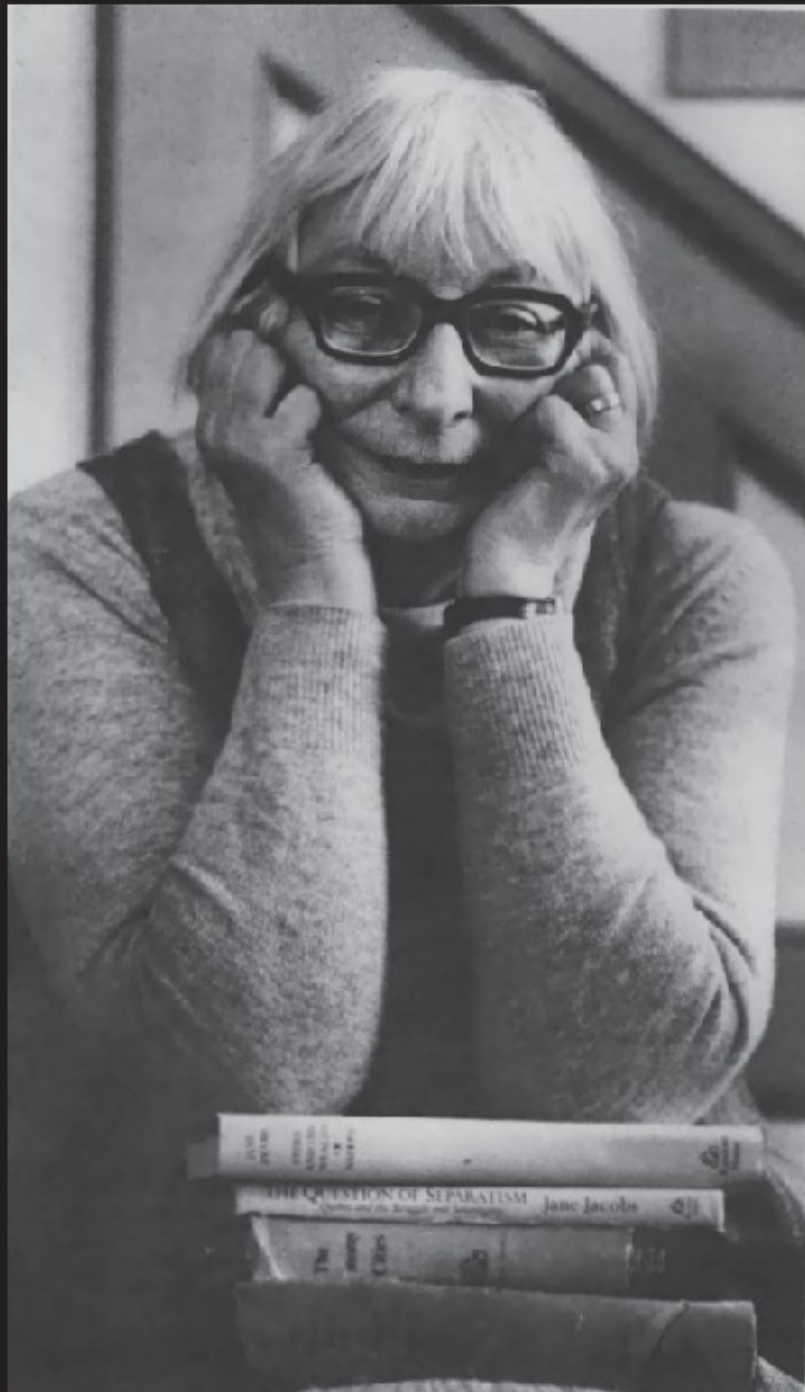


# City Planning (and un-planning)



# Outline

- ~~Defining a 'City'~~
- ~~The origins of cities~~
- Urbanization and 'orthodox' city planning
- City planning a la Jane Jacobs
- Vancouverism



An Introduction to Jane Jacobs,  
*The Death and Life of American Cities*

for use by MFA Students  
in Graphic Design,

The Maryland Institute College of Art

February, 2008

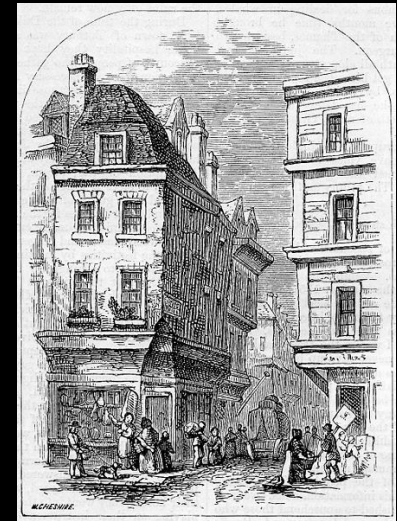
Slides  
by  
Julia R.  
Lupton  
@ MICA

In the beginning...



# Pre-Industrial Cities

- Centres of commerce, government, knowledge
- City size limited by technology
  - Transportation and agriculture
  - Residents must be fed...



- World's largest city in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century was London, at around 1 million people

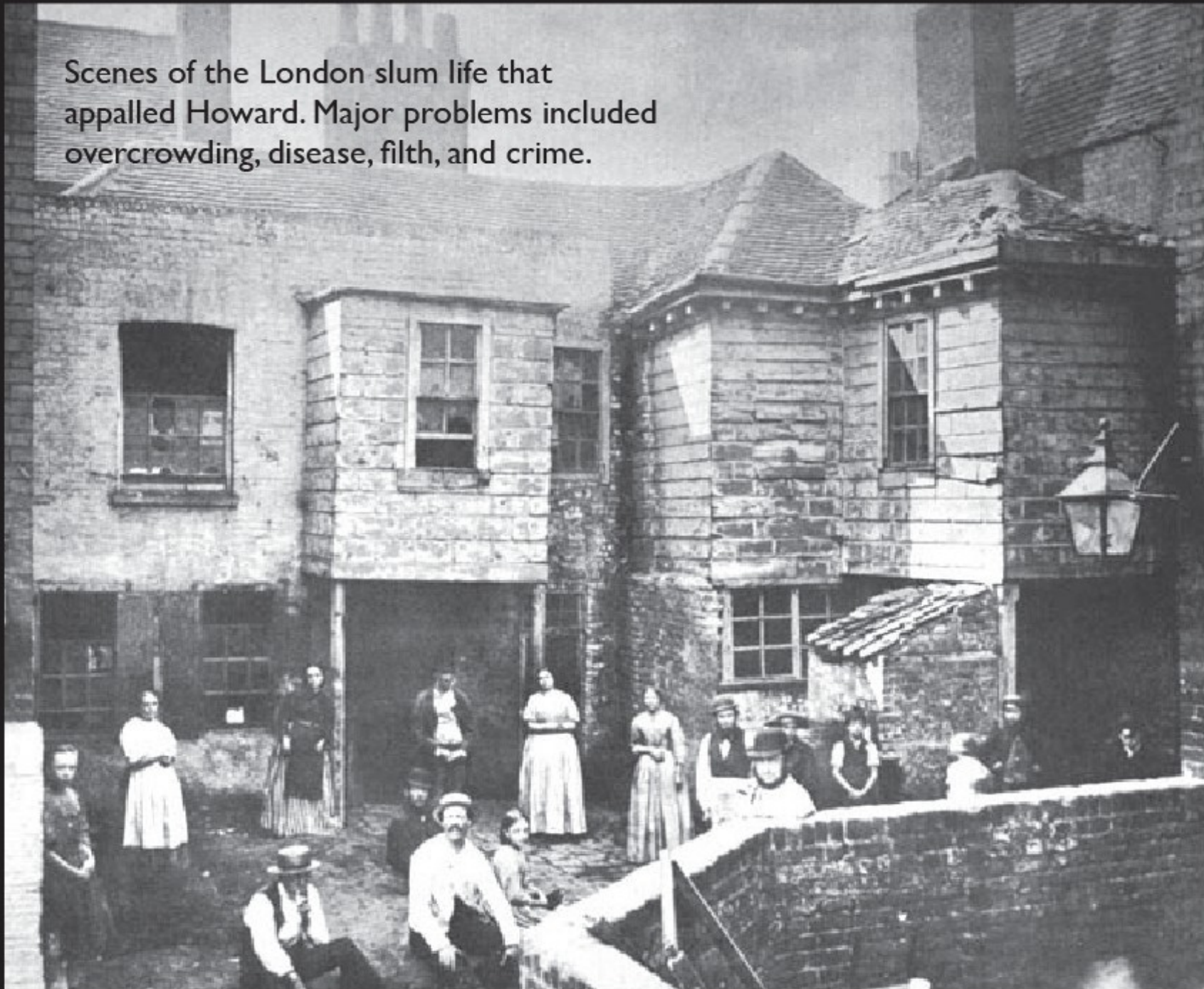
# The Industrial Revolution

# The Industrial Revolution

- Millions flock to the cities to work
- 12-16 hour work days, child labour, beatings, dangerous conditions, measly pay
- Inspiration for Charles Dickens and Karl Marx



Scenes of the London slum life that appalled Howard. Major problems included overcrowding, disease, filth, and crime.



LONDON "SLUM": Market Court, Kensington. Demolished late 1860s.  
<http://www.victorianweb.org/art/architecture/london/56.html>





LONDON SLUM: c. 1901?

<http://www.victorianlondon.org/houses/slums.htm>

"19th century urbanization and industrialization in the west created conditions that were both exploitative and dangerous to human life, with massive urban migration, high density, industrial pollution, human waste, lack of open space, and commonly occurring outbreaks of disease such as typhoid, yellow fever, cholera. The result of these sanitary and housing conditions was a total collapse in the life chances of the inhabitants. In cities of over 100,000, life expectancy at birth dropped from 35 years in the 1820s to 29 in the 1830s." (Hunt, 2005)

# Side Note

“History repeats itself, first as tragedy, second as farce.” -- Karl Marx



# 'Orthodox' City Planning

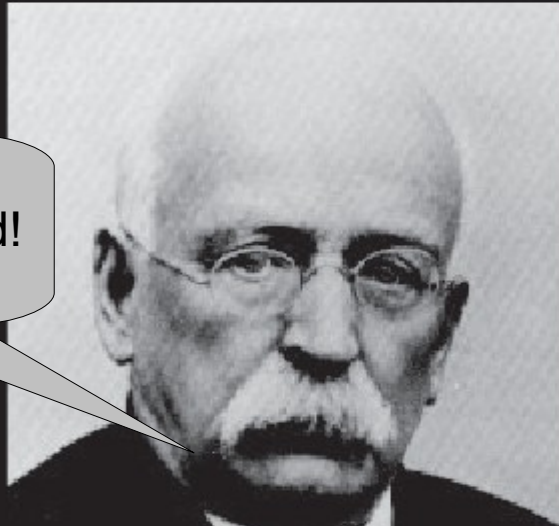
- Density is bad, streets are wasteful, disorder is a curse
- On unplanned cities: "a chaotic accident... the summation of the haphazard, antagonistic whims of many self-centered, ill-advised individuals" (Stein)
- On downtowns: "a foreground of noise, dirt, beggars, souvenirs and shrill competitive advertising" (Bauer)

# THE GARDEN CITY

Ebenezer Howard, 1850-1928

:: traveled in America

:: a reformer appalled by the living conditions of London's poor



it's the cities, stupid!

# The Garden City - Principles

- The functions of a city distilled, segregated and packaged into self-contained units
- Houses should face away from the street



Letchworth  
Garden City

Letchworth Garden City, north of London, is the “first planned city.”



Letchworth Garden City, built in order to demonstrate Howard’s ideas, became the model for a bunch of “New Towns” and “Garden Cities” in England and the United States, including:

- Chatham Village (Pittsburgh)
- Garden City, New York
- Baldwin Hills Village, Los Angeles



# Corbu

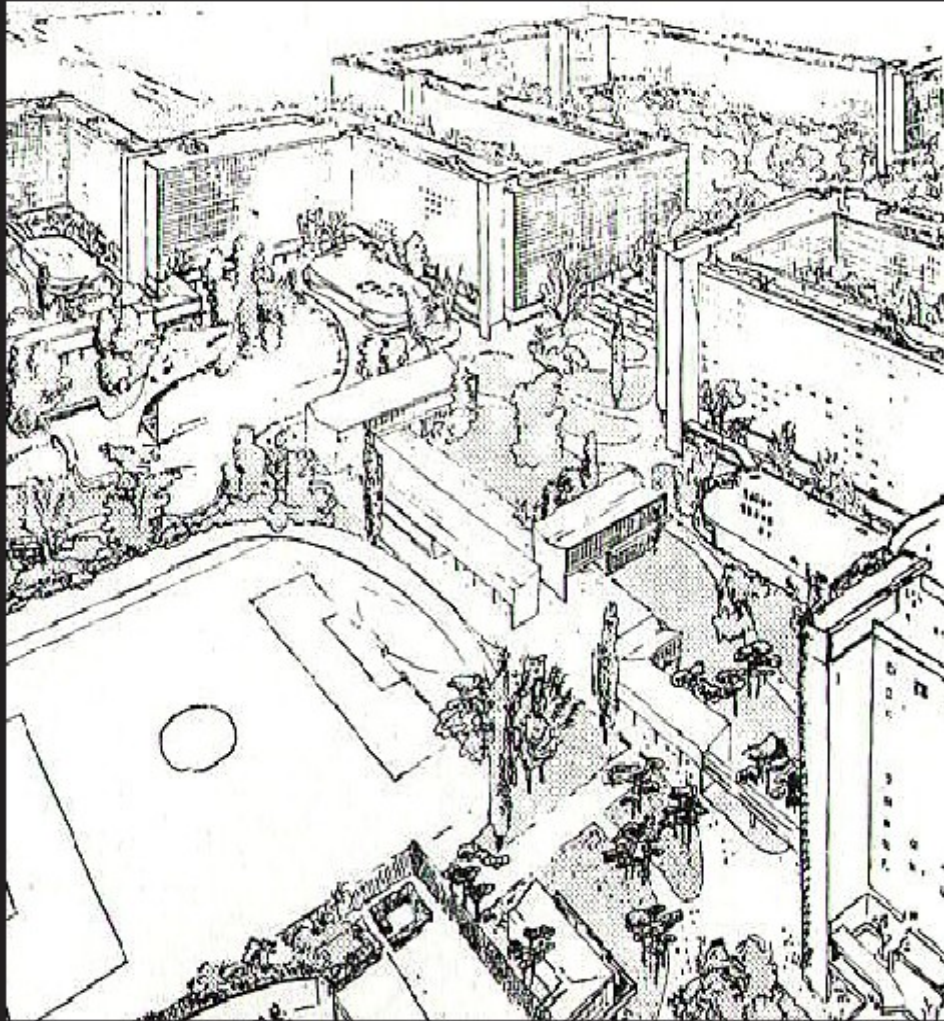


Charles-Édouard Jeanneret a.k.a. Le Corbusier, 1887-1965



# Corbu and the 'Radiant City'

- Hugely influential architect and planner
- Thought the Garden City neat but infeasible
- The 'Radiant City' combines density with open space via skyscrapers-in-parks
- A 'vertical Garden City'



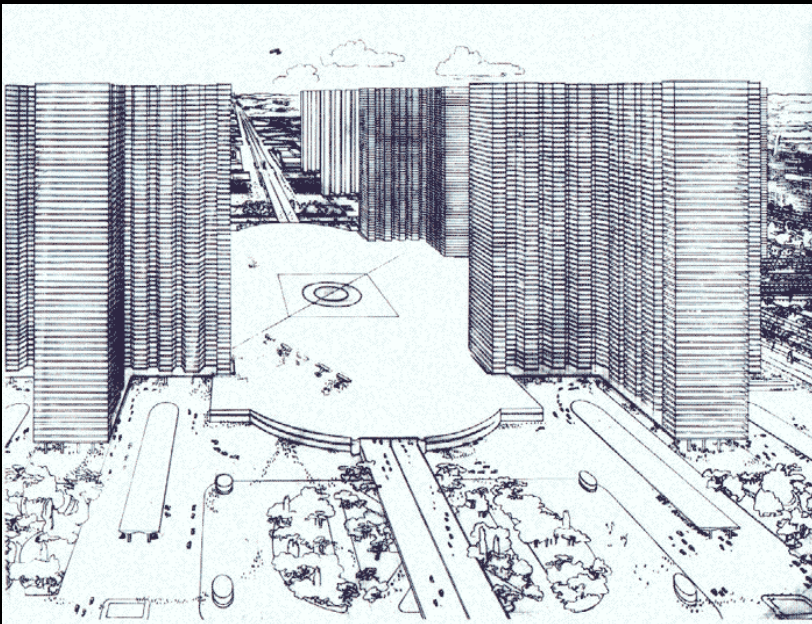
“Suppose we are entering the city by way of the Great Park. Our fast car takes the special elevated motor track between the majestic sky scrapers; as we approach nearer, there is seen the repetition against the sky of the 24 skyscrapers; to our left and right on the outskirts of each particular area are the municipal and administrative buildings; and enclosing the space are the museums and university buildings. The whole city is a Park.”

-- Le Corbusier on the Radiant City, cited by Jane Jacobs, p. 21.



# What We Now Know

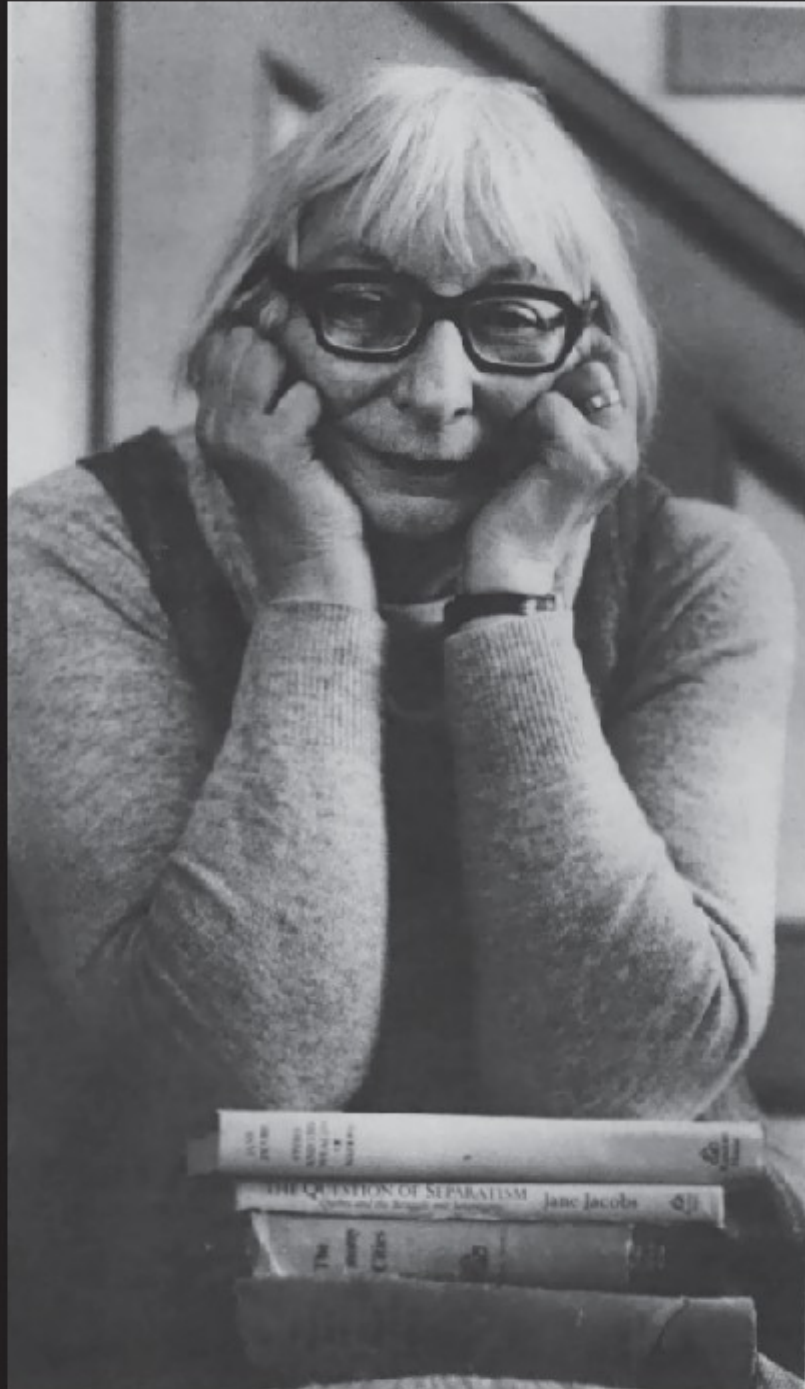
- Radiant City design can work well in affluent neighbourhoods
- It is disastrous in poor ones



# What We Now Know

- Many Radiant City developments were built for low-income families
  - Housing projects in the U.S., banlieues in France
  - Quickly became worse than the 'slums' they'd replaced





## JANE JACOBS

:: Born in Scranton, Pennsylvania, 1916

:: Moved to Greenwich Village in New York City, 1928

:: Associate editor of *Architectural Forum*, 1952

:: She wrote *The Death and Life of American Cities*, 1961

:: In 1962, she was Chairperson of the Joint Committee to Stop the Lower Manhattan Expressway.

:: Protesting the Vietnam War, she and her family emigrated to Toronto, Canada in 1968, where she continued to work as an urban activist.

:: She died in Toronto, in 2006 at the age of 90.

Jane Jacobs in 6 words:



**Jacobs loves sidewalks ...**



**... and hates parks.**

**THE RADIANT GARDEN CITY BEAUTIFUL:**  
or, what Jane JACOBS hates about  
urban planning

In the opening sentence of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs declares war on the major schools of urban planning:

“This book is an attack on current city planning and rebuilding. It is also, and mostly, an attempt to introduce new principles of city planning and rebuilding, different and even opposite from those now taught in everything from schools of architecture and planning to the Sunday supplements and women’s magazines.

She names three major targets of urban planning.

- :: the Garden City
- :: the Radiant City
- :: the City Beautiful.



# Jacobs' Recipe for a Healthy City

What we want to achieve:

- Mixed primary uses over most hours of the day (residential, business, entertainment)
- Diversity
  - Of social class, occupation, age, gender, etc etc.
- Sense of belonging
  - Without sacrificing privacy

# Jacobs' Recipe for a Healthy City

How to achieve it:

- Fine-grained, dense, flexible zoning
  - With limited amount of open space
- Clear separation of public vs private
- Streets and roads that connect, not disconnect

# Mixed Primary Usage

- A neighbourhood dedicated to one purpose will be abandoned most hours of the day
- Dull and possibly dangerous
- Ultimately, cannot properly support even the purpose for which it was built



CITY ARMS



THE CITY ARMS

Cash A/c

Food

Tr

Web

C

# Safety

- Violent crime rarely occurs when someone is watching
  - Mixed use = more people on the street
  - Density
  - Private vs public: "is this my business, or not?"

# Green Spaces

Can work...



...or not

“In orthodox city planning, neighborhood open spaces are venerated in an amazingly uncritical fashion, much as savages venerate magical fetishes. Ask a houser how his planned neighborhood improves on the old city and he will cite, as a self-evident virtue, More Open Space. Ask a zoner about the improvements in progressive codes and he will cite, again as a self-evident virtue, their incentives toward leaving More Open Space. Walk with a planner through a dispirited neighborhood and though it be already scabby with deserted parks and tired landscaping festooned with old Kleenex, he will envision a future of More Open Space.

More Open Space for what? For muggings? For bleak vacuums between buildings? Or for ordinary people to use and enjoy? But people do not use city open space just because it is there and because city planners or designers wish they would.“

## CHAPTER FIVE

### The Uses of Neighborhood Parks

Jacobs opens her chapter on parks by turning common planning wisdom upside down:

**“Conventionally, neighborhood parks or parklike open spaces are considered boons conferred on the deprived populations of cities.**

Let us turn this thought around, and consider city parks deprived places that need the boon of life and appreciation conferred on them.”  
(p. 88)



## THE PROBLEM WITH PROJECTS



Dearborn Homes, Chicago.

<http://tigger.uic.edu/depts/ahaa/imagebase/maclean/aerials3/089.JPG>

Projects are turned inward onto courtyards, away from streets and sidewalks.

There is little commerce or street life to keep "eyes on the street."

The lack of sidewalks leads to "Turf":

- :: gang warfare by the poor
- :: fortressing by the wealthy

# Diversity in Construction

- Older buildings play an important role:
  - Hard to achieve mixed use when everything is high-rent
    - "Old ideas can sometimes use new buildings. New ideas must use old buildings."
    - Corollary: this is why you will rarely find an interesting shop in a shopping centre
- There are advantages to mixed heights and footprints

# SimCity



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYiGC8Y5ddM>

# Lower Manhattan



# 'Lower Manhattanism'

- Super high density via back-to-back skyscrapers
- Traditionally a business district with few residents
- Jacobs describes consequences of lack of diversity: few amenities with 'mob scenes' at lunch time
- Since 9/11, millions of sq ft. of office space converted to residence

# Vancouver



# Vancouver

- Youngest metropolitan area in North America
- Redeveloped mostly after publication of *The Death and Life*
- *Highest residential density in North America (or was?)*
- *Unique geographic and social setting:*
  - *Sprawl limited by water, mountains, U.S. Border and some really good farmland*
  - *Population accustomed to high density*

# Vancouverism

- Planning explicitly for density, mixed use, and diversity
  - Also 'purpose-built' the Downtown Eastside...
- *Narrow, high-rise buildings with commercial base and residential towers*
- *Height restrictions – 'view protection'*





# Vancouverism

- *'Social bonus zoning': developers allowed higher densities in exchange for funding public services chosen by the city*
  - *e.g. Schools, cultural facilities, parks, social housing*
- *Developers resisted at first, but discovered this makes the project's value go up.*
- *Other cities are trying this model*

# But all is not well...

- *Like Lower Manhattan, huge pressure to convert office space to housing*
- *Corporate HQ moving to Burnaby, Richmond, Surrey*
- *Translink predicts 4 times as many people commuting out of downtown to work as coming in*
  - *Downtown as a dormitory suburb?*

# Sources

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[http://www.isocarp.net/Data/case\\_studies/1364.pdf](http://www.isocarp.net/Data/case_studies/1364.pdf)