

I-10 The Gulf Coast States / Mall Housing

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The proposal is part of a larger project of research and speculation which we've named, "I-10 The Gulf Coast States". The thesis questions how architecture might contribute to particular geographic places. In the words of Flannery O'Connor, that meticulous craftsman of the short story, "Someplace is better than anyplace."

Experimental propositions to locate new sites for building. "Mall Housing", in these two renditions, Perimeter Type and Mask Type, looks to the quasi-public space of shopping malls as a site for architectural speculation. The choice of such generic, non-place specific contexts is a test of our thesis that architecture might respond deeply to particular locales. These prototypes offer new territories as sites, the utilization of which could decrease suburban sprawl. This housing would be accessible to automobile traffic and would also sponsor small scale pedestrian districts. While not replicating the form of traditional urban spaces, these housing types, used individually or in combination, could result in social overlaps common to denser urban environments.

Mask Type. The galleries of France and Europe as well as the linear bazaars of the Middle East developed as organic pedestrian links within larger networks of urban passages. The contemporary shopping mall operates internally as such a pedestrian network. It differs from the older models in that it is usually cut off from the city because of the scale of the parking lot, and because all the programmed interior spaces turn exclusively to this internal system.

The logic of shopping mall configurations result in a characteristic typical to much of today's large buildings, long mute facades. The wall housing prototype exploits the blank wall as an enclosure for a semi-private linear mews. The linear space of this green belt is repeated in an adjacent layer of thin contiguous dwelling units. The scale of the units is reflected in the new facade which is punctuated as intervals by large portals of the shopping mall. The facade which fronts the parking lot is composed of relatively small punch windows while the facade which faces the green "lungs" of the garden is composed of large expanses of glazing.

Perimeter Type. This housing aggregate is to be located at the surrounding perimeter of shopping center parking lots. It consists of two thin buildings which frame and follow a linear garden. The garden space is a habitable zone which extends the interior space of each dwelling while providing a privacy screen from neighbors across the way. The resultant double wall configuration is a dense and relatively efficient housing aggregation. The Perimeter Type provides lease office space as well as housing which can accommodate home offices. The linear configuration of contiguous housing is broken at intervals by leasable office space. Gateways which permit transverse traffic are located at these office locations. The resulting configuration offers a mix of housing, retail, and office space which offers organic connections with each other and with the larger environmental surrounds and communities.



Fig. 1. Housing @ Edgewater Mall, Mask Type.

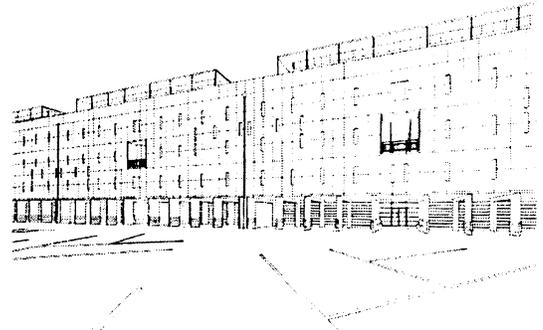


Fig. 2. View from parking lot, Mask Type.

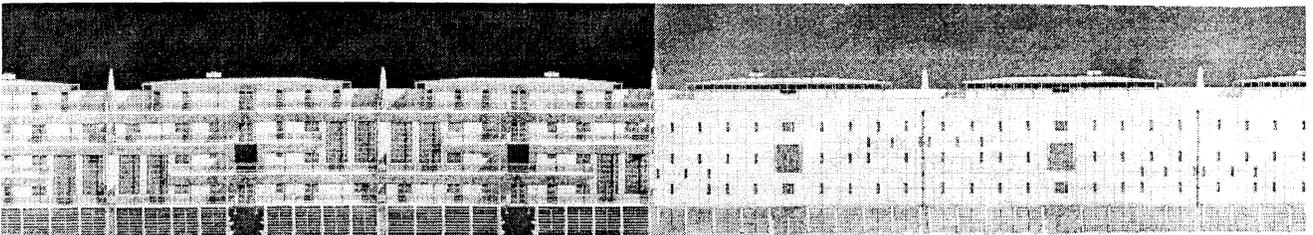


Fig. 3a. Garden elevation, Mask Type.

Fig. 3b. Public Facade, Mask Type.

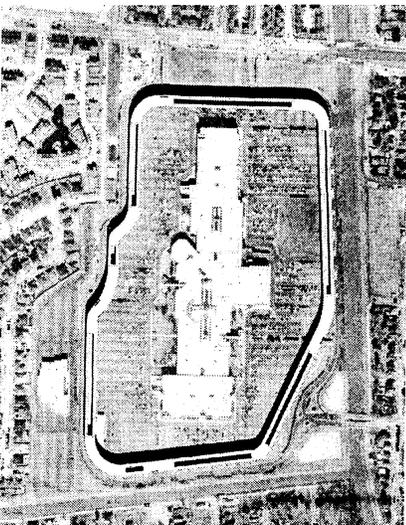


Fig. 4. Housing @ Esplanade Mall, Perimeter Type.

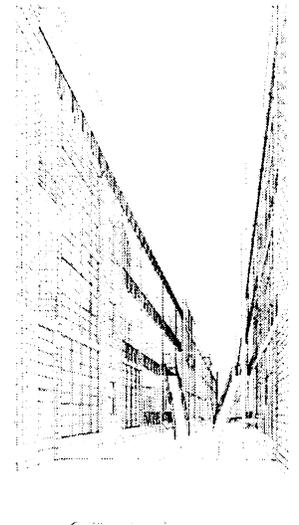


Fig. 5. View of garden, Perimeter Type.

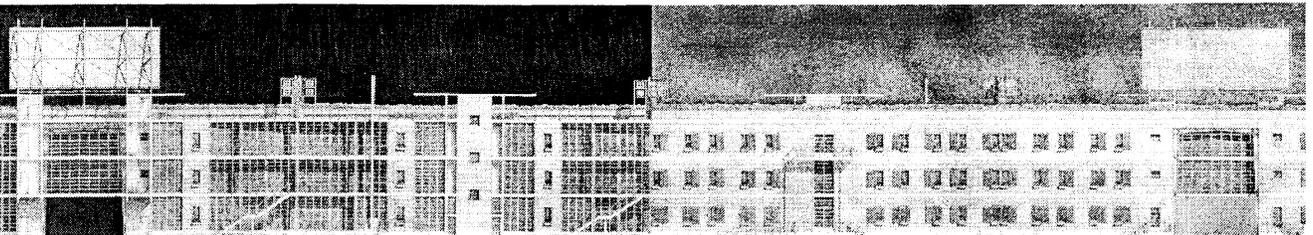


Fig. 6a. Garden elevation, Perimeter Type.

Fig. 6b. Public elevation, Perimeter Type.