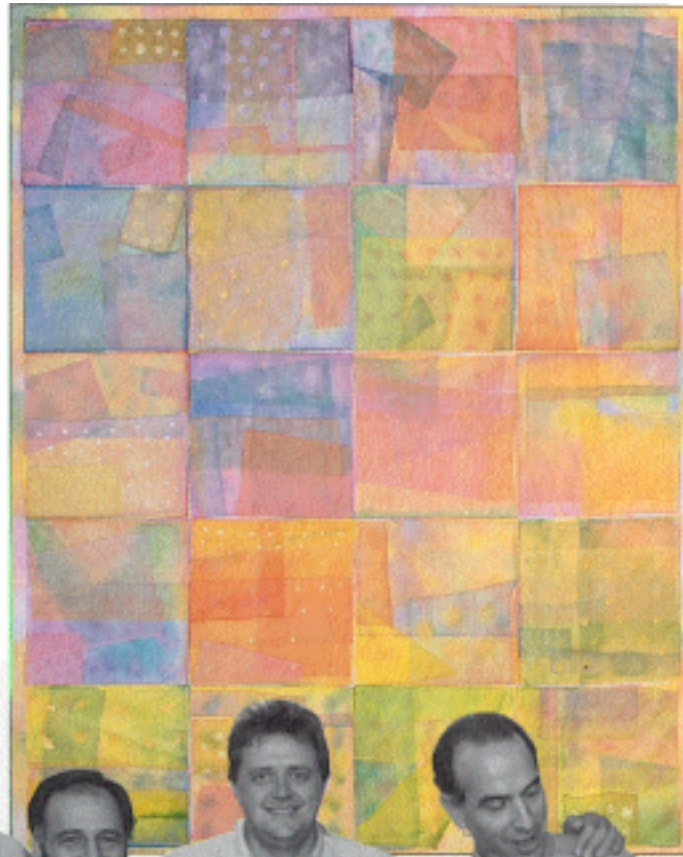


Below:

The beauty of the quilt illustrated depends on the contrast between the strong order of its pattern and the organic quality of its fabric. Our community design is analogous to this. The beauty of the *urban quilt* depends on the contrast between the strong order of its pattern of streets and lots and its natural systems.



Artist: Merrill Mazran. Title: Toronto II. Photographer: Carina Woodhatch. Courtesy of Quilt San Diego.



TEAM ONE

Ken Greenberg
Jennifer Marshall
Bill Wenk
Don Wuori

THE URBAN QUILT

There is a fundamental dialectic which occurs on sites such as this 400-acre site in Surrey. On the one hand, we have the image of Arcadian nature, an organic softness; on the other hand, we have the tools of the surveyor, the grid line and the cardinal point. In the twentieth century, the later has held sway over the former. Nature has been seen as a nuisance, something we try to overpower when we develop a site. On any site, the natural systems (topography, hydrology, vegetation, and so forth) are its most important structuring element. Yet our system of cutting up the land into parcels takes no account of natural systems, and Surrey reflects this bias. The entire city, including this site, is broken up into quarter mile or 400 metre by 400 metre sections, each section containing 40 acres. As the countryside becomes the city, these 40-acre squares get cut up into 20-, 10-, 5-, and 1-acre squares. The one-acre squares are further broken up into 1/2, 1/4, 1/8 acres, and so on.

This system of cutting squares often obliterates the Arcadian qualities that originally brought new residents to these suburban landscapes, but it doesn't have to be this way. Our team hit upon the image of the quilt and decided it would be a useful metaphor for our site plan. In a quilt, you have the organization of the grid, much like the organization of the surveyed landscape, but you also have the colour and pattern of the materials, much like the natural systems of the site. A quilt is beautiful and functional to the extent that its organization and its materials are in harmony. Similarly, we feel that this site is beautiful and functional to the extent that its ordering systems and its natural systems are in harmony. What we are looking for is an intense touching, integration, and interaction between the two.

Working Within the Pattern

We began by accepting the pattern of ownership on the site, which is, of

course, a reflection of the surveyor's grid, and we imagined how it might evolve, over time to become the "urban quilt" we were hoping for. Our plan shows a snapshot of the site taken, say, fifteen years from now, when the individuals within those various parcels are beginning to change the site by adding housing, institutions, schools, shopping, jobs, and so on, in such a way that the patterns of nature are not suppressed but are rather expressed and emphasized.

The strength of the pattern of nature in our design is largely a consequence of individuals respecting the natural processes of the site when they change it; in particular, respecting the way that rainwater moves through and out of the site. Rather than sterilizing the site by removing rain water as quickly as possible through the use of expensive, heavy drain pipes and inlets (structures common to almost all newly developed areas), this community is designed to respond to the water. We found ways of absorbing and containing the water that fell on the site, allowing it to percolate back into the ground, back into the water table, and slowly back into the natural systems. Not only does this process naturally clean and slow the water moving off the site, it also offers a potential savings of millions and millions of dollars by obviating the need for heavily engineered storm-drain systems.

Our next move was to extend the natural forest of the stream-ways by linking it with the urban forest of the new and existing streets. This uniting of the cultural landscape with the natural landscape is a key element of our urban quilt. It functions to both visually and actually integrate the ecology of the streams into the ecology of the community.

Connection, Not Separation

Our third move was to emphasize connection over separation in our transportation system. Current practice for planning suburban communities emphasizes separation over connection - residential streets separated from collector streets, collector streets separated from arterials, and so on. While this pattern may reduce through-traffic on cul-de-sac residential streets, it has an unfortunate side effect; it greatly increases the distances required to get anywhere, leading to greatly increased dependence on the automobile. The arterial streets that serve the area quickly become overloaded, requiring ever greater expenditures to widen them until, finally, they become great barriers between districts. We suggest reverting to an old pattern, the pattern of the interconnected

Left:

Team 1: (back row)
Jennifer Marshall, Richard Peck, Bill Wenk, Don Wuori, Ken Greenberg, Nick Sully;
(front row) Sai-Hong Lai, Launie Burrows, Juril Sennecke, Jennifer Nagai, Cheryl Machan, Dan Abboud; (not shown) Suzanne Pearson