

The "D" Word

An aversion to crowded cities lies in our suburban legacy and reality. Density is often confused with overcrowding and blamed for congestion, traffic and noisy neighborhoods. In reality, high density, is absolutely essential to successful cities and often reinforces

due to the sense of surveillable space. Low density is desired by suburban to drain life out of a illusion of isolation and can make anti-social, more likely. It is in that community and emerge naturally. It is

populations can merge and unique neighborhood characteristics can emerge. We must reach for density and diversity that beget life, and distinguish it from crowded, meaningless conglomerations of buildings and people that dehumanize and homogenize.

"We ought to look at densities in much the same way as we look at calories and vitamins. Right amounts are right amounts because of how they perform. And what is right differs in specific instances."⁸

positive public behavior being in public, density, which is much standards, is also likely place. It creates the disconnectedness which delinquent behavior high-density situations convenience can where diverse



The Bodies of Buildings

It is no wonder that density has acquired such a negative connotation for many suburban Americans. When we see residences or work places for large numbers of people it is often in homogenous, multi-layered buildings or drab, cubicle-style structures. Density has been associated with over-crowded industrial cities where people are packed like sardines into small spaces which reflect a desire for efficiency without character or aesthetic meaning. In suburbs and cities alike, we see apartment and office buildings constructed in the same uninspiring manner:

“Offices, apartments, and stores are piled together in ways which owe more to filing-cabinet systems or the price of land than to a concern for human existence or experience.”⁵



In comparison with this filing-cabinet nature of many buildings, the free-standing, single-family house, although isolated from place and inefficient in land use and energy consumption, “maintains a curious power over us”⁵ because it relates to our bodies and maintains the importance of aesthetic symbolism that gives meaning to buildings and places. The high-density quarters that are commonly built have not spoken to the body's desire for meaning. They have lacked public, shared space and have resembled drab cubicles more than lively residences.