

AHST 3320 Section 501  
Course in Contemporary Art  
Kinetics of Urban Sprawl  
Dr. Charissa N. Terranova  
Spring 2008

Monday, 7:00-9:45  
02.04.2008

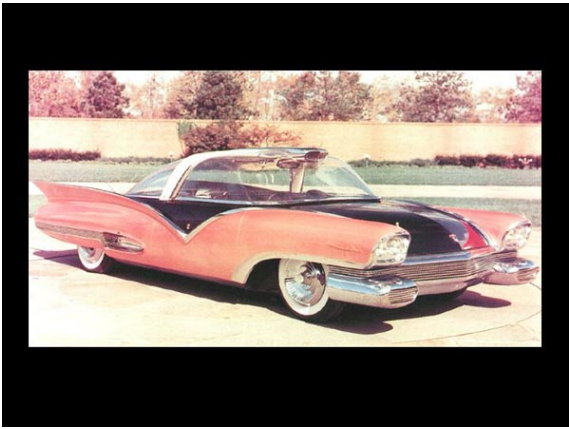
Prefabrication and Postwar Prosperity: Levittown and the  
Case-Study Houses

## Quiz

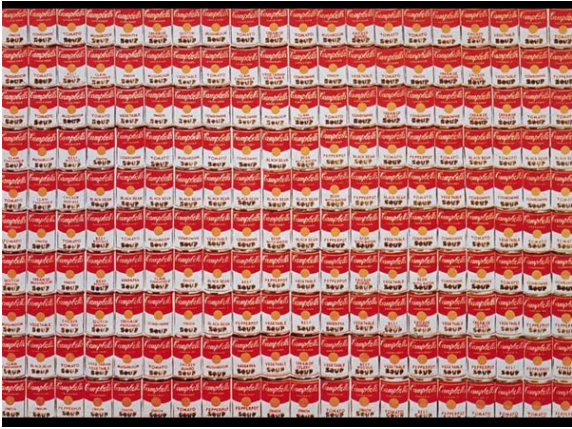
You read two articles by Neil Jackson on "metal-frame houses" in Los Angeles. According to Jackson, what are the advantages of building a house with a metal frame as opposed to a wooden frame?

## REMINDER

Assignment #1 **Due February 18** The Wendy and Emery Reeves Collection is located on the third floor of the Dallas Museum of Art. Please write a 2-page analysis of the interior of the couple's bedroom. Your analysis should describe the setting not in terms of "beauty" conventionally understood but in terms of "taste" as a construct of political economy. I want you to think about how the space of their bedroom signifies in terms of class and social structure, or how "beauty" in this instance is a matter of "taste" and the display of luxury and collected objects.







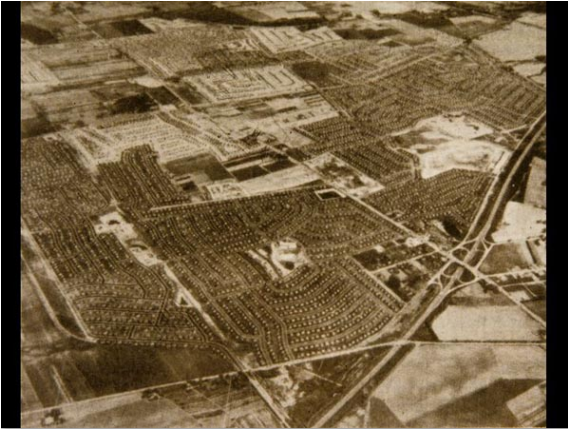












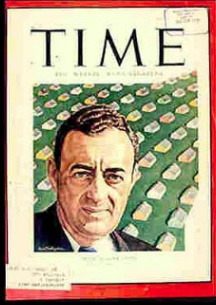












One of four different styles of the 1 1/2 story



One of four different styles of the Levittowner



# Levittown IN 1957



One of four different styles of the Levittowner

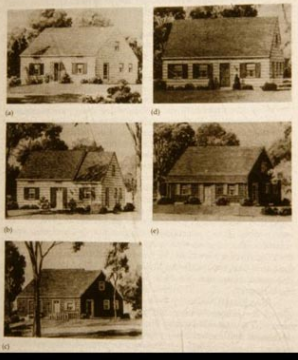


One of four different styles of the Country Clubber

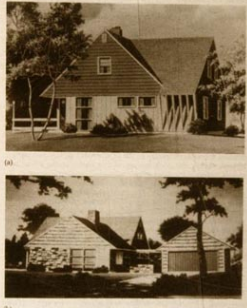
Levitt & Sons' drawings of five Cape Cod models, 1947. (NCM)



Architect's renderings of five versions of the 1947 Cape Cod model. (NCM)

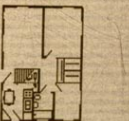
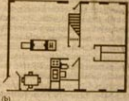
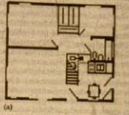


(a) Basic 1949 ranch at Levittown (C. 398). (b) Ranch model at Country Club Estates, Rye, N.Y., 1949. (NCM)



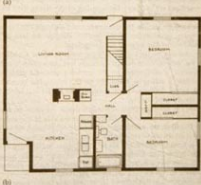
(b) The receipt of the investment in redesign was not limited to the Levittown houses. Levitt & Sons built a more expensive development, Country Club Estates, at Rye, N.Y., which incorporated many of the new concepts in houses selling for at least a third more than the Levittown ranches.

Comparison of three floor plans. The 1947 Cape Cod is shown here with its floor plan rotated 90°. In that rotation, it duplicates the room arrangement of the 1949 ranch. (a) 1947 Cape Cod (b) 1949 Ranch; (c) 1947 Cape Cod rotated 90°



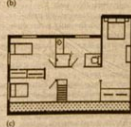
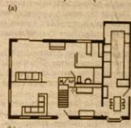
3.6.

(a) Architect's rendering of basic 1949 ranch model. (NCM) (b) Floor plan C&D Ranch, Author





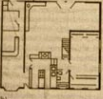
Front elevation and floor plans for Taylor house. (a) Front elevation. (b) First floor. (c) Second floor.



Front elevation and floor plans for Mendota house. (a) Front elevation



(a)

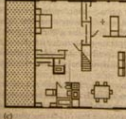
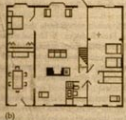
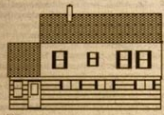


(b)



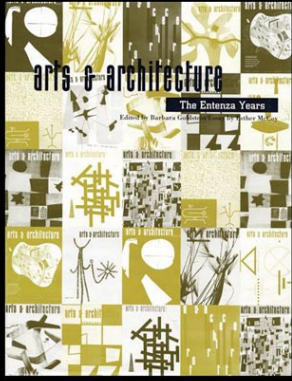
(c)

Front elevation and floor plans for Stark house. (a) Front elevation  
(b) First floor (c) Second floor.

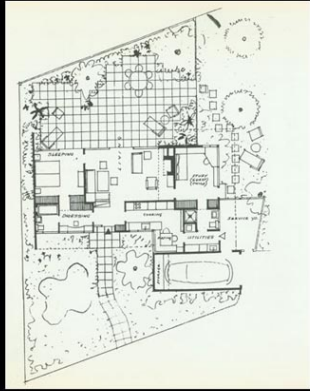






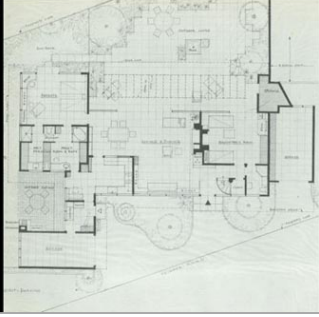
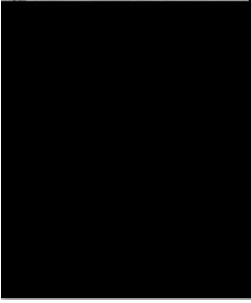


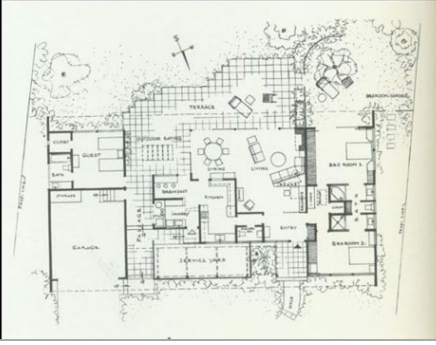


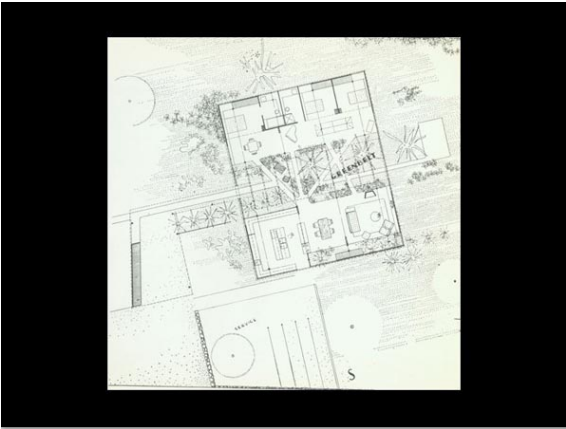


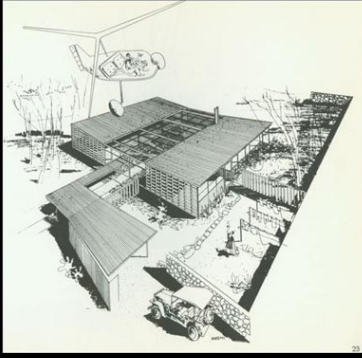


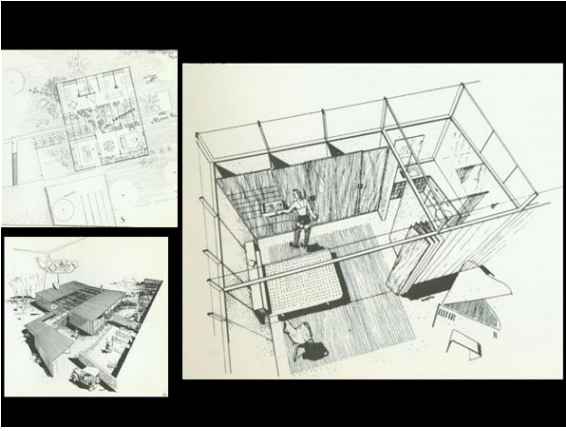


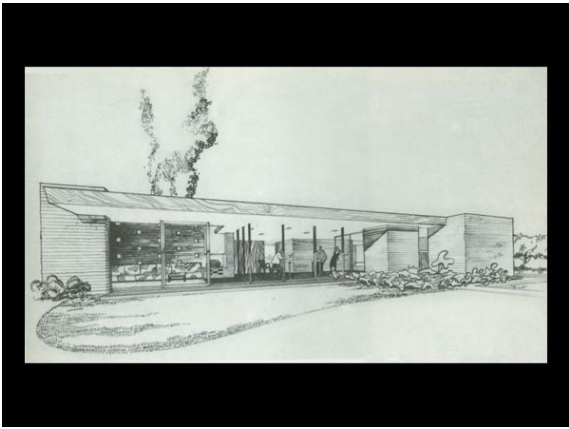


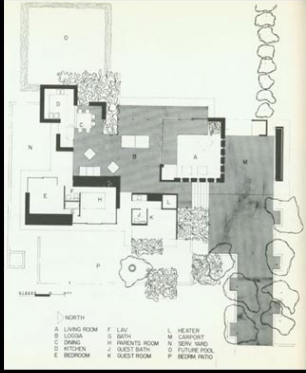






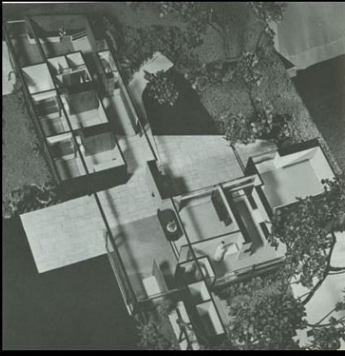


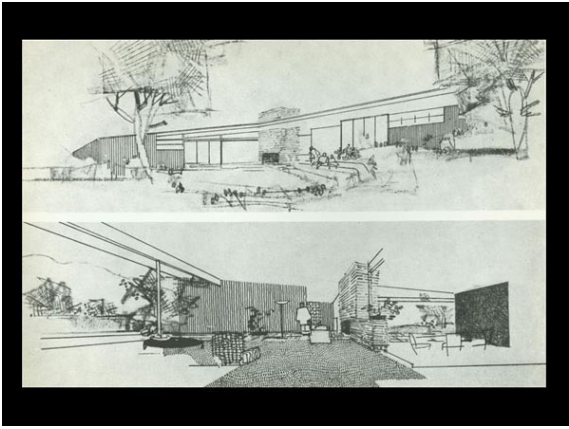




- NORTH
- |                |                 |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. LIVING ROOM | F. LAV.         | L. HEATER       |
| B. LOBBY       | G. BATH         | M. GARAGE       |
| C. DINING      | H. PARENTS ROOM | N. SUN. PAD.    |
| D. KITCHEN     | J. GUEST BATH   | O. OUTDOOR POOL |
| E. BEDROOM     | K. GUEST ROOM   | P. REAR PORCH   |

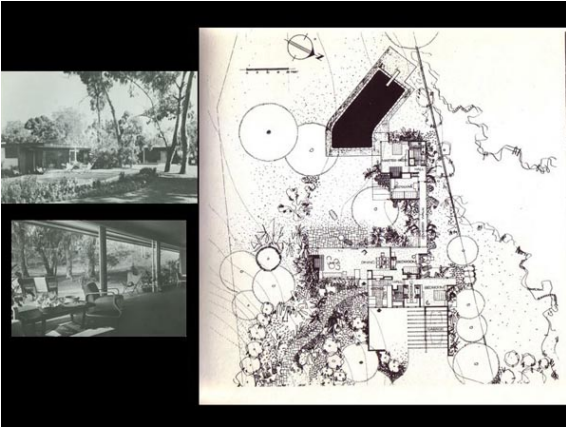




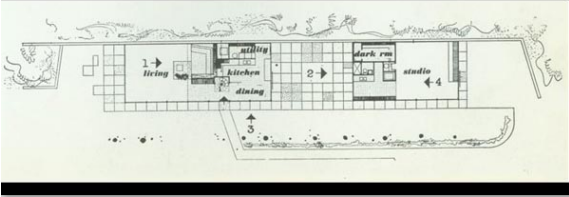
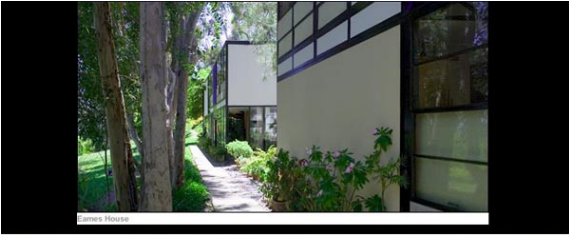


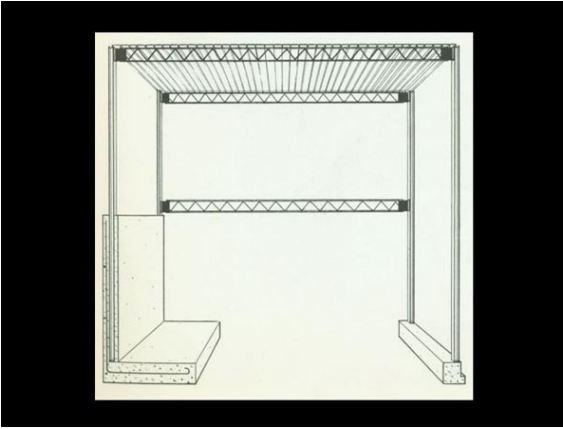










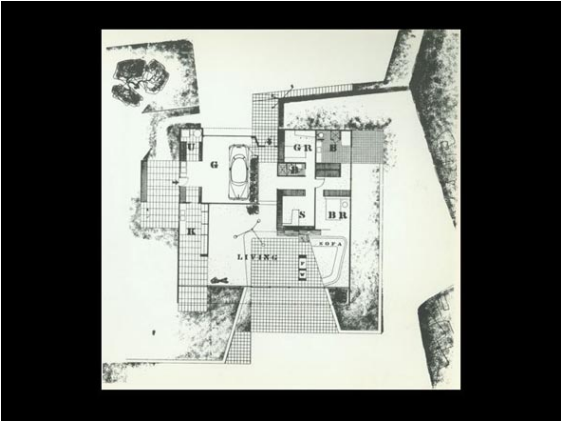


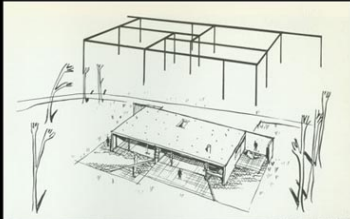


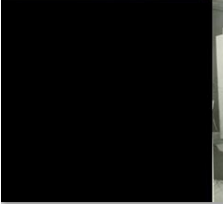
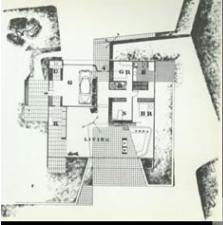




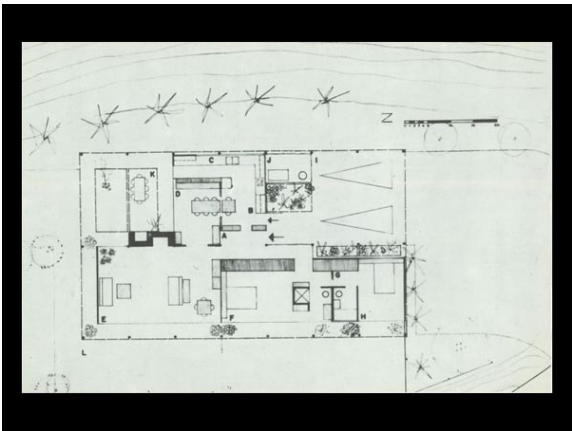








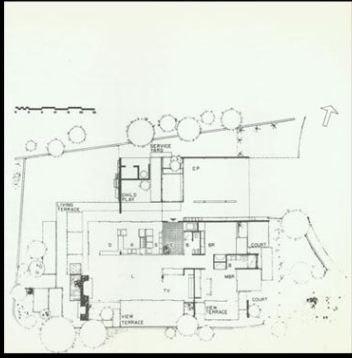


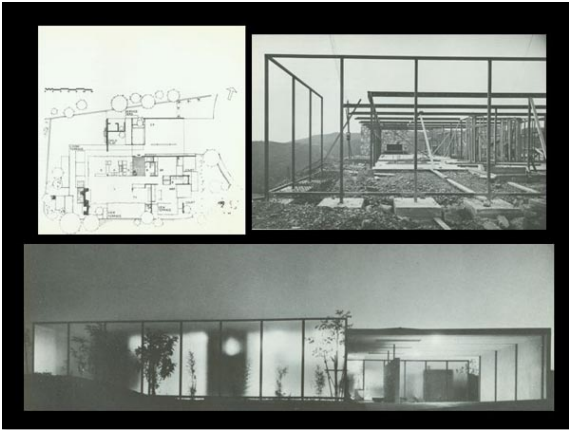


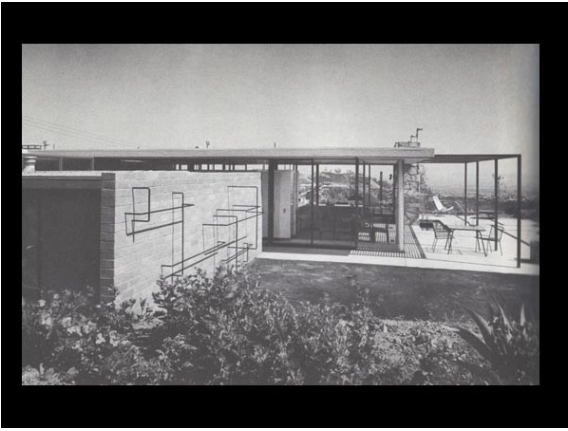


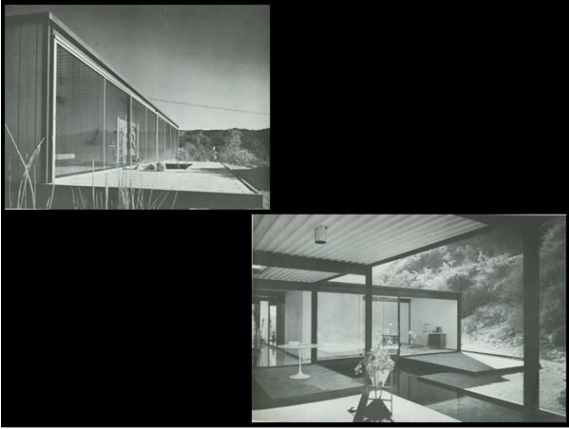








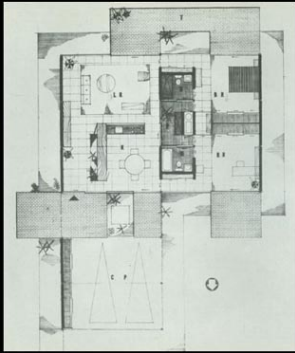






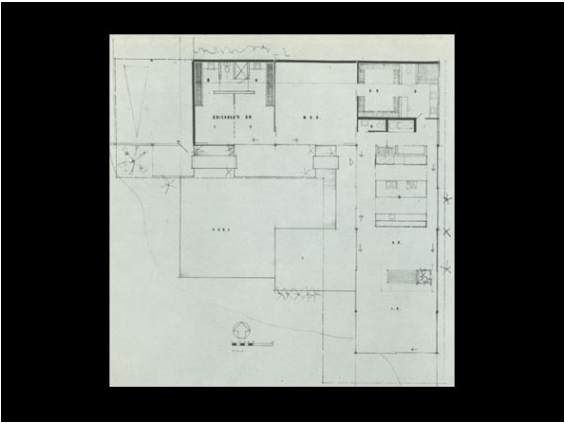








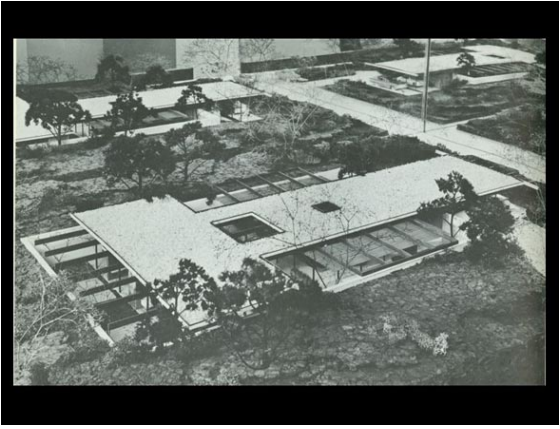




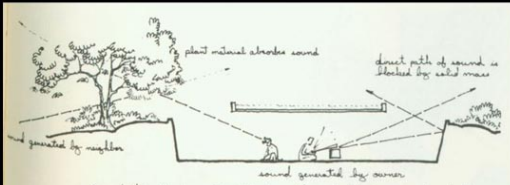




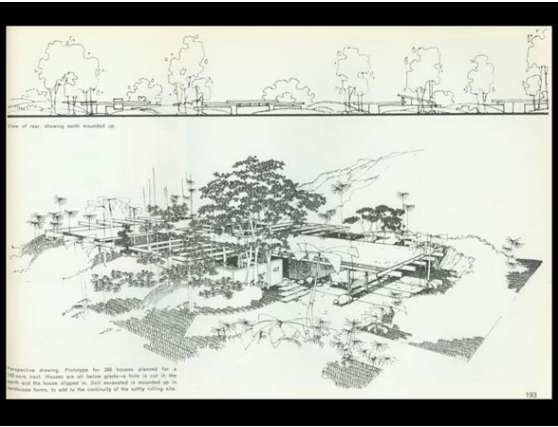


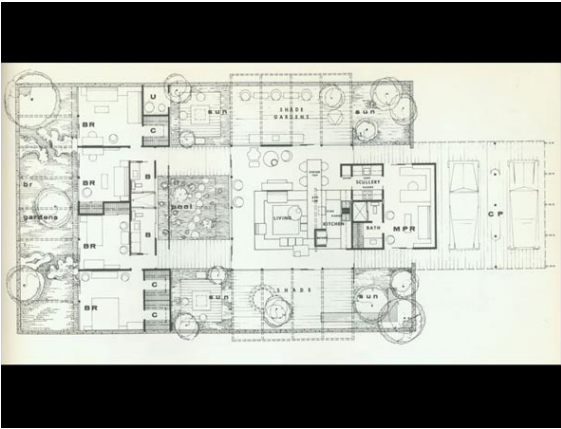


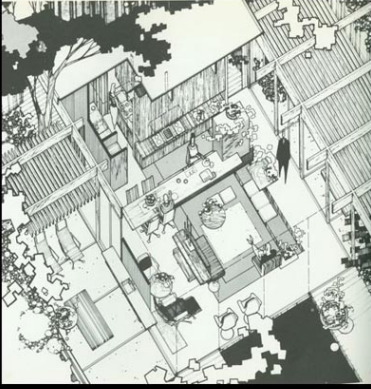




Sound travels in a straight line path much the same as does light. By blocking the direct path of sound or absorbing it with plant material its intensity is greatly reduced.







Herberg J. Gans, *The Levittowners: Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban Community* (1967) 3-12; 153-184

•You read two short sections of the sociologist Herbert J. Gans' *The Levittowners*. Let's discuss the first portion, pages 3-12.

•What was the evolving role of "community" in the Levitt-family real estate operation?

•With respect to architecture and urban planning, can you plan community?

•Gans was known for his critique of architectural determinism, or the notion that architecture, modern architecture in particular, can transform people and improve their life. What do you think of this idea?

•How is the center of Dallas distinct from Richardson or

•How is the center of Dallas distinct from Richardson or Plano?

•Do these areas have an effect on the people living there?

•Does the architecture of this campus -- UTD -- cultivate a certain mindset as opposed to that of other campuses -- such as SMU?

•What does Gans discuss in the second assigned section, pages 153-184?

•What is his thesis on homogeneity?

•What is his thesis on conformity?

•Do you agree with his sociological research, or do you think it shows biases?

Neil Jackson, "Metal-Frame Houses of the Modern Movement in Los Angeles: Pars 1 and 2," *Architectural History*, vols. 32-33 (1989/1990) pp. 152-172; 167-187

- What are the advantages of building with a metal frame over a wooden frame?
- Who is Richard Neutra and what is the significance of his designs in Los Angeles in the late 1920s?
- What is Jackson's thesis on the Los Angeles "regional tradition"?
- Does Dallas have a regional architectural tradition? A vernacular?
- Does Texas?
- What might they be?

- Can modern architecture also be regional?
- Is regionalism inherently parochial?
- In keeping with our discussion over the past few weeks, what with respect to post-WWII housing is the relationship between wartime production and peacetime production?
- Can there be avant-garde mass-produced tract housing?
- Can there be "good design" in a mass-produced tract housing situation?
- Are developers, such as Levitt, doomed to being only interested in profit instead of community?
- Speaking of money, what was the role of money in the Case Study Program, according to Jackson?