Krzysztof Wodiczko's *Homeless Projection* and the Site of Urban "Revitalization"

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In *The City Observed: A Guide to the Architecture of Manhattan*, Paul Goldberger, architecture critic of the *New York Times*, concluded his historical survey of Union Square with the following observation:

> For all that has gone wrong here, there are still reminders within the square itself of what a grand civic environment this once was. There are bronze fountains and some of the city's finest statuary. The best of the statues are Henry Kirke Brown and John Quincy Ward's equestrian statue of Washington, with a Richard Upjohn base, and Karl Adolf Donndorf's mother and children atop a bronze fountain base. There is also an immense flagstaff base, 9½ feet high and 36 feet in diameter, with bas-reliefs by Anthony de Francisci symbolizing the forces of good and evil in the Revolutionary War; *even if a derelict is relieving himself beside it, it has a rather majestic presence.*[1]

The cynicism inherent in the use of a homeless person as a foil for the aesthetic merits of a sculptural base and for the nostalgic visions evoked by civic monuments will hardly surprise anyone familiar with Goldberger's consistent apologies for the ruthless proliferation of luxury condominiums, lavish corporate headquarters, and high-rent office towers in New York City today. The dangers of this attitude have, however, become fully manifest only in the current period of architectural expansionism. For in his "appraisals" of new buildings—evaluations that appear, appropriately, juxtaposed to real estate news and accompany the incessant disclosures by public officials of private development plans—Goldberger also fails to reflect on the relation between horrifying social conditions and the circumstances of architectural production. Goldberger never mentions the fact that the architects of New York's construction boom not only scorn the flagrant need for new public housing but also

1. Paul Goldberger, *The City Observed: New York, a Guide to the Architecture of Manhattan*, New York, Vintage, 1979, p. 92 (emphasis added).

relentlessly erode the existing low-income housing stock, thereby destroying the conditions of survival for hundreds of thousands of the city's poorest residents. By remaining detached from questions of housing and focusing on what he deems to be properly architectural concerns, he further impedes the more fundamental recognition that this destruction is no accidental by-product of such reckless building but is, along with unemployment and cuts in social services, a necessary component of the economic circumstances that motivate it in the first place. Moreover, the discourse that Goldberger represents blocks comprehension of the full urban context by simulating social responsibility in the form of a concern for the physical environment of the city. Thus, Goldberger intermittently attempts to dispel doubts about the substantial threat this construction poses to New York's light, air, and open space by occasionally appealing to a mythical notion of planning which, in practice, is a considerable part of the problem itself.[2] By declaring the crucial issues in development projects to be the size, height, bulk, density, and style of individual buildings in relation to their immediate physical sites, Goldberger ignores architecture's political and economic sites. He is able to concede in passing that "architecture has now come to be a selling point in residential real estate as much as it has in commercial."[3] Nonetheless, he abets the destruction of housing and communities by aestheticizing the real estate function of current construction, much as he did the commercial function of the early twentieth-century skyscraper.[4] In short, he makes common cause with contemporary development for the rich and privileged, using the same rationale that authorized his exploitative description of the sculptural treasures of Union Square: the exaltation of the essential power and romance of, in the first case, the skyscraper, and, in the second, the historical monument.

2. Reviewing an exhibition of Hugh Ferriss's architectural drawings held at the Whitney Museum's new branch at the Equitable Center, a building that, itself, represents a threat to the city's poor, Goldberger claims that Ferriss "offers the greatest key to the problems of the skyscraper city that we face today," because he demonstrated "that a love of the skyscraper's power and romance need not be incompatible with a heavy dose of urban planning" (Paul Goldberger, "Architecture: Renderings of Skyscrapers by Ferriss," *New York Times*, June 24, 1986, p. C13).

3. Paul Goldberger, "Defining Luxury in New York's New Apartments," *New York Times*, August 16, 1984, p. C1.

4. Observing the omissions of any social or economic history in Goldberger's "history" of the skyscraper, one reviewer wrote, "The building process is born of economics. . . . Some of these factors might be: the state of the national and regional economies; the nature of the local transportation system; the conditions of local market supply-and-demand; the relationship to desirable local geographic features or elements, such as proximity to a park; the perceived or actual quality of building services and image; and the economies of new construction techniques that reduce building costs or enhance efficiency—*all of which are factors that cannot be seen simply by looking at the building's skin*" (Michael Parley, "On Paul Goldberger's *The Skyscraper*," *Skyline*, March 1982, p. 10 [emphasis added]). The factors Parley lists indicate some of the most serious problems with Goldberger's aesthetic history, although they, too, need to be set in a broader economic framework.

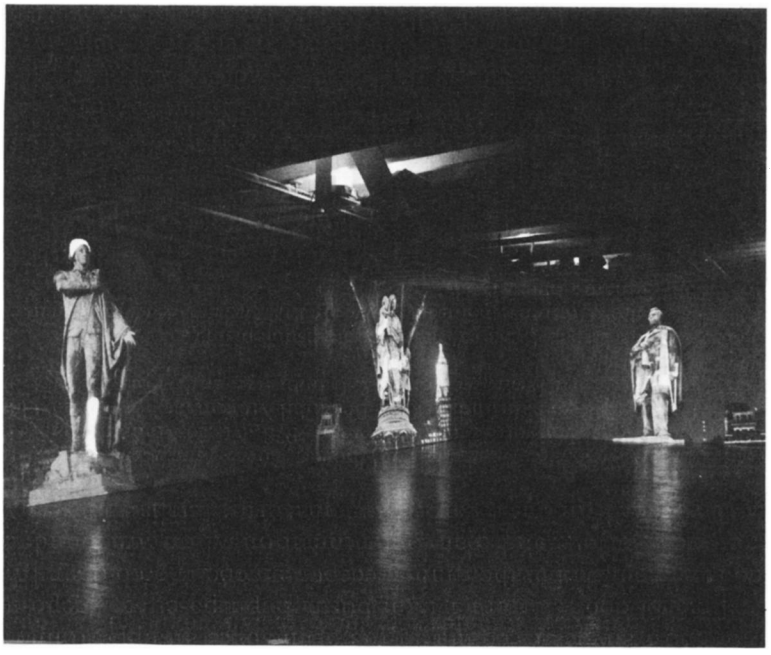
The City Observed appeared in 1979, only a few years before "derelicts," along with other members of a "socially undesirable population"[5] were, in fact, evicted from Union Square by a massive program of urban redevelopment. Like all such activities of the latest New York real estate boom, this one also forcibly "relocated" many of the area's lower-income tenants and threatens numerous others with the permanent loss of housing. The publication of Goldberger's guide coincided with the preparation of the redevelopment plan, and it shares prominent features of the planning mentality that engineered Union Square redevelopment and of the public relations campaign that legitimized it: aesthetic appreciation of the architecture and urban design of the neighborhood and sentimental appeals for restoration of selected chapters of its past history. The thematic correspondence between the book and the planning documents is no mere coincidence. It vividly illustrates how instrumental aesthetic ideologies are for the powerful forces determining the use, appearance, and ownership of New York's urban spaces and for the presentation of their activities as an illusory restoration of a glorious past. For Goldberger, "Union Square's past is more interesting than its present. Now the square is just a dreary park, one of the least relaxing green spaces in Manhattan."[6] Invariably, the reports, proposals, and statements issuing from New York's Department of City Planning, the City Parks Commission, and city officials regarding the various phases and branches of redevelopment also reminisce about the square's history and lament its sharply contrasting present predicament. As one typical survey put it, "For the most part, the park today is a gathering place for indigent men whose presence further tends to discourage others from enjoying quiet moments inside the walled open space."[7] These texts disregard the prospects for Union Square's displaced homeless or for the new homeless produced by mass evictions and the raised property values resulting from redevelopment. Instead, they conjure up a past that never really existed; narratives portraying vaguely delimited historical periods stress the late nineteenth-century episode in Union Square's history, when it was first a wealthy residential neighborhood and then a fashionable commercial district: part of the increasingly well-known—due to a wave of museum exhibitions, media reports, and landmark preservation campaigns—"Ladies' Mile."[8] This purportedly elegant and genteel era they are most eager to revive. A principle value of the aesthetic discourse for those seizing control of Union Square lies in this discourse's ability to

5. The designation appears in Department of City Planning, *Union Square: Special Zoning District Proposal*, originally released November 1983, revised June 1984, p. 3.
6. Goldberger, *The City Observed*, p. 91.
7. Department of City Planning, *Union Square: Street Revitalization*, January 1976, p. 28.
8. For a history of the economic factors—the needs of business—that determined the development of Ladies' Mile, see M. Christine Boyer, *Manhattan Manners: Architecture and Style 1950–1900*, New York, Rizzoli International Publications, 1985.

construct a distorted architectural and design history of the area, one that will produce the illusion of a comforting continuity and a reassuring stability of a tradition symbolized by transcendent aesthetic forms. The history of Union Square, it is said, lies in its architectural remains. Using the same methods that cleared the path for the design and execution of redevelopment, reconstructed histories such as Goldberger's conduct their readers on a tour of the area's buildings, monuments, and "compositions."[9]

Krzysztof Wodiczko's *Homeless Projection* interrupts this "journey-in-fiction."[10] Although it employs the same Union Square terrain and the same "significant" architectural landmarks, the work aligns itself with radically different interests within the politics of urban space. Its form: site-specific, temporary, collaborative with its public; its subject: the capitulation of architecture to the conditions of the real estate industry; the contents of its images: the fearful social outcome of that alliance. All of these qualities render *The Homeless Projection* useless to those forces taking possession of Union Square in order to exploit it for profit; they militate, also, against the work's neutralization by aesthetic institutions. Instead of fostering an unreflective consumption of past architectural forms to oil the mechanism of urban "revitalization," the project attempts to identify the system of economic power operating in New York City beneath what the artist once called "the discreet camouflage of a cultural and aesthetic 'background.'"[11] Eroding the aura of isolation that idealist aesthetics constructs around architectural forms, it also—by virtue of its rigorous attention to a broad and multivalent context—dismantles the terms of an even more obscurantist urban discourse that relates buildings to the city conceived only as a physical environment. Wodiczko's project reinserts architectural objects into the surrounding city understood in its broadest sense as a site of economic, social, and political processes. Consequently, it contests the belief that monumental buildings are stable, transcendent, permanent structures containing essential and universal meanings; it proclaims, on the contrary, the mutability of their symbolic language and the changing uses to which they are put as they are continually recast in varying historical circumstances and social frameworks. Whereas the architectural and urban discourses promoted in journalism such as Goldberger's and in the documents produced by New York's official urban-planning professionals manufacture an aesthetic disguise for the brutal realities of "revitalization," *The Homeless Projection*, if realized, would dramatically interfere with that image, restoring the viewer's ability to perceive the essential con-

9. "The making of compositions, the making of streets, and the making of theater—it is these things that define the architecture of New York far more than does any single style" (Goldberger, *The City Observed*, p. xv).
10. Krzysztof Wodiczko, "Public Projection," *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, vol. 7, nos. 1–2 (Winter/Spring 1983), p. 186.
11. *Ibid.*



Krzysztof Wodicizko. The Homeless Projection.

nections that these discourses sever, exclude, or cosmeticize—the links that place the interrelated disciplines of architecture, urban design, and, increasingly, art in the service of those financial forces that determine the shape of New York's built environment. Moreover, the clear ethical imperative that informs the work's engagement in political struggles markedly contrasts with the dominant architectural system's preferred stance of "corporate moral detachment."[12]

Wodiczko entered the arena of New York housing politics when he took advantage of the opportunity offered him for an exhibition at a New York art gallery. *The Homeless Projection* has existed until now only as a proposal presented at 49th Parallel in the winter of 1986. Consisting of four large montaged slide images projected onto the gallery's walls and a written statement by the artist distributed in an accompanying brochure, it outlined a plan for the transformation of Union Square Park. The exhibition coincided with the unfolding of the redevelopment scheme that is transforming Union Square in actuality, occurring several months after the completion of the first phase of the park's restoration

12. Krzysztof Wodiczko, "The Homeless Projection: A Proposal for the City of New York," New York, 49th Parallel, Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art, 1986; reprinted in this issue of *October*.

—the ideological centerpiece and economic precondition for the district's "revitalization." Drastic changes in the built environment, such as this "revitalization," are effected through conventional and institutionalized planning forms. "What has been of fundamental importance," writes a critic of the history of town planning, "is the role of the project, that is of *imagination*."[13] Such projects entail activities of sight and memory. No matter how objective their language, they are, by virtue of their selective focuses, boundaries, and exclusions, also ideological statements about the problems of and solutions for their sites. Given the fact that *The Homeless Projection*'s potential site is the site of the pervasive and calculated urban process of redevelopment, Wodiczko's photographic and textual presentation in the space of aesthetic display—the gallery—appears to echo and critically intervene in the visual and written presentational forms of city planning. Like the official proposals generated by the teams of engineers, landscape architects, designers, demographers, sociologists, and architects who actually shaped Union Square's renovation, Wodiczko's presentation envisioned imagined alterations to its location and set forth the principles and objectives governing his proposal. Unlike such documents, however, it offered no suggestions for enduring physical changes to the area under study. Instead, the artist disclosed a plan to appropriate temporarily the public space of Union Square Park for a performance, in the course of which he would project transient images onto the newly refurbished surfaces of the four neoclassical monuments that occupy symmetrical positions on each side of the park. Yet this is not the core of the difference between the two. Whereas mainstream planning discourse legitimates its proposals through the notion that they will restore a fundamental social harmony, Wodiczko's intervention illuminates the existing social relations of domination which such planning disavows.

The Image of Redevelopment

While *The Homeless Projection* is a proposal for a work to be situated in Union Square, the work's subtitle, "A Proposal for the City of New York," explicitly announces that Union Square represents a determinate location of urban phenomena extending far beyond the immediate area. Indeed, the transformation of Union Square from a deteriorated yet active precinct consisting of a crime-ridden park, low-rent office buildings, inexpensive stores,[14] and single-

13. Bernardo Secchi, "La forma del discourse urbanistico," *Casabella*, vol. 48 (November 1984), p. 14 (emphasis added).

14. The shops along 14th Street from First to Eighth Avenues, including Mays department store facing Union Square, comprise the largest shopping district south of Spanish Harlem for Manhattan's Hispanic residents. Some of these stores' sites have already been purchased for future redevelopment. Known as La Calle Catorse, this street has traditionally provided the link between the concentrations of Hispanics on the Lower East Side and Chelsea, both of which neighborhoods have recently been redeveloped, resulting in large displacements of those populations.

room occupancy hotels into a luxury "mixed-use" neighborhood—commercial, residential, and retail—is only an individual manifestation of an unprecedented degree of change in the class composition of New York neighborhoods. The concluding phases of such metamorphoses—those that follow the preliminary and calculated stages of abandonment, neglect, and deterioration caused by landlords and financial institutions—are identified by a constellation of inaccurate, confusing, and distorting terms. Overtly falsifying, however, is the overarching rubric *revitalization*, a word whose positive connotations reflect nothing other than "the sort of middle-class ethnocentrism that views the replacement of low-status groups by middle-class groups as beneficial by definition."[15] The word *revitalization* conceals the very existence of those inhabitants already living in the frequently vital neighborhoods targeted for renovation. Perhaps the most widely used term to designate current changes is *gentrification*, which, coined in London in the 1960s, implies the class interests at work in the phenomenon. It identifies the gentrifying classes incorrectly, however, suggesting that they represent some fictional landed aristocracy.

Explanations for "revitalization" and gentrification, where they exist, are generally formulated out of the concepts, values, and beliefs espoused by those financial institutions, politicians, corporations, real estate developers, landlords, and upper-middle-class residents who benefit from the process. At their most reactionary and self-serving—and most widely disseminated in the mass media—such "explanations" repress the social origins, functions, and effects of gentrification in order deliberately to thwart the apprehension of its determining causes and present it, instead, as the heroic acts of individuals. New York's former housing commissioner has, in this fashion, asserted,

> When an area becomes ripe for gentrification, a condition that cannot be rigorously identified in advance but seems to depend on the inscrutable whims of an invisible hand, the new purchasers face monumental tasks. First the building must be emptied. Then layers of paint must be scraped from fine paneling; improvised partitions must be removed; plumbing must be installed and heating ripped out and replaced. Sometimes the new buyers spend years under pioneering conditions.[16]

Not all accounts are so blatantly misleading. But even those explanations that identify and criticize some of the real effects of gentrification tend to be super-

15. Bruce London and J. John Palen, "Introduction: Some Theoretical and Practical Issues Regarding Inner-City Revitalization," in J. John Palen and Bruce London, eds., *Gentrification, Displacement and Neighborhood Revitalization*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1984, p. 10.
16. Roger Starr, *The Rise and Fall of New York City*, New York, Basic Books, 1985, p. 36.

ficial, impressionistic, or eclectic rather than based in an understanding of the specific forces that govern patterns of city growth and change.

Recently, however, efforts have been made to "identify rigorously" the structural factors that prepare the conditions for gentrification and to ascertain precisely whose needs and interests regulate the restructuring of urban space within which gentrification plays a role. These theories rest on the fundamental premise that the physical cityscape is the effect of the specific society in which it develops. The wholesale reorganization of that space represents, then, no mere surface phenomenon; rather it reflects a full-scale restructuring within that larger society. Compelled by the imperative to place gentrification within the context of this broader restructuring, Neil Smith and Michele LeFaivre produced in 1984 a detailed and urgently needed "Class Analysis of Gentrification."[17] In contradistinction to notions of "inscrutable whims" and "invisible hands," the essay examines a systematic combination of economic processes—a "devalorization" cycle of declining real estate values—whereby inner-city neighborhoods have been historically and concretely "developed" into deteriorated areas in order to produce the prerequisites for gentrification. Occurring within the wider periodicity of capitalist expansion, this devalorization cycle—consisting of new construction, landlord control, blockbusting, redlining, and abandonment—terminates in a situation in which a developer's investment can result in a maximization of profit. The ability to produce profitable investments depends on the existence of a substantial gap between the current capitalization of real estate in a specific location and the potential return on investment. "When this rent gap becomes sufficiently wide to enable a developer to purchase the old structure, rehabilitate it, make mortgage and interest payments, and still make a satisfactory return on the sale or rental of the renovated building, then a neighborhood is ripe for gentrification."[18]

The analysis of this devalorization cycle is, by the authors' own admission, schematic; it requires readjustment to accommodate the variations among development procedures in diverse cities and to account for the variables of conflicting capital interests, forms of state intervention, the emergence of community movements, and other factors. Nonetheless, the analysis is indispensable in destroying the myth that arbitrary, natural, or individual actions produce neglect and abandonment, which can then be "corrected" by gentrification. Rather, it ties the stages of abandonment and gentrification together within the "logic" of an economic system and reveals them to be the product of specific decisions by the primary and powerful actors in the real estate market—financial institutions, developers, government, and landlords.

In their description of the real estate devalorization cycle Smith and

17. Neil Smith and Michele LeFaivre, "A Class Analysis of Gentrification," in Palen and London, pp. 43–63.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

LeFaivre emphasize the commodity function of city neighborhoods under capitalism. They further stress this function when they situate gentrification within the larger transformations taking place in central cities. In so doing they closely follow David Harvey's pioneering analyses of capitalist urbanization, in which Harvey endeavors to discover the constituent elements that propel the flow of capital into the built environment of the city during particular economic periods.[19] His conclusions depend on an application to urban processes of Marx's analysis of the contradictions within capitalist accumulation and of how capitalism attempts to ensure its survival. Harvey emphasizes the tendency toward overaccumulation, in which the production of capital in certain sectors of the economy exceeds opportunities to employ it at the average rate of profit. Manifested in falling rates of profit, overproduction, surplus capital, surplus labor, or greater exploitation of labor, overaccumulation crises can be temporarily solved by switching investment into other sectors of the economy. Harvey views extensive investment in the built environment as a symptom of such a crisis, "a kind of last-ditch hope for finding productive uses for rapidly overaccumulating capital."[20] Due to the long-term, large-scale projects this investment entails, the success of the attempt—its short-lived success—requires the mediation of financial and state institutions. Smith and LeFaivre apply Harvey's conclusions to the processes of contemporary central-city development and gentrification, which they evaluate as a component of this switching process: in order to counteract falling rates of profit, capital moves into areas such as real estate and construction. Characterizing gentrification as "the latest phase in a movement of capital back to the city,[21] the authors offer another crucial argument against the prevailing vision that gentrification represents a spontaneous "back-to-the-city" movement by individuals eager for the excitement of cosmopolitan life.

The use of the city neighborhood as a commodity to be exploited for profit represents, however, only one of its purposes in a capitalist economy. Traditionally, it has also provided the conditions for reproducing necessary labor power. Smith and LeFaivre interpret gentrification as a phenomenon representing a definitive replacement of this function by the neighborhood's alternative service as a commodity: "The economic function of the neighborhood has

19. See, in particular, David Harvey, "The Urban Process Under Capitalism: A Framework for Analysis," in Michael Dear and Allen J. Scott, eds., *Urbanization and Urban Planning in Capitalist Society*, London and New York, Methuen, 1981, pp. 91–121. Other works by Harvey include *Social Justice and the City*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973; and *The Urbanization of Capital: Studies in the History and Theory of Capitalist Urbanization*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985.

20. Harvey, "The Urban Process Under Capitalism," p. 108. For another analysis of the contemporary construction boom as a response to the capitalist economic crisis, see Mike Davis, "Urban Renaissance and the Spirit of Postmodernism, *New Left Review*, no. 151 (May/June 1985), pp. 106–116.

21. Smith and LeFaivre, p. 54.

superseded the broader social function."[22] It is possible, however, to interpret gentrification as a means for the reproduction of labor power in a way that does not exclude the neighborhood's commodity function. In New York today, the two uses might signal conflicts within the capitalist class itself between those interests that require the conditions to maintain the labor force—the lower paid and part-time service workers in particular—and those that can profit from their destruction. Seen in this light, the current situation represents a specific historical instance of a more general contradiction between the imperatives of accumulation and reproduction in the late capitalist city. Writing in 1984 about the new commercial art scene that was then unfolding on New York's Lower East Side, Cara Gendel Ryan and I situated gentrification within the shifts taking place in the composition of the late capitalist labor force.[23] Citing heavy losses in manufacturing jobs in New York City, unemployment in the industrial sector due to the automatization of labor power, and the concomitant steady growth in jobs in the financial, business, and service sectors, we reasoned that gentrification was a crucial part of a strategy for restructuring the workforce. Together with the loss of jobs and cuts in basic services, it has helped to impoverish and disperse the traditional, now largely redundant, workforce, and allocated urban resources to fill the needs of the city's white-collar, corporate workers.

The general changes taking place in the nation's labor force are conditioned and modified by a global reorganization of labor which has accelerated since the 1970s. This global restructuring has had profound ramifications for urban spatial organization on a variety of levels. As a system for arranging production on a world scale, the new international division of labor entails the transfer by multinational corporations of their labor-intensive and productive activities to third-world countries and the intense concentration of their corporate headquarters in a few international centers. Allowing for enhanced flexibility and control over vastly extended operations, strategies are formulated, managerial decisions made, and financing administered from the global cities. To qualify as such an international center of business a city must possess, first, a high proportion of headquarters of corporations doing the majority of their business in foreign sales and, second, a centralization of international banks and international corporate-related services: law, accounting, and advertising firms.[24] In the United States, only New York and San Francisco have emerged as such international centers, so that "even the international activities of firms headquartered outside these cities were increasingly linked to financial institu-

22. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
23. Rosalyn Deutsche and Cara Gendel Ryan, "The Fine Art of Gentrification," *October*, no. 31 (Winter 1984), pp. 91–111.
24. R. B. Cohen has devised a "multinational index" for quantifying the status of cities in the United States as international business centers. See his "The New International Division of Labor, Multinational Corporations and Urban Hierarchy," in Dear and Scott, pp. 187–315.

tions and corporate services located within them."[25] But in addition to transforming relationships among international and national cities, the new international division of labor affects the workforce within the corporate center itself. These centers present limited opportunities for blue-collar jobs, further "'marginalizing' the lower class which has traditionally found job mobility extremely difficult."[26]

As an arm of broader governmental policy, urban planning in New York has, since the 1970s, focused its energies on the needs of the city's new economy—its corporate-linked activities and workers—and on the maximization of real-estate profits, engineering the dispersal of that "immobile" population with no place in this economy. Bureaucratic procedures and programs of planned development execute the task. Union Square "revitalization" is just such a program. The coincidence between the pattern of its evolution and the contours of deeper economic trends is clear. The area became the target of City Planning Commission attention in 1976 and the final redevelopment plan was approved in 1984. During this same period, New York lost more than 100,000 blue-collar jobs and gained over twice that many in the finance, insurance, and other business industries. These changes, accelerating since the 1950s, were reflected within the Union Square area itself. In that period, especially between 1970 and 1980, there had been an exodus of light manufacturing companies from the district's lofts, which were subsequently converted to more profitable residential and commercial uses compatible with the city's new economic base. Although it is difficult to furnish accurate figures for Union Square proper, since it comprises portions of four separate census tracts, the neighborhood's middle-class residential population substantially increased; fifty-one percent were employed in the service industries, forty-three percent in wholesale and retail businesses, while other employment sectors showed "less growth."[27] This disparity in employment possibilities illustrates the fact that New York's period of economic prosperity and resurgent business expansion is, more truthfully, an era of intense class polarization. According to a report prepared by the Regional Plan Association and based on 1980 census data, seventeen percent of the New York area's upper-income households accounted for more than forty percent of the area's total income, while forty-two percent—those with incomes under $15,000—accounted for only fourteen percent of that income.[28] (By 1983, those with incomes under $15,000, were, in New York City itself, over forty-six percent of the population.)[29] The report surmised that "the economic outlook for hundreds

25. *Ibid.*, p. 305.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 306.
27. Department of City Planning, Manhattan Office, *Union Square Special Zoning District Proposal*, p. 17.
28. Thomas J. Lueck, "Rich and Poor: Widening Gap Seen for Area," *New York Times*, May 2, 1986, p. B1.
29. "How Many Will Share New York's Prosperity?," *New York Times*, January 20, 1985, p. E5.

of thousands of poorly educated, low-income residents throughout the New York area, stretching from Trenton to New Haven, is growing more bleak."[30]

Only within the overarching framework of this larger urban development can the functions and effects of New York's recent redevelopment programs be assessed with any comprehensiveness. Nevertheless, throughout this period, the City Planning Commission began to codify a restriction of its vision under the misnomer *contextual planning*. Further, this time of extreme class polarization, wrenching restructuring of the economy, and social dislocation of the poor—most evident in the enforced mobility of the displaced homeless—was, to the commission, the interval when the city finally began to be conserved, stabilized, and protected from radical change as well as from the radical impositions of modernist architectural concepts. Advised by the architects, urban designers, planners, and engineers who staff the Department of City Planning, the commission modified its zoning regulations, bureaucratic methods, and physical design orientations in order to "guide" development according to the principles of responsiveness to the needs of distinct city environments. They pursued a design path directed toward the historical preservation of existing circumstances. With relief, one architect and urban planner for the city approvingly wrote, regarding this "preservationist" outlook,

> The urban aesthetic of associational harmony is reasserting itself under the banner of *cultural stability*. The mercurial rise to prominence and power of the urban preservationist movement has helped to fuel this change in direction. Preservation of both our most valued urban artifacts, whether they be the conventionalized row houses of Brooklyn Heights or the sumptuous dissonance of the New York Public Library is an important, if not vital, contribution to our sense of emotional well-being.[31]

This "redevelopment"—the resurgence of tradition and emergence of a severely restricted notion of cultural preservation—helps paper over violent disturbances in the urban social fabric.

From its inception the agenda of Union Square redevelopment was conceived and executed under the aegis of historical preservation, restoration of architectural tradition, and reinforcement of the existing urban context.[32] These

30. Lueck, p. B1.
31. Michael Kwartler, "Zoning as Architect and Urban Designer," *New York Affairs*, vol. 8, no. 4 (1985), p. 118 (emphasis added).
32. This fact can be seen in the role that architecture and urban design are playing in the creation of Battery Park City, one of the largest real estate developments in the country. The project has undergone several permutations since it was first conceived in the early 1960s, but a single one overshadows all the rest in significance. In 1969, the City Planning Commission accepted a plan for the development of Battery Park that called for two-thirds of the new housing units to be subsidized and divided equally between the poor and the middle class. When, however, the project was refashioned in the late 1970s, after the municipal fiscal crisis, it provided subsidies, instead,

concepts dominated the massive ideological campaign accompanying the scheme and the narrower aspects of its decision-making process. The bronze monuments in Union Square Park—refurbished and newly visible—embody with particular efficacy the attempt to preserve traditional architectural appearances in order to deliver the Union Square territory into the hands of major real estate developers and expedite luxury development. In fact the patriotic statues became a useful symbol to the forces of "revitalization" themselves as early as 1976, when the Department of City Planning received from the National Endowment for the Arts a $50,000 "City Options" grant, part of a "New York City Bicentennial Project." The intention of the grant was "to produce designs that would improve city life." After consulting with the community board, elected officials, businessmen, "civic leaders," and other city agencies, the Planning Department published a report entitled *Union Square: Street Revitalization*, the first exhibit in the case history of Union Square redevelopment. This document became the basis for the *Union Square Special Zoning District Proposal*, which was originally released in November 1983, revised in June 1984, and, after passing the city's review procedure, adopted later that year. The final redevelopment plan fulfilled the primary objectives and many of the specific recommendations of *Union Square: Street Revitalization.* When requesting the City Options grant, the Planning Department chose four "historic" neighborhoods for study and design proposals; its application announced that its goal in these neighborhoods was preservation: "Cities contain many centers and communities rich in history and a sense of place. We seek to develop prototypical techniques by which the particular character of these areas can be reinforced so as to assist in their preservation through increased safety, use and enjoyment."[33] Among the strategies developed to "capitalize on existing elements worthy of preservation"[34] was the first proposal for improving the park: "Restore the centerpiece flagpole, a

in the form of tax abatements, for the World Financial Center and plans for luxury apartments requiring incomes greater than $75,000. The fate of this project encapsulates the solution to the fiscal crisis adopted by the city. To Mayor Koch the change was justified by the fundamental necessity that "we continue to be the financial center of the world" (quoted in Martin Gottlieb, "Battery Project Reflects Changing City Priorities," *New York Times*, October 18, 1985, p. C3). Whereas the chronicle of Battery Park City's growth illuminates important changes in the city's economic and political priorities over the past fifteen years, the design mentality governing its creation increasingly conformed during the course of that growth to the preservationist branch of contemporary planning. Speaking about the traditional street furniture reproduced for the public esplanade of the $4.5 billion project, a *New York Times* article noted that it makes the area "seem like a long-established section of New York—a natural and inevitable part of the city rather than a newly designed environment." And one of the architects who worked out the master plan for Battery Park said, "We wanted to make it look as though nothing was done" ("Esplanade Recalls Old New York," *New York Times*, July 3, 1986, p. C3).

33. Victor Marrero, Chairman, Department of City Planning, "Preface," *Union Square: Street Revitalization.*

34. *Union Square: Street Revitalization*, p. 33.

memorial to the 150th anniversary of the United States, which features the Declaration of Independence engraved in bronze."[35]

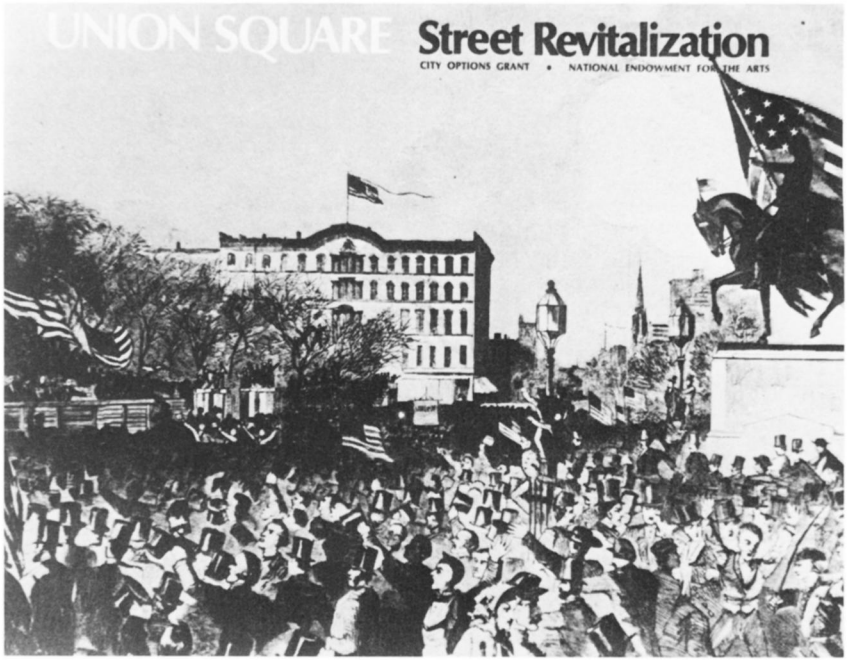
The cover of *Union Square: Street Revitalization* "capitalized" on another Union Square monument and patriotic event. It reproduced an engraving from a nineteenth-century copy of *Harper's Weekly* captioned "The Great Meeting in Union Square, New York, To Support the Government, April 20, 1861." The print depicts a crowd of New Yorkers gathered at the base of the colossal equestrian statue of a flag-waving George Washington, now ceremonially located at the southern entrance to the park, but at that time situated on the small island at the park's eastern perimeter. The illustration evoked a brief era during the Civil War when Union Square became a gathering place for a public believed to be unified by nationalist sentiment. Loyal citizens repeatedly rallied around the Washington statue listening to speeches by Mayor Opdyke and letters of endorsement from the governor, president, and other officials; newspapers recounted the patriotic, unified spirit of these crowds:

> The great war-meeting at Union Square effectually removed the false impression that the greed of commerce had taken possession of the New York community, and that the citizens were willing to secure peace at the sacrifice of principle. . . . The patriotism of the citizens was also indicated by the wrath which that meeting excited at the South. The Richmond *Dispatch* said: "New York will be remembered with special hatred by the South, for all time."[36]

The name of the square, originally referring only to its physical position at the juncture of Broadway and the Bloomingdale Road, now implied national unity and a shared public history, dreams believed for some time to have come true as a result of the war.[37] The placard displaying the word *UNION* in the *Harper's Weekly* print indicates these new connotations.

The survival of this myth helped repress beneath high-minded notions of communal harmony the more disquieting memories of the class conflict that was the fundamental reality of modern urban society and which was also insistently visible in Union Square. The park was the scene of some of America's earliest labor demonstrations, including the New York segment of the first May Day celebration in 1886. This class division would reemerge conspicuously in the 1930s when the square became the conventional New York site for communist rallies and militant demonstrations of the unemployed and homeless. At that time its name was linked with trade-union movements. Albert Halper, a

35. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
36. Lossing, *History of N.Y. City*, in I. N. Phelps Stokes, *The Iconography of Manhattan Island 1498–1909* (1926), New York, Arno Press, 1967, p. 1896.
37. Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order 1877–1920*, New York, Hill and Wang, 1967, pp. 11–12.



Cover of Union Square: Street Revitalization.

"proletarian novelist" of the period, wrote a book entitled *Union Square*, in which he employed the park's heroic monuments as a conceit to underscore the contradictions between idealized representations symbolizing spiritual ideals and reassuring authority and the present-day realities of starvation and police brutalization of demonstrators. In this way, he described Donndorf's mother-and-children fountain on the west side of the square—a position it still occupies—as "a dreamy piece of work" facing Broadway right near the "Free Milk for Babies Fund hut."[38] With similar irony, he juxtaposed the "big history" represented by the great men and deeds memorialized in the park's other statues with the historical class struggle, whose skirmishes were being waged in the square itself.

The original intention of monuments such as these, however, when they were erected in American cities in the late nineteenth century was more congruent with their use by the apparatus of Union Square redevelopment. Neoclassical imitations were meant, as M. Christine Boyer observes, to conceal such social contradictions by uplifting "the individual from the sordidness of reality" through the illusions of order, timelessness, and moral perfection that neoclassicism was supposed to represent.[39] Although they never comprised a planned

38. Albert Halper, *Union Square*, New York, Viking, 1933.
39. M. Christine Boyer, *Dreaming the Rational City: The Myth of American City Planning*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1983, p. 50.

or unified sculptural program, the Union Square monuments exemplify the type of sculpture and its strategic positioning promoted by the nineteenth-century municipal art movement—copies of Parisian copies of Greek and Roman landmarks of art and architectural history. These decontextualized forms, reinvested with new meanings about America's emerging economic imperialism and national pride, were products of the decorative offshoot of the municipal art movement, itself a branch of the attempt in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to produce order and tighten social control in the American city.[40] Inspired by fears of the unplanned chaos of urban industrialization, squalor, and disease in the slums, extensive immigration, and a wave of labor disturbances, the notion of urban planning and design as a vehicle to counteract these threats appeared in nascent form in the ideas of the civic art crusaders. Their activities are, then, only one aspect of an effort, as David Harvey put it, "to persuade all that harmony could be established around the basic institutions of community, a harmony which could function as an antidote to class war."

> The principle entailed a commitment to community improvement and a commitment to those institutions such as the Church and civil government, capable of forging community spirit. From Chalmers through Octavia Hill and Jane Addams, through the urban reformers such as Joseph Chamberlain in Britain, the "moral reformers" in France and the "progressives" in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century, through to model cities programmes and citizen participation, we have a continuous thread of bourgeois response to the problems of civil strife and social unrest.[41]

As part of this network, municipal art advocates aimed to produce a sense of order and communal feeling through spatial organization and decorative beauty. Public open spaces, such as Union Square Park, were targeted as prime locations for forming the desired community, a public realm characterized by cohesive values conjured up through moral influence. "Modern civic art," wrote one of its foremost advocates, "finds in the open space an opportunity to call [the citizens] out-of-doors for other than business purposes, to keep them in fresh air and sunshine, and in their most receptive mood to woo them by sheer force of beauty to that love and that contentment on which are founded individual and civic virtue."[42] In this regard, municipal art specialists in New York consis-

40. See Wiebe, *The Search for Order*; Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America 1820–1920*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1978; Mario Manieri-Elia, "Toward an 'Imperial City': Daniel H. Burnham and the City Beautiful Movement," in Giorgio Ciucci et al., *The American City: From the Civil War to the New Deal*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1979; Christine Boyer, *Dreaming the Rational City*.
41. Harvey, "The Urban Process Under Capitalism," p. 117.
42. Charles Mulford Robinson, *Modern Civic Art or, The City Made Beautiful*, New York and London, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903.

tently lamented that Union Square was a missed opportunity. One of the few public squares provided in the 1811 Commissioner's Map that established the rectilinear grid plan for "upper" Manhattan above Washington Square, Union Square almost failed to materialize. In 1812 it was recommended that plans be dropped since they would require the use of land and buildings with high real estate values. Although the square survived these threats and was finally opened to the public in 1839, greatly enhancing land values in the immediate vicinity, civic art reformers regretted that the park was never properly utilized to create a physically—and therefore, socially—cohesive public space. One critic proposed that it be turned into the civic center of New York;[43] another suggested that a proper and elaborate sculptural program be organized there around the theme and images of liberty secured by the War of Independence. "Could anything influence more forcibly the national pride of our coming generations?"[44] Public statues, embodying social ideals, would, it was hoped, "commemorate in permanent materials the deeds of great citizens, the examples of national heroes, the causes for civic pride, and the incentives to high resolve which are offered by the past."[45] As instruments for the pacification of an unruly populace, the sculptures, as well as street layouts devised by the municipal art movement, "searched not to transform the contradictions between reality and perfection but for the norms that moral perfection must follow."[46] Indeed, when Charles Mulford Robinson, systematizer of municipal art concepts, directed his attention to conditions in the metropolitan slums, he ignored the problem of poverty itself, declaring, "With the housing problem civic art, its attention on the outward aspect of the town, has little further to do."[47]

This resigned abandonment of the most troubling facts of city life and neglect of the motive forces determining the city's social structure could, in the end, only contribute to the persistence of the housing problem. Today, the uses of New York's civic sculptures—and the architectural and urban design system they represent—have *only* to do with the housing problem. This contention is amply supported by examining the fate of the Union Square monuments. The appearance of a nineteenth-century American imitation of a Roman equestrian statue on the cover of a late twentieth-century city-planning proposal for redevelopment during a period of fiscal crisis can demonstrate nothing other than the extreme pliability of the monument's meanings and the mutability of its functions. Nevertheless, the architects of redevelopment (together with the copywriters of real estate advertisements) attempt to bolster the illusions of cultural stability, universal values, and gentility connoted by such architectural forms. By so doing, they fail to realize that their own acts of preservation are

43. J. F. Harder, "The City's Plan," *Municipal Affairs*, 2 (1898), pp. 25–43.
44. Karl Bitter, "Municipal Sculpture," *Municipal Affairs*, 2 (1898), pp. 73–97.
45. Robinson, p. 170.
46. Boyer, p. 50.
47. Robinson, p. 262.

ideologically motivated, determined by particular interests and investments, and present them instead as neutral deeds of cultural rescue.[48] With the words *Union Square: Street Revitalization* parading across it, the nineteenth-century print and the George Washington monument are appropriated to incarnate a false impression of urban redevelopment as restoration. The small but clearly visible and centrally placed "UNION" placard in the engraving seems to promise that the values it connotes—coherence and harmony in the public realm—will adhere to the Union Square created by the redevelopment program. Similarly, the monuments themselves, their dirty images cleaned up, layers of grime and graffiti removed from their surfaces as part of the park renovation, have been enlisted to project an image of redevelopment as an act of benign historical preservation. Suffusing all the official accounts of Union Square's metamorphosis, this aura has become the classic image of gentrification, an image that secures consent to and sells the larger package of redevelopment. In this way, the aesthetic presentation of the physical site of development is indissolubly linked to the profit motives impelling Union Square's "revitalization."

This image of redevelopment can be contested by reconstructing the calculated moves made by the city in creating the new Union Square. The perception of Union Square redevelopment as a beautification procedure was reinforced by the fact that the first visible sign of change in the area came in the form of the park's renovation. Similarly, media reports focused on the park for almost a full year before there was any public indication of more comprehensive activities. This sequence of reported events and appearance of visible signs corresponds to the terminological inaccuracies surrounding urban restructuring. Misidentifying the new residents of "new" neighborhoods as a lost aristocracy, for example, the term *gentrification* participates in the prevalent nostalgia for genteel and aristocratic ways of life that has returned in the Reagan state, a nostalgia fully exploited and perpetuated by prestigious cultural institutions. The term also yields erroneous perceptions of inner-city change as the rehabilitation of decaying buildings. Redevelopment, on the contrary, clearly involves

48. Kurt W. Forster has examined current architectural attitudes toward history and preservation using Alois Riegl's 1903 essay on monuments undertaken to direct the Austrian government's policy in protecting the country's historic monuments. Riegl's efforts to determine the nature of what he called the unintentional monument—the landmark of art or architectural history—led him to the understanding that relative and changing values determine the course and management of programs of preservation. Much of Riegl's essay is devoted to an attempt to identify and categorize these conflicting values. The act of establishing unintentional monuments as landmarks entails extracting art and architecture from its original context and assigning it new roles in new circumstances. Relating Riegl's insights to current architectural attitudes, Forster has designated the unintentional monument as "the homeless of history, entrusted to public and private guardians." He points out the fact that Riegl's study fundamentally undermines the notion that architectural monuments possess stable meanings. See Kurt W. Forster, "Monument/Memory and the Mortality of Architecture," and Alois Reigl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origins," *Oppositions*, no. 25 (Fall 1982), pp. 2–19 and 21–51 respectively.

rebuilding, usually after buildings have been razed and sites cleared. In these aggressive acts, the power of the state and corporate capital is more obvious.

In Union Square's redevelopment the illusion that the park restoration preceded redevelopment plans produced an equally distorted picture. The actual sequence and coordination of events differed considerably from surface appearances. Documents generated during the process indicate the extent to which planning in the area served as part of the comprehensive policy adopted by the city government following the fiscal crisis. The initial survey of Union Square, financed by the City Options grant, was issued during the period when austerity measures had been imposed on the city's residents. *Union Square: Street Revitalization* was informed by a full acceptance of the popular explanations offered by politicians and financiers about the origins of the crisis—overborrowing, corruption, greedy workers and welfare recipients—and of the "solutions" justified by these explanations—cuts in basic services and deferred wage increases. Thus the report asserted, in a practical, businesslike tone, that "public financing of new [housing] projects must be ruled out" in the development of Union Square's housing "frontier."[49] Instead, private development of housing, as well as of office and retail space, was viewed as a panacea, and the authors of the report hoped that efforts could be made to "enlist the real-estate industry in effort [sic] to market new or rehabilitated housing units."[50] Framed in objective language, the document adopted superficial, received notions about city policy. It was party, though, to the execution of a more brutal solution to a more basic problem—the incompatibility between the city's new economy and its workforce. That solution lay in "attempting to get rid of the poor and take away the better situated housing stock to reallocate to the workers needed by corporate New York."[51] The same year that *Union Square: Street Revitalization* was published, Roger Starr, who had been the city's Housing and Development Administrator during the fiscal crisis, advocated the "resettlement" of those residents no longer needed in the corporate-oriented economy. Referring to deteriorated neighborhoods that would, he hoped, be completely vacated by such "relocation," Starr asserted that "the role of the city planner is not to originate the trend of abandonment but to observe and use it so that public investment will be hoarded for those areas where it will sustain life."[52] Adopting Starr's "empirical" method, the Planning Department complied. It was hardly, then, a question of the city's enlisting the real estate industry in order to fulfill the needs of residents.

49. *Union Square: Street Revitalization*, p. 30.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
51. William K. Tabb, "The New York City Fiscal Crisis," in William K. Tabb and Larry Sawers, eds., *Marxism and the Metropolis: New Perspectives in Urban Political Economy*, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 336.
52. Roger Starr, "Making New York Smaller," *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, November 14, 1976, p. 105.

Rather, real estate and other capital interests enlisted the city government to supply the conditions to guarantee their profits and reduce their risks.

The extent of the city's intervention into the housing market on behalf of corporate profits emerges in its clearest outlines in the 1983 proposal for redevelopment. It acknowledged that "Manhattan-wide market changes in the manufacturing, commercial, and residential sectors"[53] had effected changes in the population and land-uses of its wider study area: the territory bounded by 12th Street to the south, 20th Street to the north, Third Avenue to the east and Fifth Avenue to the west. It discovered, however, that 14th Street and Union Square proper had benefited little from the prevailing trends in the area. That pivotal center needed infusions of government support. "The Square continues to have a poor image,"[54] the report maintained, affirming that a principal barrier to the desired development had been the "social problems" plaguing Union Square Park, particularly its use by a "socially undesirable population (e.g., drug peddlars)."[55] By this time, however, the park had been "fenced off for reconstruction,"[56] a project that had been publicly announced in 1982.

The obstacle that the park's image represented had already been anticipated in the 1976 study, but the full force of the city's class-biased response to the problem and of its rationale for current urban policy is demonstrated by a difference between the 1976 and the 1983 documents. In 1976, the surveyors deduced that "high income households . . . are more likely to be attracted to the Upper East Side or other established prestigious neighborhoods"[57] than to the shabby area around Union Square. While, admittedly, it contained no suggestions for providing low-income housing, the report made some pretense of formulating strategies for furnishing moderate-cost housing. The later proposal totally disregarded both. By that time, the implications of the original report had become clearer and hardened into policy. At the moment when services to the poor were cut and the assumption made that no thoughts of public financing of housing could even be entertained, the government, acting through the Parks Commission and Planning Department, was, in fact, directing its funds toward subsidizing the rich.

The $3.6 million restoration of the park constitutes such a public subsidy. Both Union Square plans indicate the degree to which the triumph of redevelopment depended on cleaning up the park's image and transforming it into an external housing amenity. An indication of the correctness of this prediction is the fact that by the time the restoration was planned and publicized, and, significantly, during the preparation of the final Planning Department proposal,

53. *Union Square Special Zoning District Proposal*, p. 2.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
55. *Ibid.*
56. *Ibid.*
57. *Union Square: Street Revitalization*, p. 30.

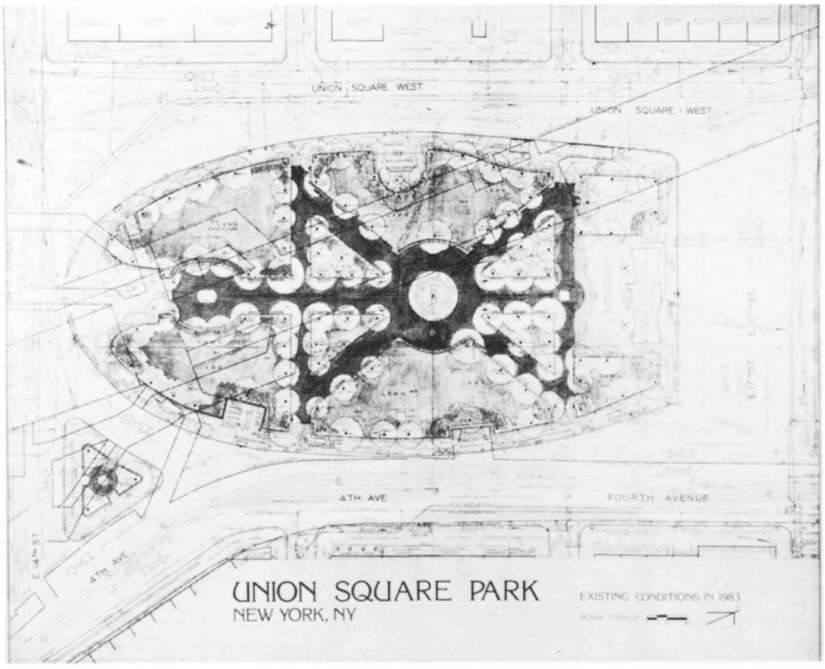
the destiny of the most important development parcel in the area—the entire city block occupied by the abandoned S. Klein department stores—was being decided. In July 1983, a two-year option to buy the property had been acquired by William Zeckendorf, Jr., New York's most active real estate developer, particularly in the speculation in poor neighborhood lots that become catalysts for gentrification. The Planning Department map labeled the property the "S. Klein/Zeckendorf Site." Zeckendorf intended to develop it for luxury commercial and residential use, but his plans were contingent on the fulfillment of various city plans. One such plan was already under way, however, as the hindrance that the park's image represented to the gentrifying classes was in the process of being removed. The restoration of the park, then, can only be viewed as that crucial stage of gentrification in which the poor are dislodged in order to make a neighborhood comfortable for high-income groups.

Typically, this stage of displacement is legitimized under the auspices of crime prevention and the restoration of order; the park was being reclaimed from thieves and drug dealers. This goal, primary in determining the urban design principles that governed the park's renovation, reveals the actual limits of the ideological program of historical preservation and the attempt to create a false congruence between the past and the present. While existing nineteenth-century structures—the park's monuments—were refurbished and sham ones—lights and kiosks—constructed, the park was also thoroughly bulldozed in preparation for the first phase of its "restoration" to its "original" condition. Phase I completely reorganized the park's layout and spatial patterns in order to permit full surveillance of its occupants. This was accomplished through precepts that have been dubbed by one New York planner, "defensible space."[58] The author of this appellation considered as "defensible" that space which allowed "people" to control their own environments. In actuality it describes the application of the disciplinary mechanism that Foucault termed "panopticism" to state-controlled urban surveillance. By producing "defensible space," architecture and urban design become agents of the discreet and omnipresent disciplinary power that is "exercised through its invisibility; at the same time it imposes on those whom it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility."[59] Based in notions of natural human territorial instincts, the principles of "defensible space" assign architecture the role of policing urban space:

> Architectural design can make evident by the physical layout that an area is the shared extension of the private realms of a group of individuals. For one group to be able to set the norms of behavior and

58. Oscar Newman, *Defensible Space: Crime Prevention through Urban Design*, New York, Collier, 1972.

59. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, New York, Vintage, 1977, p. 187. M. Christine Boyer analyzes urban planning as a disciplinary technology in *Dreaming the Rational City*.

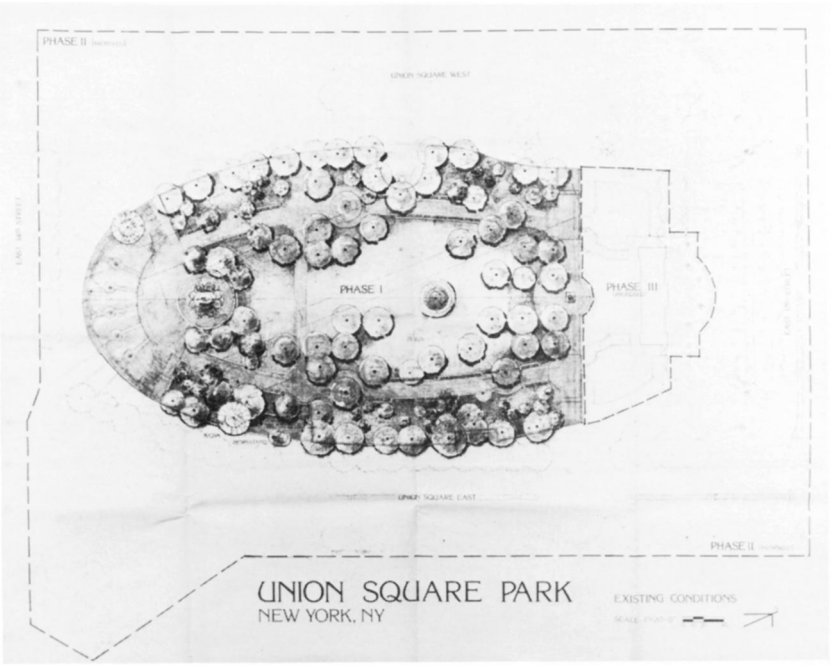


Union Square Park, Architectural drawings. Existing conditions (left); proposed modifications (right).

> the nature of activity possible within a particular place, it is necessary that it have clear, unquestionable control over what can occur there. Design can make it possible for both inhabitant and stranger to perceive that an area is under the undisputed influence of a particular group, that they dictate the activity taking place within it, and who its users are to be. . . . "Defensible space" is a surrogate term for the range of mechanisms—real and symbolic barriers, strongly defined areas of influence, and improved opportunities for surveillance—that combine to bring an environment under the control of its residents.[60]

That the private corporate and real estate interests represented by the new Zeckendorf Towers, its future residents, and other wealthy beneficiaries of Union Square redevelopment should exercise "unquestionable control" over the public space of Union Square Park was assured by a few decisive changes in the park's physical appearance and circulation system. An open expanse of lawn with two walkways cutting directly across the park replaced the original radial pattern of six paths converging on a circle in the park's center; a pathway encircling the entire periphery of the park provided the major circulation route; trees were removed and thinned out; removal of walls and trees created an open plaza at the park's southern entrance. According to the Police Department

60. Newman, pp. 2-3.



in St. Louis, this is the precise configuration of a safe park, because it permits "natural" surveillance by a long periphery that can be easily patrolled.[61] A statement by the design office of the New York City Parks Commission applauded the success of Phase I:

> With design emphasis on improved accessibility, visibility and security to encourage its optimal use, the park has once again recaptured its importance as a high quality open space amenity for this community. Since Phase I began, the area around the park has changed quite dramatically. It is felt that the park redesign has contributed greatly to the revitalization of the Union Square area, and regained the parkland so needed in this urban environment.[62]

The manipulation of New York's high level of street crime has proved instrumental in securing public consent to redevelopment, to the wholesale restructuring of urban space, and to a Haussmannian logic of social control through the kind of spatial organization exemplified in Union Square Park's sophisticated new security system. On April 19, 1984, at the inaugural ceremony for the restoration, the existing landscape had already been demolished. Mayor Koch incited an assembled crowd: "First the thugs took over, then the

61. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
62. "Union Square Park Phase I," statement by the design department of the City Parks Commission.

muggers took over, then the drug people took over, and now we are driving them out."[63] To present the developers' takeover as crime prevention, however, the social and economic causes of crime are repudiated as thoroughly as the real causes and aims of redevelopment itself are obscured. Koch, for example, fully endorses the current resurgence of biologistic notions of the origins of "predatory street crime." Reviewing *Crime and Human Nature*, a recent book by sociobiologists James Q. Wilson and Richard J. Herrnstein, in the pages of the neoconservative *Policy Review*, he reiterates the authors' explanations of such crime in terms of biological and genetic differences that produce unreformable delinquents.[64] This piece of self-serving journalism is used to justify New York's methods of crime control and its continuing attack on the poor: higher levels of indictments and convictions of felons, an increased police force, the imposition of criminal law for the purposes of "moral education,"[65] and, by implication, redevelopment projects that, employing architecture as a disciplinary mechanism, transform city neighborhoods into wealthy enclaves in order to facilitate the movement of "undesirables" and "undesirable market activities"[66] out of the immediate vicinity.

These tactics of urban restructuring are not entirely new; neither is the erasure of the less appealing signs of its manufacture or the denial of its social consequences. Over a hundred years ago, Friedrich Engels described these procedures for transforming the city to meet the needs of capital. At that time disease, even more effectively than crime, sanctioned the violent dislocation of the poor and the exacerbation of their problems that the process entails. Engels referred to this process by the word *Haussmann*, employing the name of Napoleon III's architect for the reconstruction of Paris. His description is still relevant:

> By "Haussmann" I mean the practice, which has now become general, of making breaches in the working-class quarters of our big cities, particularly in those which are centrally situated, irrespective of whether this practice is occasioned by considerations of public health and beautification or by the demand for big centrally located business premises or by traffic requirements, such as the laying down of railways, streets, etc. No matter how different the reasons may be, the result is everywhere the same: the most scandalous

63. Quoted in Deirdre Carmody, "New Day Is Celebrated for Union Square Park," *New York Times*, April 20, 1984, p. B3.
64. Edward I. Koch, "The Mugger and His Genes," *Policy Review*, no. 35 (Winter 1986), pp. 87–89. For alternative reviews by scientists condemning the authors' methods and conclusions, see Leon J. Kamin, "Books: *Crime and Human Nature*," *Scientific American*, vol. 254, no. 2 (February 1986), pp. 22–27; and Steven Rose, "Stalking the Criminal Chromosome," *The Nation*, vol. 242, no. 20 (May 24, 1986), pp. 732–736.
65. Koch, p. 89.
66. *Union Square Special Zoning District Proposal*, p. 23.

> alleys and lanes disappear to the accompaniment of lavish self-glorification by the bourgeoisie on account of this tremendous success, but—they appear again at once somewhere else, and often in the immediate neighborhood.[67]

About the housing question, Engels continued, "The breeding places of disease, the infamous holes and cellars in which the capitalist mode of production confines our workers night after night, are not abolished; they are merely *shifted elsewhere*!"[68]

That bourgeois solutions only perpetuate the problem is indicated by the growing numbers of homeless who no longer live inside Union Square Park but on the streets and sidewalks surrounding it. Furthermore, crime has, in the words of the *New York Times*, "moved into Stuyvesant Square," only a few blocks away, having "migrated from nearby areas that have been the focus of greater police surveillance."[69] Parks Commissioner Henry J. Stern concurs: "It's clear some of the problems of Union Square Park, and maybe Washington Square Park, have migrated to Stuyvesant Square."[70] By subsuming all of New York's social ills under the category of crime, the rationale for "revitalization" reproduces and heightens the real problems of poverty, homelessness, and unemployment. Simultaneously, it attempts to eradicate their visible manifestations. Aiding the appropriation of Union Square for the real-estate industry and corporate capital, architecture has colluded in this endeavor. Embodied in the restored park and its monuments, architectural efforts to preserve traditional appearances merely repress the proof of rupture.

The Homeless Projection: Counter-Image of Redevelopment

"Behind the disciplinary mechanisms," Foucault wrote, "can be read the haunting memory of 'contagions,' of the plague, of rebellions, crimes, vagabondage, desertions, people who appear and disappear, live and die in disorder."[71] Similar repressions inhabit the controlled urban space that Wodiczko selected as the site of *The Homeless Projection*. The work stimulates an aggressive public reading of this Haussmannian arena of beautified surfaces, suppressed contradictions, relocated and unsolved problems. If the forms of Wodiczko's proposal at 49th Parallel can be viewed in relation to the presentational modes of contemporary city planning, the project's realization would critically scrutinize—*re-present*—the city environments that such planning produces. For this purpose, Union Square provides a fully equipped, well-arranged, and strategi-

67. Friedrich Engels, *The Housing Question*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1979, p. 71.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
69. Keith Schneider, "As Night Falls, Crime Moves into Stuyvesant Square," *New York Times*, October 12, 1985, p. 29.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
71. Foucault, p. 198.

cally located theater—a "fake architectural real estate theater," as Wodiczko calls it—of urban events and social processes. The present "theater" was brought into existence by a series of well-calculated strategies in an urban "revitalization" campaign. Conducted in the name of history—the Zeckendorf Towers are advertised as "The Latest Chapter in the History of Union Square"—that campaign simultaneously attempts to consign its own brutal history to oblivion.

Utilizing the Union Square site, still possessed of memories of recent changes and the forced marginalization of people, *The Homeless Projection* seeks to wrest the memories of alterations and social conditions from the very spaces and objects whose surface images deny them. In order to activate these memories—to liberate suppressed problems and foster an awareness of architecture's social origins and effects—Wodiczko takes advantage of the spectacles created by the park's restoration and the benefits its physical appearance offers. The numerous lamps—reproductions of nineteenth-century Parisian streetlights—and the platform on which the park is elevated—a legacy of

Zeckendorf Towers Sales Office.

Models of proposed condominiums.

alterations to the 14th Street subway station in the 1930s—furnish him with a public stage accessible to a ready-made, collective city audience. The setting contains tangible evidence of social reorganization in the park's spatial reorganization—redirected pathways, newly sodded lawns, thinned-out foliage. Since Wodiczko's work inserts the restoration of the park into the context of more extensive architectural activities, the signs of urban change that ring the park's boundaries crucially complete his site, although most were not in existence when his proposal was made. Scaffolding, cranes, building foundations, demolished structures, fenced-off construction areas, emptied buildings all verify the extensive restructuring of the city and juxtapose signs of destruction with the signs of preservation in the park itself. The huge, luxury Zeckendorf building rising across the street—"The Shape of Things to Come" as its billboard announces—identifies the principal beneficiaries of this activity.

In addition to lighting, stage, audience, and sets, Union Square Park provides Wodiczko, most importantly, with actors for his own theatrical presentation in the form of its figurative monuments. By temporarily appropriating these statues, he stimulates an awareness of the role they are already playing in the gentrification of New York. Evoking memories different from those the monuments were originally meant to conjure up and associations contrary to the ones their official restorers hope to awaken today, *The Homeless Projection* probes the less exalted purposes that underly reverential acts of faithful preservation. Sculptures once placed in "open spaces" in the hope of pacifying city residents are appropriated by Wodiczko to mobilize the public. In opposition to the incursion of private interests, the space is restored as a site of public debate and criticism. Using the monuments in their contemporary incarnation—mediums for repressing the changed conditions of urban life—Wodiczko makes them his own vehicles for illuminating those conditions. In this way he assimilates to the built environment of the city itself the techniques and purposes of Brechtian theater, about which Walter Benjamin wrote, "To put it succinctly: instead of identifying with the characters, the audience should be educated to be astonished at the circumstances under which they function."[72]

Despite energetic exertions by the mass media, the city, real estate advertisements, and segments of the cultural community to present the bronze statues as representatives of eternal and universal values—aesthetic or symbolic—the monuments have been recast in compromising situations and positions. Haphazardly produced, the sculptural program of Union Square is commonly considered to symbolize concepts of liberty and individual freedom. This assessment originated in the nineteenth century when two of the sculptures fortuitously shared a common subject: heroes of the revolution. The George Washington statue was erected in 1856 and, although it adopts the codes of

72. Walter Benjamin, "What Is Epic Theater," in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, New York, Schocken, 1969, p. 150.

Roman imperial form, it is generally characterized as a symbol of the freedom secured by the War of Independence. Lafayette, on the park's eastern edge, by Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, sculptor of the Statue of Liberty, was presented to New York by its French residents in 1873 to commemorate French-American relations. Inscriptions on its base commemorate two instances of solidarity: mutual inspiration and support during the American Revolution and the sympathy offered by the United States to France during the difficult period of the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune. The other two nineteenth-century statues—Abraham Lincoln, erected three years after the death of the Civil War president and author of the Emancipation Proclamation, and the fountain located on the western side of the park, a "heroic bronze group," of a mother and children—do not strictly conform to the Revolutionary War theme but are easily incorporated into the patriarchal motif and atmosphere of eclectic classicism. On July 4, 1926, however, Tammany Hall bolstered the thematic coherence by donating a huge flagpole base—staffless and flagless today—which was placed at the center of the park. It complemented the theme of freedom, containing the full text of the Declaration of Independence, a relief depicting an arduous struggle for liberation, a quotation from Thomas Jefferson encircling the base, and a plaque stating, "This monument setting forth in enduring bronze the full text of the immortal charter of American liberty was erected in commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence."

Originally, the park's six wide pathways converged on this monument; as a result of "revitalization," the hyperbolic tribute to individual freedom stands alone in the middle of the large expanse of lawn created to render the public accessible to surveillance and to prevent any illicit activities taking place at the park's center—the most distant point from the policing on its perimeter. The restored structure's new presentation suggests that in the act of commemorating individual freedom the "enduring bronze" simultaneously represents the unfettering of those financial forces in whose interests the renovation was undertaken. The circumstances of that presentation demonstrate the monument's lack of symbolic stability and the extreme mutability of architecture's function. Unequivocal evidence of the nature of its current metamorphosis—what Wodiczko terms architecture's "real-estate change"—is provided by the presentation of the park's monuments in the Zeckendorf Towers sales office which opened in the spring of 1986. Here, framed Cibachrome photographs of the statues hang next to pictures representing Union Square's history and photographs of mounted park police on a wall behind a model of the new condominiums, whose prices approach half a million dollars. The fact that a substantial number of the apartments were sold in the first week of business corroborates the testimony of a 1984 *Times* editorial which, urging support for Union Square redevelopment, seconded the City Planning Commission's belief that "the location of the public

square and its handsome lines and *great statuary* will attract investment from builders."[73]

Nonetheless, the dogma persists that monumental architecture can "survive" overt changes in presentation and the contingencies of history with its dignity and power intact. Successful monuments, this discourse asserts, transcend the "trivialities" of commercialism. Such assertions "logically" extend the argument that successful monuments also transcend the "trivialities" of social conditions—poverty and homelessness, for example. Thus, expressing faith in the enduring power of architecture, Goldberger, who, as we have seen, shielded the Union Square flagpole base from the "degrading" actions of a homeless bum, recently rhapsodized the "essential dignity" of the Statue of Liberty. This defense was not occasioned by a desire to fortify the monument's purported meaning against the present virulent wave of anti-immigrant sentiment and attempts to enact repressive legislation against Hispanics and Asians in the United States. Rather, he applauded the Statue's ability to fulfill a monument's fundamental role in the urban environment: "The city that is too large and too busy to stop for anyone seems, through this statue, to stop for everyone. Suddenly its intense activity becomes background, and the statue itself becomes foreground: we cannot ask of a monument that it do anything more."[74] Unwittingly, Goldberger summarizes with remarkable clarity not the real workings of monuments but the ideological operations of his own idealist aesthetic and urban principles. Stretching the tenets of aesthetic autonomy far enough to embrace the city that surrounds the monument, he fetishizes the city environment, too, at the level of its physical appearances. In the article from which the passage is cited, he describes the Statue of Liberty's compositional relationship, by virtue of its permanent position in New York Harbor, to a city that is, through that relationship, made more physically coherent. Utterly neutralizing and drastically restricting the notion of context, Goldberger indeed employs architecture to push into the background the city's "intense activity"—which is, in fact, its social processes, its intense real estate activity, for one. This blurring of the broader urban context renders it less disturbing; in this originates its usefulness as a weapon of power, for the aestheticization of the city has the most far-reaching implications for the urban environment.

Defining architecture as an institutionalized social system rather than as a collection of permanent aesthetic or narrowly utilitarian objects, and addressing urban space as a terrain of social processes, *The Homeless Projection*, on the contrary, appropriates the Union Square monuments not to depreciate the significance of either the city's activities or the architectural objects but to foreground and illuminate their relationships. Wodiczko plans to project onto the surfaces

73. "Speaking Up for Union Square," *New York Times*, August 16, 1984, p. A22.
74. Paul Goldberger, "The Statue of Liberty: Transcending the Trivial," *New York Times*, July 17, 1986, p. C18.

of the four figurative monuments in Union Square Park—representatives of architecture's attempt to "preserve its traditional and sentimental appearances"[75]—images of the attributes of New York's homeless population—the group most noticeably dispossessed by the results of that attempt. Magnified to the scale of the buildings—although not heroicizing or representing the poor themselves—the images would remain, as they did in the gallery installation, unchanging for the duration of the artist's performance. The photographed images consist of the familiar objects and costumes of the homeless, their means of travel—occasioned by their enforced mobility—and the gestures they adopt to secure an income on the streets. Far from transcending the "trivial" facts of city life, Wodiczko's monuments are forced to acknowledge the social facts they produce. Trivial objects form the content of his images, and while such monumentalized commonplace items as a shopping cart, wheelchair, or can of Windex seem to clash absurdly with the heroic iconography of the neoclassical monuments, their placement is also carefully calibrated and seamlessly joined to the formal language of the sculpture. This appearance of continuity, achieved in some cases by superimposing a photograph of a hand over the statue's bronze surface so that it merges imperceptibly with the figure's anatomy, only renders the presence of the images more astonishing and the statues more uncanny in their mixture of strangeness and familiarity. Disengaging spectators from their usual disregard of the monuments as well as from their seduction by the restoration program's presentation—both of which shield the monuments from their surrounding social conditions—*The Homeless Projection* allows viewers to perceive those objects *only* in relation to those conditions. This primary reading is ensured by the subject of the images as well as by Wodiczko's montage techniques, the relations he establishes between image and architecture. The effect of his formal accommodation of an unchanging image to the appropriated surface of an existing architectural structure is twofold. The viewer's attention is actively focused on the structure—its physical stability as well as its mythical symbolic stability: the images of inevitability and power that it normally projects. Secondly, however, the projection uses the structure's forms to disrupt its seemingly unshakable homogeneity and its authoritative permanence. In a sense, the montage operation symbolically *moves* the object so that its actual mutability can be recognized. At the same time, Wodiczko's method of projection destabilizes the monuments in a more fundamental way. *The Homeless Projection*'s images, depicting the current social outcome of relations of private property, are integrated into symbolic forms commemorating political emancipation and the freedom of the individual. The bourgeois concept of the "rights of man" memorialized in the Union Square statues is, however, as Marx observed, that of the "rights of the *member of civil society*, i.e., of egoistic man, of

75. Wodiczko, "The Homeless Projection."

man separated from other men and from the community."[76] Its practical effect is to ensure the freedom of private property. The monuments, then, can only connote communal harmony and idealized political authority if this sphere of self-interest is constituted, through repression, as a separate domain. By forcing the effects of this private sphere to reappear within the public monuments themselves, *The Homeless Projection* revolutionizes the statues, which, in their altered form, "acknowledge" the contradictions they embody.

Thus, Wodiczko manipulates the statues' own language to challenge the apparent stability of its signification, transforming the classical gestures, poses, and attitudes of the sculpted figures into those used by people begging on the streets. George Washington's left forearm, for example, presses down on a can of Windex and holds a rag, so that the imperial gesture of his right arm is transformed into a signal used by the unemployed to stop cars, clean windshields, and obtain a street donation. The proud but humble bearing of Lincoln becomes, through the addition of a crutch and beggar's cup, the posture of a homeless man standing on a street corner; the graceful stance and friendly extended arm of Lafayette takes on the added identity of a vagrant asking for alms; and the mother sheltering her children becomes a homeless family appealing for help. In addition, Wodiczko projects a continuously fading and re-

76. Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question," in *Karl Marx: Early Writings*, trans. Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton, New York, Vintage, 1975, p. 229.

Krzysztof Wodiczko. Proposed Projection for Abraham Lincoln Monument, *showing facade of emptied building.*

emerging image onto the front of the Lincoln monument: an emptied building whose surface is partially renovated.

This "style" of building—visibly empty at a time of a manifest need for housing—is a familiar New York spectacle. Its surface, like the surface of the monuments, has been partially restored as part of a presentation to encourage neighborhood speculation. By infiltrating the previously unbroken surfaces of the Union Square monuments—the images of gentrification—with images of this building and of the mechanisms by which the homeless survive, *The Homeless Projection* concretizes, albeit in a temporary antimonumental form, the most serious contradiction that New York architecture embodies: that between capital's need to exploit space for profit and the social needs of the city's residents. Mapping these images onto the surfaces of monuments in a public square, Wodiczko forces architecture to reveal this repressed contradiction and, thereby, its identity with the activities and actors in New York's real estate market. By virtue of its attention to these contradictions, Wodiczko's intervention in the space of Union Square "revitalization" addresses the single issue ignored by the city throughout the long and complicated course of redevelopment: the question of displacement. During *The Homeless Projection*, and afterward in the viewers' memories, Union Square's monuments, diverted from their prescribed civic functions, commemorate this urban event—mass eviction and development-caused homelessness.

Real Estate Aesthetics

The indifference to and concealment of the plight, even the existence, of the displaced is entirely predictable. To foster development, the city encourages a suppression of data on displacement and homelessness. Whereas *The Homeless Projection* placed this issue at the center of the urban context, official architecture and urban disciplines, sanctioned by aesthetic considerations, actively colluded in its cover-up in Union Square. To appreciate the extent of this collusion fully, it is necessary to understand the crucial role played by "contextual aesthetics" at a key phase of "revitalization."

Government subsidies to real-estate developers are not confined to direct financial outlays or to tax abatements and exemptions. Benefits also accrue from the city's administration of institutional allowances for building, especially through its bureaucratic procedures and the power of zoning regulations. The development of Union Square hinged on a specialized proceeding through which the Planning Commission permits zoning constraints to be waived or altered. The vehicle for this alteration is called the "special zoning district," defined in the Planning Department Dictionary as a section of the city designated for special treatment "in recognition of the area's unique character or quality."[77]

77. "Glossary: Selected planning terms applicable to New York City real estate development," *New York Affairs*, vol. 8, no. 4 (1985), p. 15.

Permitting changes in the use, density, or design of buildings in the specified area, the creation of a special zoning district is construed to represent a flexible response to "perceived needs."[78] Its flexibility is frequently underscored by comparing it to the rigidity of the 1961 Zoning Resolution, whose rules the special zoning district, since the 1970s, has been used to modify or circumvent. Thus, the 1961 zoning code is characterized as based on the principles of European modernist architecture of the 1920s and therefore "utopian," "anti-tradition," "anti-urban," and "unresponsive to context." Only within the terms of this simplistic "critique of modernism" and by portraying urban problems as aesthetic problems can the current manipulations for the purposes of redevelopment be presented as responsive to the environment or to the city's needs. These distortions can be gleaned from the following assessment of the problems, which led to the frequent utilization of the special zoning district:

> Less than ten years after the adoption of the 1961 Zoning Resolution, disaffection with the results of the utopian vision set in. . . . The prevailing view was that the new zoning was incompatible with the best efforts of architects and urban designers to produce high-quality architecture and good city form. This belief, while most often heard from architects and urban designers was also expressed with great regularity by the developers, bankers, and community representatives, and other professional, lay, and governmental constituencies. They posited that zoning was legislating esthetics, and that a single vision was too restrictive, leaving little room for genuine architectural design quality. The result is a cookie-cutter building that is ugly and sterile, set in an ill-considered and barely usable public open space that is often neglected, or used by the seedier elements of New York's street-corner society. These same buildings appear to be insensitive to the existing buildings around them, creating dissonance in urban form.[79]

The special zoning district, then, is perceived as another means to conserve tradition and restore coherence and stability.

The Zeckendorf Company's plans in Union Square directly depended on the creation of a special district for sites fronting directly on the park. After purchasing the option to build on the Klein site, Zeckendorf announced that the realization of his project was contingent on the rezoning already being proposed by the Planning Department. The change put forward would increase the allowable density for buildings around the square, providing additional space bonuses for the Klein property in return for the developer's renovation of the 14th Street subway station. The rationale for the special zoning district was

78. Kwartler, p. 115.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

contained in the 1983 summary of the Planning Department's two-year study undertaken to "guide" redevelopment so that it would reflect the "existing urbanistic context."[80] In recognition of the historic architectural uniqueness of Union Square and to foster "compatibility between any new construction and the existing significant architectural buildings,"[81] the proposal suggested not only increased density allowances for new buildings to match those of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century structures, but also created special "bulk distribution regulations": no plazas or groundfloor setbacks were allowed—the park made plazas unnecessary—and the facades of all buildings on the square were required to be built to the property line and to rise straight up for a minimum of eighty-five feet. Light and air would be ensured, according to the proposal, by a system of mandated setbacks and a restriction on any towers within 100 feet of the square. Zeckendorf's architects had already designed his mixed-use building to conform to these "contextualist" principles. Four seventeen-story apartment towers would rise from a seven-story base occupying the entire building site. They would begin at a point furthest from the park and terminate in cupolas to "echo" the historic tower of the Con Edison building behind them. According to Zeckendorf, the building plan "addresses the concerns we've heard from the community about not overshadowing the park and fitting in with the rest of the structures there."[82] The key point in the zoning rationale and in Zeckendorf's compliance was that the new buildings would not merely harmonize with the existing environment but recapture its history as an elegant neighborhood. A *Times* editorial stated:

> To understand fully what the rescue of Union Square would mean, the observer has to imagine how it once resembled London's handsome Belgravia and Mayfair residential districts. By insisting on the eight-story rise directly from the sidewalk, the planners hope that modern apartment house builders will produce a contemporary echo of the walled-in space that gives the small squares of London and America's older cities their pleasing sense of order and scale.[83]

Before their ultimate approval (with slight modification) in January 1985, both the rezoning proposal and the design of the Zeckendorf Towers had to pass through a public review process. Over a period of seven months, each project was debated at public hearings, first before the community boards, then before the City Planning Commission, and finally before the Board of Estimate. The city and the developer submitted obligatory and highly technical Environmental Impact Statements in which they were required to show "the potential en-

80. *Union Square Special Zoning District Proposal*, p. 1.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
82. Quoted in Lee A. Daniels, "A Plan to Revitalize Union Square," *New York Times*, July 1, 1984, p. 6R.
83. "Speaking Up for Union Square," p. A22.

vironmental effects of a proposed action on noise level, air and water quality and traffic circulation."[84]

The supreme measure of the city's alignment with corporate interests in the area was the total neglect in any of their reports of the socioeconomic impact of the redevelopment plan on the area's low-income population. Displacement of these residents, the most obvious effect of the literal demolition of housing and the more extensive effect of "revitalization"—raised property values—was virtually unremarked in the hundreds of pages of documents generated throughout the planning and review processes. The unquantifiable numbers of homeless who "find shelter out of the public view"[85] in city parks were driven from the newly visible Union Square, their numbers augmented by the homelessness caused by the larger redevelopment plan. Also unmentioned was the single-room-occupancy hotel directly on the Klein site whose demolition was required by the Zeckendorf project and whose address—1 Irving Place—is now the address of the luxury towers. Similarly, the Planning Department surveyors who, in the proposal, applauded the increasingly residential character of the neighborhood due to middle-class loft conversions and who examined the quality of existing residential buildings, failed to survey the thirty-seven single-room-occupancy hotels and rooming houses in the special district, buildings containing 6,000 housing units for residents on fixed or limited incomes.[86] The relationship between current levels of homelessness and SRO displacement in New York City is well known, however:

> This shrinkage of housing options is nowhere more visible than in the long-time staple housing source for low-income single persons—the single-room-occupancy (SRO) hotel. Across the country the number of units in SROs is declining. In some areas they are being converted to luxury condominiums, while in others they are abandoned by owners unable to afford taxes and maintenance costs. In New York City, SROs have disappeared at an alarming rate. Because of this—and other forces at work—it is estimated that as many as 36,000 of the city's most vulnerable residents, the low-income elderly, now sleep in the streets.[87]

84. "Glossary," *New York Affairs*, p. 13.
85. New York State Department of Social Services, *Homelessness in New York State: A Report to the Governor and the Legislature*, October 1984, p. 3.
86. See the statement of Nancy E. Biberman, Director, Eastside Legal Services Project, MFY Legal Services, Inc., to the City Planning Commission, October 17, 1984.
87. Ellen Baxter and Kim Hopper, *Private Lives/Public Spaces: Homeless Adults on the Streets of New York*, New York, Community Services Society, Institute for Social Welfare Research, 1981, pp. 8–9, cited in Michael H. Schill and Richard P. Nathan, *Revitalizing America's Cities*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1983, p. 170, n. 120. Schill and Nathan's book provides a rationale for governmental policy of encouraging redevelopment. It concludes that resulting displacement does not justify stopping this process. The authors' credibility is compromised by the fact that their methodology included "an effort . . . to avoid neighborhoods that contained high concentra-

Despite the fact that the number of lower-priced SRO units in New York declined more than sixty percent between 1975 and 1981,[88] the burden of surveying the area and determining the consequences of Union Square redevelopment on the occupants of these dwellings fell to the housing advocates who argued against the development plans at the Board of Estimate hearing. The impact of either primary displacement—the direct consequence of the demolition of the SRO on the Zeckendorf site—or the more significant secondary displacement—that caused by higher rents, enhanced property values, real estate speculation, legal warehousing, and, temporarily, illegal conversion of neighboring rooming houses—were not included in the Environmental Impact Statements.[89]

Throughout, this concealment was facilitated by the notion of aesthetic contextualism and the cultural sentiments informing all three phases of Union Square "revitalization": the park restoration, the creation of the special zoning district, and the approval of the Zeckendorf project. Thus, the architects and designers who minutely calculated the physical effects of rezoning and of the towers on the shadows and air in Union Square or the aesthetic effects on the cornice lines of the square's buildings exemplify that "real idol of late capitalism," "the 'specialist' who is blind to any overall context."[90] The ranks of the city's technocrats today also include artists, critics, and curators who are asked to fulfill the task, as recently defined in a Mobil advertisement, of encouraging, through art, residential and commercial real-estate projects and "revitalizing" urban neighborhoods. One example of compliance with these corporate demands by sectors of the art establishment is that type of public art placed in "revitalized" spaces and applauded as socially responsible because it contributes, functionally or aesthetically, to the "pleasures" of the urban environment. Such work is based on the art-world equivalent of official urban planners' constricted version of contextualism. Knowing the real social consequences of this "contextualism" underscores the urgency of creating alternative art practices such as *The Homeless Projection*, whose reorientation of vision disturbs the tightly drawn borders secured by New York's contextual zoning.

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tions of SROs or transient accommodations" and that "the survey of outmovers does not describe the rate of displacement among the most transient households or examine the problems faced by the homeless."

88. *Homelessness in New York State*, p. 33.

89. Nancy Biberman, a lawyer from MFY Legal Services now doing private housing consulting, represented the tenants of 1 Irving Place and was able to get a good settlement for these victims of direct displacement. Since Zeckendorf was eager to begin construction before December 1985 in order to be eligible for 421-a tax abatements, and since legal problems could have held him up past the deadlines, he was pressured into offering these tenants the option of living in the Zeckendorf Towers themselves at the price of the tenants' old rents. For the victims of secondary displacement Zeckendorf assumed little responsibility. He was required only to purchase and renovate forty-eight units of SRO housing.

90. Ernest Mandel, *Late Capitalism*, London, Verso, 1975, p. 509.