

Out of This World: The Amusement Landscape and Our Escape to Elsewhere

a practicum

by **Christina R. Harris**

presented to the
Department of Landscape Architecture
Faculty of Architecture
University of Manitoba

in completion of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Landscape Architecture

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**OUT OF THIS WORLD: THE AMUSEMENT LANDSCAPE AND OUR ESCAPE TO
ELSEWHERE**

BY

CHRISTINA R. HARRIS

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of
Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree**

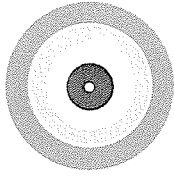
of

MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

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Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits and
Are melted into air, into thin air:
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea all which it inherit shall dissolve
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

William Shakespeare,
The Tempest IV

Elsewhere is always paradise. To escape from our everyday surroundings is to experience the feeling of entering 'another world'. The desire to encounter the duality of existence, ever-present in the history of humanity, sends us in search of a world different from our own, rich with possibilities. In this sense, the association between gardens and paradise is not only the perpetuation of a universal myth...it is also an affirmation that gardens, or parks, are a favoured setting for rewarding encounters between the world of desires and the world of experience.

Isabelle Auricoste,
Leisure Parks in Europe: Entertainment and Escapism, 483

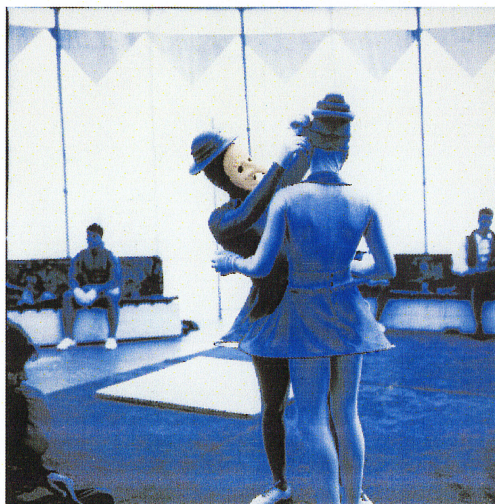
Cover Photo: *Untitled (PNE II)*
Roy Kiyooka, 1978

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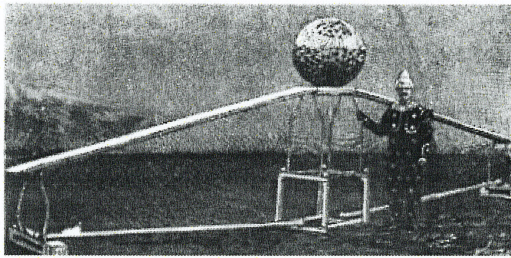
Many thanks to my committee for their patience and perseverance. To Ted for your unending encouragement, to Alan for your insight and painstaking editing and to Alison for your friendship and enthusiasm in all endeavors.

A million thanks to my friends Wendy, Gillian, Tricia and Barb for years of listening and support. Thanks to Tim for the push when I needed it most.

Thanks most of all to Rae and to Grant without whom this would not have been possible. I love you.



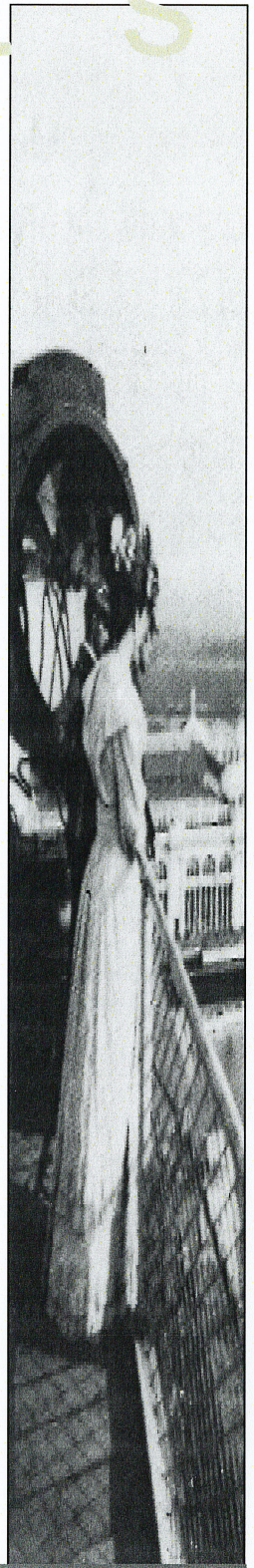
t o A l e x a n d e r



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Look around you, in this extraordinary Country, and contemplate the various Shows and Diversions of the People, and then say, whether their temper or mind at various periods of our History, may not be collected from them?

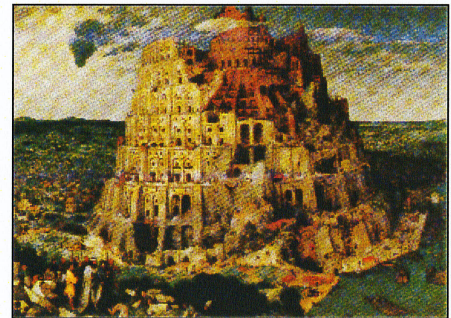
Prefatory page, signed "G.S. Eckham, 1840," in British Library scrapbook, *Exhibitions of Mechanical and Other Works of Ingenuity*

introduction

The concept of paradise is the oldest utopian vision, either as a heavenly realm or an earthly Eden. Nearly all cultures share the image of paradise as a garden or as eternal spring, where the mortal becomes immortal and the human spirit dwells in harmony with the divine. The concept of paradise is intricately tied to the garden, since the word 'paradise' is from the Old Persian word *pairdaeza* meaning 'park' or 'enclosure'.

The Persian garden was a walled oasis divided by channels of water, a cosmological idea echoed in the biblical Eden. The Persian garden was symmetrically patterned by fruit trees, flowers and shrubs, and designed for philosophical contemplation and enjoyment. The paradise garden embodies eternity in many religions. According to the Koran, the blessed will be brought to the Lord in "gardens of delight". The eternal abode of the Hindu gods is a land of flowers, perfumes and paths of gold. The gardens within monasteries in mediaeval Europe were similar to those of Persia - an enclosed retreat from the world. Paintings of Mary and Jesus from this time period were often set in enclosed gardens.

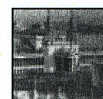
In the gardens of paradise, Western religions find exultation; from them, Eastern religions hope for



The Building of the Tower of Babel
Pieter Bruegel the Elder
oil on wood, 1563

park, n. 1. an area of land, usually in a natural state, for the enjoyment of the public, having facilities for rest and recreation.

gar*den, n. 2. a piece of ground or other space commonly with ornamental plants, trees, etc., used as a park or other public recreation area. 3. a fertile and delightful spot or region.



the fair

Amusement parks existed in germinal form in both church-sponsored fairs and trade fairs held throughout Europe from the earliest written records. Where and when the first fair was held is not known, however, evidence points to the existence of fairs as early as 500 BCE. The book of Ezekiel in the bible says "Tarshish was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of the kinds of riches with silver, iron, tin and lead, they traded in thy fairs." Ezekiel's account of the destruction of Tyre also describes the town as an important market and fair centre. Fairs were commercial in nature from the beginning. Merchants from distant countries would gather to trade their wares and make new business connections.



Religious activity was also associated with the fair. The latin word *feria* means holy day, and it would appear to be the root of the word 'fair'. Each feria was a day when large numbers of people would assemble for worship in temples in Athens, Rome and Mecca. Fields adjacent to these temples were staked out for traders and religious statues were placed at the peripheries to protect the participants. During the early Christian era, the church took an active part in sponsoring fairs on feast days and as a result, fairs came to be a source of revenue for the church.

This fair tradition which blended religion and commerce



enlightenment. Nature, in Confucian thought, personifies wisdom and virtue. In Zen philosophy, Buddha's presence is assumed in the simplest stone, and according to followers of the Amida Buddhist sect, the path to paradise, the Pure Land, lies through the garden (Time-Life:6).

The term 'park' has recently been used to describe a place of amusement. The qualities of this place include the sense of enclosure, an area defined by limits and separate from the surrounding world. It is also connected with the idea of a garden, and to an image of paradise in the collective imagination. The amusement park, the theme park, and the world's fair share all of these qualities; they have provided a vehicle for escapism from this world, and have long been a favoured setting for encounters between desires and experience.

The question I would like to explore in this practicum is simply: how has the amusement landscape enabled us to experience 'another world'? Fairs, festivals, gardens of delight, and amusement parks have for several centuries been the sites which have enabled us to encounter 'elsewhere'. The means by which this transportation is achieved have varied, but it has consistently involved a blend of landscape, technology, ideology, and imagination.

In terms of geographical and psychological reality, the



The Garden of Delights
Hieronymus Bosch
c.1500 (central panel)



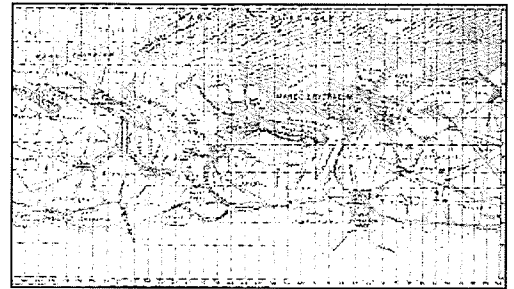
concepts of 'here' and 'elsewhere' represent two territories between which there is a certain amount of tension. Various words are used to describe the pleasure arising from this tension, yet they only describe actions and not the satisfaction of this desire. 'Diversion' is the action of turning away, departing from the norm, just as 'distraction' is to pull in the opposite direction. These terms refer to the duality of two opposing directions. They are also metaphors which connect the ideas of 'elsewhere' and 'here'.

When 'here' and 'elsewhere' are taken together, the possibility of entertainment is introduced. Amusement lies not in the fact that a space is devoted to that function, but because there is another territory where other, more serious, matters predominate: "it is not a question of fixed areas being assigned a particular character, but of the bond between that territory and another, between a familiar country and another world" (Auricoste:483). As Jane Jacobs has said, the real world and the storied world are not mutually exclusive; they intertwine and are constitutive of each other (15).

The amusement park has been the site of exploration for various manifestations of 'here' and 'elsewhere'. This includes class structures, social values, and geographical location, as well as utopian visions of alternate realities. The amusement park garden may be regarded as a stand-in for utopia, as the paradise garden was before it. The amusement park, because it is derived historically from the garden, holds the unique

U*to*pi*a *n.* 1. an imaginary island described in Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) as enjoying the utmost perfection in law, politics, etc. 2. a place or state of ideal perfection 3. any visionary system of political or social perfection. 4. an area of the northern hemisphere of Mars.

Webster's Dictionary
1983



map of Mars according to Schiaparelli, 1877-86



position of being the site of intersection between a technologically derived and a landscape-based utopia.

These parks have presented an alternate and parallel reality through the use of narrative, whether this is one of subversive delights, projections of the future, or fantastical worlds. The term 'narrative' refers to both the story, or what is told, and the means of telling, implying both product and process, form and formation. Potteiger and Purinton feel that the postmodern landscape is characterized by a "proliferation of masks, staged events, simulations, scripted places, invented histories, and escape to other realities" (25).

As this practicum will show, landscapes of amusement have forever exhibited these qualities, teaching us lessons about ourselves and who we hope to become.



the fair

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This fair tradition which blended religion and commerce



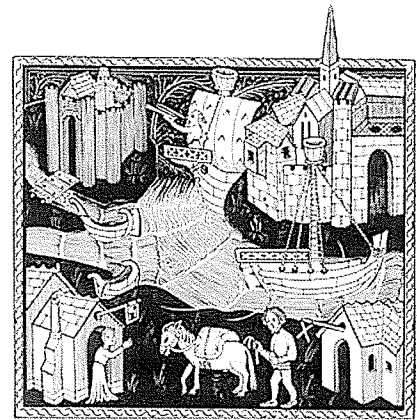
continued over time and moved into western Europe during the Middle Ages. These fairs gave their participants a chance to suspend their routine, exchange goods and information, and be entertained. Some were connected to harvest or pre-lenten carnival celebrations, while others were mainly markets and occurred more frequently (*Fairs and Expos website*).

bartholomew fair

Bartholomew Fair in London was one of these annual events which tended to achieve popularity by provoking the spectators to exhibit uninhibited and bawdy behaviour. It started sometime after 1133 when a monk named Rahere held a 10-day fair to raise revenue for a hospital following Bartholomew's Day on August 24.

Primarily a trade event, this fair saw exhibitors coming from all over England to exhibit their wares. For the first four centuries Bartholomew Fair was in operation, it maintained a commercial emphasis; however, during the Elizabethan period it changed from being a trade event to a centre of amusement. Ben Jonson's play *Bartholomew Fair*, first performed in 1614, records jugglers, puppet shows, genetic "enormities" and other freaks, fat women, dancers, actors, and so forth.

By the 18th century, most booths charged a penny for admission and erected many lamps to lure fairgoers to their displays. Recognized early as a provocative form of allurements, lighting became a staple attraction that has remained an integral part of fairground attractions to this day.



Drawing based on a English manuscript illustration of ca.1400
<http://www.trytel.com/~tristan/towns/townint7.html>



A 1729 poem by George Alexander Stevens depicts not only the chaos and pleasures of the fair but also the criminal stigma that contributed to its eventual demise a century later:

*There was drolls, hornpipe-dancing, and showing of posture,
With frying black puddings and opening of Oysters;
With salt-boxes solos, and gallery folks squalling,
The tap-house guests roaring and mouth-pieces bawling;
Pimps, paunbrokers, strollers, fat landladies, sailors,
Bawds, bailies, jilts, jockeys, thieves, tumblers, and tailors;
Here's Punch's whole play of the Gunpowder Plot,
Wild beasts all alive, and peas-pudding all hot;
Fine sausages fried, and the Black on the wire;
The whole Court of France, and nice pig at the fire:
Here's the up-and-downs, Who'll take a seat in the chair?
Though there's more up-and -downs than at Bartelmy Fair.*

(Adams:2)

In the middle of the 19th century, 700 years after its beginning, Bartholomew Fair was overrun by unruly mobs. Officials decided to shorten its length, raise rents for booths, and ban many of the more raucous games and shows in an attempt to eliminate the criminal population. Unfortunately the mobs prevailed, and the last fair was held in 1855. As Adams states: "the tendency of amusement areas to lure unsavory and criminal populations, established early, would persist as a formative factor in the development of the amusement industry"(3).



The Fair on St George's Day, etching attributed to Jan or Lucas van Duetecum, after Pieter Brugel the Elder, Dutch, second half of the sixteenth century

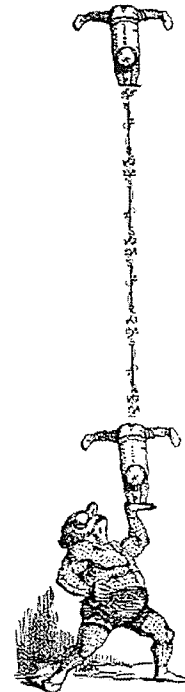


carnival

Mikhail Bakhtin, a Russian philosopher and literary theorist (1895–1975), examined popular humour and folk culture in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, particularly the world of the carnival. To Bakhtin, the carnival, with its emphasis on the earthy and grotesque, signified the symbolic destruction of authority and official culture and the assertion of popular renewal. "In the world of carnival the awareness of the people's immortality is combined with the realization that established authority and truth are relative" (Bakhtin: 10). To him, the festival or carnival was a special, creative lifeform, with its own unique space and time.

Carnival in its widest, most general sense embraced ritual spectacles such as fairs, popular feasts and wakes, processions and competitions, comic shows, mummery, and dancing, open-air amusement with costumes and masks, giants, dwarfs, monsters, trained animals and so forth. To Stallybrass and White, the main importance of Bakhtin's work, *Rabelais and his World*, is its broad development of the 'carnavalesque' into a potent, populist, critical inversion of all official words and hierarchies (7).

Carnival, for Bakhtin, is both a populist utopian vision of the world seen from below and a festive critique, through the inversion of hierarchy, of the 'high' culture:



As opposed to the official feast, one might say that carnival celebrates temporary liberation from the prevailing truth of the established order; it marks the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalized and complete.

(109)

order and chaos

The festival represents the inversion, even temporarily, of the two realms of 'here' and 'elsewhere': of high and low culture, and of order and chaos. Stallybrass and White contend that "cultural categories of high and low, social and aesthetic,... also those of the physical body and geographical space, are never entirely separable" and that "the high/low opposition in each of our four symbolic domains — psychic forms, the human body, geographical space, and the social order — is a fundamental basis to mechanisms of ordering and sense-making in European cultures" (7).

Critics differ as to whether true transgression against the upper classes took place at the carnival or if it was a release licensed by them, but according to Babcock the carnival modeled a different, pleasurable and communal ideal 'of the people', even if that ideal could not immediately be acted upon (4). Partly because he associated it with the utopian, the 'no-place' of



collective hopes and desires, Bakhtin simplified the paradoxical, contradictory space of the market and the fair as a place-beyond-place, a pure outside (Stallybrass and White:28).

But the fair, like the marketplace, is neither pure nor outside. The fair is at the crossroads, situated at the intersection of economic and cultural forces, goods and travellers, commodities and commerce. The separation of 'here' and 'elsewhere' is often difficult to determine. According to Stallybrass and White, it became increasingly difficult, with the development of economic theory, to separate work and pleasure / leisure as they regularly occurred at the fair.

As these boundaries were constructed, they were haunted by the play between the oppositions which had been formulated....the fair reflected for the bourgeoisie its own uneasy oscillation between high and low, business and pleasure, and consequently retained a potent imaginative charge in the culture of those who increasingly defined themselves as above its gaudy pleasures (28).



Southwark Fair, etching and engraving by William Hogarth, Jan. 1733/4 (reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum)

*The Magistrates decree that 'Fair is foul',
And put a stop to profitable sport;
They exorcise the Lion's shilling howl,
And cut the Irish Giant's income short...
Take warning then, ye fair, from this fair's fall.
One Act — the Vagrant Act — hath been its ruin.
Listen, oh listen, to Law's Serious Call,*





For fun and pleasure lead but to undoing.

(Elegy on the Death of Bow Fair,
after its suppression in 1822)

Part of the transgressive excitement of the fair for the subordinate classes was not its 'otherness' to official discourse, but rather the disruption of provincial habits and local tradition by the introduction of a certain cosmopolitanism, arousing desires and excitements for exotic and strange commodities. The fair 'turned the world inside out' in its mercantilist aspect just as much, if not more, than it 'turned the world upside down' in its popular rituals.

the exotic

Contrary to Bakhtin, Stallybrass and White feel that the fair, far from being the privileged site of popular symbolic opposition to hierarchies, was in fact a kind of educative spectacle, a relay for the diffusion of the cosmopolitan values of the 'centre' (particularly the capital and the new urban centres of production) throughout the provinces and the lower orders. Thus, for example, 18th-century industrial innovators consciously used the fair circuits to stimulate new tastes and fashions among the general populace. Like the commodities which were sold at it, the fair was structured by the juxtaposition of another combination of 'here' and 'elsewhere': the domestic and the bizarre; the local and the exotic (39).

At Sturbridge Fair, for instance, as Charles Caracioli



noted, there were "Coffee-houses, Taverns, Eating Houses, Music Shops, Buildings for the exhibition of Dolls, Puppet Shows, Legerdemain, Mounnebanks, Wild Beasts, Monsters, Giants, Rope Dancers, et cetera." An Essex doctor commented on the fair at Prittlewell in 1826: "The fair is a very decent one. An exhibition on our right of a Giant, Giantess, an Albiness, a native of Baffins Bay and a Dwarf — very respectable. We had a learned Pig and Punch on our left and in front some Theatrical Exhibition. All in very good order" (Stallybrass and White:39).

'Here' and 'elsewhere' also refer to the combination of cultures which could be found at the English fairs. From the 16th century onwards, the fair's 'monsters' (Siamese twins, a calf with a pig's head) were increasingly supplemented by displays of exotic wonders of the colonized world. A midget from the West Indies was shown at the May Fair in the early 1700s, and at the Highworth Fair in the 1870s, among the exhibitions of beasts, birds, waxworks, model machinery and cotton spinning, 'a great Zulu and several negroes performed the war dance' (Ibid:40). In such acts as these, the 'Other' is reduced to a frightening or comic spectacle set against the 'normality' of the spectator.

Throughout the last several centuries, the festival or carnival had always been a loose amalgam of procession, feasting, competition, games, and spectacle, combining diverse elements from a large



repertoire and varying from place to place. During a long and uneven process of suppression (carnivals were often banned, only to re-emerge in a slightly different form), there was a tendency for the carnival to be marginalized both in terms of social class and geographical location.

The emergent bourgeoisie disavowed the fair and drove it out of well-to-do areas. In England, for instance, the carnival moved to the coast, and became associated with health spas, tourism, and the fairground. To Stallybrass and White, disgust always bears the imprint of desire. These low domains, apparently expelled as 'Other', return as the object of nostalgia, longing and fascination. The forest, the fair, the theatre, the slum, the circus, the seaside-resort, the 'savage': all these, placed at the outer limit of civil life, become symbolic contents of bourgeois desire (191).

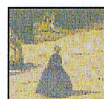


the city's edge

pleasure gardens

Amusement parks and theme parks of today are derived not only from European festivals and fairs, but also pleasure gardens of the 17th century. Parallels may be drawn concerning commercial aspects of the displays, the physical entertainments such as the rides, as well as how the sites were situated in relation to the rest of the urban fabric.

In the 17th century a fiscal cordon was imposed around Paris, which served to impose a tax on merchandise entering the city's gates. Immediately, bars and inns were set up outside the walls where goods such as wine and food could be obtained tax-free and, after being consumed, could be brought back into the city 'fraudulently'. These inns offered, along with their wine, a fleeting and precious escape to the world outside of the city. Soon long lines of trees were planted along the edges of fields, providing visual structure to the city dwellers' country walks. These new landscapes symbolized a new town outside of the town, and marked a confrontation of territories.

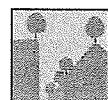


city's edge

Soon, private gardens on the outskirts of the city began to combine commerce and park, inviting members of the public to indulge in novel forms of behaviour and social interaction. The original nature of these pleasuregrounds was a collection of open gardens where one could escape life in the city. Since they were owned by landowners who enjoyed unlimited licence, these gardens were in opposition to the strictly controlled, rationalized urban space of their day.

These gardens also had some of the same physical characteristics as modern-day amusement parks, designed to draw customers, win their attention, and keep them engaged in their surroundings. The space of the gardens was enclosed and hemmed in by small lots; therefore, access was limited to a few easily controlled entrances. Variety and novelty were the rule in the design of the attractions, and an irregular plan encouraged surprise in the viewer (Auricoste: 486).

The peak in popularity of these gardens coincides with the Industrial Revolution in England. It is likely that the desire to preserve an idyllic, natural setting amid the smoke and pollution of the factory environment was a motivating factor for creating and patronizing these gardens. Pleasure gardens did not only contain natural features, but also the most contemporary technological displays. Common features to most of the gardens were intricate landscaping, menageries, elaborate and fanciful



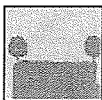
structures, extensive illumination, bands, acrobats, freaks, theatrical spectacles, balloon ascensions, and fireworks displays. These pleasure gardens had preserved many traditional fairground entertainments when fairs themselves had come under pressure, but they also tended to generate anxiety because shady areas on the grounds provided opportunities for indiscriminate mixing and questionable behaviour by patrons (Walden: 254).

During the 17th and 18th centuries, there was a huge increase in the number of pleasure gardens, including Vauxhall and Ranelagh in London, and the Prater in Vienna.

vauxhall gardens

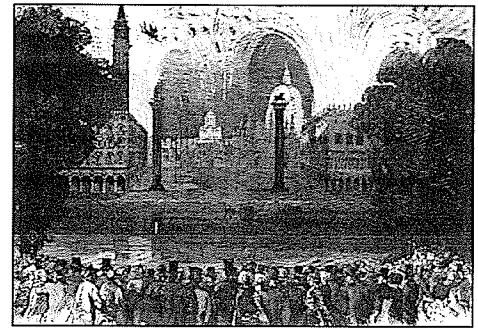
First called New Spring Gardens, Vauxhall was established in 1661 and covered 12 acres in Kensington Lane near Vauxhall Bridge. It was popular from the reign of Charles II almost to the end of the 19th century. Originally, Vauxhall was simply a well-landscaped promenade ground, with walks, arbours, hedges, an orchard; an English adaptation of French public gardens of the time. The attractions included a chance to commune with nature or to be accosted by the masked ladies of dubious repute who frequented the gardens.

Many contemporary observers described it in Edenic terms because of its walks and arbours, roses, cherries, and nightingales. In a 1741 poem, Farmer Colin



rhapsodizes that "No paradise is sweeter,/ Not that they Eden call". Many well-known literary figures also immortalized Vauxhall, including Jonathan Swift, Horace Walpole, Samuel Johnson, Charles Dickens, and James Boswell.

When Jonathan Tyers obtained the lease for Vauxhall in 1728, the gardens began to display features that not only became characteristic of these urban parks but also survive as central elements of present-day amusement parks. Tyers recognized that competition was demanding more than a beautiful garden, so he staged elaborate entertainments, built an exotic central structure for theatrical and musical presentations, and added thousands of lamps. Vauxhall became a premiere venue for contemporary, patriotic British art and architecture as well as a central meeting point for a diverse clientele of tradespeople, gentry, and aristocracy.



Picture model of Venice at Vauxhall Gardens
(*Illustrated London News*, 12 June, 1847)

Vauxhall's architecture was a medley of styles — Gothic, classical, and Chinese — and its fountains and cascades exemplified the contemporary application of hydraulic principles to artistic spectacle. Its layout was conservative in light of the current fashion for a 'natural' landscape, since it retained, in general, the formalism of the 17th-century French garden, though it included groves and serpentine paths.

Vauxhall's famous Grand Walk was a stately avenue of elms 900 feet long and 30 feet wide. Parallel to it, the South Walk was spanned by three triumphal arches,



which were a part of a realistic painting of the Ruins of Palmyra. On Gala nights, this painting was replaced with one depicting a Gothic Temple, with an artificial fountain at its centre.

Traversing these walks was an avenue called the Grand Cross Walk, which ran through the whole Garden at right angles. The approximately 125 feet between the Grand Walk and the South Walk was an area known as the Grove. In the Grove, temples and pavilions were built as well as a colonnade for use during bad weather.

spectacle

In addition to these buildings, there was the Rotunda, a theatre capable of holding 2000 people, where ballets and light theatrical turns were frequently given, and horsemanship feats, rope dancing, and dioramas were exhibited. Another dazzling draw at the Gardens was the famed Cascade, which could only be viewed each evening at 9:00 for 15 minutes. In the first show, a lit landscape scene portrayed a miller's house and waterfall, complete with a froth of water at the bottom which drove the miller's wheel. The illusion of water flowing over it was made of strips of tin and concealed lamps. In later shows, an old woman sat spinning at the foot of what looked like London Bridge, a coach passed over it to the town, and a fierce bull followed, driving an ass before him.



In some areas of the Gardens, trompe l'oeil paintings were hung at the end of paths. There were also transparent pictures made with translucent paints on materials like calico, linen, or oiled paper and lit from behind like stained glass. These 'illuminations' were a favourite form of 18th-century public art. Vauxhall also had a picture gallery: each of the 50 supper boxes surrounding the central quadrangle contained a painting eight feet wide. Vauxhall also featured large pictures or panoramas, such as an 80-foot-high scene of the Bay of Naples, Fingal's Cave, ruins of an Italian abbey, the Houses of Parliament, and Venice.

Although Vauxhall was patronized by aristocrats, it was not exclusive, and the upper classes found it amusing to mingle with the merchant and working classes. Current scholarship contends that Vauxhall succeeded in retailing and "democratizing" the landscape garden experience formerly available only to a select few.

Throughout its history, critics claimed that Vauxhall was becoming a centre of vice and low morality. The park's appeal, however, lay partly in the atmosphere of controlled risk, and the casual and unpredictable encounters made available. Later, amusement parks would play on this dichotomy of decorum and vice, always associating themselves with a darker, dangerous side (Harris, 20).

Even though an outing to the gardens was relatively costly, by the late 18th century Vauxhall was plagued by drunks, thieves, and young hooligans who instigated

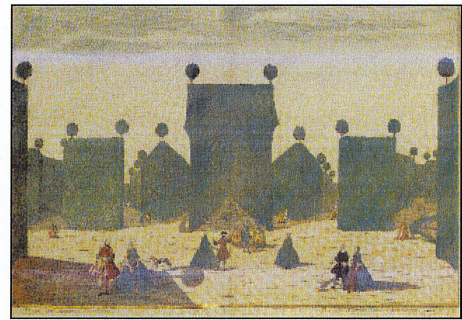


fight, broke lamps, and terrorized young ladies throughout the grounds.

After Vauxhall passed from the Tyers family in 1821, it went into a gradual decline. Despite huge galas, Vauxhall suffered from the lower monetary resources of its clientele, changes in ownership, and competition. By the mid-1830s, Vauxhall opened during the day to stay alive financially, but from the late 1840s on, the press greeted each new season with complaints about the intensifying vulgarity of the attractions and clientele, as well as the increases in charges for admission. In 1859, Vauxhall closed with a final, sentimental fireworks display entitled "Farewell for Ever" and the grounds were sold off for building lots (Altick:6).

ranelagh gardens

Vauxhall Gardens' chief rival was Ranelagh, open from 1741 until 1803. It was not as distinguished for its scenic effects, but it did feature an enormous rotunda which was an amphitheatre with balconies. This rotunda, built by William Jones, architect to the East India Company, was 555 feet in circumference, with an entrance flanked by four Doric columns and an exterior arcade circling the building. The interior contained a circle of 52 boxes, each of which could accommodate six to eight people sampling refreshments of tea, coffee, and buttered bread. Above the boxes was a gallery with a like number of cubicles.



Villa Arconati-Visconti
(now Crivelli Sormani Verri)
at Castellazzo, Lombardy:
Color engraving by M. dal Re
from *Delizie della villa di Castellazzo*, 1743.



In the centre, a construction of elaborate pillars and arches supported the building and served as a fireplace, allowing patronage of the rotunda in cooler weather. Crystal chandeliers lit the entire painted and gilded interior, and a painted rainbow encircled the ceiling (Adams: 96).

spectacle

Ranelagh's fame was based on its entertainments, including elaborate masquerades and evening concerts. On 29 June, 1764, an eight-year-old Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart performed several of his own compositions on the harpsichord and organ. George Frederic Handel composed music for the fireworks.

Late in the 18th century, Ranelagh held such ornate spectacles as "Mt. Etna", which was a special structure from which smoke poured, a crater threw flames, and lava rolled down until a final violent eruption caused an immense explosion. Despite such attractions, by the beginning of the 19th century, the exotic buildings, the elegant tea, and the social promenade had lost their appeal, and Ranelagh closed in 1803.

the vienna prater

The Prater consists of a vast expanse of woods and entertainment areas of over 2000 acres in Vienna. Joseph II opened his former hunting grounds as a park for the Viennese people in 1766 and it remains open to this day. He had it carefully landscaped, including the



View of Mon Plaisir in the garden of Elvaston Castle, Derbyshire.
From E. Adveno Brooke,
The Gardens of England, London, 1857.

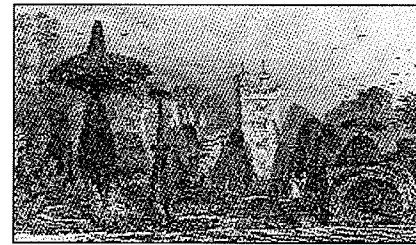


transplanting of fully grown trees, as Disney did two centuries later, so that visitors could immediately enjoy the shade and foliage. Soon after the park opened, the king allowed the erection of booths and tents for entertainment and refreshment in an area that became known as the Wurstelprater (the "Sausage Prater"). Early rides included hand-driven carousels, large swings with decorated chairs, and small up-and-downs, which would later develop into the Ferris wheel.

Many of the concession booths originally awarded to individuals remained in the control of the same families nearly to the present day. Besides food, there were also rides, puppet and marionette shows, and theatrical presentations. Beginning in the late 18th century, fireworks extravaganzas became a notable feature of the Prater, featuring displays of pictorial fantasy structured on large wooden frames with accompanying rockets.

technology

The role of the Prater in introducing the railroad in Austria demonstrates how an amusement area can adjust and acclimatize the public to new technologies. When Franz von Gerstner built the first railroad in Austria in 1823, he faced a populace that had little faith in such an invention and scoffed at its potential for practical utility. But when he shrewdly placed his experimental railroad in and near the Prater, the citizens, viewing it as another thrilling attraction, found it



Yew trees clipped into a variety of shapes.
Levens Hall, Cumbria.
From P. Boitard, *Traite de la Composition et de l'Ornement des Jardins*, 4th ed. Paris 1834.



an exhilarating way to travel around the park. Although families at first disembarked from it gasping and astonished by the speed, the metal monster quickly lost its aura of danger and became a familiar vehicle of fun from which passengers emerged feeling like explorers and innovators.

There is a 200-foot-high Ferris wheel, modeled after the 1893 Chicago original and erected in the Prater by W.B. Basset in 1896 as a monument to progress. Each of the 36 cars of the Riesenrad, resembling cable cars, holds from 15 to 20 people. It has survived through the years, despite severe damage from fire and bombs during World War II and constant structural decay (Altick: 8).

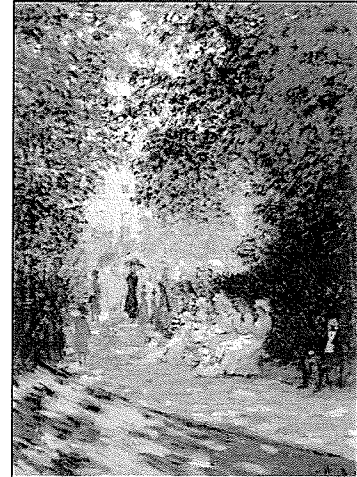
narrative

Justin Baker compares these pleasure gardens to present-day theme and amusement parks, saying that for every one of their features there is a Disney parallel: the Gothic ruin and the grotto are the ancestors of the fairy-tale castle and the ghost train; the cascade and serpentine lake are now replaced by the Log-Flume and the Pirates of the Caribbean at EuroDisney (1992:50).

The rides we know today first evolved in private landscape gardens. The first permanent rollercoaster was built into the undulating artificial hillsides of Tsarske Seloe, Catherine the Great's huge informal park at St. Petersburg. Here, gondolas ran along cast-iron rails between gilded balustrades, descending from a domed baroque "station" on a hilltop.



Near Disneyland Paris, at Monceau, the Duc de Chartres built a 12-hectare amusement park between 1773 and 1778. It had, among other amusements, a chinoiserie carousel that was worked by a treadmill, a Roman ruin, and an Egyptian pyramid, a Dutch windmill, and other Chinese- and Mediaeval-inspired architecture. In his words, "at Monceau...we have tried to do exactly as a critic has accused us of — to unite in a single garden every era and every place. It is a fantasy pure and simple, an attempt to form an extraordinary garden for sheer enjoyment" (Baker:50). It was bought by the city of Paris in 1860 and is enjoyed to this day as a public park.



Le Parc Monceau
by Claude Monet, 1878.

The intention of these gardens was to create a complete and unified fantasy world, separated by park walls and belts of planting from the real world outside. There is a direct continuation from the 17th century onward of themes and strategies for amusement place-making. Contemporary self-contained 'elsewheres' are recreated in the same way as they always have been, "it is only the gods that have changed" (50).

19th century

From the 17th century onward, so-called 'respectable' citizens who were against the rowdy elements of fairs and parks had attempted to make them cease their operations. This intolerance shifted in the 19th century, however, with the creation of new fairs which gained respectability due to scientific agriculture, and the



success of international expositions. As with many state and local fairs to this day, advances in farming were tied to these fairs, where techniques and implements were shown, and agricultural competitions held (Walden:10).

Although the Great Exhibition of 1851 is usually considered the first of these new fairs, it expanded on a previous six-decade evolution which had originally stemmed from the local carnival. Unlike the carnival, however, the world's fair encouraged the perception of the existence of a wide gulf between high and popular culture, as well as the functional and the ethereal.



Built and torn down within a few years' time, world's fairs are telescoped models of industrial hyperdevelopment.

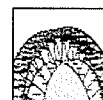
Edward Ball, *Village Voice*

World's fairs were forums where individual nations and firms exhibited their latest industrial and technological accomplishments. Their ideology was optimistic, embracing the notion of technology-driven progress, and the future was often an explicit theme (Corn 1986). These exhibitions were highly theatrical settings projecting their own utopian vision: a new, harmonious sense of community built around the consumption of pleasure. From the end of the 19th century throughout most of the 20th, it was common to think of machines as ushering in a better tomorrow, and even utopia (Corn 1984, Zukin 1991, Benedict 1983). 'Elsewhere', or what the visitor to the park had come to visit, had now become a vision of a utopia deriving from technology and progress.

For the past 150 years, we have been introduced to technology through the spectacle of the world's fair or, its more permanent cousin, the theme park. In the beginning, the world's fair was a way for colonizing countries progressing through the Industrial Revolution to display all of their marvelous new mechanical devices and other technologies. They were the occasion to demonstrate how far they had progressed



View from the roof of the Manufactures and Liberal Arts building, Chicago World's Fair, 1893
Photo by Dudley Arnold.



and where they were going. Immersed in the fantastic world of the fair, the visitor was prepared to see larger ideas about the direction of American and world culture and technology (Harris 1996, Corn 1986, Greenhalgh 1988). The influence of these fairs in shaping public perceptions of technology and the future was huge: between the years 1851 and 1939, they were the largest gatherings of people — war or peace — of all time.

The public parks movement in the 19th century was designed to provide city dwellers with open space to retreat to, yet they soon became filled with amusement features such as zoos, carousels, and refreshment stands (Harris: 106). The link between city parks and world's fairs was not only their city-like characteristics, but also that world's fairs were often held in such parks.

Known in Britain as Great Exhibitions, in France as Expositions Universelles, and in America as World's Fairs, the genre became, under the guidance of these three countries, a self-perpetuating phenomenon: "the extraordinary cultural spawn of industry and empire" (Greenhalgh: 2). Between 1855 and 1914, an event involving more than 20 nations was held somewhere in the world on an average of every two years.

At the grand climax of the tradition, the Paris Exhibition Universelle of 1937 erected buildings with a total interior space of 250 acres, while the New York World's Fair of 1939 covered 1200 acres. Four things dictated the shape of the Great Exhibition of 1851 and every



Progress fell strangely between the rhetorical and the actual. The word itself appeared in more exhibition mottos and subtitles than any other in the century following the Great Exhibition. For most organizers, the point of an exhibition was to indicate civilization was advancing in some known direction. Especially for the host nation, the exhibition would invariably be a celebration of the past as a preparation for a better future. Therein lay the interest for government, for industry, and the arts, that 'things will get better'...The most frequently suggested vehicle for achieving the goal of progress was technology. Technology would transform the world, bring plenty, peace, unity, all in the foreseeable future.

- Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*

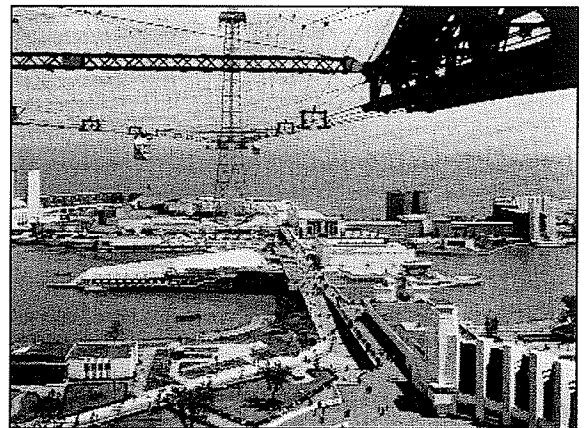
one which followed it: mass-production, prefabrication, mass communications, and urbanization, all of which relate to the Industrial Revolution (Ibid).

the sublime machine

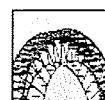
New technologies were associated with and were a direct result of the Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries and, from the beginning, there were mixed reactions to the machines that were changing the landscape. Mechanical giants such as the steam engine overwhelmed visitors to world's fairs and "outstripped the capacity of ordinary descriptive reporting that only ecstatic metaphorical construction could register reactions to it" (Leiss, 1990:36).

As early as the 1851 Exhibition in London, the machine was the pivotal construct around which everything else revolved [Greenhalgh 1988]. The Great Exhibition, like virtually all of its successors around the world, fetishized the machine, choosing exclusively to see it in a glorious past and the chance of a blemishless future. Machines were made into mythical creatures in order to make them understandable: "the machine emerged as a kind of fabulous automaton — part animal, part machine, part god" (Ibid).

Leiss describes this reaction as "the experience of the sublime"; similar to views on wild nature or powerful human passions of the past. The concept of the



looking east from Skywreath Tower International
Exhibition, Chicago 1933-34
Unnumbered plate from the album
*A Century of Progress, International Exhibition,
Chicago, 1933-34*
unknown photographer



American expositions provided visions of a higher life set amid heavenly landscapes. Enveloping in their scale, their novelty, their string of surprises, they punctuated their decades like giant exclamation marks...

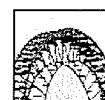
Neil Harris, *Building a Dream: The Art of Disney Architecture*

sublime — “the ineffable union of awe and dread, terror and attraction” (1990:37) — is supported by the iconography and the graphic portrayal of the machine, alluding to its mystery and majesty. In 1757 Edmund Burke described the most profound effect of the sublime as astonishment; “that state of the soul in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror”, while its inferior effects are admiration, reverence and respect (Kramnick:64). It was difficult for the writers and artists of the 19th century to come to terms with the sublime nature of the machine, since it was at once wonderful and terrifying. The machine promised progress and untold benefits to society, but it also threatened to replace workers in the already alienating factory system.

Leiss describes three metaphors to explain the relationship between the human and the machine: the master and servant, ‘autonomy/automaton’, and the automaton in the opposition of life and death. The machine possesses characteristics of both life and death, and by crossing over both realms it seems to draw life into death (Ibid).

technology

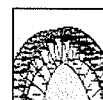
The architecture of the world’s fair was, from the start, a testament to the technology of the day. The Crystal Palace, designed in 1851 by Joseph Paxton, was an icon of technology, using the mass-produced pre-fabricated parts necessary to erect it within months



and to cover a span previously impossible. In 1889, the Eiffel Tower was designed and built by Gustav Eiffel of 15,000 wrought iron sections, remained the highest human-made structure for 40 years and was also the last major wrought iron structure in the world.

Electricity is a technology whose potential became fully-articulated to the public at large through the world's fairs and expositions. The Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876 was the last great exposition based upon steam power. In 1883, the Edison Electric Company installed over 4000 lamps, at a time when most American cities had only a few hundred lights. The spread of electrification meant that electrical corporations were deeply involved both as exhibitors and as advisors to the planners of the fairs (Corn:52). Promoters quickly realized the usefulness of electric machines and dazzling lighting displays that made dramatic artificiality easier to achieve in huge electric fountains, illuminations, unusual transportation forms, and many special effects. Spectacular lighting was "dramatic, nonutilitarian, abstract, and universalizing. It provided a brilliant canopy, connecting the many exhibits, statues, fountains, and pools in one design that was at once refined, ethereal, and stunning" (Nye 1995:35).

Each successive fair outdid the last in terms of sheer numbers of electric lights, which also served to extend exhibition hours. The telephone and the electric light "signaled the triumph of science over nature, and



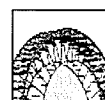
Those who arrive at Thekla can see little of the city, beyond the plank fences, the sackcloth screens, the scaffoldings, the metal armatures, the wooden catwalks hanging from the ropes or supported by sawhorses, the ladders, the trestles. If you ask, "Why is Thekla's construction taking such a long time?" the inhabitants continue hoisting sacks, lowering leaded strings, moving long

represented the superiority of the present over the past" (Nye 1995:41). At the Chicago Exhibition, there were electrical fountains, electrical transportation in the form of a moving sidewalk, a Ferris wheel studded with lights, and an intramural railway racing around its perimeters. Coney Island also developed extensive electrical features around the turn of the century, including a beach lit at night so that more people could bathe, and an electric city in Luna Park with over 1,300,000 lights.

*With the advent of night a fantastic city of fire
suddenly rises from the ocean into the sky.
Thousands of ruddy sparks glimmer in the
darkness, limning in fine, sensitive outline on
the black background of the sky shapely towers
of miraculous castles, palaces and temples.*

(Koolhaas:22)

Electricity was more than a theme for an exhibit; it was also a visible correlative for the ideology of progress. It was placed at the "apex of an evolutionary framework" (Nye 1995:35). It was closely linked to ideas around colonization and the progress of civilization, and most world's fairs included examples of 'ethnological' villages where the visitor could experience staged versions of earlier forms of society. Electricity was embedded in a social Darwinist ideology of racial superiority, since, of course, only the most advanced societies had progressed so far as to have lighting. As Nye says, "darkness was a metaphor for the primitive;



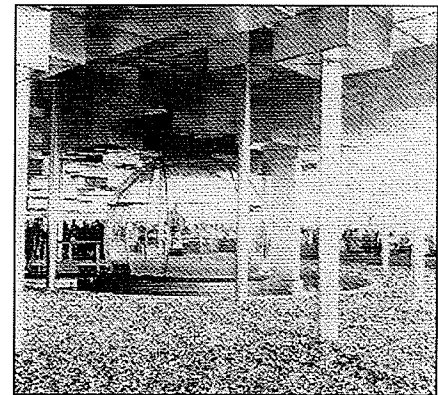
brushes up and down, as they answer, "So that its destruction cannot begin." And if asked whether they fear that, once the scaffoldings are removed, the city may begin to crumble and fall to pieces, they add hastily, in a whisper, "Not only the city."

If, dissatisfied with the answers, someone puts his eye to a crack in a fence, he sees cranes pulling

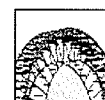
light was the exemplification of Christianity, science, and progress" (Ibid:36).

The Depression-era fairs were different from their predecessors in that the business corporation became a public personality, and there developed a heavy emphasis on futurism. The New York World's Fair's vision of industrial society in 1939 was that of a world whose citizens were now free from the necessity for arduous labour. By the year 1960, the fair promised, there would be nothing but leisure time for all of humanity. The car, the highway, the fluorescent light, and the household appliance "were to be the mass-distributed expressions of equality" (Wilson 1991:158). The new technology was supposed to democratize society as well as free it from work.

Both the 1893 Chicago World's Fair and the 1939 New York World's Fair featured exhibits of state-of-the-art technology. In 1893, new machinery was displayed as individual material products, but by 1939 "an image of technological progress was abstracted from industrial production and incorporated into the landscape of the fair" (Zukin:225). Progress as a narrative gave coherence to the exhibits but it was also applied to the mechanization of the exhibits themselves to ease visual consumption. Technology dramatized the exhibits' effects and provided visitors with a means of moving around them (Zukin 1991, Kihlstedt 1986, Appelbaum 1977). The fairs of the 1930s



At the state of Washington's *World of Tomorrow*, a glass elevator known as the Bubbleator (centre) lifted fairgoers into the exhibit, where they could see predictions of how people would live in the year 2000.
Seattle World's Fair, 1962



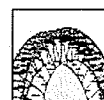
up other cranes, scaffoldings that embrace other scaffoldings, beams that prop up other beams. "What meaning does your construction have?" he asks. "What is the aim of a city under construction unless it is a city? Where is the plan you are following, the blueprint?"

"We will show it to you as soon as the working day is over; we cannot interrupt our work now," they answer.

acknowledged the appeal of the new mass media and accepted the commercially shaped, nationalized, media-driven middle-class culture that was coming to dominate America (Harris 1996).

The New York World's Fair also featured a railroads exhibit with a 140-foot, 526 ton steam locomotive that ran continuously at 60 mph on a roller bed, a steel production exhibit, nylon as a new textile, and RCA televisions. There was also a Town of Tomorrow with 15 model homes, including a plywood house, a glass house, a celotex house, and a motor home, as well as an electrified farm featuring over 100 applications of electricity (Appelbaum 1977).

The relationship between the world's fair and the amusement park is significant, and is a great example of chaos and order in the amusement landscape. All world's fairs from their beginning in the 1850s had an ordered, educational component which was the main feature of the fair. They also had their seedier alter ego: adjoining amusement parks with rides, restaurants, illusionistic concessions, and performers. These contributed to a great extent to the success of their larger hosts, and their attractions could later be transferred to a permanent amusement park setting. The amusements at the world's fairs were traditional fairground attractions updated by modern technology (Zukin 1991). In many ways, today's theme parks are an innovative reworking of the earlier amusement parks, either attached to world's fairs or freestanding,



Work stops at sunset. Darkness falls over the building site. The sky is filled with stars. "There is the blueprint," they say.

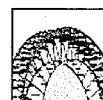
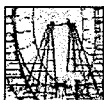
Italo Calvino, *Cities and the Sky* (ii)

which had developed in or near major European and North American cities and resort centres in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

A great many of these amusement parks had fallen from favour with the advent of cinema and television, and the growing sophistication and mobility of the population, and world's fairs in the early part of the 20th century suffered the same lack of attendance (Cameron:11). In addition, inadequate capitalization and reinvestment, combined with the public's growing dissatisfaction with the often sleazy and disreputable aspects of amusement park operations, assisted in their demise. Theme parks, on the other hand, provide a full day of "wholesome" family entertainment based on thrills and fantasy in an environment of cleanliness and friendliness. Cameron quotes Walter Stewart when he says:

Amusement parks are one of America's current growth industries. These are not the amusement parks of yesteryear, those ramshackle affairs that featured girlie shows, thrill rides, hot dogs, candy floss, freaks, games of chance, sawdust and dirt... Today's are clean, orderly, sexless, healthful places where families gambol together..."(11)

DisneyWorld in Orlando features technology exhibits by the same corporate sponsors of the 1939 fair. Future World is given over to corporations' pavilions,



The decline of utopia and the rise of its nightmare cousin is parallel to the history of this surrealist century, which is at once the partial fulfilment of nineteenth-century dreams and their negation.

Chad Walsh, *From Utopia to Nightmare* (1962)

namely: 'motion' (General Motors), 'progress' (General Electric), 'energy' (Exxon), and 'imagination' (Kodak). There are also solar-powered 'traveling theater cars' that propel blocks of 60 visitors through the exhibits. Tomorrowland features many of the ideas of the postwar period, including superhighways, spaceships to the moon, and monorails (Zukin 1991, Wilson 1991).

utopianism

The majority of the 19th century's political economists were sure that the benefits of the Industrial Revolution would outweigh any negative aspects. However, there were several socialist writers who spoke out against what was happening, such as Robert Owen, Karl Marx, and William Morris. Artistic movements such as The Aesthetic Movement and Art Nouveau were resolutely set against mechanical reproduction and industrial design. Novels such as *We* by Yevgeny Zamyatin (1920) and *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley (1932) were anti-utopian in their criticism of the implied aims of the Industrial Revolution and "the genie that has been let out of the bottle and cannot be put back in" (Leiss 1990).

The years between 1880 and 1930 were marked by a proliferation of social reform movements, including 'technological utopianism' which derived from the belief in technology as the means of achieving a perfect society in the near future. Such a society, moreover,



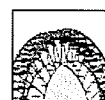
View of Theme Centre and surrounding area, New York World's Fair, 1939



would not only be the culmination of the introduction of new tools and machines; it would also be modeled on those tools and machines in its institutions, values, and culture (Segal 1986). It was a movement not of revolt but of its antithesis: a movement seeking to alter the speed with which American society was moving but not its direction.

There also developed a growing respect for scientists. In the 19th century, inventions were perceived as deriving from mechanics, but by the 1930s they were from scientists, such as the chemists who developed plastic. The scientists' transformation of materials and their creation of new ones became symbolic of modern science's contribution to industrial progress, of the promise of the future (Corn 1986).

In the 20th century, the antithesis of utopia, or dystopia, gained prominence as a concept for literary and artistic expression, centring on technology in particular. The idealization of technology and machines is demonstrated by books and art produced by the Futurists. For instance, Fritz Lang's film *Metropolis* reminds visitors of the dangers of technology run amok. Idealistic architecture and city planning of the 20th century includes both the forward-looking city of Brasilia to the nostalgia-inducing town of Disney's Celebration, Florida.



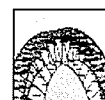
the city

Ideas surrounding technology and utopia have inevitably encompassed the city, since it is there that technologies such as high-speed transportation and communications are first conceived and made manifest. As a result, some utopian socialists of the 19th century not only distrusted the machine but also the city. There are many examples of proposed plans for colonies, in predominantly radial shapes, sometimes including farmlands, based on common ownership and voluntary labour. The ideal was the village, not the city (Rosenau 1983). Ebenezer Howard discussed Garden Cities which were envisioned as low density townships with park and garden developments. Tony Garner's design for an Industrial City in 1901 emphasized the factory and the industrial scene, with an emphasis on zoning. Le Corbusier's 'Ville Radieuse' of 1935 was derived from this. It concerned the skyscraper within a park setting, the stress laid on the use of glass and simplicity of form. He referred to his plan as a 'vertical garden city', although it was purely functionalist. The house was a 'machine for living in', since the tool and the machine were deeply embedded in his philosophy of architecture (Ibid).

By the 1930s, these ideas had evolved into models of cities of the future at the world's fair in New York. There, visitors rode part-way up the Tylon (on the



Futurama Exhibit
General Motors
New York World's Fair, 1939



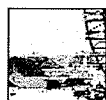
A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing. And when Humanity lands there, it looks out, and seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realisation of Utopias.

Oscar Wilde

world's highest escalator at the time) and stepped onto two moving rings to see 'Democracity'. They viewed a huge model of a future city in a six-minute show, its site plan drawn from Ebenezer Howard's radial-plan Garden City designs and Frank Lloyd Wright's models for Broadacre City, built by his students in Arizona in the 1930s. In this model, the automobile was paramount, an expression of American individualism and freedom, since 'Democracity' was traversed by expressways that whisked drivers from the city centre past the surrounding greenbelt, suburbs, and industrial ring and into natural preserves (Wilson 1991, Appelbaum 1977).

The General Motors building was designed by Albert Kahn (1869-1942) and featured the popular 'Futurama' ride. Six hundred chairs with individual speakers moved visitors over a 36,000 square foot model of the highway world of 1960. It featured seven-lane roads with 100 mph design speeds, experimental homes, farms, industrial plants, dams, and bridges, as well as the intervening landscape. A well-developed traffic system was seen as the guarantee of future happiness. Free of slums and full of parks, with abundant energy sources, Futurama demonstrated what could be (Appelbaum 1977).

This vision corresponded with what many Americans in the 1920s and 30s embraced in the vision of a uniform, planned, skyscraper-dominated city. This was a change from the negative view of all things urban that

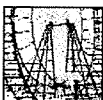


had characterized the utopian thought of the previous century and had caused most commentators to view turn-of-the-century Chicago and New York, dominated by their new skyscrapers, as overcrowded, congested, and hectic zones of social decay and predatory capitalism (Willis 1986).

In the 1920s, however, led by a new vision, popular thinking about the city became more positive. City planners and architects began to articulate an image of a future city that would be as clean, efficient, ordered, and as beautiful as existing cities were dirty, chaotic, haphazard, and ugly. Their visions of the future city became widely known, just as Futurama was widely popular. For the first time in American history, the city became an accepted site for utopia (Willis 1986).

the future that used to be

An interesting phenomenon has transpired in the last several decades in terms of how the future can be viewed and displayed for consumption. When Disney was designing and building his theme parks in the 1950s and 60s, progress was embraced along with all of its manifestations — better toasters, faster cars, rockets to the moon — with naive idealism. Disney himself had a buoyant optimism about the future that mirrored his time. Yet, the goal of the technological utopians came true and the exhibits meant to depict the future quickly looked out of date. As early as the 1950s, even Disney himself referred to Tomorrowland



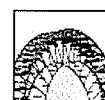
Without the Utopias of other times, men would still live in caves, miserable and naked. It was Utopians who traced the lines of the first city... Out of generous dreams come beneficial realities. Utopia is the principle of all progress, and the essay into a better future.

Anatole France.

as "Todayland" (Harris 1996).

The monorail, with its streamlined shape and near-silent glide, remained the only thing which continued to seem visionary. When given the chance to build a new park and avoid some of the same pitfalls as the older parks, the Disney 'Imagineers' designed Tomorrowland as Discoveryland in Paris. It didn't try to envision the future, but rather show how it had once been imagined in the movies, books, drawings, and comic strips of the 1930s and 40s, including Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon. Discoveryland is an expression of yesterday's tomorrow: architecture done as a past vision of the future. Ironically, the predictable future — the one that was looked to for so many decades — is now a source of nostalgia (Harris 1996). This emphasizes the point that the future always exists primarily in our imagination in the form of ideas, expectations, and projections (Corn 1986).

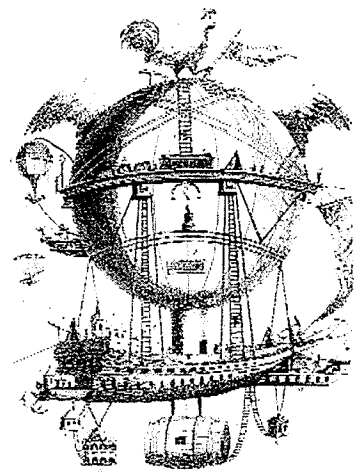
Fairs had a special ability to look backward and forward simultaneously, and for making pleasure acceptable to Victorian morals by cloaking it with useful information. They also fed, as nothing before them had, the passion for searching out the next generation of consumables. By concentrating on popular science, mass amusements, patriotic nostalgia, and industrialized mythology, the Disney parks are only the latest manifestations of the world's fair aesthetic and ethic. The early exhibitions helped to establish what Disney later built on, that is, a periodically recurring



rhythm of mass movement, a faith in destination as social restorative, and the reaffirmation of belief in the past and the future (Harris 1996).

Nan Ellin discusses the postmodern city and its lack of 'centre' in terms of any meaningful sense of order and communal anchor. She describes how although the late 20th-century quest for meaning and for a centre has elicited nostalgia for cities of the past, it has not been accompanied by a desire to relinquish technological innovations which raise the standard of living, or that corresponding child of the Enlightenment, the pursuit of progress and modernity. Rather, she says "that which appeals is the apocryphal simplicity, authenticity, intensity, and harmony of social relationships along with a built environment which expresses and facilitates these" (1996:11).

The Buck Rogers idea of nostalgia also corresponds to current day valorization of artifacts from the industrial era. Since the 1970s, "the factories, warehouses, machines, and products of our industrial past have been elevated to preservation status" such as 'industrial archaeology' 'preserving' industrial landscapes and museums devoted to displays of artifacts from this period (Ellin 1996:141). "The reason that people develop a sentimental - or a sensual - attachment to the industrial aesthetic," says Sharon Zukin, "is that it is not real. To be precise, it is no longer real" (1988:73). Robert Harbison maintains "they are choosing to return to a more manageable



Satirical representation of a utopian airship,
end of 18th century

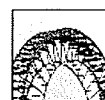


past. As each generation of machines becomes more complicated, we withdraw 'into dreams of obsolete machines and see ourselves among windmills, clipper ships, even trolley cars'" (cited by Zukin 1988:73). The smaller our machines get, the more the older, larger, ones evoke nostalgia and become a part of the common folklore or myth (Ellin 1996).

phantom disasters

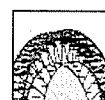
London's Great Exhibition of 1851 inspired New York to do one better in 1853. It was marked by two structures that completely overwhelmed their surroundings: the first was a version of the Crystal Palace, a cruciform topped by an enormous dome; the second, a 350-foot high tower. It was built of iron-braced timber, and its base accommodated shops. A steam elevator gave access to the first- and second-floor landings, where the visitors viewed Manhattan through telescopes. Inside products were displayed as well as new modes of mass transportation: underground, on-grade and elevated systems, as well as the elevator (Koolhaas 1985).

This new technology, the elevator, was presented to the public as a theatrical spectacle. The inventor himself, Elisha Otis, mounted a platform that slowly ascended, and when it had reached its highest level, an assistant presented Otis with a dagger on a velvet cushion. The inventor took the knife and began to attack the crucial element of his own invention: the



cable that had hoisted the platform upward and that now prevented its fall. Otis cut the cable; it snapped. Nothing happened, either to platform or to inventor. Invisible safety catches prevented the platform from falling.

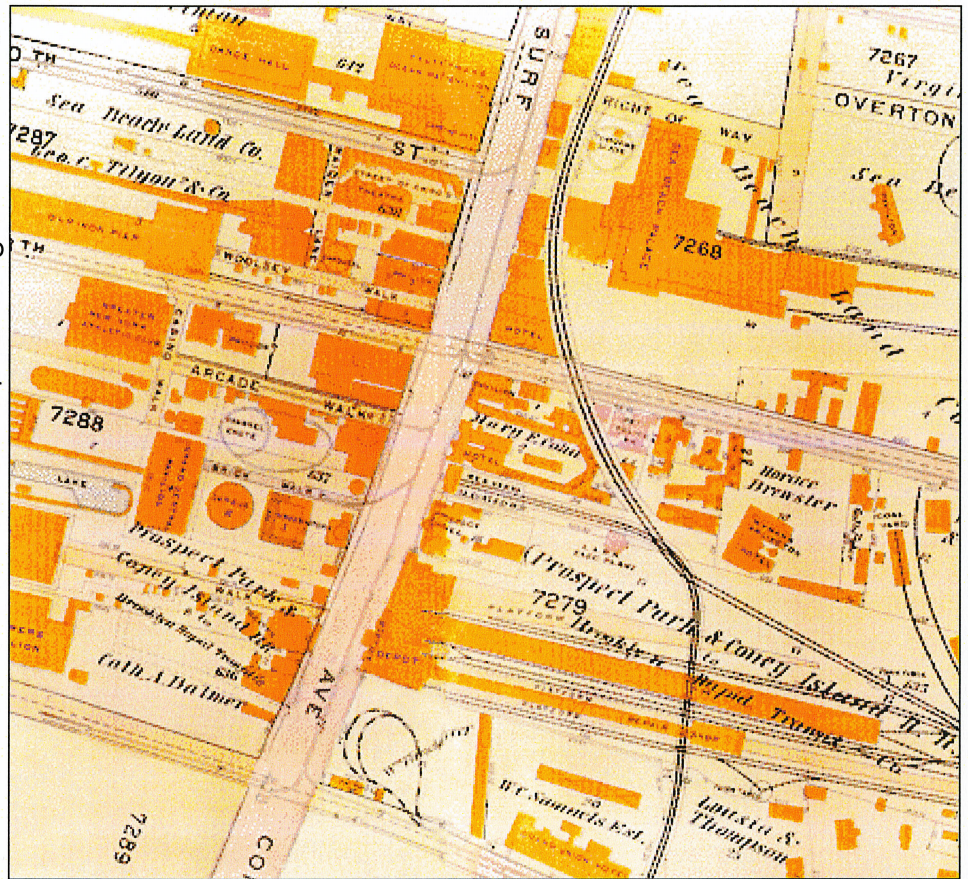
Thus, as Koolhaas puts it, Otis introduced an invention in urban theatricality: "the anti-climax as denouement, the non-event as triumph" (19). "Like the elevator," he says, "each technological invention is pregnant with a double image: contained in its success is the specter of its possible failure. The means of averting that phantom disaster are almost as important as the original invention itself" (20). Manhattan, as any sizable city full of bustling people and rapidly advancing technological systems, was an accumulation of possible disasters that may happen, and it needed its amusement park appendage, Coney Island, to serve as exorcist to its inhabitants.



chaos & order c. 1900

coney island

Like the city inhabitants of Europe a few centuries before, New Yorkers at the end of the 19th century needed a resort zone to counteract their cramped living quarters and provide equilibrium. On Coney Island's eastern end, the cosmopolites had virgin nature to escape to, planted with large resort hotels. The western end harboured other isolationists — fugitives and criminals — and the two groups competed for power over the island. In 1865, the railroad brought masses of city-dwellers to the beach for the first time.



Map of Coney Island, 1898



Inspired by the success of the world's first amusement midway at the 1893 World's Colombian Exposition in Chicago, Capt. Paul Boynton opened the world's first modern amusement park: Paul Boynton's Water Chutes on Chicago's south side. The success of his Chicago park inspired him to open a similar facility at the fledgling Coney Island resort in New York in 1895.

disaster

Many of the artifacts and rides of the world's fairs were later brought to Coney Island. The idea of progress, however, was here subsumed by the pursuit of pleasure, although often with the same technological means. The spectacle was also a major component in the escapism desired and achieved in this amusement park. An endless series of simulated disasters occurred daily on Coney Island, including The Fall of Pompeii, the San Francisco earthquake, the burnings of Rome and Moscow, naval battles, episodes from the Boer War, the Galveston Flood, and the eruption of Vesuvius. The cathartic effect was psychologically addictive to the stressed urbanites, since "each nightmare exorcised in Dreamland is a disaster averted in Manhattan" (Koolhaas:42).

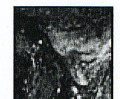
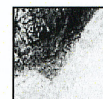
The city block itself was a protagonist in this ritual in the Fighting the Flames show, one of the most spectacular theatricals of its day. It was comprised of a building 250 feet x 100 feet, without a roof. Inside, the square of a city was built, complete with houses, street, and a hotel. Four



Entrance to Dreamland



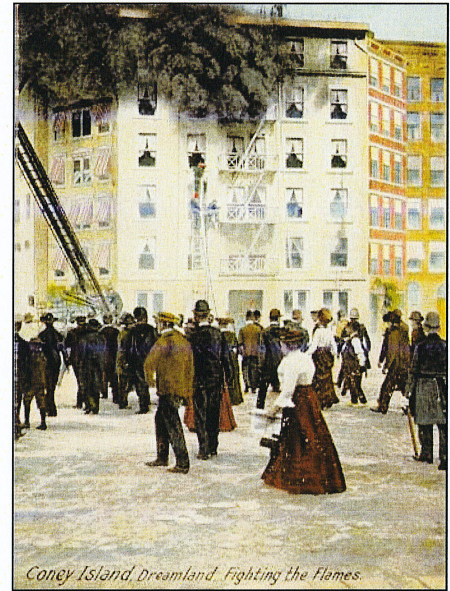
Battle of Lights, Coney Island
Joseph Stella, 1914



He who can look upon a merry-go-round without longing to ride the wooden horse once more before he dies, for all the maturity of his middle age, can hardly be a human being.

Richard Le Gallienne, 'Human Need of Coney Island'
(Cosmopolitan 39 [July 1905]: 239-46)

thousand firemen permanently inhabited this set, because periodically a 'fake' fire catastrophe would take place, complete with alarms, screaming victims, fire fighters and engines, actor-onlookers, and even an ambulance which ran over a man in its race to the scene. When the flames reached the top of the building, there was a great explosion and the roof caved in. But all was well in the end: "the guests, hysterical, are saved, the fire put out and the city block prepared for its next performance" (Ibid:48). As Koolhaas states, "The entire spectacle defines the dark side of Metropolis as an astronomical increase in the potential for disaster only just exceeded by an equally astronomical increase in the ability to avert it" (Ibid).

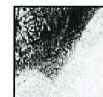


Fighting the Flames,
Dreamland

The opposition of life and death takes place in Leiss's third level of the root metaphor, when the machine, which is identified with inorganic matter, or death, draws the living into the realm of the inanimate. The city which once evolved organically through the centuries had now increased in size exponentially and taken on a life of its own. With this growth had come terrifying possibilities for disaster inherent in masses of people crammed into engineered skyscrapers and rapid transportational machines. New Yorkers, although willing to surrender to the superior power of the technological world around them, simultaneously knew they were giving up a certain amount of control over their lives. Only by using technology to re-enact and safely resolve disasters introduced by industrialization could they overcome death's grip.



Canals of Venice,
Dreamland



spectacle

Other features on Coney Island included the Loop-the-Loop, which led to the rollercoaster in 1883. Coney had a hotel in the shape of an elephant, the legs of which were 60 feet in circumference. The most popular ride, named the Steeplechase, featured a mechanical horse track run by gravity, the horses ridden by visitors (Koolhaas:30).

Luna Park was erected in 1903, also on Coney Island. Here, visitors fantasized they were astronauts on the moon. A large lake was in the centre, surrounded by needle-like structures representing specimens of moon architecture. These were an ensemble of 1221 snow-white pinnacles and towers, lit at night with 1,300,000 tiny lights. This park had a more elaborate infrastructure and communications network than most cities at the time. Like Disney's later Jungle Cruise, live and mechanical fish cohabitated in Luna Park's Fishing Pond.

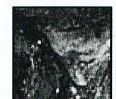
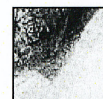


Luna Park, Coney Island,
ca. 1905.

Another Coney Island park, Dreamland, was based on the sea, or rather an inlet of the Atlantic Ocean. Entrance porches were underneath a gigantic plaster ship, so, metaphorically, the surface of the park was under water, like Atlantis. Unlike the other Coney Island parks, this park had no colour; it was all white. Small boys selling popcorn and peanuts dressed as Mephistopheles to stress the Faustian theme. They were also a Dadaist performance piece: every morning they were instructed in 'nonsense' — meaningless, enigmatic jokes and slogans meant to sow uncertainty in the crowds throughout the day.



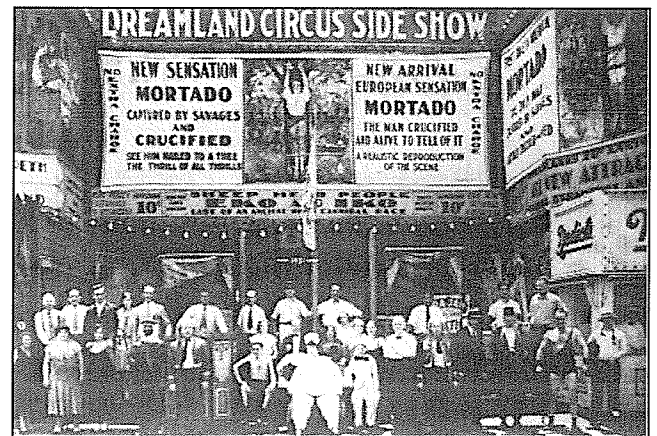
Shooting the Chutes,
Luna Park, Coney Island



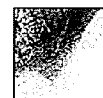
The Blue Dome of Creation led the viewer by means of a water canal through 60 centuries to the dawn of civilization. The multi-national theme was also present here: the "Canals of Venice" was a gigantic model with gondolas carrying visitors through a perfectly replicated Grand Canal, past live 'Venetian natives'. "Coasting Through Switzerland" was a mechanical resort within a compressed replica of Switzerland. The viewer would mount a little red sleigh to go on a journey which showed mountain climbers, a valley village, and went through a 500-foot tunnel to penetrate the Alps, kept cool by diffused ice air.

utopia

Interestingly, Coney Island also had a sort of utopia, or permanent experimental community. Liliputia, the Midget City within Dreamland, housed 300 midgets who had been scattered across the continent as attractions at the world's fairs. Their buildings were half-scale, and they had a parliament, a beach, and a fire department "responding every hour to a false alarm — an effective reminder of man's existential futility" (Koolhaas:40). Within Liliputia's walls, the laws of conventional morality were systematically ignored, and this fact was advertised to attract visitors. Promiscuity, homosexuality, and nymphomania were encouraged and flaunted: 80 percent of newborn babies were illegitimate. This utopian city was perhaps indicative of a society trying to shed the remnants of Victorianism (Ibid:42). As John Kassar

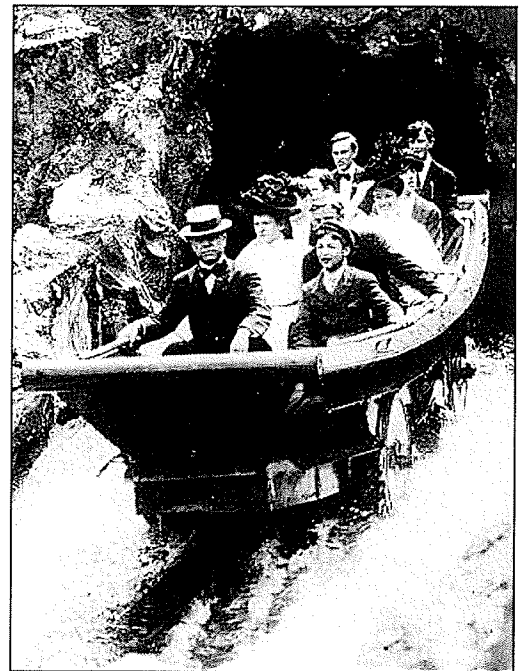


*Dreamland Circus Sideshow
Dreamland, Coney Island*

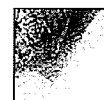


noted in his account of Coney Island in 1900, an essential element of Coney Island's appeal for virtually all of its visitors was the contrast it offered to conventional society, everyday routine, and dominant cultural authorities. He says "though traces of class and ethnic backgrounds still clung to Coney Island's amusement seekers, in arriving at the resort they crossed a critical threshold, entering a world apart from ordinary life, prevailing structures and positions" (41). Unlike the designs for Central Park and most of the world's fairs which sought to reinforce social hierarchies and discipline public life, Coney Island offered freedom and exciting possibilities for exhibitions of behaviour and social interaction prohibited elsewhere.

As visitors arrived, they entered an environmental phantasmagoria, which combined characteristics of a beer garden, county fair, midway, vaudeville, and circus. These combined to create a holiday or carnival atmosphere, and provided an invitation for collective gaiety and release. Kassan says "Coney Island appeared to have institutionalized the carnival spirit for a culture that lacked a carnival tradition, but Coney located its festivity not in time as a special moment on the calendar but in space as a special place on the map" (50). Against the values of thrift, sobriety, industry, and ambition, it encouraged extravagance, gaiety, abandon, and revelry. It also signaled the rise of a new mass culture which demanded a democratic resort of its own, a "Feast of Fools for an urban-industrial society" (Ibid).



Shooting the Chutes,
Luna Park, Coney Island



Whether as theme park, wilderness area, or scenic drive, landscape has become a huge, exotic attraction unto itself, a place of entertainment, fantasy, escape, and refuge.

James Corner
Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture: 15

themed landscape

disney

In 1910 there were an estimated 2000 amusement parks in existence. Within the next five to ten years, however, the proliferation of specialized amusement grounds waned, with the only notable park of any size being Coney Island. In 1929, America entered the Depression, and by 1935 only 400 amusement parks still remained, struggling to survive. The industry was further hurt by World War II, when many parks closed and others refrained from adding new attractions due to rationing.



Beanstalk outside Sir Mickey's Store, Fantasyland, Disneyland Paris

With the end of World War II, America and the amusement park industry enjoyed post-war prosperity. Attendance and revenues grew to new records as new parks opened across America. A new concept, the Kiddieland, took advantage of the post-war baby boom, introducing a new generation to the joys of the amusement park. However, the resurgence was short-lived.

~~the resurgence was short-lived.~~ → "park" is the park

As the 1950s dawned, television, urban decay, and suburban growth began to take a heavy toll on the aging, urban amusement park.



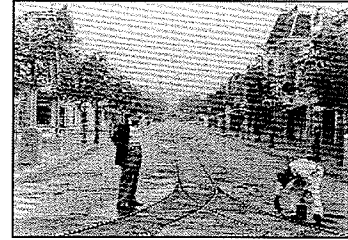
The industry was again in distress when the public turned elsewhere for entertainment.

When Disneyland opened in 1955, many people were skeptical that an amusement park without any of the traditional attractions would succeed. But Disneyland was different. Instead of a midway, Disneyland offered five distinct themed areas, providing guests with the fantasy of travel to different lands and times. Disneyland was an immediate success and, as a result, the theme park era was born.

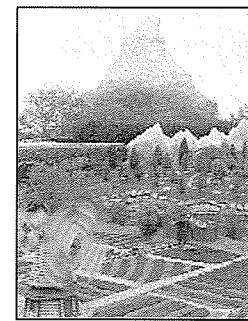
narrative

The formula for Disneyland was not completely new, since Walt Disney had carefully studied previous parks, including Coney Island. Its characteristic, unseen before its opening, is the way it links the attraction of a landscaped park, evoking the purity of virgin nature, with the largely fictional heroes of Walt Disney films, and totally subordinating the usual fairground attractions, spectacles, and services to these two dominant themes. The genius of this concept, demonstrated by its enormous popular success, "relies on the strict submission of activities in the park to particular and specific rules of conduct, with no equivalent outside, which allow the visitor to enter into an obviously different world and there to participate in a way of life foreign to his everyday experience" (Auricoste:489).

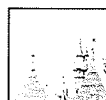
According to Walt Disney, "the idea of Disneyland is a simple one. It will be a place for people to find



Walt Disney stands at the foot of Main Street USA on opening day in July 1955, watching a workman apply the finishing touches to the park.



Story Book Land, Fantasyland; Disneyland, Anaheim, CA

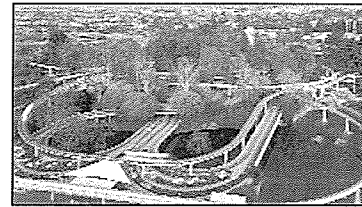


happiness and knowledge" (Zukin: 222). The idea that is Disneyland and Disney World is, in fact, far from simple. It is a hybrid of culture, art, ideology, market, and place.

The extraordinary popularity of Disney theme parks is due in part to their fantasy and their grandeur, as well as their apparent familiarity. For instance, Main Street USA refers to a past that seems friendly because it is so recent and, therefore, familiar. It is, as Henry James put it, part of the "palpable imaginable visitable past...the nearer distances and the clearer mysteries" (Moore, Mitchell, Turnbull: 90).

When it was built in 1955, Disneyland differed from and was ridiculed by the owners of other amusement parks of the time because it featured fewer rides, more open (and therefore unprofitable) space, and the need for constant, meticulous maintenance. However, it was an instant success, in part because it was the first chance for visitors to see several landscapes simultaneously — some imaginative historical recreations and others purely imaginary.

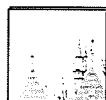
From the beginning, Disneyland set out to tell a story; the entertainment offered was not only the rides and other amusements, but the consumption of space and time. At the same time, Disney had a television show which featured his famous characters from the park. The commercial spin-offs from the show and the park were the most extensive to ever come about under a single sponsor. Disney's enterprise and subsequent



Autopia,
Tomorrowland; Disneyland,
Anaheim, CA

*In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And there were gardens bright
with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an
incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery...*

Kubla Khan
Coleridge, 1816

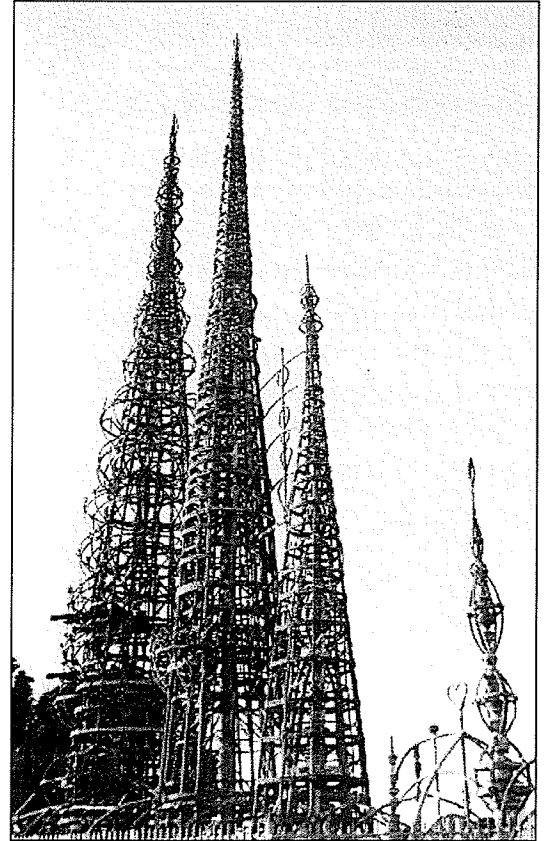


Summoned to lay down the rules for the foundation of Perinthia, the astronomers established the place and the day according to the position of the stars; they drew the intersecting lines of the decumanus and the cardo, the first oriented to the passage of the sun and the other like the axis on which the heavens turn.

huge success was directly related to a combination of factors taking place in the mid-1950's, including the baby boom, the rapid spread of television, the increase in domestic consumption, as well as the expansion of suburbs, the growth of the service sector, and a boom in leisure-time activities. "Just as the real landscape reflected the intensive, unplanned development of the country by subdivision and mass construction, so the imaginary landscape of Disneyland reflected the growth of mass communications built on visual consumption" (Zukin:223).

When Disneyland first opened, there was no analogue for this aimless travel through the "lands" of the Magic Kingdom or the "worlds" at the EPCOT Center. Now, because of the shopping mall, they are familiar. "Malls aspire to the same monadism as the Disney worlds, and their designs echo that of the parks with varying explicitness. Parking is relegated to the vast outside areas, leaving the "real world" invisible beyond the boundaries of the commercial kingdoms" (Bukatman:66).

Amusement and theme parks such as Disneyland have been similar in style to other development in the last 30 years, including shopping centre design, such as West Edmonton Mall, as well as neotraditional residential communities which seek to emulate Main Street USA. Although the term "theme park" is relatively new and usually refers to Disneyland-like parks, the use of landscape and technology to create an escapist



Watts Towers, Simon Rodia



They divided the map according to the twelve houses of the zodiac so that each temple and each neighbourhood would receive the proper influence of the favoring constellations; they fixed the point in the walls where gates should be cut, foreseeing how each would frame an eclipse of the moon in the next thousand years.

experience is not, as has been discussed.

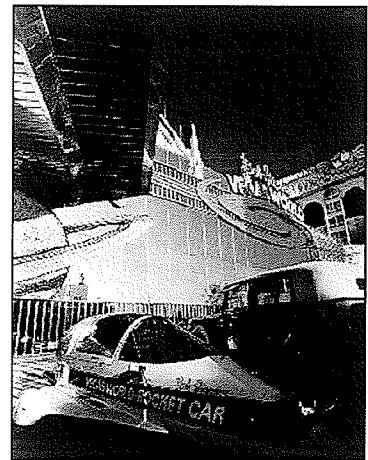
In the creation of fantastical worlds, Walt Disney understood that the combination of the familiar with the exotic was the most potent means to escape. His strong use of his own narrative, or the narrative developed by his designers, served to create a self-referencing and self-contained universe which proved to be phenomenally successful with audiences throughout the world.

the themed landscape

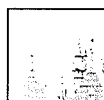
The term 'amusement park' means "a place to be amused" whereas a 'theme park' means "a place for stories". Generally, an amusement park has little or no theme and is simply a collection of rides while a theme park is like a three-dimensional story and its guests are active participants in the narrative. Those involved in the theme park industry argue that while the amusement park, such as Six Flags, offers exciting thrills and enjoyable experiences, it does not transport the guest to another place or time (e.g., another world).

Since Disneyland, themed parks have multiplied throughout the world. They tend to have the following characteristics:

- They have a family appeal;
- They contain one or more themed environments;
- They have some form of "ambient entertainment," that is, strolling, musicians, performers, or costumed



Vegas World Casino,
Ana Barrado, 1991



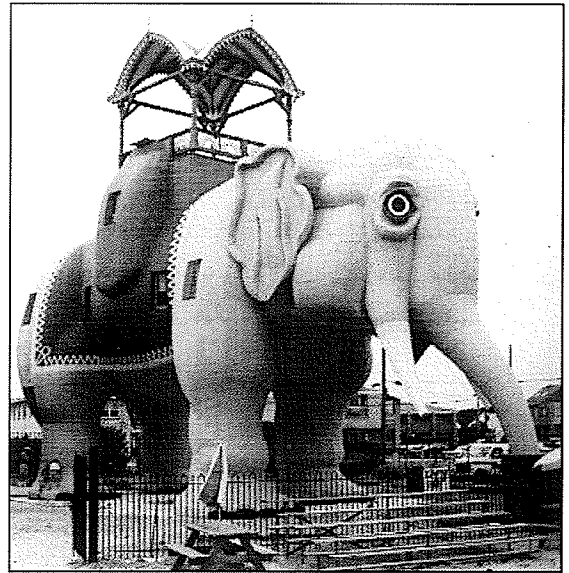
Perinthia - they guaranteed - would reflect the harmony of the firmament; nature's reason and the gods' benevolence would shape the inhabitants' destinies.

Following the astronomers' calculations precisely, Perinthia was constructed; various peoples came to populate it; the first generation born in Perinthia began to grow within its walls; and these citizens reached the age to marry and have children.

characters;

- They have a high investment level per unit of ride or show capacity;
- They have high standards of service and maintenance and cleanliness;
- They contain enough activities to create an average visitor length of stay of typically five to seven hours;
- They will usually, but not always, have a pay-one-price admission policy.

Recently, some theme parks have been oriented around one theme or toward one market, such as aquatic parks and children's parks. There are now also indoor theme parks combined with retail shopping centres, such as West Edmonton Mall, Lotte World in Seoul, and Mall of America in Minneapolis. Disney has also developed DisneyQuest, which is a 100,000-square-foot indoor arcade-like amusement park.



*Lucy the Elephant,
Architectural Follies in America, 198*

the future of the industry

It appears that theme parks will be a fixture of international tourism throughout the world for a long time to come, and analysts predict several trends:

- * New parks will have stronger theming tied to the country or local region;
- * They will be part of larger mixed-use destination projects (shopping, resorts, waterfront developments, etc.);



In Perinthia's streets and square today you encounter cripples, dwarfs, hunchbacks, obese men, bearded women. But the worse cannot be seen; guttural howls are heard from cellars and lofts, where families hide children with three heads or with six legs. Perinthia's astronomers are faced with a difficult choice. Either they must admit that all their

- * There will be greater visitor participation and interaction;
- * There will be greater use of simulation experiences and virtual reality;
- * There will be greater water orientation;
- * Parks will be designed for all-weather operation and artificial environments.

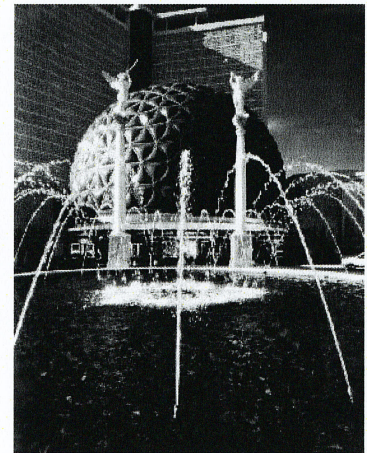
Theme parks are becoming a way to express regional differences, culture, and technological achievement. They are becoming incorporated into suburban shopping complexes, mixed-use waterfront developments, and multi-use office buildings. They can also include destination resorts, shopping / restaurant villages, and special events centres and trade expositions.

New attractions are being designed to provide greater participant control and encourage interplay between the visitor and the virtual environment. New thrill rides are being offered where the rider can individually control the experience and intensity of the ride. Analysts predict that future thematic concepts will be based more on participative activities, such as sports and music, which relate to the audience, rather than comic book characterizations (Jones and Robinett:4).

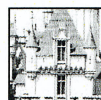
Attractions at parks have made many advances in simulation techniques in the last several years. These rides combine high resolution visual imagery with seats



staircase, Park Güell
Antoni Gaudí



The Caesar's Palace Casino, Las Vegas,
Ana Barrado, 1991



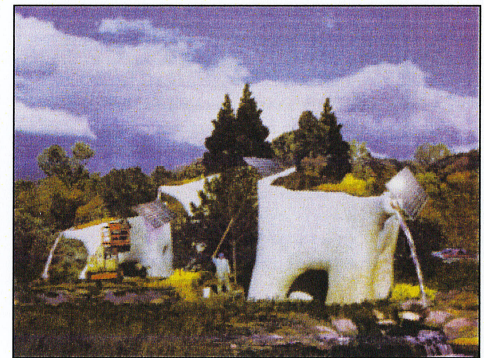
calculations were wrong and their figures are unable to describe the heavens, or else they must reveal that the order of the gods is reflected exactly in the city of monsters.

Italo Calvino, *Cities and the Sky* (iii)

that are programmed to move with the action. Visitors experience very realistic simulations of river rafting in New Zealand, runaway sports cars in the Italian Alps, and intergalactic space races. These simulations are produced for much less than traditional attractions, the technology is more flexible, and also more space efficient (a 45-seat simulator needs only about 300 square metres). The major challenge with this technology will be to maintain the thrill and spontaneity of perceived personal risk and group interaction (Ibid).

A greater use of water-related activities is occurring in theme park design as well as in nearly all forms of real estate development. Several parks (Ocean Park, Hong Kong; Dreamland, Australia; Walibi, Belgium) combine an active water park with more traditional themed rides and amusements. New, high-technology aquariums are now using acrylic tunnel concepts which combine a scuba diver's view of the undersea world with a ride experience. Some of these will be developed in the open ocean.

Lang Research recently did a study on tourism trends in the U.S. and Canada and found that those who are most likely to have visited a theme park while travelling in the last two years in Canada and the U.S. were affluent families. Not surprisingly, perhaps, seniors were the least likely to have done so. Those likely to take a trip within the next two years were asked what cultural or entertainment activities they would participate in. After 'seeing natural wonders like Niagara Falls' (49%), the respondents said they would go to a theme park like



Noel Harding,
The Elevated Wetlands, (photocomposite), 1998

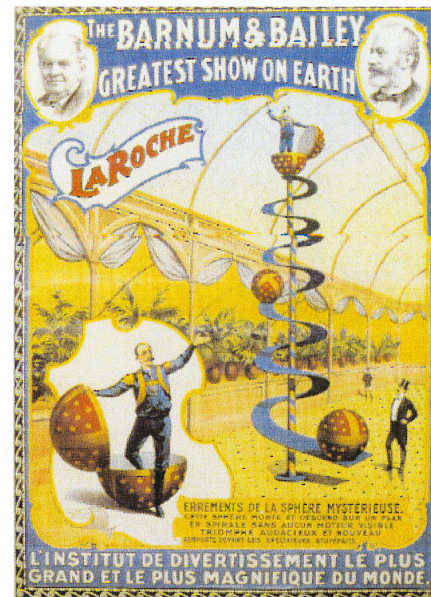


Disneyland (42%), a movie theme park like MGM Studios (34%), science and technology theme parks like Epcot (31%), historical replicas of cities or towns with re-enactments (24%) and culturally-themed tourism products such as 'French Canadian cultural experiences' (13%) and 'powwows or other Aboriginal celebrations' (8%).

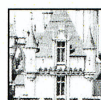
The themed landscape has become a major influence in the way people interact with their physical environment when going on vacation or simply going shopping. Some of the trends seem to indicate the shape these spaces will take in the future, but it is unclear the extent to which virtual reality will succeed in replacing actual reality in the recreation and the everyday landscape. In terms of attracting tourist dollars, business interests can learn from the directions in which these trends are going, and the following proposal outlines an example of this. How this virtual landscape will influence our perceptions and expectations of the landscape around us would be a valuable study, but one beyond the scope of this practicum.



Cirque du Soleil
S. Drake and V. Robert



Cirque du Soleil
S. Drake and V. Robert



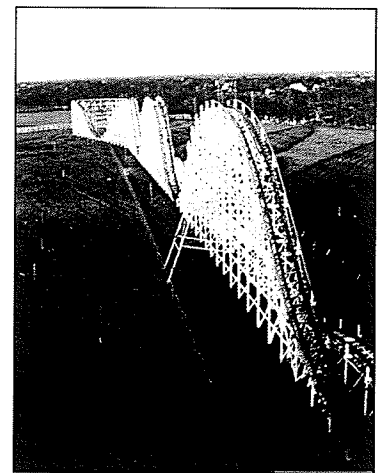
*[Winnipeg is] a bleak and wind-buffed Luna Park carved from a glacier
where winter pedestrians are less common than wild dogs.*

Guy Maddin, filmmaker

The Village Voice

local amusement parks

The geographical separation of Coney Island from New York was a significant indicator of 'another world'. Due to the fact that visitors had to travel by train to reach the beaches and their amusements, the creation of an alternate world to Victorian society and its concerns was made more complete with the anticipation during the journey to the parks. In Winnipeg in the early 1900's, and also accessed by train lines, River Park, Elm Park, and Winnipeg Beach offered similar thrills to visitors, albeit on much smaller scales.



Roller coaster, River Park
Parker, John E. collection 57
no date
Mb. Provincial Archives

river park, elm park

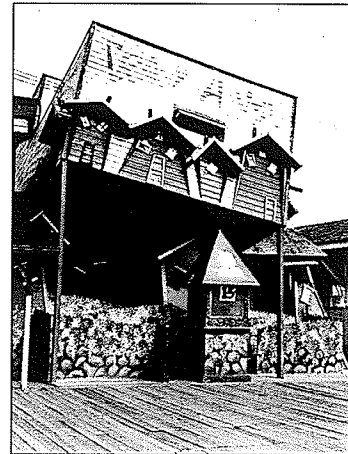
In the late nineteenth century, increased urbanization gave rise to electric traction (trolley) companies. At that time, utility companies charged the trolley companies a flat fee for the use of their electricity. As a result, the transportation companies looked for a way to stimulate weekend ridership. This resulted in the amusement park. Typically built at the end of a trolley line, amusement parks initially were simple operations consisting of picnic facilities, dance halls, restaurants,



games, and a few amusement rides. These parks were immediately successful and soon opened across North America.

Winnipeg had its own versions of these popular retreats. During the 1890s and into the early years of the 20th century, Winnipeggers went to River Park (1891-1945) and Elm Park (1890-1912), both south of the then-developed city. Albert William Austin developed a horse-drawn street railway in 1882, and then an electric streetcar starting in 1891. There was a line from Main St., down River Ave. to Osborne and through the bush to Spadina Station and the pontoon bridge at Elm Park. After 1913 the streetcar stopped at Jubilee Avenue. Albert William Austin owned four properties adjacent to the river (lots 14-16 which were River Park and lot 109 which was Elm Park), and established these commercial parks to be fed by his streetcars (MacDonald:33 and personal communication T. McLachlan).

River Park was on the north shore of the Red River in Riverview, both east and west of Osborne St. In 1890, it was less developed than Elm Park, but later became a fully fledged amusement park. A harness racing track was installed in 1893 and operated until 1925 when Polo Park opened. The track was later used for auto racing by the Winnipeg Driving Club. A large roller rink (which later moved to the U. of M.) was built in 1895 which was flooded in winter for ice skating. Later attractions included bumper cars (the "Dodgem Speedster"), a carousel, a large Ferris wheel, shooting



Crazy House, River Park
Parker, John E. collection 73
1931
Mb. Provincial Archives

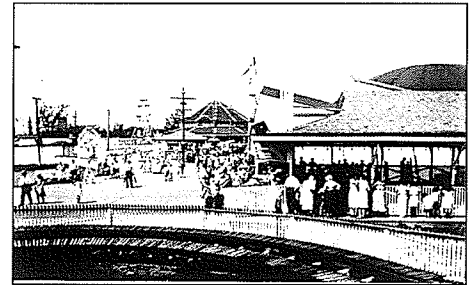


galleries, and a miniature train.

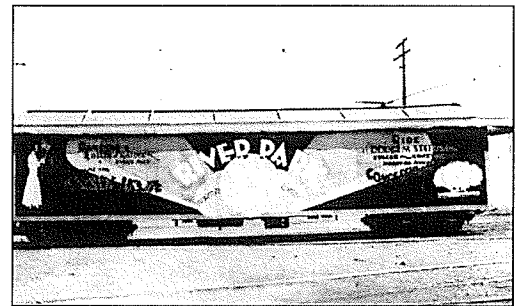
In 1900, a zoo opened which ran until 1925. John Hammerton was the park superintendent and zoo keeper from 1900 until 1925. He put in a carousel ("Hammerton's Electric Riding Gallery") on which every animal was carved by hand. The first rollercoaster was built in 1912, known as the "Jack Rabbit". It was replaced by a 700-metre-long coaster in 1928 called the "Deep Dipper" using machinery and cars manufactured in Winnipeg.

In 1942, River Park was sold to the City of Winnipeg where it developed Churchill Park and Churchill Drive, and sold the balance of the land to housing developers.

Situated where Kingston Row now is, Elm Park was first accessible from the north side of the river only by ferry, or, later, a pontoon bridge. One of its first features was a covered open-air pavillion, built in 1890. The park also featured a midway with a merry-go-round with a centrepiece with eight oil-painted landscapes. There were also automatic swings, quoits or croquet, a shooting gallery and a coconut throwing game. Visitors could also see moving pictures in the kinetoscope and photograph tent. A bandstand with brass or bagpipe bands entertained strollers in the naturalistic setting. Trails were cut into the mature forest, and riding bicycles along them was a popular pastime, since there were only young saplings on city streets at the time (MacDonald:4).



Midway, River Park looking north
Parker, John E. collection 75
1929
Mb. Provincial Archives



Open Streetcar, advertising River
Park, Winnipeg, ca 1929.
Provincial Archives of Manitoba,
Still Images Section.
John E. Parker Collection.
Item Number 74. Negative 5468.

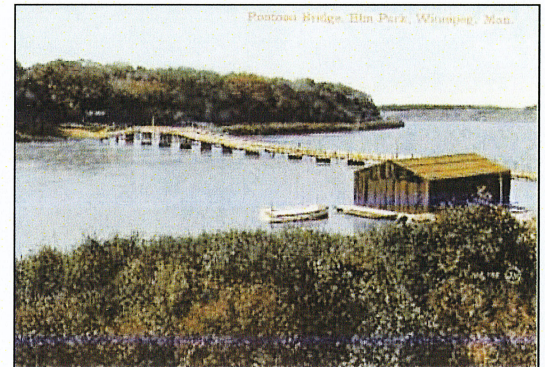


Although they were very popular at the time, reform-minded citizens were disturbed by these amusement parks. In their view, "games of chance, unsupervised dances and giddy rides exposed young people to dangerous temptations" (Ibid). After heated public pressure, the owners of the parks felt vulnerable to their assault and banned liquor sales, striving to improve the parks' image. In 1895, the *Winnipeg Free Press* reported that the dances held at the Elm Park pavilion had been discontinued because "...they threatened last year to lower the tone of the place by becoming offensively popular" (Ibid).

Nineteenth century civic reformers in Winnipeg shared the popular sentiment of their time by advocating that public city parks remain as green space to combat the smog and congestion of city life. However, the commercial aspects of River and Elm Parks did not agree with everyone. George Champion was superintendent of parks at the time, and he was adamant that amusements of a commercial nature would never sully the tranquility of public parks. As he said about the merry-go-rounds in 1908 "...nothing tend (sic) to detract from the beauty, or lower the tone, of a Park, more than things of this kind, which are entirely at variance, with all things that a Park should be" (Ibid:29).

happyland park

The Happyland Park Company was established May 1, 1906, and a park was built on about 13 hectares of land

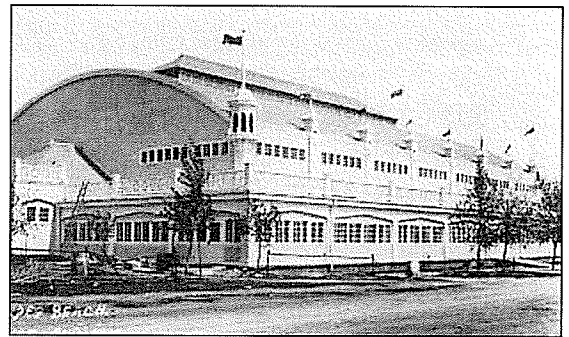


Elm Park Pontoon Bridge, n.d.
Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Still Images Section.
M. I. Guthrie Collection.
Item Number 5. Pontoon Bridge, Elm Park



between Aubrey and Dominion streets from Portage Avenue south to the Assiniboine River at a cost of \$150,000. The main side of the park fronted 90 metres of the south side of Portage Street with a high wooden fence sporting the word "Happyland" and advertisements detailing the amusements to be found inside.

The park featured either a "Figure 8" or "Scenic Railway" rollercoaster built by Ingersol/Miller, and a Traver "Circle Swing". Other attractions included a baseball diamond, which was home to The Winnipeg Maroons Baseball Team. W.O. Edmunds was Happyland's manager in 1907, and he must have booked at least one circus into Happyland because there is an account of a storm which damaged the park's canvas and wood structures, resulting in a circus elephant and lion escaping on August 10 of that year.



Dance Pavilion at Winnipeg Beach, 1911.
Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Still Images Section.
M. I. Guthrie Collection. Item Number 19

On August 20, 1908, just over two years after its opening, the park went bankrupt. It was subsequently purchased for \$6000 by W.M. Fisher. In 1909, Happyland opened a beer garden to entice more patrons, but few came. Fisher tried various schemes which failed to attract the crowds, and the park began to deteriorate. Over the next decade, fading paint on the entrance fence reflected the sad times the park was having. Competition from Winnipeg Beach and River and Elm Parks may also have been a factor. Finally the park closed in 1922.



winnipeg beach

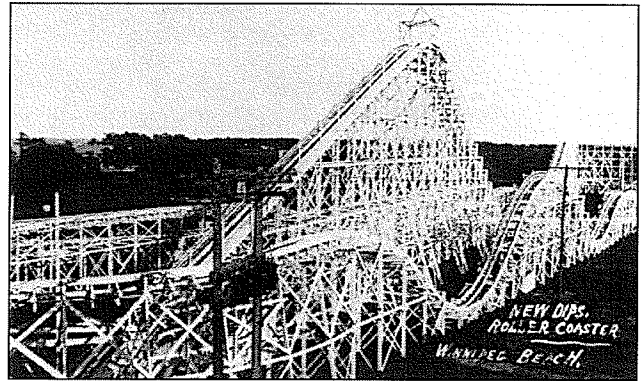
Like Coney Island, Winnipeg Beach was a resort reached by train and enjoyed by many city-dwellers at the turn of the last century. In 1900, Sir William Whyte came across the site on the west side of Lake Winnipeg and bought 330 acres of lakefront property. Two years later, there was already a community, a dance pavilion, and a train station. Track from Winnipeg was laid in 1903.

Soon the entire region was transformed, with the sudden appearance of hotels, parks, picnic grounds, a pier, a boardwalk, a roller coaster, a pony track, a theatre, concessions, and cottages. All classes of citizens were lured to the beach by the "Moonlight Special", the train from Winnipeg.

This ran for over 50 years every Saturday night, after a long six-day work week. Time at Winnipeg Beach was spent promenading the beach and boardwalk, dancing for free, listening to concerts, singing at the pier, and swimming in the lake. The train boarded for the city on Sunday at midnight and was a .50¢ return fare.

There were also "Daddy's" trains which left Winnipeg every day all summer at 5:20 p.m. for the family cottage, then left the beach in the morning to take passengers back to work.

Due to the immense popularity of the beach and its attractions, the original pavilion was soon too small, so the CPR built an ornate palace with a 14,000 sq.ft.



Roller Coaster, Winnipeg Beach



dance floor. Top bands of the 1910s through to the 1940s played there.

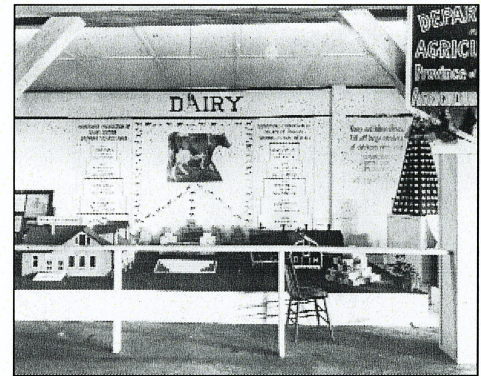
However, as with many amusement parks of its day, Winnipeg Beach soon lost its appeal and "the once gayest and gaudiest resort in Manitoba slumped into social impotence" (Mb. Gov.:10). In 1961 the CPR halted service of the train line to the beach due to lack of passengers and the park closed in 1964.

the agricultural fair

The first fair in North America was held in 1765 in Windsor, Nova Scotia. The same fair continues to operate today. In Upper Canada, as Ontario was called in early Confederation, a fair was held in 1792, sponsored by the Niagara Agricultural Society. There were also many small fairs in the early eighteenth century in French Canada.

A New England farmer named Elkanah Watson was known as "the father of U.S. agricultural fairs" because he showed a small exhibit of sheep in Pittsfield, Mass. in 1807. He wrote "many farmers, and even women, were excited by curiosity to attend this first novel and humble exhibition" (*Fairs and Expos website*).

Early fairs in the US and Canada shifted away from the European festival model into the development of agriculture and animal husbandry. They offered public



Manitoba Agricultural College exhibit
Brandon, 1917
Mb. Provincial Archives

↳ "park" on the park



education, promotion of local industry, and entertainment. As competition became the main program element, youth development provided a social theme. By the beginning of the 20th century, almost every state and province had at least one fair or exhibition.

Today, over 3200 agriculture fairs are held in North America each year. They feature educational activities as well as industrial exhibits, demonstrations, competitions aimed at the advancement of livestock, horticulture and agriculture (Ibid).

red river exhibition site

The Red River Exhibition has been held in Winnipeg for over 50 years and has used several different locations in and around the city, including across from the Legislative Building, on McPhillips St., next to the site of Polo Park shopping centre, and now next to the Assiniboia Downs near the Perimeter Highway. In terms of this practicum, the current location for the Exhibition is interesting because, like all of the major sites discussed so far, the site is on the physical edge of a settlement. The following chapter outlines proposed design interventions for this site. It also examines existing conditions and uses, and makes proposals for a park with a more permanent identity for



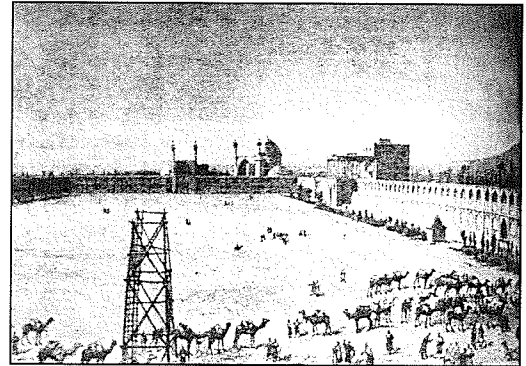
Red River Exhibition, 1956
Mb. Provincial Archives



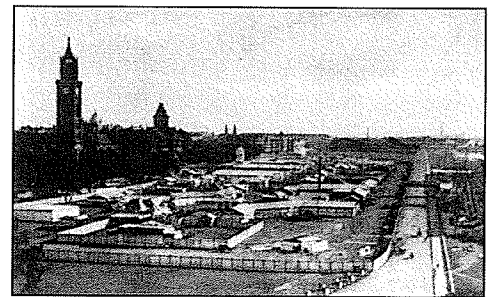
year-round entertainment.

The prairie location of the site means that the landscape is relatively flat. It is surrounded by fields on one side and by the city itself on the other. This site has permanent buildings built for the fair, and the remainder of the property is largely undeveloped and merges with the adjacent field. Though underused, the site is often available for alternate uses when the Exhibition is not in town. Similarly, in India vast, open spaces called 'maidans' support a wide spectrum of urban activity, including sporting events, political rallies, religious congregations, trade fairs and circuses. They date back centuries from city planning by Islamic rulers, and are generally found either on the edge of a city, such as this site, or as a clearing in the middle of a city.

The landscape narrative of the Red River Ex site is that of agriculture, annual fair, proximity to horse racing, and proximity to a city. Its vast open spaces hold the potential for a park which utilizes the rich history of the fair and moves it forward into the twenty-first century world of the amusement landscape.



Maidan-i-Shah, Isfahan,
as nomadic site
Mme. Dieulafoy, *La Perse* (1887)



Temporary habitation in the Oval Maidan,
Bombay, c.1900
The Victoria and Albert Archives, Bombay



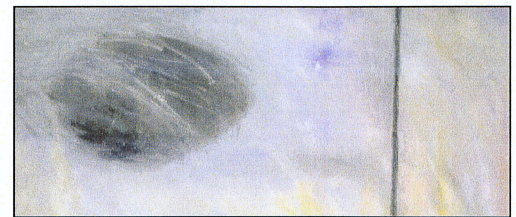
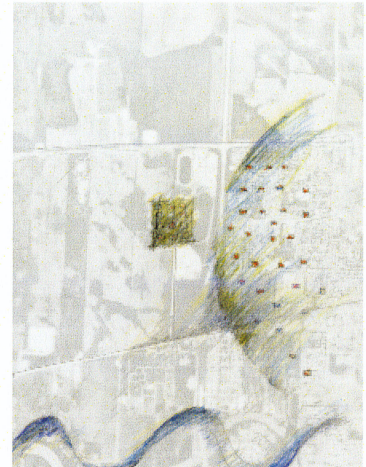
"The prairies burning form some of the most beautiful scenes that are to be witnessed in this country, and also some of the most sublime. Every acre of these vast prairies (being covered for hundreds and hundreds of miles, with a crop of grass, which dies and dries in the fall) burns over during the fall or early in the spring, leaving the ground a black and doleful colour."

- George Catlin, 1832

design strategies

The notion of the sublime was first outlined according to our relationship with nature and its terrible and profound forces. It was then extended to describe our relationship to technological marvels of the Industrial Revolution. The effects one feels when hurtling through space on a ride at the amusement park could come close to "that state of the soul in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror", as Burke described (Kramnick:64). The awesome power of the machine has thereby become the means for achieving 'near-death' physical experience. The effects and nature of the sublime on the prairie landscape is a theme which explores this interaction between the machine and the garden.

The Red River Exhibition site, though seemingly mundane, presents unique opportunities for experiences related to its past. Currently, this site sees less than 100 days of activity per year, so it is reasonable to assume that more use could be made of it both in land use and days of use. Other than the annual CanadInns Winter Wonderland show, which is a drive-through, 150,000-light display, there is no



"park" subservient to the park - landscape reason for park

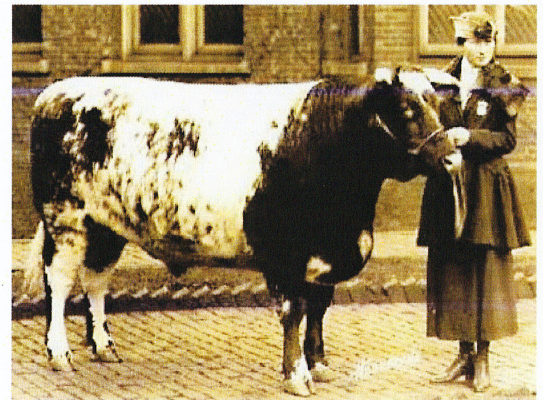
reason to go there in the off-season. The entire property is 480 acres in total, but the developed portion of this site is currently only 90 acres.

The proposed design uses the remaining nearly 400 acres of the site to create a permanent, year-round landscape-based attraction which serves different purposes depending on the season.

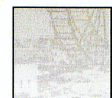
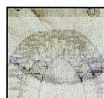
There are permanent features which expand on the attractions of the Red River Exhibition in larger and more technologically advanced ways.

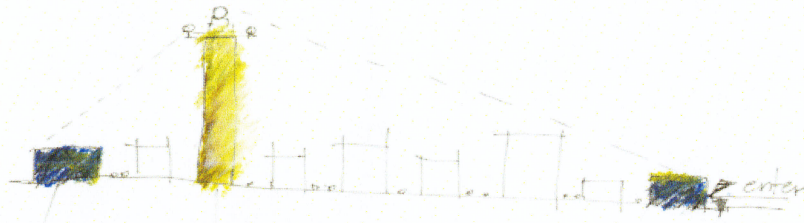
These features include:

- * a simulation theatre which engages viewers in surround-sound and image 'rides' of prairie phenomena such as crop-burnings, tornadoes, floods, etc.
- * a similar theatre, based on agriculture, and which takes the viewer inside the body of a cow; another which begins in outer space and zooms down until the viewer is travelling across the US and Canadian prairies a few hundred feet in the air; and another which explores the evolution of technology and the machine as it relates to agriculture.
- * a complex based on the tall grass prairie which includes a homestead, prairie and shelter belt as well as a below-ground theatre with a historical ride depicting the history of the area from Lake Agassiz through tall grass prairie to agriculture to urban life to a projected future.



Miss Curtis, cattle judge, c.1915. Photo by Hildebrand. Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Still Images Section. Agriculture Collection. -- Livestock-Cattle. Item Number 14



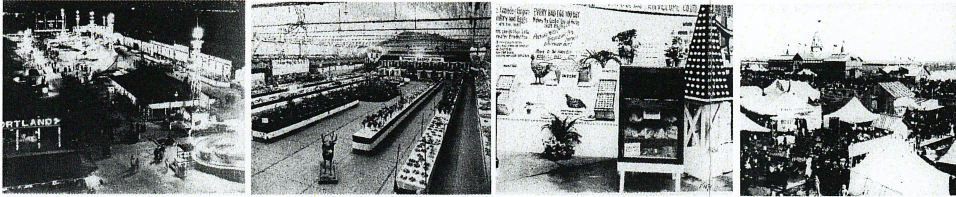
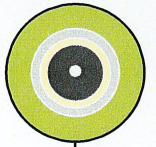


- * a linear lake extending the present retention pond with sedge plantings and fish as a ride which explores the underwater life inside. This becomes a giant skating rink in winter.
- * a long curvilinear series of berms rising 50m in places which extend around the southern end of the park. These are iced-over in winter and become toboggan slides and snowboarding slopes as well as projection screens for film.
- * these berms also become a rollercoaster-like ride in both winter and summer by using remotely powered electric vehicles.
- * a giant observation tower in the middle for viewing the big prairie sky.

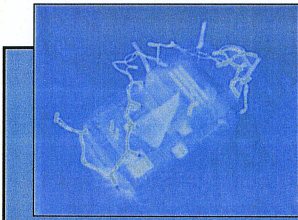
Like River and Elm Parks as well as Coney Island, the means by which one travels to and arrives at the park is extremely important. Since the others were based on a state-of-the-art method, the bullet train would be an interesting option for this site.

The escape to elsewhere is now a multi-billion dollar industry worldwide. The traditional formulas for creating them are gradually changing, incorporating more regionally-specific and varied amusements and attractions. The ones which will endure will provide unusual and compelling reasons to transgress from the everyday.



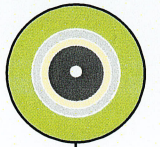


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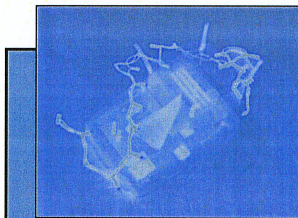


land park

existing

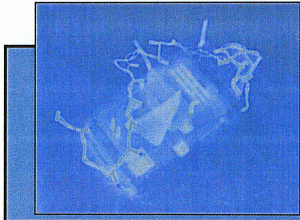
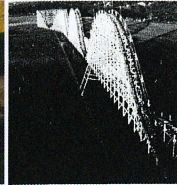
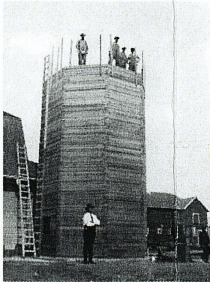
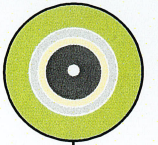


edge condition



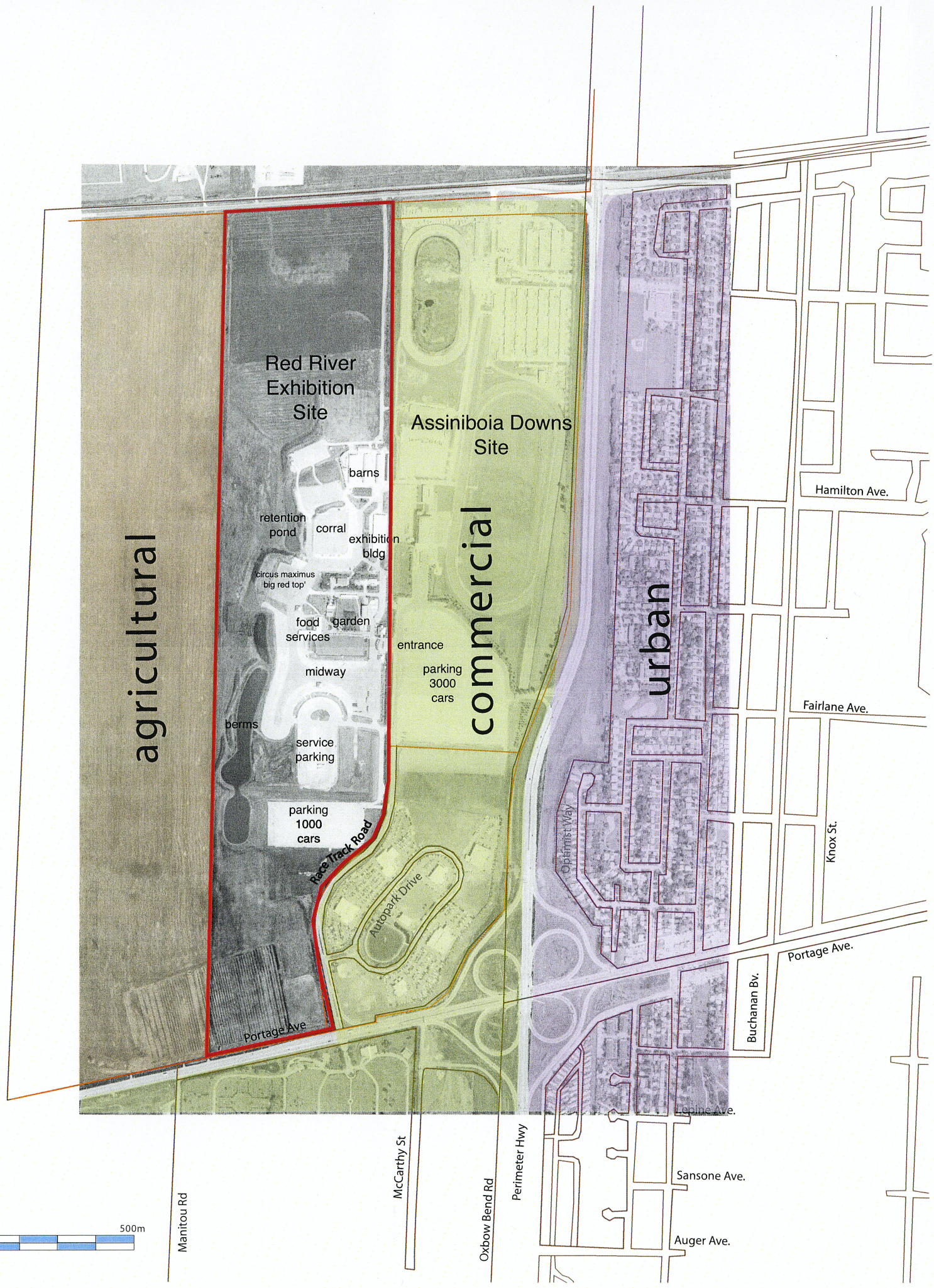
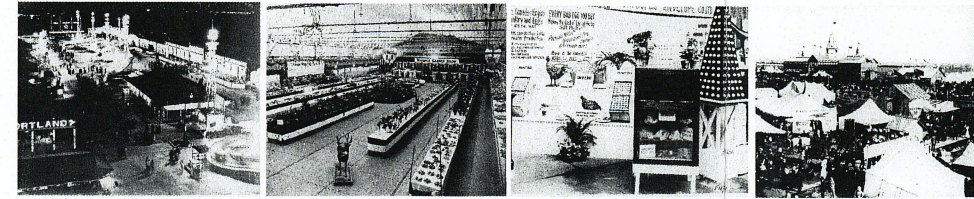
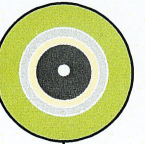
land park

existing



land park

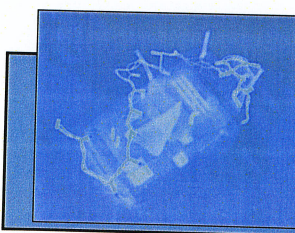
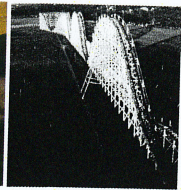
new features



context

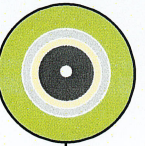
land park

existing

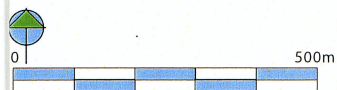


land park

new features

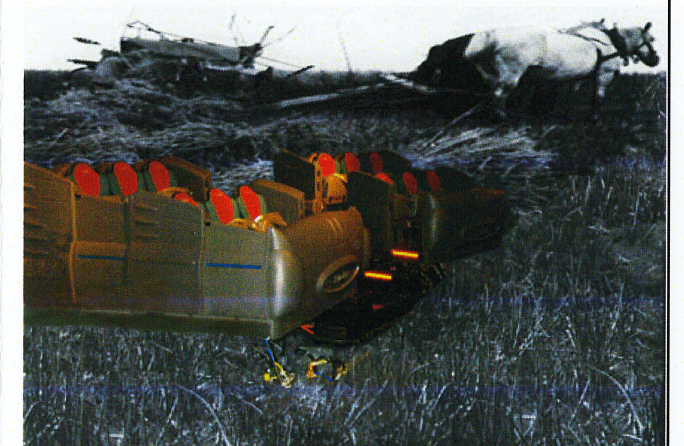
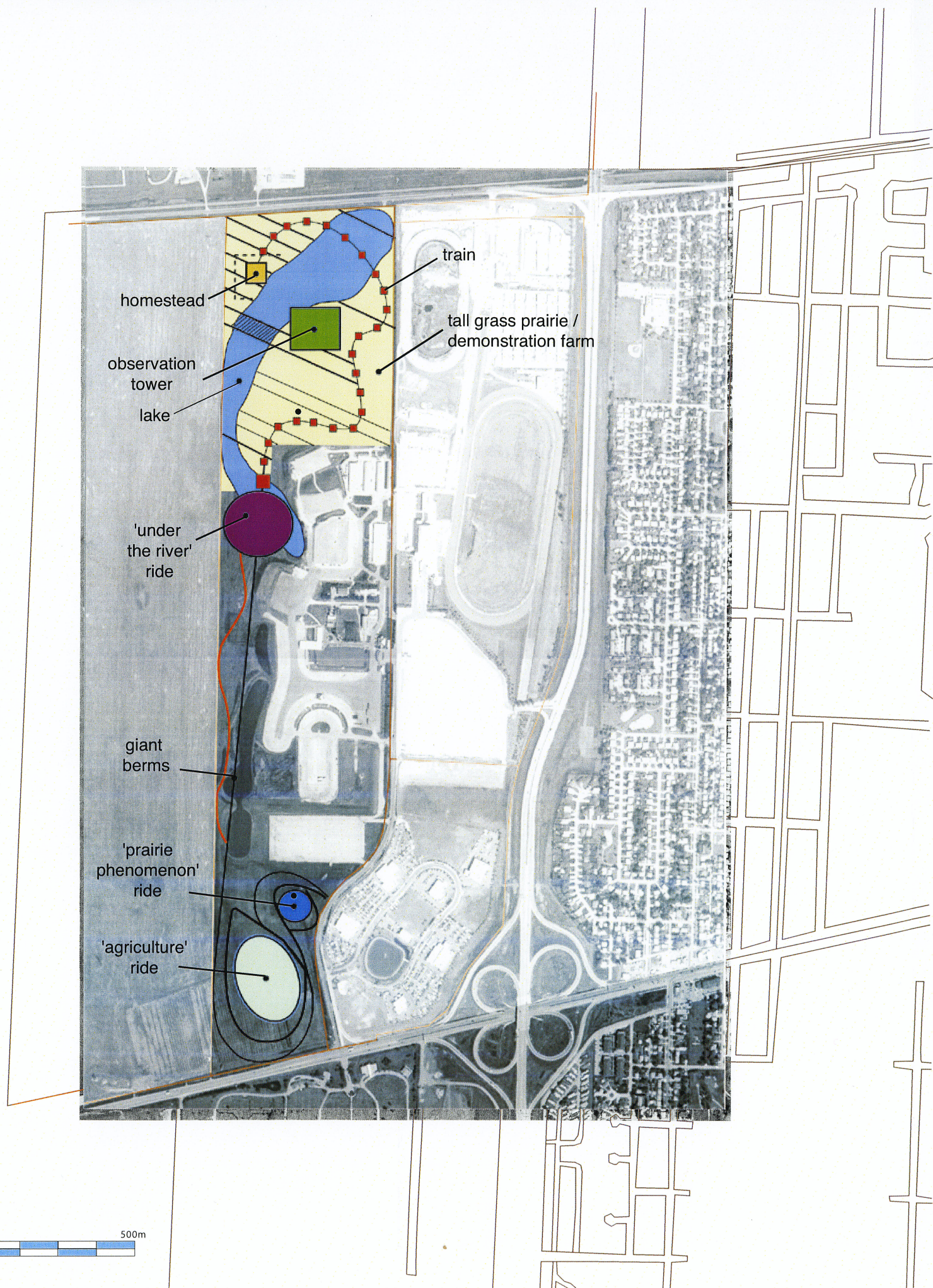


edge condition

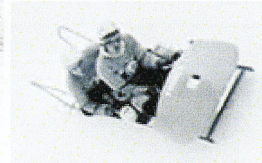
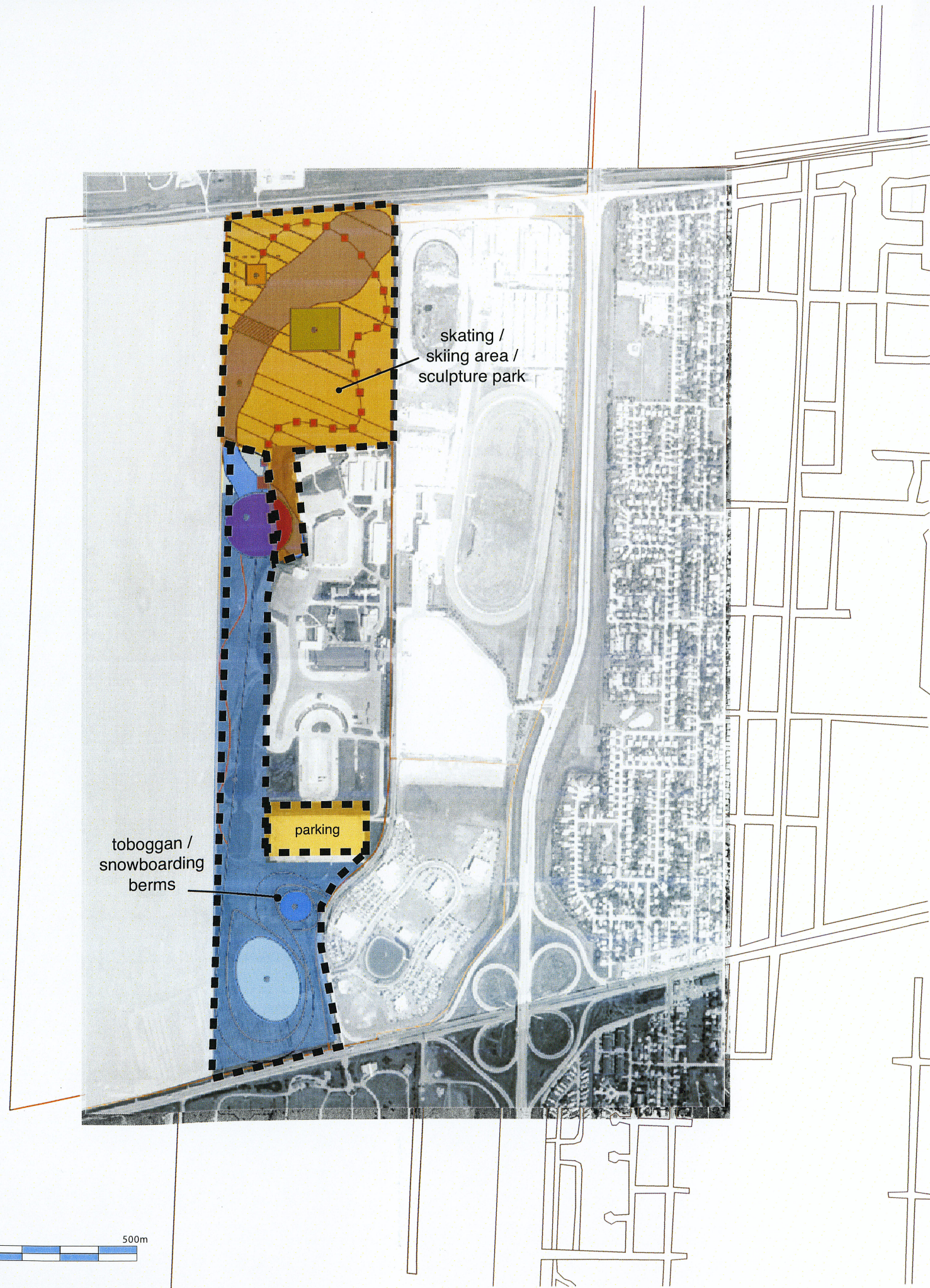


land park

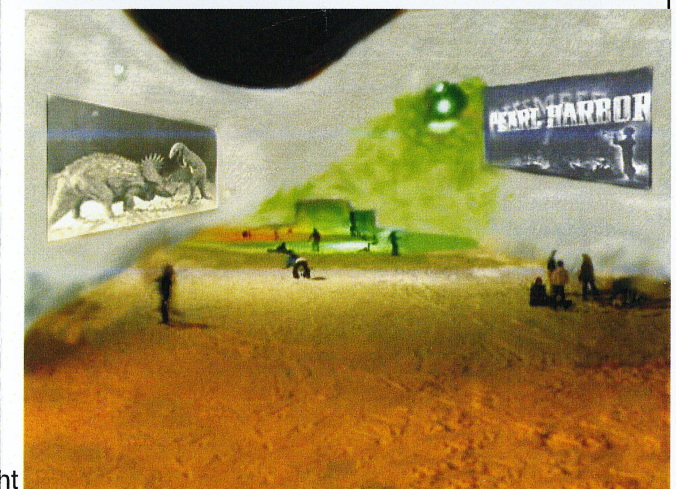
existing



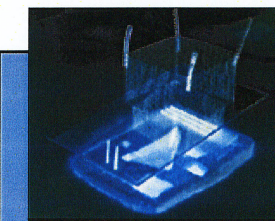
land park activity areas - summer



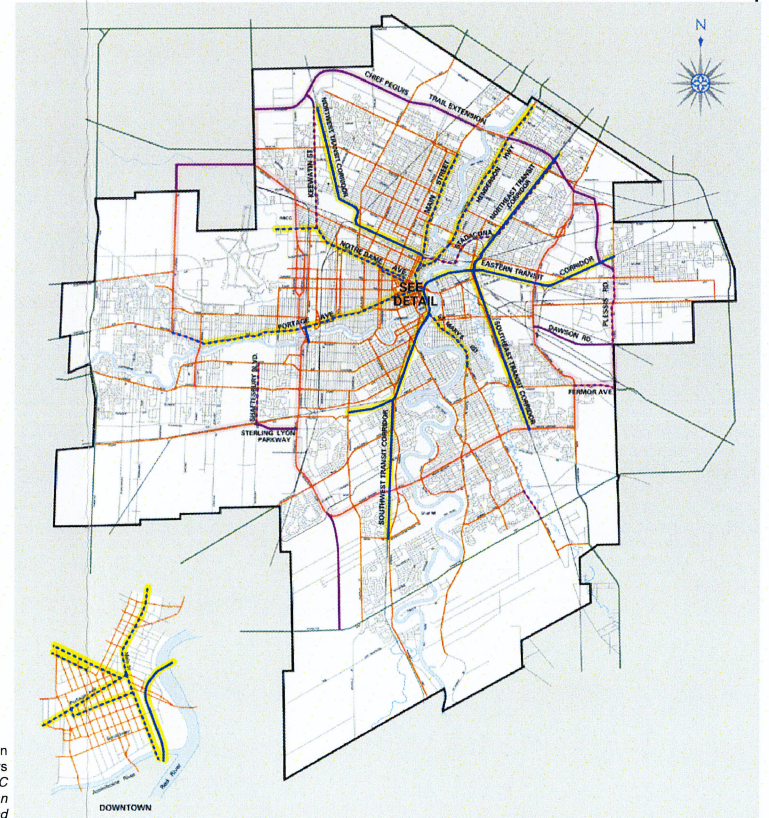
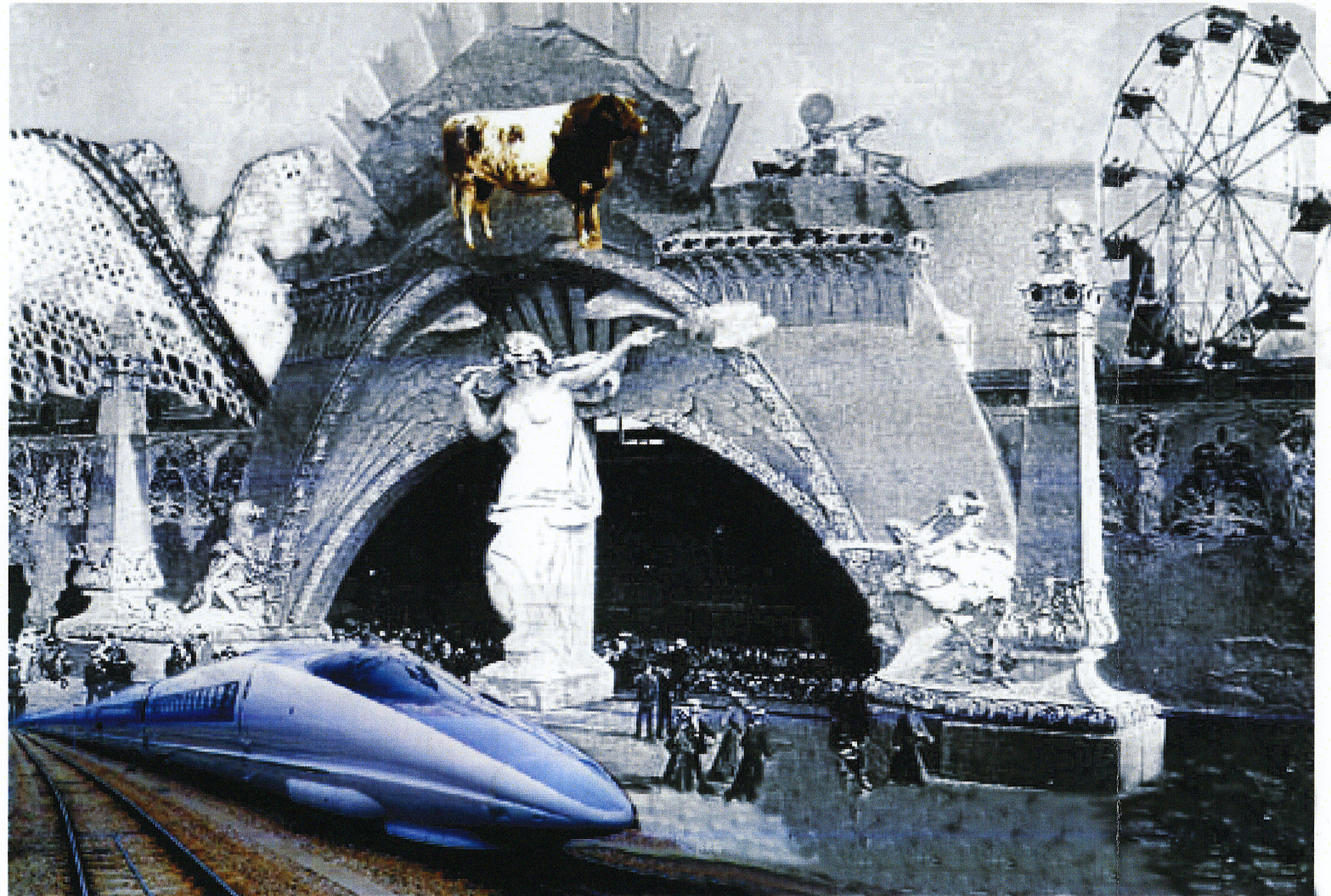
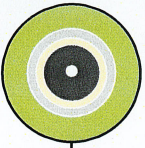
toboggan slide by day



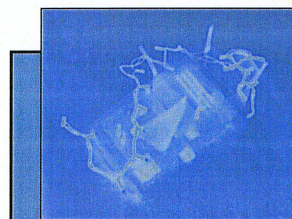
and by night



land park activity areas - winter

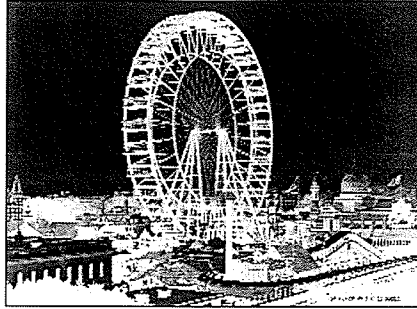


Plan Winnipeg 2020 Vision
High Speed Transit Corridors
Policy Plate C
Transportation Concept Plan
to 2020 and Beyond



land park

mode of
transport



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