The Development of Homes in Houston and Chicago

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INTRODUCTION

The character of American cities has been determined by many things, perhaps the most important of which are geography, types of housing, and, before the development of mass transit, the availability of public transportation. High population eastern port cities, such as Baltimore and Philadelphia, expanded inland from the waterfront with blocks of brick or wood row houses. Less densely populated cities with more land area could have semi-detached or single-family homes that are set on larger lots. The latter detached house became the standard for suburban growth. The development of public transportation was the vital factor that helped the city spread in the direction of the service lines and increased the dispersal of people from residences in the central city to locations further away.

The unit will be used to supplement a section of a course in United States history that deals with the development and growth of cities. The students in the course are in the eleventh grade and many have a first language other than English. The school has students from over 40 countries and is one of the most ethnically diverse schools in Texas.

Generally, when history textbooks discuss cities, they focus on a single time period: the end of the nineteenth century, at the time of the change from a "walking city" to a city where some form of transportation was necessary to get from home to work. This unit will deal with two time periods. The first to be considered will be the late nineteenth century up to the United States' entry into World War I, a span that coincides with the Progressive Era, and the second will be the post-World War II "Baby Boom" era (c. 1946-1955). I have selected these periods because the first was a time of very large immigrations to the United States, an aspect of interest to my students. As these new Americans became economically stable, they increased the demand for housing. The second, post-World War II period included the mushrooming growth of tract housing in cities and the suburbs, a phenomenon that is particularly important in the growth of Houston.

In describing the factors that contributed to the growth of cities, most texts include the development of the skyscraper that was made possible by the Otis elevator with its safety mechanism and plate glass, the introduction of electric lights, and the increased use of the trolley. Although tenements are sometimes mentioned, there is no information provided about the types of single-family houses that people were building and inhabiting.

This unit will take the story of the city one step further and will look at the types of homes that were being constructed at the time of the development of city transportation. In doing this, the following should be considered: geographic factors, types of transportation available, reasons for the location of transportation lines, cost, and style of the house. The last item will include comparing types of roof as well as the presence of porches and yards. In studying the house, the type of heating (coal, gas, oil), the type of plumbing, and the floor plans will be considered.

DISCUSSION OF UNIT

Two cities with a large geographical area and a generally flat land configuration will be included in the unit: Houston and Chicago. The growth of each of these cities was initially not limited or cut off by incorporated neighboring towns, as was the case for earlier New England and Middle Atlantic settlements. Each of these cities also grew by annexing outlying areas, a process that sometimes included the annexation of smaller towns. Therefore it is possible to observe a variety of housing types within the city limits of each. Another similarity is that both Houston and Chicago developed as both ports and as railroad centers. Houston was advertised as the "Chicago of Texas" (Baron 293).

In the late nineteenth century, the type of home constructed was influenced by the beginning of the advertising age, the growth of magazines, and the marketing skills of individual builders and large retailers like Sears & Roebuck. Consequently, there should be similarities between the houses built in Houston and Chicago, although the obvious differences in climate might contribute to variations in design. This unit will examine similarities and differences. There might also be similarities in environmental design that were caused by the beliefs of the Progressive era. Examples are the appearances of city amenities such as parks and wide streets with boulevards. In each city, there will be political and commercial factions involved in the development of new residential areas.

The students will study the growth of Houston from its initial site, the formation of the wards, and its outward growth to places such as the Houston Heights and Montrose. In Chicago, Hyde Park, on the South Side, and suburban Park Forest will be discussed. Students will realize that a city is always changing and growing. They will learn what people want in a home, what is necessary for living, and what is a nice extra. Indirectly, they should learn what a city offers and what and why people want to live there. This last point might involve the current attractiveness of the Houston downtown area as a place to live.

Chicago will be used as a contrast. There are some similarities between the locations that explain why each was chosen as the location of a major city. Although Chicago was developed much earlier than Houston, the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 destroyed a large percentage of the city's buildings. The post-1871 reconstruction resulted in many buildings that are closer in age to buildings in Houston than would be the case between Houston and other older Midwestern cities. A difference between the cities was that in

the aftermath of the Great Fire, a new Chicago fire code required fireproof buildings downtown and in adjacent areas. Consequently, more brick construction will be found in Chicago residential areas.

In terms of specific academic knowledge, students should get a better idea of the beginning of the Progressive Era and the role of increased literacy, which led to magazines, newspapers and the power of advertising. They can also learn about other Progressive methods and programs for improving urban life through the implementation of better sanitation, the enforcement of health codes, and the availability of a good water supply.

The Early Period: First Settlements and Catastrophes

A river determined the placement of the earliest settlement in each of the cities. In Chicago, a trading post was set up where the Chicago River flowed into Lake Michigan, and in Houston, the business area was set up at Buffalo Bayou's furthest navigable distance from the Gulf of Mexico. The Chicago River has two branches and, originally, more development was located south of the river. The boundary imposed by the river meant that the land available for the commercial and residential growth of Chicago was more constricted than was the case in Houston. By 1871 Chicago was much larger than Houston and had more and larger buildings. Then the catastrophic Great Fire devastated Chicago and completely destroyed the downtown area, including commercial buildings, government offices, churches, and private homes. As Chicago was rebuilt, the business part of the city remained downtown, and the residential and manufacturing areas moved further out to less expensive land. Churches also followed this pattern when many congregations sold their more valuable downtown land and used the profits to construct larger buildings closer to the new residential areas (Bluestone 99).

Houston's growth was also associated with a catastrophe, in its case the natural disaster of the 1901 hurricane that caused many deaths and destroyed large parts of Galveston. People moved inland, and many businesses were relocated to Houston. This increase in financial activity gave a boost to the growth of Houston's economy.

As each city grew there was need for public transportation. Convenient public transportation was a key element in making it possible for more people to become homeowners. According to the *Houston Daily Post*, "Rapid transit is the only thing that can enable a poor man to own his home" (Baron 28-29). Houston at first had streetcars running on rails and pulled by mules. By 1874 the Houston City Street Railway System offered regular trolley service, one of the earliest systems west of the Mississippi. There were two lines, one on Travis Street from Market Square to the Fairgrounds (about a mile and a quarter away) and a second along Washington Avenue to Glenwood Cemetery. A second franchise, which later became the Bayou City Street Railway, was given to Samuel E. and William Boyd, brothers who ran a paving company that did business with the city. At first, these two lines competed fiercely because they served the same general

areas of the city, but later these two companies merged. Although the Houston City Streeet Railway had been started by Houstonians, the company was sold to a Chicago businessman, Charles B. Holmes, who eventually resold the line to an Omaha, Nebraska syndicate headed by Oscar M. Carter. In 1892, when electric trolley service began, the company changed its name to the Houston Electric Company. In the same year, the Houston Heights Street Railway was started. Later (1894) the Houston and Fairview Street Railway added a line to Montrose, and the Houston City Street Railway added an unprofitable service to Bellaire (1910). The combined lines had 13 routes and over 35 miles in the system in 1892, and at its peak in 1928 had 90 miles of track. River Oaks was not on a trolley line, but there were shuttle buses that operated between the Country Club and downtown. This subsidized service began in 1928 and used segregated seating for blacks, who were seated in the backs of busses. Segregation in the streetcars had been instituted in the Jim Crow legislation of 1903 when a law was passed that required separate sections for blacks and whites. This legislation was opposed by the company because it required changes in the cars, was unpopular with black patrons, and was difficult to enforce. The Houston black community responded by boycotting the streetcars, one of the earliest examples of a protest of this type. The Houston City Council, however, ignored these protests and passed the ordinance (Baron 6, 16, 30, 50, 28, 42-43, 79).

Oscar M. Carter was the developer of the Houston Heights. At approximately the same time that he bought the Houston City Street Railway, he acquired the land on which the Houston Heights would be built. The Houston Heights Street Railway was a separate company and was probably set up as a way to remove profits from the Houston Electric Company for use in the development of the real estate. The Heights trolley line ran down Heights Boulevard and provided easy and quick connections to downtown Houston. The company also helped in the electrification of houses in the Heights because railroad executives, such as D.D. Cooley and C.A. McKinney, who lived on Heights Boulevard, were able to tap into the power lines and use the company's electricity free of charge. At the time of its development, the Houston Heights was an incorporated municipality. It was annexed by the City of Houston in 1918 (Baron 111, 115).

The Houston Heights had homes for a variety of economic classes. The larger, more expensive houses were located on Heights Boulevard, and lower priced lots were available farther from the Boulevard. Lot sizes also varied. In addition to residential property, there were manufacturers in the southwest and northwest parts of the community. The Boulevard is also an example of the type of amenity that was typical of the Progressive Era. A wide park-like area provided places for people to walk and get fresh air.

Before either the Houston Heights or Hyde Park could be marketed as attractive places to live, each had to have an appropriate name that conjured up the desired image. In Houston, the word "heights" could be connected with higher places that got cooler

breezes during the hot summer months. Hyde Park reminded buyers of an upscale tree-filled London area.

In Chicago the development of Hyde Park has some parallels with the Heights. Paul Cornell, the developer of Hyde Park, purchased the land in 1853. Realizing that he would have to offer transportation to his development that was about seven miles from downtown Chicago, he convinced the Illinois Central Railroad to run its tracks through his land on Lake Michigan and not through the center of the state. Sen. Stephen A. Douglas helped negotiate this new location, a change that also benefited the city of Chicago. Cornell also realized he had to make Hyde Park a desired destination. To accomplish this, he built a hotel near Lake Michigan. The hotel was advertised as a vacation place in which you could escape the heat and foul air of downtown Chicago and as a place that catered to the wealthy. He was successful in his attempts. Among the guests were the wives of two United States Presidents: Mary Todd Lincoln, who stayed there after the assassination, and Julia Boggs Dent Grant. The Hyde Park population grew, and land prices increased after the Chicago Fire, when distance from downtown became more attractive. Hyde Park, annexed by the City of Chicago in 1889, was distinguished by its large parks and open areas such as Washington Park, Jackson Park and the Midway Plaisance (Berger 17, 19-21). These parks had been designed by Frederick Law Olmstead at the time of the Columbian Exposition of 1892-1893. The central part of the Exposition was in Jackson Park and the Midway. The University of Chicago (1893) at its inception was located north of the Midway; in the mid-twentieth century, it has expanded to the south.

Chicago and Houston were influenced by the City Beautiful movement. Chicago's Plan of 1910 outlined a series of parks that would form a continuous link around the city. Broad boulevards would also have plantings. Railroad lines were moved from the lakefront so that there could be an uninterrupted view of Lake Michigan. In many cases, rail lines that formerly had been at street grade were either lowered beneath or raised above traffic. As Houston grew, it placed esplanades in some streets and developed spacious parks, such as Hermann Park and Memorial Park. Private gardens and smaller parks in residential areas also had the additional advantage of increasing land values. Providing parks was also in keeping with the Progressive aim of providing a healthy and salubrious environment for citizens. Chicago, for example, used coal from fields in Illinois and Pennsylvania that were relatively close. Even though anthracite coal gave a cleaner burn than the cheaper bituminous coal, the smoke from coal-burning factories polluted the air.

Types of Houses:

Early Workmen's Homes

Housing of the lowest economic group is difficult to document for several reasons. Lack of maintenance combined with inferior building materials or practices contributed to the

disintegration of houses. In other cases, homes were abandoned when it became possible for the tenants to construct and own better residences. In some Chicago neighborhoods, older wood homes were moved to the back of the lot that faced an alley and a new home was constructed on the side facing the main street. In each of these cases, the resulting neglect of basic maintenance could lead to deterioration and to the eventual demolition of the structure.

Basic housing needs were met by a structure that provided a kitchen, sleeping areas, and a place for family chores and activities such as sewing. These requirements can be met in different ways. A contrast between Houston and Chicago can be found in the shotgun house and the raised one story-plus loft. Each house was made of wood, could be heated by either coal or wood, had a limited number of rooms that were used for multiple activities and, in the early versions, did not have connections to sanitary sewers.

The shotgun house had a series of rooms laid out in succession with a front door and a back door at either end of the same axis, so it was possible to fire a shot that could travel the length of the house and not hit anything. In a hot, humid climate, this arrangement of rooms permitted cross ventilation. The house could have front and back yards and a small front porch, almost a necessity in the south. Another home that provides ventilation is the dog-run house. In this design, two sets of rooms are connected by an open porch. Both shotgun and dog-run houses were usually made of wood and had one story.

In Chicago, many workmen's homes were built by the contractor Samuel E. Gross, who claimed to have established over eighteen suburban towns during his career (Berger 112). Because Gross built many of his homes outside the "fire limits" area in which brick construction was required, he could market a less expensive wooden dwelling. His developments were close to public transportation. The homes had an elevated basement, a design that required a flight of steps to reach the front door. The first floor had four rooms: two bedrooms, a parlor and kitchen. The second floor had two smaller bedrooms. There was no indoor plumbing. This is not surprising because before 1908, bathrooms were found only in higher priced homes. An attraction of the elevated basement was that it could be rented out to another family. Additional income from rent helped the owner make mortgage payments. These homes did not have front porches and were built up to the sidewalk line (Mayer and Wade 155-156; *Sears Roebuck Houses*).

An example of homes built by Gross for the workingman can be found on Archer Ave. These 1887 homes are called cottages, because the roof is too steep for a bungalow, but they are in the transitional phase between the cottage and the bungalow. The homes date from the period before the street level was raised to accommodate the sewer system. The street is on the same level as the front-door sill of the home. One of the houses in the block has been raised to include a basement floor at ground level.

Gross aimed his advertising at immigrants, particularly German-speaking ones, and he is sometimes associated with the unscrupulous builders portrayed in Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. Other commentators, like Berger, take a more generous view and claim that Gross did not automatically foreclose on an owner because of late payments, but preferred to have buyers who would use the equity in their homes to trade up to more expensive models. Biggot, in defense of builders like Gross, argues that Sinclair's view of immigrants is paternalistic. Sinclair, although a Socialist and a crusader for better working conditions, maintained the prejudices against and misconceptions about immigrants that were typical of the era. Biggot's statistics on home buying in Hammond, Indiana, show that the high percentage of immigrants who became homeowners indicates that they would not have been deceived by the business practices described in *The Jungle* (Berger 115; Biggot 150-151).

Workmen's homes can be either cottages or bungalows. Cottages may be one or two floors and have a sharply pitched roof that might have dormers. In Chicago the narrow side of the house faced the street. Building material can be wood or brick. More expensive early twentieth century cottages were frequently embellished in the eaves and on the porches with intricate wooden decoration called "gingerbread."

Bungalows

A bungalow is usually a one-story house with a gable or hip roof. Its silhouette is characterized by a low, flat appearance that is in harmony with the landscape. Well-placed shrubs hide the dividing line between the house's foundation and the earth and contribute to the feeling that the house is more closely joined to the ground. The building material can be brick, wood, stucco, or adobe. Many bungalows use several contrasting materials that will accent the horizontal lines of the house. A lighter-colored limestone placed under the windows of a brick house will emphasize the length. Frequently there will be a roofed porch. Although bungalows are usually thought of as having only one floor, there are some bungalows that have more than one story. Sometimes one or two rooms are contained within the sloping lines of the roof; in the case of "airplane" bungalows, the rooms are set in a box-like structure on the center of the house. In the airplane bungalow, the lower horizontal lines of the bungalow suggest airplane wings. The roof of a bungalow has deep overhanging eaves that may be supported with brackets. Within this basic pattern there are many possible variations: the length of the porch, the use of pillars, the architectural order of the columns, the number and type of windows, the use of a bay window. Bungalows may be constructed on pilings, may be put on a slab on the ground, or may have basements.

The word "bungalow" comes from a Bengali word that referred to buildings in India that had rooms on one floor and a verandah that encircled them. The English use of the word dates from the British Colonial period. Although the term remained, the designs of the buildings changed during the late 19th and early 20th centuries both in England and in the United States. The first bungalow in England (1869) was built near the sea as a

second home. The first bungalows in the United States appeared after 1876. Another contributing factor to the style of the bungalow is its development from the cottage. Bigott notes that the Aladdin Homes Catalog used the same floor plans and specifications for the "Princeton Cottage" and the later "Princeton Bungalow." The only variation is in the name (Lancaster 34, 43; Biggot 50-51).

There were several other influences in the development of the bungalow style. In the eastern United States, the roofline in Flemish buildings or even the Swedish log cabin might have influenced the form. It is more likely that the development of the bungalow in the Middle West was influenced by the commingling elements from the Arts and Crafts movement and from the Japanese architecture that appeared at several World's Fairs, including the Columbian Exposition at Chicago (1893) and the St. Louis Exposition (1903) in honor of the Lewis and Clark expedition. In the Southwest and in California, one-floor Spanish adobe construction influenced design. The era of bungalow popularity extended from the 1890s to the onset of the Great Depression (Lancaster 46).

The typical brick Chicago bungalow combines the Prairie and the Arts and Crafts styles. Frank Lloyd Wright, a Chicago area resident, was one of the early proponents of the Prairie style. The long horizontal lines of Wright's designs can be seen in many homes in the Chicago area, including the Robie House (1909) in Hyde Park, and the Tomek House (1907) in Riverside, IL. Of these two houses, only the second is considered to be a bungalow (Winter 71-73). Other Arts and Crafts elements present in many bungalows include hardwood floors, built-in furniture, fireplaces, excellent woodwork, and colored leaded glass in windows. The windows are double hung and can open at the top and bottom; this arrangement permits the circulation of air. The front room may occupy the area where a front porch would be in a home in milder climates. The windows in this sunny area might project toward the street in a rounded or octagonal-shaped bay window. The front entrance sometimes leads to a vestibule that is separated from the front room by a door; this design prevents the wasteful escape of heat. The exterior brickwork sometimes has intricate designs and includes decorative elements. Often two different types of brick were used: a more expensive face brick for the front of the house, and a less costly type for the parts of the sides not visible from the street. The Chicago bungalow, unlike those in Houston, has a full basement.

The bungalow's floor plan usually has the living room opening into the dining room. The division between rooms could be an arch or architectural columns. This arrangement allows all rooms to receive light. Although floor plans vary, a common arrangement was to have the bedrooms located from the middle to the rear of one side of the house. If there is a hall, it is a connecting passage between the bedrooms and the bathroom. The desire for light and air was a reaction against the Victorian Era's use of heavy drapes, and it led to minimal window coverings. The simple, light and airy open floor plan is associated with positive values and a healthy approach to life, and is in keeping with Progressive ideals. The Arts and Crafts movement and the elevation in importance of excellent-quality handmade products can also be associated with the Progressive

Movement in Chicago because Jane Addams, the founder of Hull House, was one of the founders of the Chicago Arts and Crafts Society (Cigliano 77).

In both Houston and Chicago, bungalows can be found in many areas of the city. Frequently they were a family's "starter home," although they could also be the permanent home. The Houston Heights bungalow is usually placed on a much larger lot than a Chicago bungalow, and its gable ends may face toward the sides of the lot or toward the front of the lot. In Chicago, lots are narrower and the gable ends of the bungalow will usually face the street. The Chicago houses are also much closer together and will have fewer exposed areas such as porches. Bungalows in both cities will have backyards and greenery or shrubs in the front. The Houston homes will have more extensive front yards. Alleys provide access to garages that are located at the back of the lot. The alleys also were used by vehicles that removed garbage or provided other services for the homes. As a result, commercial traffic was reduced on the street and the residential character of the neighborhood was enhanced.

Houston bungalows have floor plans similar to those found in Chicago, with the living room at the front of the house and the kitchen at the back. Open front porches that extend across the front of the house and sometimes wrap around the side could be enjoyed all year and could provide relief from the heat in the days before air-conditioning. Because of the climate, entry to the house could be directly into the living room. Early homes were built with very high ceilings, a plan that allowed the hot air to rise.

Bungalows and other Houston homes exhibit a variety of architectural styles in the elements of the front porch. The overhanging roof of the porch may have supports only on the railings at the corners or at both the corners and the front steps. The supports can be rectangular or cylindrical columns with capitals using any one of the classical orders. Large planters may flank the front steps.

Larger Homes

Two- and three-story homes became much easier to build following the development of the balloon frame in the early nineteenth century. Balloon frame construction uses standard lengths of wood in the walls, with the result that the structure can be built and then raised by fewer workers in a shorter period of time. This technique can be used in any size building, but it is particularly useful in larger ones and those having more than one story. One of the earliest examples of balloon frame construction was St. Mary's Church in Chicago (1836). Homebuilders frequently followed plans that were offered by house plan books or by magazines. The same plans could be found across the country. An example of this is the use of the plan of George Barber's Design no. 27 in houses built in Calvert, TX and Ottawa, IL (Culbertson 39; Wright 103). The Queen Anne design is easy to recognize because of rich ornamentation of the brickwork that continues out from the chimney and surrounds a first floor single pane window with an arch. Other

characteristics of the Queen Anne style are an irregular roofline and an asymmetrical façade. Each home has a second- and third-floor room in an irregular octagonal tower, and three third-floor windows that face the street. Differences in the Illinois house include a closed-in area instead of a porch, a basement, and one fewer window. Concerns about cold weather could have brought about these changes.

Many different architectural styles are found in larger homes of the first decades of the twentieth century. One basic style was the four-square, which had four rooms on each floor, a hip roof and a front porch. Other styles that can also be found in bungalows are Arts and Crafts, the Prairie School and Colonial Revival.

The Baby Boom Years

In 1945, at the conclusion of World War II, several factors contributed to the unprecedented demand for new homes. First, there was the increase in number of potential buyers, caused by the demobilization of millions of servicemen whose priority in many cases was to marry and start a family. Second, there was a built-up demand for housing that dated back to the depression of the 1930s. Third, many parts of the country saw an increase in population from pre-war level because soldiers or defense workers who had been located in those places chose to remain there after the war. Fourth, government programs set up by the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (the G.I. Bill of Rights) favored those who bought single-family houses. In favoring single-family owner-occupied homes over multiple-family housing, these post-war government programs were consistent with the aims of Depression-era housing agencies.

Both Houston and Chicago experienced the phenomenal growth of suburbs beginning in the late 1940s and 1950s. Because Houston had more undeveloped land within the city limits or in areas that could be annexed, the major Baby Boom era developments were within the city, whereas in Chicago large development occurred in rural areas outside the city limits. The Sharpstown area of Houston and the Chicago suburb of Park Forest were products of the era.

Each of these communities was guided by people who tried to plan and provide for all the things that a young family might want or need. Schools, religious buildings, parks, theatres, and shopping centers were to be incorporated into the master plan of the development. Streets were curved and loop roads were included to limit the amount of outside traffic that could travel through the community. Sharpstown, planned and built by Frank Sharp between 1954 and 1968, and known as one of the largest housing developments in the country, was located about five miles from the original Houston business center. Because Houston had become an automobile-dependant city, the availability and convenience of public transportation were far less than in the days of the trolleys. The means to connect the development and downtown was a road, the Southwest Freeway. Sharpstown had apartments and one-family homes that were available in a limited choice of styles. Park Forest offered more housing options. In

addition to single-family homes and apartments, there were duplexes and units of four town homes.

Park Forest, about 28 miles from downtown Chicago, was located on two rail lines to the city. Park Forest had three founders: Philip M. Klutznik, who had been Commissioner of the Federal Public Housing Authority in the Truman Administration; Carroll Sweet, who had been involved with the Home Owners' Loan Corporation during Roosevelt's New Deal; and Nathan Manilow, who had extensive experience in financing housing programs (Randall 12-14). The design of the community had been influenced by the earlier Greenbelt cities in which there had been an attempt to plan for a balance of residential, commercial and recreational areas. Park Forest had housing for a variety of income levels. The requirements of financing caused the developers, American Community Builders (ACB), to offer rental units. Monthly rents provided ready assets and the many tenants provided a market for future home sales. A year after the first residents moved in, the ACB founders incorporated Park Forest as an independent town (1949), a move that prevented the surrounding county or other townships from levying taxes. The tax money was kept in Park Forest, and the selection of improvements or amenities was left to the voters of the town. As a result, Park Forest residents became very active in the political affairs of the community. Because Park Forest was a new community it had to set up its own municipal services, such as a police department, fire department and schools.

Sharpstown was built completely within the Houston City limits and from the start had the advantage of city services, such as fire protection, police, public education, and public works. To provide amenities to the residents, Frank Sharpe gave religious denominations low-cost land for places of worship. To give residents a choice other than public education, low-cost land was provided to the Jesuits, whose mission was to build an academically rigorous private school. This school became Strake Jesuit. Low-cost land also helped establish a college – Houston Baptist University. Sharpe also encouraged the building of a hospital.

Both developments had several things in common: an overall plan, a limited number of house styles, curving residential streets that had limited access from surrounding roads with heavier traffic, a shopping area that catered to the residents' needs and families that had young parents and many children. These elements contributed to making a cohesive community. The two communities were typical of the "Baby Boom" era. The ideal two-parent family had a mother who stayed at home to care for the children. Houses were designed to accommodate the most modern appliances. There were family rooms and large picture windows that permitted the mothers to observe their children. The popular Ranch Style home was more spread out than the bungalow. The one-level house could have rooms arranged in an elongated I- or an L-shape. In either case, the combined living room/dining room would be at the center. A kitchen or a family room would be close together on one side, and the bedrooms would be on the other. A variation on the ranch house was the split-level. This arrangement could put the bedrooms on an upper level.

Sometimes there would be a room and bath on a lower level that could be used either as a family room or as an extra bedroom.

Baby boomer homes put an emphasis on the nuclear family in which there were strongly stereotyped gender roles. The women stayed at home, took care of the children, and used the latest in home appliances to manage an ideal home. The role of the men was to go to work and to earn a large enough paycheck to support the suburban life style. The role of the children was to go to school and, perhaps, to fulfill their parents' hopes. Each of these groups participated actively in community organizations. Because there were few extended families, some people felt isolated. Everyone assumed that the suburban environment was best way to raise a family. There were pressures to conform and to maintain a conservative moral environment. Park Forest, for example, did not rent apartments to unmarried women. External pressures on the males in the community were analyzed in William Whyte's *The Organization Man* (1956).

The limited number of house styles made lower architectural costs possible for each house. By limiting the choice, and paying more for a better design that would be used in many homes, it was also possible to have better and more carefully designed buildings. Using a curved street plan, instead of grids with right angles, gave variation in the siting of the house. Parks and recreational areas were also included and were convenient to the homes. Limiting cross traffic made the streets safer and quieter for pedestrians and encouraged communication between neighbors.

A large, youthful population provided an attractive market for retailers. Both Park Forest (1950) and Sharpstown established shopping centers. Park Forest's was the first in the Midwest. In 1962, the Sharpstown Mall became the first air-conditioned shopping center in the country. But, in later years, as the population in each community aged, several problems arose. First, the deterioration of the apartment buildings brought about urban problems such as increased crime and urban blight. In Houston, some of these apartments were not within Sharpstown, but were in the adjacent Gulfton area. Second, in Illinois and in Houston, the development of larger regional shopping centers hurt the smaller centers in Park Forest and Sharpstown. High-volume retailers moved out to follow larger, more affluent markets. As stores left, so did shoppers. Today, each community is trying to address these problems by using approaches that will attract consumers. Park Forest hopes to accomplish this by returning to smaller, independent retailers and service providers. The new management of the Sharpstown Mall hopes that they can revitalize the mall by acknowledging the ethnic diversity of the surrounding area and by using marketing approaches that will attract these patrons.

Problems of Conservation

Both Houston and Chicago are beginning to recognize the resources and beauty of their late nineteenth and early twentieth century housing. In each city, the effort to preserve and restore buildings has been led by individuals with some city support. In 2000, Mayor

Richard Daley proclaimed a "Bungalow Initiative" in which tax benefits would be given to people who bought and restored bungalows that were built in the specified time periods. The City also took steps to classify buildings according to architectural or cultural significance. Theoretically, these designated buildings would be safe from the dangers of leveling by redevelopers, although recent articles in the *Chicago Tribune* (23 April 2003) have found this premise to be false. Chicago has a "Demolition Day Ordinance" which requires a 90-day waiting period before any work can be done on a registered building. This 90-day period may be renewed if both parties agree. A *Tribune* check on some of the more than 17,000 buildings listed found that, in spite of the ordinance, over 200 had been destroyed, many with the knowledge of city officials. Many other buildings were razed without permits. Buildings in areas of high visibility or in sections that are being gentrified have a greater chance of being saved; buildings in less visible areas or in less affluent neighborhoods can be destroyed more easily (25 April 2003).

The city of Chicago has set up a good website to publicize historic buildings and areas in the city. The site provides links to places where there is information on proper methods of restoration, how to finance a project, and what sort of appliances should be used. The Historic Chicago Bungalow Association also has an excellent website.

At this point, Houston is not as organized as Chicago. The city of Houston does have a Historic Preservation code, similar to Chicago's, that was most recently revised in May, 2003. In this code, the responsibility for determining whether a building is worthy of protection falls to the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission (HAHC). This board is comprised of unpaid professional experts including an archaeologist, an architectural historian, a historian, an architect, an urban planner and a real estate appraiser. There are two problems with this type of board: its unpaid status ensures that its members can do this only as a very part-time activity and the vast scope of its activities is Sisyphean in character. One of its tasks is to make lists of landmark buildings and sites that should be preserved. Some criteria for preservation include: good example of architecture, historic style, and site of significant national or local event. Making a similar list in Chicago took twelve years and cost $1.2 million. Adherence to the Houston Code is voluntary, and the role of the Board requires persuasion instead of coercion.

If someone in Houston wants to change a building that has been listed as being worthy of preservation, the applicant, who must be the owner, has 90 days to obtain a certificate of applicability. In this period the HAHC may suggest changes that would be acceptable. The suggestions, however, need not be followed. Of particular concern is the emphasis in the Houston code that the board "be sensitive to the property owner's financial condition" (Houston Code 33-238). Economic arguments could be used in most cases. According to one set of statistics, 85% of applicants were willing to change design plans to comply with suggestions from the board. Although preservationists would

disagree, some proponents of the Houston code thought that this rate of compliance indicated that the code was successful (Craig 2).

A problem that both Chicago and Houston share is the pressure to raze small houses located on large lots and to replace them with more profitable buildings. Even if the smaller house is architecturally significant, a plea of economic need would doom the building. If the house is not architecturally or historically significant, it can be easily destroyed. In Houston this tendency can be seen in places adjacent to areas that have experienced a rise in property values. The increase in values in the Houston Heights has put pressure on adjoining neighborhoods, such as Independence Heights. The main defense against this intrusion is neighborhood cooperation and installation or enforcement of covenants. A second threat to cohesive neighborhoods is the destruction of small bungalows and the construction of lot-covering houses. Unfortunately, many neighborhoods with buildings designed on a human scale are being destroyed by the intrusion of the "Yuppiedome." The Bellaire and Memorial neighborhoods provide examples of this.

Houston is rediscovering the convenience and enjoyment of downtown living. Many downtown buildings are being restored and adapted for new uses. Apartment occupancy is rising, new restaurants are opening, and there are more entertainment options. An increased sensitivity to urban architecture, not only in large buildings, such as the Rice Hotel, but also in smaller private homes on the outskirts of the downtown area, will make Houston a more attractive place to live. This return to urban living is also a denial of the Baby Boom belief that the only happy life, and certainly the only happy family life, can be found in the suburbs.

LESSON PLANS

Note for all lesson plans: The activities can be done by groups of various sizes. Using a computer is more effective and faster, but pictures from books can be substituted.

Lesson Plan 1: Geography

Materials needed
Houghton's *Houston's Forgotten Heritage*, Baron's *Houston Electric*, street maps of Houston and Chicago, area maps of the upper Midwest, tracing paper.

Houston
Exercise 1
Use the League of Women Voters website to find the borders of Houston's original six wards. Trace the locations of each of the wards. Indicate the major cross streets. Have students search the web to find information about each of the six wards.

Exercise 2
Use the street map to locate other Houston neighborhoods, such as the Houston Heights, Independence Heights, Montrose, and Sharpstown. What two grid systems are used in Houston? Use the Houghton book to locate neighborhoods in each grid.

Extra credit: Find a plat of the Houston Heights neighborhood. How do the lot sizes vary? On which streets are the larger lots?

Exercise 3: Transportation
What would be the most efficient route between Texas and Main Street, and Montrose and Westheimer; between Heights Boulevard and 20th Street, and Reliant Stadium? Use Baron's *Houston Electric* to see what the original routes were for the first two destinations. Use a map of the Houston Light Rail system for the route to Reliant Stadium.

Chicago
Use an area map of the upper Midwest to locate Chicago. Use the street maps or the Chicago Landmarks website to locate the following areas and places: the Loop, the Chicago River, the North Side, the South Side, Hyde Park, Soldiers' Field, Wrigley Field, US Cellular Field.

Lesson Plan 2: Rooms in the Home

Materials needed
Real Estate sections from Houston newspapers (Saturday and Sunday), computers for student use.

Books needed
Houghton, Lancaster, Culbertson

- Use several floor plans shown in a recent newspaper. Make a list of rooms and areas found in a contemporary house. Discuss the following topics:
    - Which rooms or areas appear in all the houses?
    - Which of these rooms or areas would be found in an apartment?

- Refer to floor plans of older homes as shown in the books or on the Sears website. Select designs of one-floor and two-floor homes and answer the following questions:
    - What rooms are the same as those found in a contemporary house?
    - Can you tell what type of energy would be used to heat the house?
    - Are there bathrooms? If the Sears site is used, determine the cost of plumbing.
    - How would these rooms be used: parlor, living room, chamber, dining room, pantry, vestibule, porch, sleeping porch, sun room?

- Discuss what areas are important to include in a home. What areas are amenities?

Assignment

1. Make a floor plan of a house. The house can be either a basic house or an ideal one.
2. Use real estate listings to determine the current prices of houses that have this floor plan. Select houses located in different areas of Houston. What determines the variation in price? (Materials, location, schools, craftsmanship of home)

Lesson Plan 3: Architectural Styles

Books needed

Winter, Houghton, Lancaster; Houston real estate sections

Websites

Chicago Landmarks, Chicago Architecture, Network Chicago, Natunewicz

Use the list of styles in the Chicago Landmarks site to identify characteristics of styles. Have students select the following styles and answer the questions about each: Queen Anne, Prairie, Craftsman, Classical Revival, Chicago, Workmen's, Chicago Bungalow.

1. What are the characteristics of each style?
2. Indicate the characteristics of each style by making a diagram of the façade of the house.
3. Find houses in Chicago that have the same style.
4. Find houses in Houston that have the same style.

Lesson Plan 4: Comparison of Houston and Chicago Houses

Materials

Same as above.

Bungalows

Answer the following questions and complete the activities:

1. What architectural styles are used in bungalows?
2. Compare the Daley bungalow (Chicago Architecture site) and a bungalow in Houston Heights. (Natunewicz site).
    a. What is the building material?
    b. Is there a basement?
    c. How large is the front porch?
    d. What type of roof is there? (gable, hip)
    e. How many windows are there and is there decorative glass in the window?
    f. Can you tell how large the lot is?
    g. Is there a garage?

3. Look at the smaller homes on the Natunewicz site.
    a. Are these homes bungalows or cottages?
    b. What types of plants surround the house?
    c. Small house one is an "airplane bungalow." Why is it called this?
    d. How are Small houses three and four similar? How are they different?

Larger homes

1. Select examples of Queen Anne style from Houston and Chicago and make the following comparisons:
    a. What type of material is used?
    b. Is the façade of the house symmetrical?
    c. What architectural embellishments are used? (arches, towers, variety of woodwork)
    d. How large are the porches?
    e. Does the house have a basement?

2. Compare the Robie House (Hyde Park, 1909) and the John W. Link House (Houston, Montrose, 1912).
    a. Review Prairie Style and Classical Revival Style.
    b. What is the style of each house?
    c. Why would high ceilings and wide porches be used in Houston?
    d. If you did not know the dates of the homes, which looks more modern?
    e. Explain what is meant by "modern."

Extended projects

Look on the various websites for other Frank Lloyd Wright buildings. Make a collage. What are common characteristics in Wright's buildings?

Lesson Plan 5: Homes and the Progressive era

Books needed

Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 44-61, 188-194; Wright, *Building the Dream;* Mayer, 155.

Read the description of the house in *The Jungle* and compare it to the picture of the house in the Gross advertisements in Wright and Mayer. Find pictures of Gross houses on the web (Chicago Architecture). Answer the following questions using both *The Jungle* and the advertisements. Explain the similarities between the advertisements and the descriptions in the novel.

1. Estimate the height of the basement.
2. What is the material?
3. What is the floor plan?
4. Is the description of the house in the advertisement in *The Jungle* like the description of the house on pp. 188-194?

5. How is the house financed?
6. What types of rooms are there?
7. Is there a kitchen or a bathroom?
8. To what sort of sicknesses does Sinclair allude?
9. How do they eventually lose their house?
10. Do you think that immigrants could be cheated this easily by developers?
11. How many floors are there?
12. How many windows are there?
13. What languages are used in the ads?

***Elsewhere in* The Jungle**

Is it likely that a child could drown in the mud outside the door? What does this tell you about Chicago streets? Where do the characters work? Do men and women earn the same amount? How do the characters get to work?

Extended projects

1. Explain why the Meat Inspection Act was passed as a result of this book.
2. Find information on the Pure Food and Drug Act.
3. Look up dumbbell tenements. How was this design an attempt to bring light into the building?
4. What other regulations on working conditions were passed in the early 1900s?

Lesson Plan 6: Baby Boom Years

Use the Forest Park Historical Society's website to examine housing of the 1950s. This website shows pictures only of a unit within a 4-unit building.

1. What rooms do the houses have?
2. Look at the basement. Why was the wash hung there? Why didn't the ACB want wash hung outside?
3. What appliances and products are in the kitchen? Are these products still sold?
4. What is the color scheme of the bathroom?
5. Which rooms would have been on the first floor?
6. Where was the first school held? Why was it necessary to use this place?

Lesson Plan 7: Historical Preservation: Problems

Material

Copy of the Houston Historical Preservation Code

- The code is 20 pages and few students will want to read all of it. Focus on the first three pages, Section 33-238, and the last 6 pages.

Points for discussion

- What is the purpose of this code?

- What terms are defined? Why is it important to define these?
- What types of occupations must be represented on the HAHC board?
- Who appoints the board members?
- What criteria are used to designate a building a landmark?
- Does limiting the changes that an owner may make to his building interfere with the owners' constitutional rights?

Have students suggest buildings that are currently considered "landmarks" or that in the future might be considered for "landmark" status. Some might mention public buildings, such as the Astrodome, the downtown Foley's, Sharpstown Mall, the Johnson Space Center, the former Colosseum, the Rice Hotel, or the Harris County Court House. Private homes should also be included, such as homes in the Houston Heights or Montrose, or the former apartment of Pres. George W. Bush (5500 block of Richmond Ave.).

Group project

Make a poster that shows what events happened in each of these public buildings. What individuals were associated with each building? Indicate the time period in which the building was used. List 10 other events of national importance that happened during this time period. For private homes, give the date, the style and list 10 event of local or national importance that happened in the decade in which the home was built. Include an argument explaining why each building should or should not be designated as a landmark.

Extra Credit or Enrichment

Look in Houghton's *Houston's Forgotten Heritage.* Find a house that has been torn down. Visit the site and explain what has been built there.

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Books

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Everything you want to know about Houston's transit systems. There are sections that describe labor unrest and strikes, racial segregation. This will be useful as a comparison to the Chicago transportation systems.

Berger, Miles L. *They Built Chicago: Entrepreneurs Who Shaped a Great City's Architecture.* Chicago: Bonus Books, 1992.
The focus of this is on large public buildings, but there is information on neighborhoods.

Bigott, Joseph C. *From Cottage to Bungalow: Houses and the Working Class in Metropolitan Chicago, 1869-1929.* The University of Chicago Press, 2001.

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_____. "Bungalows and the Complex Origin of the Modern Home." *The Chicago Bungalow.* Dominic A. Pacyga and Charles Shanabruch, Eds. Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2001.
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Duis, Perry. *Chicago: Creating New Traditions.* Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1976.
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The many pictures include all types of houses and some of the advertisements of S.E. Gross.

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This is a reprint of Sinclair's 1904 novel about immigrants who work in the meat-packing industries in Chicago. The relevant pages are 47-61 that describe the house bought by the family.

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