

# INTERIOR DESIGN AS ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN: THE PARSONS PROGRAM IN THE 1960s

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In April 1965 the graduating students of the interior design department at Parsons School of Design put on an exhibition of their work in their studio space, a converted loft on East Fifty-Fourth Street. The thematic show, called *A Place to Live*, focused on the reform of slum housing and included a reconstruction of a Spanish Harlem tenement. In their institutional version of Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain*, this reconstruction came complete with "a naked tenement toilet. A nearby cubbyhole just large enough for a worn gas stove...strewn with grimy pots and pans, cans and cereal boxes."<sup>1</sup>

**Fig. 1** A reviewer for *Interiors* magazine noted the incongruity of the subject matter for Parsons, "that stronghold of elegance... which stands for luxurious, raffiné decor." This show, unlike anything ever before presented by the school, was the public face of a reformed program, reflecting profound changes to the curriculum put in place by faculty members James Howell and Allen Tate in the 1964–65 academic year.

Any contemporary steps toward imagining interior design in an expanded field must take note of this mid-1960s moment. *A Place to Live* reflected a new curriculum, one that broke with the limits of the discipline as it had been traditionally conceived and set out an ambitious agenda of social engagement. Under the leadership of Howell and Tate, students at Parsons were encouraged to think of their work in relation to the emerging discipline of environmental design rather than as the then-current manifestation of the history of decorating. At its most extreme, the controversial new "environmental approach," as it was soon labeled, saw students abandoning their focus on the adaptation of period interiors for wealthy clients in favor of community design projects including slum housing, a women's prison, and a Lower East Side youth center. Other interior design programs, such as the one at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, were similarly reoriented. While the outcome of the environmental design movement in architecture has been studied and subjected to critique, its influence on interior design pedagogy and practice has not. Using as a case study a program that experienced a radical version of this transformation, this essay will explore the moment in the mid-1960s when the criterion of taste was emphatically rejected. The introduction of environmental design principles into Parsons' curriculum did more than simply alter course content. In the name of greater social awareness and responsiveness, the new pedagogy blurred distinctions between disciplines and in the process toppled fundamental notions of design teaching and practice, including established means of representation and an orientation toward historical styles.



**Fig. 1**  
*A Place to Live* exhibition,  
Parsons School of Design,  
April 1965

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Conceptualized and guided by Howell, *A Place to Live* was a manifesto for a new vision of interior design. An iconoclast, Howell was probably disappointed that the show did not generate more public controversy. Reviews such as the one in *Interiors* were generally tolerant if not amused. Representatives of the newly formed Interior Design Educators Council (IDEC) toured the exhibition as part of their annual conference. Soon afterwards they issued their approved interior design curriculum, influenced in part by what they had seen.<sup>2</sup> Within the school, however, the battle lines were drawn. The new direction displayed in the show and the curriculum seemed drastic and wrong to many. In May 1966 a group of second-year students wrote a letter to the Alumni Association protesting the changes.

Most of us came to Parsons...to pursue a course of concentrated study of High-style interiors...We understand that the Parsons Look is not necessarily a traditional look, that design covers all fields and can be studied in many ways, but we came to Parsons to learn how to produce that “special look”; that has been attained and maintained during this past half century.<sup>3</sup>

Although another, equally large, group of students wrote in support of Howell and the new curriculum, those who wrote in protest were concerned that the famed Parsons look was being abandoned. While the program quickly acquired a new version of the look during the 1970s, regret over the loss of the original, and speculation about what that look might resemble today, continues to reverberate.

Up until 1964 an education in interior design at Parsons meant an education in a very specific version of good taste. The original Parsons look was a hybrid of the turn-of-the-century New York style of decorating made popular by Elsie de Wolfe, mixed with the minimalist French luxury popularized by Jean-Michel Frank in the late 1920s. The look had its origins in the teaching of William Odom, known as “Mr. Taste,” or “the inventor of smart, rich, high-style decorating,” and his protégé Van Day Truex.<sup>4</sup> It was a luxury interior based on historical models, in particular an abstraction of the proportions, brightness, and relative emptiness of the eighteenth-century French townhouse, furnished with a few period-appropriate pieces along with some more contemporary

items for contrast. Beyond the small world of the school, the look became a style vernacular that was widely exhibited in the design press and in popular media.

The look was transmitted with very little variation through the years, largely because of the limited number of people involved. Graduates became influential players in the small and elite New York interior design scene. They also became Parsons teachers, passing on what they had learned with only modest alteration.<sup>5</sup> Prominent alumni included Odom's pupil and informal business partner, Eleanor McMillen Brown. Through her own firm, McMillen Inc., she promoted the look almost exclusively, with occasional forays into art moderne and American colonial. She continued to exert a strong influence over the program and the profession in her role as a member of the board of trustees and employer of many Parsons graduates, including Albert Hadley.<sup>6</sup> The look was disseminated in new discipline-specific journals such as *Interior Design* and *Interiors* that had little use for the asceticism of high modernism. It became part of popular culture through its incorporation in department store windows and movie sets. For example, Parsons graduate William Pahlmann designed model rooms for the department store Lord and Taylor, while another graduate, Joseph B. Platt, became a Hollywood set designer and was responsible for blockbuster films including *Gone with the Wind* (1939) and *Rebecca* (1940). Together these Parsons alumni broadcast the look to a mass audience across the country and the world.

Until 1964 the interior design curriculum at Parsons was, as Henry-Russell Hitchcock described nineteenth-century architectural education, "a grounding in those styles considered most suitable for imitation."<sup>7</sup> Students studied for three years to gain a certificate in interior design.<sup>8</sup> The first year was dedicated to fundamentals of architecture and furniture design, form, color, composition, and decoration. In their second and third years, students concentrated on the study of historic styles. The vehicle was the measurement and representation of period rooms through richly rendered watercolor perspectives and technical drawings of details like moldings. **Fig. 2** As the school's 1949 catalog noted, "Of particular importance is the inculcation of the superior standards of taste for which Parsons School of Design has become distinguished."<sup>9</sup>

While the Parsons look was established and practiced in New York, its primary reference point was Paris, the center of American taste for nearly two centuries.<sup>10</sup>



**Fig. 2 (top)**  
**Three Parsons students**  
**making measured drawings**  
**of a side table, ca. 1940**  
**Kellen Design Archives**

**Fig. 3 (bottom)**  
**Three Parsons students**  
**making measured drawings**  
**in the Palazzo Ducale,**  
**Mantua, Italy, ca. 1925**  
**Kellen Design Archives**

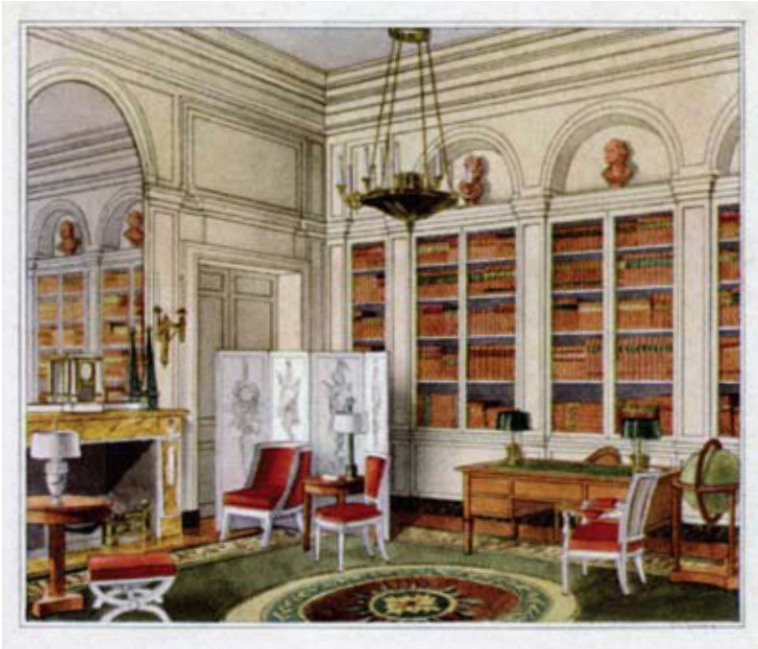
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Just as American architecture students went to the Beaux-Arts for training during the nineteenth century, after World War I Parsons interior design students went to Paris to be taught French style. In the early 1920s, Odom established an outpost at the Place des Vosges, where selected students spent a year of advanced study supplemented by a summer of sketching in Italy. **Fig. 3** In Paris they learned to translate French taste for the upper-middle-class design market in America. This was not the Paris of the avant-garde (which was in the process of shattering old standards of taste), or even the Paris of the 1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes (where the luxury trade established its own modern aesthetic, dubbed art deco). The real draw was the long history of fine decorating on display in the homes of wealthy aristocrats.

Intellectually the Parsons pedagogy depended on ideas of *convenance* and *bienséance*, i.e., propriety and comfort, both defined according to standards of good taste established two centuries earlier by French masters including Jacques-François Blondel and Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières.<sup>11</sup> Technically the training was one of careful imitation and translation. Under faculty members Truex and Mildred Irby, Parsons students measured, drew, and learned to recombine the various elements of fashionable French interiors into new designs. **Figs. 4, 5** The chief medium was the interior perspective, rendered in watercolor and painstakingly constructed to depict the play and composition of colors, textures, and patterns on every surface. Students learned not only by making these detailed representations but also through osmosis. Commenting on his years living in Paris from 1925 to 1939, first as a student then as a faculty member, Truex said: “I walked in beauty.” Late in his career, Truex summed up the school’s philosophy in the following way: “basically our approach was always motivated and controlled by, let’s give them as much as we can in the sense of eye, in the sense of quality and the sense of style.”<sup>12</sup>

The interior design curriculum established at Parsons in the 1920s remained largely unchanged until the mid-1950s. By that time the Board of Trustees decided that the school was out of touch with the reality of design practice in postwar America. Wartime was a period of anonymous, bureaucratic design in the United States.<sup>13</sup> In its immediate aftermath, designers felt the pressure to build up the American economy through commercial and technological expertise. The discipline of interior design

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**Fig. 4 (top)**  
 “Original design for a  
 small circular sitting room  
 combining features of various  
 18<sup>th</sup> century French styles  
 with modern features in  
 background,” Parsons School  
 of Design catalog, 1927–28

**Fig. 5 (bottom)**  
 “Original Design—Library in  
 the Directoire Style,” Parsons  
 School of Design catalog,  
 1935–34



expanded beyond its traditional focus on domestic interiors for elite private clients. In the world of business, the field of contract interiors created a broader basis for practice and demanded new design skills. Models of the modern middle-class house appeared on television and in magazines, introducing new styles and markets for home decoration. Finally, in education, the emergence of a new field of design practice, “environmental design,” generated criteria against which to assess the performance of the interior.

Successive Parsons presidents Pierre Bedard, Sterling Callisen, and Francis Ruzicka attempted to align the school’s curriculum more closely with contemporary social and economic concerns. In 1949 “low-budgeted housing” was introduced as an area of study within the interior design program.<sup>14</sup> In 1954 Bedard established a Department of Design in Industry (i.e., industrial design), and in 1957 he launched a short-lived Department of Design in Commerce, which offered classes in merchandising display and store design. By 1959 Parsons was rewriting its history, deliberately downplaying the idea of taste, along with importance of the Paris program and of its early administrators. Catalogs from this period explicitly described the all-encompassing importance of Parsons Paris as a strictly historical phenomenon. Though students could still study there, the administration emphasized the fact that New York was now the center of the school’s activity.<sup>15</sup> President Ruzicka was the major agent of change. Citing long-standing complaints that the interior design department was moribund and the faculty intractable, Ruzicka was especially critical of what he called the “overromanticization” of period study.<sup>16</sup> The most significant change began in 1964 when faculty members James Howell and Allen Tate, with the support of the administration, began to realign the curriculum with the new field of environmental design.

It is important to note that the reimagining of interior design education as a subset of the new field of environmental design did not follow but was contemporaneous with a similar reimagining of architecture. The concept of “environment” that emerged in North American universities in the 1950s enabled and encouraged a coordinated, systematic, and interdisciplinary approach to the fields of design and planning.<sup>17</sup> The environmental design movement, popularized by programs such as the one established at UC Berkeley in 1959, was based on an understanding of design as the total activity of arranging and building the world, deliberately disregarding the traditional distinctions between the disciplines of interior design, architecture, landscape

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architecture, and urban design.<sup>18</sup> In the writing of influential figures such as John McHale and Ian McHarg, the boundaries between “home” and “globe” were becoming less and less distinct or significant.<sup>19</sup>

The interdisciplinarity touted by advocates of environmental design was chiefly meant to integrate the fields of social and physical planning at all scales. The new approach was based on modernist ideas about the improvement of physical well-being for all and the betterment of social relations, an approach in which the concept of taste appeared to have no place. Tate equated an education in taste with elitism and a crass commercialism attuned to the upper-middle-class market for furniture and decoration—taste is that which sells, he said. On the occasion of Parsons’ seventy-fifth anniversary in 1975, he summed up these changes: “In a world facing problems of ecology, over-population and all the attendant social ills, it is of a greater priority to learn how to create habitable spaces for the masses rather than drawing rooms for the few.”<sup>20</sup> He encouraged students and faculty members to think of interior design as a method through which to challenge social convention, rather than reinforce it.

In the search for these “habitable spaces for the masses,” the pedagogy of environmental design was characterized by three key objectives: a concentration on the process of design rather than the resulting form (i.e., on problem solving rather than form making); a focus on the creation of human environments rather than building technologies (i.e., on the space contained within the building and on the activities of its occupants rather than the makeup of the shell and its cladding); and finally, the rejection of the idea of designer-as-artist in favor of a community of diverse professionals whose members worked collectively, in much the same way that scientists did.<sup>21</sup>

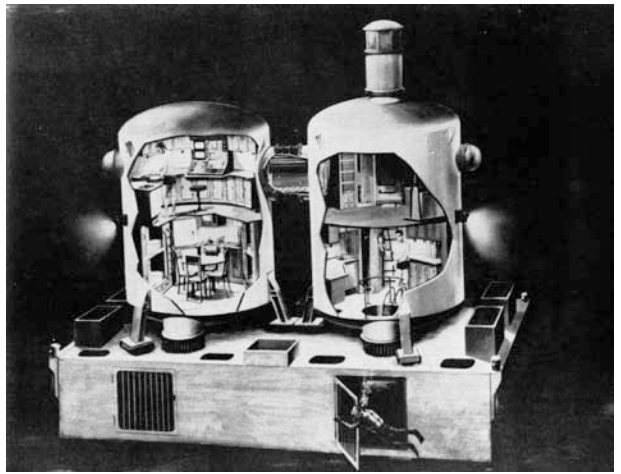
Interior designers were more than happy to claim a stake in the expanded field of environmental design. The new discipline was conceived of as a collaborative effort on a huge scale, from the region and city to the individual room and pieces of furniture. In this context, interior design was an important component of a large and complex puzzle. The significance of the profession in the movement is evident in that the first issue of *Design and Environment* in 1970 featured an article titled “Interior Designers Discover Behavioral Research.” It included a discussion of the Tektite II project by the U.S. Department of the Interior in collaboration with General Electric’s Space Division, an underwater habitat designed for prolonged human occupation. In this

way of thinking, interior design was not primarily confined to the private home, but an essential part of exciting new fields such as space and deep-sea exploration. **Fig. 6**

The movement toward environmental design that took place in interior design programs, notably at Parsons and Pratt, was partly promoted by the belief that architects were becoming more and more focused on large-scale urban problems, leaving the intimate space of the interior behind.<sup>22</sup> However, this intimate human environment was not the same one addressed by Elsie de Wolfe and William Odom. The environmental approach relied not on traditional ideas of taste but on investigation into physiology and the sciences of human behavior, especially psychology and sociology. Following the modernist paradigm, it aimed to better social relations by assuming absolute equality and by focusing efforts on the economically disadvantaged. The field was open for interior designers to reimagine their own particular skills in broad social and scientific terms.

In the philosophy of environmental design, the success of a particular project was assessed in relation to its performance rather than its appearance. Howell, who became chair of the department in 1965, redefined the discipline of interior design as “the shaping and conditioning of spaces into an optimum functional and psychological environment.”<sup>23</sup> His philosophy is reflected in the 1965–66 curriculum. For many years the curriculum had centered on an eleven-credit second-year course in historic styles (“Period Color and Design”), taught by alumnus and successful society decorator Stanley Barrows. Under pressure from Ruzicka, Howell, and Tate, Barrows was encouraged to transform his course into a series of supporting lectures on the history of interior design, rather than the basis of knowledge for the whole program. Howell also introduced courses in material fabrication, as well as lighting and furniture design. The result was to remove the study of objects and fabrication methods away from the specific context of historical practice and instead to categorize them according to assumed objective and timeless principles. Finally the course “Drawing and Painting” was replaced by “Graphic Communications,” rationalizing the process of representation. As in the field of architecture forty years earlier, watercolor perspectives representing the colors, textures, and patterns of interior surfaces lost their preeminence in favor of more scientific forms of representation—the plan, section, elevation, and most of all the axonometric—drawings that privileged abstract spatial relationships

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**Fig. 6 (top)**  
Tektite II, 1970

U.S. Department of the Interior  
and General Electric Space  
Division

**Fig. 7 (bottom)**

Ms. Inez Croom, chair of the  
Scholarship Committee of  
the New York Chapter of  
the American Institute of  
Interior Designers, presents  
the 1964 award to Mr. Joel  
Mettler and Ms. Terri Mally,

both graduating students of  
Parsons School of Design.  
Kellen Design Archives

over tactile, material ones.<sup>24</sup> (For a time the approaches existed in tandem, which was confusing for the students. For example, a photograph of the work of two students taken in 1964 represents the two kinds of project coming out of the curriculum, one a traditional rendering of an interior perspective complete with decorative paneling and period furniture, the other a much more abstract rendering, one that, significantly, appears to have no walls.) **Fig. 7**

Besides altering the curriculum, Howell and Tate invited visiting faculty members from the natural and social sciences, including Paul A. Fine, a psychologist and sociologist, Albert Eide Parr, senior scientist at the American Museum of Natural History, and E. Lee Raney, a speech instructor at Columbia University. These changes predate Parsons' 1970 affiliation with the New School for Social Research, when it became possible for students to take classes in the humanities and social sciences as members of the larger institution.

As *Interiors* magazine noted in its review of the 1965 Parsons graduation show:

What Parsons interior design students were doing, in effect, was asserting that their profession belongs in the forefront of the science of environmental psychology and urban sociology... Scientists, humanists, architects, and industrial designers are trying to build a body of scientific knowledge, based on painstaking research. But none of these professions has more practical contact with the interaction between environment and daily life than interior designers.<sup>25</sup>

For example, the Parsons 1966 end of year show featured a project for a prefabricated housing system made up of aluminum framing filled with modular panels, the type of project more often seen in architecture schools. The *Interiors* review stated, "It was as though student [John] Bray was calling attention to the fact that no one is better qualified to design the objects which make up the immediate and human environment than the interior designer—and when this environment has to be mass-produced—well he can take care of that too."<sup>26</sup>

Though strongly resisted by many members of the existing faculty, these teaching methods were consistent with the ways in which some professional interior

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designers were reorienting their practices during the same time period, particularly those who focused on large-scale corporate interiors.<sup>27</sup> In 1967, former president of the National Society of Interior Designers C. James Hewlett founded the Interior Environments Research Council. This organization relied heavily on the work of anthropologist Edward T. Hall and his theory of “proxemics,” the study of the culturally specific component of human concepts of space. As *Design and Environment* noted, the acceptance of these ideas within the design professions reflected “society’s growing awareness that anthropology, psychology and human engineering provided, for the first time, a scientific foundation for measuring man’s responses to interior settings.”<sup>28</sup>

The core belief underlying environmental design, that spatial design has a direct and measurable impact on social behavior, led to a particular interest in the redesign of extreme social environments characterized by poverty and crime.<sup>29</sup> At Parsons, as at architecture schools during the same period, studio problems focused on socially worthy programs such as prisons, youth centers, and low-cost housing, all located far from the elegant drawing rooms of the Upper East Side. Between 1964 and 1969, Parsons studio projects included the redesign of Manhattan’s notorious women’s prison in Greenwich Village, as well as one on Riker’s Island, and a youth center on the Lower East Side.<sup>30</sup> **Figs. 8, 9**

In working through these exercises, students were encouraged to focus not on the culturally constructed historical employment of styles, but on the supposedly objective science of psychology. One course, “Psychology of Perception,” introduced students to the manipulation of light, color, and material in order to change the way people behave—ideas first explored at the Bauhaus. For example, the design for the Mobilization for Youth project included a series of colored directional baffles intended as wayfinding devices, and the women’s prison featured “color bands in a spiral pattern to visually minimize long corridors; other corridors [were] visually shortened and widened by [the placement of] light fixture[s]....”<sup>31</sup> With this attention to the psychological and abstract aspect of color and form, interior design education at Parsons abandoned the particulars of period style that had defined the program since its inception sixty years earlier.

The mid-1960s reform of the Parsons program was a pivotal point in the history of both the institution and the discipline, one with lasting implications. In 1970

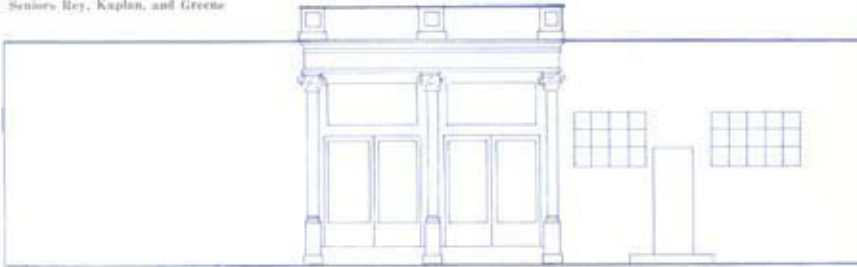
# LIKE, MAN, IT'S FOR REAL



Seniors Rey, Kaplan, and Greene

Parsons seniors help Mobilization for Youth, Inc. brighten the future of its youthful clients. A class assignment that widened professional horizons, and that may stimulate actual remodeling, is illustrated with the design submitted by one of seven of the student teams.

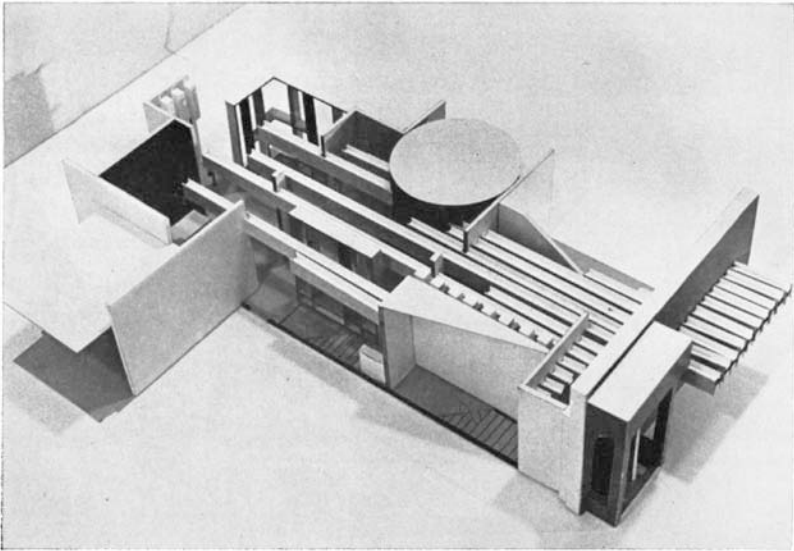
Photos and Text by George McC. Whitney



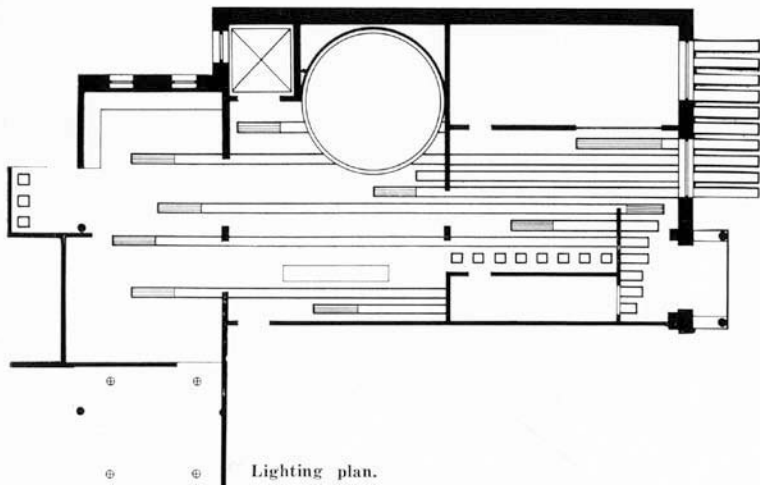
Below: Pre-Parsons Mobilization for Youth Job Center at 211 East Second Street.



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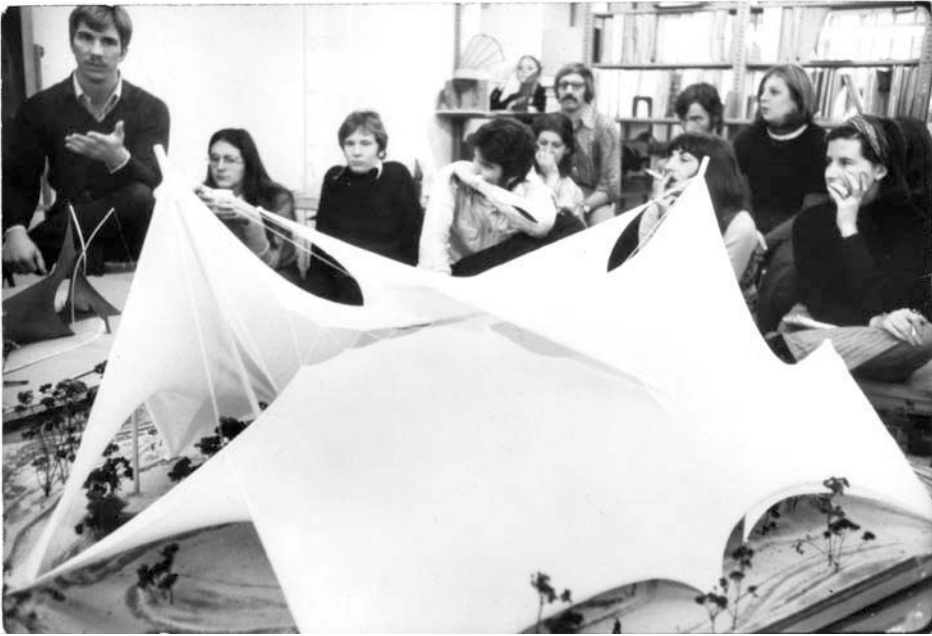
Three-dimensional scale model by Rey, Greene, and Kaplan, showing how structural lines of the marquee over windows at front of building are carried through full length of intake-reception area, serving to direct traffic as well as to house the vandal-proof lighting elements overhead.



### **Figs. 8, 9**

**Luis Rey, Barbara Greene,  
and Howard Kaplan, interior  
design seniors at Parsons  
School of Design, proposal  
for Mobilization for Youth Job  
Center, East Second Street,  
New York City, May 1967**





the department was renamed the Department of Environmental Design. Under Tate, who was named chairman in that same year, the faculty continued the pedagogical approach initiated five years earlier: attention to the psychological aspects of human behavior as motivators for design rather than historical precedents; choice of low-income community-based programs rather than those for elite clients; and emphasis on the connections between the different scales of design as component parts in the larger human environment. Over time the department also introduced attention to ecological issues in ways that anticipated our current concern with sustainability. **Fig. 10**

However, within some circles of the interior design world this moment is not remembered fondly. Some critics have charged that changes to the program and the abandonment of the Parsons look meant the loss of many positive attributes of the previous educational method, in particular: attention to the intimate character and scale of the interior surface; skill in specialist forms of fabrication and representation

**Fig. 10**  
**Students discussing a project**  
**to construct tensegrities, 1972**  
 Photograph courtesy of Casey  
 Coates Danson (Parsons 1975),  
 pictured third from right, smoking

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(particularly training in material selection and watercolor rendering); and a thorough knowledge of the modes of taste that made up design history until the mid-twentieth century. These are valid criticisms. As Kent Kleinman points out elsewhere in this volume, it may be attention to the specificity of the surface and to the *sensus communis* of taste that gives interior design its particular claim on knowledge. But perhaps a synthesis of the two approaches is the most desirable outcome as we look forward. If the particular mode of knowing that characterizes early twentieth-century interior design practice (attention to surface, detail, and material, along with active engagement with the contemporary community of taste) could be synthesized with an updated “environmental approach” (one that is synchronized with other design disciplines and seriously addresses the problem of sustainability), then interior design might reclaim some aspects of its former territory in a productive rather than nostalgic way.

I am grateful to Wendy Scheir and the staff of the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Archives Center at Parsons The New School for Design for their help in researching archival material.

- 1 “Parsons Exhibition; Seniors Scan Slum Housing,” *Interiors* 124 (May 1965): 10.
- 2 Olga Gueft, “Education for Interiors at Parsons and Pratt,” *Interiors* 125 (November 1965): 163.
- 3 Parsons School of Design Alumni Association. Events: Interior Design Department Student Protest and Counter-Protest, May 1966. Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Archives, Parsons The New School for Design.
- 4 “The Influence of William Odom on American Taste,” *House and Garden* 90 (October 1946): 88, 93, 162. John Richardson, “The Sad Case of Mr. Taste,” in *Sacred Monsters, Sacred Masters: Beaton, Capote, Dalí, Picasso, Freud, Warhol, and More* (New York: Random House, 2001), 64–71. On Truex, see “The Connoisseur: Late Dean of American Twentieth Century Design,” *Antiques and Collectibles* 202 (1979): 232; Christopher Petkanas, “Van Day Truex: Master of Understatement,” *House and Garden* 165, no. 1 (January 1993): 72–75, 119; Adam Lewis, *Van Day Truex: The Man Who Defined Twentieth-Century Taste and Style* (New York: Studio, 2001).
- 5 Stanley Barrows, “Recalling a Golden Era in Manhattan Design,” *Architectural Digest* 46 (1989): 350–56.
- 6 On McMillen, see Erica Brown, *Sixty Years of Interior Design: The World of McMillen* (New York: Viking Press, 1982).
- 7 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, “Some Problems in the Interpretation of Modern Architecture,” *JSAH* 2, no. 2 (April 1942): 29.

- 8 Beginning in 1945, Parsons also offered a four-year Bachelor of Science degree through an affiliation with New York University.
- 9 Parsons School of Design Catalog, 1949–50, 4. Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Archives, Parsons The New School for Design.
- 10 On the global importance of Parisian luxury goods, beginning in the eighteenth century, see Robert Fox and Anthony Turner, eds., *Luxury Trades and Consumerism in Ancien Régime Paris: Studies in the History of the Skilled Workforce* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1998), 99–137.
- 11 Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières, *The Genius of Architecture: Or the Analogy of that Art with our Sensations* (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1992); Robin Middleton, “Jacques-François Blondel and the Cours d’Architecture,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain* 18, no. 4 (1959); Richard A. Etlin, “‘Les dedans,’ Jacques-François Blondel and the System of the Home, c. 1740,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (April 1978): 137–47.
- 12 Van Day Truex, interview by Paul Cummings, November 15, 1971, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.
- 13 Andrew M. Shanken, *194X: Architecture, Planning, and Consumer Culture on the American Home Front* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).
- 14 Parsons School of Design Catalog, 1949–50, 6.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 President Francis Ruzicka, letter to Richard M. Paget, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, June 20, 1966, Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Archives, Parsons The New School for Design. The subject of this letter was “The Controversies Relating to the Interior Design Department.”
- 17 Reinhold Martin, “Environment c. 1973,” *Grey Room*, no. 14 (Winter 2004): 78–101.
- 18 The architecture program at the State University of New York, Buffalo, underwent a similar transformation under Michael Brill, with the help of Reyner Banham and John McHale.
- 19 John McHale, *The Ecological Context* (New York: George Braziller, 1970). See Alex Kitnick’s essay in this volume for a closer look at the implications of McHale’s writing for interior design.
- 20 “Evolution or Revolution? A Close Look at Parsons School of Design on its 75th Birthday,” *Interior Design* 42 (May 1971): 86.
- 21 These aims were partly realized in the new professional associations spawned by the environmental design movement, including the Inter-Professional Council on Environmental Design, made up of members of the American Institute of Architects, the American Society of Engineers, the American Society of Landscape Architects, and the American Institute of Planners, founded in 1963, and new publications like the *Journal of Environmental Design*, founded 1965, and *Design and Environment*, founded in 1970.

- 22 Gueft, "Education for Interiors at Parsons and Pratt," 162. In 1965 Harold Elliot Leeds, chairman of the interior design department at Pratt, claimed that "the interior designer will gradually take over most of the responsibility for human environment at intimate scale."
- 23 James Howell, "The Interior Designer's Role Today," *Interior Design* 37 (July 1966): 115.
- 24 Yves-Alain Bois has discussed the ideological underpinnings of the modernist preference for the axonometric in his article, "Metamorphosis of Axonometry," *Daidalos*, no. 1 (1981): 41-58.
- 25 "Parsons Exhibition; Seniors Scan Slum Housing," *Interiors* 124 (May 1965): 10.
- 26 "Triumph at Parsons," *Interiors* 125 (July 1965): 12.
- 27 John Zeisel, "Interior Designers Discover Behavioral Research," *Design and Environment* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1970): 41-43. See also John Zeisel, "Behavioral Research and Environmental Design: A Marriage of Necessity," *Design and Environment* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1970): 50-51, 64-66, and John Zeisel, *Inquiry by Design: Tools for Environment-Behavior Research* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
- 28 "Designers and Scientists Dedicated to Rebuilding the Environment," *Design and Environment* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1970): 19-25.
- 29 Daniel Barber has discussed the popularity of the prison as a studio problem in environmental design curricula in "Extreme Environmental Design: The 'Correctional Facilities' Studio at UC Berkeley College of Environmental Design, 1966-67," presented at the Studioscope Symposium, Harvard Graduate School of Design, April 13, 2007.
- 30 "Four Parsons Students Tackle Women's Prison Design," *Interiors* 127 (December 1967): 14; George M. Whitney, "Like, Man, It's for Real: Parsons Seniors Help Mobilization for Youth, Inc.," *Interiors* 126 (June 1967): 125; "The Environmental Approach; Senior Project of Parsons School of Design," *Interior Design* 39 (February 1968): 148-49, 168.
- 31 *Ibid.*