

Country: United States of America

Client: Nos Quedamos

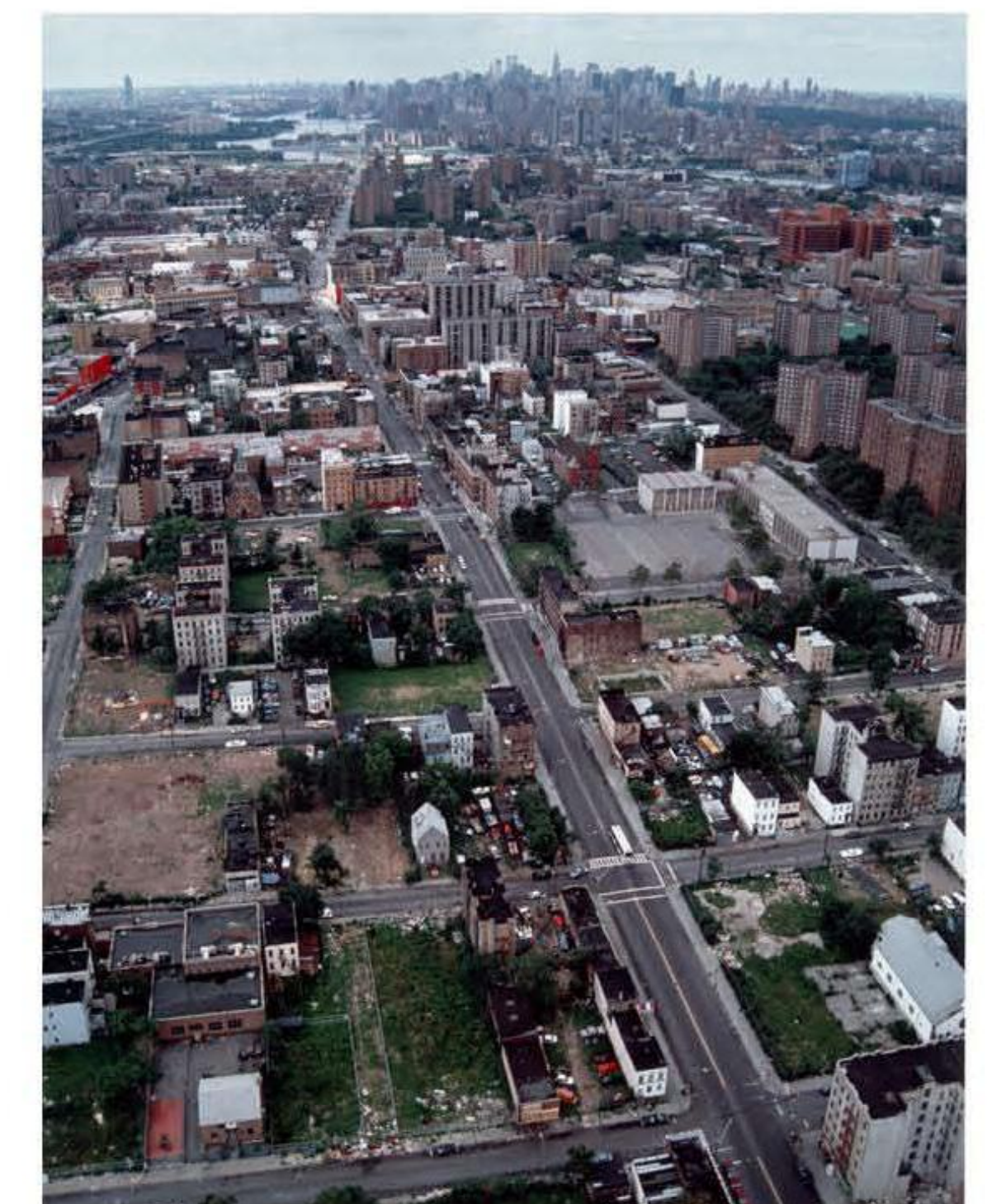
Architect: Magnusson Architecture and Planning

Historical Significance

- Colonized in 17th century as royal farmland
- Remained primarily farmland until mid-19th century
- Commuter train and subway lines connect the Bronx to Manhattan in mid-19th century
- Vibrant urban communities of immigrants form around transportation nodes

Neighborhood Deterioration

- *White Flight* to suburbs in 1950s drives demographic shift to lower income black and hispanic population
- Physical environment is deteriorating which leads to slum clearance and highway development which isolates neighborhoods
- Economic hardship in New York City in the 1970s leads to massive loss of population and further infra-structure deterioration
- Vandalism and arson decimate neighborhoods
- By the 1980s the South Bronx had lost 2/3 of its population

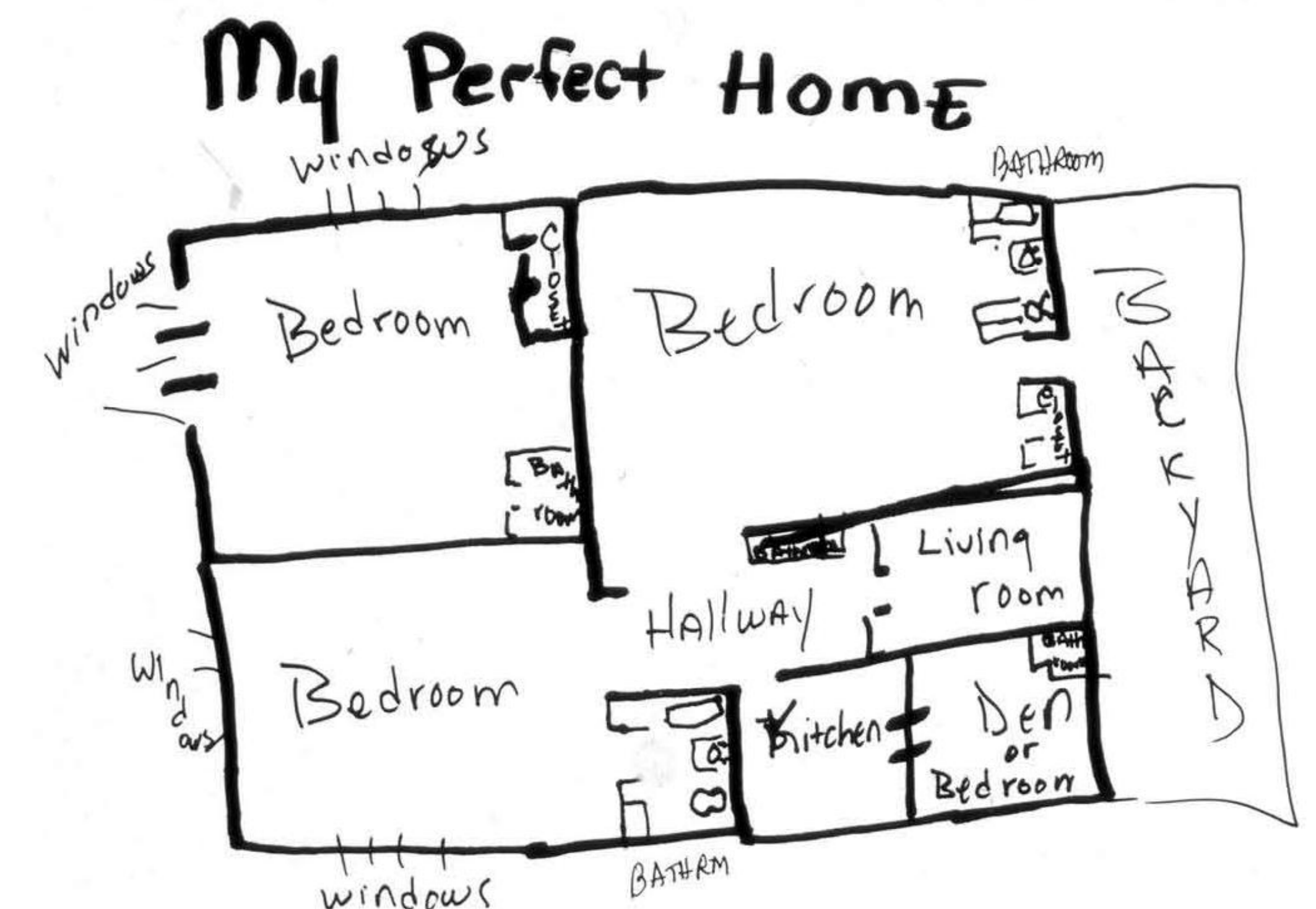


City Plans for Redevelopment

- By 1993 the neighborhood lay in shambles—burnt out, desolate, and populated by less than 6,000 of the nation's poorest people.
- NYC quietly plans to raze the neighborhood and redevelop it as a market-rate suburban scale community
- The community is outraged to discover the city's plans will displace them

The Community Responds

- Rallying together, residents formed an organization called We Stay/Nos Quedamos (NQ)
- NQ, with the help of Magnusson Architecture and Planning (MAP), forced the city to halt their plans for redevelopment
- With 6 months of community meetings and charettes, NQ and MAP were able to craft an Urban Renewal Plan that the City and State would sign into law in 1994
- This process sets new precedent for planning in NYC.



A Community Defines It's Future

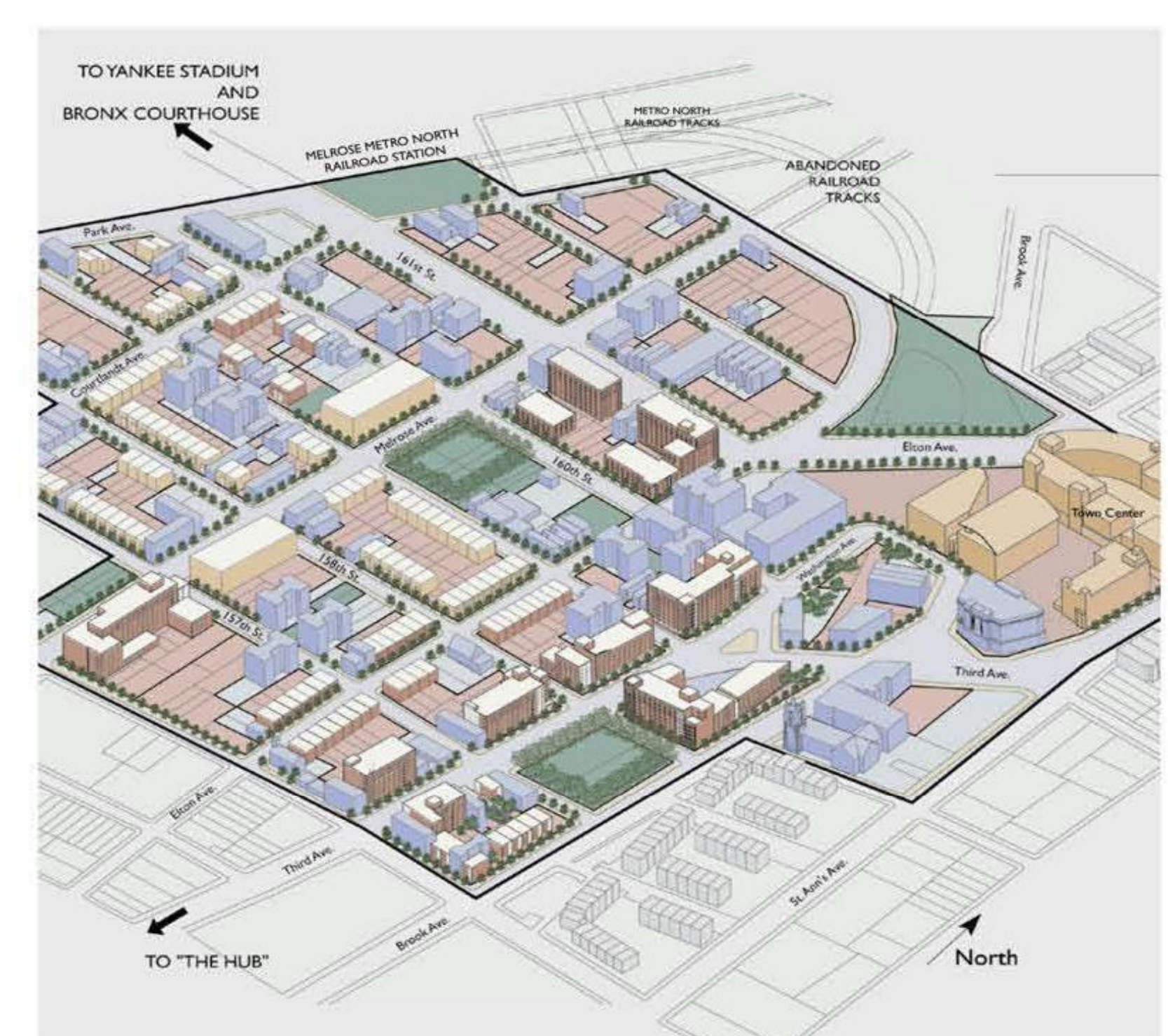
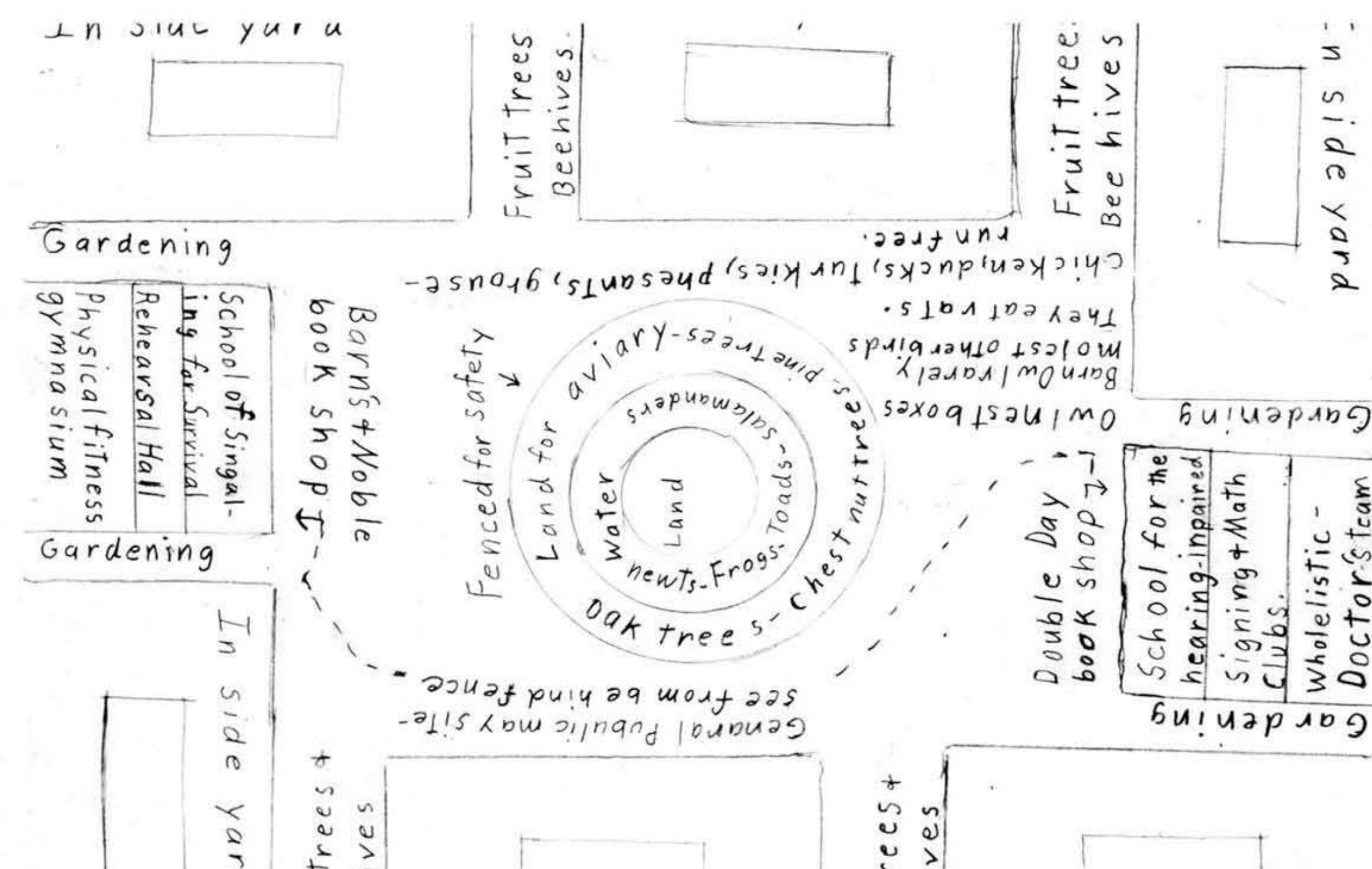
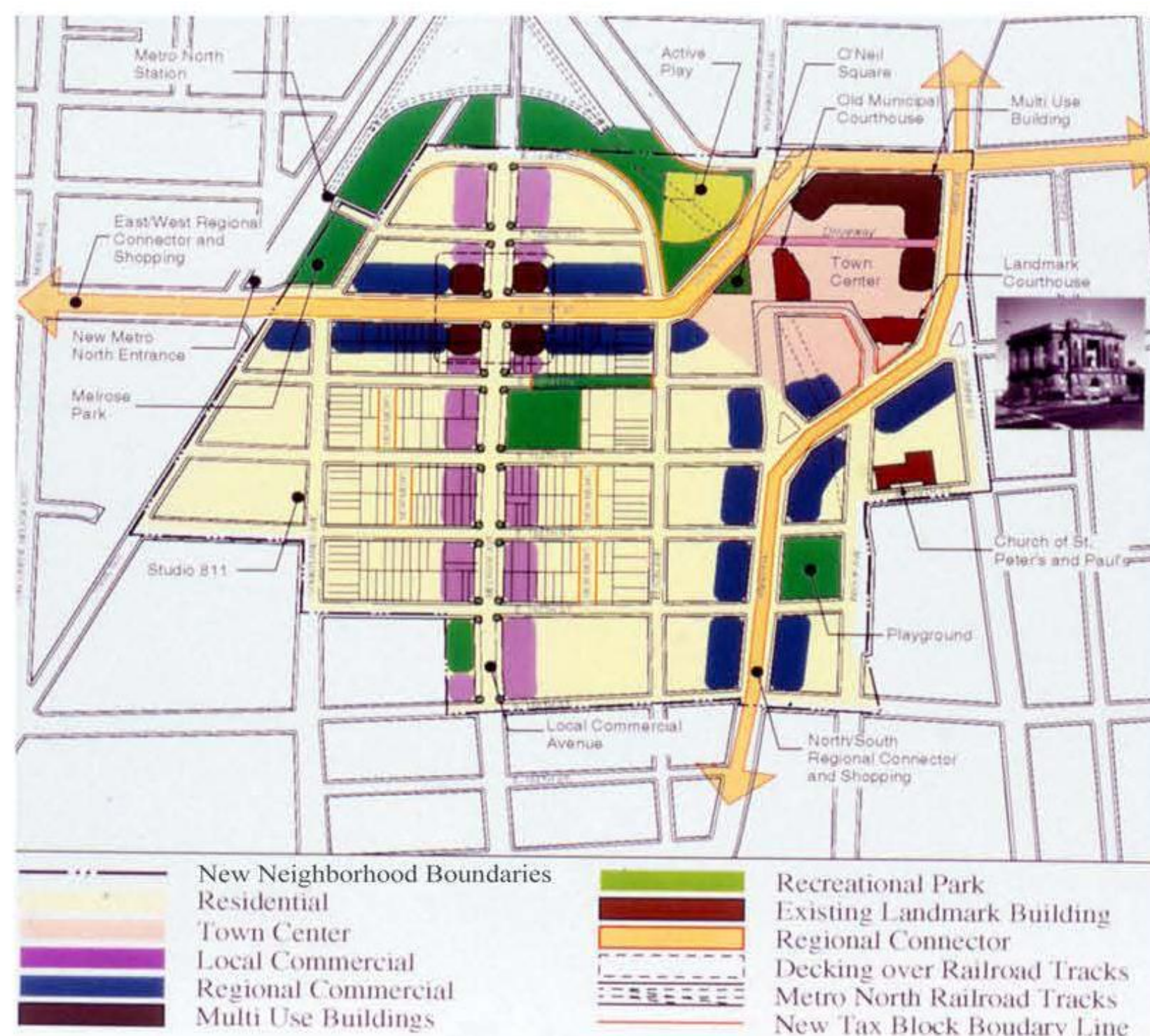
- Sustainability—rebuilding a once thriving community, sustainability is not just an environmental concern, but also a matter of economic and social stability
- Quality of Living—the neighborhood must encourage connectivity and walkability, maintain public open space, and have proximity to diverse services and uses
- Resident Health—as a neighborhood with one of the nation's highest incidences of asthma, a major goal was to improve the living environment in order to improve resident health
- Unique Urban Fabric—Melrose Commons was home to a unique community, the goal was to maintain the individuality of the neighborhood in building typology, demographics, and unique features such as community gardens

Economic and Social Sustainability

- 'No Displacement' principle made part of plan
- Appropriate density defined in order to encourage commercial and institutional uses to locate in the neighborhood
- Housing types provide a mix of affordability levels to allow for future economic growth of residents
- Inclusion of ownership properties to encourage resident investment in the community

Environmental Sustainability

- NQ and MAP press developers to include green design elements long before the existence of USGBC's LEED® systems—eg, low-E glazed windows, bamboo flooring, high albedo roofs
- To reduce incidences of asthma, cavity-wall construction implemented well before it becomes common practice and carpeting is eliminated in all buildings



What is LEED® for ND?

The USGBC's LEED® for ND is a system that integrates the principles of smart growth, urbanism, and green building into the first national standard for neighborhood design. LEED® certification provides independent, third-party verification that a development's location and design meet accepted high standards for environmentally responsible, sustainable, development.

Melrose Commons and LEED® for ND

- 2007: MAP & NQ learn of Pilot Program and are accepted as Focus Group participants
- Program offers opportunity to recognize decades of work, against all odds, to achieve sustainability in a formerly blighted urban neighborhood
- Melrose Commons can challenge the system as it develop and will act as a role model of sustainable urban redevelopment in similar communities around the country and the world.

Why LEED® for ND Works for Melrose Commons & URAs?

- Existing infrastructure & established transportation routes
- Mixed-use neighborhood
- Brownfield reclamation and infill development
- Established community to advocate for green building practice

Challenges

- Requirements based on idea of greenfield development
- Extremely limited availability of funding for green methodologies in affordable projects
- Coordination between developers, community groups, city and state agencies
- Retrofitting a modern system to perform in a pre-existing neighborhood



Parkview Commons



Palacio del Sol



The Aurora