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# Making A Middle Landscape

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*The second part of this book is about the building that took place in the middle landscape, enabling people to live, shop, work and move around. Four typologies are presented, each describing artifacts that have proved central to the cultural enterprise of modern metropolitan development.*

*The first is the single-family house in its garden, undoubtedly the most prevalent feature of the American middle landscape. In all, six house types are presented, including vernacular bungalows, colonial revivals, ranch houses, and contemporary homes. During its evolution since 1920, the program of the suburban house expanded and became more specialized in order to meet changing social circumstances. Landscape qualities also reflected different cultural preoccupations, involving personal health, physical exercise, and recreation for the mind. Generally the spirit of adventure, equality, informality, and progressive opportunity have been symbolized by allusions to the American West, whereas sentiments of solid respectability and status have drawn upon models from the colonial East.*

*The second typology describes developments in the retail realm of American suburban life from roadside franchises and strip commercial developments to shopping villages and pedestrian malls. Generally both the size and functional diversity of facilities have increased to match rising development costs and operational economies of scale. Apart from housing retail commercial activities, shopping centers have increasingly become venues for leisure-time and recreational pursuits. Their identity as community centers still remains ambiguous, however, in spite of the persistent efforts of socially minded planners and use of the metaphor of the traditional market town.*

*The third typology deals with the modern workplace in the guise of office parks and corporate estates. From administrative facilities adjacent to factories located on the outskirts of cities, suburban office complexes have emerged in a variety of forms, ex-*

*pressive of both business functions and corporate images. Typically abstract modern office buildings and pastoral landscapes combine to make seemingly benign symbols of managerial organization and corporate power.*

*The fourth typology concentrates on the design and construction of modern roadways, the infrastructure necessary for modern metropolitan development. From a primary concern with simply upgrading existing roads, emphasis shifted toward the provision of higher levels of service. As a consequence the hierarchy of roads and related subdivision layouts became more pronounced. Functional reasoning combined with environmental integration to produce specialized highways and other forms of street layout.*

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