J. Kargon, Architect Homewood and the City 51

Geography, Ecology, and Infrastructure

Considering Sustainability
&
Thinking about the Future

51 Conclusion

Throughout this presentation, the phrase "paradigm shift" has referred to historical events whose material consequences reflected a new way of thinking among participants. The concepts underlying Sustainable Design today challenge us with another shift in our own society's basic values.

Nevertheless, even at our Nation's beginning, some writers proposed similar points of view.

J. Kargon, Architect Homewood and the City

Geography, Ecology, and Infrastructure

Paris Saptember 6. 1789. I set down to write to you without knowing by what occasion I shall send my letter. I do it because a subject comes into my head I set out on this ground which I supopose hurry of the moment very capable of proof. The question to be selfevident, that the earth belongs in usufruct to the living: that the dead have neither powers nor rights overit. The portion occupied decision, but place a government. He in by any individual ceases to be his when himself ceases to be, & reverts my mend; What in to the society. if the society has formed no neles for the appropriation very capable of proof. I set out on this ground which i suppose to be selfwident, that the earth belongs in usufrect to the living : that the dead have neither provers nor rights overit, the proviou occupied by any individual ceases to be his when himself ceases to be , & revolts to the society if the society has formed no rules for the appropriation of it's lands in severally, it will be taken by the first occurrents. these will generally be the wife Veheldron of the decedent . if they have formed niles of appropriation, these rules may give it to the cife and children , or to some one of them, or to the legater of the deceases . so they may give it to his creditor. but the child, the legater, or creditor takes it, not by any natural right, but by a law of the society of which

52

In a well-known letter to James Madison, Thomas Jefferson considers "[t]he question Whether one generation of men has a right to bind another," a question which goes to the heart of Sustainable design. Jefferson, in this letter, continued:

I set out on this ground... "that the earth belongs in usufruct to the living": that the dead have neither powers nor rights over it. ... [N]o man can, by natural right, oblige the lands he occupied, or the persons who succeed him in that occupation, to the paiment of debts contracted by him.

The legal term "usufruct" is the "right to use something that belongs to another, provided that the thing itself is not altered or damaged." An analogy with our contemporary society's stewardship of the environment is easily made, but such an analogy might also be extended to the subject of this essay: *Homewood* and *the ecologies of which it is a part*. In our discussion of this unique architectural artifact, we might well consider changing the "paradigm" with which we celebrate its technical features and its artistic merits. For Homewood's own story confirms Jefferson's view that today's institutions maintain stewardship here, in a moral sense, *only in usufruct*.

J. Kargon, Architect Homewood and the City

Geography, Ecology, and Infrastructure



53

Without a doubt, the Johns Hopkins University's renovation and maintenance of Homewood Mansion has contributed to this kind of longitudinal awareness. Nevertheless, taking seriously our concern for Sustainability suggests that we should discard words like "preservation" or "restoration" and all such defensive terms which imply a kind of removal from the future's material and intellectual needs.

Here is where we need the paradigm shift: Homewood's role within our community must be its own example, for the City of Baltimore, of that material continuity which underlies each succeeding generation's possession of this place, and of its *genus loci*.

The symposium "Green Homewood" is, in fact, a significant step, since today's theme makes clear the value of that continuity and of those qualities which have all too often — unSustainably — been lost to us and to our descendents.