
The Man in the Street: Shadrach Woods and the Practice of “Pedestrian” Urbanism

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Abstract

In his efforts to rebuild war-torn Europe and construct vibrant community life, Shadrach Woods advocated for urbanism defined by streets – not only literally, in terms of form, but as metaphor and theoretical concept, as well. Challenging rising building heights and the growing dominance of automobiles, Woods proposed urban schemes organized by pedestrian networks conceived to be experienced at the scale and speed of foot traffic on ground level. Such designs were generated for and by the common man through sociological study of circulation patterns and vernacular architecture, and often drew upon local inhabitants’ knowledge. In opposition to modern architects’ frequent imposition of top-down masterplans and totalizing images, Woods sought to revalidate streets from the bottom-up by turning attention to everyday life and privileging notions of appropriation and flexibility. These guiding interests underscored his principles of “stem,” “web,” and “bazaar,” while Woods’s broader corpus of writings evidences the importance of the street – and the man in it – to his revolutionary urban practice.

Keywords

Shadrach Woods, social architecture, urbanism, street, pedestrian, urban planning, stem, web, bazaar

1.1 Introduction

Across Paris during springtime 1968, clamoring crowds and emblazoned posters proclaimed “Beauty is in the street!” Yet both as observation and philosophical premise, this slogan might have appeared tongue in cheek. Indeed, at that very moment, the city’s historic quarters were being transformed by brazen technocratic projects including the destruction of Les Halles, erection of the Tour Montparnasse, and construction of a stranglehold around the city center in the form of the autoroute Périphérique. Thus, *les rues*, along with the boulevards and arcades that had inspired the likes of Baudelaire and Benjamin were recast from spaces for casual *flânerie* to sites of dramatic confrontation between the historical past and modernizing present, citizens and state bureaucracy, and automobiles and pedestrians.

However, the battle cry was not in jest and its popularity suggested new ways of thinking about the city were gaining mass appeal. Through statement and in action, protesters affirmed the life of the city was in its streets, upending notions of Paris as a precious object or enduring symbol but rather understood as a constantly changing, charged field of spatial praxis. Moreover, the “events” demonstrated that streets formed spaces of negotiation and encounter, whose social and discursive flows better expressed urban reality than a cliché postcard image.

Paralleling Bernard Rudofsky, Kevin Lynch, and Jane Jacobs (the latter of whose *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* stated the urgency of the situation in no uncertain terms), the new generation believed streets provided the

premier arena for fostering community and public engagement, and thereby constituted striking alternative to the growing retreat to private homes, private cars, and private lives. At the same time, the streetscape's potential for activism and appropriation was seized upon by sociologists Henri Lefebvre and Paul-Henry Chombart de Lauwe, while artists mobilized streets as location and thematic in their work from Situationist *dérives* and Lettriste *décollages* to Fluxus dances and Dadaist graffiti.

Set against this background of political, philosophical, and artistic response, the fact that streets figure so prominently in Shadrach Woods's writings and practice is not remarkable – and is perhaps even less so given his chosen profession. Yet chronological examination of Woods's writings and built work demonstrates that his theories of architecture and urbanism intrinsically tied to streets, street life, and “the man in the street” were prescient and profound. His lifelong exegesis on streets was expansive in scope and varied in focus, uniting organicism, African architecture, and cybernetics. Finally, as an architect and urban planner, streets dually provided catalysts for theoretical concepts and physical spaces for design interventions, while his ideas crystallized widespread thinking about the “everyday” and the “pedestrian.” Through both his built and written practice, Woods proposed a decisive break with *de facto* postwar planning and irrevocably changed the shape of modern urban habitat.

1.2 A Fork in the Road

Like his mentor, Le Corbusier, Woods conceived of architecture and urbanism as inherently intertwined – an ethos likely instilled during his tenure as project architect of the *Unité d'Habitation* in Marseille (1946-52). Yet soon after the building's completion Woods decamped to North Africa, actively distancing himself from Père Corbu and distinguishing his work from that espoused by other members of the *Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM). Whereas the CIAM old guard utilized omniscient viewpoints and aerial photography to structure masterplans from above, Woods studied the context of each project from below: embedding himself in pre-existing communities, conducting surveys with prospective residents, and embracing an ethnographic approach to building and place-making.

Woods further challenged Le Corbusier and CIAM doctrine by disavowing functional zoning and, with it, the sacrosanct orthogonal geometry characterizing modern town planning. In contrast to the omnipresent grid, Woods promoted an urban matrix composed of interwoven and overlapping layers emphasizing connectivity, relationships, and integration, and suggested that the typology best suited to produce such spatial environments were streets. However, he cautioned that “streets” differed from Le Corbusier's “roads,” writing: “The street, which was destroyed by the combined assaults of the automobile and the Athens Charter, may be revalidated if it is considered as a place as well as a way from one place to another” (Woods, 1960).

For Woods, it wasn't the aesthetics of streets that mattered but the activities that occupied and were engendered by them. He explained: “What is generally called ‘circulation’ is not the key to planning” (Ibid). Instead, human-driven patterns – including and in addition to transportation – generated the flows underpinning the urban realm. Of these overlooked conduits he noted, “[They] nearly always seem to be spontaneous, or at least they tend to escape from predetermined paths. They refer to the *real shape* of the network of human activities and not the apparent traffic pattern or road system” (Woods, 1962a, emphasis added). Woods championed these multivalent “streets” as essential features of urbanity, responsible for facilitating communication and community in traditional architecture and capable of promoting sustainable growth in contemporary times. He believed streets uniquely mediated between

public and private spheres and could serve as linking appendages between old and new development.

To illustrate his thesis, Woods designed the Nid d'Abeilles and Semiramis Housing with colleagues in the Atelier des Bâisseurs (ATBAT) [Figure 1]. The residential complex included passages between apartments that functioned as “streets in the sky” enabling movement from one area to another (what Woods called “ways”) and serving as sites for congregation, casual discussion, and chance occurrence (what he termed “places”). Located on the outskirts of Casablanca, the architecture distilled the physical form and social activity of urban streets to the domestic scale in attempts to enliven what were quickly becoming prosaic *grands ensembles* elsewhere in the world.



Fig. 1 - View of Nid d'Abeilles (above) and Semiramis Housing (below) in Casablanca (1954).

Subtly paying heed to the diversity of residents' religious practices, the team created a joint sense of individuality and community via the separation and coexistence of public and private spaces throughout the complex. Thus, the design did not result from traditional colonial planning but was a conscious nod to and reformulation of the nearby mountain dwellings and recalled vernacular urbanism in terms of its flexible plan. Unlike fortified, medieval cities in Europe, the residential scheme emulated the size and shape of North African villages with open-ended street networks to encourage evolution and future expansion.

African streets provided example of how to achieve variation within the use of repeated elements. Utilizing this single device, African urbanism yielded a range of permutations, each individuated rather than monotonous or repetitive. Woods reinterpreted these indigenous forms to facilitate dense patterns of habitation while enabling growth and change in the built environment. And although he never explicitly recognized the systemic logic at play, in adopting North African vernacular models to aid his design, Woods also began using fractals: patterns that self-replicate and repeat at multiple scales.¹

After his early work in Morocco, fractal geometry became central to Woods's thinking. Throughout his career, "streets" broadly considered functioned as his fractal denominator, from corridors in apartment complexes to neighborhood sidewalks, and from regional transportation networks all the way up to immaterial data flows structuring the newly minted cybernetic world. This holistic vision of architecture and urbanism positioning streets as the primary unit of fractal organization had a twofold impact on Woods's practice and philosophy: first, it led him to believe that all architecture is interrelated; and second, as a corollary, that all people are, too. This ideology fueled his commitment to sustainability and equitable living standards, and yielded his core concepts of stem, web, and bazaar, to be discussed.

1.3 Stem

Woods returned to France to found his practice with ATBAT colleague, Georges Candilis, and fellow Le Corbusier apprentice, Alexis Josic, in 1956. Shortly thereafter, the firm won the state-sponsored *Opération Million* competition to expeditiously and economically replace housing stock and build new towns in metropolitan France. In their winning proposal, the studio advocated for a naturally occurring pattern language as existed in North Africa to revitalize the flattened cities of postwar Europe, thereby reversing the assumed direction of colonial knowledge transfer and somewhat ironically causing the firm's first attempts to realize an African influenced *habitat évolutif* to arise under the auspices of the rapidly decolonizing French government.

In the accompanying project text entitled "Proposal for Evolutional Habitation," Woods blatantly condemned Le Corbusier's urbanism, opining, "We have tried to avoid the deadly alignment of the straight line" (Woods, 1959). Yet linear devices were not to be avoided altogether since, "A line is open-ended; it has no dimension, it can change direction at will," and "A linear organization is the truest reflection of an open society" (Woods, 1961). Instead, Woods wanted to subordinate the straight line or pure form to what he considered to be the true determinants of the built environment: inhabitants and their activities.

1 - Ethno-mathematician, Ron Eglash, first identified the fractal dimension in African art and architecture. While Eglash's scientific arguments was published after Woods's death, Woods was also aware and observant of the unique systems, geometry, and patterns embedded in African architecture and urbanism. For more, see R. Eglash, *African Fractals: Modern Computing and Indigenous Design* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999).

He believed that cities could be better organized and stimulated by a theoretical principle he termed “Stem” and outlined in an eponymous article. Introducing the concept, Woods lamented how dogmatic personalities had yielded the “present absurdity of treating habitat as a means of self-expression, a plastic universe where houses are building blocks for the child-architect to play with,” resulting in “an endless series of virtually identical housing schemes from Stockholm to Algiers,” and “a crossword puzzle universe” (Woods, 1960) [Figure 2]. He further attacked modern planning for closed forms that prevented growth and operated in haphazard, additive fashions. Instead, Woods argued that cities and homes should be conceived as comprehensive systems connected by physical streets and information flows, reflecting the era’s megastructural aesthetic and popular allusions to cellular propagation.

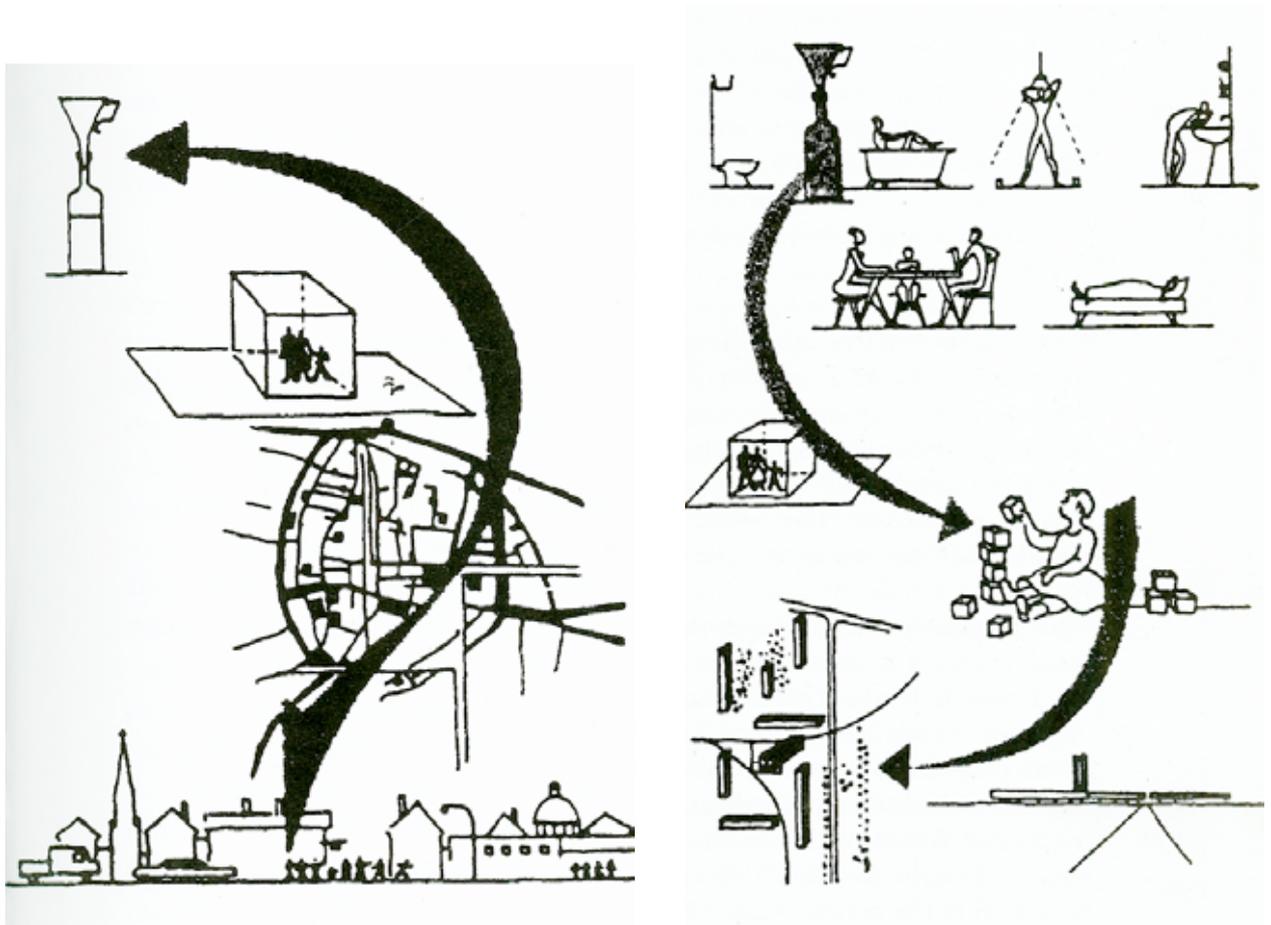


Fig. 2 - “Stem” diagram published in Architectural Design 5 (1960).

At the crux of his argument, Woods stated, “In view of the failure of the traditional architectural tool, *plan masse*, to cope with the accelerated creation of habitat, it is proposed that planning be reconsidered from stem to cluster (rather than from cell to symbol)” (Ibid). He thus concluded, “Stem is considered not only as a link between additive cells but as the generator of habitat. It provides the environment in which the cells may function” (Ibid). While visual description would have helped elucidate the structured growth and conceptual idea Woods was advocating, he only provided evocative cartoons and indeterminate phrases to avoid repeating the very formalism he had previously decried. Therefore, the open-ended nature of stem was intentional and in keeping with his firmly anti-aesthetic position. Although the term could conjure organic associations with a plant branching and rising, it was also meant to spur thoughts of streets and street patterns; as Woods explained, “Its form and spatial content will be different from that of previous streets, but the idea of street (as distinct from that of road) is inherent in the idea of stem” (Ibid).

In project files for a proposed extension to the city of Caen, the stem is immediately visible with its street-like functions clearly articulated and even heralded as “the primordial and permanent function of urbanism” [Figure 3]. Over the course of the design process, stems were replicated from dwelling unit to housing block and ultimately to conurbation; like so many bronchial tubes comprising a set of lungs, the stem repopulated until a new city formed. The diagrams further illustrate how pedestrian patterns led to neighborhood clusters determining the overall scheme for Caen-Herouville. Yet it is important to remember that stem was a hermeneutical concept rather than a specific visual form: while its generative capacities and reformulation of the traditional street were applied across a range of scales and contexts, its shape and appearance were uniquely determined by the uses and users of specific conditions.

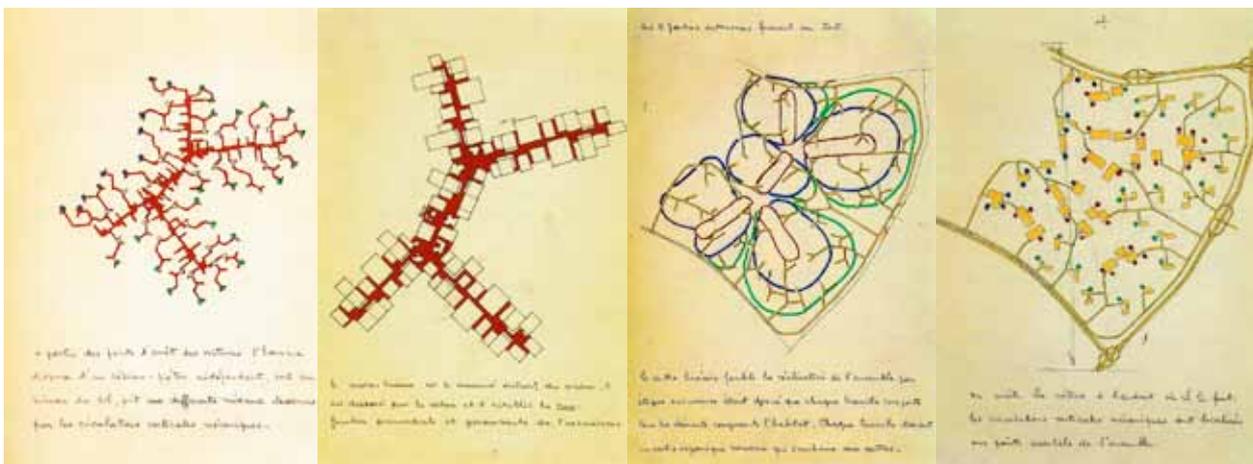


Fig. 3 - Project files for proposed Caen-Herouville development (1961).

Unlike other postwar planners who embraced the *carte blanche* status of *tabula rasa* environments, Woods adopted a layered temporal approach, considering a site's past in tandem with its future, and designed with time or what he called "the fourth dimension." For example, since the Caen sub-development was expected to span a building period of fifteen years, Woods developed multiple, independently valid phases (i.e. stems) which would eventually grow to be interconnected. Through the continued addition of new branches and neighborhoods, the city was understood to operate like a living organism; Caen-Herouville would constantly evolve and avoid static form, thereby ensuring its longevity with a flexible skeleton of streets amenable to growth and adaptation by future inhabitants.

The idea that architects should provide customizable, do-it-yourself frameworks rather than finite compositions was essential to Woods's architectural philosophy and he believed that stem represented the first step in achieving this aim. Reflecting upon the Caen-Herouville project he commented, "We needed to discover a minimum structuring device which could be effective for fifteen hundred dwellings but could grow to ten thousand, which could adapt itself to changing conditions, whether these be economic, social or technological, which could then be comprehensible to our clients (that they could use it and find their way in it), and which would allow for adaptation to its physical environment" (Woods, 1964).

Urbanism is a French word, and although my partially Anglo-Saxon heredity rebels at borrowing words from such Latinate sources, I have not yet found a good English or American equivalent. The English have a discipline called town-planning, which is something like urbanism; The Americans have city-planning which is nothing like it. In some places, 'Urban Design' is used to render the approximate meaning of the content of 'urbanism.'

The essence of urbanism, on the most mundane, practical level, is organization. This is also the essence of architecture. The relationship between architecture and urbanism is that they are parts of the same entity, which might be called environmental design, and that each is a part of the other.

"Urbanism and architecture are parts of a continuous process. Planning (urbanism) is the correlating of human activities; architecture is the housing of these activities . . . Urbanism establishes the milieu in which



Fig. 4 - Excerpt from *What U Can Do, Architecture at Rice 27* (Houston, TX: Rice University, 1970), p. 3.

As this statement suggests, Woods prized flexibility above all and analogized the practice of urbanism as akin to a construction site or a permanent work-in-progress to which architects should only provide basic scaffolding. He argued that architecture and urbanism were essentially “organizing processes” and that organization formed the single ethical intervention architects could make to the collective and evolutionary human habitat [Figure 4]. Yet a limited role for architects consequently necessitated greater user participation, from implementation and upkeep, to later revision and modification. Woods explained: “We assumed that the man in the street is the city builder and that the urbanist or town planner, who is an architect, is here to help him, not to supplant him. An urbanist can substitute for a citizen (he is equivalent) but he cannot find within his limited self the wealth of possibilities which are in all citizens. And this is not his job. An architect might design for you a house which would not leak but if he should try to regulate your use of the house you would consider he was exceeding his mission” (Woods, 1964).

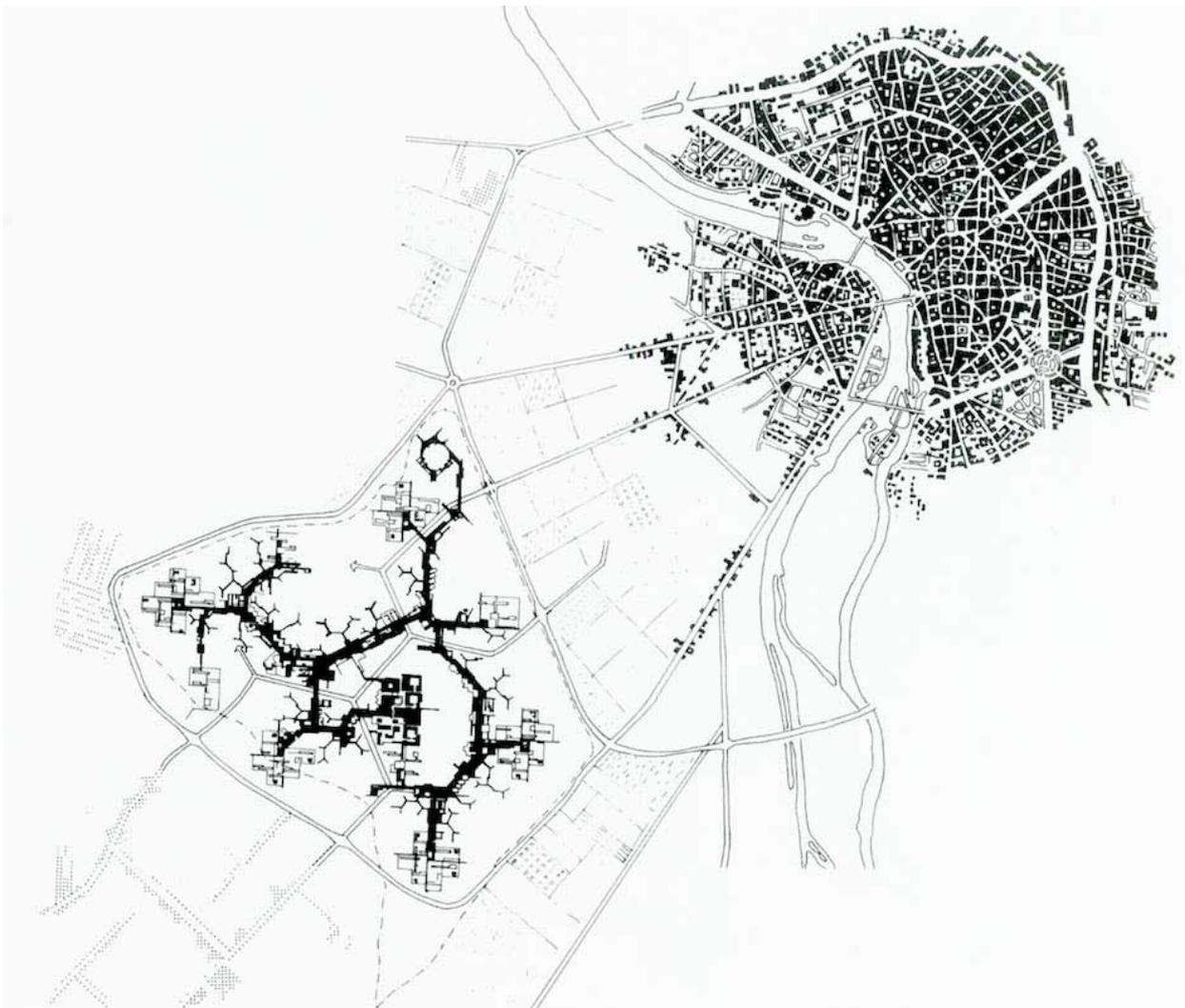


Fig. 5 - Site plan for Toulouse-Le Mirail proposal (1961).

Woods's confidence in his fellow man to become fellow builder was likely due to his early work in Morocco and Marseille, as well as his own unorthodox training in philosophy. As a result, he championed the notion that "the man in the street" and ordinary citizens would become architects as well as occupants of a future global habitat collectively designed from the bottom-up. Furthermore, he believed such an approach to urbanism would require dwellers to collaboratively create both physical and social community along the stem - the site of community-building par excellence. Woods argued that street life instituted a social contract on the most basic level, since "When one walks in the street, one understands very quickly that a certain type of exchange is necessary between people. In order to walk in the street so as not to bump into another person, one must have understood that there are other people; one must already have a social attitude toward others" (Woods, 1967). According to Woods, streets constituted spaces of mutual respect, recognition, and negotiation, while stems served as the primary building blocks of a new urbanism and the first step towards an open society.

1.4 Web

It is difficult not to read Woods's participatory rhetoric in relation to the then expanding field of cybernetics, and in later texts, greater parallels between architecture and technology were made evident. After "Stem" was written to explicate the design process in Caen, Woods published "Web" while working on a satellite neighborhood for Toulouse. There, stems multiplied and spread in numerous directions, not only along a single linear path but outward to form a network without center and northwest to join the city's historical urban fabric [Figure 5].

In the intervening years since Caen, Woods had recognized that a solitary stem could not yield a total environment, rather, a network of stems would be required. He had also become attracted to the democratizing impulse of "webs" both in systems theory and urban planning. These ideas were central to the Toulouse-Le Mirail project and were reinforced in the companion publication in which Woods wrote: "The idea of organization so that no parts are in danger of isolation and none are subject to an a priori over-densification is essential to our thought about what systems can be suitable to the evolving total society" (Woods, 1962b). However, this language of equality did not promote homogenous landscapes; instead, like a decentralized constellation or spiderweb, points of connection and heightened activity would emerge where multiple systems of circulation and organization would intersect.

Toulouse-Le Mirail employed "streets" at multiple levels, with separate systems for automobiles and pedestrians on the ground balanced by public passages on building facades linking apartments, shops, and community centers above; perpendicular to this horizontal activity ran systems of vertical movement facilitated by elevators and stairs [Figure 6]. These multiple circuits were then overlaid, causing independent networks to meet at various "intensity points" yielding a new, polycentric conglomeration. Unlike CIAM-approved functional zoning, where select areas of the city would be occupied at different hours of the day, Woods simultaneously dispersed and linked commercial, residential, and institutional spaces, translating the matrix pattern first outlined in his theoretical writings to the built environment.

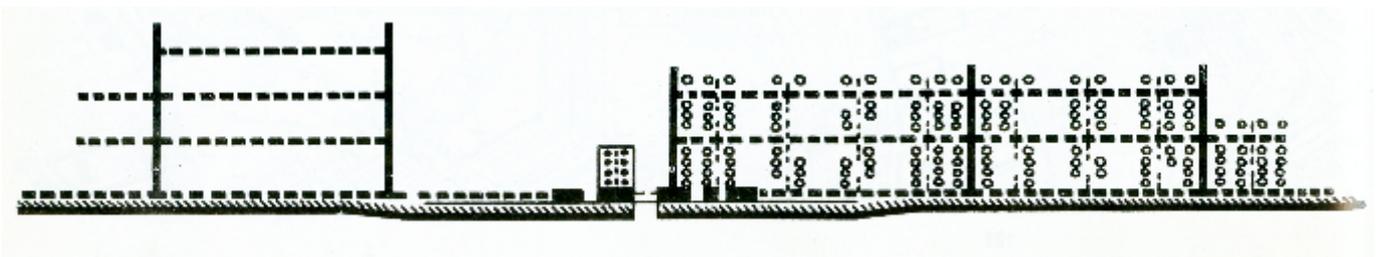


Fig. 6 - Project file illustrating proposed vertical circulation for Toulouse-Le Mirail (1961).

In face of the ever-increasing scale and complexity of his projects, Woods maintained that streets and pedestrians were the essential components of urbanism and announced the primary goal of web was “to re-establish the human scale in planning” (Ibid). Practically, this meant aligning the urban realm with pedestrians rather than automobiles, even at the most elementary level, as when we stated: “The stem remains a pedestrian way – developing at the scale of speed of the man on foot” (Woods, 1964); or when he observed: “In relation to speed, the measure of which is distance, the human scale is the pedestrian who moves at about four kilometers per hour” (Woods, 1962b). With this pedestrian dimension in mind, Woods spaced ancillary features throughout Toulouse-Le Mirail according to the amount of time it would take to walk from one to another; he then calculated such distances in “feet” despite the fact that his colleagues utilized the metric system and larger measurements would have been more practical when operating at the regional scale [Figure 7].

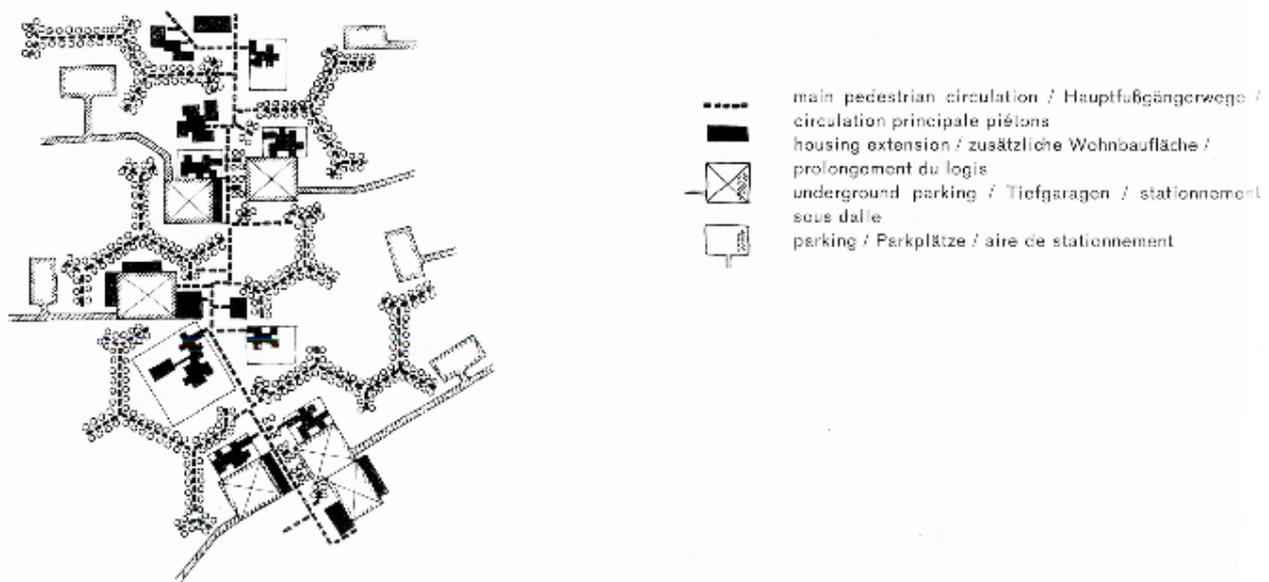


Fig. 7 - Proposed placement of ancillaries along the “Stem” for Toulouse-Le Mirail (1961).

But perhaps the greatest challenge Woods faced was integrating his ideas into existing urban environments, especially those that had embraced automobiles, such as postwar Paris. Although stem and web were theoretically based upon pedestrian networks, reconciling their forms with reality often proved difficult. One of his most ambitious attempts to weave pedestrianized urbanism into a historical city center was the proposed Bonne Nouvelle redevelopment in the heart of Paris. After the municipality relocated the central food markets to suburban Rungis, architects were invited to fill the subsequent void and improve surrounding areas which had long been considered blighted, as evidenced by Le Corbusier’s plan to overhaul the neighborhood half a century earlier. Analyzing these proposals side by side is instructive insofar as it illuminates the latent influence of Le Corbusier on Woods’s thinking, as well as the many ways Woods sought to break with his mentor [Figure 8]. Performing this visual comparison, Tom Avermaete has noted: “If the 1925 Plan Voisin by Le Corbusier for the same Parisian site seemed to be the blatant illustration of the irreconcilable character of modern urban models and the historic European city, then the Bonne Nouvelle project by Candilis-Josic-Woods seemed to announce a possible reconciliation” (Avermaete, 2005).

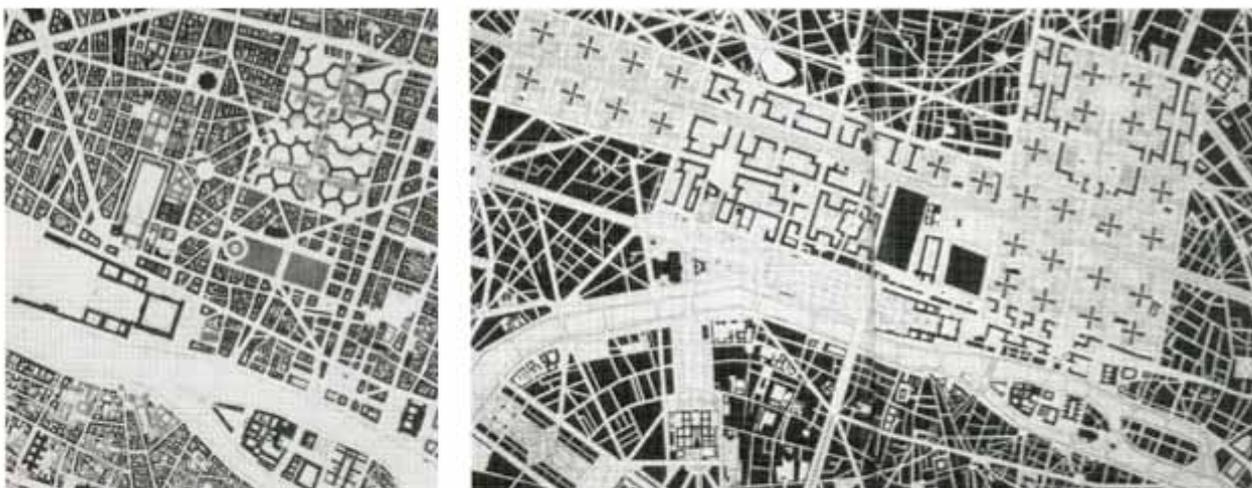


Fig. 8 - Comparison of Woods's proposal for Bonne Nouvelle (1967) (left) and Le Corbusier's Plan Voisin (1925) (right).

As in earlier schemes, Bonne Nouvelle would have created intensity points where the web met with existing neighborhood features such as bus routes, metro stations, and public monuments. The nearby famous *passages* would be echoed in suspended glass arcades linking office and residences across the high-rise development with terraces and outdoor spaces staggered and positioned at varying levels throughout the complex. Woods even proposed an overhead transit system so that upper floors would retain the same level of activity found at ground level below. Yet whereas the stem in Caen grew axially in one direction and the web in Toulouse in two, Bonne Nouvelle signaled an attempt to extend the previously developed systems in three directions and to weave them together in what fellow architect and Team X chronicler Alison Smithson would later dub “mat-building” (Smithson, 1974).

Bonne Nouvelle marked the logical progression of Woods's thinking leading to a more synthetic, unified urban landscape shaped by human practices rather than by compositional means. But, unsurprisingly, this futuristic overhaul never left the drawing board. Further, since Caen-Herouville was not developed and Toulouse-Le Mirail was only realized in amputated form, little of Woods's vision for street-oriented urbanism remains visible today. Due to this lacunae, Woods and his legacy are often reduced to the single built work that forms the closest approximation of his theories herein discussed: in Berlin, Woods wove stem and web together to create what he conceived as a McLuhan-esque “global village” and playfully termed “bazaar.”

1.5 Bazaar

The Berlin Freie Universität was designed as a miniature city and was thus intended to provide illustrative experiment of how to deal with broader problems plaguing the urban realm by theorizing issues of city living within the space of the university. Timely circulation was prioritized, as was facilitating interaction between faculty, staff, and students. Additionally, due to its siting in suburban Dahlem, the campus was designed to link town and country by building in accordance with existing urban fabrics and preemptively respond to the rapidly encroaching metropolitan scale [Figure 9]. Finally, as a building intended to house progressive intellectual communities, the university setting provided ideal grounds for Woods to test his notion of social architecture, wherein better building would lead to improved human relations.

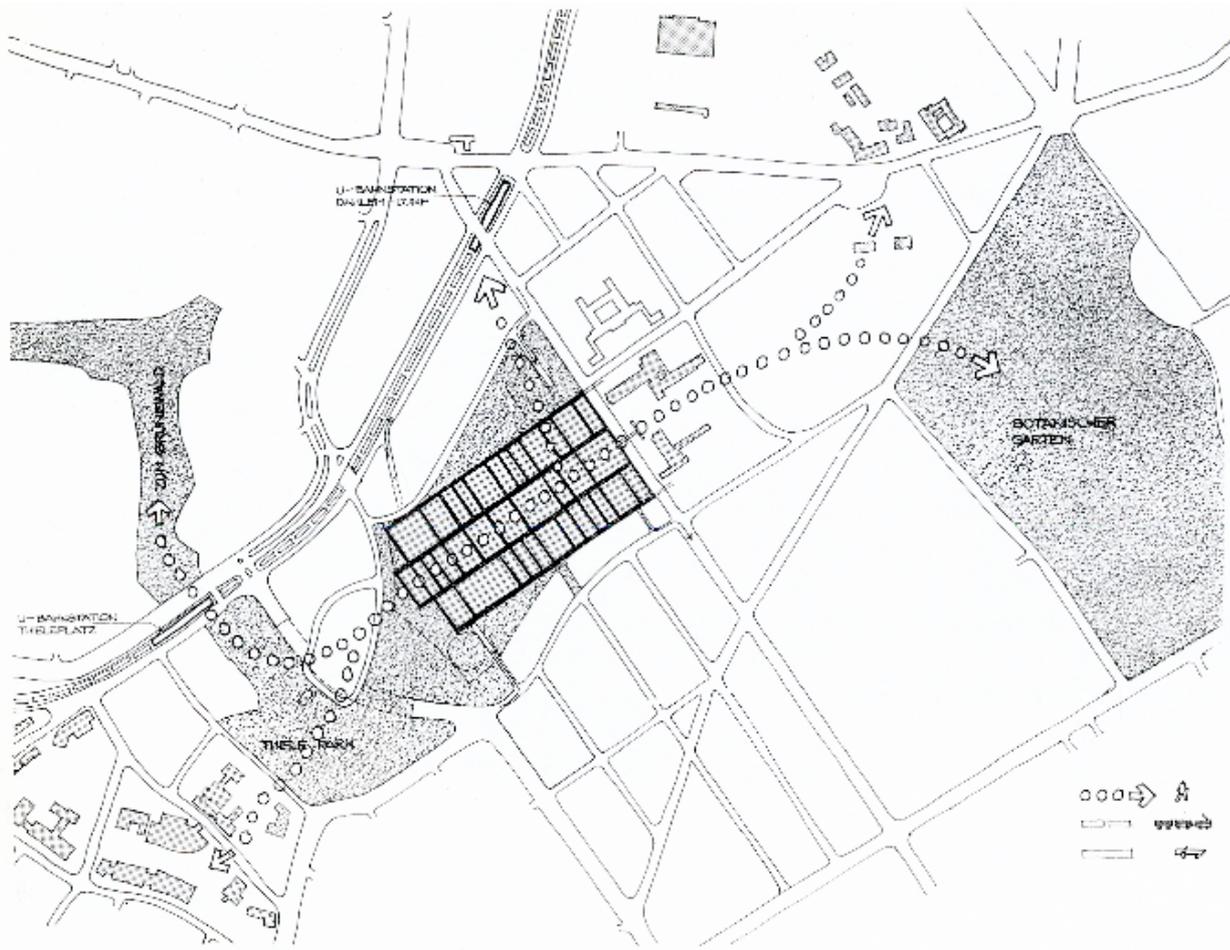


Fig. 9 - Site plan for Berlin Freie Universität (1967).

During the university's construction, Woods contributed to a special edition of the *Harvard Architectural Review* dedicated to the subject of "Architecture and Education." With his text "The Education Bazaar," Woods explained the concepts behind and aspirations for the Berlin project, writing: "Cities represent the future of Western society, and schools represent the future of cities" (Woods, 1969a). He continued: "Teaching and learning are also performing arts, and the city is the theatre of these performances. And just as the other performing arts tend to become stilted and remote when isolated, as in Lincoln Center, so does Education lose its relevancy by being locked up in ivory towers." Lest the metaphor be lost on his audience, Woods then succinctly concluded: "The theatre of our time is in the streets. Education, then, is urbanism. And urbanism is everybody's business" (Ibid).

Woods's altruistic ambitions were reinforced and supported by the university architecture and organization of social practices that would take place therein [Figure 10]. Dramatically flipping the skyscraper model horizontal to avoid vertical isolation and defy hierarchy, Woods inserted a permeable "groundscraper" in its place to encourage movement of bodies and, by extension, ideas, through fluid interpersonal exchanges. He also outfitted the main building with flexible interior and exterior wall panels enabling rooms and points of egress to be reconfigured to accommodate

different purposes, activities, and crowds, as well as to provide customizable variety within a modular system. It was hoped that this “open door policy” architecture would facilitate greater collaboration and catalyze the dissolution of disciplinary boundaries within the university providing uninterrupted access to the life of the city beyond, wherein city and university would mutually enrich and learn from one another, and ultimately “intertwine to an inextricable degree” (Ibid).

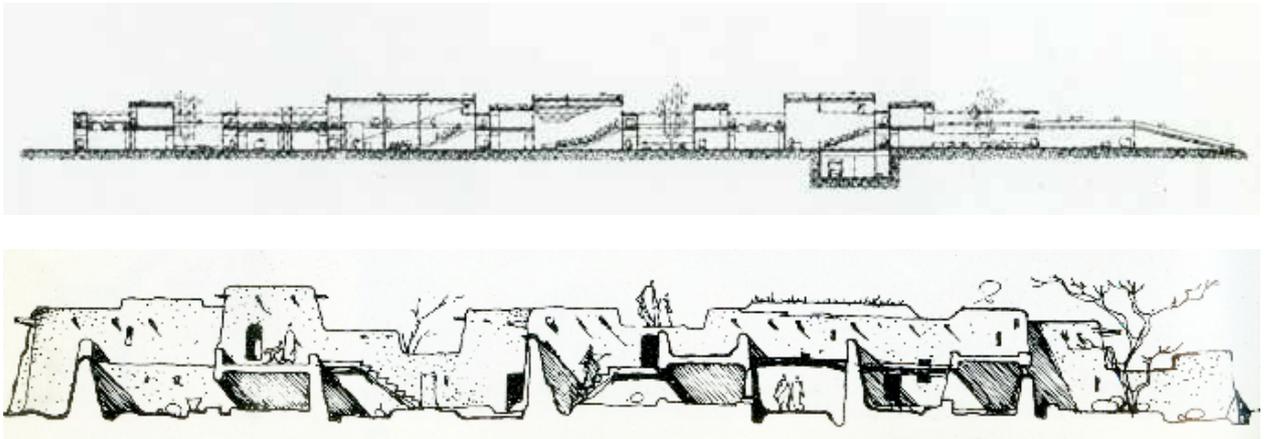


Fig. 10 - Section for Berlin Freie Universität (1967) (above) compared with section of observed dwellings in Chad (1962) (below).

At the core of the Free University project – and the defining architectural feature supporting these manifold desires – is a street network composed of two pedestrian levels overlaid at an angle so that the logic of the grid bends to the will of web [Figure 11]. Outdoor and indoor spaces are peppered between the two systems and are linked by ramps, staircases, tangential views, and hallways, while further activity is encouraged in the interstitial spaces created within alleys and passages providing equivalent to the “ballet of city sidewalks” promoted by Jane Jacobs. In sum, the campus suggested what modern cityscapes and their urban tissues could become, albeit at a fraction of the total scale. The university therefore functioned as a synecdoche or fractal that could be repeated and woven together to produce a comprehensive urban ensemble.

Harkening back to Woods’s earlier work in North Africa, the complex invites comparison with a model city comprised of squares, courtyards, and streets, or with an Arabic medina as suggested by the title and ideas contained within the “Education Bazaar” article. Following Woods’s untimely death in 1973, Team X collaborator Aldo van Eyck similarly reflected upon his friend’s urban practice and the Free University project, stating, “We just used that one word ‘casbah’ as an image, as a poetic image. We were referring to any kaleidoscopic society where all the functions are more or less mixed, and always said ‘casbah’ was the final limit. We don’t have to literally make a casbah, but we need to be a little more ‘casbahistic’, by putting things together: and letting things penetrate each other again” (quoted in Forés, 2011).

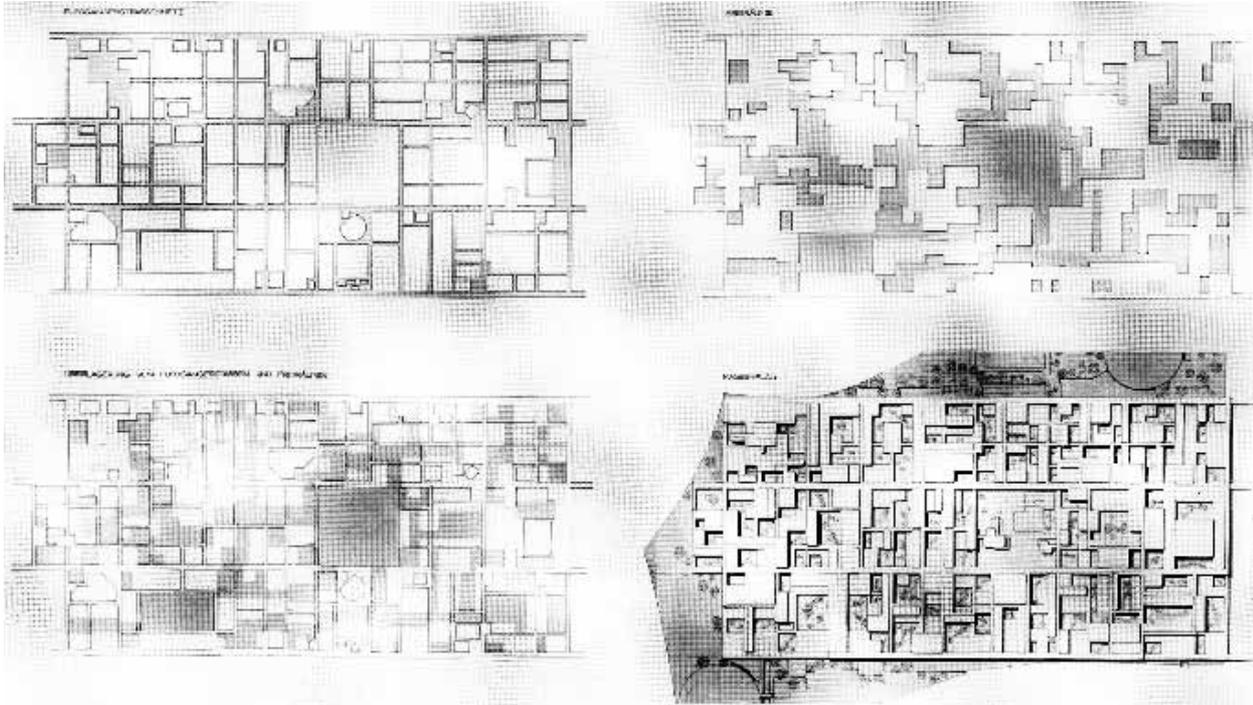


Fig. 11 - Detail of individual meshes and comprehensive overlay for Berlin Freie Universität (1967).

1.6 Conclusion

Perhaps Woods and his ideas of pedestrian urbanism proved too radical for his peers and, later in life, even for himself. (It would be remiss not to mention Woods's final commission for the Lower Manhattan Expressway – one of the most reviled postwar urban initiatives and certainly not a project dedicated to reconstituting the street.) In addition, history has not been kind to Woods's concrete legacy: the central pedestrian *dalle* was never implemented at Toulouse-Le Mirail, while rioting in 2005 forced closure of many of the complex's "streets in the sky"; meanwhile, in Berlin, the installation of code-mandated fire doors radically altered the original nature of the plan and significantly impeded the intended flow of students and ideas within the university.

Yet reverberations of Woods's thinking are being felt and put into practice today, while many of the questions Woods grappled with are as pressing now as they were for his generation. Like other 1960s thinkers, his warnings about sustainability and finite resources have rung true, prompting limited car usage and adaptive reuse projects. Similarly, municipalities around the world have elevated the profile of pedestrian zones and public spaces, as well as pursued well-designed street networks to contain urban sprawl. Pritzker prize winner Alejandro Aravena and his firm ELEMENTAL's low-cost, incremental housing expands upon Woods's model of participation; and the 2016 Venice Biennale British Pavilion addressed the overlooked "fourth dimension" to consider architecture's lifespan throughout construction, use, and its afterlives.

But beyond calling attention to duration, flexibility, and change, Woods's architecture and urbanism for "the man in the street" valued common citizens and the links between all of earth's inhabitants, forcing us to consider the implications of his friend Roger Vailland's observation that: "The world, at the scale of the universe, is an island" (Woods, 1967). Throughout his practice, Woods was committed to pedestrian-oriented urbanism. He sought to build

relationships both concrete and metaphysical, and valued the seemingly “pedestrian” by evaluating the vernacular alongside cutting-edge technology.

In a lecture at the Technische Universität Berlin given shortly before his death, Woods called upon architects to avoid reducing urbanism to quantifiable data and to instead observe social practices and provide malleable frameworks for their accommodation and evolution. Questioning his life’s work and the future of the profession, he asked: “What can urbanism do, then? Well, first of all it can, and only can, deal with present realities. It cannot be visionary; it is not ‘furable.’ But the present reality is sufficiently difficult to occupy us all” (Woods, 1969b). Although Shadrach Woods’s philosophy and ethnographic urbanism dedicated to pedestrians and to the “pedestrian” may not have found welcome audience in the late twentieth century, his assessment that “we are all passengers on what Bucky Fuller calls “Spaceship Earth” has proven acutely relevant in today’s evermore interconnected world, wherein “The world is a city, and urbanism is everyone’s business” (Ibid).

Acknowledgements: The title of this paper reprises Woods’s posthumously published text, *The Man in the Street: A Polemic on Urbanism* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1975), although the ideas contained therein were equally expressed in the articles, lectures, and built work referenced above. Research was conducted at the Shadrach Woods Archive at Avery Library, Columbia University, New York, NY, USA.

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