

From Modernist Utopia to Postmodern Simulacrum: Disney's
EPCOT, Celebration, and *The Florida Project*

Ilona Kohnke

Submitted to the Faculty of Film, Art and Creative Technologies in candidacy for the BA
(Honours) Degree in Design for Film – Production Design DL845

Submitted 13/02/2025

Declaration of Originality

This dissertation is submitted by the undersigned to the Institute of Art Design & Technology, Dun Laoghaire in partial fulfilment of the examination for the BA (Honours) Design for Film. It is entirely the author's own work except where noted and has not been submitted for an award from this or any other educational institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ilona Kohnke', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ilona Kohnke

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Clare Barman for her invaluable support, keen interest, and encouragement throughout the writing of this thesis.

A special thanks to Conor McKenna for his understanding and flexibility in the past years accommodating my academic commitments, allowing me the time to focus on my studies and this thesis.

To every wonderful soul I've met over the past four years and am lucky enough to call my friends—thank you. And to my mam, my sister, and my dear friend Christi, I am beyond grateful for your support and for always standing by me.

Abstract

This thesis delves into Disney's architectural and urban design ambitions, tracing how its projects evolved from Walt Disney's mid-century utopia of EPCOT to the controlled aesthetic of Celebration, Florida, and finally to the fractured urban terrain shown in *The Florida Project*. This essay uses architectural and cinematic theory, including the works of Le Corbusier, Ebenezer Howard, Robert Venturi, and Jean Baudrillard, to analyze how Disney's created settings serve as both utopian ideals and mechanisms of spatial and economic exclusion.

EPCOT was designed as a mid-century paradise, complete with radial zoning, underground transportation networks, and a modernist planning paradigm. However, its final conversion into a theme park emphasizes the physical and economic alienation of the postmodern society. Meanwhile, *The Florida Project* deconstructs Disney's carefully created places by depicting Kissimmee's chaotic, neon-lit sprawl via a raw cinematic lens, revealing the huge socioeconomic differences that lurk just beyond Disney's clean image.

This thesis contends that, while Disney's spaces promise utopian ideals, they ultimately serve as curated spectacles that reinforce—rather than dismantle—structural injustices in the built environment, as vividly illustrated in Sean Baker's *The Florida Project* (2017).

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Walt Disney’s City of the Future: EPCOT	3
When and Why?.....	3
Mapping Modernist Epcot	4
The Fairytale That Never Came True	13
Chapter 2: Celebration	14
The Vision of Celebration- New Urbanism	14
Highway 192.....	15
Residential and Civic Architecture	18
Chapter 3: The Dark Side of the Magic: Life on the Margins of Disney	24
The Magic Castle: A Harsh Reality	24
The Surroundings and Visual Aesthetic	29
Destroying the American Dream- A Surreal Escape	32
Conclusion	35
Bibliography:	38

List of Figures

<i>Fig. 1 Master Plan of the proposed theme park area, EPCOT film. (1966)</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Fig. 2 Walt Disney in front of the entirety of the master plan, EPCOT film (1966).....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Fig. 3 EPCOT masterplan, EPCOT/ Florida Project (1967) Dir. Arthur J. Vitarelli [film]</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Fig. 4 ‘spokes of a wheel’, EPCOT/ Florida Project (1967) Dir. Arthur J. Vitarelli [film]</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Fig. 5 Sir Ebenezer Howard. 1902.Garden Cities of To-Morrow. London, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., Ltd.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Fig. 6 Concept art for the city's central commercial areas and Cosmopolitan Hotel by Herbert Ryman (1966).....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Fig. 7 Ville Radieuse/ Radiant City (1933) Le Corbusier</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Fig. 8 View of the transportation centre below the urban centre of E.P.C.O.T Herbert Ryman. Opaque watercolour on browline. 24 x 51. 1966. Restored in 2012.(c) Disney.</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Fig. 9 Ville Radieuse (1933) Le Corbusier, accessed via: https://iamyouasheisme.wordpress.com/</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Fig. 10 Behind the scenes of the E.P.C.O.T film 28/10/66 (c) Disney.ccessed via: https://d23.com/a-world-of-tomorrow-inside-walts-last-dream/.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Fig. 11 (left) Nonstandard real estate advertising, on Route 192 (Andrew Ross).....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Fig. 12 (right) Promotional billboard for Celebration, FL (Dan Piepenbring) accessed via: https://www.theparisreview.org/.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Fig. 13 Celebration: The Town that Disney Built (1996). Dir. Phillip Smith.BBC2.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Fig. 14 Upper strip looking north, Learning from Las Vegas, Robert Venturi (1972)</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Fig. 15 Architectural Styles. page A-3. Celebration Pattern Book</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Fig. 16 Illustrative Catalogue, Residential Lots. page A-6. Celebration Pattern Book</i>	<i>20</i>

<i>Fig. 17 Town hall Designed by Phillip Johnson (Architectural Walking Tour) c. Disney.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Fig. 18 The Old Town Hall Designed by Philip Johnson. Jackie Craven accessed</i> <i>via:https://www.thoughtco.com/celebration-florida-disneys-ideal-community (Accessed: 13</i> <i>February 2025).</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Fig. 19 U.S. Post Office Designed by Michael Graves, Architectural Walking Tour) c. Disney .</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Fig. 20 U.S. Post Office. Celebration, Florida. Jackie Craven accessed</i> <i>via:https://www.thoughtco.com/celebration-florida-disneys-ideal-community (Accessed: 13</i> <i>February 2025).</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Fig. 21 Neuschwanstein Castle at Sunset [Online]. Available at: https://www.neuschwanstein.de</i> <i>(Accessed: 11/2/2025).....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Fig. 22 Cinderella Castle at Magic Kingdom [Online]. Available at:</i> <i>https://www.disneyworld.co.uk/attractions (Accessed: 11/022025).....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Fig. 23 The Magic Castle Inn & Suites, photographed by Richard Luscombe/The Guardian</i> <i>(2017).....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Fig. 24 The Florida Project (2017) Directed by Sean Baker [Film Still]. A24.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Fig. 25 The Florida Project (2017) Directed by Sean Baker [Film Still]. A24.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Fig. 26Cinderella Castle,Available accessed</i> <i>via:https://www.disneyworld.co.uk/attractions/magic-kingdom/cinderella-castle/ (13 February</i> <i>2025).....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Fig. 27 The Florida Project (2017) Directed by Sean Baker [Film Still]. A24.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Fig. 28 The Florida Project (2017) Directed by Sean Baker [Film Still]. A24.....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Fig. 29 The Florida Project (2017) Directed by Sean Baker [Film Still]. A24.....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Fig. 30 The Florida Project (2017) Directed by Sean Baker [Film Still]. A24.....</i>	<i>33</i>

Introduction

The Disney Company has long been associated with fantasy, perfection, and utopian ideals, shaping global perceptions of idealized communities through its films, theme parks, and architectural projects. Aside from its painstakingly crafted illusion, Disney's urban planning endeavors - EPCOT, Celebration, resulting in the postmodern landscapes around Walt Disney World - provide an intriguing study of utopian vision, regulated settings, and socioeconomic realities. This thesis examines how Disney's evolving urban projects reflect both the aspirations and contradictions of the American Dream, delving into EPCOT's modernist ambitions, Celebration's nostalgic reimagining, and the harsh realities of communities living on Disney's periphery.

This essay adopts a theoretical framework based on modernist and postmodernist urban planning theories, including the perspectives of Le Corbusier, Ebenezer Howard, Robert Venturi, and Jean Baudrillard. Each of these thinkers offers important perspectives on how architecture and urban planning interface with ideology, spectacle, and socioeconomic disparities. Using these theories, I examine how Disney's urban initiatives serve as both utopian visions and instruments of exclusion.

Three key visual texts serve as primary sources for this analysis: the 1966 EPCOT promotional film, which depicts Walt Disney's original urban vision; a BBC documentary on Celebration, which examines the town's design and lived experience; and Sean Baker's *The Florida Project*, which captures the socioeconomic realities of those living on the outskirts of Disney's carefully curated spaces. These videos serve as visual case studies, providing a multifaceted knowledge of how Disney's constructed environments are portrayed, experienced, and evaluated.

The first part looks at EPCOT as an unrealized modernist paradise, comparing its design to Le Corbusier's Radiant City and Howard's Garden City Movement. The EPCOT advertising film from 1966 is evaluated alongside these theoretical writings, revealing how Disney envisioned a city based on technological development, corporate control, and efficient urban planning. Le Corbusier's *The City of Tomorrow and Its Planning* and Howard's *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* shed light on how Disney's vision harmonized with larger modernist planning principles. The advertising film creates a dramatic contrast between Walt Disney's ideals for urban perfection

and the ultimate metamorphosis of EPCOT into a theme park rather than a working metropolis.

The second chapter delves into the building of Celebration, Florida, as Disney's answer to postmodern suburban sprawl and its perceived shortcomings. Celebration, designed according to New Urbanist ideas, sought to create a carefully controlled, visually nostalgic atmosphere to counterbalance the alienation of contemporary urban living. This chapter is based on readings from Robert Venturi's *Learning from Las Vegas*, which criticizes the artificiality of contemporary urbanization and the primacy of imagery above utility. The BBC documentary on Celebration is a valuable visual resource, demonstrating how the town blurred the line between true communal living and controlled spectacle. Baudrillard's theory of simulacra situates Celebration as an example of a postmodern setting in which imitation replaces organic urban expansion.

The last chapter delves beyond Disney's constructed utopias to examine the economic and social reality of those living on the periphery. *The Florida Project* offers a dramatic cinematic counter-narrative, following the lives of youngsters like Moonee who grow up in the shadow of Disney's fantasy yet lack access to its benefits. Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation* is critical for understanding how Disney World's hyperreal environments differ from the lived reality of economic precarity. The film's visual storytelling stresses how Kissimmee, Florida's built environment serves as a skewed representation of Disney's promises. This chapter also includes ideas from urban studies on economic inequity and transitory housing, which connect Moonee's experience to larger critiques of corporate-controlled urbanization.

Chapter 1: Walt Disney's City of the Future: EPCOT

"I don't believe there's a challenge anywhere in the worlds that's more important to people everywhere than finding solutions to problems of our cities. But where do we begin? How do we start answering this great challenge? Well, we're convinced we must start with the public need." ⁽¹⁾

- Walt Disney

This chapter describes Walt Disney's EPCOT concept as an ambitious yet unattainable urban vision. It delves into Walt's transition from entertainment to urban planning, his reasons, and the historical background of mid-century American cities including concerns about suburbanisation, urban deterioration, and infrastructural issues. By evaluating the 1966 EPCOT promotional film, I will explain how Disney marketed the project as a solution to urban problems, comparing its design to modernist planning models such as Ebenezer Howard's Garden Cities and Le Corbusier's Radiant City. Finally, I wonder if EPCOT was a genuine attempt at urban transformation or only a well packaged Disney illusion.

When and Why?

Walt Disney, who was well-known for his love of fairy tales and animation, believed America needed a shift in the entertainment industry. His interest towards animation began to wane, and he started to shift his focus towards more realized spaces; resulting in the creation of Disneyland in California. Nevertheless, this seemed insufficient to Walt. In the latter months of his life, in possibly one of his most ambitious endeavours to date, he was getting ready to construct a planned town. The city known as EPCOT (Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow) is still regarded as one of the most fascinating ideas in 20th-century urban design.

Walt's expansion into Florida was his way of bringing his life's work to a meaningful conclusion and securing his legacy, he was going to take anything he learned from Disneyland, and the World Fairs and apply it to the public good. Steven Watts (1997) articulated that by the period when Walt was acquiring land in Florida, he had adopted a form of "technocratic populism"...which sought to harness the creative, technological, and productive capacities of modern industries and use them for the benefit of ordinary people" (p. 442)

This is what truly sets EPCOT's plan apart from any project Disney has done before. It can be argued that the modern Disney Company has done little for the public welfare beyond means for entertainment, however, EPCOT was set to change everything.

In the EPCOT/Florida Project promotional film, Walt said he was going to tackle the most important challenge in the world; finding a panacea to the problems of our cities by addressing the public need (Disney,1966) This shows Walt saw himself as more than an entertainer, he had the public interest at heart and was willing to put the work into it. In the book *Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction*, academic Lyman Sargent (2010) explains:

“Many utopias are like a photograph or a glimpse of a functional society at a moment in time, containing what the author perceived to be better and designed to break through the barriers of the present and encourage people to want change and work for it “(p. 104).

Walt's' concern, like many Americans in the 1950s, was the state of American cities. His worries, including suburban sprawl, highway culture, and urban decay, are what helped fuel his passion for urban-planning.

In *Walt Disney and the Quest for Community*, Steve Mannheim (2017) noted that this planning coincided with a period of governmental investment in urban regions. A month after the release of Disney's, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 (Model Cities Act), which gives Disney's concept much more relevance in hindsight. (p.xiv) This law sought to revitalize urban regions, especially impoverished neighbourhoods, by offering financial and technical support for "new and imaginative proposals." By placing EPCOT in this context, it becomes clear that Disney's model city was not just a corporate utopia but rather a sincere attempt to address modern urban living issues, one that coincided with government initiatives to reconsider the future of American cities.

Mapping out Modernist Epcot

With the when and where established, it is time to delve into the specifics of Walt's plan. Perhaps the best way to examine this is with Walt Disney's words themselves, using the EPCOT/Florida Project promotional film of 1966. The 25-minute film can be split into 3 parts, the

introduction narrating about the significance of Disneyland California, mainly over a montage of short clips of the park. The main focus lies when Walt enters the screen around the 6-minute mark, appearing in a special room that was set aside for the project in WED Enterprises in Glendale, Florida, with a 16-foot ceiling, the plans being scattered on the wall like wallpaper. The ideas that the team drafted for EPCOT were certainly not concrete, but what was planned and mocked up was undoubtedly some of the boldest and most stunning ideas that Walt has ever dreamed up.

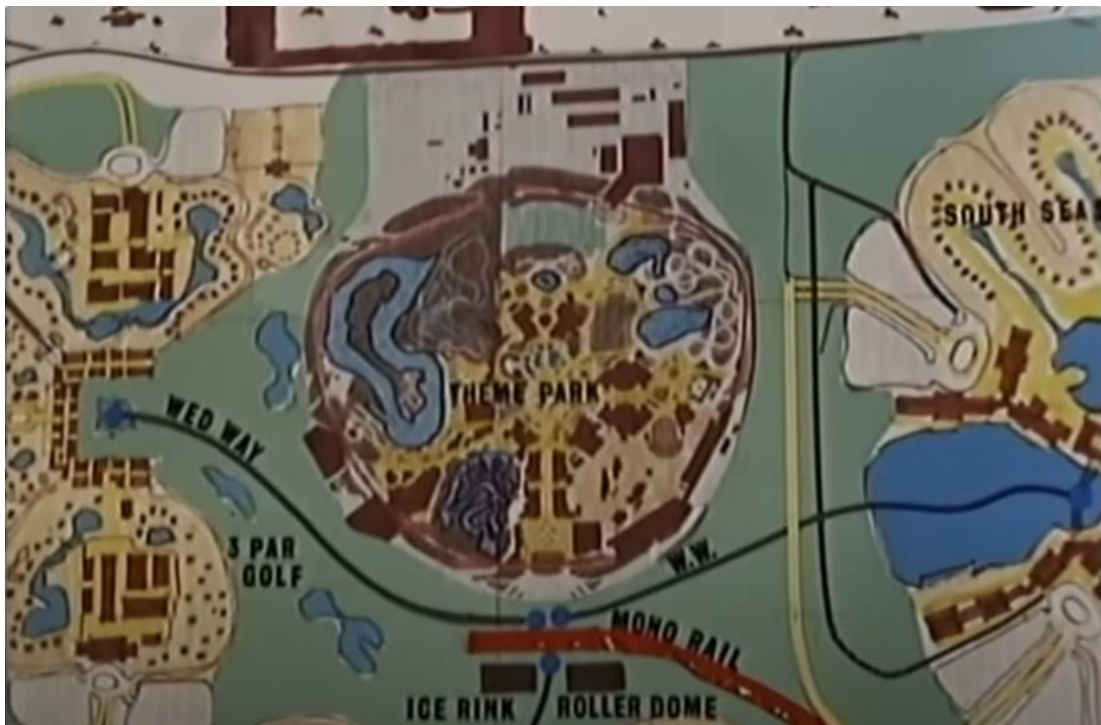


Fig. 1 Master Plan of the proposed theme park area, EPCOT film. (1966)



Fig. 2 Walt Disney in front of the entirety of the master plan, EPCOT film (1966)

Walt's figure is crucial in this segment to emphasize the true literal-and metaphorical size of his plans. The camera is zoomed in on a section of the masterplan that shows the newly proposed theme park in Florida. (Fig. 1) Walt explains that just this little area alone, encompassing the theme park and all the facilities around it (like motels, hotels, and recreational centres), is five times the size of Disneyland California. (Disney,1966)As the camera slowly pans out, the actual magnitude of his idea is seen, rendering the theme park area only a tiny speck in the upper left corner of the map.(Fig. 2) Walt's figure appears somewhat ordinary when juxtaposed with the map, effectively symbolizing how his concepts were nearly larger than life. Walt discusses the advantage of the new property's size in relation to Disneyland:“ There’s enough land here to hold all the ideas and plans we could possibly imagine.”

At the time, Disneyland's primary issue was its limited space for growth. Disney characterized the park, which was now encircled by motels and tourist traps, as "a second-rate Las Vegas” (Anderson,2015)

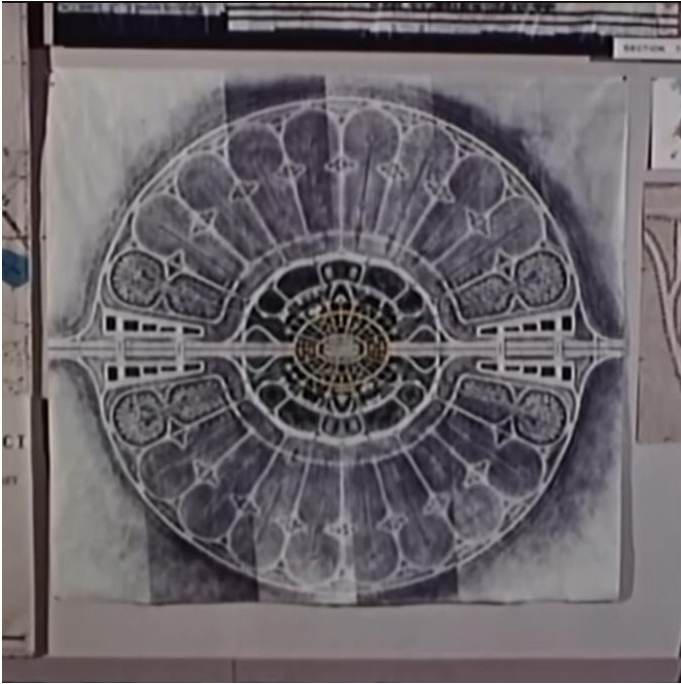


Fig. 3 EPCOT masterplan, *EPCOT/ Florida Project* (1967) Dir. Arthur J. Vitarelli [Film]



Fig. 4 'spokes of a wheel', *EPCOT/ Florida Project* (1967) Dir. Arthur J. Vitarelli [Film]

With a strong emphasis on industrial and transportation spaces, EPCOT is a distinct product of American mid-century modernism. This manifests clearly in the “radial plan” of the town, a concept Walt had previously used in his template for Disneyland, with a castle as the centre hub and all the themed lands branching out like spokes. Similarly, Walt’s city would also be radially designed, extend out from a central hub, branching out to four primary spheres of activity surrounding the core. (Fig.3) As Walt describes in the film: “Picture a wheel: like the spokes of a wheel, the city fans out along a series of radials from a bustling hub at the centre of E.P.C.O.T.” (Fig.4)

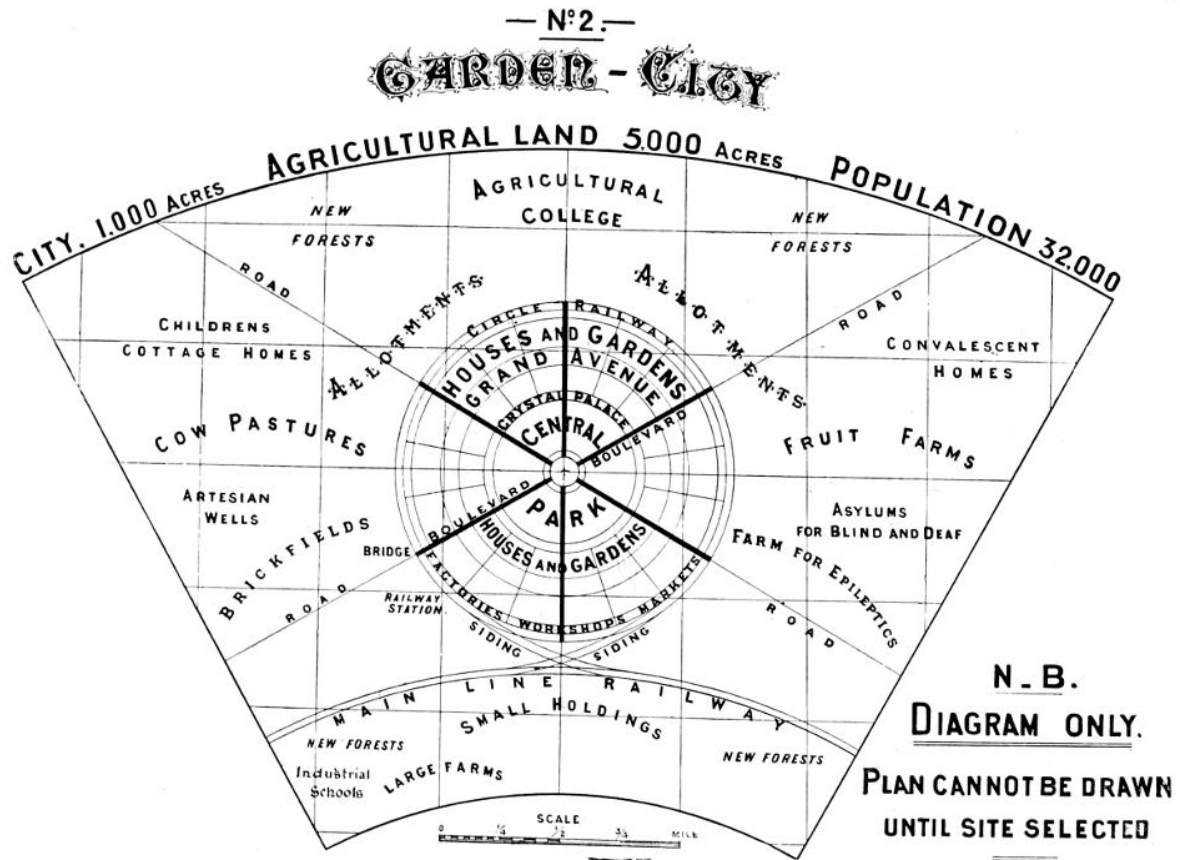


Fig. 5 Sir Ebenezer Howard. 1902. *Garden Cities of To-Morrow*. London, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., Ltd.

This radial layout of EPCOT reflects the ideas of Ebenezer Howard's Garden City concept, which sought to produce self-sufficient, well-planned communities balancing urban efficiency with green areas, in response to the industrialization and urbanization of late 19th century Britain. Howard stressed in *Garden Cities of To-morrow* the need of planned communities that balanced urban growth with natural settings, writing:

“But neither the Town magnet nor the Country magnet represents the full plan and purpose of nature. Human society and the beauty of nature are meant to be enjoyed together. (...) Town and country must be married, and out of this joyous union will spring a new hope, a new life, a new civilisation.” (Howard, 1902, p. 17) (Fig. 5)

EPCOT was intended to integrate these visions, creating a city incorporating both ‘magnets’ and utilizing a belt to separate the residential areas from the bustling town centre.

The business and commerce sector would pose as the centre of EPCOT, enclosed by a nuclear 50-acre dome structure, to protect it from the humid, hot, and rainy Florida weather. The climate-

regulated complex would accommodate international companies, a convention centre, and finally, a luxury landmark hotel, serving as the inner centre's focal point. Immediately below the hotel, would've been EPCOT's transportation lobby, the transportation being split into multiple layers. The very bottom layer would have been a truck route, hiding supply vehicles from the eyes of the visitors. The middle layer is for transporting cars, adjacent to the roads on this layer are the parking spaces on the top floor. A key feature is the absence of stoplights, Walt believing them to be a major cause of traffic. Pedestrians would move freely at ground level, with monorails and people movers roaming above their heads.

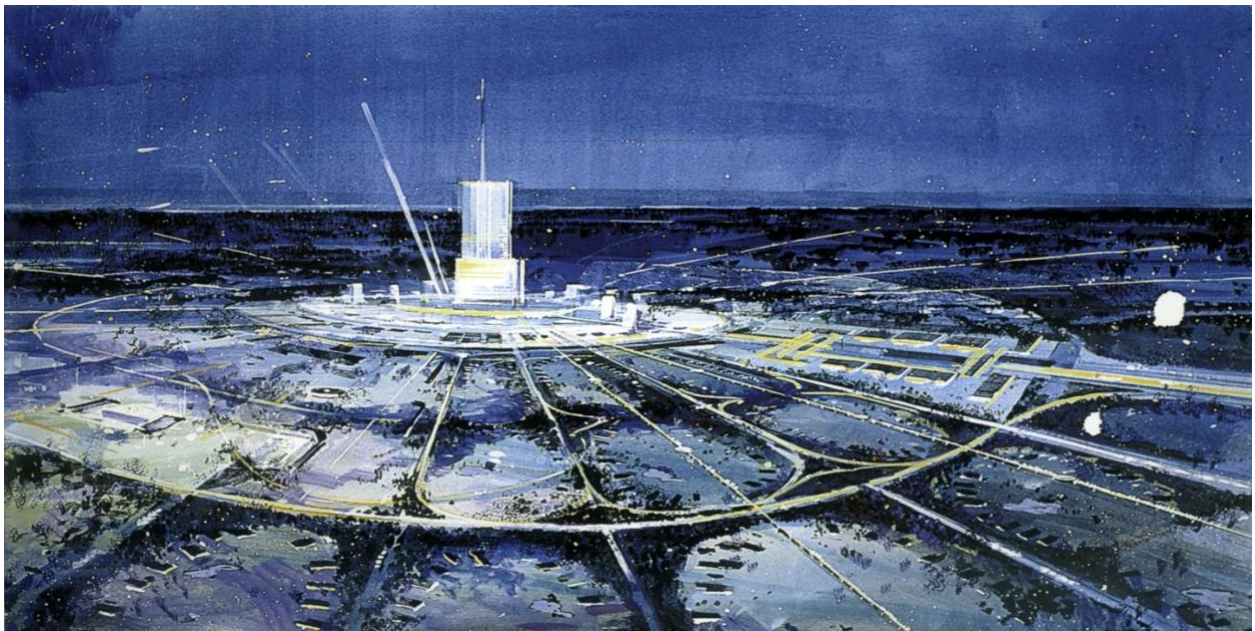


Fig. 6 Concept art for the city's central commercial areas and Cosmopolitan Hotel by Herbert Ryman (1966)



Fig. 7 Ville Radieuse/ Radiant City (1933) Le Corbusier accessed via <https://www.archdaily.com/411878/ad-classics-ville-radieuse-le-corbusier> (13 February 2025)

The planned community holds similarities to Le Corbusier's Radiant City, both sharing the idea of zoning, creating a strict division of commercial, entertainment, and residential areas. At EPCOT, the tall hotel complex reflects the skyline of the Radiant City, with the towers of the commercial district located in the centre of the complex. (Figs. 6,7)

Both proposed communities emphasize innovative transportation, advocating for the separation of transit layers to create a city that is both highly walkable and easily navigable. By isolating different modes of transport -separating cars and pedestrians-, they ensure efficiency and safety, preventing conflicts between the two. (Figs. 8,9)

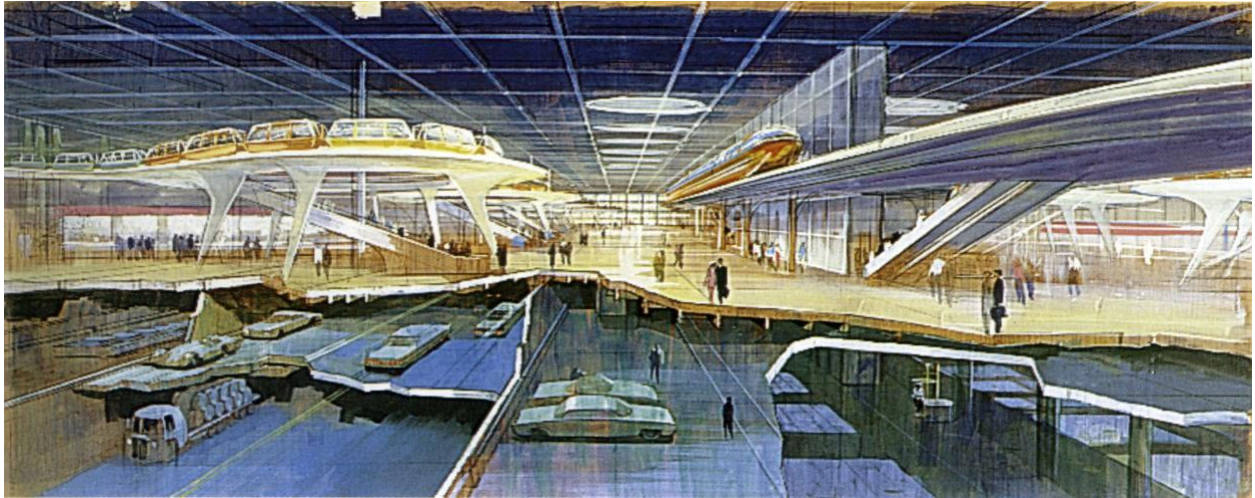


Fig. 8 View of the transportation centre below the urban centre of E.P.C.O.T Herbert Ryman. Opaque watercolour on browline. 24 x 51. 1966. Restored in 2012.(c) Disney.



Fig. 9 Ville Radieuse (1933) Le Corbusier, accessed via: <https://iamyouasheisme.wordpress.com/>

Upon comparing the concept designs of EPCOT to those of Le Corbusier, it is evident that Disney's project evokes a sense of excitement that is absent in the latter. This can be attributed to Disney's utilization of vivid, brilliant, and contrasting colours, which are used to captivate audiences.

Disney is renowned for its ability to captivate audiences through the production of films and entertainment. Ultimately, their area of expertise is the creation of fairy tales. This strength is evident throughout the entirety of the film, not just in the concept art. Disney sticks to what they're good at, using narration and images to their advantage, to convey a positive, upbeat tone. One could say, the entire project is encased in a magical filter, a mist of Disney's pixie dust that converts its vision into something more charming.

Take, for example, Image 11, a behind-the-scenes photograph from the 1966 shoot. The image, taken barely two months before Walt Disney's death, shows no signs of his declining health. We can assume his lung cancer is at an advanced stage, judging from the photo's timing, but Walt exudes a certain contagious sense of vitality and warmth.

Interestingly, the silhouettes of the crew workers surrounding him seem to almost resemble children gathered around a storyteller, it's almost as if he's holding a picture book and narrating a bedtime story. This characterizes most of Disney's work: reality is filtered through a lens of optimism and enchantment, making everything appear more magical than it actually is.

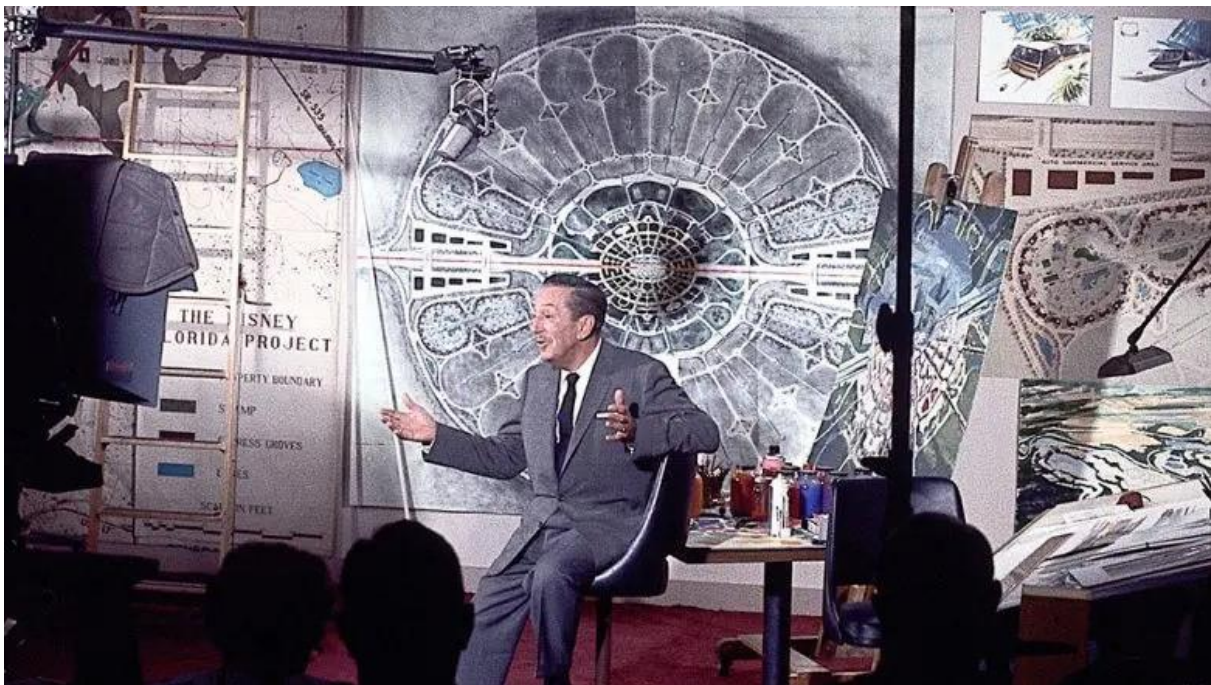


Fig. 10 Behind the scenes of the E.P.C.O.T film 28/10/66 (c) Disney. accessed via: <https://d23.com/a-world-of-tomorrow-inside-walts-last-dream/>

The Fairytale That Never Came True

Walt's death on the 15th of December, 1966, shook the company and most of the EPCOT plans were put on the back shelf. Despite having the promotional film mapping out the framework of EPCOT, most of the details were stuck in the conceptual stage, only ever fully actualising themselves in the mind of Walt Disney.

Walt Disney Enterprises had no intention of building a city, especially not without Walt. Walt Disney's brother Roy would instead invest all the resources into bringing part of Walt's dream alive, the theme park and resort area. Disney World officially opened its doors on October 1st, 1971 – with Roy Disney officially naming it Walt Disney World to honour his legendary brother. (Leibacher,2012)

Today's EPCOT is only a small reflection of Walt's original vision. The "community of tomorrow" Walt had imagined never came to life; instead, EPCOT functions more like a showcase, similar to Tomorrowland.

With the Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow never built, the question of the feasibility of the project will always remain unanswered. Despite the ambition of Walt's ideas, they largely remained superficial, failing to really explore the societal challenges of the era. One can only speculate how EPCOT would have integrated into this broader context—or how it would have confronted challenges such as racism and unemployment during that era.

Since the project was never fully realized, it is impossible to find out. Walt's final words of the film-"We're ready to go right now"- hang eerily in the open; a promise left forever unfulfilled.

Chapter 2: Celebration

“Celebration, as a Disney project, speaks to another aspect of its utopianism. Given the company’s history of utopian promise coupled with its long-standing and carefully crafted corporate identity as a company that breeds magic and fantasy, Celebration – regardless of its embrace of New Urbanism- was nonetheless assured of being thought of and marketed in utopian terms.

(Hugh Bartling , 2004, p.377)

In the early 1990s, the Disney Company revealed intentions to construct a new town again, *Celebration*, a community intended to embody Disney’s conception of the ideal neighborhood. However, this time, that vision had altered significantly, being set in a new world, one that embraces late-stage capitalism. This chapter examines how the company's choice to go ahead and open the gates of Walt Disney World without EPCOT’s futuristic vision of progress, innovation, and technology at its core, had drastically transformed the Central Florida landscape in just over a decade, and how Celebrations New Urbanist ideas, proposed to find a solution for them.

The Vision of Celebration- New Urbanism

The plans for Celebration can be partially attributed to remnants of Walt Disney's original ambition for his Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow, since after Walt’s passing, the idea of EPCOT as a high tech, future metropolis was abandoned and instead opening its gates as a non-residential theme park. When creating Celebration, the creators often minimize the importance of the EPCOT plans. Michael Eisner, then-CEO of Disney, dismissing direct comparisons, stating

“It was like having an idea for a movie at dinner, and then dropping dead after dinner, and then people saying that this was your fully conceived vision.” (Ross,1999,p. 74)

By the time the master plan for Celebration was drawn up in the early 1990s, it could be argued they retained quite a lot of the original plans. A community of 20.000 residents, built from scratch, on 5000 acres of “virgin” Florida swampland: an international showcase for technology, education, and medicine. However, it was no longer the company town like Walt had imagined. Unlike EPCOT, Celebration’s economy was not directly tied to Disney, though some residents would take jobs with the company out of convenience. Celebration stayed true to Walt’s vision of fixing some

of the issues of modern urbanism, but only to a limited extent—and only for those who could afford to be part of it. Sonia A. Hirt (2009) criticizes some of these new urbanist proponents, arguing they are:

“(...) ignoring some ‘inconvenient’ parallels with historic paradigms that sought social exclusion; that the new urbanist reconstruction of history had a distinctively upper-class flavour, and the new urbanist nostalgia for the good old (premodern) times is hardly a recipe for a sustainable future. “(p.249)

One can see the concept and purpose of the new-urbanist Celebration was fundamentally different from just being the continuation of Walt’s dream. Disney’s vision of an urban utopia saw a complete transformation. Instead of a climate-controlled futuristic bubble, Celebration became a raw nostalgia trip down Memory Lane. Rather than looking ahead to the future, at its core it sought to recapture the “good old times” of the past, a time before modernism.

Disney executives knew that Celebration plans presented themselves like a town based on exclusivity; only accessible to middle- and upper-class Americans. When asked about the likely impact of the town on urban planning as a whole, Eisner states “I will say one thing. This does not address the problems of the underclass, like you have in New York or Detroit. It is not a panacea, it is not the model for the next city, nor was it meant to be.” (Ross,1999, p.75)

Highway 192

The true message of a celebration is revealed by the environment in which it is presented. This is most clearly demonstrated in its commercials, particularly the billboards positioned along the bustling Route 192, which took a markedly different marketing approach.

With the image of two girls flying in the breeze on a swing set, one of the billboards offers a humorous play on words: "Isn't this reason enough for Celebration?" The photograph exudes a kind of joyful freedom, and the hazy background transports you to their world. Although the women photographed are adults, they evoke a nostalgic sense of carefree childhood play. (Fig.11) Another example has a simple green background with a touching image of a mother playing with her daughter, lifting her in the air. Similar feelings of unfettered childhood nostalgia are conveyed.

The border or photo resembles a postcard, as if a memory was brought to you in a time capsule.(Fig.12)



Fig. 11 (left) Nonstandard real estate advertising, on Route 192 (Andrew Ross)

Fig. 12 (right) Promotional billboard for Celebration, FL (Dan Piepenbring) accessed via: <https://www.theparisreview.org/>

The billboards featuring photographs of children playing happily ever after were clearly an attempt to draw attention away from the thrilling attractions that compete for tourists' attention in this region. It exists in a world where a multitude of theme park rides dot the Orlando area, providing families with a new form of entertainment that has replaced these more primitive kinds of play. The commercials' true message was hidden in the contrast between the billboards and their surroundings, rather than on the billboards themselves. Being surrounded by highways that steer drivers past an endless sea of motels, fast-food chains, and tourist traps, "the ads could afford to be subtle". (Ross,1999, p.16)



Fig. 13 Celebration: The Town that Disney Built (1996). Dir. Phillip Smith.BBC2.



Fig. 14 Upper strip looking north, Learning from Las Vegas, Robert Venturi (1972)

Similarly to how Robert Venturi portrays the change of Route 66 in Las Vegas, the architecture of Highway 192 evolved to meet the demands of high-speed automotive traffic. As cars approach

at high speeds, signs must be bold, bright, and large, putting visibility ahead of architectural design. Venturi noticed that in many circumstances, "the sign is more important than the architecture"-a notion that defines Highway 192 as much as it defined Las Vegas. The flashy, eye-catching signage dominates the streetscape, while the real buildings behind them are modest and practical, functioning as just backdrops. Highway 192 continues this tradition, with the overblown spectacle of signs serving as the primary architectural statement, while the buildings themselves fade into the background as functional needs. (Venturi, 1972, pp. 13-19) (Figs.13,14)

Walt Disney World was not solely to blame. In his essay *The Doubles of Post-Modern*, town's master planner Robert Stern described Highway 192 as "the sleaze head of all times"(Stern,1980,p.75), a product of a chaotic, unplanned commercial sprawl that existed even before Disney opened its gates in 1981. However, Disney's establishment of a presence in the area was the tipping point, the collateral influence of Disney World was truly felt as Florida quickly became the world's number one tourist attraction. It turned Central Florida's peaceful lakeside towns into a "purgatory of fast growth and fast food" (Ross, 1999, p.17). It's strange that Disney, a company partially responsible in destroying the landscape, is now proposing a safe haven, a concept of retreat and simplicity, isolated from the out-of-control materialism of the outside world.

Residential and Civic Architecture

Disney played into the public's loathing to the strip mall landscape, and its gaudy commercialism. The company was selling the idea of happiness and simple life, and there seemed to be a market for it; the interest in buyers was overwhelming. To manage high demand, Disney instituted a lottery system held on November 18th, 1995, a day that would later be remembered as the official Founders Day of the town. Over 5000 people participated each of them putting down a deposit of 1000 dollars to stand a chance to buy a home in Celebration. People longed for the charm of small-town living, where daily life felt more connected and intentional, in contrast to the sprawl and isolation of modern suburbs. (Ross,1999,p.31)

The town's design was carefully curated. Those selected through the lottery were given options from the *Celebration Pattern Book*, which dictated that homes could only be built in one of six traditional architectural styles: Classical, Revival, Coastal, Mediterranean, French, or

Victorian.(Figs. 15,16) Each style was further restricted to a palette of just five approved colours, ensuring a cohesive and carefully curated look throughout the community.

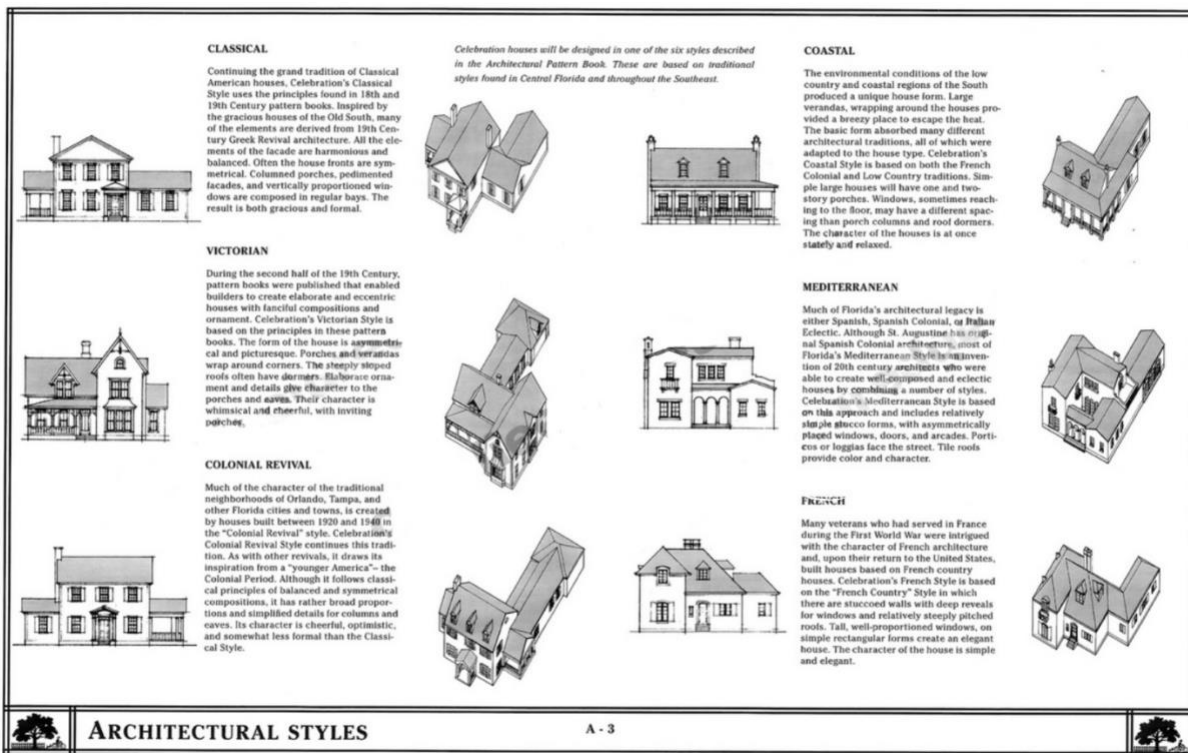


Fig. 15 Architectural Styles. page A-3. Celebration Pattern Book

No two adjacent homes could share the same style or colour, reinforcing the towns-controlled aesthetic. Houses were built close together, white picket fences lining the properties; but with height regulations to keep them short enough to encourage neighbours to peek over them, exchange greetings, and to catch glimpses of each other's gardens. This design was meant to revive the spirit of close-knit communities, where everyday interactions and a sense of familiarity were part of daily life. Many residents embraced this vision. The Abeyta family, one of the early residents of the town, reflected on how Celebration helped them feel more connected, explaining that it allowed them to "stop isolating ourselves in our homes and put us back into the community we belong." (BBC2,1996)

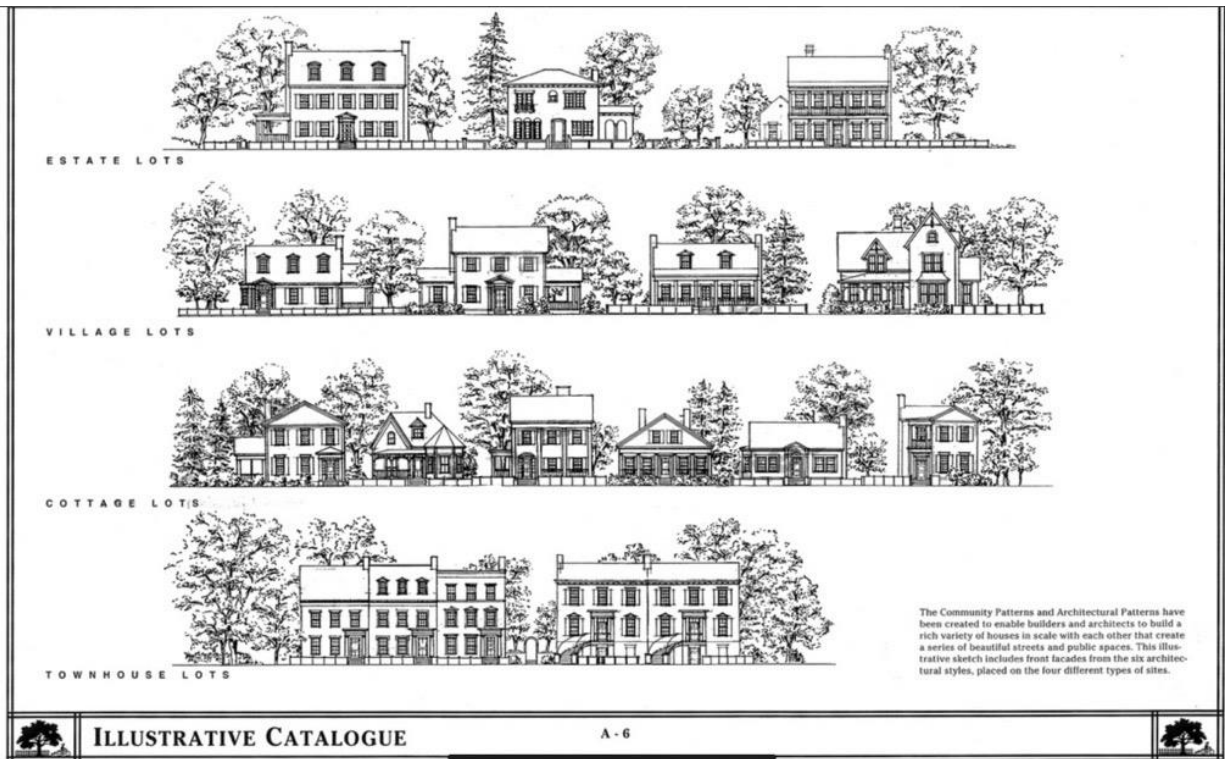


Fig. 16 Illustrative Catalogue, Residential Lots, page A-6. Celebration Pattern Book

Celebration's attempt to revive traditional values and close-knit neighbourhoods is not without controversy. While the town's classical and Victorian-inspired architecture invokes nostalgia for a bygone era, it only exists because Disney was instrumental in eradicating that environment, replacing historic Florida communities with highways, theme parks, and tourist sprawl. In an ironic reversal, Disney is now reconstructing an idealized version, a form of simulation, of what it helped dismantle; but in a highly regulated, sanitized, and marketable manner.

This curated nostalgia extends to Celebration's municipal architecture, created by world-renowned architects such as Philip Johnson and Robert Stern. The end effect is a postmodern reconstruction of history, similar to Celebration itself—a site that promotes an image of community and tradition, but only as a meticulously regulated imitation of what once existed. The public spaces in Celebration feel straight out of a storybook, blending classical influences with playful, postmodern twists. For instance, the Town Hall designed by Philip Johnson takes familiar classical elements -pillars and symmetry- but exaggerates them into something postmodern, playfully mocking the traditional idea that pillars should serve as structural

necessities by having a magnitude of 52 thin, decorative columns supporting the roof. (Figs. 17,18)

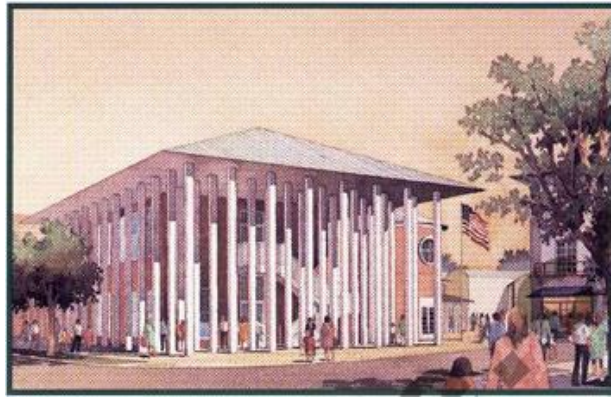


Fig. 17 Town hall Designed by Phillip Johnson (Architectural Walking Tour) c. Disney



Fig. 18 The Old Town Hall Designed by Philip Johnson. Jackie Craven accessed via:<https://www.thoughtco.com/celebration-florida-disneys-ideal-community> (Accessed: 13 February 2025).

Similarly, Michael Graves' Post Office is a small yet striking public building that blends tradition with a distinct architectural presence. Its lighthouse-like structure designates it as a central feature of the community, underscoring its civic purpose. In contrast to modernist designs that emphasize the notion of "form follows function," the Post Office adopts symbolism and ornamentation, preferring a more expressive and whimsical approach. Though modest in scale, the post office commands attention, balancing institutional significance with an approachable, almost childlike aesthetic, and a unique structure, a building you'd seldom encounter outside of Disney's gates. (Figs.19,20)



Fig. 19 U.S. Post Office Designed by Michael Graves, Architectural Walking Tour) c. Disney



Fig. 20 U.S. Post Office. Celebration, Florida. Jackie Craven accessed via: <https://www.thoughtco.com/celebration-florida-disneys-ideal-community> (Accessed: 13 February 2025).

Together, these buildings contribute to Celebration's carefully curated charm, where civic spaces feel theatrical, nostalgic, and unmistakably "Disney"- resulting in a town designed to look and feel like a dream.

For tourists, Celebration-and even its residents-often still felt like part of the attraction, blurring the line between theme park and community. At the time, Celebration was featured on Disney World maps, inviting visitors to take a peek into the carefully crafted town. Andrew Ross compared living in Celebration to *The Stepford Wives* -likely referencing the book's mention of

Disney Imagineers - or to the idyllic, manufactured town Seaside from *The Truman Show*. He observed, "Indeed, virtually everyone who visited me in Celebration remarked that the place was like a movie set." One of his neighbours even admitted to him that she always made sure to tidy herself up before heading to the grocery store—just in case tourists snapped a picture of her. In her words, she wanted to "represent Celebration in a good light." (p. 345)

A significant portion of public and political life is meticulously staged for media exposure- a trend that was apparent in the 1990s but is even more pronounced today. "We take it for granted that there is a façade and a behind-the-scenes reality." (Ross,1999,p.345) In turn, it is not surprising that visitors frequently see a comparable dynamic in Celebration. Although it was Disney's first "unscripted" creation, residents appeared to experience an implicit pressure to perform, as if they were unknowingly assuming the roles of cast members in a meticulously orchestrated environment.

Chapter 3: The Dark Side of the Magic: Life on the Margins of Disney

As discussed in previous chapters, the area surrounding Disney World became home to struggling families living in budget motels, caught between the dream of Disney and the harsh realities of poverty.

Sean Baker's *The Florida Project* (2017) shines a light on this hidden world, following the lives of those living just beyond the gates of Disney's manufactured paradise. Through the story of Moonee and her mother Halley, the film exposes the contrast between the fantasy Disney sells and the struggles of those left behind. This chapter explores how *The Florida Project* challenges the idealism of Disney's vision, using its setting, characters, and visual style to reveal and highlight the deep socio-economic divide that exists in the shadow of the "happiest place on earth."

The Magic Castle: A Harsh Reality

The story revolves around the turbulent lives of Halley, a struggling teen mother, and her six-year-old daughter, Moonee, as they navigate life while living in a budget motel near Orlando's Disney World. The film's title is thought to be an ironic nod to Walt Disney's housing projects in EPCOT, which, during the planning stages, were also referred to as the Florida Project. Director Sean Baker deliberately chose this title to highlight the stark contrast between two worlds: the corporate, manufactured joy of Disney World, often referred to as "the happiest place on earth," and the harsh realities faced by those living on the margins of society in budget motels just beyond its borders.

The Florida Project (set in Kissimmee, Florida), draws a sharp contrast between Walt Disney's mid-century utopian dream and the postmodern reality that the majority of American youth face today. Late-stage capitalism has converted daily living into a dystopian environment in which survival is prioritized over stability. Perhaps the film's central setting, the Magic Castle Motel, serves as the clearest representation of this contradiction. For Moonee and Halley, the motel is home; a transient, precarious existence that reflects both poverty and the hyperreal. It is a place

that blurs reality and illusion, embodying Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality. Baudrillard famously uses Disneyland, California as an example for ideas of the hyperreal, arguing:

“Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, whereas all of Los Angeles and the America that surrounds it are no longer real, but belong to the hyperreal order and to the order of simulation.” (Baudrillard, 1994, p.13)

For Moonee and other children like her, hyperreality is all they know. Their world is one of simulation, fantasy, and economic instability, where a cheaply constructed motel, painted in fairy-tale colours, stands in the shadow of the Magic Kingdom, selling the illusion of an escape it will never provide. An interesting parallel can be drawn to Baudrillard's four phases of the hyperreal, using the motel. The first phase represents a faithful reflection of reality—a true copy. A prime example of this is Neuschwanstein Castle in Germany, completed in 1886. Unlike Disney's Cinderella Castle, which is a fabricated fantasy, Neuschwanstein is a real, functional structure, built with historical intent, meaning, and purpose, embodying wealth, power, and royalty. (Fig. 21)



Fig. 21 Neuschwanstein Castle at Sunset [Online]. Available at: <https://www.neuschwanstein.de> (Accessed: 11/2/2025).

The second stage of Simulacra can be found in Cinderella's Castle at Magic Kingdom. This structure is a warped depiction of reality, a stylized and commercialized representation of European castles. While it is still used as a symbol of monarchy and fairy tale princesses, its

meaning has changed. Unlike genuine castles, which have historical and political value, Cinderella Castle is merely aesthetic and commercial, serving only for amusement and branding rather than legacy. (Fig.22)



Fig. 22 Cinderella Castle at Magic Kingdom [Online]. Available at: <https://www.disneyworld.co.uk/attractions> (Accessed: 11/022025).

The Magic Castle Inn, a budget motel off Highway 192 in Kissimmee, Florida, represents Simulacra's third level. By this point, the link to a real castle has been almost completely lost. The motel incorporates some visual features from of the Cinderella Castle, such as pastel colours and turret-like buildings, but it does not serve as a castle in any meaningful way. It contains the metaphorical weight of fantasy and escape, but lacks the magic that it implies. The motel conceals the absence of reality by conjuring associations with Disney, although having no direct connection to the theme park. (Fig. 23)



Fig. 23 The Magic Castle Inn & Suites, photographed by Richard Luscombe/The Guardian (2017)

The fourth and last step, pure simulacrum, is seen in the film itself. Sean Baker's film *The Florida Project* immortalizes the motel, converting it into something more than just a physical location. On screen, the fantasy Castle Inn represents both poverty and childlike delight, a reimagining of Disney fantasy through the prism of economic suffering. It is no longer merely a building; it has evolved into a cinematic construct, living in the audience's mind as a representation rather than a reality—the ultimate level of hyperreality. It is a real copy without an original, representing daily poverty as opposed to the wealth of the ruling class. (Fig. 25)



Fig. 24 The Florida Project (2017) Directed by Sean Baker [Film Still]. A24

Director Sean Baker undoubtedly chose the Magic Castle Motel as the film's core location on purpose, considering its symbolic significance. The juxtaposition between its fairy-tale name and the terrible reality of those who live there is a fitting backdrop for the film's investigation of severe poverty and the "hidden homeless" in the United States—families struggling to make daily rent and continuously on the verge of losing their housing, without making a film that's patronizing.(Figs.25,26)

Baker's interest in this topic was spurred by his friend and co-writer, Chris Bergoch, who frequently travelled through these communities in Kissimmee, Florida, while visiting family. Bergoch spotted a tale in this ignored reality, prompting the couple to immerse themselves in the neighbourhood and gather inspiration until they crafted a screenplay with fictionalized characters based on real people living below the poverty line.(Coyle,2017)

The movie avoids sugar-coating the experiences of the people living in these circumstances, creating a raw and almost documentary-like portrayal of their lives. By capturing the motel's bold and vibrant colours, the film effectively visualizes the perspective of Moonee, the young focal character of the film. For her, the vibrant setting represents a carefree childhood bubble, even as she remains unaware of the darker, adult struggles unfolding around her.



Fig. 25 *The Florida Project* (2017) Directed by Sean Baker [Film Still]. A24



Fig. 26 Cinderella Castle, Available accessed via: <https://www.disneyworld.co.uk/attractions/magic-kingdom/cinderella-castle/> (13 February 2025)

The Surroundings and Visual Aesthetic

The aesthetic of *The Florida Project* reflects the fragmented existence of living in the shadows of Disney World. The surrounding area, filled with colourful and whimsical structures, mirrors Moonee's childlike perception of her world. Through her eyes, the brightly coloured motel and its surroundings become an imaginative playground. Postmodern structures like Twistee Treat,

with its oversized ice cream cone design, and Orange World, with its dome-shaped structure—a tongue-in-cheek nod to Disney World's EPCOT Centre, along with the eccentric tourist gift shops lining Highway 192, are an everyday part of her life. While these spaces are designed to attract Disney tourists- from a different socio- economical background than Moonee, they take on a surreal, magical quality when viewed through Moonee's perspective. (Figs. 27,28,29)



Fig. 27 The Florida Project (2017) Directed by Sean Baker [Film Still]. A24



Fig. 28 The Florida Project (2017) Directed by Sean Baker [Film Still]. A24



Fig. 29 The Florida Project (2017) Directed by Sean Baker [Film Still]. A24

Production designer Stephonic Youth described the unique character of the area of Kissimmee: “There was so much there. All those places like the Wizard Store and the Twisted Treat—it’s all so beautifully crazy, and it’s already there.” The film’s visual style was crafted to emphasize this vibrancy. “I love Instagram filters,” Youth explained. “Everything pops out. I wanted every

frame to look like a beautiful photo. I was always running in and out, placing colour around the frame.” (Gobar,2018) This approach to the visual design enhances the sense of wonder in Moonee’s world while contrasting sharply with the harsher realities of her life, encapsulating the duality of beauty and hardship in her environment. It’s like putting on a colourful filter, smudging the starkness of real life with a whimsical blur.

The set design effectively communicates the themes of the film, illustrating the fragile balance between resilience (represented in the bright and vivid colour palette) in a harsher day-to-day life. The motel room serves as both a prison and a sanctuary for its residents—a place of routine instability but also moments of familial connection. Through these details, the film’s design helps to humanize its characters and bring their experiences vividly to life.

Destroying the American Dream- A Surreal Escape

The Florida Project concludes with Halley garnering the notice of the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), who arrive at the Magic Castle Motel with police officers, to move Moonee into foster care. A Moonee realizes the gravity of her predicament and she flees to her friend Jancey’s motel across the street. The film takes a drastic change in quality and mood as soon as Jancey grabs Moonee's hand. Baker switches from 35mm to an iPhone 6s, - a technique he used in previous films such as *Tangerine* (2015), a project he shot entirely on an iPhone 5. (Murphy,2015) This shift of quality somewhat mimics a home video footage, reflecting how Moonee's childhood would have been documented in the mid-2010s. Since the film is mostly shot from Moonee’s point of view, with its low angles and highly saturated coloration, this is in a way how Moonee would look back at her childhood memories. This is the first time the film uses orchestral music as the score, while it’s transitioning to jump cuts of the two girls running through Disney World, accompanied by the upbeat music. They arrive at Cinderella’s Castle, a very different one from the cheerfully named *Magic Castle Motel* Moonee grew up in. Moonee flees her "kingdom" of misery for a land of perpetual peace, where she no longer has to deal with adult issues beyond her years. (Fig.30)



Fig. 30 The Florida Project (2017) Directed by Sean Baker [Film Still]. A24

The closing sequence split audiences, raising the question of whether Moonee's escape was real or imagined. Logistically, it appears unlikely—while Disney World is only 20 minutes away from Kissimmee, walking there would take hours. Baker acknowledged the divisive reactions to the finale, with some viewers claiming he damaged the picture in the final 30 seconds. (Whipp, 2018) He did, however, add that the closing sequence is about allowing the spectator to experience the moment through Moonee's imagination and youthful awe rather than precise truth.

Ultimately, whether Moonee actually arrives at Cinderella's Castle is unimportant; what matters is that she believes she has escaped. The film's denouement is a poetic ending to a story about childhood innocence, which is a more fitting resolution than seeing Moonee transported away in a DCF car.

Despite its light-hearted ending, *The Florida Project* is ultimately a severe criticism of the American Dream. Moonee and Halley's lives depict a dystopian America characterized by poverty, instability, and disenfranchisement. They exist just beyond Disney's ideal realm, but are locked in an entirely different economic and social reality—one that is neglected and despised. This juxtaposition emphasizes the contrast between the romanticized American Dream and the realities of those struggling to get by daily. Walt Disney's original vision for EPCOT contained an optimistic model of growth and wealth, but it failed to account for the potential economic

inequities in such a system. What if EPCOT had been created as a city, and workers faced layoffs? Would the Disney paradise have addressed homelessness?

In this way, *The Florida Project* reveals the inconsistencies of a society that offers success and opportunity yet frequently abandons its most vulnerable members. Moonee's Magic Castle Motel was a cheap copy of Cinderella's Castle, and the American Dream is still a fantasy for many. While Disney World represents escapism, riches, and limitless possibilities, Kissimmee's motel communities reflect a darker reality—one in which families struggle to fulfil their basic needs in the shadow of a dream they will never realize.

Baker's film pushes audiences to confront the hidden struggles of individuals living on the outskirts of society, raising the question of whether the American Dream is genuinely open to all, or merely another neatly built fantasy—much like Cinderella's Castle.

Conclusion

This thesis shows how Disney's urban planning experiments—from EPCOT to Celebration and periphery communities—exemplify architectural vision, urban planning, and economic disparities. Each of these projects was designed to address urban issues, but their execution shows corporate-controlled spatial planning's limits. This research uses modernist and postmodernist design theory to show how architecture, nostalgia, and simulation shape Walt Disney World's built environment and how these influences affect marginalized people's lives. Sean Baker's film *The Florida Project* contrasts Disney's master-planned towns with the harsh realities of those living outside the corporate dream. Moonee, the film's heroine, represents the unexpected repercussions of a postmodern world molded by economic exclusion, where Disney fantasy clashes with nomadic living. Her experiences show how children in hyperreal situations must balance spectacle and hardship.

Disney's planned communities may depict an idyllic lifestyle, yet its design mechanisms contribute to social disparities. The study of EPCOT, Celebration, and *The Florida Project* shows how corporate-led urbanism creates highly curated spaces that offer aspirational lifestyles for some but leave others in precarious living conditions, reinforcing disparities that contradict these developments' utopian ideals.

EPCOT, influenced by modernist planning theories like Le Corbusier's Radiant City and Ebenezer Howard's Garden Cities, was ambitious. Walt Disney envisioned a utopian metropolis prototype with future design and corporate control. Radial zoning, subsurface transport networks, and climate-controlled environments showed careful spatial planning. The proposal was reduced to a theme park, showing how difficult it is to turn large architectural visions into functioning urban environments. Disney expanded into the marketed, car-dependent environment EPCOT wanted to remove, worsening urban sprawl. This chapter shows how economic and corporate concerns conflict with modernist design goals, resulting in incomplete or compromised execution.

Disney reinterpreted its urban objectives via a postmodern perspective by switching from EPCOT's modernist approach to Celebration's nostalgic one. Celebration's New Urbanist design featured historic facades, pedestrian-friendly streets, and well-curated civic areas. This

postmodern approach emulated small-town America rather than a metropolitan environment. This study examined how Celebration's strict architectural standards and design guidelines favored aesthetic harmony above functional diversity, creating a closed community. This chapter showed how Celebration's architectural language is more of an idealized community than a lived-in one, using Baudrillard's simulacra theory.

Sean Baker's *The Florida Project* contrasted Disney's utopian ideas with the ignored realities of those on the periphery. The Magic Castle Motel, the film's main backdrop, is an architectural irony: its pastel facade and turret-like towers resemble Disney castles, but it's a transient housing project. This chapter contrasted Highway 192's garish signs, inexpensive motels, and fragmented urban landscape with EPCOT and Celebration's immaculate design. This research showed how architectural design repurposes escapism aesthetics to reinforce economic isolation rather than provide comfort.

These three case studies share the significance of architecture and design in defining space, community, and socioeconomic status. EPCOT was a failed modernist utopia, Celebration a controlled postmodernism, and *The Florida Project* motels a Disney fantasy parody. Baudrillard's hyperreality notion helps analyze Disney's settings' simulations that hide socioeconomic realities. Disneyland and its surrounding developments have a controlled aesthetic, yet they promote economic inequality and spatial exclusion.

Disney's urban planning projects demonstrate the limits of corporate-driven architecture and its effects on social and spatial fairness. EPCOT, Celebration, and the nearby motels show how design and urbanism affect economic power. Disney's ideas glorified landscapes yet promoted exclusion and inaccessibility. The contrast between these well-organized spaces and the unregulated, sometimes neglected urban environments beyond them shows how architectural design perpetuates socioeconomic inequalities.

Disney's urban experiments still apply to housing affordability, gentrification, and public space privatization in modern cities. Designers, architects, and urban planners must rethink inclusive,

adaptive spaces that put human needs over corporate image. In a world of privatized and commodified environments, how can design build community rather than be a spectacle?

Bibliography:

- Anderson, P.F. (2015) '*A second rate Las Vegas*' ~Walt Disney - Disney History Institute, Disney History Institute - Celebrating and Preserving Walt Disney's Creative Legacy. Available at: <https://www.disneyhistoryinstitute.com/2010/12/second-rate-las-vegas-walt-disney> (Accessed: 12 February 2025).
- Bartling, H. (2004) 'The magic kingdom syndrome: trials and tribulations of life in Disney's celebration', *Contemporary Justice Review*, 7(4), pp. 375–393.
- Baudrillard, J. (1983). *Simulacra and Simulation*. Translated by P. Foss, P. Patton & P. Beitchman. New York: Semiotext(e).
- Beardsley, John. A Mickey Mouse Utopia: Disney's new town, Celebration, Florida. *Landscape Architecture* 87, February 1997, pp. 76-83; 92-93.
- Besel, K. and Andreescu, V. (2013) Back to the future : New urbanism and the rise of neotraditionalism in urban planning / edited by Karl Besel and Viviana Andreescu. University Press of America
- Budd, M. and Kirsch, M.H. (2005) Rethinking Disney : private control, public dimensions. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press.
- Celebration Pattern Book, First Edition (March 1995) c.Disney. Available at: <http://charlieeldredge.com/celebration/patbk/01cover.htm> (Accessed:13 February 2025)
- Celebration: The Town that Disney Built (1996) [Film] Directed by Phillip Smith. BBC2.
- Congress. (2009, February 19). Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966. [Government]. U.S. Government Publishing Office.
- Coyle, J. (2017) '*Florida Project*' shines a bright light on hidden homeless, *The Seattle Times*. Available at: <https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/florida-project-shines-a-bright-light-on-hidden-homeless/> (Accessed: 12 February 2025).
- Craven, J. (2019) *The architecture of Disney's planned celebration*, ThoughtCo. Available at: <https://www.thoughtco.com/celebration-florida-disneys-ideal-community-178231> (Accessed: 13 February 2025).

Downtown Celebration: Architectural Walking Tour [Brochure], (1996) c. Disney. Available at:
<https://mousemuseum.wordpress.com/2018/01/12/celebration-florida-information-package-1996/>(Accessed: 13 February 2025)

Epcot / Florida Film (1966) [Film] Directed by Arthur J. Vitarelli. The Walt Disney Company

Fishman, R. (2016). *Urban utopias in the twentieth century* Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier. Cambridge, Mass. The Mit Press

Frantz, D. and Collins, C. (1998) *Celebration USA: Living in disney's brave new town*. New York: Henry Holt.

Gennawey, S. (2011). Walt and the promise of Progress City. Pike Road, Al: Ayefour.

Glancey, Jonathan. "Utopia Built on Mickey Mouse." *The Independent*, 19 Aug. 1996.

Grobar, Matt (2018) "The Florida Project" Production Designer on Tracking down Dreamy Pastel-Colored Locations for Dark Fairy Tale." *Deadline*

Hirt, S.A. (2009) *Premodern, Modern, Postmodern? Placing New Urbanism into a historical perspective*, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, *Journal of Planning History* 8(3):248-273

Howard, E. (1902). *Garden cities of tomorrow*. London: Faber and Faber.

Jeffrey (2018) *A world of tomorrow: Inside Walt's last dream*, D23. Available at:
<https://d23.com/a-world-of-tomorrow-inside-walts-last-dream/> (Accessed: 13 February 2025).

Kargon, Robert H, and Arthur P Molella. *Invented Edens*. MIT Press, 11 July 2008.

Le Corbusier, 1971. *The City of Tomorrow and Its Planning*. Translated by F. Etchells. New York: Dover Publications. (Originally published in 1929 as *Urbanisme*).

Leibacher,H (2012) Roundup, D. and Disney, B. of (2023) *Roy O Disney – Walt's brother and the man who finished Disney World, World Of Walt*. Available at:
<https://worldofwalt.com/roy-o-disney-walts-brother-and-the-man-who-finished-disney-world.html> (Accessed: 13 February 2025).

Luscombe, R. (15 Oct. 2017) In the Shadow of Disney, Living Life on the Margins, *The Guardian*

Mannheim, S. (2002) *Walt Disney and the Quest for Community*. Routledge.

Merin, G. (2013) *Ad classics: Ville Radieuse / Le Corbusier*, *ArchDaily*. Available at: <https://www.archdaily.com/411878/ad-classics-ville-radieuse-le-corbusier> (Accessed: 13 February 2025).

Mulder, M.T. (2015) *Shades of white flight : evangelical congregations and urban departure*. Rutgers University Press.

Murphy, M. (2015) *Sean Baker talks 'tangerine,' and making a movie with an iphone*, *The New York Times*. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/06/movies/sean-baker-talks-tangerine-and-making-a-movie-with-an-iphone.html> (Accessed: 12 February 2025).

Njoh, Ambe . *New Urbanism, an Alternative to Traditional Urban Design: The Case of Celebration, Florida, USA* . 2009.

Raymond L. Watson, interview by author, Nov 6, 1998, transcript, p.3

Ross, Andrew (1999) *The Celebration Chronicles : Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Property Values in Disney's New Town*. New York, Ballantine Books.

Ross, Andrew (2021) *Sunbelt Blues*. Metropolitan Books

Sargent, L. T. (2010). *Utopianism: a very short introduction*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Stern, R.A., 1980. The Doubles Of Post-Modern. *Harvard Architecture Review*(U. S. A.), VOL. 1, pp. 74-87

Tangerine (2015) [Film] Directed by Sean Baker, Magnolia Home Entertainment

The Florida Project (2017) [Film] Directed by Sean Baker . A24

Venturi, R., Scott Brown, D. and Izenour, S. (1972) *Learning from Las Vegas: Revised Edition*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Wasko, J. (2020) *Understanding Disney : the manufacture of fantasy*. S.L.: Polity Press.

Watts, S. (2014) *Magic kingdom: Walt Disney and the American Way of Life*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.

Whipp,G (2018) '*The Florida Project*' Cast and director take a deeper dive into the immersive drama, *Los Angeles Times*. Available at:
<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/envelope/la-en-mn-florida-project-willem-dafoe-brooklyn-prince-20180109-story.html> (Accessed: 12 February 2025).