

RESPONDING TO MODERNITY: A Comparative Analysis of Ecovillage and Suburbia

In his essay *Modernity versus Postmodernity*, Jürgen Habermas makes a distinction between alternative responses to the failures of modernity—responses that range from a complete rejection of modernity to continued support of select elements. Habermas makes clear that this debate has important implications for the organization of society and individuals' experiences in everyday life.¹ In order to understand these implications more concretely, this paper will analyze two residential developments. It will be argued that the suburban development and the ecovillage—as represented by Fairfield Ridge and Berea Ecovillage, respectively—embody alternative responses to the perceived failures of modernity. Specifically, Fairfield Ridge represents “new conservatism”—an attempt to preserve industrial society (social modernism) while emphasizing traditional values (i.e., minimizing cultural modernism)—; and Berea Ecovillage represents an example of “critical modernism”—continued advancement of the Enlightenment goal of emancipation through rational organization of social life. This analysis will begin by summarizing Habermas's understanding of modernization and the alternatives to modernism. It will then analyze the two residential developments through this lens, looking at both architectural design and the social forms that these designs support.

Habermas on Modernization

Habermas's understanding of modernization begins with the Enlightenment-era differentiation of the spheres of science, morality, and art—a concept borrowed from Max Weber.² The Enlightenment vision was that this specialization would accelerate the development of each sphere, and that this development would lead to continued improvement in the lives of ordinary people. In Habermas's view, specialized institutions developed around the three spheres: strategic actions (goals) were institutionalized in the market; normative actions (ethics) were institutionalized in law and constitutional government; and aesthetic

¹ Habermas, Jürgen. 1980. “Modernity Versus Postmodernity.” Trans. Seyla Ben-Habib. In *A Postmodern Reader*, ed. by Joseph Natoli and Linda Hutcheon. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993, 91-104.

² Habermas 1980, 97.

actions (self-expression) were institutionalized in the arts.³ To these Habermas adds a fourth sphere: the *lifeworld*, the sphere of everyday human life from which the others spheres are by definition removed.⁴

The capitalist market, however, quickly became the dominant institution, subjugating the others to its internal logic—the logic of instrumental reason. The independent imperatives of the market have adverse effects on the lifeworld, including inequality, environmental degradation, and the creation of “social pathologies”.⁵ For example, economic efficiency favors a migratory populace that moves according to available work, but such movement has detrimental effects on families and communities. Eventually the state intervened to stabilize the market and compensate for adverse effects. In doing so, the state, too, expanded into the everyday world of its citizens. Thus the process of modernization is characterized by the “colonization of the lifeworld” by the market and the administrative state.⁶ Consequently, the Enlightenment notion of increased wellbeing via specialization has not come to pass, and there is a growing skepticism of modernity in general. Habermas describes the present dilemma as follows:

*The more complex the systems requiring steering become, the greater the probability of dysfunctional secondary effects. We experience on a daily basis the transformation of productive forces into destructive forces, of planning capacities into potentials for disruption. [...] The very forces that make for increasing power, the forces from which modernity once derived its self-consciousness and its utopian expectations, are in actuality turning autonomy into dependence, emancipation into oppression, and reason into irrationality.*⁷

Habermas is therefore critical of the way that modernization has occurred, and argues that the normative potential of modernity has not been realized—if anything, the Enlightenment goal of continued emancipation has been subverted by the dominance of the market. But rather than abandon modernity all together, Habermas posits a critical rethinking of modernity that will continue the modernist project of a “more rational and just organization of social life”.⁸ In order for this to happen, the lifeworld must be strengthened so it can resist, rein in, and keep in check the forces of money and power (the market and the state). It must balance the internal logic of these systems against the normative values of the lifeworld. This

³ Brulle, Robert J. 2000. *Agency, Democracy, and Nature: The U.S. Environmental Movement from a Critical Theory Perspective*. Cambridge, Mass.; London, UK: MIT Press, 32.

⁴ Wolin, Richard. 1989. “Introduction.” In *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians’ Debate*. Ed. by Shierry Weber Nicholsen. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, xxiii.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Habermas, Jürgen. 1984. “The New Obscurity: The Crisis of the Welfare State and the Exhaustion of Utopian Energies.” In *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians’ Debate*. Trans. and ed. by Shierry Weber Nicholsen. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989, 20.

⁷ Habermas 1984, 51.

⁸ Wolin 1989, ix.

requires the creation of autonomous self-organized public spheres⁹, which create social “space” for open and democratic discussion. It is through such discussion that communities are organized and collective action takes place.¹⁰ This approach, however, is only one of several alternatives to modernity.

In *Modernity versus Postmodernity*, Habermas identifies three other responses to these apparent failures of modernism. First, the *young conservatives* reject modern rationality but embrace modern culture and its subjectivity, spontaneity, and interest in self-expression. Paradoxically, this anti-modern view champions cultural modernism, which relies on the autonomy of the aesthetic experience decoupled from the other spheres. Second, the *old conservatives* reject the differentiation of science, morality, and art, and the instrumental rationality of modernity, and advocate a return to a “premodern” undifferentiated society. Habermas sees this view as unnecessarily eliminating the modern project of a more just society. Third, the *new conservatives* accept the development of modern science, technological progress, and associated economic growth, but reject cultural modernism, advocating a return to traditional values that are more supportive of the market. They attempt to minimize the elements of cultural modernism that could undermine continued growth. Paradoxically, this view fails to recognize that the cultural modernism they oppose is largely a result of the social modernism they support.¹¹

Given these responses to modernism, Fairfield Ridge, a typical suburban development, can be said to represent a “new conservative” approach because it supports the continued expansion of the market while attempting to minimize or repress cultural modernism. Conversely, Berea Ecovillage, an intentional cooperative community, can be said to represent Habermas’s approach of “critical modernism” because it increases advances rational and just social organization, empowers the lifeworld, and resists (even reins in) the market.

Fairfield Ridge: New Conservatism

Fairfield Ridge is a suburban development located in Fairfield Township, north of Cincinnati, Ohio. It is typical of suburban development in that it consists of relatively homogenous freestanding single-family houses roughly centered on individual plots of land, located in a subdivision built by a developer (here, Fischer Homes). Potential home-buyers can choose from a menu of seventeen house plans, each of which can be rendered in several historical styles, from Tudor to Colonial to Midwest-traditional (see figs. 1-4). The houses range in price from \$200,000 to \$300,000. For this development to be considered “new

⁹ Habermas 1984, 64.

¹⁰ Brulle 2000, 8.

¹¹ Habermas 1980.

conservative” in the sense that Habermas intends, it must be proved that this development: (1) accepts and furthers social modernism—specifically, economic growth; (2) supports “traditional values” that are seen as reinforcing economic growth; and (3) attempts to minimize or repress cultural modernism.

1. *Promoting Economic Growth*

Economic forces largely determine the architecture and lifestyle associated with suburban communities like Fairfield Ridge. First, suburbia itself is a manifestation of the modern logic of differentiation of spheres. Differentiation is writ large in city planning in the physical separation of environments for work, living, and recreation and the resulting “freeway city”.¹² This radical differentiation separates production and consumption, making locales increasingly dependent on the market and industrial infrastructure for all goods and services—for food, water, clothing, and energy.

Second, the overriding logic of suburban development is *economies of scale*. House plans are standardized and built from mass-produced components. Prior to construction the land is cleared and leveled in order to “standardize” the topography to accept these mass-produced structures. The repetition of plans and the scale of construction minimizes cost and maximizes profit for the developer—which is the prime directive for new conservatives.

Third, the houses themselves support material accumulation. Individual ownership of properties and the corresponding ideology of self-reliance means that each house must contain all the “necessities” of daily life. Each household must individually own a washer and dryer, lawnmower, snow blower, etc. Over time this individualization has grown more acute: now each *individual* owns his or her own phone, car, computer, and television—items that were previously shared within a household. To accommodate this expanding stock, houses in the United States have grown progressively larger since the 1950s,¹³ at once providing more storage for possessions and necessitating more furniture to fill new rooms, like the “great room” and “breakfast nook”. It is not uncommon that two incomes are required to support this lifestyle—and thus the lifestyle itself (as well as the physical house, which creates a financial liability for years to come) necessitates participation in, and reliance on, a growing economy.

Finally, suburban development not only supports the market, but also erodes the communicative basis of the lifeworld’s strength, reenacting at a small scale the “colonization of the lifeworld” by the market. By eliminating the public space (both physical and social) in which community flourishes, suburbia reduces the social interaction that might otherwise form the basis for collective action. The design of Fairfield Ridge

¹² Ley, David. 1993. “Cooperative Housing as a Moral Landscape.” In *Place/Culture/Representation*. Ed. by James Duncan and David Ley. London; New York: Routledge, 132.

¹³ Crowley, Anne Barnes. 1994. “Contemporary Suburban Housing.” *Dimensions*, Vol. 8, Spring: 75.

hinders social interaction in numerous ways. Public space is regarded primarily as empty space to be traversed rather than communal space to be inhabited;¹⁴ winding roads and cul-de-sacs create an isolated environment and limit activity on the street,¹⁵ and use of the street is viewed as a lower-class phenomenon to be avoided. In some suburbs the sidewalk has vanished entirely. Also on the wane are the walkways that connect the street to the house (the public realm to the private). Barbara Flanagan observes, “the newest subdivisions treat the front steps as garden follies—historic curiosities ringed by shrubs, buffered by lawns, and rendered quaintly inaccessible”.¹⁶ Tiny front porches are no more than formal gestures; the active space has migrated to the private back yard in the form of the patio and deck. This is indicative of an atrophy of the social sphere: if public walks and porches are unnecessary, this does not speak well of their use. This literal lack of “common ground”¹⁷ makes robust public dialogue difficult.

The privatization of space continues on the interior. The informal family spaces—the “great room” or “family room”, kitchen, and eating “nook”—are in the rear of the house, protected from the public sphere, and near the only outdoor private area on the sprawling suburban lot¹⁸ (see figs. 5-7). The living room and dining room, where they remain, are largely disused spaces reserved for formal entertaining, and which effectively buffer the real living space from the public street. Thus suburban development not only supports a growing market, but also erodes the conditions in which an autonomous public sphere capable of exerting control over the market could develop.

2. Supporting Traditional Values

Despite its clear association with social modernism and a growth-oriented capitalist economy, Fairfield Ridge nevertheless supports “traditional” values. New conservatives see modern culture as emphasizing self-realization, subjective experience, and self-expression, which ultimately “stirs up hatred against the conventions and virtues of an everyday life”¹⁹ and is therefore incompatible with the values of discipline and hard work that drive the capitalist economy. Instead, new conservatives emphasize “traditional” values: a protestant work ethic, self-reliance, family, and religion, which are seen as promoting productivity and competition.²⁰

The design of the house supports these traditional values. It expresses a traditional vision of an “ideal life”—upward mobility, the nuclear family, independence, self-reliance, and stability. For example, the

¹⁴ This distinction was originally made by Amos Rapoport in *House Form and Culture* (1969).

¹⁵ Crowley 1993, 74.

¹⁶ Flanagan, Barbara. 1998. “The Suburban House Reconsidered.” *Metropolis*, Vol. 17, No. 7: 44.

¹⁷ Lerup, Lars. 1971. “Suburban Residential Environments: Analysis, Evaluation, and Selection.” *Ekistics*, Vol. 31, February: 198.

¹⁸ Crowley 1993, 78; Lerup 1971, 192.

¹⁹ Habermas 1980: 95.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

house is designed to fulfill all needs, eliminating the necessity to rely on others. As discussed above, such ideals demand participation, if not excellence, in the market. Success is measured by financial status, which is expressed architecturally through stately foyers, manicured yards, and numbers of garages. Homes are designed as objects to be viewed; individual households are at once differentiated and normalized by this participatory surveillance, which serves, as Foucault observed, to homogenize social behavior around particular norms.²¹ Finally, the homes themselves are rendered in historic styles, referencing traditional ideas of “community” and seeking legitimacy in the grandeur of the past. But historicism, as Habermas notes, serves another function as well: to both cover up and escape from the problems associated with social modernization.²²

3. *Minimizing Cultural Modernism*

In Fairfield Ridge, the strategy for minimizing cultural modernism is to *obfuscate* and *pacify*—to buffer inhabitants against the negative effects of economic growth, and compensate for adverse effects of modern life. In this way, the desires that would normally lead to cultural modernism—for example, the desire for authentic self-expression against the homogeneity of the hyper-rationalized modern life—are dealt with superficially or sublimated into more acceptable forms.

First, the ideas of “safety” and “security” which a suburb like Fairfield Ridge has come to represent can be seen as displacing the effects of late capitalism (poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation) thereby creating an enclave in which these things do not exist. The problems are relegated to underprivileged areas—the inner city, the rural town, the developing nation. This displacement makes it difficult to understand the causal relationships—how the benefits of the suburban lifestyle create costs elsewhere—and so engenders a passive acceptance of the status quo.

Second, the house form can be seen as pacifying or sublimating potentially subversive desires—for stability, belonging, self-expression, and repose—that social modernism fails to address. Philip Slater notes the contradiction between owned houses full of cumbersome possessions (which are not readily moved) and a largely nomadic population. He suggests that this represents a *longing for stability* expressed by a technological failure to adapt.²³ Desire for *belonging in a community* is expressed in the well-organized neighborhoods whose historic styles evoke “simpler times” and traditional communities—for example,

²¹ Foucault, Michel. 1999. “The Means of Correct Training.” In *The Blackwell Reader in Contemporary Social Theory*, ed. by Anthony Elliot. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 97-106.

²² Habermas, Jürgen. 1981. “Modern and Postmodern Architecture.” In *Architecture Theory Since 1968*, ed. by K. Michael Hays. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998.

²³ Slater, Philip. 1970. *The Pursuit of Loneliness: American Culture at the Breaking Point*. Boston: Beacon Press, 111-12.

Tudor style suggests close-knit pre-industrial villages.²⁴ As noted above, the architecture becomes a “form of display”²⁵ that communicates belonging to a particular social class. This identity, however, is based on income rather than active participation in a community, and is therefore an *anonymous identity* that fails to provide the social intercourse from which a sense of belonging typically grows. Thus suburbia effectively transforms a desire for community into a competitive urge for financial status. At the same time, the normalizing effects of a mass-produced culture create a *desire for differentiation*—hence differentiated façades, landscaping, and yard ornaments. This is an acknowledgment, however weak, of the culturally modern impulse for self-expression and individual identity. Finally, the literature on Fairfield Ridge repeatedly emphasizes an escape from the stress of the daily grind: the suburb provides a setting “that allows you to unwind,” that “transport[s] you away from the daily rush,” and that “provide[s] an [...] escape from the rest of the world”.²⁶ Even the names of the homes—Ellsworth, Montgomery, Bradford—suggest upper-class country estates, evoking a retreat to an idyllic (and luxurious) landscape. Increasing luxury—especially the generous appointments of the master bedroom suite (walk-in closets, attached bathrooms, and overall spaciousness)—suggests relaxation and tranquility. These rooms are rarely *used* for relaxation, but they serve a symbolic function—expressing, as Slater might say, a *longing for repose* by failing to adapt to the speed and efficiency of modern life. Here again desires are sublimated: the stress of modern life is transformed into a desire for escape and luxury that can be achieved only through financial means which ultimately support social modernism. The idyllic historicism of Fairfield Ridge obscures the actual effects of the market and fails to acknowledge economic growth and materialism as the source of its troubles. It deals with latent desires in ways that keep the overall system of the growth-market intact.

Fairfield Ridge therefore fulfills Habermas’s definition of “new conservatism”. Its lifestyle promotes economic growth through privatization and individual accumulation; its design supports the traditional values of the nuclear family, hard work, and competition; and its built form conceals the undesirable effects of economic growth and attempts to mediate the desires for stability, belonging, differentiation, and repose. Such a system, however, is unsustainable. Cultural modernism cannot be repressed forever while social modernism continues; and furthermore, it is not desirable to do so, precisely because of the adverse effects of continued economic growth. Alternative social forms must be explored.

²⁴ Spencer-Wood, Suzanne M. 1999. “The World Their Households: Changing Meanings of the Domestic Sphere in the Nineteenth Century.” In *Housing and Dwelling: Perspectives on Modern Domestic Architecture*, ed. by Barbara Miller Lane. London; New York: Routledge, 2007, 172.

²⁵ Lerup 1971, 198.

²⁶ Fischer Homes. 2007. Fairfield Ridge. [cited 23 May 2007]. Available from <http://www.fischerhomes.com/>.

Berea Ecovillage: Critical Modernism

According to Robert Gilman, an ecovillage is “a human-scale, full-featured settlement in which human activities are harmlessly integrated into the natural world in a way that is supportive of healthy human development and can be successfully continued into the indefinite future.”²⁷ Berea Ecovillage is located in Berea, Kentucky, and is unique as an intentional community in that it was established by Berea College as an alternative form of student housing (see fig. 8). To fulfill Habermas’s criteria of critical modernism, it must be proved that Berea Ecovillage: (1) continues the “modern project” of continued emancipation via rational social organization; (2) empowers the lifeworld in order to restrict the power of the market and state; and (3) *does not* aim for a “pre-modern” de-differentiated world, which would make it an “old modern” approach incompatible with the modern project.

1. Continuing the Modern Project

The social vision of Berea Ecovillage is distinctly modern: a better society through participation and democracy. A “rational social order” is envisioned in terms of a “healthy community” that frees people from traditional class divisions and social norms and is rooted in values of equality and diversity.²⁸ The residents represent this diversity in their age range and varied socio-economic backgrounds. A variety of housing units accommodate a variety of living situations: traditional families, single parents, and individuals. Democratic decision-making is a central tenant: communal decisions are made democratically, and community participation was a significant feature of the architectural design process.²⁹ But democracy and freedom are not only ends in themselves; they are also means by which the everyday lifeworld is empowered.

2. Empowering the Lifeworld

Public space—in both the physical and social senses—is necessary to create the autonomous public spheres through which the lifeworld is empowered. In this light, Berea Ecovillage empowers the lifeworld in the following ways: (1) by creating and activating public space; (2) by fostering individual personalities capable of civic involvement; and (3) by maintaining an appropriate scale. The ecovillage then has the strength to resist and rein in the colonizing forces of the market and state.

Communal space is physically created by organizing the apartments around a communal courtyard. The focus is on the “interior” of the community rather than toward the street, creating a sense of communal ownership (see fig. 9). Communal facilities include a day care facility, a “food forest” consisting

²⁷ Gilman, Robert. 1991. “The Ecovillage Challenge.” *In Context: A Quarterly of Humane Sustainable Culture*. No. 29: 10.

²⁸ Berea College. 2007. *Ecovillage*. [cited 5 May 2007]. Available from <http://www.berea.edu/sens/ecovillage>.

²⁹ Gutsche, Christopher and Kathleen Smith. 2005. “Appalachian Ecovillage.” *YES! Magazine*, Summer.

of fruit trees, and a central Commons House, which contains a kitchen, meeting room, “kid room”, laundry facilities, mailboxes, and offices. Including everyday functions in communal facilities stimulates daily social interaction, and frequent planned events, both formal (e.g., dinner) and informal (e.g., sports), provide occasions to bring together the community as a whole. These activities create public space in the social sense.

The success of this public space owes largely to an appropriate balance between communal and individual space. First, the front yard of each unit (i.e., that facing the communal yard) provides several “zones” of space, and the sense of privacy and ownership increases as one moves closer to the front door (see fig. 10). Each unit has its own front door, front stoop, and trellis, and shares a “front yard” with immediate neighbors. This space is often used for gardening, hanging laundry, and socializing (see fig. 11). The communal yard beyond supports distinctly communal events such as sports, games, and children playing. This contrasts sharply with the street-facing yard in which only two zones exist: semi-public and public. The yards provide little privacy and are rarely used. Second, although the apartments are attached, with four to six apartments per building, the form of the buildings provides a degree individual identity: each two-story unit is discernible (if not entirely distinct) from the exterior (see fig. 12). Third, each apartment has its own kitchen and dining facilities and can therefore operate as an autonomous entity. Thus inhabitants can choose the degree of participation desired at any given time. The public/private balance also provides space in which individual differentiation and personalization can occur. According to Christopher Gutsch, “residents gather on their patios, and some have added swings, lawn chairs, gardens, clotheslines, and children’s toys”³⁰ (see fig. 11). This balance is important for another reason as well: it is vital for creating individual personalities capable of civic involvement. According to Robert Brulle, the expression of the self is a prerequisite for participation in society.³¹

Scale is also an important consideration for social interaction. According to Habermas, “Forms of self-organization strengthen the collective capacity for action beneath the threshold at which organizational goals become detached from the orientations and attitudes from members of the organization and dependent instead on the interests of autonomous organizations in maintaining themselves [...]”.³² At a certain scale the goals of individuals are disconnected from the goals of the larger whole, and the “organization” becomes controlled by a faceless bureaucracy. Berea Ecovillage contains fifty living units; at two to three people per unit this comes to 100 to 150 people total. This number comports with the size of an

³⁰ Gutsch 2005.

³¹ Brulle 2000, 41.

³² Habermas 1984, 67.

average “social network”—that is, the number of people one knows intimately—according to sociologists.³³ This allows each individual to know other ecovillagers on an individual basis, which prevents anonymity and encourages personal accountability. This creates a form of collective action with the power to rein in the market and state.

According to Habermas, the ultimate goal of these autonomous public spheres is to “make the self-regulating mechanisms of the state and the economy sufficiently sensitive to the goal-oriented results of radical democratic will-formation”³⁴—that is, to reshape the market and state according to certain values, thereby bringing them under the normative control of the lifeworld. Berea Ecovillage has demonstrated the capacity to do precisely this. First, the self-reliant nature of the community denies power to the global market in favor of local economies. On-site energy generation, waste management, and (limited) food production withdraw support from existing systems of centralized energy, waste treatment, and industrial agriculture. This is not a matter of isolationism but rather a matter of accountability: Whereas a global economy prevents consumers from making ethical choices by subverting the information necessary to do so—information regarding production methods, environmental effects, and ethical practices of businesses—a localized economy is more transparent and accountable for its actions, rendering it more vulnerable to ethical demands. Second, communal activities such as entertainment and childcare effectively replace market activities with non-market activities. This represents an effort to extract the market from everyday activities, undoing the commoditization that has devastated the lifeworld. Third, cooperative housing communities have historically aimed at making housing affordable for all, often by adjusting rent according to income³⁵—a subversion of the market in favor of the values of everyday citizens democratically enacted. Finally, ecovillages resist material accumulation. Common ownership and shared facilities eliminate the redundancy of material possessions necessary in suburban developments, and actually give residents access to more conveniences at lower cost.³⁶ Modest size units and an overriding environmental ethic further allay consumerism.

The ecovillage also has a demonstrable, albeit limited, influence on the state. For example, an inability to use the on-site waste treatment system due to state regulations led community members and experts from Berea College to lobby the state legislature to overturn said regulations. This action also

³³ Hill, R. and R. Dunbar. 2002. “Social Network Size in Humans.” *Human Nature*, Vol. 14, No. 1: 53-72.

³⁴ Habermas 1984, 67.

³⁵ Ley 1993, 138. Information regarding rent was not available for Berea Ecovillage, but it is likely controlled by the college—a relinquishing of power to an “autonomous organization”.

³⁶ McCamat, K., and C. Durrett, with E. Hertzman. 1988. “How Cohousing Works: The Trudeslund Community.” In *Housing and Dwelling: Perspectives on Modern Domestic Architecture*, ed. by Barbara Miller Lane. London; New York: Routledge, 2007, 386.

represents an appropriate use of specialization, arguably in the way that Enlightenment thinkers envisioned: expert knowledge was to be used to *benefit* the lifeworld rather than exploit it.

3. Supporting Differentiation

Many residents of Berea Ecovillage are themselves specialists-in-training. Although they generally maintain a “holistic” worldview that recognizes the interconnectedness of all fields, they are not fundamentally questioning the differentiation of disciplines. Therefore they are not “old conservatives” who are attempting to undo modernity and return to an undifferentiated age. Rather, the members of Berea Ecovillage are attempting to craft a better life through community interaction (empowering the lifeworld), rational ordering of social life (democratic participation), and by maintaining a set of values (social equality and ecological sustainability) even in opposition to the forces of market and state. It therefore fulfills the requirements of Habermas’s “critical modernism.”

The social form represented by and embodied in Fairfield Ridge, unconditionally supports the continued growth of the capitalist economy, even to the detriment of the everyday lifeworld. Its emphasis on traditional values and attempts to minimize cultural modernity are futile at best, and pathological at worst, because the negative effects of economic growth will continue to accelerate. Thus the *new conservative* approach is ultimately a losing proposition. Conversely, Berea Ecovillage aims at a more just, equitable, and sustainable social order through democratic participation. This gives it the strength to resist market imperatives and instead insist on the values of its lifeworld. Thus *critical modernism* is a hopeful approach: it neither gives up the modern project nor accepts as inevitable the adverse effects of social modernism. This is not to suggest, however, that ecovillages provide the only “correct” solution to the problems of modernity, nor even the best. The general conditions Habermas outlines for empowering the lifeworld rely fundamentally on the will and desire of individual participants—and these general conditions have the potential to create an infinite variety of social forms. Nevertheless, Berea Ecovillage represents a social form largely created and maintained through the democratic participation of its members, and as such can serve as a precedent for grappling with the difficult task of critically advancing the modern project.

Figures 1-4: alternative elevations of the “Andover” floor plan by Fischer Homes rendered in various historic styles

source: www.fischerhomes.com



CRAFTSMAN



ENGLISH MANOR



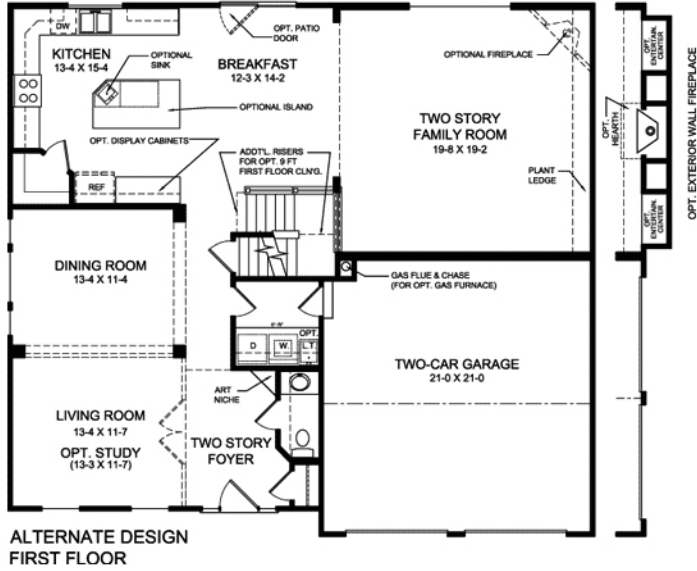
FARMHOUSE
(SHOWN WITH OPTIONAL EXTENDED PORCH)



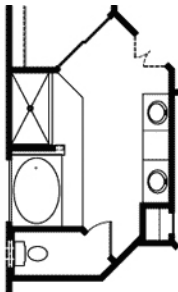
TUDOR
(SHOWN WITH OPTIONAL STONE ACCENTS & DORMER)

Figures 5-6: the "Andover" floor plan by Fischer Homes, first and second floors

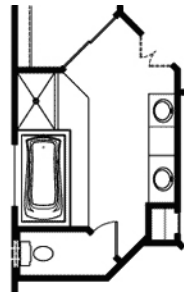
source: www.fischerhomes.com



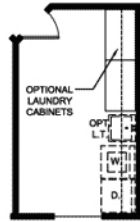
ALTERNATE DESIGN
FIRST FLOOR



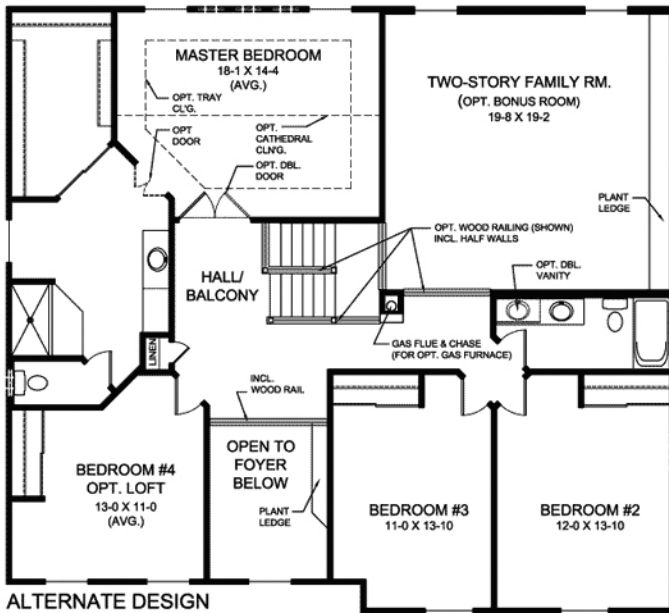
MASTER BATH OPTIONS
W/ OPT. 60 X 42 SOAKING TUB & 60 X 34 SHOWER
(VS INCLUDED SHOWER ARRANGEMENT)
OPT. 7FT. 6IN DBL. VANITY SHOWN vs SINGLE



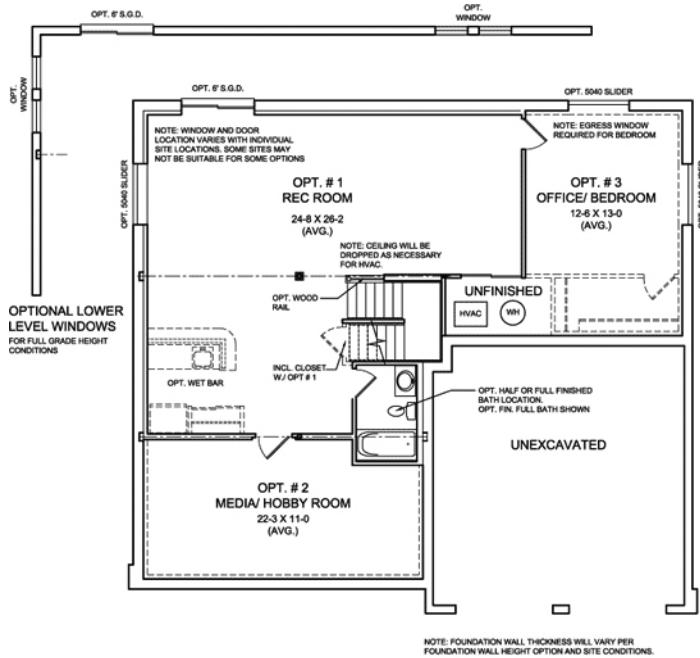
OPTIONAL DESIGNER BATH



OPTIONAL LAUNDRY
IN LIEU OF 2 STORY FOYER



ALTERNATE DESIGN
SECOND FLOOR



ALTERNATE DESIGN
LOWER LEVEL FINISH OPTIONS

Figure 7: the "Andover" floor plan by Fischer Homes, lower level

source: www.fischerhomes.com

Figure 8: Berea Ecovillage site plan showing (1) the Living Machine, (2) sustainable demonstration house, (3) residential units, (4) childcare center, and (5) Commons house

source: www.berea.edu/sens/ecovillage

Figure 9: site plan diagram showing public and private spaces



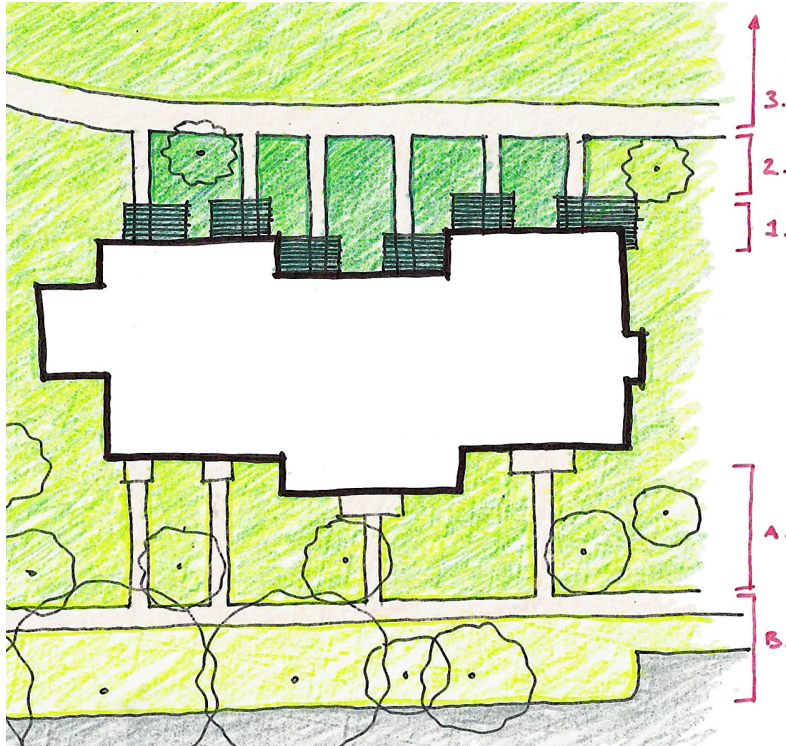
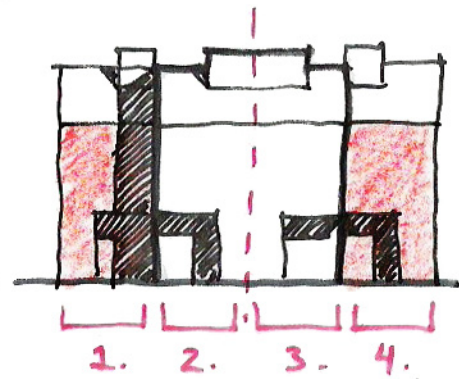
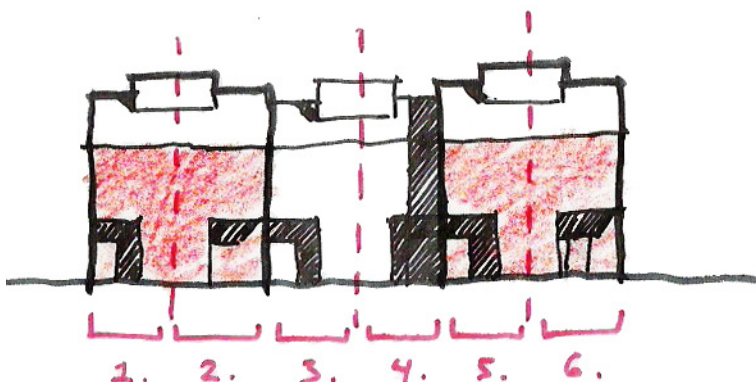


Figure 10: yards and degrees of privacy: (1) individual entry, (2) shared yard, (3) common space; (A) semi-public yard, (B) public space.

Figure 11: use and personalization of patios and shared yards

source: www.berea.edu/sens/ecovillage

Figure 12: elevations and individual identity: four- and six-unit apartments



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