

Unrepressing Class to Reinterpret the Tradition of Midcentury Modern Architecture and Its Preservation in Tucson, Arizona

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Architect A. Quincy Jones designed one of the first modern post-World War II subdivisions for the builder Del Webb in 1948. At the time, his design for the houses and blocks in the development, which was known as Pueblo Gardens, gave form to then-popular ideas of modern living and a new vision of neighborhood physical heterogeneity. Preservation advocates have since evaluated Pueblo Gardens as historically significant but an unlikely candidate for conservation. The assessment reflects material changes to its built fabric, but it also raises important questions about the interpretation of Modern architecture and the preservation of modern subdivisions after they have become home to more working-class, racially diverse populations. The research presented here highlights the role of “white” middle-class aesthetics in postwar Modern architecture to reinterpret the place of Midcentury Modern tract homes in preservation discourse. Specifically, it questions assumptions about the tradition of preservation in diverse neighborhoods where racial and class distinctions are connected to aesthetic values.

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The white and middle-class aesthetic of postwar modern subdivisions — understood through their original advertising materials and recent cultural scholarship — challenges the rationale of traditional preservation practice in socially and economically diverse neighborhoods. This is particularly true where “whiteness” was not only produced historically by instruments of separation and exclusion such as deed restrictions, but has been

deeply connected to aesthetic interpretation.¹ The challenge thus pits traditions of Modern architecture as these have evolved in less-affluent and nonwhite neighborhoods against the widely agreed-upon parameters of preservation. At stake in this conflict is not historical significance, but interpretations of visual and material evidence.

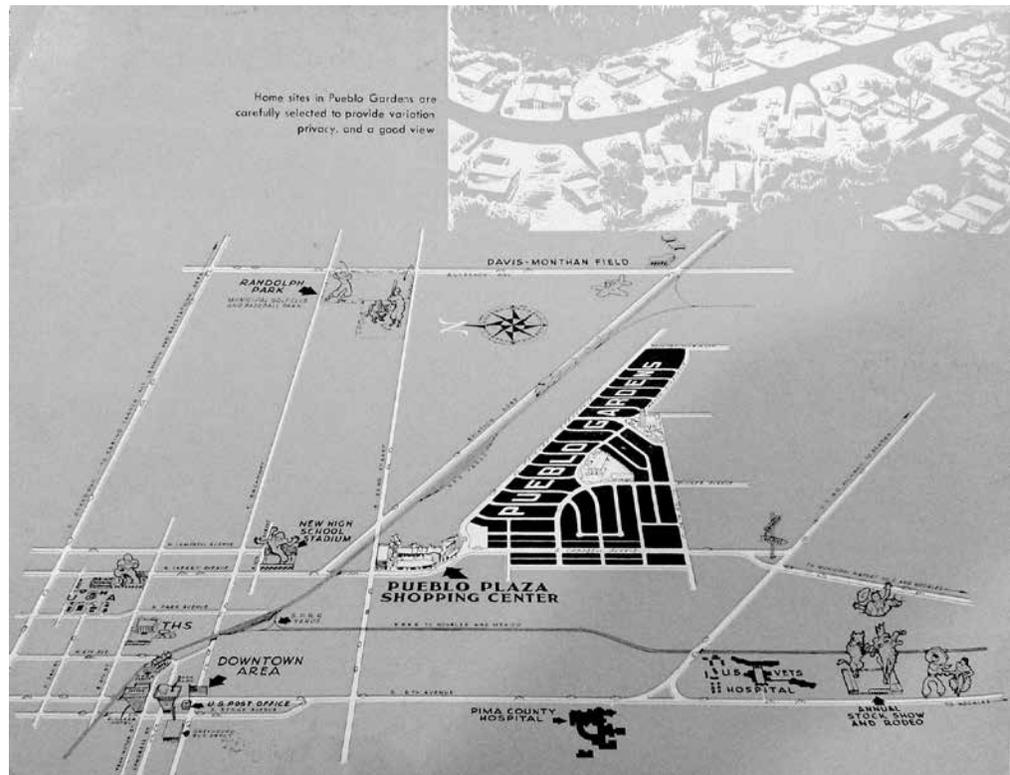
This essay begins by examining the aesthetic of class and class-based narratives about place. It then turns to the specific example of Pueblo Gardens in Tucson, Arizona. This tract is among several hundred neighborhoods in Tucson being considered by preservationists for inclusion in a citywide neighborhood preservation plan.² Windshield surveys and initial discussions among preservationists have led to the initial consensus that the neighborhood and Jones's design work there is of medium to low priority for conservation. The assessment accurately reflects the many material changes that have been made to homes in the area. But it also raises important questions about the interpretation of Modern architecture and the preservation of subdivisions embodying its principles after they have been transformed by more working-class, ethnically diverse populations.

The neighborhood in question is historically significant because it was among the first U.S. subdivisions after World

War II to be inspired by the tenets of Modern architecture. Bankrolled by the builder Del Webb in 1948, its layout and houses were the work of the young architect A. Quincy Jones, who transformed what might have otherwise been a standard FHA-approved development into a notable example of Mid-century Modern design (FIG. 1). In addition, Jones set out to design a subdivision with visual heterogeneity, using ordinary, inexpensive materials.

Comparing the architect's initial approach toward tract-home design with visible changes and adaptations in the subdivision since its construction, the essay attempts to build a more nuanced interpretation of Modern architecture than that normally found in preservation discourse. It also seeks to open up possibilities for preservation that are less concerned with originality and authenticity than with the original principles of Modern architecture and the solution to housing Pueblo Gardens represents. The historic merit and distinctive character of the neighborhood are undeniable, and historic designation would certainly benefit many of the neighborhood's homeowners financially. But the more important question addressed here is why agreed-upon practices in preservation might cause this neighborhood and similar ones elsewhere in the U.S. to be overlooked.

FIGURE 1. Promotional map of Pueblo Gardens in 1948 locating the neighborhood's relationship to downtown, city amenities, and an Air Force base. Source: A. Quincy Jones Papers, University of California Los Angeles Special Collections. Source: A. Quincy Jones Papers (Collection 1692) UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.



THE AESTHETICS OF POVERTY AND PRIVILEGE IN PRESERVATION PRACTICE

Assessments of aesthetic value are central to historic preservation, but judgments on the matter are frequently referred to by other names. According to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), properties suitable for government protection must possess integrity based on their location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.³ In other words, properties must convey honesty, authenticity and purity — if not straightforward historic legibility — in addition to having demonstrated historic significance based either on their outstanding design or association with an important person, event, or cultural pattern.

In Tucson, there are 35 designated NRHP districts, historic preservation zones, or neighborhood preservation zones; and five more areas are under consideration that have met, or will soon meet, stringent criteria for conservation.⁴ The number reflects the tenacity of preservationists in conserving the cultural heritage of Native-American, Spanish, Mexican, and Anglo populations in the region. Although individual buildings range in age, designated districts and zones are principally from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, making the recent history of Tucson a focus of preservation efforts.

Pueblo Gardens, designed after World War II by a now-celebrated Modern architect under the supervision of a notable developer, meets several of the NRHP requirements; but its integrity, or purity of expression, is not readily apparent. For one, it is a modern neighborhood that has been subject to the modern tradition of change; but the preservation of the recent past, specifically the mid-twentieth century, is also relatively new intellectual terrain.

Foundational to theories and practices surrounding the preservation of mid-twentieth-century built environments is Theodore Prudon's text on the preservation of Modern architecture.⁵ In it, Prudon set out to update historic considerations for conservation to include works of architecture designed and built within the last fifty years. This required navigating such topics as the preservation of modern materials, including structural steel and concrete, and the evaluation of twentieth-century building types such as civic arts centers and airports. Drawing on various examples, Prudon also recounted issues related to the preservation of suburban developments; and in his descriptions of Greenbelt, Maryland (one of three federally planned Depression-era greenbelt towns), and Mar Vista in Los Angeles (a modern tract development designed by the architect Gregory Ain with the landscape architect Garrett Eckbo), he emphasized the importance of their continuing "authenticity" to their preservation value.

Prudon's analysis of the two developments used historical research to establish a benchmark for measurable change, and it considered the continued originality of their materials and forms as basic to their successful conservation. In this regard, however, Levittown, New Jersey — also included in

Prudon's analysis — provides an alternative, vexing case. Unlike Greenbelt and Mar Vista, Levittown presents preservationists with several dilemmas. Most important are the visible changes to houses that (despite the indisputable importance of such developments to American architectural history) invalidate its material authenticity, and therefore foreclose any chance that the neighborhood as a whole will ever qualify for historic recognition. Singular houses may meet preservation criteria, but the neighborhood — as evidence of a postwar cultural pattern — may not. Thus, concern for material authenticity may bind contemporary preservation practice to original aesthetic values and exclude neighborhoods as significant as Levittown and Pueblo Gardens from consideration.

Embedded in current neighborhood-preservation practices, where a larger cultural landscape is implicated, is a kind of aesthetic governmentality. Strictly speaking, governmentality refers to the way a state exercises control over a population. But in the case of preservation, the control mechanism focuses on appearances, and there are multiple, interdependent ways visible characteristics may be identified and governed.⁶

Looking at these issues through the lens of the state, international organizations such as UNESCO, national ones such as the NRHP, and local ones such as state historic preservation offices (SHPOs) typically seek to establish programs to select and preserve qualifying historic sites.⁷ The criteria in these programs certainly facilitate the evaluation of sites, but they also condition collective decisions through an application process, and this effect may be particularly evident with regard to historic districts.

Using government program guidelines, preservationists, archeologists or historians (along with citizens of a community) are responsible for researching and assembling historical evidence for such areas as part of an application process. These efforts are meant both to verify the significance as well as the salient characteristics of each area's historic character and mount a case for it in front of the responsible government agency. But the result is that final validation of the integrity of construction materials, workmanship, feeling and association in a proposed preservation area will depend both on the historic and aesthetic interpretation of a community and a government agency.

History, however, is often conditioned by a privileged class to serve certain cultural or political purposes.⁸ And when historic districts are the subject of preservation concern, this may result (less so than in the case of specific buildings) in integrity assessments that are more easily met in affluent, middle-class neighborhoods. Typically, such places exhibit an ongoing commitment to maintenance or a more recent pattern of economic investment, because evidence of the past and narratives about it are more synchronous.⁹ In other words, current built environments may preface interpretations of history better than archival evidence.

Practitioners of preservation might counter this argument by noting, as Prudon has, that good design withstands

significant change — or that neighborhoods, if preserved early, are more likely to be saved. However, in their study of Bedford, New York, James and Nancy Duncan offered an alternate explanation that focused on the interrelationships of aesthetics and privilege.¹⁰ Examining how affluent residents preserved this “white” community, they linked current appreciation for the landscape to such activities as fabricated historic narratives about place, conservation, and legislation to control and tax unwanted development and people. Important to the Bedford study was not only how residents invented a local heritage inextricably tied to their own landscape aesthetics, but also how they eventually controlled aesthetics through government agencies. The notion of “aesthetic governmentality,” as it is used here, pairs preservation practice (regulated by federal and state agencies) with aesthetics and privilege, and it instrumentalizes the image of the landscape (no matter how it is contrived) as the object of conservation.

Traditional forms of preservation practice may thus be seen to rely on unspoken yet intertwined concepts of aesthetics and affluence. The Duncans’ analysis provides but one example; others have similarly articulated the relationship between aesthetics and class. For example, building on the theories of Pierre Bourdieu, Sebnem Yucel Young’s study of villages in Western Anatolia analyzed the use of style and aesthetics to establish and maintain urban identities and class distinctions in rural areas.¹¹ In this case, Yucel showed how the aesthetic of urban affluence was transported and adapted from urban to rural settings, while class distinctions remained legible to those who had cultivated the aesthetic in the first place. From a different perspective, Romola Sanyal likewise investigated the image and decontextualized aesthetic of poverty at the Habitat for Humanity Global Village and Discovery Center in Georgia.¹² Not surprisingly, the image of global poverty presented there contrasted starkly with Habitat’s humanitarian projects. Nevertheless, it showed how the image of poverty (or relative affluence) may be evident in architecture, and that the built environment may indeed serve as the very medium through which social and economic distinctions are made.

By contrast, only a few scholars have looked at processes of preservation in relation to the ethnic, racial and socioeconomic realities of resident populations, but their research may help in understanding and analyzing Midcentury Modern tract homes that have undergone noticeable change. In his study of inner-city Chicago, Vincent Michael chronicled how black community activists used the metrics of preservation to press white preservationists to designate a “blighted” neighborhood historic.¹³ His research identified professional blind spots to urban decay, race and poverty as well as a propensity among preservationists to entangle the concepts of conservation and rehabilitation. While the confusion is understandable, a clearer distinction between the concepts is necessary. Conservation rests on the notion of a past tradition, and when applied through preservation practice, it

reinforces the significance of the past through built form. In contrast, rehabilitation privileges utility and salvageability, and can lead to the removal of people and structures. However, both concepts ignore the possibility of modern traditions, including a tradition of change in the built environment.¹⁴ Both conservation and rehabilitation rely on aesthetic determinants, and therefore the application of either to a neighborhood too often depends on its racial or ethnic composition — and not, as Michael pointed out, its historic significance.

Taking an anthropological approach, Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga’s research on bungalows and mansions, white suburbs, and immigrant aspirations is also relevant. She has explored the role of preservation and design review in Southern California, where immigrants have aspired to construct or renovate homes in established neighborhoods.¹⁵ In the neighborhoods of Lawrence-Zúñiga’s study, “white” or established residents have attempted to retain the old (not necessarily original) character of the areas they occupy by instituting design-review procedures that deter new construction they believe to be incongruous with existing community aesthetics. As a result, aesthetic governmentality has transformed what might otherwise have emerged as a cultural debate among newcomers and long-timers into a formal process involving official evaluation of aesthetic value. Although culture is the root of design disputes and preservation efforts, so is the aesthetic of affluence.

Looking at the preservation of Midcentury Modern architecture, but in a different manner than Prudon, Paul Spencer and Leslie Klein have also raised issues pertinent to the reevaluation of historic integrity.¹⁶ In their research, they found that a modern public housing project designed in the 1950s by Carlo Raul Villanueva in Caracas, Venezuela, has now been surrounded and overcome by a dense, self-built neighborhood that represents a contrasting, postmodern solution to housing the poor. Despite the physical deterioration and dramatic changes to the modern buildings and landscape, Spencer and Klein proposed conserving both the old and new — asserting that if preservation is to teach us about the past, it should also press us to solve current problems. Their approach dissolved the distinction between traditional preservation efforts, which celebrate the past, and preservation through rehabilitation, which acknowledges change and social function.

Although Caracas, Chicago, and Bedford are far from Tucson, the range of recent scholarship creates new conceptual terrain on which to consider the privately developed yet affordable mid-century subdivision. Examining the original intentions of the architect A. Quincy Jones, the type of housing Pueblo Gardens represents, and the aesthetics of modernism and of race, ethnicity, and poverty, it is clear that a more nuanced interpretation of modern tract housing and preservation is needed.

THE MID-CENTURY DESIGN OF PUEBLO GARDENS: WHITE YET HETEROGENEOUS

Although Pueblo Gardens was designated with affordability in mind, the project conformed to the aesthetic expectations of Modern architecture in the mid-twentieth century and reinforced the “whiteness” of postwar subdivisions.¹⁷ Similar to his contemporaries, Jones furnished the model homes with modern furniture, and images of white, middle-class families were featured in promotional material used to sell the homes (FIG. 2). Many studies, including those of Dianne Harris, have highlighted how marketing culture and the ephemera associated with postwar homes created and promoted images of white domesticity.¹⁸ The information conveyed through these images piqued public interest and established cultural expectations about homes and furnishings. Jones’s strategies, familiar to readers of popular magazines, similarly cast the project of tract housing and homeownership as “white.” However, although Pueblo Gardens targeted a white middle-class population (a position reinforced through then-common deed restrictions¹⁹), Jones’s design intentions complicate interpretation today of the homes and neighborhood.

The builder-developer Del Webb of Webb Construction had hired Jones at a time when the young Los Angeles-based architect had designed and built only a handful of small houses.²⁰ Jones’s connection to Webb, established through his partnership with the architect Paul Williams, thus proved important to his budding career, especially because it marked his entry into tract housing. The collaboration between Jones and Webb was amiable because Jones used modern design to solve cost and construction-efficiency problems while proposing a novel approach to contemporary residential design in Tucson’s housing market. Similar to efforts elsewhere in the country, Jones’s work mediated between the extremes of nature and new architectural technologies to provide a kind of modern “middle ground” for middle-class families.²¹ In the context of Jones’s own career, the project also provided him a vehicle to research new materials, aesthetic possibilities, and what he called “modern living.”²²

Modern living, a derivative of the popular slogan “better living,” was imagined to happen when architecture facilitated fluid social patterns and uses of space.²³ For Jones, it also meant fostering community, visually connecting interior and exterior spaces, using modern materials, and dealing with the local environment in innovative ways. His residential architecture therefore employed open floor plans, encouraged outdoor living, made use of standard or industrial materials, and emphasized the importance of shared values to life within the neighborhood. He pursued these ideas in Pueblo Gardens and in his later work for the developer Joseph Eichler, but what distinguished the project for Webb was its very low price point, which pressed Jones to think about how modern living could be affordable.²⁴



FIGURE 2. Promotional images of Pueblo Gardens in 1948 show young white couples enjoying the outdoor patio of an A. Quincy Jones-designed home in Del Webb’s tract development. Floor-to-ceiling windows connect the living room and outdoor patio, while a redwood fence provides domestic privacy. Source: Arizona Highways (November 1948), p.33.

Jones wrote of affordable housing in 1949, as he made public education about architecture one of his avocations. He believed that most people in the United States had only the slightest idea about the relationship between living and design, and he recalled having to explain to clients how to use their new living rooms.²⁵ Jones believed individuals (and communities) deserved design attention, even if the cost of construction was low. This meant that his work in Pueblo Gardens not only channeled his ideas on modern living, but also purposefully explored the ways he could introduce modern living to the average or aspiring middle-class family. Priced between \$5,000 and \$8,000, the homes of Pueblo Gardens were less expensive than many tract homes on the market, and would have attracted moderate-income buyers.²⁶

The design of Pueblo Gardens' homes and neighborhood also reflected Jones's aspiration "to eliminate many of the obvious faults of previous housing developments, such as the appearance of row housing, caused by uniform front yard setbacks."²⁷ He also avoided the use of small, decorative windows and other tricks deployed by other builders to create the appearance of variety, such as bay windows, shutters, and mirrored house plans. Instead, Jones varied the material and

color palette, the setbacks, and rotated (rather than mirrored) houses on adjacent sites (FIG. 3). The rotation of houses was especially important because it created varied outdoor spaces between structures that, with extensive use of glass in each home, made it possible to tie outdoor spaces to the inside.²⁸ The design strategy of using floor-to-ceiling glass walls visually extended the overall size of the living area to include the patio, lot, and distant Sonoran landscape. This open relationship with the landscape made living outdoors possible and perhaps pleasurable, but it also demanded that the residents forgo the traditional front and back yards afforded by more typical housing developments. And although the appearance of variety was achieved, the strategy placed uncommon demands on the landscape and its design, especially since Jones envisioned a neighborhood without fences.²⁹

To show the houses, Jones opted *not* to plant cactus gardens native to the Sonoran Desert, but instead to plant lawns, flower beds, and hearty species such as oleander and eucalyptus (FIG. 4). His rationale originated from his belief that cactus gardens showed poorly and that trees such as eucalyptus would provide windbreaks and much-needed shade.³⁰ More important than the plant materials themselves, however,

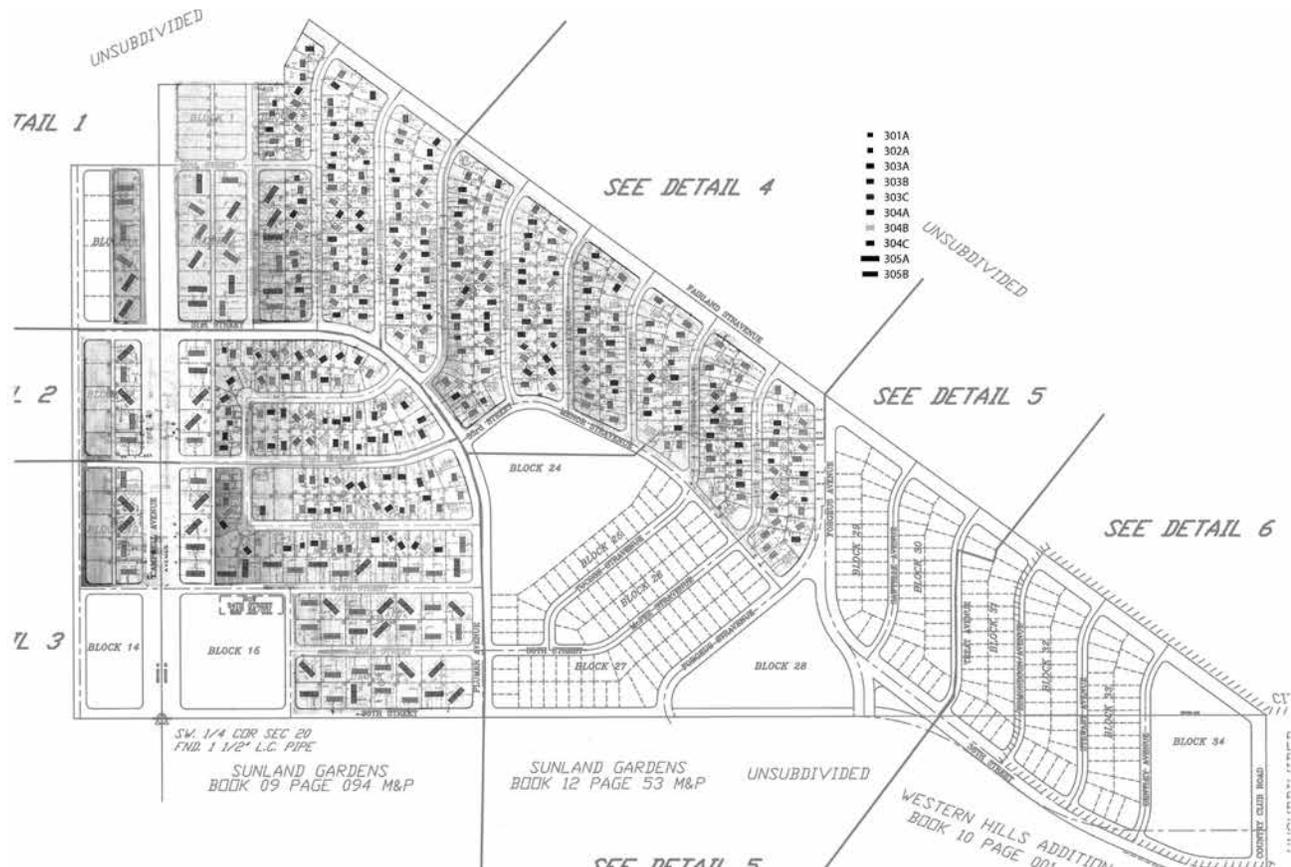


FIGURE 3. Original neighborhood showing the streets and lots laid out by Del Webb and the house types proposed by A. Quincy Jones. Source: Author, Nikki Hall, and Bernardo Terán, created using data from the Pima County Recorder Office and A. Quincy Jones Papers (Collection 1692) UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

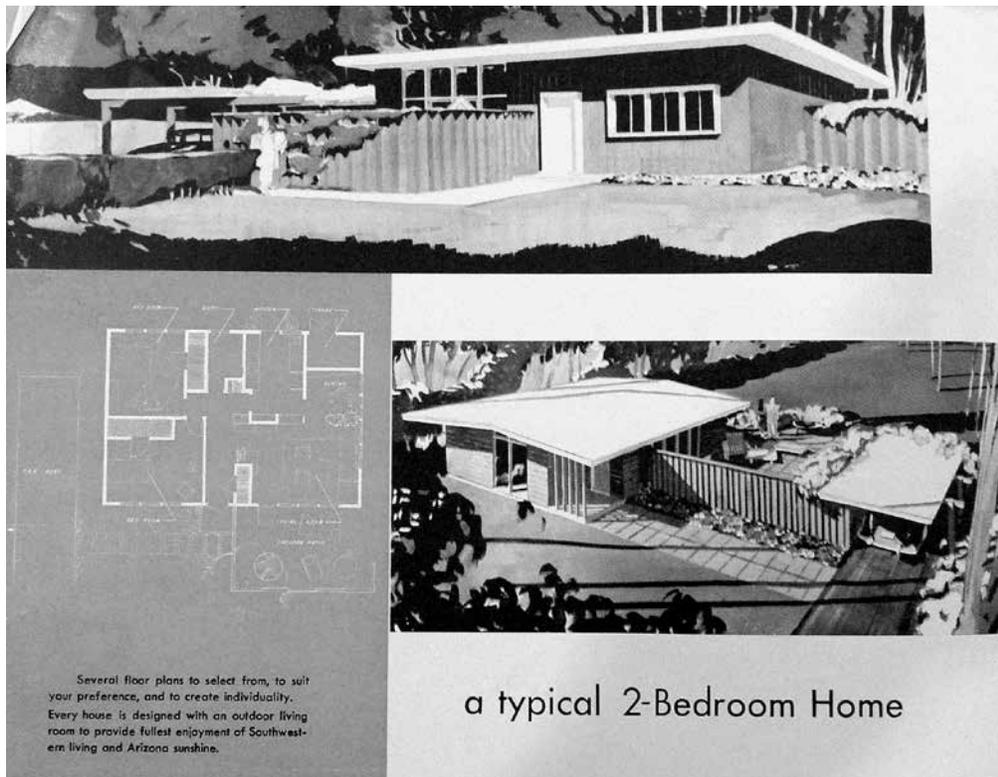


FIGURE 4. A typical two-bedroom home in Pueblo Gardens, n.d. Jones created “rooms” for outdoor living adjacent to each house and varied the location of the carport and patio. Source: A. Quincy Jones Papers (Collection 1692) UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

was the way Jones arranged trees and hedges on each lot and block. Departing from the one-tree-per-lot rule common in tract developments at the time, he aggregated the trees, treated each block as a canvas, and broke up the monotony of the neighborhood by crisscrossing plantings through each lot, creating, in his words, a “counterpoint” to the otherwise typical street pattern (FIG. 5).³¹

Material choices, construction strategies, and environmental-design details distinguished Jones’s project, too. Departing further from typical tract developments, especially those in Tucson, Jones clad his houses in redwood or Gunitite, rather than concrete block, brick, or “burnt adobe,” and he avoided more expensive roof trusses to employ cost-effective shed roofs. The wide roof overhangs this approach facilitated could further be used to shade windows and insulate walls from the sun during the summer months, making modern design and its associated technologies a better solution to the sometimes harsh environment of the Sonoran Desert.³²

Features like these set Pueblo Gardens apart from the majority of Tucson’s postwar subdivisions. By visiting six model homes on the site, buyers could experience the full size and layout of what was for sale, as well as the preset color palates. In addition, Jones demonstrated how modern furniture would populate the homes and how features such as floor-to-ceiling windows could facilitate outdoor living. Furniture from designers such as VKG, Knoll, and Eames, as well as ovens, refrigerators and mattresses, comprised

between \$2,300 and \$5,000 of the cost of each of the model homes. This meant that the furnishings represented between 46 and 63 percent of the cost of an entire home, establishing an upper-middle-class image for an otherwise affordable neighborhood.³³

This image of middle-class wealth was central to the logic of affordable modern tract homes and the marketing campaign to sell them. Similar to homebuilders elsewhere, Webb Construction produced brochures that situated the development within the Tucson area and described for the layperson the benefits of the homes and neighborhood. Specific architectural features celebrated by Webb (and by news reports about the project) included the novel plans for each lot, the private outdoor patios, and the buffet counters between the kitchen and living areas. At a larger scale, the brochures emphasized the landscape design, street patterns, and nearby shopping center (all designed by A. Quincy Jones), clearly promoting a desirable suburban lifestyle.

The small size of the homes and the features in them clearly targeted aspiring middle-class families who desired the images of leisurely outdoor living and modern furniture. And their affordability, the promotional images of modern living, and the furnishings in the model homes helped sell them. But so did the materials used to construct the houses. The wood framing and the Gunitite or redwood siding were thus intended to allow owners to easily upgrade and renovate individual houses in the future.

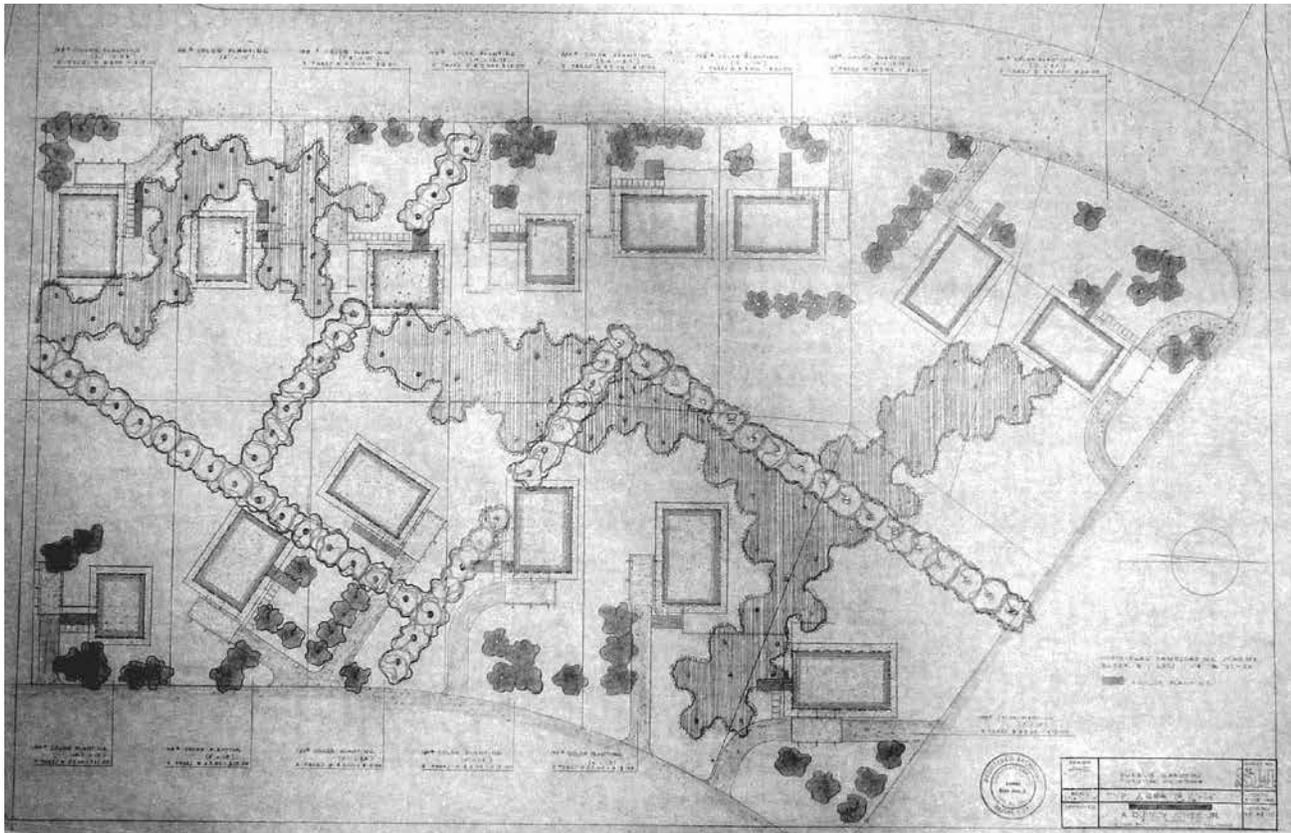


FIGURE 5. A block of Pueblo Gardens rendered by the office of A. Quincy Jones to show the rotation of houses and the planting plan of eucalyptus, oleander, and olive trees, 1948. The scheme helped create visual variety from the street and pressed residents to forgo lot-line fences and the usual front and back yards. Source: A. Quincy Jones Papers (Collection 1692) UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

AESTHETIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE: REASSESSING CLASS AND MODERNISM

The midcentury vision of middle-class families living leisurely outdoors in a well-designed community was short-lived in Pueblo Gardens. Soon after the homes sold, Jones received news from the construction company that residents were building fences in the front yards.³⁴ Although he had proposed a fence type that could be easily constructed of redwood, similar to the fences surrounding the patios, few of these were either built or remain.³⁵ Properties instead are now surrounded by masonry walls, chain-link fences, or corrugated metal fences. The young oleander hedgerows and the spindly eucalyptus were revealed to be inadequate to protect the private lives of new neighbors and, in addition, the planting strategy proved unsustainable in the dry desert climate.³⁶

Moving further away from Jones original design, most owners have since also adapted their homes by adding extra rooms, garages and porches. Some have boarded up the floor-to-ceiling glass walls or the clerestory windows with plywood, replaced doors, changed window sizes and types, and re-

moved the original carports. Others have added window bars or decorative elements that reflect their security concerns or aesthetic preferences. Yet despite these many changes, the majority of adaptations may still be judged to be sympathetic to the original design of Pueblo Gardens.

A recent survey of the exteriors of houses from the street by the author revealed that only 37 percent, or 146, of the 398 houses in the tract would be considered “contributing” properties for historic-preservation purposes — meaning that they would meet stringent integrity metrics for preservation as part of a historic district. These houses sit as originally built on their sites, are clad in either vertical wood siding or Gunitite, have maintained the original apertures of their windows and doors, and have retained their gradually sloping shed roofs (FIG. 6A). The remaining houses do not contribute, even if 31 percent, or 123, of them may be judged to be “sympathetic” to the modernism of Jones’s original design. The sympathetic houses are typically still clad in wood or Gunitite and retain their shed roofs, but the sizes and locations of their square or rectangular apertures and the extent of their rooflines may have changed. Meanwhile, many other changes are the result of inexpensive repairs, such as board-

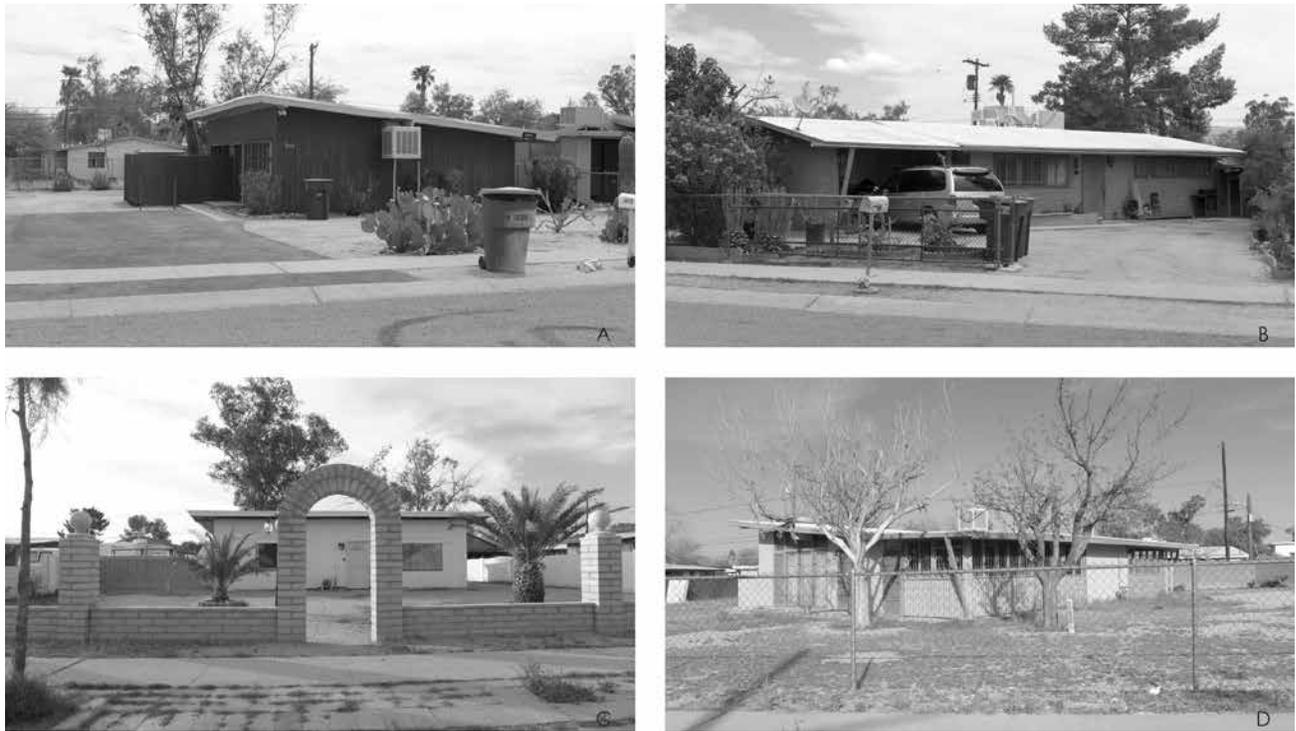


FIGURE 6. Pueblo Gardens, circa 2015. (A) Contributing property and one of several model homes used to sell properties in 1948. (B) Sympathetic property with added carport. (C) Sympathetic property with added masonry wall. (D) Sympathetic property with addition and security bars. Photos by author.

ing up rather than repairing the custom floor-to-ceiling windows (FIGS. 6B, C, D).

By contrast, some of the houses that do not contribute to the historic character of the neighborhood have either been replaced entirely or have been reconstructed using masonry. More often, however, the “noncontributing” houses have been added to in ways that break the shed roofline, or that introduce bay or Palladian-inspired windows. Overlooked in the survey were impermanent architectural details, such as fences, security bars, and paint colors, as well as porches or replacement carports.

Overall, therefore, when the metrics for determining contributing and noncontributing structures is loosened, roughly two-thirds of the houses in the neighborhood have retained a spatial and architectural character that is not only

distinct from neighboring subdivisions, but may be regarded as a maturation of Jones’s original intent to create the appearance of a heterogeneous tract development (FIG. 7).

Despite its overall cohesive appearance, preservationists note the neighborhood’s lack of integrity, citing the visible changes. The appearance of the houses has departed too far from the original images of Pueblo Gardens, they say. However, the conditions framing the divergence are important to consider. Because the affordable model homes were furnished with relatively expensive modern furniture, the promotional literature that advertised them actually presented a fiction to potential buyers — a story about an affluent middle-class lifestyle they might only hope to enjoy. In other words, the images illustrated the potential, not necessarily the reality, of the homes and neighborhood. And the actual story of the



FIGURE 7. West side of Amelia Avenue showing typical street in Pueblo Gardens, circa 2015. Photo by author.

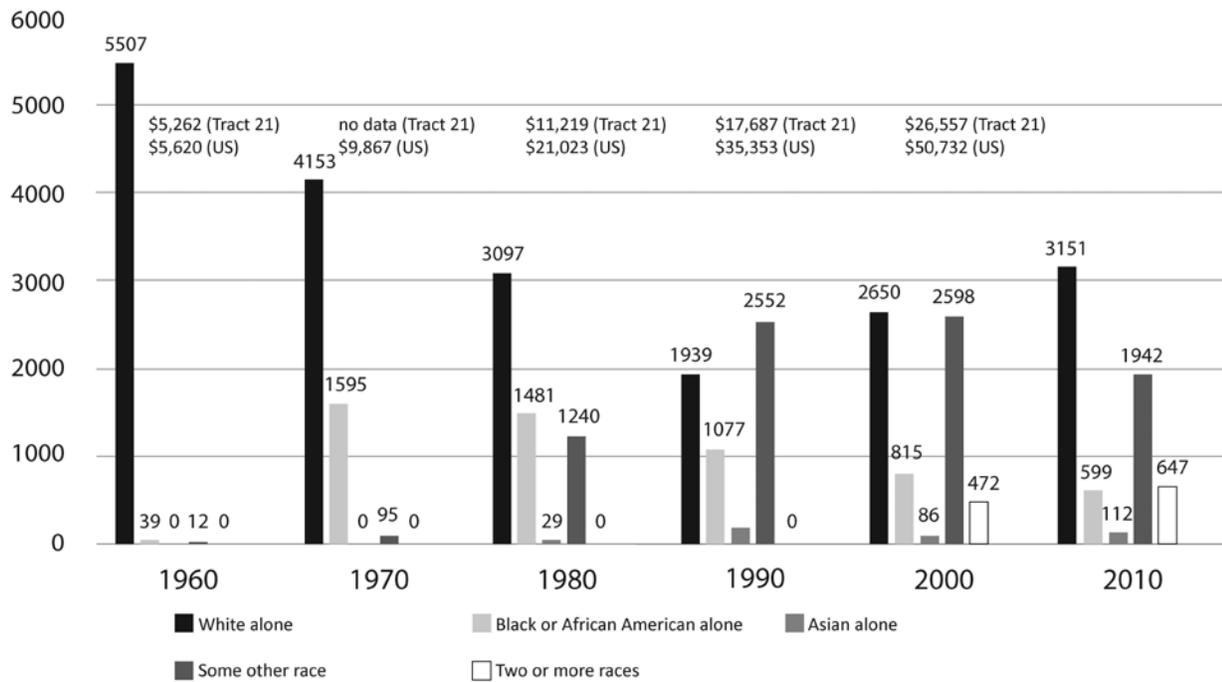


FIGURE 8. Population of Census Tract 21 in Tucson, Arizona, between 1960 and 2010 with median family income. Source: author, Nikki Hall, and Eduardo Guerrero, created using data from Census.gov and Social Explorer.

people who came to inhabit it differed markedly. In particular, even though Pueblo Gardens captured the attention of realtors and journalists far afield, it remained an “affordable” area of town.³⁷ Thus, in recent years the median home price in Pueblo Gardens has remained \$70,000 to \$100,000 below the median home price in Tucson.³⁸ But the sustained affordability of Pueblo Gardens compared to greater Tucson might actually be viewed as an original quality of the development that was important to the larger purpose of Modern architecture.

Pueblo Gardens’ relative affordability further underscores the demographic makeup of the neighborhood. In 1960 the median family income of residents of U.S. census Tract 21, of which Pueblo Gardens is a part, was reported to be \$5,262, or less than 1 percent below the median family income for the entire United States. However, by 2000, that number was \$26,557, or 47.6 percent below that year’s U.S. median income (FIG. 8). The relative shift downward in the incomes of Pueblo Gardens residents may be indicative of an overall decline in the economic standing of the middle class in the United States. But it may also illustrate the relative economic position, or gap, between Pueblo Gardens residents and residents of other neighborhoods in Tucson.

In addition to median family income, census data also reveals how the ethnic composition of Pueblo Gardens changed between 1960 and 2000 (FIG. 9). Specifically, the number of white residents declined, while the number of African Americans and Hispanics increased. And although

this trend is consistent with data collected for all of Tract 21, the pattern differs from conditions across the broader Tucson metropolitan area, where white residents remain the majority.

The external pressures placed on Pueblo Gardens between 1960 and 2000 were common to U.S. cities. While municipalities and development corporations renewed downtown districts and promoted rapid suburbanization, more penny-wise developers bought property where it was cheap, constructed neighborhoods and shopping centers beyond the reach of city building inspectors, and fueled the Tucson metropolitan area’s rapid expansion. In parallel, large-scale planning and civic projects overlaid the city with high-speed roads, and eradicated older, poorer, more diverse neighborhoods. These development practices typically displaced residents, and in Tucson, urban renewal efforts affected Hispanic families living downtown the most.³⁹ Since Tucson’s period of urban renewal, which peaked in the early 1970s, many displaced and new Hispanic residents have settled south of downtown in what were once peripheral neighborhoods, including Pueblo Gardens.

The economic position of Pueblo Gardens and its diversity relative to Tucson explains many of the alterations there that might more typically be found in lower-income neighborhoods. Boarded-up floor-to-ceiling windows where Jones had placed glass as well as security bars and chain link fences where Jones had envisioned an open community landscape are among the most common changes. The relative position

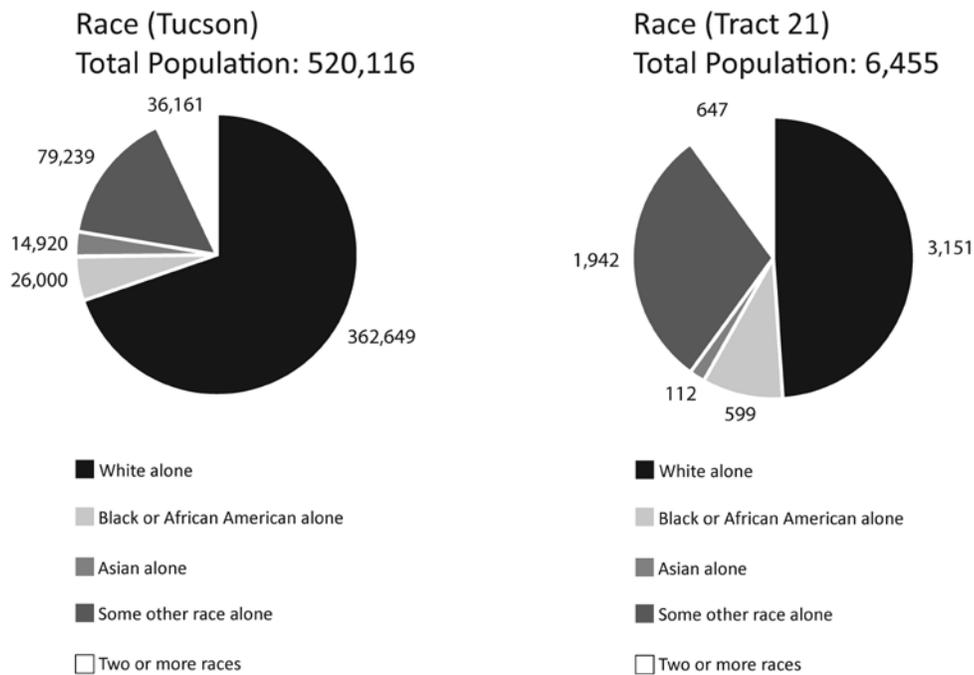


FIGURE 9. Population of Census Tract 21 and Tucson in 2010 by race. Source: author, Nikki Hall, and Eduardo Guerrero, created using data from Social Explorer.

of Pueblo Gardens also supports the varied record of maintenance and care of properties, from the rental properties to the owner-occupied units, as well as stylistic preferences of residents, such as masonry walls, common in Mexico and the Southwest. Because the neighborhood began as an average, yet affordable, middle-class neighborhood, however, its continued affordability actually links it back to Jones's original design intent and to the economic rationale for modern housing.

Instead of a static, unchanging Modern architecture, structures within Pueblo Gardens demonstrate the variables of architectural adaptability in a tract development. Given the professional stance of Jones, who embraced the appearance of variety and the opportunity to design affordable tract homes for a developer, these visible changes should not be read as detrimental to the neighborhood or counter to the ethos of the architect and developer. Rather, the transformation of Pueblo Gardens should be seen to demonstrate the persistence of the ideal of Modern architecture in light of economic and racial shifts.

Common, affordable materials fueled Jones's research on modern living. And the same types of materials have enabled residents to update, expand and maintain their homes. The image of middle-class "whiteness" celebrated in Webb's original promotional literature (and provisionally enforced by deed restrictions) may thus be gone. But in its place a tradition of Modern architecture that is changeable, low-cost, and sympathetic to Jones's original design has persisted.

TRADITIONS OF CHANGE: FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS FOR PRESERVATION PRACTICE

The original design of Pueblo Gardens illustrated that it was possible to design and build houses in a tract development and meet (or come in below) the developer's target cost, and that it was possible to update the traditional houses typically approved by the FHA and replace them with contemporary homes.⁴⁰ Jones and Del Webb had a "wholehearted desire to produce something better in the way of tract developments, both architecturally and cost wise."⁴¹ Thus invested in "modern living" (as imagined to incorporate fluid social patterns and uses of space, community spaces, interior and exterior connections, modern materials, and a sensitivity toward the environment), Jones and Webb designed and built inexpensive modern houses, and successfully sold them based on the neighborhood's promise.

Since the immediate postwar period, the neighborhood has undergone a gradual yet apparent transformation. Despite the visible signs of change, however, most alterations to homes appear sympathetic to Jones's site and architectural parameters: setbacks still vary, houses remain rotated on individual parcels, and most of the shed rooflines remain. Residents have replaced doors and windows or removed trees and shrubs, but the appearance of variety, once desired by Jones, persists. In addition, materials used to upgrade homes are inexpensive and similar to (if not the same as) those speci-

fied by Jones in the first place. One might thus conclude that Pueblo Gardens has fulfilled its promise as a modern, affordable subdivision — much as Levittown has for its residents in a different cultural setting.

The transformation of Pueblo Gardens, as well as its continued affordability, however, upsets the myth of Midcentury Modern tract homes as established in popular magazines. And, more importantly, it challenges the current parameters of preservation — in particular, the aesthetic principles employed by the historic preservation profession, which rely on historic evidence and aesthetic interpretation and favor original, unchanged structures.⁴²

Visual evidence of the past is basic to preservation, and there are specific changes to Pueblo Gardens that detract from its aesthetic integrity — or more accurately, that compete with its originally imagined aesthetic “whiteness.” In particular, security bars, which protect homes from burglars, and chain-link fences, which are cheap, symbolize a neighborhood that is nonwhite, poor and dangerous. Yet Jones never set out to design an ethnically homogeneous neighborhood, and the basic affordability of its homes (if not their furniture) was central to his purpose. This raises two issues: how the project of Modern architecture was understood and executed by Jones; and how preservation metrics enforce certain landscape aesthetics that suppress class and the solution to housing Pueblo Gardens represents, then and now.

The tendency to put image before more complex local and national histories is a recurring theme in recent scholarly assessments of preservation.⁴³ For example, in his study of Ouro Preto, Brazil, Leonardo Castriota examined the manufacture of heritage through the imposition of a “heritage style” that, with modern development, gradually effaced local history.⁴⁴ Similarly, Robert Saliba’s research on design strategies in postwar Beirut assessed the importance, yet two-dimensionality, of facade qualities in the identification and preservation of historic districts.⁴⁵ Cautioning against such overreliance on image, Michele Lamprakos’s research on Sana’a, Yemen, has likewise compared UNESCO’s historicist, aesthetically centered approach to heritage to another, potentially more lenient strategy. As she observed, this might allow for new building technologies that would highlight the tensions between original and newer building traditions and typologies, as well as between the image and substance of heritage sites.⁴⁶ Not surprisingly, these and many other studies point out the importance of appearances to judgments of heritage value, even when the visual markers of history may be largely fabricated.

It would likewise be a mistake to consider image value in purely historical terms and overlook the socioeconomic implications of preservation. Early research on gentrification, for example, focused on the sociological changes to inner cities. Since the 1970s preservation practice has also played a role.⁴⁷ Thus, when neighborhoods are preserved, the resulting conservation can cause social turnover. Indeed, Robert Good’s

study of Venice, Italy, presented preservation as the handmaiden of gentrification.⁴⁸ As he documented, conservation of housing in central Venice has led directly to the rise of an affluent housing market comprised of small, subdivided apartments for short-term rentals, and it has accelerated the decline in the number of local residents in the oldest parts of the city.

Investment in historic buildings, in this way, may increase either property values, desirability, or both. Kate Jordan’s research in the north London neighborhood of Bruce Grove also revealed such a pattern. Preservation efforts there were aimed at facilitating the conservation of multiple traditions and identities to foster an open-ended, diverse view of heritage.⁴⁹ However, Jordan noted that the increases in property values that resulted from conservation only valorized the aesthetic judgments of the individuals or communities pushing for preservation in the first place. Thus, conservation may not only deliver an image that has cultural value but also increase economic value. Despite the best of intentions, increased economic value may not necessarily benefit an area’s original residents or foster diversity.

While the economic value of preservation affects the private real estate market, government agencies may also contribute to the economic impact of preservation. Because it is understood that historic preservation leads to higher property values, many states, counties and municipalities in the United States discount property taxes for historic sites as an incentive for preservation.⁵⁰ In Arizona, if individual properties are not eligible for federal investment tax credits, owner-occupied properties within a historic district may be eligible for Arizona’s state historic property tax reclassification, which could discount annual property taxes as much as 45 percent.⁵¹ Owners of properties, not tenants, thus stand to benefit the most from conservation. If appearances guide initial eligibility, the desired aesthetics established by state or community preservation practices (or by communities themselves), might overlook historically significant neighborhoods that would benefit from tax incentives or direct economic investment, leaving the fate of nonaffluent or “nonwhite” neighborhoods occupied largely by renters to other social and economic processes.

Images of the past and present, and the reimagination of them, are crucial because they create or reinforce desirable cultural landscapes. Pueblo Gardens is not occupied by the “white” homeowners of Lawrence- Zúñiga’s or Duncan and Duncan’s studies; but the sense of its past is dominated by images of them, no matter how incongruent these are with the contemporary experience in the neighborhood of relative poverty and social diversity. When Webb hired Jones to design the homes in Pueblo Gardens, the houses and housing policies privileged white, middle-class homeownership. However, federal policies and the private housing market have changed since the immediate postwar years, and processes such as urban renewal have accelerated changes to the economic and racial realities of the neighborhood. Thus, the context in which images of Pueblo Gardens were first

produced has been replaced by new economic and social realities. Given such conditions (if preservation practice were to recognize the role of affluence and aesthetics), the metrics of preservation might be changed to promote economic development in more socially beneficial ways. Alternatively, it might stress the importance of different traditions within Modern architecture — specifically, those of change and adaptation.

Neighborhood preservation depends on historic images. But in the case of Pueblo Gardens, these images may also ultimately obscure the underlying import of Jones's contribution to architectural practice and to the advancement of builders' homes as a modern design product. As Jones put it, it was not only time for architects to embrace the importance of speculative building, but to develop affordable, well-designed contemporary housing that could break free from the monotony of typical residential projects.⁵² Interpreted through the lens of affordable design practice and Jones's own writings, the ordinary and inexpensive changes to many of the homes in Pueblo Gardens today may actually be interpreted as an extension of, not a divergence from, the original vision.⁵³ Instead of the modern interiors and middle-class residents living leisurely outdoors, homes in Pueblo Gardens present an updated version of modern tract housing with new mass-produced building materials and continued architectural variety. In other words, Modern architecture has its traditions, too.

Pueblo Gardens may not and need not be preserved. However, its value as built heritage lies not in the maintenance of the image of its original marketing materials, but in its contribution to understanding the design of affordable tract housing, then and now. The original homes contained ideas about indoor and outdoor living, material and spatial efficiency, and community design. Today many outdoor patios are gone, and hedgerows have given way to property-line fences. But the unifying heterogeneity established by Jones persists in the community. Thus, the adaptations to homes only point toward the success of Pueblo Gardens: its malleability and continued service to the purpose for which it was originally conceived through the use of inexpensive replacement materials. Pueblo Gardens is, in this way, an unplanned testament to neighborhood variety and to affordable Modern architecture.

By comparing the suburban image of middle-class, white families and the realities of the suburban community over time, the case of Pueblo Gardens cautions against fixation on idealized cultural landscapes, even affluent ones. Instead, it posits an honest reckoning with class, race and ethnicity as being central to understanding the aesthetic and community vision of A. Quincy Jones and the future of preservation traditions.

REFERENCE NOTES

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1. The image of middle-class “whiteness” is explored by Dianne Harris in *Little White Houses: How the Postwar Home Constructed Race in America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013). Other scholars who have pursued studies of this area include Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga, who explored the role of “white” aesthetics in preservation and design review processes in “Bungalows and Mansions: White Suburbs, Immigrant Aspirations, and Aesthetic Governmentality,” *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol.87 No.3 (Summer 2014), pp.819–54; Jim Duncan and Nancy Duncan, who summarized the effects of white privilege in their chapter “Aesthetics, Abjection, and White Privilege in Suburban New York,” in R. Schein, ed., *Landscape and*

Race in the United States (New York and Oxon, U.K.: Routledge, 2006); and Becky Nicolaides, who considered the relationship between class and the built environment in *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles 1920–1965* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

2. The extraordinary effort to research and prioritize over two hundred subdivisions has been led by the Drachman Institute at the University of Arizona.

3. See National Register Criteria for Evaluation at www.nps.gov (accessed January 31, 2017).

4. See Web content of the City of Tucson Historic Preservation Office at www.tucsonaz.gov/historic-preservation (accessed January 31, 2017).

5. T.H.M. Prudon, FAIA, *Preservation of Modern Architecture* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons, 2008).

6. M. Foucault, G. Burchell, C. Gordon, and P. Miller, *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality with Two Lectures by and an Interview with Michel Foucault* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

7. See, for example, “Arizona Reporting Standards for Cultural Resources” developed by the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office, the Arizona State

Museum, and the Arizona State Land Department (October 2009) (www.azstateparks.com/shpo-guidelines-2016-updates, accessed February 13, 2017).

8. For a discussion concerning integrity and significance, see D. Lawrence-Zúñiga, “Historic Preservation as Cosmology: Municipal Regulations and City Dynamics,” in Lawrence-Zúñiga, *Protecting Suburban America: Gentrification, Advocacy, and Historic Imaginary* (New York, Bloomsbury Academic: 2016), pp.79–102.

9. Here, economic investment includes gentrification. See the concluding section of this article for a discussion of gentrification and preservation.

10. J. Duncan and N. Duncan, *Landscapes of Privilege: the Politics of the Aesthetic in an American Suburb* (New York: Routledge: 2004).

11. S.Y. Young, “Hyper-Traditions/Hip Villages: Urbanite Villagers of Western Anatolia,” *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, Vol.18 No.2 (Spring 2007), pp.29–41.

12. R. Sanyal, “Poverty as a ‘Theme Park’: Christian Norms and Philanthropic Forms of Habitat for Humanity,” *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, Vol.15 No.2 (Spring 2004), pp.19–31.

13. V. Michael, "Race Against Renewal: Motives for Historic District Designation in Inner-City Chicago," *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism*, Vol.2 No.2 (Winter 2005), pp.34–43.
14. The "Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation" claims rehabilitation as an approach to historical preservation, and distinguishes it from preservation, restoration, and reconstruction (www.npw.gov/tps/standards.htm, accessed March 26, 2017).
15. Lawrence- Zúñiga, "Bungalows and Mansions," pp.819–54.
16. P. Spencer and L. Klein, "23 de Enero: Modern Public Housing in Post-Modern Caracas," *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism*, Vol.2 No.1 (Summer 2005), pp.58–66.
17. Harris, *Little White Houses*.
18. See S. Dodd, "Parade of Homes: Salesmanship and the Post-War American Housing Industry," *Journal of Design History*, Vol.28 No.4 (2015), pp.385–404; and Harris, *Little White Houses*, especially pp.59–81.
19. Restrictions on the original deeds filed the development at the Pima County Recorder's Office in May 1948 permitted only Whites and Caucasians to purchase houses there.
20. C. Buckler, *A. Quincy Jones* (London: Phaidon, 2002); B. Hodge, J. Schmidt, A. Quincy Jones: *Building for Better Living* (Los Angeles: Hammer Museum, University of California, Los Angeles, 2013); *Art and Architecture* (September 1949); and *Progressive Architecture* (February 1950).
21. S. Isenstadt, "Modern in the Middle," *Perspspecta*, Vol.26 (2005), pp.62–68, 71–72.
22. Research was what Jones called his exploration of materials. In addition, note his membership in the Southern California Housing Research Council (A. Quincy Jones Papers (Collection 1692) UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA, letter from Jones to Thomas Creighton, editor of *Progressive Architecture*, March 15, 1950).
23. A. Shanken, "Better Living: Toward a Cultural History of a Business Slogan," *Enterprise & Society*, Vol.7 No.3 (September 2006), p.485.
24. Jones later championed architect-designed tract housing in his book. See A. Quincy Jones, F. Emmons, and J. Chapman, *Builders' Homes for Better Living* (New York: Reinhold, 1957).
25. Letter from Jones to R.L. Stephens, Associate Professor of Art at Southwestern Louisiana Institute, November 28, 1949 (A. Quincy Jones Papers, UCLA).
26. Sources report the cost of the homes as less than \$10,000 (marketing materials), and between \$5,000 and \$8,000 (*Arizona Highways*, November 1948).
27. Letter from Jones to Joe Ashton of Webb Construction, August 3, 1948 (A. Quincy Jones Papers, UCLA).
28. Letter from Jones to Joe Ashton, August 3, 1948 (A. Quincy Jones Papers, UCLA).
29. Dianne Harris's chapter on privacy in *Little White Houses* (2013) addresses the relationship between privacy afforded by fences and "whiteness." But other scholars (namely, A.K. Sandoval-Strausz, "Latino Vernaculars and the Emerging National Landscape," *Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum*, Vol.20 No.1 (Spring 2013), pp.1–18) have pointed out the prevalence of chain-link or other fences in Hispanic neighborhoods as important signifiers of private family life.
30. Letter from Jones to Mrs. W.L. Crowninshield, Botanical Garden Collector, June 23, 1948 (A. Quincy Jones Papers, UCLA)
31. Letter from Jones to Thomas Creighton, editor of *Progressive Architecture*, March 15, 1950 (A. Quincy Jones Papers, UCLA).
32. Letter from Jones to Joe Ashton of Del Webb Construction, August 3, 1948; and letter from Jones to Thomas Creighton, editor of *Progressive Architecture*, March 15, 1950 (A. Quincy Jones Papers, UCLA).
33. The cost of the furniture is based on a list from Frank Brothers Modern Furniture in Long Beach (A. Quincy Jones Papers, UCLA).
34. Letter from L.C. Jacobson, Executive Vice President of Webb Construction Company, to Jones, February 25, 1949 (A. Quincy Jones Papers, UCLA).
35. Few redwood fences remain because specifications did not demand that homeowners use concrete footings, even though termite damage is common in the Southwest (letter from Jones to L.C. Jacobson of Webb Construction, February 28, 1949, A. Quincy Jones Papers, UCLA).
36. The plants selected by Jones, liked or not, demand water in the Sonoran Desert. Since 1948, residents have planted palm trees, mesquite, and cactus, or have let the plants die off.
37. The *New York Times* ran a piece on Pueblo Gardens, and realtors celebrated the unique character of the project. Census data shows that the median income of the area remained far below the national level, and the median income level of Tucson.
38. Zillow.com (accessed July 30, 2016, and February 24, 2014).
39. For two different versions of Tucson's ethnic reorganization and development, see L. Otero, *La Calle: Spatial Conflicts and Urban Renewal in a Southwest City* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010); and J. Gomez-Novy and S. Polyzoides, "A Tale of Two Cities: The Failed Urban Renewal of Downtown Tucson in the Twentieth Century," *Journal of the Southwest*, Vol.45 No.1–2 (2003), pp.87–94.
40. Letter from Jones to Talmage C. Hughes of *National Architect*, November 30, 1948 (A. Quincy Jones Papers, UCLA).
41. Ibid.
42. See, for example, texts on the preservation of modern architecture and/or suburbs, including Prudon, *Preservation of Modern Architecture*; and D. Ames, *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, 2002).
43. See N. AlSayyad, ed., *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage: Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism* (New York: Routledge, 2013), but especially the chapter by A.M. Broudehoux, "Image Making, City Marketing, and the Aesthetization of Social Inequality in Rio de Janeiro."
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45. R. Saliba, "Historicizing Early Modernity — Decolonizing Heritage: Conservation Design Strategies in Postwar Beirut," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, Vol.25 No.1 (Fall 2013), pp.7–24.
46. M. Lamprakos, "Rethinking Cultural Heritage: Lessons from Sana'a, Yemen," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, Vol.16 No.2 (Spring 2005), pp.17–37.
47. For research on gentrification, see S. Zukin, "Gentrification, Culture, and the Urban Core," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol.13 (1987), pp.129–47.
48. R. Good, "Tourist Commodification of Residential Vernacular Architecture in Venice: Livability and Conservation in an Historic District," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, Vol.17 No.1 (Fall 2005), pp.65–74.
49. K. Jordan, "Bruce Grove Transferred: The Role of Diverse Traditions in Historic Conversation," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, Vol.20 No.2 (Spring 2009), pp.59–74.
50. See J. Mabry, "Benefits of Residential Historic District Designation for Property Owners," City of Tucson, Department of Urban Planning and Design, June 7, 2007; and A. Krause, "A Cost/Benefit Analysis of Historic Districting in Tucson, Arizona," Ph.D. diss., University of Arizona, 2004.
51. See State Historic Property Tax Reclassification (SPT) for Owner-occupied Homes at www.azstateparks.com/state-historic-property-tax-reclassification-spt-for-owneroccupied-homes (accessed February 12, 2017).
52. Letter from Jones to Thomas Creighton, editor of *Progressive Architecture*, March 15, 1950 (A. Quincy Jones Papers, UCLA); Jones, Emmons, and Chapman, *Builders' Homes for Better Living*; and P. Heyer, *Architects on Architecture: New Directions in America* (New York: Walker, 1966), pp.163–71.
53. Jones, Emmons, and Chapman, *Builders' Homes for Better Living*.