



MHC 250

Lecture 1: Exploring City Form

# To get at the heart of the matter...

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Why should we try to understand cities?

How can we understand and describe cities?

- Are cities a collection of buildings?
- What's the difference between a city and a village?
- Are cities a new idea?
- Is planning for cities a *new* idea?
- What is city form?
  - ▣ Physical + Social + Administrative + Time = Place

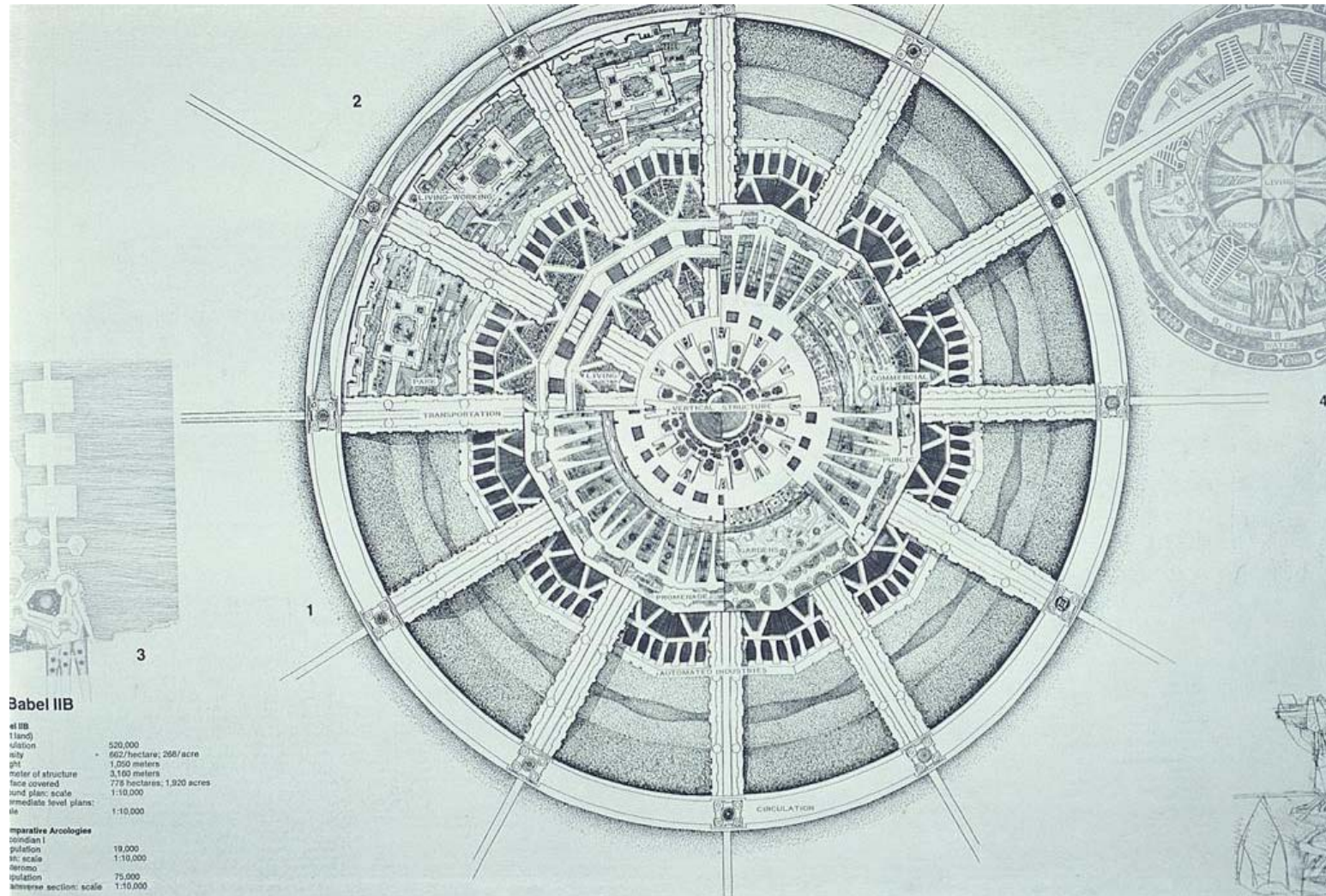
# Modern City Planning

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- Early 20<sup>th</sup> century city planning primarily a reaction to the 19<sup>th</sup> century city
- What was the 19<sup>th</sup> century city like?
  - ▣ London, New York, Chicago
  - ▣ physical conditions of buildings & the surroundings
  - ▣ density/crowding
  - ▣ environmental conditions
  - ▣ quality of life
- The City Beautiful Movement
  - ▣ Progressive social reform

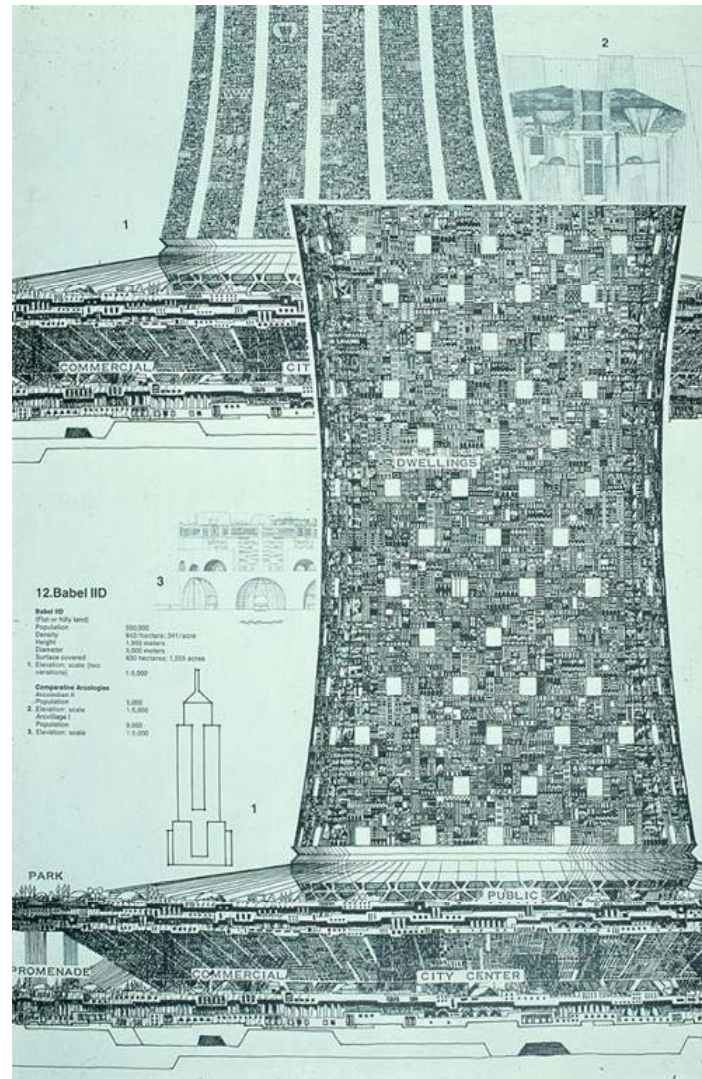


# Babel/ Paulo Soleri



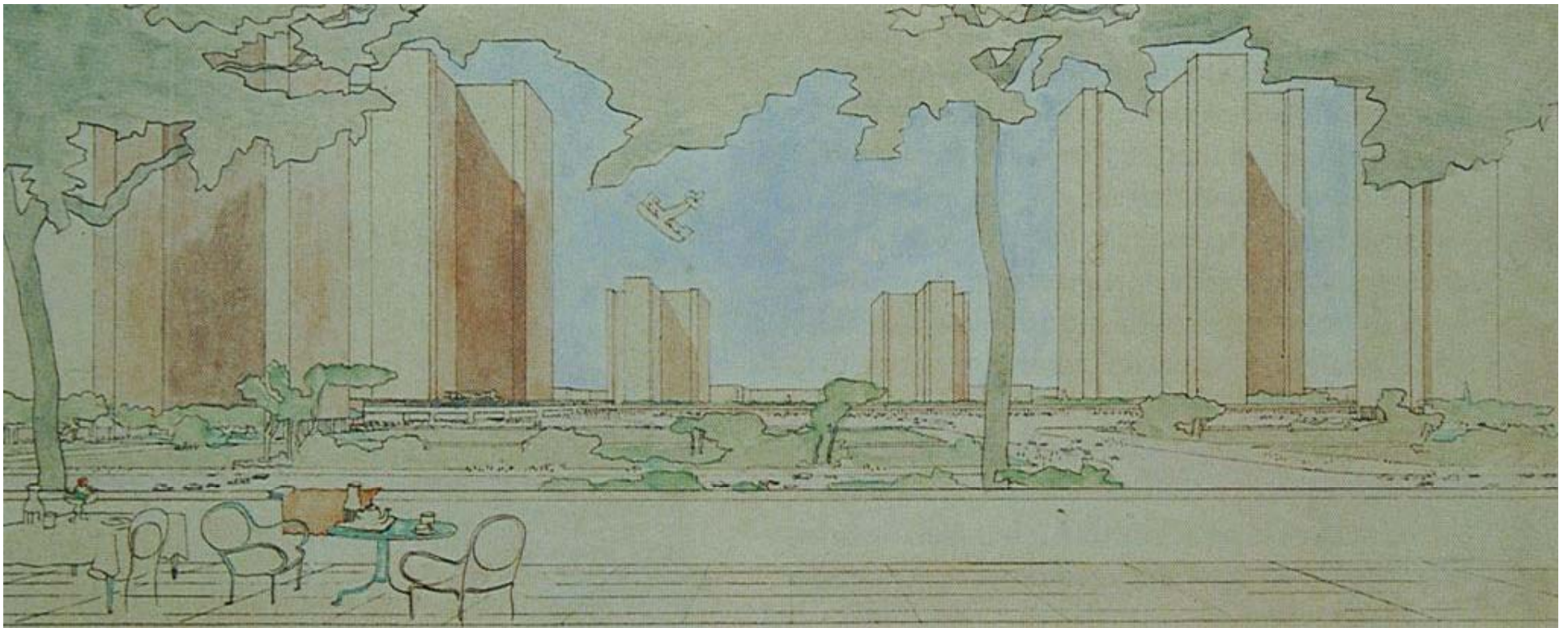
# Babel/ Paulo Soleri

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# Contemporary City/ Le Corbusier



# Broadacre/Frank Lloyd Wright





Garden City (1898)

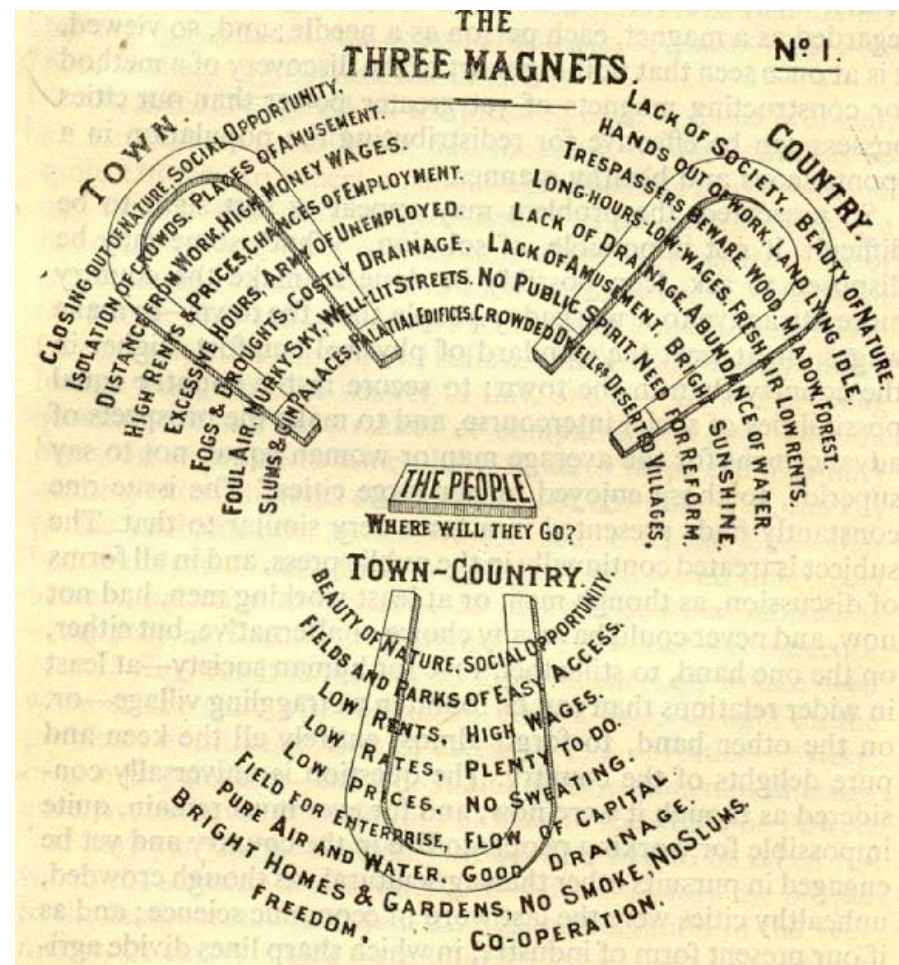


# Origins of the Garden City

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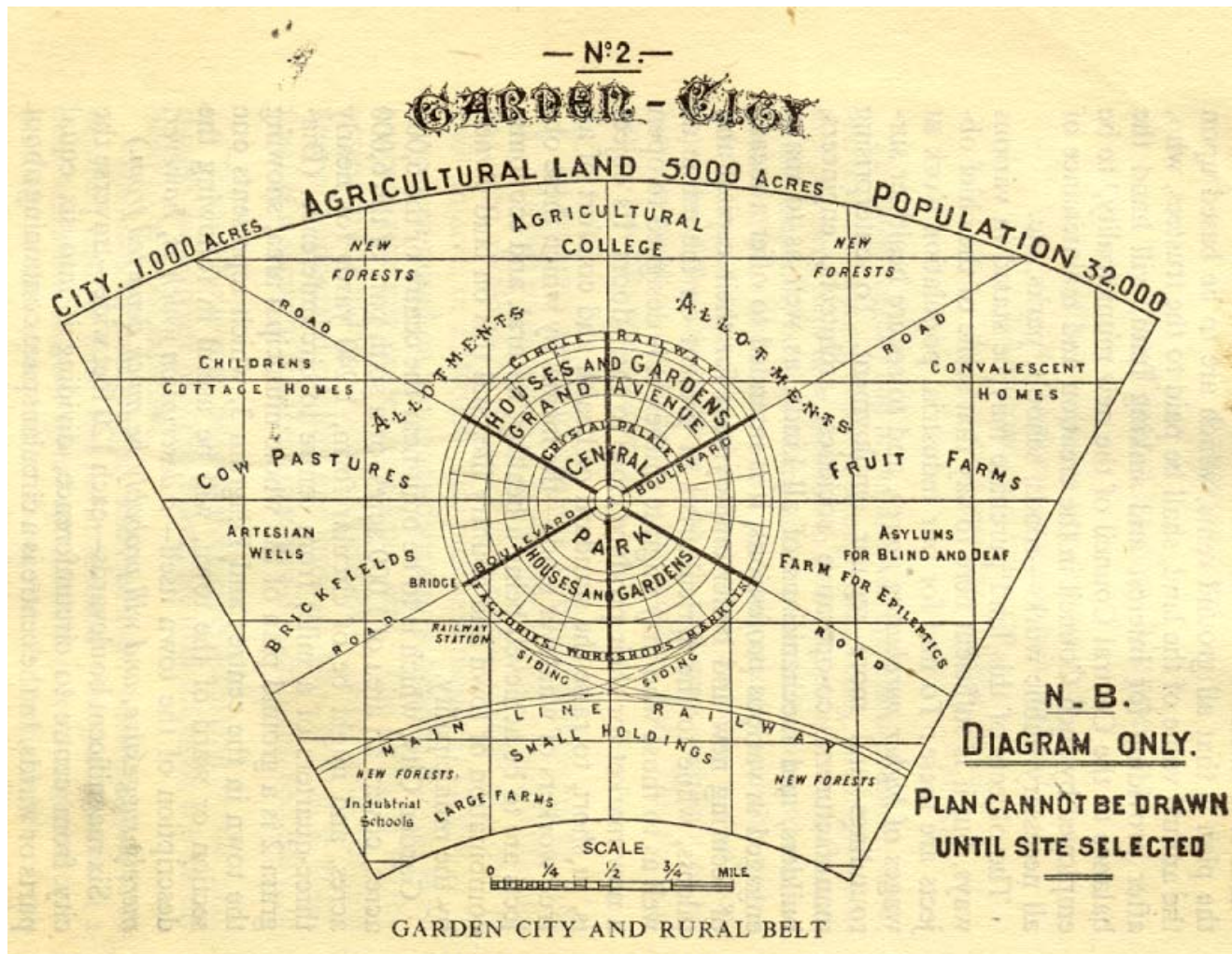
- Ebenezer Howard
  - ▣ Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform (1898)  
republished as Garden Cities of Tomorrow (1902)
  
- Inventor of the Garden City idea
  - ▣ Unique combination of ideas
    - Decentralization of cities
    - Democratization of wealth and power
    - A belief in Progress

# Representing an Idea



# The Garden City

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# Garden City - Features

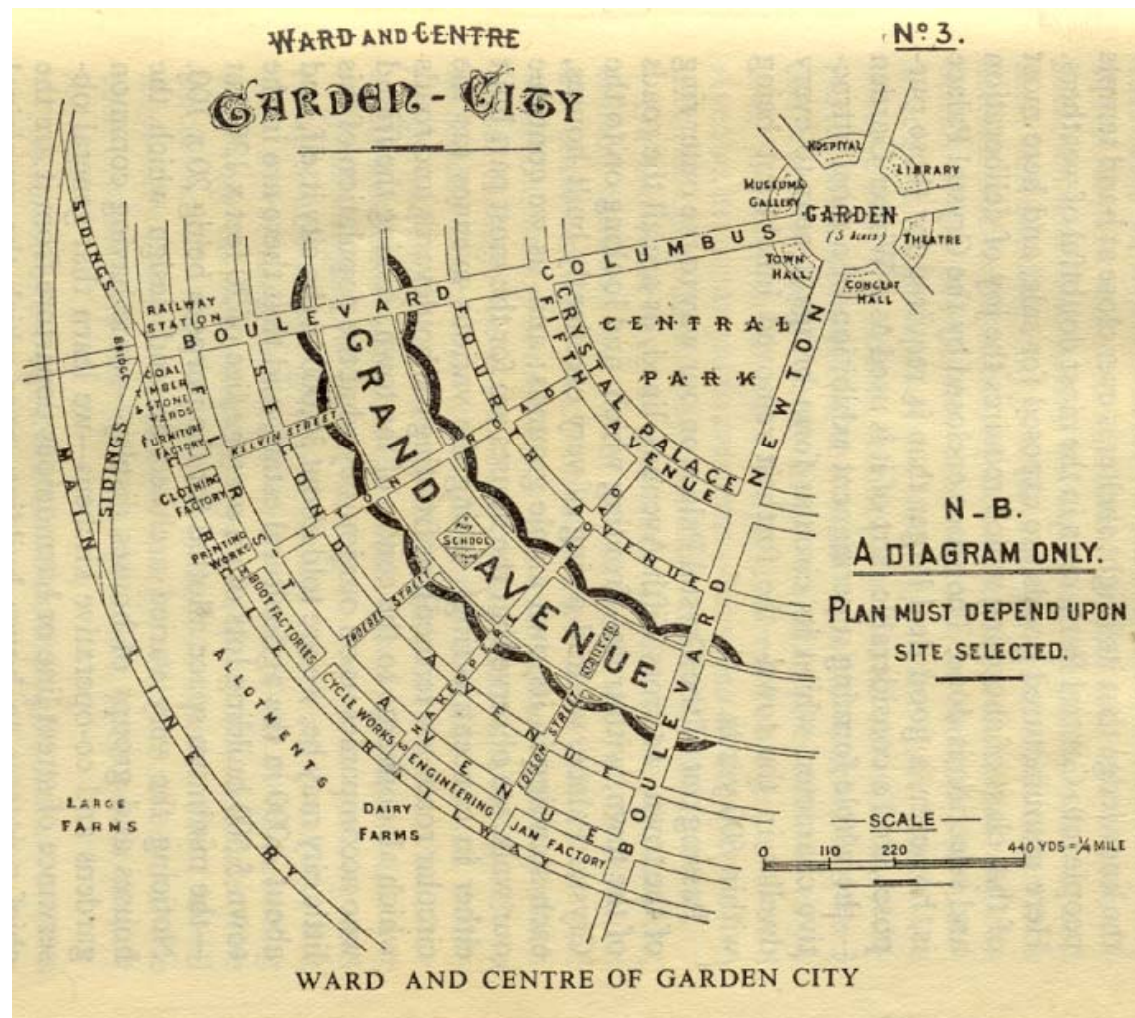
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- A tightly organized urban center
  - ▣ 30,000 – 32,000 inhabitants
  - ▣ surrounded by perpetual green belt of farms & parks
  
- City with full range of facilities
  - ▣ residential, commercial, industrial, cultural
  - ▣ not satellite town or bedroom community
  
- Plan for hundreds of Garden Cities
  - ▣ small scale, diversity of functions



# Garden City Detailed View

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# Garden City – The Form

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- Symmetry
  - ▣ utilitarian, convenient
  - ▣ “a unity of design and purpose”
- Density
  - ▣ 25 people per acre
    - 1 Acre = 43,560 square feet
  - ▣ wide, tree-shaded avenues, gardens
- Zoning
  - ▣ separation of activities
  - ▣ neighborhood centers, civic centers
  - ▣ a central Park – accessible recreation
  - ▣ the Crystal Palace – a setting for consumption, distribution

# Underlying Values

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- Cohesive forces to bring residents out of their neighborhoods and unite the city
  - ▣ Leisure
  - ▣ Civic Spirit
    - Meaningful public buildings like town hall, library, museum
- Ward (neighborhood)
  - ▣ Single family home surrounded by a garden
  - ▣ 20 feet by 130 feet (typical lot)
  - ▣ School – center of the neighborhood unit
  - ▣ 1/6 of a town (5000 people, or about 1000 families)
  - ▣ Complete town by itself with community institutions

# Underlying Values (continued)

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- The right to space (for everyone)
- Limited transportation costs
- Land reform
  - ▣ Ownership moves from individuals to community controlled institutions (Garden City Company)
  - ▣ the natural death of private land ownership
- Balancing public/private control of industry
- Subsidized utilities



The Contemporary City (1922)

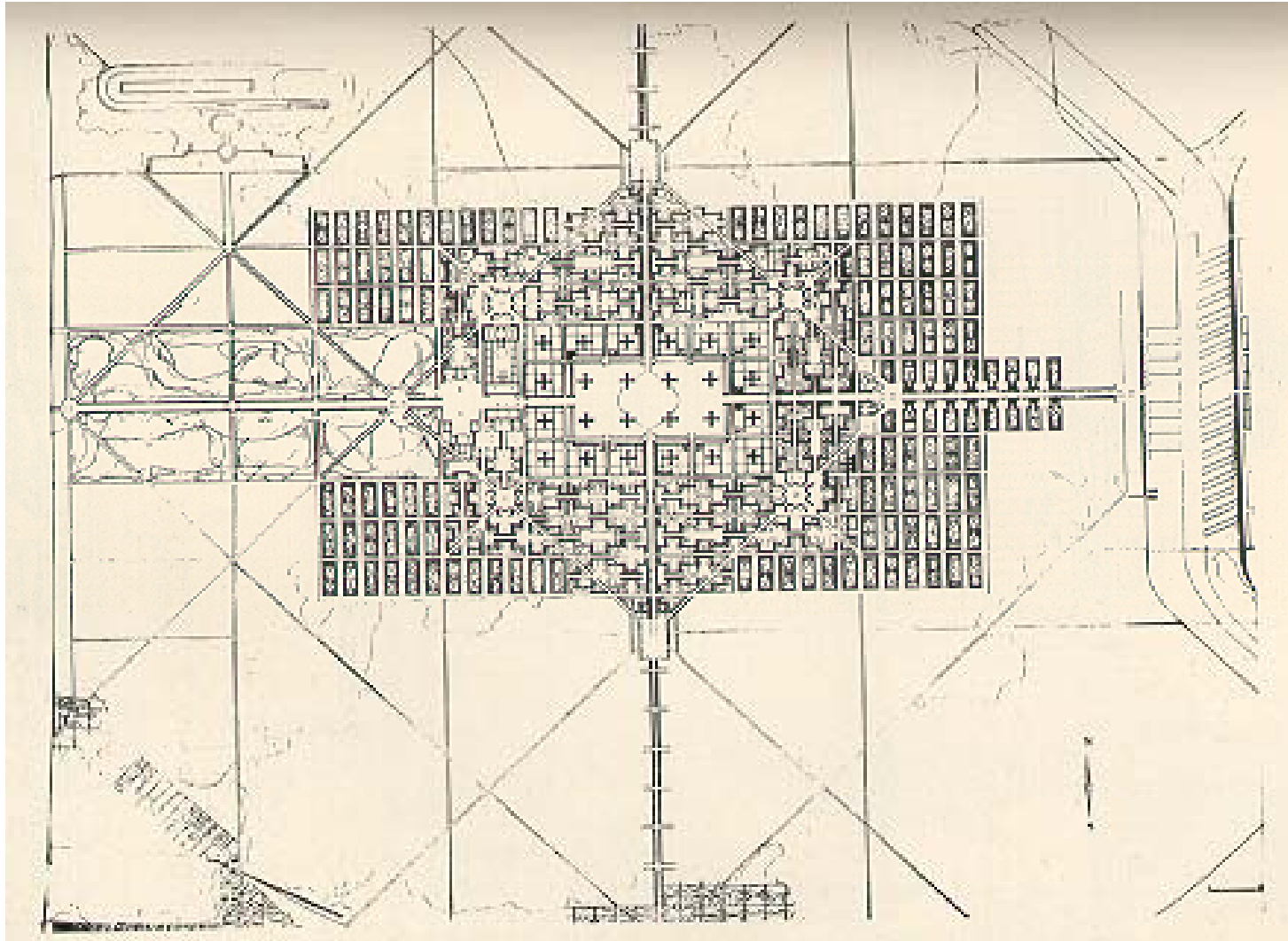
# The Contemporary City

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- City for Three Million People
  - ▣ 1914-1915, presented in 1922
- Separating the past from the future
  - ▣ of hope, favoring the present
  - ▣ about collective spirit & civic pride
  - ▣ City planning
    - An applied science too important to be left to citizens
    - City for a machine age
  - ▣ City proposal on a 'tabula rasa'

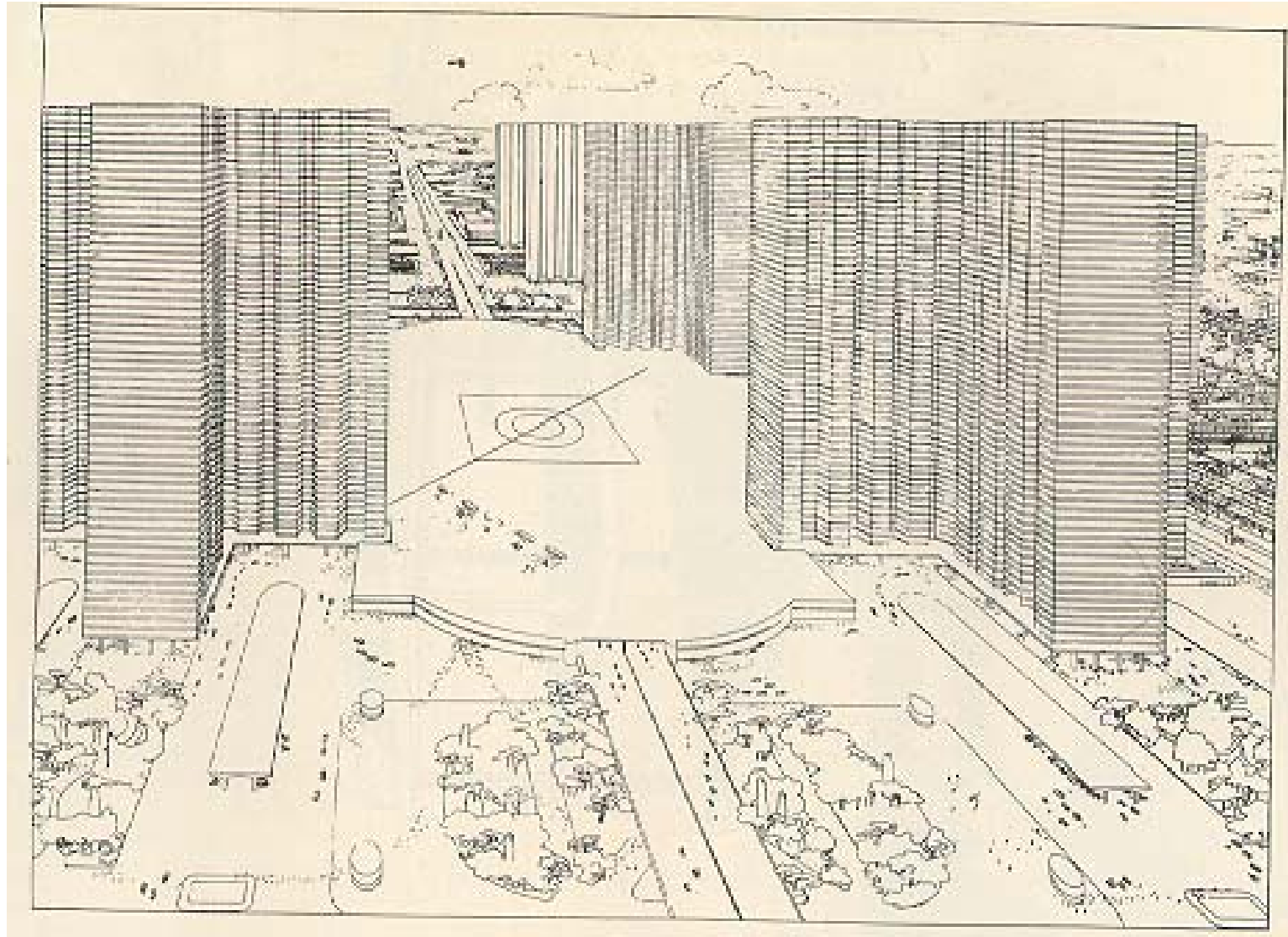
# Rendering of the Vision

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# Detail of City Center

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# Contemporary City

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- Form
  - ▣ Order & symmetry
  - ▣ Central axes intersecting at the city center
- Density
  - ▣ Skyscraper 1 200 people/acre
  - ▣ Luxury dwellings (1 20 people/acre)

# Functions

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- Central terminal (transportation center)
- 24 glass and steel skyscrapers (business)
- 500-800,000 people work in these towers
- Cities/Towers in the park
- Housing – mass produced
- Hierarchical (not all housing is alike)
- Apartment house design
  - ▣ No internal wells, flats looking on either side onto immense parks

# Values and City Form

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- Fundamental principles, sets of rules
    - ▣ Level Site
    - ▣ Citizens (categorized by their functional roles)
    - ▣ Desire to create open spaces (lungs)
    - ▣ The role of the street, status of infrastructure
    - ▣ A single transportation hub
    - ▣ Order, reliance on geometry, efficiency
- “A city made for speed is made for success”

# Form, Relationship to Values

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- Hierarchy of access
  - ▣ Rooftop gardens and other leisure activities
  - ▣ Not linked to property ownership
    - Dwellings don't belong to the owner, it is linked to owner's place in the industrial world
- Satellite cities without special privileges
  - ▣ Eight hours of (dehumanizing work) balanced with eight hours of leisure
  - ▣ Balancing cooperation and individualism so that they could be simultaneously expressed

# Utopian Visions have in common

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- Social/religious values – influence forms
- Density and scale
  - are devices used to achieve end goals
- Consciously “designed” environments
- Range from pragmatic to unfeasible
- Products of individual thinkers
- Powerful influences on contemporary planning



# Values, and Policies

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- Strong values (values frequently cited, success or failure in meeting these objectives is “measurable”)
  - ▣ Meeting demand for services, infrastructure, and housing
  - ▣ Providing space for wanted uses
  - ▣ Reducing pollution
  - ▣ Increasing access

# Wishful and Weak values

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- Objectives often associated with urban form, relationships discernable and outcomes potentially measurable, but not easily achieved
  - ▣ Improving equity
  - ▣ Reducing migration
  - ▣ Conserving material and energy resources
- Objectives frequently cited but relationship to urban form not well established
  - ▣ Increasing social stability
  - ▣ Increasing social integration, creating strong communities
  - ▣ Increasing choice and diversity

# Hidden Values

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- Maintaining political control, prestige
- Disseminating an advanced culture
- Removing unwanted activities or persons
- Profit
- Simplifying the processes of urban planning/management/governance

# Neglected Values

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- Examples?
  - ▣ Children and other vulnerable populations
  - ▣ Nature/environment

# Values $\leftrightarrow$ Spatial Policies

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- Control of size, rate of growth of cities
  - ▣ e.g., Urban growth boundary
- Networks of infrastructure
  - ▣ Strengthened to improve efficiency
- Zoning
  - ▣ Used to separate activities, functional efficiency, reduction of nuisance, improve health, and/or to remove *unwanted persons?*