



by Peter Scriver.

An exhibition organized by the Architectural Undergraduate Society at McGill University's School of Architecture from February 23 to March 6, 1981.

The programme for the Bunker Hill redevelopment is as topical as the design schemes it has spawned. Depending on one's perspective, the project may be viewed as either the epitome of architectural adventures, or the ultimate of urban planning disasters. It is my conviction that the attempt to design at such a scale is pure folly. Neither an individual nor a consortium of specialists can hope to simultaneously predetermine the infinite complexity of relationships which define the natural composite of

urban structures and spaces. Such complexity is the function of time and requires infinitely more design thought, allotted element by element, in full conscience of the evolving urban context.

The 11-1/2 acres of vacant real estate which comprise the immense Bunker Hill site are completely devoid of their former 'fin-de-siecle' context; a nameless, imageless urban desert where neighbouring corporate towers offer only a sporadic definition of the frontier. To design content for Bunker Hill then, is not to add sympathetically to Los Angeles (a contextual non-entity), but rather, it is the brazen attempt to design a complete urban entity in itself.

All but one of the five schemes submitted in last summer's competition appear quite incognizant of this fact. Erickson Associates' winning proposal is a sleek, professional package which presents the most unified and elegant massing of structures on the site. But, the built sky-line remains a shallow and abstract dimension with respect to the spatial scope of the pedestrian. As is depressingly reiterated in the proposals of S.O.M., Fujikawa, Conterato & Lohan and Albert Martin, the ridiculous immensity of the site has provoked consumption at the most obvious scale, **monolithia**; pedestrian space remains in essence an accident.

The widely published scheme of Maguire Partners, Myers, Moore, Pelli, et al, is certainly not totally innocent of the aforementioned folly, yet the distinct organization and individual orientations of the design team suggest that the design was at least initiated with an appropriate intent. While the tower men, Pelli, Kennard, Leggorreta and Myers, pay their respects and/or irreverence to the tombstones of the urban graveyard, Moore, Halprin, Gehry and Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer set themselves to animate the

urban spaces below. This rare balance of design priority between the two orders of dimension in the North American city, has produced a scheme which is at once unique, functional and fantastically **fun**. But, it would be wrong to accept this outstanding design approach as the proper design solution.

The "Maguire" architects evidently pursued their design responsibilities independently in an effort to approximate the random growth of a 'natural city'. The true 'natural city' is a product of time, however; time for building styles and technology to progress as well as time for the urban space to establish its image and thus curb the random towards the complementary. The gradual arrival at a unity of image establishes the **permanence** of the 'real city'. The "Maguire" scheme does not strike one as 'real city' (ie. New York, Boston, San Francisco) as it launches all too much in one momentary thrust. In the predestined incongruity of such an exuberant, total environment, one cannot but sense the nagging disillusionment of the stage set; an eclectic fantasy with as much **permanence** as the average World's Fair.

Making Plans.

ALCAN LECTURES, H. Noel Fieldhouse Auditorium (6:00 PM, Leacock 132, McGill University).

April 7

Michael Graves: On His Work

ATELIER LUKACS, 1430 Sherbrooke W.

April 7

Peter Aitkens: recent paintings

April 24

Lili Richard: abstract

May 12

Toby Graser: recent works

CONTINENTAL GALLERIES, 1450 Drummond

March to May

Traditional Canadian Art

April 28 to May 9

Terry Tomalty: one man show

DOMINION GALLERY, 1438 Sherbrooke

April

Jules Herve: paintings

Hans Schlee: sculpture

Late April

Eric Goldberg: selected works

GALERIE A, 680 Sherbrooke W.

March 11 to April 2

Atmospheres - couleurs sur papier et sur soie de Veronique Da Costa: tableaux et