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Urban Excellence

Philip Langdon

with Robert G. Shibley and Polly Welch



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The Market as Organizer of an Urban Community

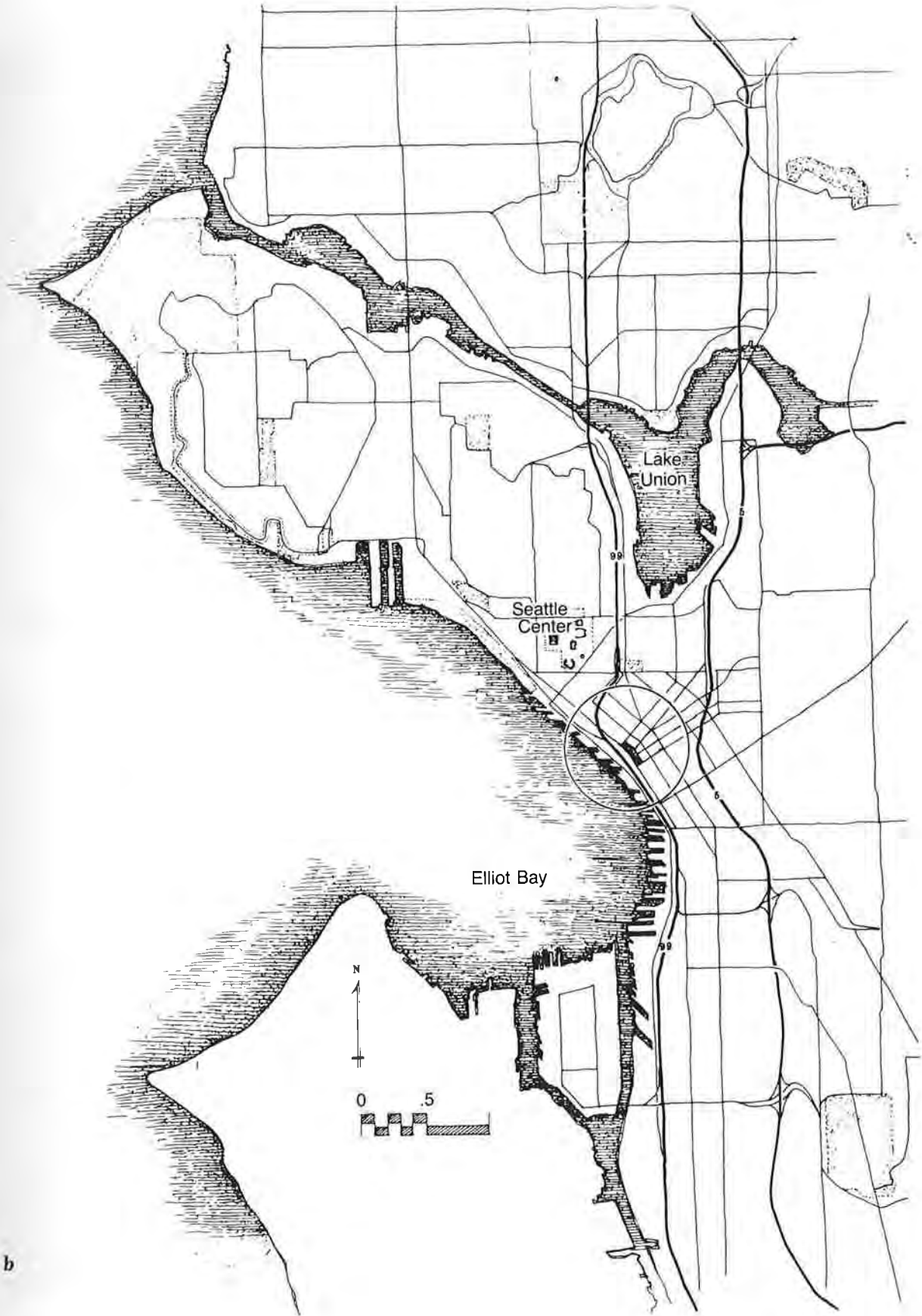
Pike Place Market, Seattle

The Pike Place Market, which climbs a steep hillside not far above the Seattle waterfront (fig. 2-1), is one of America's great urban places. Some people, hearing its name without ever having been there, might think the Pike Place Market won the Rudy Bruner Award for Excellence in the Urban Environment because it is a "festival marketplace." They would be wrong, and it is worth pointing out why. The places that developers call festival markets are shopping centers that offer food and goods in an entertaining urban setting. Festival markets have wonderful aromas, public performers, and lots of small shops. They typically have interesting views. And all these things can be found at Pike Place, which is certainly festive.

But the differences between Pike Place and a festival market are profound. Unlike festival markets, the Pike Place Market is a place where people live as well as shop. Some of Pike Place's inhabitants are wealthy, but a greater number are poor or of moderate income; they occupy new or rehabilitated apartments mainly because an effort was made to obtain government subsidies. The chain merchants that operate in festival markets are not allowed at Pike Place; on the contrary, Pike Place strives to rely on independent enterprises whose owners are on the premises, making their concerns and their personalities felt. Although there are plenty of restaurants and take-out food stands at Pike Place, just as in a festival market, much of the food at Pike Place comes in a basic, less expensive form—raw, for home consumption. Dozens of stalls display produce, which is sold by the farmers who grew it. There are fish and meat markets as well as farmers' stands. Tourists are welcomed at Pike Place, but they are less dominant than in a festival market; the market does not exist to serve them. Instead, Pike Place aims mainly to meet local people's needs (see fig. 2-2).



Fig. 2-1. Location of Pike Place Market in downtown Seattle.



b



a

Fig. 2-2. Shops offer produce and specialties as well as serving everyday needs like newspaper sales and shoe repair. (a. Courtesy of the Market Foundation.)



b



c



d

The vitality of Pike Place Market greatly impressed the Rudy Bruner Award Selection Committee. Pike Place is worth studying because it shows how an urban market can serve a remarkably broad variety of purposes. These include

- Providing reasonably priced food for lower-income city residents, conveniently close to where many of them live.
- Providing economic opportunities for small farmers, including immigrants, some of whom need a way to become successful participants in the American economy.
- Encouraging the development and growth of independent local merchants.
- Preserving buildings that impart a sense of the city's history.
- Preserving a "social ecology," a network of people whose lives are intertwined and who are attached to a particular part of the city. This social ecology can be bolstered by placing additional housing in the market area.
- Providing social services that address the needs of local residents.
- Providing high-quality products for gourmet restaurants and discriminating shoppers.
- Providing attractions for tourists.

Pike Place also demonstrates that a flexible organizational framework, capable of responding to changing conditions, is needed if the balance between so many different uses and perspectives is to be maintained. One of the things that makes Pike Place outstanding is its complex system of governance, which allows many different participants to play a role. This system incorporates checks and balances that allow the market to change but that try to ensure that any significant changes reflect convictions about the market's social purposes. When diversity is managed well, as at Pike Place, diversity can become a compelling urban attraction.

The Original Purposes of the Market and the Struggle for Pike Place's Preservation

One of the unusual things about Pike Place is that most of the activities that are unfolding there now have been going on in the same location and in some of the same buildings for most of this century. The market's roots go back to 1907. Its history, which is summarized in the 1987 RBA Selection Committee Briefing by Shibley and Welch, sheds light on some of the processes and values that give rise to a great urban place.

1907	Market start
1943	Japanese internment
1958	Central Association of Seattle
1963	1985 Downtown Plan for Seattle
1964	Friends of the Market established
1971	Initiative to establish preservation district and commission
1973	Public Development Authority established

- 1978 First urban renewal funds
- 1981 Federal cutbacks in social services
- 1982 Formation of Market Foundation

In *The Pike Place Market: People, Politics, and Produce* (1982), Alice Shorett and Murray Morgan tell how Pike Place began as a populist protest against price gouging. Wholesalers used their control over the city's supply of fresh produce to jack up the prices of fruits and vegetables in 1906 and 1907, and much of the money never reached the farmers and growers. Seattle City councilman Thomas P. Revelle believed food prices could be lowered if middlemen were eliminated. With support from Colonel Alden J. Blethen, publisher of the *Seattle Times*, Revelle succeeded in getting a level area at First Avenue and Pike Place, just off the newly planked Western Avenue, designated by the council as a location where farmers could come and sell their produce directly to the public (fig. 2-3).

Thousands of customers besieged the fewer than a dozen farmers who brought their wagons into town on the first day, August 17, 1907. The next Saturday, according to Shorett and Morgan, seventy wagons showed up, and an eager public bought everything they had. The Pike Place Public Market's immediate popular success spurred demand for what would become a long series of physical improvements undertaken over several years. By the end of November in 1907, a real estate company built a long shed offering something always appreciated in Seattle—shelter from the



Fig. 2-3. Pike Place Market began in 1907 with farmers selling produce from their wagons.

(From *Pike Place Archives*.)

rain. The shed's seventy-six covered stalls were rented to farmers. On adjoining property, the city spent \$10,000 in 1910 and 1911 to build arcades to shelter farmers and their customers. In 1912 the mayor proposed—and in the following year the city's voters agreed in a referendum—to spend \$25,000 to pave the center of Pike Place for traffic and provide still more covered areas for farmers and customers.

In 1914 the Public Market & Department Store Company, an extension of the private company that had built the first covered stalls, constructed a four-story 240-foot-long building between Western Avenue and Pike Place, containing more stalls and farmers' tables, additional restaurant space, a butcher shop, a creamery, and many other spaces for merchants and for other needs. In 1916, this company altered a building at First Avenue and Pike Street so that sixty-five stalls and stores, along with some other uses, could be accommodated there. Shorett and Morgan note that Frank Goodwin, the real estate owner involved in the private projects, emphasized designs with openness, ease of circulation, simplicity, and economy, without expensive decoration that would repel cost-conscious customers. Of course, this was simplicity by the standards of the 1910s; none of the buildings was entirely unornamented. And Goodwin believed in providing flowers, shrubs, and other plants to create a pleasing appearance, which he considered important to women, the main shoppers at Pike Place.

Many of the buildings that stand at Pike Place Market today had been erected by 1917 (fig. 2-4). By that time, the market had become a well-accepted part of the city's life. The process of building Pike Place was largely ad hoc: private interests put up additional physical structures as



Fig. 2-4. Pike Place Market today against the Seattle skyline.

business demanded them; and because the market served a popular need, city government supplied a certain amount of help. Most of the buildings were privately owned, but the city regulated the market and allowed some use of public rights-of-way. To apply one of today's favorite planning and development phrases, there was a public-private partnership—but one that was decidedly loose in its organization.

The market continued strong until World War II, when the federal government rounded up Americans of Japanese descent and sent them to camps far away from the West Coast. By the early 1940s, a large proportion of the market's farmers were Japanese, and their absence was sorely felt during the war years, when they were forced to leave their farms. Shorett and Morgan report that the government gave the farmers less than a month to dispose of their homes and property, so it was impossible for them to get a fair price for their farms. After the war, few of the Japanese recovered their farms and returned to the market.

Meanwhile, there were additional reasons for the market's loss of vigor. People were moving to the suburbs, farther away from the market. Supermarkets were becoming the dominant food suppliers. Refrigerated systems were making it possible to transport long distances chilled fruits and vegetables, making the fresh local produce of Pike Place and other urban markets less important. Agriculture was becoming a bigger enterprise, with farms selling directly to supermarket chains. The market lost much of its prominence in Seattle life. In 1939, 515 farmers had been licensed to sell in the market; by 1949, only 53 remained.

As the market and its surroundings became shabbier, the city government began to consider taking a more active, dramatic role in shaping the market area. A series of ideas for alteration began to be advanced. As early as 1950, there was a proposal by at least one city planning commissioner to demolish the market and replace it with a seven-story parking garage. In the 1950s and 1960s the proposals varied in number of hotel rooms, extent of parking, number of high-rise apartment and office buildings, and expanses of parkland, but they all agreed on the need for a major change. The forces behind Seattle's orthodox city planning during this period focused on the issues of traffic congestion, parking needs, tax revenues, business development, attracting the upper half of the income spectrum, and resisting physical and social deterioration (fig. 2-5).

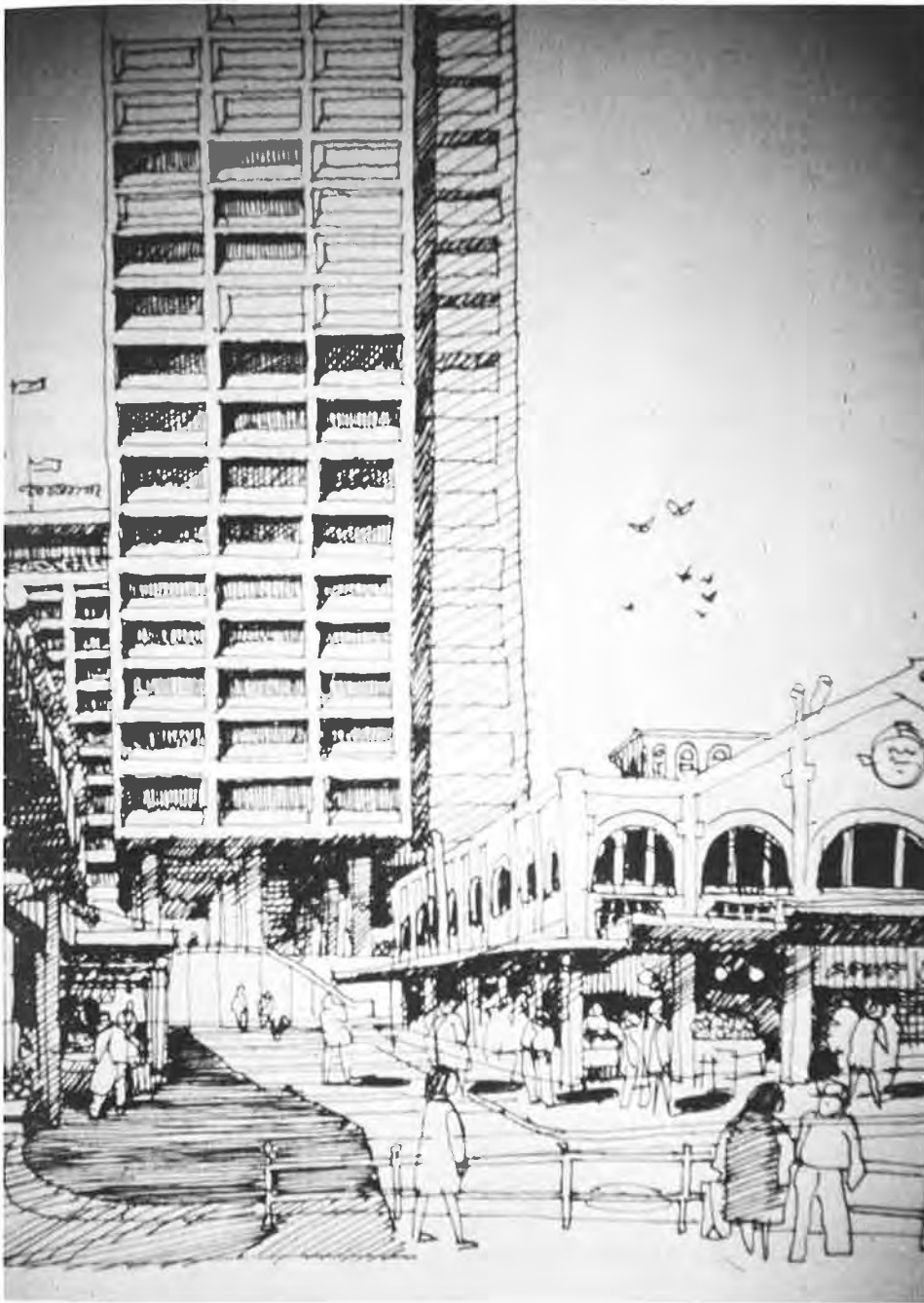
The city decided to pursue a million dollars in federal urban renewal funds to give the Pike Place Market area a radically different character as part of its "1985 Downtown Plan," unveiled in 1963. Victor Steinbrueck, a professor of architecture at the University of Washington, was strongly opposed to the plan. He organized the Friends of the Market, which led a grass-roots effort to block the city's proposal. The effort went on for years, and because it allowed so much time for argument and reflection, the Friends were able to sharpen their understanding of what was so important about Pike Place. At first, the market might have been viewed as a piece of urban architecture that deserved to be saved and as a collection of uses that merited preservation. But over time, the Friends realized that the crux of the issue was more than this; it was the preservation of what Shibley and Welch call a "social ecology"—a community that functioned in a distinctive, yet unpretentious urban place, a community that could not be put back together if it were ripped apart by city hall's plan. The social ecology



a



b



c

Fig. 2-5. The market (a) in the early 1920s, (b) as sketched by Victor Steinbrueck in the 1960s, and (c) depicted in a 1963 downtown plan that proposed constructing a high-rise building in the middle.
(a, c. From Pike Place Archives; b. From Victor Steinbrueck. 1978. Market Sketchbook. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press.)

consisted of the interdependence of many people in the market area. Old people depended on farmers for some of their food. Farmers relied upon shoppers to help retain an agricultural way of life. Children learned, through exposure to the different kinds of people at the market, useful lessons about life and society. The environment of the market allowed many sorts of people to interact and satisfy some of their needs, which changed as individuals passed through various stages of life (fig. 2-6). The Friends, recognizing that more than buildings was at stake, played a critical role in marshaling efforts to save the market and its character.

The battle on behalf of the market was fought in public hearings that demanded large commitments of time from volunteers. Steinbrueck's group slowed the bureaucracy by getting Pike Place approved at the state level as a National Register historic district (though that decision was amended later). Delay in itself proved to be a useful tactic, because a big project that seemed sensible to many interests in the 1960s seemed less so when conditions changed; Boeing, Seattle's biggest employer, fell on hard times, and as Shorett and Morgan note, even supporters of the project began to entertain doubts about the need for all the proposed buildings and about the financing.

By 1971 the Friends collected enough petitions to force a referendum on the market's fate onto the fall ballot. The citizens' initiative proposed establishment of a 7¼-acre historic district with boundaries at First Avenue, Western Avenue, Virginia Street, and a line between Pike Street and Union Street (fig. 2-7). The area would be supervised by a newly created Market Historical Commission, organized for "the preservation, restoration, and improvement" of the buildings and "the continuance of uses deemed to have architectural, cultural, economic, and historical value." A little under 16,000 signatures were needed to put the issue on the ballot; in three weeks, more than 25,000 were collected (Shorett, Morgan 1982, 136).

As opposition to demolition grew, a second group, the Alliance for a Living Market, was founded by people who had been involved in Friends but who were uncomfortable with some aspects of the Friends' approach. The Alliance and the Friends were not always at ease with each other. The Alliance, according to Aaron Zaretsky, was more willing to accept city hall's plans for the periphery of the market. But the Alliance joined with the Friends in believing that the core of the market must be saved and in helping to mobilize citizens to act on the market's behalf. Both of Seattle's major newspapers, reflecting the predominant attitude of the downtown business interests, urged the citizenry to vote down the save-the-market initiative. The voters thought otherwise. By a margin of 73,369 to 53,264, they decided to preserve Pike Place as a historic district. There is much to be said for constitutions that allow city residents to force an issue onto the ballot, with a binding result. Seattle's early populism gave the city an institutional framework that served it well when Pike Place was endangered. The victory may seem predictable today, but in 1963, when Steinbrueck first became involved, public markets were in decline across the country, and it was by no means clear that Pike Place would eventually be crowded six days a week with residents and shoppers.

One lesson of Pike Place extends well beyond the question of how to



a



b

Fig. 2-6. The market has continued to serve the needs of various age groups within the community.

(Courtesy of the Market Foundation.)

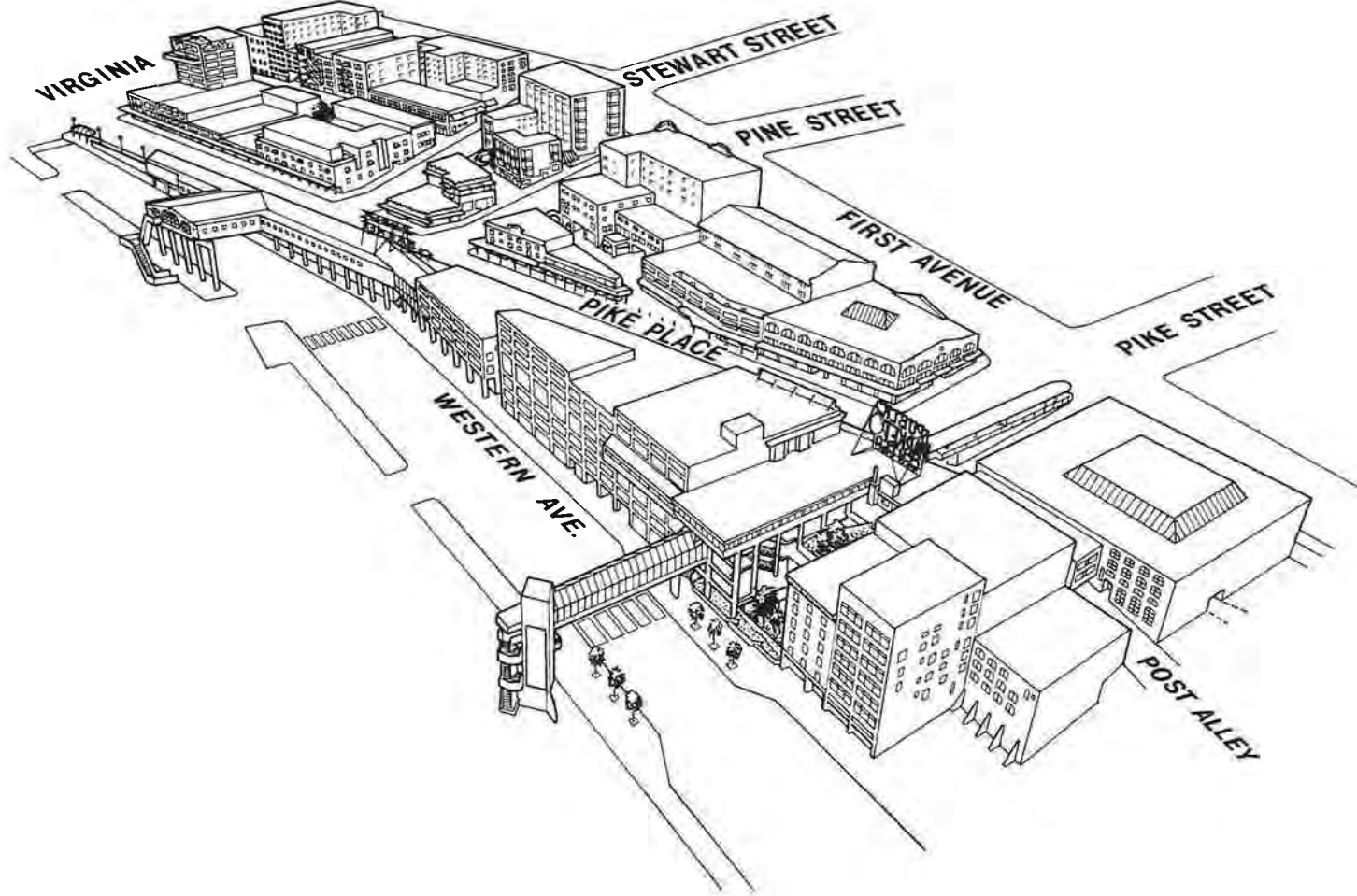


Fig. 2-7. Plan of the Pike Place historic district.
(Courtesy of the Market Foundation)

save an urban market; this lesson is that people should be attentive to the things in their own city that can become the basis of satisfying urban places. The ingredients of urban excellence are highly varied. They differ from one town to another. Urban excellence is not a formula. People need to look creatively at their own resources and context and not content themselves with copying the techniques that have already been used by many other cities. The tendency to hop on a national urban development bandwagon—to adopt ideas that have been implemented already in other cities—is hazardous. The cities that in the 1970s adopted one of the popular panaceas of that time—the removal of vehicular traffic from shopping streets and the creation of pedestrian malls—have in many instances been disappointed with the results. Perhaps part of the problem was that those cities were looking at other cities instead of examining their own distinctive assets. One of the remarkable things about Pike Place is that the urban market revival was not a predictable urban solution, imported from other cities. It was an indigenous solution, developed by local people who looked at what they had and figured out how to use it to maximum advantage. The best solutions to urban issues rarely are stock ideas grafted onto local terrain. Many nuances and special conditions exist in cities, and greatness lies in identifying the opportunities inherent in those local conditions. That is one of the important things that Pike Place teaches. One reason the Rudy Bruner Award Selection Committee praised Pike Place was that it represented fresh and independent thinking. Vernon George said Pike Place was “an absolutely critical response to traditional urban renewal procedures at a time when nobody could quite figure out what that response ought to be.” Instead of “two sides going head to head,” George said, “they actually negotiated a peace that has built a momentum that continues today.” William H. Whyte said this was the first time that an urban renewal project came up for a vote and people had to decide “what kind of place they wanted Seattle to be.”

Structuring the Effort to Revive the Market

After the voters delivered their verdict, the process of saving the market evolved, necessarily, into something much more complex than a struggle of citizens versus the establishment, of “us versus them.” Those who had favored a conventional urban renewal approach had to revise their attitudes, and they did. A new institutional arrangement had to be hammered out, implementing the will of the people and also drawing on expertise that would prove useful. The process of saving Pike Place is impressive because this transition was generally handled well. The revival of the languishing market received cooperation from merchants, market advocates, downtown interests, and city officials, many of whom had heretofore tried to reduce or get rid of the market. Officials agreed to muster as much urban renewal money as possible for the project. The initiative had given the mayor the power to appoint the initial members of the historical commission (with city council approval) and had specified what qualifications the members were to have. There were to be two of each of the following: market property owners; market merchants; residents of the historic district; members of the Seattle chapter of the American Institute of Architects; members of Friends of the Market; and members of Allied Arts of Seattle, another market preservation organization. Mayor Wes

Fig. 2-7. Plan of the Pike Place historic district.
(Courtesy of the Market Foundation.)

Uhlman, who had opposed the Pike Place preservation initiative, put many of the initiative's advocates in influential positions in the market renovation project. Some of the most prominent posts in the revitalization effort went to individuals associated with the Alliance for a Living Market, which had more of a business orientation than the Friends.

The city acquired the market properties and introduced an elaborate system of administration incorporating checks and balances on the power of any particular interest. Management was, and is, carried out by the Pike Place Market Preservation & Development Authority (the PDA), with one-third of its board members now chosen by the mayor, one-third by the PDA board itself, and one-third elected by the "constituency" of the PDA—basically anyone who pays a dollar to become a member and obtain the right to vote. The day-to-day management is now handled by the PDA's executive director and staff. The Pike Place Market Historical Commission carries out an essentially judicial function; it must approve the appropriateness of proposed new uses or physical changes in the market. It is the organization entrusted with preserving the market's authenticity and guarding against the desires of merchants, PDA members, or others to shift the market away from its historic mission. The merchants can also make their desires known through the Merchants Association. Responsibility for the market is divided primarily between two organizations, the PDA taking care of financial health while the historical commission focuses on physical well-being. In one sense, the division is far from equal. The PDA has an annual budget of \$3.5 million and a paid staff of about seventy. The historical commission has a very small budget and one half-time staff member. The members of the historical commission work about twenty hours a month, at no pay. Yet the historical commission continues to attract energetic members, and it wields real power. Decisions are constantly being made on what can be sold at the market and whether the physical structure can be altered, even in relatively minor ways. Shibley and Welch say of the balancing of concerns at Pike Place: "Financial decisions are not allowed to drive physical development at the expense of the preservation of the market, yet market preservation as a museum is understood to be destructive as well."

The mayor retains the legal power to remove the PDA board, but no mayor has exercised it, and it is accepted that this power is not to be employed except in extreme circumstances. The board enjoys broad independence. "The market has run so well that the mayor tends to leave us alone," observed Jerry Thonn, a PDA board member who served four years as its chairman.

At the outset, the board was clearly an effort by the market people to give the board political credibility and credibility with downtown. The members included the treasurer of the Boeing Company, a vice-president of a bank, a major contractor-developer, and a major downtown building owner, plus a number of people long active in the market or who had been advocates of the initiative. In those early days . . . it helped to have some people on the board who had credibility with the financial community. And we were calling on people for their expertise. We were developing a leasing process and a budget process. Now we're an organization with more of a professional staff and an existing budget process. The board now is in more of a policy-making role.

By custom, the board suggests who the mayor might appoint to the board. The board continues to strive for a mixture of areas of knowledge, so if the members feel they need an appointee with a background in marketing or finance, for instance, they can name such a person to one of the four seats filled by the board itself or they can recommend an appointment by the mayor. "Our only interaction with the city council," Thonn added, "usually takes place when there's some specific issue that needs to be addressed."

An important component of the process of Pike Place's revival, then, has been the ability of organizations to emerge in leadership roles when needed, to express independent points of view when those served the market's purposes, to cooperate with others when appropriate, and to fade into the background when their presence is no longer required. As the market became a healthily functioning place, the Friends, for instance, had to ask themselves what their new role should be; the task of protecting the market had effectively been institutionalized in the historical commission. The Friends came to an interesting decision: the group would become inactive but not disband. The shell of the organization still exists, with a small sum in its bank account and with officers. If a new crisis arises to threaten the market, the Friends are ready to become the framework for a citizens' campaign.

Early in the 1980s it became evident that the market needed another organization—not one intent on saving the market, like the Friends, but one capable of ensuring that the market, now well-established, could continue to serve its social purposes, especially among the poor and the elderly. In 1981 a sharp reduction in federal spending for social services across the nation threatened the market's senior center, child care center, community clinic, and Downtown Food Bank. Nearly half the funds available or promised to those agencies stood to be eliminated at a time when the demand for services was rising. The PDA responded by helping to establish the Market Foundation, which since 1982 has raised money to support all of those services. Board members of the foundation have been selected partly on the basis of their personal connection to the market but also with the idea that they represent Seattle's corporate, philanthropic, or arts leadership (Focke 1987). The foundation has developed imaginative and unusual ways of appealing for support, capitalizing on Seattle residents' fondness for the market. It raised the consciousness of people and induced them to make an emotional investment in the market's people. These are three fund-raising programs that the foundation initiated in 1985–1986:

1. Four sketches of the market by the late Victor Steinbrueck, by then known as the "father of the market," were donated by his widow, Marjorie Nelson Steinbrueck, a foundation board member. The drawings were featured in a special market check series offered by First Interstate Bank of Washington. The bank donated \$5 for every market check series ordered. In each box of checks, the bank also enclosed pledge cards encouraging the customer to make a donation to the foundation. In addition, the bank gave the foundation \$10,000.
2. Needing to resurface the market's floor, the foundation and the PDA asked donors to give \$35 to have their names imprinted on new



a



b

Fig. 2-8. The names of donors were imprinted on more than 45,000 ceramic tiles used to resurface the market's floor.

ceramic floor tiles. In six months, the supply of twenty-nine thousand tiles was sold out. So strong was the demand that the PDA decided to resurface another portion of the market, selling another sixteen thousand tiles. In all, the tile sales raised \$1.5 million, of which \$350,000 was allocated to market maintenance projects and \$100,000 was used to start an endowment for the foundation. This technique had earlier been used elsewhere. The Friends of Pioneer Square in Portland, Oregon, sold 48,637 name-imprinted bricks at \$15 each, using them to surface the downtown square. In Portland the bricks are described as a major attraction and as giving city residents a sense of ownership of "their" square. At Pike Place, the tiles express the pride of community "ownership" of the market. While attesting to popular involvement in the market, they also subtly add to the rich range of experiences available to the market's users (fig. 2-8).

3. A bronze, life-size piggybank created with funds donated by an ice cream company and modeled after a 650-pound sow was placed near the market's main entrance. It has become a favorite object of youngsters. Money dropped into the pig, named Rachel, averages about \$1,000 a month. This mechanism particularly encourages donations from tourists and children (fig. 2-9).



Fig. 2-9. Rachel, a life-size bronze piggybank for donations to the Market Foundation, doubles as a photo opportunity.

Fig. 2-10. The clock and sign are symbols of the Pike Place Market.



Other fund-raising events have included a preview opening of new restaurants in the market and a preview of a new bed-and-breakfast hotel. Each December the foundation sponsors a "Light up the Market" campaign. Contributors pay \$100 to "purchase" one of the colored lights strung across the market's streets for the holiday season; a banner with the purchaser's name is attached next to each light. One illustration of the public's attachment to the market came when the PDA sent out a press release announcing an upcoming change: the huge illuminated clock above the market's main entrance was to be replaced by a digital clock. Howls of protest were heard across Seattle. Angry letters denounced this unthinking removal of a market landmark. What the angry citizenry had neglected to notice was the date of the announcement—April 1. It was an April Fool's joke, the PDA explained to those who had missed the humor of the original announcement (fig. 2-10). The episode demonstrated that preservation of Pike Place's historic character is no laughing matter for many in Seattle. People feel strongly attached to the market and have a sense of being part-owners of it. This feeling is a considerable resource, which the Market Foundation can tap for support.

The foundation's fund raising has gone well. In its first five years, the foundation raised more than \$1 million, entirely from private contributions, mostly in the \$30-to-\$50 range. The service agencies used the money

for operating expenses, augmenting it with money from other sources, including fund drives of their own. Could the fund raising have been conducted by the PDA without the Market Foundation? Perhaps. But Focke (1987) notes that Harris Hoffman, who stepped down in 1987 as PDA director, saw major advantages in having fund raising for social services handled by an entity separate from the PDA. The PDA was able to concentrate its attention on businesslike management while knowing that the social service goals would not be sacrificed.

Questions have been raised about who should serve on the foundation's board. As Anne Focke writes,

Some local community activists have expressed concern that the Foundation's board includes too many who represent the forces that are changing downtown and threatening the displacement of the people the Foundation was established to support. A Foundation premise is that these are the very people who must be involved if the organization is to have a real impact. [1987, 83]

Shibley and Welch praised the decision that each of the social agencies operating at the market would have its own board, thus providing opportunities for more individuals to have a voice in matters that concern them. They view these boards and other groups, such as the Merchants Association and the Friends, as a way of distributing power among a large number of people, some of whom have traditionally been kept outside the councils of decision making.

The job of rehabilitating the market eventually required money on a grand scale. The city benefited from the support of an influential U.S. senator, Washington's Warren Magnuson, who was second ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Committee. "He let the Department of Housing and Urban Development know that the \$28,000,000 earlier promised Seattle was to be delivered. Hesitation vanished, the money moved west," Shorett and Morgan write (1982, 148). When that sum—for the twenty-two-acre urban renewal area, including the seven-acre market area—proved insufficient, Senator Magnuson came through with plenty of additional federal funds. In all, say Shorett and Morgan, "Federal expenditures on the Pike Place Project come to between fifty and sixty million dollars, depending on who is counting and for what purpose" (148). Initial renovation used many public sources, including community development block grants, urban development action grants, Title I urban renewal funds, and Section 8 funds. After the initial public money had established conditions encouraging the market's revival, private sources became predominant. In the urban renewal area and an area a couple of blocks beyond it, private investment, including building capital and tenant improvement, has been estimated at \$200 million. In one part of the urban renewal area outside the historic district, empty warehouses, dilapidated and in some instances abandoned retail buildings, low-income housing, and surface parking lots have been upgraded into major retail centers, residential condominiums, offices, and low-, middle-, and upper-income apartments. Shibley and Welch note that although public funds were necessary at one time, today the market operates with virtually 100 percent private financing: "Public funds are employed only in the safety net of welfare funds to individuals and to some social services."

Design as a Setting for Human Activities

A key to the reinvigoration of Pike Place was a decision to save as many of the existing buildings as possible. Rather than giving the market a new look, the goal was to retain the character — “urban design by accretion,” as Shibley and Welch describe it — that made the market distinctive. Since the market was a collection of buildings that had gradually deteriorated, bringing everything up to current standards of safety and maintenance was no easy job. As Shorett and Morgan note, “the roof leaked, the temperature fluctuated, the floor groaned, and rats were numerous and bold enough to get individual nicknames” (1982, 142). Out of apprehension that unregenerate urban renewal forces might alter the market’s character in radical ways despite the voters’ verdict, this general statement of principles was adopted: “It is generally better to preserve than to repair, better to repair than to restore, better to restore than to reconstruct” (146).

To preserve Pike Place’s mixed nature, the fix-up work on the more than a dozen buildings in the main market was not to bear the stamp of just one personality; different architects and contractors would work on various buildings. The biggest project, an L-shaped complex at the heart of the market, was the responsibility of architect George Bartholick. “It was a mess. There were no records,” said Rich Cardwell, an architect who worked with Bartholick. Cardwell spent six months walking through the market and two younger architects spent a year, learning how its multiple levels were actually built and creating drawings of the existing structure on which the renovations could be based. Victor Steinbrueck had made many sketches of details of the market, including signs, lighting fixtures, and building exteriors, all of which helped the architects remain true to the market’s historical personality. (One of many such sketches is shown in fig. 2-11.) Cardwell described some of the problems they encountered:

It’s a wood-frame building, and there were many things that had to be done to meet current building code standards. We had to give it rigidity for earthquakes. We had to punch exit stairs and put in elevators and sprinklers. We put in a heavy concrete frame throughout the building. There are nine floors from top to bottom in part of the market and seven to eight floors in the main parts of the market. Nothing was level.

The lower levels were mostly storage areas, and the architects had to figure out how to open them up for retailing and how to improve circulation with new stairs and ramps so that people could easily reach them (fig. 2-12). “We left the main arcade pretty much as it is in terms of circulation, but we tried to get rid of bottlenecks,” Cardwell said. Small functional improvements were made, such as elevating the floor area on which the farmers stand; instead of having level displays of their goods, the farmers could arrange their goods to give a terraced effect, making more of their produce eye catching.

Despite the changes, the complex retains its aged feeling. Its interior, especially in the lower levels, meanders in a way that no modern designer would ever devise. One can still see tree trunks that were installed decades ago as structural support. “We didn’t lose the character of the facades, and

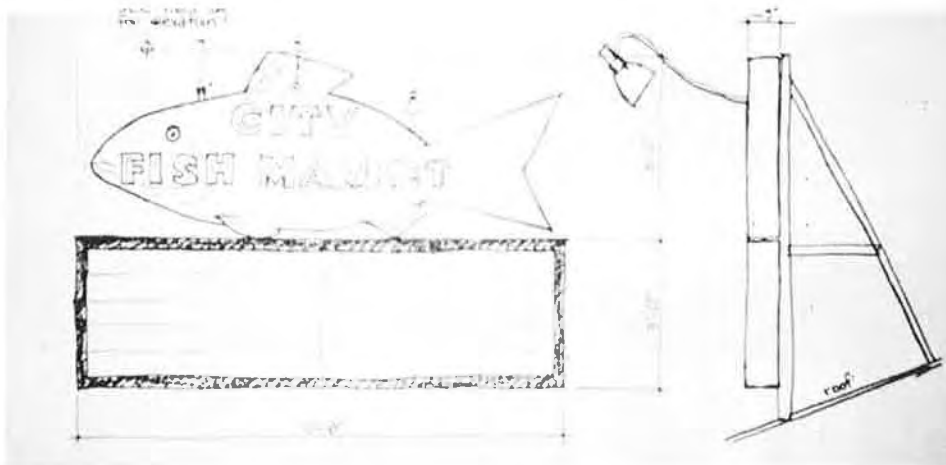


Fig. 2-11. One of many sketches made by Victor Steinbrueck documenting original market details. (From Victor Steinbrueck, 1978. Market Sketchbook. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press.)



Fig. 2-12. Decorative and functional signage, along with new stairs and ramps, lead shoppers to retailers at the lower levels.



Fig. 2-13. The architecture of Pike Place Market is simple and unostentatious, offering a setting that highlights human activity rather than calling attention to itself.

not much was lost on the interior either,” Cardwell said. That certainly was the intention. Fred Bassetti, a Seattle architect involved in the fight to save the market, had said, “It reveals the face of truth. Its roughness reminds me of Seattle’s beginnings, its lusty past, the vitality that gave it national notice long ago” (Steinbrueck 1978).

Merchants had to be relocated during the repairs and renovations, but there was a policy of avoiding closing large parts of the market at any one time; the project was predicated on the idea that any long-term shutdowns would put small merchants out of business.

The historical commission required that the design and materials of any new buildings complement what already existed. Brick, stone, and concrete were prescribed as building and facade materials. Facades were required to have more voids than solids on the ground floor, to attract the interest of pedestrians. The new architecture, which is subject to review by the historical commission, “works hard at fitting its context,” Shibley and Welch said. The Rudy Bruner Award Selection Committee praised Pike Place as an example of anonymous, fairly humble architecture serving people well. The buildings form a background that does not draw undue attention to itself; it is a stage on which the activities of the people are the main attraction (fig. 2-13).

Even though the market now attracts more affluent people than it did during most of its history, continuing efforts are made to avoid extravagance. How successful these efforts are is something that each observer may judge differently. In 1978, when Steinbrueck wrote a new preface to his 1968 book *Market Sketches*, he complained that “Contemporary design and entrepreneurial judgments are establishing a new, more luxurious market character, sometimes tinged with a ‘plastic’ quality as some of the natural awkwardness of the old environment is removed.” In some instances, he found “an unmarketlike and inappropriate poshness that mocks the intention of the preservation ordinance and the historic commission.”

Shibley and Welch noted that in one building, higher-quality wood and fancier floor tiles were installed, but the result was controversial. Learning from this experience, Pike Place now avoids materials and design flourishes associated with “festival markets” like Harborplace in Baltimore and South Street Seaport in New York. Pike Place has deliberately kept most of its finishes commonplace. Walls are painted “market green.” Columns in the main arcade have decorative capitals (fig. 2-14), as has been the case for decades, but no attempt is made to paint them in colors that will make them seem fancy. Lighting is supplied by ordinary exposed bulbs. Peter Steinbrueck, chairman of the historical commission and son of the late Victor Steinbrueck, describes this as “a utilitarian esthetic,” which avoids a showiness considered unbecoming for a people’s market. This policy also saves Pike Place from the visual clichés that afflict many historic districts where oak and polished brass—introduced as handsome touches—have become trite through overfamiliarity.

Though Pike Place’s architecture is humble, it is not plain. There is a

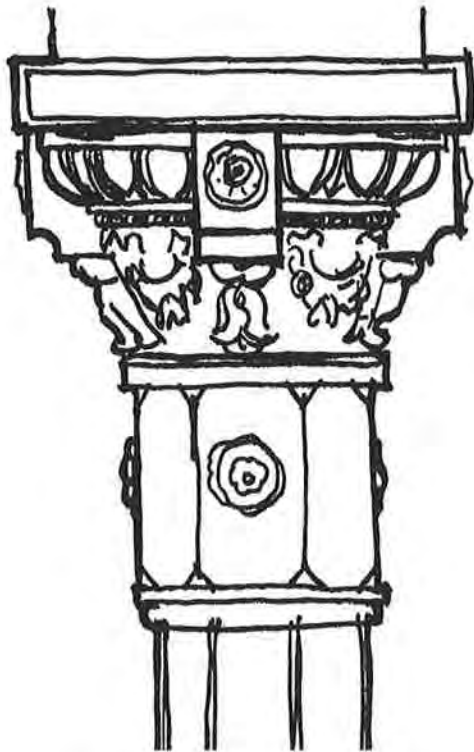


Fig. 2-14. One of the ornamental capitals decorating the columns in the main arcade.

(From Victor Steinbrueck. 1978. *Market Sketchbook Seattle and London*: University of Washington Press.)

wealth of visual detail, such as the decorative column capitals in the main arcade and the tree trunks in the lower-level corridors. These help guarantee that Pike Place is never an esthetically dull experience. Signs in their original style clamor for attention throughout the market. The old materials and shapes exert an undeniable appeal. The large arched windows of the Corner Market possess dignity. The brick pavement of Pike Place, which for years had been covered by asphalt but now has been re-exposed, emphasizes the human scale of the market. The buildings' large old cornices, though not of classic beauty, work well with flower boxes and planters to decorate rooftops above shopping level, softening the complex's appearance.

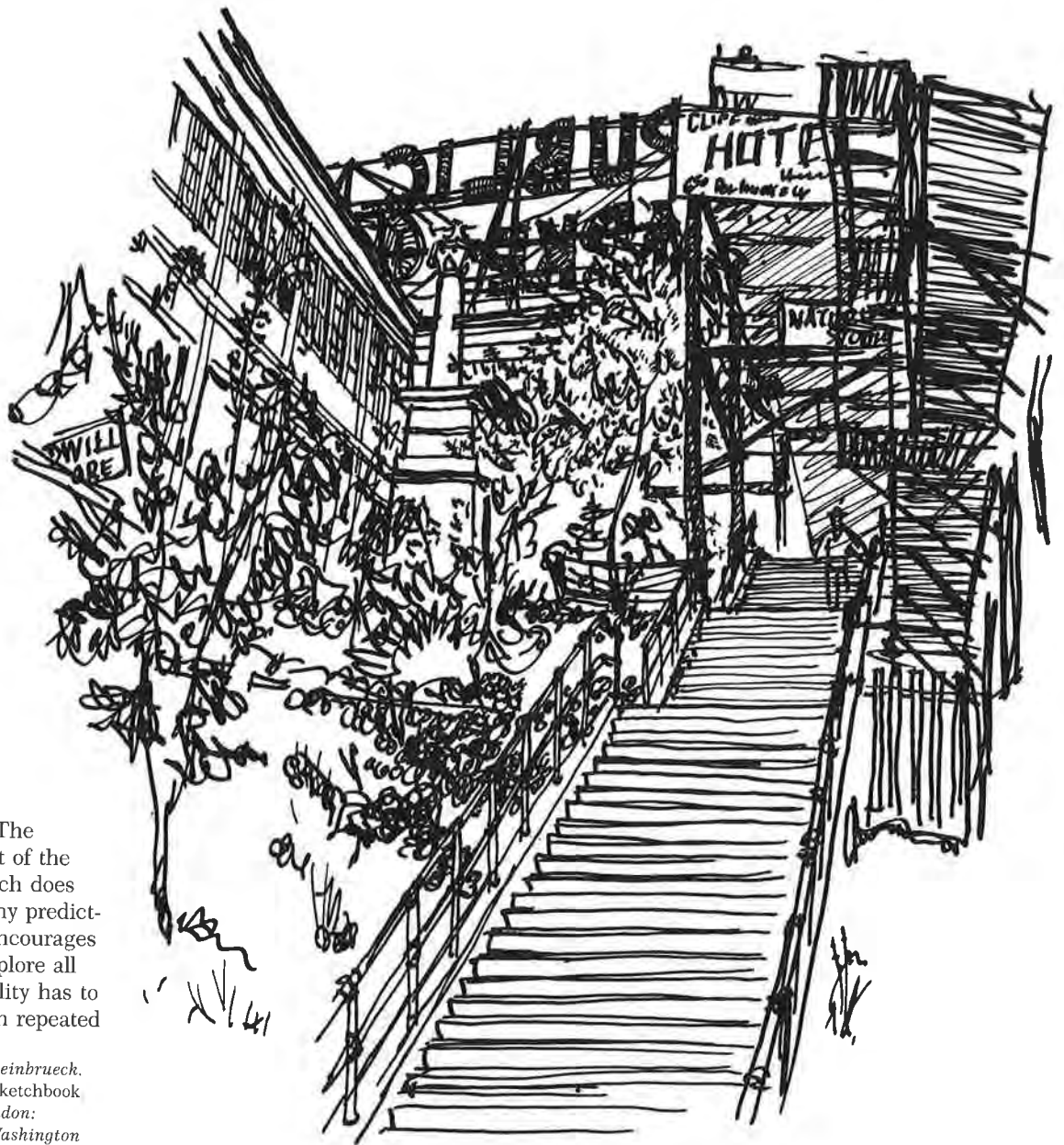
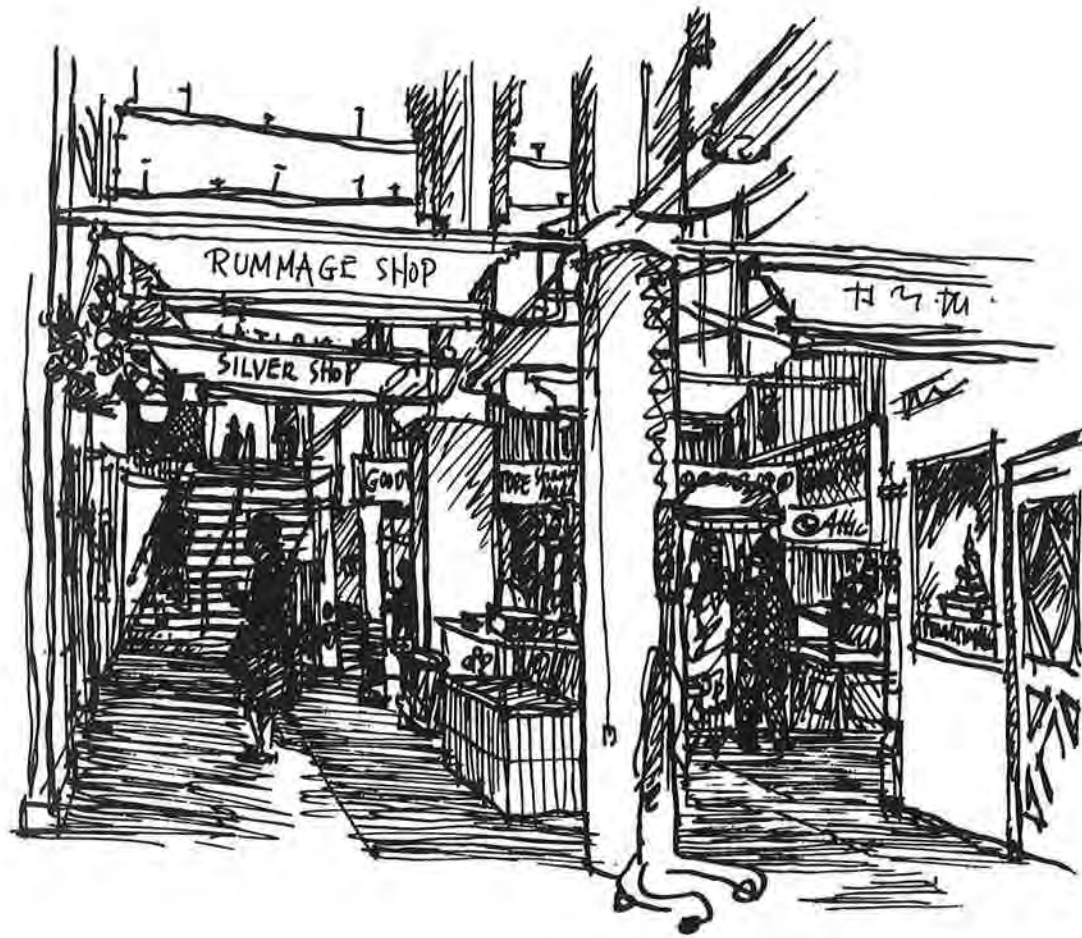


Fig. 2-15. The arrangement of the market, which does not follow any predictable logic, encourages people to explore all that the facility has to offer through repeated visits.

(From Victor Steinbrueck, 1978. *Market Sketchbook Seattle and London*: University of Washington Press)



Pike Place occupies an advantageous perch above the waterfront. Some of the restaurants have large windows with magnificent views of Puget Sound. A public stairway that cascades down the steep Western Avenue side of the market offers continuously changing vistas. “Both old and new architecture in the district can be understood as an architecture of view, vista, connection, and surprises,” said Shibley and Welch. They also pointed out that “the distribution of shops within the Market reminds one more of a rabbit warren than a commercial marketing venture.” The absence of an easily understood order can be a problem for retail buildings that have to attract crowds if their businesses are to prosper. But at Pike Place, the surprises, the unusual circulation system, generally work in the market’s favor (see fig. 2-15). People return to the market at least partly because of the fun of exploration. This is not a place that can be fully explored in a day; it repays the effort of repeated visits.

At Pike Place, things are mixed together; a former brothel, now renovated as apartments for the elderly, stands next to shops, public stairways, and the child care center’s outdoor play area (fig. 2-16). The juxtaposition of different elements recalls Jane Jacobs’ recommendations (1961): different kinds of people pursuing many different sorts of activities cross paths and make the stairs and ramps and corridors and outdoor areas feel inhabited. There is plenty of activity and the feeling of safety that goes with it.

Fig. 2-16. Victor Steinbrueck’s sketch shows a rummage shop adjacent to a silver store—one of the many interesting juxtapositions at the market.

(From Victor Steinbrueck, 1978. *Market Sketchbook Seattle and London: University of Washington Press.*)

One of the few parts of Pike Place whose success is less than total is Steinbrueck Park, situated on the west side of Western Avenue. From a leftover area, the park has created one of the few open areas in the market, and one that commands a dramatic view of Puget Sound. Great numbers of people use its grassy expanse for picnicking and relaxation. Totem poles in the park serve as important landmarks. One corner of the park, however, consists of a concrete walkway and overlook on top of a parking garage that was inconspicuously inserted into the sloping site. The paved overlook, with walls along some of its edges, has problems. It is the only part of Pike Place spray-painted with graffiti. A part of the overlook is a dead end, and in this area lacking through-circulation the stink of urine is noticeable. Some of the rougher looking of Pike Place's inhabitants hang out there. What goes on in the overlook troubles some of Pike Place's residents. An elderly woman who lives in a senior citizens tower in the market reports that from the safety of her room, she often sees drug selling in the park and calls the police. Perhaps the lesson to be learned from this section is the need to have plenty of connections that will encourage pedestrian traffic through a park; an area that lacks through-traffic may become a problem, its magnificent view notwithstanding (figs. 2-17 and 2-18).

On the whole, Pike Place is such a strong attraction that businesses are eager to locate close to the market. This eagerness extends even to linking new buildings to the historic market buildings. One of the newest struc-



Fig. 2-17. Steinbrueck Park at the north end of the market is a relaxation spot for all sorts of people.

tures in the vicinity of the market, just outside the historic district, is the South Arcade building developed by Harbor Properties. The South Arcade runs directly south from the market, along First Avenue. An arcade containing stores runs through its ground level, connecting to the main arcade. Making such connections seems a good idea. Nonetheless, Dorothy C. Bullitt, vice-president of the company, says some of the retailers in the new arcade are doing well and others are not. Perhaps the connection with the market is not as good as it could be, or perhaps part of the problem is that the arcade leads to a street where idle men—some of them old-style panhandlers, others of more threatening appearance—congregate on the sidewalk. The main reason for the arcade's difficulties, Shibley and Welch believe, is occupancy largely by retailing that has little in common with the "everyday life" goods sold in the market. The arcade seems too close in spirit to a typical shopping mall, deficient in the diversity that makes Pike Place distinctive. The arcade does not offer much that is needed by Pike Place's local constituency. In a sense, the problems of the South Arcade amount to a vindication of the special qualities of the market. Essentially a mainstream mall, the South Arcade stumbles while the market itself—vibrant and attentive to ordinary needs—thrives. The people who come to the market, says Aaron Zaretsky, executive director of the Market Foundation, "don't like slickness. The market is an alternative to the typical shopping center experience."



Fig. 2-18. The park is visible from many of the apartment buildings in the market district.

Another important aspect of Pike Place's design is the street system. The street system in the core of the market can seem very inefficient, mixed as it is with delivery trucks, tourists' cars, and great numbers of pedestrians. Trucks and cars on narrow Pike Place move slowly, required as they are to yield the right of way to pedestrians. Local people, however, know better than to drive through the very heart of Pike Place; there are faster routes for getting around or to the market. And efficiency of circulation is not a major value; by giving efficient circulation a low priority, the managers of Pike Place have been able to accentuate other, highly satisfying qualities. The slowness of the traffic encourages pedestrians to feel comfortable walking across this street in the center of the market. The narrowness of the street, with the farmers' arcade on one side and other market buildings on the other, creates a sense of an outdoor room, inviting human habitation (fig. 2-19).

Generally, the preservation of Pike Place has furnished this part of the city with a workable and enjoyable design. There is a pleasantly ambiguous relationship between indoors and out (fig. 2-20). The covering of the arcades lets people escape the rain, yet there is enough outdoor air in the arcades to give the market a bracing atmosphere; the openness to the outdoors seems to bring out an exuberant, boisterous character. In a semi-outdoor environment, farmers or fish peddlers can raise their voices and entertain their customers, whereas a totally indoor environment would call for an unmarketlike restraint. Many of the buildings have series of businesses arranged along irregular internal walkways in a loose, informal way more like a bazaar than a shopping mall, where you are either inside a store or out in the corridor. The demarcation between merchant space and



Fig. 2-19. The slow-moving traffic through the market fails to discourage pedestrians.



a



b

Fig. 2-20. Much of the market has a pleasantly ambiguous relationship between indoors and out.
(*a.* Courtesy of the Market Foundation.)

circulation space feels fuzzy, and this encourages a feeling of participation in an urban festival. Festival markets, of course, also have a minimum of physical structure separating the merchants from the customers. But Pike Place Market's physical organization seems more relaxed and in some instances almost makeshift—which is fine; it contributes to the feeling that this urban market is genuine. This does not mean that *administratively* anything is unclear at Pike Place; irregular though the boundaries may seem to consumers, the PDA can tell the businesses exactly where merchandising is allowed and where it is forbidden.

The irregular layout, with areas that are sheltered from rain, yet not enclosed, has the side benefit of producing good locations for street performers. There are plenty of musicians—singers, guitarists, piano players, and others—in the market area, and jugglers and other performers as well.



Fig. 2-21. Street performers are assigned specific locations in the market by lottery.

(No flamethrowers and no electronic amplification are allowed.) At Harborplace in Baltimore, a special outdoor area has been provided for scheduled entertainment, about halfway between a building full of eating and drinking places and a building filled mostly with merchandisers. This spot helps to link the separate buildings, pulling customers along from one focal point to another, but still it feels forced and a little forlorn. To stand and listen, one must give up the bustle of the buildings; the entertainment area is a single-purpose place, or nearly so. Pike Place is superior in that its users need not give up the other pleasures of the market in order to enjoy the performances. Many of the performances are tucked into corners, edges, and entrances of the market; visitors can watch other things going on while enjoying a musician. There is no sense of being isolated from the market's major attractions. Performers put out a hat or a guitar case or some other collection device to gather donations from the audience passing by. The locations of the performances are not arrived at by happenstance. The performers and the PDA have learned from experience which locations are best, and have institutionalized the use of them. Spots are marked with red dots, and performers (who pay three dollars every three months for the right to play at the market) are assigned their positions by lottery (fig. 2-21).

As all of this suggests, Pike Place does not conform to the dominant ideas of how an urban shopping area should be designed. One of its notable omissions is extensive, convenient parking. There is surface parking and some garage parking on the fringe of the market, but not as much as would be expected for a place that draws twenty to forty thousand people a day. Some of the parking is not in easy locations, requiring that people negotiate relatively steep grades or stairs to get to and from their cars. But if the extent and type of parking that is presumably necessary for a development the size of Pike Place were provided, the market itself would not exist in its present condition. Parking needs cannot be ignored, but they should be put in perspective, because such "needs" seem to be somewhat elastic. At Pike Place, people have shown that they will put up with some inconvenience for the reward of experiencing such a stimulating market.

The Management of Diversity

Important as Pike Place's physical design is, it is not in itself the source of the market's success. What gives Pike Place much of its allure is a mix of activities that have been meticulously nurtured over the years. The market's strong sense of social and economic purpose is reflected in its decision to promote:

- Sales of fresh fruits and vegetables by the farmers who grew them
- Sales of meat, fish, and other basic food items, including food for city residents with low to moderate incomes
- Housing and other services for low- and moderate-income people

Shorett and Morgan note that those who saved the market also felt it was important to encourage person-to-person sales of hard-to-find goods, including ethnic and seasonal products; of goods that involve light manufacturing processes that are interesting to watch; of those catering to the

pedestrian or offered in a natural state, rather than prepackaged; and of those bringing together people of varied backgrounds.

"The farmers are the leading attraction in the market; if they ever leave, the market will truly be dead," Victor Steinbrueck wrote in his 1978 introduction to *Market Sketchbook*. But attracting farmers today requires determination. The valley from which many of Pike Place's first farmers came has since been paved over for industry, commerce, and houses. Farms are farther away now, and much farming is a large-scale operation, oriented to the needs of supermarket chains. Consequently, the PDA has to have an employee act as liaison to the farmers—encouraging them to sell at the market and confirming that they are selling what they've grown rather than retailing produce purchased from others (fig. 2-22). The rental rate for "day tables," where farmers sell their goods, is a few dollars a day, in effect a subsidy for the producers. Despite the fact that they generate little of the market's direct rental income, farmers continue to get prime selling



Fig. 2-22. Farmers who sell at the market must grow what they sell.

(a. From Victor Steinbrueck, 1978, *Market Sketchbook*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press; c. Courtesy of the Market Foundation.)



b

locations. After all, the market's main slogan, emblazoned on a big sign above Pike Place, is "Meet the Producer."

The encouragement of farmers at the market ties into regional concerns, such as the importance of farming as an environmental, land-use, and esthetic issue. To have farmers at the market, there must be agricultural land within a reasonable distance and there must be people willing and able to farm it. The county adopted a program aimed at preserving farmland, which was then put to use through the Indochinese Food Project, started by the PDA and various local agencies. The project provided training and technical assistance to new Vietnamese and Laotian immigrants who were on welfare so that they could start farming what had been county-owned land and sell their products in the market. The result has been the movement of the Southeast Asians off the welfare rolls and into productive employment, and Pike Place has benefited from having a new group of farmers bringing goods to the market.

There is considerable variation in what the farmers grow. Years ago, the emphasis was on basic, economical produce. Today staples continue to be sold, but the growers also sell flowers and many nonessentials. There's a tendency toward fancier products, appealing to those who are making discretionary purchases. The food in the market is not less expensive than food sold elsewhere. Some elderly people who live in the market area ride a bus to a supermarket to do major grocery shopping, although virtually everyone who lives at Pike Place does at least some shopping in the market. There is a delicate balance between allowing farmers to sell whatever will support them—which often means catering to an increasingly affluent clientele—and encouraging farmers to sell things that the economy-minded city dweller needs. The PDA tries to walk the difficult line between economic viability and social purpose.



Fish and meat markets also rank high among Pike Place priorities. Some of them occupy the best locations, and one fish market is said to earn more revenue per square foot than any other business on the West Coast. The fish markets serve a varied clientele—residents of the immediate area; people from throughout metropolitan Seattle who are looking for rare or especially high-quality products; restaurants; and tourists (fig. 2-23). “We pack to travel for 48 hours,” proclaim signs above the lobsters, salmon, and crabs. The fish markets do a healthy business of shipping by air to restaurants in other parts of the country. They put on a good show, too, as the uninhibited employees toss great slabs of salmon from their display mounds of ice to other employees behind the counter. With the gradual rise in popularity of fish consumption during the past two decades, meat markets have suffered. When one of Pike Place’s four meat markets closed, there were proposals to fill its location with another kind of enterprise. But the predominant attitude was that a meat market served an important purpose, especially for city residents, and after several months the PDA found a butcher willing to operate in that location.

Craftspeople are a more recent component of Pike Place (fig. 2-24). The tables they occupy are not as conspicuously located as those of the farmers and fish and meat markets, yet the location is good enough to result in a waiting list of about 400 more persons who would like to sell there. People are attracted by what they have to offer, and there is recurrent debate about whether the craftspeople have too much or too little prominence. “The craftspeople have a fair amount of clout,” says Peter Steinbrueck. “They’ve been there since the renovation. People are somewhat wary that they might get too much. Whenever there’s something they don’t want, they speak out. They’re the first to knock on the mayor’s door.”

Visitors can buy souvenirs, cookies, doughnuts, croissants, pizza, and other such goods in the market, but an attempt is made to keep items like these from setting the market’s tone. The historical commission gives permission for which things will be sold. Peter Steinbrueck discussed the control of the business mix with Philip Langdon:

We get applications for T-shirts, Sno-Cones, deep-fried potato skins. We have a variety of means to deny things. One denial is on the basis of saturation. If there are enough of certain businesses, we don’t allow more. We require businesses that are specialty in nature. They cannot sell just anything they want. They have to define their lines fairly narrowly. That means, in a way, that we won’t have problems of saturation. We often ask what the price range of the goods is. I feel the use controls are more important than the design controls. The real effort was not to save the buildings. It was to save the character and vitality of the market.

This is one of the distinguishing features of Pike Place—the emphasis on uses, not just buildings. Many people, including Aaron Zaretsky, executive director of the Market Foundation, believe that saving buildings is not a sufficient urban objective. The uses of the buildings and the people who are served are just as important—probably more important (fig. 2-25). Selection committee member George Latimer praised Pike Place for leaving free exactly what needs to be free and guarding the valuable things that would have been eradicated by a free market. “They have imbued it with a social sense, a human service aspect,” he said.



Fig. 2-23. Fish markets cater to tourists and out-of-town restaurants as well as local clientele.
(Courtesy of the Market Foundation.)



Fig. 2-24. Craftspeople represent a new dimension of the market slogan, "Meet the Producer."

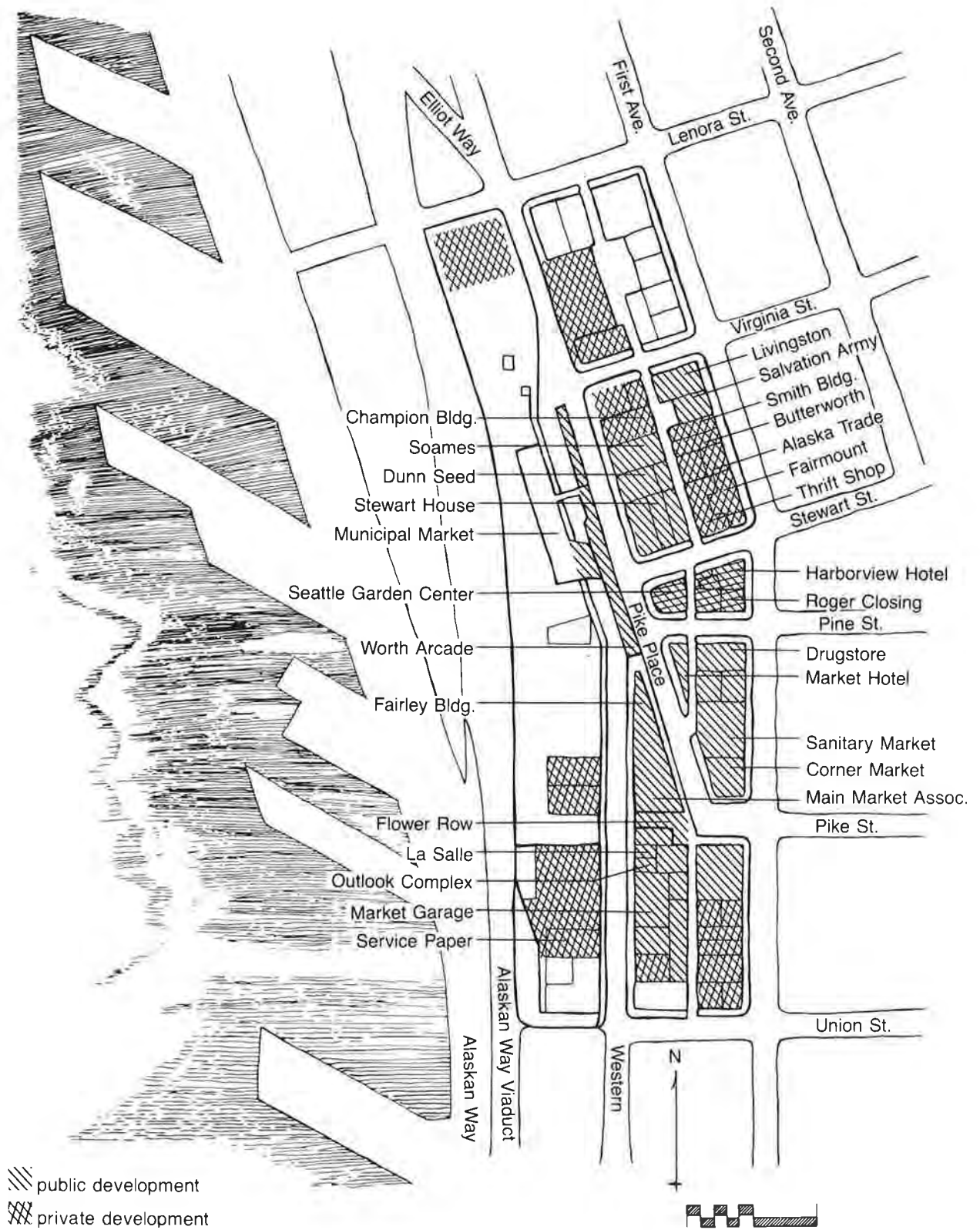


Fig. 2-25. The mix of private and public development in the 7.5 acre parcel parallels the mix in the market stalls: private support of the public good.

The following summary illustrates the mixed use, income, and service philosophy that helps make Pike Place Market's 7.25 acre development so successful (1987 RBA Selection Committee Briefing, Shibley and Welch):

- 7.25 acres preservation district
- 250,000-square-foot PDA leasable market space
 - 26 percent Food
 - 27 percent Restaurants
 - 15 percent Used goods
 - 33 percent Other retail
- 800 housing units constructed since 1975
 - 5 percent Single-room occupancy (SRO)
 - 57 percent Low income
 - 11 percent Moderate income
 - 27 percent Condominium
- 45,000 visits/year at Senior Center
- 21,000 visits/year at Health Center
- \$1.6 million worth of food distributed with budget of \$80,000
- 100 families served annually at child care center

Individuality and personal contact are prized. "It's the way we relate to the customer," says Mike Carroll, executive director of the PDA. "It's much more one-on-one customer service." For example, one proprietor, Sol Amon of Pure Food Fish Market, says, "There's a lot of personal touch with the market. We tell people how to cook and get the most out of their purchase." There are unique little shops that could not survive anywhere else in Seattle, like the Pike Place Market Creamery, which annually does about \$400,000 of business supplying people with fresh, local products, such as fifty kinds of yogurt, four cream cheeses, and eggs from hens that roam. "We support three local dairy farms and a goat milk farm," says owner Nancy Douty. In this case, the market, by nurturing an independent local business, makes possible the survival of other independent enterprises located some distance away from the market; the policies of the market set off a ripple effect through the regional economy.

Many of Pike Place's enterprises have an element all too rare in the business world: conviction. Unlike chain bookstores, which typically give the impression of not caring what they sell as long as it is profitable, bookstores at Pike Place pursue purposes beyond money making when they choose the titles they carry. At Left Bank Books, the point of view is from the left, and so are many of the books, which are displayed straightforwardly without chain-bookstore slickness. To raise a little consciousness, a sign proclaims, "This shop is controlled by its workers." (Other signs make it clear that this is a shop with its own unexpected logic. On the left wall is "fiction by women"; on the right, "fiction by men.") Many of the shops are known as the best of their kind in the city, so they draw a wide clientele to the market area. Sur la Table, for example, sells kitchen equipment to local professional chefs, chefs from ships stopping in Seattle, hotels, caterers, tourists and, as owner Shirley Collins puts it, "the average Joe in the market who wants a good potato peeler or an expensive piece of cookware."

As part of its policy of nurturing owner-occupied businesses, the market forbids chain enterprises. A business can start at the market and later add branches elsewhere, but an outside company cannot set up a branch store in the market. (A restaurant from elsewhere in Seattle that wanted to come to the market had to institute a menu significantly different from that of its other location.) There are no McDonald's or Burger King outlets in the seven-acre historic district. The market is intended to function as a local community; and to do so, it requires locally based businesses.

The gradual trend has been toward greater numbers of high-quality, high-priced goods and services, but market policy aims to ensure that the low-income people are not driven away. There is what Shibley and Welch describe as a "Robin Hood" rent structure, with rates based on ability to pay and types of goods sold. The big-revenue businesses serving the affluent pay more. Space is provided very cheaply for a few enterprises such as a day-old bread shop and a used goods store. Moreover, these businesses are interspersed with other types of stores. So far, the mix of price levels and businesses seems to have worked fairly well, although some are disturbed by the trend toward expensive and stylish stores. Some of these stores are located just outside the historic district and thus not subject to Pike Place's controls. Some chain operators also have taken up positions at the edge of the historic district, drawn there by Pike Place's success at generating crowds. Many of them have done well, but some seem to have overlooked the fact that people do not go to Pike Place to get the same mass-produced goods and standardized atmosphere that can be found elsewhere; a Burger King that opened across First Avenue from the main entrance to the market eventually closed down.

The development of Pike Place has brought major changes in the use of space since 1974. The amount of space available for commercial purposes has decreased and the portions used for different types of business have shifted, as shown in the following summary based on the PDA Annual Report for 1983.

	1974	1982
Total usable square feet	1,122,500	703,400
Wholesale purposes	23%	3%
Retail	16%	56%
Office/service	15%	32%

Statistics on the distribution of commercial space in the market illustrate the mix of retailing but not the rich range of options within categories. There are several retail opportunities in each category of retailing for every level of income, as the PDA revealed in a 1982 report.

	<i>Square Feet</i>
Dairy and produce	6,179 (4%)
Meat and fish	6,425 (5%)
Grocery and deli	19,430 (14%)
Bakery	4,780 (3%)
Restaurant w/liquor	19,845 (14%)
Used goods	20,798 (15%)
Non-food retail	23,670 (17%)
Other	21,890 (16%)

The growth in employment since the redevelopment of Pike Place is another indication of its vitality and economic success. A 66 percent increase in employment occurred between 1973 and 1982 (1,428 to 2,370).

In places, the market might have benefited from having its geographic limits defined differently. If some boundaries had run through the center of blocks rather than down the middle of streets, there might have been a less abrupt shift in character between the market and its neighbors. "Look carefully at boundaries," urges Don Fleming, a former president of the Merchants Association. One boundary line of the historic district goes down the center of First Avenue, with the result that at one time "we had the market on one side and every hooker in town across the street." The market influences and is influenced by much that lies outside its boundaries, most of all the population of the downtown area. The inhabitants and administrators of Pike Place are proud that those who live near the market area are not all high-income people.

In the past thirty years or so, a huge stock of inexpensive housing disappeared from the downtowns of many cities. Residential hotels that amounted to fire traps have been demolished. Substandard boarding houses have closed. Decent, safe low-rent housing has disappeared too, replaced by everything from office buildings to parking lots and luxury condominiums. This has put the low-income downtown population in a difficult squeeze. In her study of the Market Foundation, Focke (1987) points out that Seattle had 230 low- and moderate-income hotel buildings with 17,100 living units in 1960. By 1973, only 7,900 units in 110 hotels were left, and as time went on those numbers continued to decline. From 32,000 people living downtown in 1960, the downtown population fell to 19,300 by 1978. The number is estimated at about 20,000 today. The Market Foundation argues that a widespread stereotype of downtown residents as down-and-out alcoholics fits only a small minority. Most older residents of downtown Seattle are people who worked on the waterfront or in the downtown, whose roots are in the downtown area, and who never accumulated a lot of money.

Consequently, one goal at Pike Place Market has been to provide some of the housing that these people need, along with convenient sources of affordable food, medical care, and other services. In the urban renewal area, new or renovated buildings provide about 650 apartments, of which approximately 450 are subsidized low-income units. The remainder are mostly upper-income apartments or condominiums and a small number of housing units for middle-income people. The subsidized low-income units are not numerous enough to make up for the long-term loss of inexpensive downtown housing, but they do provide good needed housing. Suggestions have been made that the city do more to encourage housing for middle-income people, the group least able to get housing near the market (Herzog 1982).

City government, mainly through the Department of Community Development, required some private developers to create low-income housing in return for providing sites on which upper-income housing could be built. The mostly elderly low-income residents contribute diversity to the city, they make the city a safer place, and their spending adds to the health of city businesses. A symbiotic relationship is nurtured by this urban

housing. The elderly are better off for having decent housing to inhabit and activities to watch or participate in; the city is made safer and more enjoyable because the elderly observe what's going on, implementing the Jane Jacobs "eyes on the street" concept (1961). (See fig. 2-26.)

The Market Foundation sees itself as, among other things, an advocate of the needs of the elderly. Without such advocacy, it is easy for the elderly to be overlooked. The business community, for instance, tends to focus more on the highly visible alcoholics who live on the streets and in other public places—"a very tiny population that's very obvious," in Zaretsky's estimation. At one time, he says, "there were seventeen services for skid road people and none for seniors. But skid road accounts for about 4 to 5 percent of the overall downtown population, while seniors are two-thirds of those who live downtown." The foundation does not favor letting the "skid road" (or skid row) population go without services, but it emphasizes that the nonalcoholic urban elderly population is larger, has needs of its own, and should not be forgotten. Consequently one of the things the foundation supports is a senior citizens center, which is tucked into the market and was started by volunteers who envisioned it "more as an extended family than a social service" (Focke 1987, 62). The senior center continues to be run by a board of users rather than social-service professionals. The enhanced awareness of the city's low-income elderly population led voters to pass a \$50 million bond issue to provide subsidized housing for them. Selection committee member Cressworth Lander observed, "Typically cities go to the federal government for money, but a city that puts its own money into public housing is a city that is caring and going places."

The foundation has helped raise money for the Downtown Food Bank, which was founded in 1979 in a public housing project and has more recently been housed in a market area warehouse at an inexpensive rent generously offered by Harbor Properties. Each year the Food Bank gives food (including surplus goods from the market merchants) to a mixed-age clientele of more than twenty thousand people.

The foundation has been one of the supporters of the Pike Market Child Care Center, which since its inception in 1982 has primarily served low-income or single-parent families who live downtown or work in the marketplace. Elderly individuals do a great deal of volunteer work at the child care center, and the children in turn visit the senior center (fig. 2-27). Another service supported by the foundation is the Pike Market Community Clinic, which opened in 1978 and caters mainly to poor elderly patients.

Recently the Market Foundation has been working on a program to deal with "street kids," who have become a noticeable and sometimes intimidating presence on the fringes of the market. Street kids tend to be cut off from traditional social services for youths at age eighteen, yet many are illiterate and lack job skills. The foundation has been working with other groups with the goal of providing perhaps a dozen units of transitional housing, addressing the youths' literacy problem, and getting them started on the path to employment—perhaps by introducing them into the existing job market or by organizing a messenger service, café, or other business they could operate.

The foundation is creating a system to give low-income people cou-



Fig. 2-26. Pike Place Market has consciously maintained affordable housing for the elderly in the district.

(Courtesy of the Market Foundation.)

pons to buy food from the farmers, thus helping the poor and solidifying the farmers' economic viability. The foundation is also creating a fund for the future to be used for a variety of projects, such as the youth program, seed money for new low-income housing, and capital and operating subsidies for existing market agencies.

The foundation, in other words, is one of the key elements of the market. Though most tourists remain unaware of its existence and may not notice the social services it supports, the foundation exercises much of the responsibility for guarding Pike Place's character. It places economic and housing opportunities in the hands of people who might otherwise be forced away from the market because of rising real estate costs and other economic pressures. In contrast to some social-service agencies, the foundation not only helps provide the money for needed services but acts as an outspoken advocate for those who are often displaced by economic development.

The result is that Pike Place has retained its diversity even as its corner of downtown Seattle has grown increasingly affluent (fig. 2-28). Both the well off and the not so well off appear to appreciate the genuineness and the lively spirit of a heterogeneous urban setting. The elderly want to be able to stay in the environment that for decades has been their home ground. Those who are neither poor nor elderly nor long-time residents of downtown prize the vitality and variety they've been able to find there. "It's the most exciting place to be in the state of Washington," said a resident of a lush million-dollar condominium that stands sixty feet away from a subsidized senior citizens' building. "I'd hate to see the balance change."



a



b



c

Fig. 2-27. The services supported by the Market Foundation include **(a)** a senior center, **(b)** the Downtown Food Bank, **(c)** the Pike Place Market community clinic, and **(d)** a child care center. *(a, b, c, d. Courtesy of the Market Foundation.)*



d



Fig. 2-28. Victor Steinbrueck's sketch of a scene reflects the familiarity and diversity that characterize the market.

(From Victor Steinbrueck. 1978. *Market Sketchbook*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press.)

Issues and Values at Pike Place

Clearly Pike Place Market is an extraordinary development. As Shibley and Welch observe, the underlying story "is not just about a market. It is about why people live in cities." Pike Place manages to be physically pleasing, economically successful, socially diverse, and adaptable to change.

The market does face some problems. One is the pressure brought on by its own popularity—the pressure to become a place increasingly oriented to tourists and the affluent. Already, some merchants and officials notice a scarcity of "two-bag shoppers"—people of low or moderate income who live in the vicinity and who rely on the market for the bulk of their groceries. The market does well at serving people who are looking for the best food that Seattle has to offer, whether it is fresh strawberries or smoked salmon. It will be a challenge for the market to continue to be a place that also meets all the routine needs of people. The encouraging thing is that many people associated with the market, including owners of businesses that cater to the well off, recognize this trend as a problem and want to address it.

One aspect of the problem is the big tourist business that the market attracts, especially in the summer. Tourists marvel at the displays of fruits and vegetables, but farmers can't subsist on admiration. "Tourists are not going to buy bunches of parsley or basil," one merchant says. Tourists generally stay in hotel and motel rooms and do not cook their own food, so the farmer—who is supposed to be the most important element of the market—benefits least from the tourists' presence. The farmer may even be hurt by tourists, some of whom stand in front of the displays, making it hard for the farmers to conduct business with regular customers.

Another aspect of the problem is the increasing popularity of the market area for middle- and upper-income housing and development. If the price of housing and real estate continues to climb, only low-income people with subsidies will be able to remain in the vicinity. Most of the subsidized units have been built or renovated for the elderly or handicapped as single-room-occupancy, studios, or one-bedroom apartments. Although a single-room-occupancy building also houses a wide variety of other individuals—artists, workers, former mental patients making the transition back from the institutional world—there's generally less housing available for young, larger families. Younger nonaffluent people without subsidies may be priced out, and if they are, the diversity of the market population may diminish. Shibley and Welch also raise the question of whether the elderly population that has lived in the downtown or waterfront area for decades will be fully replaced as years go by. The elderly who currently live in or near downtown Seattle come from a period in which large numbers of working-class people occupied the central business district. That way of life has undergone a long, gradual decline: younger generations of this economic class live, to a larger extent, away from downtown, some of them in the suburbs. Whether there will be a large downtown community possessing economic diversity is a question that will have to be addressed.

Pike Place, like any good urban place, is not static. It continually

generates new ideas and new opportunities and it adapts to forces from outside its boundaries. Recently the PDA became involved in a proposal for major construction on city-owned land that had been used as a surface parking lot on Western Avenue below Steinbrueck Park. The PDA wanted a parking garage, and to make it financially feasible, the garage would have to have been part of a five-story building containing more than 100,000 square feet of office space and 30,000 square feet of retailing. Others at the market objected to having views blocked by the building, to the extent of the office and retail uses, and to what they interpreted as a shift in the market's character. Though just outside the historic district, the idea was defeated because of the uproar. Continuing public concern for the market proved once again to be a critical element in the process of preserving and generating urban excellence. It now appears that a parking garage will be built, but instead of having offices and retailing, it will have above it three stories of congregate housing for frail, low-income elderly people. Making this financially possible will require \$3 million from the city housing bond fund. This was one of many signs of what Shibley and Welch refer to as the market's ability to modify the "highest and best use" standard of development. The market continues to defend values that have to do with diversity, uses, esthetics, and community welfare.

A potential weakness identified by Shibley and Welch is the lack of an overall planning process for Pike Place. Power is divided among various entities, and no single organization controls long-term planning and implementation. The PDA can plan, but the historical commission can block its proposals. The historical commission continually makes decisions by interpreting the fundamental principles that have guided Pike Place through the years, but these decisions typically come as responses to others' requests, not from its own initiative. "There's no one point of planning focus that speaks to all the disparate interests," Shibley and Welch say. Should this be changed? There are arguments on both sides. Shibley and Welch say that without a formal planning process, there is some doubt that the market can deal effectively with the pressures of tourism, affluence, and the aging or death of the resident population (Herzog 1982). The current structure, they note, relies on the talents of individuals in four different organizations—PDA, historical commission, Market Foundation, and Merchants Association—and on their ability to work together. On the other hand, the current division of responsibilities has produced an outstanding place, and, Shibley and Welch say, "any effort to put a superstructure over it might kill it or bureaucratize it." If the organizational structure remains as it is, they say, it requires at the least that the various parties be aware of how interdependent they are.

In fact, the market has evolved over time in a fairly casual way. Pike Place has never been a place where people first conceived a grand "organizational master plan" and then built what they had devised conceptually. Rather, each organization emerged and assumed its role in direct relation to a felt need. As needs changed, some organizations adjusted their mission. Others became like the National Guard—there if needed, but not very active.

No matter what the organizational framework, the processes at Pike Place require an active leadership with a workable blend of realism and

idealism. The documents hammered out in the aftermath of the citizens' initiative of 1971 identify goals and values for Pike Place. Although these have helped Pike Place to achieve great things, the creation and maintenance of quality in an urban setting is an unending process. At Pike Place, Shibley and Welch say, often it is a matter of discovering first principles, which are rooted in the market's long history. The market's success, they point out, largely depends on recognizing that Pike Place's long-time mottoes, "Meet the Producer" and "The Farmer First," represent the viewpoints that created an interesting, real market environment serving an indigenous population. That environment became a tourist attraction because of its adherence to these first principles. To reverse the priority and serve the tourist first would benefit neither the farmers nor the indigenous population nor the tourists. Pike Place, so far, has fortunately not made the false choice of market versus tourist use. By recognizing the important interdependence among its differing purposes, the market has succeeded in becoming an exemplary place.

Architect Fred Bassetti described the market in the 1960s as an honest place in a phony time . . . a haven where real values survive, where directness can be experienced; where young people who have never known anything other than precut meat, frozen vegetables, or homogenized milk can discover some things that they do not see on television or in Disney picture books or in movies. [Steinbrueck 1978]

Indeed, Pike Place has lessons to teach everyone, not just the young. One of these lessons is about the role of design. Buildings and open spaces are important, but they need not be high-profile or high-fashion. At Pike Place, people take pleasure in a relatively humble architecture that connects them to the past and provides plenty of opportunity for social interaction. Another lesson concerns the magnetism of urban markets. People have an instinctive appreciation of markets where farmers come to sell their goods directly to the public and where meat and fish peddlers serve the city's residents. A market area can be a logical location for new housing, both because people enjoy the market and because they can fulfill ordinary daily needs there. A market area can offer the prospect of racial, ethnic, and economic integration—better, probably, than any other part of a city. Cities can benefit from such strong, humane, functional focal points. A social ecology can be maintained.

Another lesson is that when such a place succeeds, it is likely to become more and more complex. This complexity can reinforce its vitality. It is good, for instance, that the farmers and shops at Pike Place can serve multiple constituencies—low-income city residents, gourmets, and restaurants among them. This enhances economic opportunities for farmers and independent local businesses. This is a worthy alternative to "festival markets," which cater to fewer needs and a narrower clientele and therefore offer less long-term satisfaction.

The mixing of housing, retailing, and restaurants and of different social classes can work. If it is to do so, it requires organizations that understand the need for something better than a laissez-faire approach. There must be active supervision of the process of change. At Pike Place, such supervision has a public and democratic flavor. Residents, business

owners, farmers, craftspeople, preservationists, advocates of the poor and the elderly—these and others have the opportunity to be heard and to influence decisions. Economic, social, and political empowerment are among the important values of Pike Place. If economic forces are permitted to be the sole determinant of what happens, a wonderful environment like Pike Place will self-destruct. Pike Place shows us that the management of diversity is necessary. Management of this sort is challenging and controversial. But as the Pike Place Market demonstrates, it is worth the effort. These are lessons from which other cities can profit.

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