

and no, and no! These possibilities are remote. We know that they are all nearly impossible in modern totalitarian democracy. Yet common sense tells us that all these particularities might

arise in response to a careful adaptation in which topography, feeling, culture, personality could play a role and be recognized in the resulting shape of the city.



3 / EXCESSIVE RIGIDITY OF RULES

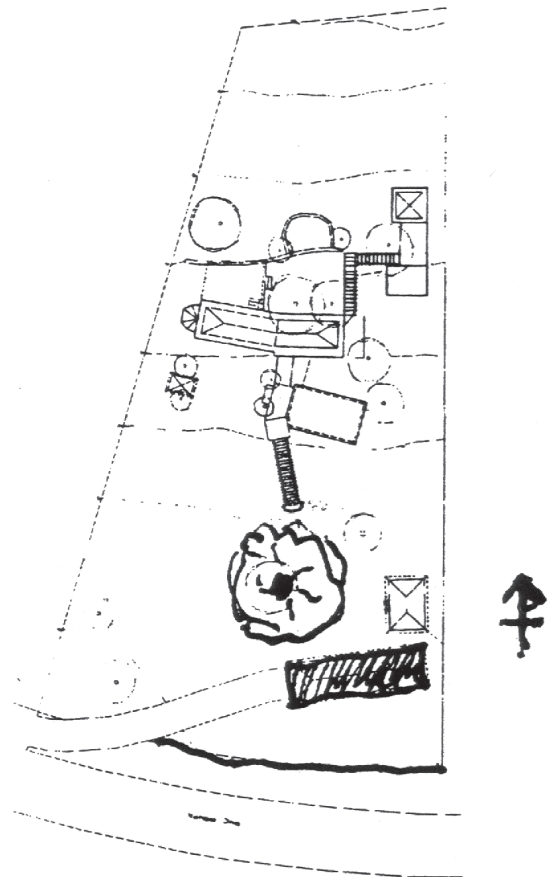
The same kind of dynamical argument can be applied to almost every contemporary structure, whether it be a new city hall, creation of a plaza or an airport, whether it is the waterfront, a forest, a new bridge, a house, a garden, or a neighborhood. Rules are wrongly formulated. Processes are too rigid to allow adaptation. They cannot allow life to occur.

Here, another example: I describe an event that happened during construction of the Lighty house in Berryessa, California, which I built many years ago. This was a house, small, but consisting of six buildings on a slope, looking towards distant mountains in the Napa valley. The road above was on a plateau. The site itself, then, was on a slope falling away from the plateau and it was there on the slope that the very small house was constructed, almost palace-like, among the oak trees.

The plateau above, at the edge of the road, was more or less flat, and had to include a garage, and space for two cars. At the same time, there was a magnificent old white oak standing in a key position; and the entrance of the house itself, the front door and stair that led down the slope to the house, were located near this old oak tree.

The question was, How to place the garage? Because of the site conditions, and the Lighty's infrequent use of cars, I had determined that the garage needed to be long and narrow (one car behind the other). More important, this building had the capacity to create a positive space with the oak tree at its center, then taking the arriving person in a most natural way, through this courtyard, towards the front door.

Only one problem existed. A very small change of distance, had a huge impact on the life



The plan of the Berryessa house, emphasizing the garage, the white oak tree, the stair and the front property line. If the garage had been moved one foot to the north, and closer to the tree, the space around the oak tree would have been damaged.

of the structure which could be created. The position of the garage was governed by a setback regulation of 10 feet. But, to make the garage work, while leaving the space around the great oak tree in good condition, the roadside edge of

the garage would have to be no more than 9 feet from the road; 9 feet 3 inches would have been possible, at a pinch. But 10 feet would have crowded the tree, and destroyed the living space around the tree. To solve the problem, the setback requirement *had* to be violated.

What to do? In theory, a variance could have been sought, and possibly granted, to allow the needed minor deviation from the setback rule. However, this procedure would have taken at least several months — time that neither the clients nor the project could afford. Further, it was unlikely that it would have been granted. A legal desire for consistency would probably have held sway. The intent of the setback rule was to create a uniform street facade ten feet from the edge of the road — a rather simple-minded, rule-bound attempt at protecting the larger whole. This rule was insensitive to the more subtle wholeness, which existed on different sites and in this case included the great tree, *and* the garage, *and* the house.

To solve it, briefly and easily, what we did was to confuse the building inspector on the day he came to measure the building: “Could you hold this end of the tape, please, I will measure over here,” that sort of thing — and make him believe that the nine feet, were actually ten. Of course, it had already been marked as ten feet on the drawing.

But this stratagem, though effective in our particular instance, did not alter the fact that the process — viewed as a whole — *did not contain the capacity to create a living structure*. It contained the capacity, only, to create a poor approximation to living structure, by following a rule-bound scheme that could not even see the wholeness, much less appreciate it or protect it.

If a process were to be defined, which might replace the too-rigid setback rule, it would have to be one that both protects the larger whole, and is sensitive to the variations and needs of smaller local wholes.



4 / INTENTIONAL RIGIDITY OF RULES THE INFLUENCE OF FREDERICK TAYLOR

Where did the 20th-century passion for rigidity come from? It came, in part, from Frederick Taylor.

Taylor was one of the individuals who had the greatest influences on the 20th century. An American machinist working at the very end of the 19th century, Taylor conceived the idea of time-and-motion studies, studies in which we would make the repetitive production of objects more efficient.

Taylor first inspired Henry Ford’s factory at Dearborn, the first highly efficient modern factory. Ford employed Taylor as a consultant while he planned and built this factory. Later, as a direct result of Taylor’s work, almost all natural and organic processes throughout the world which relied on judgment, participation, and common sense were replaced by a way of thinking about process, which relied on rules, rigidly

applied, codification of category, task, function. What we know as the modern organization with machinelike repetition of processes, came from Frederick Taylor.² What we know as modern bureaucracy — American, British, Russian, Swedish, or Chinese — with its system of rules, questions and answers, which make little provision for human actuality or human difference, came from the application of Frederick Taylor’s ideas to large human institutions.³ What we know as modern construction, is the application of Taylorism to the assembly of physical components. What we know as modern agriculture, lies in the application of Taylor’s ideas to farms, animals, crops, water resources, fertilizers, and machines on the land.

It is amazing to realize that Taylor himself very well understood the positive social and human conditions of the living process he was try-