

**PROPOSAL FOR
*THE CITY OF TOMORROW***

The New City Markers

ALLAN McCOLLUM

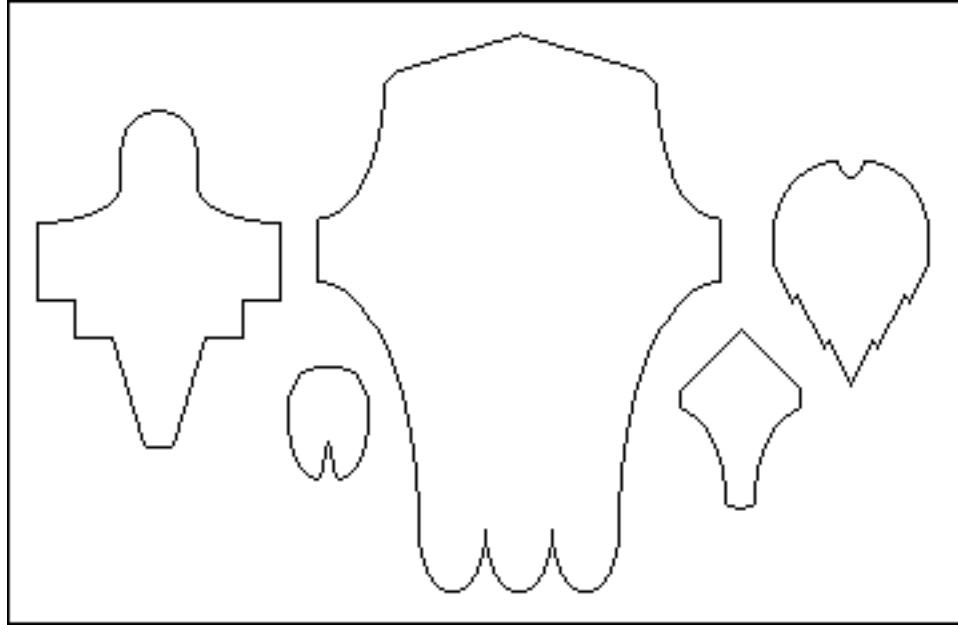
I would like to propose a simple system that can generate unique graphic symbols. Each symbol created will be assigned to each separate occupiable unit throughout the City of Tomorrow project in Malmo Sweden

I plan to create each symbol as a computer-automated-manufacturing file that can be read by different CAM machines: routers, plotters, cutters, waterjet equipment, and so on. These files may then allow the symbols to be reproduced by computer numerically controlled media, in thin, black-colored metal.

Each symbol would be around 25cm in height, or larger, depending upon how far away from the viewer they are installed.

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It is my hope that, over time, the installation of the symbols throughout the project will come to serve a function for the occupants of the buildings. Perhaps it might help visitors locate a specific building, for instance. Or perhaps a building's symbol might function as a symbol within the culture of the residents of that building, say, as a symbol used in a building newsletter, or in letterheads. The symbolic system could become a basis for children's games, treasure hunts, club insignias, or even as learning exercises. Or perhaps the symbols could be used in sending secret notes between lovers! Or perhaps a business might enjoy incorporating the symbols into their signage, inter-office memos, business cards, stationery, or watermarks.



NOTES ON FLEXIBILITY AND COLLABORATION

Because the shapes will be designed as files readable by computer automated manufacturing systems, the symbols could conceivably be made in metal, wood, ceramic, cement, stone, plastic, glass, paper, and (or) in different sizes and colors. Along with this proposal, I have included a few samples for the panel to review that are made in wood, for instance; they could just as easily have been cut in another material.

The architects of each building could be asked to participate in (or approve of) the choosing of the locations for each symbol assigned to their project. The symbols could be put on the buildings themselves, in lobbies, on each door, in the stonework outside of the building, on retaining walls, in public areas, or many other places.

For instance, if it were the architect of a certain building were to disapprove of the black color that I prefer, the symbols for that building might be made in white, or green. Similarly, if it seemed that placing the symbols in a lobby was too intrusive or too distracting, they could be smaller, or placed on or near the door of each unit, or in the hallways, etc.

I also would like to leave company copies of the computer files with each owner and each management company, in case they or their tenants might like to make use of the system of shapes for other purpose. This would allow the system to remain alive into the future, allowing people in the "City of Tomorrow" the opportunity to add their own creative ideas.

A FEW THOUGHTS ABOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT

It is well known that we traditionally identify ourselves with symbols that define the real or imaginary groups to which we feel we belong: national symbols, sports team symbols, school symbols, community symbols, neighborhood symbols, club, gang, clan and institutional symbols, etc.

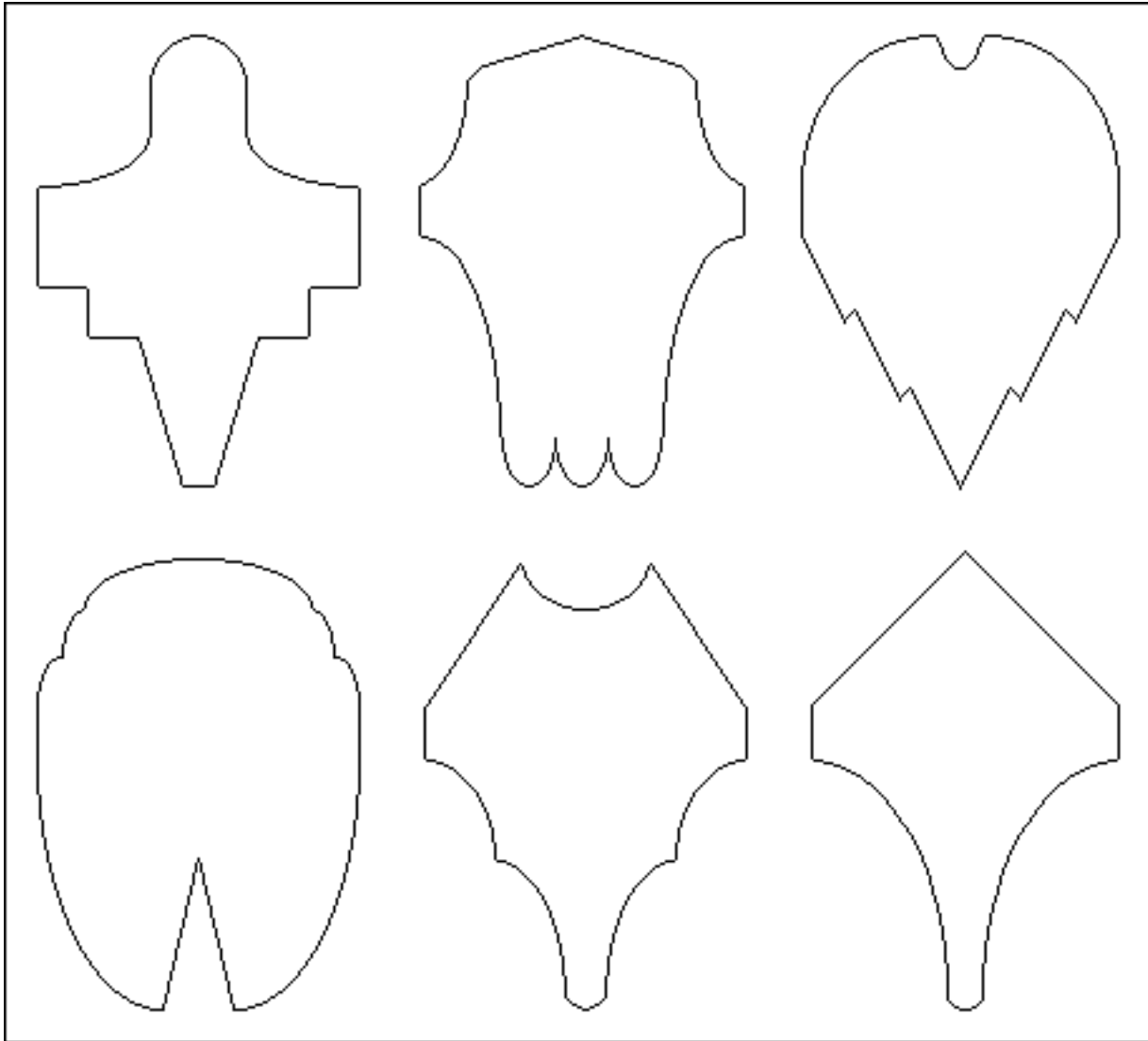
In the normal case, a group of many individuals will identify with one single, unifying symbol for each association. In doing this, they are thereby submitting themselves into a larger crowd, all "identifying" in the same direction. To me, this system feels too hierarchical. My goal with this proposed project is different. I want to design a "system of symbols" (a symbolic system) that can also represent each member of a group individually, as well as representing a group as a whole.

With this new system, I hope to imagine how a community planner might try to help a community represent itself in a more involving and interesting (and perhaps more democratic) manner; yet my overarching intention is for the project to address a common contemporary question: would such a new system insure MORE individuality through unique symbols for each entity, or LESS individuality through an externally imposed, mechanistic system of "false differences?"

I feel this question is appropriate to the City of Tomorrow project, especially to the challenge of how a single, select group of architects might design a new community organized to create the atmosphere of a village – a village which might have grown together over decades or centuries. It is an interesting task to try to synthesize the organic growth of a community in one contemporary moment of time, with one sweep of the hand.

SOME TECHNICAL NOTES

Each symbol, while always unique, will be bi-symmetrical, and smaller toward the top, suggesting a human figure, a human head, a family crest, a medieval shield, a royal seal, a clan emblem, a badge of identity, or a modern-day corporate logo. They might have to be made in different sizes, each size depending on the distance of the potential viewer. If a group of symbols were to be close to the viewer (i.e. touchable), I would like each symbol to be around 25 centimeters high.



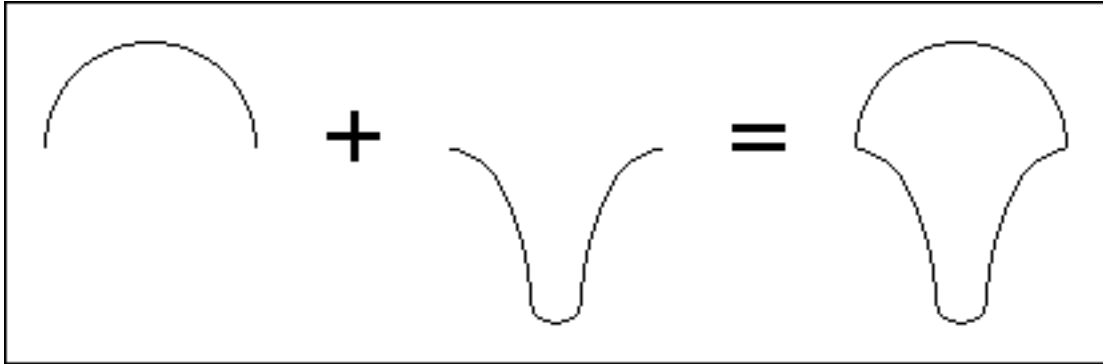
It is my preference is that each symbol be the same size and made in very thin (but rigid) metal, perhaps painted or anodized black. I would like them be put on the sides of the buildings, with much smaller versions made to be placed above (or near) the doors.

NOTES ON THE SYSTEM

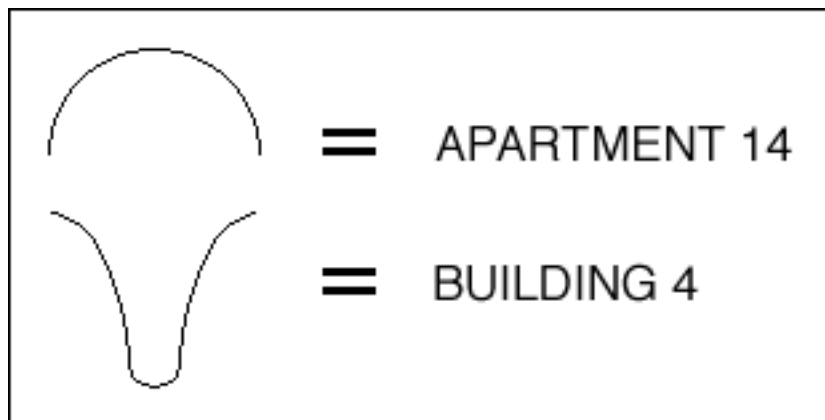
Each symbol will be created using a combinatory code. That is, the system will create a large amount of symbols using a smaller number of parts, combined in different ways, according to a code.

The system will involve around 50 "tops" and 50 "bottoms."

For instance:



I'm hoping to design the code in such a way that each building may be recognized in the symbol itself. For instance, the "bottom" could represent a particular building, with the "top" representing a particular building unit:



This way, a curious person (child or adult) could enjoy learning the code, and use it for many different purposes.