

Movin' On Up

Urbanized TV Landscapes and the Growth of Gentrification



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The Rent Gap

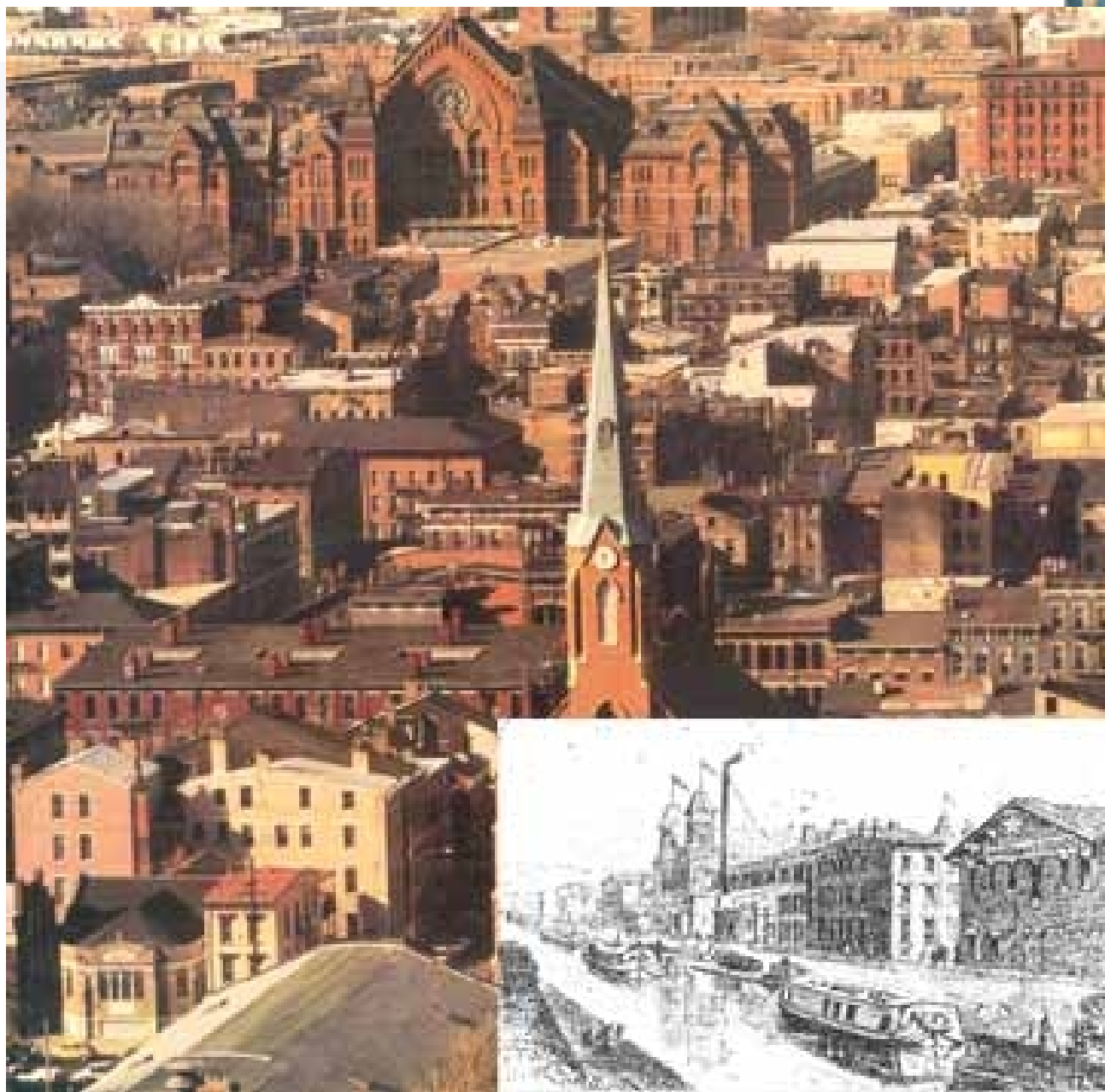


- Inquiry starts as a failed attempt to demonstrate the operation of Smith's (1979) "rent gap theory" in Cincinnati.
- Mt. Adams, Cincinnati's most gentrified neighborhood appears to have never gone through a cycle of disinvestment and reinvestment as Smith suggests.
- The neighborhood known as "Over-the-Rhine" turned out to be the more likely candidate for rent gap style reinvestment, but began gentrifying only in recent years.

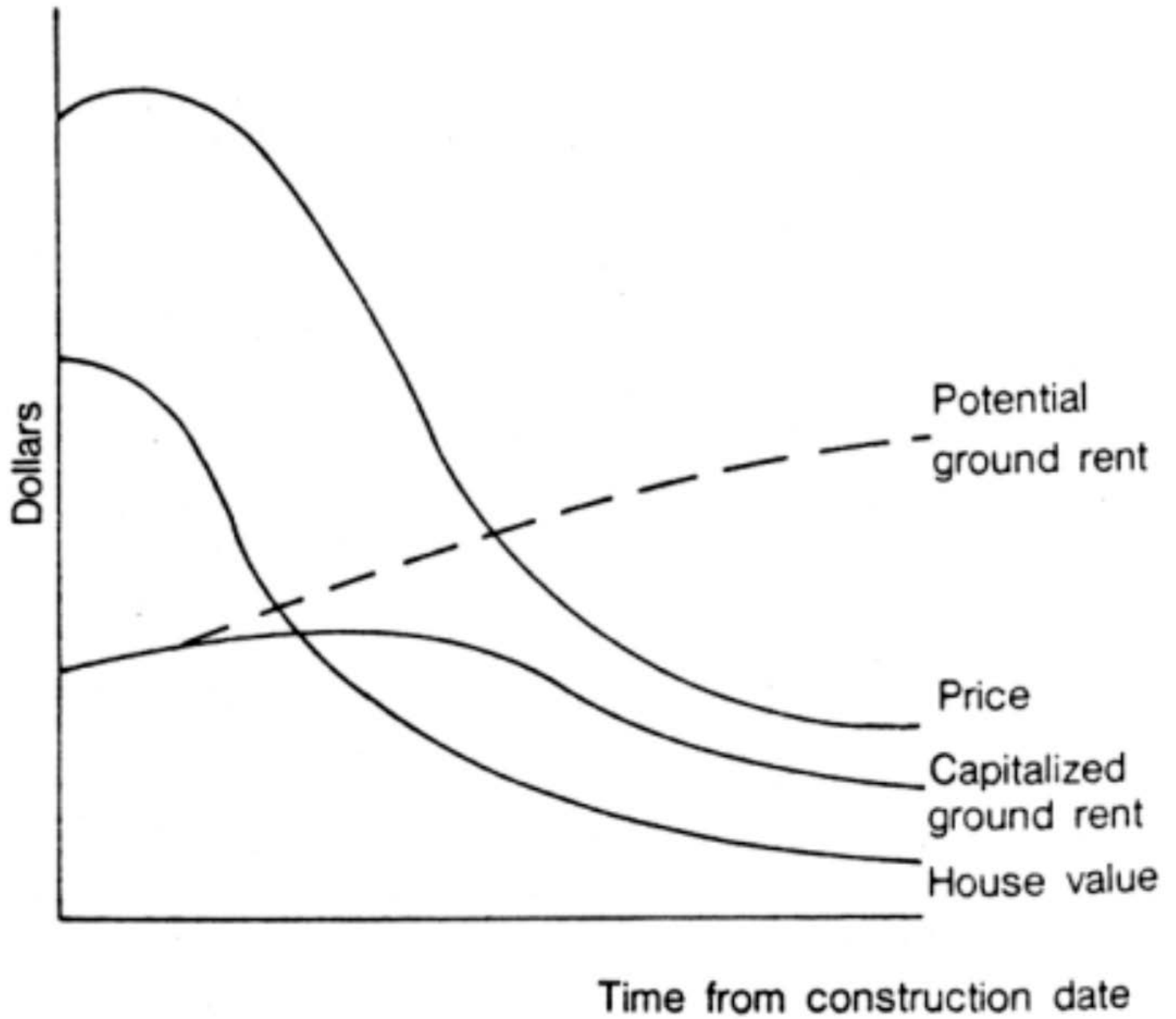
Mt. Adams



Over The Rhine

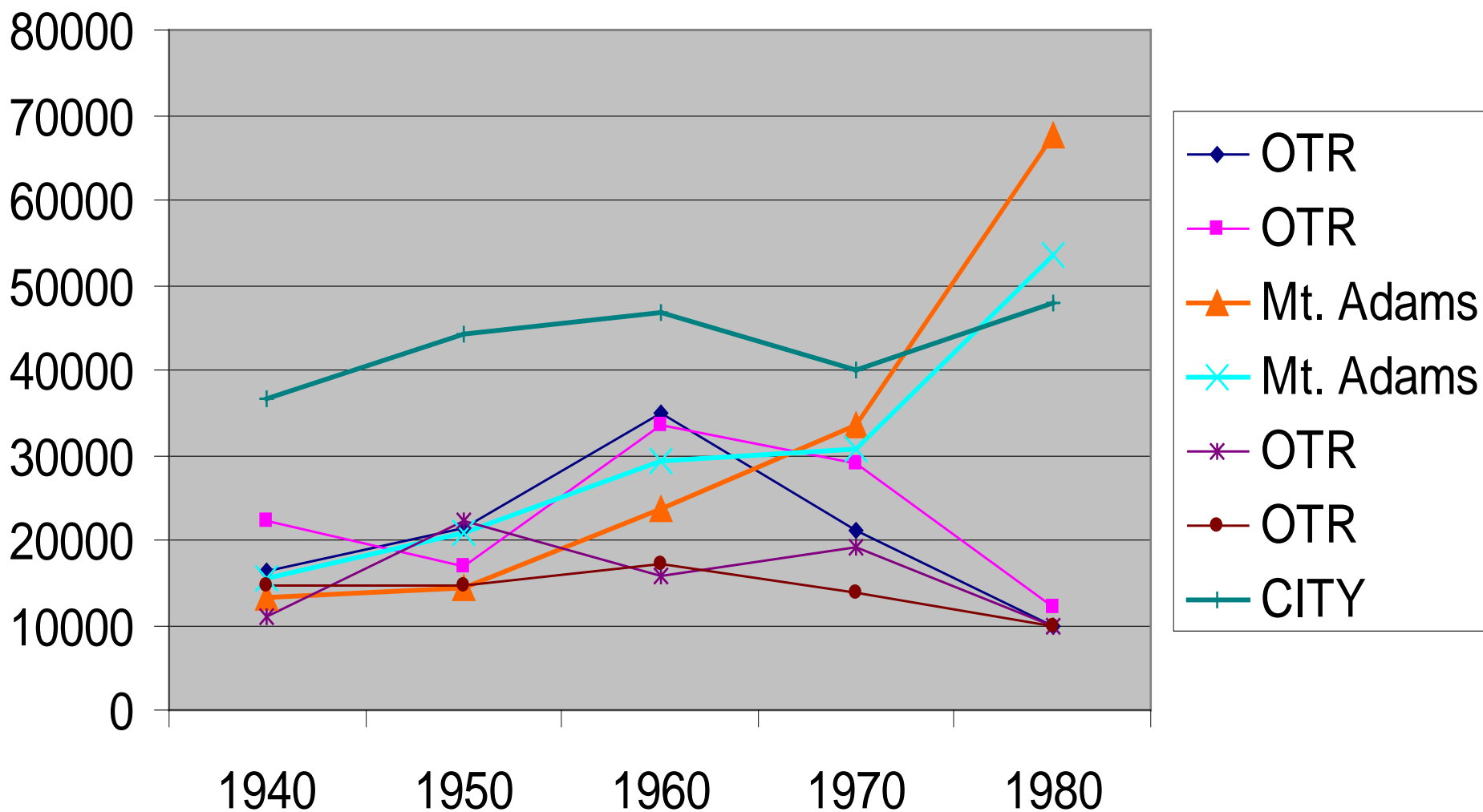


Rent Gap



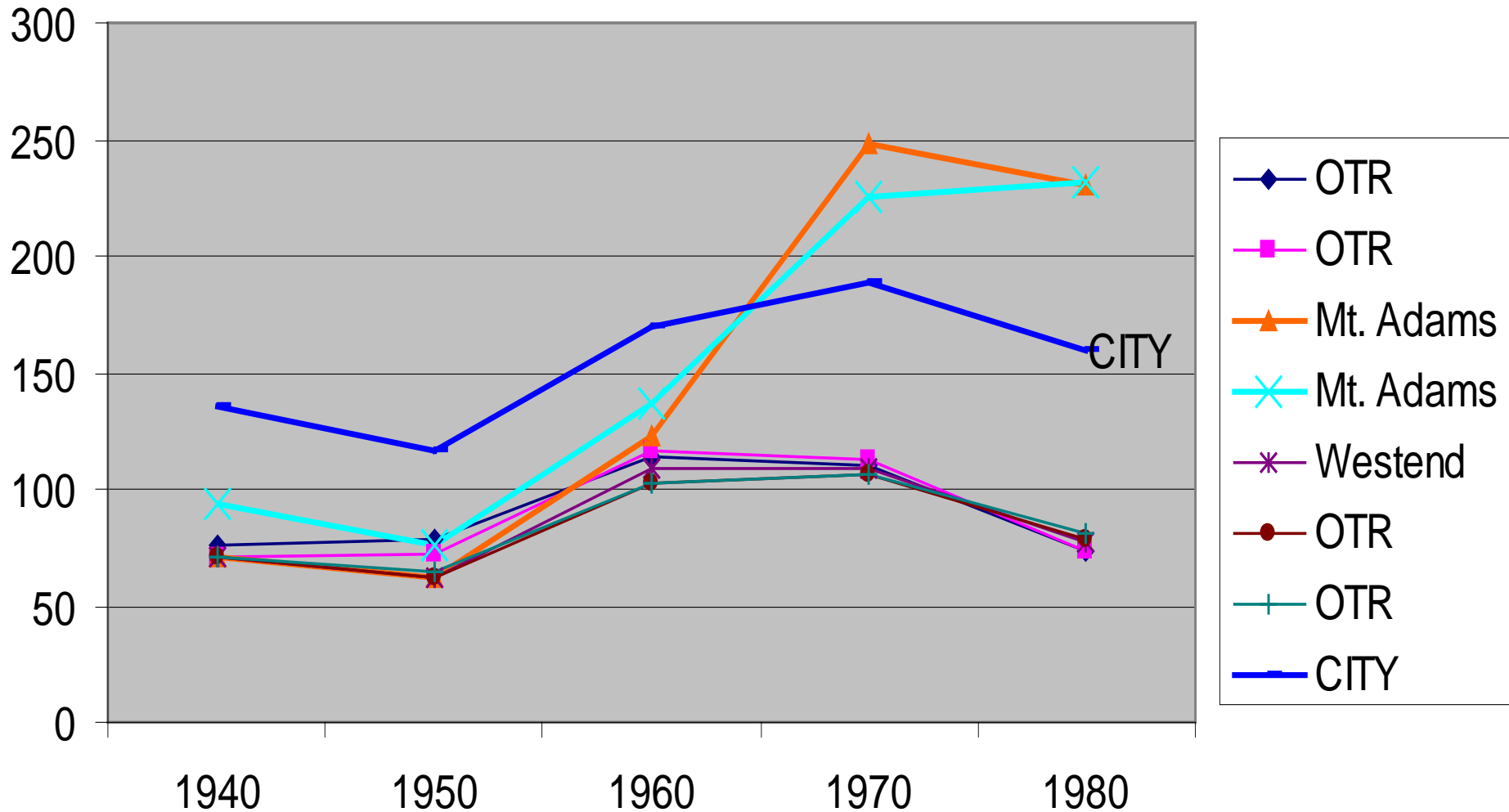
Cincinnati Median House Values 1940-1980

Selected Tracts (adjusted to 1980 dollars)



Cincinnati Median Rent :1940-1980

Selected Tracts (Adjusted to 1980 Dollars)



Demand Side Explanations



- My findings might support the “demand-side” argument that explains gentrification in terms friendly to the consumer sovereignty position in classical economics (e.g. Ley 1986, Hamnett 1984).
- Changing patterns in the economy, long commutes, boredom associated with suburban living, cited as demand-side reasons for gentrification.

Insufficiencies



- The consumer sovereignty position tends to overlook the structural constraints involved in housing markets, which the Marxists point out.
- Other structures within the housing market limit choices of housing types: What types of houses were available to those seeking a life in the city?
- Additional structures constrain taste preferences still more to what might be fashionable.

Taste Preferences



- Buying a house is generally the largest personal investment one makes AND one of the most personal statements one makes (e.g., Adams 1984),
- A home is a statement of identity for many, especially those who can afford to personalize such statements.
- Those without means still have a variety of opportunities to express their identity through their housing choices.

Housing Options: 1970



- 1970 seems to be a crucial turning point in American culture and economics, and seems to be a point of departure for many gentrification movements.
- What options were available to those looking for housing in 1970?

Option 1: Suburbia



Option 2: Modern High-rise



Fordist Housing





Option 3: “Bohemian” Bargain



Option 3: Early Adopters



- Option 3, the bohemian bargain is forced upon the “starving artists” who can afford neither the suburbs or modern high-rises.
- The “bohemian” crowd forms the nucleus of residents “pioneering” this “urban frontier”
- This does not explain how Option 3, becomes...

Option 3.5: “Yuppiedom”



The \$64,000 Question:



- How does consumer taste preferences for housing change such that urban residents, many of whom have been identified as “upwardly mobile” and “engaged in the “new economy”, become willing to take a chance on the “Bohemian Bargain” identified earlier?
- This question is explained away too easily by advocates of consumer sovereignty positions.
- “Oh it’s *Better Homes and Garden, City Living*, and those types of magazines”.

Ringing Hollow



- Other consumer items, including many that are much less conflated with ones personal identity, can not be marketed so simply.
- Pop music albums, for example, exhibit powerful tendencies to sell poorly in the face of massive marketing campaigns (e.g., Graves 1999).

Television as Marketing Device



- Since radio stands as the only (partially) effective means for selling music, it stands to reason that an equally powerful media, such as television or film, would be necessary to market similar commodities that function as markers of personal or cultural identity, especially one like a house costs many thousands of dollars.

Television as Structure



- At the very least, televisual imagery of housing structures consumer taste preferences by creating knowable categories into which home-buyers project themselves.

TV Housing 1950-2000



- I gathered Nielsen Ratings data for 1950-2000 to look for top 20 programs predominantly set in the home.
- Using 1970 as the seminal year for American gentrification, I selected a 10 year framework around it for additional analysis.

Background-1950s



- The domestic comedy had not yet fully flowered, but programs such as “I Love Lucy”, “Father Knows Best” and “Dennis the Menace” employed understated suburban settings.
- “The Honeymooners” depicted urban, tenement style living, using it effectively to demonstrate the difficulties of urban life.

1960s



- Westerns decline in popularity, permitting more domestic comedies and urban dramas to appear.
- Andy Griffith Show and Green Acres lead a variety of rural-set TV shows.
- Suburban housing dominates urban settings in programs such as “My Three Sons”, “Bewitched”, “Here’s Lucy”, Ozzie and Harriet, etc.
- Inner city scenes are reserved primarily for detective programs and serve as settings for crime.
- “A Family Affair” and “Julia” are the only two domestic settings that are both popular and set in the city.

My Three Sons



- Initiates the popular “two bachelors raising a family genre”
- The Douglas family (My Three Sons) moved from the fictional Bryant Park to suburban Southern California

My Three Sons



Bewitched



- **1164 Morning Glory Circle Westport, Connecticut**

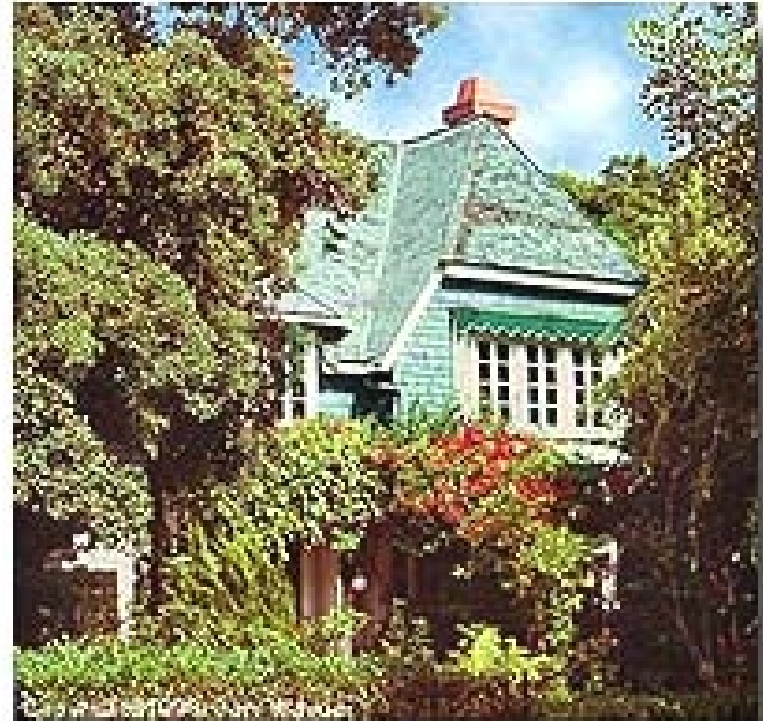
Dick Van Dyke Show



The Dick Van Dyke Show" centers around the life of Rob Petrie, a New York comedy writer who lives in suburban New Rochelle

Suburban 1960s TV Addresses

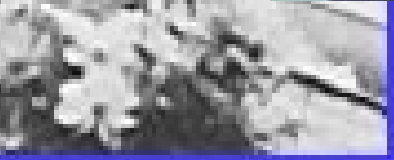
- Lucy Carter lived in a “lovely suburban house at 623 Valley Lawn Drive, Los Angeles”
- Ozzie and Harriet Lived at 822 Sycamore Road, Hillsdale - was modeled on the Nelsons' real-life home in Hollywood).



Swingin' Bachelor / Bachelorette



- The primary housing arrangement would-be gentrifiers, (young, urban, professional) in the 1960s was the glass-and-steel, modern high-rise.
- Wealthier TV bachelors live in upscale “5th Avenue” apartments.
- Major Nelson , of “I Dream of Jeannie” lived in the suburbs, even though he was an swingin' astronaut.



A Family Affair

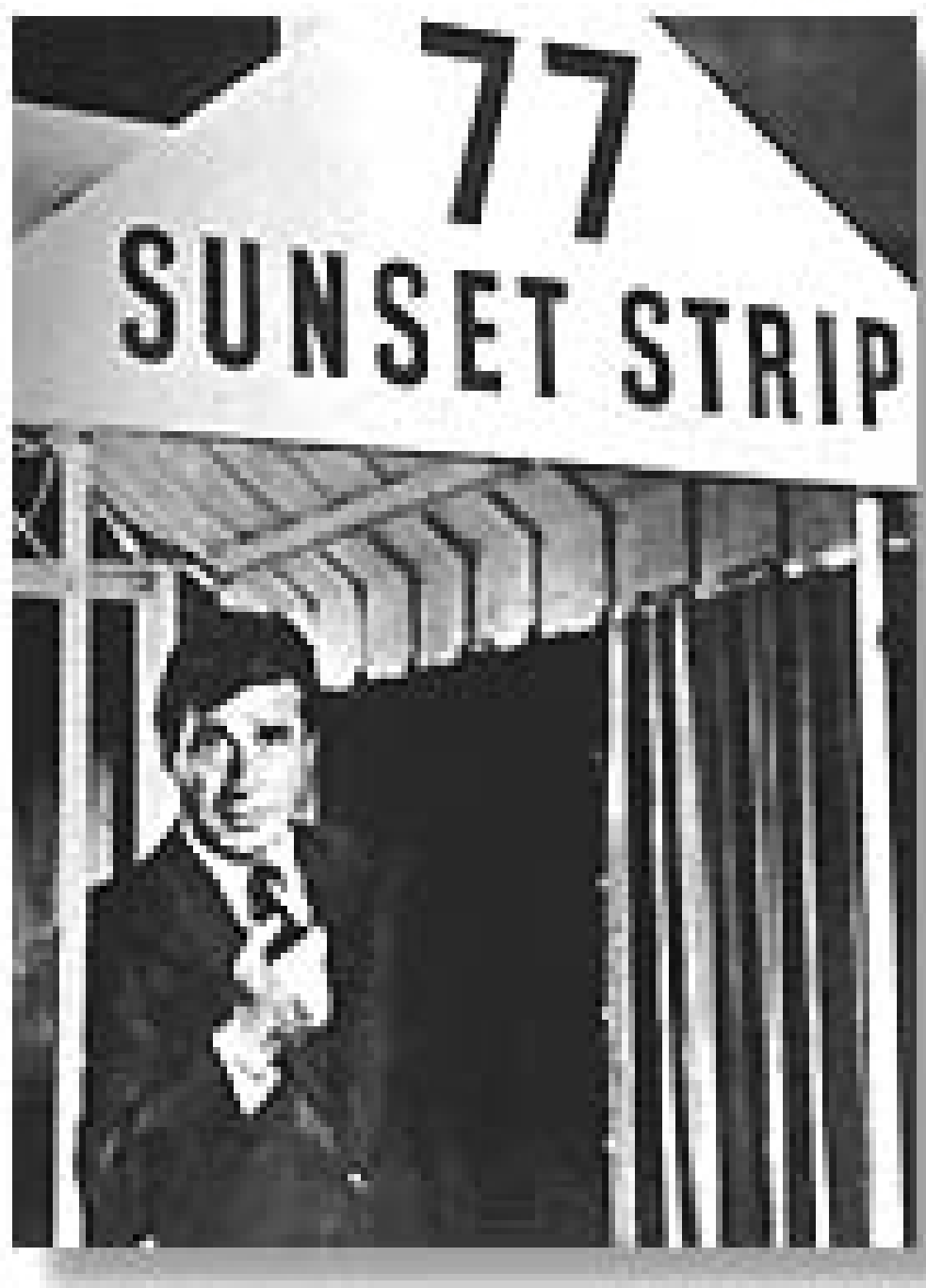
A Family Affair



- Very highly rated program and depicted someone successful and, at least at first young, urban and professional.
 - Bill Davis' carefree existence as a swinging bachelor [was] just about perfect. A highly paid consulting engineer, he maintained an elegant apartment off Fifth Avenue in Manhattan (apartment 27A) (fansite)
- Clearly they did not live in gentrified housing, nor did he live in a glass and steel high-rise.

77 Sunset Strip

- West coast, swingin' cats
- Clearly modern, but West Coast



The Courtship of Eddies Father



- West coast widower dad
- Apartment dweller
- Modern



I Dream of Jeannie

- Cocoa Beach



Julia

- Starred Dihann Carroll as a widowed African American nurse and parent in Los Angeles.
- She lived in a “modern...beautifully appointed apartment rather lavish for a nurse's salary”



That Girl

- Another program of the late 1960s depicting apartment life, but less clearly.
- The Marlo Thomas character changed addresses and setting frequently.
- Upscale apartments the rule, but the setting is not used to much effect.
- Perhaps indicative of the uncertainty about how to house a young semi-professional in the city.



1970s



- In the 1970s, housing becomes much more varied as programming becomes more thematically diverse.
- Seven of the top 20 programs in 1973 have significant urban-domestic settings.
- In 1974, 18 of the top 20 programs are urban set.
- All in the Family, Sanford and Son, The Mary Tyler Moore Show, Maude, Chico and the Man, The Bob Newhart Show and Good Times, Rhoda, all use big city settings.

The Categories



- 30+ years, urban and working class- row housing
- 30+, middle class with children- suburbs
- 30+, urban and wealthy- modern high rise
- Under 30, urban and hip-gentrified housing

All in the Family (1971-1979)



- The series revolved around the life of Archie Bunker who resided at 704 Houser Street in the Corona section of Queens, New York.
- Archie was an uneducated, prejudiced, arch-conservative with a outspoken and working-class opinions on everything.

All in the Family



Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman



The Jeffersons

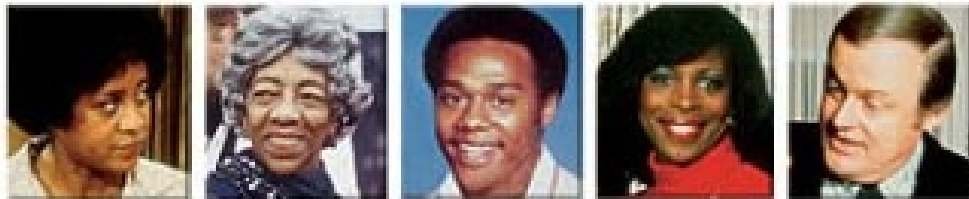


- Professional, but over 30.
- Settled in the “deluxe apartment” in the sky.
- Clearly Fordist housing

THE JEFFERSONS



The Complete First Season



DVD
VIDEO

The Odd Couple (1970-1975)



- Divorced male roommates, over 30.
- Lived in a high-rise apartment, but the apartment set changes during series.
- Professional, but decidedly unstylish (Felix and Oscar)



Odd Couple



Bob Newhart

- Older, decidedly uncool
- Glass and Steel high-rise apartment dwellers



Good Times 1971-1979



- Florida and James Evans were lower-middle-class blacks living in a high-rise on the South Side of Chicago with their three children: JJ was the oldest at 17; Thelma, 16 and Michael, 10.
- Fordist housing at its worst, most depressing.
- Robert Taylor Homes?



Robert Taylor Homes



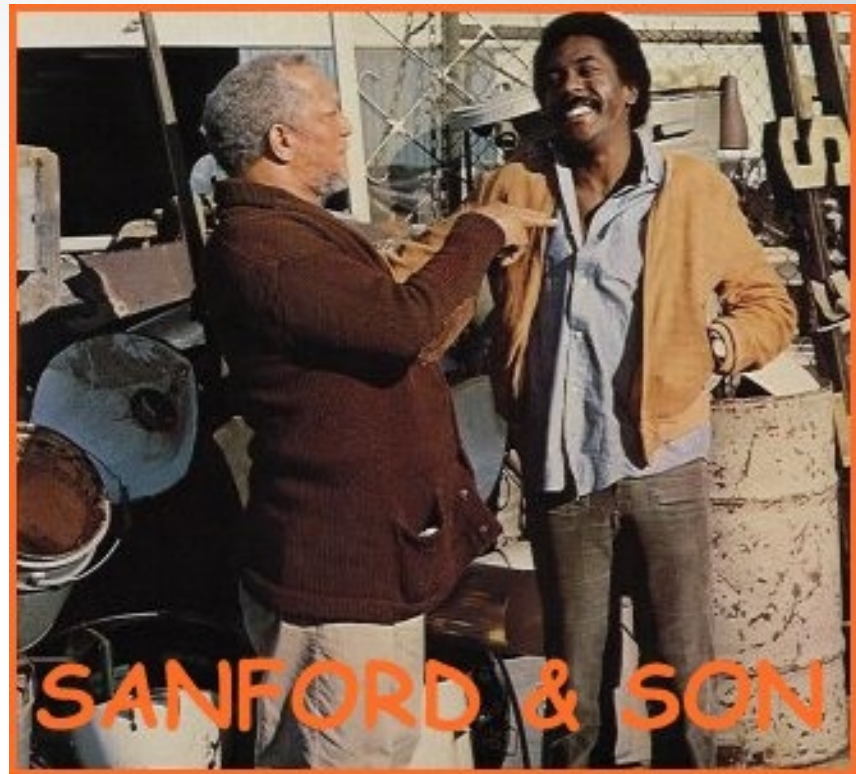
Robert Taylor Homes



Sanford and Sun



- ***9114 South Central, Los Angeles, California***



Chico and the Man



What's Happening

- Urban setting, but not inner city



The Brady Bunch



- House and neighborhood where I most wanted to live while I was growing up: suburban and safe.
- Opposite the “Good Times” set.
- Mike Brady was an architect, one would guess they would have lived in a more interesting house.
- This house probably set the standard for suburban-family housing in the early 1970s.

Happy Days



Family (Eight is Enough?)

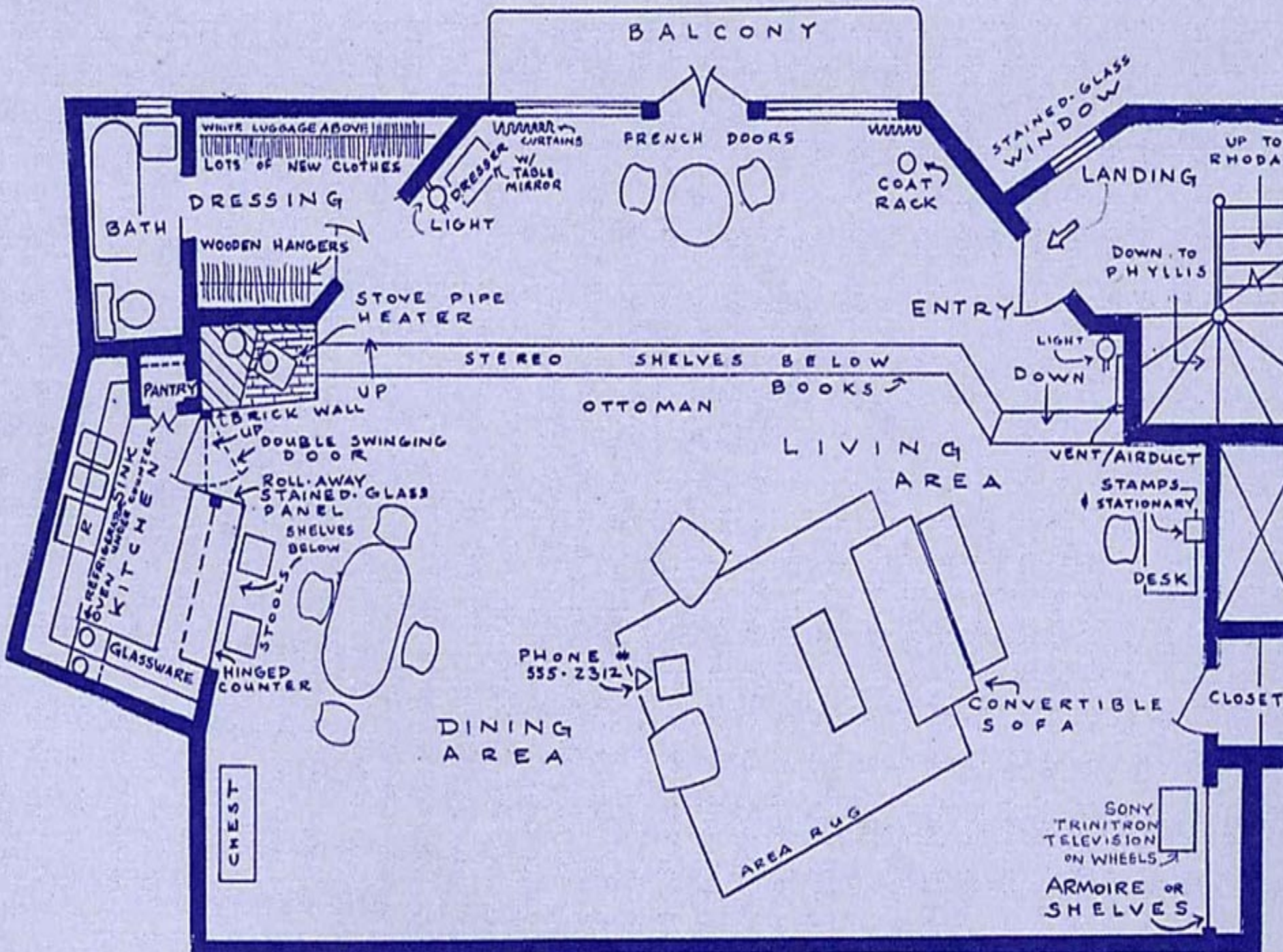


Mary Tyler Moore Show 1970-77

- Perhaps the first TV depiction of a yuppie in a gentrified dwelling.
- Careful consideration of Mary's Apartment was made by the production staff.
- Fans of the show are still taken by Mary's pad.







Mary Tyler Moore Show



- Mary lived Apartment D in an old Victorian home located at 119 North Weatherly Avenue
- Many scenes shot in the apartment and many plot involved directly the apartment.
- Rhoda (her upstairs neighbor) covets her apartment and they initially do not get along well because of this apartment envy.



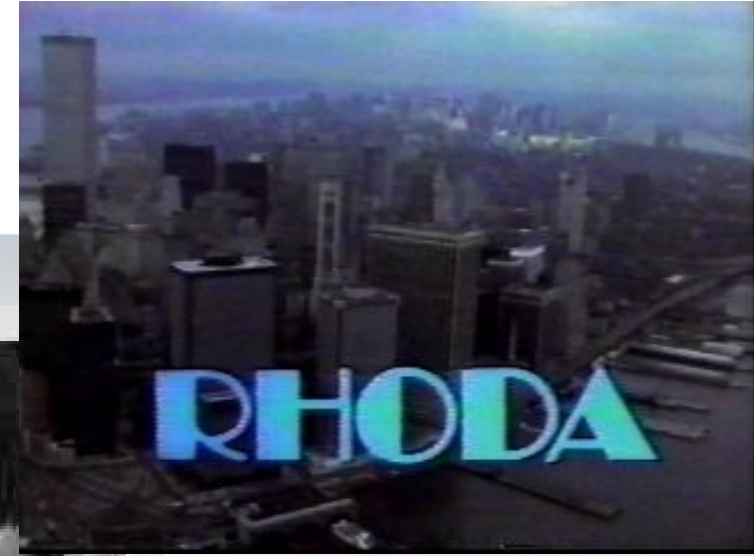
Mary Tyler Moore Show



- In later seasons, Mary moves on up out of the “gentrified” apartment to something befitting her greater maturity.
- Modern in style it is describe by one fan as “very upscale”
- In reality, the building is modern, but part of one of Minneapolis’ more dangerous public housing complexes.



Rhoda



- Carlton the Doorman
- Various living arrangements but got clearly gentrified in later seasons.

Welcome Back Kotter



- Kotter's house was clearly gentrified.
- Set in Brooklyn and the apartment or house they lived in was originally intended to be a focal point of the program.
- Series shifted early to more school-set episodes, but cool Mr. Kotter's house remained the closing shot for each episode.



**Welcome
Back Kotter**



Mork and Mindy



- Lived in an apartment in a restored Victorian
- Earthy vibe

One Day at a Time



- Set in an apartment in Indianapolis.
- Exterior shots not prominent or absent.
- Since the building super was a regular, one can assume that it was not in good repair, but it appeared to be semi-gentrified.

One Day at a Time





B BIRD



Three's Company

- Apartment dwellers, but in Santa Monica



1980s



- By the 1980s, TV housing categories fully developed.
- Almost all under 30 urbanites were living in gentrified housing.
- Over 30 characters, in order to establish their “hipness” were placed in old Victorians, Brownstones, etc.
- The Rosanne show recreated the working class housing category.





Cosby Show

- The Huxtable's brownstone front steps are now a New York City tourist landmark.



Too Close For Comfort



Friends



Friends



Conclusions



- Television programs help establish the categories of knowledge regarding our housing choices.
- Television assisted in characterizing brick, glass and steel, Fordist housing as suited for those over 40 and/or the urban poor.

Conclusions



- Gentrified housing became a popular and knowable category of urban dwelling through programs such as, The Mary Tyler Moore Show, Mork and Mindy, Welcome Back Kotter, etc.
- These programs therefore helped fuel demand for gentrified housing by giving gentrifiers and developers a knowable and desirable housing/lifestyle category.