Goodman Dies At 85; Taught Architecture

Percival Goodman, professor emeritus of architecture at Columbia, died in New York City Oct. 11 of lung cancer. He was 85.

He taught architecture at Columbia for more than 25 years. He joined the University as an associate in architecture in 1946, becoming assistant professor in 1949, associate professor in 1955, professor in 1965 and professor emeritus of architecture when he retired in 1972.

The artist, urban planner and architect, who was one of the nation's leading designers of synagogues, was best known as an urban theorist and student of utopias. In 1947, he wrote *Communitas*, a blueprint for self-sufficient communities, with his brother, the philosopher Paul Goodman. They envisioned cities of 200,000 where people would work in, or within walking distance of their homes. Farms within the city limits would produce the communities' food and offer an ideal setting for child-rearing. Regional manufacturers would produce such items as trains and automobiles. Above all, work and its products would be useful.

He later wrote *The Double E*, on the relationship of ecology to city planning, which was published in 1977. And in the years before his death, he embarked on a book-length series of elaborate drawings of utopias throughout history.

During his 43-year architectural practice, from 1936 to 1979, he designed more than 50 synagogues and religious buildings around the United States, including the stone-clad Fifth Avenue Synagogue at 62nd Street in Manhattan, Congregation Adath Israel in the Riverdale section of the Bronx and Shaarey Zedek in Detroit.

In his obituary of Goodman, *New York Times* architectural critic Paul Goldberger wrote: "His synagogues were assertive, modernist structures, reflecting Mr. Goodman's belief that the vocabulary of modern architecture could be transformed into something rich enough to express powerful religious feeling."

Deeply committed to the belief that rational planning could create better cities, he was a persistent critic of many planning efforts of the 20th century, including Ebenezer Howard's garden cities; Le Corbusier's Ville Radieuse of modernist slabs amid highways and open space, and most of New York City's, especially those which displaced large numbers of residents and destroyed older buildings.

He designed many plans for parts of the city, including a master plan for Long Island City, in 1945, that would have transformed its light industrial districts into a residential community for 13,000 families, "prefiguring by more than 40 years the more gradual transformation occurring there today," wrote Goldberger.

In 1964 he designed a plan for a 10-block renewal area from W. 125th to 135th Streets in Harlem, which Columbia intended to sponsor. Goodman's plan was intended to develop the industrial section along the Hudson River there into a complex of apartment buildings, businesses, garages and parkland, combining both moderate- and low-income housing.

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The plan called for erecting seven apartment buildings, some as high as 30 stories, on a plaza the height of the Riverside Drive viaduct. Beneath the plaza was to be space for some of the existing industries and garages and for new industries, such as research organizations and computer companies that might do business with the University. A platform built over the Hudson on pilings was to be landscaped as a park.

The project ultimately became embroiled in the issues surrounding the student strike in 1968 and was never built. Goodman had disavowed Columbia's version of the plan, which was prepared by other architects, saying it did not represent his original intentions.

Goodman was born in New York City Jan. 13, 1904. He was educated privately, and in 1925 he received the Society of Beaux-Arts Architects Paris Prize, which sent him to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, where he received his architectural training.

He is survived by his wife, Naomi; two sons, George Ridge and Joel; a daughter, Rachel, five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.