

GUNPOWDER PARK / ROBERT WILSONPROJECT STAGE A WORKSHOP PROPOSAL

MICHAEL PINSKY

GRID



Gunpowder Park The Field Station Sewardstone Road Waltham Abbey Essex EN9 3GP UK

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Proposal for Gunpowder Park: *Grid*

Once upon a time in the near past, a pseudo Georgian Estate was built on the banks of the Lee River. This estate reflected the occidental obsession with a nostalgic construct of an unidentified moment near the beginning of the industrial revolution. A time when right was right, wrong was wrong and people knew their place within society. The inhabitants of this estate were sold a dream of quiet crescents overlooking a perfectly defined Capability Brown landscape. Over the next few years what materialised was quite the opposite of their aspirations and hopes. A land/city/suburbcape that reflected the complexities of our post-modern multilayered ethnically dispersed and diverse culture. The park that grew to the South, part sanctuary, part wilderness, part power plant, part landform had a certain austere charm, more at home with the sublime than the picturesque. To the north emerged a warehouse, the largest in Europe, providing a battle grey backdrop to the estate, that radically shifted the scale of the Georgian houses, creating a film set waiting for the next soap opera.

Peculiar things began to happen. An artist laid a barely perceptible grid in the ground. This extension of the principles of the meridian line that dissects Gunpowder Park began to become infected with small dwellings. These structures found a comfortable habitat at each of the grid's intersections. Though smaller than their Georgian neighbours these houses, matched exactly the carefully tailored appearance of their counterparts. These viral homes drew their power directly from the electricity pylons that marched down the Lee Valley. Slowly over the years each square in the complete grid became populated with these dwellings. Within each, a different cultural activity developed. Artists from over the world inhabited and worked in a setting that overlaid the natural with the geometric. People from the neighbouring estates, while jogging or walking their dog would find a home mirroring their own, with unexpected activities happening within.

Then one morning, as a reluctant sun cleared the mist that hung heavily to the park, a space was revealed. Open Space. Space without habitation S p a c e.

Notes

1. Gunpowder Park, a name forever associated with battle.
2. The meridian line, the line against which all co-ordinates derive, constructing the cartographic system for navigating the world.
3. The chessboard represents both the cartographic grid and the battle.
4. Gunpowder Park looks like a knight if you look at it on a map and crinkle up your eyes.
5. A knight unlike any other chess piece can jump, moving though space magically without effecting players between. The quantum leap.

Michael Pinsky – June 2006