



Figure 8.55 Charles Center site and plans. (a) The 1957 proposal and (b) the site as developed by 1972.

The site is bisected by Fayette Street (later partially bridged by a building and deck so that two superblocks were linked into one to form the basis of the design). The original design (1957) had clear Modernist overtones with its considerable amount of parks and plazas (see Figure 8.55a), but the one that evolved by 1972 (see Figure 8.55) was significantly denser. Forty changes, each approved by the City Council, were made to the original conceptual design based largely on a more thorough understanding of the property market.

The components of the site were linked by an elevated walkway – a skyway – made possible by the 60-foot (18-metre) slope of the site. At the same time, buildings were

built to the property line on the streets so that Charles Center was both an island and integrated with surrounding areas. The sites were disposed of in a number of ways: competition based on team credentials, land price competition, negotiated sales and negotiated leases. Each site had guidelines and controls written in a section of a legally adopted plan titled, ‘Aesthetic control and approval of plans and specification’ (Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency, 1959). The controls stipulated the building use, the maximum bulk and the height of each development (see Figure 8.56 for one important block). Some flexibility in terms of the modification of site boundaries was allowed but none in terms