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**Nina Gibans** [00:00:00] We can start. I'm Nina Gibans, and this is Bill Blunden. So the start point really is how you got into the architecture, your architecture career you were in. But maybe how you were, where you were brought up, born?

**William Blunden** [00:00:24] I was, I was born in Lima, Ohio, on the west side of the state.

**Nina Gibans** [00:00:29] Railroad town.

**William Blunden** [00:00:30] A railroad town, an interesting combination of economies. There was a rural economy there, a very strong farm economy. There was an industrial economy. Lima Locomotive was an old, old firm that turned into a tank plant during World War II. Westinghouse was there and Lubrizol, and it was a fairly interesting mix town of about 45,000 when I was there. And very much smalltown America in the '40s and '50s. And it was, you know, screen doors weren't locked, houses weren't locked. You didn't lock your car. Children went and played wherever they wanted to.

**Nina Gibans** [00:01:16] Have you been back?

**William Blunden** [00:01:18] I go back. Yes. I have, still have relatives there and no immediate family.

**Nina Gibans** [00:01:24] Has it changed a lot?

**William Blunden** [00:01:24] Oh, yes, as all the small towns in America have changed, sadly, and the car has waged its war and won. And so the center of the town is not as viable as it used to be and the outskirts are full of big-box stores.

**Nina Gibans** [00:01:48] And I have to ask you, are the sounds of the railroads still in the public area downtown?

**William Blunden** [00:01:55] Yes, they are.

**Nina Gibans** [00:01:56] That was built.

**William Blunden** [00:01:56] Yes.

**Nina Gibans** [00:01:58] That was an artist who came to Cleveland later, who actually grew up in Little Italy and who brought the sounds of the boats and bridges, trucks and so forth out to, you know, where the children's museum?

**William Blunden** [00:02:15] Yeah.

**Nina Gibans** [00:02:16] By cable television, I mean, you know, telephone. That was a project.

**William Blunden** [00:02:23] Yeah. Well. The, the...

**Nina Gibans** [00:02:25] All right. So continue.

**William Blunden** [00:02:26] So it was a, it was a smalltown experience, which I loved. I think I had probably one of the most carefree and wonderful growing up periods in my life. I had the privilege of going to high school and college in the '50s, which was a very special time, in my view. America still had a certain degree of innocence. And...

**Nina Gibans** [00:02:52] Where did you go to college?

**William Blunden** [00:02:53] I went to... My undergraduate education was at Ohio State, and my graduate school education was at Cornell. And in between then I served for two years in the Army, in Army Intelligence, the Counterintelligence Corps, and I was stationed at the Presidio of San Francisco for two years. Went back to Ithaca, New York, and was there for two years and then moved to New York City. And I was there for about four years. I worked for Edward Durell Stone and then moved to Cleveland.

**Nina Gibans** [00:03:34] Right. The Cornell architecture had its influence...

**William Blunden** [00:03:40] Well, I think...

**Nina Gibans** [00:03:41] On the environment.

**William Blunden** [00:03:41] That... I think the, you know, the influences I've had in my life have been many. I started... I decided I was going to be an architect when I was twelve years old. I had a drafting board and all T squares, and I was drafting, and drawing houses, and buildings in my bedroom when I was twelve years old. Unfortunately, at the expense of doing other homework. But... And when I was at Ohio State, I actually... And I started out in the architectural school and I took a year out because I wanted to spend a year in the art school. So I spent a year in the fine arts and then went back into architecture, graduated from Ohio State in 1958. Spent two years in the Army and then went back to graduate school in 1960. And that was a two-year experience as well.

**Nina Gibans** [00:04:42] Were you there at the same time Bill Morris was there?

**William Blunden** [00:04:45] No. Bill was ahead of me, and he was... I only met him when I moved to Cleveland.

**Nina Gibans** [00:04:55] Right.

**William Blunden** [00:04:56] Yeah.

**Nina Gibans** [00:04:57] So you came to Cleveland.

**William Blunden** [00:04:58] I came to Cleveland.

**Nina Gibans** [00:04:59] So let's talk about that path.

**William Blunden** [00:05:04] Well, I was actually from New York. I could have moved anywhere.

**Nina Gibans** [00:05:11] Who did you work for in New York?

**William Blunden** [00:05:12] Ed Stone. Edward Durell Stone. And I could have moved anywhere. And I explored Philadelphia and Boston and felt that at the time I visited those cities, their renaissance is already, had already started. And I came to Cleveland and it looked like Cleveland's was about to start. And I felt that that was probably a good sign and a good place to come to. And I had a lot of friends who lived in Ohio. I grew up... Growing up here and going to undergraduate school here, I had a lot of friends. And I thought that was a bonus as well.

**Nina Gibans** [00:05:56] Well. Maybe we haven't explored the major influences on your career...

**William Blunden** [00:06:02] Okay.

**Nina Gibans** [00:06:02] As much as we thought.

**William Blunden** [00:06:03] Okay. I think that certainly I had a couple of teachers in high school that actually encouraged me, and they actually. I took some architectural drawing classes in high school as part of the industrial arts program, although I was in a college prep course. I spun off and they allowed me to do that. There were only two of us in the program, and I worked as an office boy in an architectural firm in Lima: McLaughlin and Kyle. And that was, I was in the eighth grade, and I did that for several years off and on, and actually worked for them after I'd gone to college, worked for them in the summer, a couple of summers. But I had a couple of teachers in high school that encouraged me. One was my art teacher, Mrs. Simpson, and she was just wonderful. I ended up, when I moved to Cleveland, living across the street from her sister. So it's a small world, but she encouraged me. Then I went to Ohio State, and I had several professors there that encouraged me, George Tittle and Harry Filion, and they were very supportive and... But I felt that Ohio State at that time, and still is, the architectural school's in the engineering college, and they gave us a very strong background in the technical and craft of building. And I just felt I needed more design experience and exposure. And that's why I went back to Cornell. And there I met two professors that were, that really changed my life. Henry Elder, who was an Englishman, who had taught at the AA. And Mario Romanach, who was from Cuba and had just left everything he owned and exited Cuba. Went to Harvard, taught there for a couple of years. He and Gropius were friends. And then from there he went to Cornell, and he was there during my time. And shortly after I graduated, he moved to Philadelphia and became part of the Penn faculty and was there for 20, 25 years. At one time he was the dean of the school. And both of those people just changed my life. They. Henry Elder was an intellectual, and, and he guided me on in that, that path. And Mario was a designer and he was a man who illustrated to me that you could devote your life to that. And it was worthy, it was a worthy cause. And coming from a midwestern practical experience, few people talk to me about the fact that, that art and the, and the, the need for art was a was a legitimate life endeavor. And so between the two of them, they really set me on my path.

**Nina Gibans** [00:09:38] That's right. So when you came to Cleveland, finally, you mentioned where you lived. But where was that?

**William Blunden** [00:09:45] In New York?

**Nina Gibans** [00:09:46] No, here.

**William Blunden** [00:09:46] Oh, here. I moved here. Originally, lived in Shaker Heights for 26 years or something like that. I now live in Cleveland Heights.

**Nina Gibans** [00:09:56] And what year did you come here?

**William Blunden** [00:09:59] I came here in 1965, I believe, or '66. I'm very bad on dates.

**Nina Gibans** [00:10:07] In the '60s?

**William Blunden** [00:10:08] Yes, in the '60s. Middle '60s? Yeah.

**Nina Gibans** [00:10:11] So what was going on and how did you enter the world of architecture here?

**William Blunden** [00:10:17] Well, I actually came here to to take a job. I had interviewed with Dalton-Dalton. And I was here about six months. And I was I was ready to go back to New York. I wasn't satisfied. And an individual in the in Dalton's office said, well, why don't you go down and talk to Don Hisaka? And so I went down and, and Don and I hit it off and I left Dalton-Dalton. And went to work for Don. And we had a grand time. I was there for seven years, I believe. And it was it was fabulous. We had great fun. We had a lot of interesting work to do, and it was a wonderful experience. Don is a great teacher and I learned a lot from him as well.

**Nina Gibans** [00:11:16] Do you think we should interview Don in this project since he worked on Euclid Avenue and since he had one of the few Cleveland buildings that was nationally recognized?

**William Blunden** [00:11:29] Yeah, I certainly think that he's an important part of the, of the...

**Nina Gibans** [00:11:32] That was something I wanted to ask you about, interviewing him by phone. He's in San Francisco area.

**William Blunden** [00:11:39] Yeah, he's, he's... You know, he, he played a very, I think, a key role in elevating the, again, elevating the expectations for what a building should be. And I think that... And he was one of those guiding lights, in my view. He was the guiding light in Cleveland as far as doing that.

**Nina Gibans** [00:12:09] I've had a lot of conversation with him recently. He's just retiring. He's out in San Francisco area, Berkeley. And maybe he'll come back here next year with the Cleveland Goes Modern.

**William Blunden** [00:12:22] Oh, great.

**Nina Gibans** [00:12:23] So, Don, that's where I know you.

**William Blunden** [00:12:29] Right.

**Nina Gibans** [00:12:29] I first got to know you.

**William Blunden** [00:12:29] Yes.

**Nina Gibans** [00:12:33] So in developing Euclid Avenue and the development of Euclid Avenue, obviously you weren't in Cleveland during, you know, the old days.

**William Blunden** [00:12:46] No.

**Nina Gibans** [00:12:46] So to speak.

**William Blunden** [00:12:47] However.

**Nina Gibans** [00:12:48] However.

**William Blunden** [00:12:49] My father was.

**Nina Gibans** [00:12:50] Oh.

**William Blunden** [00:12:52] He was a... Prior to World War I, he was nineteen years old. His brother had left the farm and moved here and was working in a machine shop. And he came here and worked with him. And he basically worked off of what is like a UPS truck. It was a delivery truck and he delivered things to all the mansions on Euclid Avenue.

**Nina Gibans** [00:13:17] What was that like?

**William Blunden** [00:13:18] Oh. He said that it...

**Nina Gibans** [00:13:20] Did you accompany him?

**William Blunden** [00:13:20] No, no, no, no, no, no, no.

**Nina Gibans** [00:13:21] Oh, this is before.

**William Blunden** [00:13:22] Yes, this is before I even was on this planet. Now, this... He was only nineteen years old.

**Nina Gibans** [00:13:28] Oh, okay.

**William Blunden** [00:13:28] He was here for, I don't know, maybe a year, a year and a half, and then went into World War I. [And] then never came back. But, but he has told me about his experiences in driving a truck.

**Nina Gibans** [00:13:43] Would you like to tell us some of those experiences?

**William Blunden** [00:13:45] Well, they're really not... I don't, I don't know that there, there's an architectural connection. I mean, the truck driver evidently liked to stop at all the bars and drink, and he'd have to sit in the truck and wait for him since he was the number two guy. So. Yeah. He said that that made him a bit mad because he could get, they could have gotten their runs a lot earlier, finished a lot earlier. And he could have gone home. But no, he had to sit in the truck and wait for this guy to go hit every bar on Euclid Avenue that was or wherever they were. But he did talk a little bit about the mansions and how many there were and what a, what a place it was.

**Nina Gibans** [00:14:21] So he would have delivered to all those mansions?

**William Blunden** [00:14:23] He, he would have delivered packages.

**Nina Gibans** [00:14:25] Do you know if it would have been a horse driven truck?

**William Blunden** [00:14:27] No, it was a truck, truck.

**Nina Gibans** [00:14:28] It was a truck, truck.

**William Blunden** [00:14:28] Yeah. Gasoline.

**Nina Gibans** [00:14:31] Right. Probably made in Cleveland.

**William Blunden** [00:14:33] Probably made in Cleveland.

**Nina Gibans** [00:14:35] Well, that's fun. Is there anything you want to say more about that?

**William Blunden** [00:14:42] No, I think that's...

**Nina Gibans** [00:14:44] Right, because those mansions.

**William Blunden** [00:14:45] It was just an aside.

**Nina Gibans** [00:14:46] Those mansions are history, legacy gone. So how do you feel about that, that you never got to really experience them?

**William Blunden** [00:14:56] Well, I, you know, I think it's interesting because Americans have very short attention spans. And you go to Europe, and there is a sense of the whole continuity of time playing out. And we tend to, you know, build and then tear down. A typical example is the student union building at CSU. This building, Don Hisaka did this building. In my view, it's the best building on the campus. And it's, it's one of the best modern buildings in the downtown area. And they're going to tear it down and they're going to put up a new student union building. And I find it hard to understand the logic for doing that.

**Nina Gibans** [00:15:51] Well, that's why. Did you have any part of that?

**William Blunden** [00:15:54] Yes, I did. I was working.

**Nina Gibans** [00:15:56] Well, let's get into that a bit.

**William Blunden** [00:15:56] I was working in the office when, when they were doing the building. I left right after the major part of the design was done. I had, Don and I were separating. And I went to work for another firm here in town as a, as director of design. And I was only there two years and I started my own office. But I, it was an interesting process. It's a very difficult site. And the resolution that I think that that Don came up with was very, very pragmatic. But it was also wonderful in the fact that the, the spaces that are created and the relationships of the spaces and how the building fits on that site are wonderful. Some people complain that it's a concrete building, but you know, that isn't, that is not the heart of the building. Heart of the building is inside.

**Nina Gibans** [00:17:00] Well, the issues have the ones that I've read about it anyway are the ones that are about facing Euclid Avenue and energy consumption. And I know about the sound in the main part.

**William Blunden** [00:17:15] Yes.

**Nina Gibans** [00:17:15] Which is not different from the old arcade.

**William Blunden** [00:17:19] Right. I mean, you know, it we get so used to buildings with eight foot ceilings and acoustic tile in the ceiling and tile on the floor. And this becomes our standard. And we, we assume that everything should be like this. I find it to be a wonderful building and quite uplifting when you walk into it. And the other things, I think that, you know, some of the considerations of, of energy and things like that are, are addressable. And I think you can address those. I think it's. I don't, I can't speak for what the what all the reasons are, but I have not been convinced. And there's nothing that I've read that is tells me or says to me it's compelling. It is a compelling reason to tear that building down.

**Nina Gibans** [00:18:14] Let me ask you an architectural question that bothers me. Why might not, except for the political reasons of going back to your original architect, why would they not go back to an architect as well respected, say, as Hisaka? And ask for his renovations?

**William Blunden** [00:18:43] I think that what happens, at least in my experience, is that if an architect works, particularly in an institutional setting, works for an administration, then they become associated with that administration. And each administration wants to make its own mark, have its own signature on things. And so they, they tend not to do that or it's been my experience that they tend not to do that. We have been involved in projects with institutions in the city where the administrations have changed and we have been able to continue that continuity. But at some point, it always ends. There's always a change in administration, no matter how many years you might be involved, and 15, 20 years they'll come a time when an administration will come in and they just want to make their own signature.

**Nina Gibans** [00:19:34] Change.

**William Blunden** [00:19:35] Right.

**Nina Gibans** [00:19:35] Right. Just because they need to make their own mark.

**William Blunden** [00:19:38] They, they feel they need to make their own mark. And, you know, that's just the way the world works.

**Nina Gibans** [00:19:47] Right. I guess I wish it weren't quite that way.

**William Blunden** [00:19:50] Well, I'd be, I'd be happy if they just, you know, if they're going to do it, at least keep it in the city. You know, we don't need to go to New York. We don't need to go to Boston. You know, we don't need to go to L.A. There's plenty of talent here that can tackle those problems.

**Nina Gibans** [00:20:13] Well, we know that some of our architects are working around the world from Cleveland. So there's no reason they shouldn't work in Cleveland.

**William Blunden** [00:20:21] Right.

**Nina Gibans** [00:20:21] It's really one of the, one of the issues.

**William Blunden** [00:20:24] Well, if they don't work in Cleveland, if Cleveland turns its back on its architectural community, as far as projects are concerned, then the architecture community is going to, it's going to die. It's going to be, it's going to be basically is what will be left is basically a service community. It's like the art community, music community. If you don't support the local talent, it leaves because it can't sustain itself here. And so it's very important. It seems to me that both the city and the state take a hard look at employing the talent that it has and building on that talent, not turning its back and going to New York. For someone who's going to come in here for a year and leave and never be heard of again. And so their commitment and their... I'm not saying that they don't professionally perform their responsibilities, but the commitment to that and the, and the passion for that. Their investment in that is not nearly as great as people who are living here and making and trying make their lives.

**Nina Gibans** [00:21:42] I want to make a leap with that idea, an analogy to the corporate community, for instance, that has lost some, some of its leadership. The corporate, you know, headquarters that were in Cleveland. Might have to do with what's happened since the time you came actually to the city. And it's bearing on the vision of the city. So can we do that?

**William Blunden** [00:22:15] Sure. Absolutely.

**Nina Gibans** [00:22:16] I mean, it's an analogy I think that works.

**William Blunden** [00:22:18] Absolutely.

**Nina Gibans** [00:22:19] About commitment.

**William Blunden** [00:22:20] Sure.

**Nina Gibans** [00:22:22] Sustainability and energy and all that kind of thing.

**William Blunden** [00:22:25] Right.

**Nina Gibans** [00:22:25] And maintenance and supervision and...

**William Blunden** [00:22:29] Right.

**Nina Gibans** [00:22:30] Caring and all those good things. So. Have you a favorite building on Euclid Avenue? And can we start with anything like that? Have you?

**William Blunden** [00:22:43] I have. The only building that I've been involved with on Euclid Avenue as far as an architectural project is concerned, is the CSU center. And I was in Don's office at that time. However, I, our offices for close to 27 years were in the Arcade. And I think that that building is a jewel and thank goodness that I came along and put 50 million or whatever it was into the building because we know what's going to be there for a while. It was badly in need of, of repair and upgrade. But it is, you know, in my view, it's the jewel of Cleveland. And it sets a standard for urban space. It sets a standard for the way it responds to people. I think it's a wonderful, wonderful building. And it does everything buildings should do. It excites. It, it enlivens. It, it is joyous to be in. And it's just it's a marvelous building, marvelous building. And...

**Nina Gibans** [00:23:57] I couldn't agree more.

**William Blunden** [00:23:59] You know, certainly the, the... And as you go along Euclid Avenue, it's the old buildings that stand out. The new ones, with the exception of Don's, the new ones just don't quite go there. [They] don't seem to respond to the issues that the other older buildings responded to. Obviously, times are different, issues are different. But I think there's still a consistency and a demand for what these old buildings did. The the little corner building at East 9th and Euclid, Cleveland Trust, little dome building there. As I was walking down today, I was looking at that and just marveling at it and, and absolutely dumbfounded as to why there isn't anybody in that building. Why? Why? How could someone not want to be in there? Obviously, there are reasons and I don't know what they are, but I'm always amazed.

**Nina Gibans** [00:25:07] it makes me think about the Breuer situation.

**William Blunden** [00:25:09] With the tower? Well, here again, you know, are we going to build buildings and then every thirty years tear them down? Start over again? That's a really a waste of of resources, in my view. We can. If, if we've got enough money to tear that building down and build a new one, why don't we leave that building and build a new one somewhere else? And, you know, then we've got both buildings. I can't believe that a building, though, that's less than fifty years old can possibly be outdated. When we have buildings that are 100 years old and Euclid Avenue, there are still viable buildings. I, I just.

**Nina Gibans** [00:25:46] They aren't dated. They are dated in a way, but in a classic way.

**William Blunden** [00:25:50] Yeah. And so, anyway, I think that this rush to destroy or to tear down and build new I think is questionable. I find, I find it hard to believe that that really makes economic sense. Now, I realize, again, I don't have all the issues that are out there and all the reasons for it, but you just can't. You know, otherwise you're going to be rebuilding the same buildings and you're not going to be doing anything else if you tear them down every thirty years, the buildings you build, you'll have no resources to do anything else.

**Nina Gibans** [00:26:32] Is that a problem with our vision and working it out?

**William Blunden** [00:26:34] I think so. I think so. You know, I. I don't know whether I'm getting ahead of you or not, but it seems to me that, that the, the problem Cleveland has had is [the] focus of the leadership to the, to the urban core. And it has been development here has been one that I would call opportunity driven as opposed to planned.

**Nina Gibans** [00:27:15] Lord knows, we've had plans though.

**William Blunden** [00:27:17] Oh we've planned to say, I don't know how many Euclid Avenue times we've planned Euclid Avenue. Halpern has been here at least twice, and there have been other people in between. Public Square gets studied every ten years and it goes. It's it's the same thing that I talked about tearing down buildings, believe me. Keep studying these same things. Public Square is the front door of Cleveland. Doesn't need to be anything else than that. It's not a destination center. It's a... It's a transportation center. [It's] the front door of the city, the parks and the traffic patterns. People seem to have a lot of problems with and I don't have problems with them. It is unique. Well, are we going to make it look like something everybody else has? This is a unique feature in Cleveland, the four quadrangle. The way the streets work around it, but it is a front door. It's a visual element. [It's] like the gateway to the Forbidden City or any sort of entry point. It is symbolic to put it. There was an article in the paper several weeks ago about, oh, we need to make it a destination and we're going to put in a theater and we're going to put in a restaurant in the quad. That would be absolutely, that would destroy what its purpose is and it wouldn't attract people.

**Nina Gibans** [00:28:41] Do you see it from your window?

**William Blunden** [00:28:43] I do see it from my window, absolutely.

**Nina Gibans** [00:28:45] And, and...

**William Blunden** [00:28:47] And it's lovely.

**Nina Gibans** [00:28:48] Yeah. Oh.

**William Blunden** [00:28:49] Lovely. [And] it's wonderful to watch the light change during the seasons and watch the trees. And so I think Public Square is fine. And let's, you know, every ten years they plant new trees. And so all we have are these trees that are in the process of growing. We don't have any mature trees. We need to get something. We just leave it. We do it, we leave it alone. We live with it. And we hopefully have been thoughtful enough about it that it will last for 150 years.

**Nina Gibans** [00:29:21] So we've talked about the traffic pattern and I can visualize past the sculpture and the history of those pieces that are on the Square. But what about other buildings? What about... You're in the Terminal, right?

**William Blunden** [00:29:36] I, we're in the BP tower. You know, the thing that, that the Public Square needs is it needs to fill in the blank on the west side of the Square with whatever that is. It should not be a parking garage. It needs to be a building. It needs to be something that...

**Nina Gibans** [00:29:58] You mean opposite the, opposite the Stouffer? Not Stouffer.

**William Blunden** [00:30:02] Yeah.

**Nina Gibans** [00:30:02] The hotel.

**William Blunden** [00:30:02] The Renaissance. Yeah. It's filling in the, the... What would be the northwest corner...

**Nina Gibans** [00:30:09] Right.

**William Blunden** [00:30:09] Where the west side of the Square opposite the hotel.

**Nina Gibans** [00:30:12] Didn't Peter Lewis try to do that at one point?

**William Blunden** [00:30:14] No, he had a building that he wanted to put down on the lakefront next to...

**Nina Gibans** [00:30:18] I see. Okay.

**William Blunden** [00:30:18] Next to the city hall or county building. I can't remember.

**Nina Gibans** [00:30:21] So you would, you would fill that space, right?

**William Blunden** [00:30:24] Yes. That should be filled. And there was a, you know, when was it... Ten years ago, they tore down the buildings that were there because they had intended to build a tower and then the economy went south and, and that... Those plans were put aside and they've never been revisited.

**Nina Gibans** [00:30:43] What about the restorations of some of the spaces there?

**William Blunden** [00:30:48] I think that, you know, again, I think that the old buildings are wonderful. We need to keep them. We need to have a sense of elapsed time in our city. We need to see that continuity [of] growth and change. It connects us to the, to the past and, and I think inspires us to the future. We, we... All the things that are new, all the things that we create are created from something that already exists, whether it's knowledge or, or an object or whatever. And so if we eliminate all the things that have existed, we're destroying a lot of what our inspiration is built from.

**Nina Gibans** [00:31:38] What about the Euclid Avenue development?

**William Blunden** [00:31:42] Well, I'm, you know, I'm happy that we're doing that. My concern is that I don't think that in itself is going to make the city any much different. It's going to change some traffic patterns. It's going to separate bus and automobile traffic. It's a, it's a transportation-driven project that has some beautification associated with it. The thing that Cleveland lacks, in my view, is that it's just lax and its economy has been just, just destroyed. And you've mentioned it earlier that the move of the corporate headquarters out of Cleveland, and you could list them and it'd fill a couple of pages. When I moved here, we were the, I think, first or second corporate headquarters...

**Nina Gibans** [00:32:36] Right.

**William Blunden** [00:32:36] In the country. Now I don't know where we are, but we not only lose, we lose lots of things. When that happens, we lose the economy, the base. We lose the philanthropic portion of that corporate structure, and we also lose the leadership of it. And those are three really important things in any community. A city can't exist without an economic base. They won't... That's their basic reason. Then, in this capitalist industrial society is cities are an economic-based place. And unlike the reason for Vatican City, which is quite different. Vatican City is not economically based, some would argue, but it's not it's a, it's a religious-based community. But most of the cities in the United States are economic-based. And if the economics aren't there, the city won't be there. It won't survive or will survive at a very low level.

**Nina Gibans** [00:33:46] What are some cities maybe that have done it right that are our side?

**William Blunden** [00:33:51] Well, certainly you look at Minneapolis–Saint Paul, which has just been in the paper the last couple of days. But I have visited that city a couple of times, and they have somehow managed to marshal their forces so that every time they do something, it's an additive, a cumulative effect to the overall city. As opposed to Cleveland, which does a very fragmented kind of development process. You have a piece going on down in the Flats. You have a piece going on out at University Circle. You have another piece on the lakefront. You have something here. But it isn't, it isn't cumulative. It doesn't, it doesn't add to the critical mass. And, in fact, it sort of pulls at that fabric in a negative way, not concentrating on it, but actually extending it and fragmenting it. And it seems to me that that's been one of the major issues that that lack of vision [for a] cumulative effect in the way we develop our city so that each step adds to and reinforces that which we've done before. And this goes back to the statement I made earlier about if every thirty years you tear down the buildings you build, you're just going to get into that cycle of build, tear down, build, tear down. And nothing's cumulative. Nothing is because you're using those resources to do something you've already done.

**Nina Gibans** [00:35:23] So how do we garner that vision?

**William Blunden** [00:35:26] Leadership. And in a city that is losing population and the majority of people who earn their living in the city of Cleveland, I would venture to say, don't live here. So it has a major effect there because we have no voting rights, that we have no direct control over who that city leadership is. We, we., The I think that the leadership of the city is, is critical. And I, I'm afraid, unfortunately, that we haven't had an abundance of great leadership in the city. When the corporations were here, they sort of supported that, and helped it, and, and helped to guide it. But with that gone or a great part of it gone, I, I'm not as pessimistic as I may sound, but with that gone, then [it's] really critical that both the, the city government, the mayor, the city council, the county government. I think [if] Cleveland is to have any sort of resurgence, it has to be in cooperation with a larger regional concept. But that leadership, that Cleveland leadership is really critical...

**Nina Gibans** [00:37:02] To that effort.

**William Blunden** [00:37:03] To that effort and to the effort of focusing what the vision is. And we, in my view, we've never really had that vision, not that Saint Paul, Minneapolis–Saint Paul seems to have had. And Pittsburgh also. Although they've had been having some economic problems, I think their core has a lot more, a lot healthier than our core. But the thing that is so difficult to understand is when I moved here, Cleveland was city of Cleveland. That alone had a million people in it. And they're saying by, in a couple of ten years from now, it's going to have 375,000.

**Nina Gibans** [00:37:50] How could we have avoided that?

**William Blunden** [00:37:52] I don't know. Well, I don't know that we can avoid everything. You can't avoid hurricanes in Louisiana. You can't avoid corporate mergers and acquisitions. And that's had a big part to play in the way we, what we've lost. So those things are not controllable. What we have to do is be honest with ourselves as to what we have and to marshal our resources and understand that we probably are going to have diminished resources. And we have to set our priorities and our focus to make sure that every dollar we have and every resource we have is focused on something that accumulates into a critical mass that can survive. And I think that, that is a real challenge for us. A real challenge.

**Nina Gibans** [00:38:56] Right. That isn't negative. That's a challenge.

**William Blunden** [00:38:59] It's a challenge. But the thing to be is realistic, to be honest, to accept the fact that we're not a, the fourth largest city in the United States anymore. Well, I think, again, when I came here, we were fourth or fifth largest city in the United States: Cleveland. And I don't know where we are now: 25th, 26th. And the poorest. But, you know, a lot of problems would be solved with an infusion of economic base. It would, it would start the wheels rolling. But that's only, that only builds resources. It doesn't build it. There are a lot of other things that need to happen once you have that.

**Nina Gibans** [00:39:44] And synergies among leaders.

**William Blunden** [00:39:46] Exactly.

**Nina Gibans** [00:39:48] And so forth.

**William Blunden** [00:39:48] Yes.

**Nina Gibans** [00:39:48] Suburban leaders.

**William Blunden** [00:39:49] Everybody. Yeah, and the suburban people have to realize that whether they want to or not. And this is part of that being honest is that they're tied into the city of Cleveland. If they want to... If they're recruiting on college campuses and they want to bring the, bring the intelligent young people here, they have to realize that it's a regional thing that these people are going to be judging, not just Beachwood or not just Westlake. They're going to be looking at the whole region. And Cleveland is going to be a piece of that. Big piece.

**Nina Gibans** [00:40:39] The biggest.

**William Blunden** [00:40:40] Yeah. The biggest piece.

**Nina Gibans** [00:40:46] Okay. So this incorporates everything like the convention center and the lakefront and all of that.

**William Blunden** [00:40:52] Yes. And, you know, it seems to me that, that we've... There's a question here about that. You talked about, about what's the biggest mistakes that Cleveland has made? What have been, what were those points at which...

**Nina Gibans** [00:41:08] We could have...

**William Blunden** [00:41:09] We could have done things differently? And I think we've had lots of chances. I think that probably the biggest disappointment to me, one of the big disappointments to me and one of the big misses, was when we had the opportunity to put the Browns Stadium somewhere other than the lakefront, and we didn't do it. I think that was a major miss based on what kind of opportunities that would have opened up. But I think that beyond that, I think that the convention center has been talked about since I arrived here. And in fact, there would, when I came here and interviewed from New York, Outcalt Guenther was doing an expansion to the Convention Center. And from that day forward, there's been nothing but talk about doing it eventually. If we don't, I mean, if we hope, if we hope to be competitive with Minneapolis, and with San Francisco, and Dallas, and Houston, and Raleigh, and you name the cities. If we hope to be competitive with them, we have to have facilities that are reasonable. And the argument is the same as the arguments they used for the stadiums. The baseball stadiums and the football state that they, they were getting to a point they, they weren't functioning properly. They weren't being able to do what they needed to do so that we need to build the Convention Center. We need to do that. And it should be a priority. And it doesn't, it sounds to me like.

**Nina Gibans** [00:42:59] Are you in favor of keeping what we have and expanding it or moving it?

**William Blunden** [00:43:04] I, you know, I don't... I haven't studied the problem enough. I don't know. All I know is they need to start getting serious about it and it needs to be connected to the hotels and the rapid and the airport, and it needs to be in that central core. Is the Mall the best place for it on the lakefront? I don't know. Would, would across the street in the, in the area that we talked about across from the hotel, that's one site. I, I'm not sure that I'm a big fan of putting it up on the river just because I think it's out of sight. But it needs to be, it needs to be addressed and we need to come to terms with it and we need to do it or we're just going to lose more ground because we're not competitive with the facilities we have. I mean, you go, I was in San Francisco last spring and I was at the art museum and the convention center is right there and it just blows your socks off. And in Baltimore, they built one. twenty years ago or twenty-five years ago. That just is really a great facility.

**Nina Gibans** [00:44:22] With transportation.

**William Blunden** [00:44:23] Right. And, you know, if if we don't do that, we're not going to get the conventions that they're getting. We're not going to fill the hotel rooms. So it's something the city just needs to address.

**Nina Gibans** [00:44:39] But, would you say that it should be part of this vision?

**William Blunden** [00:44:43] Oh, absolutely. I mean, it plays a part in the whole.

**Nina Gibans** [00:44:46] Yeah.

**William Blunden** [00:44:46] One of the things about cities is everything's connected. If you, it's like a balloon full of air. If you punch it and squeeze it in one place, it'll pop out someplace else. It's all connected. These are not independent decisions or isolated decisions. They're, they're connected with the whole fabric of the city.

**Nina Gibans** [00:45:10] Do you. I'm going to use the word land bank, the economic part of it, so that you're building that up over a period of time? How? Yeah. How, how does that work?

**William Blunden** [00:45:23] I think, I think one of the things that, you know, is Cleveland's in a unique position right now because it's got more land than its got people. So there's a whole series of things that Cleveland could do now that they couldn't do thirty years ago or forty years ago when there were a million people living here. But I think that, you know, you have, you've housing development in the city of Cleveland. You need to build amenities that are going to be competitive with other choices that people have. And I always go back [to the] London prototype [of the] private square with the housing around it. And Cleveland is in a position now where they can create all sorts of housing that would have gardens and private squares and areas, not unlike that, but what we see being done, not that it's not encouraging that people are building houses in Cleveland, but what we see is we see sort of a prototype of what's already been here. It isn't an amenity. It doesn't have any, anything beyond what the suburbs can offer you. It doesn't provide you with anything that is unique, that would it would say, I want to live here. The townhouses that are down near the Clinic that they're building, it's, it's pretty prosaic stuff. And, and it seems to me that it just if we, if we don't reestablish imagination in our vision and our thinking, then we're like the people who keep doing the same thing and think they're going to get different results.

**Nina Gibans** [00:47:35] All right. You've lived in the Heights, though?

**William Blunden** [00:47:37] I have.

**Nina Gibans** [00:47:37] And so you have to pass University Circle. And all of the...

**William Blunden** [00:47:40] Yes.

**Nina Gibans** [00:47:41] And all of the upper Euclid Avenue...

**William Blunden** [00:47:41] Yes.

**Nina Gibans** [00:47:42] Development. What about that?

**William Blunden** [00:47:45] Well, University Circle is the best thing about Cleveland. It's the unique thing. It's one of the great attributes that we have. The public library, the lake, University Circle, and our hospital, our health services right now are our biggest assets as far as city and institutions and some of the visual things. And we have to figure out how to parlay that, how to build off of it, how to use it [to] grow. You know, it's interesting, if you have something that's viable to grow, something next to that is very easy. It's like a garden. If you have a garden that's growing and you want some more flowers, you dig a little dirt adjacent to that and you put some more flowers in there. To try and build something new in the wilderness away from what one of the amenities are. Then the critical mass of that you have to build in order to make that viable is substantial. You just can't do a little renovation here or renovation there. It won't, it won't survive. So that the idea of, of incremental growth or growing incrementally from those things that are there healthy and adding to those and building and, and adding to the viability of those. It seems to me that's the secret of developing a city.

**Nina Gibans** [00:49:23] Would you call the development in upper Euclid Avenue at Mayfield that complex and what's going to happen there? What's thinking. What they are thinking of doing with the Center for Contemporary Art Cleveland?

**William Blunden** [00:49:41] I, you know, I think all of those certainly those are, those are important projects. They add to the viability, they add to the intensity of the, of the use of the circle and to the campus and to the, all the institutions that are there. There isn't another place in, in the whole world that I know of that has a University Circle. And it is, it's so remarkable. And in some ways, it's once you, you know, the edges ought to be alive and they're not.

**Nina Gibans** [00:50:20] So if. So you would be in favor of that blossoming?

**William Blunden** [00:50:24] Certainly, I'm in favor [of] incrementally growing University Circle at the edges. Absolutely.

**Nina Gibans** [00:50:33] Right. So the extension of Euclid Avenue development and transportation and all of that is something.

**William Blunden** [00:50:40] Makes sense. Yeah. If that doesn't happen, if those developments do not take place, universities going to the University Circle will survive, but it... These developments would just reinforce what's going on there.

**Nina Gibans** [00:51:04] Well to this point. And even with the subway plan I showed you there certainly hasn't been until this time that connector possible.

**William Blunden** [00:51:16] Right.

**Nina Gibans** [00:51:17] And that's what this Euclid Avenue project.

**William Blunden** [00:51:20] Right.

**Nina Gibans** [00:51:20] Really means. I think so. Do you think it will enhance the flourishing or what has to happen?

**William Blunden** [00:51:32] Well. It's you know, it's, it's like the thruway, the interstate system that we built in this country. We built the interstate system as a means of getting from Detroit to Cleveland. What happened along the way is there was all sorts of other development that took place because the system was there. It's like, you know, not, let's say Aurora or some of the far eastern, southeastern things because of the interstate systems, those areas flourished. They, they became attractive. They, they became places that people could live. And because of the system, they could communicate in a similar way, although not exactly the same, but in a similar way. This, it seems to me there are untold things, benefits that are going to take place we don't even know about yet. But we've put into place a system that allows for that and encourages it, and that's all good.

**Nina Gibans** [00:52:42] Is there some other thinking you want to add?

**William Blunden** [00:52:50] I noticed there, there was a [pause] thing about... Let's see. What am I looking at here? [pause] Well, I just say that, that, you know, I've spent my, good part of my life here in this city and my work is here. And it has been very hard and very difficult to watch the, the international, and national, and regional circumstances change our city. It's been very hard to watch and it's very hard for me to walk. You know, [it's] very sad to walk from BP Tower to this building here to the communications building at CSU along Euclid Avenue, because I knew it in a different way than it is today. And granted, there's a lot of construction going on and it looks even worse. But it, the, the, but the lack of occupancy within the buildings is and, and the closed-up storefronts is just very, very hard to walk by.

**Nina Gibans** [00:54:22] Well, when there's a traumatic like the development of Euclid Avenue has been to small business. Isn't that normal?

**William Blunden** [00:54:34] Well, but I think a lot of those in a lot of those places were vacant before they started the digging and the revising. I mean, so we'll just hope that with the completion of the Euclid Corridor Project that there will be a revitalization to, to the business opportunities along Euclid. You know, I knew Cleveland when Higbee's, and the May Company, and Halle's, and Sterling or Newman. What was the name of the big store?

**Nina Gibans** [00:55:10] Sterling & Welch?

**William Blunden** [00:55:11] Yeah, I mean, and great [operations.] You know, Lord & Taylor and Papagallo's, and they were, everything was here. And you'd go out at noon on Euclid Avenue, and it was abuzz. It was, you know, not quite as much as 5th Avenue in New York, but there were lots of people and lots of things going on. And today I can walk out of my building, close my eyes and walk across Euclid Avenue, and I wouldn't get hit by a. And this was before they started the construction. Now that they got some of the streets closed off, this was before you. I couldn't get hit. I don't believe that. So that's all unfortunate. But, everything is an opportunity. And I think we have to seize that. We have to act, we have to assess what we have honestly, and we have to figure out how to build on it. And certainly and we have to figure out in doing that how that not just the building on that, but how that attracts in economy, economic basis to our, to our city. It's very important. I think that, that probably the biggest thing that Cleveland has done over the years, one of the major disappointments is the lack of, of understanding of the value of the lakefront [and the] underuse and, and lack of imagination as to how that's been created and what they've done to it. The fact, you know, and I'm sure there's great there can be great arguments made for that little airport down there. But I think in the broader future, in the longer run, that piece of land is too valuable to the city to be an airport as a land bank. It's okay now. There's no structures on it. It's all horizontal construction so that's not bad. But I think that one of the things we have to do is we have to drive development from the city point of view, not from the developer's point of view. And we have to make. The city has to make choices and then it has to stay with those choices. And it has to stay with its plan, and it has to get support for that plan so that it will be adhered to over time.

**Nina Gibans** [00:58:02] Have we had some decent plans?

**William Blunden** [00:58:09] I don't know. There have been so many and none of them has, have come to fruition. And what we've had is we've had development-driven buildings and that with no plan. It's almost random. Nothing. No one's looking at how things interrelate and how things build off each other and support each other and reinforce each other. It's one of the crucial things about the convention center location, wherever it goes. It's got to support. And Got to allow for support of the restaurants and the, and the hotels. And it's got to be planned in such a way that they think ahead as far as where new hotels are going to be located in relationship to the convention center and how that works. It's, I was telling you before we started talking about Stanley Kunitz, and he describes the world as a spider web. And wherever you touch the spider web, it sends vibrations throughout the whole web. Well, the city is the same way. Wherever you touch one little piece of the city, it sends vibrations out to the whole city. They can be good or they can be bad. And we need to, we need to think about our city as, and region, as a whole, not as a series of parts and separate entities.

**Nina Gibans** [00:59:40] It's pretty fragile.

**William Blunden** [00:59:42] It's very fragile. Very fragile.

**Nina Gibans** [00:59:44] A spider web is fragile.

**William Blunden** [00:59:47] Spider web. So is a city.

**Nina Gibans** [00:59:48] Right.

**William Blunden** [00:59:50] Very definitely. And, and when you, when you break the connections, the web will be destroyed. And when you break the connections in a city, the web, the city will be destroyed.

**Nina Gibans** [01:00:04] That's sort of a good image to leave us with.

**William Blunden** [01:00:08] No kidding.

**Nina Gibans** [01:00:09] I think. Is there anything else?

**William Blunden** [01:00:12] No. I've enjoyed being able to pontificate.

**Nina Gibans** [01:00:18] Oh, no. You're, you're wonderful because everybody is very different.

**Emma Yanoshik-Wing** [01:00:21] I just.

**Nina Gibans** [01:00:22] Knowing what you're reading, I'm going to ask you to read something and then come back to me with it, which is The Poetics of Space.

**William Blunden** [01:00:31] I've read it.

**Nina Gibans** [01:00:32] You like it?

**William Blunden** [01:00:33] Yes.

**Nina Gibans** [01:00:33] Yes.

**William Blunden** [01:00:34] It's a wonderful book.

**Nina Gibans** [01:00:34] All right. Well, someday we'll discuss it.

**Emma Yanoshik-Wing** [01:00:38] Can I ask one question?

**William Blunden** [01:00:39] Sure.

**Nina Gibans** [01:00:40] I'm sorry. Emma, has some.

**Emma Yanoshik-Wing** [01:00:42] Just kind of for clarification. You were talking earlier about Cleveland needing to make sure that it's not turning its back on the architecture community or else what's going to be left is the service. Just the service community is, is that what's happening or is that just a threat? I mean.

**William Blunden** [01:01:00] No, that's happening now. We're losing young talent. Young offices are, are having a very difficult time at sustaining themselves because they're not given any projects. Even the older offices, our office has great difficulty in getting local projects. And it's it there is a [if they] don't support a community, if the local people don't support their local communities, those communities dry up. Look at... Take for example, a Wal-mart, which is a national chain and it comes into a community and they want to build outside of say, outside of Findlay, Ohio. And Findlay, Ohio has a wonderful main street and it's got mom-and-pop stores, individually owned unique stores. If the community doesn't support those stores and they allow Wal-mart and they then turn their backs on their local community and go to Wal-mart, that community's going to die. And that's true in the arts. It's true in architecture. It's true in all phases. And. So it's a very important thing. And, and I don't think as although the argument may be placed, I think we can get world-class. I hate that word. I think we can get superb architecture. From local talent as easily as we can from outside of the state. And a more maybe a more certainly had more concerned about what they do because they're going to live here and they have to look at the buildings.

**Emma Yanoshik-Wing** [01:02:57] Have they chosen an architect for and or design for when they redo the Cleveland State building?

**William Blunden** [01:03:04] Yes.

**Emma Yanoshik-Wing** [01:03:05] They have? And where is that?

**William Blunden** [01:03:07] New York.

**Nina Gibans** [01:03:08] Who?

**William Blunden** [01:03:08] New York. Charles Gwaltney.

**Nina Gibans** [01:03:10] But that fell through.

**William Blunden** [01:03:12] He's not going to do it anymore?

**Emma Yanoshik-Wing** [01:03:13] He said he wanted too much. Is that he wanted more money. He wanted a bigger percentage.

**Nina Gibans** [01:03:18] I don't know but the.

**William Blunden** [01:03:18] I, I heard that rumor. Yes.

**Nina Gibans** [01:03:21] It was in the paper and something that had.

**William Blunden** [01:03:24] Been done. Well, anyway, that's who they had chosen.

**Emma Yanoshik-Wing** [01:03:27] Were there. But I imagine that there were local people under consideration. Correct?

**William Blunden** [01:03:33] There. In fact, he was going to team up with a local firm out of Akron, which is local enough. However, that firm is a service firm. I mean, what they're doing for the project, in my view, and I don't know the, the details of their contractual arrangements, but generally what they do is they do the service for the architectural design.

**Nina Gibans** [01:03:56] The working drawings.

**William Blunden** [01:03:57] Right. You need to develop. The whole thing or we end up with. We. Not that that isn't an important part of how buildings are built and that is an important function, but you need the whole thing. You can't have just a piece of it and really have what you need. You know, [I], the museum at.

**Nina Gibans** [01:04:27] Vinoly. Do you mean Vinoly?

**William Blunden** [01:04:29] Well, Vinoly. But also then the, the one at, at the Triangle is interviewing people from.

**Nina Gibans** [01:04:40] Well, Yes. Not anyone here.

**William Blunden** [01:04:41] Yeah. Every. And these people are from all over the world. [I] find it. You know, one of the things that I am disappointed with is the, is the lack of, of esteem in your region. And the fact that regionalism is not a bad word. It's not a, it's not a bad word. It's a good word. And if we give up our regional differences and our regional uniqueness, we're all going to be in McDonald's and Wal-Marts. And, and it's almost like that now when you go from city to city, now you go from mall to mall, and you can be in any mall anywhere. You can go to San Francisco and go to the mall and it's the same mall that's here in Cleveland.

**Nina Gibans** [01:05:33] Right.

**William Blunden** [01:05:33] So you lose those, those uniquenesses. Those particulars that are affected by the culture of the, of the region. And that's a tremendous loss, it seems to me. I, I just feel that it's, it's unfortunate and, and detrimental. We. The attitude today is that every city wants a building by, say, Frank Gehry. So they go out and they get Frank Gehry and they get a Frank Gehry building, and then they want somebody else's building. So they have all these objects that have no relationship at all to the fabric that they're being inserted into. Not only don't they have any relation to the fabric, they don't have any relationship to the history. They don't have any relationship to the, to the community culture. They are an object. And buildings need to be more than objects. And environments need to be more than objects. And you can't have an environment that's just an object.

**Nina Gibans** [01:06:46] Okay.

**Emma Yanoshik-Wing** [01:06:47] Thank you very much.

**William Blunden** [01:06:48] Okay. Thanks.

**Nina Gibans** [01:06:49] Just wait till we get to Fleischman this afternoon. He's much angrier.

**William Blunden** [01:06:56] Well, I'm angry, but I'm just.

**Nina Gibans** [01:06:59] Yeah, but I mean he will come across it.

**William Blunden** [01:07:00] I'm angry because, you know, I've spent my life here and I've committed myself to this place. And I've attempted to, to do work, that is, that reaches for something more than just, you know.

**Nina Gibans** [01:07:25] You've done some work.

**William Blunden** [01:07:26] Completion. And, and. I'm not making this personal because my concern is for, you know, I started out as a young person and my I started in an office and the only project I had was the home and flower show house. And this was a project that, that I think I had the budget for. It was $10,000 or something and my fee was like $2,000, something like that. And I that's, I had two babies: twins and a little girl. And not much else. And I started out and I was lucky that I, I was able to go forward. The interesting thing is that that house won a national design award, even though it was only up for a week.

**Nina Gibans** [01:08:22] And this is 1960?

**William Blunden** [01:08:22] And then they tore it down. It was 1973.

**Emma Yanoshik-Wing** [01:08:27] Can, can I ask you what some of your projects have been since you started your firm?

**William Blunden** [01:08:33] Sure.

**Emma Yanoshik-Wing** [01:08:34] And everything? Just.

**William Blunden** [01:08:34] Sure. If you. If I can remember. We've, we've done work for the Cleveland Public Libraries. We did two projects for them.

**Nina Gibans** [01:08:45] Which branches were those?

**William Blunden** [01:08:47] We did Jefferson Branch and the Lorain Branch. The Jefferson Branch won a national award from the AIA, American Library Association Awards program. And we've done churches, a little church out in South or out in Euclid. Lake Shore Christian Church. Budget was $160,000. A little sanctuary addition. These were early projects that won a national award from the American Wood Association. We did an adult training center, which is on 480 at. Can't think of the name of the cross street right now. That building was done back in the late '70s, early '80s. I think maybe early '80s. That won two national awards. One from the Masonry Association. One from U.S. Steel or from the Steel Association. And we've done city halls. We've won a competition in Cincinnati to do a city hall in Forest Park. We did a project in Macedonia for a city hall. It's no longer used that way. It was a very contemporary building and a new administration came in and so they sold it and built a colonial building. Yeah. And

**Nina Gibans** [01:10:34] Shaker Heights Library is nice.

**William Blunden** [01:10:35] Shaker, we've, we've renovated a school in Shaker Heights, did a new library there. Have done work at the Clinic and at Case Western have done work. We did the interiors and designed all the furniture for the Kelvin Smith Library at Case Western at a time when technology was just starting. And so we, there was no furniture that had stuff that you could plug into. So we designed a whole line of furniture for accessibility from for technology. And have done work in Oberlin. And most recently, I like this story because this was Unity, the Unity Church out in Westlake. It's a little church and they had a budget of $65,000 and they wanted to change their sanctuary. And it was, it looked like the basement rec room that was just awful. And so we and this was quite recently just did that and it won a national award. So you don't need a lot of money. You just need imagination, determination, patience and, and a desire. We. I can't think of all the projects we've done that's.

**Emma Yanoshik-Wing** [01:12:08] Well, thank you for giving.

**William Blunden** [01:12:10] Yeah, sure.

**Emma Yanoshik-Wing** [01:12:10] Us a taste of it.

**Nina Gibans** [01:12:11] That's great. I'm sorry I didn't ask you. I should have.

**William Blunden** [01:12:15] Yeah.

**Nina Gibans** [01:12:15] I stuck to Euclid Avenue with.

**William Blunden** [01:12:18] Well. You know.

**Nina Gibans** [01:12:20] But that, that, that was a, the discussion of the building and I thought the building at CSU because of course you had something to do with it.

**William Blunden** [01:12:28] Well, yeah, I was working with Don.

**Nina Gibans** [01:12:30] And my question has always been why didn't they go back to Don?

**William Blunden** [01:12:35] Well.

**Nina Gibans** [01:12:36] And, and, you and of course you answered it as of course that happened.

**William Blunden** [01:12:41] It does.

**Nina Gibans** [01:12:41] It happens all the way down the line. It isn't just architects. They change, you know, people in administrations. People.

**William Blunden** [01:12:50] We did, we, we did a building in for a, for a community. And within ten years, they tore it down, tore our addition down and the building down and built a new building. It's such a waste of resources. I keep harping on that, but it's just strange.

**Nina Gibans** [01:13:19] What kind of building would you dream of doing if you had the opportunity? Is there a type?

**William Blunden** [01:13:26] No, there are some that I wouldn't want to do.

**Nina Gibans** [01:13:30] Like?

**William Blunden** [01:13:30] A jail.

**Nina Gibans** [01:13:31] Oh.

**William Blunden** [01:13:31] I have no desire to do jail. But I think, you know, all buildings are about people. You, you build. You don't build the building. Building types are different, but the basic common denominator are people. And you're building environments for them. And that's what you do. It's, it's not form as a result of, of decision making about that, but it's really about making places for people. And so whether it's a community center or whether it's a library, we've done a lot of libraries or whether it's a private residence or whether it's a medical facility or a city hall. It's still all about people. It's about finding that [and] making them feel comfortable at ease and, and wanting to be there and supporting what goes on in those spaces.

**Nina Gibans** [01:14:38] Right.

**William Blunden** [01:14:38] So I really don't have a.

**Nina Gibans** [01:14:39] Right.

**William Blunden** [01:14:40] But I would not want to do a jail.

**Nina Gibans** [01:14:41] I know how upset you were about the addition to the Children's Museum that the original building was wonderful.

**William Blunden** [01:14:46] You know. You don't, you know, you don't always get everything you want.

**Nina Gibans** [01:14:51] No.

**William Blunden** [01:14:52] But we got, we got to do what we wanted to do and.

**Nina Gibans** [01:14:55] Yeah and it was great.

**William Blunden** [01:14:55] And, and it was. I think so.

**Nina Gibans** [01:14:58] Lots of kids. And essentially that building is still very much the way it was.

**William Blunden** [01:15:02] Yeah.

**Nina Gibans** [01:15:03] We were there recently with some young kids. The program is for younger kids.

**William Blunden** [01:15:11] I always thought that was an interesting project because when I walked in there, it was the old.

**Nina Gibans** [01:15:18] Howard Johnson's.

**William Blunden** [01:15:18] Howard Johnson's.

**Nina Gibans** [01:15:20] Yeah.

**William Blunden** [01:15:20] And it hadn't been occupied for, I don't know, ten years or something like that. I fully expected to find a dead body in there.

**Nina Gibans** [01:15:29] Well, you know. The bank next door. Did you ever observe the, the little plaque? The little. That was the site of the original Western Reserve Historical Society.

**William Blunden** [01:15:41] Oh, really?

**Nina Gibans** [01:15:42] Yes, it was the last. See, remember that little circle? That was the last piece of the original University Circle. And that was the home. Well, that plaque says here is where the path to Buffalo and Detroit. The juncture. So.

**William Blunden** [01:16:04] Yeah.

**Nina Gibans** [01:16:06] You know. I don't know when that plaque was put there, but I told the museum if the bank ever moved that they were to preserve it. I wanted it.