

# 1976: THE YEAR IN HOUSING

While Christopher Alexander was leading the Mexicali Experimental Project, one of the most interesting and turbulent years in the history of modern housing was unfolding. At the first United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat I, in Vancouver, Canada, and at the alternative meeting known as the Habitat Forum, leaders and experts from around the world recognized that it was urgent to address the multiple crises facing human settlements across the globe. In St. Louis, Missouri, the U.S. government demolished the last structures of the iconic Pruitt-Igoe housing complex—designed only two decades earlier by Minoru Yamasaki—in a move that Charles Jencks would regard as the *coup de grâce* to the modern movement's urban and housing project. In Mexico, the federal government created the monumental Secretariat of Human Settlements and Public Works (SAHOP, or Secretaría de Asentamientos Humanos y Obras Públicas) and enacted the first General Law on Human Settlements (Ley

General de Asentamientos Humanos), from which would later stem the National Urban Development Plan (Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Urbano) and the National Housing Program (Programa Nacional de Vivienda). In Mexico City, two of the largest and most representative housing complexes of the era were completed: Módulo Social de Vivienda Integración Latinoamericana, designed by Sánchez Arquitectos for the Housing Fund of the Institute for Social Security and Services for State Workers (Fovissste), and Conjunto Habitacional El Rosario, designed by Legorreta Arquitectos for the Institute of the National Workers' Fund for Housing (Infonavit). In the academic and intellectual sphere, some of the most paradigmatic texts of the period were published, including *Housing by People*, by John F. C. Turner; *Housing: An Anarchist Approach*, by Colin Ward; *Megastructure*, by Reyner Banham; and *El desarrollo urbano de México*, by Luis Unikel.