

7/30/2018 Question of the Week

Philadelphia-born architect Edmund Bacon (pictured here) earned fame for his work with what local agency during the mid to latter half of the twentieth century?

- a) the City Planning Commission
- b) the Philadelphia Housing Authority
- c) the Redevelopment Authority
- d) the Philadelphia Charter Commission

Answer: a) the City Planning Commission

Edmund Norwood Bacon (1910-2005) was born in Philadelphia to conservative Quaker parents. He graduated from Cornell University's School of Architecture in 1933. He was a city planner in Flint, Michigan, and then director of the Housing Association of the Delaware Valley before serving in the Navy during World War II.

In 1946 he began working for the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, a new agency that he helped create. Bacon was appointed executive director in 1949. Advising four mayors who won and lost elections, Bacon remained a fixture with the planning commission until his retirement in 1970. He was recognized with the 1983 Philadelphia Award for being "a pioneer in urban revitalization, a person with a creative mind and spirit and one who has earned the gratitude of the people of Philadelphia and its environs."

Much of his work with the commission involved the center, west and northeast sections of the city, but he is best known developing Society Hill, Penn Center, and The Gallery and Market East, as well as for his pioneering design of the area at the base of the Benjamin Franklin Boulevard that would become known as LOVE Park. In an essay titled "The City Image," published in *Man and the Modern City* (1963), Bacon argued that the city image must be sharp and clear but, above all, consider the human beings populating the area. He envisioned Philadelphia (with the focus on Center City) as a city that would be clean, appealing, and symmetrical, with thriving businesses and offices, historic architecture, and plenty of open spaces. He died in his beloved hometown in 2005 at the age of ninety-five.

*In HSP's library is a copy of *Man and the Modern City* (call number HT 123.G4 1963), along with a few of other works about Bacon and his work, such as *Imagining Philadelphia* (call number HT 168 .P43 E56 2009) and *Philadelphia: A New Urban Direction* (call number UPA/Ph HT 168.P43.P544 1999). Historical city planning manuscripts can also be found on our collections of local leaders, such as the J. Hampton Moore papers (#1541) and the Richardson Dilworth papers (#3112).*
