

J U D G E D R E D D

DROKK CITY

first
issue!



Illustration by Ron Smith
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RON SMITH

J U D G E D R E D D DROKK CITY

issue 1

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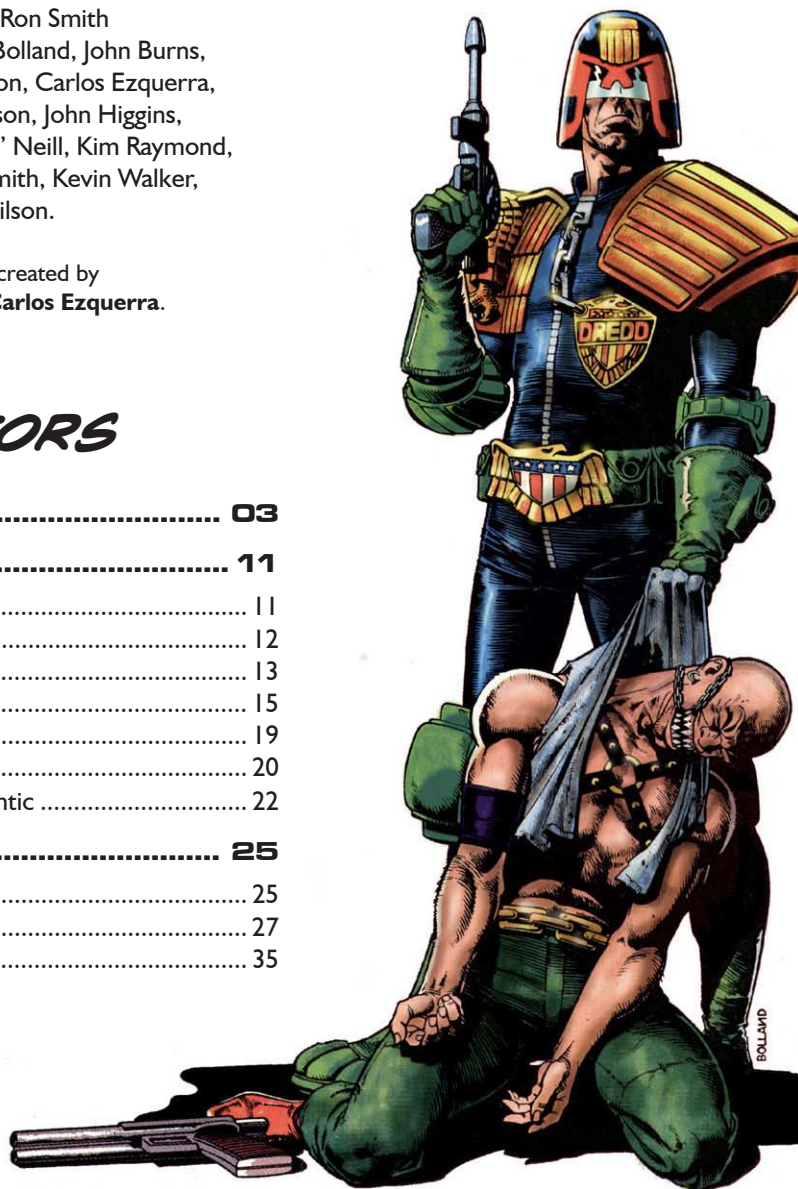


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SECTOR 1 history

In the early Twenty-first Century, the World Council was formed to deal with possible attacks from hostile nonmember countries and global terrorists. One of the World Council's first unilateral decisions was to better protect major population centres from physical attack and to make it easier for the governing bodies to contain and monitor their citizens. The Mega-City Initiative annexed neighbouring major cities within new boundaries; unprecedented road network and housing construction projects fused the cities into a single, sprawling megalopolis. The United States of America was chosen as the site for the first of the megacities. Construction of Mega-City One began in 2023 but technically has never ended, for the city was designed to expand gradually over time until it enveloped most of Eastern America. Following the commencement of the Mega-City One Initiative, plans were quickly drawn up for similar cities in Texas and California. To cope with the huge population numbers and projected increase in crime rates, a new breed of lawman was created - the 'Judge' - a highly capable, heavily-armed peacekeeper with the power to dispense instant justice.

world war 3

Revolutionary construction techniques had made the megacities a reality. To protect the megacities, an American-European consortium created a laser defence screen [LDS] to be installed within each megacity. The LDS enabled the megacities to mount an effective defence against missile attack by knocking the incoming warheads off course with missiles of their own. In 2045, newly-elected American President Robert L. Booth, under pressure from American oil & polymer corporations to further safeguard the American economy, ordered trillions of dollars into the development of a first-line laser defence system called 'Starfall'. This intimidating network of orbital satellites could vaporise enemy nuclear missiles before they entered the American continent, or launch a massive nuclear attack on any country that opposed American interests. Starfall caused international uproar, with global powers accusing America



of focusing all its energies on reinforcing its defences while ignoring its allies' own defence needs. The Oriental Alliance [Russia, China and Korea] seized the moment, strongly demanding that America disarm Starfall or consolidate its reputation as 'World Tyrant'. The Oriental Alliance's words were strong and America met it with an equally strong rebuttal. America had long suspected the Oriental Alliance of plotting a hostile takeover of American society through corporate methodology spanning generations, the Alliance's ultimate ambition - culminating in total control of Western media, electronics and manufacturing industry - to supplant the 'decadent' enemy philosophies with martial law and rigid state control. The Muslim Federation, a Middle-Eastern terrorist coalition, were thought by the CIA to be supplying vital information pertaining to American defence secrets to the Oriental Alliance in return for operational concessions. In 2070, the Oriental Alliance demanded America retract its accusations of deception and withdraw long-standing military garrisons from the Middle-East and Russian borders. America expelled the Oriental Alliance's diplomatic corps and closed its borders. President Booth ordered Starfall armed. The Oriental Alliance attacked American Middle East bases, slaughtering thousands of soldiers and their families. President Booth pressed the red button - Starfall directed its nuclear payload directed at Russian and China. World War Three had begun.

fallout

The third world war ended a year later in stalemate and a world bomb-blasted to the core. America was a ruined radioactive wasteland, but its megacities survived to look bleakly out on the world they had helped create. For countries not so fortunate, the dying citizens fought for precious supplies of food and water not contaminated by radiation. Many survivors died in short order from radiation-related injuries, while pockets of the more 'fortunate' adapted to the radically altered environment, becoming more resilient but some-





thing less than human - mutants.

The global political arena was slowly being rebuilt. Blame for the war shifted from one country to the next, rejected by the obvious culprits. Governments fell like dominoes, replaced by radically different structures sponsored by grief-maddened masses. Chief to rise to the responsibility of government were the Justice Departments. In Mega-City One, the first act of the judges was to impeach President Booth for gross endangerment of the American people and the nations of the World Council. President Booth was exiled and the Senate dissolved. Mega-City One Chief Judge Fargo began the momentous task of resuming trade relations with the rest of the world. Global relations slowly improved over the next three decades, though some of the scars inflicted by World War Three would never heal.

In 2104, East-Meg One, the capital city of Russia and former signatory of the Oriental Alliance, focused its military might on toppling the American mega-cities whom it suspected of preparing to stage another nuclear assault. Its first target was Mega-City One. The East-Meg One invasion came to be known as the 'Apocalypse War'. Mega-City One lost half its surface area to East-Meg nuclear strikes and was unable to respond with its own nuclear deterrent, but instead penetrated Russian homeland defences to launch a counterattack within Russian borders, annihilating East-Meg One with missiles fired from its own silos. The Apocalypse War sealed Mega-City One's reputation as the world's most dangerous government and it was never again threatened openly by a terrestrial agent on the scale attempted by East-Meg One. With the unpopular East-Meg One government removed, positive relations between America and Europe were quickly resumed; even East-Meg Two tenta-

tively agreed to open its borders to American imports.

In the current year of 2126, Mega-City One remains scarred from past conflicts and wounded by mounting civil unrest, but the city has grown stronger and wiser from its experiences.

mega-city one timeline

- 2023** Construction of Mega-City One begins along the American east coast.
- 2032** The judge system is introduced into Mega-City One to combat spiralling crime levels. The first Chief Judge is Fargo.
- 2039** Work begins on the construction of Mega-City Two along the American west coast.
- 2045** Mega-City Three begins construction, centred around the southern American state of Texas.
- 2066** The first judge clones of Mega-City One are released from the laboratories of Genetic Control [GenCon]. Judges Joseph and Rico Dredd ['clone-brothers'] are among the first to emerge, youthful duplicates of Chief Judge Fargo. The judge clones' physical and mental age have been artificially accelerated to that of five year olds, allowing the clones to immediately begin judicial training.
- 2070** The 'clear and present danger' of an imminent attack by the Oriental Alliance prompts American President Robert L. Booth to take pre-emptive action; Booth presses the red button that triggers a massive nuclear strike against the Alliance. World War Three [*The Great Atom War*] begins.

2071 The Atom War ends in stalemate. Although the Oriental Alliance's power base has been shattered, the world has been brought to the brink of nuclear annihilation. America and Russia suffer the greatest environmental damage, most of their landmasses reduced to radioactive wasteland. The world's mega-cities, protected by laser defence screens, escape major damage. President Booth is declared a war criminal. Booth flees Mega-City One and makes his last stand at Death Valley Arizona, protected by a loyal army of mek-troopers [*The Battle Of Armageddon*]. The judges - represented by Supreme Prosecutor Judge Solomon - find Booth guilty of all charges made against him. The famous 'Judgement Of Solomon' decrees that Booth be sentenced to one-hundred years suspended animation in Fort Knox. The American people rise up against the American Senate. Chief Judge Fargo is appointed the new leader of Mega-City One.

Biological weapons released by the Oriental Alliance during the Atom War wreak terrible havoc among the already-stricken populace of North America [*The Great Germ War*].

2072 Chief Judge Fargo dies and is succeeded by Judge Goodman.

2083 Mega-City Three declares independence from Mega-Cities One. This is considered a grievous breach of the intercity trade agreement forged

continuity corner

The *Judge Dredd* comic strip has not provided definitive dates for the events between 2023 and 2066, nor has it provided a clear date for the Second American Civil War. There also exists some confusion over how and when Chief Judge Fargo relinquished his authority, exactly what role Judge Solomon played, and what year Chief Judge Goodman ascended to take Fargo's place. The dates given by this PDF's timeline are purely conjecture on the part of the author.

between the three mega-cities in the wake of the Atom War. Mega-City One mounts a blockade around Mega-City Three until the rogue city surrenders [*The Second American Civil War*]. Failure to reach a settlement and the rising cost of taxes heaped on the citizens to sustain the blockade puts too great a strain on conflict and reluctantly Mega-city One grants the rogue city-state its independence. The people of Mega-City Three vote unanimously that its name be officially changed to 'Texas City'.

2099 The Statue Of Judgement is unveiled in Mega-City One to commemorate the heroism of the judges and their unceasing drive to combat crime. A new public holiday - 'Justice Day' - is created.



The rogue carpenter robot Call-Me-Kenneth organises a robot revolt against the humans of Mega-City One [*The First Robot War*]. The judges join forces with sympathetic robots and rout the enemy robots after much fighting. Judge Dredd destroys Call-Me-Kenneth at the Meg-Oil Refinery. Chief Judge Goodman announces, much to the Justice Department's consternation, that Mega-City One's borders will be opened to the mutant shanty towns surrounding the city, their populace welcomed as Mega-City citizens. The city descends into anarchy as mutant marauders make their presence felt. Judge Dredd travels into the Cursed Earth to investigate the site of a crash-landing made by the Chief Judge's H-wagon, the time from which Goodman began to make erratic judgements. Dredd discovers that Goodman's mind has been taken over by a bizarre, parasitic mutant known only as the 'Monkey', and it is the Monkey who plots Mega-City One's destruction. Dredd returns to Mega-City One with a vial of red dust to which the Monkey is violently allergic. This Dredd uses to kill the Monkey. With his mind restored to normal, Chief Judge Goodman authorises Dredd to exile the mutants for good back into the Cursed Earth.



2100 Mega-City Two is brought to its knees by a survivor of the Great Germ War, a metavirus called 2T[fru]T that transforms citizens into ravenous maniacs. Mega-City One attempts to fly the vaccine across, but the Mega-City Two hoverports are blocked and so Judge Dredd is dispatched to deliver it by hand. After an epic trek across the Cursed Earth radiation desert, Dredd finally brings relief to Mega-City One.

2101 On his return to Mega-City One, Judge Dredd is framed for the murder of Chief Judge Goodman and sentenced to life on the penal colony of Titan. Dredd discovers that the insane head of the Justice Department's Special Judicial Squad, Judge Cal, engineered Goodman's death and now plans to bring terror to Mega-City One as its new chief judge. Dredd escapes imprisonment but finds that Cal has brainwashed most of the judges into serving him. Dredd allies himself with the few judges left unaffected and an Undercity dweller called Fergee to attack Cal. The mad chief judge falls to his death from the Grand Hall Of Justice in the grip of Fergee. Mega-City one is saved. Judge Tutor Griffin is pronounced Chief Judge Goodman's successor.

A charismatic environmentalist mutant called Father Earth emerges from the Cursed Earth with a large army of followers, all determined to destroy Mega-City One which they perceive as a crime against Nature. Father Earth's 'Doomsday Dogs' infiltrate Mega-City One and blow up Power Tower, a power station that harnesses geothermal energy. A volcanic eruption beneath the tower threatens Mega-City One, but the Justice Department's Holocaust Squad manage to plug the leak at the cost of their own lives.

Later that same year, another Cursed Earth menace - poisonous mutant spiders - swarm on Mega-City One. A surgical nuclear strike annihilates this 'Black Death.'

2102 An undead entity called Judge Death stalks Mega-City One, his creed to destroy the cause of all crime - Life itself. Judge Dredd imprisons Death's spirit within the body of Psi-Judge Anderson, both trapped within a block of the wonder plastic Boing®.

The dying Psi-Judge Feyy predicts that Mega-City will be destroyed in the year 2120 unless the psychic child Owen Kryslar ['The Judge Child'] can be found to stop it. Judge Dredd traces Kryslar to the Cursed Earth, but the villainous Angel Gang kidnap the boy and flee into deep space. Dredd pursues the Angel Gang to the frontier



planet of Xanadu and retrieves Kryslar at the cost of the Angel Gang's life. However, during the 'Judge Child Quest', Dredd became suspicious of Kryslar's morality, a hunch confirmed when Dredd witnesses Kryslar murder Pa Angel. Dredd decides to leave Kryslar behind on Xanadu in the custody of the Grunwalder, rather than risk exposing Mega-City One to the boy's malevolent influence.

- 2103** Mega-City One suffers a nuclear attack from the Black Atlantic pirate leader Captain Skank, who demands a mighty ransom for the safe return of vital Mega-City One nuclear technicians. Judge Dredd defeats Skank aboard his underwater sea fortress and rescues the hostages. During the mop-up operation, it is revealed that Skank is really a robot controlled by Skank's second-in-command Tuskarosa, an East-Meg One undercover agent. Dredd returns Tuskarosa's corpse to East-Meg One and demands compensation for the damage inflicted upon his city. As a gesture of peace, East-Meg One destroys one of its own city sectors. The rising tensions between the world's two superpowers are however far from resolved.

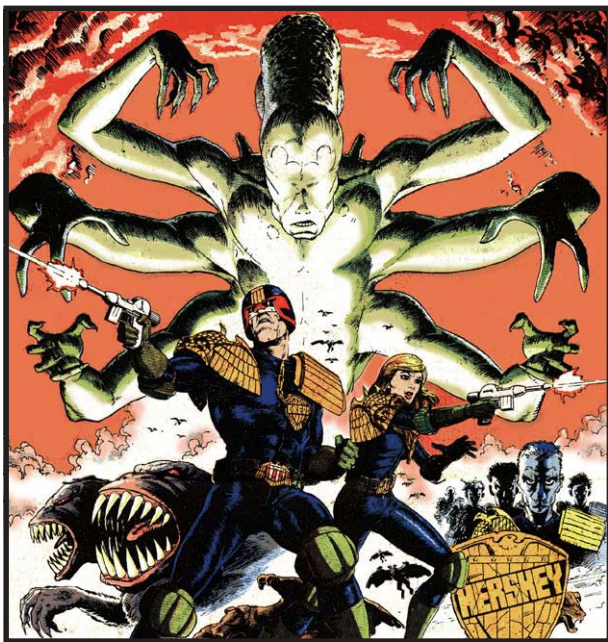
Judge Death escapes his Boing® prison and is reunited with three other 'Dark Judges' - Fear, Fire and Mortis. Death and company set out on a genocidal attack against Mega-City One, but Judge Dredd and Psi-Judge Anderson once more

team up, driving the Dark Judges back to their home dimension of Deadworld. There, Anderson uses her psychic powers to channel the collective hatred of the millions of Deadworld citizens murdered by the Dark Judges. This awesome outpouring of anger and grief vanquishes the Dark Judges.

- 2103** A string of seemingly unrelated block wars blossom into a major civil war that stretches the Justice Department's resources to breaking point; even worse, many judges leave their posts to join in the violence. The cause of this 'block mania' is Orlok, a master saboteur and East-Meg One field agent, who has contaminated the city's water supply with a psychoactive drug that causes extreme paranoia and exacerbates violent tendencies. Judge Dredd locates and captures Orlok, but the 'block mania' has served its purpose - Mega-City One is now ripe for invasion from East-Meg One.
- 2104** East-Meg One attacks, first bombarding Mega-City One's southern zones with nuclear missiles and then breaching the Atlantic Wall, flooding the eastern sectors. Chief Judge Griffin is captured by enemy forces as Judge Dredd leads the Mega-City resistance. Griffin is brainwashed and becomes an East-Meg propaganda tool, forcing Dredd to assassinate him. Dredd then leads a crack judge strike force into East-Meg One airspace and commandeers a nuclear silo. Dredd

turns the missiles on East-Meg One, wiping the enemy city from the face of the Earth. The East-Meg army abandoned in Mega-City One loses hope and quickly surrenders. SJS Judge McGruder is elected as the new chief judge. Four-hundred million citizens have died during the East-Meg invasion. The East-Meg One invasion will be remembered as the 'Apocalypse War.'

On Xanadu, Owen Kryslar ['The Judge Child'] uses a magical elixir to resurrect Mean Machine Angel, killed by Judge Dredd. Kryslar uses Mean Machine as his tool of vengeance on Dredd, teaming up brother Fink, the only other surviving Angel. The Angels kidnap Dredd's maid Maria and his servant robot Walter to use as bait to lure Dredd. Dredd hunts the Angels down. Fink dies under the mechanised knives of his own torture machine while Mean Machine is thrown into an iso-cube. Dredd discovers Owen Kryslar's involvement in the affair and orders a pinpoint missile strike that obliterates the boy.



2106 Plagued by concerns over the dire predictions of the late Psi-Judge Feyy and the recent events surrounding the Judge Child, the Justice Department authorise a time travel mission to the future year 2120. Judge Dredd and Psi-Judge Anderson journey aboard the time machine *Proteus* to 2120 and find the city ruined, stalked by monstrous beasts and rancid with negative psychic energy. Dredd discovers that an entity called the 'Mutant', a creature of awesome psychic power, is responsible for the city's devastation. The Mu-

tant is in fact a deformed clone of Owen Kryslar, the 'Judge Child', brought back from the dead by the Grunwalder, the robot ruler of Xanadu. The Mutant dispatches the future version of Judge Dredd - a zombie kept alive to amuse the Mutant - to hunt and kill the Dredd of 2106. Dredd narrowly escapes death as he and Anderson jump back in time. Chief Judge McGruder authorises another attack on Xanadu, to prevent the Mutant's 'rebirth' and to punish the Grunwalder for his reckless actions.

2108 Chief Judge McGruder resigns her post after blaming herself for the loss of life among Mega-City One citizens and judges caused by a rogue 'psi-warlord'. Judge Tutor Silver is elected in her place. McGruder takes the Long Walk into the Cursed Earth.

A group of pro-democracy activists stage a violent takeover of Channel 48 to use it as a medium to issue their demands. Judge Dredd executes the activists on live tri-d, fanning the flames of future pro-democracy troubles.

2109 Huge, peaceful pro-democracy demonstrations take place in front of the Grand Hall Of Justice. The Justice Department sabotages the march, making it appear that the demonstrators have descended into violence and that the judges are justified in taking martial action to quell it.

2110 The judges come under attack from heavily-armoured 'Judda', clones of the Justice Department's finest bloodlines. The Judda are the soldiers of exiled Mega-City geneticist Morten Judd, discarded by the judges for his extremist views on population control. Judd's base is located inside Ayer's Rock in the Australian Radback. Judge Dredd uses Judda technology to teleport into the enemy headquarters, leading a Justice Department counterstrike that sees both Ayer's Rock and Morten Judd destroyed

2112 Judge Dredd is plagued by doubts concerning the morality of the judge system and his place within it. The matter comes to a dramatic conclusion when Dredd learns that a former Judda warrior called Kraken is being groomed to succeed him. Dredd is assigned to take Kraken out on his Final Street Evaluation. During the test, Dredd's one-time mentor Judge Morphy is found murdered. Thoroughly demoralised and grief-stricken by the death of his old friend, Dredd fails Kraken, then resigns and takes the Long Walk into the Cursed Earth. However, Chief Judge Silver overturns Dredd's decision to fail Kraken and the young ex-Judda assumes's Dredd's persona.

The Dark Judges - their powers boosted by allies Phobia and Nausea - the 'Sisters Of Death' - transform Mega-City One into a 'Necropolis', a city of the dead where the judges have been mass brainwashed into murdering the citizens. Judge Dredd returns from the Cursed Earth, teaming up with exiled former Chief Judge McGruder and Psi-Judge Anderson to defeat the Dark Judges. Phobia and Nausea are banished, the Necropolis is ended and the four Dark Judges are placed in maximum security confinement. In the absence of Chief Judge Silver, transformed into a groveling zombie by Judge Death, McGruder resumes her place as Chief Judge. Sixty million citizens have died during the 'Necropolis' crisis.

2113 The pro-democracy movements gain strength, fuelled by the judges' temporary transformation from peacekeepers into mass murderers during the 'Necropolis'. Intense pressure forces the Justice Department's senior officials to debate the issue. Judge Dredd votes to hold an election to let the citizens decide who will govern Mega-City One. Many judges are initially opposed to this option, and some attempt to put Dredd out of the argument for good by staging several assassination attempts. In the end, Dredd gets his way and Mega-City One has its first election for decades. Much to the dismay of the pro-democrats, the judges are re-elected and Dredd is vindicated, though resentment towards him still simmers in the upper echelons of the Justice Department.

2114 A time-travelling fugitive, the necromancer Sabbat, uses his evil powers to raise all the Earth's dead as an army of zombies and attack the mega-cities ['Judgement Day']. The world's toughest judges team up to fight back against the endless tide of bloodthirsty undead and are forced to destroy the cities overrun with zombies before they can spread their curse further. The world judges trace Sabbat's base

to caverns beneath the Radlands Of Ji. The judges eventually triumph and Sabbat is rendered helpless, his power broken. The zombie army reverts to its inanimate state.

To provide backup for the Justice Department's depleted ranks, Chief Judge McGruder authorises the construction of 'Mechanismo' - heavily-armed robot judges programmed to emulate the behaviour of a street judge. Initial field tests however reveal programming glitches that have disastrous consequences for innocent citizens caught in the mecanismos' path. The project is shut down.

2115 A group of former judges sentenced to the Titan penal colony for attempting to murder Judge Dredd during the pro-democracy crisis escape and return to Mega-City One to exact vengeance. Led by Grice, the renegade judges release the 'Meat Virus' - a bacterium that feeds on living flesh - into the city. Grice and his accomplices are recaptured and executed by Judge Dredd.



2116 When Judge Dredd learns that the 'Mechanismo Project' has been secretly resumed and that more of the killer robots will soon patrol the Mega-City streets, he takes direct action to prevent it. Dredd is found guilty of attempting to pervert the course of justice and sentenced to imprisonment on Titan. Chief Judge McGruder has Dredd accompany her - en route to Titan - as she visits the 'tenth planet' of Hestia to sell the colonists a squad of mechanismo. However, malfunctioning mechanimos sabotage the flight, forcing the spacecraft to crashland in the Hestian wilderness. Dredd is released from captivity to save the crash survivors from the killer robots. He finally convinces the Chief Judge that her project is fatally flawed. Dredd is reinstated as street judge.

Returning to Mega-City One, McGruder resigns to be replaced by the new Chief Judge Volt. McGruder is later diagnosed with a degenerative brain disease and considered a candidate for euthanasia. Judge Dredd refuses to see his former commander-in-chief humiliated in this manner and violates procedure to take McGruder on one final mission into the Cursed Earth where McGruder can die in combat as a hero.

2121 Crime lord Nero Narcos launches a massive attack on the Justice Department as part of his grand plan to rule Mega-City One ['The Second Robot War']. Using combat-modified municipal robots and exploiting a crucial flaw in the judge's Lawgiver handguns, Narcos defeats the judges and assumes his place as the city's new overlord. In the meantime, Judge Dredd is captured by his old enemy Orlok and brought to trial as a war criminal before the survivors of East-Meg One. With the help of Psi-Judge Anderson, Dredd escapes certain death and travels to Brit-Cit to muster support for his fight to oust Nero Narcos and his robot armies from the Grand Hall Of Justice. The judges are able to reprogramme the robot armies and turn them against Narcos, whom Dredd executes. Chief Judge Volt, blaming himself for the judges' embarrassing defeat, takes his own life. The highly-regarded street judge Hershey assumes the position of Chief Judge.

2123 An army populated by villains from parallel Earths invades Mega-City One. Led by a Chief Judge Cal who did not fail to conquer the city in his own reality, the dimensional raiders seek to rob and pillage, then move onto the next parallel Earth. The villains make a point of executing each



reality's Judge Dredd for the difficulties he has posed them, and true to form Cal targets Dredd. The judge is brought before Cal and his nefarious allies, but this is their undoing, for they have let Dredd get too close. Dredd swiftly delivers justice to the villains one by one and then banishes Cal to an agonising dimensional hell.

2124 The Justice Department allows a floating pleasure island called Sin City to anchor within its borders, a concession designed to allow the judges access to the city and Ula Danser, a global terrorist who is believed to be on board. During the judges' successful capture of Danser, it is discovered that East-Meg One assassin Orlok has used Sin City as a decoy to allow him to get within range to unleash a devastating genetically-engineered plague on Mega-City One. Judge Dredd orders Sin City quarantined long enough to capture Orlok, then bombs the pleasure island beneath the Black Atlantic to stop the plague's advance.

2125 Orlok is found guilty of capital crimes against Mega-City One and executed by lethal injection on live tri-d. Mega-City One celebrates.

2126 The present year [2000AD publishing year 2004].

SECTOR 2 overview



Mega-City One grew from a multi-state urban metropolis encompassing New York and Washington D.C. to a rockcrete and plasteen behemoth totally engulfing the eastern seaboard of North America. Even so, the city's eight hundred million population forced its housing capacity to absolute breaking point. City Hall drew up an emergency program for territorial expansion along Mega-City One's western perimeter; in addition, it offered brave citizens an attractive lump sum if they were to renounce their Mega-City One citizenship and seek a new life out in the Cursed Earth. These hardy pioneers were nicknamed 'Helltrekkers'. This sanctioned exodus continues to the present day. The border expansion however came to a grinding halt in 2101. In this year, the demented Chief Judge Cal closed Mega-City One's borders within a mile-high plasteen wall to stem the flow of many thousands of citizens who sought to flee his tyranny; it was estimated that half a million citizens escaped into the Cursed Earth. Many however found life in the radlands too intimidating and gravitated back to the city, where they set up shanty towns along the city wall; most were never repatriated into Mega-City society. Chief Judge Cal's reign of terror was thwarted, but the city wall remained. Cal had unwittingly performed a huge service to the Justice Department by marshalling huge numbers of workshy citizens and forcing them to build a heavily fortified perimeter in record time for no payment other than a brief respite from the whip. Cal's successor, the thankfully sane Judge Griffin, decreed that the wall - a valuable city defence - would remain in existence. As for the chronic overpopulation concerns, Griffin ordered City Hall to investigate new housing possibilities within the city borders and the construction of even taller cityblocks.

A perverse solution to the city's population crisis came in 2104 when the East-Meg One invasion ['The Apocalypse War'] destroyed half of Mega-City One and an equal percentage of citizens. The 'Necropolis' of 2112 reduced the populace by a further sixty million, though many cityblocks were also left in an advanced state of

decay from the Dark Judges' aggressive, paranormal energies. The original eight hundred million population had been cut down to three hundred and forty million, but a unilateral loss of cityblocks and other large-capacity habitats cancelled out any benefit the reduced census might have offered. By 2126, Mega-City One's population is nearing four hundred million; some estimates have it exceeding that figure.

basic geography

Mega-City One is divided into five *quadrants*, each governed by a Justice Department quadrant commander responsible for law and order within that region. Each quadrant is further subdivided into a number of *sectors*, neighbourhoods the size of a small city complete with its own Justice Department sector house.

In the wake of the Apocalypse War, Mega-City One's sectors were renumbered to take account of massive losses of city estate to the north and south. Every remaining sector was renumbered, though existing precinct borders remained relatively intact. MegSouth had traditionally been the city's industrial heart, and as such was a prime target for the East-Meg One nuclear strikes. Fully two-thirds of Mega-City One's industrial capacity was demolished and slow to rebuild, lacking a heavy-duty manufacturing base. An intensive building program installed new factory estates ['dust zones'] in MegWest, MegCentral and MegEast, close to the few surviving but crucial MegSouth plants to form a centralised communications network.

Quadrant wealth is greatest in MegNorth, where many quintillionaires live in luxury-blocks, well-defended by private security forces. MegEast and MegWest are the poorer regions and victim to the highest crime rates in the city. MegCentral - clustered with hoverports - is the city's second wealthiest region. MegSouth - despite its huge business empires - has a largely mechanised work force, so most of the profits generated bypass the minimal human staff, to be ploughed instead into MegNorth bank accounts.

quadrants

Mega-City One is divided into five distinct quadrants [clockwise from north]: *MegNorth*, *MegEast*, *MegSouth*, *MegWest* and *MegCentral*. Each quadrant is subdivided into a number of *sectors*. Prior to the Apocalypse War, Mega-City One had over five-hundred sectors, but the loss of half the city's area to nuclear strikes prompted a detailed consolidation of territory in 2106. *MegCentral* retained its former boundaries but was reduced to twenty sectors, numbered concentrically from Sector 1. The southern boundaries of *MegEast* and *West* were moved north to accommodate the new *MegSouth*. *Meg-East* comprised Sectors 21 to 108, radiating in sequence from the eastern edge of *MegCentral*. *MegSouth* [Sectors 109-160], *MegWest* [Sectors 161-240] and *MegNorth* [Sectors 241-300] followed a similar pattern, except in the north, where sector numbering was on an east-west basis. A small habitable patch of estate located in the middle of the northern rad-zone [the Northwest Habzone] features sectors 301-305; it is considered part of the *MegNorth* region. The sector and boundary changes were finalised jointly between the Justice Department and City Hall, but neither party could have predicted the furore it would cause among the citizens who had grown very attached to their traditional sector designations and were not going to give them up without a fight.

Related arrests quickly spiralled to seventy-eight thousand, suicides escalated and thirteen-hundred council officials were murdered or wounded by angry protesters. Exercising financial ledgerdemon, the Justice Department proposed a 'Sector Relocation Bonus' [a one-hundred credit bribe] to every adult citizen, provided they signed a legal document agreeing to abide by the new numbering system. Later, once the crisis had been averted, the judges impemented a single payment 'Clean Air Tax' at the cost of one-hundred and five credits per adult citizen. The sector renumbering project has remained fixed in place ever since, the city's total sector complement set at three-hundred and five. To cope with a swelling population count, rather than attempt to expand beyond the city's borders, the current trend is to build ever taller cityblocks such as the 'Super Sixty' series.

Distribution of wealth and industry - *MegEast* was the first component of Mega-City One to be constructed. The project saw a huge investment in local industry to meet the architects' demands. Many decades later, *MegEast* retains an industrial capacity competitive with those of the other precincts, principally by its distinction as the host to the city's capital of Sector 44 and as the centre of culture and wealth, temptations that big business cannot resist. *MegEast* is home to some of the largest construction corporations in Mega-City One who can supply massive numbers of manpower

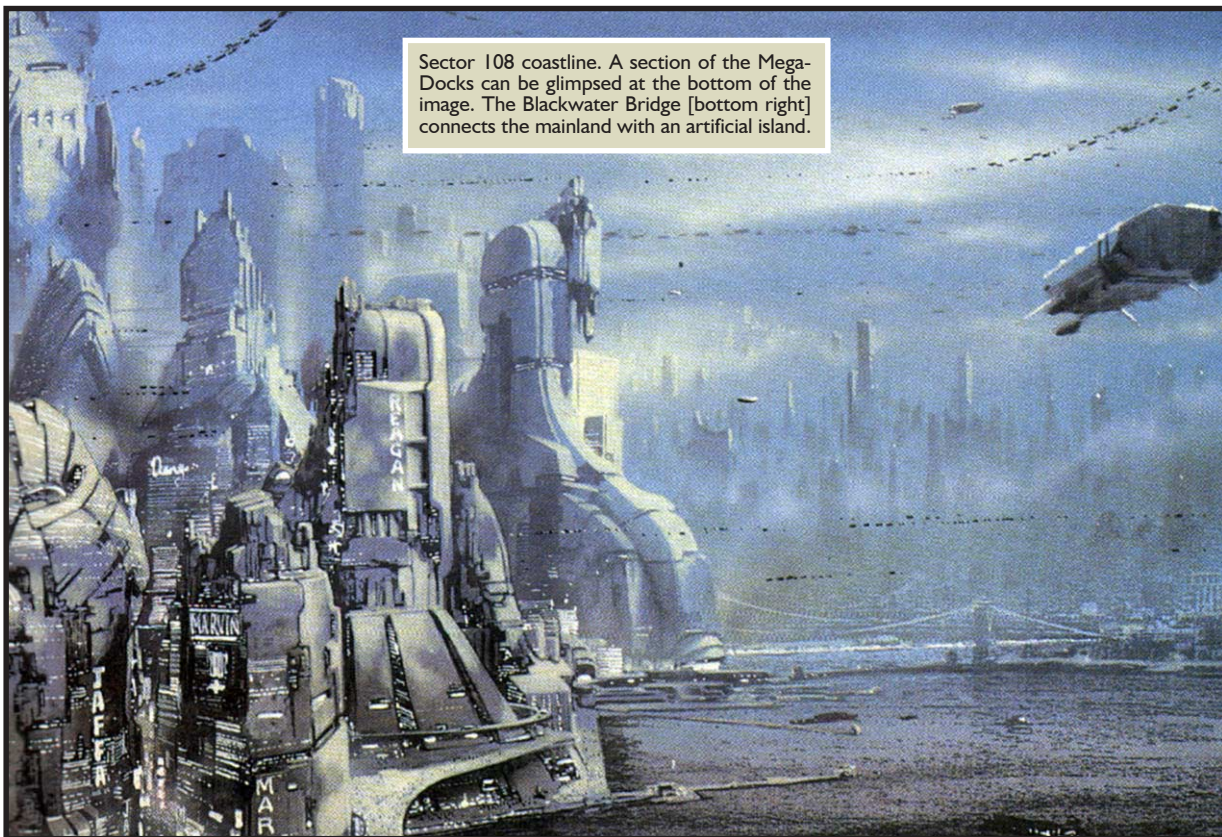
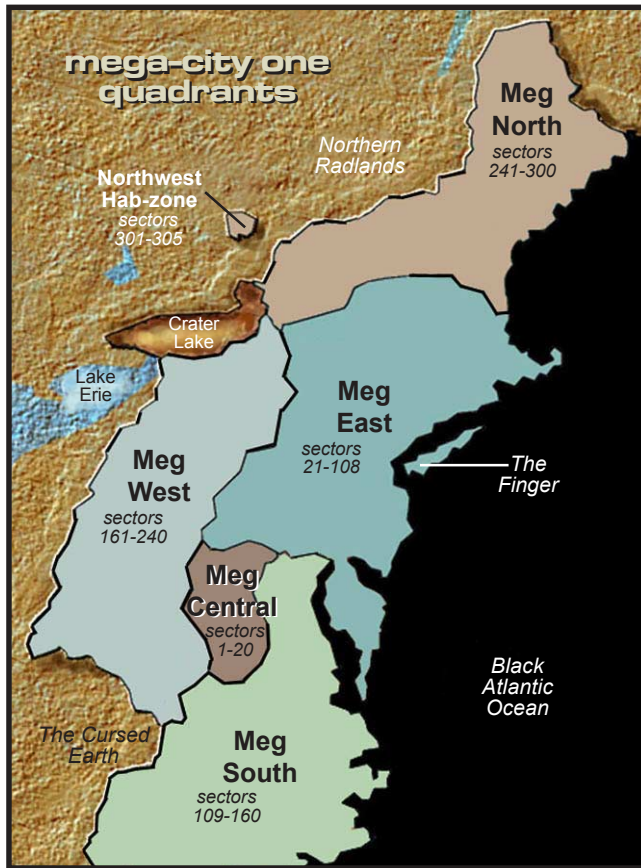


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and machinery to any part of the city to undertake city-block construction and urban redevelopment programs. Despite its fame, MegEast suffers a great disparity of wealth between social classes who have been attracted by the region's glamorous and edgy reputation, but have only succeeded in overloading the local service and housing industries. This 'poverty gap' is most prevalent along the MegEast/MegNorth border.

MegSouth succeeded MegEast as the city's prime location for modern industry, bolstered by intense investment in the newly-relocated region after the Apocalypse War to provide an emergency manufacturing base to repair the city's shattered infrastructure and to supply life-essential provisions such as fresh food and uncontaminated drinking water to neighbouring regions MegWest and MegEast [south]. In 2126, MegSouth has maintained its reputation as a corporate force to be reckoned with and is home to the headquarters of many of Mega-City One's largest mega-corporations as well as endless tracts of industrial estate. Though most factories are staffed by robots, a small number of cityblocks have been set aside for the convenience of highly-skilled human workers whose talents have not yet been superseded by labour-saving technology.

MegWest and MegNorth are similar in standing, both with a higher ratio of residential habitats to industry,

though MegNorth can boast a slightly higher quality of living than its neighbour, as the chief executives of the mega-corporations choose to site their opulent homes as far from the grimy skylines of the Meg-South dust zones as possible.

MegCentral is home to Mega-City One's professional transients, travellers from other parts of Earth and beyond. The quadrant is crowded with major hoverport and astroports, a navigational nightmare ironically forced into such close company by stringent health and safety laws that forbid expansion into surrounding residential regions. The laws do not function to prevent the presence of extraregional ports located in MegWest and MegEast. The ports of MegSouth are primarily designed to accept aero-freighters, hovertankers and other heavy industrial vehicles.

city levels

From its inception, Mega-City One was going to be huge, a population centre home to an unprecedented number of citizens paired to a radical conceptual rebirth of high-rise living. The mega-city was birthed in New York State, advancing south to annex Washington D.C. and surrounding states, pulverising the Appalachian Mountains to use as the building material for cloudbusting cityblocks and glistening mega-corp citadels. Overcrowding and decades of estate attrition caused by war, plague and terrorism placed an unimaginable pressure on the mega-city society and instigated movement towards a literal vertical class system. The vast majority of citizens, unemployed and forgotten by all but their Welfare cheques, live in the city's lower levels. The wealthier a citizen finds himself, the higher he can afford to live, above the noise of the incessant traffic and far from the snares of crime - at least that is the dream.

Mega-City One is divided vertically into two levels of social aspiration, given the nicknames *Lowtown* and *Hightown*. Citizens may make reference to a locale called 'Midtown', but it has no discernible borders or socioeconomic specifications and is merely a geographical fix directed at any midpoint of a structure.

lowtown

Geography - Lowtown is considered to occupy the bottom two-thirds of the Mega-City One vertical landscape, both architecturally and financially. It is poor, noisy and dirty.

The Locals - Most of the *Judge Dredd* stories featuring 'average' citizens take place in and around Lowtown. The lower levels of most cityblocks are inhabited almost exclusively by citizens dependant on Welfare

cheques who are serviced by local businesses and cut-price branches of larger corporations offering their clients a tantalising glimpse of a better life they will never be able to achieve short of resorting to crime. Most leisure centres and factories beyond MegSouth [and to a lesser degree MegEast] cannot stand higher than Lowtown's 'ceiling'. The standalone leisure institutions [not installed in cityblocks] cater mainly to Lowtowners and so have no commercial desire to 'reach' any higher. Planning restrictions and the combined pressure of Mega-City One's wealthiest and most powerful citizens ensure that the noise and pollution generated by the factories in the residential zones are kept far below their robot-valeted luxury-apts. The only 'eyesores' allowed to this height are the towering hovertanker masts that function as refuelling stations and offloading bays for the city's slow-moving fleet of heavy goods aero-freighters. Heavily-funded Hightowner campaigns have regardlessly succeeded in keeping a good number of these depots sited along the borders with MegEast and MegSouth, close to the city's major dust zones.

Crime - Poverty relative to the wealth enjoyed by the higher levels perpetuates frustration, antisocial behaviour and simmering aggression among the Lowtowners, and helps feed a thriving criminal underworld with victims and employees. Most Justice Department patrols focus on Lowtown with foot, bike and street camera units' areas of operation combining their open and covert surveillance activities to create a detailed, 'tiered' map of the area's fixed inhabitants, transients and criminal activities.

City Bottom - The ground level upon which Mega-City One stands, metres-thick rockcrete separating the future metropolis from the dark depths of Old America, long-known to mega-city citizens simply as the 'Undercity'. Tweenblock plazas, pedways, shopplices, leisure centres, dust zones, hotels, bars and nightclubs, frequented by citizens day and night, fight for space in the cityblocks' shadows.

Beyond the hectic daily pace of life of City Bottom exist swathes of desolation and poverty, spawned by war, neglect and housing shortages. Among the rockcrete foundations, beggars squat in cardboard cities while fugitive criminals hope to hide from the judges, fighting for territory with feral sub-humans and hideously mutated animals. Scars of the Apocalypse War are still evident - rad-pits too dangerous to decontaminate and no-go zones, areas of unexploded war ordnance. Within protective electro-cordons, DP [displaced persons] camps offer the most basic of living conditions to those who lost their cityblock apartments to destruction.

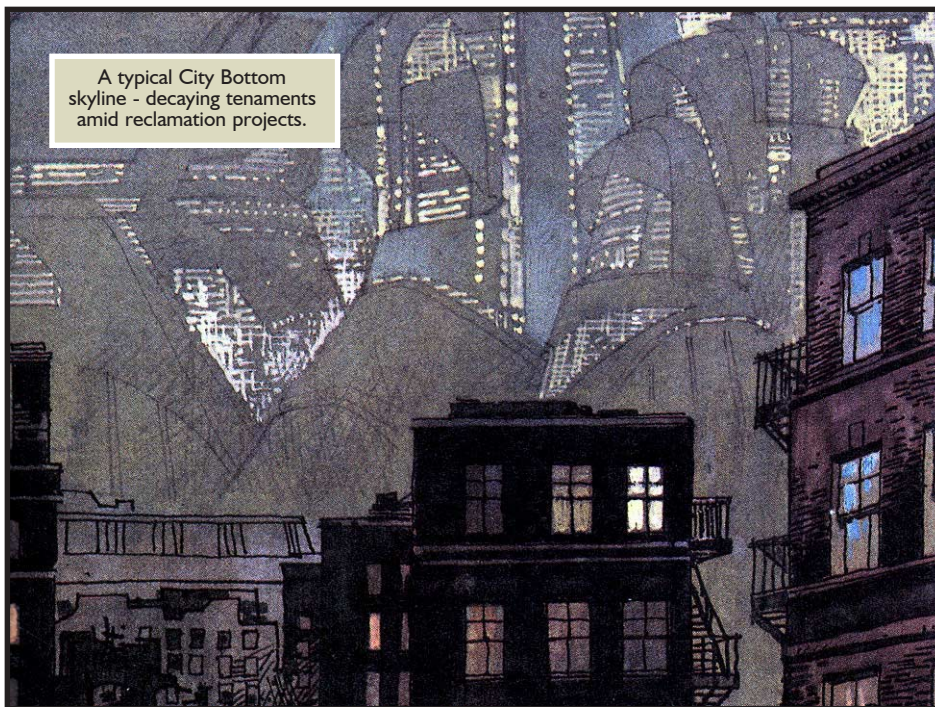
Not all areas of City Bottom are sweat boxes of humanity or slums; remnants of the old towns [the aptly nicknamed 'Old Town'] persist like weeds, wooden and brownstone tenements that are home to elders who refused to be rehoused and have been virtually forgotten by the judges.

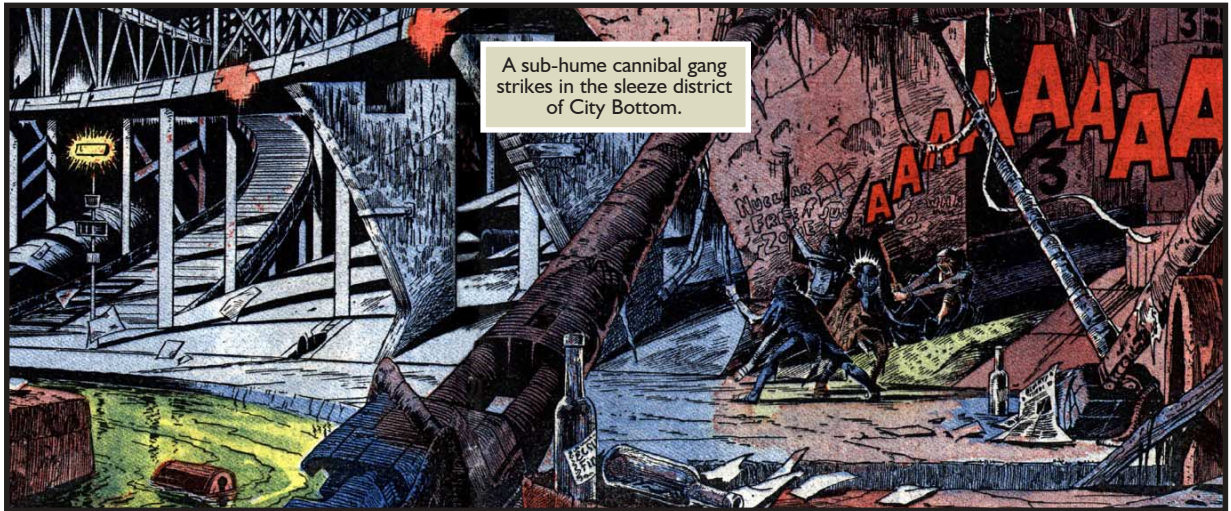
hightown

Geography - Hightown is considered to represent the upper strata of any cityblock where only the financially well-endowed can afford to reside. The term may also

correctly be used to describe any property of expense, whether it be a luxury-apt, 'luxy-block' [a cityblock reserved entirely for bottomless wallets] or any establishment where one cannot enter unless one is accompanied by a personal entourage of valets and bodyguards. Ever since the Weather Control network began to falter, Hightown has suffered some of the worst excesses of acid rain, electromagnetic disturbances and radiation fallout. The residents - never short of a credit or two - quickly contracted out

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for block shields available in physical [poly-layered plas-steel] or force field configurations to protect their interests. It is quite by accident if Lowtown gains any benefit from the structural modifications.

The Locals - Hightown is regarded as prime estate among the richest citizens and mega-corporation executives who are willing to pay millions or even billions of credits to escape the crime and squalor of the lower levels; if a citizen cannot afford to relocate to Hightown without a bank loan, he is not welcome there. A typical Hightown society is composed of businesspeople [rarely THE Chief Executive, enjoying the privilege of entire building all to himself], entertainment industry celebrities [actors, presenters, quack astrologers and sports stars], City Hall councillors and citizens whom Fortune has smiled on such as Megalotto winners and flash-in-the-pan reality tri-d contestants, here today, evicted tomorrow as their fame and talent agency bank balances swiftly dry up. The old disparities between talent and wealth continue unabated in Mega-City One; the good-looking and loud of mouth get the most media coverage and money, while the intelligensia [scientists, academics, rights campaigners and philosophers] struggle on Welfare or meagre grant payments.

To live in Hightown is recognised as a major social achievement, but it is not enough for some residents who strive to better their peers. Image is everything, reflected in Hightown by the size of one's luxury-apt, personal fashion, entourage, number [and scale] of parties and the density of hoverlimos docked at one's private hoverport at any one time while mega-networking takes place.

Crime - Hightown offers much of value to criminals, as all residents can expect to be loaded at all times with the latest in personal technology and garments designed by the world's leading fashion houses. Unfortunately for the criminal, Hightowners also come com-

plete with bodyguards [human, alien or mechanoid] who are authorised via a costly agreement with the Justice Department to use severe force against any miscreant who is proven to be an imminent lethal threat to the bodyguard's client. Burglars tempted to ransack a luxury-apt will find their way barred by layers of electronic security systems, their every move captured on security camera and relayed to the block judge. Criminals coming to Hightown from the outside world have a very challenging time ahead of them. Most give up, descending to Lowtown for easier pickings.

Crime, however, does not attack by one route alone, and Hightown has its share of corruption *within* the security walls, social niceties and public esteem. Big business is unable to function without some degree of immorality - whoever got rich by being good? With enough credits to grease the backhand of Judge Death himself, the basest of sins are sanctioned on a regular, almost mundane frequency and Mega-City One knows no differently; the celebrities keep smiling and flashing their wealth, politicians pass out hollow and reassuring sound-bites like mock-choc and business executives smile, give no comment and allow themselves to be gently eased into their waiting hoverlimo by a team of immaculately dressed, scandalously underpaid Mex-Cit valets.

transport network

ground vehicles

Mega-City One's constant flow of commerce and civilian traffic is supported by a seemingly endless winding lengths of roadway that, from a distance, resembles an enormous rockcrete and plassteel cobweb strung along the skyline. The road network supports rapid transit from the depths of City Bottom to the lower levels of Hightown. The high ratio of drivers-to-road capacity

would mean perpetual gridlock if not for greatly raised speed limits, the average speed along a meg-way exceeding two-hundred and fifty kilometres an hour. The superslabs, the network's largest roads, dictate speeds greater than four hundred kilometres an hour. The Justice Department has the authority to travel even faster in pursuit of felons, or responding to a grave emergency. Speed limit concessions are also granted to civilian fire and ambulance units.

The mega-city transport network's everyday functions are maintained by the Transport Department, based at City Hall. The central administration hub - Traffic Control - is but the main branch of a whole gallery of centres sited across Mega-City One. Traffic Control is never less than a hive of activity with human and robot operatives following the progress of sector and regional traffic movements on large, complicated, billboard-sized displays. Most of the huge volume of traffic and related computer data is filtered through a powerful traffic computer that acts in conjunction with others of its series to control the speed of traffic light changes, divert traffic should an accident or obstacle pose a 'flow-blow' [decrease or total cessation of traffic movement], or to automatically alert robot clean-up squads to rectify unstable patches of road or remove debris. The human contingent of Traffic Control is in place to provide a mandatory 'back-up' to the computers if they should malfunction or encounter a scenario they have not been programmed to resolve.

The larger traffic control centres are jointly-manned by the judges of Meg-Way Division. The drivers of Mega-City One behave themselves no better - and often much worse - than commuters of any other age and so are subject to strict controls on their activities. The traditional crimes of speeding, dangerous or inhibited driving are present, alongside a new offence - the crime of the 'slowster', one who travels at less than the minimum speed limit and endangers the lives of others.

The complexity of the Mega-City One road system is such that an electronic driving aid - the 'AL-manac' - is recommended for all civilian drivers, though not yet compulsory by law. The soothing synthesised tones of AL provide navigational directions for the driver, updated constantly by

Traffic Control. The Justice Department relies on its own, encrypted nav-feed that reveals short-cuts and bypasses unknown to the average driver, allowing the judges to get to the scene of a crime that much faster, or to help them ambush fugitive drivers.

Naming Roads - The roads of Mega-City One have several names. Their official classification is a combination of initials and numbers. Each road has a letter, followed by two sets of numerals separated by a forward slash [letter/sector of origin/sector of termination]. The first letter is that road's initial denoting its type. The first set of numerals describe the sector the road originates in, and the second numeral represents the sector it terminates in - many meg-ways and skedways span several sectors.

For example, mw/233/235 is a meg-way that begins in Sector 233 and ends in Sector 235.

Many roadways and pedestrian corridors have a second name. Like most cityblocks, they often carry the name of a famous celebrity, cultural icon, historical figure or local hero [*Marge Simpson Pedway, Billy The Kid Skedway, Jack Daniels Superslab*, for example]. This is the only name by which most ordinary citizens know the location.

hover vehicles

With road traffic congestion rising tremendously during the Twenty-first Century, the moment that anti-gravity technologies made personal travel affordable it was put into mass production by the world's major vehicle manufacturers. Soon, the skies of Mega-City One were filled



Illustration by John Higgins. Copyright Rebellion A/S © 2004

with hover vehicles, from hoverpods designed for single drivers to hoversaloons catering for families, to airbuses and industrial hovers tankers. Hover traffic follows strict flight paths fed automatically into their nav-feed computers by Traffic Control. These rules apply from the moment a hover vehicle enters a 'tangle' [busy flight path] until it breaks away, joining a one-way 'line' to begin approach towards its final destination. Harsh sentences [anything from five to fifteen years] apply to flyers who do not obey the protocols, risking the lives of their fellow flyers. Hover traffic generally operates at a slower speed [one to two-hundred kph] than its ground counterpart to reduce the risk of collisions with other vehicles and buildings, and because there are relatively fewer hover vehicles than ground traffic.

zoom

For citizens without ground or hover vehicles of their own, the zoom network provides rapid transit across Mega-City One. Sometimes referred to as 'sky-rail', the zoom is a huge grid of plasteen tracks elevated hundreds of metres above City Bottom. The zoom trains

ride the 'rails' using the tried and trusted 'maglev' [magnetic levitation] technology, superconductors that raise the zoom a small distance above the track to remove friction and allow for incredible speeds. One-hundred kilometres per hour is the average for intersector travel, while interprecinct zooms can operate at three-hundred kilometres per hour. The greatest speeds are reserved for the Crossmeg Express, exceeding six-hundred kilometres per hour.

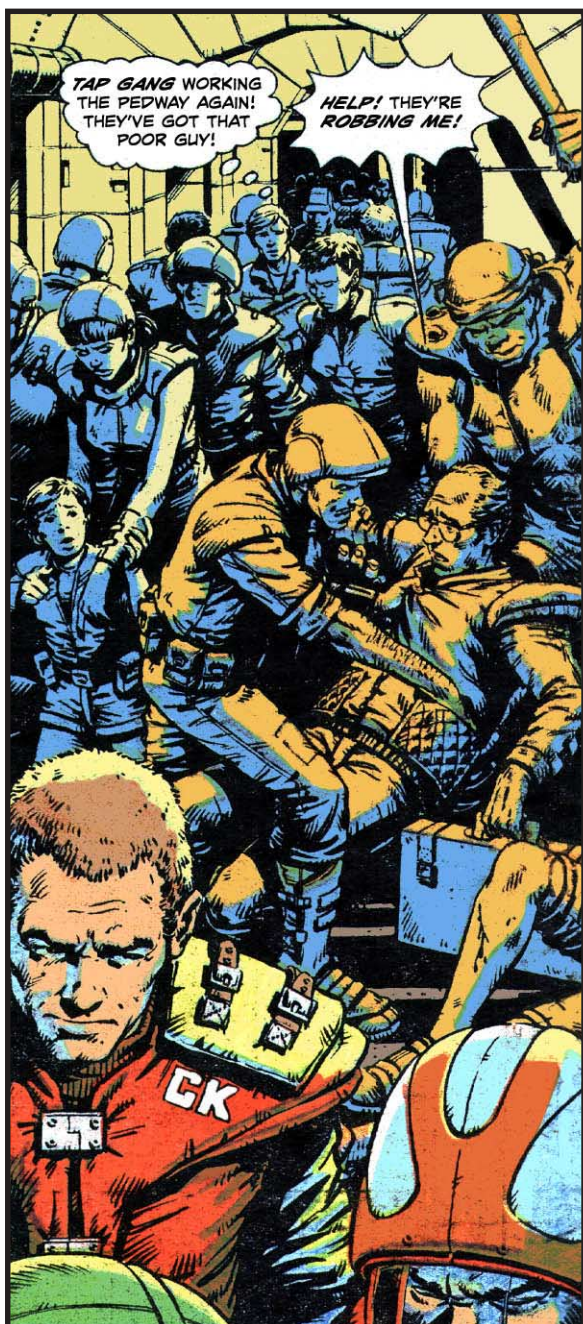
Zoom stations are to be found in most sectors and offer inexpensive travel. All ticket transactions are handled by robot vendors: place the correct credits or paycards in one slot and a ticket slides out another. A robot ticket inspector checks that all passengers have their tickets during the journey. If they do not, handcuffs are automatically dispensed and the nearest judge patrol notified so that they can collect the offender[s] at the next station. The larger cityblocks have their own zoom stations, occupying two levels - one for the uptown line, the second for the downtown line. The city's main zoom lines converge at Mega-Central Station, one of its busiest tributaries the aptly-named 'Hell's Junction', a traffic accident blackspot.

transport terminology

The *Judge Dredd* comic strip has assigned many names to describe the differing types of roads found in Mega-City One. What becomes clear after reading many stories is that most roads have more than one classification [a meg-way is also known as an 'xpressway'] and at least one local identifier [e.g. Roy Rogers Meg-Way may share the equally valid title of 'mw/44/45'].

- **Boomway** [bw] - Road splitting off from a meg-way or skedway into several [aka boom].
- **Com-way** - [cw] Pedestrian concourse.
- **Feed** - [fe] Road that Traffic Control uses to regulate traffic flow to and from other road systems.
- **Filter** - [ft] Road branching off from a meg-way or skedway into several roads, each directing traffic onto a smaller road system according to individual need [aka segway].
- **Flyover** - [fo] Any road that passes over a residential or industrial district. A 'flyunder' passes beneath pillar-supported habitats.
- **Judge Lane** - [jl] Road reserved exclusively for Justice Department vehicles; many meg-ways have judge lanes running their entire length.
- **Intercross** - [ic] Zoom junction.
- **Meg-Way** - [mw] Mega-City One's 'B' roads, many lanes wide, designed to carry a high volume of traffic at speeds averaging 250kph [aka slab, speedway, xpressway].
- **Pedway** - [pw] Basic footpath.
- **Pipeway** - [pp] Footpath enclosed within an opaque or transparent tube [aka zipstrip].
- **Ringway** - [rw] Any spiralling or circular road.
- **Skedway** - [sk] 'C' road, half the width of a meg-way [sked].
- **Slipway** - [sw] One-way road, component of a filter [see above].
- **Slidewalk** - [sw] Motorised pedway allowing pedestrians to move at various speeds [aka eeziglide].
- **Superslab** - [ss] The city's 'A' roads, up to three times the width of a meg-way. Average traffic speed 400kph. Some superslabs offer uninterrupted travel across Mega-City One.
- **Transit Stack** - [ts] Huge rockcrete [more recently plasteen] support pillars for multi-storey road and zoom networks.
- **Zoom** - [z] Maglev train [aka sky-rail].





pedestrian

For short journeys and a breath of fresh air, the city's pedways offer the ideal means to cross between city-blocks and to access local entertainment centres. A pedway is nothing more than a wide walkway built of rockcrete or plasteen, following a straight or curved path as its course demands. Several other varieties of pedway exists in Mega-City One - the 'pipeway' [pedway enclosed within a tube] and the 'slidewalk' [motorised pedway offering jogging speed transit]. The shorter pedways provide a straight link between buildings of close

proximity, while others connect to tweenblock plazas or concourses. Pedways are ideal 'runs' for criminals such as taps and dunks and gangbangers who frequent them in the evening and early hours of the morning when foolish citizens venture out on their own and judges are relatively scarce.

government

Mega-City One is administrated by a complex partnership between the Justice Department and City Hall. The judges were nothing more than elite law enforcers before they disposed President Booth and the American Senate and were elected by the citizens of Mega-City One as the city's guardians. This role the judges have continued to pursue, a relentless war on crime that recognises few civil liberties or 'red-tape' bureaucracy. While the Justice Department works, it leaves much of the municipal and commercial responsibilities to City Hall.

The civilian government of Mega-City One has changed very little from its basic organisation in the early Twenty-first Century: the City Council meets at City Hall [in Sector 38 East] to decide new policies, vote on proposed bills and set tax rates. The City Council is led by the Mayor, a modern counterpart of the old American president who is voted into office every four years on the back of a scandalously expensive campaign, elected electronically by the citizens from the comfort of their home tri-ds. Every cityblock has its own resident council [or 'committee'] and its own mayor, elected by the residents to see that City Hall directives are enforced. The mayor is part of the City Council and can veto any bill or motion that he disagrees with, but here his powers dwindle as most other executive decisions are carried out by the Justice Department's Council Of Five - the judges even have a say on the citywide level of taxation.

The two most famous Mega-City One mayors of recent years are Jim Grubb and Dave, an orang-utan. Grubb was a charismatic individual who won the vote for reelection several times and remained firmly committed to his job despite being publically humiliated by the mad Chief Judge Cal and kidnapped at least once. Grubb was feared lost during the Apocalypse War, but survived by scavenging among the city ruins. He was soon to perish, having inhaled the spores of a lethal, mutant fungal infestation. Dave, an orang-utan and best friend of barfly Billy Smairt, enjoyed the distinction of being to date the only non-human to hold the office of mayor. Dave had become a major celebrity in the megacity media when he successfully chose [quite by chance] the winner of that year's Superbowl game. Dave easily beat off the competition to become mayor in 2106. Sadly, Mayor Dave's popularity did not save him a from



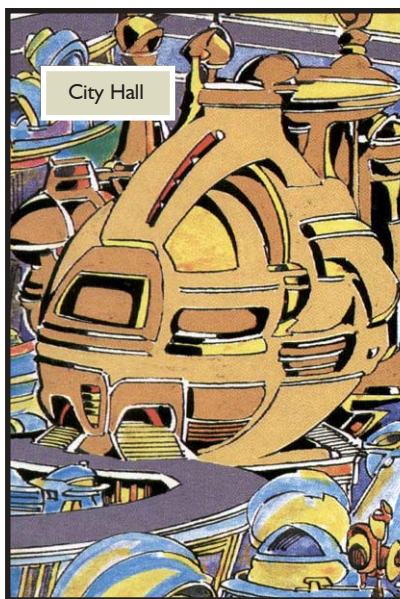
A block committee meeting in session.

pointless death in 2107. Mo Molinsky, a friend of Billy Smairt's, thought he would collect on Smairt's insurance policy if Smairt died. He did not - the policy had lapsed. Since Dave's death, the *Judge Dredd* comic strip has not revealed the identity of any of the successive mayors.

The City Hall bureaucracy is divided into several key departments. A city the size of Mega-City One will have many more sub-departments to deal with all manner of issues, most too tedious to waste page count examining. Council departments are titled in order of 'function/department' [for example, the Housing Department].

- **Construction** - Hundreds of thousands of labour and construction robots toil unceasingly to keep the city's endless skyline intact, all inhabited structures stable and the roadways in good working order. Older buildings are demolished to be recycled into fresh rockcrete or plasteen building blocks for the construction of modern residences. The department is also responsible for ensuring that private developments observe planning and safety regulations and for maintaining the rockcrete barrier between City Bottom and the Undercity.

- **Energy** - Works alongside nationalised and private business organisations to supply the city blocks and dust zones with electricity from the Power Towers, a network of cool fission reactors and solar energy collectors scattered across the higher cityblocks.



City Hall

- **Environment & Health** - Keeps the city's streets and other public venues hygienic and free of pestilence. The clean-up squads [operated jointly with the Construction Department], Pest Control and its elite 'Verminators' are all responsible to this department. Health & safety investigations are organised from this department, though it is usually the Justice Department that carries out spot inspections or serves orders to close down or quarantine environments deemed dangerous to the public.

- **Finance** - Sets the city's annual public services budget, subdividing it among the 305 sector councils. Finance works with the Justice Department's Accounts Chief to decide upon tax, national insurance and medicare rates.

- **Housing** - Has the most difficult job of all departments, maintaining the upkeep of thousands of city-blocks, containing or relocating populations of displaced persons, reporting problem neighbours to the Justice Department, ensuring that Welfare payments are regularly distributed and reviewing immigration/emmigration applications from mega-city citizens, foreigners and extraterrestrials with specific environmental and cultural requirements.

- **Leisure** - In some ways, Mega-City One can be compared to an insane holiday camp. An average of ninety-percent of all adult citizens are unemployed at any one time, which breeds chronic boredom, depression and antisocial tendencies that manifest themselves in countless harmless or potentially dangerous ways. The Leisure Department's remit is to keep the citizens happy - or at least occupied - and to take some of the burden of public order off the Justice Department's shoulders. Home entertainment systems must be kept in good working order to keep tri-d addicts from developing violent withdrawal symptoms.

The thousands of entertainment stations are monitored closely to ensure they provide wall-to-wall broadcasting, or face a prison sentence for gross negligence. Public venues such as block and amusement parks, concert halls and sports arenas all must be ready to receive the crowds at short notice or risk triggering riots that can quickly spread from one sector to the next [and the councillors responsible duly arrested].

The business of educating the citizens falls within the Department of Leisure's parameters. The block schools provide guidance for juveniles concerning acceptable public behaviour and non-inflammatory ways of spending their hormone-ad-

dled years. For older students, the 'Mega-U' [universi-ty] centres offer hundreds of courses designed to last for years or decades to keep questioning minds content. These education centres have small branches within most cityblocks and a lesser number of much larger, stand-alone centres [megaplexes] housed in renovated pre-atomic blocks.

- **Records** - Most of Mega-City One's public records are handled by a master computer called Barney, located within the City Hall. Any citizen can access their housing, health or financial histories and accounts from a tri-d terminal or compatible vid-phone, putting them directly in touch with the always friendly Barney, complete with 'smiley face' and vocal interface. Alternatively, Barney can be visited at City Hall and accessed through the many computer stations sited in its public gallery. Barney also mediates local or general elections, collating the votes.

- **Transport** - Billions of kilometres of jam-packed roads and skies choked with hover vehicles demand that the Transport Department be one of Mega-City One's largest and most well-organised divisions. At Traffic Control, vehicle flow is constantly monitored and adjusted through traffic lights and auto-diversion systems in the event of accidents that can result in immediate, sector-long tailbacks. Unfortunately, though many traffic-calming initiatives read well on paper, in practice they are often thwarted by certain drivers who knowingly or unwittingly flout every regulation in the book and cause complete chaos. Any damaged road systems must be repaired within twenty-four hours regardless of their size to keep the traffic in motion, necessitating monumental co-ordination between the Transport and Construction Departments and the Justice Department's Traffic Division who work personally with the drivers to see that order is maintained until the repairs are complete.

typical city councillor

Fig 2 Hed 3 Nim 3 Psi 0 Spd 3 Str 3

Action Skills - Vehicle [ground/hover] 3.

Academic Skills - Diplomacy, Mega-City One Bureaucracy.

Equipment - Biz-suit, comm, handcomp [containing that day's agenda].

Soundbite - *'I value the rights and opinions of all my constituents; I hope to serve you to the very best of my ability'* [spoken through fixed grin].

the city wall

The city wall was constructed on the orders of the tyrannical Chief Judge Cal during 2101, built with the sweat and blood of hundreds of thousands of conscripted labourers; many died to bring Cal's twisted vision

of a prison-sized city to fruition. When Cal's forces were overthrown, the city wall remained. Though originally designed to prevent Mega-City One's citizens from escaping Cal's regime, the wall was equally as effective at keeping undesirables such as mutants and other enemy forces from freely entering the city. The city wall suffered major damage during the Apocalypse War and the so-called 'Necropolis' and is still being repaired years later.

structure

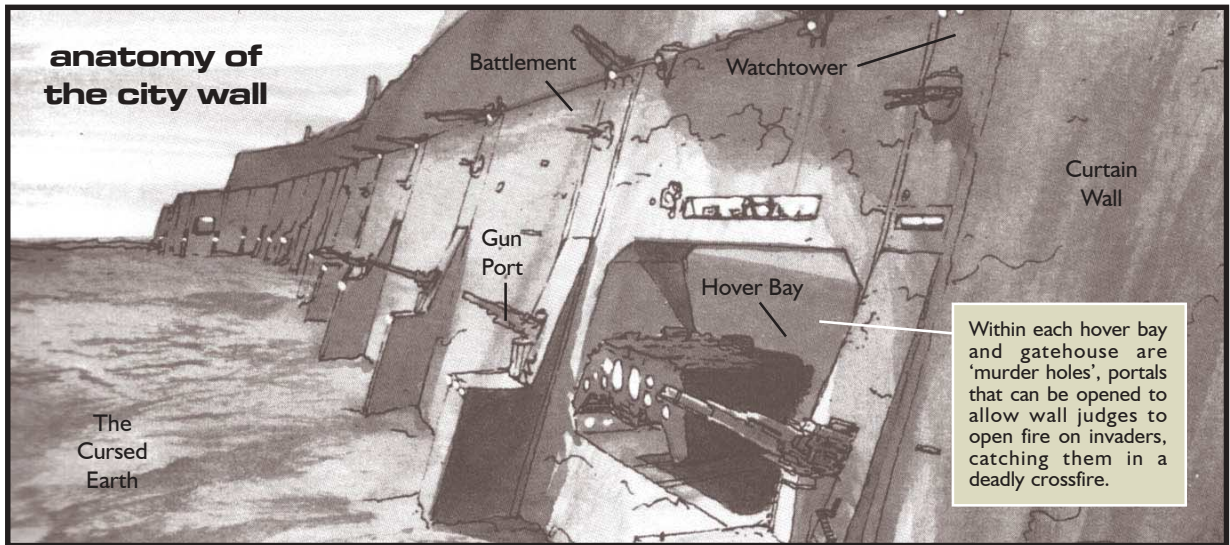
Chief Judge Cal wanted his wall completed in as short a span of time as was humanly possible. The answer was to construct it from plasteen, a common building material of the late Twenty-first Century that could easily be moulded into any configuration of building block and was far lighter than rockcrete. The city wall measures one mile in height along its entire length, including the more recent southern face built after the Apocalypse War to protect the remaining MegSouth city sectors. Extensive repair work began at the same time to rebuild the east ['Atlantic'] wall, levelled by a monstrous tsunami generated by East-Meg One nuclear strikes out at sea.

As described previously, the city wall's original function was to prevent citizens from leaving Mega-City One. As such, the structure was built high and sheer. Searchlights were placed every dozen metres, constantly strobing the city and the wall's own sides for transgressors. If they were discovered, death was the only punishment, delivered quickly and efficiently by one of many hundreds of street cannon emplacements. Larger anti-aircraft batteries scanned the skies for fugitive hover vehicles. Judges patrolled battlements that ran the wall's length. When Mega-City One was liberated, work began to redefine the city wall's utility. As a barrier against the armed threats coming from the Cursed Earth, its weaponry was turned one-eighty degrees about, facing outwards and long-range sensor stations were built into the watchtowers. Gun ports were installed, augmenting the street cannons of Cal's day with both medium and heavy laser cannon, capable of annihilating a convoy of enemy ground vehicles in seconds. The city wall has no central judicial command unit, but is instead protected by judges assigned from every adjacent sector. The sector chiefs are responsible for the security of the wall within their sector.

wall traffic

Gatehouses have been sited intermittently in the curtain walls to allow authorised ground vehicle and foot communications between Mega-City One and the Cursed Earth. Located further apart and higher up the curtain wall's face are hover bays large enough to admit a single





'C-Class' H-wagon or cargo shuttle. Two sets of armoured doors - an outer portcullis and a blast door - on either side of the city wall protect gatehouse and hover bay. Gatehouses and hover bays all have numerical designations ['West Gate 16' for example, for the sixteenth gate along the west wall. A hover bay uses the typical designation of wall/bay/digit, 'North Bay 11', for example].

All civilian vehicular and foot traffic are examined scrupulously for content and as a possible threat to the security of Mega-City One. As armed judges watch, small teams of tek-judges probe newcomers with weapons scanners while med-judges perform full medicals on Cursed Earth arrivals with the authority to place their charges under quarantine for courses of inoculation or decontamination until they are no longer deemed a health hazard. Vehicles too are detained for decontamination or structural integrity inspection to assess their suitability for travel on the high-speed mega-city road network. For Mega-City One citizens, formal authorisation is required to be permitted to leave the city, available by application to Barney, the City Hall computer, who cross-references the claimant's profile with the Justice Department to learn if the claimant is seeking to leave the city for a less than wholesome reason, such as attempting to escape arrest.

Should at any time the subject of an 'entrance exam' fail to qualify for admission into Mega-City One, the judges will throw him back into the Cursed Earth without further notice with a stern warning never to return unless his situation improves. Known criminals found to be attempting to enter Mega-City One will be arrested and placed in one of the temporary holding pens inside the city wall to await formal sentencing and relocation to an iso-block. Mega-city citizens who fail to pass muster are sentenced to five years in the iso-cubes for wast-

ing the judges' time. Criminals are arrested and driven or flown to the nearest sector house for processing.

mutants

Cursed Earth mutants cause the greatest concern for the judges of the city wall. For the disease-ridden, poverty-stricken mutant populations, Mega-City One is a paradise on Earth and they are drawn to its borders like moths to a flame. Mutants [nicknamed 'wallhoppers'] constantly attempt to scale the mile-high curtain walls with ramshackle climbing kits, to fly over the walls using scratch-built gliders or stolen hover vehicles, or going for the direct route and using explosives or brute force to try to breach the wall itself and overpower the judges. On most occasions, the mutants' efforts are easily thwarted and they are thrown back into the Cursed Earth - if not gunned down first. However, the city wall has not been completely repaired and gaps along its flank tempt the brave and desperate with the quick and easy way into Mega-City One - if they can first avoid auto-guns hidden among the wall debris and roving judge patrols. Despite the city wall's formidable security, mutants do sometimes succeed at climbing over the wall. While some exceptional mutations grant inherent wall-crawling, invisibility or flight abilities that allow their possessors to make it over the wall without making a sound or otherwise be detected, most incursions are conducted *en mass*, breaking through the defences by sheer weight of numbers. One example of a recent incursion recounts hundreds of mutants ['surf sharks'] flying over the city wall atop powerboards stolen from an Oz aero-freighter crashlanded in the Cursed Earth. The surf sharks steal food, fresh water and valuables from mega-city citizens. The sharks are surprisingly well organised, using edged weapons to cut down judges as they fly over the city wall, then once within the city limits switching



to firearms to intimidate their victims and keep the pursuing judges at bay. The judges are very effective at containing surf shark incursions - most sharks do not make it out of Mega-City One alive - but those few that manage to fly back over the city wall have earned the great esteem of their peers - and any items they have been able to steal in the process. Some mutants escape capture, to remain forever hidden among the city's immense urban maze. These mutants may manage to eke a bare standard of sustenance living from the refuse deposited on City Bottom, fighting against sub-humes and giant rats for every meagre scrap of food and clothing, or fall victim to a criminal organisation with designs on the mutant's person, threatening to deliver him to the judges if he does not do their bidding. Roving bands of organleggers find mutants an occasionally valuable source of body parts if they are not too diseased or riddled with cancerous radiation.

surf shark

Fig 4 Hed 3 Nim 4 Psi 0 Spd 4 Str 3

Action Skills - Projectile [handgun] 4, Projectile [rifle] 3, Vehicle [ground] 3, Vehicle [powerboard] 5.

Academic Skills - Basic Repair & Maintenance, Cursed Earth Survival.

Weaponry - Stolen, scavenged or scratch-built light projectile weapons [handguns, hand bombs, etc], small-to-medium-sized edged weapons [knives, axes, etc].

Equipment - Powerboard, warm clothing, light body armour [Ba1].

Soundbite - 'Die, stinkin' Normos!'

beyond the wall

All terrain immediately beyond Mega-City One's west wall, reaching into the Cursed Earth, is neutral territory [the 'Dead Zone'] for a distance of fifty kilometres. The area is aptly named for it was the site of huge burial pits containing



millions upon millions of citizens murdered by the Dark Judges during their 'Necropolis' campaign. The burial pits were disturbed in 2114 when necromancer Sabbat resurrected all their dead during Judgement Day - sixty million undead crawled from the pits and attacked Mega-City One. After Sabbat's defeat, the zombies returned to their deathly state. This time, the judges were more thorough and destroyed the corpses, scattering their ashes to the Cursed Earth winds. The burial sites were filled

in, but they continue to exude disturbing psychic energies despite having been blessed by Exorcist Division.

Any organisation that declares an interest in establishing a temporary or permanent encampment within the Dead Zone falls under close scrutiny from the Justice Department; hostile or potentially threatening parties are ordered to leave the vicinity within twelve hours or face a forceful expulsion, a practice typically executed by an H-wagon and a squad of Lawmaster judges airlifted to the scene. Habitats and encampments that manage successfully to gain authorisation for long-term settlement have all to date been established for commercial purposes benefitting Mega-City One such as food producers, science laboratories [conducting field studies into Cursed Earth geology and biodiversity] and modest waystations of varying quality for travellers of both Mega-City and independent origin who have plotted their journeys to direct their course parallel to the city wall, enjoying the relative security offered by row upon row of heavy weaponry.

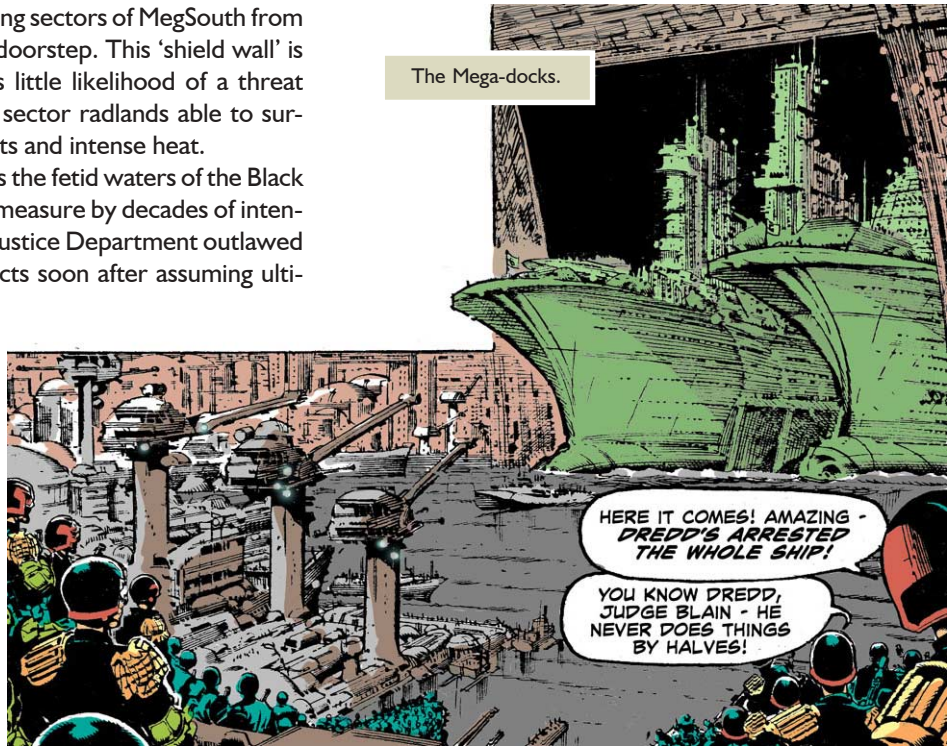
The former southern tail of Mega-City One once stretched as far as Florida and has long lain devastated from radiation spawned by the Apocalypse War. Mega-City One's immediate response was to effect emergency damage control measures and build a new length of

wall to separate the surviving sectors of MegSouth from the ruined hellhole on its doorstep. This 'shield wall' is lightly-guarded as there is little likelihood of a threat emerging from the south sector radlands able to survive the corrosive rad-mists and intense heat.

The east wall overlooks the fetid waters of the Black Atlantic, polluted beyond measure by decades of intensive industrial abuse. The Justice Department outlawed such waste disposal projects soon after assuming ultimate jurisdiction over Mega-City One and clean-up projects have been in progress along the city limits, though it will take many generations yet before the Black Atlantic's waters will resume any semblance of their former health. Though the Black Atlantic is lethal to marine life, it has had little impact on commerce, business between Mega-City One and the world's trade centres conducted by fleets of solar tankers and a variety of shipping built to last with corrosion-proof hulls and acid-diffusing sprinkler systems safeguarding exposed decks.

To facilitate the needs of the maritime community, the east wall is peppered with docks along its length able to berth the largest tankers; the largest docks are to be found at Long Island [known locally as the 'Finger']. Smaller vessels of industrial and civilian ownership can enter the city through the sea-gates and weigh anchor in the Mega-Docks. Each sea-gate is numbered ['Atlantic Gate 3' for example].

The Mega-docks.



The Justice Department watches over all transactions through Harbour Patrol [inside the wall] and Atlantic Division [for all activities outside the east wall and within the one-hundred kilometres of ocean along the entire length of the North American eastern seaboard that falls under Mega-City One jurisdiction]. Both Harbour and Atlantic patrols can call on a small fleet of amphibious 'A'-wagons and armed customs boats to round up smugglers and sea pirates, or bring rapid assistance to boats and ships in distress.

pirates of the black atlantic

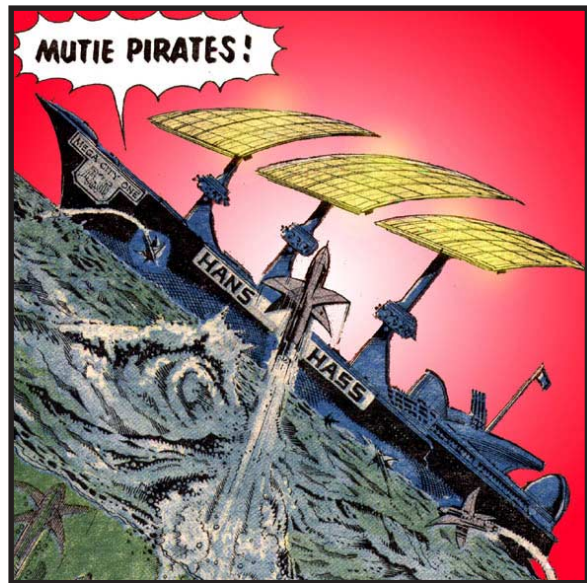
The so-called 'Pirates Of The Black Atlantic' are mercenary thugs, wanted criminals and brutes of low intellect and high violence who have been recruited or unwillingly shanghaied into the service of their masters, sea pirates who prey on shipping for valuables to horde or sell to clients at illicit ports along the Central American coast. Most Black Atlantic pirates are of Central or South American origin, peasants from the shanty towns who want a better life, though fugitives from Mega-City justice are also in evidence among the rabble. The pirates field whatever weaponry they can buy or steal and are particularly skilled with notorious, scratch-built firearms such as the harpoon rifle and the 'blastlock'.

Black Atlantic pirates conduct their attacks on shipping with great speed and ferocity, using pneumatic axes to create handholds against the sides of target vessels, allowing the pirates to attach themselves below the level



of the enemy weapons batteries and then quickly ascend to the top deck. The same axes are used to deal in a deadly fashion with any defenders the target vessel might possess. One small but equally nasty weapon in the pirates' arsenal are 'barbeqs', transparent caltrops seeded across the deck in advance of a predicted enemy intrusion. When stepped on, these nearly-invisible devices explode with enough force to blow a man's foot off, disabling him but by design lacking sufficient power to seriously damage the ship.

When the pirates have taken control of the ship, all its valuables are brought onto the top deck to be sorted and then carried back to the pirate 'ketch' by teams of strongmen, or for the better-equipped pirate bands, labour robots 'acquired' from solar tankers. Though a vicious lot, the Black Atlantic pirates are not without instincts of self-preservation and will quickly flee back to their ketch if faced with an enemy of greater strength.



black atlantic pirate

Fig 4 Hed 3 Nim 4 Psi 0 Spd 4 Str 4

Action Skills - Projectile [handgun] 4, Projectile [rifle] 4, Vehicle [ground/hover] 3, Vehicle [marine] 5.

Academic Skills - Basic Repair & Maintenance [water vehicles], Black Atlantic Survival.

Weaponry - Blastlock or harpoon rifle, pneumatic axe, barbeq.

Equipment - Custom armour [Ba1].

Soundbite - 'Hand over all your fancy trinkets an' I'll not make you walk the plank - yet!'

pirate ketch

BA 5 Mass 16-32 Spd 10

Weaponry - 2 x 'shipwreck' torpedo launchers, communication scrambler transmitter.

Techbite - Ketches are small pirate vehicles able to carry approximately three-score pirates from their secret base out into the Black Atlantic. They have amphibious capabilities, able to operate both as submersibles and surface boats. A small number of ketches in the possession of the larger pirate bands have been fitted with antigravity engines to allow them to pursue merchant aero-freighters.

solar tankers

Solar tankers drive the world's sea trade. Highly-efficient solar panels and several decks of turbines convert the sun's rays into electrical power, propelling the tankers at great speed. Solar tankers are the product of decades of alternative energy refinement, a marvellously simple build, allowing the ships to be staffed by very small crew numbers assisted by computers that allow the tanker to virtually drive itself - which it can do in emergencies when the crew is incapacitated or absent. Labour robots further supplement critical ship operations, loading and unloading freight and effecting repairs to the tanker's hull while out at sea. Solar tankers are typically unarmed, though the more wealthy merchant navies insist on armed 'insurance' to ward off pirate assaults. Should the solar tankers face destruction, lifeboats with limited survival kit are on stand-by, powered by fuel cells continually charged by the tanker's main turbines until the lifeboat is released from its docking clamp.

solar tanker

BA 4 Mass 64-256 Spd 9

Weaponry - most solar tankers are unarmed, but some may field several missile launchers or light laser cannon.

SECTOR 3 cityblocks



The buildings of Mega-City One are designed for the mass containment of large quantities of citizens and terrace upon terrace of corporate industry. The largest structures are those dedicated to residential housing and the robot factories of the dust zones, while the tallest belong to the privileged few. Notorious as the most densely populated megalopolis on Earth, Mega-City One nevertheless cannot be accused of apathy - floating habitats ['aircons'] have taken many citizens above the crowded slabwalks and rehoused them in antigravity citadels. Other aircons have followed suit by providing hovering restaurants, leisure centres, clubs and observatories for the airborne population as well as offering a novelty environment for the ground-dwellers. Space condominiums ['condos'] have taken population relocation one step further, self-contained metal islands that trace graceful orbits within the Sol solar system.

The landscape of Mega-City One is dominated by thousands of cityblocks, towers designed to house many thousands of citizens in comfort. The basic cityblock design was conceived in the early Twenty-first Century and remains largely unchallenged; the more recent developments have wider foundations and reach further into the skies but they still closely follow the basic architectural pattern. The ideal of the cityblock was to provide housing, business and leisure facilities for a large number of residents to such a comprehensive extent that a citizen could conceivably live his life within the cityblock walls and never have to leave.

With a crushing population density to cope with and new development space at a high premium, cityblocks are sited very close to one another. This means many of the smaller service industries that prior to the construction of Mega-City One were located on their own estates now have to be relocated *within* the cityblocks to conserve ground space. This is not the norm for all extrablock interests and a number of sectors are divided more evenly between cityblock and miscellaneous structures. Mega-City One has become an architect's nightmare, a triumph of function over style or beauty, but necessity must take precedence over aesthetics.

Cityblocks fall into four broad categories: *Pre-Atomic*, *Post-Atomic*, *Conapt* and *Luxy-Block*.

Pre-Atomic blocks are those that were constructed before the Great Atom War of 2070-2071. 'Pre-atomic' blocks are shorter, narrower, often rectangular of build and have fewer modern amenities than later designs. 'Post-atomic' blocks count for all the cityblocks constructed after the Atom War to the present day. They are characterised by their vaguely conical design, bulbous foundations and domed roofs. Conapts are much smaller than pre or post-atomic cityblocks and offer apartments with larger dimensions and sometimes a private security force patrolling the grounds. **Note** - 'Conapt' is a contraction of 'connecting apartment' and is used to describe an apartment of above average quality within a cityblock and also a conapt cityblock, a building containing connecting apartments exclusively.

The final category of cityblock is the 'luxy-block', taller than it's plebian neighbours and the subject of some innovative construction techniques that only its extremely wealthy residents can afford to enjoy.

pre-atomic block

A pre-atomic cityblock [also nown as a 'hi-rise'] is a tower constructed before 2070 and after 2023, when the architects of Mega-City One rockcreted over most of Washington D.C. and New York. Pre-atomic cityblocks range in height from five-hundred to seven-hundred metres, altitudes that once were only the province of an elite number of global landmarks. Each block could have as many as one-hundred and fifty levels [divide the height by four to get an approximate level total]. Despite the state-of-the-art technologies of that time that went into their construction, from the outside pre-atomic blocks were widely criticised for their unattractive, retrospective facades, reminiscent of the grey and monotonous tower blocks adopted by world development agencies in the latter Twentieth Century. Construction duties of the pre-atomic cityblocks were tendered to private development companies who were also to govern the blocks after their completion, extracting rent

from the residents [rent was and continues to be the only method of acquiring an apartment in Mega-City One, unless one is wealthy enough to purchase a Hightown property outright]. The controlling executives of the development companies became known as 'Blocklords.'

Design - Before post-atomic blocks refined the ideal of 'internal living' - a structure dividing space between residential quarters, parks, shopplices, public forums and leisure facilities - the concept of cityblock volume division was simply to cram as many citizens into as tight a space as possible [fifteen to twenty thousand], making a few, meagre concessions to the architect's aesthetic whims. The block atrium was the most prominent of these concessions, a wide, sunlit space surrounded by galleries linked to apartment levels. On entering the block via any one of several automatic double doors [the larger the block the more entrances], one could look up - and up - towards the block's ceiling, watching sunlight cascade across the transparent covering and 'drip' into the atrium from every level, reflected from the exterior by a series of mirrors. A block park was sited at the centre of the atrium floor to be maintained regularly by a team of block 'regulators' [janitors].

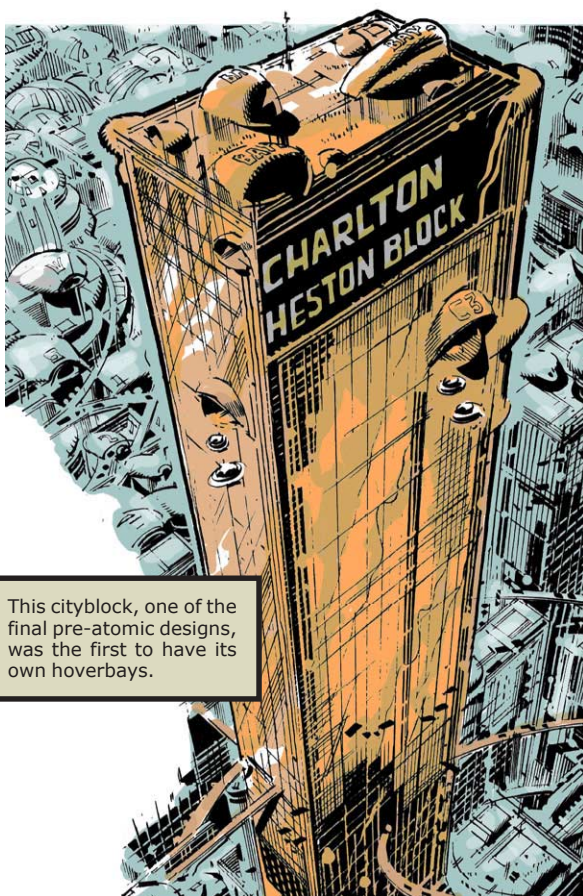
From the atrium, residents and visitors took escalators to the upper levels. The smaller pre-atomic blocks

had escalators that could take one to every level; a central elevator was added to carry heavy goods impossible to convey by escalator. In later designs, as the height of the block increased, the escalator was superseded by highspeed, button-activated elevator cars ['Els'] arranged in banks around the building's rockcrete core. One interesting feature of the pre-atomic elevator systems was a hydraulic spring sited on the floor of each shaft, designed to protect and cushion malfunctioning elevator cars and their occupants against power failure or sabotage. Emergency stairs ran the block's height should the elevators be put out of commission, accessed by fire doors.

The block's power generators were located in its basement, as were water and air conditioning pumps, electrical switchgear, electric cable buses and gas pipes [when the world's gas reserves were exhausted, the block was modified to be wholly reliant on electricity]. Before antigravity technology was perfected, all external maintenance work had to be carried out by contract cleaners using platforms winched down the block's side from rooftop cranes.

Habitats - Having travelled in an elevator to the desired level, the resident exited into a corridor leading to his apartment. Most pre-atomic blocks were subdivided into four vertical compartments [A-D], each occupying a quarter of the building's inhabitable volume. At least two elevators serviced each compartment. The apartments were built directly next to one another, separated by inexpensive brick walls. Pre-atomic apartments were each identified by the '00/x' prefix [numbers indicate the level, the letter the apartment in alphabetical order relative to distance from the nearest elevator]. Each apartment had one entrance opening out into one of that compartment's six corridors [imagine a figure eight - the lines of the '8' are the corridors, the two gaps in-between the apartment blocks. The inner corridor overlooked the block atrium, while the outer corridors offered a view of Mega-City One through large glasseen windows.

Every apartment was built to the same template, anticipating a certain class - and fiscal bracket - of resident, what we would today label 'upper lower to lower middle classes', a mixture of low income earners and those dependant on the welfare state. The apartments came furnished with basic kitchen and bathroom units and Megaweb access, a staple of the so-called 'intelligent home'. Still climbing the wave of the recycling era, the pre-atomic block was not fully-equipped for the procedure; all relevant domestic items had to be deposited in a chute located inside the atriumward face of each level where they would drop into ground level bins to be collected and taken by truck to the early mega-waste disposal units. Pre-atomic apartments were divided into four rooms - the living room/kitchenette, two bedrooms



This cityblock, one of the final pre-atomic designs, was the first to have its own hoverbays.

and one bathroom. The living room was the only room to have a window, and that was only provided for apartments facing the block atrium or located along the outer walls. The 'encased' apartments - lacking windows - were recompensed with 'virtuascapes', two-dimensional flatscreen monitors that replayed moving images of one of several relaxing environments such as tropical paradises, elements of the American countryside and simulated fantasy locales.

Disadvantages - The pre-atomic block suffered from some of the shortfalls in contingency anticipation that had beleaguered earlier incarnations. It lacked backup power generators and so was completely at the mercy of Mega-City One's prototypical and embarrassingly unreliable Nuclear Grid which subjected the entire megalopolis to power blackouts at the most inconvenient times. If fire or structural instability threatened the block, a sprinkler system automatically came online - but only if the blocklord's company computer decreed that the emergency warranted such a response. The deaths of thousands of citizens resulting from computer failure was a major boost for City Hall's campaign to transfer control of many pre-atomic to a single body directly responsible to the Department Of Housing. Blocklords do however continue to operate in certain sectors, but fortunately they number among the more responsible of overseers who have upgraded their properties with extensible fire slides in the lower levels offering swift escape from fire and mild to moderate structural damage.

Who Lives In A Block Like This? - The pre-atomic blocks that have survived to see 2126 are many decades old and show their age. Their rockcrete walls are cracked, pitted and blackened by low-level pollution. Frequently reduced to standing in the shadows of the even larger post-atomic cityblocks, pre-atomic residents must live in a twilight world where the sun no longer shines into the block atrium and the shadows are always long. The quality of life for the residents cannot be said to be any worse than that tolerated by the post-atomic block inhabitants - as long they remain indoors whenever possible; pre-atomic blocks are closer to City Bottom and more vulnerable to attacks from ranging sub-humes and gangs of delinquent slummies. Pre-atomic districts also report a higher than average rate of missing persons - from quite natural causes on occasion - but tap gangs, hungry feral animals and 'removal men' [professional abductors] hold claim to the remaining ranks of absent friends and family.

post-atomic block

The Great Atom War taught the governments of Mega-City One many lessons. One was '*build our cityblocks better!*'. The Eastern Alliance's nuclear strikes were

largely deflected by Mega-City One's laser defense system, though a small number did escape the blitz to cause thousands of deaths. The laser defence system could not however prevent aftershocks caused by nuclear missiles falling short of their target and detonating in the lands immediately beyond the city. Shockwaves rumbled into Mega-City One, creating instability in the city's foundations. Portions of the city collapsed into the Undercity, while a good number of cityblocks collapsed.

Design - The next generation of cityblock - and miscellaneous high-rise structures - was designed with longevity in mind. Nicknamed the 'gnome' because of its bulbous and lumpy silhouette, the post-atomic cityblock provides the maximum of structural security and features modular elements that allow for a limited increase of internal volume. Post-atomic block shells are built from cylindrical blocks that lock together as plasteen columns which provide stability whilst the block is under construction - these same columns are sunk deep into the ground as foundations. The block's outer shell is made of stacked, truncated domes, their diameter decreasing with each ascending tier so that the block vaguely resembles a pyramid of giant 'blisters'. The final, topward dome is capped with a vaulted roof.



Post-atomic cityblocks. Pipeways and crosspeds link the Lowtown levels.

Dimensions - Post-atomic cityblocks can measure six-hundred to well over fifteen-hundred metres in height ['starscrapers'] and contain between one-hundred and fifty to four-hundred levels. The upper levels are vulnerable to powerful winds that would demolish pre-atomic blocks and so each dome above a certain height is mounted on a computer-controlled, pressure-responsive track allowing the cityblock to sway gently without suffering structural damage. This movement can however cause nausea among the more sensitive Hightowers, but most get their 'block legs' before too long.

Power Supply - Cityblocks are fed power from a number of sources. Mega-City One's main mode of power is nuclear, utilising a highly-refined, foolproof technology controlled by robots. Supplementing nuclear power is geothermic, the second most widely-used energy source. Mega-City one has two [soon to be three] 'Power Towers' that draw intense heat up from the Earth's crust and convert it into steam to drive thousands of turbines, generating electricity. Hydroelectricity follows a similar system to geothermal, but instead exploits the kinetic energy of rushing water to motivate the turbines. A number of MegEast sectors along the Atlantic Wall are reliant on hydro-energies generated by power plants sited on the Black Atlantic side.

A cityblock's final energy source is solar. The tallest blocks have hundreds of solar collectors arranged around their peaks and upper domes to feed Hightown light, power and heating. The energy required to 'pump' essential block system amenities to these lofty heights from the underblock generator levels is enormous - a local alternative like solar energy has instantly-recognisable economic merit.

In addition, cityblocks have their own power generators, located in the lower half-dozen levels, though they only have the capability to supplement the electrical energies sucked into the block from the nuclear reactors and Power Towers. In the event of a city grid blackout, these generators automatically go to full output, enough to restore lighting and low-power systems for several hours.

schematics

This next section details the residential, leisure and business zones that a resident can expect to make use of in the average post-atomic cityblock. Entries are arranged in alphabetical order.

- **Administration** - Each cityblock is governed by a council [also known as a 'Block Committee']. The councillors are elected by the block residents every six months and are responsible for their cityblock's smooth and trouble-free operations. There is no limit to the maximum number of councillors that can be elected per term, bar the capability of the council chambers to con-

tain them all. Councillors can stand for re-election as often as they like as long as they remain permanent residents. Council meetings are chaired by a robot called 'Mr. Speaker' who ratifies council votes and downloads new, revised or revoked laws to the block mastercomp for immediate implementation; all residents receive notice of changes to local law via their tri-d units. Residents may watch council meetings in session from the comfort of their apartments, but most remain profoundly disinterested at the slightest notion of anything remotely political. The more proactive block councils pressure their constituents to ensure they realise their valued place in the community and contribute to their block's upkeep. 'Block Talk' is a tri-d channel run by every block committee's broadcasting unit that tries to do just this, inviting residents to voice issues of concern to guest councillors.

The hard work of block repair and maintenance is performed by teams of labour robots stored in garages near the main power generators until their services are required. The robots use the block's Type 3 elevators to speed to their destination and immediately begin work. Not all cityblocks are of sufficient size to warrant their own robot contingent and so the block council must petition Sector Maintenance Services [a division of the Construction Department] for assistance, a process that can take weeks owing to the never-ending backlog of similar requests from dozens of other cityblocks.

- **Apartments** - Cityblocks are primarily constructed with a view to housing citizens, and apartments ['habs'] are the units that contain them. Specific apartments are identified by two sets of digits, arranged 'a/b' ['a' being the level number, 'b' the apartment number on that level]. The apartment is a prefabricated box with four walls, internal partitions and ports for wiring and plumbing to be threaded through. Originally, an entire cityblock level was to have been allocated for specific social groups - for example single cohabitants [married or otherwise] and family units - but plans have a habit of unfolding and extreme housing shortages have meant that citizens on the Housing List are found new homes wherever there are vacant apartments on offer. The basic apartment shell can be enlarged by connecting to an adjoining module and removing the meeting wall, work carried out by a team of construction robots. This is how the various apartment configurations are arranged:

Single/Cohabitant [two residents] - 1 living room/kitchenette combination, 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom, 1 storeroom. Total Module Requirement - 1.

Family Unit [two 'paired' adults, up to six juves] - 1 living room, 1 kitchen, 1 bedroom [double bed], 1 bedroom [bunked], 1 bathroom, 1 storeroom. Total Module Requirement - 2. Larger families may warrant a third module, but the Housing Department may instead issue a 'compulsory adoption order' to relocate the 'surplus' juves.

The average inhabited apartment contains a tri-d unit [holographic multimedia entertainment centre with access to Barney the City Hall computer, the block master-comp and the Megaweb], a servorama food preparation unit, garbage grinder [priming waste for transit to the local mega-waste disposal plant], suite, sink, lavatory [flushing human waste to compost vats, ultimately to become fuel for industrial methane plants located elsewhere in the sector], bath [or] shower [traditional water or sonic] and one basic domodroid [to assist with household chores]. Internal doors slide sideways to save space, while apartment entrances are hinged [easier for the judges to kick through!] and secured by an electronic lock [which can be defeated by a standard issue Justice Department multilock].

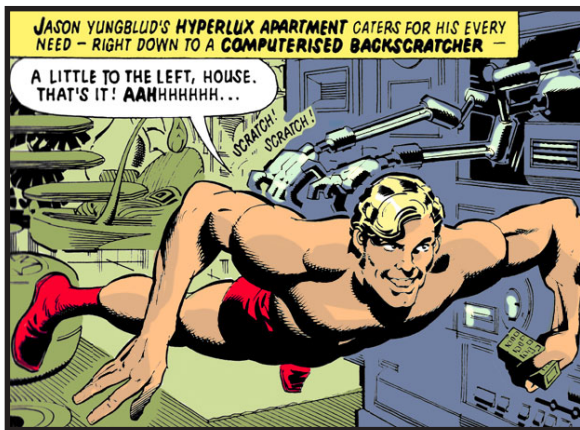
's charge - this includes repairs to electricity and plumbing supplies.

The average luxury-apt living room is furnished with a state-of-the-art sensurround tri-d entertainment system that decorates one entire wall. As an extension to the entertainment theme, the resident will have at least one 'sim-bonce', a helmet that immerses him in a completely 'realistic' fantasy environment of his choosing complete with full-spectrum sensory stimuli. All furniture within the luxury-apt is 'intelligently ergonomic' and will change its design to best suit the occupant's current posture. Any item of furniture required to be portable will be driven by low-output antigravity plates powered by an underfloor AGO 'carpet' - some AGO systems are capable of levitating the residents around the apartment. All the luxury-apt's electronic features are vocal-activated, including air conditioning, heating and window controls.

The luxury-apt kitchen practically makes the residents' meals for them, robot arms performing all the duties of a cook from preparing the food [synthesising from an armoury of basic nutritional components] to washing up after the meal and cleaning the kitchen. Some Hightowners like to be pampered along more personal lines and so purchase a robo-chef to bring their meals to the table and add atmosphere to the festivities. Residents who would prefer to have humanoid servants throughout the rest of the luxury-apt can elect to use deluxe domodroids and have the 'wall-valet' systems removed. Luxury-apt bathrooms are similarly robot-driven - the lavatory wipes a user's arse and the sink washes or shaves his face with spindly arms before drying. For a more comprehensive clean, a null-grav bath levitates the bather within a sphere of warm water and the sonic shower strips dirt from his pores without any need of water intervention. The bedroom will contain a large suction- or air-bed for maximum comfort. Once again, robots come to the occupant's aid, offering sedatives should the resident have difficulties sleeping, a wake-up call in the morning and assistance in dressing or disrobing.

Luxury-apt doors are exactly the same sliding models as those fitted in Lowtown apartments, and much to their consternation, the Hightowners have to endure the same standard of external door with an equal inability to resist a judge's boot. All is not however lost for luxury-apt owners who seek to protect their valuables from block criminals - a myriad of home security systems can be purchased to deter all but the most persistent transgressor. The simplest is a conductive 'shock-strip' that fits snugly around the entrance, delivering a powerful electric shock to unwanted visitors, activated via remote control from within the apartment. A recognition chip fitted in a street judge's belt will automatically disable the shockstrip. One alternative, pain-free deterrent is the securicam, fitted over the door, trans-

Illustration by Ron Smith. Copyright Rebellion A/S © 2004



Hightown apartments [luxury-apts, aka 'hyper-apts'] are also based upon prefabricated modular packages, but the basic shell has greater dimensions and capacity for modification than those of Lowtown. In the case of Lowtown apartments, the Housing Department was expected to pay for all of the installation and so was careful to commission apartment designs that were cost-effective. Hightowners usually buy their apartments [to own one's property - even if not outright - is a signifier of high social status in Mega-City one] and can typically afford to make structural adjustments to better suit their requirements.

The basic Hightown luxury-apt is four times the size of a Lowtown apartment module. The living room occupies a third of this area, the remainder of the volume divided between a state-of-the-art kitchen, a king-sized bedroom and equally large luxury bathroom. There is no practical limit to the size of a luxury-apt - adjoining modules can be added as are vacant and internal partition walls relocated or removed as the resident desires. All redesign work within a luxury-apt must be privately contracted since the occupants are not reliant on Welfare payments and no longer the Housing Department

mitting the images of a break-in in progress directly to the monitors of private security firms located within the block, paid to protect the resident. Should the criminal manage to gain entry into the apartment, the wall-valet can be preprogrammed to try to ensnare him with its many metal arms until a security guard or judge can be summoned.

- **Biz-Level** - Every block has its own business community, allocated ecom units in their very own space called a biz-level; a cityblock can average one biz-level for every twenty levels. The biz-cits rent ecom units on a monthly basis from the block council and as such are regarded as honorary council members with some influence over how the biz-levels are maintained [with the exception of the ro-biz establishment, below]. Any biz-cit wishing to set up shop on a biz-level must run the Block Business Federation's [B-Fed] gamut and have his wares scrutinised for suitability. The block council have ultimate veto over any decision the B-Fed makes concerning new business developments, but generally trusts the biz-levels to self-regulate. If it can be found in the shipping malls of our age, it will feature in a block biz-dis, in addition to many bizarre niche suppliers.

The biz-level society is divided unevenly between human and robot ['ro-biz'] tradespeople, with massive variances in human-to-mechanoid ratio from one biz-level to the next. Resentment exists between the two parties, the human biz-cits jealous of their robot rivals' ability to keep their stores open all day every day and so steal away the human's customers. The ro-biz are frustrated that

they are not allowed seats on the block council despite paying their rent, a limitation the human biz-cits regard as helping to even the odds somewhat. Biz-cits are among the very few members of their block to enjoy employment and so can afford to invest in modest Hightown apartments. Their wealth also makes them potential victims for block tap gangs ['on-taps'].

- **Block-to-City Communications** - Cityblocks are so large that they often form the hub of sector transport networks. Ground and hover vehicles are directed by feeds into sizeable 'multiparks', controlled by robots and offering repair and maintenance facilities [see *Vehicle Parks*]. Pedestrians can use one of dozens of pedways and zipstrips connecting the block to plazas and high-density pedestrian concourses. The larger cityblocks have their own zoom stations - a pair of maglev

tracks [one for Uptown, one for Downtown travel], platforms, mobile ticket vendors, restrooms, slug-vendors and eateries. Tickets can be purchased through any tri-d unit in the block, or directly from a mobile ticket vendor. Since the zoom trains passed into robot control, the timetable has become extremely reliable, with a zoom arriving exactly every half-hour barring obstructions along, or the destruction of the outerblock track.

- **Block Foyer** - The foyer replaces the atrium of the pre-atomic block. It is far larger in length and width and only two or three levels in height. All City Bottom entrances [automatic sliding or revolving doors] lead directly into the block foyer. The foyer connects directly to the block's outdoor 'tweenblock' plaza, a huge public domain linking to neighbouring cityblocks with numerous multilevel pedways. The foyer functions as a concourse, offering various routes for residents wishing to travel further into the block such as evelator banks and AGCs. Recognising that not all visitors are familiar with the block's layout, one of many public terminals can be activated to display tri-d maps indicating the user's present position and that of his intended destination - whether a business facility, service establishment,



A biz-level, a cityblock's centre of commerce. Block buggies and hovertrams travel between stores.

block council office or a specific apartment - linked by a series of blinking arrows that the user can follow as he accesses each subsequent terminal along his route. The 'underpark' [see *Vehicle Parks*] is connected to the foyer by a well-signposted corridor.

The foyer is typically loaded with small shoppexes catering to the traveller - eateries, synthi-caf shops, slug-vendors, con-shops, teksmiths, fash-ups, restrooms and florists. Traditionally the favourite haunt of juves, most block foyers are equipped with vircades and chill-outs. Slidewalks connect the upper-level stores with foyer floor. Depending on the size of the foyer, one of more statues commissioned from local artists provide a central focal point. The subject of the sculpture could be anybody of note, from the personality the block is named after, to a famous blocker or a completely abstract work

of art. Many sculptures employ animatronics, vocal synthesisers or tri-d projectors for example to bring added 'value' to the artefact. If further entertainment is required, licensed 'foyerists' [foyer artists] provide drama and music. Where space permits, religious groups stake out territory to try to convert the blockers to their religion, and licensed sparechangers sell vid-slugs from grotty carrilots, earning just enough from daily proceeds to buy a grot-pot and a six-pack of Doomlager.

- **Block Park** - These colourful expanses of synthigrass, winding paths and clearings are the closest approximation to a real, outdoors park that most citizens will ever experience. Block parks are designed to give equal pleasure to all members of cityblock society, subtly partitioning juve play areas from eldster 'resteries' [benches, robo-duck ponds and cafes] and 'dult favourites such as sports courts and picnic hills with attractive

- **Defence & Security** - Over time, the Justice Department recognised that a measure of self-protective capability was useful in expanding the reach of the judges' Defence Division; the measures taken to do so have arguably resulted in the creation of more difficulties than benefits to Mega-City One's defence strategy. Citi-Def operations are centred around an armoury, a lock-box filled with pistols, rifles, grenades, missile launchers, body armour and jetpacks, all approved by the Justice Department as 'reasonable deterrents.' The CD armoury will be sited in the top half of a cityblock, adjoining a private hoverbay where the Citi-Def gunships are docked. The armoury is protected by a blast door; the armoury's security computer will report any breach of the armoury to the block judge.

Every cityblock has a resident 'block judge', a street judge assigned permanently to the block. The block judge

is the first point of contact for residents who wish to speak personally to a member of the Justice Department. He then may investigate his constituent's concerns, or pass them over to the local sector house. The block judge conducts foot patrols throughout the cityblock, making arrests as he goes, handcuffing felons to a holding post located every few levels. A regular feature of the block judge's itinerary is the block court, whereby citizens are brought before the judge to air their local grievances. The block judge issues an instant rule of judgement after considering all sides of the issue by which all parties must abide.



foliage. The park has its own environment control system, able to generate all seasonal conditions and all weather types from a blistering heatwave to rain, snow and ice [for skating on the block pond]. The largest block park will be equipped with its very own beach, made up of reconstituted rockcrete sand and pebbles. Pumps along the beach zone's edge force water back and forth along the beach to simulate the tide. Robot park-keepers keep the place tidy and trouble free [reporting crimes to the Justice Department], while robot lifeguards watch over the block beach, ready to drag struggling swimmers to safety with their telescopic arms.

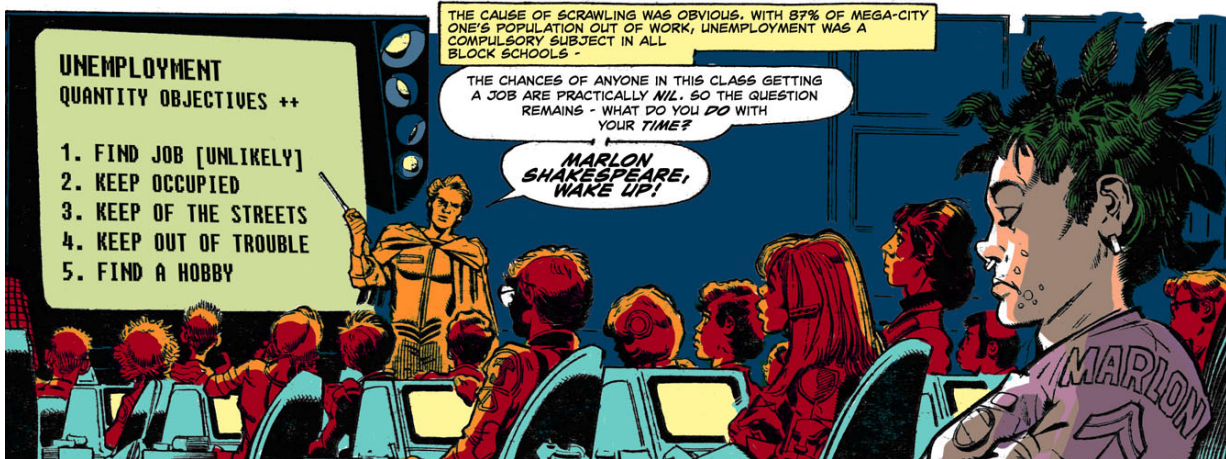
- **Education** - Block schools are large and well-equipped, their duty to prepare the block's children for a life of unemployment and extensive leisure time. The block schools must also work very hard at instilling respect for the law, for great lengths of leisure time are constantly being met with the temptation to pursue the quick and easy path to self-fulfilment - antisocial and ultimately criminal behaviour. Children are admitted to block school from the age of five and will remain members until they are sixteen. Teacher robots take the children through curriculums covering many subjects - science, history, languages [principally those spoken in Mega-City One by natives and main ethnic groups], the

history of Mega-City One, sex education and regular classes exploring the benefits of the modern justice system. Half of term time is consumed by the Hobby Foundation Courses [HFC] - children's interests and talents are scrutinised and the child encouraged to develop them into full-time occupations. These will then hopefully keep the child out of trouble during and after he graduates from block school. During block school, the teacher robots maintain detailed logs of all the children in their charge. Information like burgeoning 'fringe movement' political sympathies and criminal predisposition are passed onto the Justice Department's PSU for analysis; children that persistently display antisocial tendencies can be removed from block school, transferred to secure educational wings within rehab blocks where intensive 're-education' classes pound obedience into their stubborn minds. The 'corrected' child can then be returned to block school to continue his education as normal.

The block judge regularly attends block school to give talks on law and order. He may be accompanied by street judges who have given up off-duty time to bring

press elevators to carry residents to their destination level. Standards of elevator model vary, from keyboard navigation to vocal interface systems. Aside from technological variations, three types of elevator - defined by differing sizes - exist. Type 1 elevators are the normal model, used frequently by up to twelve citizens a time. Type 2 elevators are industrial-scale, used to carry heavy goods. Type 3 elevators are the private property of the block's staff of robot caretakers, lacking lighting or heating and capable of velocities that would leave human users physically sick. Type 1 and 2 elevators are located towards the block's core, arranged in banks of three. Type 3 elevators are situated closer to the block's exterior walls which grants equidistantly swift access for the caretaker units to the block's service tunnels that contain elevator shafts, electricity, air conditioning and plumbing systems.

Available to the more modern cityblock developments are antigravity 'chutes [AGC], transparent, vertical tubes that convey residents using small AGO engines at the top and bottom of the chutes. The user extends his arms sideways to slow movement [when exiting the



to the class honest, stark and frightening real-life accounts of Mega-City One life. Few adult citizens ever forget the days the judges visited them in block school. During summer break, children are offered places at a nearby megaplex, a 'camp' of sorts where children can learn about all manner of subjects not covered by the normal curriculum.

On graduating, young citizens have the option of continuing their education at Mega-U, the city's university network. Larger cityblocks have their own Mega-U branches. University courses can run for years or decades, depending on how committed the students wish to remain. Diplomas and masters degrees in unemployment, sports and hobbies are the most popular courses, followed by media studies and science.

- **Innerblock Travel** - Cityblocks rely on banks of ex-

AGC], and raises or lowers his arms to move up and down respectively. AGCs are faster than conventional elevators but contain comparatively few passengers.

Cross-level travel is carried out mainly on foot, but slide-walks offer jogging speed transit, whether horizontally or diagonally just as the escalators of our time function. For disabled, elderly or plain lazy residents, small, one-man vehicles called 'block buggies' are available for block plaza transit. Block buggies are free of charge to use and are stored in special buggy parks when no longer needed. Stairs no longer feature in modern cityblock design, an impractical and obsolete means of covering hundreds of levels served so much more efficiently by elevator and AGC.

In the event of fire, chemical attack or block instability, every level has a number of glide 'chutes made automatically available once the block fire alarm is sound-

ed. Glide 'chutes [illustration opposite] are small, antigravity devices that can be held with one hand, activated when the user reaches a specific velocity. When a dire emergency threatens the cityblock and the elevators are for some reason out of commission, residents can escape by jumping out of emergency exits, floating gently towards the block plaza, their 'chutes homing in on beacons located around the plaza's edge. Small parachutes activate if the glide 'chute's onboard computer detects it has been launched from any height exceeding five-hundred metres. A number of the more recent block designs include fire tubes, high-speed elevators armoured to protect their occupants against explosive or extreme heat damage. Fire squads use fire tubes to dispatch vital emergency equipment rapidly to colleagues on distant levels.

- **Med-Level** - Ill and injured citizens report to the block med-level, dedicated to healthcare, containing dozens of med-bays dedicated to healthcare. The recently deceased are taken to the block mortuary for a routine examination, possible autopsy and preparation of the coroner's report before being bagged and sent to Resyk. The med-level is well-equipped to deal with a block's everyday demands. Block healthcare is financed by a compulsory health tax deducted automatically from a citizen's welfare payment, or issued as a quarterly bill to employed or financially self-sufficient citizens. Routine check-ups have to be arranged in advance by appointment, while emergency cases are admitted as they arrive; depending on the severity of the injury or illness, one can expect to be given a bed and a medic's immediate attention, or be placed in a queue.

Human medics [doctors, nurses and registrars] deal with all health issues outside of major surgery, whereby robo-docs are used, their intimate and exhaustive programmed knowledge of the human body [and numerous alien physiologies] rivalled only by the exacting precision of their surgical tools. The med-level has teams of parameds - 'med-squads' - on stand-by to deliver field assistance to citizens afflicted by health problems throughout their sector. Much like the paramedics of our time, med-squads rush to the scene of concern and dispense immediate treatment. Serious cases will be taken to the subject's home block, or admitted to the sector hospital until a positive identification can be made. As standard practice, the Justice Department is informed of all 'John' and 'Jane Does' to be reported to a hospital.

At last one cityblock in every sector will have several levels given over to a fully-fledged hospital with a name of its own [St. Simon Templar's Hospital, for example]. Any major health crisis to affect the sector will have its response planned and coordinated from this location among the numerous affiliated block med-levels. Hos-

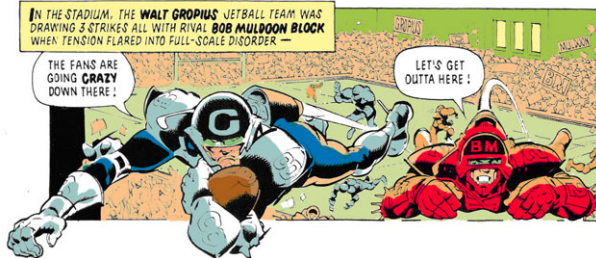


pitals have dedicated disease control, nuclear, biological and chemical centres and research facilities. They also host medical summits in conjunction with other sectors to discuss current working and administrative practices.

- **Promenade** - If a citizen could be envisaged living his entire life within the walls of a single cityblock then appropriate facilities need to be provided to give him somewhere to exercise. Promenades are vast, open spaces that may reach a kilometre in diameter, perfect for walking or running off the stresses of everyday living. Gymnasiums and healthy food eateries are a common presence in promenades, as are 'slimpickers', talent scouts from sports academies searching for an athlete to wear their strip at the next Block- or Mega-Olympics. By day the promenades are a reasonably friendly place to hang out, but as night falls the decent citizens make tracks for home and gangs of punks strut in to retake their territory. The stores close and the security shutters come down, providing the gangs with surfaces to scrawl on. The gangs spend the long hours drinking, shouting and fighting. If the judges do not intercede to move the gangs on or make arrests, morning finds the promenade strewn with litter, vomit and bruised bodies soon to be carried off to the block hospital for treatment. The block judge makes his rounds, asking the un-injured parties if they wish to provide the judge with the identities of their attackers, but it is often the nature of

gangbangers never to 'squeal' on their own.

- **Sport & Entertainment** - Community sports facilities are a vital component of block society, providing a focus for block pride and an enjoyable day out for families. Every block has its own sports stadium, a cus-



tom-designed level several storeys high with a pitch, row upon row of bleachers, eateries, rest-rooms, team locker rooms and commentators' box. Most blocks have their own jetball, smashball or block-out teams [sometimes all three], named after their home block. The stadium can be reconfigured to suit the type of game pay - ground-based or aerial - with ease. Matches are played both home and away, as 'friendlies' with allied blocks or play-offs as part of the Intersector/Quadrant/City Leagues.

Music and entertainment are equally as important to the lives of many citizens as sport. The sports stadium - modified accordingly - works well as a venue for music and theatre. Some tweenblock plazas are large enough to accommodate permanent 'vibe-bowls', open-air arenas with superb acoustics where music, lectures and drama can be enjoyed.

- **Vehicle Parks** - Many cityblocks have ground vehicle parks ['parkaramas'] located intermittently between levels where residents and visors may store their vehicles. The largest park is the 'underpark', accessible from a feed road along City Bottom, through several garage doors sited along a different wall to the block's pedestrian entrances. The underpark is multilevelled, with large elevators storing or retrieving new arrivals in vacant parking places located by the cityblock's mastercomp. Due to the dynamic nature of Mega-City One life, Lowtown residents are not entitled to a fixed parking spot. When he requires his vehicle to be retrieved, a resident makes the request by using his apartment tri-d centre, interfaced with the block mastercom, entering his personal vehicle pin number that recognises him as the vehicle's legal owner. He alternatively might use a public terminal within the block, or visit the underpark personally and make his request from there. Other ground vehicle parks higher up the block may only have one or two levels, admitting traffic from feeds elevated above City Bottom by transit stacks. Citizens with a little more wealth, including the residents of Hightown,

can afford hover vehicles. Cityblocks provide dedicated 'hoverbays', hangars that small hover vehicles can fly in and out of with ease, landing on parking spaces not dissimilar to those used by ground vehicles. The block council offers both ground and hover vehicles repair and maintenance contracts, ensuring that the vehicles are kept fuelled and fault-free. These contracts are lucrative money-earners for the council, but are expensive and so most Lowtowners will instead take their chances with small, private garages sited throughout the sector. As far as security measures are concerned, both parks are protected by securicams controlled by the Justice Department's Public Surveillance Unit to monitor vehicles entering and leaving. At the block council's discretion, robot or even human security guards may be employed to make ground level sweeps. Neither ground or hover park have exterior doors, their contents situated well within the entrance, shielded from the elements.

- **Waste Disposal** - Every item of refuse generated by a cityblock's population is recycled for reconstitution as construction or nutrient materials. Garbage grinders in every apartment [and in every corridor] shred packaging and small, light furniture into slivers which are then forced down garbage 'chutes into bins located in the block's sublevels for collection by garbage trucks. Waste too large to insert into a garbage crusher's jaws are stored in ecom units, accessible by Type 2 elevators. The heavy waste is collected and fed into the fang worm vats at the local mega-waste disposal plant where the waste is digested and excreted as constituent chemicals, ready for rapid reintegration into the manufacturing process. Human waste products are directed from bathrooms to the block's sublevel to be stored in sewage hoppers and bilge tanks. Fluids are decanted and purified, then re-circulated around the block as tap water. Faecal remains are separated and stored in airtight



containers; they are then delivered in bulk to a methane plant, exposed to powerful strains of bacteria and decomposed - the gaseous emissions are then used as a potent fuel source. Non-human waste is routinely incinerated to prevent weird and dangerous biological elements from damaging the expensive recycling system.

cityblock variants

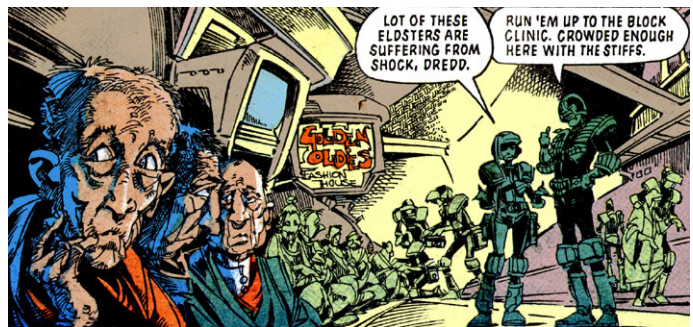
Conapt - [aka 'low-rise']. A relatively small cityblock, rarely exceeding forty levels. Conapts break the 'Vertical Divide' rule by offering above-average quality housing at Lowtown altitudes. Conapt apartments [each referred to also as conapts] are twice the size of a cityblock apartment and their built-in amenities a notch higher up the quality scale. As the conapt caters for an exclusively middle-income professional and/or financially self-sufficient clientele, its exclusivity is adequate compensation for the conapt's place in the shadows of Lowtown. Conapts each lay claim to the same amount of City Bottom estate as post-atomic cityblocks which they fill with pleasant, verdant parks and squares, surrounded by a high plasteen wall loaded with securicams to keep the riffraff out. Robo-dogs patrol the parks at night, programmed to drag intruders to the floor and hold them down with their metal maws until the conapt security team - privately contracted by the conapt council - can restrain the guilty parties until a judge arrives.

Eld-shelt - Mega-City One has a sizeable population of OACs [Old-Aged Citizens]. Advances in medical science have increased the natural life-span of the Twenty-second Century human, many of its beneficiaries expecting to live into their early hundreds. Unfortunately, several side-effects of aging [Dementia, Alzheimer's Disease and Arthritis for example] persist as mutated variants, causing the elderly the same difficulties suffered by the old folk of our time. Nearing the end of their lives, OAPs [known as 'eldsters' or derogatively as 'crocks'] are not well-suited to the hectic, intense pace of Mega-City One life. As they become infirm, OAPs feel ever more vulnerable in their small apartments. As loved ones perish, victims of old age, it may become impossible for the eldsters to remain in their present homes, even with the assistance of a caring domodroid. The eld-shelt ['crockblock'] offers fragile OACs permanent, sheltered accommodation funded by the Housing Department. Each eldster receives his own apartment, modified with labour-saving devices to help him dress, wash and get in and out of bed. Eld-shelts are similar to conapts, though with a more robust heating system to cope with the ever warmth-parched occupants. Eld-shelts lack pedways and vehicle parks as most residents are not physically fit enough to leave the premises. Elevators and

sidewalks are in abundance to take the weight off the eldsters' feet - the most infirm are pushed around in robo-chairs by built-in servodroids. When not snoozing in their apartments, the eldsters congregate in quiet, stiflingly warm block parks, feeding the robo-ducks, knitting synthetti winter clothes and reminiscing about vaguely-remembered youthful exploits.

Eld-shelts are located in the quieter areas of Mega-City One, far from the superslabs, but this does not guarantee the location will be an altogether pleasant one; derelict pre-atomic blocks and war-damaged conapts are at the top of the list for eld-shelt redevelopment. A number of eld-shelts have been built against the west wall, partially exposed to radiation mists seeping in from the Cursed Earth. This does not seem to concern the eld-shelt developers who view their inhabitants as at best temporary. Eld-shelt staff are a mixture of human and mekanoid, though OACs as they descend into infirmity, prefer the human touch over cold metal. The eld-shelt staff live on the premises in top-level apartments, catered to by a small biz-level set between their homes and the eldster apartments. Most eld-shelts have their own med-bay, including a well-stocked mortuary.

Luxy-block - the ultimate in cityblock living. Luxy-blocks stand between eight-hundred to two-thousand metres in height [two-hundred to five-hundred levels] and are designed by Mega-City One's most highly sought-after architects - no two luxy-blocks look the same but they are all sure to be eye-catching, colourful to the point of garish and experimental in their choice of building materials. In the midst of a sea of lumpy cit-



yblocks, the luxy-block stands graceful and proud, its ornate spire piercing the heavens like a giant's needle.

The residents of luxy-block hyperapts are the city's elite - business executives, entertainment industry celebrities and political heavyweights. Their apartments ['penthouses'] can occupy an entire level and be decorated in a manner only limited by the resident's imagination. Biz-cit penthouses tend to be ultramodern, clean and geometric and highly-mechanised, while entertainment celebrities recognise no limits of extravagance or taste. Politicians' decorative tastes are narrow, selecting either the biz-cit model, or reaching back into histo-

ry to recall the exotic era of the American Senate with great expanses of wood [imported from Canadia], marble and gold. Every luxury-apartment will have at least one hoverbay and a vehicle for every occasion. Though air travel is for many Hightowners the only way to travel, some prefer to tour the Lowtown 'rabble'. Each luxury-block has a garage level in the lower levels, connected to private feed roads. Luxury-apartments have no external pedways and so the only way in or out is by vehicle. All entrances are monitored and multiple security checkpoints cleared to get as far as the AGC clusters. Luxury-block borders are heavily secured, their corridors and block plazas alive with bodyguards and securicams linked to the watchtowers of the block's multitude of competing private security companies. Luxury-blocks have biz-levels to serve the resident's needs. The stores are fewer in number than those sited in comparable biz-levels of the Lowtown cityblocks, but their wares are of the highest quality and often exclusive to the luxury-block community, offering the very best of Mega-City One luxuries and technologies alongside exquisite treasures purchased across the globe and the galaxy by dedicated teams of 'acquisitors'.

- **Problem Block** - A proportion of citizens have strong, inherent antisocial tendencies. They may not enough to warrant an iso-cube sentence, but chronic exposure to such behaviour can cause extreme levels of distress among their placid, law-abiding neighbours. Should an individual or family prove to be career 'ASes' [Anti-Socials], the Justice Department can serve a notice of eviction. The affected citizens are removed forthwith from their apartment and relocated to a cityblock where they will be placed among other ASes; these undesirable dwellings are known as 'problem blocks'. By the time that ASes have made the problem block their home, all attempts to rehabilitate them into civil society have failed. They have been imprisoned, counselled, humiliated and medicated, but they remain tenacious social pests. The only remaining option available to the Justice Department is to contain their behaviour. The typical problem block resembles a slum from Hightown to Lowtown - every inhabitant is an AS - welfare-dependant, shockingly lacking in self-awareness, little more than a slack-jawed primate mimicking the sur-



face trappings of slab cred. His apartment will be covered in discarded food containers, unwashed clothes. His tri-d unit is hardly ever switched off, the volume control stuck on 'high'. The walls of all the problem block levels are thick with illegible graffiti and barely domesticated dogs and cats roam the floors, biting passersby for a scrap of nourishment their slovenly owners are too lazy to give them. Violence among ASes is common, provoked by the most trivial of reasons - ASes love to squabble and get the first punch in. The block med-bay is always busy with admissions [and re-admissions]. The traditional block judge has been replaced with a block riot squad ['The Boots'] that operates from an armoured, mid-level control centre nicknamed the 'Cage'. The Boots monitor the block through securicams and move in swiftly to stem potential rumbles. The boot's remit is to cap the violence, not to seek to curtail it in its entirety, an impossible feat for a squad that is chronically undermanned.

drokk city - issue 2

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