The handsome man who can play such a godlike game is neither conqueror nor commissar, but one of a new breed of artisans arising in the world: the regional planner. The regional planner orchestrates vast areas of wilderness with cities, villages, farms, and forests to serve the needs of men.

—"The Land: The Man with the Plan," *Time* magazine, September 6, 1963

A 1963 *Time* magazine cover story details William Pereira’s master plan for the city and university at Irvine Ranch, praising his plan for ecological and sociological foresight and sensitivity to the challenges facing an ever-crowding planet. Trained as an architect at the University of Illinois, Pereira came West in the late 1930s and quickly established himself as a forward-thinking institutional architect, executing major municipal commissions such as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Los Angeles International Airport, as well projects for Lockheed Aircraft Corporation, Paramount, and CBS. At Irvine, Pereira was able to fashion an entire region from scratch, an unprecedented opportunity to “serve the needs of men” through his integrated and totalized master-planned community. UCI’s California Brutalist campus core rose out of the razed hills of the former Irvine ranchland; its modular facades offered a seemingly science-fictional stage for the new university at the center of a speculative city of intellect.
The farm complex provides an ideal setting for pursuing these and similar investigations. While the architecture and arrangement of buildings does not appear to be ideal from a university point of view, it more nearly approximates the living situation of most of the world’s population. The houses are small, and for the most part not greatly different from the native dwelling of many of our subjects. The sheds are ‘open,’ representing a relatively primitive level of shelter. The arrangement of buildings and sheds under trees provides a general aura of non-threatening environment. The informants we deal with will feel much more at home working and to some extent living in such a setting. It is critically important to give students an opportunity to participate in such settings with native peoples prior to their doing cross cultural research.

—Duane Metzger, “Proposal for a Detached Cross Cultural Teaching/Research Facility,” 1967
Life at the commune was centered around a variety of self-directed creative practices—from throwing pottery and drawing to collaborative building projects—often in partnership with visiting informants at the Farm.