

# Urban Design: Practices, Pedagogies, Premises





# Urban Design: Practices, Pedagogies, Premises

A series of Panel Discussions between  
Urban Design Educators, Practitioners, Public Policy  
Experts, and Academics from Urban and Design fields

**April 5-6, 2002**

Avery Hall, Columbia University  
and Lighthouse International  
New York City

*Sponsored by:*

Columbia University Master of Architecture and Urban Design Program,  
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and Van Alen Institute: Projects in Public Architecture

*Co-organizers:*

Andrea Kahn, Columbia University  
Margaret Crawford, Harvard University

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# Urban Design: Practices, Pedagogies, Premises

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Andrea Kahn

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## Foreword

The Urban Design: Practices, Pedagogies, Premises conference was modeled on the notion of conversation, which to paraphrase theologian David Tracy, demands a willingness to risk one's own position in the face of another. To elicit the exchange of ideas and evince divergent points of view, four invited panels were augmented by two hour-long moderated discussions with the audience. Although there are now nearly forty North American universities offering courses in Urban Design (seventeen at the graduate level) participation was limited to schools with master degree-granting programs, based on the belief that they represent a highly distilled version of the same challenges that all forms of urban design education face. The directors of these programs are joined by public sector planners, academics from architecture, landscape architecture, urban history, urban policy, regional planning, and law, as well as a group of practitioners selected to represent a broad spectrum of urban design experience (in variously sized private firms, community organizations, city governments, as well as real estate development). The net was cast wide here, but purposefully so, to include groups who describe their urban design activities in strikingly different terms, and who operate using often conflicting definitions of the field.

### The Panels

Each of the four panels had a specific charge. The opening session, "Shaping Civic and Public Realms," took on the perceived and potential roles that urban design can play in American cities today. The panel introduced a number of themes that resonated throughout the event - the most prominent being the relationship of urban design to power and the importance of locating and fostering civic-minded urban design clients. To examine the relationship between professional practice and urban design education, the "Urban Design Practices" panel considered the relevance of academic studio work to the challenges faced by practitioners working today. Venturing into territory mired with assumptions about the relative merits of theory to practice and the hard demands of the "real" world versus the supposed soft speculative terrain of the academy, this panel revealed that entrenched differences of opinion about the role of graduate design education generally (should it be a "professional training" or should it take on broader pedagogical agendas?) are not easily dismissed. The "Urban Design Pedagogies" panel considered the philosophical claim (made by all the participating programs) that they bridged different disciplines concerned with the physical form of the city. Driving the discussion was a simple question: In programs of study lasting only one to two years, does this bridging lead to "abridging" - to a superficial and truncated understanding of urban design's myriad dimensions and concerns? The legacy of urban design's origins was a recurrent theme in the panelists' effort to situate the place, purpose, and direction of urban design education today. The importance of fostering research, capturing resources, and expanding the role of urban design in policy-making reinforced a general call for greater focus on those aspects of urban design practice not immediately associated with physical form-making. The conference's concluding session, a roundtable of Urban Design Program Directors, fostered a dialogue between urban design educators themselves. Unlike their colleagues in urban planning or architecture departments, urban design faculty in North American schools do not have the benefit of annual academic conferences dedicated to their field. Rather than focusing on strictly pedagogical questions, however, the final discussion centered almost entirely on urban design as a civic and public endeavor, and the social responsibilities of urban designers.

## The Briefing Materials

Three documents were produced to expressly focus the proceedings. A few weeks prior to the event, The Van Alen Institute published a special report, entitled "Urban Design Now," with a lengthy public platform section devoted to the questions, What is Urban Design? Who Practices Urban Design? and What Does Urban Design Contribute to the City? It also included articles on urban design programs in Berlin and Bangkok, and an editorial putting the conference in broad historical perspective. This pamphlet had wide public circulation, and was made available to audience members both days. More central to the proceedings were two Briefing Books circulated in advance to the participants (included here as Appendices). The first provided general background material for all the invited panelists: specially commissioned historical essays on post World War II urban design in Europe and the United States (by David Smiley and Eric Mumford), position papers by the eight program directors, and responses to an urban design practice questionnaire. The second booklet -- documentation on the history, philosophy, curricula and studio work of the eight participating Master-degree granting urban design programs -- had a more directed purpose. Comments on the sample studio work by urban design practitioners initiates discussion in the "Urban Design Practices" panel, and a review of the textual curricular materials is the springboard for the "Urban Design Pedagogies" panel.

## The Transcripts

What follows is a complete transcription of the two day proceedings, "lightly" edited to retain the tone of the live conversations. The decision to forgo formal paper presentations makes reading this record a bit like visiting a new city without a fixed itinerary. One's sense of orientation increases in direct proportion to time spent in the place. Patterns become evident, slowly, as one becomes familiar with the territory. Not surprisingly, given the breadth of urban design's concerns, these conversations touch on many topics - urban history, aesthetics, urban policy, suburban expansion, decaying urban cores, changing patterns of urban life, demographics, sustainability, politics, economics, density, infrastructure, landscape, and more. Nevertheless, recurrent themes do surface. Many are echoed in written reactions solicited from the audience directly following the event, which address both specific points made by individual panelists as well as the overall thrust of the conversations. (Interspersed throughout the proceedings, the responses are marked with an asterisk and located as parallel text on the bottom of the page).

In addition to this transcription of the panel discussions, a second publication based on the conference is currently underway. To be published next year, the book will contain expanded versions of selected position papers from the original briefing materials, as well as newly commissioned articles on twentieth century urban design and contemporary professional practice.

## Acknowledgements

Special thanks are due to Dorith Geva, for her editorial work on the conference text; Eugenia Vidal and Kimberlae Saul, for graphic layout; and all the panelists and respondents who generously contributed to the editorial process.

This publication is funded by the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts. The conference received seed funding from Columbia University Graduate School of Design, Harvard Graduate School of Design and The Van Alen Institute: Projects in Public Architecture, and a supporting grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.



# Introduction



## Design and Urban Change\*

Van Alen Institute was initiated in 1995 in order to be a forum for discussions and demonstrations of design's critical role in rethinking and rebuilding cities. The Institute has established this forum through international design competitions, workshops, publications, web sites, exhibitions, and dialogues, including the conference detailed in this report. The subject -- urban design -- could not be more relevant to the Institute's goals, or to the immediate needs of New York and metropolitan regions across North America. Our partners, Columbia University and Harvard University, and the speakers who participated, made it possible to address the topic from both the most abstract and most concrete case study perspectives. As many speakers at the conference articulated, urban design lies somewhere between existing definitions of planning (the analysis and projection of urban forces) and architecture (the design of buildings and places), and its exact boundaries are always in flux, always debatable, as cultural and technical attitudes evolve. Yet the conference was a rallying cry: this inherent ambiguity is no excuse for supine commentary, and urban design has to stand up and take on the places in our urbanized landscape that have no viable choice but change, especially sites where either a singular disastrous event or perduring environmental, political, or economic stress have marked them for physical or social failure.

*Urban Design: Practices, Pedagogies, Premises* inevitably brought forth conflicting views amongst those working in the field. Practitioners hardened by decades of zoning changes and public meetings questioned whether contemporary student work could communicate with the public. Academics declared social conditions so extreme that the field had to once again enforce a more political paradigm. Some participants wanted to keep the field's focus tight on the built environment, and to do so, for example, by brokering a firmer partnership with landscape architecture. Others wanted to grasp how a design approach could both interpret and propose changes in metropolitan flows, from finance to fantasy.

There was overarching agreement, however, that: a) There was work to be done; b) The people in the room, even the public officials, despite limited powers, had valid techniques and enough authority to apply them; and c) While mid-20th-century delusions of master-planning urban life were a thing of the past, the future did not call for modesty. Two important ways for urban design to renew itself emerged: first, to recognize the seriousness of its endeavor to "make great clients" out of the private, public, institutional, and community entities it serves. This happens as a two-way exchange; urban designers, more than any practitioners, have to listen to their clients, yet at the same time they only fail if they see themselves as transparent recorders. The second is a reenergized relationship to research -- recognizing the full range of related disciplines rife with resources -- and reaffirming that while urban design has its own base of knowledge and method, it is not an autonomous exercise.

The conference's ultimate aim was knowledge: increasing it, explaining it, understanding how it can be used -- learning how to renew the field's social contract with the city. The conference is a beginning, not an end, to expanding this work.

Raymond W. Gastil  
Executive Director, Van Alen



## Urban Design Pedagogy: Testing Premises for Practice\*

This document records the *Urban Design: Practices, Pedagogies, Premises* conference held on April 5 and 6, 2002, in New York City. The event was co-sponsored by the Urban Design programs of Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation and Harvard University Graduate School of Design, and the Van Alen Institute: Projects in Public Architecture. A diverse audience of over two hundred design professionals, students, academics and government representatives, participated in public discussions with nearly thirty panelists examining what urban design means now - as a concept, an academic discipline, a professional practice and a public enterprise.

### Why This Conference Now?

*Urban Design: Practices, Pedagogies, Premises* intends to compare distinct approaches to urban design and constructively engage various positions on city-making. Its structure tested the fundamental premise that the lack of standardized aims and methods, as well as abundance of forms of activity that characterize urban design should not be taken as a flaw, but as a mark of distinction and a measure of its adequacy to meet urban challenges. Since the strength of urban design derives not from individual heroic efforts, but from the collective sharing of ideas, the gathering broadly examined the territory that constitutes urban design now from a variety of perspectives. The timing for this consideration is ripe, as many participants pointed out.

A lively and often contentious debate about the shape of American cities has emerged over the last ten years, to wide coverage by both the professional and popular press. With evidence everywhere of a growing interest in urban design, as well as a renewed concern for cities, urban designers nevertheless struggle to define their role in the city-making process. The rapidly rising number of design professionals calling themselves "urban designers" reflects a continuing trend within the architecture, landscape architecture and planning professions to redefine the scope and arena of their practices. Thus, today a real opportunity exists to strategically situate urban design within a broader array of practices concerned with urbanism and the city. Many also perceive the need to supplant inter-professional competition with a more integrative working model in which people dedicated to improving our urban environments can strategically pool their skills to join rather than splinter their powers to effect change.

The recent proliferation of new Master Degree-granting Urban Design programs in North America provides a timely opportunity to assemble a core group of educators and program directors in conversation with others who share a commitment to urban environments. Here, groups who too rarely have the opportunity for shared reflection and discussion about urban design -- public sector representatives, urban design practitioners and academics from related urban and design disciplines -- exchange views on the field's present day challenges as well as its future possibilities.

### Confronting Urban Complexity

Over the past decade, the dominant strands of urban design discourse have become highly identifiable around issues related to scale, place and space. Today, a strong tendency exists to

\* This introduction is an expanded version of the opening comments delivered at the conference, April 5, 2002

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oversimplify these concepts and also to polarize their relevance to urban design. While proponents of globalization and proponents of localization each raise genuine and important issues that invoke pressing urban design questions, neither alone adequately address the demands of contemporary urbanism. Simply stated, urban design thinking has become unnecessarily burdened by false dichotomies -- global versus local, city versus suburb, form versus process, preservation versus invention, private versus public, to name but a few. At this juncture, a more conceptually nuanced basis for discussion is crucial; cities demand a far richer vocabulary than that afforded by reductive dualisms.

The conference grapples directly with the messier realities that simple oppositions mask. Contemporary urbanism includes not just central urban cores (the "city" as traditionally defined) but large de-densifying areas as well as ever-expanding low-density urban settlements. In fact, de-densification affects many urban centers, and suburban densities often exceed those of inner cities. Historic preservation efforts, which abound in cities across the country, often prevent the very kinds of urban invention symbolized by the projects they strive to protect. More and more, urban design must navigate thorny local development agendas that regional, national, and even global forces prescribe in many ways.

Because urban design must contend with so many unclear, conflicting and often irreconcilable facets of urban reality, its territory echoes the complexity of the city itself. Essentially cross-disciplinary, Urban Design constantly borrows from, negotiates with, and overlaps many fields -- those concerned with the physical environment as well as those devoted to the cultural, social, political, and economic dimensions of urbanism. A multiform practice, it comprises many spheres of action and varying scales of operation. Contemporary urban design work ranges from constructing building ensembles, to projecting regional growth patterns, to devising urban marketing strategies, to fostering local community empowerment, to guiding national transportation policy, among many other things. Urban designers generate futuristic visions, advocate for restorative urban preservation, design streets, cities, airports, websites, landscapes. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, practitioners, educators, policymakers, planners, as well as the public, proceed with significantly different understandings of how it works and what urban design efforts contribute to urban life.

### Confronting Urban Design

The struggle to define urban design as a discipline has firm roots in its academic origins. Indeed, debates recurred in the conference about whether it is a discipline at all. Almost fifty years ago, in 1956, Jose Luis Sert convened an international conference at Harvard's Graduate School of Design, with participants including Louis Mumford, Jane Jacobs, Victor Gruen, Edmund Bacon, Garrett Eckbo, and Hideo Sasaki. In the decade preceding that event, urban planning had become increasingly less focused on the physical organization of the city, and had established its own independent academic and professional territory based on the methods of social science. The more comprehensive practice of "urbanism," at that time still dominant in Europe and Asia, was replaced in the United States by a dual structure that effectively disengaged the concerns of urban planning from those of architecture.

At the Harvard conference, Sert announced urban design as a new academic field, which he defined as "the part of planning concerned with the physical form of the city." He added that the urban designer must first of all believe in cities, their importance and their value to human progress and culture. Thus, academic urban design began with two agendas, one professionally oriented, the other culturally based.

Urban design was Sert's answer to a uniquely American situation. Hoping to heal the breach between architecture and urban planning, Sert ambitiously envisioned urban design as an alternative arena where the work of the architect, the city planner, and the landscape architect might be reunified. As an outcome of the conference, Harvard founded the first North American Urban Design program, followed by others at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Washington University in St. Louis, and Columbia University. This marked an unusual beginning. Unlike other design fields, urban design originated in academia rather than professional practice. Perhaps for this reason, the academic setting has played a particularly important role in delineating its shifting contours.

Twenty-five years later, a new generation of urban designers felt the need to rethink the field. In September of 1980, Harvard University hosted the Second International Urban Design Conference. Three years later two other conferences occurred, sponsored by the New York based Institute for Urban Design and the University of Washington, in Seattle. Participants such as Kevin Lynch, Jonathan Barnett, Denise Scott Brown, Allan Jacobs and Donald Appleyard, recognizing a crisis in urban design practice, looked to the schools for solutions and used education as a lens through which to examine developments in the field. Although Sert's modernist model had been replaced by postmodern contextualism, many of the same issues persisted: the difficulties of depending on large-scale government support, the need to reconnect with urban planning, and the necessity of defining an identity separate from that of architecture. Again, the result of these discussions produced conclusions at divergent scales: urban design must be specifically focused on design yet broadly accountable to society at large.

The present conference similarly offers a reconsideration of urban design, sponsored by its evident professional expansion in the academy and an increasing public recognition of its contributions to cities. In the past three years alone, five North American graduate urban design programs have been started or substantially re-structured to reflect recent urban transformations. (A chart comparing the participating programs is provided in the Appendices). This energetic burst has required the formulation of curricula specifically geared toward Urban Design. Unlike architecture, where academic programs must meet external accreditation requirements that reflect the profession's legal status, Urban Design's territory is nowhere precisely delineated. As such, each Master's level curriculum (with its choices of course content, studio topics, suggested and required areas of study, modes of interface with other disciplines, etc.) offers, implicitly if not explicitly, a working definition -- or better still, a representation -- of urban design. Since the number of these programs has almost doubled in the past few years, now is a propitious moment to re-examine urban design as well as the role of the academy in shaping its identity.

The conference uses academic curricula as its starting point for discussion because, as representations of the discipline, these are inevitably shaped by assumptions about what urban design is, and what urban designers do -- implying a direct, if not always immediately evident, link between pedagogies and practices. Each of the participating programs projects an image of urban design's terrain, and each of these images is necessarily prefigured by a specific set of social, political and cultural values (rarely, if ever, stated outright). While difficult, the crucial task of the conference was to tease out, and critically scrutinize those embedded values -- how they move back and forth between academia and professional practice, how they shape notions of urbanism, and how they inform the identity as well as the evolution of the field.

### Directions for the Future

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The conference discussions provide very real opportunities to move beyond the reductive dichotomies that have so long hampered urban design thinking and action. At times, this potential derives from new terminology, like Jacqueline Tatom's notion of the "metropolitan landscape" or Carol Burns' use of the term "urban settlement," both of which offer models for thinking about contemporary urban environments without recourse to the outdated suburban/urban formulation. At other times, they come from an individual's specific response to a particular question. Alex Krieger deftly dispatches the reductive aspects of the global/local debate in his remarks during the opening panel; Robert Fishman's insightful, post-conference commentary about invention and urban history (in response to the opening panel), exposes the complex layers underlying debates about design invention and urban preservation; and Brian McGrath's reaction to the use of the term "reality" (during the second panel) recasts the often divisive relationship between the academy and the world of professional practice. Other times still, openings arise out of practical experience. An empirical critique of the public/private dichotomy was implicit in remarks by Marilyn Jordan Taylor, Denise Scott Brown, and Rosalind Greenstein, each of whom described urban design clients who fail to fit neatly on one or the other side of this false divide.

The conference also identifies concrete areas requiring new initiatives. The need to find, even invent, committed civic and urban minded clients was quickly recognized as a vital concern. Calls were made to more actively engage once ignored power-players in urban development (universities and hospitals, for example) and the urban design process was also highlighted as a tool to empower otherwise politically weak constituencies -- increasing their participation in, and control over, decisions affecting their everyday environments. The need for more and better funded research presents another pressing issue. Within the academy, stronger research programs enhance the status of the discipline (improving chances to win university funding). Outside the academy, research leads to more effective public advocacy (by producing knowledge that can be widely shared). While pedagogy and practice were recognized as having related, but different agendas, the value of greater communication between the profession and the academy was reinforced. Anne Vernez-Moudon's plea to practitioners to better record their process points to the critical relationship between methodology and discipline formation. To strengthen urban design as a field of knowledge and action, its methods first have to be recognized. Only then can they be tested and refined.

Participant Rodolphe el-Khoury characterizes urban design as having a perpetual need to re-invent itself. Clearly, that need to define urban design is in evidence here. Despite attempts by many participants to answer "What is urban design?" this was not the central question of the conference. In fact, the conference takes an important step in shifting the discussion to look instead at what urban design *does*, and what it might do more effectively in the future. Nevertheless, the issue of urban design's origins still underlies much of this conversation. Debates about whether urban design results from planning and architecture's divorce or their embrace seem of little consequence to the actual practice of urban design. The attention panelists devote to this question, however, does reveal the extent to which history impacts the field's present situation. One panelist's suggestion that it may well be time simply to "kill the parents" holds particular promise. Clearly, the eight academic programs directly involved in the conference still bear a weighty sense of responsibility to put Humpty-Dumpty back together again. For post-graduate urban design education, in particular, throwing off the mantle of healing a mythical breach opens up valuable new directions to better prepare students for the economic and political realities they inevitably face when entering the working world. While form-making is, and should remain, central to urban design education, placing greater emphasis on urban design's political, regulatory, and programmatic dimensions are important initiatives to pursue. Openings for new directions in urban design education (which in turn frame openings for new directions in practice) present themselves in many different strands of the conference discussions. Students should not simply be taught about land-use policies and regulatory processes, they should not simply accept the current conditions constraining urban development. Expanding academic



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urban design to include that knowledge required to design better urban regulatory mechanisms brings the premises of urban design practice -- its place in the city-making process as well as its underlying assumptions -- to the fore. As educators, we must directly address the actual frameworks that make urban design possible.

Dissolving the distinction between urban design as form-making and urban design as process has profound implications. Shifting the educational focus is not an academic matter. It demands that we recognize and utilize the relationship between urban design, power, and the political economy. In this conference, urban design pedagogy was commonly seen as strategic in contributing to the field's potential to play a more prominent role in city-making. Certainly, the most important initiative set forth here charges urban design education to better prepare urban designers to go out in the world and reshape the very possibilities of their practice.

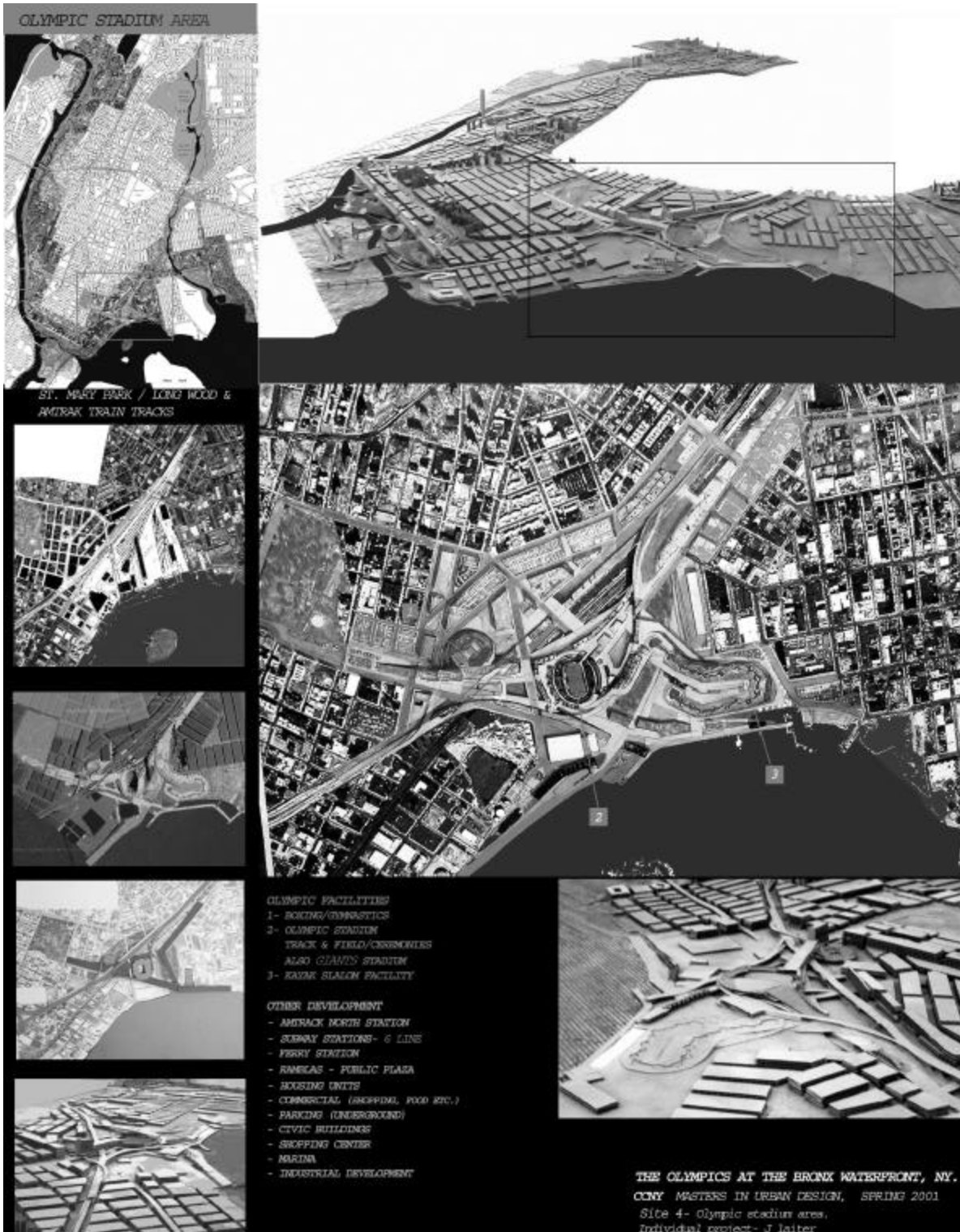
Andrea Kahn  
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Columbia University



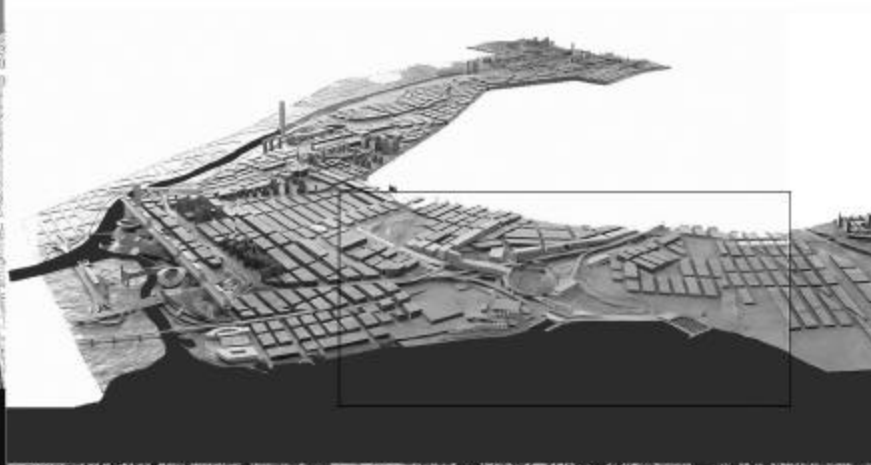
# Conference Proceedings



# Shaping Civic and Public Realms: What is the Role of Urban Design?



ST. MARY PARK / LONG WOOD & AMTRAK TRAIN TRACKS



- OLYMPIC FACILITIES**
- 1- BODING/GYMNASTICS
  - 2- OLYMPIC STADIUM
  - TRACK & FIELD/CENNIOMIES
  - ALSO GIANIS STADIUM
  - 3- KAYAK SLALOM FACILITY
- OTHER DEVELOPMENT**
- AMTRAK NORTH STATION
  - SUBWAY STATIONS- C LINE
  - FERRY STATION
  - RAINCAS - PUBLIC PLAZA
  - HOUSING UNITS
  - COMMERCIAL (SHOPPING, FOOD ETC.)
  - PARKING (UNDERGROUND)
  - CIVIC BUILDINGS
  - SHOPPING CENTER
  - MORIDA
  - INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT



THE OLYMPICS AT THE BRONX WATERFRONT, NY.  
CUNY MASTERS IN URBAN DESIGN, SPRING 2001  
Site 4- Olympic stadium area.  
Individual project- J Iaiter

**Panel Synopsis:** *The first panel of the conference positions design professionals in policy and governance in discussion with urban design academics. The panelists discuss what they view as the main challenges facing cities today, and in so doing, highlight what they consider as the advantages and disadvantages of urban design, especially in contrast to urban planning. The widespread phenomena of urban de-industrialization and urban de-densification are noted to be of particular importance to urban design and planning today, while the proper place and strategy for designing work-spaces in today's economy is also debated. The potential threat of homogenization due to globalization is raised as another important issue confronting urban designers and planners. In light of this shifting terrain of the city, the usefulness of looking to past urban models is questioned. The theme of the tension between democracy and urban design expertise is first raised in this panel -- a subject that continues to be discussed throughout the rest of the conference. Some panelists suggest that the definition of clients strikes at the heart of this debate, as the question lies in whether urban designers' clients are those who foot the bills, or the citizens and community groups most directly affected by urban design work. It is stressed that urban designers must overcome their disregard for the suburbs by resisting the dichotomy between city and suburb. By so doing, they should admit both the importance and the necessity to further incorporate the suburbs into urban design research and practice.*

## Shaping Civic and Public Realms: What is the Role of Urban Design?

**Moderator:** Margaret Crawford, Harvard University

**Panelists:** Jerome Blue, Battery Park City Authority, NYC  
Amanda Burden, Chair, New York City Planning Commission  
Rosalind Greenstein, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Cambridge, MA  
Maxine Griffith, Philadelphia City Planning Commission  
Alex Krieger, Harvard University  
Richard Plunz, Columbia University  
Michael Sorkin, The City College of The City University of New York

**Andrea Kahn:** Good evening, and welcome. My name is Andrea Kahn, one of the co-organizers of this conference. I will be back tomorrow morning to say a few words about the thinking behind this conference, but this evening, I am here simply to welcome you all, and to invite Ray Gastil, Executive Director of the Van Alen Institute, and one of the conference cosponsors, to come up to the podium and start the evening proceedings.

**Ray Gastil:** Thank you. Welcome. The Van Alen Institute is very pleased to sponsor this conference with the Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning & Preservation, and the Harvard University Graduate School of Design. It has been a pleasure to work with Andrea Kahn and Margaret Crawford, and to have had the support of Deans Bernard Tschumi at Columbia, and Peter Rowe at Harvard; the Van Alen Institute's Chairman, Robert Kupiec; and the directors of the co-sponsoring urban design programs, Richard Plunz, Professor of Architecture and Director of the Urban Design Program at Columbia University, and Alex Krieger, Professor in Practice of Urban Design and Chairman of the Department of Urban Planning & Design at Harvard, who will also give a brief introduction before we move onto the panel. This program and related publications are made possible by grants from the trustees of the Van Alen Institute, the National Endowment for the Arts Design Program, Harvard University, Columbia University, The Graham Foundation, and the Musser Fund. Thank you very much. And many thanks to the panelists, people who represent urban design practice, pedagogy and premises; that deliberately reversed title I fought against, but have come to believe in.

I cannot play favorites, so I am not going to name any names. But I want to say that I am especially appreciative of all the people who I have leaned on in the past to be part of various conferences, juries and panels, and who have volunteered for this again. These people, along with others who work so hard for cities around America, understand how hard, how challenging, and how rewarding it can be to establish the premises, undertake the pedagogy, and conduct a practice to help sustain and build a thriving metropolitan culture. As Jean Jacques Rousseau noted more than two hundred years ago when he stumbled across a factory in rural Switzerland, the city is everywhere. We still need boundaries. We may still have towns. But for better or worse, we live in a metropolitan culture, and urban design, however fraught its definition, is a necessary response.

This is meant to be a very participatory conference, as you know from the structure of tomorrow's panels. Tonight, we are going to proceed with the panel until about 8 PM, and then open up for questions for about twenty minutes after that.

This issue of urban design is the heart of the Van Alen Institute's mission. From the Times Square competition, to the East River exhibits, to Van Alen Reports, our website, and conferences like this, we strive to get out the word that there is a need to both understand and act on the shape of our cities. The point of our current exhibit, "Renewing, Rebuilding and Remembering," on seven cities coming back from disaster, is not to display comparative misery, or to suggest that there is some perfect formula out there. Rather, it is to show that there are actions, designs, and renewals that matter in the world. The exhibit, like this conference, provides information, since urban design, at its core, lives and dies on information.

I would now ask Professor Plunz and Professor Krieger, respective directors of the Columbia

and Harvard Urban Design programs, to please say a few words, and then we will go on to Margaret Crawford, moderator of the first panel. Thank you.

**Richard Plunz:** Well, to be brief, welcome. Thank you for the tremendous interest. I think this interest bodes well for the architectural side of things relative to urban planning. Welcome to Columbia. We are happy to be part of this. Tomorrow, I am sure you will wander around in between sessions, and you are welcome to go upstairs to the sixth floor of Avery, where the urban design students work. They will be happy to talk with you. They are a friendly bunch, working in Belgrade at the moment -- on Belgrade I should say. Again, thank you for your interest. And we will see you at Columbia tomorrow.

**Alex Krieger:** The School of Urban Design at Harvard is very pleased to be a cosponsor of this conference. On behalf of Dean Peter Rowe, who is actually attending another urbanism conference at the University of Pennsylvania this weekend, I welcome you all. And also, thanks to Columbia for its work, and especially Andrea and Margaret for organizing this conference.

I am pleased not only to be here, but also to participate and observe. As some of the essayists noted in their position papers, there was an important conference at the Harvard Graduate School of Design in 1956, which marked the beginning of our program at Harvard. As we are in early preparations for a conference to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of that foundational event I am going to look at this as a kind of dry run for our 2006 conference, and I certainly hope all of you will attend that one as well. Thank you. I am looking forward to the next couple of days.

**Ray Gastil:** Now I would like to introduce Margaret Crawford, moderator of tonight's panel. Margaret is a professor of Urban Design at Harvard University.

**Margaret Crawford:** Thank you, Ray, and thank you, everyone for coming. I would like to begin by introducing our distinguished panelists. I thought the urban design directors would be seated on one side, and the non-academic panelists on the other side, but I see we are mixed, which is probably better.

First, I am going to introduce the three directors of urban design programs; Alex Krieger, the Chair of the Department of Urban Planning & Design at Harvard; Richard Plunz, the Director of the Urban Design Program at Columbia; and Michael Sorkin, the Director of the Urban Design Program at City College, New York. We also have three representatives who are engaged in policy and planning activities in cities. First of all, replacing Tim Carey is Jerome Blue, Senior Vice President of Project Development & Management in the Battery Park City Authority. We have Amanda Burden, who is now the Chair of the New York City Planning Commission, and on her way from Philadelphia, Maxine Griffith (who we hope will arrive during this session), Director of the City Planning Commission in Philadelphia. And we also have Rosalind Greenstein, who is a Senior Fellow and the Director of the Planning Section of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

I would just like to say a few words about the planning of this panel, which began well before September 11th. Certainly the events of September 11th have altered what we initially imagined as the context of this conference. Even if it is not the optimistic, ideal moment that we had envisioned, it turned out to be an ideal moment for reconsidering urban design in other respects. Certainly in the aftermath of the September 11th events, and particularly in light of the many discussions surrounding the plans for rebuilding this city, I think probably every issue that we will discuss this weekend has come up. Really, the redevelopment discussion offers a kind of condensation and dramatization of many urban design related issues -- like public and private partnerships, infrastructure and aesthetics, the range of constituencies, each with a passionate interest in what is happening, intense media attention, economic and social issues, memory and history. All of these are central to what we think of as urban design. And so in many ways, the events of September 11th underscored the urgency of thinking about how they can be dealt with in the city-building process. Certainly, one of our hopes for this conference is that it can illuminate the possible role of urban design in addressing and coordinating all of these issues.

Since we also want to look beyond September 11th, however, to a more distant future, I will start by jumping right in and asking the four panelists who deal with the city -- because we know that



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the program directors have thought long and hard about what urban design is -- what urban design means to them. Let's start with Amanda Burden: What do you think of when you hear the words "urban design"? What does it mean to you?

**Amanda Burden:** I have thought about that a lot because I am a planner by profession and by degree. But I practice urban design a lot, and I think that the relationship between planning and urban design is a critical question to address and discuss. So I am going to take a couple of minutes to make my remarks. Michael Sorkin was told not to write down any remarks, but he is such a great speaker, and I wanted to have my thoughts be coherent.

The first thing I want to say is I cannot stress how much damage is done by not requiring planners to take urban design as a course of study. Planners make important and sweeping land use decisions with little sense of how to shape environments, or even what will become, or should become, of the built fabric of a place. A planner is rarely encouraged to have implementation as a goal. It is most often their aim to produce a report or rezone a given area. Perhaps for that reason, a planner is not particularly concerned with how a place will feel, what it will mean, and how it will work for the people who use it. Planners are more apt to think in terms of floor area ratio, which to me is almost irrelevant. Floor area ratio does not really shape the built landscape we want to create. Planners must become more form-oriented, and the place to begin is to have urban design as a mandatory course of study in the planning curriculum. It is through urban design that we use the broad strokes to shape a place. Most importantly, urban design has to do with the small touches that you see close up. It determines how a building meets the sky, and more importantly how it meets the street. It is concerned with those factors that will determine whether we care about a place, whether we want to spend time there, be it to find peace, vitality, respite or inspiration. These are the factors that determine success -- or they should.

Those of us who really care about urban design must recognize the reality of the situation. A successful building treatment, a great public place, the shaping elements that comprise place-making, these are in the hands only of whoever is responsible for their construction. Rarely does the public sector get to control design and construction. That is the real reason Battery Park City in Lower Manhattan is truly unique. I was very, very fortunate: When I joined the Battery Park City Authority in 1981, the entire ninety-two acres was only sand. But we had uniquely good conditions. Because the Authority was about to go into bankruptcy, we operated under emergency conditions; we had total control, a mandate, a mission, emergency funding, a lot of talent, and an extremely narrow time frame to demonstrate results. The master plan was, for its time, revolutionary. The details were not. We did not have time to take risks. We had to create neighborhoods where nothing existed except sand and skepticism, and most importantly, we had to attract development. So we drew upon tested formulas of beloved neighborhoods and parks in New York City. You see a little bit of Brooklyn Heights, Central Park West, Brooklyn Botanical Gardens, Columbia University, Fifth Avenue, Central Park, Carl Schurz Park, and the Viaduct at the northern end of Riverside Drive. Battery Park City should be taken as a model now only in the most narrow respects, because I totally agree with Michael Sorkin that urban design is ready for an explosion of fresh forms producing places, as he says, of ravishing complexity.

**Michael Sorkin:** I was thinking of you when I wrote that.

**Amanda Burden:** You were? Michael, my dear friend, thank you. And now I will conclude briefly. The most important lesson I learned about successful urban design and place-making in my decade at Battery Park City is how important working on-site is; how critical it is to test and retest presumptions about scale by measuring constantly, building mock-ups, reexamining colors, retesting plant materials, trying out street furniture in multiple locations, and incorporating a wide range of public amenities. Of course, I had a great deal of control (which worked at the time), but I would not recommend that kind of rigid regulation as a matter of course. Because we could not risk economic failure, we also took few risks in architecture, and probably curtailed innovation and creativity.

The challenge for me now at City Planning is, of course, quite different. We do not build. We do not control the things that really make a difference. And in New York City, the role of the public

sector in ensuring a well-designed city has traditionally been very, very limited. New York has always let the marketplace determine the outcome of development and its quality. But I believe the events of September 11th have changed that construct, and there appears to be a shift back to the public sphere. There is a growing consensus that certain responsibilities need to be taken back by government, and there are certain things that cannot be settled by the market alone. This mindset presents a tremendous opportunity for restructuring the effectiveness and the potential importance of the Department of City Planning. And now we have a mayor and an administration that actually understands that good design is good economic development. The challenge is to raise the level of discourse, expectation, and public demand, so that the built product -- actual city building -- uses the best that urban design can bring to bear. Thank you.\*

**Margaret Crawford:** Thank you, Amanda. Jerome, Amanda has pointed out that Battery Park City was a very successful model, but she also questioned its continuing validity. What do you think about urban design from your Battery Park experience, and moving on from it?

**Jerome Blue:** First, I'm very appreciative of all of Amanda's efforts in getting Battery Park City started in its early planning and implementation. I think what we're trying to do now is to take it one step further. We think that the main thrust of design now will focus on the needs of the city, focusing on, for example, making certain there are no blackouts, and electricity, water, and conservation concerns. What does that really mean? It means a concern with Battery Park City's environment, or what we call green issues. As a result, all our guidelines are being modified so that we focus on the environment. The next nine developments we are attempting to do, which will obviously change Battery Park City as it is now, will all be based on the green design guidelines. There will be seven residential buildings, and two commercial ones. We think that will have a major impact upon Battery Park, but will also address its needs. For every building, at least five percent of the base level of electric demand will come from photovoltaics in the facade of the buildings. This has been designed by many of the participants of this conference. That's the transition we see now, and basically we're just continuing where Amanda left off.

**Margaret Crawford:** Thank you, Jerome. So far, this has been very lower Manhattan-centric, so let us ask Rosalind Greenstein what she thinks, from her more national framework, about urban design.

**Rosalind Greenstein:** I feel like the outsider in a couple of ways. First, even though I sit in Cambridge, as do others at this table and in the audience, I do get a view of the rest of the country and occasionally beyond. And second, while I am an urban planner by training, I am one trained at the other end of the continuum, if you will, more toward the social science end of urban planning, not really in the territory of design. So when I think about the question of urban design, I ask the question: What do urban designers do? And speaking as an outsider (I use this as a cover to protect myself), I can plead ignorance whenever you all tell me that I am getting it all wrong. From my vantage point, urban designers are informed by history and a historical vision of the city, and they attempt to organize the built environment to honor and reflect that history and that vision. To that end, it seems to me that

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\***Robert Fishman** (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor): This exchange speaks directly to the questions of urban designs origins, and what models we are seeking to teach our students. One model, as an example, is that of the design and conceptualization of Battery Park City -- that is, the application of the "tested formulas" of the past (especially those local to the site of construction) adapted to present circumstances. This is a model I'm sympathetic to, since in the context of the radical erosion of urbanism, it is impossible to assume the revival of the past through simple nostalgia. Yesterday a solid street wall was a matter of course; today it's an achievement. However, at the same time, Amanda Burden saw a role for "fresh forms of ravishing complexity," as did most of the participants. Michael Sorkin, later in the panel, questioned why Battery Park City's development was based on the model of older New York City neighborhoods. But where would the fresh forms come from? How would they be taught? Is it possible, or desirable, for design education to somehow encompass both tested models and the fresh forms?

In my mind, this relates to the issue of democracy and dialogue. Those practitioners calling for better

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urban designers are involved in a discourse with others, sometimes living, sometimes dead, sometimes practicing, sometimes not, around that history and that vision. They also bring an aesthetic to their enterprise, and they attempt to build and modify cities to reflect that aesthetic. And finally it seems that the standards urban designers use to judge success -- their own and those of their colleagues who are engaged in similar efforts -- involves the degree to which they successfully honor and reflect the discourse, the history, the vision, and the aesthetic.

So in an attempt to communicate where I disagree with that project, I will tell you what I wish urban designers would do. I wish they would be less involved with the ideologies of the city and the metropolis, and more involved with the city as it is, with the citizens and the users of the current city. I wish they would provide a bridge between the city and its residents of today, with the city and its residents of the future.

I think, however, that is very, very hard to do for many reasons. Three come to mind. One is the question of the client. Notwithstanding what Amanda just said about changes in the post September 11th world, from my experience of living and working in New York, from going to school here and then leaving, New York is wonderfully different from other places. So, while I can't speak to what you just said about the expanding role of the public sector for New York since September, I believe we are not going to see similar changes beyond New York. Notwithstanding that, urban designers, just like planners, have a concern and interest with the city as a whole. In the United States, in contrast to Europe, for example, we have a concept of the city that is informed by our ideology of private property and the primacy of markets. I think, therefore, we lack an understanding of the city as a place that reflects our shared history, and of the city as a common cultural resource. In that context, I believe it is difficult to identify who the client is. Thus, sometimes designers bring their own sense of who the client is, even if it is not the person or entity paying the bills.

I think another reason why my vision of urban design is hard to achieve is because of a tension between experts and democracy. As citizens, we have a deeply ambiguous and perhaps distrustful relationship with experts and expertise. And as economists would say, this is non-trivial. Planners resolved this tension, for a time, with advocacy planning. Some cities may have morphed or co-opted that idea to a highly structured form of citizen participation. Currently, I think some planners and academics are confronting this tension by emphasizing planning as a process. Good process, however, does not guarantee good outcomes. Planning -- my background, my discipline -- struggles with this tension between expertise and democracy, and does so without quite naming it that way. I think that tension still exists in urban design.

Third, there is among urban designers, at best, an urban bias and, at worst, contempt for suburbs and suburbanites. And yet that is where there is lots of action.

So what do we do? And where should we look for clients? In my subset of urban planning, which is economic development and urban revitalization, there are interesting things going on. But I suggest we don't look to the old actors and institutions (government, be it federal, state or local), but to those, who as seen by their actions, are most committed to the city and the metropolis. And the

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communication with the broader public, implied, in practice (I would argue), a high degree of reliance on traditional forms and representations, because that is what developers, planning boards and citizens understand. This was, at bottom, the source of the interesting debate during Panel 2, where Jacqueline Tatom defended her students' project, despite the fact that the forms and representations were so unfamiliar as to be unreadable even to other design professionals and teachers. Her defense was that it was a highly creative response to the program for the site.

The great modernists had clear answers to these questions: one studied the past in order to understand its mistakes. And if the public and academics hated modernism, so much the worse for them. One could prove scientifically that the old forms were obsolete, while the new ones responded to the modern challenge. We are, of course, in a much more confused situation. Among other things, it is in the hated suburbs (technoburbs, edge cities, etc.) that one sees fresh forms emerging, and often from the crassest real estate context (that, at least, is my reading of David Smiley's wonderful research on shopping centers). In contrast, design professionals, such

issues that are most important, in my mind, are where you live and where you are making jobs, and where you recreate is less important. Who are these actors? I think they are in the communities, in community-based organizations and in certain institutions, such as universities or medical centers.

My injunction to designers would be, look for new kinds of clients and communicate the following ideas to these clients: Your project can serve your needs, but it can serve the city as a whole as well. Your project will be part of our shared environment, our shared history, and will enrich your neighbors, too. I suggest urban designers should articulate this, sell this to their clients, bring that project to life, and then tell us, the citizens of the city, what they have done and why. Urban designers should do this with their eyes and ears open, with an attitude that there is always room for improvement, so that the next project will be even better. To conclude, I would like you to find your clients, and then love your clients. And your clients should be living, breathing people who have roots in this time and place.

(Applause)

**Margaret Crawford:** Perfect timing. Maxine Griffith has just arrived just in time to answer a question. (Laughter) If you want, you can catch your breath. The question I would like to ask you, based on your experience in Philadelphia, is what do you think of when you hear the words “urban design”?

**Maxine Griffith:** First, I'd like to thank Amtrak and the New York City taxi industry for getting me here.

I come to urban planning from architecture. I was taught that urban design happened when architecture and planning embraced. It seems to arise from the need to provide an organizing framework for the architect, so that the city is comprehensible to the user.

**Margaret Crawford:** Thank you. Richard, Michael and Alex, do any of you want to respond to any of these comments?

**Alex Krieger:** Well, first to Amanda Burden. When the first thing out of your mouth was about planners needing to be educated in urban design, I thought I had died and gone to heaven. In the 1970s, in many parts of the country, planning programs left the design schools and camped out at places where they felt more kindred spirits. At Harvard, planning went to the Kennedy School of Government. They promptly disappeared from the design school, or were absorbed in another set of quite important issues. And so a number of years ago, we at Harvard began a new planning program under the umbrella of an Urban Planning and Design Department. Indeed, one of the unique characteristics of that program is that it takes about twenty-five architects who have already received degrees, and about twenty planning students, who are starting their professional education. Our program combines them, throws them into the same mix, and for two years, they kind of duke it out. Our aim is that they come out more knowledgeable, tolerant and understanding of one another. We hope, of course, not to have the opposite effect. We believe, as you do, that it is imperative for planners not only to be educated in, but to embrace, the idea of the physicality of the city; to do something with that physicality, and at least to learn about the way design thinking operates. At the

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as Michael Sorkin or Sandro Marpillero, champion fresh forms, but in effect are more heavily invested in traditional urban design than they would like to admit. (Michael Sorkin did imply this in his discussion of “climax cities.”) This is indicative of what I see as a prime contrast between this conference, and the inaugural 1956 Harvard urban design conference that Alex Krieger mentioned in his opening remarks of Panel 1. In 1956, the conference participants were much more inclined to “lay down the law” for urban design. At this conference there was a notable reticence about prescribing fresh but definitive models of urbanism for design education.

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same time, we also believe all of our urban design students (who, coming from an architecture background, missed out on planning for twenty years) become more effective urban designers by not simply doing architecture at a larger scale, but in effect, by becoming planners, of sorts. So we also force our architectural students to spend two years with planners, and most of them, we hope, like that. Some, of course, regret it deeply. But we absolutely agree, at least at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, that while planners and urban designers have separate roles in the world, they have much more in common than they do in opposition to one another. I would love for you, Amanda, to come to our school and deliver the same message some time.\*

**Amanda Burden:** My pleasure. You can come to our commission and tell them, too.

**Richard Plunz:** First, I would like to point out that the Urban Design Group within The New York City Planning Department disappeared quite a while ago -- which you all probably remember. That shift can be understood in many ways, but in the long term, it remains a very curious symptom. In spite of the kind of optimism people have mentioned about things changing in this city, in terms of relationships between public and private interests, or between architects and planners, until the Urban Design Group reappears in some form, I am not going to hold my breath. But, I think it has to reappear, probably transformed, but nonetheless it will fill a very important need. Let us see what Mayor Bloomberg does with this need. If he thinks the World Trade Center is basically a planning problem, the ex-World Trade Center, I am not so sure this position will bode very well for the question of urban design. Maybe he will have good advisors.

Second, I found this yellow pamphlet [*Van Alen Report 12: Urban Design Now*] to be very curious, with all its conflicted and anguished definitions of urban design suggested by people who had studied urban design for years and still could not figure it out. I understand that this confusion is a symptom of the present urban condition, which for me also raises the suburban issue. I guess things are not as simple now as they were fifty, seventy, eighty years ago, in the period of town planning, which was essentially urban design. I raise this issue of the changing urban landscape, and changing urban form in order to raise the question of the current identity crisis of professionals dealing with the physical form of the city.

A few other general points. I think urban design is distinct from architecture in one fundamental way, which is the relationship to power. Power is, of course, very important for both the practice of architecture and for the practice of urban design. But there are differences in the kinds of power, and the relations to power, that architecture and urban design recognize as strategic relative to the design of the environment. Of course, the fact that power connects very quickly to questions of the political economy gets pretty far from the ideals of architectural practice as it has traditionally come down through the schools and the profession. Let's face it: Architects are trained from the cradle that they must maintain the proper aesthetic credentials. They cannot dirty themselves or their design process with questions related to power, political economy, etc. This belief is probably stronger today than it has been in a long time. Urban design, by definition, is different.

In many ways (and I will only mention a couple here), this yellow pamphlet reflects the current

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\***Ariel Krasnow** (Catholic Charities of Brooklyn and Queens) As the title of the conference implied, and the arrangement of the panels encouraged, strikingly varied world views, states of minds, and use of language were revealed, for instance, between Richard Plunz, Michael Sorkin, and Alex Krieger as academics, in comparison to Maxine Griffith, Rosalind Greenstein, and Karen Phillips as urban design practitioners. Are the two mutually exclusive, where the latter group is required to get things done, and the former is needed to pursue an ever evolving concept of the city? There was, in addition, some discussion of the expert vs. the general public. This is part of the broader issue of diverse points of view regarding the study of the city. However, it is interesting to note that the notion of the expert in fact positioned the academic and practitioner on the same side.

moment -- obviously an interesting one, at least for this audience. It properly reflects a kind of ambiguity, I would not say crisis, of relevance or perhaps irrelevance. I am not sure 9/11 has changed much. We will see. It seemed to me that the post 9/11 media reaction among both architects and urban designers was pretty much business as usual, or even hyper-business as usual. Maybe there has been some learning. I do not know. That would be an interesting issue to discuss. Certainly there is growing interest in urban design at the moment.\*

**Margaret Crawford:** I would like to say that the mysterious yellow pamphlet Richard is referring to is *The Van Alen Report 12*, in which we asked many people what urban design was, and got a range of answers that strongly suggested a certain lack of definition. If there are copies out front, everyone should take a look. Michael Sorkin?

**Michael Sorkin:** Let me briefly pick up on these questions of democracy, inspired, of course, by Raymond's reference to Jean Jacques Rousseau in his introduction. Back in the Sixties and Seventies -- when we were all Cambridge Maoists -- we had a certain faith in the infallible wisdom of the people as the driver behind architectural and urbanistic decisions. We disdained expertise as mystifying and classist, a tool of oppression. I think we have come some distance since then, and I like very much the notion that a strategy for empowerment is not to make people into planners, architects or urban designers, but to somehow liberate their talents as clients. This seems extremely relevant to any democratic style of planning or urban design, and I think that if one wants to conceive of urban design as an essentially democratic practice, it has to rise in defense of what one might, for want of a better expression, call the urban social contract or the urban compact, which I think comprises some vital things that we might talk about. I am drinking coffee tonight because I am a little knackered, having just flown in from Nicosia -- a place where the urban social contract is certainly frayed, to put it mildly. But in its historic incarnation, Nicosia, with its Venetian walls -- a classic expression of defensive architecture -- represents a kind of compact about the sacrifice of a certain amount of private space for the collective benefit of the security of the city wall. Certainly, as urban designers, we have to defend people's sense of security within the city. But I do not think it stops there, because the urban compact is one of the ways in which we define ourselves as urban citizens, and certainly one of the ways in which we define the desirable qualities of our cities. In New York, for instance, one manifestation of this social compact, and therefore one manifestation of our style of democracy, is the fact that many of our neighborhoods and places are almost done. They have, in effect, at least at the physical level, reached a state of climax -- in the forester's sense, not the Dr. Kinsey sense. And what we must talk about is the kind of perfecting of places that are almost complete. My studio is in Tribeca, and on returning from Nicosia, I was depressed to discover that a big blue wooden fence had appeared, signaling the start of construction of a large new apartment building behind our lovely loft space. I find this building objectionable because it exceeds the bounds of the tacit climax that I derive from a close reading of the character of the fabric in the neighborhood. Certainly if there is anything we have to be scrupulous about watching and adjusting as planners, as citizens, and as urban designers, it is that point of completion, the moment at which a city achieves its characteristic genius loci. However, because we seem to recognize the cultural authenticity only of

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\***Jeffrey Raven** (A+W/Berger): Richard Plunz states here that the difference between architecture and urban design is its relationship to power. In particular, he focuses on the political economy as a manifestation of power that the urban designer, more than the architect, must directly confront. Since urban design operates in this political and economic arena, its practice will either reflect or engage in a critique of the dominant social, economic and political power structure. Ideally, the successful outcome of this relationship should be measured from a civic building perspective, where physical form creates a synergy in which positive economic, political and cultural forces flourish. Yet, American urbanists are hired to provide professional services for clients as diverse as corporate clients, inner city communities, and un-democratic societies overseas. Recognizing this short-lived brush with power and the potential to exert influence on it raises the question: How should practicing urbanists define their role, serve their clients, and measure success?

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historic ways of doing things, we have fallen into a dilemma in which preservation has become the predominant medium of participatory planning. One of the anxieties about the World Trade Center is that we are going again to be forced into defense mode -- the characteristic style of New York City planning in which we oppose some strategy that those white guys in suits are going to foist on us eventually on the basis of its incompatibility with our historic values. Because the plutocrats are the only ones empowered to actually develop ideas, we are left with only one style of choosing: objecting.

So, there are two aspects to this compact: Security and climax, as well as an adjustment and adjudication. But we also have to be very careful that this notion of a city, which has reached some characteristic apogee of development, is not, as well, a city that excludes invention. Certainly, if one wanted to diss Battery Park City, one might ask why, on a big piece of sand freshly constructed from fill in the middle of the river, would one necessarily construct a set of urban blocks, and establish regulations about the height of quoin on brick buildings? The danger of a too strict identification of cities with forms that are bound at their particular climax, is that somehow the possibility of invention on sites where it is appropriate is squeezed out.

The last fragment of this compact that I would like to talk about in connection with democracy is the mystery in cities. Nicosia, where I was just visiting with a bunch of students, is a tiny town within its historic walls, although it has fairly egregious sprawl outside of them. One of the delights of this place is that one rapidly finds oneself able to get lost in its streets, and sometimes you can get pretty hungry before being able to find the way back to the hotel. The importance of this mysteriousness extends beyond charm: the ability to get lost, to encounter people and places accidentally, is the physical substrate of democratic urban culture. One of the things we have to defend against in our planning and urban design strategies is the kind of over-regulation that makes it impossible for the city to retain its sense of mysteriousness and chance.

**Alex Krieger:** Michael, can I challenge you on this climax issue? Sounds very good. I was actually going to disagree with an issue that Rosalind raised, but now after hearing your remarks, I am going to agree with her, a little bit. Maybe New York has reached its mode of climax; I would not know. But about ninety percent of all development in this country, ninety-five percent, some say, continues to take place out there, somewhere, where they have not even started flirting yet, much less, reached climax. And so while I was going to disagree with Rosalind's call for urban designers to become more involved with suburbs (as I will in a second), after hearing you speak, it sounds like she is right. I know New York, and I know New York has suffered a great trauma. But I think right now urban design has less to do with New York City than with the rest of the country. Despite its continuing empathy for what has happened to New York, the rest of the country has a lot less to do with the kind of city that New York was, or maybe even wishes still to be. And some of us need to be trying to figure out what all that stuff out there is, where climax is a long way off, a long, long way off.

Now, the reason I was going to disagree with Rosalind was, oddly enough, some would say that the only new direction in urban design in this country over the past generation or two has been the New Urbanism phenomenon, which at least is an organized set of ideas, whether you appreciate them or not. Of course, the motivation for New Urbanism really came from trying to deal with the suburban question, or sprawl; it came from a desire to reform suburban development patterns with another vision in mind. So, to Rosalind, some would say, no, no, no. In fact, a lot of people out there are now organizing themselves to deal with the suburb. Michael, you should do the same. I know you do in some of your work.

Now, let me just make one more comment. I was going to very much agree with Rosalind, on the issue of democracy, particularly your point about a tension between expertise and democracy. I am going to remember that line and I am going to use it, if I may. I think that is very, very true right now. Planning certainly suffers from this tension, and to some extent, urban design has benefited from this fact, oddly enough because from my understanding as a practitioner, Urban Design as a title has supplanted Planning amongst citizens. To citizens, planning means bureaucracy; it means directors of commissions, and it also means some kind of large, abstract notions that maybe are not so completely tied to what citizens think they need, such as safer neighborhoods, less density, calmer

streets, and so forth. In many cases, I would say the majority, urban design is invoked by the population as a kind of community advocacy issue. Urban designers are not there to dream of ravishing complexity, but urban designers are there to help citizens fend off the planners and the developers and the architects and the big thinkers whose big thinking rarely relates to what they may need. One of the missing insights we should maybe think about is that while urban design's origins may have been a conceptual rethinking about the nature of urbanism, right now in practice, at least in larger American cities, it has more to do with advocating for community groups over very small scale, or at least geographically immediate, issues, rather than with notions about how to reform the city or reinvent the city. I believe if you asked people in the street, perhaps not in New York, but around the country, they would define urban design as closer to what used to be called community advocacy, than to radical rethinking about the nature of urbanism.

**Maxine Griffith:** I was up very late last night at a community meeting, discussing the fact that in Philadelphia, we are going to be demolishing probably about ten thousand vacant and structurally unsound housing units, and redeveloping huge sections of the city. One quarter of Philadelphia is going to change rapidly in terms of both form and structure. I do not think the people I talked to last night care whether they are speaking with planners, or designers, or architects. I do not think the titles, or the labels, are going to matter at all. What matters is what can you do? How can you solve this problem? It is in these community forums where theory about town planning, and city building meet reality. Most of these people get up early, get their kids to school, go to work, come back, and then try to make sure their kids are inside the house doing their homework. They are not focused on being a perfect client. They are looking for people with expertise, and they are happy when you come in the door and help them organize the places where they work and live.

**Margaret Crawford:** Amanda, certainly Manhattan may be approaching climax, but I would like to ask you about the other boroughs? They seem to me to be distinctly incomplete.

**Amanda Burden:** They are. And actually part of Manhattan on the far West Side around the convention center and to its south is a pretty empty, desolate place. That is one of our initiatives.

To respond to Richard Plunz, I just want to say we have a pretty talented urban design group, and we are no longer going to do planning -- we are not going to decide how to zone a place -- without first doing physical planning and urban design. But in the other boroughs, there are huge empty areas, and some Maxine knows very well: Morrisinia, in the Bronx, or East New York, or Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn. Even Long Island City in Queens is still pretty empty. So there are, actually, quite open templates. The whole urban design staff has been working on Greenpoint and Williamsburg since the day I started at City Planning. There is nothing on the entire waterfront of Greenpoint and Northside, and we have done an urban design plan for the area since the only way I can sell a plan is by showing a physical image of what should be built, because I cannot understand what R73 zoning is. To figure out the right kind of zoning, I first have to look at where the public amenities are, where the streets are, where low-rise buildings are placed and how to keep them low, and where the height should go. Only then can I figure out what kind of zoning should go with it. But urban design has to be a key component -- it has to precede zoning. Only then will I use zoning as a tool to try to convince the city and the neighborhood of what really should be there. In New York City there are many areas that have nothing -- they are almost tabula rasa. Our challenge is to give those areas an image of what should happen in the future.

**Margaret Crawford:** I think this leads to the next question. Starting with Battery Park City, because it is the smallest entity represented here, what does your site need? You mentioned green buildings as something you are working on. What else does your site need, and what will it need in the coming decades?

**Jerome Blue:** One major project we're working on now, which we started prior to the terrorists attack of September 11th, is to try and find some alternative energy sources; the photovoltaics being integrated into facades started us with that. We have partnered with engineers and other consultants to try and find ways to not only retrofit the existing buildings, but rather find a way to ensure that every building in the future will be able to be more self-sustaining in terms of



energy. We think that's what is necessary in order to be more responsive, especially after the attacks of September 11th when everyone became concerned with the threat of a lack of power or water, and other such things. We think that is really what we need, and it is what we're focusing on now.

**Margaret Crawford:** Philadelphia, you have already started telling us, what does Philadelphia need?

**Maxine Griffith:** We have a wonderful thriving downtown that has always been a mixed-use neighborhood. There are great art institutions and a lively arts scene, great restaurants, and real theater. We have nice neighborhoods where anybody would want to live, like Chestnut Hill and around University City. But then there's the other Philadelphia. Like a lot of mature cities, Philadelphia has shrunk over the last fifty years. Its population has dropped from a high of about 2.2 million to about 1.5 million. It is also made up of lots of little factory towns, where folks have now migrated to the suburbs. There has not been over the years the political courage to say: We're a smaller city, nobody is going to live in that building anymore, so let's tear it down and figure out what to do. Finally, we've reached the point where there is a mayor who is willing to take that on. It currently has sixty thousand vacant or abandoned properties. We will have to re-pattern the urban landscape in many of Philadelphia's neighborhoods. While academics may be interested in boundaries, like where does urban design begin and end, I don't know if that is really important in practice. The question is, do you have skills? Can you help?

**Margaret Crawford:** Well, with all of these empty spaces, what is going to be inside the building envelopes projected on to them? In a sense, is this not what Rosalind was talking about when she was saying that really the issue is very much jobs, employment and housing? Without one, can you have the other? What do you need to fill these buildings?

**Michael Sorkin:** I would like to agree with Amanda, partially agree with Richard, and partially disagree with Alex. By saying that the replacement problem for the World Trade Center is a planning problem, I think the mayor is correct if what he means is that it is not an urban design problem in the first instance. In fact, the problem of replacing the World Trade Center is not one that can simply be solved on the site, given what has happened. In this sense, the solution is to look citywide at a set of sites that are larded with transportation, near neighborhoods that need jobs, and which have lower land costs than in lower Manhattan. Rather than pouring countless billions into propping up corporations downtown, an enlightened strategy would be to develop places like the Bronx Hub and Jamaica Queens, and so on.\*

The mayor's comments also recognize that the real issues confronting urban design are not only the problematics of the delicate conservation of cities, which are cooked on the one hand, or putting a Band-Aid on sprawl, as the New Urbanists seek to do, on the other. As Maxine noted, the urban population of the planet is growing at the rate of something like one hundred thousand a day, which suggests to me that one of the great forbiddens of urban design is to think about the creation of new cities from scratch, and plenty of them, and plenty fast. Certainly, if I were arguing for something that we ought to recuperate as a profession, whatever you might call it, it is exactly this possibility of

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\***Miriam Gusevich** (Catholic University of America): The scale of urban design analysis is not equivalent to the scale of the proposed intervention. When designing at an urban scale, the analysis of the existing conditions -- the reconnaissance -- can be at a very large scale and incorporate many different layers of interpretation. In contrast, the proposed design as a recommended course of action can be quite small and circumscribed. This is like the distinction between strategy and tactics. The scale and scope of the analysis ought to be large in order to strategically situate the particular intervention, to provide a context. As other disciplines provide a disciplinary context, a physical analysis at a larger scale, such as the neighborhood (or lack thereof), the city, the region, the eco-system, etc., can provide a physical, functional, and/or institutional context. The context provides a frame of reference to judge what is missing, what should be proposed. Yet this context is never fixed, it changes over time, as our perspectives change and as others react to our own efforts and actions.

These changes might be unpredictable, since urban design is intrinsically political (as the etymology suggests, politics originates in the Greek *polis*, the City). To paraphrase Clausewitz's famous dictum: Urban design is "the

looking at these unbuilt territories around the world and their relation to a population crying out to be housed. Rather than simply trying to address the issues of sprawl or mega-cities in place, it is time to vigorously pursue the idea, to begin to think about, making cities from scratch again, what used to be called -- what did you say, Richard -- town planning. This is happening in many parts of the world. Maybe not by our standards, but it is. There is probably a new city being planned on a daily basis in Mainland China. It seems odd, listening to Amanda and Maxine speak; it sounds like our cities need people, and other places need buildings for people. There are places in the world that need everything else that American cities provide for. We lack the people. They lack all those other things, to put it mildly. In China, two hundred and fifty million people will move from rural areas into urban areas in the next ten years or so, and cities are being built from scratch to house them. I think it is not colonialist to suggest that they need tools with which to better build them (maybe they should look less toward the American experience than they currently do). But, in Philadelphia, we probably need some more people, and fewer facilities.

**Maxine Griffith:** Maybe. One of the things we are looking at is re-patterning. How do you look at the new urban block? What is the house that goes on that block? How are you going to deal with the car (and the car is not going away!)? So there is great opportunity, not necessarily to start from scratch, but to re-think the evolving purpose and the evolving understanding of what makes a good place. In Philadelphia we have to do it quickly, and under pressure. Maybe it's looking at cities that are more environmentally anchored. We know more now than we once knew when those cities were built, and so enhancing them doesn't have to mean just tinkering around them. Rather, it can be a very meaningful exercise, as well as looking at areas of our cities like Philadelphia, the Bronx or Queens, that are not totally built up. Then we can go to Asia and Africa and build new towns. It doesn't have to be either/or. I don't know that the academic approach where you stake out territory and defend it, and say, "It's this and it's not that," is helpful in this regard -- it may be an interesting discourse, but in the real world that's not how it works.

**Margaret Crawford:** Your comment about building cities from scratch makes me wonder about the contradiction that Rosalind pointed out between experts and democracy.

**Michael Sorkin:** I do not see this as an automatic contradiction. One of the things democracy does is establish representative government, and the problem is often the mediocre quality of most of the representatives in our government. I do not think that is to gainsay the utility of expertise in the planning of cities. No, I do not think these are concepts that are destined to annihilate each other by any stretch of the imagination.

Another thing we must think about is the changing number of people living in traditional nuclear families in the United States these days. It is about thirty percent? The restoration of traditional block forms, with houses designed to support Daddy, Mommy, Sis, and me, really is not on anymore. There is a dramatic territory that is crying out for innovation in terms of the re-patterning of cities simply because people do not live the way we design for them.

**Maxine Griffith:** Or work that way.

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continuation of politics by other means." Urban design is based on uncertain knowledge. That our knowledge is fallible does not mean that it is impossible or a chimera; that would be a collapse into solipsism or cynicism. Rather, fallibility means that knowledge is provisional, as termed by Karl Popper, subject to "conjectures and refutations." As Clausewitz recognized, "The influence of theoretical truths on practical life is always exerted more through critical analysis than through doctrine."

Thus, analysis in design, like in war, is of the utmost importance. If the war metaphor is too disagreeable, we can draw on an analogy to microsurgery or acupuncture; the broad analysis gives us a holistic overview of the body; the intervention can be as small and minimal as possible. In contrast to the absolute Grand Plan, to the tabula rasa, this distinction implies a methodological minimalism. There is a different and subtle aesthetic pleasure in minimalism, a variation of Occam's razor and the pursuit of the maximum effect from the minimum number of moves.

There is much to be learned from a strategic overview of the context, understood broadly. Nevertheless, there

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**Michael Sorkin:** Or work that way. This is an even more amazing fact: Seven percent of households right now in America involve a working dad, a stay-at-home mom, and a kid or two of school age. Seven percent. I have one more statistic. This one is for you, Maxine. Obviously the car is not going to go away immediately, but I did hear the other day that we Americans of the boomer generation will have consumed half of the total petroleum reserves of the planet by the time we expire. On the other hand, it delights me to know that New York is the second-most energy efficient city in the United States, after some benign environment in Hawaii. And the entire reason is not that we are lethargic, but that we use public transportation. Therefore, if you are going to talk about green policies and conservation policies and sustainability policies, you are going to have to talk about the car.

**Richard Plunz:** Well, when the price of gas reaches a reasonable level -- the actual cost of the gas -- the car situation will change drastically and probably very, very quickly. It is amazing, in this country, the extent to which we (and I don't mean just academics) trust the marketplace, rely on the existing power structure, on the status quo, which is, of course, extremely artificial. Relative to issues of the automobile, this trust gets into very, very soft areas. This issue is extremely important relative to urbanism.

Relative to the ongoing discussion, following my previous remarks, I think New York City is hardly finished. I do not quite understand that exchange. But even more enigmatic is the notion that there is a New York City without a region. I would argue that the regional issues around New York City are probably more or less the same as anywhere else in the States. Of course, there are formal, urbanistic differences between places. But at this point, one can hardly conceive of New York City as a politically bounded entity of eight-whatever million people. The World Trade Center put that in amazing evidence. Consider the immediate changes which occurred as a result of the closing of the downtown Path tube; the drift of jobs here and there, the frantic attempts to get them back without an intact regional infrastructure. Just reading the obituaries in the New York Times was amazing because one understood how few of those people -- I suppose the cream of the cream -- actually lived in New York City. This point is very elementary, but it is still relevant to that previous discussion. One has to be careful about distinctions. I think that New York City is very much at the center of a national debate at many, many levels. New York City is a region, and has been one for probably two hundred years. It has evolved a lot relative to its hinterland, but there was a moment when New York City really was a city-state stretching from New York Harbor to Buffalo. When one considers how radically the situation of the city has changed relative to its hinterland, over a long period of history, there is a great deal to be learned. That is where the planning issue and the World Trade Center come together. Rebuilding is not a local planning issue at all. It is about strategic planning, with a very global outlook.

For me, a basic question here is how do you teach urban design? (I thought that was the subject of the conference.) Is urban design a liberal arts training, sort of like architecture in Italy, or like an undergraduate planning course, for that matter? Does urban design let students learn to interact with the city and feel good about different things and to think urbanistically? Or is it a highly defined professional subject area? I am sure there are very different views on these questions. I

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have to be limits; otherwise, we can research forever with no end in sight. Thus there are intrinsic limits to the time for analysis, to the knowledge one can derive from analysis and to the scope of the intervention. These limits underscore the limits of power.

would like to think that urban design is a subject area that is capable of supporting post graduate curricula, very strategic in its outlook, a depository of theoretical alternatives -- and I do believe theory is needed. It is probably needed now more than ever. There is the question of strategizing, and that is again where the political economy and the power issue come into play. Of course the globe is hyper-urbanizing. We have large cities built from scratch, some built from scratch probably in the last ten years. But unfortunately I think our discipline is unable to even recognize or fathom, our culture is unable to fathom, what this means. For example, at Columbia University, we have worked in Caracas, Venezuela, for three studios by now. Caracas is a city where fifty to seventy percent of the urban settlement, no one knows exactly, is considered illegitimate relative to planning and urban design norms or controls. What do you call a city that is seventy percent illegitimate? How can you even call it illegitimate? Where are the definitions? I think we suffer from a certain lack of global perspective. I also would just say, in response to some of the earlier comments, yes, academics do stake out territory. We are all guilty of that. But so do politicians.

**Rosalind Greenstein:** Too bad they are not here.

**Michael Sorkin:** That's right. Where are they?

**Margaret Crawford:** Richard has suggested that we look at a larger scale than the city, and I think that is a key issue. Perhaps staying within the United States, I would like to ask Rosalind a final question about the issues she thinks cities are really concerned with today, on a national level. Are they the issues we have been talking about here? Or are there others that we have not even mentioned?

**Rosalind Greenstein:** I think the issues that people are dealing with, those that matter a great deal, are very small scale and site-specific. People are concerned about small changes in their neighborhoods. They are concerned about the impact of new development -- the traffic implications, for instance, and how new development is going to disrupt their day-to-day routine. I think some of those small issues are what concerns cities.

**Margaret Crawford:** And suburbs.

**Rosalind Greenstein:** And suburbs.

**Margaret Crawford:** For reasons of time, we will stop now, and ask the audience for questions, and then let our panelists respond. Questions? Harrison?

**Harrison Fraker (UC Berkeley):** I would be interested in two things that Rosalind raised, and I am interested in her experience around the country. First, Rosalind talked about the concept of the city as understood by developers, which involves private property and land markets. If you watch the patterns of that development, there are certain ways in which land is accumulated, and certain ways it is developed. Then you asked us to think about new clients, and new programs, and new building sites. I would like you to comment about how feasible it is for urban design to bring those two realms together, because if you look at the land markets and private property, and then at these new programs, clients and building sites, in many cases, it is hard to put the two together.

**Rosalind Greenstein:** Some of those developments are happening. For example, The Lincoln Institute has been trying to organize the real estate decision-makers at urban universities. In a sense, we were trying to create a club of these university administrators, these actors, because we think that the development that they are doing for their own purposes, for their own university expansion, could be done in a way that benefits the city more than has been the case in the past. So this is one example. Traditionally, we did not think about institutions anchored in place; when they need to expand, almost all urban universities stay as opposed to leave a place. And so here is a group, here is a class of actors, to whom we wanted to get this message: Can you do the development that you are interested in, that serves your needs in a way that also serves the needs of the city? That is one example from our experience.

**Alex Krieger:** I am not sure. The real estate community, the real estate industry, seems to operate somewhat like a big barge, or maybe a more apt analogy, like some slow moving luxury liner. It is hard to start turning it, but sometimes it is actually harder to stop it from taking a turn, from moving too much to the left. Take, for example, the way in which real estate has co-opted the New Urbanism.

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Every subdivision has to have emblems of urbanity. Mixed-use is a big buzzword now in this industry. The issue is not so much that developers do not change, that they do not respond to new clients or new programs, but actually the issue is they sometimes overreact. Then the question becomes one of how to steer them? You wish the real estate industry would not only move very slowly and in one direction one time.

**Jay Chatterjee** (University of Cincinnati): This question is directed toward Michael Sorkin. Michael, you have talked about the need for re-patterning of cities. This task is very comprehensive by its nature and may require governmental intervention. This country once had a national urban policy, in the era of the National Planning Resources Board, which generated new urban form as exemplified by Greenbelt's Maryland, Greenhills, Ohio, and Greendale, Wisconsin. Is it time now to return to the development of a new urban policy?

**Michael Sorkin:** We have always had a kind of a national urban policy that dare not speak its name. It was the government that invented the suburbs in the form of Federal Housing Authority loans, ninety percent subsidies for freeways, rapid depreciation of greenfield commercial projects, etc. Yes, we desperately need a national urban policy. And I would suggest that we start by turning half the military bases in the United States into new urban settlements. Or three-quarters.

**Richard Plunz:** One of the amazing things that remains unrecognized in academia, at least within our discipline (in fact even here tonight) are the facts of the suburban displacement which occurred from the Thirties on, by national design. It is so little studied, so little recognized, understandably perhaps because we are all in a mode of either suburban denial or idealization. There is no way one could imagine anything else. United States suburbanization was, arguably, the largest urban project of the Twentieth Century, anywhere. The new town was only a very small piece of it; nothing really, compared to the whole of the phenomenon, which continues to play itself out. We know that national policy is at the base of the land planning, land economic continuities. The dispersion is planned. Totally.

**Michael Sorkin:** China is an interesting case that keeps getting cited. Urban policy in China used to be based on radical de-urbanization because they were afraid of the atomic bomb. Perhaps the current environment of paranoia could be a useful hinge for creating a rational urban policy.

**Alex Krieger:** I'd like to make a slight sort of adjustment to history, here. The federal government has always had a national policy, stated or unstated, but it did not begin in the 1930s. You can blame it on the Homestead Act in 1860, you can blame it on Jefferson surveying the continent to grids to support decentralized government, but the instinct to decentralize is much more deeply rooted. What the policies of the Thirties and Forties provided, as opposed to initiating the suburb, was accessibility to more of America. I think it is worth remembering that the instinct to suburbanize is as old as the boat ride from the old country. And therefore the decision to change or alter existing patterns is not quite as simple as raising the gasoline tax or making mortgages more expensive -- decisions that have all kinds of other social justice implications for the population as a whole. We have long been a suburban culture, and occasionally urban policies aid and abet our instincts to become suburbanized.

**Richard Plunz:** Well, that is an interesting point. But apart from the price of gas (one of my favorite issues) I think what happened in the Thirties was a policy that targeted cities very, very directly.

**Alex Krieger:** Cities were accused of creating the Depression; they were accused of monopolistic tendencies (associated with New York actually) and of accelerating and causing the Depression.

**Richard Plunz:** Not only that. National policy saw a way out of the depression based on a new consumer culture, which, by definition, was anti-urban. You could not beat selling two hundred and fifty oil burners in Levittown versus two on West End Avenue, for the same number of families. This is a long discussion. I just want to point out that there was a moment when we were basically an urban culture. We could argue that, but I do not see the pre-1930s U.S. as a nation of woodsmen and farmers. In fact, the heart of our culture came out of cities. Basically that urban culture was targeted. Of course, the post-bomb period only exacerbated the process. And now the same tendencies come

together, and continue to come together, downtown.

**Douglas Kelbaugh** (University of Michigan): I was wondering if anyone would like to address the issues embedded in the global/local debate, and the threat it poses to simultaneously homogenize and destabilize cities. Borrowing from Benjamin Barber, on the one hand we have the forces of jihad, symbolizing any fundamentalist, absolutist, totalizing, and often-sexist religion or ideology that is rooted in place, blood or tribe. On the other hand we have McWorld, code for the multi-national, corporate market with little if any allegiance to local place and community. Both threaten the open, democratic and egalitarian city that we all cherish and defend. What are your thoughts on these twin juggernauts and their implications for urbanism?

**Michael Sorkin:** May I give a slightly oblique answer? Certainly, in the face of rampant globalization and a kind of fetish for locality represented by the other side, one of the issues for urban design is how to propagate a set of new urban entities in the context of a culture that provides tremendous pressure for homogeneity. Obviously one of the tasks for urban design is to figure out where the differences in cities are going to come from, because certainly the continued creation of urban difference is one of the engines that will drive the possibility of cities being democratic. I think homogeneity is certainly the enemy, which brings me back to a slightly risky point, in the context of this crowd -- which is the idea that the artistic component of urban design education becomes particularly important as a way of opposing, on the one hand the depredations of multinational culture, and on the other, a kind of localism that has been completely wrested from its originating context of meaning. I think that is a big task for us, and an interesting one.

**Amanda Burden:** I want to just pick up on a question, and on what Michael said. I think if we look at the importance of New York City as a global city, and the effort to attract and keep talent here that is involved in the world of globalism and technology, you can only really do that if you nurture tremendous diversity and choice and neighborhoods. If you make the city homogeneous, you lose the great minds and the talent. That is one of the challenges. New urban forms, a kind of complexity, an edginess, is the kind of urban design that keeps and attracts the sort of human capital we want. What we really have to nurture in the city is its difference, its edginess. We have to find a way for urban design to interface with and achieve that difference.

I just want to make one more comment. Having edginess, or good urban design, or good architecture in a city is almost virtually impossible unless you have the leadership of a mayor who knows the difference. I do not think we have had a mayor who knows the difference since John Lindsay, but I believe we now have a mayor who again knows the difference. I would be surprised if he does not support good architecture and urban design, and I am going to try the best I can. I have only been Chair of the Planning Commission for two months, and I am working on it.  
(Applause)

**Rosalind Greenstein:** I just wanted to try and respond to that last impossible question. I am not sure if urban design can do what you are asking it to do. And I would say it is an issue of how one goes about one's work. As professionals, in our behavior toward our colleagues and our clients, we do have control over how we interact. We need to start interacting with respect and tolerance and civility and a sense of purpose and a sense of fun. How we behave in our professional roles is going to make a bigger difference in challenging this other homogenized, scarier world that we are describing, than the buildings we design or the way we arrange them in the city.

**Alex Krieger:** I also wanted to respond to Doug's very provocative dichotomy, but maybe turn it on its head a little bit. In his comments, there is a suggestion, or an implication, that globalization is equivalent to homogenization, and local culture retains authenticity or uniqueness. In a funny way, I think it is almost the opposite. To thrive in a globalized context, to be successful, means you have to be quick thinking, and kind of edgy, and you have to seek out the new. You need to be opportunistic and creative, or take advantage of those who are creative. Those who cannot participate in a globalized context, those who are fearful of it, or do not have access to it, tend to want to resist that. And so we come back to our prior discussion about small things. We want our neighborhoods to stay the same. We have too much change. We do not want so much change. We want stability. In a

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funny way, globalization does not necessarily mean homogenization. It may actually mean needing to constantly be more creative, or edgy, for lack of a better word. And to some extent, localism actually leads to constancy, to stagnation and a resistance to change. So I am not sure that the issue is quite so simple. We can't just say globalization equals homogenization, and localism breeds some kind of uniqueness. Sometimes I think it is actually the opposite.

**Margaret Crawford:** Other questions? Bob?

**Robert Fishman** (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor): I just wanted to respond by returning to the question of history. Is there a place for visionaries in urban design today? Is there a place for a Clarence Stein, or a Henry Wright?

**Alex Krieger:** I have asked that question often -- is there a place for a great visionary today, as an urbanist, not as an architect? Of course there is, and actually I think he exists. I am sorry to acknowledge this, because usually I am in grave disagreement with him, but Andres Duany is a Clarence Stein. You may disagree with him, and I do more often than not (but not always) -- and others do even more often than me. But I believe that he, like a Clarence Stein, is projecting an urban vision. There is also Peter Calthorpe. Though you may disagree with their conclusions, there are a number of people who actually think broadly, and are affecting not necessarily New York or Boston, but substantial aspects of our land development culture. There are always visionaries out there. Sometimes we do not recognize them. Often times we disagree with them. And certainly others fear them because they disagree with them. But I do not believe that we are in a post visionary era. Perhaps it will be Michael Sorkin who will next receive a broader, more generalized conceptual view of things as opposed to dealing with only the small things.

**Margaret Crawford:** Other questions? Richard?

**Richard Sommer** (Harvard University): Picking up on Rosalind Greenstein's comments on how urban designer's related to history, if we don't turn to historical models of cities for inspiration, where should urban designers look for new models?

**Michael Sorkin:** I have got nothing against looking at the historical form of the city. There are plenty of good models. What do you get when you add, for example, Fez with virtual technology? The one does not annihilate the other. Fez is a good model. But, I am attempting to resist the impulse to universalize the principles of urban design. I certainly resist the impulse to codify them at the level of design techniques and strategies. So, the answer to the question, obviously, is to look at everything and mediate it through a certain set of more or less fundamental principles, but not through a certain set of images.

**David Smiley** (Columbia University): I have a question for Michael Sorkin. You stated that in urban design terms, a city or neighborhood reaches a point of climax, a point of completion or that it "achieves its genius loci." Are you being rhetorical? How do we know what completion is, whether we want it; and finally, who declares completion?

**Michael Sorkin:** No, I am not being rhetorical. I never said that I thought cities were complete. I said I think cities develop characteristic forms that achieve a certain kind of perfection, and that agreement about those forms -- hopefully democratic agreement -- is part of the nature of this urban compact. What I mean by these forms are, for example, the Georgian Squares in London, or the way Fifth Avenue meets Central Park, or the labyrinth of Fez, etc. Obviously cities are dynamic, but I think we have to admit that they also are artistic creations, and that one of the ways that we celebrate our cultural longevity and our cultural consensus is through the conservation and recognition of forms that have in fact reached a kind of perfect state.

**Richard Plunz:** I think that the dichotomy that has set up between complete and incomplete is symptomatic of our problem as a discipline (urban design), and probably as a culture -- coming out of the industrial world where one always sees cities as expanding along a certain mode of density and proximity. In fact, now, probably the far more important question for urban cores, as well as the urban regions, is the question of de-urbanization -- which is another form of incompleteness. Our bias is toward wanting to fill things back up, if indeed we even recognize that they are empty. It is very interesting. The old Nineteenth Century urban infrastructure, which was very space consuming, is basically no

longer needed. Now it is a kind of fantasy era for us. In terms of imagining futures, one could argue (though I am not sure) that the fiber optic net is as important to the future of the city now as the railroad yard and the movement of freight was in the Nineteenth Century. Yet the spatial consequences are very, very different. So I think, relative to your question, as a discipline we are a little bit confused about space in the city today: Full\Empty. Complete\Not complete. We certainly do not teach studios having to do with de-urbanization -- the unthinkable -- even though it has happened on an enormous scale.\*

**Margaret Crawford:** Did I see another question up there?

**James Lima, (NYC):** (Inaudible) [Can you see a role for urban design in cultivating the cultural character of certain neighborhoods in New York City, but more importantly, in fostering and sustaining them? Can urban design address issues of social and economic diversity?]

**Amanda Burden:** I assume that is meant for me. I think that, as I said, rezoning really does not work in terms of conveying what will actually add to a community and accommodate a community's growth. But you have to begin with a physical model, with a physical plan. That is where urban design really comes into play, because then you can have a dialogue with the community, and that interface should and hopefully will result in something that is much more responsive to a community's particular needs, something that accommodates not only its growth, but its aspirations and its peculiar defining characteristics. That is my hope.

**Raymond Gastil** (The Van Alen Institute): I would like for Maxine Griffith to explain more fully why the City of Philadelphia is planning to tear down thousands of row houses, an action that seems to echo the mistakes of urban renewal of an earlier era.

**Maxine Griffith:** In most instances, there is no market for these houses. They are vacant and in terrible condition, and there are seven hundred thousand fewer people in Philadelphia than there were when these sixty thousand units were built. About fifteen thousand of these properties are what we call imminently dangerous -- in New York City they would have already come down. We hope to renovate or rehabilitate some. It has taken us two years to plan our approach to this, doing so by house-by-house community planning. We also can't make assumptions about the desirability of row houses; some people want a place to park their car.

**Alex Krieger:** So you need a great urban design scheme for emptiness. I am serious actually. Look at downtown Detroit, for example.

**Marilyn Jordan Taylor** (Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP): Maybe because the events of September 11th have made us all think more about what the nature of jobs are in urban places, it has raised the question for me of whether there is some province that we're missing in urban design now that has to do with the creation of jobs? What can we do to get jobs to Philadelphia? Is there a New Urbanism of jobs ?

**Maxine Griffith:** We need to rethink those urban patterns that at the point of the industrial revolution separated working from the rest of life. We must look for new models to support different kinds of live-work relationships, and create a more fertile environment for Twenty-First Century jobs.

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\***Els Verbakel** (Columbia University): What is the material an urban designer works with? If it is true that, on the one hand, historical city centers are transforming into shopping malls, and on the other hand, suburban neighborhoods are far from rural, the two historically established poles (the urban and the suburban) might be much closer to each other than we imagine. The local and the global are intertwined at every scale, and one question is whether an urban designers aim should be to unravel them and turn the global back into the local. This seems to be an impossible undertaking. The experiment is to think beyond those traditional dualities and to see the amalgam of cores and sprawled landscapes as one. As Saskia Sassen and others suggest, the contemporary urban environment can be thought of as a field of parallel urbanities, of juxtaposed temporalities. Taking into account this aspect of the relation between time and space offers the potential to reassess the strongly rooted conception of a locale.

I would argue that the urban designer can no longer only work with what is historically understood as a city, without taking into account the suburban periphery. Alex Krieger's remark that we should start considering



## Shaping Civic and Public Realms: What is the Role of Urban Design?

**Alex Krieger:** Can I just expand that a little bit? I think the idea that jobs are really necessary to revive cities -- that is really a nineteenth century idea. If more people were able to choose where they worked based upon the environment they prefer to work in, then the key is not locating jobs, it is rather making those environments worthy of attracting people. At the moment, I think this idea is expressed in perhaps naive ways, like the need to make cities exotic again, or finer, or full of nightclubs and edginess. But there is something more profound there. If you make the city a worthy environment -- one people want to spend time in -- I think jobs will follow. But we certainly cannot go back to a time when we built a factory in the city and insisted that five thousand factory workers work there. We have to slightly change the calibration between living and jobs, because in the future, jobs will chase after pleasant environments, rather than people chasing after jobs, no matter where they are.

**Roy Strickland** (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor): I would like to suggest that there is opportunity in this country to put hundreds of millions of dollars toward potential urban design work and construction -- particularly in education. Whether one is on the left, the right, Republican or Democrat, education is an essential point of discussion at every level of our country; community, city, state and federal. So jobs and entertainment are important, the private sector is certainly important, but there is this opportunity to seek a connection between those education dollars, curriculum, and community development. That is an opportunity for all of us to consider. Engage those kids from pre-school, seek to capture those hundreds of billions of dollars toward capital investment, and use it to trickle outwards to restore and regenerate our cities.

**Margaret Crawford:** That is a comment rather than a question. I am now going to abuse my role as moderator by asking the final question. (I assure those who still have raised their hands that there will be ample opportunity to raise more questions tomorrow.) Like Ray, I want to express my astonishment at something I heard here, which is the reluctance of most of the people on the stage to be interested in the suburbs. This seems to touch on a lot of different points -- that of emptiness, for example. An empty city might become a low density or a more suburban-like city. Suburbs are growing; cities are shrinking. Yet there seems to be an incredible attachment here to the historical city. Does this risk making urban designers irrelevant, or lead them to create a kind of niche profession that deals with an ever-shrinking venue in which to operate?

**Rosalind Greenstein:** I am interested in suburbs.

**Alex Krieger:** I actually reject Margaret's accusation, at least personally. I was born and bred in the city to be sure, but I am very interested in the suburbs. Just a minute ago I even paid a great compliment to Andres Duany. You always think about an answer to a question two questions later, so let me return to Richard Sommer's, regarding where else to look for models, other than to restore historic urbanism. This is where I think Rem Koolhaas comes in, because he tends to look at all sorts of places; Lagos on the one hand, or corporate America on the other hand; office parks, resort communities, shopping malls, retirement areas. All those latter things are more common to suburbia, they are suburban functions. I am not interested in suburbanizing the city, and often, if you look at the suburbs, one would be accused of doing that. But I think that we can look at that ninety percent of

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suburbia more seriously, and Richard Plunz's concern that the region, not only the city, should be studied, beg the question of design implementation. Remembering, protecting and reconstructing the city from the past, have gained new meaning; the complexity of envisioning an urban environment for the future is even more challenging. Although the visionary movement known as New Urbanism has been able to develop a certain approach to the suburbs, their strategy does not encompass already dense urban sites, nor has it led to innovative results that suggest a potential for developing future urban neighborhoods. In this perspective, Richard Plunz's call for developing an urban theory as a response to the current lack of perspective is especially relevant.

## Urban Design: Practices, Pedagogies, Premises

America that has been developing in the last thirty, forty, fifty or seventy years, and find things there that might be useful. I am not saying we should introduce the shopping mall back downtown, but we can find things out there that might be useful as a way to also invigorate our cities, including a little bit of emptiness, which is a characteristic of suburbs. I would like to reject your accusation that I am not personally interested in the suburb, though of course I prefer to live in cities.

**Margaret Crawford:** You do not want to live there.

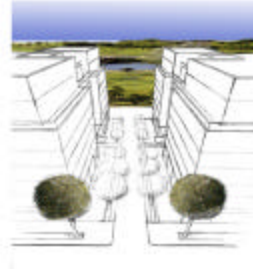
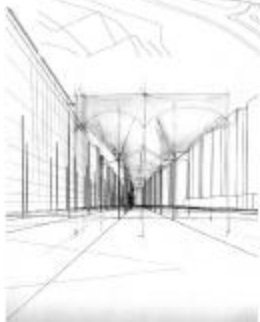
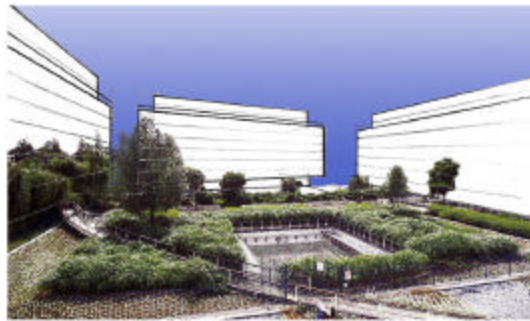
**Alex Krieger:** I do not want to live there. That is right.

**Margaret Crawford:** Our time is really up, so we are going to adjourn. Michael has the final word.

**Michael Sorkin:** I not only reject the accusation, I reject the premise. One of the problems is this insistent dichotomization of city and suburb. They call them sub-urbs for a reason -- we have to acknowledge it is one system. On the other hand, I grew up in the suburbs, and I know why those doctors invented Prozac. (Laughter)

**Margaret Crawford:** Okay, we are now going to adjourn to continue the conversation outside in a reception. And we look forward to continuing it with you tomorrow.  
(Applause)

# Urban Design Practices



**Panel Synopsis:** *Urban design practice is the central topic of this panel, however the relationship between professional practice and urban design education shapes much of this discussion. The panelists, academics and practitioners alike, utilize existing student projects from graduate urban design studios as an opportunity to locate what they view as the strengths and desiderata of existing masters program curricula. Two main clusters of concerns emerge. The first focuses upon the challenge of translating academic studio training to the realities of professional practice. Some advocate more formal or pure studio exercises in order to encourage innovation in student thought. In contrast, others call for a need for further curricular emphasis upon the exigencies of urban design as professional practice, noting the importance of issues such as learning how to communicate with the public, the political economy of land markets, the definition of clients, and the reality of the urban political machinery. The second cluster of issues emerges from the concern that urban design, as both method of inquiry and professional practice, is still struggling to define its place within the field of the design professions. Thus, pedagogy is perceived in this discussion as being a key strategy through which urban design can further its disciplinary distinction. At times, the very usefulness of urban design itself is questioned. However, it is widely agreed upon throughout the discussion that concerns with density and infrastructure, both urban and suburban, should be of greater concern to urban designers as practitioners, teachers, and students.*

**Moderator:** Harrison Fraker, UC Berkeley

**Panelists:** John Chase, City of West Hollywood  
Sandro Marpillero, Columbia University  
Karen Phillips, Abyssinian Development Corporation, NYC  
Charles Reiss, Trump Organization, NYC  
Denise Scott Brown, Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, Philadelphia  
Jacqueline Tatom, Washington University, St. Louis  
Marilyn Jordan Taylor, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP  
Anne Vernez-Moudon, University of Washington, Seattle

**Raymond Gastil:** There are two things I want to say before we get started. First, Andrea Kahn is going to speak before we move on into the panel. And second, I was requested by an audience member to do a quick poll of the audience: Anyone who is a student, raise your hand. All right. You will have to look around for your own estimates; I am not going to make them. Anyone who is an academic, raise your hand. Okay. Is something wrong with being an academic? Anyone who is a politician? Oh, come on, Karen. Anyone who is a practitioner? I see some double dippers.

All right. Now, Andrea Kahn: She is a professor here at Columbia, and the only thing I am going to mention about her career (rather than give a long bio, since we are doing short bios) is that, given one of the topics here is urban design as a regional practice, of all the academics in architecture and urban design that I know, Andrea has perhaps had the most regional teaching career. Wherever the metropolitan transportation lines take you, she has been there. From Yale down to Penn, she has been there. And throughout the city, wherever the subway system takes you, she has been there. It is an extraordinary career, which represents her commitment to teaching and understanding the city. In spite of herself, even if she was not interested in the region, it has been part of her teaching and instruction as a person interested in urban design. Andrea Kahn.  
(Applause)

**Andrea Kahn:** Thank you so much for coming back today. As Ray said, there were a lot of issues raised last night in the opening panel, and I am very much looking forward today to delving into at least some of them more deeply.

A little over a year ago, the Van Alen Institute hosted a panel on urban design education that was organized by my colleague here at Columbia, Modjeh Baratloo. It had as speakers Ken Frampton and David Smiley, also from Columbia, Mark Robbins from the National Endowment for the Arts, and Margaret Crawford from Harvard. In a series of separate conversations that were prompted by that event, Margaret and I were struck by the recent proliferation of new programs granting master degrees in urban design. And I think we were both equally excited by the potential opportunity of constructively engaging their various positions on city-making, particularly since the strength of urban design is not the result of individual heroic efforts, but more the result of the collective sharing of ideas. So this conference grew out of those relatively informal conversations.

I am very pleased to welcome all of our panelists who have generously agreed to explore how urban design as a concept and urban design as a discipline are linked to urban design as a practice and a public enterprise. I also want to take this opportunity before we begin this morning's panel to publicly acknowledge all of those who have contributed to this project, which like any urban design project has required a sustained collective effort. In particular, thanks are due to the Dean here at Columbia, Bernard Tschumi, Dean Peter Rowe, and Alex Krieger of Harvard and Raymond Gastil of The Van Alen Institute for their financial support. All of The Van Alen Report respondents and contributors, Brian McGrath and Ralph Stern, David Smiley and Eric Mumford, as well as the urban design directors for their contributions to the briefing documents, the practitioners for completing those questionnaires. For help in producing the books as well as the studio work exhibit which is hanging on

the rear wall in the lobby outside, and more, Kyre Chenven, as well as Columbia urban design students Kimberlae Saul, Jennifer McDonald, and Galit Motchan; and finally for over a year of unwavering support, Zoë Ryan, who in addition to serving as project administrator offered Margaret and me the chance to guest-edit *The Van Alen Report*, and Clare Nelson, in charge of The Van Alen Institute's special projects, who was absolutely essential to our fundraising. Without their dedication and the help of the rest of the Van Alen team, this conference would never have happened.

I would now like to ask the first panel to come up to the table. We have a lot of speakers at all our panels. Many people have been commenting on that, and so in keeping with our decision to keep introductions to a minimum, it is very much my pleasure to introduce the moderator for this panel, Harrison Fraker, who is also going to moderate the public discussion after the first break. Harrison is the William Wurster Professor and Dean of the College of Environmental Design at the University of California at Berkeley. He is also a dear friend. I am very, very pleased that after doing a conference at his own school, and knowing how much work it entails, he agreed to take on this task. Harrison, I give it to you.

**Harrison Fraker:** Good morning. We are already considerably behind schedule, so I am going to try to catch up a bit. The format for this morning is to have our practitioners talk a little bit about their practices and to comment on the work that was published in the compendium of the schools. I am going to introduce them in just a minute. Then there will be some comments by Anne Vernez-Moudon and Jacqueline Tatom, followed by an open discussion. Since we are behind, I would like the panelists to limit their talks to maybe five or seven minutes, if possible.

Let me say, to begin, that I do not know about New York, but certainly on the West Coast urban design is a booming practice for architects, landscape architects and planners. There is a growing market in these areas. As local municipalities re-do their general plans, they turn to urban designers. As developers try to get approval for their projects, they turn to urban designers to try to cast the spell, make the magic that will get them approvals. Environmental groups are employing urban designers to rethink the ecological systems of their cities. Community groups are employing urban designers to advocate for their cause within the cities.

About forty-five architectural, landscape architecture and developer firms contribute to our college. When I go around and see them, all they do is talk about the incredible booming business in their field. They are looking for graduates, and graduates of our program get jobs immediately. They bring skills. So I am hoping that the practitioners will talk about a couple of things today. Number one, what analytic methods, skills, and tools do they use in their discussions with their clients? And do they see them in the curricula that they have reviewed? Secondly, I would like to have you talk a little bit about the nature of your clients and what they look for. What are the kinds of ideas and issues they would like to have you help them wrestle with?

Let me introduce our panelists. I am going to be very brief. John Chase will start off. He is an urban designer for the city of West Hollywood, educated at Santa Cruz and UCLA. Next will be Karen Phillips, President and CEO of the Abyssinian Development Corporation. She was educated as a landscape architect. Next will be Charles Reiss, Senior Vice President for Development at the Trump Organization. Next Denise Scott Brown, principal of Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates. (Most of these people need no introductions.) And finally, Marilyn Jordan Taylor, Chairman of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP, and urban design partner there. And Sandro Marpillero, of course, of the Columbia Urban Design program.

I am going to introduce the academics in a moment, when they make their comments. Let's start with John Chase.

**John Chase:** Student projects are really about the idea of what is possible. In much daily practice, working for a municipal government is all about what is not possible, about what you cannot do. It is all about conflicts, often very petty conflicts, on a neighbor-to-neighbor basis, on a city councilperson to city councilperson basis. Every proposal has to go through the eye of the needle of practical politics. For example, the politics of the architectural review or those associated with planning regulations, which end up using lowest common denominators or design restrictions that

penalize the most innovative and creative architects. Because unfamiliar ideas, new ideas, strange ideas, unsettling ideas, are not necessarily popular, the lowest common denominator often wins.

Before I begin, I wanted to note that it is my understanding that the studio projects displayed here are not to be critiqued chiefly in their own right. Rather their purpose is to raise larger issues. At the same time, once I have a student project in front of me, I really get caught up in the details, and it is impossible for me not to dive into the individual project. Also, I want to note that I could be getting any project completely and utterly wrong, because the accompanying text that I would need to completely understand the work is missing. So, in a way, my comments are a potential massive misunderstanding of the images in front of me.

I am postulating urban design practice and pedagogy as separate, but related, segments of cultural, formal and intellectual production, in which the determinates of design and the criteria for success differ in each sector. There are things that can happen in schools that simply cannot happen in the kind of urban design practice that I am used to. Thank God for that.

I had a rapid succession of reactions to the first project, from Harvard's "Making Ecology Visible - Atlanta Studio" (Fig. 1). First I was appalled -- I thought, "How dare they." Then I thought, "Wait a minute; in certain respects this is really pretty wonderful." The project is an artificial symbol of ecological concern that has many costly factors and many non-sustainable factors, such as the presumed elaborate integration of planting over a high rise structure. It is theme park planning in that it appears to create an enclosed and discrete place; it is focused on a concept that informs all of its design; the design is primarily what the user comes to the site to consume; and it is divorced from the city as a whole, as an enclave.

That said, there remains the irreducible fact that this design is one of the most arresting in the briefing book. However controversial its theme park urbanism, it is a memorable place that actually would have a strong identity. Should urban design studios encourage work that pushes the limits of actual development, whether they be political, cultural, or economic? A barometer of the success of unrealizable work is whether it contributes to the development of thinking about urban design as a legitimate end in its own right. Is it advancing urban design theory? I would say that unrealizable projects are quite necessary, since by free market forces and existing political economic inequalities, they suggest that alternative visions supply benefits that cannot be otherwise realized. There is also a "do the least damage possible" clause at work here. The advocacy of iconoclastic measures is surely most appropriate in student projects, where a professional expert's unchecked opinion has the least chance of impacting the lives of a constituency who may not agree with that expert's beliefs, or does not want those beliefs imposed upon them.

Students have the rest of their lives to have the ruthless limitations of actual practice, economic circumstances and political reality imposed upon them. School is the one chance for them



Fig. 1 "Making Ecology Visible - Atlanta Studio," Harvard University

to develop a belief system, to pursue it, and to find out for themselves what kind of world they aspire to. At the same time, urban design is about engagement with other constituencies. It is about relationships. It is not necessarily about solipsism. Therefore, for work to have value, it must have some demonstrable benefit to the public -- something added, whether it be actual, symbolic or functional.

Next, I wanted to turn to a project from Professor Jacqueline Tatom's Metropolitan Landscapes studio at Washington University in St. Louis (Fig. 2). The last project, although outrageous, seemed to have a public benefit. However I cannot decipher how this project relates to the actual use of the city, how it creates a meaningful ordering or hierarchy. The overall agglomeration described here (at once expensive and difficult to build) did not seem to have any payoff either in terms of its internal relationships or the relationships to its surroundings. This project, to me, demonstrates the always-present danger in student work, of a purely formal exploration that does not actually engage lived experience. Of course, for a student it can be more fun to create an entire universe from scratch than to pay attention to what seems to be the dreary banality of actual circumstances. Tying a project to the existing city requires real work, real research, and analysis. There is a natural, even healthy, tendency for students to be attracted to design that appears to transcend existing conventions and rules, to overturn existing ordered society. Who is not a revolutionary at the beginning of their career? It is therefore not surprising that students create unlikely adjacencies and mixes of use based in forced or weak connections. I would cite the Harvard-Atlanta studio combination of a golf course over a shopping mall as an example of one of these doomed and pointless unions.

Mega-maniacal or self-indulgent student projects raise the broader issue of the marginalization of urban design in the world at large. Why should anyone pay any attention to urban design if it is disengaged from function, from human desire, from experience, if it makes no attempt to engage the public it theoretically serves? Regardless of the radical nature or scale of a project, urban design work needs to be informed by analysis of existing conditions, even if those existing conditions end up being ignored or violated. Michael Sorkin's City College of New York Studio for Olympics at the Bronx Waterfront is an example of the type of analysis that needs to inform projects (Fig. 3). Multi-pronged analysis is particularly important in pointing out social and environmental conditions, inequalities and opportunities, amenities and quality of life issues that exist between privileged and disenfranchised areas of the city. It is also essential for defining the soul and the spirit of the city, for understanding the very medium of the city that the urban designer is working with. The knowledge resulting from analysis does not necessarily lead to the generation of form on a direct one-to-one basis. Each bit of understanding will automatically crave an aspect of a proposed urban design project. However, if no effort is made to understand the city, urban design proposals are inherently more likely to fail.

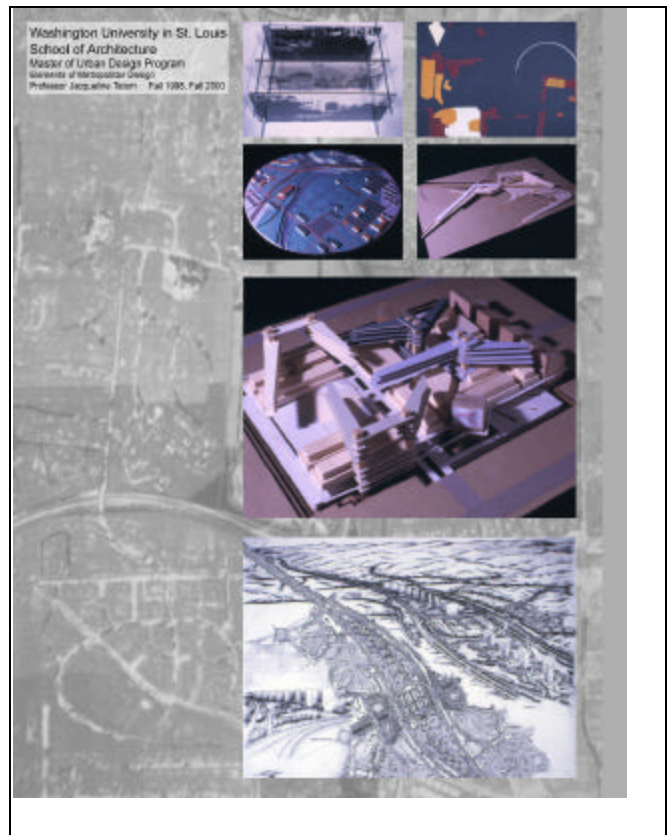


Fig. 2 "Metropolitan Landscapes", Washington University in St. Louis



Thank you.  
(Applause)

**Harrison Fraker:** Karen, you are next.

**Karen Phillips:** Good morning. I am a landscape architect by training, but I call what I do community development. It is on-the-ground, grass roots work. We make things happen, and we influence urban form in the most direct way, meaning down to dirt under my fingernails. My perspective could be a little controversial in a setting with people who are studying and teaching urban design, since my experience relates to what really goes on in the real world.

In my teaching (I will not say at what institution) students often wonder why I always ask them about things related to making their projects real. I can learn that after I start working, they say. I understand that in academic settings it is very important to let the creative juices flow, and let students work outside of the box. But what I often find, much like my own design training, is that students come out thinking that if their project is beautiful, it will get built. They don't think about what really drives the design implementation process. In reality, beauty is not the reason things get built. From my perspective, the implementation of urban design is the type of development I do in inner city areas, where people have long been oppressed and feel they have no control over their environment. Urban design is really about helping to shape the environment for real people who live in an area. We often think of our clients as the developers, city governments, or builders who hire us, but the real clients are the people who use the spaces and places that are designed.

My design background in landscape architecture exposed me to ecology, planning, architecture, and various other disciplines that influenced my work. I was very interested in reviewing the projects in the briefing booklet as a planner, or someone who had to evaluate the work at a glance. I took the position of a critical client, asking, Do I understand what is going on? Then I tried to imagine what would happen if I presented these projects at the Community Board 10 meeting in Harlem. (Fig. 4)

How long do you have to captivate the audience? How does the audience relate to plans and drawings of streets, or urban built form versus the open space? How do you convince someone who is on the city council not to immediately write off anything you have to say, because they assume from your drawings that you do not know what reality is? As we are teaching and communicating, it is very important to recognize that urban design should create an environmental literacy, so people can understand how their environment is going to be affected, and hopefully, therefore, participate in that process. Drawings that include photographs or perspectives that include real people are very important, because people are the medium that we work with in urban design.

The determining factors in making something happen on the ground are politics, money and people. That is the reality. It is very important to communicate to people what is going on in the design. In the political arena the crucial question is, What is it going to take to realize the design? People have to understand it, feel a part of it, and as designers we must play in that political game. Designers would

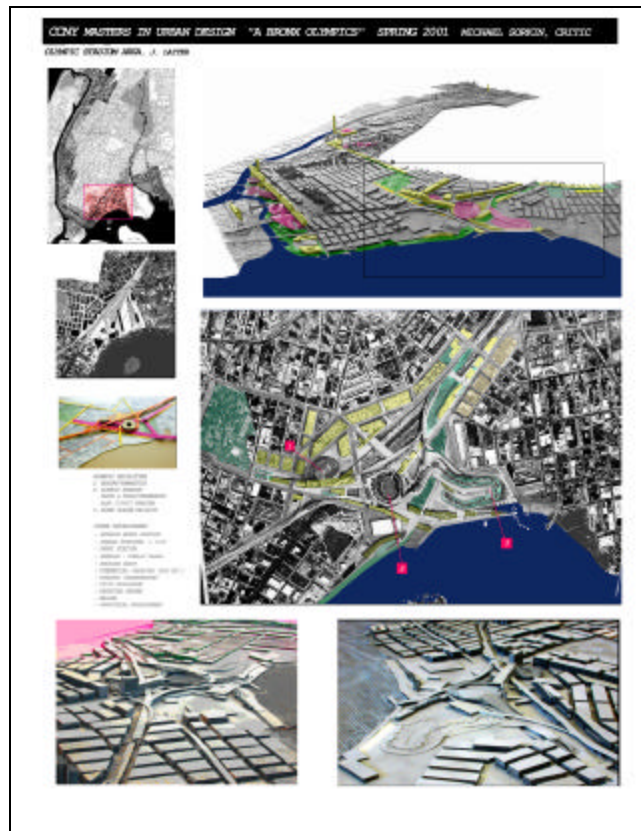


Fig. 3 "Olympics at the Bronx Waterfront", City College of New York

like to stay out of politics, but in my experience, politics has been a much more influential aspect of my work than having an understanding of zoning calculations. Money is, of course, the main influence. How does your proposal get built? How does it fit into the marketplace and the economy?

The project from the University of Washington in Seattle impressed me because it was explored very much on a neighborhood scale (Fig. 5). Of course, that is the scale I work at most often. Since people relate best to areas that immediately affect them, it is very important to start with the neighborhood as a point of reference. Before doing regional or large scale plans, students need to look at neighborhoods, see how they are formed, and how their form affects the people who live there. In the Seattle project, the analysis really did focus on open space; it got down to the scale of actual units; it considered views and where windows were located; it studied apartment layouts. But the analysis also introduced the concept of “Horizontal and Vertical Rhymes,” one of those nifty urban design concepts intended to describe how spaces flow and generate form. In the real world, this kind of concept doesn’t mean much. People want to know how much the project will cost, and how they will get a return on their investment. The kinds of questions that matter to them are: Can this neighborhood survive? Is it lower density than the areas around it? How much will the land cost? What is the real price to make this happen? How can it be made to work?

One of the major challenges for us, as practitioners, is to translate our professional knowledge and communicate it to both the people who make decisions and the people who live in cities. I will stop there, because I’m interested in hearing the thoughts of the other panelists (the urban design practitioners as well as the academics). I think the issues I have raised ought to be a part of urban design education and not learned after graduation, when students go on and work for firms, hopefully with developers or community organizations where their influence can be directly felt.

Thank you very much.\*

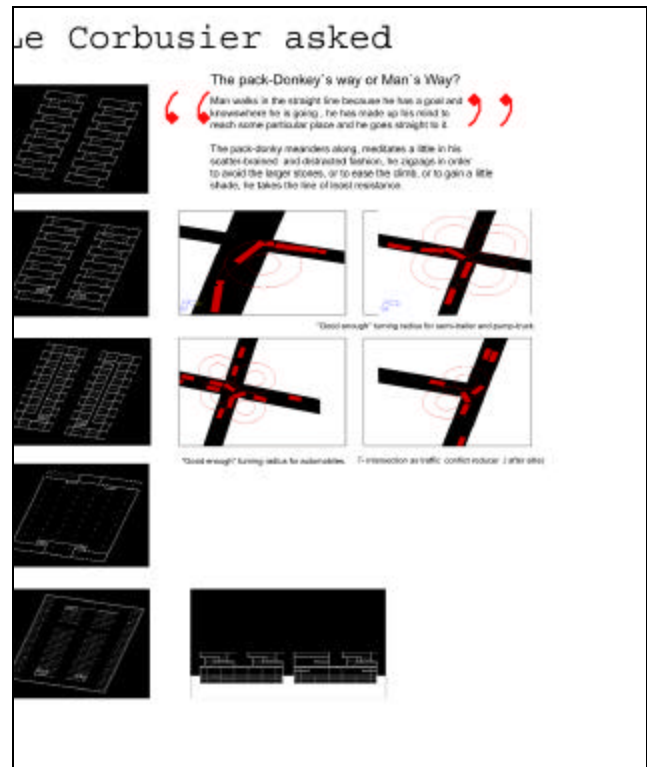


Fig. 4 University of Toronto

**\*Brian McGrath** (Columbia University): During the Urban Design Practices session, John Chase prefaced his remarks by saying that unrealizable work is something properly engaged -- within limits -- in academia. As a designer for the City of West Hollywood, he admitted that his practice was most often bogged down by what could not be done, rather than by animating the creative possibilities of urban life. The second panelist, Karen Phillips, made larger claims on reality, commenting on what really goes on in the real world, how to make projects real, and how things get done. Phillips said “The real determining factors of making something happen on the ground are politics, money and people...That is the reality.” Like Chase she asked, what does take to realize the design? In criticism of some of the studio work she was asked to examine, Phillips said, “but in the real world, this kind of concept doesn’t mean much.”

As adjunct faculty in the Columbia Urban Design Program, where my teaching continually entails negotiating between practice and pedagogy, I would like to challenge how these panelists used the words real, reality, and realize. Do certain forms of practice have a monopoly on urban reality? Are other practices marginalized by being

(Applause)

**Charles Reiss:** Thanks. A few weeks ago, Andrea called me up to discuss what I was going to say. It was my intent to tell her that I did not really think I belonged here, and I would rather do something else on a Saturday. But in the course of the conversation I took a look at the selection of projects, and found that one of them was the Gowanus Canal (in Brooklyn). When I saw that, I withdrew my objections because the Gowanus Canal was my own urban design thesis thirty-seven years ago, and thinking about it thirty-seven years later made me realize how much it has continued to influence my career. Despite the fact that I could not really understand the drawing in the briefing book, it was a great jumping-off point for discussing my own thesis. What is really interesting about a thesis or a student project about the Gowanus Canal is not necessarily the content, but the site selection itself, which reflects the underpinnings of what I think urban design is and the role it plays in professional practice.

The Gowanus Canal, which I termed in my thesis an intra-city waterway, is a linear system. In my own career, I became interested in this concept of linear systems in urban environments. Linear systems became not only a conceptual definition, but also a working context of how one designs, thinks, or plans when moving beyond the walls of an actual building.

What are linear systems? In the most obvious sense, they are streets (which I dealt with at the beginning of my career, when I was one of the first members of the Urban Design Group -- an organization in the Department of City Planning in New York mentioned last night). There are lots of other systems as well. By understanding these other systems, one starts to understand more about what urban design impacts, and how one can influence it in so many ways.

What are some of these other systems? They are railroads, streams, and canals, to name a few. Those are physical examples. But there are more. There are types that repeat themselves over an environment -- particular types of row-houses, architectural styles, and uses. In sum, they are

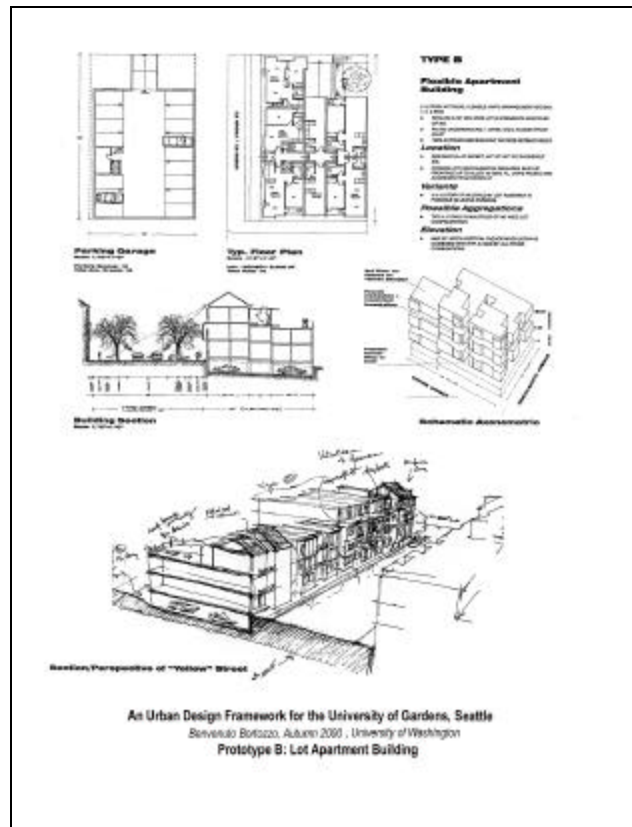


Fig. 5 University of Washington in Seattle

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relegated to the opposite pole of the imaginary? Or is there another lens through which to reflect on the discussants' definitions of the real and the ideal?

Charged with conducting a reality based studio, the term "reality" needs immediate unpacking; first, to drop the false assumption that there could be a purely speculative or imaginary studio, and second, to account for the three-month limit of the standard academic studio, which allows only the briefest of introductions to the complex urban reality of the New York City region. The challenge is to make a studio intellectually challenging as well as engaged with the world outside the campus gates. Our approach, therefore, has been to use the amazing collective skills of a post-professional degree program, and its considerable technological facilities, to provide a space where differing realities can converse. Our studio works with site partners, not "clients," and our post-professional students (practicing architects from around the world) provide these partners with a valuable public resource. Working with a site or program suggested by a governmental or neighborhood group, we also invite other parties to re-describe these supposedly given or real conditions. During the semester, students engage

systems that band together disparate parts of an environment. When you design an urban context, those are the aspects that become interesting. Any urban context has two things going on simultaneously -- there are separate parts (separate buildings having separate functions) and there are binding elements. It is the identification and the understanding of those binding elements that I think constitutes urban design. The need to define urban design is not just academic. It is also important to define because there are so many ways to impact urban form and use. The concept urban is really only one of degree. Last night somebody said suburban. Remember, the word "urban" is in "suburban." Most people today neither live in, nor aspire to live in, urban environments. And linear systems, particularly canals or rails to trails systems, exist in both urban and suburban, even rural environments. In Great Britain, go out into the country, and you will find a single system, an old canal, that links urban, suburban, and rural areas. It is one continuous system, with similarities that cross different types of settlement areas. The similarity need not be formal; it need not be designed. In the case of the Birmingham canal, the similarity is based on actual use, on the movement of the boat. In people's minds, this continuity binds a politic. Understanding this is what is fun about urban design.

The Gowanus Canal has a unique history. It has economic benefits, and its economic function is a seriously evolving one. The canal has a series of regulations. In my thesis, one of the key issues was that no one controls the canal's urban design potential. Looking at the canal's regulatory system was my first real encounter with government planning agencies. I tried to map out all of the different agencies that affected the canal. At the time, fifty-seven separate agencies were involved with the Gowanus with almost no opportunity to interact with one another. Each linear system has its own regulatory basis; its own form, its own function. The history of the Gowanus Canal illustrates any number of vibrant functions: from Indian canoes, to hard, almost offensive industrial uses, to recreational possibilities. Now that the Gowanus is no longer being used as an open sewer, it is acquiring great potential.

Understanding all this is important in urban design, no matter where you are practicing. To function well as an urban designer, whether you are building, designing a zoning ordinance, or just planning an activity, requires understanding the context of the system you are working with. My own firm is now doing large-scale projects in Las Vegas, Chicago, Miami, St. Vincent's in the Caribbean, and London. They are all on the waterfront, and they all involve understanding these systems.

I am going to conclude with one final and different point I really want to make. Control does not necessarily mean the total elimination of accident, and nor should it. Design has to factor in, enhance and benefit from accident. We always talk about enhancing systems in urban design, yet very little of that enhancement has to do with what somebody actually planned. Accident is very important -- you cannot forget accident.

**Harrison Fraker:** Thank you.

(Applause)

**Harrison Fraker:** Denise?

**Denise Scott Brown:** I think we are beginning to build a picture of what urban design is, and

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directly with the diverse group of actors to construct a space and a language in which to reconsider their preconceptions about an urban site's reality. The realization of the studio work extends well beyond the single semester timetable. Coalitions initiated by the academic studio situation gestate and continue to develop over time. While three years is too short a time to fully assess the results of our efforts to bridge the real and the imaginary, we have drawn six initial practical conclusions: 1) Reality is differently constructed by the diverse actors in urban design practice, and terms and values need to be continuously negotiated and balanced. 2) From this definition, reality is not conceived as a limiting force but as a field within which one negotiates. 3) Innovative and integrative work needs a space in which to build consensus and imagine another reality. 4) Post-professional degree programs provide a unique context for a form of practice in which professional architects can interact with policy makers and community groups in a neutral setting. 5) The academy is a real place for urban design practice. And finally, 6) Realizing innovative urban design work entails consistent re-engagement with practice at a variety of scales, and entails work of long duration beyond the limits of a single semester.

of the multiple layers it may contain. Maybe many of the real things Karen spoke about should not be taught in school -- there's no time for them all and if you don't go on learning in practice you miss half the fun. In any case, school has its own reality and dealing with that is part of the learning. Hands up everyone here who is a practitioner and a teacher. You see the dichotomy in our field? Urban design is complex on many levels -- physically, politically -- there are complexities in all its dimensions. Anne Vernez-Moudon and I were talking about the social sciences model. She said, How can you go for that? And I said, It's a good thing. Then we realized we had different models in mind. She was talking about findings claimed to be derived from the social sciences that transportation engineers push at her, and I was talking about a way of thinking.

I am an architect and planner. This is my way of being. Urban design is one of my fields of endeavor. I don't know what I am: I think I am a circus horse rider trying to keep three horses together. Put a group of urban designers, architects and planners in a sightseeing bus and watch them as the cameras click. Where do the architects click? At buildings or clusters of buildings; or at objects -- bridges, sculptures, pylons. The urban designers click where things come together -- buildings against bridges, pylons beside small houses. The planners are too busy talking to each other to look out of the window. (Laughter)

Those are the three fields we have to bring together. I would love to tell you how I have tried to do so myself. In the 1950s, when there was money from Washington everyone was becoming an urban planner. (Where is the money coming from now? Why aren't they hiring urban designers today?) In the 1970s, with Nixonomics and Reaganomics, planning agencies became like haunted houses and my practice went out of urban planning. We could not do what Paul Davidoff, the great social planner, wanted us to do without losing too much money. In 1987 I completed a plan for downtown Memphis. Its scope was everything it should be, with economists, transportation planners, inner city consultants, and ecology and cultural planners. It was a marvelous challenge, but our twenty-two-volume report was largely unread. Then, just as I began to say I cannot do this any more, Dartmouth College asked, Would you do some campus planning? When I said I'm too busy, they said, We'll wait. Have you ever had a client say that? I have been doing urban design and urban planning via campus planning since 1988.

Our master plan for the University of Michigan shows the range of my work now. The three-thousand acre University of Michigan campus stalks through the city of Ann Arbor and beyond to the region -- going from untouched wilderness, to abandoned farmland, to suburban campus, to dense downtown city campus, covering an amazing range of conditions. When the new University of Michigan President (a former Dean there) returned after having been away for two years, he found that since his departure, the University had acquired two more campuses, one of more than one thousand acres. He said, What have we got? And what should we do with it?

I have had to use every discipline I can muster and almost everything I have ever known to do this planning for Michigan. My clients have been the top university administration -- clients many architects wish for when they work on campuses. In addition there were faculty (some sent us useful e-mail, others' personal agendas were dignified as public good); students (who had grace but suffered when food and conveniences were not available on the North campus after 5:00 PM); merchants, who appreciated that we mapped their locations in relation to campus activities; politicians who could be trusted with our plans; and the public, who kept careful tabs on the actions and intentions of the university. Urban design students could usefully address some of the issues I faced as a campus planner, but dealing with them in a pedagogical context requires careful selection and focus to serve teaching goals.

Now here's the project I wanted to discuss -- it's from a UC Berkeley urban design studio (Fig. 6). I was drawn to it partly by the mapping, because transportation and urban land use planning, urban and regional economics, and environmental framework planning form the basis for the work I do. I need to know about them as both systems and contexts. To understand this project, I need more information than these drawings provide, and I need to know more about a broader regional context. (I hope that these were not the only two scales at which this problem was studied.) To understand this

project, I would ask: What should this channel and this lake be for the whole city? Should the land around it be in private use except for a narrow water edge? Given that the channel is an important regional resource, is it desirable merely to infill around it with more of its local context? I very much agree with Charles Reiss that urban designers need to know about building typologies. They need to know what the essence of a row house or an office park complex is. They need to know all aspects of the siting of such buildings; their access and passage needs, their parking and service requirements, and to have general information on their internal organization.

Then there is another important question: should you design the specifics of a project when you're not going to be its designer? How do you design without designing? How does an urban designer show something that's indicative without constraining the future architect? Try constraining architects. Ask them to do one thing and they'll do the opposite. (Laughter) Ask them to put the front door here because it will relate to others on the street, and they will put it around the corner because they're the architects. So on top of everything you have diplomacy problems. (Laughter) What about the decision to use a grid in this project? It may be the right decision, but consider that the lake and the channel provide the city with something open and undefined. Should we keep it that way? Should we help this area to be outside the grid? Should we use a piece of it now and let others use the rest later? Should we leave it incomplete and challenge people as they walk through it to remake it in their minds? The biggest movement system in town crosses maybe the biggest open space in town, right here. What activities would this volume of movement generate? Thinking as an economist, what is the highest and best use of this area? As a socially concerned person, you may not want to recommend the highest and best economic use, but it is good discipline to think in these terms. You may consider instead the second highest and best use, or ask, what is the highest and best, socially desirable use? I think I've said enough.

**Harrison Fraker:** Thank you.  
(Applause)

**Marilyn Jordan Taylor:** You asked us to explore the relationship between professional practice and urban design education. Does studio work address the issues and challenges of the workplace? Where is studio work vis-à-vis the parameters of practice? Are there roles for speculative thinking and applied research in urban design practice? Preparing for this conference is sort of like urban design itself: things to read, questions to answer, data to analyze, needs to define, conclusions to draw, not enough time. (Laughter) It's a real challenge in five to seven minutes.

What I'm asked to do is take three studio projects and use them as examples of directions I didn't see enough of, or ideas I saw too much of. I'm going to use these projects as backdrops and take the opportunity to address two questions from the viewpoint of our urban design practice. The first is, What are the key issues in urbanism that large-scale multidisciplinary practices, like ours, should

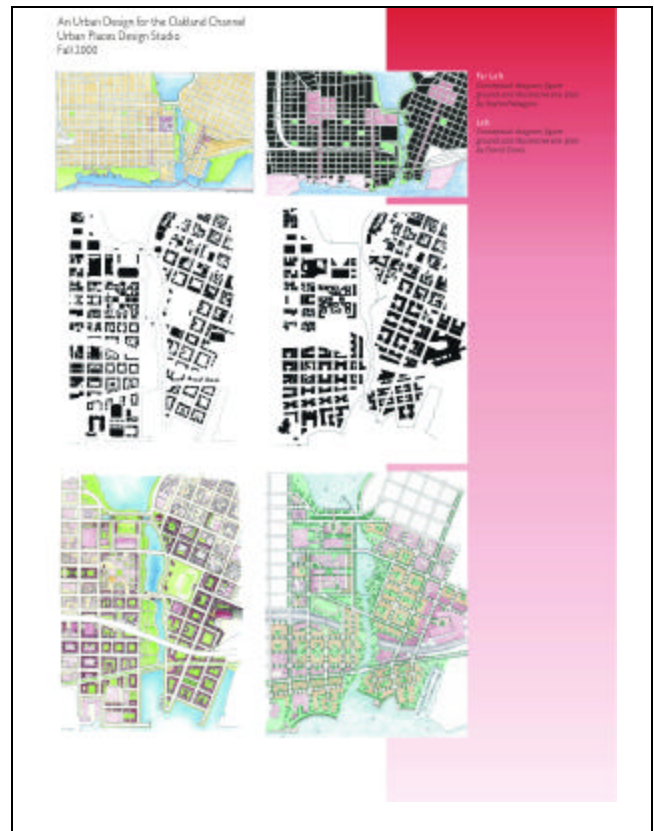


Fig. 6 University of California Berkeley

be addressing? And the second is, Who is addressing these issues? This could be an internal question, relating to everyday life in tension -- tensions between architectural designers and urban designers, between the larger and the smaller scale; between the object and the setting; between the fixed and the indeterminate, between the resolved and the open-ended.

But the real question for today is the question of the client. Who is the client for the practice of urban design? I focus on this because practicing urban design often requires the creativity and agility to invent projects. It requires finding the client who will engage in such pursuits. Alternately, and more practically, it may mean persuading clients to undertake an endeavor far more complex than their own initiating program. The point I want to make is that skills in strategic thinking are truly critical to urban designers. From the point of view of someone who has spent over two decades in Skidmore, Owings & Merrill -- precisely because of our ability to engage clients in large complex urban projects -- I wanted to note that for many of those years I was able to introduce myself as the only partner in SOM who has not designed a tall building. Now, for a host of reasons, there are a few more partners who fit the same description, and I think this is a good sign. To contribute to this discussion, I have tried to frame my comments from my role as an urban design partner (and chairman) of SOM.

Turning to the issues, the first subject I want to address is the reality of density. Increasing density, concentrating people and their economic and social activity, is both a fact and a good. The fact is evident in any visit to Hong Kong, Singapore, Shanghai, New York, Saigon, South Florida or, in fact, even the suburbs. South Florida is a great example: overtake the Everglades, or cling in increasing densities at the coast? The right answer is clear, but its achievement is far from assured. Density is a physical, urban design challenge, a three-dimensional problem that I didn't see sufficiently addressed in most of the examples of studio work you showed us, with the exception of the project I show here. As this project illustrates, density is not always tall. (Fig. 7)

The second issue I want to address is the need for broadened interest and skill among urban designers in the design of infrastructure, as the second studio project I've selected illustrates. Just a few years ago density and infrastructure were two words one didn't use in good company in public. Now infrastructure is the subject of a Herbert Muschamp treatise in the *Sunday New York Times*. While cars are here to stay, life without a car is a great freedom. More people are choosing life in city centers. Although we must fight every six years for renewal, the last two federal transportation bills have created extraordinary opportunity to address the experiential and community issues of traffic and transportation, to design infrastructure, not just engineer it. There is not enough basic knowledge among urban designers and architects about how to capture this potential. We must learn how to capture it to the benefit of districts, cities, transit corridors, and stations that we design. Airports, for

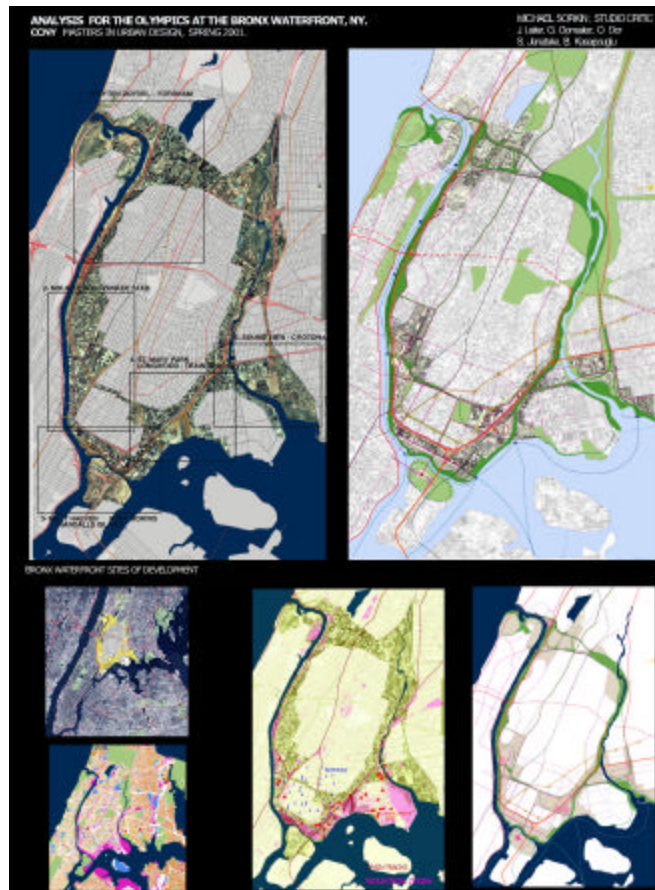


Fig. 7 "Olympics at the Bronx Waterfront", City College of New York

example, must be seen as integral elements of regional urban infrastructure, not just land uses relegated to the urban parameter. I believe that in the intersection of density and infrastructure, new urban forms will be created at a regional scale and at the scale of individual buildings.

At this juncture, I'd like to turn to a short commentary on clients. It seems to me that our clients for urban design could be said to fall in four categories: First, the private sector -- both developers and owners. (I agree with Denise that right now campus planning is one of the places where urban design theory and practice are coming together in extremely interesting ways.) Second, we have the Special Purpose Authority. Third, we have public planning entities. And fourth, we have communities -- both location-based and interest-based. I believe that the chances for effectiveness as urban designers lie in understanding not only these client groups, but in finding ways to bridge between at least two of them. Two of our projects, Pennsylvania Station and JFK Airport Terminal Four, both in New York City, achieved greater design distinction (we hope Penn Station will when it gets built) than might have been otherwise expected, because these projects required creative interaction between a special purpose authority and the private sector, each of whom had to do something different than what they were used to doing normally. The Lower Manhattan Development Master Plan that Ken Greenberg and I are just starting now is a joint endeavor of the Downtown Alliance -- business interests -- and the Community Board. Its objective is a vision that balances their respective concerns, but most importantly, and this is an explicit objective, it aims to move beyond stalemate. The World Trade Center site is an obvious example. Right now it is not located anywhere in terms of clients. It's shifting back and forth from the private sector, toward and through an existing special purpose authority, to a new special purpose authority with a public planning attitude. The question of the actual "client" has yet to be resolved, but no one client will do it alone, and none should do it alone.

To close, picking up on last night's discussion, I do believe that it is a promising moment, at least here in New York. More people, including every neighbor in my building, are now more interested in what makes a city, forms a city, shapes a city, designs a city. For the last three decades in New York, I think most people on the street felt they had little to no control over the outcome of projects for the city. Whether they do or don't, there is now a tremendous interest in how the city will be formed. How wonderful for New Yorkers that the Chairman of City Planning says that she was the Chairman of Urban Design!

To close, I'll just reiterate that I think urban designers invent projects that accomplish outcomes not imagined in either the architectural program or the planning process. But to take advantage of the opportunity, we have to move past another false dichotomy. We need to overcome the problematic either/or dichotomy in the debate about whether we are outside or inside the decision-making machinery -- we need to find our position in both domains. Thank you.\*



Fig. 8 Harvard University



(Applause)

**Harrison Fraker:** Sandro.

**Sandro Marpillero:** Having had the privilege of raising my hand twice as both an academic and practitioner, I would like to make two observations. When I received the fax from Harrison's secretary outlining what projects the practitioners had picked from among the materials submitted by the different urban design programs to be included in the briefing book, I found the distribution both interesting and funny. In a way, it responded to very different readings of the studio work that made it in the briefing book. One way of sponsoring a discussion of the practitioners' reactions to this work -- their positive and negative feelings about what was or was not addressed in the projects -- is to distinguish between the work if it is read as a project and the work if it is read as an image.

So I would like to ask a few questions based on this distinction. It seems to me that we have the opportunity of using the focus of this particular panel, on the intersection between practices and pedagogies, to start mapping this strange, amorphous terrain that is urban design. I really want to thank Denise, because she gave us a very generous description of the field of possibility, and of frustrations that arise with certain processes, or with the identification of certain clients as actors. Rather than continuing to ask what urban design is (which I think, in part, is implicit in the readings and reactions to the images of student work), I would like to ask one of the urban designers how you feel the territory of urban design is actually traversed, or practiced, or inhabited?

I would like to go back to Charles' comments, if I may. (I'm very proud that you chose the project on the Gowanus Canal because it belongs to my modest contribution, here at Columbia University, together with Andrea Kahn.) Your comments showed that you knew a lot about the Gowanus Canal. I am wondering how that particular set of images gave you a clue about those inspirations for linear systems you spoke about as central to your professional life? I would like to explain the set of images. There are three basic concepts: The constellation, describing the intersection of different urban systems (on the upper left); the probe, which we define as a way of checking what's going on in a specific location (the three images on the upper right), and (at the bottom) an apparatus -- a hybrid set of representations that tries to give a sense of the site's spatial, qualitative aspects. (Fig 9)

Having heard this description, how do you feel about the strategy of representation? What did it offer you, as a panel, besides the fact that you obviously had some sort of connection with the scene?

**Charles Reiss:** Well, I sensed from the drawings that there was an attempt to understand access. I sensed from the drawings that there was an attempt to understand kind of what it looks like. But what I think was missing from the drawings was a closer scale look. The drawings essentially are very far away. They're large-scale maps. There is no sense (picking up on what Karen was saying) that you could communicate to anyone who is outside of the class exactly what makes this kind of waterway so fascinating. It is fascinating. Just the selection of the site alone demonstrates an understanding of that fact. But you don't get that sense from the drawing.

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\***George Thrush** (Northeastern University): Marilyn Jordan Taylor articulated four types of clients for urban design: private, special purpose, small public, and larger public clients. Examples of private clients included university campus plans, office campuses, and mixed-use retail centers. Certainly we can try to improve such plans, but at least there is already a client there who understands the need for urban design services. The special purpose client (like an airport expansion project, or the Central Artery Tunnel project in Boston) is also aware of the need for the kind of multi-scale, coordinated design that urban design offers. The small-scale public client is frequently the NIMBY, or community group. It is the realization of politics at a local level that does affect more large scale, public matters, but at present has no means available to realize and act positively. Which brings us to the large-scale public client, typically the regional planning agency, as for example, The State Office of Environmental Affairs in Massachusetts. These agencies have certain public mandates, but usually bear little relationship to more local issues. In my view, it is with regards to the relationship between these two levels of public clients, the smaller-scale more local clients and the larger public clients, that the majority of critical work needs to be done.

Even though there's a model, obviously well constructed, you don't get the sense of the three-dimensionality of the subway going up above, the boats going underneath, or the roads crossing. You just don't get that feeling. Sometimes we really do lose the sense that urban design is an art -- an art both in terms of the design and in terms of its representation. I graduated from Cooper Union, where there's almost an obsession with the skill and art of model making.

At one point, I went back to Cooper, to their great annual show. Each one of the models was a wonderful piece of sculpture that conveyed nothing about the project. I think that the students were very happy to work that way. I think that was the goal. This is not a vote against representing things very artistically. In that sense, the models are fine. But I still want to understand what's great about a project? I think it's a scale issue; I think work has to exist on a total continuum of scale.

**Sandro Marpillero:** I believe the expectations you have about developing a project at the level of physical engagement do need to be recognized. Here at Columbia, which is a three-semester program, we do that later on in the curriculum.

**Harrison Fraker:** Now I would like to turn to two people whose role is to comment on the presentations by the practitioners, in quotes. I think some of them are also academics. Why don't we start first with Jacqueline Tatom, who comes to us from St. Louis, where she is the co-director of the Graduate Urban Design Program, one of the new programs or one of the programs that has been recently rethought. She's contributed a very nice paper to the briefing packet about some of the premises of that program.

**Jacqueline Tatom:** Thank you. In fact, our program has been around since 1963, which puts us up there. However, we have recently reformulated our program.

In response to the panelists who just spoke I'd like to reiterate some of the positions we are trying to develop because I think these will touch on many of the issues already raised, and it will also help explain how we are trying to work within the parameters that the practitioners' remarks have set out for us, as broadly as they may have been defined.

I want to argue, as I think we have to inevitably, for a broadening of the scope of urban design, perhaps even more than was suggested during yesterday's panel. I think it's very dangerous to narrow urban design down to a kind of packaging of development for communities. That has come up a couple of times (not necessarily in today's presentations) but certainly in the discussion yesterday. So I would argue for broadening urban design's territory, and for overcoming the discussion of urban versus suburban.

If we could have called our program a Master in Landscape Design, or Metropolitan Landscape Design, we would have. We stuck with the convention of urban design, but it remains very unsatisfactory as a term. In the interest of broadening territory, I think we'd be better off with a Masters in Urbanization, or a Masters in Urbanism, which is maybe a formalized way of looking at urbanization.

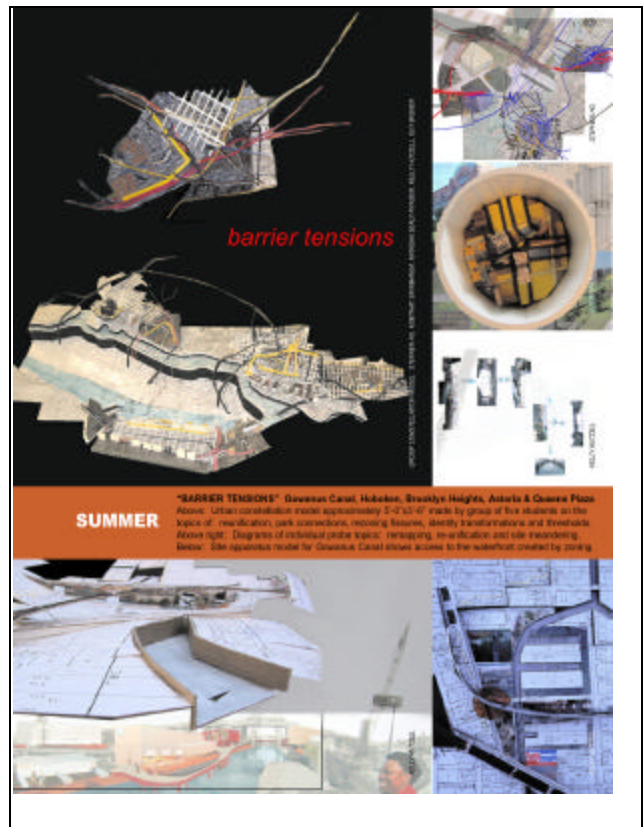


Fig. 9 Columbia University

This would help us avoid many of the discussions that we inevitably seem to slip into.

I'd also like to argue for a broadening of the sectors -- of the kinds of programs that urban designers look at. I was very gratified to hear Marilyn Jordan Taylor bring up the topic of infrastructure. The billions of dollars that go into highway design and public transportation design are just waiting for our design input, if only we could figure out how to give it, and if only we knew what to propose. Landscape is important, obviously, because of the heightened sensitivity we have to environmental sustainability, and also because landscape architects have been working at a scale that is much more familiar and useful to urban design than the scale that architects have been working at. Landscape architects are used to working across miles; and they're used to working across decades, which is another very important factor. It takes twenty years for a tree to grow, but it only takes three or four for a building to be constructed. So I think landscape architecture's understanding of the long-term time frame is very important.

I'd also like to argue for a broadening of urban design's scope to include land markets, land design, and land division. Some years ago Anne Vernez-Moudon wrote a paper about platting versus planning. I would like to argue for platting instead of planning, because it addresses both the very great resistance that land structures and land markets bring to any kind of transformation or change in the city, and because it allows a certain open-endedness in relation to change and to use. I think we can learn a lot from our own great history of platting in the United States, and its impact on the creation of new towns.

And then I'd like to argue for design. We've had numerous calls for invention. I think we have to distinguish between design as the thing that supposedly provides a solution, and design as a way of thinking. I agree with Denise when she was arguing for the rigor of a social science based approach. That approach is absolutely essential, because a rigorous scientific method derived from the social sciences will allow us to get the embedded value judgments that are so often completely implicated in our proposals for the city. Greater rigor lets us rise above the level of value judgments and lets us get into an actual appraisal and lucid observation of what is happening in cities today.

That said (and perhaps that focus really happens at the level of program), we also need to look at form. We need to understand its particular autonomy. In our school, we bring design thinking to form and to program, so that we actually work with what might be, rather than what should be. I think it was Colin Rowe who used to say architects like to work with plausible fictions, knowing full well, as Richard Plunz said in his paper, that reality is often stranger than fiction. We have only to look at the Central Artery Project in Boston, or any development happening in the suburbs today, to be made very aware of that fact.

And I'll just close very briefly with a defense of my project, which John Chase discussed. (Laughter) That project happens to be very mundane in regard to program. It's infrastructure based - - proposing parking over a Metrolink station, over a highway interchange, or next to a highway interchange, with commercial and residential uses above. It is an absolutely generic program; an attempt to deal with the densification of suburban environments, notably at major highway

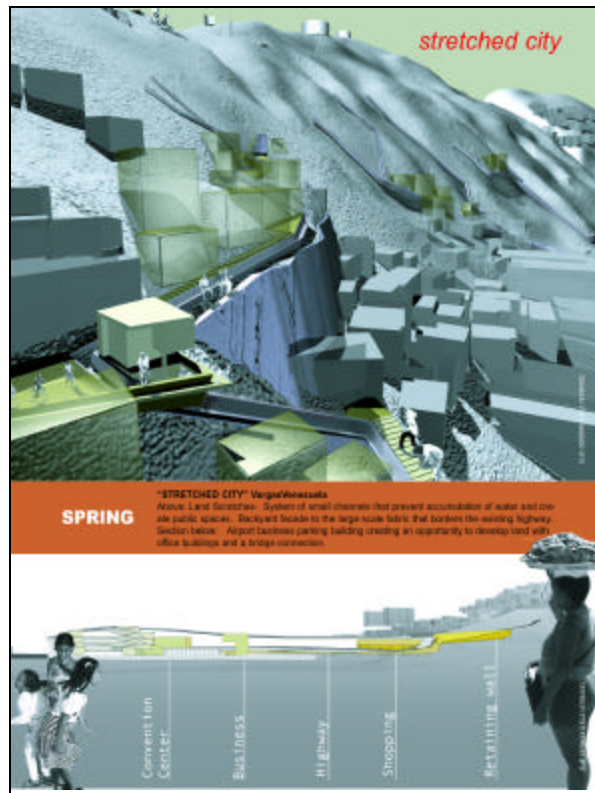


Fig. 10 Columbia University

interchanges. The suburbs are densifying and radically so. And amazingly enough, in a city as suburban as St. Louis, there is a Metrolink. This is a project that uses the Metrolink as an opportunity to integrate infrastructure, landscape and density, a project that questions the relationship of these three metropolitan conditions, in an examination of what a new ground might be. I'll just end with that.

**Harrison Fraker:** Thank you.

(Applause)

**Harrison Fraker:** Anne, you have the last word. Anne Vernez-Moudon is a Professor of Urban Design at University of Washington, Seattle.

**Anne Vernez-Moudon:** Thank you. I know there's not much time, and there are so many issues popping up that I am getting dizzy. I don't know about you, but I am very dizzy. So I will make some statements, which maybe we can discuss later.

Before I begin, let me just say that it's pretty obvious I come from academia and I'm essentially a teacher. I'm interested in understanding cities, and I'm interested in my job, which is to teach students about how cities work or don't work. My other audience -- our other audience -- as teachers and researchers of the environment is the public. How do we communicate our knowledge of cities to the public?

So, my first statement relates to the professional questionnaires in the briefing booklets. One of the questions was, "Do you hire urban designers?" The response, which corresponds to my experience, was, "No, not really, we hire people from our different professions." In other words, architectural firms primarily hire architects, and planning firms primarily hire planners, etc. I found that very interesting. Each profession basically hires from within its own profession. Clearly, an urban design focus, whether from architecture, landscape or planning, is desirable. (There seems to be a dissertation in this somewhere.) That questionnaire response says something about the kind of urban design programs we should have in academia. By the way, I think we should have urban design programs in academia that are also directed at non-designers. (I will return to that later.) We should include people in real estate; we should include engineers; and people in public works. And urban design programs should include people in public affairs. Urban design programs want the designers because they want to do great studio projects, but there are many other very important people to include into our midst.

My second statement has to do with a kind of competition between the academy and the profession. We tend to compete. We tend to say; I'm a practitioner and I'm an academic, or I'm both, which we tend to assume is the best model. For some people, it may be. But in some cases people should be practitioners and forget about academia, because teaching is not really their forte.

My point is we have to recognize that, both within the profession and in order to educate people about our profession in the future, we need to differentiate between practice, advocacy, and research. Research entails looking at what is happening now, as Jacqueline noted, whether in the profession or out there in the city. Advocacy, involves thinking about what should be, and practice involves thinking about what can be. Basically, research, advocacy and practice constitute a three-part system -- and we have to work together to feed information into that system. In academia a major

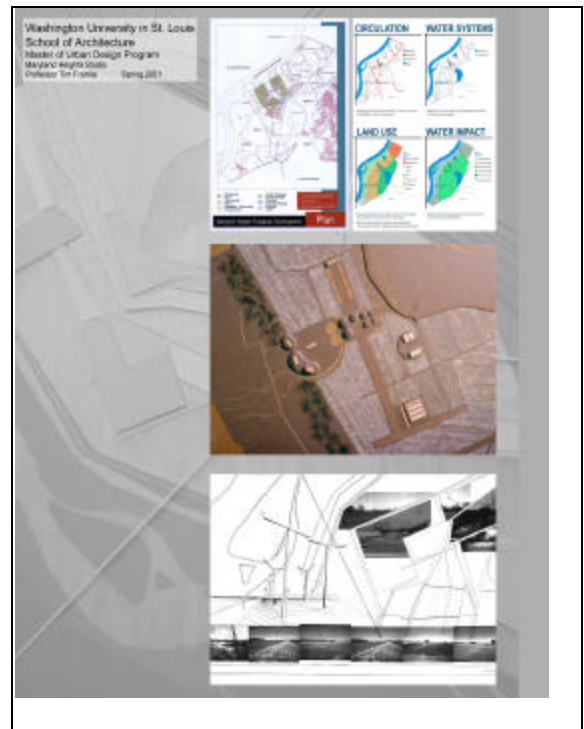


Fig. 11 Washington University in St. Louis

frustration for people trying to teach about practice is that practitioners do not record what they're doing very well. Some professions are better than others. For instance, the planners are definitely better at recording what they're doing than the architects. But if you are out there trying to teach about practice, it's very difficult to find material. Even in this conference, notice how a lot of us get into storytelling mode; Here's my project, this is how we did it. One of our great weaknesses is that we're still in a medieval stage of knowledge building -- we disseminate knowledge by telling stories.

Now don't get me wrong. I have nothing against stories. I love stories. But, when you're out there in the boonies, how many times can you get Denise Scott Brown, Karen Phillips, or Charles Reiss to come and tell you stories. Academics have to start doing something about seriously recording what is done in practice, and similarly, the practitioners have to start listening to what people are saying in academia.

One other quite spectacular thing about urban design is that in the last five to ten years, we've had three or four journals that have come out. I can go on and criticize what's in these journals, but the important fact is that we have them. We're talking. We're writing. *Journal of Urban Design* is one; *Urban Design International* is another; *Urban Morphology* yet another. Then there is the *Journal of the American Planning Association*, as well as the *Journal of Architectural Education*. We have journals coming out from academia that are trying to record what is happening in the profession, journals through which we're trying to talk to the profession.

The question is whether the profession is reading these journals. We'd like to have feedback. Tell us, from the professionals: Is our writing totally incomprehensible? Should we write in a different way? Because of the nature of knowledge building, practice has to inform the research, which in turn has to inform the advocacy, that has to inform the practice, and so on. It's a vicious circle.

My last statement has to do with why I think urban design has to expand its territory; in other words, why the profession still needs to exist. Take, for example the suburban edge, or fringe development, as it exists, as it has actually existed over the last fifty years. I think we all find problems with this kind of environment -- little houses, subdivisions, multi-family apartments, retail, big box, small box, retailers, passengers and so on. The fact is this is the most highly regulated environment that has ever existed, which is quite amazing. We may all turn around and say we hate it, but our society created this environment. Not only have we created it, but we've created it with an amazingly well engineered, finely tuned system. If we turn around and say we don't like it, we're still going to return to that system because we invented it. And we invented it only fifty years ago.

Let's look at the pieces of that system for a moment. There is the single family, the multi-family dwelling, the retail, the roads, the parks, and all these elements are controlled by different professions and systems. By the way, architects have a lot to do with designing subdivisions, but I just choose not to talk about these kinds of architects. The multi-family dwelling is very interesting because it's a very regulated piece of the environment, regulated, that is, by financiers. Why, for instance, do we find apartment complexes facing beautiful views where all the apartment units face the other way?

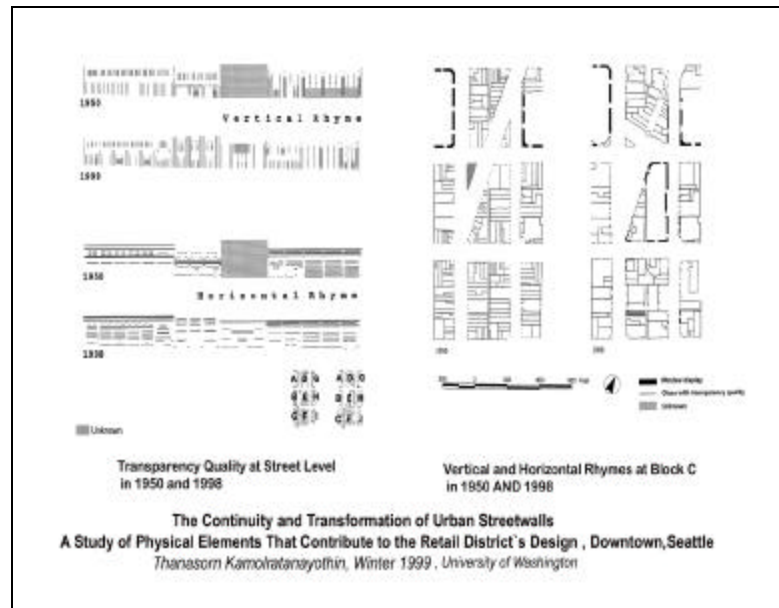


Fig. 12 University of Washington in Seattle

Because the apartment complex has been designed in Texas, and the person who designed it had no idea the site had a view. I think it's the job of urban designers to intervene into the system and say, "Hey, there is a view here," so that same dull apartment can be reshaped to take advantage of the view -- because an apartment with a view does rent for more money than one without a view.

In this same environment, the road system (what Charles referred to as the linkages, or binding elements) is entirely controlled by public works through a very elaborate system of standards. Anybody who's worked out there knows it's very difficult to change those standards, some of which come out of the blue and some of which are highly engineered. To effect any change requires doing social science based research, because if you don't crunch the numbers, nobody will believe you. From an urban design point of view, we are out of control in terms of roads. Their design is controlled by the engineers, which is why urban design has to expand its mandate to include them.

One last example worth mentioning about suburban design relates to open space regulation, which is completely controlled by the environmental scientists -- people who are looking at water systems and water flows. These people control the regulations, leaving little to no room for designers to intervene. In suburban development everybody has to have a pond, a so-called retention pond, in each subdivision. We don't really know if these work as a system, but the fact is as designers we have no control over their design. In order to change the environment we have to work with the scientists who are designing the standards.

(Applause)

**Harrison Fraker:** I too am a little dizzy from all of this. But I think some really important and powerful ideas have been put on the table here, which I hope we can get into when we reassemble after a fifteen-minute break.

## PUBLIC DISCUSSION

**Andrea Kahn:** Welcome back. This is the first of two public discussions today. We scheduled these after the coffee break because, in my experience, during the coffee break is when you think about what you want to ask a panelist, and once you return to the auditorium, usually a whole new panel has been assembled. So we've decided to try a new format -- and I thank you all for being very timely in coming back. If we do the same this afternoon, everything will work wonderfully.

I also have a few technical facts to convey to you before we begin. We are recording this conference and will be transcribing the proceedings as part of a follow-up publication. So the request I would make of anyone asking a question is that they please identify themselves and their affiliation. There are two wandering microphones available for people who wish to raise questions. Following this session is a break for lunch, and we'll reconvene for the afternoon session at 1:30.

**Harrison Fraker:** Just to quickly refresh people's memories, I'm going to make a desperate attempt to romp through everything that was said. John Chase started off by talking about urban design practice as a process of working through the eye of the needle, referring to all the incredible approvals that any project requires. He therefore called attention to the need for really useful and valuable analysis, in order to make it possible for a project to pass through that needle. And he also cautioned against self-indulgent explorations.

Karen Philips was very direct about the importance of remembering the people who are being served by urban design. She reminded us that urban design ideas, concepts, and information need to be made understandable to those people whom urban design is serving, so the public can buy into and understand the design propositions. She also talked about the incredible responsibility of being

financially sound, and the need to make projects financially feasible, since if they are not, they don't mean anything to community groups. And she also provided a caution about politics. What a nice contrast in the first two.

Charles Reiss's comments were also a reminder about all the systems that bind individual pieces of the city together -- a terrifically important theme that was elaborated on by some of the later speakers. He stressed the need to understand how these things work as whole systems, also a very important concept. And finally, he cautioned that while urban designers try to understand and order all the parts of the system, they also need to allow for accident, or what I would call improvisation.

Denise gave a wonderful presentation, calling attention to the need for mapping the multiple layers of information and issues that an urban designer must try to organize, understand and communicate to their clients. She also mentioned in her anecdote about her work on the University of Michigan project how many clients urban designers actually do serve. She also called for understanding building typologies, and her remarks implied the incredible complexity and invention possible within those typologies. Certainly her practice has demonstrated that. And then she cautioned about how you do urban design without designing. How do you create a framework that allows for really creative invention within an overall urban design proposition?

This was followed up wonderfully by one terrific point made by Marilyn. She said that urban design really invents projects and clients, and remarked that we need to learn how to be creative about that aspect of our practice by using tools like strategic thinking as well as persuasion -- by building an argument for something. Basically, she argued that urban design needs to be based on good evidence. It needs to be grounded in really good information and material. And this information and material needs to be made understandable to a public.

She then mentioned two other subject areas that have not been dealt with widely in the past, but are increasingly being recognized as important issues today. One is the reality of density, and the other is infrastructure. And finally, she did a great job outlining urban design's various client types and describing the importance of creatively building alliances between different groups.

Sandro did a wonderful job of bringing attention back to the issue of representation, by asking Charles how the representations of Gowanus Canal resonate with the issues that his thesis raised thirty-seven years ago. The issue of representation is always a terrific one to raise. For instance, are the analytical tools used in design studios really getting at the most important, substantive issues?

Then our two final speakers did a great job of expanding on the content and subject area of urban design. Jacqueline first warned against urban designers becoming just packagers for developers, although developers are important clients, and we certainly need to know how to speak their language. But mainly she spoke about expanding the territory of urban design to include the notion of metropolitan landscape, a concept of interest to a lot of the urban design programs. (I think of the eight projects, in six to seven of them landscape was really an important element in the design proposition, although I don't think it was represented as well as it could be.) She talked about the need to better understand the metropolitan landscape -- that requires addressing infrastructure, the landscape, ecological issues and time issues -- which I think is wonderful, especially the temporal notion of succession and phasing. And then she came back to land markets, to the whole economic game, and to the fact that urban design really needs to be creative while working within the framework set by developers and financial institutions. (Once you recognize that framework, it's amazing how creative students can be in terms of inventing new types and remarkably economically feasible propositions.) Jacqueline also made a plea for design thinking as a way of opening up and exploring problems, as well as a way of developing an argument for a solution. Implied in her remarks was that we not only need to build really strong empirical evidence -- the kind based on social science research -- but we also need to develop a powerful conceptual basis for urban design. We need a sort of artistic, discursive idea that can capture the imagination of a community.

In all of these issues, urban designers are looking for ideas that will resonate with their clients and make it possible for their projects to be approved, and realized. I thought Anne Vernez-Moudon did a wonderful job -- even though she was suffering from dizziness, as I am too -- talking about the

players that needed to be brought to the urban design table; developers, engineers, and public policy makers (beyond the group we normally associate with). And she gave a wonderful description of the cyclical knowledge-building process that involves practice, advocacy and research. We all can have our own version of that model, but to understand that we are involved in a process of knowledge-building, and that each of these areas plays a different role and provides different kinds of information, is an extremely valuable point. Anne then concluded with a comment that I thought was really useful for our discussion. She said we can't just ignore the very powerful systems already in place that shape the way we build our cities and the way we try to make good cities. We need to know what those systems are. We can't forget about them; and in many ways, if we want to change our cities, first we have to change that powerful system of controls, regulation and finance -- which means we really have to work within this knowledge-building cycle. Otherwise we're just not going to make it.

What I thought we should do now is open it up to the audience, and get somebody to run around with the mikes. Andrea also suggested that we might operate around Alex Krieger's comment last night, about only coming up with the answer to a question after three more questions have been asked. So let's get a couple of questions posed before we ask the panelists to respond. Let's bundle the questions. Go ahead.

**Maurizio Sabini** (Kent State University): At Kent State, we have an urban design program within the Master of Architecture program. It's not an independent program, but we are working on establishing one. Thank you to all the panelists for this most stimulating discussion. One issue of interest to me came out of the implicit dialogue that fortunately was established by setting up a mixed panel of practitioners and teachers. In particular, I am especially interested in how urban design relates to real communities, to real development projects, to the real forces at work in cities, as opposed to the work that is done in the academic studios. Urban design is probably too often seen as a pure discipline, an approach that can have certain results that we have already discussed -- for instance, how urban design studio projects are elaborated as purely formal functional exercises. I love Denise Scott Brown's definition of herself as being an architect and a planner, with urban design bringing together those fields.

**Harrison Fraker:** She called herself a circus horse rider.

**Maurizio Sabini:** (Laughter) I totally subscribe to that but I cannot claim to be a planner. But I think we should approach urban design as an arena where the different professions, and the different disciplines meet to dialogue and produce ideas and visions for our urban systems. I think this would be a more effective way to address both research and practice.

**Harrison Fraker:** Okay. Let's get a couple more issues and ideas on the table.

**Manjeet Tangri** (City of Albuquerque, New Mexico): New Mexico, by the way, is in the United States. I think this morning's discussion is a really good one. I was glad to hear about urban design being taught as a way of thinking, because that's what I have always felt. Like Denise, I'm an architect

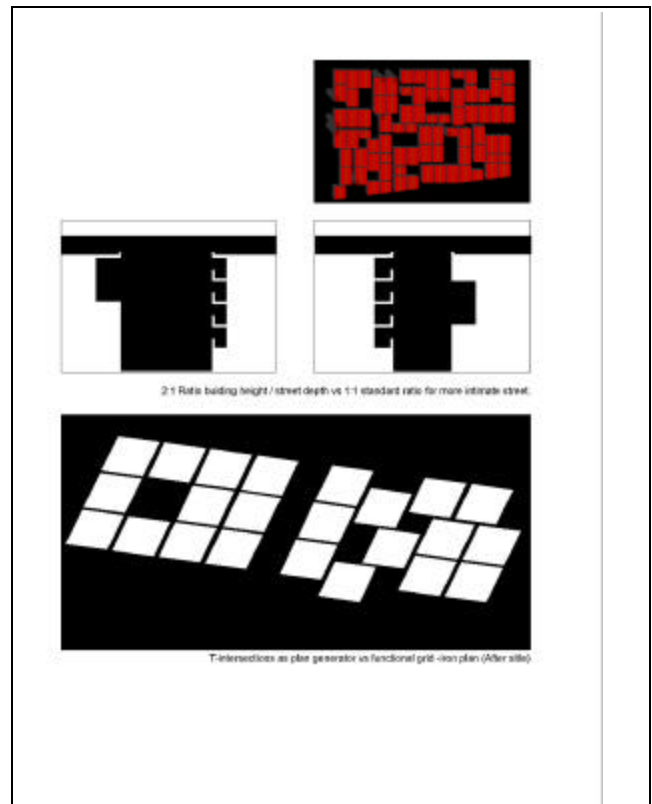


Fig. 13 University of Toronto



and I also practice planning. To me, urban design is a philosophy and a comprehensive way of thinking. Instead of looking at it as a discipline, we should look at it as a tool that one can use to design the environment, to design a city, or even a piece of furniture. If we look at it as a philosophy and as a way of thinking then we can talk to politicians. If politicians, financiers, and developers see urban design as a discipline, it becomes intimidating for them. But if they see it as a philosophy and a way of thinking, then it becomes more of a common ground. Having said that, my question is, how do you get politicians, financiers and infrastructure designers (I was glad to hear engineers mentioned because they play a major role) to understand and buy into this notion of urban design? That's my question.

**Harrison Fraker:** Let's get one more question.

**Sherida Paulsen** (Chair of New York City Landmarks Commission): To cut to the chase, my question is, how can we change the regulatory systems that we have in place, in order to address what I think is the central issue for our overall environment -- which is the issue of density? At a conference I attended a month ago, someone presented a population chart that showed that the Earth's population had been basically a straight line until the year 1900. And then between 1900 and 2000 it skyrocketed. How can we, as urban designers and government officials, come up with a better regulatory system to address issues of density, land division in urban and suburban areas, the desire to control or maintain some amount of open space and green area, the need to develop the proper systems to provide a well designed environment?\*

**Harrison Fraker:** I think urban design is a very good way to begin to address the last two questions. I know of one excellent example; Peter Calthorpe did an amazing exercise called Envision Utah, in which politicians, engineers, financial people, community institutions, and community groups participated in an exercise of imagining what would happen if Utah was built out according to the existing state regulations. After everyone had a chance to actually see the physical consequences of density and sprawl, to see the real risks to the "quality of life" they valued, after they realized the cost in infrastructure, the cost in the loss of natural habitat and farmland, they changed the regulations. They immediately said, "We can't continue to build this way." So one powerful thing that urban design does is visualize existing regulations and systems as successions. One of the powerful things we can do as designers is bring people to the table and show them what will happen to their environments. Another similar exercise was done in Idaho where five or six cities got together and looked at what would happen if they built out. That one resulted in a pact among the mayors. Using the process of designing to show the consequences of regulations in physical terms is a great thing to do. Others? Would anybody else like to pick up some of those questions?

**Denise Scott Brown:** I want to pick up on the question whether urban design is a discipline or not. I don't know how you define a discipline, but I think the term suggests the existence of a body of knowledge and a body of theory and principles that accompanies that knowledge. So if you say urban design is a way of thinking, you are in a sense claiming that it has a theory and principles. In urban design, I think we lack not a body of knowledge (relevant knowledge is to be found in a great

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\***Claire Weisz** (Design Trust for Public Space): Sherida Paulsen's question about the profession's ability to facilitate changes in the way land review is done exposed an important but, in design circles at least, rarely articulated connection between design practice and policy constraints in the actual mechanisms of urban form. The issue of what constitutes "the legal environment" and its role in shaping the practice of urban design made me think, how does one teach students to "see" the legal environment as a potential tool for change?

The playing field of the urban is unquestionably broad. It is compelling to consider the ideal urban design education as one of teaching nimble, creative minds to see the world as a set of constantly shifting physical, social and cultural relationships. Are these urban design students? Economists? American Studies? Cultural Anthropologists? Architects? It is possible that what distinguishes urban design practice from architectural practice is the clear possibility and condition of not "solving" complex social relationships.

Are academic and professional spheres capable of responding to an emerging and larger playing field for urban design? Returning to Sherida's question, can we make a case for new techniques (beyond "review boards and

many fields), but an understanding of the scope of that knowledge and an ability to access it and, in particular, an understanding of how it applies to our work. Professional work adapts and builds on knowledge that comes from research. If you're a doctor, you get knowledge from the life sciences and other fields, and you use it to heal patients. If you're an architect, you need knowledge of, for example, history, but instead of using it for scholarship, you use it for design. The urban designers' problem is that they get knowledge from many sources but don't know how it applies to their work. They don't have a theory about how knowledge that comes from architecture -- or from economics or urban planning -- should be used for the specific problems of urban design. I think we need bridging scholars between us and these other fields before we can become our own discipline, or before we can consider whether we should become a discipline. To do our work as practitioners, I feel we need that kind of help. So, though I am a practitioner, I believe urban design now needs the kinds of theoreticians and historians who have recently flocked to architecture. The field gets richer because of those people. We should co-opt some from architecture, get them interested in urbanism, get them thinking about our problems.

**Karen Phillips:** When we talk about working with people like engineers or regulatory authorities in order to implement an urban design proposal, I think we should look at urban designers as the politicians of the design movement. Landscape architects do certain things, architects focus on buildings, but the urban designer's job, in addition to doing analysis and coordinating all of the systems, is to work with all the people needed to execute a project. A lot of what I do in the process of implementing a design involves working with other people, like engineers or people from the Department of Transportation. It requires a political sensibility. You have to figure out, for example, what the engineers want to do (obviously they want to design something, they want to control the specifics). Basically, the job of the urban designer is to find a way to focus and convince all the players to best use their talents to support a better environment for the people who will be affected by what is designed. It's a very difficult thing to do. In addition to doing the analysis and the really detailed physical planning, urban designers need to be political. They need to work with all the people who will ensure that a project is achieved. Not only the clients. I think urban designers need to be on the forefront in analyzing and understanding how to deal with all the players. It requires understanding the developers' and the financiers' perspectives. It requires recognizing that politicians don't want a study that will end up on the shelf for years and years. Politicians want to come to a ribbon cutting. You need to be able to explain to the politicians that you can unveil your plan, miraculously enough, by September (because that's right before the primary), or that phase two will be ready in four years -- just in time for their reelection. Essentially, I am talking about beating people at their own game. You figure out what people want, and you figure out the people you need to get the project done. Too often we focus too much on the design. What we really need to do is engage people and make them feel a part of the process.

**Harrison Fraker:** I'd like to just quickly relate back to Amanda Burden's opening statements last night, when she asked, "What do we do?" In addition to caring about the big systems and the big

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processes") of connecting communities with prospects for change? Should urban designers be creating alternate review processes, such as a dynamic review model whereby review is not the beginning of a process, but is rather triggered by specific issues? How can a review process not simply be a way of saying no, but instead involve, even require, the input of design forces on all sides of an issue (both physical and formal)? Is this idea of urban designers being required to consider multiple issues that positions the field for dynamic growth.

What are the mechanisms and tools of urban design? We are too slow to adapt to the tools of geographers, journalists, photographers, statisticians, and public relations -- with the exception of Aldo Rossi's *The Architecture of the City* and Rayner Banham's *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*. In the morning there was some debate about new urban forms vs. rules and regulations that I sensed underpinned many of the discussions. It would be great to work on dispelling the myth that the two subjects are disposed across a line. They are part of the same construction, and we must deal with them as such.

structures, we have to care about the physical detail of the public realm -- the things that make people care about their places. Through that you can engage clients directly. Often, in schools, we don't spend enough time on the physical quality and character of the public realm, and how meaningful and important it is to the people who use it.

**Marilyn Jordan Taylor:** I think I can bridge your comment with the comment I wanted to make to Sherida, whose question about regulatory policy is a very good one. On the one hand, urban design as a way of thinking allows us to engage in rethinking existing regulatory systems. But we risk failure if we don't pay significant attention to the enormous roadblocks that these regulatory processes, which have been developed over the last thirty to forty years, represent for us. Whether you believe they were devised with good intention or not, we need to reassess what these regulations actually do for us. Frankly, I think, among the people that we need to bring into this discussion are a few really good lawyers with the creativity to bring about change because many of the smartest people we know have made an extraordinary business out of maintaining these regulations as they are.

**Denise Scott Brown:** Would you say fiefdoms?

**Marilyn Jordan Taylor:** (Laughter) Yes, I think you could say fiefdoms. Think about all the corporations that have come and gone since 1961, the changes that have occurred, how differently we address problems today. But we still have the same zoning ordinance we had in 1961. We've made little patchwork changes, but now the ordinance is seven hundred pages long. It's really very difficult. The point I want to make is we're at an interesting moment once again. There are two examples to watch. First, our current Deputy Mayor of Economic Development and Rebuilding, someone who made a lot of money investing, discovered that he could create a super-plan for the 2012 Olympics. Working from outside government, he, Alex Garvin, and others, were able to create one of the first comprehensive plans that New York City has seen in a long time, and they did it outside the existing regulatory process. The second example to pay attention to is the World Trade Center site -- a site that has no zoning law. What I am trying to say with these two examples is if the original premise was that vision is supposed to precede regulation, we might actually have a chance to achieve that, as long as we don't revert to fighting over territory.

**Anne Vernez-Moudon:** I just want to say Harrison's summary was actually better than our presentations. Now, I'd like to talk about density. I think density is really a non-issue. We talk about density as if we knew what it meant; we have big fights about it. Actually, if you look around the world, the human species is amazingly adaptable to all kinds of densities. (I never thought I could live in a single-family neighborhood, because I'm an urban person, but I do.) In most cities with economic development, people worldwide are getting more money, and we are actually lowering our densities because these people take up more space. Fifty years ago people took up much less space. Take the example of Hong Kong: I think fifty years ago they had one square meter per person, and now they are up to eight square meters per person. Hong Kong has one hundred times the density of the city of Seattle, and it's not a poor community. Like Marilyn said, density has nothing to do, or little to do, with height, although in Hong Kong they've increased the building height so people can have more open space on the ground. On the other hand, when you go into poor neighborhoods, very often you find low-rise structures -- one or two story shantytowns with the same densities as Hong Kong, but with no open space whatsoever. I think the way we deal with density, in this country especially, is that we use it as a shield to talk about all kinds of other issues, such as community life, segregation, and so on. I think density means very little as a word. In fact, in some parts of California, they don't talk about density anymore. The word density is nonexistent in some plans for Bay Area communities because it's too politically charged.

**Charles Reiss:** As somebody who deals professionally with high-rise developments (which people immediately assume are extremely dense), I'm fascinated by the whole concept of density. In fact, high-rise developments usually aren't very dense. And often the reason is because, particularly in an urban environment, nobody's home. (Laughter) The important thing about that statement is there are so many facets to density -- the average size of the family unit and how it has evolved over the last few decades; how people live, where they go on weekends. It is certainly true that if you look back

to the Lower East Side in the 1920s (probably at that point one of the densest spots on earth), that environment is what people seem to treasure today, because they know intuitively that even though the nature of urban life has changed, they can still fit very well into that old format.

Density, I submit, is a market driven issue. It's an evolution; it's a result of social functions, of social desires, of economic desires. The role of the urban designer, the engineer, the architect, or the city planner is to serve that density. Every time planning tries to fight density by restricting high-rises, by building more one and two family homes, or mid-rise residential buildings, they run into trouble. The New York City Zoning Ordinance is a classic failure in managing density. Yet so many of its regulations attempt to do just that. In the Sixties and Seventies, regional planning (which ran into this country's revulsion against regional politics) also attempted to manage density. Where urban design or physical planning runs into trouble is by holding onto the belief that it is the call of the planner to manage density, to tell density where it best should go, and what it should best be comprised of. In fact, urban design and planning should serve the market function of density by addressing mass transit, commercial zoning, the commodiousness or the non-commodiousness of streets, etc.

**Jacqueline Tatom:** I'm going to switch topics, but let me say I think those are very pertinent points on density. I wanted to return to the questions about urban design as a discipline, or urban design as a way of thinking, a philosophy. I'm wondering what would happen if we just get rid of urban design as a term, and instead say that there needs to be a place in the academy (and in practice, although I think it already exists), for thinking about cities. All we're talking about here is cities, and how cities need a whole range of actors to get made. The problem is, in architecture schools, we are so tied up with the curriculum and with forming design professionals that there is very little space left for thinking beyond pure architecture. In our school, by the end of three and a half years of architecture, students have five electives. We have NAAB [National Architectural Accreditation Board] requirements; we have to prepare them for licensing. Historically, there has just been such a tightening and narrowing of the architecture profession (the same is perhaps true for the landscape architecture profession) that there is too little space for broader thinking. So an expedient place in the academy for that kind of broader thinking has been created, which we have called urban design.

If we don't think of urban design as a thing in and of itself, as having to be bounded, or given a particular role, it becomes a lot easier to accept that many different players are involved. There are people who work at a community level who choose, through their actions and their professional practice, to engage their sense of citizenship in a certain way. There are others who choose a different set of clients. There are the implementers. There are the politicians, the social scientists. One could even think of planners as simply economists and social workers who want to think about cities. If we don't try to essentialize the profession and if we don't try to essentialize the practice, urban design simply becomes a place where we can think about cities and engage all the different people who are involved in thinking about cities. Because we need a place for that in the academy, we've carved out specific programs.

**Denise Scott Brown:** But why isn't that called "urban studies?" Urban studies is an academic discipline. It doesn't imply the mandate for action. Urban design is a professional activity. It has that mandate. I think you'd be wrong to name as studies what designers do in addressing the physical aspects of cities. Studying is part of it, but so is decision-making (or, more accurately, recommending decisions to decision-makers), and so is designing.

**Jacqueline Tatom:** Well, what if we try to talk about what is essential to the way architects think about cities.

**Denise Scott Brown:** It could be also landscape architects, or planners.

**Jacqueline Tatom:** Yes; designers.

**Denise Scott Brown:** Anyone who deals with the physical side of it.

**Jacqueline Tatom:** Yes, but what if we talk specifically about designers? The planners do useful things, but theirs is another way of thinking.

**Harrison Fraker:** If you look at the urban design programs represented here, most are post-professional programs, and in many ways they fulfill what Jacqueline is talking about. Take the

Berkeley program, which I know reasonably well. You can't apply unless you've had five years of working experience as an architect, a landscape architect or a planner. And the students are terrific when they show up. They are coming back to the academy because they want to explore some things about the city. They are looking for new ways to analyze these complicated systems, the sectors that Jacqueline talked about. They are struggling to find ways to represent these things that are meaningful to themselves and to their clients, and this makes for a real hotbed of very creative thinking. I would argue that the notion of a post-professional masters program that happens to take urban design as its subject matter is a good model for lots of other things in the academy, where we are trying to build up better ways of looking at, and better ways of analyzing, cities. What I found a little frustrating about the format that we used -- discussing student work to get at other broader issues -- was that the projects that were chosen to be included in the briefing booklets are hardly representative of the work that goes on in most of these programs. In other words, when we, the program directors, were asked to send in representative projects, rather than trying to find the students who had done a project that really opened up a whole new way of analyzing some of these urban issues, we just sent in what was available. I do think there is good work happening all around the country.

**Sandro Marpillero:** Anne Vernez-Moudon's position paper had a wonderful line that I would like to cite to reinforce what both Jacqueline and Harrison have just said. Anne said urban design is a child of a divorce. And as a child of the divorce, as a modernist project that attempted to put together architecture and planning, it failed. What's interesting about this situation is precisely the opportunities it presents. As far as I know, in this country at least, there are very few perfect families. There are a lot of divorces. And we know that sometimes a divorce can be productive. For example, urban design can also produce a new role for landscape architecture, which sometimes is mentioned and sometimes not. And it might allow for a remixing of the actors, like the grouping around this table. In other words, it could be a potentially fruitful divorce. Although the students' projects were selected according to what might have been bizarre logics, either by the schools or by the speakers, I think they do offer a means to try to work out some of the specifics of this field of possibilities.

**Claire Weisz** (Design Trust for Public Space): I think what urban design schools produce, and what urban design practice is ultimately about is strategy -- it is about producing strategists. These strategies relate to what we've all been talking about, which is built and unbuilt space. Therefore it makes sense for all these disciplines to assess how to best use an academic situation to provide the right tools to become good strategists. My question for the panel is: Are we providing the right tools, either through the opportunities available in practice, through our writings, or through our pedagogy in the academy, to strategize about the regulatory process, and also to strategize about who can contribute to this field?

**Harrison Fraker:** Let's field a few more questions.

**Doug Kelbaugh** (University of Michigan): To pick up that theme of the regulatory environment (which Anne Vernez-Moudon says is more highly regulated than ever) urban designers, architects, and landscape architects have to be strategic, maybe more so than ever before in maneuvering through the minefield of engineers and zoning officials and bankers and others whom we've all talked about. I don't think that's new. In fact, in thinking about the history of architecture since I first became involved with it, in the Fifties, I think to get good design through this minefield requires some sort of sponsor, some sort of idea. In the Fifties, the sponsor was engineering. Le Corbusier and Mies van de Rohe believed in engineering, but they also saw it as a Trojan horse, as a way to get good design around their clients, as a means of convincing their clients. There's even a certain amount of subterfuge in some cases. In the Sixties the sponsor was social advocacy. In the Seventies it was energy. In the Eighties it was theory. In the Nineties, I don't know what it was. But I think the time has come where urban design, or urbanism, is the Trojan horse. Mayors, boards, commissions, and communities -- they all will listen to urban design questions related to density, transportation and infrastructure. It's our time right now, not only professionally, but also in the academy. I think this is the chance of a lifetime, to not only enrich and reinforce our urban design programs, but to start taking back lost ground in the architecture programs. It is time to bring back some urban responsibility to these architecture

programs, which as you know, have wandered far afield and have become insensitive and irresponsible about the urban implications of their work. Is this true? And if so, how do we take more advantage of it?

**Harrison Fraker:** Anybody want to get some more things on the table?

**Jim Davis** (Disabled In Action): I'm Jim Davis. I do design and construction, management consulting, and public service advocacy work with the Disabled In Action of Metropolitan New York. I want to bring up the notion that universal design, which is associated with architecture, actually relates just as much to urban design. I also wanted to suggest that community groups ought to be involved as presenters in a conference like this.

**Harrison Fraker:** Another question over here.

**Linda Pollak** (Harvard University): There is a lot of heavy lifting at this conference. The topics are so difficult as to be overwhelming. Yet urban designers can't afford to become overwhelmed by the complexity, because their creative work lies in

addressing the city, including its impurity. The challenge of urban design is not only to be able to represent the city's different layers, registers, scales, and constituencies; the creative work also resides in constructing resonance -- in acknowledging the tensions, and looking for correspondences between the layers. This work is so subtle and difficult to communicate. While some of the students' images may have been inadequate to describe their projects, all of the images were trying to cut through a certain complexity. Even though there is a great divide between the academics who picked the images to include in the conference materials, and the practitioners who then selected them as a jumping off point, in general everyone felt their inadequacy in terms of being able to clearly communicate design ideas. So, I wanted to ask about the tension between representation as a design tool, and representation as a communication tool. This is always a problem in architecture and other design disciplines, but somehow it is multiplied in urban design.

**Harrison Fraker:** Who wants to pick up one of those great questions? We've got one on regulations, several views of regulation and urban design as a Trojan horse. We have a very profound question about representation as exploration or as communication. We have a reminder of one more dimension of why people care about a place; because they can actually get humane access to it -- universal design. Who wants to pick any of these up? John.

**John Chase:** I just wanted to pick what I thought was the easiest question -- about tools of representation. Urban designers, landscape architects, and planners are all analyzers of the environment. They're looking for a larger order. They're looking for some kind of meaning that resonates as a structure. I think that when you present to the general public, what this public looks for is some sense, some way of understanding what the design is going to mean to them. And I think that design professionals, and especially students, generally present in ways that focus on the big idea.



Fig.14 University of Toronto

They don't necessarily focus on presenting what the project will be like for the user, who may not really understand that big idea, or overall order. The user will understand the effects of that order, or the sense that the order produces. We need to strike a balance between keeping the idea and communicating the idea. I'm often surprised how at very crucial points in decision making processes, when there is a lot riding on presentation, design professionals choose to get their message across in terms of what the final benefit is going to be for the user.

**Harrison Fraker:** Any other comments?

**Denise Scott Brown:** There were a couple of different things I wanted to share with the audience before leaving. They relate vaguely to the questions on regulatory environments, and also to those on the content and staging of education. Let's deal with education first. The degree I didn't take at Penn (I got a Masters degrees in Architecture and City Planning) was one called Civic Design (in the 1950s) and Urban Design (in the 1960s). That program involved taking the required courses in one discipline as the electives in the other. So, in fact, you had the two degrees and you were called an urban designer. Now, the students taking this joint degree were very recently out of school and were inexperienced in both architecture and planning. They hadn't worked much as architects and their combined course missed the richness that went with the electives in each program. None of the people I taught in that program became designers. They became good administrators, educators, all kinds of actors, but not designers. The thinness of their training seems to me to be part of the reason. Coming to urban design later, as they now do at Berkeley, may help. And for my urban and campus design projects in the office, I prefer to find a talented architect with four to five years of experience and train them in-house myself.

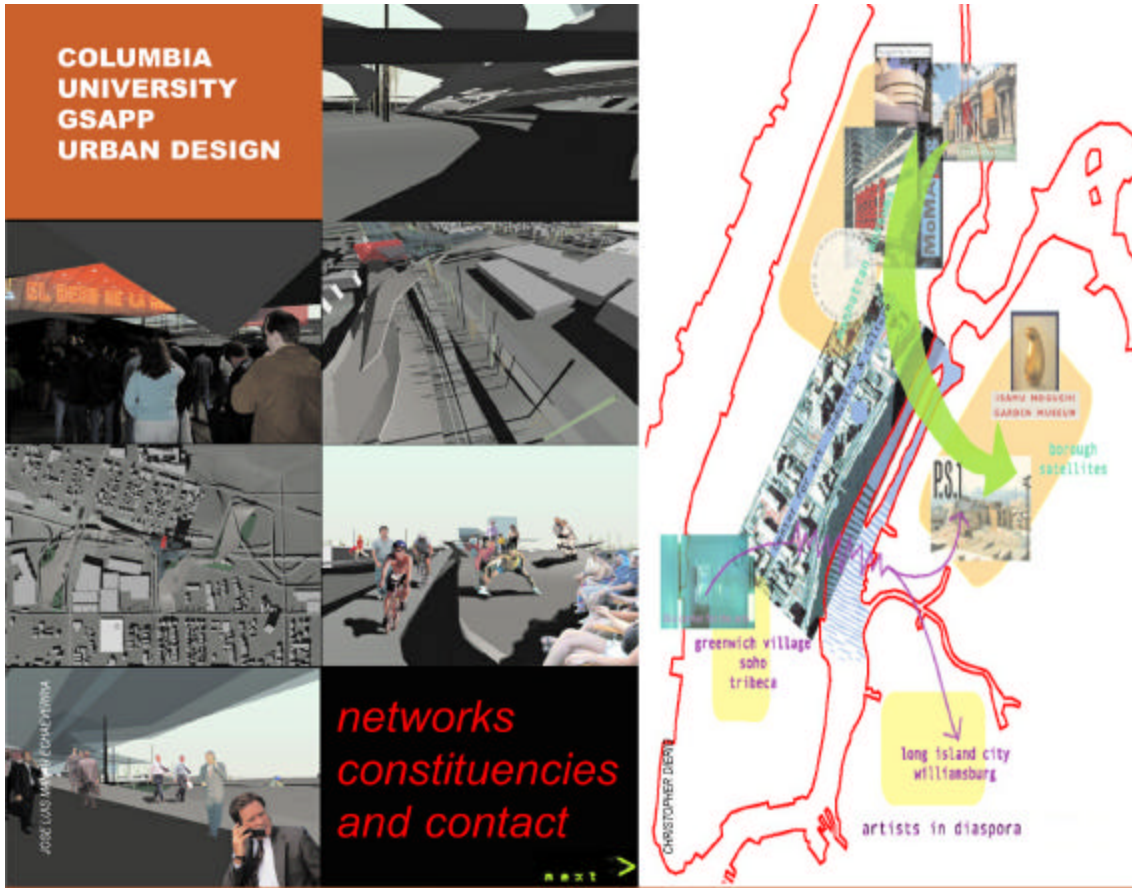
Now let me wear my architect hat for a moment. I am designing a project and I must comply with a set of urban design guidelines. Let's take the city of Seattle, for example. Just before we started the design of our museum, Seattle adopted new urban design guidelines (not without some political difficulty). These guidelines mandated building profiles that were based on fifty-story office towers, but which also regulated our five-story building. They gave us a very squat museum. You couldn't do anything else. The guidelines also required that any street with a view must be a wide street, because for a view to be good, it must be wide, right? Naples notwithstanding, narrow view corridors are not good, right? To work within those guidelines, we had to set our building ten feet back from our building line. Our museum client ended up losing thousands of square feet of floor area for no reason other than that a wide view is the only good view. Our profile and setback derived from the urban designers' focus on high-rise office towers. They needed a richer urban design concept, one that saw the city as made up of civic buildings, public buildings, private buildings, semi-public buildings. One could imagine parallel design guidelines for old buildings, new buildings, even for honky-tonk, all on the same street and making the whole a rich mix. Perhaps a low-rise civic building like the museum should have been encouraged to be in the view corridor. But that wasn't in Seattle's lexicon. As architects, we feel strongly about overly simple guidelines.

**Harrison Fraker:** I feel responsible for our next panel. And I also feel responsible for lunch. Denise ended with a little reminder about the ravishing complexity that we deal with. (That's a new quote I got last night. Thank you, Michael.) She also talked about how difficult it was to create plausible fictions. (Another good quote; that's Colin Rowe.) I'd like you all to thank this panel for a really stimulating conversation and urge you all to be back here by 1:30 PM.  
(Applause)



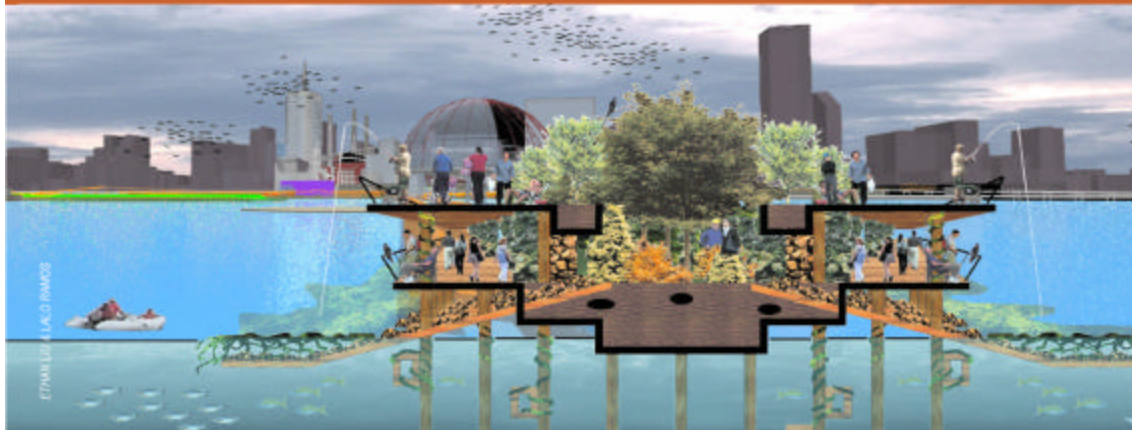


# Urban Design Pedagogies



**FALL**

Upper left grid of images: New Central Park for Perth Amboy, NJ: a multi-level, mixed use land scape for recreational, commercial, cultural and educational activities along an unused rail right-of-way.  
 Upper right map: Cultural programming of Kips Bay redevelopment mixing global and local cultural institutions. Below: Wildlife park created within an artificial lagoon planned for Kips Bay.



**Panel Synopsis:** *This discussion, as a starting point, analyzes urban design program descriptions and curricula, in order to prompt dialogue between urban design educators and practitioners from related fields, about what broadly characterizes urban design education, and what is distinct about individual urban design programs. As with the discussion in Panel Two (Urban Design Practices), the panelists are keenly aware that the definition of urban design curricula is crucial in situating urban design's professional and disciplinary specificity. There is broad consensus that urban design historically emerged to fill the gap created by the split (or divorce) between architecture and urban planning. Thus, a central focus of the conversation is upon the imprint this legacy has left upon urban design, raising questions about the benefits and costs of this interstitial status: What exactly is it that urban design bridges, and as a result of this bridging, is there even a common core of urban design education? Should urban design programs distinguish themselves by a focus on their locales, by the kinds of research questions they ask, or by what they are choosing to bridge? Is urban design a sub-specialization (in the shadow of architecture), or an exploded field? What is the appropriate level of urban design education? A sense of the timeliness of urban design emerges from the discussion, as it is agreed that cities and suburbs are undergoing radical change, and that urban designers have novel insights into the challenges posed by contemporary urbanism. The panelists also note that the conference discussions importantly break open several conventional understandings of urban design pedagogy and practice, thereby potentially launching urban design education into new, fruitful, directions.*

**Moderator:** Alan Plattus, Yale University

**Panelists:** Robert Beauregard, New School University  
Carol Burns, Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Rodolphe el-Khoury, University of Toronto  
Robert Fishman, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor  
Walter Hood, UC Berkeley  
Jerold Kayden, Harvard University  
J. Michael Schwarting, New York Institute of Technology  
Roy Strickland, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

**Margaret Crawford:** Welcome back to the first panel of the afternoon, Urban Design Pedagogies. I will just turn it over to the moderator, Alan Plattus, Professor of Architecture at Yale University.

**Alan Plattus:** Welcome back again. It is, of course, that time of the afternoon when attention and various other things begin to flag a little bit, but we'll try to keep it lively. At this point in the conference it's very tempting to be an immoderate moderator, and to really use this opportunity to just blurt out all of the things I've been keeping to myself thus far. But I will try to save that until the point at which we need a little boost of energy or direction. I do hope that as we move into the public discussion you will collaborate with us, in the spirit of urban design as a collaborative discipline, in trying to make this as focused a discussion as we can. I understand everybody has his or her own issues and agendas, and that's part of the richness of our discussion. But I hope that the issues, which will emerge around the topic for this session will also lead into further interrogation on the part of our participants out there. Many of my panelists have already urged me to try to keep us as focused as we can.

Now, here is the drill. The parti for this session is similar to the earlier sessions. We have five distinguished colleagues from what have been characterized as adjacent disciplines, although, as I think you'll discover, most of these colleagues are themselves completely implicated as urban design insiders; either teaching, or practicing, or both. But they, I guess, by virtue of their titles and training, qualify as visitors from adjacent disciplines as well.

On the far left is Robert Beauregard, an urban planner, and Professor of Urban Policy at New School University. Next to him is Carol Burns, a principal in the Boston architectural firm, Taylor & Burns Architects, and a professor of architectural design at MIT. The next is Robert Fishman, sitting immediately to my right, who is Professor of Architecture and Urban Planning in the Taubman College of Architecture and Planning at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan. This is globalization at work, folks. He teaches courses on the history of urban form, the history of planning, and the history of utopias, a topic on which he has written very influentially. He was originally in the history department at Rutgers, and was trained as a historian and is here at least partly in that capacity. Robert is now completing a book that I understand is tentatively and tantalizingly entitled *Cities After the End of Cities*. Maybe he'll share a little bit about that with us. To my left, your right, Walter Hood, who is here as Associate Professor at Landscape Architecture at the College of Environmental Design, at the University of California in Berkeley. Walter has become nationally known for his innovative practice, teaching, and writing in landscape architecture as part of a firm that he's been involved with since 1981. And then the fifth is Jerold Kayden, who is a lawyer and city planner, and Associate Professor of Urban Planning at the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University. He also teaches back and forth between the Graduate School of Design and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. So he may have some thoughts about this bridge that once existed and might exist again between the disciplines of architecture and planning that people have already referred to.

And then to respond to these remarks, we have, again, a home team of three card-carrying urban designers, the heads of urban design programs; Rodolphe el-Khoury, who is the founding head

of the program at the University of Toronto; Roy Strickland, who is also a founding head, or director, of the new Urban Design Program at University of Michigan. And then a late addition who's not listed in your program, Michael Schwarting, who is the director of the program in Urban and Regional Design at New York Institute of Technology. The drill is this: there have been some focal questions posed by the organizers to all of us, in particular to the five who will speak first, that have to do with their response to a body of material that has been circulated to many of us in advance. Those questions have already spontaneously emerged in the course of yesterday evening and this morning. They became quite specific in the last session, and I think we'll be able to pick up where some of those comments left off, probing this interesting but sometimes academic issue of the disciplinary status of urban design. These are questions such as, where is urban design situated, both inside and outside the university? Is its lack of a stable disciplinary boundary an asset, or maybe even a joy, in that by evading some of the apparatus that goes with being a bona fide academic discipline, like licensing, and God forbid, accrediting, it can therefore remain somewhat more nimble as it faces the issues of urban design? Or, in some respects, is it a liability because of our relative inability to produce a shared body of knowledge, and a set of methodologies and representational conventions that allow us quickly and easily to share important information, not only with each other, but with our clients? That, of course, has already been mentioned today. I don't want to lose track of that important component of the equation.

And, of course, there is the question, posed by the organizers, as to the interstitial status of urban design, a question that relates to its emergence, as someone put it earlier, as the child of a divorce between architecture and planning. Is that a legitimate birth? Is it one we should celebrate in certain ways, and take advantage of? Or is that shifting interstitial status something of a problem? What are we really interstitial between these days? Is it between other fields, such as those represented here? Or is it actually between some of these worn out dichotomies that have been mentioned in earlier discussions? Is urban design the negotiating point between the local and the global, between the public and the private? Is there a different kind of interstitial knowledge and role that comes from that?

Now, the primary evidence we've been presented with for this discussion is program curricula -- interesting documents in and of themselves. I'm always amused at this time of year seeing earnest, young prospective students walking around looking, actually reading the course catalogues of various schools probably for the last time in their lives, trying to decide between Program A and Program B on the evidence of the described curriculum. One always wants to take them aside and shake them and say, "You know, that's not really what it's all about." But curricula can be in both an obvious and underground way revealing.

As I was reading these urban design curricula, I thought of my favorite curriculum, which many of you will recognize as I quickly read it to you, "Knowledge of Literature -- nil. Philosophy -- nil. Astronomy -- nil. Politics -- feeble. Botany -- variable. Well up in belladonna, opium, and poisons generally. Knows nothing of practical gardening. Geology -- practical, but limited. Tells at a glance different soils from each other. Knowledge of chemistry -- profound. Anatomy -- accurate, but unsystematic. Knowledge of sensational literature (here's a shared point) -- immense. He appears to know every detail of every horror perpetrated in the century. Plays the violin well. Is an expert singlestick player, boxer, and swordsman, and has a good practical knowledge of British law." By now, I trust you may all have guessed that this is the description by Dr. Watson of his new friend, Sherlock Holmes, in *A Study In Scarlet*, where he tried to figure out what this guy does. I think that the apparently random accumulation of ignorance and expertise in a variety of fields may be one aspect of what we're seeing in the formulation and emergence of urban design as a field. We may be working with the notion of a pragmatic or, shall we say, tactical definition of the field out of the issues, the interests that we share. And this may, in some curious way, just as with the specificity of Holmes' invention, reflect Marilyn Jordan Taylor's very poignant formulation of the idea of inventing clients. Holmes invented a profession, which was consulting detective. He was the world's first. Now try to get that curriculum past your provost, Harrison.

Firstly, I love coming to these conferences because I'm convinced that urban designers have more interesting work than many other design professionals these days. They get to work on really amazing sites and problems. Secondly, they can't resist the storytelling aspect. When you asked them the big question last night: "What is urban design?" The responses were, "Let me tell you what I've been doing lately." Or in the case of others, "Let me tell you where I just was." And whether it was in Nicosia, or at a neighborhood meeting, what very quickly came to the fore are the issues people feel they're facing, as opposed to the conventional sort of disciplinary answers like, "We need a little bit more anatomy here," or, "We need a little bit more chemistry there." I think an important part of our discussion is the question of whether our value as a field of operation, let's say, rather than a discipline, might be our ability to continually evade the burdens of disciplinary status. With that final remark, I will turn it over to our distinguished panelists, starting with Robert Beauregard at my right, at your left end of the table, and then we'll move quickly around.

**Robert Beauregard:** Not being an urban designer, I thought I would think of my remarks today as parable. A parable is a story designed to give advice to the listener, though the listener has to figure it out. And so I'm going to talk about planning, and I'm going to leave it to the panelists and the audience to figure out what the implications are for urban design.

Last night Amanda Burden (New York City Planning Commission) began her remarks by talking about the relationship between planning and urban design, and she pointed to the critical need for planners to be better trained in urban design, to take urban design courses. Two things about her comments struck me. First, wasn't it nice that the Chair of the New York City Planning Commission implied that planners were influential and important? The second thing that struck me was that this is an opportunity, if I turn this into a question, to talk about planning pedagogy and urban design pedagogy. Why is it that planners are not better trained in urban design? Well, I'm going to reject the argument that planners are simply ignorant -- That is, they don't know what they don't know. I don't think that's the case. I think that planners do recognize the importance of urban design. And in fact, urban design is taught in many planning programs. I also want to reject, but not so wholeheartedly, the idea that the planning academics are narrow minded, parochial or threatened. I think if the planning professors knew that teaching and learning urban design would make them more effective and more influential, they would integrate it into their curriculum.

Now, let me suggest another answer to this question, and I'm going to do it in a somewhat elliptical fashion. Almost a century ago planners faced the proverbial fork in the road. Along one of those paths was Daniel Burnham. And Daniel Burnham said, "Come with me. We're going to make big, we're going to make bold, we're going to make expansive plans. None of this small stuff. And by the way, did I tell you that the people who are interested in these plans are the captains of industry? They have wealth, they're interested in the city, they have the ears of the politicians, and they're going to get things done. And by the way, it might even be possible that we can do regional things."

Now, in the other direction was Patrick Geddes; polymath, biologist, sociologist, contributor to historic preservation, who said, "Don't listen to Burnham. Listen to me. What's important is not the big bold plans, but trying to understand how things exist on the ground. We have to do studies. We have to gather information. We have to learn how to analyze that information. And with that, we can make a contribution." Well, I think the planners made the right choice; they didn't listen to Burnham, they listened to Geddes. And in the process, what the planners did for themselves was give up the possibility of working with some very wealthy, influential clients, who were very few in number and only existed in the large cities, in order to work for lots of clients, called local governments, that existed all over the United States. This provided a major constituency to support the graduates of planning programs.

So this was a good decision on their part. And it became an even better decision after World War II when the number of suburban municipalities began to multiply and multiply and multiply, and these municipalities began to have a great need for planners to help them plan road networks, and so on and so forth.

What Daniel Burnham didn't know when he offered the wealthy captains of industry as the

clients of planning, was that those captains of industry would eventually abandon the cities, cast their production facilities across the nation, and eventually move them overseas. The planners could not have known that local governments, which were so powerful at the beginning of the century, would slowly lose power, both to the state legislatures (as the suburbs began to take over those deliberative bodies) and to the federal government (after it started to collect income tax in the Twenties) and became bigger and bigger. The federal government comes back to help planners in the Sixties, but that's a very fleeting moment.

Now, when seen from the university, this good choice, as I'm characterizing it, wasn't so good. Local governments certainly provided a lot of planning jobs, but these were not high paying jobs. They've never been high paying jobs, and they've never been high status jobs either. And that has implications in the university because what planning programs basically do is create alumni who are not very rich, who are not very powerful, and who cannot be used within the university to gain status. Moreover, local governments, with maybe a few exceptions -- New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago - - are not big funders of research in the university. They don't give you money to do the kinds of studies that might have curriculum implications. They don't give you money to do program development (except in the Sixties, when the federal government had a lot of money to do this). For the most part, planning academics tied themselves to a constituency that was relatively poor, and not about to come into the university and have a major impact.

Now when these aspects of practice are combined with planners' claims to be interdisciplinary, this really hurts their university status. Being interdisciplinary is a wonderful thing to say, but over the years I've realized that in the university it's fad, it's not foundation. People like it. They embrace you if you say it. But at the end of the day, it's the disciplines that win out over interdisciplinary programs. Think of cultural studies. Interdisciplinary programs have come and gone, but sociology and economics remain.

So what happened was that the planners found themselves with low status within the university, and with not a lot of ability to direct the attention of the university to their needs or to attract resources from what we bureaucratically call the central administration. Well, what's the point of my story? The answer to the question, "Why aren't urban planners better trained in urban design?" is simple. It comes out of a complex story, however. The simple answer is, clients don't ask for it. They don't demand it. If the clients did demand it, they would teach it. And because urban planning lacks high status, and an independent source of resources within the university, it lacks the base to pursue this independently. Pedagogy is not just an academic task, and it's not alien to politics. Thank you.

**Alan Plattus:** Carol.

**Carol Burns:** In the array of disciplines present at the table and the ideas already expressed today, I feel something similar to facing one of those rotating trays of food at the center of a huge meal. We might each approach this tangentially, making a rotisserie out of at least a few of the possibilities. It's more difficult to reach toward the center, to see what can be made of it all together.

Having read the briefing booklets with the curricula of the various schools, I think it important to address them. At least part of the reason we're here is because of the sense that urban design seems to matter to cities more now than it has at other times. Prior panels have discussed this. But since the founding of three new urban design programs is the spur for this conference, the increasing importance of urban design as an academic effort merits acknowledgement as well.

In reading the program materials, I was struck by a few things. Notably, they are all second professional degrees. In academia, a professional degree is called a "terminal degree." (And, personally, as a student I thought several times that finishing my terminal degree would kill me.) But we see here the emergence of new programs offering what we can perhaps call "post terminal" degrees. The emerging importance of these new second professional degrees deserves mention in its own right.

Looking over the program documents, from one to the next to the next, I often found I was reading curricular material and thinking it was describing one school, when actually, I had already turned the page and was reading about the next school. It was very difficult for me to get any sense

of how these programs are really distinguished from each other. Given that one program is not so clearly distinct from the next, how do prospective students decide where to go?

To some extent, each program can use the material of its own location as a basis for teaching. In this regard, the programs might well indeed be quite distinct, even though their curricular materials, as excerpted for us, don't look so different. The program at Washington University, in St. Louis, draws on its location, a post-industrial city that has been under-invested for at least fifty years, to provide a particular physical base and intellectual platform for teaching urban design. That's very different from teaching in a growing metropolitan area with a diversified economic base, such as Seattle or Boston. Even so, Harvard has slight need to focus on Boston, right? Instead, Harvard flies its students to cities all over the world as sites for urban design studios.

These urban design programs certainly differ by personnel; who teaches in that program, who heads this program, who are the people that students actually learn from. Each program is distinct in that way. Most good teaching is marked by good teachers rather than by good institutions. So, as Alan suggested, comparisons of published curricula tend to show commonalities among programs rather than revealing differences.

To speak to representing architecture as a discipline here raises my own interests as an architect in buildings, in the spaces between buildings, and in particular, to houses and housing, and how residential areas comprise the greatest land use in every city. "Settlement" is the word I typically use, rather than that of "urban design." No matter the terminology, an area that opens up at this scale is the study of "flows" -- people, politics, and power -- the actual life that moves through places and makes them lively.

The life of people is one of the essential aspects of this study. This includes, for instance, demographics, the study of the population itself. Demography is a sort of "interdiscipline." You can't call it a discipline in its own right. It's not exactly housed anywhere, but it's a very powerful analytic tool. Another aspect is the flow of money, the economic dimension. This includes the horrific creative destruction we work with as designers in a capitalist system. It is important for students to understand how money works, how the cycling of economies conditions sites of operation and intervention. And it is also important to understand that with the cycling of economies come the flow and power of politics, of polity itself. These are all issues that are difficult to address in a typical architecture studio. However, when the scope is broadened a bit to include issues of settlement, then this full complexity comes through. I've never been a faculty member in an urban design program, though I've taught many urban design students. And I have taught from this base in understanding architecture on its own terms as well as the complexities it brings when its scope is enlarged.

I would close with a story about the first commission in my professional practice. We were hired to design a rather modest project, a social hall addition to a church in downtown Kansas City. This area had suffered significant dis-investment and depopulation, with vacancies, huge separating distances, and parking lots everywhere. Our commission was to design a small building in an ocean of empty urban territory, next to a convention center over a half-mile long. The site was a very strange mix of scales. And though it's a campus, and we designed a campus building, we worked at more than one scale, acknowledging that that the site was not simply that campus, but also a particular urban situation at a particular intersection.

The building has a big presence at night due to overscale light elements in the roof. The city has started to use this building, which is a social space, for all sorts of activities never envisioned by the church. The project was acknowledged by the city government for contributing to the economic redevelopment of the downtown area, because it has created activity and downtown life at night. I think that this unplanned success is due, at least in part, to the urban design dimensions of the project. I confess that, in receiving this award, I thought it was pathetic that a major American downtown could be helped so much in its economic redevelopment by a church addition, but nevertheless this goes to show the power of thinking about architecture in urban terms.

The questions we've been addressing on the academic side are one thing. But the questions in the field are profound and really quite thorny. American cities need so much help. Anne Vernez-

Moudon today characterized urban design as resulting from a divorce between architecture and planning. Last night Maxine Griffith said that urban design was the result of the embrace between architecture and planning. Whether in illicit attraction or estranged affection, architecture and planning somehow got it together.

**Alan Plattus:** Thank you, Carol.

(Applause)

**Robert Fishman:** Thank you. We're into relationships here. As Alan mentioned, I was trained as an historian and taught for many years in a college history department, so I'm not implicated in anything that actually got built. But for the last two years it's been my privilege to teach students of urban design, architecture, and planning. I say my privilege because these students have brought to history an interest, an intensity, a vitality that I've found remarkable. They have a need for history.

We are not only entering a new era of urbanism, as Doug Kelbaugh said before lunch, but after fifty years of what was called de-urbanization, one of the defining aspects of this new era of urbanism is to make a connection between the past and the future. As we can see, not only are urban design students avid consumers of history, but urban design teachers are now important producers of history. We saw that on the panel last night; sitting side by side were Alex Krieger (Harvard University), Margaret Crawford (Harvard University), and Richard Plunz (Columbia University), three people who have made very important scholarly contributions to our understanding of history. And that is as it should be. The city is history, the physical embodiment of our collective memory, the place where past, present, and future meet.

So how can the study of urban history be most useful to urban design? Let me suggest three ways. First, we have a responsibility to teach a canon of great urban design; urban design that's been realized, urban design as imagined. Urban design's greatest hits, you might say. Now I know canon building is extremely unfashionable in academia today, but I think canons are vitally necessary, not only for showing what urban design can accomplish at its highest levels, but also for giving students a shared vocabulary of historic meanings and forms. For example, last night when Michael Sorkin mentioned Fez, or when Richard Plunz mentioned the town planning movement of the Twentieth Century, we all need to know what they are talking about. Secondly, studying history means studying the city building process, what Karen Phillips called very aptly "politics, money, and people"-- that clash of forms, ideas and interests that Eric Mumford and David Smiley explicated so well in their position papers for this conference. (I hope you all have a chance to read them.) In other words, studying history is studying how design meets power over time. And it means becoming aware of the many sources of urban design beyond those individuals named in books. Perhaps most profoundly, it means studying how urban design, even the greatest urban design, represents outcomes that are unforeseen by anyone, any single person in the process.

Thirdly, studying history might well be the last place where students can encounter the genuinely urban. It's one of the ironies (as has been mentioned so many times at this conference) that now, for the first time in human history, the majority of people are living in cities. Yet, urbanism, the urban, is in crisis everywhere. I think the two are related because, when I spoke about "cities after the end of cities," cities have been defined in the past by a contrast between urban and rural. That contrast is disappearing. It has disappeared in the advanced countries. It's disappearing throughout the world. What we have now is the urban region, and as the city becomes a metropolitan region urbanism fragments. At the edge it mutates into these remarkable, low-density cities that we persist in calling suburbs, while, at the core, urbanism too often becomes a kind of simulacrum of itself, an imitation. History enables us to make contact with urbanism at its most intense. It takes us beyond the limitations of our own time, and suggests possibilities for urban design not apparent in the present. For example, if we only knew Detroit as it is today, what could we possibly think or imagine for Detroit? We have to know its history in order to imagine a future.

So for me, the study of traditional neighborhoods, of downtowns, of the urban transportation system that Denise Scott Brown mentioned for Philadelphia, this kind of study of our history is the opposite of nostalgia or escapism. Instead I think it teaches us that this is not just our past. This is our



future as well. And it's only by making contact with the past that urban design will have a future. Thank you.

(Applause)

**Alan Plattus:** Walter.

**Walter Hood:** As usual, my guess is I'm going to stray in a different direction. First of all, my background: My formal training is in landscape architecture, architecture and urban design. My urban design training is through a landscape architecture program, which is quite different than many of the panelists. What I'd like to do is first start with my homework. I was asked to look at the various urban design programs highlighted in this conference, review their syllabi and other program documentation. And what I thought I'd do, as someone unfamiliar with them, was look at each one to see what stood out. I won't name the programs. I'll just go through what I have highlighted as distinct characteristics of each.

One was centered between architecture and planting. Planning -- not planting. (Laughter) One states succinctly that architecture design is the program's basic endeavor. The next one listed a plethora of interdisciplinary studios. You could take a studio in almost any department that had course offerings for the urban design program. Another articulated that the study of new forms, and human ecologies and processes would lead us to speculative work. Another said that, "We would formulate design strategies and propose programs that would improve the quality of urban environments." And another caught my eye in that the degree differed if I was entering with an architecture background or if I was coming from landscape. That one also had an association with the school of government, and said that you could test design feasibility against financial and political realities.

Another said that they were bridging architecture, landscape and urban planning, and that through design workshops there would be multidisciplinary outreach. Another featured bridging architecture and landscape architecture, with design as a primary medium of operation and research. Another stated that there would be a collaboration between architecture, landscape architecture and urban design and planning. It furthermore stated that they would look at shaping built landscapes formulated over time by different actors, and that, in the end, they would analyze and evaluate performance of the projects and their policies. And lastly, one that really caught my eye was a unique merging of architecture, landscape and infrastructure of design education within a metropolitan research and design center.

So, these are the things that came forward. After this review I had some insights. The bridging, or definition of bridging, and interdisciplinary practice, varied from school to school. Some bridged architecture and planning. Some bridged architecture and landscape, and some articulated that they would bridge architecture, landscape and planning. Half of the programs were one year, or one year including a summer. Half were two year programs, which meant four semesters, or close to it. I think the two-year program listed a full time faculty associated with the program, whereas the one-year programs used the schools of design to basically make up their faculty. The question I found myself asking was whether one year was enough, or two years was too long.

Many of the design perspectives suggest, or could be misconstrued to suggest, that there are various absolute definitions of what urban design is. In fact, Harrison Fraker's position paper attempted to highlight what those positions might be, almost like a shopping list of programs with structural beliefs that are central to the foundation of urban design, based on the faculty's research, their interests and beliefs, since their ideals and the various pedagogical frameworks run parallel. What I primarily noticed was multidisciplinary implementation strategies.

My background informs my insights. I teach in a one-year urban design program at Berkeley that enlists faculty within the school who have interests in urban design. Many faculty do not share the same ideas that are reflected in the program's core.

There were a few things that I did not see articulated in any of the programs. First of all, urban landscapes are dynamic, physical and natural ecologies. Urban design programs and practices must accept and articulate this symbiotic exchange. They must recognize that different urban patterns exist, and that none are absolute, meaning that demographic and cultural shifts in geographies are in

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constant flux, and few are formally articulated. I think to begin to understand the dynamic urban environment we need to be able to interpret, and in some cases, validate the existence of these diverse urban patterns. If you look at the American city in particular, you should look at the work of J. B. Jackson, Jane Jacobs, Spiro Kostof, John Stilgoe, Davis, etc.

Second, cities are built on natural topographies. For example, Manhattan is an island. Someone yesterday talked about how it used to be sand. We made it; we took away the sand and put something else there. Boston sits on an estuary; San Francisco sits on a bay and an estuary. St. Louis, New Orleans; they are in flood plains. L. A. is a river basin, Los Angeles a desert. So cities aren't built on static plains, they are actually changing ecologies. Within the multidisciplinary framework of programs, with the exception of two, landscape architecture as a profession seems highly marginalized. Yet it is this profession that is most prepared to deal with the issues of the city today; central issues like infrastructure, environmental equity, geomorphology, public spaces, etc. Great landscape architects (as was earlier articulated) have always dealt with the scale of the city and the region; for example, Frederick Law Olmsted, Garrett Eckbo, Louis Halperin, Hideo Sasaki, just to name a few.

Third, I believe urban design is a lens that allows environmental design professions, such as architecture, planning, landscape architecture, and in some cases visual studies, to extend out beyond their individual disciplinary cocoons and see the city and how it is shaped. Through this lens of urban design, we can see architecture not as objects, but as synthetic patterns and a closure for human habitation; we can see landscape, not as discrete types, not as parsley around the pig, not as dressing, but as the basic morphology around the city, the ground, the infrastructure, the section; and we can see planning not only as policy based in social and economic and welfare concerns, but as a physical product. I believe, through this lens, each discipline engages in a more extensive discussion about the city's qualities, its physicalities, and its complexities, both present and future.

Finally, two remaining points: First, given our discussion over the past two days, I think we need to be critical and learn from our mistakes and our failures. In the post-industrial era, rather than look backwards, we must look forward. There are a few people in the room today who are doing urban design work because either past urban design efforts in housing or transportation infrastructure failed to achieve their stated goals, or because they failed through some natural catastrophe or disaster, such as floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, etc. Lastly, it was said last night that urban design is associated with power. I strongly believe in this. I believe that those of us in this room who call ourselves urban designers must figure out what that power is, how to harness that power, and then how to empower others. We have to be surrogate advocates for our clients to achieve their plans. Thank you.\*

**Alan Plattus:** Thank you.

(Applause)

**Jerold Kayden:** How do you plead, says the judge? Guilty, I respond. I'm a lawyer. But I'm also an urban planner. If I simply put on my lawyer hat this afternoon, I have to say that I'm completely

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\***Miriam Gusevich** (Catholic University of America): Cities are complex phenomena, and may be understood from many disciplinary perspectives. Panel participants, most appropriately, represented part of this diversity. Nevertheless, a few guests spoke as if urban design programs are remiss if we do not teach their particular subject matter and tailor our programs to feature it. Since most post-professional urban design programs are at most two years long, it is obviously impossible to cover this range of relevant disciplines and teach it with any depth. We would be creating a "Jack of all Trades and a Master of None."

Urban design programs can aspire to make students aware of different perspectives and their bearing on the designer's task. Since urban designers most often work as part of a team effort that brings many different people together in the process, urban design programs can instill respect and curiosity about a variety of disciplinary perspectives -- teaching students to be conversant with, rather than intimidated by, other experts. Thus an important goal of an urban design program would be to empower students with a hunger for knowledge and a desire to work with others.

at home at this conference because never have I seen so much lawyering going on about the definition of terms, which, of course, is one of the great things that lawyers like to do. Statutory construction and constitutional interpretation are a form of hermeneutics. And as, Marilyn Jordan Taylor (Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP) stated publicly, in an unembarrassed fashion, lawyers are absolutely crucial to the urban design project. So I am again very much at home, even though I have been at home for many, many years teaching full time in a very real design school about the connection between the law and design and planning.

Let me start very quickly with what insights law might provide as a discipline, how I may or may not be useful to urban design. Let's first get what law is on the table, because it's not always clear even to lawyers. So what is law? It's a set of rules that codifies societal norms drawn from moral structures, religious structures, socioeconomic structures, historical and cultural structures. What do lawyers mean when they talk about "legal thinking" or "legal method"? It's never an easy question to answer. It has some of the following qualities, however: It's analytical and logical. It reasons from precedent, but it also delights in distinguishing from precedent. It tests arguments often through hypotheticals, extreme ones from time to time. It tends to be dialectical, adversarial, binary; it uses false dichotomies, and it is argumentative. It presents reasons for and reasons against. And it involves thinking on one's feet. It's very much of an oral tradition. It's also text based. The word is king -- the non-lawyer does not appreciate the incredible precision law attaches to words. Yet, at the same time, the lawyer can be a generalist. Lawyers learn a new field potentially overnight if the client asks for it. And they are well paid, of course. Legal material. What is the stuff of law? Constitutions. Around the world, this is where our basic notions of what a society should be tend to reside. Constitutions spell out individual rights and the rights of society. They act through representative and maybe not-so-representative government. And you will find embedded in constitutions a very deep philosophical discussion about the distinction between public and private. There are also statutes at the national level, the state level, and the local level, although they go under different names, from bylaws and ordinances and resolutions, to acts and bills. And there are cases; the case law, the literally millions of cases, judicial opinions written by judges.

What about legal institutions? There are lawmakers, those who draft the laws. There are law administrators, the agencies and departments that implement the law that has been drafted. And there are law reviewers, typically the judges who review to make sure that the law has been correctly implemented, or who determine whether the law drafted by the legislature does not contradict the fundamental document of a constitution. Finally, there are private actors, both not-for-profit, and for-profit, who play a crucial role in legal agreements and in acting under, or contradicting, existing law. So finally, law's approach as a discipline to problem-solving holds obvious values for urban designers who, in addition to being creative or synthetic, can also be analytical, can also test hypotheticals, can also think on their feet. Yet, at the same time, given urban design's tendency not to want to rely only on precedent, its desire to avoid binary discussions, and its resistance to advocating two extreme positions, law is distinctly not a model in terms of methods of thinking for urban designers.

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Urban design entails knowledge about cities, or more broadly, human settlements. It is also, and most importantly, about design; that is our expertise. Is it too obvious to reiterate that urban design programs should concentrate on teaching design at a large scale? Design is a way of thinking and acting on the world; it is also an acquired skill. Through the design process, we can propose alternative scenarios, alternative patterns; by re-considering the site. Designers solve problems and address new circumstances through the use of paradigms, be that a parti, a free-body diagram, etc. The paradigm is a pattern, not a set of isolated elements; it captures a complex set of relationships. A paradigm is open to re-interpretation and invention -- it need not be confining. Precedents are often invoked for their implicit authority, their credibility as exemplars that already exist and have a history; they prove it can be possible. They serve to legitimize a recommended course of action. Thus to be knowledgeable in a wide range of precedents and how to interpret them is an invaluable *modus operandi*, which gets slighted in the search for originality.

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How then do these contradictions play out in a design school and in urban design pedagogy? How might law be part of urban design pedagogy and practice in a very practical sense? To begin with, planning and design law is far too important to be left to lawyers. Lawyers today have far too substantial a say in the crafting of our land-use laws, which really have an enormous impact on the look, the feel, and the operation of our built and natural environment. Lawyers are not trained to figure out what an appropriate setback is, or the correct height for a building, or the correct mixture of uses, or how a building intersects with the landscape, etc. And yet they appear to have an enormous say in all these things. They frequently are the gatekeepers, but not by dint of training or skill.

The urban design task starts with design, but it ends with implementation. And law, of course, is an important subset of implementation. I like to say; to design is human, to implement, divine. That's very important as part of our field. This implementation takes two forms. First there is implementation of specific projects, making sure they happen as designed, and insuring their continuity. Not just during the year they open, but five years, ten years, and twenty years down the line. Frequently this demands a degree of legal implementation. Implementation also deals with plans for areas large and small, with the rules of the game that have great impact.

What might we teach, specifically in our urban design programs, to deal with implementation? Three quick ideas: First, urban designers need to know about the crafting of land-use laws. They should not resist this. Law and the ability to engage in law is an enormous opportunity for urban designers, and yet it's been viewed too often as a constraint. Get on the bandwagon of law, because law does, both intentionally and unintentionally, have a dramatic impact on our built environment, and should not be left to others. Urban designers should be involved in thinking through and crafting, and even drafting all of these laws that impact on our built environment, since these laws, both through inertia and momentum in a contradictory fashion, are too often detrimental for our built environment.

The New Urbanists have grabbed onto the importance of law. But they talk very imprecisely, using words like codes, without necessarily understanding distinctions between public and private, and without necessarily caring about basic individual rights. But nonetheless, they clearly realize the profound power of these laws to affect, on a wholesale rather than a retail basis, our built and natural environments. Smart growth is also heavily dependant upon legal controls, for example, new zoning, cluster zoning, planned unit developments, urban growth boundaries, concurrency in adequate public facilities doctrines, etc. Urban designers could participate in drafting these kinds of laws, and yet, too often they are absent.

What does that mean in terms of courses? Urban design programs should have a course that deals with these things. Of the eight programs that I reviewed, I found three that had one course, and they tended to be the longer programs, and one program that had sort of a course on it. Since urban designers will not, without a law degree (at least in our lifetimes), stand up before a judge and say, "May it please the court," these should not be old style planning law courses, which I think go too much into case law. Urban designers need courses that will help them deal with the actual drafting and crafting of the documents themselves.

This kind of course would involve empirical research, to figure out what laws make sense and what laws don't. I used to have a lot more hair before I studied public spaces in New York. But that sort of public research is something urban designers can do as an underpinning for law. We heard Anne Vernez-Moudon, Marilyn Jordan Taylor, and others, talk about the need for actual empirical research to undergird our law.

The second and third points, quickly. Urban designers need to understand institutions; they need to know the players. Not just the public sector, but also the quasi-public agencies; the community development corporations, as well as the private sector and neighborhood groups. They need to know the levers of power; where and how they may participate in that power structure; they need to understand what the committees are, what the process is, how public and private partnerships are structured. They need to know who the owners are, and who is in control. This is all absolutely critical to what the environment ends up looking like.

Finally, urban designers do need to have a general literacy with the law that is provided with broader

concepts of balancing individual rights against societal rights. What is the role of government? What do we really mean by “democracy,” a term we heard last night? Law can be very helpful in providing answers to that. Thank you.

(Applause)

**Alan Plattus:** Turning now to the Urban Design Program directors, I was wondering if you could talk about what you faced in starting your programs. How do you situate yourself within the university? Who are your colleagues? Do you define yourself mainly by where you are, as Carol Burns suggested, by what you teach, or by the issues you deal with?

**Rodolphe el-Khoury:** The way our program was initially designed followed very much what I now recognize as conventional notions of urban design as practice, in that it was situated between planning and architecture. Clearly, this is one of the platitudes we have heard over and over again; one we have all succumbed to. But what I appreciate about this conference is the way it has started to challenge this notion. That's why I'm very much seduced by Jacqueline Tatom's attempt to completely explode the field. This is what happened in Toronto because we don't have an M. Arch II at the University of Toronto. The program attracts students who are not necessarily exclusively interested in this conventional notion of urban design; some don't exactly know what they want to do when they join the program. And because the students have very different interests, they tend to hijack the curriculum in very interesting ways. Luckily, the program was designed with enough flexibility to allow the students to construct their own courses of study. Now we have something which very much approaches Jacqueline's notion of urban design as an exploded field. I find it very interesting that in all of the discussion panels we obsessively dwell on the definition of urban design and its disciplinary boundaries. This is symptomatic of urban design's fundamental identity crisis. Specialists in architecture or planning or law wouldn't be asking these questions, but they somehow seem endemic to urban design.

I don't think this is a pathology. I think this is helpful. Maybe these are symptoms of a schizophrenic subject, a subject very much suited to contemporary conditions. To go back to this analysis of urban design as the child of divorced parents, I think that maybe it is time for the child to kill the parents. In Freudian terms, it's time to overcome this Oedipal complex. I would really like us to move beyond conceiving the situation of urban design as mediator between planning and architecture, because that gap is already filled by architects and planners. Urban design should be something else. It should be wider.

As an example, let me tell you about three student projects from the University of Toronto. One project proposes a website to deal with Toronto's new zoning ordinance, a new deregulation policy for certain neighborhoods. The web page allows citizens to visualize the consequences of this new ordinance. It allows them to participate in a public debate around these issues, to actually transform their own properties and understand this transformation according to the new ordinance. It allows them to comment on their neighbors' transformation in a virtual forum. There is no doubt that this web page, which is elaborate and sophisticated, is design. It is programmed with a fundamental design sensibility. But is it urban design as we conventionally define it? Is it architecture? Is it planning? I don't know.

Another type of product, and there are several examples, is inspired by OMA and the Situationists. These are basically design schedules to orchestrate events programmed over a period of time -- seasons, years -- in the city. They deal much more with time than space. It seems that in all definitions of urban design there is a consensus that urban design deals with space, physical planning. I think this kind of program-driven design, this notion of *mis-en-scène* in the city, challenges this space-based practice.

Another type of urban design has to do with what Guy Debord has identified, very pejoratively, as a type of marketing. He says urban design is to architecture what marketing is to the commodity. He, of course, means this in a very negative way. But I think of “design-as-marketing” as a potentially interesting mode of operation for urban design. We know of certain examples, like Mario Gandelsonas' work in Des Moines, or Robert Mangurian in St. Louis. Here, the urban designer is called upon to package the city, to construct an identity that can be used to market the city in effective ways. This

clearly involves graphic design; it has to do with marketing, with strategies that really are outside architecture and planning. These three examples, which I see being enthusiastically practiced in Toronto, seem to have displaced urban design from its conventional situation, and from the expectations of the curriculum itself.

(Applause)

**Roy Strickland:** I think we're being asked to do an awful lot within one or even two years. We don't live in a just world. If we were to teach everything there was to know about urban design or urbanism, it would be a seven, or eight, or ten-year process. From the perspective of our entering students at Michigan, aggressive intellectually, skilled professionally, articulate, witty people from all around the world, the urban design program represents a moment of transition from one location and one discipline, to another location and discipline and to future opportunities.

So I suggest, from the perspective of those students who come to these urban design programs, that we enjoy our position and relax a little bit. We should encourage people to be good learners. We need to recognize (as I was told when I was seventeen years old in my first job at I. M. Pei and Partners) that architects are young in their fifties, that there is the opportunity for decades of experience and learning after school. Our role might best be to serve as arbiters, as coordinators and as catalysts in the development of what Donald Schön calls "reflective practitioners," practitioners who think before they act, who are critical and questioning as they move into urban design, or, as numbers of my students have, into computation, politics, government, marriage, and many other endeavors.

I wish we could relax a little bit. I wish that we could enjoy our positions in schools as conversationalists about themes urban, as people who enjoy cities and can discuss cities, who see cities. We should ask our students not just to come out with a set of formal skills, but rather to use, as Howard Gardner identifies, the many parts of their brains. There are people who are skilled at visualization, there are people who are skilled at movement, there are people who are skilled at writing and mathematics. And we all have those skills in varying degrees. I think urban design, in its largeness, in its cultural and global perspective, allows people to come to it with all those various capacities. If we accept our transitional position, we might help students identify any number of roles in the definition of the physical landscape. So you're all correct, as my colleagues invariably are. But we might be more relaxed about what we do.

(Applause)

**Michael Schwarting:** I'd like to try to answer Alan's question, but also in some way discuss the assigned homework that both Walter Hood and Carol Burns have talked about. Six years ago when I put together the Urban Design Program at New York Institute of Technology, we had to think of a name. This meant thinking a lot about what ought to be happening over a fairly long period of time. To accomplish our mission we decided to call it Urban and Regional Design to address not just the city, but also the suburbs. The discussion of city and suburbs came up last night, and I think it was Michael Sorkin who said, "It's all one system." Today, Robert Fishman also talked about the fact that cities are going everywhere and becoming somewhat endless. This way of seeing the city in a much larger, symbiotic way has been important for a long time, especially in New York with our Regional Plan Authority. It's an important area, and one where urban design needs to be somewhat expansive. The suburbs -- the place, as carefully analyzed by Lewis Mumford, where people dislike and distrust the city even though they're dependant on it -- is a critical area to understand. Now that we've made this system of city and suburbs, we need to examine it.

Looking over the urban design program materials, from the perspective of having tried to formulate one myself, we can see that they are all post-professional degrees, they all require a bachelor of architecture degree, and they all are studio-based. Unless we all sit around and talk about changing these conditions, they set the name of the game. Interestingly, others have already noted that they are all one or two year programs. Roy Strickland mentioned needing seven or eight years, and I agree. One or two years are too short to learn a discipline, and so effectively these programs have become an extension of architectural thinking, but at the scale of the city. If we think about Alberti's observation that the city is like a house, we arrive at a more complex relationship between

architecture and its extension into urban design. Looking at the projects and curricula of these eight programs, they all seem to involve another scale of form-making, possibly looking at the void rather than the solid; they look at the functioning of the city, its infrastructure, and its economic, social and political dimensions; topics which are, presumably, part of the terrain of architectural study as much as they are part of urban design.

The other night there was a declaration that ran through the discussion about urban design as an artistic endeavor. I thought Camillio Sitte was going to come into the room at some point to join the conversation. Today, what's come out a bit more in conversation is how social science and physical science are also critical to urban design. The infrastructure of a region, for example, raises physical scientific issues as well as issues pertaining to the social dimensions of the city and its region.

In looking at the programs, my sense is that urban designers can't become planners. There's not enough schooling for that. Most urban design programs make little forays into different aspects of planning, and I think one question is whether planners have enough time to understand planning? Given the way urban design has grown out of architecture, I'm not sure it acts as a bridge. On the other hand, I don't think planners can do urban design if we've defined it as being a studio-based discipline, since this precludes the inclusion of other non-studio based disciplines. One question could be, "Should that definition of urban design be changed?"

One comment I found interesting last night was that things haven't been the same since Lindsay was the mayor of New York, when there was an interrelationship between government planning and urban design. I think others, Ed Bacon, in Philadelphia, and Ed Logan, in both Boston and New Haven, were also involved in similar participatory types of planning and urban design pursuits. But the possibilities these people represent require not so much a reassessment of academic pursuits, but of practice. It requires looking at the political, social and cultural structuring of the possibility for the support of interdisciplinary processes. What worries me is how dominant a force public/private strategy has now become in American urban decision-making. I'm not sure if the public/private partnerships allow us to create working interrelationships between planners and urban designers.

**Alan Plattus:** Thank you. We're close to taking our break, but I want to give people an assignment before you go out and drink coffee. I was hoping that one or two dominant strands worthy of continued discussion would emerge from what people said. But, in fact, as is often the case, there is a lot to chew on. I want to pick up one point and turn it into a question/challenge to all of us, including the audience. It's based on a very interesting observation that Rodolphe el-Khoury made about the somewhat accidental status of the Toronto Urban Design Program as the only post-professional program at the university. That comment made me realize how often we assume that urban design at the postgraduate, post-professional level, is something like a sub-specialization in medicine. There, after you've gotten a general degree, say surgery or internal medicine, you go on to study a sub-specialty field where, like Sherlock Holmes, you get really precise, detailed, practical information about one thing, and everything else gets set aside because you're now going to increasingly narrow your focus.

As we know from the urban design practitioners who have been with us over the last day and a half, that narrowing is impossible. Like lawyers, urban designers often have to learn about very complicated problems in very short periods of time; but unlike lawyers, who simply have to argue about the problems, urban designers actually have to do something or propose something around them. Maybe what we're talking about is not a further focusing of urban design, but about its dispersal, about how it could be seen as a general capstone to design education. One thing I would like you all to think about is whether urban design, at that post-professional level, may be the thing we come back together to do, not as sub-specialists, but as increasing generalists. Let me complicate this even further and suggest that, at least for me, as someone who teaches strictly in a school of architecture but who practices predominantly as an urban designer, one of the real challenges is how urban design moves back into first professional degree programs, and blows those apart. Maybe that's what Rodolphe meant by the killing of the parent -- that urban design literally comes back into the first

professional degree and radicalizes it, opens it up, disturbs the easy site boundaries architects give themselves by suggesting that we should be designing something different, a website perhaps, as a response to a project.

Finally, and this question may be the one that I feel more strongly about, I'd be interested to see how people respond to the proposition that urban design might best belong at the undergraduate level, as a crucial part of a liberal arts conversation. As Robert Fishman led us on a brisk walk over here this morning, I had a conversation with Alex Krieger (Harvard University), who is now teaching "Introduction to Urban Design" as an undergraduate course to six hundred college level students. I have had a similar experience teaching an undergraduate course on New Haven as an exemplary, not always positive, case study in urban development, where we've had to move to increasingly larger venues on the Yale campus, and are now in the biggest lecture room on campus. The last time we did it the course had six hundred or seven hundred students.

The other thing I'm reminded of is my very first teaching experience, as a TA for the introductory sophomore undergraduate studio that Barbara Littenberg taught (I don't think she is here today, but I wish she was). The very first problem Barbara gave those students who were just starting their first studio experience in the architecture program (actually, in a pre-architecture program), was a classical urban design problem. And it was a splendid first problem to immediately get the students to think on a larger scale about issues we assume are too complex to address in any meaningful way without years of experience and the help of colleagues in every imaginable professional field. But perhaps the place where urban design truly belongs, at least initially, is at that undergraduate level. During the break, think about those three levels of education, about the site or the non-site of urban design pedagogy.

(Applause)

## PUBLIC DISCUSSION

**Jyoti Hosagrahar** (University of Oregon): I teach architecture, urban design, and urban history. Like several people who have already spoken, I have degrees in architecture and planning, and in architecture and urban history. I am wondering about two related points. The first concerns the question of urban design as a specialty in and of itself. I think there is a great deal of merit to specializing in urban design, and of having a one or two year period of devoted study with a separate urban design emphasis. What I want to do is ask people to respond to an alternative idea I've been thinking about, which is to make urban design part of other already established degree programs, such

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\***Ellen Dunham-Jones** (Georgia Institute of Technology): Perhaps it is no surprise that when architects, as opposed to planners, discuss urban design education, not much attention is paid to the role of research. Tenure in planning programs tends to be heavily based on research; much of it sponsored, much of it policy-oriented, and most of it empirically based. Tenure in architecture programs, with the exception of architectural historians or PhD programs, tends to be based on publications of scholarship or design production, often more speculative than empirical. Rather than definitively distinguishing empirical research from theoretical scholarship (a minefield best to avoid in any case), I would like to argue that architects teaching urban design develop research skills that might better serve this hybrid field and reflect its multidisciplinary parentage. While there are many kinds of valuable research, in the remarks that follow, I will focus on three categories that I think will best help advance both urban design theory and implementation: empirical studies, urban design as research, and urban design as situated knowledge. These recommendations stem from my belief that the continued discussion of urban design now needs to enthusiastically incorporate research (not just various student design projects), into any discussion of



as architecture, or planning, or landscape architecture. For instance, at the University of Oregon, where I teach in the architecture department, one of the issues that has been on the table for some time is the idea of establishing a separate Master of Design Program. The main impetus for this has been student demand. We've thought about establishing a separate program because we've had several applicants who want a specialization in urban design, and we have several faculty members who have interesting experience and valuable expertise in the area.

We already teach several urban design courses as part of the undergraduate and graduate programs, and some of the other faculty would consider the studios they currently teach as urban design studios. As Alan pointed out earlier, even beginning level studios or intermediate level studios can address urban design issues. Architects, landscape architects and planners need to have this knowledge. Rather than removing urban design from all of these other departments and making it a separate stand-alone field, the hybrid character of urban design knowledge demands interaction with all of these disciplines.

My second point had to do with the very romantic notion of a complete design, one that is somehow final and finished and perfect at a certain point in time. Given the rapid transformations in the city today, this kind of stability is very fleeting; it is very momentary. How then, do we think about design in a new way, to respond to this kind of fleeting stability?

**Alan Plattus:** Thank you. I'm going to try to call for responses as we go along. But if that doesn't work, I'll go back to the model of multiple questions. Does anybody want to comment, or do we all agree? Asked unanimously. Next proposal.

**Ellen Dunham Jones** (Georgia Institute of Technology): I'm Director of the Architecture Program at Georgia Tech. My question is to the directors of the Urban Design Programs. We've heard about distinguishing between these programs, in terms of their curriculum, and from Carol Burns we heard about distinguishing between programs based on their particular locales. But we haven't heard much about research as something that might further distinguish these programs -- another potentially promising venue if this child of the divorce is to grow into a more adult discipline. Part of the attractiveness of these urban design programs is that they do not have to abide by standard accreditation requirements. This suggests a real opportunity to distinguish between different programs; it is a chance to endorse a multiplicity of approaches.\*

It seems like we are still a little bit stuck in the mode of the "architecture parent" where design is defined as the operative form of research. But design-based research is very particular to the project at hand, and it's difficult to learn from others. If programs were to identify their own burning research questions, that would really begin to help define each of those different programs differently. Like it or not, many of New Urbanism's successes result from having identified a burning question, and sustaining a conversation about various strategies around that question, which is to tackle the suburbs. Couldn't the various urban design programs represented here (as well as the almost forty certificate programs currently running in the U.S. right now) identify a whole range of questions relating to gentrification, to ecology, to infrastructure, to the problems of the densifying city versus the de-

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"the work" of an urban design program. Not only is such research necessary to the advancement of urban design as a discipline and a practice, it offers a significant opportunity for simultaneously deepening knowledge across the field, enriching the multiplicity of available strategies, while at the same time particularizing and distinguishing programs from each other.

On the one hand, there is a tremendous need for empirical studies to aid practitioners in convincing planning boards, developers, investors, community groups, etc., to legally allow new urban design proposals. This country's public and private systems for implementing urban design (where it is more often understood as real estate development and occasionally as community-building) are highly resistant to change. If we trust that the schools are turning out informed, ambitious, critical, designers capable of proposing worthy changes to the status quo, are we also equipping them with the arguments and empirical research skills they'll need to be effective? While studies correlating everything from crime rates to heat island effects may not appear to have a direct bearing on design, they are often needed to support changes to conventional conditions and practices. And, while

densifying city? What I'm trying to do in Atlanta is really focus a program around questions relating to the retrofitting of existing suburbs. It seems to me that if these different programs had more clearly identifiable research agendas, we would all benefit from the kinds of sustained conversations research provides.

**Alan Plattus:** It's a great question, and I want to throw it to the panel. Before I do, I just want to note, for the record, that the last panel (Urban Design Practices) did have something to say on this score, and not surprisingly, since people like Anne Vernez-Moudon have been doing rigorous urban design research for quite some time. I've been bugging her for years to republish her book on San Francisco neighborhoods, which I think is one of the spectacular documents of really detailed local research. And, of course, Denise Scott Brown was a pioneer of powerful research-based studios focused towards designers and design techniques, for example, the Las Vegas and Levittown studios. So I just want to acknowledge that the last panel was also representative of the potential of this direction. Folks?

**Roy Strickland:** Just for clarification, could you define a little more clearly what research is?

**Ellen Dunham Jones:** Now that I'm an administrator?

**Roy Strickland:** No, I ask this question because I have colleagues from various departments who have very sharp definitions of research and what the place of research is in a university.

**Ellen Dunham Jones:** Well, urban design faces a curious question; does it follow the kind of research standards of planning or the research standards of architecture? In terms of their research standards, the two are very different. I think it's very much up to individual programs to define what constitutes their research. Do the products of the design studios become the research? Is it more empirical, like the kind of morphological studies that Anne has been doing? I hope there is a multiplicity of answers. I certainly wouldn't want to narrow it. But I would hope each program would want to answer that question in its own way.

**Alan Plattus:** Are there others who would like to pick up on that?

**Rodolphe el-Khoury:** Well, yes. Research is definitely a very important preoccupation of ours. With a yearlong thesis, defining research is certainly the ambition of the Toronto program. Some students are encouraged to do a yearlong, independent research study that would lead to the thesis. In fact, the thesis becomes a substantial research project. But I would disagree with your suggestion that programs articulate one burning question to identify or define themselves. I think that our task is actually to open up the field for many questions.

**Roy Strickland:** May I pick that up? First, you need to understand that I only arrived at Michigan in September, so I'm the newbie in the university. But I think that the school, through Dean Kelbaugh's efforts, and the efforts of others, has identified an area of research, which for us is the city of Detroit, the post-industrial city. Over several years we've had a sustained investigation of that city. We are making design, programmatic, and development recommendations, and we are accumulating quite extensive documentation of the city, with parallel studios and workshops. Let's be frank. This is low status work. It's very tough to get outside support for that program, to make the project as

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urban design faculty may not themselves always have the skills to produce such studies, who else is better situated to partner or connect with researchers in other fields and help direct such studies in useful ways?

On the other hand, there is need for research that can help us better learn from each other's design work. Too often, urban design projects are either so place-specific that it is difficult to extrapolate general lessons that might be learned and applied elsewhere, or they are so singularly focused that it is difficult out of context to assess their impact on a wider range of concerns. In both cases, greater understanding and problematizing of the general context would significantly help future designers compare and accumulate strategies. This is not just a question of translating designs into more easily comprehended diagrams. Rather, it has to do with explicitly framing urban design as research on a particular condition, such as, for example, that of the gentrifying downtown, or the depopulating small town. Understanding and communication of the inter-related factors contributing to the broader issues at hand can allow better recognition of design's contribution to the physical, social, environmental, policy, and economic context, and a build-up of research in these areas.

extensive as it might be. I'm sure that within the university context, there are physicists and social scientists and others who would never consider this truly academic research. So for a number of reasons we're bucking a trend, bucking people's research in the context of a university, and also bucking limited financial support. But still, the project is generating a substantial body of material, and it is a kind of research that might help distinguish our program from others.

**Shai Gross** (Temple University): Hi. I teach Urban Studies and Economic and Social Geography at Temple University's Geography and Urban Studies department. Just as a first note, in response to the comment that you made before we broke for our coffee, I integrate urban design into my undergraduate urban studies courses, and students take to it very well. It seems to be somewhat of a relief to them, because it makes something that is initially foreign more understandable and also more approachable. But the main point that I wanted to make is this: in the first session we were talking about players, and now we're talking about pedagogy. There are several different types of players involved in this discussion; we have lawyers, planners, and architects, among others, on the panel. But, if we are addressing the education of urban designers, we seem to be forgetting about the user, the people for whom we're designing pedagogy. My point is that there are players missing on the panel, and I think they are the students. To formulate this working definition of urban design, it would be constructive to hear more from the students who are going to be involved in it.

**Alan Plattus:** In fact, I've already been advised that given this panel is ostensibly about pedagogy now is the time for observations and questions from students in the audience. You've just made the segue for us.

**Els Verbakel** (Columbia University): I would like to talk as a student. I have studied urban design both in Europe and in the USA. I studied in Belgium, in Spain, and at Columbia University in New York. I would like to talk about this opposition between urban design education in Europe and the United States, which hasn't been addressed yet. It seems to me that in Europe there is less separation between urban design and architecture. During my education in Europe, I could choose urban design studios while doing my architecture studies, and urban history was in a general package. If, in the United States, urban design is seen as a separate discipline, why are students who study in an urban design program required to have an architecture background? And why does the program need to be post-professional?

**Carol Burns:** I'd be glad to respond. I must say, I think it's the same question that you, Alan, left us with: "Where should urban design be studied?" And you laid out some options: at the end of graduate school, in the beginning of graduate school, in the undergraduate program. My question is why would it be in one spot? If urban design is not a discipline (I think the panel before us worked through that question, and I agree with that position enough to move forward with it), if it is a philosophy, or a way of thinking, if it's something that's internalized like a habit of mind or a passion, why would it not be taught continuously as part of a liberal education? It is a physical repository of all human activities, which can be studied from every angle. Why would urban design not be taught continuously through a professional architectural education? It could be a separate degree, say, a

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Of course, research shouldn't stop simply at developing generalizable design strategies. The real value of an urban design lays in its ability to positively impact lived, local conditions. In addition, research into how general intentions are particularized by design proposals to address specific places, communities, and legal hurdles is also needed to further help us learn from each other. This is where urban design programs might take more advantage of the fact that they do not have to conform to any prescribed curricula or spread themselves too thin by attempting to address all conditions. Rather, they can focus on a few local conditions and exploit the depth of the faculty and students' immediate, sustained, and personal knowledge of the challenges and opportunities facing both the recognized and disempowered stakeholders. Again, faculty and students are ideally situated to produce local designs, case studies, post-occupancy evaluations, and documentation of implementation for a broader audience. Individual programs would gain the benefits of local outreach, and the discipline as a whole would be enriched from research that collectively pooled this situated knowledge.

Each of these areas of research begs further questions, especially relative to the structure of urban design

specialty taught later as well. Perhaps in some ways urban design has been excluded from enough overt consideration within architecture degree programs.

**Rodolphe el-Khoury:** Maybe that's because it doesn't exist independently as a body of knowledge.

**Carol Burns:** I agree, yes.

**Rodolphe el-Khoury:** So how could it be taught throughout an undergraduate program? That implies there's something to teach, something that is independent of the issues and the field of operation. This is where I would disagree with the definition of urban design as a state of mind, or a philosophy. I think it's issue based, it's operational, it's strategic. It's something that depends on situations and not on a body of a priori knowledge that exists outside of these situations.

**Carol Burns:** Well, maybe we should draw a distinction between two areas of study: urban design and urbanism. For instance, when I was a liberal arts student at Bryn Mawr there was a course called the "Study of the City". And in the department of English, there was a course called "The Literature of the City". In economics there was a course called "Urban Economics". So within that very tightly constrained focus on liberal arts education there was plenty of material to teach.

**Alan Plattus:** Two quick observations, and then other students get ready because I think that was one of the better questions we had, not surprisingly. One interesting point our friend from Temple made is that she is using urban design problems to teach an undergraduate urban studies course. She is treating urban design less as a subject and more as a method for investigating urban scale problems. I think that's one way of mediating between the alternatives people are talking about here. I also want to thank Els Verbakel for reminding us of the extent to which so many of these issues have been thoroughly absorbed into the mainstream of European design education, particularly architectural education. The seeming revolution in architectural theory that occurred during the Seventies, the return to the city as the ground of architecture, was more quickly transformed and more completely absorbed into European architectural education than it was here in the United States, for understandable reasons. I remember when I got to graduate school in the mid-Seventies there was a student who had just arrived from Venice. I was just blown away looking through his portfolio from architecture school. He had very little work that we would think of as conventional architectural problems. All of the projects seemed to be, at least by our standards, urban, because the architectural and the urban, at least at his school and others like it, had been so thoroughly absorbed.

**Kathryn Firth** (London School of Economics): I teach in the Cities Programme at the London School of Economics, which is probably the only urban design program represented in this room that has no association whatsoever with an architecture program. Our program accepts architects and people from any other discipline, in about a fifty/fifty split. As Carol was saying, it is very important to make people aware of the built environment earlier on in life, at age ten, or age eighteen, or as an undergraduate -- and I think our program's admissions policy speaks to that.

Going back to what Alan just said, when we look to Europe we tend to praise the way urbanism and architecture are integrated. But I want to raise another question, which is what do we

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education. In order to promote continued research in urban design, should urban design curricula include some training in research methods? Should urban design programs try to have a spectrum of faculty each with their own research agenda and design approach, so as to provide students with maximum breadth of exposure to a range of issues and approaches? Or, might entire faculties collaborate on a common condition/problem, each bringing a different research specialization towards the common problem, so as to provide students with maximum depth into a problem? My point is simply to argue that there are many kinds of useful research that urban design can benefit from, that schools can significantly influence the field through their role in producing research, and that while much of the research related to urban design coming from planners, developers, urban historians, and urban morphologists is very useful, there may be new kinds of research needed to particularly help us learn how to better learn from each other's work, especially with regards to design strategies.

want the people who go through our programs to go out in the world and do? What debates do we want them to influence? What role do we want them to play? What I see happening with many of our students is that they end up working with all of the people who are sitting at the panel right now. If they come in as an architect there is a very good chance that they will go out and work for a design practice. But that's not necessarily always the case. As someone said earlier, if you teach people at the graduate level you're usually capturing them at a point of transition in their lives. They've decided to make a break. If we look into the larger issues of how we want to shape our cities, capitalizing on the potential of the mature graduate student offers a very valuable opportunity to influence the shape of our cities.\*

**Alex Wall** (University of Karlsruhe, Germany): I'm the chair of Urban Design in an Institute for Local, Regional and City Planning, and I'm on the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Karlsruhe in Germany, where the diploma is a double-aimed one in engineering, and probably lies between an undergraduate and graduate degree. We have no Masters program as yet. My question is triggered by Robert Fishman and Walter Hood, and it is about a new player on the faculty horizon called "Landscape Urbanism." There is a landscape urbanism conference taking place now at the University of Pennsylvania. The University of Illinois at Chicago has a new program. So does the Architectural Association in London. Urban design is driven partly by landscape architects in France and Holland, possibly because in the new context of the regional city, a landscape architect can offer a larger contextual understanding. He or she can create a context for the traditional specific urban design problem. So it seems to be a symptom of something. If you wouldn't start such a program at your faculty, how will you respond to what seems to be a naturally arising new development?

**Walter Hood:** Well, I don't know if I'm going to answer this question directly. But a few thoughts came into my head. About ten, well, fifteen years ago, when I first came to Berkeley, I was looking for an urban design program. I was excited by the idea of going to a College of Environmental Design where architecture, landscape architecture, planning, and visual studies (which had at one time been separated) had come together in one physical space to engage in interdisciplinary problem solving, in a collaboration between various professions. Unbeknownst to me, when I got there, they were splintered, as they are everywhere else. But my urban design degree came through the study of landscape architecture, because the faculty at Berkeley was interdisciplinary. More than half of the faculty doesn't have landscape architecture degrees. They range from scientists, to geomorphologists, to urban designers, to planners, to architects, etc. The program at Berkeley has probably been thinking in this interdisciplinary way for quite a while, and I think other places are also bringing diverse faculty into their landscape architecture programs. It's a good fit, as I said before, because landscape architects have been dealing with the urban scale, with methods of looking at region, looking at the city, for over one hundred years. New York offers a great example of the big role that landscape architecture has played in urban design within the city.

**Robert Fishman:** Sometimes I'm tempted to think that the overwhelming aim of the design professions in the United States is to recreate Frederick Law Olmsted. In other words, exactly what he

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\***Els Verbakel** (Columbia University): What is the product of an urban design project? Master plans, development strategies, and massing exercises don't seem to satisfy the question because of the ephemeral character of their repercussions on the urban environment. As Jerold Kayden suggested: To design is human; to implement is divine. The final manifestation or test of an urban design project is the built space, implemented through an architectural design process. I would even argue that there is no limit to how small an urban design project can be. Whether it is a bus stop or an airport, a weather shelter or a social housing project, what matters is not its size but its scale, its reach. This implies a close collaboration between urban designers and architects, and an understanding from both sides of how an architectural process can incorporate urban issues that reach further than the property line. In order to do so, a clearer delineation of the goal of education not only of urban design, but also of architecture, is needed.

The argument that urban design is the child of divorced parents (architecture and urban planning) was raised a few times during the conference and needs to be looked at more closely. When, where and why did this separation

was able to put together, we divide. In fact, at the University of Michigan, landscape architecture is in a totally different school.

**Alan Plattus:** Agriculture.

**Roy Strickland:** No, Natural Resources.

**Robert Fishman:** And that, I think, draws on one of the themes of these questions. The way in which the academic world divides almost compulsively what our interests, our aims and our goals have to bring together. Just to mention a couple of other names; two of the most important books of the last fifty or sixty years, Lewis Mumford's *City and History*, and Jane Jacobs' *Death and Life of Great American Cities*, were written by people whose terminal degree was a high school degree. They were not exposed to these divisive influences. I think we constantly have to go against the basic principles of higher education in order to create the real education we need.

**Alan Plattus:** I hasten to point out that Olmsted did go to college at Yale, but only for a year.

**Etienne Coutu** (Columbia University): My question is probably for Rodolphe. I'm a student in the Urban Design Program at Columbia. Among the richness of this program is how international it is. This year I was lucky to be with twenty-four other students from fifteen different countries. But one of the problems with the program is its cost, which limits who can attend. In comparison, Canadian programs are much less expensive. The University of Montreal's Master of Environmental Design has many people from developing countries like Asia and Africa. So my question is for you, since you are from the University of Toronto. Will you initiate exchanges with American universities, and will the American universities open their doors not only to Canadians, but also to African students? Will they help these students financially, since most of the urban development in the Twenty-First Century will probably take place in Africa? The question is open.

**Rodolphe el-Khoury:** This richness in student demographics is also true in Toronto. This year we only have one Canadian applicant. All the rest are international; African, Asian, applicants from all over the world. It is strange that we didn't have a single American applicant, since one would expect Toronto to be attractive to American students. There is no language barrier, like in Quebec, and it looks just like a midwestern city (Canadians don't like to say that, but it's true). The tuition is also extremely attractive. So your question was about how the U.S. can start to actually draw on this.

**Etienne Coutu:** Yes. How will you convince the people you see here this weekend to take some Canadian students, and will you host some of their students through exchange programs, or something similar? I think this is essential for urban design. We need to be exposed to the experience of people from other countries, and people from other countries need our experience.

**Rodolphe el-Khoury:** Well, I know that the Harvard Graduate School of Design does attract a lot of international students.

**Alex Krieger:** Consistently, over the forty-year history of the Harvard Graduate School of Design program, the international component of the student body has been half to two thirds. Just like Columbia. But beware: with all these programs there is a risk of becoming like the convention centers in American cities. There may not be as much of a market for graduate urban design study as you all

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happen? My first intuition, having had an education in architecture and urban design both in Europe and the United States, is that this cleavage is more prominent in America, where privatization happened much earlier than in Europe. Comparing pedagogies with Western Europe and elsewhere could be useful, as the distinction between architecture, urban design and planning seems less explicit in European design programs. In addition to looking at what already exists in design programs, new ways of re-integrating those fields of education should be developed, while taking into account current socio-economic forces -- for example, through the investigation of current implementations of public-private partnerships and the extent to which an urban project can influence the environment through privately owned space. Accordingly, urban design practice will more feasibly survive.

might believe. But I'll return to that point a little later on.

**Alan Plattus:** Well, that goes together with a dirty little secret that I suppose is worth exposing, even if we don't need to discuss it, which is that in American universities a lot of post-professional programs, urban design programs in particular, have been looked at as cash cows. That's not to accuse any program of being less than serious. It is simply true that these are largely tuition driven programs. In some ways I think that fact takes us back to Ellen Dunham's question. Not until faculty see urban design programs as serious sources of research collaboration, and not until students are seen as collaborators in that ongoing research (coming not just to pay tuition, get a quick degree, and go back to wherever they came from), will there be much prospect of transforming the program's status within the university at large. This is another important reason why the research component needs to be taken seriously, I believe. Other questions from the floor?

**Jeffrey Raven** (Architect, NYC): I'm an architect in New York. I have almost a technical pedagogy question. In light of the fact that these are second professional degrees, what prevents these programs from being whatever they want to be for a year? For example, why not a research based endeavor for a one year thesis, perhaps with some structure, not simply another version of the graduate degree modeled on architecture schools with three classes, a design studio, etc.? This dovetails with the fact that many students have been out of school for several years, they have been in the profession, they have discovered things compelling, things that have been beyond their reach as architects. I'm talking about architecture graduates that find themselves in the urban design world, involved in everything from community empowerment to strategic planning to law, to development -- you name it, we've heard it all. It would be very interesting to bring back these mature practitioners, and these issues, to the schools, as a way of developing research-driven urban design programs. I'm not saying anything radically new. It seems that the programs described here, and the images of their work that I've seen today look a lot like what we did in architecture school. Given that earlier panels have expressed frustration with having to draw from so many different tendencies within urban design, doesn't it lend itself to more of a flexible type of curriculum, one that would allow someone who has already been out of school for a few years to come back and explore an idea in an academic setting? This dovetails with Rodolphe's point about urban design as a response to particular situations using particular strategies. How do you go in there and address the fact that urban design does not necessarily have an overarching body of knowledge per se?

**Alan Plattus:** Not to oversimplify, but it sounds like you're asking about the balance between course-based work, and research and/or project-based work in urban design education. I think it's fair to say that it varies fairly dramatically from program to program. I'll throw the question to the various program heads here at the panel, and to anyone in the audience who would like to comment on how you calibrate that balance, and how you take advantage of the opportunities of those sorts of students. Denise?

**Denise Scott Brown:** I think it depends on the individual who is going into urban design, when are they going, and why? If it is someone whose practice has led him or her into urbanism, and now they want to use their experience in, or find out more about, a specific area, it sounds like a professional doctoral program is for them. On the other hand, if they're heading out towards scholarly research, then a PhD program is appropriate. What concerns me are the people who want to professionally practice in urbanism, but who end up doing large scale architecture, which, in my opinion, is what many of the European schools teach. People who really want to practice as urban designers in cities need to know about transportation (not traffic engineering). They need to know regional science, they need to know regional economics, they need to know urban land use, they need a certain amount of law, and they need politics, social sciences, and sociology. All of these subjects are very, very important if you want to be a practicing urban designer in the city. I use these subjects all the time in architecture, because I do urban transportation and land use planning inside buildings. But having said that, I really think you need to do them outside buildings. It would be a shame if you didn't get that kind of training if what you wanted to be was an urban designer.

**Alan Plattus:** This raises a question that somebody may want to address at some point. I was

struck by the surveys that the practitioners filled out, and in particular, how the possession of an urban design degree is not that influential as a hiring credential. But then, talking to Harrison Fraker earlier, he said the opposite. In his experience, a lot of the big firms doing large-scale urban design type projects are, in fact, hiring graduates of his program, at least. This seems to take us back to the research question that Ellen raised earlier and to the issue of students knowing what, as consumers of educational products, they want to get out of a program. I believe that schools of social work, as well as many business schools, routinely require quite a bit of real world experience as a prerequisite for admission to their graduate programs, which are in fact, heavily course-based. In other words, what they do is take in people who have had a lot of practical experience, and then, in a systematic way, try to ground them in the theory and knowledge-base that pertains to those fields. This is a good question, and a good line of discussion, but not one we will likely resolve at this hour in the afternoon. Any of my colleagues want to comment further on that issue? We'll take another question from the floor. I think there's one over here.

**Manjeet Tangri** (City of Albuquerque, New Mexico): My question returns to the discussion of when should we learn about urban design. Perhaps the universities should be looking into developing a course for elementary school kids because when you educate and make these kids aware, they will grow up to become mayors, they will become city councilors, they will become economists. That's when you make an impact on the urban environment. Dr. Ann Taylor, at the University of Minnesota, has developed an architecture course that she teaches to schoolchildren. How would you respond to that curriculum?

**Alan Plattus:** I'm going to throw that one to Roy Strickland, if you don't mind. But I think this is another version of what Marilyn Jordan Taylor calls "inventing your client." You start to tap the mayors sometime before fourth grade, get into their hearts and minds.

**Roy Strickland:** That's an extremely interesting question. For the past ten years or so I've been engaged with public schools and public school systems around the country, and I have been thinking about how urban design might be related to the theme of learning, lifelong learning. I often find that the ideas coming from fifth, sixth and twelfth graders are extremely stimulating and exciting and full of pungent lessons. Kids are enormously perceptive about their environment. And yet, they don't understand, or they are not yet in a position to understand, that they have power over that environment. Instead they're receivers of the environment; they are put in a passive role. To break youngsters out of that passive role, to open up new opportunities and new perspectives to them, takes a great commitment on the part of adults and universities. This is exactly where this question of research and support comes in, because what high powered university faculty member, or struggling untenured professor is going to reach out into a kindergarten environment, or public school environment outside of his or her discipline? That is a low status environment. In addition, we're talking about class differences here, since sixty-five percent of the people in this country do not go on to college. A professional architect, or designer, or planner is a member of an elite, and frankly, public schools are not the concern of most of the elite institutions that offer urban design and architecture programs. So for anyone interested in entering that arena requires very serious commitment. I've managed to get seven hundred thousand dollars worth of research money to support that effort, which is laughable when I compare it to colleagues in engineering and the sciences. I bet there is money out there, but it is pursued only at great risk to one's personal career and academic development. That's something that we, as designers, need to confront. What are we willing to sacrifice in order to cultivate this emerging client base? What sort of hard choices are we willing to make? Are we willing to be public school teachers? Do you know what it's like to be a public school teacher? It is horrific. You speak about low status as urban designers, but speak about low status, speak about being overworked, speak about having no control over your environment, and you are speaking of the situation of too many elementary and high school teachers.

**Manjeet Tangri:** Can I just say something? What I was saying is that you don't have to become a public school teacher. Dr. Ann Taylor, who I was referring to, trains public school teachers.

**Roy Strickland:** Yes. But that still takes an enormous commitment. And within the university



isn't that left to people in the school of education?

**Robert Beauregard:** There seems to be a proposition emerging here; you're never too young to think about and learn urban design. And no matter how old you live to be, you'll never know urban design.

(Applause)

**Robert Beauregard:** What does that say about urban design education?

**Roy Strickland:** It should be more like kindergarten.

**Robert Fishman:** I think that says it all. But I just wanted to suggest one more model: Ann Spirn's West Philadelphia landscape project. Ann is a very high status person, now teaching at MIT, who went into a middle school in one of the poorest districts of West Philadelphia and made landscape and ecology the center of the learning process. It's a project I admire tremendously. Then there is the other side of the coin. So many people are growing up in low-density cities who have no experience with public transportation. Just taking a bus is something very strange to them. There's a lot of education that has to be done in terms of what a city is and what urbanism is.

**Alan Plattus:** I think on that note we should do as Harrison called for at the end of the last session; thank these panelists.

(Applause)

**Alan Plattus:** And also, the audience. And a reminder that we're going to take a brief break and then return for the last panel.



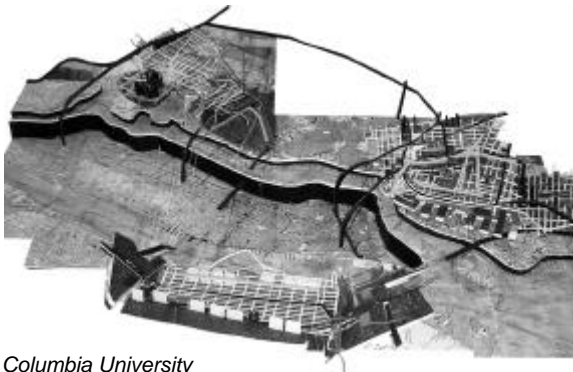
# Urban Design Premises: Roundtable Discussion



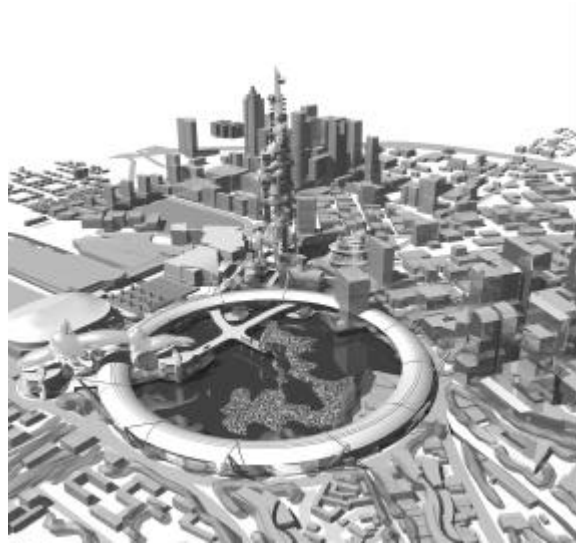
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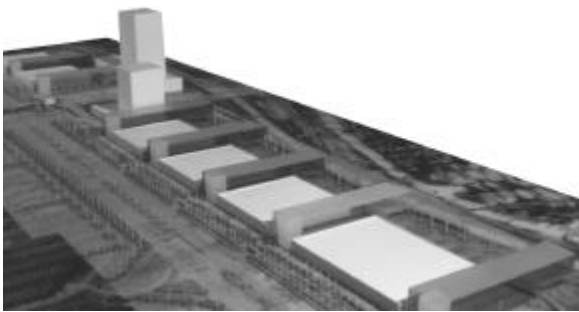
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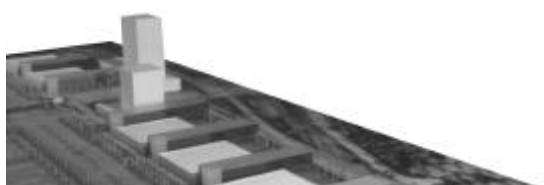
*Harvard University*



*Washington University in St. Louis*



*University of Washington in Seattle*



*University of Toronto*

**Panel Synopsis:** *The final panel of the conference is composed of a roundtable discussion. While many of the issues mentioned throughout the conference are further elaborated upon, such as the appropriate level of urban design education, and urban design's relation to the other design professions, this exchange importantly raises the social and political responsibilities falling upon urban designers. Many of the panelists call for further civic engagement of urban design professionals, ranging from increased democratic participation, helping disempowered groups in adjudicating their grievances, to defending diversity and ensuring the maintenance of good cities. The panelists understand the various challenges posed by globalization as making such social intervention all the more pertinent. It is also observed that the foremost movements in urbanism historically emerged to alleviate major social crises. Some suggest that urban design has a more positive reception amongst the wider public as compared to the other design professions, furthermore underscoring the importance of embracing urban design's broad social responsibilities. Urban designers are urged to utilize their power in further developing alternative visions. Thus, the panelists conclude that despite, perhaps even due to, urban design's enduring debate regarding its origin and character, its fresh perspective and insights make urban designers especially well situated to confront the demands of contemporary urbanism.*

**Moderator:** Raymond Gastil, Van Alen Institute

**Panelists:** Rodolphe el-Khoury, University of Toronto  
Harrison Fraker, UC Berkeley  
Alex Krieger, Harvard University  
Richard Plunz, Columbia University  
Michael Sorkin, The City College of the City University of New York  
Roy Strickland, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor  
Jacqueline Tatom, Washington University, St. Louis  
Anne Vernez-Moudon, University of Washington, Seattle

**Raymond Gastil:** I ended up being extremely gratified, even though I may have misunderstood, when I heard Denise Scott Brown declare that there is a discipline of urban design. She didn't use the word "discipline," but she did say, "There are things you can teach. There are things you can practice. And it's not just great architecture."

To lead into the questions that I want to ask this last panel I think one thing I could say about the Van Alen Institute's urban design project is that it very much involves an issue that many people have raised here today, that of trying to invent a client by celebrating public agencies that actually engage in that urban design endeavor. The Van Alen Institute's job is to create a better client, to allow a client to emerge that actually cares about urban design. One way or another, I think everyone here is striving for a similar thing, whether they're talking about educating people in fifth grade, or sixty year old CEOs, or eighty-five year old clients at a senior center.

In this panel, I want to revisit some of the issues that came up today around the question of better clients, and about the relationship of pedagogy to practice. I'm going to direct these questions to particular panelists, but they don't have to answer the questions I address to them. They can answer any question they want.

My first question is about the issue of the canon. As people interested in cities, do we in fact care about a canon of amazing places? Robert Fishman mentioned this in the previous panel. Or, do we really care about a canon of approaches, as opposed to a canon of places? In a discipline that remains connected to place, a canon of approaches may be a very odd place to be.

My second question is about the local versus global issue, which was brought up last night by Doug Kelbaugh, in response to Alex Krieger and others. How do you actually have a local identity, which is, for lack of a better term, a progressive identity? Another question is, what makes a good city? As Jacqueline Tatom noted, this term, "good city," seemed to have a physical determinism redolent of the worst excesses of mid-century, heroic modernism. Yet, if we look for the clients of the future, there are many people who are extremely eager to believe in physical determinism, believing that urban designers can help provide a "good city" -- perhaps not on the heroic scale, but rather on the local scale.

Finally, the question that perhaps ties all the others together pertains to the relationship of urban design to power, or urban design's relationship to politics, which is just another way of raising the question of the client. Something we have to face in the urban design scenario, are accusations of not being connected to the right issues, or to the right people -- Roy Strickland pointed to this status issue earlier this afternoon. One method that urban designers, like architects, use to gain prestige and status in the world is, in fact, to do an end run around politics -- they declare themselves such cutting edge, cultural thinkers and artists that their work ends up being situated in a different cultural realm. They make urban design part of high culture. We know people who do that. You all know their names. They're very successful at it. And basically, I'd say seventy-five percent of urban design students whose work I see in reviews are being trained to try and be one of those people. I'm not saying that's a bad thing or a good thing. I have mixed feelings about it. But I think that this group might actually

respond to that question in a number of ways. I'd like to start with Michael Sorkin, who has already made a plea, last night, for trying to achieve beauty. (Laughter)

**Michael Sorkin:** Lovely. First, to the Canadian student in the audience who, at the last panel, raised the point of tuition costs for foreigners interested in an American urban design degree, seven thousand dollars US will buy you an urban design education at City College. (Laughter) It's a totally non-discriminatory college.

(Applause)

I will speak briefly on this matter of the canon. I'm not going to talk about a canon of places, although I could certainly spit out tales of delightful cities I have known. I mentioned Fez last night, and I certainly will never forget the month that I visited both Prague and Fez for the first time.

**Anne Vernez-Moudon:** At the same time?

**Michael Sorkin:** Close: within the same month. One of the agendas of this conference has been to somehow define this slippery creature called, "urban design." Certainly one strategy for doing that is to enumerate some sites of research -- something that has come up in an earlier panel. But what I want to do is to present another kind of a canon, a set of desires, which I think is another way of elaborating the dimensions of urban design. I've made a list of ten such desires -- or sites -- that I think are relevant; moments of investigation for this discipline, whatever it is. The articulation of these desires depends, in each instance, on the core activity of urban design: the management of propinquities in space.

The first of these desires is the desire for a democratic space. As I was trying to suggest last night, I believe accident is the instrument of a democratic urbanism. Let me give you an example. I brought my *New York Review of Books* on the subway as camouflage for my trip to the Upper West Side. And in it I came across this letter from Cass Sunstein -- responding to a letter written about a review of his book, *Republic.com*, in which he writes about the neglected requirements for genuine free expression on the web. Although Sunstein was talking about the Internet, he might have been talking about cities in writing that unanticipated, un-chosen encounters, and a range of shared experiences were crucial for electronic democracy. This idea of accident as foundational for a democratic net, I think, is also foundational for a democratic urbanism. And I am happy to see the learned professor affirming this.

A second desire in the city, likewise formative for urban design, is the desire for intimacy. By this I mean the dimensioning of the city via the body. I live in the Village. I've lived there for twenty years, in the same apartment. It's a walk up, and I live on the top floor. Thus, after many years of empirical research, I can tell you that five floors is the absolute upper limit of the ability of a middle-aged human to climb stairs. This is a kind of dimensional intimacy established via the body. There are many others. And I think one of the projects of urban design is to formulate the algorithms that describe the distances and dimensions that are appropriate to a city, or an urban environment, in which the human body plays the alpha role in locomotion and dimension.

A third of my ten desires, or articulations of desires, is the desire for memory. I talked yesterday about this notion of climax urbanism. And I invoked this as the forester's metaphor. I'd now like to let it slide into the other alternative, and to say that these climax forms do represent a kind of coming together, if you will, which I think is the substrate of the kind of compact that is crucial for a memorable urban environment.

Fourth in this canon of desires, is privacy. By privacy I understand not simply the idea that the city is a place in which we can bathe in anonymity, but that the city offers us the medium of living our lives in our own chosen ways. This kind of privacy -- embracing both private choices and private places -- is, I think, essential to urban design.

Ecology is another object of desire. By ecology, I understand first that our cities are networks, and second that the primal ecotope in the city is the neighborhood. Therefore, if we are to be ecologists of the urban, our focus must be on the dynamics of neighborhoods and their interactions. I understand sustainability to be a little bit different from ecology, having to do with the lie of the city on the land, and with its footprint. I find the concept of the ecological footprint to be a highly suggestive

and useful tool for analyzing another kind of climax. Here we slip back into the forestry metaphor. The notion that there is a possibility of thinking of a city as a single and continuous entity, that by modeling its requirements, its daily intakes of oxygen and food and fiber and so on, we formulate the city in a radically different way than the model of infinite growth and mere complexity.

Mystery is another of my desires for the city. The city is preeminently the place where the stimulus of the unexpected is delivered to us in varying forms at varying times. Mystery differs from accident inasmuch as it must be unraveled, not simply encountered. It demands tools, perspective, and choice

Artistry is another deep desire. I think that we shouldn't be shy about the discussion of taste in questions of the city. I began to suggest last night that I think artistry is going to be increasingly crucial as a tool for individuation of cities. And that provoked a question asking what we could do to temper the onslaught of the global, and to reaffirm and reestablish locality. I would argue that as cultural contexts become more and more slippery and homogenized, artistic differences will become increasingly important in the creation of urban character.

When I finished architecture school, I came to New York to work for city government. Those were the Lindsay years (former mayor of New York City), and I can remember the way in which he tried to cheer us all up by referring to New York with the gruesomely ironic phrase, "Fun City." Although those were, in many ways, miserable days for the body politic, it was also true that I came to Manhattan because I couldn't imagine any place more fun. The patterns of conviviality that we as urban designers are able to engage and to stimulate are absolutely critical to the formulation of a good city. Our task is to produce as much pleasure for people as we possibly can. And I'm hesitatingly thinking of the good city as the core of whatever it is we are doing.

And finally, the last of these ten articulations of desire in my canon is diversity. Cities increasingly are the vessels of difference, and the celebration and defense of difference is an absolutely central urban project. I think we are moving beyond the idea of the city as the cauldron or the melting pot, the place that in essence offers the universal right to surrender everything that makes us different. Instead, the city is becoming a kind of retention vessel, or catchment basin, for a tremendous diversity, which we know -- to return to the ecological metaphor -- is absolutely critical to the health of any biological system. Thank you.

**Raymond Gastil:** I want to use the diversity question as an opportunity to turn to Alex Krieger. Maybe you could discuss the point you made last night about globalization possibly being a good thing, even if it is becoming universal, since this relates to the question of diversity and what makes the city strong

**Alex Krieger:** I'll take the option of answering a different question. (Laughter) But perhaps in an elliptical way, I'll get back to the issue of diversity. First of all, I'd love to inform Roy Strickland that I'm very relaxed about urban design. I'm relaxed about my ability to define it explicitly. I think that's a good thing and a bad thing. I'm relaxed about the opportunities in the marketplace for urban design services, both for those in power as well as those who are desperate to find experts through whom they could gain a little bit more power. And I'm relaxed about everyone's education, although I do worry about whether or not we will be able to support urban design programs.

Actually, what I'd like to do as a former program director who's been pushed up to the position of Chair, is situate urban design as a discipline, assuming that it is one. I'd like to situate the education of urban design, since I thought a very compelling part of the last session was the discussion around where it should be taught. And then lastly, I'd like to return to the issue of power, to situate the practice of urban design and identify one possible challenge to the people in this room.

First of all, in the matter of defining urban design, of situating it as a field of endeavor, I am reminded of a book that just came out which I almost brought with me today -- but it's way too heavy, not in content but in size. The book is by Kenneth Kolson, and is called *Big Plans: The Allure and Folly of Urban Design*. I'm very jealous of the subtitle because I wish I had thought of it. Because, in fact, it seems to capture why people have so much angst about urban design.

At this conference, who among us, except maybe Michael Sorkin, can say, "I design cities"?

(Laughter) It's preposterous in the extreme, right? That's why I think urban design's folly and allure intrigue us. The allure intrigues us, while the folly reminds us about how impossible it is. So I believe that urban design is actually a series of what I call active territories. I won't go into that in detail. But there are many people who call themselves urban designers right now, people who are pursuing relatively specific actions which they think are very important and useful to society, without worry about whether they encompass urbanism in the process. There are those who are involved in the Smart Growth movement, and there are those who are involved in envisioning future cities, and there are those involved in restoring time honored urban traditions. They're all doing pretty good work. And they're not all that concerned about whether their work perfectly overlaps with those of their colleagues, or whether they are lacking some kind of meta-theory about what constitutes urban design. That's one of the reasons for my being relaxed.

I think many people practicing urban design identify it as a screen or a lens, as somebody called it early today, as opposed to some kind of overarching endeavor. In the first panel this morning, Jacqueline Tatom said, "Urban design needs to broaden the scope." But maybe we need to focus its scope as well. Some will broaden it and some will focus it -- and both will be doing God's work in terms of our need to improve and evolve, to rescue and preserve, and of course, to alter our cities. So, I think that urban design is a series of disciplines, practiced perhaps out of some sense of common value. Exactly what this practice entails is less certain, but perhaps we can talk about it in terms of a common interest, or passion about settlement, versus an interest in artifacts, or other quantities, or analysis, which are also passions that people have about the world.

Secondly, I'd like to say something about situating the education of urban design. I believe this education should take place in three categories, and that the sort of information in each category has to be very different. I'm very much committed to our program, which says that people must enter into the center of urban design from another discipline; either architecture, or landscape architecture, or planning. We've never had an urban design degree, per se, nor do we intend to have one, at least not in the near future. What we have is a Master of Architecture and Urban Design. We have a degree called the Master of Landscape and Architecture Design. And we used to have a Master of City Planning and Urban Design degree (the one I received), which I would love to restore as part of our program.

In all these degrees, the suffix of urban design doesn't stand for specialization. The suffix actually stands for a broadening of the skills that professionals bring into this field -- a broadening that allows individuals to deploy their skills in a very different way than they might have as an architect, or a landscape architect, or a planner.\*

While some of my own faculty might disagree, I believe that in our program at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, the training of urban designers as graduate students, as professionals, is about broadening their future world. That's why I very much agree with Denise Scott Brown's list of things that urban designers must also encounter. In our curriculum, we make a very basic distinction between the studio learning process, which is exploratory in nature, and the more conceptually, or

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\***Kathryn Firth** (London School of Economics): Where do we expect and hope urban design graduates will end up working? Simply as urban designers in a private urban design/architectural practice? Why not also as developers, municipal chief executive officers, development analysts, urban policy consultants, or even mayors? In short, is it not the goal to train people who can contribute to, and influence, the debates about the future shape of our cities and suburbs? Despite the fact that not all people trained as architects go on to practice architecture (indeed many become pop stars), architectural programs are designed with the expectation that a graduate will generally work for a private architectural practice upon graduation. If, however, the ambition of urban design is to educate people to take a broad view of the urban environment, how does this and should this influence the urban design curriculum? In addition, Denise Scott Brown suggested during Panel 2 (Urban Design Practices) that perhaps we should focus on urban studies as a discipline, possibly implying that the field of urban design circumscribes too narrow a remit. Similarly, Alex Krieger refers to urban design as an encompassing series of disciplines. If this is the case, how should it influence how we teach urban design? Do we risk diluting what many



factually based coursework where students learn skills and techniques. In all four semesters of design studio, we don't worry so much about what clients need. Studio is where students think, and postulate, and maybe even do hair-brained things. At the same time, they are taking courses where they learn at least a little bit about things like real estate, or planning law, with Jerold Kayden, or systems, such as transportation.

In my opinion, graduate level study is geared towards professionals who are interested in thinking more comprehensively about the city and who wish to more broadly deploy their professional training as a consequence of their interest in cities. Now, I'm not sure if there really is a great demand for those kinds of people, or as much demand as all of these new programs suggest. I'm actually very concerned about that. Where I do think there's an unbelievable growth market is at the undergraduate level -- perhaps even earlier, but I won't address that. I believe that we do know more than fifth graders about designing cities, even though they might have an insight or two about that for us.

However, at the undergraduate level, I believe that right now there's a tremendous desire on the part of students to talk about sprawl, and quality of life, and if not about cities, then something like cities -- the places where they grew up. There is a lot of interest in global urbanization, or globalization, and its ramifications. I discovered this over the past year when, as Alan said, I offered a course to Harvard undergraduates. I was overwhelmed by the interest -- students didn't enroll because I was teaching the course, they enrolled because of the subject matter. Architecture has not often been offered as an undergraduate liberal arts course, certainly not at Harvard, and not necessarily as often as it should at other universities either.

But you don't teach techniques of urban design to undergraduates. That's where you teach, if not canons, some of the things I think Michael Sorkin identified earlier. You teach characteristics, or you teach insights, or you teach ways of thinking about the city. There's a hunger for those things. There's a hunger to understand urbanism, even if that word is not necessarily used amongst people who are not trained in design.\*

Doug Kelbaugh wanted me to mention that I think there's a role for urban design courses in almost all first professional degree architecture programs. I wish more schools would inculcate their students with awareness of urban design. But at the moment, that's not my particular concern. At the moment, I'm interested in broadening the knowledge base of professionals wishing to call themselves urban designers. I am also interested in invading the undergraduate world, or a younger world, to have them find a way to express their interest in cities as they grow into adulthood, and become mayors.

Lastly, I want to say something about situating urban design as a practice or as an endeavor. I think urban design encompasses many endeavors; it isn't singular. Returning to the perhaps over-used offspring metaphor of the past two days, I think that Rodolphe el-Khoury was close to being correct. I'm not sure that patricide is in order. But I do think that as an illegitimate child of architecture and planning, urban design wants to say, "A pox on both your houses." I think the urban designer challenges the assumptions of the architect and should do so more and more, because some of those assumptions are very narrow. Urban designers also challenge assumptions of planners who are

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of us value about the discipline of urban design -- namely, its design-centric nature? Does multi-disciplinary collaboration start most productively in urban design practice, or should it be introduced earlier to students in the academic setting?

**\*Stanley Moses** (City University of New York): Having been asked by Andrea Kahn to state brief reactions to the conference, I wish to focus upon the remarks made by Alex Krieger in the concluding panel. Krieger stated that in a recent survey conducted among graduate students at Harvard, it was demonstrated overwhelmingly that the subject of greatest interest to students is the field of urban design. Students were generally uninterested in planning courses because they believed it to be too related to the world of bureaucracy, and therefore boring and uncreative. They also expressed lack of interest in architecture because they felt it had become a sub-field of land development, with the work of the architect now controlled and dominated by developers. Since students, according to Professor Krieger, are currently not attracted to either architecture or planning, they have focused

somehow trapped in a slightly narrow framing of the world, of how it ought to change and improve, and of who ought to be heeded in these conversations about change.

I guess this brings me round to Raymond's question about power. Whatever we call ourselves, we all engage power. I believe that the challenge, or at least the challenge that I would like to leave you with, has to do with my belief that right now, at least in American society, it's in fact the urban designer, more than the architect (even the star architect) and more than the planner, who has the possibility of empowering those who may need a little bit more of it. That's what speaks for the vitality of urban design, for our field, at the moment.

I think the urban designer has to pay attention to Robert Beauregard's amazing description of two paths: the Burnham path and the Geddes path. I think most architects have already made their choice, as have most planners (as Robert related to us this morning). But most urban designers don't need to choose one path or the other. They have opportunities to make different choices depending on the appropriate moment. That's a great advantage. And therefore, at least from my practical experience, I know I have some access to power. And that's where my abilities as an urban designer to speculate, to perhaps enthrall, to serve the ambitions of, to try to seduce clients with a rah-rah idea or experience, can be very useful. At the same time, right now most urban designers work for those without much power. Which is why, in the gentlest way possible, they have to work to educate those without power to think a bit less self-centeredly, and a bit more broadly, a bit more conceptually. The urban designer now has almost total access to power, or at least to aspects of power, which puts his or her expertise in great demand among those communities with less power. If instead of bridging between architecture and planning, or between the global and the local, urban designers were to make a bridge between those holding power to make decisions in the world, and those with less power, that would be an unbelievable achievement for the urban design fields -- plural -- with an "s" at the end.

**Raymond Gastil:** What you've just described is a kind of everyday heroism. I use that term as Roy Strickland used it last night in his statement about working with public schools. I wonder, Roy, if you could comment on that type of heroism in relation to urban design -- not token heroism -- but the tradition of doing work against great odds, of making difficult choices.

**Roy Strickland:** Yes. Sandro Marpillero pointed out last night that he much preferred the word "courage" to heroism, referring to my position paper. I agree. I wish I had an editor. But when I wrote the piece, I was stranded in the midwest, and felt the great amputation of the World Trade Center disaster. I had been fed images of heroes, and picked up that term. Yes, let's think of being courageous, rather than being heroic. Although I spoke earlier about our need to relax and think and luxuriate in urban design, I also think we should feel some sense of urgency in this particular moment, one that may have profound implications for the way we live and the way we socialize.

A few years ago, Christopher Lasch wrote an article about cities and symbols. In it, he related cities and symbols to the division between global capital and technology on the one hand, and fundamentalism and nationalism on the other, arguing that the world was restructuring itself such that power was becoming invisible and the symbols of power were disappearing. Can we think of the

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on design as the field that offers the greatest interest. They see design as the greatest challenge to innovation and creativity -- hence the great demand for enrollment in design courses at Harvard.

In listening to Professor Krieger, I sensed something of his own affirmation and agreement with the views of students; a sense on his part that students were indeed moving in the right direction as they chose the most creative and challenging professional route, a direction that happened to coincide with the specialization of those attending a conference on urban design, practices and pedagogies.

While I can appreciate the enthusiasm of Professor Krieger and others in the audience, I wish to state my dissent; a dissent that I hope is not caused simply by the fact that I am a Chair of a Department of Urban Affairs and Planning. I believe that urban design represents by itself too limited an approach to problems and needs presented by the society we live in. The urbanization of modern society brings with it a level of complexity that cuts across so many disciplines and specialties, raising problems and issues that require the broadest of education, knowledge, understanding and training. This has always been the goal of planning: to aim for an

architectural symbol for Fidelity Investments? Not likely. Although we may have some image of the Microsoft campus, can we really say that Microsoft has the same powerful architectural imagery as a national capital, or a mosque, or a temple? Probably not. According to Lasch, a global community is developing, wrapped up in technology and the movement of money. But the identity of the source of that money is submerged; it is nowhere expressed or symbolized. At the level of the nation-state, and at the level of religion and fundamentalism, themes are expressed architecturally. Our national capitals are very visible. In fact, one way of gaining prestige in the international context is to build a new capital building that's very conspicuous. Certainly among fundamentalists, site and architecture are terribly, terribly important symbols.

Looking back to September 11th -- what was the World Trade Center? It was perhaps the last gasp of the symbolic representation of capital, the conspicuous representation of capital and global capitalism on the skyline. Other countries are attempting to recreate that symbol, although it's wrapped up in their aspirations rather than their realities. So what was the hit? Well, a group of fundamentalists were driven toward that symbol of capital. And what happens after that? Here we have a wonderful opportunity, a poignant opportunity, for urban designers to begin to ask questions. I am not speaking in the abstract here. This is real. Even this morning, before coming up here, I turned on my television and watched the local news station New York 1, and saw thousands of Muslim brothers and sisters on Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn, either kneeling and praying, or protesting. I heard about a Jewish family that's been ostracized from its Brooklyn community because their son, who is doing humanitarian work, happened to be in Ramallah at the time of the Israeli incursion into the West Bank, and found himself in the same room as Yasser Arafat. So here we have Muslim fundamentalists on the streets of Brooklyn, and there we have a Jewish family pushed from its community. Indeed, we may be becoming more like other places in the world. And it's not only happening in New York. If we look at Detroit, with a large population of Muslim brothers and sisters; and Paterson, New Jersey; and the suburbs of Virginia, our immigration and population patterns are creating a very different kind of opportunity for conversation between all kinds of people.

What is the potential of that? We all become "the other." It's not that some small groups of people are "the other," but we may all become "the other." It's no longer white folks thinking of black folks as the other, or black folks thinking about white folks as the other. As we become more diverse, we have become potentially more divided as world conditions are reflected in our daily interactions. And we define ourselves against others.

So, what do we do about that? I'm not sure. But I think we are in a powerful position to begin to ask questions. What are the symbols of the city and the culture? What do we think about our levels of consumption, which may result in a fractured globe and contribute to rising fundamentalism? These questions have a great deal to do with transportation planning, with the use of fossil fuels, with planning for cars, and with the organization of the city and suburb. At a basic level, we need to look at how we live. In this extraordinary moment, there has been no real conversation in this country about how we live. We speak about American values. We speak about reacting against evil, which I suppose

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integration of an inter-disciplinary effort that confronts urban problems and issues in a manner that reflects the most up to date knowledge of the different disciplines, and to bring this understanding to bear with thoughtful and responsible plans for implementation. Planning evolved from diverse viewpoints of utopian socialists, housing reformers, civil engineers, transportation planners, and land use and public utilities planning -- all of which were merged at different times with the aesthetic skills and ideals of architects and urban designers.

The practice of planning involves all the academic disciplines and professional practices that have some relationship to urban life. It is the task of planning to coordinate and manage these interrelationships and guide understanding to theory, practice, and implementation. Urban design is a very important part of this process, but left to itself it does not provide a theoretical framework for the broad level of understanding and implementation that is necessary in order to be effective.

It is true that in the current political climate in the United States, planning is not fulfilling the great goals that were originally conceived as its mission. Instead, planning often does reflect the limitations and compromises resulting

is necessary to rally a population to geopolitical effect. But we might also ask ourselves, what is it about how we are living that places us in harm's way, that elicits the kind of response that we see today? And perhaps we can do so from a level of patriotism equal to that of the politicians.

And who might be asking those questions, if not people who are concerned with the design of cities -- urban designers? This is the moment when we can begin a conversation, begin to postulate some vision, some alternatives that may have, if not immediate effect, perhaps a long-term effect. We've seen this happen before at other moments of crisis. Think back to the Nineteenth Century, the period of industrialization, and the great Parks Movement. If we think of the great housing reform movement as a response to turn of the century urban immigration; if we think of the rise of modernism as, in part, a response to the devastation of World War I in Europe; if we think of the post-war planning that created the suburbs in reaction to World War II, these planning and design and architectural actions derived from deep conversations growing out of crisis. We may also be in a crisis now. We may find ourselves in perpetual conflict. We have entered into a tension with forces that extend back one thousand years. We are dealing with people who have very deep memories. Where does that place us? How do we respond?

I don't think the response is simply rebuilding the World Trade Center, nor do I think that it's simply a matter of rebuilding infrastructure, although that's terribly important. First, we have to consider these questions. We must think of places that can enable people to see past otherness.

**Raymond Gastil:** Who would like to follow?

**Jacqueline Tatom:** I think I'm going to do it.

**Raymond Gastil:** Good.

**Jacqueline Tatom:** Roy's comments tie in quite a bit to some of the struggles I have been having as Director of the Urban Design Program in St. Louis, as a professional architect, and as someone interested in cities. My point has to do with something I raised in my position paper, which is the difficult and ambiguous relationship within ourselves between who we are as designers, who we are as professionals, and who we are as citizens. In relation to the city, there's a range of ways we can engage as citizens. There's a range of actions we can take as professionals. And then there are probably a certain number of things that we can tackle as designers.

It's very important to tease out when we are acting as citizens and when we're acting as designers, while realizing that untangling this, as professionals, is especially difficult. It's very hard because the two identities are intertwined. So in response to Roy, I'd like to backtrack a little bit. We all have a tremendous commitment, not so much to the city, but to what the city stands for -- for the society that makes the city. As professionals, we can never forget that we are also citizens. How we combine these two identities is a matter of the choices we each make every day. For instance, our choice of clients, who we decide to work for, or how to work with program. I think it's very important that we bring our skills as designers to those decisions, as well as our knowledge as informed citizens.

In light of that, I'd like to turn around this metaphor we've been using about urban design as a child of divorce or, simply a child, and say instead that urban design is actually the parent. I think all

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from its being hamstrung in the world of bureaucracy and politics. But alas, that is the society we live, and it is the task of planning to creatively respond to such limitations. A realization of this shortcoming should not therefore be seen as an excuse for the glorification of more limited specializations and professional orientations.

As we think about the values, goals and purposes of the education of our students, we should pay attention to the ways in which we, as educators, can achieve those goals of planning that seem to be absent from the understanding of contemporary students and educators. This will involve more than an understanding of the market for student enrollments, but must instead be concerned with the needs of society and students as we meet the challenges of urban life and education for the future. And that means going beyond the current disciplinary and professional fragmentation that seems to currently dominate so much of thought and practice, both within universities and in the world of professional practice.

of us here are impassioned about cities, about all the things Michael Sorkin brought up; we are passionate about our culture, about our society's extraordinarily rich and creative qualities, and about its most scary and terrible aspects.

So it is really the architects and planners who are the children of urbanism. If we have to stop thinking about our whole culture, about our whole cities, about our whole society simply because we are either architects or planners, a terrible break occurs.\*

**Raymond Gastil:** I think this question of citizenship is related in Anne Vernez-Moudon's earlier comments about a three-part knowledge circuit in urban design; a cycle of practice, advocacy and research. Do urban design programs actually teach the tools necessary to work on these issues as both professionals and citizens? Or does it require a higher degree of specialization?

**Anne Vernez-Moudon:** I think that Roy and others are very passionate about describing the issues we're trying to grapple with in the program at the University of Washington. If you open up your eyes and ears you see that there are many audiences out there interested in cities, and they are interested in asking questions about how we live, and whether we should really live the way we do.

Just to give you one example, in the many Departments of Transportation we have in this country, an increasing number of people are questioning how we live. If you go to the U.S. Department of Transportation in Washington, DC, there are about twelve functioning sub-agencies that we are subsidizing, and probably ninety-five percent of the Department's people are working to support increased consumption of oil and concrete and asphalt. But I would say that at least five percent of the department is seriously questioning that behavior. In many ways, these few people can be described as heroes, since they are operating in an environment that is pretty hostile and difficult to change. If urban designers are really interested in strategy, we have to open up our eyes and ears and noses, and look for the right clients -- just like Marilyn Taylor Jordan said, we have to invent our client. Those five or ten percent of the Department of Transportation employees questioning the way we move about the world need people with our kind of expertise, our kind of interest in cities, they need us to help fuel their fire. That's one example of a very exciting set of possibilities for urban design.

Seven members of the Ford Foundation attended the 1956 Urban Design Conference at Harvard. At the time, the Ford Foundation was a pretty big powerhouse in terms of asking questions about how people lived in cities, and it also put money on the table -- it fed the thinkers while they thought about the questions. There really not a lot of support available today for thinking about these issues. There is the Graham Foundation, maybe the National Endowment of the Arts; the Skidmore Foundation is also trying to do its bit. But all the deans here today know that it's very, very difficult to do our job thinking and teaching in academia, and to feed ourselves at the same time. That is where entities like the Department of Transportation, and others, come into play, entities that actually employ people who are interested in urban design issues. Their frustration is that they don't know where to find us. They don't know where we are. There's a program in the Department of Transportation that's called "Context Sensitive Design." Has anybody every heard of it? They have a lot of money in terms of what we are used to, but not very much in terms of the Department of Transportation. Basically,

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\***Miriam Gusevich** (Catholic University of America) A recurrent pattern at the conference was the lack of distinction between our concerns as citizens and our responsibilities as professionals. These led to lively discussions, yet not many enlightening ones. To her credit, Jacqueline Tatom (Washington University, St. Louis) kept restating this important point to deaf ears. Why was she not heard?

There are important reasons to continue to assert this distinction. First, it recognizes our limited power as urban designers. It is very tempting as we aspire to be urban designers to believe that we can change the world and indulge in Messianic, Apocalyptic fantasies. Those fantasies of omnipotence, often nurtured in the academy, are dangerous and can tempt us to a reckless association with tyranny. The urban designer's limited power rests on his/her power of persuasion based on specialized knowledge (as suggested by Beauregard's Sherlock Holmes parable). At best, in a democracy, as urban designers we work for citizens; as designers we rightly have limited powers, as citizens we are all equal under the law. Citizens or their representatives determine policies -- not experts.

these people are rethinking road-building standards. They need people like us. Are any urban designers working with them? Not very many.

I'm not saying it's easy for us to team up with these people. They have their own set of internal working relationships, and the institutions themselves are not exactly open. But nevertheless, these kinds of partnerships are an opportunity for us, an opportunity at many levels. In terms of inventing clients, these agencies already exist. For academia, they offer the potential of supporting research. And once you get your foot in the door, if you do a good job you can continue getting a decent level of support. When students graduate, they also can find jobs. If what we are looking for is to better serve cities, we need to learn to work these systems. Then there can be very positive results. Maybe we end up with better road design, because if we have trained students to work well within these agencies, the people in the agencies will trust us to do a good job. I know several people here have worked for the Department of Transportation, but not in a systematic enough way. We can't be too self centered and idealistic. We have to work the system.

Transportation opens up a whole set of issues, and not only at the national level. State Departments of Transportation are very powerful, as are local and regional agencies. They have resources, and they are interested in urban design. The minute regional agencies start thinking about congestion, or mass transit, they're always looking for input from urban designers. In terms of looking at building cities and urban systems, working with these entities takes the urban designer into new, important arenas, beyond that of the project as being only a building complex. Once you get involved with these agencies, you realize, as Alex Krieger pointed out earlier, that people are actually interested in urban design. They find it hopeful. Architecture is different. But urban design is something that people can connect with. They see it, perhaps metaphorically, as the new kid on the block, as an interesting way to enter into the world of design, which is new to them. I've run into a number of non-designers who are using the term, "urban design," and even if, as an urban designer, I feel like suffocating because they don't really know what they are talking about, that's okay. Usually they appropriate the term for the right reasons.

The other interesting area opening up to urban design is that of public health. In 1996, the Surgeon General declared physical inactivity the second largest health problem in the USA. Obesity is the most visible part of that problem. Several million-research dollars are dedicated to looking into nutrition issues. But, right now, the Center for Disease Control is conducting at least a million dollars worth of research to look at how the physical environment affects our level of physical activity. Without being physical determinists, they are simply saying there may be some connection between our health and the design of our environment. They are asking questions like, If we build a trail will people become more physically active? How far do people walk? How far are people able to walk? Do they feel right if they're walking that far?

The point is, these people have resources. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has set out twenty million dollars over the next five years for both promotional and research programs on physical activity and the environment. I think we have to get out and link up with these resources. We have to

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Our power as professionals is limited by design; it is an extension of the Constitution establishment of a division of power among the three branches of government. As citizens, we should be concerned and express our concern through the relevant institutions. As professionals, we acknowledge our limits gracefully, and avoid becoming frustrated or a power-hungry monster. Yet, in the Real-politick of real estate development large fortunes are at stake and most of the decision-making power is in the hands of developers, politicians and power brokers. In this field of power, the designer has a limited and relatively weak position from which to negotiate on behalf of design. A corollary of limited power is the phenomenon of unintended consequences. As citizens, we might be in favor of open housing policies and against gentrification because it displaces poor people. Yet we might find that, contrary to our values and intentions, our work as professionals to improve and rebuild a neighborhood might lead to gentrification. There is a tension between our role as professionals and as citizens; remaining aware of this tension and seeking to resolve it is an ongoing effort and integral to our concerns as a reflective professional.

learn to talk their language (because they do speak a different language); these institutions can also help us pose the questions that need to be posed, and then change the behaviors that need to be changed.

**Raymond Gastil:** I wondered if Harrison would like to follow up?

**Harrison Fraker:** I think we need to lighten up. Here is a quote from Rem Koolhaas: "The seeming failure of the urban offers exceptional opportunity, a pretext for Nietzschean frivolity. We have to imagine one thousand and one other kinds of city; we have to take insane risks; we have to dare to be utterly uncritical; we have to swallow deeply and bestow forgiveness left and right. The certainty of failure has to be our laughing gas/oxygen; modernization our most potent drug. Since we are not responsible, we have to become irresponsible. In a landscape of increasing expediency and impermanence, urbanism no longer is or has to be the most solemn of our decisions; urbanism can lighten up, become a Gay Science -- Light Urbanism."

What I'd like to do is add another point by going back to a comment that Alan Plattus made in the last session, about the difference between medical programs and urban design programs. Alan said that unlike advanced degrees in medicine, the post professional urban design degree was a broadening and generalizing experience for people returning from practice to undertake these studies. I'd like to argue that this comparison sets up another one of those false dichotomies we have been talking about a lot today. Our experience at Berkeley has been that students who come back to school are looking for both kinds of experience. They may specialize in one area that particularly interests them, they may pursue courses in financing, or in ecology, or they may delve into landscape in great depth. But, by the same token, they're also trying to broaden their horizons.

I think these urban design programs really do allow both kinds of learning, and they should be encouraged to do so. One of the hallmarks of the Berkeley program is to provide a tremendous amount of freedom. We're able to do that because not only do we have faculty in the college, we also have faculty around the university who are interested in the phenomenon of the city and urbanism, and faculty who are interested in this issue of urban design research. Take, for example, Allan Jacobs. His approach to urban design, the work that he's done on streets, is a legitimate mode of inquiry. Here's somebody who is a part of a planning faculty, who for years had done nothing but listen to traffic engineers determine how to shape streets, neighborhoods, and regional environments. Allan felt there were other options that ought to be considered. So he looked at other types, and he did incredible empirical analysis. Allan completely fought the transportation and traffic engineering bureaucracy's narrow idea of streets as conduits for cars or fire engines traveling at forty miles an hour, by working to expose their multidimensional aspects and how they contribute to urban public life.

That kind of work represents a form of empirical inquiry that is similar to Denise Scott Brown and Bob Venturi's work in *Learning from Las Vegas*. Rem Koolhaas' empirical work on shopping is also tremendously creative and fresh; it is a kind of light approach, if you will. I urge people to look freshly at these phenomena, and to come up with empirical evidence that start to seriously question the assumptions that an entrenched bureaucracy has established. This is what urban design allows us to do. It allows us to re-visit these questions in ways that are really interesting. There's a lot of good, honest hard work to be done, work that is extremely valuable to the clients we talked about this morning. These clients are hungry for information that will support their instincts about what makes a good city. We don't provide enough evidence for that. And we should just well get busy and do it.

**Rodolphe el-Khoury:** I'll be kind to the audience and spare them my profound comments so we can speed up the process.  
(Applause)

**Richard Plunz:** What this session proves to me is what I suspected to be true all along -- that this whole operation was a form of self-therapy for urban designers. You know, of course therapy is sort of a tradition for New Yorkers. So, those of you who are from this New York tradition, just bear with me. And for those who are not, here the point: in therapy you always arrive at this moment where you get what I always thought was a ridiculous question, which is, "And how does this make you feel?" (Laughter) I appreciate your abstinence, Rodolphe, because I have slightly the same reaction. I took

all these notes, but there's no time to bother with them, and by Monday morning I will have forgotten what most of what this has been about, anyway. But I would like to say one thing, which is that this whole discussion, with all of its agonizing, has been very useful for me. It has shown me, personally, that I am, in fact, a designer. I've done a lot of projects in my life, but never a commercial project, never what one could call architecture in the commercial sense.

But as a designer, this discussion has made me feel more strongly than ever that urban design is an extension of architecture. If urban planning wants to do urban design, let them go ahead. Once they've done it, once they can talk about design, then we can have a conversation. And if landscape architects want to do urban design, let them do it too. In fact, there's already a conversation going on with landscape urbanism, or urban landscapism. Whatever it becomes is just fine too. But I do think as educators, and as program directors, we need to be committed to knowing what it is we're trying to do. We need to at least be willing to commit to an approach, to test it, and to understand its consequences. In fact, we need to take responsibility for these consequences. In our case, at Columbia, I would say that as a faculty, we have tried very hard to establish a curriculum with continuity from a professional architectural degree (which is the background of the majority of our students), but at the same time offer them a clear alternative, one that emphasizes urban design issues. We're constantly tinkering with our curricula; we're constantly trying to improve our approach.

I do have some problems with the notion that urban design can just flail about in all the disciplines. I guess the bottom line here is that I just have a hard time standing up in front of students who are paying outrageous amounts of money to study here and basically say, "Well, you know, we don't really know what this is. But it's all very interesting to us." This is actually not the moment for that kind of waffling about urban design. So with that, I have had my final say.

**Raymond Gastil:** I guess the final words will belong to Michael Sorkin.

**Alex Krieger:** I have one more thing I want to add before we leave.

**Raymond Gastil:** Apparently the last word belongs to Alex.

**Michael Sorkin:** I resisted the dumb metaphor all day. And now I want to give into it. This conference has two mommies. (Laughter) And I want to say, "Thanks for getting the family together."

**Alex Krieger:** I want to reinforce a point that Anne Vernez-Moudon made earlier. I can't speak for New York, but right now, around the rest of the country, when you say "architecture," people think of development. It doesn't have a necessarily positive connotation. When you say, "planning," it suggests bureaucracy. But when you say, "urban design," there is this positive response. I don't know how long it will last, but I think we should take advantage of it.

(Applause)

**Andrea Kahn:** I know everyone is ready to go. I am certainly very ready to go, very ready for a drink. But I would like to take this last moment to thank everyone, the panelists as well as the audience.

I know that Raymond Gastil may have thought all along that we posed too many questions here. Whether I agree is not the issue, and don't worry, I'm not going to summarize any of them, since

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\***George Thrush** (Northeastern University): It has been acknowledged that a great deal of the success of the New Urbanists lies in their sense of shared commitment and common purpose. Sending out focused questions prior to the conference for all to address is exactly what aided in adding focus to this conference. From my perspective, the critical question to focus the next conference should be: How do we gain better access to using transportation infrastructure as an armature for more public space? In addition, urban designers should seriously consider starting a series (maybe like Pamphlet architecture) that would allow us to accumulate resonance over time. If we held these every year, or every two years, we could gain some momentum, and within several years we would gain that much more focus.



at this late point in the day I can't. What does makes me very happy after two very full days, is my strong sense that the questions we are left with this evening are not exactly the same as the questions we started out with yesterday. Perhaps because I am an academic, to me that is the sign of a job well done. Thank you all.\*

**Margaret Crawford:** I want to thank everyone who came; the invited audience, our panelists, and the general audience. I also want to thank Andrea, whose extraordinary efforts really made this conference possible. And so, I hope that we can all acknowledge and applaud that. (Applause) And the final thing that I want to say is that one year from now, we plan to publish a book based on this conference, so this event won't simply vanish in our memories as it would ordinarily. It will be recorded and we will package something. And it will be available to you this time next year. Thank you for coming.



## Participating Panelists

**Robert A. Beauregard** is a professor in the Milano Graduate School of Management and Urban Policy at the New School University.

**Jerome Blue** is Senior Vice President of Project Development and Management, Battery Park City Authority.

**Amanda M. Burden** is Chair of the New York City Planning Commission.

**Carol Burns** is a founding partner of Taylor & Burns Architects and a Housing Fellow at the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies.

**John Chase** is Urban Designer for the City of West Hollywood.

**Margaret Crawford** is Professor of Urban Design and Planning Theory at the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University.

**Rodolphe el-Khoury** is Director of the Master of Urban Design Program in the Department of Architecture, Landscape and Design at the University of Toronto.

**Robert Fishman** is Professor of Architecture and Urban Planning in the Alfred A. Taubman College of Architecture and Planning, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

**Harrison Fraker** is the William W. Wurster Professor and Dean of the College of Environmental Design (CED) at the University of California, Berkeley.

**Raymond W. Gastil** is Executive Director of Van Alen Institute, New York City.

**Rosalind Greenstein** is a Senior Fellow and Co-Chair of the Department of Planning and Development at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

**Maxine Griffith** is Executive Director of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission and Secretary for Strategic Planning.

**Walter Hood** is an Associate Professor in Landscape Architecture in the College of Environmental Design, at University of California, Berkeley.

**Andrea Kahn** is Adjunct Associate Professor of Architecture and Urban Design at Columbia University.

**Jerold S. Kayden** is Associate Professor of Urban Planning at the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University.

**Alex Krieger**, FAIA, is Professor in Practice of Urban Design and Chairman of the Department of Urban Planning and Design, at the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University.

**Sandro Marpillero**, an architect and urban designer with offices in New York and Venice, Italy, has been Adjunct Associate Professor of Urban Design at Columbia University.

## Urban Design: Practices, Pedagogies, Premises

**Eric Mumford** is Associate Professor of Architecture at Washington University.

**Karen A. Phillips** is the President and Chief Operating Officer of the Abyssinian Development Corporation (ADC) in New York City.

**Richard Plunz** is a professor of Architecture, Coordinator of Urban Design Studio III and Director of the Urban Design Program at the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Columbia University.

**Charles Reiss** is Senior Vice President for Development for The Trump Organization.

**Jon Michael Schwarting** is an architect, urban designer, and a professor of Architecture and Director of the Graduate Program in Urban and Regional Design at New York Institute of Technology.

**Denise Scott Brown** is an architect, planner and urban designer and is principal-in-charge for projects in urban planning, urban design, campus planning, and architectural and facilities programming at Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates in Philadelphia.

**David Smiley** teaches American urban and suburban history in the Urban Design program at the GSAPP and at Columbia and Barnard Colleges.

**Michael Sorkin** is Director of the Graduate Urban Design Program at City College, in New York City, and the principal of the Michael Sorkin Studio, a design practice devoted to both practical and theoretical projects at all scales with a special interest in the city.

**Roy Strickland** is the first director of the Master of Urban Design Program at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

**Jacqueline Tatom** is Co-Director of the Master of Urban Design program at the School of Architecture of Washington University in St. Louis.

**Marilyn Jordan Taylor**, AIA, is an architect and urban designer and Chair of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP.

**Anne Vernez Moudon** is Director of the Program for the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Urban Design and Planning Departments of Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Urban Design and Planning at the University of Washington, in Seattle.

# Appendices

