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Urban Design in Action



*The history,
theory and
development of
the American Institute
of Architects'
Regional/Urban
Design Assistance
Teams (R/UDAT)
Program.*

*Editors:
Peter Batchelor,
David Lewis*

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Peter Batchelor, David Lewis, Editors

The history, theory and development of the
American Institute of Architects'
Regional/Urban Design Assistance Teams
Program (R/UDAT).

Volume 29, 1985.
The Student Publication of the School of Design
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Raleigh, North Carolina

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Dedicated to the memory of
Jules Gregory, FAIA, 1920-1985

*Who challenged the architectural profession to expand
its responsibility beyond the design of individual
buildings and to assume a leadership role in enhancing
the comprehensive quality of life in our cities.*

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basis of this book.

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Foreword

No one can doubt that our cities are in desperate need of help. Even those cities that we regard as the jewels of our culture have problems of many different kinds. From large and beautiful cities like San Francisco and Washington, D.C. to small New England mill towns nestling peacefully beside fast running streams in wooded valleys, there seem to be no exceptions.

Some problems are national, and all of our cities are affected by them. Others are particular and local. But whether local or national, they are all intensely real to the the people who are affected by them. Usually one finds that a problem does not exist on its own, but is a part of the entire network of economic social and physical problems: unemployment; industries made obsolete by technological change; a declining tax base; the exodus of the talented young, and a loss of pride. On the other hand such negatives are just as often counterbalanced by the courage and determination of citizens and local government to turn the tide and make their cities better, to strive for new goals—if only they knew how to define them, how to design them realistically, and how to turn them into action.

Urban Design in Action is the documentation of a record of achievement by professional assistance teams who answer to appeals for help from our cities. Called Regional/Urban Design Assistance Teams, or R/UDATs, they began in 1967 in response to a citizen's chance perception that the American Institute of Architects could help resolve the problems of his community. The first team discovered that the city is a living organism, embodying within prototypical problems the local culture, history and aspirations of its citizens. They sensed its continual evolution, from past to future forms. Most of all, they realized that the citizens wanted to help shape their own destinies, to participate in the formulation of policies whose implementation would result in a new sense of community.

Since the formation of that first team, more than eighty R/UDATs have been conducted on cities throughout the United States. Hundreds of professionals drawn from the design and planning fields have volunteered tens of thousands of hours to the cause of building liveable communities. These professionals all have in common: a love for cities, a belief in their future, and a determination to help the citizens of each urban community articulate their goals and participate in the job of making urban environments better and more satisfying places to live in.

Over time the R/UDAT process evolved into its current mode of operation: a methodology of interdisciplinary problem definition and resolution in which the existing city's contexts provide all the elements from which the image of the cities future must take its shape. Consequently, R/UDAT teams are drawn from a national pool of specialists—men and women who are eminent in their field and who represent, in human terms, the broad range of skills and resources needed to analyze the city's issues and to propose solutions to particular problems.

The book is divided into two parts. The first sets the contexts in which urban design operates. The second provides case studies of typical R/UDATs and their products. In the first part the R/UDAT process is explained, followed by descriptions of the structure and form of American cities, the impact of urban design on architectural and planning practice, how government and the private sector can work together to make our cities better, and urban design education in architecture and planning schools. The second part describes typical R/UDATs and defines universal themes affecting the redevelopment of American cities. An appendix contains a detailed description of the R/UDAT process.

Born in an atmosphere of urban crisis in the sixties, the growing and deepening impact of urban design is one of the most exciting developments in recent years in architecture and related professions, bringing new enlightenment and dedication to the people of our cities. The civil rights movement taught us to listen, and to hear those whose voices had gone unheard for generations. The bicentennial taught us to see in our cities a history and tradition that is strong and uniquely American. R/UDAT has taught us how to turn the aspirations of citizens, and their descriptions of urban value, into action.

Peter Batchelor, David Lewis

Section One
Perspectives:
History, Theory and Development
David Lewis, Editor

1 The History of an Idea



1 The History of an Idea

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Genesis One day early in 1967, James Bell, President of the Rapid City, South Dakota, Chamber of Commerce, was in Washington for a meeting of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. He had a little time and he had something on his mind. So he stopped at the headquarters of the American Institute of Architects to visit with Andy Euston, then Director of Urban Programs. Mr. Bell, a practicing engineer, had a keen interest in what makes cities work and a deep dedication to his home town. He recalls that at the AIA that day there happened to be others present from the Urban Design and Planning Committee.

His question: "Is there anything you architects can do to help us with some very serious problems we have in Rapid City?" He articulated what a few of those problems were. After some intense talk the architects made a suggestion. They offered to gather a small group of experienced professionals to go to Rapid City as volunteers and confer with local government officials and citizens on site, if Rapid City were to put together enough funds to pay their expenses. That sounded pretty reasonable to Mr. Bell. He promised to carry the idea back home and see what kind of response it produced.

The first R/UDAT

Soon after Mr. Bell's visit to Washington a formal request for an assistance team came to the AIA from the Rapid City Chamber of Commerce. The Urban Planning and Design Committee met and a visit was committed.

Four team members, two architects and two planners were selected, and a packet of maps,

aerial photos, statistics and other background information about Rapid City was sent to each. The three-day visit occurred in June.

The team met with the Mayor and Council. They also met with local architects, the media and key citizens. They tried to keep their meetings informal, and to hear all sides of the various issues that were raised. And they reviewed the data about Rapid City in the light of what they heard. At the end of their visit they made a verbal presentation of their findings. A week or so later they mailed to Rapid City a brief written report and recommendations. Their expenses came to \$900.

The results, over time, were powerful. A planning commission was established with one of the local architects as a member. The city hired a full-time planner and engaged a consultant to help. Citizens and officials became aware of the issues and learned to debate them jointly as part of the planning process. Everyone who was involved — including the visiting team—came to see in a few short and crowded days that the community, with a modicum of stimulus and help from the outside, had resources within it that it could learn to harness in the public interest. Business people, citizens and government joined forces for the first time. Indeed, it took the group of outsiders to trigger that result.

Back at the AIA, the architectural community was astonished and gratified. The value of the process was clear to the Urban Planning and Design Committee. It decided to offer the idea to other communities. And R/UDAT was born.

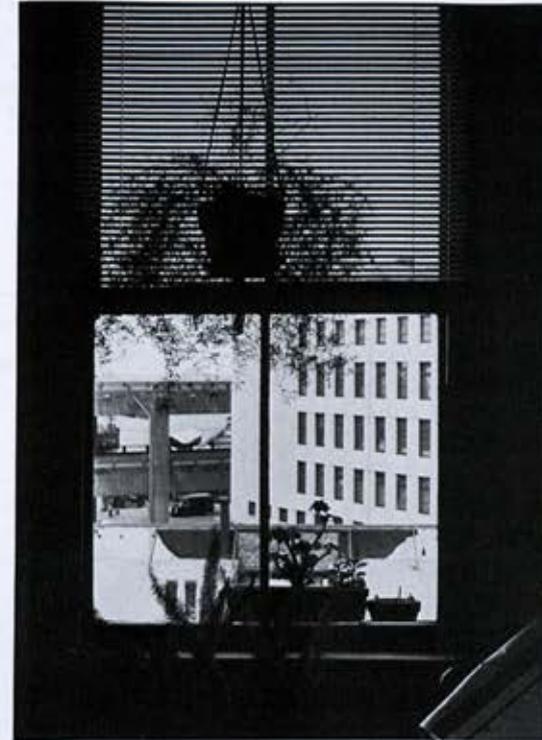
What is a R/UDAT? R/UDAT is the acronym for a cumbersome and unmemorable official title: Regional and Urban Design Assistance Teams. (And it is as unmemorable to be told that this official title derives from the two AIA national committees—the Regional Planning Committee and the Urban Planning and Design Committee— which shared responsibility for the program when it first got started.) But the acronym is rapidly becoming a word in our language: “Roodat”!

Well then, what’s so significant about R/UDAT that justifies a book?

Because by sending teams to urban communities that request them (there have now been over eighty) the AIA has done something for cities that no other professional body has ever done. And in the process, the success of these teams has deeply affected the way urban communities have perceived their capacity to generate change from within, and has also deeply affected the way architecture is taught and practiced.

The first R/UDAT in its national context

First, let’s see Rapid City in its historical setting. Rapid City’s R/UDAT occurred almost 20 years ago. That was the high noon of urban renewal. Suburbs were expanding. New urban growth was at the edges of cities large and small, fingering out



into the open countryside. Everyone who could afford to in the 1950’s and 60’s moved outwards, particularly young college-educated families. Cars and gas were cheap. Highways and interchanges were under construction. New strip shopping centers, the forerunners of today’s enclosed malls, were steadily draining out the strengths of traditional downtowns. And offices and light industry had begun moving to suburban industrial parks.



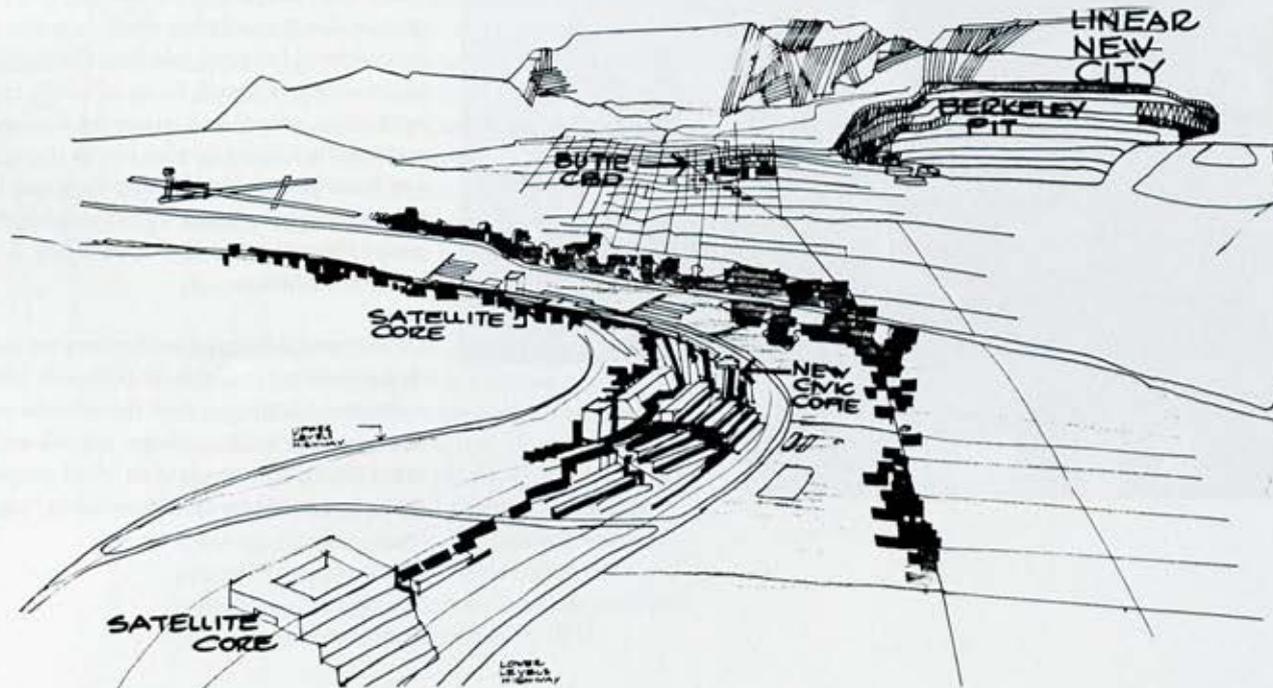
Twenty-five years ago the flight from cities was not merely a geographic migration. It was a flight from origins. Young people, especially, turned their backs on the ethnic pasts of their parents and grandparents, choosing a new future as suburban Americans. The architectural language of the new suburban schools, offices and industries, sited on wide lawns with neat parking areas landscaped with trees, was of bright technological tomorrows, spacious, open and optimistic. And those who were left behind in the older neighborhoods were most often the folk who couldn't afford to move, the old, the minorities, the unskilled, the poor. And the cure for the problem areas of the inner city was to declare them blighted and to demolish them, leaving churches without congregations and cities with declining tax bases to maintain their streets, parks, hospitals, libraries, utilities and services.



Today the mood has changed so much that it is hard to believe now how many politicians and department heads at the national level were declaring, a mere two decades ago, that the old and traditional city was dead and that new decentralized urban forms would replace it. Metropolitan growth was seen as radial extensions along highways like the spokes of a wheel. Forecasts of urban growth showed these lineal extensions of metropoli becoming linked to form urban corridors. Two well known studies in the sixties showed megalopolitan corridors linking

Boston, Providence, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington in a northeast coastal system, and the other showed Chicago, Detroit, Toledo, Cleveland, Erie and Buffalo in a great lakes system. The traditional centers of cities were perceived as "islands of excellence"—commuter cores of high density office towers reached by limited access high speed highways and rapid transit lines. Along the radials were suburban nodes — decentralized office and industrial parks, and shopping centers. Under urban renewal the older residential areas of the center city would be cleared and would become building sites for the expansion of high density cores or park land.

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Rediscovery of the city

Fortunately these forecasts have not been realized entirely. Many historic inner-city areas were declared blighted and demolished. Because we know now from today's vantage-point that we could have rehabilitated them, we mourn the waste. But enough of the older neighborhoods remain for us to be able to work with our urban inheritance — socially as well as physically — and graft new urban futures on to the old historic stems. Indeed, people everywhere are beginning to focus on our cities once again.

We are rediscovering orchestras, art museums, universities and historic buildings. The energy crisis of the seventies has made us realize how limited fossil fuels are, and that alternative energy sources must be found. Costs of family travel to work, shop, school and leisure have soared, particularly for people who live in the suburbs and commute to the city. Housing shortages have led to a rediscovery of older in-city neighborhoods, and to the satisfactions of remodeling and gentrification.

Developers and local governments are realizing that rebuilding in old neighborhoods offers economic advantages over the suburbs — because roads, sewers, utilities, shops, schools and all the other amenities already exist. And people in ever-increasing numbers are interested in "roots", in the

ethnic origins of our cities. Bumper stickers that say "Proud to be Polish" or "Ireland Forever" or simply "Italia" are so common we hardly notice them any more. But intense urban problems still remain unsolved. Our cities still house the poor and the segregated. And in a world of rapid technological change in industry, the problems of unemployed men and women who lack the technical skills for the new employment markets are intense and real.

The birth of a new urban consciousness

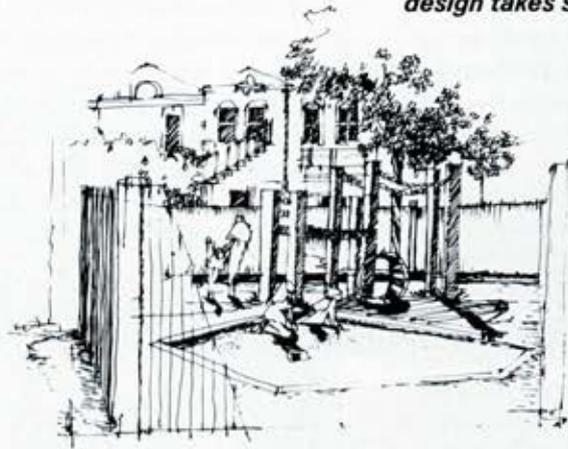
The Rapid City R/UDAT occurred at a moment of great historical importance for cities. The civil rights movement was really gathering momentum. 1968 was the year of the long hot summer. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated: and burnings, lootings and riots broke out in the black ghettos of several cities including Detroit, Chicago, Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C. Perhaps the racial riots in Washington, the nation's capitol, was the biggest surprise, cutting to the quick. And an unexpected cry arose from the slums and ghettos: "black is beautiful".

Urban design was still in its infancy in the United States. The words were not a phrase in our vocabulary the way they are today. If anyone thought about urban design at all, it was taken to mean the formal beaux arts design of civic spaces. "Interior decoration in the rain" was the way someone characterized it. Certainly it was not geared to grapple with the social, economic and political forces that underlay the urban problems that erupted in American cities in 1967.

In contrast with later R/UDATs, which became much more sophisticated as a result of dealing head-on with these difficult and highly contentious issues in more complex cities, the Rapid City R/UDAT was small and primitive, faraway, and in light of current events patently lacking in consequence. But as things turned out, Rapid City was far from lacking in consequence. It taught a revealing and basic lesson.



***A new kind of urban
design takes shape***



Architects, by training, measure success in physical terms. "Design" to the architectural world means the design of physical environments and buildings.

It is not surprising, therefore, that virtually every urban renewal clearance in the 1950's and 60's was accompanied by official plans and models showing new buildings, boulevards, parks, schools. The graphics were beautiful and idealistic. New buildings stood out like sharp cubes in the sun, surrounded by trees and grass. Cars were parked neatly in lots, and street intersections were free of congestion. Usually the graphics were drawn by architects and planners who worked in offices that were remote from the sites they drew. Sometimes these offices were even in far off cities. Indeed, the architects might be forgiven if their designs for these urban renewal areas in the hearts of cities resembled suburbs. After all the suburbs were the older inner city's competition, and they were successful.



Yet the civil rights movement and other liberation movements of the late 60's and early 70's were telling us something very different about the mainsprings of design.

Design without people

Seldom were the citizens who lived in inner city communities asked by the official designers what their perceptions and goals were. The thought that the inhabitants might have different values and priorities from those of the planners and architects, and the government agencies which hired them, did not occur to anyone. It would certainly have seemed ludicrous that the citizens might want to retain the character and density of the inherited city which had so clearly become obsolete and had failed. It was not that the people in government or the architects were trying to be callous or dictatorial. They were doing what they thought they needed to do under the circumstances. In a way they were like doctors, curing the city. Their designs were prescribed like medicine. They were giving the people what they needed, what was good for them; and the plans they prescribed were objectively thought out in terms of public budgets, health standards, zoning regulations, demographic projections, new employment and tax benefits. After all, in an increasingly technological world how would ordinary people know what the new city should be like? That's what the professionals were for. Fortunately, the plans they prescribed were seldom built; the few that were tended to be cold and impersonal.





Design with people

In contrast with this way of doing things, it turned out that the most significant achievement of the Rapid City R/UDAT was not physical at all — at least not to begin with. It lay in a different kind of design: the design of public policy, arrived at through a process of democratic exchange.



Five months after Rapid City there was a second R/UDAT. This was in Frankfort, Kentucky, in November 1967. There were two more in 1968, three in 1969, and three more in 1970. In all of these early R/UDATs, many of the same characteristics recurred. When a team came to town, people who had never talked to each other before, far less heard one another, began talking and listening.



Business people, government people, neighborhood people, old and young, minorities and WASPs, rich and poor, came to the same open meetings to talk about their aspirations, and about the obstacles that stood in the way of achieving their goals. Problems were debated and from every angle. There was no concealing any of the issues that were important to the citizens. Someone was bound to bring it up. And someone else was bound to dispute it, or have a different slant. Hidden agendas ran the risk of not being hidden for very long.



Some meetings even started by being confrontations. But most times people could see that confrontation was really a measure of passion. People got a load off their chest by shouting at one another and making accusations. But standoffs didn't resolve anything. So meetings tended to

become discussions instead. And the discussions began to reveal treasure troves of local inputs and perceptions. The team would learn about the issues, and about the history of local places and buildings in an entirely new way, a way that did not exist in books or reports, but firsthand, from people's voices, in open and free public exchange.

But far more importantly, the people themselves learned from one another about the issues in this new way too, and saw within each issue, each perception, each piece of information and insight, a gist of political significance, a detailed piece in the jigsaw of policy and consensus. Agency representatives (who after all are citizens too) were asked to provide detailed explanations of how this property came to be zoned that way, or how that intersection will operate when it is rebuilt, or how state and federal funding is regulated pertaining to a particular project, and through their explanations citizens began to understand a bit better the mysteries of government. Documents of many different kinds, some of which might normally not have seen the light of public day, or be of particular interest if they did, became public and gained meanings that weren't perceived before. People spoke at these meetings who had never spoken publicly. As they listened to each other speak, they became less shy about revealing their feelings and what they had thought to be their ignorances.

Impact on design

And as the members of the professional team began intensive discussions about what they had heard and learned, interrelationships between one issue and another began to be apparent. One thing would trigger another. Recommendations in one area became linked with recommendations in another. Networks of recommendations would be set up, anchored solidly in local contexts. And when the citizens who had participated perceived in the team's recommendations a true responsiveness to their concerns and inputs, local pride and commitment began to surface.

The architects and planners on these early assistance teams noticed something about themselves too. Their focus was not primarily on design at all, at least not in the old sense, but on making recommendations that affect policy. And when they drew their recommendations — which being architects they did more easily and naturally than writing them — they found that they were drawing in ways that differed from the drawings that were done by the urban renewal planners and by the majority of professional architects. Their drawings were not hardline and prescriptive designs imposed “from above,” but were tentative, exploratory, sensitive and uncertain, as though searching to uncover meanings. Instead of inserting hard new buildings into old streets, or replacing entire city blocks, they found themselves treating urban communities like pieces of old and treasured quilts, picking up threads of meaning and value, patching and stitching, trying to find

the implicit, the particularity of inherited structure and texture and scale, introducing new buildings sensitively into old contexts, and eliciting new vocabulary from a sense of local place and heritage.



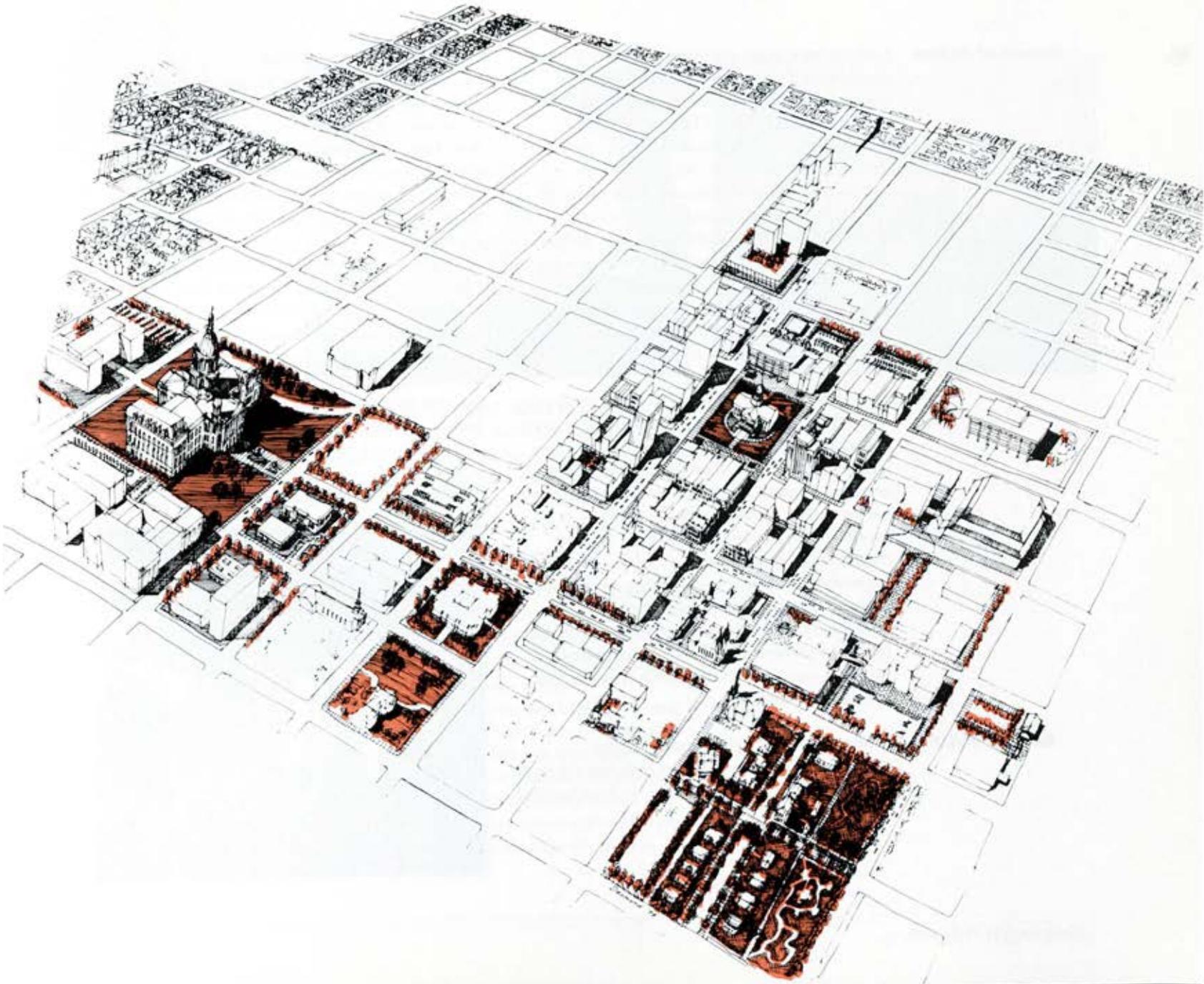


And as they drew, the architects explored the meanings of their drawings with the other professionals on these early R/UDATs, the economists, engineers, sociologists and historians. A sense began to emerge that drawings could become vehicles for the whole team working together, to explore alternatives and to define recommendations, and in this way economic and social policies became as much part of the content of drawings as physical concern with local fit.

So much has changed in the past twenty years in the way architecture is taught and practiced that much of this can be taken for granted now. But in the 60's and early 70's it was not. Architects and other professionals twenty years ago didn't think that anything was to be gained from listening to ordinary citizens. What could uneducated or untrained people offer to a task as intellectually sophisticated and complex as the design of cities? What could they be expected to know about real estate law or traffic engineering or development economics or the styles of historic buildings? R/UDAT has made an important contribution to the task of bringing about this change.



2 R/UDAT: How it Works



2 R/UDAT: How it works

8

Growth of an idea

Looking back, it is surprising how many of the elements and essential ingredients of today's mature R/UDAT process were present that May weekend in Rapid City. The team was interprofessional. They worked from a carefully developed itinerary. They worked with all components of the community. They toured the city, cameras, notepads and sketchbooks in hand. They recorded photographically and in thumbnail drawings and diagrams elements that seems to them to be symptomatic or at issue. These recordings, in all their freshness and spontaneity, they used in developing their recommendations and in their final presentation.

From that primitive beginning nearly twenty years ago, R/UDAT today has grown. In the 80 or more communities that have now had R/UDATs, four million dollars worth of professional services have been volunteered, and more than a tenth of the nation's urban population has, in one way or another, been affected by R/UDATs. And the program itself has profited with each succeeding experience, becoming much more sophisticated. Logistics have been refined to enable teams to have more creative time. Experience has developed capacities for sensitive response to delicate local issues. In many respects R/UDATs have become like urban commandos.

Today's R/UDAT

While the process varies as much as the communities, certain elements have become fairly constant in each R/UDAT. Here is a brief account of what happens.

R/UDATs are always invited

First of all, a R/UDAT is never foisted on any community. Every R/UDAT is invited. A team of about eight people comes to town drawn from all over the country. Some are old R/UDAT hands; some are on their first visit. They are from different disciplines, but all are leaders in their fields. They have been carefully selected for their capacity to deal with the specific problems at hand and their ability to work effectively in an interdisciplinary setting. They have been briefed with materials which spell out the key local issues and provide essential technical information. They volunteer their time. Only their expenses are reimbursed; and, to ensure their objectivity, they may not accept commissions for work that results from study recommendations. They are joined by at least an equal number of students from nearby schools of architecture, urban design and planning; sometimes by more.





How A Typical R/UDAT Takes Place

The team's four-day visit generally begins with a physical inspection of the study areas by foot, bus, boat, helicopter. They confer in a succession of meetings with representatives of the city establishment — mayor and council, planning and zoning boards, the chamber of commerce, banking and special interests, community leaders. They study background documents. On the second day there is a town meeting, the first of two. The town meeting is open to all interested citizens and its purpose is to collect input from individuals and from the non-establishment groups — neighborhood organizations, block groups, ethnic and minority representatives. Some of the people who have been heard at this first town meeting may be asked back for more detailed one-to-one discussions. The team gets together for work sessions. Members synthesize their experience and begin to hammer out as a team the theoretical basis for their approach.

The bulk of the production work takes place in a final 24-hour non-stop work session starting at dawn on the third day. First the team sets up a comprehensive framework for the thrust of its recommendations. Then each team member works at his speciality, alone or in small groups — conceptualizing, writing, drawing — conferring with other team members from time to time to compare thoughts and correlate ideas. A skeleton of a final report begins to surface, and as the night wears on, the report is fleshed out in writing and illustrations. By dawn of the fourth day a finished book, usually 60 to 100 pages in length, goes to the printer and the team goes to bed. In the afternoon there is a press conference. In the evening there is the second open town meeting when the team makes its presentation to the community, using slides and the finished report (which has just come back from the printer in the nick of time) to illustrate its recommendations.

The R/UDAT team is thus in town for a total of four days. But organization and preparation for a team visit often take more than a year all told, and expenses today can exceed \$20, \$25,000 generally perceived as a small sum when it is compared with the value of the professional input and, in many communities, the tangible projects that are subsequently implemented.



Preceding a R/UDAT

During the months before the R/UDAT, the city is visited by members of the AIA's R/UDAT Task Group and team chairperson who conduct informational meetings to understand the issues, and ensure that relevant background documentation is collected and available for team members. A critical outcome of these preliminary visits is that it enables the R/UDAT Task Group to select and invite the finest interdisciplinary talents available from all over the country to address the specific issues that have surfaced.

Following a R/UDAT

A highly organized follow-up program is also available as part of the process. It involves follow-up team visits, which include some (but not all) of the original team plus some new faces. The idea is to help the community move forward with the team's recommendations, to develop strategies with the community on how to remove roadblocks to progress, and to make comparisons with other R/UDATs so that the national R/UDAT committee can learn how to make future R/UDATs more successful.



R/UDAT's impact on urban design

The impact of the R/UDAT program on the nation's cities is unequalled by any other urban design activity over the past decade. No consultant organization has worked so closely with so many communities. No government agency has dealt with such a rich variety of issues. The breadth, quantity and quality of experienced talent in the R/UDAT process exists in no institution or in any consultant organization.

R/UDAT can therefore be considered an encapsulation of urban design. All the fundamental elements of the discipline exist in R/UDAT. The extent and activity of this program has not only taught us lessons for the program's own improved operation, but has also exposed the bare bones of urban design. Almost every planning and architectural office in the nation which practices urban design, whether in the public or the private domain, has been directly affected by R/UDAT.

R/UDAT's Three ingredients

Briefly, these are the three ingredients for successful urban design, as revealed by the R/UDAT experience:

One: the process

First, the **process** by which the effort takes place is as important as its product. Making urban democracy work is a critical demonstration in the R/UDAT program as it engenders a sense that ordinary people can, and do, affect urban change. The urban design process, as we have said earlier, must openly involve all elements in the community, from the decision-making structure to the neighborhood organization, and from the first

perceptions of goals and objectives through the development of implementation strategies. To be successful, urban design must be sensitive to the people in the community and its physical fabric, as well as to the culture and history of the place, its political framework and the events which produced the existing climate. The process must contain feedback techniques, so that decisions reached in one stage can be evaluated and adjusted against criteria established earlier. It is, in a word catalytic. It brings people together who have never talked to one another before, with the tough common goal of "getting things done."





Two: interdisciplinary teams

The second requirement for successful urban design is that the work be performed by an **interdisciplinary** group so that not only all the issues but all the angles on those issues can be explored at a professional level.

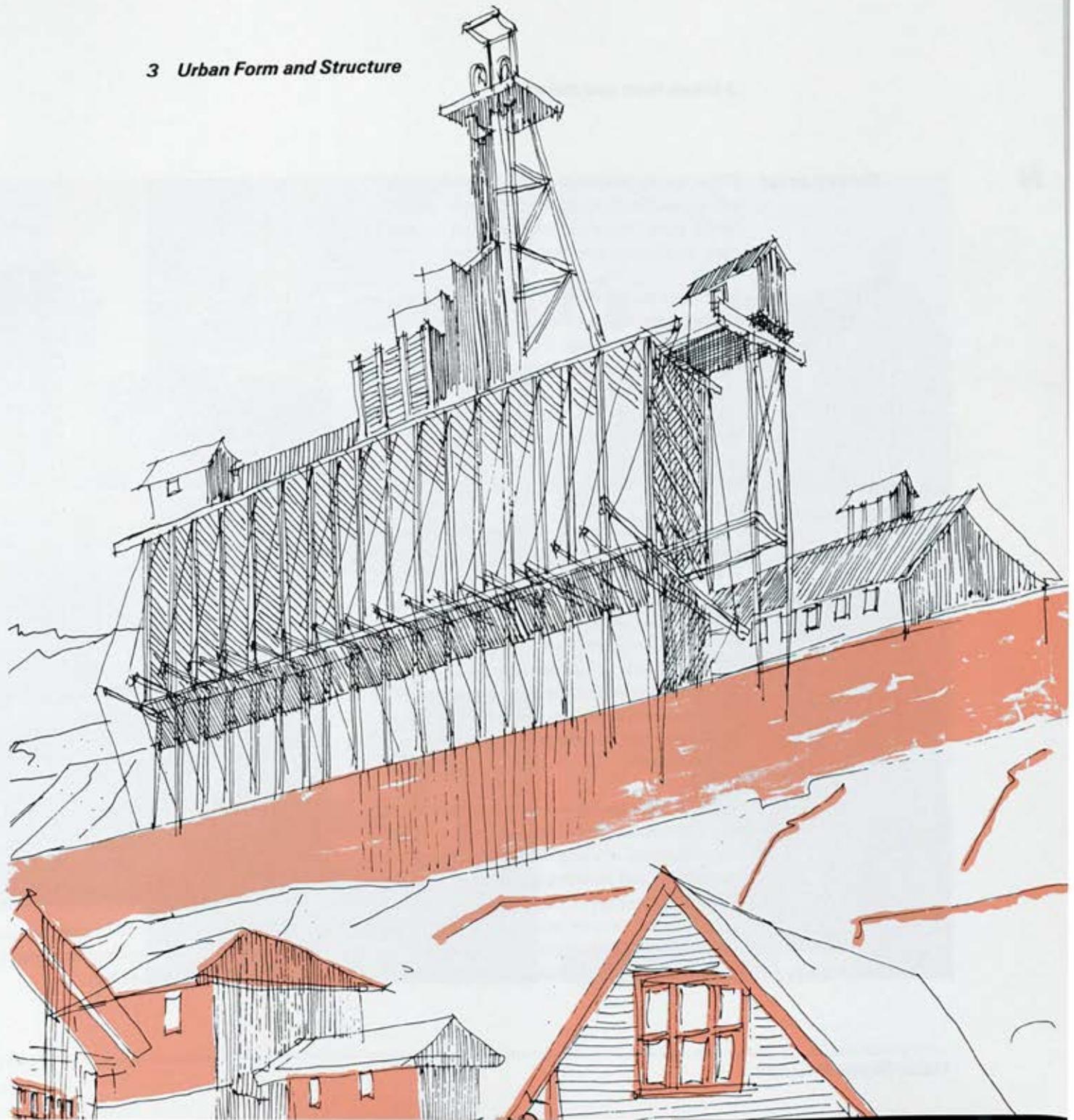
Today's issues in urban design are far too complex to be understood and addressed by any single profession. While sociologists and economists may understand each other's products, neither has the skill to perform the other's work. The sensitive meshing of the interdisciplinary team is vital, not only to ensure the quality of its work, but also its credibility in the community. The dialogue between professionals with different backgrounds and areas of expertise can grow tougher,

sophisticated and more meaningful as recommendations are challenged and hashed out within the team. Healthy urban design recommendations and stronger projects for each particular context spring from such a dialogue.

Three: citizen participation

The key ingredient of urban design is **citizen participation**. In every urban community in the country citizens are saying in a variety of ways that our cities belong to the people who live in them, and are their means of expression. The citizens' movement is no longer the scattered local voice it was only a few decades ago. Neighborhood organizations have a new strength and are being heard in city halls across the nation.

3 Urban Form and Structure



3 Urban Form and Structure

6

The city as art Cities are our most intricate art form, our richest self-expression. Citymaking is the only art in which every citizen can take part, and it is also the only art that never reaches a conclusion.

Night and day we work on our cities, tirelessly, in a myriad ways. We knock things down, build things up, change this, change that. We are never satisfied; we never stop. Every day people are challenged by the city; challenged by what to keep and what to conserve, identifying new needs, trying to remedy obsolescence, worrying about competition and investment, scheming and drawing, negotiating and making commitments.

Not everything involves architects and planners: indeed, when you really get down to it, very little does. Countless agendas are going on all the time. Some are in the public interest, some not; many are in conflict with one another. In a way it's as if—in each living city—we have generated something with an independent life of its own; a self-destroying and self-renewing organism. With every demolition the city suffers a partial death. With every new construction it enjoys a partial rebirth.

Some changes are big — a leap in interest rates, a new highway, a national strike, the relocation of a major industry, or a new tall office tower reflecting summer sky and scudding clouds in its glass. They make the front page of the local newspaper and the six o'clock news on television. Other changes are quite small, like scraping and painting a clapboard house or restoring a front porch. Things



like this go almost unnoticed except by your neighbors on the block, and in the context of the city they are hardly perceptible.





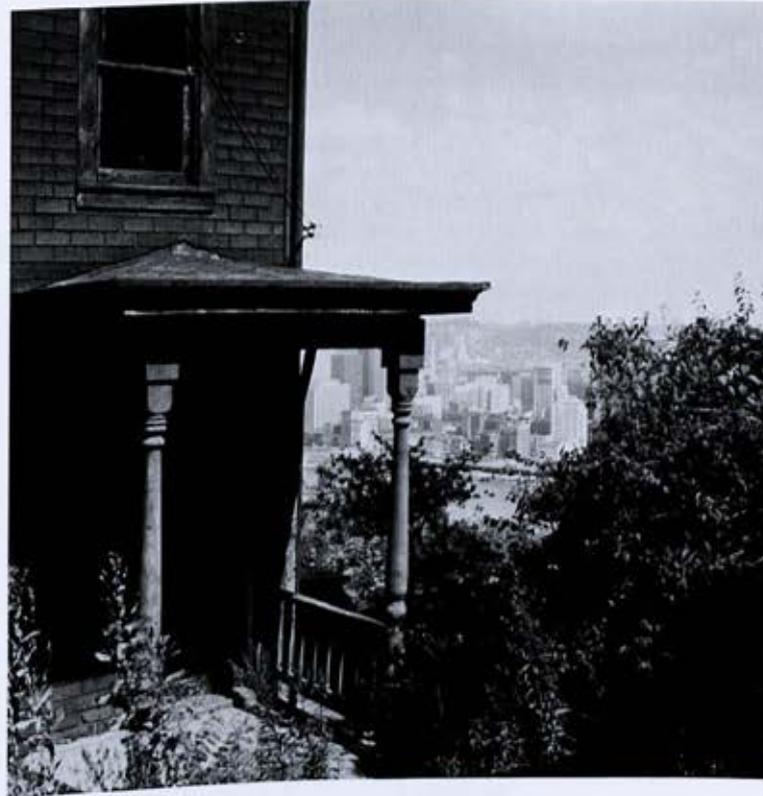
But everything adds up, big parts and little parts of the whole. All are increments of the quality, the character and the heritage of the city we live: in the place where we work and have our families and networks of friends, where we shop and go to concerts or football games, the place where we mold our public and private ambitions.

With all this going on, it's a wonder cities have any form at all. Of course on a scale of one to ten; some do and some don't. Yet this process of perpetual restless modification has been the way cities the world over and in every culture have grown and changed for centuries. Even basic urban forms which seem at first to be unexceptional and mundane may be found on better acquaintance to have evolved their own distinct personality and flavor, their own ambience, texture and even smell. Indeed, we are attracted to old cities because to our contemporary eyes they have accreted treasured layers of heritage. They touch deep chords in us. In our modern world, in which we are assailed by the speed of change and by uncertainty and cheapness, cities with tradition reassure us with their vocabularies of continuity and the anonymous enrichment of generations.



We might say, with Edmund Bacon, that the city precisely reflects its society; a pitiless mirror. And because in a way we are each responsible for this urban mirror, our city tells us about ourselves truthfully, without a blush. It tells about the things we value most and the things we hardly value at all. In the places where we take our visitors, it tells about our pride and culture. Yet in gutters and alleyways it is mischievously eloquent about our standards of housekeeping. In our tree-shaded residential neighborhoods it tells about the lifestyles of the affluent beyond the well-mown lawn; but in treeless slums, draped with wires like cobwebs from drunken utility poles, it doesn't mince matters about our disregard of the poor and derelict.

Oddly enough our urban mirror is also unblinking about our relationship to nature. Although our cities are manmade environments, they exist in natural settings. Urban form tells us unequivocally how we have shaped our urban lives in response to contour, wind and sun, to mountain and desert, and to the presence of rivers.



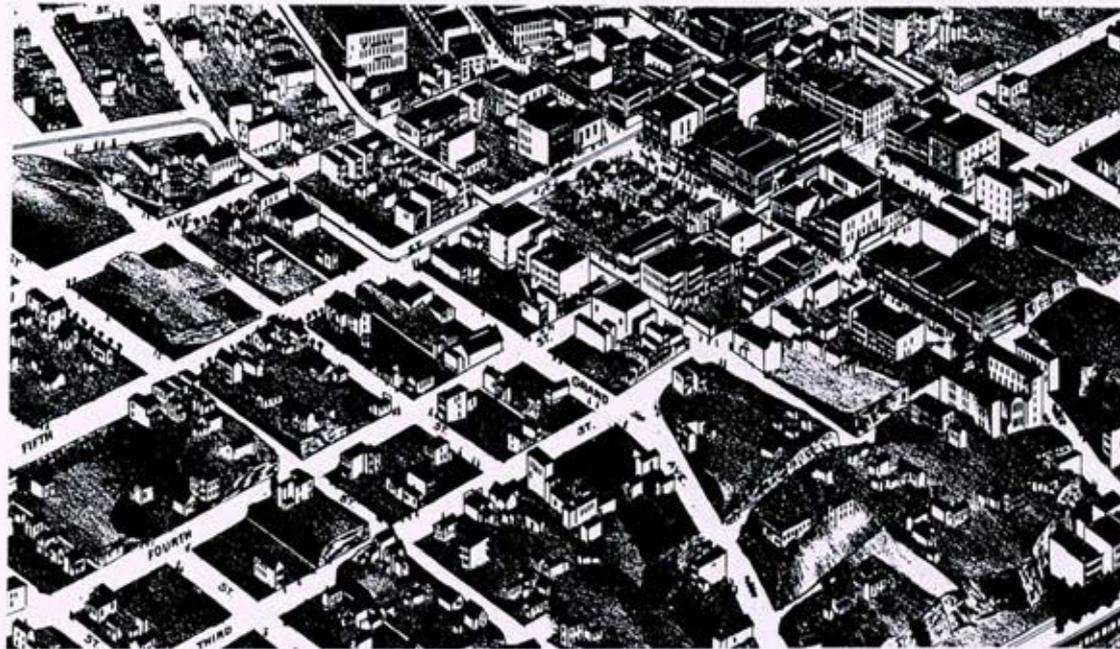
***Determinants of
urban form***

Every art has an implicit structure. The structure of American cities is very strong and distinctly different from cities evolved by other cultures. Because we look at them with contemporary American eyes, we can learn a lot from the towns of other nations and epochs. At no time in the history of mankind as so much information been available to us. If we can't fly to Europe on a Concorde or take a Boeing to the Far East, television will bring far-off places in pulsing color into our living rooms and bedrooms.

Internationalism permeates our lives. Modern science and technology are international languages which transcend the cultures and boundaries we inherit. They are relentless opponents of localism. Automobiles, refrigerators and a zillion other consumer products are not only much the same in every country, but are assembled from components manufactured in factories hundreds and sometimes thousands of miles apart.

But cities are different. They are not interchangeable. They do not so easily succumb to internationalism. Urban form, that mirror of society, can't be exported across cultural boundaries. We can learn neat and even magical things from the architectural styles of faraway towns, but they are mostly cosmetics. The urban forms we admire in other cultures are not ours; and the reverse is true too. However much we may love the winding streets or arcaded public squares, the histories, the laws, and the craftsmanship and the materials that produced Italian hill towns or Saharan walled cities — these are not our elements. They are the products of cultures and contexts profoundly different from those that gave birth to American cities.



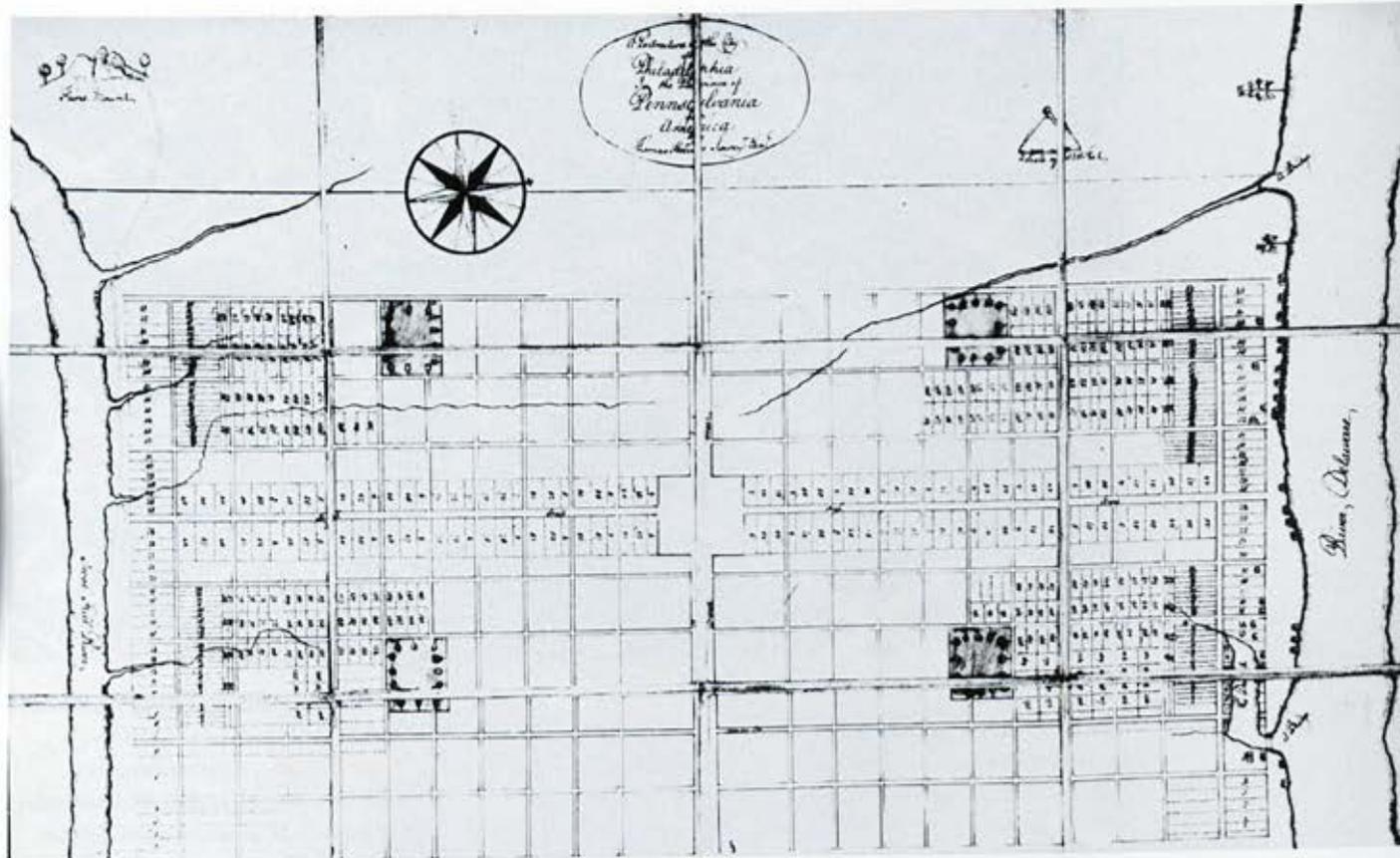


Grids Flying across the United States from coast to coast one looks down on deserts, mountains and plains, and on rivers meandering like silver snakes across the land below; and one is awed by the power and variety of the nature that upheaved those gaunt snow-peaked ranges, parched those orange deserts, and silted the vast flat prairie lands.

At the same time it is over the rich agricultural plains of the Midwest, stretching in every direction as far as the eye can see until they disappear in pale horizon mists, that you are aware, not only of nature's power, but of man's dimensions. The land is divided by grids as exact

as graph paper. And the grids extend for hundreds of miles, from Texas to Illinois, and from the Alleghenies to the Rockies, representing the willful imposition of man's geometry, human order, across nature. Hundreds of miles of equivalence: north, south, east and west.

And the overall geometry subdivides into smaller orders within it. From your aircraft window you can pick out farm buildings too, neat clusters of small white cubes at the interstices of the grids. Each cluster is equidistantly spaced from the next, a concentration of geometric objects in geometric space, a white farmhouse, two or three white barns, and a grain tower, built around a square farmyard.



And there are cities as well as farms. From the air you can see how the agricultural geometry becomes a geometry of city blocks, and how city blocks are subdivided to become building lots, decreasing in scale and increasing in density and complexity the closer one gets to the city center.

These cities did not originate organically and grow slowly over time as European cities did. Like the agricultural grids they lie within, they originated in the Land Ordinance of the Continental Congress of 1785. Orthogonal geometries were applied by surveyors to the raw open continent, generally in squares of one mile by one mile, as a prelude to grants to big land companies which in turn auctioned off quadrants to pioneer farmers or to urban speculators.

Looking down from the comfort of today's airliner it is perhaps hard to visualize how vast and intractable that continent below must have seemed to eighteenth century explorers and traders, as they inched and hewed their way across the uncharted virgin plains and over mountain ranges under the endless sky. Yet once the land was mapped, huge territories, even if they were totally unknown, were suddenly measurable and comprehensible. The cartesian geometries, in a word, provided under the sky an address, a destination, a precision of place and human scale. In the history of human settlement nothing quite parallels what happened in the United States in the nineteenth century. Literally thousands of farms and hundreds of new towns and cities were laid out in a few decades.

***The character of
Grid Cities***

The grids of American cities are often condemned for being boring. Some are and some aren't: it's dangerous to generalize. In any case, urban grids exist and we are well advised to learn and appreciate their rationale. The grid, rural and urban, was a perfect tool for nineteenth century settlement and speculation. No other geometry was so easy to lay out, subdivide, describe in deeds, and sell on the auction block.

Just like the rural grids which continue straight on regardless of whatever rivers or lakes might happen to lie in their path, urban grids became meshes thrown across every kind of topography, from the flat land of the plains to the extreme topography of the mountains. One would be hard pressed to call San Francisco boring. That city's grid runs up and around the hills, and plunges to the waterfront.

Laid over the contours the grid is a mesh of horizontal terraces and uphill-downhill avenues.

Of course, not every city has such a romantic setting. But North America is a continent with an extraordinary array of physical conditions and climates. The reason for the urban grid, as we have said, was land speculation, not citybuilding or urban felicity; urban blocks were laid out on maps with a rectangular geometry of streets so they could be sold. But under the geometry of the grid is always a geology shaped by movements in the earth's crust and weathered by nature's ceaseless energy, the silting of prehistoric lakes, the scouring of granite and limestone of millennia of winds and water, the parching of thin soil by relentless summer suns, the eroding and cutting of rains and rivers. Orthogonal projections and maps are not the same thing as being on the ground. Innumerable cities have topographies which warp but do not break the grid, and gain intense local character from the interplay. Some cities are bisected by rivers with parkland along their banks, and the grid leaps across on bridges and continues on the other side. Other grid cities nestle in the bowls of mountain valleys, so that every avenue is a vista of mountains framed by buildings. Others run their grids to the waterfronts of river, lake or ocean so that a map of the city looks like a sheet of graph paper that has been torn along its edge. And in many cities, the salient grid triangulates to accept the diagonal of a railroad, a canal or a boulevard, and then varies within each triangulation the size of street or block.

Pattern books: a basis for our cities

Because towns and cities grew so quickly in the nineteenth century, block after block was built, not by individuals, but by developer-contractors who acquired sequences of lots within the grid and then sold them to individual buyers with standard buildings on them.

Pattern books for these house-builders, carefully dimensioned to fit standard subdivisions within typical grids, were published and were in popular demand. The pattern books offered basic plans, sections and details. These were then modified by builders, from city to city and region to region, in response to market, climate and prevalence of materials. In some cities, brick predominates. In others, timber frame and clapboard. In others, stone.

The most popular books were national publications. They were sold across the country or could be ordered by mail. Even Sears sold them. So in city after city you can trace the same basic patterns, the same basic residential or commercial boxes.

Yet if you think this leads to sameness, you are wrong. In equally popular demand were alternative add-on items which each individual builder or house-buyer could choose out of manufacturers' or millwork catalogues — bay windows, porches, brackets, dormers, decorative lintels, fanlights, pilasters, friezes, stained glass, and so on. These modular items enabled each buyer to express his individuality and his contrast from his neighbor. The result is that blocks and subdivisions which appear to be equivalent on city maps evolved in

reality into sequences of almost unlimited variations. And so throughout the city each block, while based on an underlying geometric unity, became an eloquent "body language" of individual ownerships.



***The block as the key
social unit***

Despite its origin as land speculation, the grid was quickly perceived as an articulation of democratic ideals, American style. The equivalence of the grids, expanding across the continent in all directions for thousands of square miles, came to represent to immigrants and homesteaders an equivalence of opportunity and property ownership in country and city.

Urban grids, seldom geometrically the same as rural grids, were nevertheless set up to fit into rural quadrants. From the air, the geometry of rectangular city blocks breaks into the lots of individual ownerships—the “grain” of cities as the late Kevin Lynch referred to them. And the geometry of rural grids also breaks into rectangular strips of ploughed land with crops or meadow, or curvilinear stripes within the rectangular grid. From the city, main urban avenues continue out into the landscape to become the roads of the rural grids. Thus between city and country a sense of holistic order was set up, a sense of continuity from city to country and to city again across the land, in which every front door is linked to every other front door within a simple and equivalent system.



Perhaps nowhere is the basic democratic theory of the grid city reflected more eloquently than in our older residential neighborhoods. In a typical neighborhood houses line the street on each side with porches or steps where families sit in the summer time. Behind the house there is a back porch and a back yard. The back yard is the family's private space and is often fenced in. In front there are a porch, steps, a small front lawn, the sidewalk and the street. Unlike the back yards, front spaces are seldom fenced in. The street itself is a block long, with a cross-street at each end giving geographic definition.



Thresholds and Progressions

There is a clear progression in the American city from an ultimate privacy in the individual's house, the bathroom or the bedroom, to the ultimate public space, the city's courthouse square; and the sequence is a series of clearly articulated thresholds each with its own architectural vocabulary. In the house there is a back stair and a front stair. The back stair leads to a kitchen or family room that opens to the back porch and back yard, the private zone. The front stair, in contrast, comes down to areas progressively more public; a living room and hall; a front door and porch; front steps and a lawn. These in turn lead you to a sidewalk and a block-long street with cars parked on each side, separated by a row of street trees which not only offer summer shade but also demarcate the pedestrian zone from the traffic zone. Now you are in your car, and from the neighborhood street you turn onto the cross-street that leads you in turn to an avenue into the heart of the city.

Each of these threshold situations has its own social as well as personal vocabulary. The street is a summer living room under the sky, unified by front lawns and shade trees and lined with porches, each of which is a variant on a standard vocabulary of catalogue elements — column, rail, balustrade, spindle, bracket and so forth.





Porches: boundaries between the private and public domains

Many of the older porches are stylized and decorative. Carpenter gothic fretwork in the North and frilly cast iron in the South, cast shadows as though sunlight is filtered through the leaves of a tree. Balustrades, like the fretwork, are “see through” elements: a “boundary” between the public space of the street and the private space of the porch and the house. Many families will put all sorts of extra touches on their porches, too. Structural wood details or ornament may be painted in distinctive colors. Striped canvas awnings edged with scallops or tassels, and hanging baskets of ferns and begonias, will give extra shade and act as a filter for evening breeze and the voices and traffic sounds of the street. Evergreen shrubs, like rhododendrons or azaleas, planted along the base of the porch will add an extra screen of waist-high privacy, as well as a springtime festival of blossoms of every hue—red, yellow, peach and mauve—to greet the first summer sunshine and bees of May.

The porches thus become the interface between the family and the block, a body-language of individual ownership, and yet a language too of belonging to the whole. The public zone within the house is often a stage set of catalogue parts too. The front stair is ornate, at least up to the first landing, with ornamented newells, spindles and handrail, and the landing itself is lit by an intricate stained glass window, while the floor of the hall will be gracefully inlaid with geometric patterns in polished hardwoods. And this space in turn becomes the interface between the public and the family.



Within this order the block thus becomes the key social unit of the American city, and the block-long neighborhood street with its unity and diversity of residential expression is its basic urban space. Children play in the street under the watchful eyes of parents. Families sit out on their porches on summer evenings, exchanging gossip from porch to porch, and talking with passersby on the sidewalk. Everyone knows everyone else.

***Urban Structure:
The Language
of Democracy***

On another level the grid is the physical infrastructure of urban democracy. From house to city to nation is an ascending series of scales. In the vast size of the continent the grid provides a precision of place under the sun, a vectored address where you will find an individual's self-expression within a geometrically articulated urban, regional and national holism. Similarly within the city there is an ascending micro-series of scales: house to street; street to block; block to the neighborhood shopping street and to churches, schools and parks; and community to city.

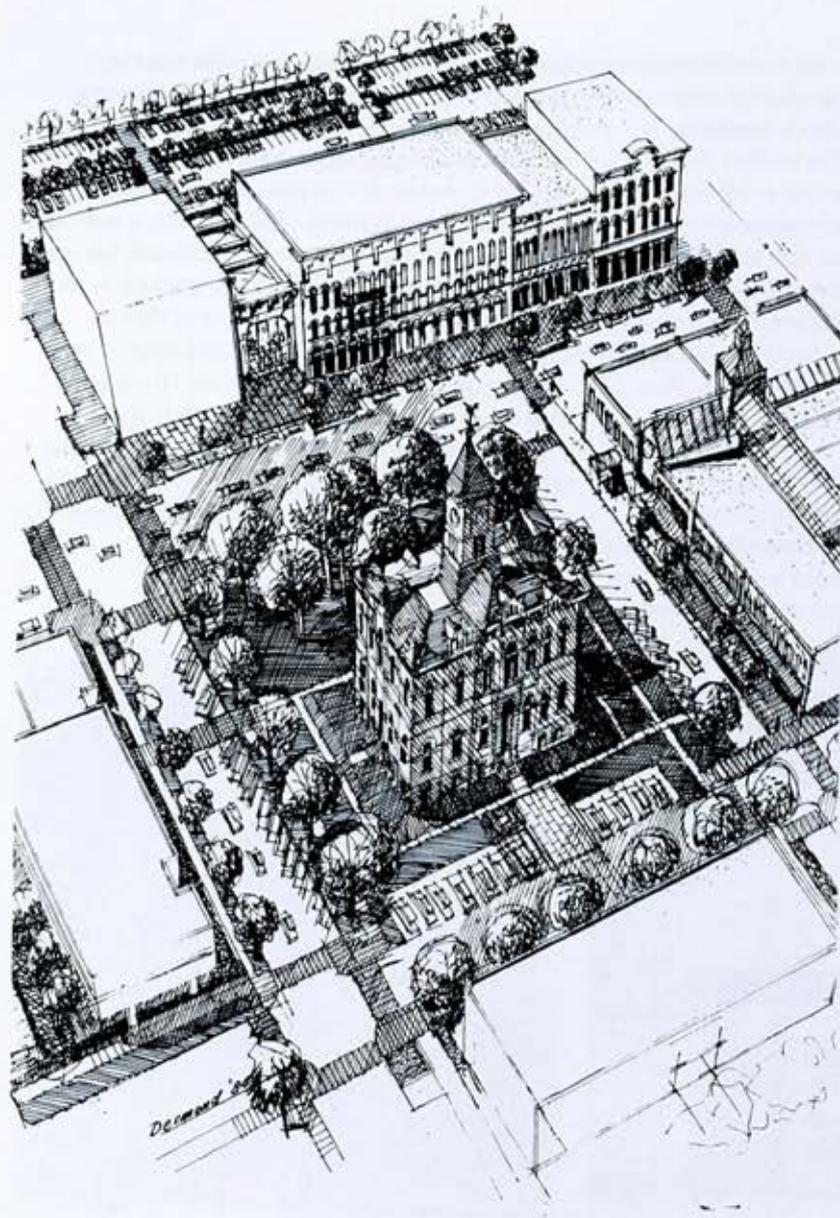
The right of individuals to own property within the urban grid, and the direct relationship of building to street, and street to city, has political as well as social and physical significance in the basic structure of American urban form. From the earliest decades of urban settlement in New England a tradition of town meetings has existed at which all citizens have an equal right to raise and discuss issues in the public interest. The geometric grids of the hundreds of subsequent nineteenth century towns and cities all across



America came to represent this sense of explicit equivalence of social worth and opportunity, and the interrelationship of all citizens with each other and with the functions and processes of the city.

In most grid cities there is as clear a physical language of the democracy of law and government as there is a clear physical language of the neighborhood street as a basic social unit.

The grid doesn't change when it comes to the courthouse or to city hall. An urban block, somewhere in the center of the city where it often can be reached by everyone, is simply devoted to this function. In other situations, the location of



the civic block is geometrically precise within the grid. Within the block the courthouse is frontal to the street just as all the other buildings in the city are, and has a bi-axial plan that relates its internal geometries to the city grid. In front of it there may be a public square— which is not the hard-surfaced square of European cities, but small park laid out with axial and diagonal pathways between lawns and trees. Above the confluence of axial geometries rises a dome. Indeed in many cities the courthouse dome is more prominent than city hall, articulating the prominence of law over politics within the holism of the grid and society.

One essence of democracy is that it permits the open exchange of ideas and concerns, and is prepared to debate them. Another is that it is accountable. The language of the grid articulates the relationship of every citizen to law and government as an equal and non-hierarchical system. Simply stated, every citizen is entitled to be heard and to get answers.

The human body as metaphor

One might say that American democracy is a network of dichotomies.

The theory of grids is a network of geometrical equivalences across the land. Yet on the ground, articulated by hills and rivers and the self-expression of countless millions of human actions, cities evolve into places with individuality and a sense of local belonging. The sense of belonging is all the more interesting when we take into account the fact that at no time in history have people been more transient. Without doubt the impact of modern communications which through

information networks, films and news bulletins make us all world citizens contributes to the confidence with which we uproot ourselves. Statistics tell us that American families move on an average of once every four and a half years. Yet in spite of the unparalleled complexity of the modern American city, we are able to plug ourselves with equal confidence into the local culture, politics and sense of place of any city we migrate to. Theoretically the political system and urban infrastructure are ready to receive us. In a sense, our own body is its metaphor.

Located at the upper end of our spine, on the periscope of our neck, is a mind, a consciousness, which looks out across time and space, across local and international history, and across cultures, arts, and politics. At the other end of our skeleton are

our feet—anchored into a particular time and place. Indeed, perceiving each city as having a character and an evolving culture, and perceiving all citizens as transients — for even if they belong to that increasingly rare species of American which lives out its life in only one city, or rarer still in only one community or neighborhood, life itself is transient and the life of the city goes on — we can see that our American pattern is that of plugging in. We plug our minds and aspirations into an on-going and evolving local city-culture and we relate the range of our minds to the specific space-time location of our feet. We make our dialogue with our local city and its culture by involving the personal resource of who and what each of us is.



Plugging into neighborhood and city

Democracy is thus essentially a framework for plugging in physically, culturally, socially and politically.

But when democracies break down, when the channels of communication are clogged or are deliberately blocked, when the individual voice fails to be heard and when public actions are no longer openly accountable — that is when revolt occurs.

By restoring openness to the local democratic process, the social upheavals of the 60's and 70's have begun to inject new life into the inherited structure of urban democracy, particularly at the local level.

The revival of our sense of localism in the latter quarter of the 20th century is thus accompanied by a new commitment to process, a commitment to the development of the democratic procedures which enable citizens to be directly involved in the design of urban policies, and in the decision-making that affects the quality of their lives and of their local communities.

Civil rights: a turning point for modern American cities

The changes that affect cities most deeply are generally not physical at all — at least not to begin with. As we have said, the main impetus for the basic infrastructure of American cities was the Land Ordinance of the Continental Congress of 1785. Infrastructures are generally slow to change. Yet at play on this basic form today are innumerable more transient factors such as the rise and fall of interest rates, the election of a new president and national administration, changes in



federal funding programs, an escalation in the cost of fossil fuels — factors which powerfully control the course and quality of urban life at the local level through their impact on local economics, priorities, and what can and cannot be achieved through development.

These are national forces. Also at play are powerful forces that originate at local levels or are intensely felt there. In the 1980's the industrial cities of the northeast and upper midwest have been deeply affected, for example, by the decline of domestic steelmaking in the face of cheaper foreign imports. The local economy of milltowns and steel communities in the Pittsburgh area, Cleveland, Chicago and Gary have been disastrously undermined. In some cities there have been strikes, revolts, and violence. Of all the upheavals

of recent years, the civil rights movement of the 50's and 60's had perhaps the deepest and most creative impact in recent history — the effects of which are still being felt today in virtually every aspect of urban life.

In 1967 the nation was staggered by riots and unrest in cities from coast to coast. As with an earthquake or a volcanic eruption, the danger signals had been in evidence for a decade before. Supreme court decisions to integrate schools; the heroic and bitter confrontation of James Meredith with the University of Mississippi when his enrollment as a student was barred on the basis of color; the quiet heroism of Rosa Parks when she refused to stand in the crowded section at the back of an Alabama bus while seats in the front section, traditionally occupied by whites, were vacant; the violence against black churches and school children by the Ku Klux Klan—incidents like these signalled local revolts which suddenly flared into an anger of national proportion, culminating in the civil rights march on Washington and the assassination of King in 1968.

Clearly national programs were not enough. It was the intricate machinery of local democracy that needed to be made open and responsive once again to the issues and concerns of citizens. The crux of the challenge was to transform brutal and violent reaction — the riots and the arson — into understanding, and into processes through which new and positive initiatives could be found.

The sixties: a new focus on localism

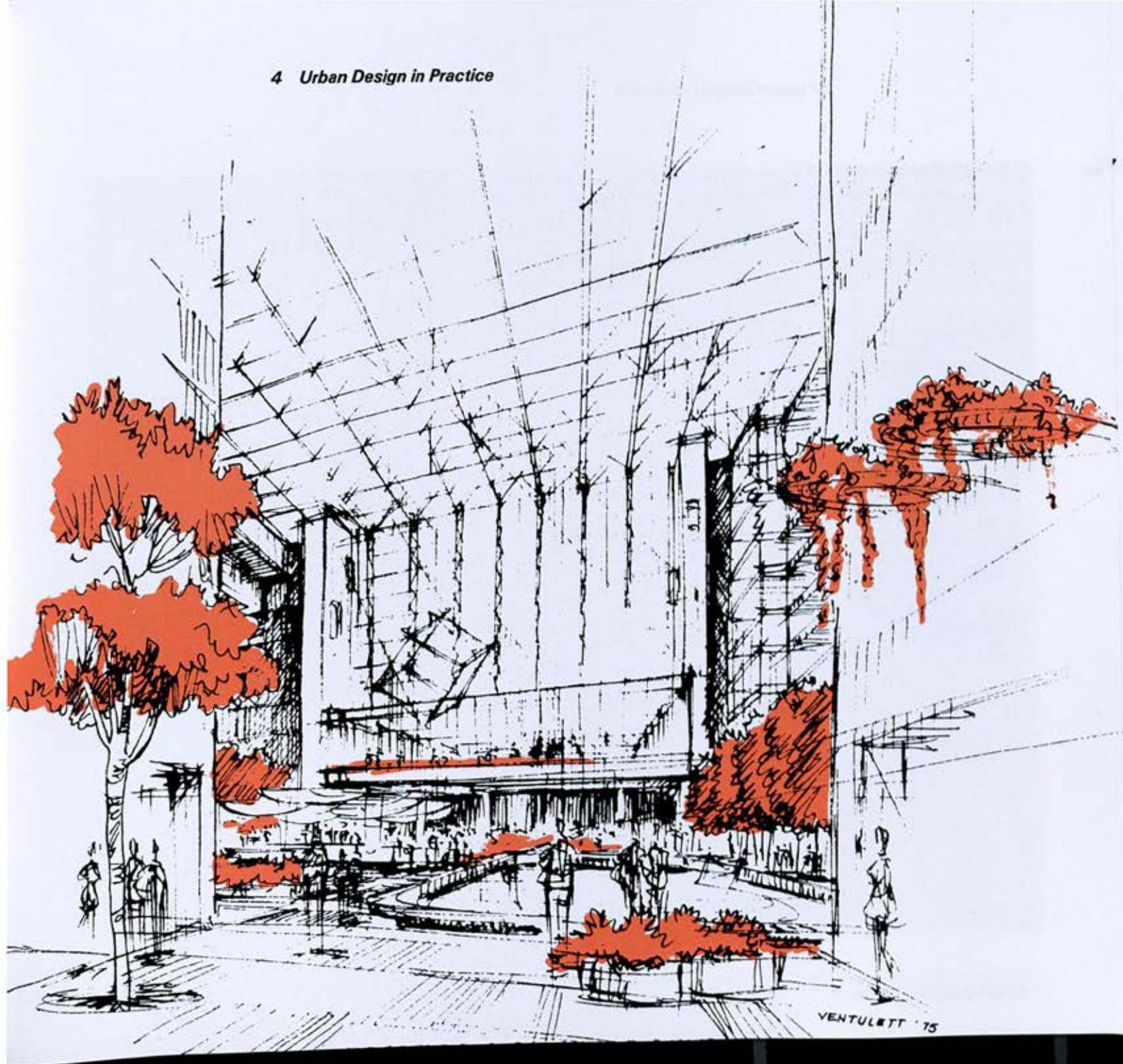
Creative contributions to a growing national debate were made by planners, architects, sociologists and historians whose focus was not national, but local. Jane Jacobs' *Death and Life of Great American Cities*, with its concern for the neighborhood street, struck a timely chord. Urban America, Inc., was established, and it published *Cities* magazine. New urban design sections were structured into the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. The American Institute of Architects established the non-profit Urban Design and Development Corporation. Newly-elected mayor John Lindsey formed the Council on Urban Design in New York; and he established the offices of Mid-town Planning and Downtown Development and staffed them with talented young architects and planners. A nationwide Community Design Center movement sprang up in urban neighborhoods across the country, manned by volunteer architects, teachers and students. And the R/UDAT program came into being, sending interdisciplinary professional teams to cities requesting help.

But none of this would have been effective if other aspects of change were not occurring simultaneously. The civil rights movement gave impetus to other liberations, the women's movement for equal rights, the rights of religious freedom, and sexual freedom, peace movements and protests by students — all of which are revolts whose basis lies, not in changing our democratic institutions, but in simply making them work.

“Sunshine” legislation, which now requires meetings of public bodies to be opened to citizen attendance, has provided avenues of information on all issues, large and small. The Bicentennial in 1976 made urban Americans conscious of the inherited quality of cities, neighborhoods and buildings in a way that was new and relevant. For the first time cities became objects of pride. Urban design, in the new atmosphere of openness, became a means of negotiating environmental issues as citizens, local government and the private sector—working together—moved complex projects forward in an atmosphere of debate and consensus.

Urban design has slowly evolved into the powerful instrument that it is today. By permitting everyone to participate in the design process, from the earliest stage of defining goals and priorities, to the final stages of design and securing financial commitments to proceed into implementation, urban design procedures have become essential vehicles for achieving policies and projects in a climate of democratic responsibility and accord.





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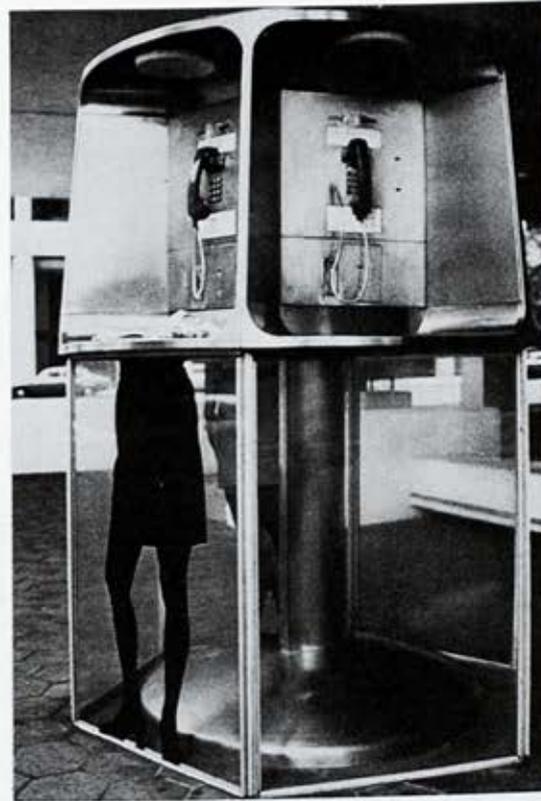
4 Urban design in practice

Civic design versus people design



Urban design, like any other art, is a means of expression. But unlike painting, sculpture, music or poetry which originate as individual self-expressions, urban design is a public and collaborative expression. Many people participate in urban design, interrelating individual actions into networks of impact, in space and over time. As the art which deals with the form and quality of environments in cities, urban design ultimately involves everyone.

Architects and urban designers do not make cities. People do. Of course there are examples of urban design in cities in the United States and abroad where formal public squares, grand boulevards, tall fountains and monumental sculptures have been created with little input from the citizens. But there are many more examples in which the opposite has happened: neighborhood parks, squares, markets, shopping streets, taverns and cafe's, and all sorts of other places such as special street corners which have somehow evolved and become special after years of use and modification, modeled and remodeled by anonymous generations of tree planters, sign painters, lawn makers, gardeners, bollarders, pavers, and, of course, by you and me who use them.





People places versus non-people places

The odd thing is that these less formal places are where citizens usually feel most comfortable. Such places speak their language, the body language of their city. This is where secretaries and executives come to brown-bag at lunchtime, to talk, listen to jazz, feed the pigeons, buy fruits and vegetables or hot dogs and chestnuts from pushcart vendors, enjoy a book, lie in the summer sun, skate in the winter, or just sit on a park bench and watch each other.





And if we look around these successful public places, we will notice that the buildings themselves seem to respond. Nearby shop windows tend to have lively displays; upper windowsills sprout flowerboxes; someone puts out a flag or two. Often citizens will work hard to modify a formal space—such as a civic plaza with its cold materials and hard geometry—into a similar informality; a group of musicians may appear, and people will sit on hard steps or low walls to listen. As W.H. White has pointed out in his wonderful book, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, formal spaces are never very successful as “people places” — that is to say, warm and human, and free from petty crime — until that sort of thing happens.



Involving people

Until the late 1950s and early '60s most architects and urban designers regarded themselves as interventionists in the daily processes of the city, inserting buildings or civic spaces without any real understanding of the interests of the citizens. But the urban unrest that erupted in the '60s showed just how wide of the mark architects, along with the majority of our society, often were. An extreme and widely publicized example of this was the Pruitt-Igoe Housing Project in St. Louis, an inner city public housing project which won international acclaim and awards for its design, but was totally rejected by the citizens and ultimately had to be torn down.

If the architects for Pruitt-Igoe had involved the people in the formative stages of the project, there can be little doubt that the design would have been different. Had they done so, the designers would have heard about the social culture of the slum streets that had to be demolished to make way for their new buildings; they would have heard about the fears and hopes of parents for their growing children. They would have heard about segregation; and about being still locked into poverty in spite of the replacement housing being new and sanitary. They would have heard that public housing creates segregation within families, because when a young person succeeds and rises above the housing authority's income limits, he or she can no longer live in the community. They would have heard that only renters can live in the project, and therefore nobody can own a home or build up any equity in the community he lives in. They would have heard about intergenerational relationships, about crime and insecurity, about

the size and activities of public open spaces, about neighborliness, identity and pride. And if they had heard all of these things, and permitted their design to evolve from these contexts rather than from the intellectual and a priori eclecticism of the modern movement in architecture, Pruitt-Igoe may well have been different and been standing today.

Perhaps we should apologize for mentioning Pruitt-Igoe, a project everyone knows so well. We only bring it up again because it is an example of what happens when there is no interaction between the users of our buildings and architects in private practice. There are hundreds of other projects like it. They exist in every city. The biggest difference between the early 1960s and the early 1980s is that some architects and urban designers are learning to listen.

Because of pent-up bitterness and frustration, and the backdrop of inner city violence of those early years, the architect's awakening began with a baptism of fire. No one really knew how to organize a public process in which citizens were encouraged to make inputs, to be heard and make decisions in an orderly manner. There were no models of previous processes to look at, no body of experience. But over the past 20 years a considerable body of experience has developed.



Public process in private practice

The earliest examples of architects in private practice involving citizens directly in the design public of buildings and environments occurred in the sixties, parallel with the earliest R/UDATs. At first there was no connection between them, other than the climate of the times.

When James Bell of Rapid City, South Dakota, made his historic visit to the headquarters of the AIA in Washington in 1967, his request for help on behalf of his city was not tied to a national consciousness of change. He merely acknowledged that the difficult local issues facing his town called for expert counsel: and that was all.

A similar focus on local issues lay behind the earliest examples of public participation in the private practice of architecture. In many ways the

stage had been set for a number of years before 1967. The nation's schools, particularly in northern cities, were a veritable cauldron in the sixties. It was here more than in any other public arena that the battle over segregation was waged most fiercely and, ironically, most eloquently. Parents saw education as the key to their children's futures. Black parents from socially deprived or segregated backgrounds looked to integrated school systems as thresholds to opportunities for their children to learn professional skills and enter middle class career streams — opportunities which their own generation never had. White parents predicted that integrated schools would lead to the lowering of educational standards, and would expose children from middle class families to drugs, crime and the role models drawn urban slums.

Schools: an early vehicle for focusing on broader urban issues

There is no doubt that this debate over the future of public education gave a powerful impetus to the flight of young families to the suburbs. And "white flight" as it was called in turn impacted the drive for integration, since it left the inner city neighborhoods more intensely segregated than ever before. Ironically the Supreme Court, by ruling that segregation violates the Constitution and that public schools must be integrated, made matters worse. And civil rights activists, white as well as black, saw the schools issue as a vehicle for exposing a number of parallel issues to public scrutiny issues such as prejudice in employment practices, health care and housing.

Fortunately in the midst of the clamor there were enough parents and educators in many cities and school districts who were simply dedicated to making integrated public education work for their children. They quickly discovered that children provided a good excuse for adults from different backgrounds to work together openly on common problems. Children don't naturally recognize racial or social barriers. And the more involved in these issues the adults became, the more they began to work together in an organized way to discuss common goals and achieve meaningful change, and these processes became early participatory design models. Indeed, years later, many architects in private practice actually learned to start with children, not simply in projects involving schools and education, but even in complex urban design contexts such as downtown redesign; and then to widen the circle outwards, first to parents, then to citizens generally, and then to city government, business, institutions and the rest.



The first schools to be redesigned on open public process were built at the time of the first R/UDAT in Rapid City

It will of course never be known what form early participatory design models would have taken without the civil rights disturbances of the late 1960's. The fact remains that the civil rights movement brought many severe urban issues to a head, and in doing so it injected a new and urgent vitality into local democracy — and thus into participatory design processes.

An early example of what can happen was the design of an elementary school, beginning in 1967, in Pontiac, Michigan, on the heels of the Detroit riots. Like Detroit and other cities, Pontiac experienced deep civil unrest too. The city was in a state of confrontation on racial lines; blacks wanted to secede from the public school system and set up their own schools, staffed by black teachers; and, the children were caught in the middle.

The architects for the new school, David Lewis and Raymond Gindroz of Urban Design Associates, asked the Mayor and the President of the Board of Education to hold open meetings at which citizens could discuss — not the school directly — but what kind of city and urban society they would like their children to grow up into, as the context for a discussion of the school. In the process of doing this, major issues were identified, and it was within the context of these issues that the capital program for public education was introduced and debated.



The results were astonishing. Through the focus on education, parents began to discuss with city officials and the business community the shape of tomorrow's society and new opportunities, not only for young people, but for all of Pontiac's citizens. The media (radio, television, and the press) played an important part as these agendas began to unfold. The little elementary school became a local cause celebre, a vehicle for arriving at a totally new concept, something far bigger and more adventurous, a wholly unforeseen and unforeseeable program that grew out of the open process.

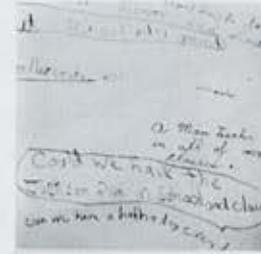




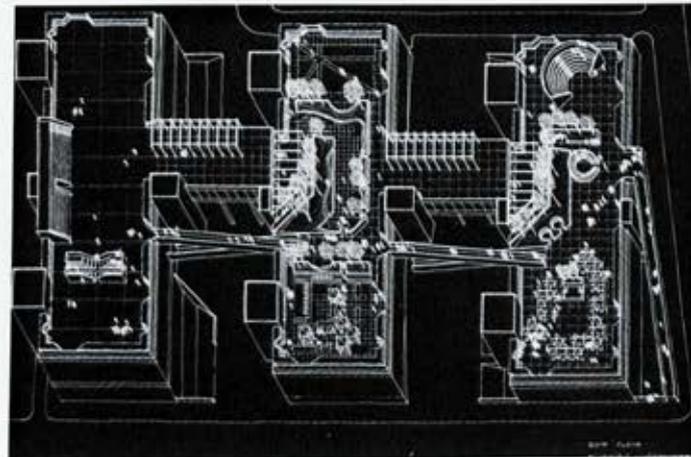
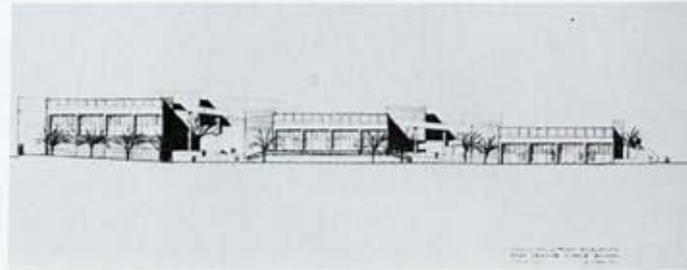
**Private practice
architects open a
store-front studio**

Parallel with Pontiac the education park experiment at Orange, N.J., culminated in a remarkable middle school designed and built in the neighboring community of East Orange in the early and mid-70s. The architects under the leadership of Jules Gregory opened a studio in a vacant storefront on Main Street. The East Orange School Design Center — as the store became known — started life with a public celebration. The street was closed to traffic, the high school band played marching music, the Mayor cut the ribbon, and the storefront studio began its work.

Day and evening passersby were encouraged to drop in to chat and comment on progress. Community planning and design meetings were held in the store. School students made models of the design and the neighborhood. They also made drawings of what they thought the school should be, and these in turn encouraged adults to give their ideas. A site for the school had to be found in a dense residential area of the city. But in spite of the need for the school, no one wanted to have a repetition of the large-scale relocations and bulldozing of the urban renewal days. What could be done?



The citizen's solution was as astonishing as it was innovative. An existing neighborhood park would be sacrificed to become the site for the new building on the understanding that a public open space and park could be placed on the roof of the structure, to be reached by ramps which were extensions of the street system of the neighborhood. Designed as a succession of enclosed spaces and open courts, the building itself is accessible from every direction. The final building is exuberant and non-hierarchical, with programs for people of all ages.





A similar storefront studio was opened by Indianapolis architect, Evans Woollen, when he was asked to undertake the redesign of the Finlay Market area in Cincinnati. The result of that process was a refurbished historic markethouse and a new community center. The citizens were so happy about the outcome that they staged a grand opening and a street celebration.

An Experimental Environment is designed and built with children

Meanwhile in the political atmosphere of student disturbances on the university campus, a typical asphalt school yard in Berkeley, California, was transformed into a diverse play and learning environment. The yard was planned and then built by parents, children, teachers, university students and neighborhoods in the surrounding community. Under the design guidance of Robin Moore and the educational guidance of Herb Wong, school principal, Project WEY (Washington Experimental Yard) became a means for people to explore themselves and their environment. After dumping and molding tons of soil, and then building structures for play and enclosure, the yard became a garden that is perpetually changed every month and every season, demonstrating the value of shared lives and shared learning.

These projects were among the first in the nation that were performed by private architectural practitioners. The architects involved in them did not know about each other or about the fledgling R/UDAT program. They were working in isolation, inventing their citizen-participation processes the best way they could as they went along, as an answer to the urban situation they found themselves in, with its intense political and social conflicts and pressures.





***Shirt sleeve mayors,
T-shirt bankers***

These early examples of what can happen have blossomed into a wide variety of architectural and urban design projects of far greater complexity in the 1970s and '80s. Housing projects, parks, sports facilities, and campus plans, markethouses, neighborhoods, waterfronts, city markethouses, and city centers have been opened up to citizen inputs, with rich and unexpected results. And these have been paralleled by the growing recognition and complexity of R/UDATs.

The media have played an increasingly important role in the success and expanding public understanding of urban design as a public process. In addition to newspaper, radio and television coverage, television has been used successfully for "design-ins". Television studios have become architectural studios, and the public has been solicited to call in their ideas and comments. Public meetings have been carried live on TV, with hook-ups for the public-at-large to telephone from their homes and make statements or ask questions during the plenary sessions or the workshops.

It was as if people were thirsty for the opportunity to participate in shaping and molding the future course of their cities. In some situations in the late 70's and early 80's as many as 500 people would commonly turn up for public meetings, and they would come, not simply to sit in the audience and listen, but ready to work, ready to join issue-oriented workshops and small group discussions, knowing that their detailed inputs were just as critical as discussions about the overall scheme of things. One of the interesting aspects of these open processes was that people in official positions saw without prompting that they had to shed their titles if they wanted to participate effectively. Mayors, bankers, librarians, agency representatives, and everyone else in our multi-titled society, had to be what they really are, simply citizens in a democratic process in which their particular background and skill becomes, not a status, but a resource.

Extraordinary things began to happen in these public workshops. In one process the mayor of a large city came to the workshops in shirt sleeves, ready to get on with it. In another the bank president turned up in a T-shirt with a humorous message stencilled across his chest. One community celebrated the conclusion of its process by parading its plan through the streets, with fire engines and a high school band all the way to city hall. Another had a gigantic festival in the courthouse square, with music, dance, sideshows, conjurers, food, an antique car rally, and a marathon footrace. And another community closed the square around its markethouse, and had a feast and public dance.



Why did all this happen?

Why did all this happen? There are deep reasons. The spirit of the late 1960's and early '70's was one of revolt. The civil rights movement was only one of several liberations producing a mood of popular uprising against the established and remote decision-making normally controlling our lives. But at the local level there was a definite connection between the eagerness with which citizens participated in creating local plans and implementing them, and the inherited form and democracy of American grid cities.

The relationship of each family's front door and porch to their neighborhood street, and the street to the city, as a succession of scales gave everyone a sense of unspoken and inalienable right to be heard, and to hear others. People talked in meetings about national problems, the economy, technological and industrial change, energy and demography, and about how these large-scale forces affected their cities and their own neighborhoods. So they also came to talk eloquently about the qualities of local heritage. It was not that they were against modern architecture, but they opposed its transferability—the fact that so many modern buildings were the same in city after city. They wanted to be sure that whatever was built physically would parallel what was done programmatically, that it would be part of city building, and that in its style and materials it would be sensitively and precisely local. In other words, it had to be in their voice.

***New ways of
listening and
responding***

To begin with, architects invented their own processes and procedures. They worked for the most part in isolation, responding to the need of the times and unaware of what others were doing at the same moment in other places. Lawrence Halprin for example developed a process in the early seventies which he called Take Part,

engaging citizens in environmental planning. Caudill, Rowlett and Scott, a large architectural firm in Houston, Texas, developed a program of architectural "squatters", in which architects would live in the community for which they were developing designs, becoming "citizens" themselves as well as professionals for the entire life of the project. And participation on a R/UDAT by one of SOM's partners, John Kriken, led to the creation of an urban design team within SOM's San Francisco office and another in their Portland office. And similarly Urban Design Associates, the firm that designed the Human Resources Center in Pontiac, has developed participatory design procedures similar to the four-day R/UDAT model, but extended to occur in a carefully organized sequence of steps along a timeline of nine months or a year.

But private practice was not always the best way to respond. Sometimes communities—particularly low-income neighborhoods—have neither the money nor the internal organization to go through the process of engaging an architectural firm, or even of getting local government to do so on their behalf. As a result new groups began springing up in various cities in response to this need.

Community design centers

In Baltimore, Maryland, a small group of architects and planners got assistance from both the American Institute of Architects and the American Institute of Planners, and formed in 1968 a Neighborhood Design Center.

The purpose of the Center was to enable residents of low-income neighborhoods to participate in comprehensive planning processes aimed towards improving their environments, including self-help projects. The Center provided technical assistance in evolving comprehensive plans, help in negotiating and evaluating development proposals in their neighborhoods, and developing alternative designs for environments, historic or vacant buildings, and vacant lots. It was not long before the Center took one more step, and became a non-profit development corporation which has to date completed over two hundred and fifty projects.

Baltimore's Neighborhood Design Center is part of what is now a national network of community design centers. CDC's to quote Paul Sachner in *Architectural Record* in June 1983, "are to architecture what legal aid is to law, and free clinics to medicine." According to Sachner the first CDC opened in 1963 when several architects started the Architects Renewal Committee in Harlem (ARCH), with aid from the New York Chapter of the AIA, to fight a proposed freeway in Upper Manhattan.

But CDC's did not really get going until the turbulence of the civil rights and the anti-Vietnam war movements in the years between 1968 and 1972. There can be no doubt that the network of

CDC's which opened in cities across the nation in those years were not only a response by architects, urban planners, sociologists, attorneys, political scientists and economists bent on solving the problems of America's urban poor, but were also part of a new kind of power struggle in American cities, a struggle on the part of neighborhoods and urban communities to have a greater control over their own environmental destinies by entering into the political decision-making process and, through non-profit corporations, by implementing some of their own recommendations. Today, fifteen or more years later, there are some 60 CDC's in operation across the country.

Some CDC's are formally or loosely related to universities or other institutions; others are organizationally independent. They all operate on the fundamental principle that community groups know better than anyone else the needs and problems of their neighborhoods. Whether independent or institutionally related, they gain their funding from a variety of sources such as foundations, government agencies, corporations, and fund drives, and through performing contracts, usually with local or state government agencies.

An example of an organizationally independent CDC is Troy Professional Assistance (TAP) in New York, an offshoot from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. In its early days TAP was an all-volunteer center operated by a group of students and faculty in a storefront, but today its full-time staff includes two architects with an annual budget of \$100,000, performing contracts for new and renovated housing, and providing an architectural clinic for homeowners, small businesses, groups and others in low-income neighborhoods. Like TAP several other CDC's are intensively neighborhood oriented: e.g., the CDC's in Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, Atlanta and San Francisco to name a few. Others are regional in their range. The East Tennessee CDC offers services to rural communities, and the Cornell Region Community Design Assistance program uses students and faculty as resources in offering services within a sixty mile radius of Corning. Their work in turn led in 1979 to the formation of The Small Town Community Design Workshop, and also to another division, the Preservation Planning Workshop, initiating surveys and the architectural preservation of historically significant structures in an eleven county constituency. The Denver CDC has, during the past two years, negotiated joint proposals with private firms to do programming, planning and design work for small communities. CDC's continue to be formed. One of the most recent, the Columbus Neighborhood Design Assistance Center in Ohio, was started in October 1982.





Among the great values of CDC's, whether they are independent centers or related organizationally to universities, is their impact on students. Through intern programs they offer a professional threshold for candidates. As Michael Smith, director of the Denver CDC, says: "we are the folk architects of our time." They also offer formal and informal training programs in architectural and planning schools. One of the best known is the graduate program conducted by Henry Sanoff at North Carolina State University, in which a number of new techniques involving urban design "games" and role-modeling have been developed as a means of structuring the definition of issues, recommendations and strategies. And at Mississippi State University a Small Towns Institute has been formed by James Barker which offers the services of students in structured participatory process for small cities in the deep south.

Other Kinds of Centers

The R/UDAT model and CDC's have created precedents that have inspired universities to develop centers. These offer architectural and planning services as studios for students that are also useful to communities, thus serving the dual purpose of practical education and the delivery of serious recommendations. For example, Ball State University has an Urban Design Center in a storefront on Main Street in Muncie, Indiana, for on-going studies in the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods, and the Center also conducts squatter programs in small Indiana towns that request help. Other universities that have conducted similar programs include Ohio State, Arizona State, Kansas State and Yale University.

The R/UDAT model has also been used by local AIA chapters to carry out specific design projects. The Kearny Street project in San Francisco and the North market project in Columbus, Ohio, were performed by respective local chapters, while at the state level a K/DAT was organized in Kentucky. Other R/UDAT derived forms include the AIA's Charrette programs put together by Iris Miller for Washington, D.C., and Alexandria, Virginia, and a study of the White River Park in Indianapolis (P/DAT). The latest of these, as we go to press, has occurred through the Rio Salada Chapter of the AIA in Gilbert, Arizona, outside Phoenix. And recent developments reveal that local government is organizing similar models.

In March 1985 the Denver Planning Office in conjunction with the district council office initiated a demonstration project to address specific neighborhood planning issues in the Five Points Neighborhood. They adopted and modified the R/UDAT process and built into it a commitment of follow-up. They assembled an interdisciplinary team composed of city officials from various city departments and agencies (2 of which have been represented on previous R/UDATs), local design professionals, bankers and developers. The approach helped the community and city focus on issues in a short time-frame, become visible and accessible in the intensive 3-day on-site design charette, and made a commitment to implement 40 short-range recommendations within 90 days of the meeting. Some actually started the next day. It demonstrated to the mayor and the community that the city could respond in a meaningful way and utilize its resources in this hands-on process.

Conclusion: people made places

Through these processes, professionals in various specialized fields are learning the benefits of working in interdisciplinary teams. As a result of the R/UDAT program alone, nearly six hundred of the nation's top architects, planners, economists, lawyers, developers, sociologists, geographers, political scientists and engineers have returned to their specializations after having an intensive work-experience in teams, and through CDC's and other similar programs the number runs into hundreds more. Similarly ordinary people in big city neighborhoods, small towns and rural areas, and students, have learned together why things happen the way they do. They have learned about the mechanics of getting things done on both the private and the public sector. They have also found that, through exploring unanticipated avenues, they can uncover options leading to enriching achievements far beyond their original goals.

Conclusion: people-made places

This was the extraordinary lesson of those early examples of participatory designing in Pontiac and East Orange, and it has been the lesson of innumerable R/UDATs. In the years since then, examples have multiplied of what can be achieved when citizens get the bit between their teeth and become creatively involved in public design issues. All over the country historic areas have been conserved, valuable buildings have been saved from the wrecking balls and lovingly restored, public spaces have been transformed from sterile anonymity to people-places full of life and color. Cities have become art museums with outdoor sculptures, gardens and waterfalls have been put in, and groves of trees have been planted to provide summer shade. Street vendors and musicians have been welcomed, and the city has put chairs out so that executives, secretaries and shoppers can listen at lunchtime to spontaneous violinists or accordionists. Traditional covered markets have re-opened, and the center city has come alive again through being taken over by its citizens. In summary, we have seen how these things can grow. We have seen how design starts with words, discussion, dialogue, perceptions, and with base maps, statistics, photographs, and budgets. We have seen how very soon diagrams begin to occur: diagrams of interrelationship, this concept interrelated with that, diagrams of place, of magnitude and of urban dynamics. And once people see ideas begin to take shape before their eyes, we can feel excitement rise. The pulse begins to beat a bit faster. Maybe, they say, we are going to achieve something after all.

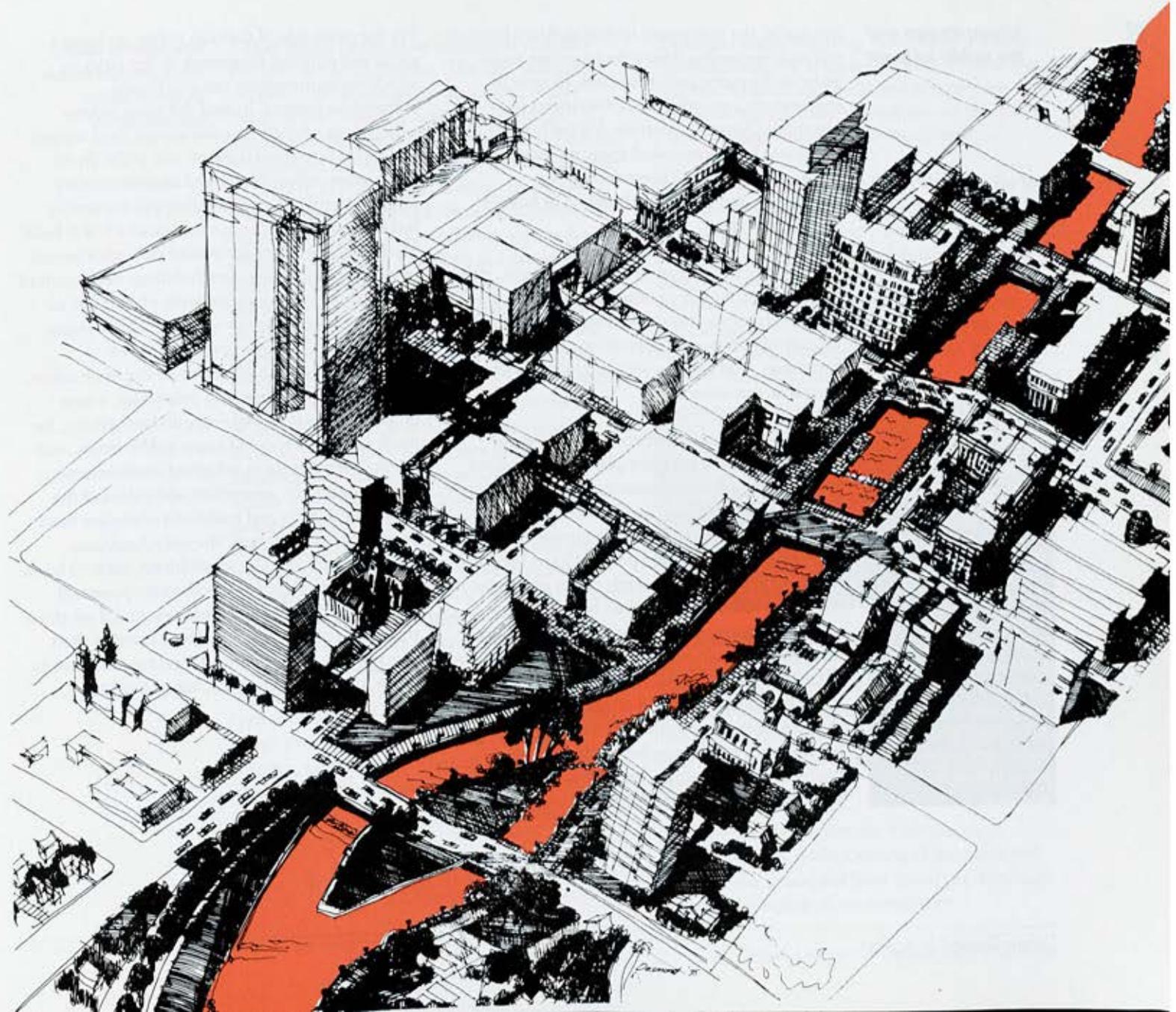




New goals form, strategies begin to be discussed, priorities turn into programs, local human resources are linked to strategies and methods of implementation, and new patterns of citizen leadership emerge. Detailed three-dimensional design takes shape, focussing more and more on local needs and contexts, until it reaches a point where design and vehicles for implementation are fused in the minds of every participant. And suddenly each participant realizes that for the first time every person, whether local citizen, student or far-off professional, has heard and debated all the ideas together, and has watched design emerge, and has understood and enthusiastically agreed to complex recommendations as well.

From this understanding grows the most forceful consensus, the kind that provides a mayor and his council with a sense of solid constituency, a banker with a sense that he is not merely investing in a project but also in community pride, a local neighborhood leader with a sense that his community really can be effective in turning things around, and that all the late night volunteer meetings after all have not been in vain.

5 Urban Design: A Developing Tradition



**Urban design and
the public interest**

Ironically, the movement to enfranchise citizens is still only beginning. Many decisions are made without the participation of users. In spite of appearances, our cities are not strangers to planning. Quite the contrary. Virtually every city of any size has experienced many proposals, many plans, involving huge investments in consultants and countless thousand of hours of professional effort.

But much of this planning comes to naught, either because of economic or other changes over which planners have no control, or more seriously because of community opposition. The waste is enormous. And because we can't agree among ourselves, our cities suffer.

It is particularly tragic when otherwise well-intentioned and intelligent planning efforts run into a stone wall of community opposition because planners have failed to openly enfranchise the inputs and wishes of citizens. In almost every city over the past two decades projects have been built that could have been so much better and richer if the inputs of local citizens had been seriously sought and incorporated, and for every project that has been built we have seen a dozen projects of far-reaching potential benefits to communities killed by the opposition of citizens, not because they basically disagreed or did not want them, but because they felt themselves excluded and imposed upon, causing a loss of credibility on all sides that sometimes takes years to overcome.

Yet the other side of the coin is that we have a social and political framework in our cities in which decision-making can and should enfranchise citizens. Indeed the same process which stops projects can also ensure their success and inject into them richness and pride. By its very nature, urban design and architecture are interventionist. A new building will inevitably have an impact on the context in which it is built. Modern architecture has passed through a period in which innumerable new buildings were inserted into existing environments with a blindness to physical contexts, to say nothing of local issues and values, that seems to us today to be extraordinary and intolerable. By the same token, handled with openness and sensitivity, a new proposal can with a little care and sensitivity, be made to act as a focus of many public issues, and to relate sensitively to inherited environment, incorporating the aspirations and values of the people whose city and traditions symbolize local pride. Thomas Jefferson, the only American President who was also an architect, said: "I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion."

"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion."

Urban design and architecture: form responding to participation

Urban design began as an outgrowth of studio architecture and planning. The first university courses in urban design in the United States began in the Graduate School of Design at Harvard in the mid-1950's under Walter Gropius. It is perhaps not surprising that he would attempt to apply to U.S. cities the Bauhaus tradition incorporating the applied ideals of European socialism and the studio-workshop approach to architectural design. Yet much as a result of his intellectual effort, urban design has evolved into the most crucial vehicle we have for focusing interdisciplinary talents and intelligence of the highest order on the contexts of change in the towns and cities we live in. R/UDATs with their emphasis in participatory democracy in the spirit of Jefferson's words and their interdisciplinary focus on precise local issues have proved to be laboratories of participatory urban design in action. And their influence on public agencies, private practice and schools of design has continued to deepen over the years. If our cities are, indeed, a pitiless mirror of our democratic decision-making civilization, it seems appropriate to pay some attention to improving our participatory processes beyond the achievements so far made in urban design. The initiative must lie in private practice. Here we will examine the typical elements constituting participatory urban design processes as they occur in everyday practice, rather than in the collapsed time-frame of R/UDAT. The salient ways in which private practitioners can address community issues are:

Through careful listening. Sometimes it's hard to listen and many of us have to reeducate ourselves to do so. After all architects and planners are trained to project their own values and ideas with their earphones turned off to the citizenry.

By providing a public forum and opportunity for participation by involving all sectors of the community. If urban design is to be open and democratic in the sense of Jefferson's words, the design/decision-making process treats as client everyone whose environment is affected. The vehicle has to be properly organized public meetings, open to everyone who has an input to make in the public interest.



By communicating. A common base of information that will provide the participants with critical understanding is a prerequisite to open, intelligent dialogue and discussion. Useful base information can in fact be developed by the citizens themselves in consort with the professionals.

This aspect of design process is invaluable in deepening public understanding of the range and impact of the issues, and later it will pay dividends in the public's grasp of accountability.

By seeking citizens as resources. Architects and planners who have worked openly with citizen groups will confirm that citizens know more about their own community than outside professionals do. They have aspirations and perceptions that can give unique insights to designers. Furthermore, a cross-section of citizens usually includes an energetic mix of creative viewpoints leading to rich and complex forms.

Architects/planners can organize workshops for these citizens to assist in developing detailed background materials, analysis of priorities, and financial and social impacts of alternative recommendations and scenarios.



By redefining the problem in an interdisciplinary context. Although it is an outgrowth of architecture, urban design in complex urban situations relies on bringing several disciplines together in teamwork. The give-and-take of these professionals with citizen groups provides an extraordinary range and depth of understanding for everyone.



By using design as a creative tool to explore and develop three-dimensional options and alternatives. Design is perhaps the best form of communication in open participatory processes. When alternatives are discussed and explored in design, everyone gets involved creatively. Accountability is in both directions, professionals and citizens. Differences fall away. This is particularly important in situations in which the contacts and language of the citizens may be very different from that of the professionals, say in a low-income black neighborhood in a large city, or a white suburban community. We should never forget that designers typically belong to a university-trained elitist subculture that is distinct and different from most of the constituencies they work for, and that common languages of understanding have to be established.

By establishing the essential connections between the various elements of the process and participants. It is important in open participatory processes that citizens see that linkages absent in the past, are now established. For example, it is clearly an indication that the process is taken seriously by local agencies if agency directors are present at meetings, and by local government if the mayor and council members participate.

Similarly, the serious intent of the private sector is signalled by the presence of a bank president and the president of a development corporation. And the best of all worlds occurs when they take off their jackets, roll up their sleeves, and participate in working groups seeking solutions. This is a two-way street. It may be politically advantageous to a mayor and council and financially advantageous to a bank president to know that particular recommendations are backed by citizen consensus.

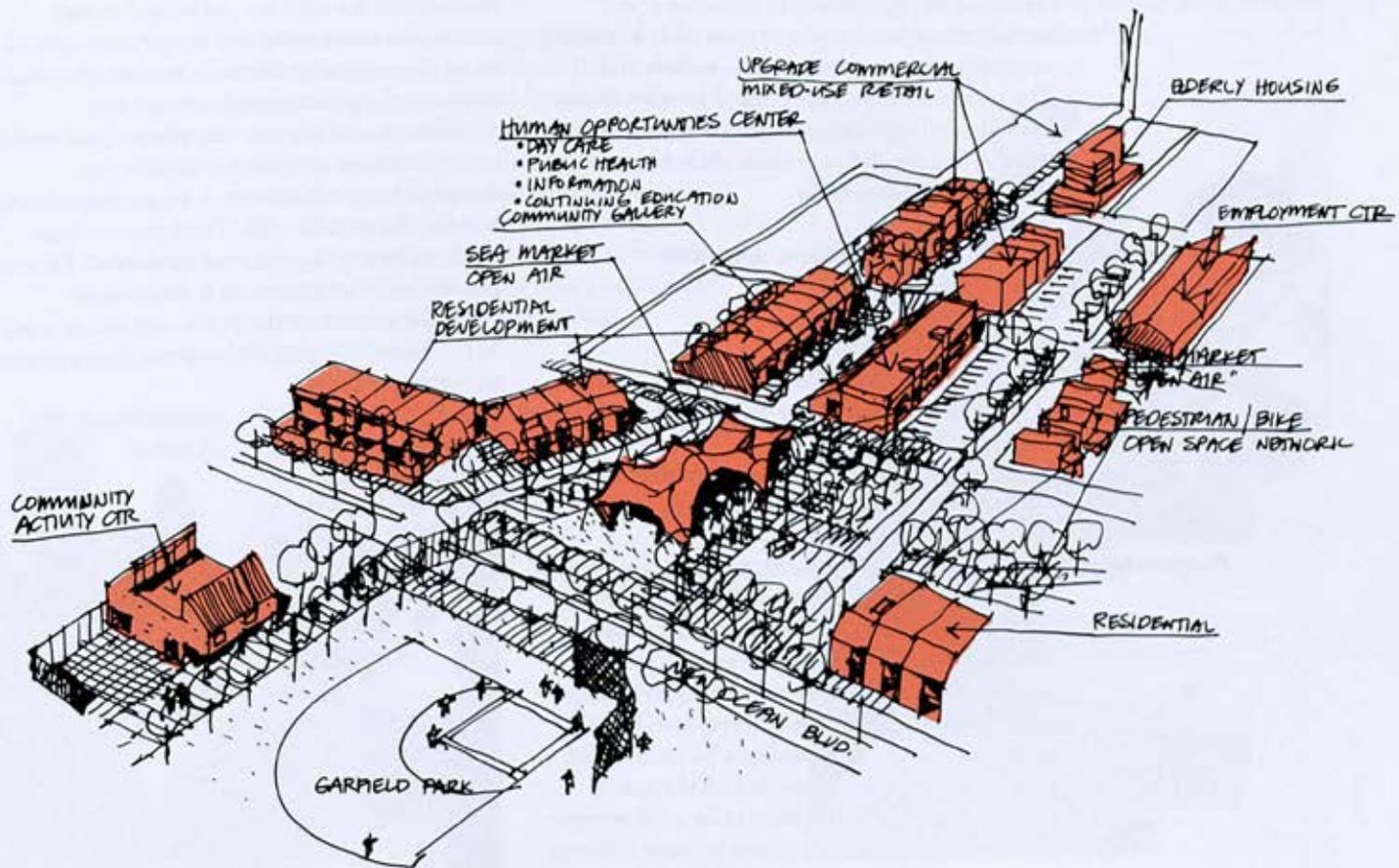
By allowing feedback and evaluation of previous decisions. Feedback is not only important in local politics, it has a long history going back to the roots of our democratic traditions. Ideas are re-evaluated every step of the way; accountability is built in.



By accountability. Accountability thus goes back to the roots of our democratic traditions. When citizens have made the effort to be serious resources for designers and have come to meetings to explain their fears and their goals, it is important that the results of the design process should be referred back to them for their criticisms.

It is particularly important for developers to explain the theory of how their financial deals are put together, and how alternative financial models affect design. Experience has shown that once trust is built up, citizens will accept that developers cannot disclose the details complex and delicate financial negotiations. But the public's trust and commitment to projects pays off in the impact that pride has on the approvals process; project marketing; and on security once the project is built.

6 Process, Partnerships and the Public Sector



6 Process, partnerships and the public process

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Public management

In many communities where successful participatory design processes have been carried out, citizens have become so proud of the results that they want "a piece of the action". Generally this takes the form of the management of selected social programs that have emerged from the process. But sometimes, citizens have formed non-profit corporations beforehand, or similar organizations, specifically to implement and manage the whole project or parts of it. Managing non-profit organizations requires technical skill. The right time to prepare citizens for roles of this kind ideally lies within the planning and design process. Transferability of these skills is therefore an important component.

Process All urban design processes must have these features:

- Accountability
- Flexibility to re-evaluate and deal with change
- Credibility in government and the private investment sector, and
- Ability to recognize and respond to the different agendas and roles of participants

Partnerships

People are the key. Partnership with government and the private sector in the fullest and deepest sense is needed in good urban design processes, rather than simply a collaboration or a loose *ad hoc* association of interests. Partnership implies risk. The risk of failure must be present; it gives reality and muscle to aspirations for success and gain. A commitment is needed on the part of every actor in the partnership to be a full resource to the effort. Partnership comes in many different

forms. Some are quantifiable: land, money, equity. Communities seldom have these, though cities with foundations or trust funds might make equity available. Others are qualitative, but not less valuable: knowledge of context, elements of program, insight and creativity, consensus and endorsement, energy and sweat equity.

Partnerships between the public and private sectors, the community and the city, the various levels of government, between various educational institutions, agencies, organizations and departments and the interdisciplinary partnerships between various professional institutions, disciplines and consultants — all are interrelated to make the process work. These partnerships result, not just in contractual agreements between parties, but in commitment to implement particular projects in the public interest, insured by the knowledge that the community really wants and endorses them.



The public sector

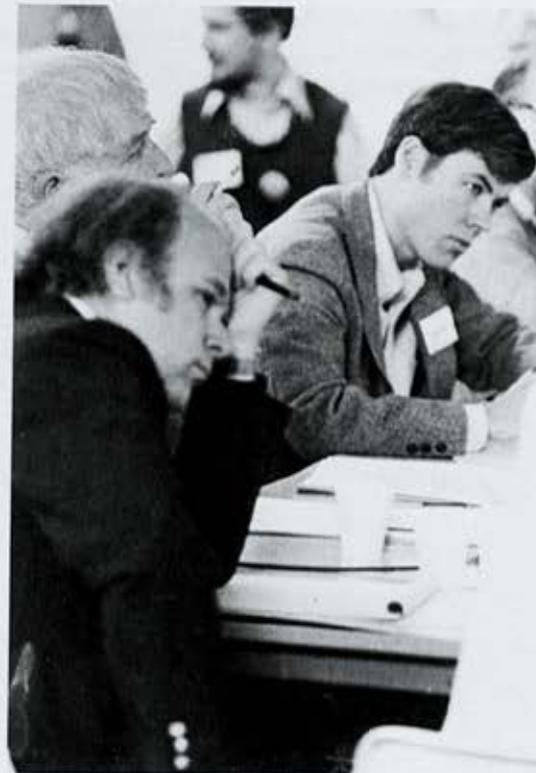
The public sector consists generally of two basic public groups, the government sector and the community sector. In the past the two groups became polarized. It is not at all uncommon to hear people refer to the government sector as "they". It is **their** responsibility to maintain our roads, and to provide good schools. **They** clear our garbage; and **they** run the government.

What we don't often appreciate is that **they** are us. **They** are citizens too. Officials involved in government from eight to five are members of the community after five, just like us: they own their homes, pay taxes, mow their lawns, and belong to community groups just like everyone else. Furthermore, in a democracy, the reverse is equally true. The government is us. Legal avenues for having our voices heard in policy-making are open, and our taxes pay for moving policy into action.

The development process

To make public/private partnerships in urban design work successfully, government and community must mutually understand the development process and how to make it operate in the best public interest.

Together, the public sector and the community should begin by establishing a wish list of goals. And then they should develop, through the urban design vehicle, realistic priorities, cost benefit analyses, pro formas indicating levels of investment and risk, management plans, and who the implementers are anticipated to be. On the basis of this information, projects for implementation can be negotiated, some of which may be owned and managed by citizen organizations.



Government The government sector consists of elected and appointed decision-making members of the community: the Mayor, Council, Planning Commissions and Boards, as well as the staff and agencies that support them. These groups operate at different levels of the decision-making process. Some decide, some advise, and some inform.

Understanding government, especially your own particular form of local government, is critical to successful urban design processes. Government institutions on the local, regional, state and federal levels are often plagued with cumbersome bureaucracy, favoritism and "old boy" politics, and are thus at odds with people who want to get things done. Elected officials are prone to be loyal to special interest groups, while their staff may be advocacy-oriented and more socially conscious. Citizens should be aware that, by nature, both groups tend to be guided by federal and state programs and regulations rather than by local goals and priorities. Therefore citizens have to make their priorities known vigorously.

Conflicting public sector interests are debilitating to urban design processes. It is certainly a primary challenge to agency staffs and elected officials to minimize conflicts.

If conflicts among citizen groups or between citizens and local government are latent, competing private sector development interests can be counted on to bring them out. Conversely, if the public and private sectors have hidden agendas, even though they might be in the best public interest, confidence in planning will be eroded very quickly once citizens smell a special deal in the air.

It is therefore important not to buck conflicting interests or private sector competition but to make these conflicts part of the design process. It is salutary to conduct competition in public and to include competitors and government together in public deliberation. In this way competing interests become a vehicle for negotiation through design that is meaningful and enriching to all concerned.

Objectives:

- To minimize conflict of goals,
- To align needs and means,
- To improve quality,
- To remove obstacles and misunderstanding,
- To define partnership roles and assess responsibility, and
- To maximize public good relative to private gain.

Other government objectives include:

Establishing an urban design consciousness in government that bridges political divisions, and focuses on issues affecting physical design and the quality of life within the city.

Establishing an open, accountable, urban design process that can get the citizens and the private interest groups involved.

Promoting responsibility and leadership in both the government and the community sectors as guardians of the physical form of the city by continually encouraging urban design issues to be raised and developing appropriate policies, frameworks and processes of communication to insure quality urban design, through encouraging open discussion and developing alternative proposals if required.

Being an effective agent in guiding the process of growth by incorporating development and urban design into standard operational procedures at all levels of government. Needless to say, it subverts the capacity of urban designers to act as brokers in negotiating design solutions of maximum benefit to all concerned if urban design is perceived as something to be done in order to make the situation look good, like garnishing an overdone roast with parsley, after all development decisions are made. To be effective, visual design values must be incorporated in the decision process from step one.

Employing talented and interdisciplinary groups of urban designers and professional consultants on the public payroll, by commission or competition, to undertake any project called for in the capital budget, and maintaining a contextual research component as an integral part of the project.

Coordinating those aspects of urban design that have regional impact among various agencies and levels of government on an interjurisdictional basis, and enacting forward-looking legislation and policies to encourage people interjurisdictionally to engage in urban design activities.

Introducing and encouraging the vehicles for public and private partnerships necessary to achieve a more responsive, higher quality urban design.

Developing meaningful incentives that result in quality development, whether by the public, private, or non-profit sectors, and that achieve community goals.

The community sector

Every urban design project has a local diversity that makes it different, particular. A simple definition of community is the range of public interest in that project.

Each community consists of a variety of actors. Our society functions to a large degree on the basis of community and special interest groups. Some of these groups are already highly organized, with defined agendas and objectives, and, like church groups, are used to functioning at a decision-making level.

Others operate on an informal ad hoc basis, being motivated by specific issues. Individuals are generally more concerned about community development issues directly affecting their own lives, and don't immediately take positions on larger-scale or long-term development questions whose local impact is not apparent, unless they form or join an organization that is dedicated to these larger-scale questions.

How a community relates to the decision-making that affects the future quality of its local life and environment is at the root of our democratic way. Participatory design processes attempt to reinforce democracy's underlying themes and make them work better with richer and more satisfying products.

Looking particularly at the community aspects of these processes, we have to recognize that a concrete and apparently limited project, if it is relevant and potent, will inevitably become the

focus of broader issues, and the broader issues will in turn attract their appropriate community concern.

The best participatory processes occur when community groups and individuals are self-organizing, free and inclusive, around the issues. The worst are when the promoters behind projects, whether in the private sector, or government, or both, try to exclude citizens from expressing concern, to say nothing of excluding citizens from creative roles, thus polarizing anger and opposition. Professional organizers can also be the Achilles' heel of participatory processes simply because they presuppose *a priori* goals, agendas and strategies, instead of allowing them to happen naturally.

As we have pointed out earlier, it is critical to recognize that participation must be open-ended. Time and again, unexpected and rewarding results occur. A community group will emerge from the process and assume the responsibility of sponsoring housing. Another will do something spectacular and creative for the elderly. Another will inject new life into existing institutions for the arts, such as a branch theater, an environmental arts program for children, or ethnic crafts. Give-and-take designing, back-and-forth dialogue, can only happen when everyone works openly and inclusively on something. And the best results occur when the opportunity to extend the project creatively, implement it, and participate in its management, is built into the design process itself.



Some objectives for the community sector are:

For special interest groups:

To sponsor interdisciplinary research, public forums and workshops on key urban design issues that are of particular concern to them and to publish and distribute information to all interested parties.

To expand the role of individual special interest groups to research and present in open forums key urban design issues involving **other** individuals and special interest groups from the public and private sector. This has the effect of defusing confrontation between groups, spreading understanding of viewpoints different from one's own, and getting everyone used to the idea of accountability.

To lobby for urban design issues and quality design through their respective constituency and friends in the public and private sector.

To be prepared to take on special projects for implementation, and to accept the challenge of continuing management.

For the media:

To educate and raise the level of understanding and make the general public aware through sound information of the basic facts on key urban design issues. As power-brokers, the media have deep

responsibilities in keeping participatory processes open and fair to all by responsibility reporting all sides. The way events like public forums or the public discussion of alternative designs are promoted and reported can clearly make or break the best run processes.

For individuals:

To speak out and demand that elected officials and the media be more responsive to urban design issues that affect the quality of life in their community.

To become directly involved in a meaningful way in the local and regional urban design discussions of issues that affect your community.

To be prepared to assume responsibility, particularly in those areas that you recommend for action.

Encourage educational institutions to play a more meaningful role by providing community service and offering technical assistance.

To articulate concerns in the broader public interest, as well as advocate your own pet urban design ideas and values.

To promote the collective confidence and optimism of the community and encourage participation in whatever form it comes.

The private sector

The private sector includes major business interests directly affecting an urban design or architectural project; i.e., developers, bankers, board members, and major tenants involved in the design process either at the actual decision-making level or as reviewers and critics or as investors and managers.

Because of the competitive nature of development these risk takers tend to be conservative. Their profit-motive orientation is shaped by financial and governmental forces that are, for the most part, beyond their control.

Some developers perceive design or aesthetics as costly and unnecessary frills. They also see community involvement and design review processes as roadblocks to the development process. Enough examples have accumulated over the past decade of costly bureaucratic delays, or projects killed because of community opposition, to convince all but the most obdurate that far greater benefits accrue when agencies, elected officials and the public are properly informed and involved. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the more forward looking developers today openly welcome predictable design reviews or a properly structured development process involving citizens, when the intent and time considerations are clear at the start.

Indeed, important pioneering inroads are occurring. Interdisciplinary teams in which developers are team members, pioneered in R/UDATs, is becoming daily more widely accepted in private practice. In the last two or three years, urban design consultants working on urban revitalization programs have begun including developers from the first day of their contracts, so that developers can actively shape the feasibility of projects from their inception, and also can represent a continuity from design into implementation.

Every R/UDAT and every private practice team is becoming a casebook for the next, a demonstration to build on. Already, leadership does not necessarily come from architects. Developers, economists, sociologists, political scientists, lawyers are responding to contexts in which they are taking the lead. In a recent situation, leadership of a multidisciplinary team has been taken by an environmental sculptor.

Some objectives for the private sector are:

To develop and establish with the public sector an appropriate framework and limits for development through accountable urban design reviews and approval processes that allow for maximum community input from the earliest possible stages and within a known and predetermined period of time.

To participate in a leadership role in the design process as a meaningful partner with the public and community sectors.

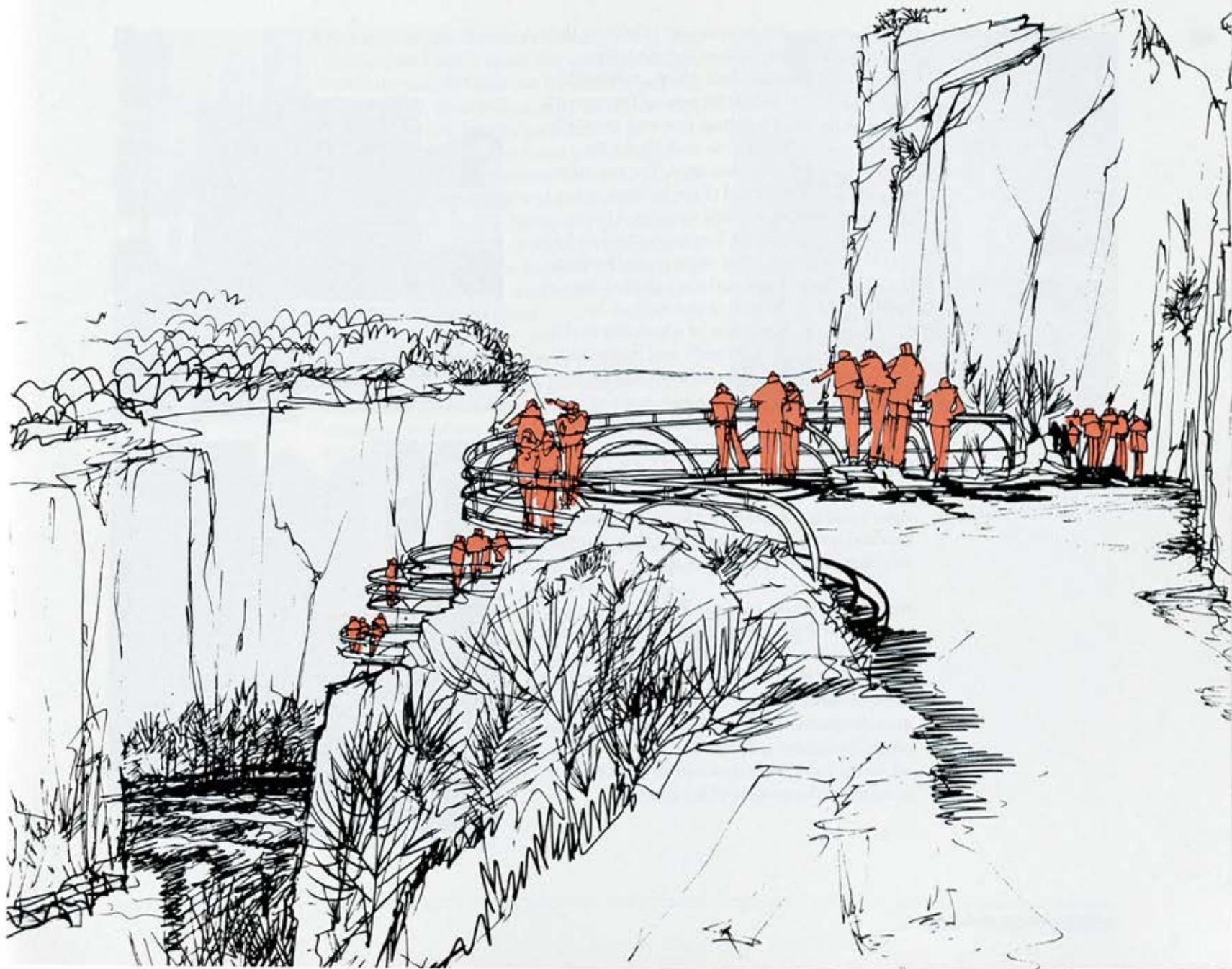
To view citizens as resources whose creative inputs can improve the project and whose consensus can help it to move forward more effectively through its statutory reviews.

To investigate and develop new, innovative, and creative approaches that can be utilized in establishing partnerships with the public sector and the community, as appropriate, to carry out and manage key elements in design and development.

To view the enthusiasm of citizens as an important asset in marketing the project and its future management.

To utilize the resources of the private sector to bring to the design process, the media, the public sector and to other institutional entities its expertise and knowledge in educating and communicating issues and concerns; and, conversely, to listen to and try to understand the concerns of the public sector and the community.

To develop through its own resources and institutions, a coordinated research program that addresses specific, key urban design issues and research topics of common concern, and to communicate the findings in a clear and objective manner.



The Professions

Just as participatory processes are redefining the roles of government, citizens and the private sector, professionalism itself is being redefined. For a long period, indeed for most of this century, architects designed buildings that were primarily for their clients and only secondarily for the context in which they were sited. The notion of the architect as artist and of the building as a habitable sculpture not only dominated the profession's view of itself, but it coincided with the public's expectation. This elitist and self-serving beaux arts image of the architect-as-artist was reinforced by our schools of architecture, by architectural journals (most of which still tend to celebrate architecture as "art"), and by the media. The pressure on the architect to change his basic approach to design has come from many sources and taken many forms. As already noted, civil unrest in American cities, and recently in European cities also, has underscored the fact that not any one issue but the interrelationship of many issues has led citizens, particularly young men and women at the thresholds of their lives, to vent their frustrations in the street.

How else do people have to tell deaf peers in government and business that paychecks relate to housing, that relevant schooling relates to the past and future of local cultures as well as to jobs, that home ownership means having a stake as a citizen in one's community, and that a person's cultural origin, his accent, his clothes, the street he lives on, or the color of his skin cannot any longer be accepted as the measure of his potential?





Perhaps it requires extreme situations to bore into the national consciousness that ways exist already in which multiple issues can be handled, and that these ways, far from undermining our society, lie at its political roots. Clearly, economics is as important as demography, social psychology as important as political science. That these can and should inform the design of physical environments is obvious. Less obvious, but equally persuasive is that it's a two-way street. The design of a school is related to curriculum; the design of housing is the shape of neighborliness. And both are the body-language of our social intent.

But like architecture, most of the professional disciplines have over decades grown apart and developed separate specializations. In spite of their common social focus, they do not easily cross-fertilize today. They speak a different language. Their premises are different. We have set up our higher education administrations and curricula on the basis that they are and will remain separate. In many universities, professors of economics don't even know the names of professors of sociology or law or architecture. Much less the chairman of different departments or the deans of separate colleges are willing to devise educational programs in which their disciplines interrelate in the public interest. Consequently, enormous barriers of language and methodologies have been erected that must be overcome if the common issues of our cities are to be addressed.

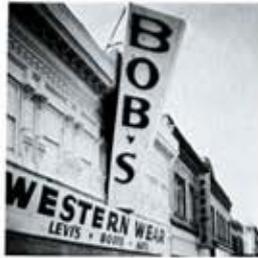


Urban Design: An Evolving Skill

A brief definition of urban design is "design in an urban context." That sounds innocuous enough not to cause offense to anyone. But design is used here, not in its traditional narrow sense, but in a much broader way. Economic projections, packaging new developments, negotiating public/private financial partnerships, setting up guidelines and standards for historic revitalization, forming non-profit corporations that combine citizens with public and private sector financing resources, are all considered as design. And urban context means the specific local context in which the design project is to occur.

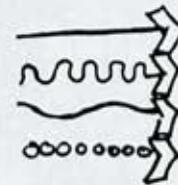
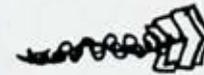
The impact of all this on architecture is profound. It is no coincidence that along with the new concern for localism comes the expansion of the architect's traditional role into the realm of urban design. Architects in growing numbers have come to recognize that cities are living organisms whose lifeblood is local culture and tradition, and that new buildings are the city's way of renewing itself, adding new life and impetus to its own particular evolution as a place. And developers of new projects are also realizing in growing numbers that the pride of citizens in their city and their buildings pays remarkable dividends.

The other specialist disciplines are rapidly expanding their traditional roles into urban design along similar lines. It has therefore become more critical than ever for members of each discipline to understand the languages and inputs of the others.



Drawing as urban design exploration

Drawing is the primary language of architects. But architects entering the urban design field are having to develop new techniques to deal with so many different and simultaneous inputs. Urban design drawings tend to begin by being soft, generalized, diagrammatic. Configurations in charcoal, pastel or felt pens on onion skins abound, soft lozenges assailed by arrows. More conventional arrows may represent traffic flows, volumes, peaks; or wind direction, tremulous summer breezes or the snow-laden scything gales of winter; or contour and vista. Smudges may suggest building mass, or hill mass, or a screen of trees. But other lozenges and arrows may deal with other matters less physical. They may represent rates of historical change and indicate the history of the future; they may tell us about resources and the flow of capital and operational money; they might indicate opportunities, constraints and alternative strategies of phasing. They can diagram sociological factors such as unemployment, conflict or crime, stability or transience, gentrification or the corrosion of blight; or they might diagram economic factors such as projections of market absorption; or procedural factors such as permissible densities, uses, and heights. Drawn to scale, one diagram can even fit over another, describing the interaction of complex factors in plan and section on a particular site, and be summarized by word diagrams loaded with quantifications.





As such a process of drawing moves forward, building up layers of information, perception and understanding, it approaches closer and closer to the physical goals of urban design, an architecture of the man-made environment that is an organic and appropriate local fit. Inside becomes related to outside. Space is related to time. Contemporary materials are related to the inherited environment. Form is related to contour, climate and usage. Mass and penetration are related to vista. Drawing is exploration, and exploration is a process of self-definition, a gradually clarifying focus, until the object is just right.

Translating complex strands into urban design

Looking at our modern traditions of painting and sculpture we can see the same process of self-clarification occurring in a cubist painting or collage, or in the drip canvases of Jackson Pollock, and we can see insiderness and outsiderness, space and time, light and shadow, plane and linearity united in a dynamic and endless flow in the constructivist sculptures of Pevsner and Gabo. And the same continuities exist in the building plans of early Mies, Le Corbusier, and Wright. Indeed the new urban design drawing techniques, in the simultaneity of their explorations of the dynamics of physical situation are intellectually more contemporary and modern than the formal eclecticism of the so-called post-modernists.

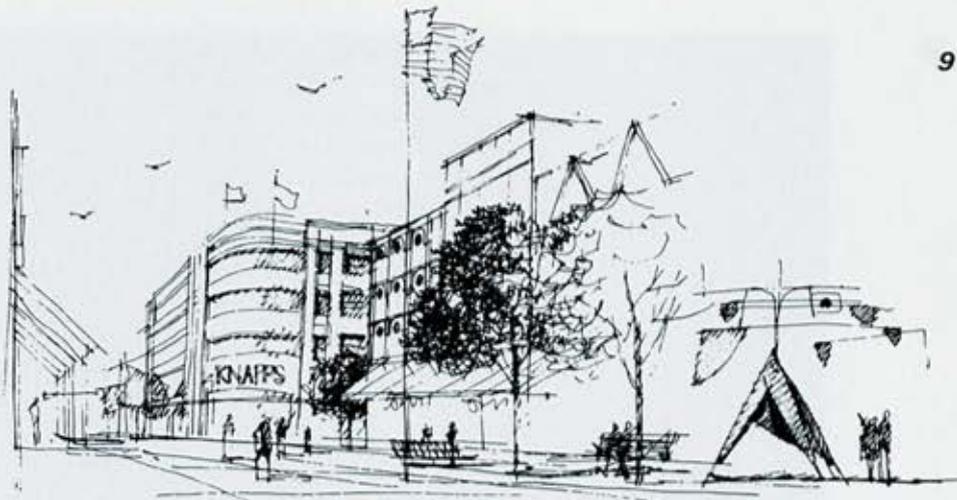
But just as architects who enter urban design have to learn how to translate interdisciplinary inputs into drawings and three-dimensional models, it is also important for economists, sociologists, political scientists and others to understand the exploratory techniques and cultural concerns of architects. It can't be a one-way street. Citizens, who have no intellectual inhibitions about how architectural drawings should or should not be done, have found little difficulty in understanding urban design drawings and diagrams, and are not shy about making suggestions, or themselves adding to drawings.

Decentralizing urban design and architecture

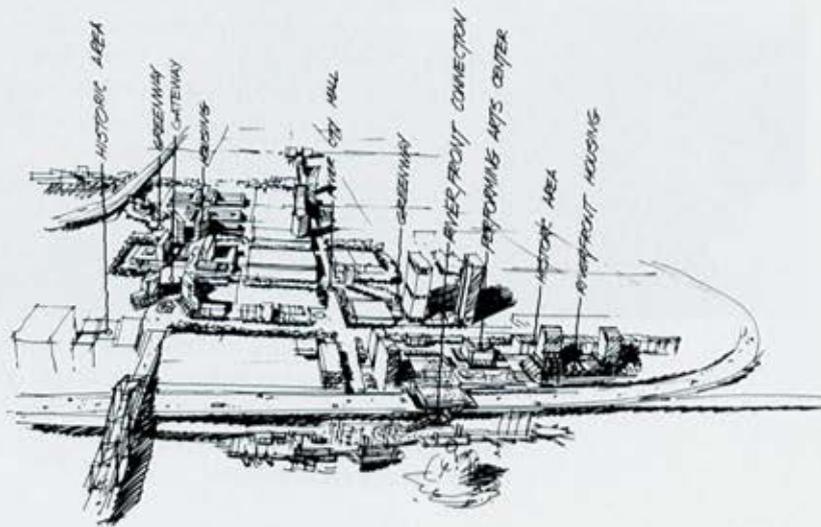
Responding to pressures from citizens for deeper sensitivity and more detailed understanding of local issues and dynamics, many public planning departments have decentralized their personnel and even their offices. During the past ten years, more and more planning meetings, shopfront studios and architectural presentations of every kind have been opened up for public input and criticism.

The language of architecture has begun to change dramatically as a result of urban design, and the effects are to be seen in many cities. The prevalent notion that a new building is an idiosyncratic and eclectic art object inserted into a city has begun to give way to the notion that a new building can be

a carefully wrought response to the inherited local context without being any less contemporary.



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And so urban design, as an extension of the physical designer's traditional skill, has become a means of exploration, a way of determining not only physical forms, but what the impacts of physical forms would be on, say, social patterns, or economics, or on the city's tax base, if the design took this form in contrast to that. At the same time, urban design has also become a means of assisting communities themselves to explore and amplify their own perceptions of their futures; and with each new project to readjust and enrich their policies.

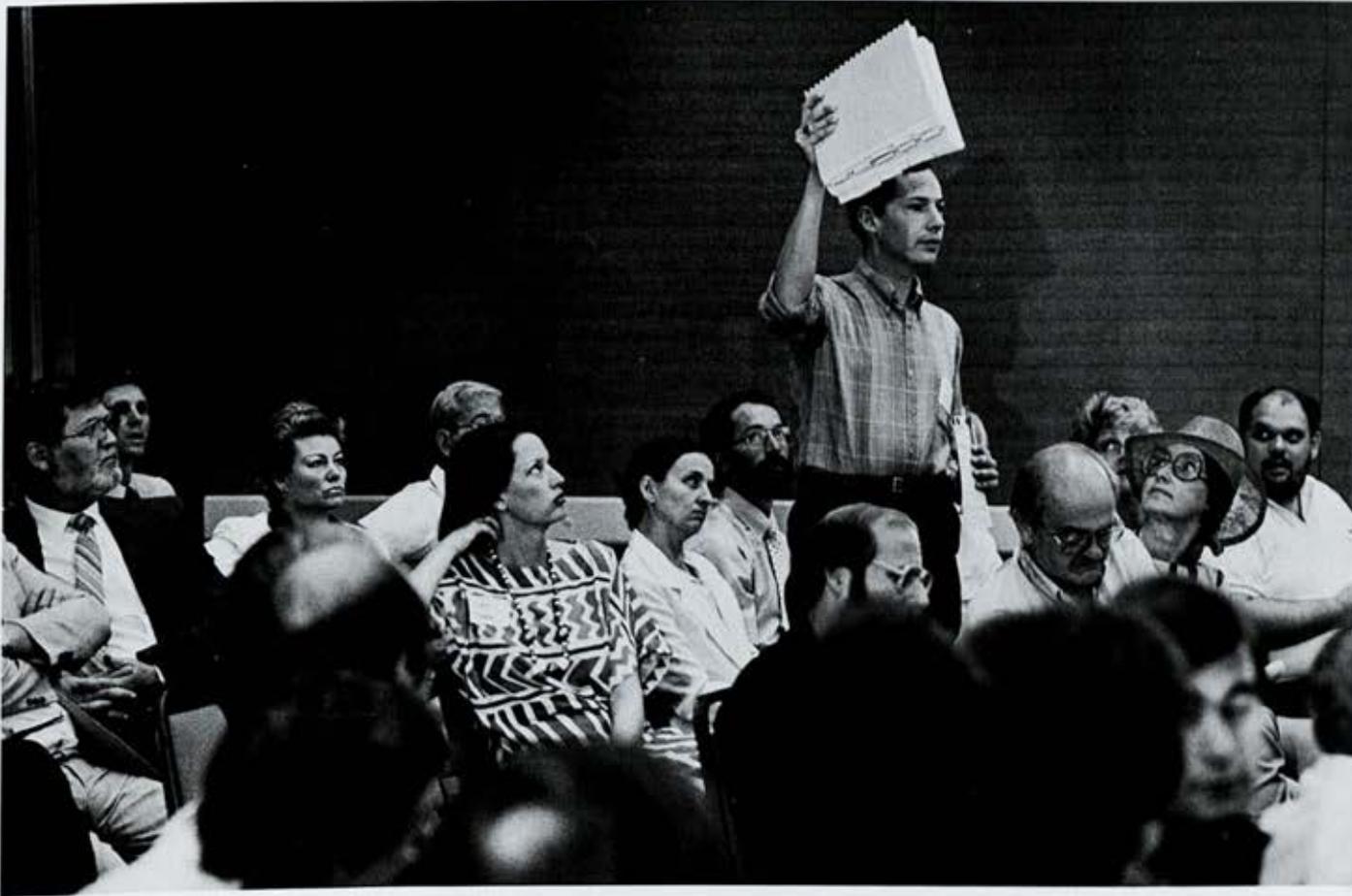
***How R/UDAT
Affects Private
Practice***

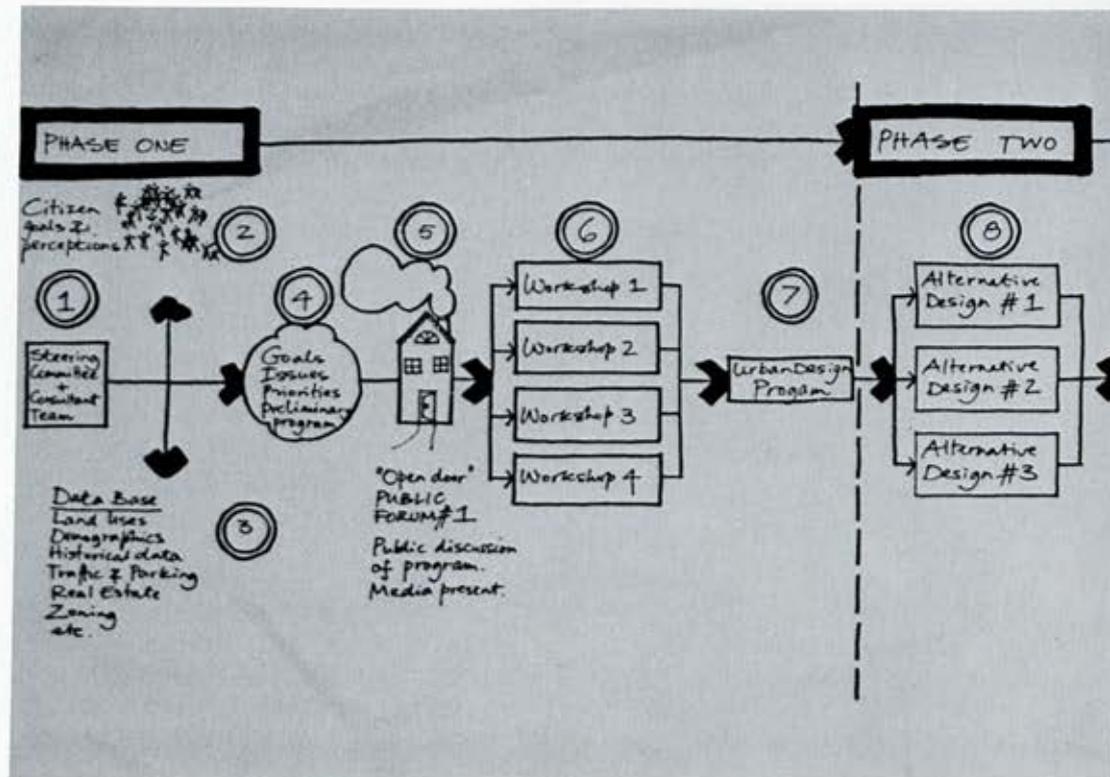
When R/UDATs began in 1967, the "state of the art" in participatory urban design was very primitive. To make matters more difficult, the few professionals in the nation who were involved in participatory design were working, as we have pointed out, in isolation, unaware that other architects and planners shared similar concerns. There were no forums of exchange. Sometimes innocent procedural mistakes led to difficult and unnecessary situations. Some of the early meetings in Pontiac became so heated that police surveillance had reluctantly to be requested and arrests were made. In a similar public process in Ann Arbor, confrontations between neighborhood people and city agencies was fomented by activist university groups. But lessons of procedure were forged in these early fires, and the rapid evolution of the R/UDAT program from similarly simple and obscure beginnings into a process that could be adapted by private sector professionals became important and influential.

R/UDATs had a profound effect on the work these isolated professionals were doing. They offered a series of concrete examples of what could happen when interdisciplinary teams respond in a spirit of accountability to the concerns of citizens. As soon as the professionals — not only architects, but professionals from other disciplines as well — heard about R/UDAT they volunteered to get on the teams, and took back to their practices the lessons they learned firsthand. And the AIA's Urban Design and Planning Committee became a forum of exchange.

***Participatory design: what happens in
private practice***

At first glance it probably seems that a four-day R/UDAT cannot have much in common with a professional design process. The fact is that R/UDAT offers in a concentrated form a process that is readily adaptable to private sector practice. The accompanying chart shows the main steps that occur in a participatory design process in private sector practice. Generally such a process lasts three to six months. Some are shorter; others can be considerably longer. But their products are developed in far greater detail than the recommendations that emerge from a typical R/UDAT, and their goal is to move directly from planning into implementation.



**Step 1**

The citizen's steering committee and the consultant team meet and work together throughout the urban design process.

Step 2

Perceptions of citizens of goals and issues are sought through interviews, group meetings, and questionnaires.

Step 3

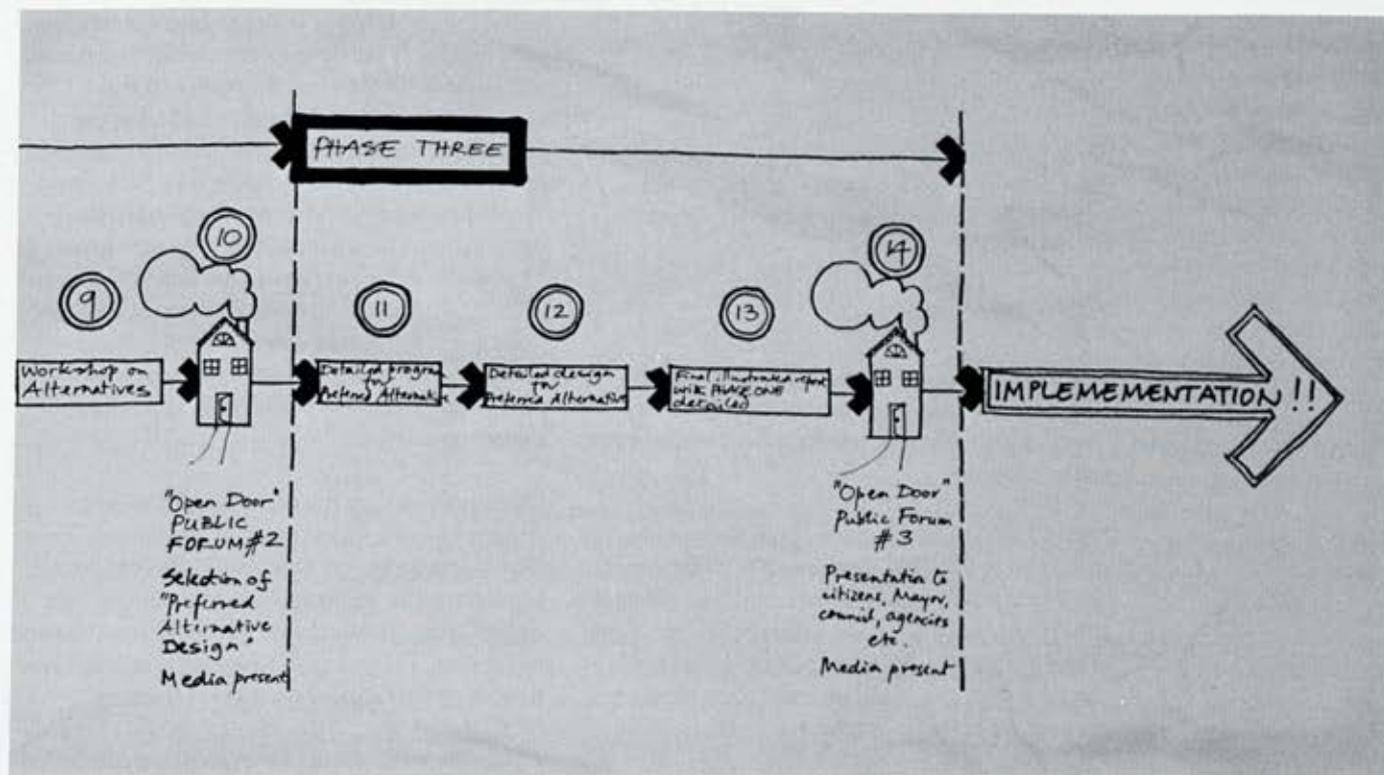
Normal planning data base.

Step 4

The steering committee and the consultant team prepare a preliminary program with a statement of priorities.

Step 5

The materials from Step 4 are presented at a public meeting for debate. This meeting should be widely publicized to ensure attendance of all concerned citizens.

**Step 6**

On the basis of expressed concerns and priorities, the consultant team and the steering committee conduct workshops on components of the program at which citizens and agencies can work together.

Step 7

On the basis of the Workshops a program is developed.

Step 8

Alternative urban designs and strategies are developed by the consultant team.

Step 9

A joint Workshop on the alternative is held for those who attended the earlier workshops (Step 6)

Step 10

A public meeting is held to consider the alternatives and to determine a "preferred" alternative.

Steps 11-14

The preferred alternative is developed in detailed designs and recommendations, with a first phase of implementation built in.

Chart

The following is a brief description of the steps in which the chart illustrates.

Participatory design in practice moves through three distinct phases: contexts, concepts, and actions. The following are some general remarks.

1. Contexts**a. Interviews, questionnaires, group meetings**

Like R/UDAT, the construction of a data base with "hard" and "soft" information is the basis for open public meetings.

"Hard" information is drawn from the same sources as in R/UDAT, but generally in far greater detail; statistical demographics, building uses and conditions, valuations, tax information, etc. Some of the work in this category may be done by sub-consultants to the team, for example market economists or traffic engineers.

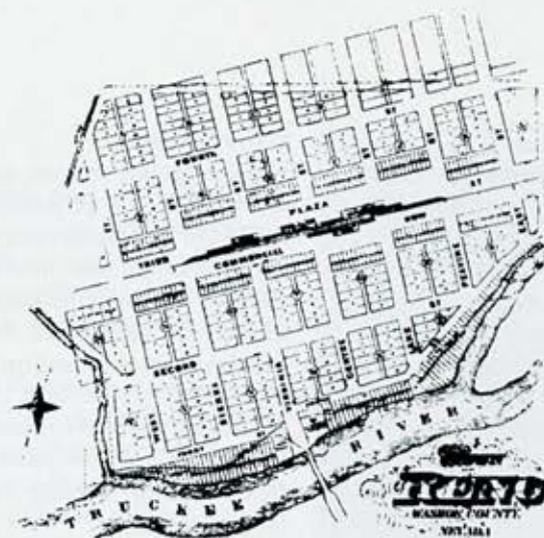
Close collaboration with public agencies, the Chamber of Commerce, institutions such as banks, universities and hospitals, and groups such as merchants associations, neighborhood organizations, etc., is advisable in building up a "hard" data base. These agencies have useful resources, and it is good politics to collaborate.

"Soft" information is generally put together in three ways: interviews, questionnaires, and group meetings.

Interviews are different from casual conversations with citizens. They have to be carefully structured, and generally occur once the team and the steering committee have established what the main issues are. Each interview should be planned to last at least an hour, and should be built up on "conversation topics" that are designed to shed sharp light on the issues and to raise new issues. The people to be interviewed are carefully chosen by the team and the steering committee together, with an eye to include unfavorable or critical viewpoints as well as favorable ones, and also to get the best range of insights and perceptions in the community.

Questionnaires, on the other hand, should be designed for the widest possible circulation. They should be simple, but they should also encourage people to write longer answers than simply "yes" or "no". A good vehicle for distribution is the local newspaper. TV and radio newscasters can be asked to urge viewers and listeners to fill them in.

Group meetings should be organized as discussion workshops. Like the interviews, these discussions should be built up on the issues. Typical groups are the elderly, minorities, merchant associations, and neighborhood coalitions.

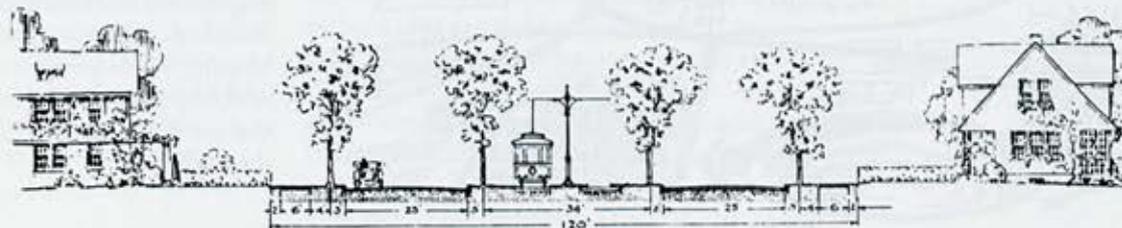


b. Issues

Participatory design just doesn't occur unless there are issues: people don't turn up without reason. Issues will have been identified in the RFP. They will have formed the basis of the interviews, questionnaires and group meetings. But once these inputs have been made, the chances are good that the issues will have to be revised and new issues will have to be added. The team will have learned many new insights and will have been pointed in the direction of many new sources of research and information. All of this material now requires careful tabulation.

c. Human resources

The interviews and group meetings will also begin to reveal what special human resources are to be found concealed in the community. Every community provides its own rich surprises. If the team keeps its ears and eyes open it will find local "authorities" on almost every subject. Historic photographs, artifacts, business records, architectural drawings, etc., will be discovered stacked away in private houses. There are rich oral histories to be taped and meaningful local traditions to be recorded. This wealth of information often makes splendid material for release to the press in the team's effort to get public momentum behind the process.

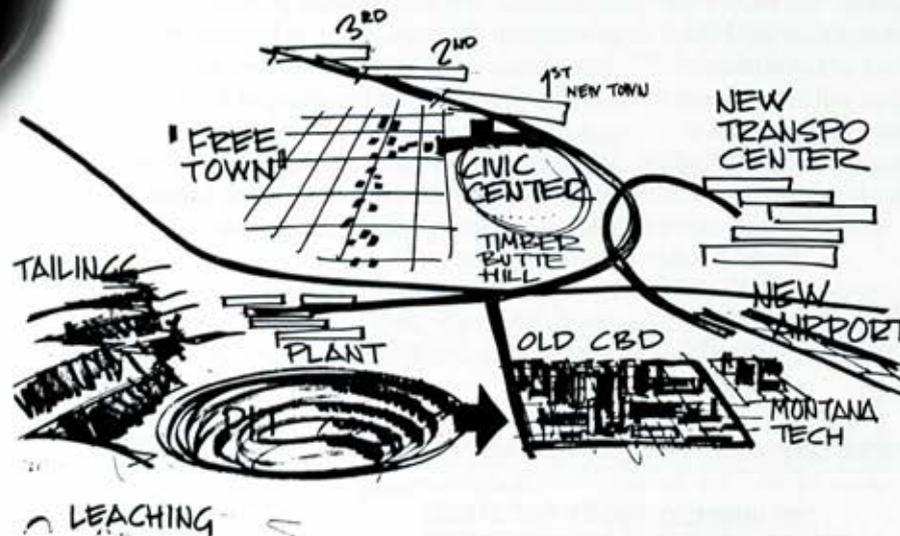


ONE HUNDRED TWENTY FOOT STREET
FINAL DEVELOPMENT IN RESIDENCE DISTRICT

d. Analysis and synthesis

The team now puts together what it has learned. "Hard" and "soft" information is reviewed in categories, and gaps in information are established. Perceptions can be quantified (e.g., how many people mentioned the river as an overlooked resource, how many people rated security as a priority, what percentage of respondents thought that race was an issue), and even though the sample may be very small, the tabulation could be a useful indicator. Base maps keyed to the information are particularly useful (e.g., where in the city exactly was crime identified as an issue, what street intersection was identified as the most dangerous, etc).

The information bank is now assembled in large graphic documents that can be used at the first open public sessions and town meetings.



e. Town meeting

The open public sessions are as vitally important to urban design in private practice as they are to R/UDATs. The media once again plays a big part in the success of town meetings. The key is to get everyone involved who wants to be, and to make involvement meaningful. Articles in the press based on interviews and background information should be published daily. Handbills and banners advertising the public meeting make good video material for TV news bulletins, and call-in talk shows on radio help keep the public's interest soaring.

At least one big town meeting should be held at this point in the process. Be sure to have a hall large enough for a good crowd. Five or six hundred people is not unusual. Generally, the agenda is in two parts. The first part is a plenary session, chaired by the steering committee, at which a report on what has been learned so far is made by the consultants. The issues are then analyzed. After a coffee break, the public is asked to attend a workshop of its choice. Aim at about five workshops. Each workshop will address an issue or a cluster of issues. Typical workshops might be conservation, traffic and parking, housing, or employment and financial incentives. After the workshops, which last about 50 minutes, the Town Meeting is reconvened and the chairman of each workshop makes a brief report on his session, so that everyone knows what happened in all the workshops.

2. Concepts

The purpose of the workshops is to narrow the focus of discussion to particulars. As a result the team should have a fairly good insight of the needs and expectations of the community. They are now in a position to draw and make recommendations.

The chart suggests that three main alternatives ought to be developed. The number of alternatives is up to the team. Perhaps alternatives is the wrong word, since it suggests complete designs. Scenarios might be a better word. Or better still "what if" scenarios. What if we do this? Alternatively what would happen if we went in a totally different direction?

Each scenario has a program, priorities, timetable, budget, incentives, impacts and level of accountability. These can be evaluated objectively in terms of risk compared with benefit, and cost compared with capital source and return on investment. Each scenario implies a series of political and financial strategies. And finally each scenario can be evaluated in terms of its probable level of acceptance with the community.

When enough scenarios and program-mixes have been worked through in three-dimensional designs as well as in numbers, the time has come for a second big open public meeting. Preparations for the public meeting will include the careful presentation of alternatives, with particular emphasis of risks, outlays, phasing and benefits.



It is important that the second Town Meeting is run by the steering committee and not by the consultant team. The chairman of the steering committee should in fact chair the public meeting. The steering committee should introduce the alternatives. The consultant team is called on to present the details.

Once again the Town Meeting should be in two parts, plenary session and workshops. At the plenary session the alternatives are presented and debated. Then once again the public should be asked to attend a workshop of their choice. The purpose of the workshops this time is to discuss critically how the team has responded in each program area, and prioritize preferences. After the workshops the Town Meeting is reconvened, and the reports from the workshops will be debated.

A picture of the preferred scenario should emerge from the Town Meeting and from a follow-up meeting of the steering committee.

3. Actions

The team is now in a position to move into the final design phase.

It is important to emphasize once again that design is not meant only in the narrower architectural sense of physical and visual design, but also as the design of political recommendations, financial pro formas, revisions to regulations, incentives, funding resources and requests, etc. Some consultant teams include a member with experience in development to help in these areas.

The goal of this phase is to bring the first phases of the project to the threshold of implementation. It is therefore crucial that design is both comprehensive and detailed. The very nature of contextual design is that new proposals are sensitively meshed with the city around them. At the same time the proposals have to work in an exacting arena where harsh terms are imposed by developers' pro formas, the requirements of lenders, and the phasing of public capital, and where things take unexpected twists and turns, such as the eccentricities of the marketplace or the rise and fall of interest rates.



In most situations today involving large projects, private sector commitments will be negotiated up to a certain point, but will not be finalized until public capital commitments have been made. Bond issues may have to be voted upon. A federal Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) may have to be negotiated.

These commitments rely in turn on a public approvals process. This is where evidence of a good history of accountability becomes a real asset.

Urban Design: An Institutional Skill

Because of its interdisciplinary base, urban design has no home in any of the existing professions or institutions. It has problems of a common language. And it suffers from the lack of formalized procedures between disciplines involved in similar issues.

To compound these problems each of the disciplines that urban design processes bring together has its own existing professional institute with inherent policies and rules of membership, licensing, accreditation, focus and direction. And the majority of their members may not even want to accommodate interdisciplinary processes in case they weaken their institute's monopolistic control of their specialization.

We have to recognize that even within architecture, not every architect has the desire or capacity to be an urban designer. Although architecture is a team profession, demanding different talents and specializations within its generalist framework, urban design demands a broadening of teams and a complexity far beyond anything experienced within architecture before.

However, recent years have demonstrated beyond doubt that everyone involved in the art of city building must be required to understand the basic processes and language of urban design, and we believe that one of the challenges now facing us is to get other professional disciplines to understand and want this as well.

For more effective practice of urban design, the following steps should be taken:

First and foremost it is imperative to institutionalize urban design on an interdisciplinary basis. This can be done either as an integral part of the profession of architecture (since it is the only profession which deals with overall physical, three-dimensional products) or as a separate profession that has the ability to pull together and coordinate appropriate segments of other professional disciplines.

The R/UDAT program, apart from its impact on the nation's cities, is an important threshold within the architectural profession. The AIA can no longer deny that its most successful public demonstration is in urban design, not architecture. Variants on R/UDAT internationally, notably CAUSE in Canada and CUDAT in Great Britain, have carried the message to other countries and continents.

But the recent formation of a separate national Institute for Urban Design is likely to be of crucial importance. Its international conferences and urban design publications have already increased recognition of urban design as a distinct interdisciplinary skill. All the professions and disciplines involved in urban design should be encouraged to support and participate in the Institute, not for what it already is, but for what it can become.



For example, interdisciplinary partnerships in research and publications can be built up, either as individual projects or based on the interdisciplinary workshops which the Institute is already holding so effectively in cities around the nation. For its part, the Institute can set up working liaisons with the institutes of related professions to explore how urban design can be an integral part of overall purposes by including it as a mandatory element in its continuing education and recertification programs, its formation and resource dissemination systems and its research efforts and agenda.

Both the Institute for Urban Design and the AIA should work together to make urban design an integral part of the practice of architecture so that architects can enlarge their responsibilities by serving the community, either by establishing a design process which utilizes an interdisciplinary approach, or by participating in a meaningful way as a concerned citizen in someone else's process.

Urban design and schools of architecture.

These goals will not be realized until urban design is a core program in all schools of architecture. To treat urban design as an elective, or as a master's program, is not sufficient any longer. We must develop new ways for the next generation of professional architects to exercise their design skills in the new contexts of social and urban awareness.

Rene DuBos spoke to this issue in his 1969 Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *So Human An Animal*:

"Since man's nature leads him to search endlessly for new environments and for new adventures, there is no possibility of maintaining a status quo. Even if we had enough learning and wisdom to achieve at any given time an harmonious state of ecological equilibrium between mankind and the other inhabitants of spaceship Earth, it would be a dynamic equilibrium which would be compatible with man's continuing development. The question is whether the interplay between man and his natural and social surroundings will be controlled by blind forces or whether it will be guided by deliberate rational judgement."

The responsibility of our universities is to make these "blind forces" understood. Habitually schools of architecture have been conditioned to produce graduates who fit niches that the profession and society has predefined for them. Professional schools still follow patterns governed by the vested and conservative interests that provide commissions for the big architectural offices, and by the subtle (but no less powerful) pressures of institutional accrediting boards. But the rate of social change has accelerated to a point that this educational model is no longer viable. The graph of change in technology alone is nearly vertical.



***Educating
government***

The education of architects is only one facet of urban design education. The interdisciplinary network that urban design represents can now be seen to expand in the university, correlating inputs and learning experiences from many directions. But the network within the university should also be seen as a microcosm of the network in the urban workshop itself.

In a democracy the informed citizen has a right to expect officials and representatives elected in his behalf to act in his best interests. It is a precious right, not only because the election booth is an expression of trust and aspiration, but the process of removing officials who do not meet expectations, and reversing decisions that do not reflect the public will is enormously difficult to put into effect by means other than elections. Sadly, these remedies of process are usually too late. The deed is done. Historic buildings are razed; budgets are spent; a park has been paved; a highway has been rammed through; an unsatisfactory project has been built; and urban evolution has been permanently diverted.

Getting public officials to be sensitive to the aspirations of citizens and to understand the impacts of their policies and decisions is an important aspect of urban design communications. Carefully prepared presentations at public hearings and informed media are important components in educating government.

But this will always be unpredictable until the education of planners, architectural historians, political scientists, sociologists, urban economists and many others is based on interdisciplinary workshops, the language of which is urban design. Only in this way will standards of interdisciplinary performance in public professional life be set, and accountability in the public interest will be quantifiable and less a matter of rhetoric.

Urban design research

It is clear that fundamental to good design and communication is sound research. Urban design research is contextual in nature. It has certain characteristics that differentiate it from research in other fields, and in a sense these characteristics make it more difficult to do. Like urban design itself, urban design research is generalist. It covers several related specialist areas, but its goal is to support design in the public interest, and is therefore different. It is not surprising to find that there is currently a shortage of urban design research. And what is done suffers from various deficiencies that have to be overcome. Here are some shortfalls:

- Most of the research is done by single disciplines, and has a narrow, unilateral point of view.
- Useful research findings are not in easily communicable form or readily available to practicing urban designers, and are not being employed effectively, if at all, by local government.
- A wealth of researchable information is not utilized.
- While universities and research institutions should continue to be primarily centers for urban design research, such research should not be conducted exclusively by them.
- Comparative case studies are needed to document and update successes and failures in urban design.
- Many individual research projects are carried out with an inadequate frame of reference.

A "culture of research", on a sound, broadly accepted methodological basis, is needed within the interdisciplinary urban design profession. Its methodologies should be designed to provide overall and commonly accepted research management strategies to enable research in various institutions, universities and agencies to be coordinated in regard to direction, quality and comparison. Research findings will thus become invaluable resources for policy formulation and funding mechanisms.

Creating options

Urban design is concerned with creating valuable new options in old or new contexts, rather than applying systems already in existence. Besides monitoring case studies, research should also therefore be a tool in the process of active experimentation that is integral to the sequence of any project's organization, implementation and evaluation.

Carefully planned projects considered to be important arenas for research work should be supported to permit consistency over a long period of time beyond implementation to permit monitoring and comparisons with similar projects in other contexts. This would allow processes to be tried, retried, and adopted, building on results of previous efforts.

A central clearinghouse

A pressing need is a central clearinghouse of urban design research and case studies. This may be a task for the Institute for Urban Design, not unlike the parallel work being done by the Urban Land Institute. Universities as well as professionals should subscribe to and support the effort. Case studies based on performance criteria are of particular importance to practicing urban designers and to government.

Urban design often involves the creation of costly and relatively permanent environmental features. The urban designer must worry about the consequences of everything he does, not only because people are going to be living with the results, but because he is sometimes substantially changing the course of a city's future. So, whatever experimentation is done must be of a type that allows adjustments to be made and failures to be corrected. Research into parallel projects, and into the sequential steps of his project, is therefore an invaluable tool, and informed feedback can lead to a better informed accommodation of needs or changes in programs.

Contextual research

Contextual research, project-by-project, may be organized as parallel comparative case studies, going over a period of years. It can be carried out as an integral part of the design-decision-implementation-management process of each project, built in from the beginning. However, research has to be consistent to be of maximum use, and must be based on the interrelatedness of all of the steps in the entire design process. It must deal with how design accommodates successive programmatic or policy adaptations, and it must be undertaken in the context of real people and events. Some of the researchers should, if possible, be the citizens themselves.

Further research strategies to be considered are projective. We might call them trickle-up. Projections based on case studies evaluated by means of accepted methodologies can be invaluable. Depending on the issues at hand, funding and other capabilities, trickle-up and post-construction research may be conducted on a periodic rather than continuous basis.

Trickle-up research, like much scientific research, begins with a focus on a concrete problem, and works its way outward to larger contextual issues, and finally to projections. The implication is that, by choosing several contexts as important areas for research, it would be possible to amass considerable specific information from which important generalizations and projections could be drawn.

Post construction evaluation

Post-construction evaluation can focus on environments that are working well compared with those that are not, in order to develop an understanding of the factors leading to project viability, successful and unsuccessful. Although evaluations tend to be statistical in order to establish a basis for comparison, it is also important to trace back "soft" data, such as the impact of decision-making, and in the light of experience, to project what the impact of alternative goals, strategies, decisions or policies might have been.

Evaluations of this kind provide excellent staff learning experiences when developed from completed projects contrasted with original intentions and are useful as demonstrations to elected officials. Based on such evaluations, future programming can be altered, public policy may be modified, and the general public can review earlier decisions in the light of new information.

Potential areas of research, therefore, that may be considered are:

- design administration
- design legislation
- design issues
- communication and education
- urban design communications
- public/private partnerships
- comparative impacts on urban economics, sociology, demography, etc.

Rene DuBos in the 1970 *Smithsonian Quarterly* said:

"Now that social and technological changes are too rapid for the spontaneous development of successful adaptive responses modern societies will have to depend on conscious design for the achievement of fitness. I prefer to speak of 'design' rather than 'planning' because I want to emphasize the need to social and ecological patterns in which the potentialities of persons and places can achieve expressions which are humanly desirable."

Because physical design is visual language, architects are able to make connections between information distilled from research and three-dimensional physical expression. They are also able to discern or derive meaning in visual form from human aspirations expressed both directly and from case studies. They have not always, in recent history, brought this ability to bear on issues of the public interest, preferring instead to narrow their effective field to more private interests.

The experience and methods of R/UDATs have eloquently catalogued the public's desire to give form to its environment, and have demonstrated with conviction the effectiveness of interdisciplinary teamwork in which expertise is additive, and in which all physical and cultural forces combine to resolve issues of conflict in a creative manner.

Comparative research, as outlined here, coupled with open, participatory design processes, offers opportunities to enrich design and informs the public in the Jeffersonian sense. It also enlarges the role that our universities and design schools can play in the future of our cities.

While the 100 or so collegiate schools that offer the education of design professionals are superficially encouraged to develop their own priorities, there is a marked agreement between them as to what constitutes a responsible curriculum. It is certainly ironic that at a time when citizens are searching for an interdisciplinary focus on the issues of change impacting urban communities, the trend toward specialization has left us with fewer and fewer professionals trained to accept the challenge in interdisciplinary teamwork.

Four areas of instruction appear in all programs with varying percentages of time allotted to them: design, history, theory, and building technology. Noticeably missing are courses that recognize that parallel disciplines can and do also affect architectural and urban form. There is, in fact, very little instruction on the **source** of appropriate form itself.

A study commissioned by the AIA admits the similarity among schools. Core requirements remain structure, history and design, with the acknowledged primary emphasis in the design studio. The traditional design studios still deal with problem solution rather than problem definition, and tend to do this as architectural design in isolation rather than in interdisciplinary settings.

In contrast design education, to be reflective of public concerns and issues, should offer opportunities to develop skills that are responsive to the continuously changing conditions of our cities — conditions which in turn must be seen as the basis for physical form.

New curricula must be developed in design schools to sharpen the skills needed to define issues, encourage dialogue, collect and analyze information, and understand the processes of urban change. Courses must be offered that make clear how economic, social and political permutations can be generators of alternative physical form in given local contexts. Indeed, schools may consider making the urban contexts all around them, wherever they are located, their primary workshops or living laboratories.

To some extent this has already begun. In the mid-sixties interdisciplinary research and workshops were organized by Kevin Lynch and Donald Appleyard at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, while a parallel attempt was made by David Lewis to use Pittsburgh as an urban workshop by the graduate program in urban design at Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie-Mellon University). In the seventies more universities joined in. Yale in New Haven, Connecticut; Ohio State in Columbus; and the University of California at Berkeley are notable examples of universities which offered urban design workshops to address specific issues in their own communities, in collaboration with citizens and government.

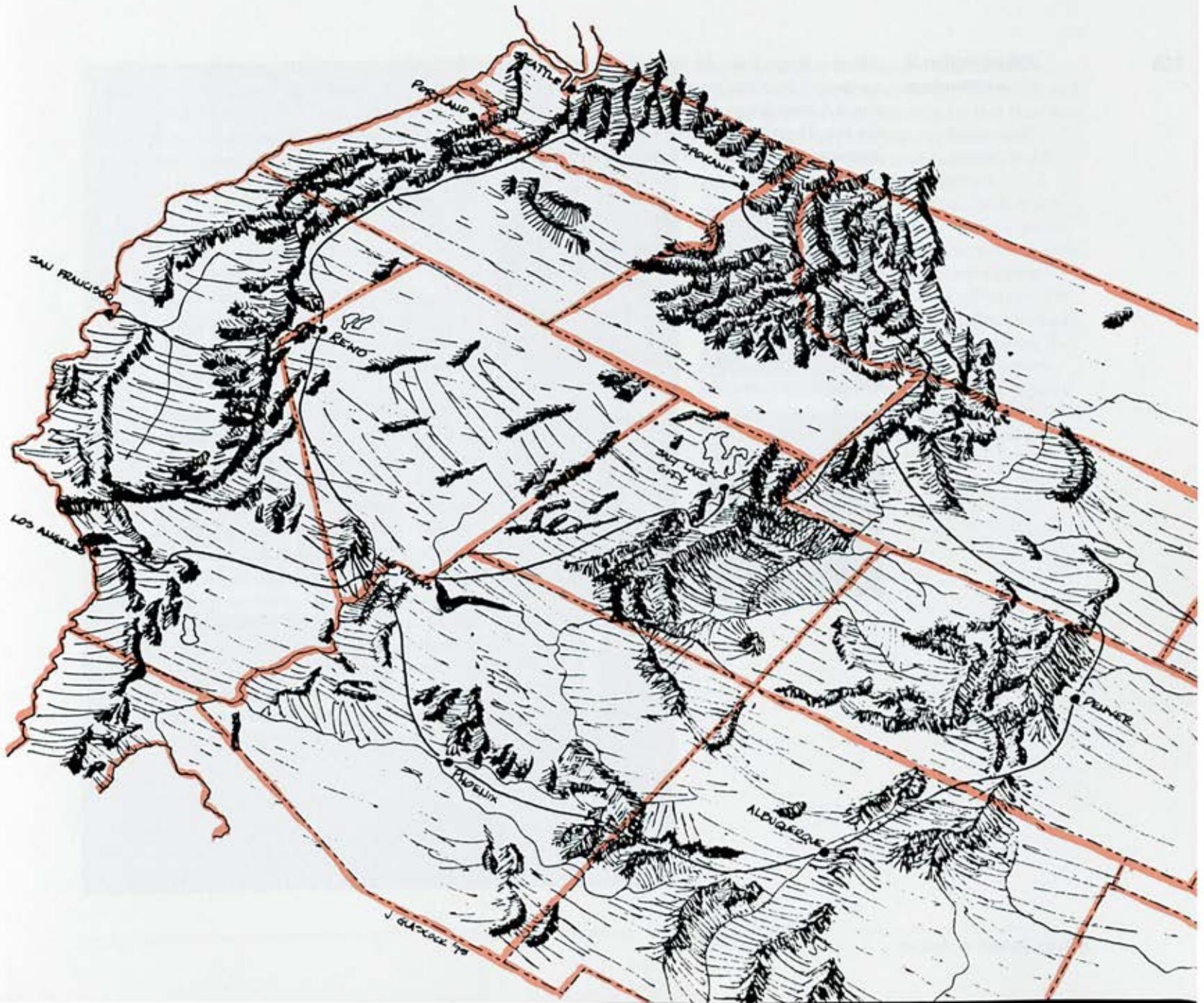
Recent examples indicate that big steps forward are being made to institutionalize these efforts and organize them rationally. Mississippi State University has the Center for Small Town Research and Design organized by James Barker which runs projects and publishes a series of important case studies in book form, and the series of publications put out by the student program of North Carolina State University is a basis for an organized body of theory and case studies.

Like case studies, history must also be considered in context with the cultural forces that created it so that the student can better understand how, in the past, the forces of politics, economics, sociology, etc., were translated into design and form. In this way the present and future can be seen as history in the making.

Schools of architecture, through their design studios, can become the catalysts for interdisciplinary partnerships with the university. They should combine the interdisciplinary opportunities of research, and they can generate resource material that is transdisciplinary, finding a way to share it with students and teachers in other disciplines and also with cities, government agencies and others that might use it.

Design studios will thus begin to reinterpret the traditional role of the university in community service, and make the idea of community service curricular rather than extracurricular. This will bring people, problems and issues into the core of the university as living resources in the setting of practical urban workshops.

8 Synthesis



**Urban design is
architecture**

All art is image. Even the opaque silences of composer John Cage are images of the absence of sound. Urban design offers images of the future of the city. These images permit us to focus with intensity and detail on the policies and strategies of achieving that future.



This book began with a spontaneous visit to The American Institute of Architects by a citizen who had a perception that his community had problems that possibly architects could help with. The first R/UDAT quickly discovered that the city is a living organism, embodying the culture, history and aspirations of its citizens. They sensed its continual change, its continual evolution from its past into future forms. But most of all they sensed that the citizens themselves wanted to help to shape that future: they implicitly recognized that any given moment in the history of the democratic city, the policies which will shape its future must be in their own hands.

From simple beginnings, R/UDAT evolved into a process which draws from the present condition, from the existing context of the city, all the elements from which the image of the city's future must take its shape. No one mind, no matter how brilliant, indeed not even one profession, is capable of spanning the width and depth of understanding needed to handle the diversity of this material. R/UDAT teams are therefore drawn from a national pool of men and women specialists, each eminent in his own field of endeavor, representing a range of disciplines to ensure that the recommendations that emerge are truly responsive to the complex strands of input and data that bombard the urban design process from all sides.



But the city does not belong to the assistance teams. They come from all parts of the nation and stay for only four days. The odds are that they have never visited that particular city before, nor previously met the other team members, and if they have, certainly not in an intensive interdisciplinary working situation. Be that as it may, the essence of the R/UDAT is that it serves, not the professionals, but the cause of the citizens. It is they who come to the team seeking help in achieving for their city a series of aspirations that are extremely precious to them. And in coming to the team they are symbolizing and expressing the basic democratic form of cities, in which every front door is connected to every other front door, and every citizen has a clear and equal relationship in government, articulated by the physical grid of the city.



R/UDAT is not called to go to cities in which all is well. On the contrary, R/UDAT is a response by the architectural profession to a call for help from the nation's distressed cities. Conflict, despair, confusion of goals, ways and means — all of these are factors that are the common fare of R/UDATs. In fact, it is the resolution of these contradictions that offers the best opportunities for creativity.

And in an open public process, in which everyone hears everyone else's input to the discussion and participates in the development of recommendations, the language of urban design is born. In the end it is the artist within the urban designer — part troubadour, part alchemist — who is able to make that creative and emotionally moving leap of insight and comprehensive understanding necessary for an inspired yet credible image. But because the citizens have participated in the birth of that language and in its development toward the articulation of policies they can deeply believe in, a new spirit of optimism and dedication and new leaderships come into being which will carry their community forward to new horizons.

The images of urban design are, therefore, truly important when their three-dimensional depictions of proposals and projects are the language of detailed focus and intention. But most important of all is the image of process and enfranchisement, those powerful undercurrents of policy and dedication by the citizens that will be responsible for the delivery of consensus and for implementing the recommendations, for these are the raw power of urban evolution. The deeper lesson of R/UDAT is that these are the mainsprings of truly significant architecture.



Section Two
The Regional/Urban Design Assistance
Teams in Action
Peter Batchelor

The Team in Action: An Assessment



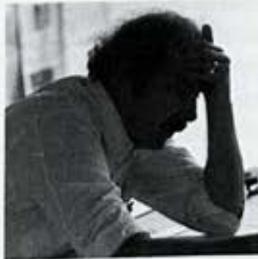
Arriving from all over the nation, a group of persons are preparing for a R/UDAT project. Their mission is to give design and planning assistance to a community. They have received a package of material in advance of the visit in order that they may familiarize themselves with the characteristics of the community and the problems they are likely to encounter.



Their professional background is very diverse. They may be drawn from architecture, landscape architecture, city planning, transportation planning, economics, law, sociology and many other disciplines. Their skills and professional activities differ greatly from each other: Some are involved in waterfront land development projects, others in highway design, and still others in writing. Yet they all have one thing in common: A strong commitment to improving the quality of life in cities. The R/UDAT visit which brings them together will result in proposals which reflect the diversity of value systems on the team.

One of the team members is designated as a leader. He or she has been carefully chosen to manage the R/UDAT event so that it is productive and meaningful to the participants. The team leader must represent the findings of the team to the community, and must be able to organize the effort internally. Such a person requires enormous amounts of energy, patience and good humor. Tactful when differences occur, adept at bringing the most creative response from individuals, the team leader must know enough about the professional backgrounds of team members in order to make sound judgements. And in the early hours of the morning when time and space hover on the edge of consciousness, and when the mind is wearied by round-the clock activity, the leader must be on hand to encourage and support team effort. Not surprisingly, a few natural leaders have emerged in the R/UDAT process and their skills are called upon with great frequency.

Over the course of several months, perhaps even as much as a year or more, a task force has been preparing for this event. Reconnaissance visits are made to the community for the purpose of meeting local officials and assessing the nature of the issues to be addressed. Local committees and contacts are established and a list of key actors — businessmen, politicians, professionals and community leaders — is prepared. The local chapter of the American Institute of Architects is involved in planning for the visit, and where possible schools of architecture and city planning are invited to send faculty and students to assist in R/UDAT sessions. A lot of time and energy is spent in preparing for a visit because it is essential to secure the active support and participation of the community, and because the team can spend their time more effectively responding to the local problems if sufficient background information is available. The existence, for example, of a properly-scaled set of reproducible base maps has a dramatic impact on the output of a team and the specificity of the product.



At some point late in the preparatory phase a team is identified by both the R/UDAT Task Force and the team leader. The unique strengths of a pool of several hundred volunteers are known, and individuals are selected on the basis of their ability to contribute to specific planning and design issues. Also important is the ability of the team member to contribute to the success of the visit, a factor which places cooperation on an equal

footing with individual creativity and skill. Out of the process of selection is forged a team — the Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team — whose separate strengths are brought to focus on a common problem.

The Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team is a unique assembly of talented people. It meets for four or five days at one location in the United States. Some team members may know each other, or may have heard of each other through professional practice, but for most it is the first time they have assembled together. The convergence of these skilled professionals at this location and time in history is an event never to be repeated. It is bound to influence some aspect of community development, and yet its principal actors are only required to make a short term commitment.

In order to understand how the R/UDAT process functions, several questions must be raised: What is the general organizational structure of a typical visit, and how is the problem-solving process conducted? How do ideas emerge, and how are they communicated? Finally, what are the critical elements of the process? These questions will be examined in the following pages and illustrated by excerpts from seven case studies.



**General Structure
and Problem-solving
Process of a
R/UDAT Visit**

RUDAT Workshops tend to follow a fairly well-defined format. The first day is usually given over to meeting representative community groups and in becoming familiar with the physical environment. On the second day, public hearings and reviews of available and recently gathered data tend to sharpen the team's perception of major issues. By the mid-point of this day preliminary problem statements and programs are defined, and by the end of the day a strategy for approaching the problem is established. The third day is essentially an "inhouse" problem-solving work session. Finally, during the evening of the third day, or on the following day, recommendations are given to the community during a public presentation.

The problem-solving methodology of a R/UDAT workshop is based on team discussion of concepts followed by joint or individual work groups assigned to specific segments of the program. The assignment process tends to be a voluntary act on the part of the team member with expertise and interest in a specific aspect of the program. After about two to four hours, the team is called together again and a new round of presentations is started. This recycling of concepts brings about a steady inflow of new ideas and a modification of previous ones, as well as a prolific amount of drawing and writing. A superhuman effort is usually needed to bring all of the disparate material together, a coordinating task which normally falls to the team leader, or chairman. It is an exhausting process. The team often works around the clock to put the final document and public presentation together.



***Wilson, North Carolina, May 2—6 1974:
A Typical R/UDAT Schedule***

The following itinerary reveals a general pattern of activities common to all R/UDAT sessions. On the first morning a bus loaded with officials, team members and students made a tour of the region followed by a drive through the town itself. This served to introduce the team to the regional problems of Wilson and to reveal the nature of the urban and rural landscape. The afternoon was a mixture of meetings with town officials, walking tours and photographic surveys of the environment. An evening presentation by the Secretary of North Carolina's Department of Natural and Economic Resources, James E. Harrington, gave the team an overview of the State's role in land development.

During the morning of the second day minority groups presented a picture of housing, employment and social conditions to the team. Public officials were requested to stay away from this meeting so that discussion could be relatively uninhibited. This meeting proved to be fairly exciting and prompted a special investigation of Black residential areas.

The second and third days of the workshop produced a large variety of planning and design concepts. Drawing boards and work surfaces were set up in the Wilson Council Chambers, and debris comprised of paper plates, cups and crumpled paper began to mount up as the tempo increased. By the end of the third evening, the team had produced the major portion of the report and accompanying design concepts. The production of a slide show for presentation to the public on the fourth evening and the printing of fifty copies of the report were the only tasks left by 4:00 AM on the final day.

Thursday May 2

Afternoon	Team members arrived at Raleigh/Durham Airport.
6:00 p.m.	Team met at 1526 Glenwood Avenue; had dinner at Velvet Cloak Inn in Raleigh.
10:30 p.m.	Team arrives in Wilson
10:45 p.m.	Team briefing session and slide show.

Friday May 3

8:00—10 a.m.	Breakfast at Heart of Wilson Motel. City, County, State persons, Region "L" officials, community leaders, news media, etc., in attendance.
10:00—12:00 a.m.	Bus tour of Wilson and surrounding area.
12:00—1:15 p.m.	Lunch at Holiday Inn. Community Leader input. Returned to Heart of Wilson.
1:30—4:30 p.m.	Team went on aerial reconnaissance, city and state staff on walking tour.
5:00 p.m.	Depart from Heart of Wilson Motel for Silver Lake Oyster Bar.
5:30—9:00 p.m.	Dinner at Silver Lake Oyster Bar and presentation by James Harrington, Secretary, N.C. Department of Natural and Economic Resources.
9:00—Midnight	Team discussion at motel. Film sent out for processing.

Saturday May 4

- 8:00—10:00 a.m. Breakfast meeting with DNER and other State officials. Discussion of planning and management issues pertinent to city, state and regional officials.
- 10:30—12:30 a.m. AIA team met with special interest groups and resource persons; continued at Municipal Chamber.
- 12:30 a.m. Team lunch with staff and council.
- 1:30—3:00 p.m. Walk through Business District.
- 3:00—6:00 p.m. First work session.
- 6:00—7:00 p.m. Team break
- 7:00—9:00 p.m. Team dinner.
- 9:00 p.m. Second work session
- 9:00 p.m. Photos sent out for processing.

Sunday May 5

- 7:30 a.m. Breakfast
- 8:30 a.m. Third work session
- 12:30 a.m. Lunch in Municipal Chambers.
- 1:30 p.m. Fourth work session.
- 7:00 p.m. Break
- 9:00 p.m.-4:00 a.m. Fifth work session. Work on final report initiated. Drawings and design concepts finalized. Slides taken of art work.

Monday May 6

- 7:30 a.m. Breakfast
- All Day Preparation of statements for news media. Slide show for press conference and news media.
- 5:30—7:00 p.m. Team dinner.
- 8:30—10:00 p.m. Public presentation
- 11:00 p.m. Team members depart for home.

***Generation and
Communication
of Ideas***

While the organizational structure of a R/UDAT visit follows a predictable course, as demonstrated in the Wilson study, the origin and flow of ideas is a highly variable phenomenon. Team members bring to each R/UDAT visit a personalized approach to issues of urban design which tend to act as a filter for sifting through and discarding or incorporating information. There are, in addition, some recurring themes — not necessarily conscious ones — which have a tendency to predispose conceptual ideas towards an array of acceptable alternatives. Finally, the technique of communication of ideas itself acts to shape the nature of the idea. All of these factors are dependent on the composition and skills of the team, the imageability of the issue to be studied, and the manner in which information about the study problem is obtained. Since no two situations are alike, the conceptualization of ideas does not unfold in some steady, step-by-step fashion. Consequently, a R/UDAT visit is a highly creative affair, proceeding as much by inspiration as by conscious management.

Ordinarily, some sort of overview or official presentation is made to team members before they have any contact with the actual site. Many civic groups assume a positive attitude about the community in an attempt to maintain a progressive spirit. Most teams are careful to question speakers at this stage and to examine disparities between documented material and official views of the community. It is a period in the process in which intuition comes into play; clues are sought which throw light upon conflicts between civic agencies or upon evasive behavior over specific planning and design issues. During informal conversations and social events team members receive a more personal set of perceptions about local problems, thus modifying the official view. Ultimately, individual and collective opinions are held concerning planning issues, and these may be widely divergent from the official view.

At some point in the first day, or usually no later than the morning of the second day, a tour of the site is made. This provides additional information of a contextual nature, supplementing diagrams and maps provided by civic and local officials. Depending on the size of the problem area, a means of transportation is provided which affords a comprehensive view of the community. In the case of a suburbanizing region, or a large city, it is not unusual to utilize airplanes and helicopters. Team members on the Butte R/UDAT visit in June 1972 were taken in a small single-engine plane over the downtown area and across the enormous Berkeley Pit, an open-face mining operation slowly



eating away the land on which downtown Butte was situated. Buses and automobiles are also utilized, though no form of transportation is more effective than a walk through the community.

This is an exciting moment for team members. Cameras click away steadily, freezing an urban scene for some crucial point later in the workshop sessions after the film has been processed. Persons with an ability to draw will be seen working on a sketch pad with great animosity as views of the site slip by. Line drawings proliferate during this phase of activity: Subjects ranging from aerial perspectives of the region to physical details of the urban landscape issue from the skilled hands of architects and planners on the team. Drawings formed at this stage of the process serve not only to document the environment but also to create a

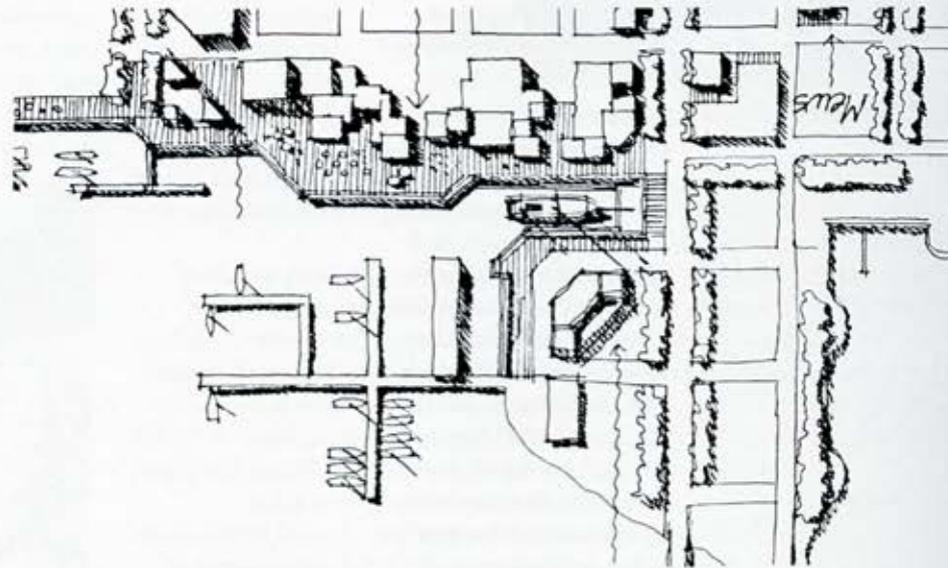
perceptual framework for future decisionmaking. Often diagrammatic in nature, these drawings clarify the complexity of the city and pave the way for a comprehensive ordering concept.

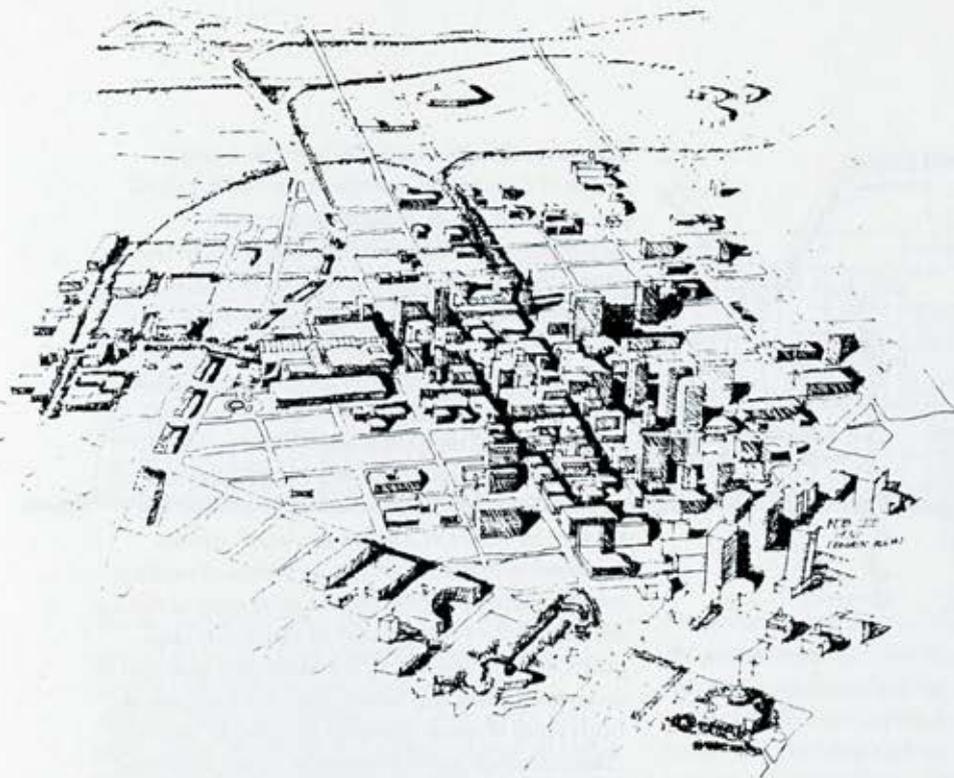
These two methods of gathering site information — vehicular and pedestrian — serve two distinct purposes. The former affords a broad view and enables team members to comprehend the complete urban fabric without being distracted by details. The latter permits involvement with the textures and details of the urban landscape: Buildings, trees, signs, street furniture and so on. Architects are trained to work from a total concept down to details and the R/UDAT process follows traditional problem-solving methods fairly closely when it comes to dealing with cities. One scale of analysis clearly imparts a sense of structure to the proceedings, while the other provides the content.



At this stage of the R/UDAT visit verbal and statistical descriptions of the problem have become infused with graphic and photographic imagery. Subsequent meetings with special interest groups, interested citizens and individuals create an understanding of priority of issues which is the final step before the generation of new ideas. It is usually at this point, sometime between the second and third day, that conceptual solutions begin to emerge from the team. Executed with simplicity of form and line, diagrams of ordering principles begin to appear in notebooks and on large paper sheets hung from walls.

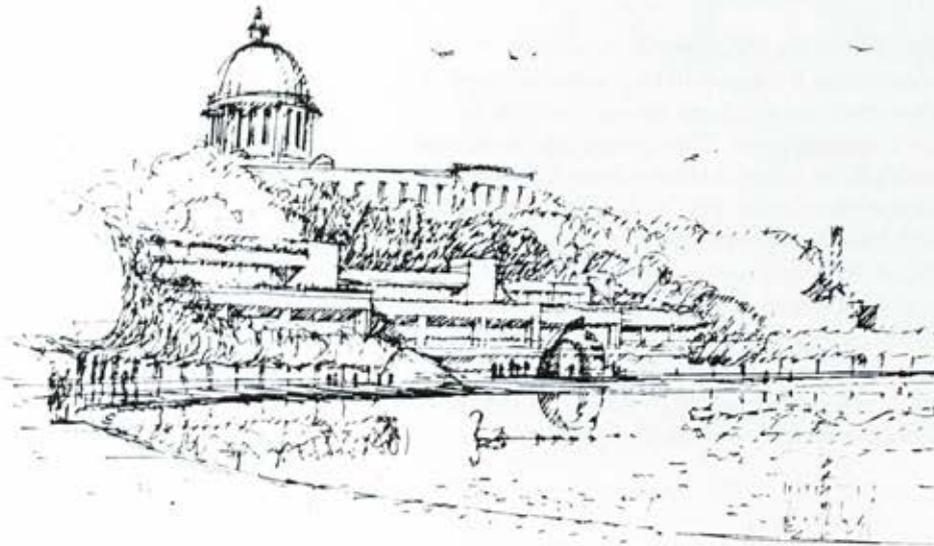
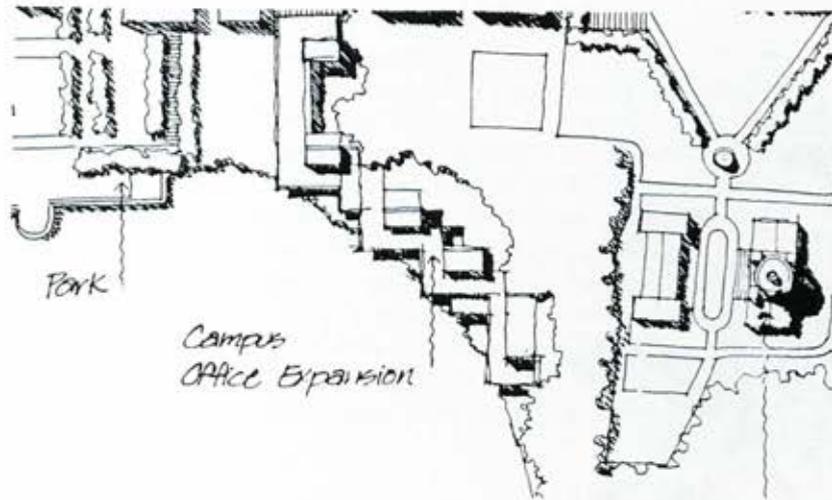
Many of the popular conceptual solutions of the R/UDAT process seem to owe their form and structure to recurring themes in the literature of urban design. Linear organizing concepts — malls, boardwalks, riverfront greenways, arcades, and so on — apparently strike the imagination of designers with greater intensity than other formal ordering systems. For example, in a city possessing an undifferentiated grid, the tendency is to favor those solutions which seek to emphasize linear segments over those which treat the grid as an entire structural system. A similar tendency to favor concentrated cores can be found in the conceptual diagrams of a R/UDAT Team. The





sheer physical dominance of the downtown area has a habit of overriding the importance of suburban cores, even if economic evidence demonstrates that downtown plays a subordinate role. It could be argued that a sort of professional bias operates in favor of the downtown, but it is also possible that, as a concentrated phenomenon, it is easier to conceptualize and to reproduce in graphic terms this tightly-knit accretion of built space.

Linear form connotes growth, expansion, adaptability, it suggests linkage and continuity — characteristics which are deemed desirable in contemporary cities. The core implies density and multiple use, which in turn suggest high levels of human interaction. In their simplest form, lines and cores can be organized into graphic constructs of just about any conceivable type of urban structural system. Therefore, a city with a strong central core and one or more linear organizing systems possesses a higher level of imageability than, say, either a suburban region or a typical small town with a dispersed population.



If linear and focal organization forms a major source of conceptual statements in the R/UDAT process, what kinds of drawings are most frequently utilized to communicate ideas to the public? Aerial drawings — plans and perspective — are probably printed most often in the official reports. Aerial relief plans, also known as shadow plans, allow the designer to give a sense of mass and therefore density to large sections of a city with comparatively few lines. These types of drawings also permit the form of buildings to be outlined, even if the plan arrangements are not known. In addition, landscape details can be executed as masses of foliage or planes of uniform texture. Aerial perspectives are extremely useful for describing the physiography of regions or large cities, and for visualizing the sculptural qualities of downtown cores and other urban concentrations. Both types of aerial drawings are used to describe complex urban environments in broad, structural terms in order that the whole city is perceivable, or so that some large part of a city can be comprehended.

R/UDAT Team members are especially adroit at distilling the unique visual attributes of cities into a language of design through rapid sketching techniques. These take the form of either ground-level views, usually made during the traditional tour of the site, or conceptual diagrams. Executed with a drawing pen in five minutes or less, ground level drawings reduce vistas, buildings, or building details down to their essential formal characteristics with only a minimum amount of detail. Conceptual diagrams are usually an abstraction, in plan form, of some aspect of the city which will later become a structuring device

***Critical Dimensions
of the
Creative Process***

Nothing is more important to the success of a R/UDAT mission than the composition of the team. Quite apart from social compatibility and mutual respect, team members must possess the ability to grasp the essence of a problem — often on the basis of fragmented and incomplete information — and to understand the differences in point of view between themselves and their colleagues. This latter quality requires breadth of knowledge in many fields, and the composition of the team typically reflects the complexity of problems studied: Building design, landscape design, transportation planning, urban land economics, project financing and development, urban administration, land use control systems, urban sociology, and other disciplines. Whatever their background may be, all team members have a special interest in urban issues, and their training probably includes exposure to, and experience in the resolution of problems drawing on knowledge from this diverse array of disciplines. The architect as urban designer has, for example, most likely received some sort of formal training at the introductory level in all of these disciplines, and it is equally likely that information originating in these disciplines is brought to bear on his or her problem-solving activities in professional practice.

Understanding all of the fields of study involved in the R/UDAT problem to be investigated, and possessing depth and creative skills in at least one such field is the prerequisite for membership on the team. This precludes the narrow specialist as team member because it is unlikely that such a person could respond to the intuitive processes at work in the concentrated, charrette-type atmosphere of a R/UDAT mission. R/UDAT teams therefore tend to be a group of creative generalists, each member having a rather special skill to contribute to the problem-solving process.

Where are such persons to be found, and how is a team assembled? Over the years a pool of talent has been organized by the American Institute of Architects' R/UDAT Administration. In its published material the AIA has identified 572 team members from 23 professions during the first nineteen years of operation of the R/UDAT program:

- 203 Architect/Urban Designers
- 90 Planners
- 65 Economists
- 35 Transportation Consultants
- 35 Landscape Architects
- 33 Attorneys
- 25 Sociologists
- 15 Developers
- 13 Ecologist/Environmentalists
- 10 Historic Preservationists
- 8 Public Administrators
- 7 Political Scientists
- 6 Downtown Executives
- 2 Artists
- 3 Humanists
- 4 Journalists
- 2 Mayors
- 2 Port Specialists
- 6 Energy Consultant
- 1 Facilities Manager
- 2 Geologist
- 1 Land Owner
- 2 State Representative

In addition, 65 Schools of Architecture provided 360 students as resource personnel for 89 R/UDAT projects. Teams are assembled on the basis of exposure to and performance of professionals from previous projects, from contact with colleagues within the AIA and its Urban Design and Planning Committee, from professional practise, and on the basis of recommendations.

Finding the correct mixture of expertise, creative skill, and compatibility is no mean feat, and it is not surprising that a small group of veteran R/UDAT team members continually reappear in the credits of project reports. Akin to an elite guard, these person usually possess outstanding skills and creative talents. It is possible to thumb through some official R/UDAT reports and identify the work of specific urban designers without glancing at the team roster. This is especially true where illustrations are involved, because each drawing carries the graphic "signature" of its delineator. These persons are responsible, somewhat unwittingly, for setting the standards of excellence in design and communications skills by which others measure their success. Consequently, each new R/UDAT mission has a documented inheritance of urban design projects whose collective effect is to successively raise the effort and output. In this regard, the author noted a steady improvement in the quality of R/UDAT projects — as judged by the reports — over time, an observation based on both quality of graphic and written material, and upon depth of investigation. Some R/UDAT projects, such as Birmingham, Alabama (1976) and Lynn, Massachusetts (1982) generated such a prodigious volume of material that it is hard to see how the work could be accomplished in the time available. Both of these projects are summarized in the accompanying case studies.