

	DETAILING	BUILDING	STREET/BLOCK	N'HOOD/CITY/REGION
<i>Modernist</i>	Standard	Unique	Unique	Standard
<i>Typological</i>	Unique	Standard	Standard	Unique

reducing the number of both building and architectural types with which to shape the city. Urban blocks became superblocks; while curvilinear and cul-de-sac streets made irregular blocks in suburbia. Bulk zoning requirements, especially set-back regulations, resulted in oversized and windswept streets (which encouraged cars to drive too fast) and gigantic plazas (which encouraged pedestrians to walk too fast). These public zones are residual rather than positive space. And they are usually empty of pedestrians. As stated earlier, traditional typology reverses this figure/ground relationship, trading figural object buildings for figural public spaces. And, when regionalist architectural, street, and block types are respected, neighborhoods, cities, and regions are particular and unique. The reversals are consistent across the board, at four scales shown in the table above.

Although tradition and precedent were ideologically and stylistically eschewed at all scales, the Modern Movement was especially free and creative at the two middle scales, i.e., the building and the street/block. It put its most fertile eggs primarily in one basket, the individual building. Architectural details and components were standard and generic, while building plans and sections were very creative and particular. Modernism also tended to experiment with urban design, often with oversized superblocks, streets, and plazas, which were sometimes raised above or sunken below street level. At the largest scale, suburban and urban neighborhoods and districts are more standardized; indeed, contemporary cities have grown to look and feel more and more alike as they become zoned and themed for tourists and commodified for residents by national and international corporations, retail chains, and banks. Mass tourism, by trying to standardize the experience of travelers, dilutes authentic local urban character.

Conversely, typology breeds more predictable and anonymous design at the middle scales of the individual building and of the street and block, but blossoms at the small and large scales. This predictability at the building and block scale is one of the key architectural phenomena that makes urban design possible. Without it, there is no way for urban designers to make meaningful and effective plans. It also encourages rich, idiosyncratic architectural detailing. The reason that a typologically driven architect is more

creative with the smaller, more private compositions of architecture—the windows, the doors, and the trim—is that they are less prescribed than the overall building configuration is by the architectural type. Precedent, repetition, and predictability are viewed as positive traits and good points of departure at the scale of the building. At the scale of the city, however, the uniformity of zoning yields to mixed-use neighborhoods and districts that can be unpredictable in the composition of the mix. As with architectural details and elements, the city becomes a rich hierarchical array of architectural types, streets, and public spaces, while the individual building becomes better behaved, that is, less autonomous and egotistical. And when the architectural and urban typologies are rooted in the region, the neighborhood, the city, and the metropolitan region are all better able to resist standardization and universalization.

A question of hierarchy

If Modernism bleached variety out of architectural detailing and neighborhood, Postmodernism artificially restored it. It started dressing a single architectural type in different garbs, often trying to pump up the importance of a building or trying to be contextual where there was no distinctive context. This dress code often inflated the visual importance of a building beyond its programmatic importance in the city or townscape, adding further confusion to the built environment. Like signing an unimportant document with a grand flourish, it overembellished everyday buildings. Indeed, architects were hired to put their signatures on mundane, commercial buildings. Postmodernism overreacted to functionalism. To quote Leon Krier:

Whatever the pretensions of its forms, a super-market is no less or more significant, whether wrapped in architectural, nautical or commercial dressing. Its very typological and social status will forever prevent it from becoming culturally significant. The reverse is also true: however beautiful and dignified an historical city center may be, it cannot survive for long its transformation into a