

Edmund Bacon—will ever come our way again. We will have to find means of operating with the tools we have.

Over the years, I have proposed, to the circus horse riders, sailors, and stool straddlers—my metaphorical protagonists in the practice of urban design—various measures to reduce inequity and enhance creativity in the guidance of urban development. From that longer list, two relate to what I have said here:

[Guidelines] should be evocative rather than prescriptive and should open opportunity and induce enthusiasm rather than constrict and smother. Guidelines should suggest by nuance not mandate by fiat. They should convey mental images through words and drawings. The painting of word pictures requires allusive, poetic writing. Drawings should not look like architectural drawings; they should be sketchier, freer, able to be filled out by the imagination of others. Nevertheless, urban design drawings should distinguish clearly between a stated intention, a predicted reaction to a city-initiated intervention, and a vision. In addition to depicting the desired general character of an area, guidelines must show what the city provides or requires and must suggest the likely private sector reaction to what is provided or required. The need to show both action and reaction implies a level of kineticism in urban design mapping and sketching and demands the ability to describe predicted reactions without designing specific, individual buildings—no mean feat.³⁷

For architects, when there is no chance to control, perhaps other philosophies must prevail: “To achieve more than pyrrhic victories, architects must learn what can be controlled, and how, creatively, to let go of some of what they can’t control and to share the power. . . . By understanding well both the rules and the roles, the sailor may occasionally turn surfer, ride the waves as they break, find within the polity a driving force, perhaps temporary and fragile, that will let things be done along the lines of what’s logical (my planner alter ego asks, “Whose logic?”) despite the thousands around to help—good luck, Daniel and Nina Libeskind.”³⁸

Urban Design Education Today

In 1956 there were prospects for real improvements in urban design and planning education and discussion of what these might constitute. In the 1960s they came to flower within the planning departments of