

ten meters and a floor area ratio of just 150 percent. This combination of conditions is rare in a Japanese metropolis. By chance, a set of conditions existed that made possible a dignified, low-rise townscape. The owners of the property were an old family of landowners. Instances of someone owning such a large, integrated parcel of land in a residential district along a public street in Tokyo are rare. The development took place over twenty-five years because the owners were short of capital. However, this proved an advantage, enabling the client and the architect to adapt at each stage to the rapidly changing environment and lifestyle of Tokyo and to offer fresh designs, both programmatically and architecturally. If this development had been undertaken by interests with deeper pockets, such a slow pace of construction would not have occurred. Nor would the resulting townscape have reflected the gradual passing of time, as it does now, even if the project had been left to the same architect. There may have been other factors and fortuitous circumstances contributing to Hillside Terrace's success, but the two conditions mentioned were unique to this project and have never been duplicated since. This demonstrates that the framework for urban design in metropolitan Tokyo is enormously varied and that urban design as a skill requires commensurate precision and delicacy as well as a great deal of sheer luck.

In recent years, large business interests have been undertaking re-development projects, spurred in part by economic recovery. There is, for example, the 2003 Roppongi Hills, an office, residential, and commercial complex built over seventeen years in the middle of Tokyo. In contrast to the sense of repose offered by Hillside Terrace, Roppongi Hills and similar large aggregate projects generate a new and vibrant urban energy. Supported by a favorable location and the support of the aforementioned infrastructure, Roppongi Hills has been enormously popular, drawing *twenty-five million* visitors in its first four months. If we consider that only twenty-five of the UN's member nations have a population of twenty-five million, these new centers are like Disneyland in their ability to draw such huge numbers in such a short time.

What Is Urban Design?

Using Tokyo as an example, I have pointed out the uniqueness of metropolises; each has special conditions and contexts on the microscale and relationships to regional, national, and global phenomena on the