



Embarcadero area, San Francisco, California, 1978. The Embarcadero Freeway was demolished in 1991. Photograph by Boris Dramov. Courtesy of Roma Design Group.

The 1956 conference sponsors were right to define urban design as a collaborative process but less right to define it as a collaborative process among architects, planners, and landscape architects. What are the roles of the engineer, the real-estate investor, and the elected public official? And what about the public itself? Jane Jacobs was present at Harvard in 1956 and had some cogent criticisms of the kinds of abstract, geometric urban designs, mostly urban renewal proposals, that were on exhibit and that illustrate the report on the conference. Interestingly, Lewis Mumford, who was to have a sharp public quarrel with Jane Jacobs when her critique of planning and urban renewal *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* was published five years later, agreed with her completely at Harvard: “If this conference does nothing else, it can at least [lead its participants to] go home and report on the absolute folly of creating a physical structure at the price of destroying the intimate social structure of a community’s life.”²

What Is the Designed City, Who Wants to Make It Happen, and Who Designs It?

Today most urban design professionals would say that a well-designed city has three components: first, it conserves the natural environment and is responsive to it; second, it creates a desirable public realm that