

*much* more judgment, period—into a standard zoning ordinance, and especially into the permitting and evaluative process. Restrictions on height or massing that in pioneering zoning codes (such as New York’s own landmark 1916 code) were ostensibly determined through measurable criteria, such as access to sunlight, could now be introduced as commonly held good form-based values. The mandating of continuous block-length cornice heights, for example, gained the status of a lot-coverage restriction, though the former could not as easily be considered a matter of “health, safety and public welfare” as the latter.

But why shouldn’t public policy as it pertains to the settled environment not aspire to quality and even beauty? More recently, a New York disciple of Barnett, Michael Kwartler, expressed this via the poetic notion of “regulating the good that you can’t think of,” or, one may infer, seeking to achieve through regulation *what is not* normally provided by conventional real estate practices. Since American planning is often accused of being reactive to real estate interests, interests that do not always prioritize public benefit, here would be a way to push developer-initiated projects to higher qualitative standards. So again, given the presumption that what constitutes good urban form (or desirable uses, or amenities such as ground-level retail, or open space) can be agreed upon by a community, these should be legislated. And the natural champions for this are those individuals identified as urban designers. The appeal behind this interpretation of urban design is twofold. It maintains lofty ideals by arguing on behalf of codifiable design qualities, while operating at the pragmatic level of the real estate industry, facilitating better development. New York’s Battery Park project is generally acknowledged as a successful example.

This may all be well and good, but such mediating and regulating are not sufficiently rewarding for those who believe that less creativity is involved in establishing guidelines for others to interpret than to design oneself. It seems too administrative and passive a role for urban design. Is not urban design about giving shape to urbanism? Is it not about:

### *The Architecture of the City*

This conception of urban design is at once more ambitious yet narrower than the idea of urban design as public policy. The roots of this view may be traced earlier in the twentieth century to the American City Beautiful movement, and further into the nineteenth century to