

ourselves place-makers before or have been so self-conscious about the task. Economists often remind society that it is the *rare* commodity that gains value over time. As more contemporary urban development acquires generic qualities or is merely repetitive, the distinctive urban place, old or new, is harder to find. This alone will continue to fuel preservation movements across the urban world. But in a world that adds sixty million people to urban populations each year, preservation and restoration cannot be the answers to place-making. More urban designers should devote their attention to making new places as worthy as those made by their time-honored predecessors. Again, it is the American New Urbanists who have articulated this goal most clearly but with mixed results. Their rhetoric extols intimate scale, texture, the mixing of uses, connectivity, continuity, the privileging of what is shared, and other such characteristics of great urban places, but their designs tend to employ familiar old forms and traditional aesthetic detailing that usually seem forced and phony, out of key with how we now live.

The obvious merits of preserving venerable old urban places or the wisdom of treading lightly in the midst of historic districts aside, doubts remain about how successfully we might organize and clothe the complexities of modern life in traditional iconography. What if



Three consecutive generations of housing, Shanghai, China. Courtesy of Alex Krieger.