aesthetics literature and also in architectural circles, where aesthetics and expression continue to dominate much of the discourse.

Chapter 4 is **Ernest Sternberg's** 'An integrative theory of urban design', originally published in the *Journal of the American Planning Association* in 2000. Through a complex and sophisticated argument, Sternberg also provides an extremely valuable commentary on the classic urban design canon. By synthesising and extending the key content of those works, he argues that the ideas informing urban design usually coalesce around contending approaches, each associated with one or two leading writers. These principles include 'urban form' (Camillo Sitte), 'legibility' (Kevin Lynch), 'vitality' (Jane Jacobs) and 'meaning' (Christian Norberg-Schulz). Sternberg argues that, by implicitly acknowledging the 'non-commodifiability' of the human experience across property boundaries, the approaches share an intellectual foundation: '…*the view that good design seeks to reintegrate the human experience of urban form in the face of real estate markets that would treat land and buildings as discrete commodities.*' He then proposes that urban design's primary role is to reassert the 'cohesiveness of the urban experience' and identifies integrative principles by which urban environments can transcend commodification. This is a view of urban design as a process of joining-up – joining up a fragmented set of built environment professions and professionals; joining up a fragmented set of development processes; and joining up (or healing) fragmented environments (see Loukaitou-Sideris, 1996; Carmona, *et al.*, 2003: 14–15). Sternberg concludes by arguing that, without conscious concern for urban design as a process of restoring or giving qualities of coherence and continuity to individual, often inward-focused developments (i.e. ensuring that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts), the issue of overall quality will inevitably be neglected.

Chapter 5 is **Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris and Tridib Banerjee's** 'Postmodern urban form', originally published in their 1998 book *Urban Design Downtown: Poetics and Politics of Form* (University of California Press, Berkeley). Complementing Jarvis's paper, Loukaitou-Sideris's paper highlights the changing nature of urban design practice – and, indeed, urban design generally – over the past 30–35 years through examples of plans in San Francisco and Los Angeles. This chapter reminds us that, in addition to traditions of thought and principles that spring from them, urban design involves a set of processes constituting a practice of urban design. It therefore provides a useful complement to Sternberg's contribution, reminding us that despite the 'integrative' aspirations of many theorists, the theory and practice of urban design and urban development generally in the contemporary age is often characterised by fraction, fragmentation, segregation and division.

The sixth and final chapter is **R. Varkki George's** 'A procedural explanation for contemporary urban design', originally published in the *Journal of Urban Design* in 1997. Its chief value lies in shaping (and developing) our understanding of the activity of urban designers. The chapter presents, in simple terms, a convincing argument that urban design is essentially a 'second-order' design activity (i.e. urban designers 'design' the decision-making environment of other development actors). The chapter first reviews what have been regarded in the literature and in practice as the 'tactics' used by contemporary urban designers. A case is then made for why the term *second-order design* is a good explanation for these tactics. The essence of the argument is that urban design articulates the way that the components of the urban environment are to be put together, but without itself designing those components in detail. Detailed design is the task of architects, highways engineers, landscape architects, etc. Rather than imbuing the creative task of designing urban places in the hands of a single 'all-knowing' designer, the argument assumes that it is shared among a range of actors. It also recognises that urban designers typically work within a context of multiple clients often with conflicting interests and objectives, developing as a consequence multiple solutions to a problem, rather than a single solution (see also discussions of the role of the urban designer within the development team in Section Eight).

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