

Buildings and their context also change from the moment a job is said to be have been completed. The climate and patterns of use – indeed sometimes love – take their toll so projects need to be renovated or demolished. Two of the schemes described here – Pruitt-Igoe in St Louis and Paternoster Square were demolished largely because what is now perceived to have been the wrong paradigm was employed as the basis of their designs. Paternoster Square has since been rebuilt. The first of these projects is described in Chapter 7 and the second in Chapter 8.

In Chapter 2, I described four types of urban design – total, all-of-a-piece, piece-by-piece and plug-in – based on the way a vision for a city or precinct is implemented. A brief recapitulation is in place here to set the framework for this part of the book. The term ‘total urban design’ implies that the whole scheme is carried out under one auspice and by one hand even if it is a communal hand. Examples are described in Chapter 7. ‘All-of-a-piece urban design’ is the type described in the statement by Lord Llewellyn-Davies that opens Chapter 1 of this book. It involves creating a vision for a city or one of its precincts and capturing that image in a conceptual design. The conceptual design is then divided into parcels of land each of which is developed and designed by different people in accordance with a set of design guidelines, or directives. A number of such projects are presented in ‘Chapter 8: All-of-a-piece urban design’. The two chapters also cover a wide variety of product types that employ a wide variety of paradigmatic approaches. The processes and products described in Chapters 7 and 8 were the traditional core of urban design work.

Saying that ‘piece-by-piece urban design’ falls within the core of urban design endeavour is more controversial because it does not involve specific physical design projects but rather the design of policies that promote the development of certain building and urban types within specific precincts, of a city. Piece-by-piece urban design involves the use of zoning and other planning instruments to achieve urban outcomes without using site-specific design guidelines or directives. The procedures employed are described in Chapter 9.

The fourth type of urban design that falls within the core of urban design is plug-in urban design. It does deal with specific design projects. It focuses primarily but not entirely, on the design of links between places. Infrastructure elements can also include facilities such as schools, libraries and other public services. The public policy concern is with their catalytic effect. Infrastructure design as urban design is discussed in Chapter 10. Much infrastructure design, however, falls outside the realm of direct urban design interests and is either city planning or civil engineering. It could be argued that the concerns of civil engineering, as much as the other environmental design disciplines, can overlap those of urban design. That discussion is dealt with briefly in ‘Chapter 12: Afterthoughts: Urban design – field or discipline and profession?’.