



Jerde Partnership, The Gateway (Rio Grande looking north), Salt Lake City, Utah, 2001. Photograph by Michael McRae. Courtesy of Jerde Partnership.

revolves around old-fashioned forms of bourgeois decorum and the deployment of a limited set of signifiers of sustainability. Over the past twenty-five years many American cities have seen dramatic—if restricted—transformations in form and habit, and virtually no town of any size now seems to lack zones replete with sidewalk cafés, street trees and furnishings, contextually scaled architectures, artistic shop fronts, loft living, bike paths, and other attractive elements from the urban design pattern book. This collusion of pleasant infrastructures has, in fact, emerged as the salient professional measure of urban quality.

I had the opportunity, not long ago, to look over plans for a major extension to the core of Calgary, a succinct encapsulation of the progress of urban design since Battery Park City. The plan had many fine features, including light-rail, mixed-use buildings, variegated scale, attention to solar orientation, a well-manicured streetscape with a wealth of prescribed detail and a strong rhetoric of urbanity. But the net effect was formidably dull, and its gridiron plan and fastidious coding insufficiently responsive to the possibility of exception, a fore-