

closure visible in the plan's unnuanced response to the very divergent conditions around it (river, park, rail yard, and downtown core), in its limited ability to accommodate architectures (such as a proposed university complex) that might be sources of creative disruption, and in its standard-issue pattern book of formal moves, from its little plazas to its proscriptions on nonconforming signage. The image of the plan conveyed in a series of winsome renderings was a perfect rendition of urban design's certifying palette of amenities—the wee shops and artistic signage, the Georgian squares, the bowered streets—all depicted in an apparently perpetual summer.

The Calgary plan was Starbucks urbanism, a suitable home for forms and traditions already translated into generic versions of themselves. With its derivation from the idea of the isolated district in its descent from the tabula rasa of urban renewal through the special districting and BIDs that succeeded it, the plan was more inflected by ideology than by place, by urban design's Platonic city form, increasingly identified with the Seattle/Portland/Vancouver prototype. Of course, these are cities that have achieved many successes, and as a default for urbanism, one could surely choose a lot worse. The issue is not the many good formal ideas embodied in the urban design—or the New Urbanist—paradigm but rather in their roles in dumbing urbanism down to create a culture of generic urban “niceness” intolerant of disorder or exception, in stifling the continued transformation and elaboration of urban morphologies under the influence of new technical, social, conceptual, and formal developments, and in disallowing the influence of communities of difference. Urban design and the New Urbanism are the house styles of gentrification, urban renewal with a human face.

The problem with this is not with the pursuit of the subtle visualities and comfortable infrastructures of humanely dimensioned neighborhoods, it is rather with gentrification's parasitic economy, feeding on the homes of the poor, on precisely the order of mix central to the arguments of Jane Jacobs. Today's dominant urban design is all lifestyle and no heart, and has nothing to say to the planet's immiserated majority, whether Americans victimized by our obscenely widening income gap or the billion and half people housed in the part of the world's cities undergoing the most explosive growth: slums. Modernist urbanism, for all its ultimate failings, was the extension of social movements for the reform of the squalid inequalities of the urbanism of the nineteenth century, and the clear subject of its address was