to form, since Mumford was a tireless crusader for the Garden City, a clear precursor to New Urbanism. Mumford aside, Sorkin maintains that if the translation has any hint of nineteenth-century formalism, all social value evaporates. Oppressively "boring" universalisms like sidewalks, uniform frontages, and narrow streets can be viewed only as simplistic niceness and therefore contemptible.

In contrast, the theme emerging from the discussion in "Urban Design Now" is that urban design must be forever constrained. There are to be no visions, canons, or principles, and no overt social agendas. Progressiveness can only be procedural. There was no mention, no single concrete idea about how to promote social justice through urban design. Without this crucial connection, urban design boils down to the aesthetic sensibilities of the individual designer or of whomever the designer thinks should be listened to—the oppressed, the misunderstood, or the politically useful.

Architects are right to be cautious about social agendas. The application of urban design to social justice has often gone badly, as many have pointed out for decades. Garden cities became garden suburbs, and garden suburbs became sprawl and separation. The failure of CIAM's (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne's) literal-minded articulation of equality in built form is now painfully obvious. By the 1950s, it was the planners who failed to see the forest for the trees, sometimes doing the most dastardly things in the name of social equality. Clearly, this was urban design in its adolescent phase—arrogant, bullying, risk oblivious.

But conservative, strict parent architects never allowed urban design to learn from its mistakes and have another go. There was to be no more application of social principle to design outcome. Social goals could only be invoked through the safety of a platitude or the detachment of a benevolent process. This pulled the rug out from urban design movements like the New Urbanism, which tried to realize social objectives concretely. Without a legitimate social basis, naturally the idea behind New Urbanism looks thin. Leave it hanging on "walkability" devoid of social purpose, and it is an easy target. Just a bunch of silly little sidewalks and civic squares.

New Urbanists still believe that urban design has a legitimate role to play in the achievement of social goals. The support of neighborhood diversity is one example. Design can help make diversity viable in many different ways: by showing how multi-family units can be accommodated in single-family blocks, by designing links between