

Michael Hough in *City Form and Natural Process* (1984). Their ideas opened possibilities for a new way of thinking beyond conventional mitigation of impacts on nature to one based on new possibilities for creative synthesis working *with* natural process and on the acknowledgment that humans are part of nature and that to some extent nature everywhere on the planet has become a built environment deeply altered by human interaction with it.

As the imperative to modify our self-destructive practices begins to suggest forms of development inherently more environmentally sustainable, cities (now our dominant place of living) are the crucibles where solutions are found to problems that are otherwise intractable. The environmental thrust is gaining traction and broad popular appeal as a common ground that cuts across class, cultural, and political lines and is rapidly pushing urban design into new areas of investigation. In ways both superficial and profound, this desire for greener solutions is giving birth to lower-impact lifestyles and new design approaches for city districts as well as individual buildings and landscapes. It augurs a greater mix and proximity of daily life activities—living, working, shopping, culture, recreation, and leisure—increased walkability, cycling, and transit and less car dependency; lower energy consumption and alternative energy sources; improved waste management and treatment; and new approaches to storm- and wastewater management.

This seismic shift in goals and priorities is also producing a cultural predisposition to a new form of coexistence, the intertwining of city and nature in a new sense of place. Renewed places reflecting these approaches will be more rooted and specific, with the underlying layers of natural setting revealed and better appreciated. In the words of Betsy Barlow Rogers, the former executive director of the Central Park Conservancy, “As the city becomes more park-like, the park becomes more city-like.”

A number of extremely powerful corollaries to this increased environmental and ecological consciousness exist. A better understanding of the complexities of succession and interdependence in nature can be linked directly to a greater awareness of the dynamic and evolving character of sustainable cities and to diverse and evolving environments with greater mix and complexity of land use and a broader demographic of people served by full life-cycle housing options. A second and related corollary is that the need to cope with