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All-of-a-piece urban design

To many observers, organizing urban design projects to be carried out building-by-building, and landscape-by-landscape by a number of developers according to an overall conceptual design is *the* core of urban design work. Many architects see all-of-a-piece urban design as inferior to total urban design because it is less a work of individual art. They believe projects would be better if dreamt of and designed by one hand as in Le Corbusier's design for the capital complex in Chandigarh or Oscar Niemeyer's work in Brasília. Others, however, believe that it is only through all-of-a-piece urban design that both a unity and variety can be captured in large project design today.

Procedurally, all all-of-a-piece designs are similar following approximately the structure shown in Figure 2.6. The degree of control over what is to be designed, however, varies considerably from highly controlled designs to those in which considerable freedom of action is given to the developers and designers of the various components of a scheme. The products of all-of-a-piece urban design run the gamut of design types: new towns, new precincts and urban renewal schemes. Few all-of-a-piece urban designs are as 'theatrical' as many total urban designs although Haussmann did very well in Paris! Their focus of attention depends on the nature of a culture and the nature of the priorities established by the stakeholders concerned. Each of the schemes described in this chapter focuses on some of the functions of the built environment identified in Figure 1.6 more than others. In each a number of concerns arise that are not characteristic of total urban design.

The source of funding is always a concern but a special set of issues arises with all-of-a-piece urban design in capitalist countries. How are the pieces going to be implemented? Is the infrastructure to be built by the public sector? Or by the developer of the overall project? Or by the developers of individual sites? Is the public sector to subsidize the work? Who is to oversee the development? Some public authorities or a private developer? All-of-a-piece urban designs vary considerably in dealing with all the concerns implicit in these questions.

The second issue deals with a series of design questions about the conceptual design or master plan. Are there some buildings that are to be regarded as foreground buildings and others as background? What is to be the degree of design