



Cooper Eckstut Associates, architect, master plan for Battery Park City, New York City, 1979.

the preoccupations of architects, it is important to outline because of what it now means for urban design and architecture.

The renewed focus on the city in the late 1970s and early 1980s was predicated on the spatial and morphological virtues of the traditional city. This was conditioned as much by the legibility of certain urban morphologies and patterns in the traditional city as by the Nolli map/figure-ground obsessions of Rowe and his followers. In fact, the birth of contemporary urban design as a professional discipline might be pinpointed to the mid-1980s, when architects like Jaquelin Robertson and Alex Cooper practiced urban design using the figure-ground and urban poche techniques of Rowe and the Kriers. Within this conception of urbanism and urban design, the open spaces of the city, including streets, squares, and parks, are conceptualized as spatial figures “carved” out of the poche of building mass. This framework