

of affordable housing as part of any large development project, have helped ameliorate the situation. Similar policies need to be adopted for retail to provide space for small-scale, entrepreneurial retail businesses often run by immigrants. Regulations that require a certain percentage of microretail could balance the natural tendency for large chains in large developments. The building footprint dimensions are again much of the problem, yielding an ungainly depth for uses along active street fronts. Only the urban versions of America's big-box retailers can fill the big leasable voids, meet the lease rates projected in the pro forma, and meet the Class A expectations of the developers.

So how do four recent and ongoing master-planning efforts of a similar scope and scale offer specific opportunities for alternative design approaches that may redress some of the aesthetic and social shortcomings for prevalent urban design strategy?

### **Queens West and the Olympic Village, New York City: Big Architecture Is Not the Answer**

An offspring of Battery Park City in business and political structure and design, if not in successful implementation, is the 1993 plan for Queens West in Long Island City. Its master plan, by Beyer Blinder Belle with Gruzen Samton, is almost identical in size, design guidelines, scope, and plan language to the one for Battery Park City. To date, several development projects have been constructed or are in the planning stages, but given the relatively remote location of Queens West, the completed projects are inward-looking residential enclaves. In anticipation of the selection process for the 2012 Olympics, a competition was organized for an Olympic Village in the southern and undeveloped sector of the master plan. Thom Mayne emerged as winner, after which he developed the proposal in more detail. To many, including Alexander Garvin (former managing director of planning for the New York City 2012 Olympic bid, and former vice president for planning, design, and development at the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation), Mayne's proposal serves as a potential counterexample and antidote to the by-now staid design of the original Queens West projects.<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, uninspiring architecture (and not the design of the framework plan) was seen as the problem with Queens West, and aggressive architecture as the solution. Another recent example of a single-author architectural pro-