

Most case studies in urban design consider a designed product from the actor's (the creator's) point of view. Case studies courses offered in universities consist of designers explaining what they did and, ideally, why. In doing so they tend to miss describing the dynamics of the design/decision-making process. They focus on the form, the architecture. The emphasis in developing case studies needs to be placed on drawing from the observations, secondary though they may be, of those outside the process looking critically in on them. The designers' voices need to be heard but placed into context. There have been a number of case studies of urban design work that do this.

Martin Millsbaugh (1964) wrote a critical study on Charles Center, Baltimore, Leonard Ruchleman (1977) studied the dynamic political and design processes that brought about the building of the late World Trade Center in New York, Alan Balfour (1978) described the various machinations involved in building the Rockefeller Center, and David Gordon (1997) has written on the history of the ups and downs in the development of Battery Park City. There are also extensive statements on La Défense and on Canary Wharf, already volumes on the barely initiated World Trade Center site development. Scattered references to many aspects of the urban development and design processes appear in the architectural and planning literature. This book draws, unashamedly, on existing commentaries. An attempt has, however, been made to triangulate information by studying diverse, often contradictory, data sources, conducting interviews and by carrying out field observations.

### ***The Selection of the Case Studies***

The case studies included here are typical examples of different approaches to, and concerns of, urban design. They could have been drawn from one major city that has been self-consciously interested in the quality of its built form over the past 50 years or even those whose citizens have been less interested in or have not known how to deal effectively with physical design issues. The projects instead are a selected sample of what has been happening around the world.

With two exceptions, Rockefeller Center in New York and Riverwalk in San Antonio, the sample has been chosen from those projects carried out since the term 'urban design' came into use in the 1950s. They are not necessarily the best known, the most successful or the most notorious projects. They have been chosen to illuminate particular points in order to enhance our understanding. As urban designs often take a considerable period to evolve from initial idea to built form, a number of the cases covered have their origins in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Others, however, were initiated much more recently and have moved ahead rapidly. They were begun and completed during the late 1990s and early 2000s.