

still concerned with the spatial and formal aspects of city making, one not yet in need of the nascent supradisciplinary formation called urban design. The project's spatial organization was based on Hilberseimer's proto-ecological planning constructs in *The New Regional Pattern*. This publication articulated a new spatial order commensurate with the economic, ecological, and social conditions of North American urbanism.

Hilberseimer's proposal called for an ecologically progressive, socially engaged, yet culturally leavened practice of city building in which landscape afforded the medium of urban order for the coming decentralization of U.S. cities. Lafayette Park represents Hilberseimer's only built planning project and illustrates an alternative history in which landscape emerges as the primary determinate of urban order. Hilberseimer's plan and its explicit vision of a mixed-race, mixed-class future for the American city replaced the plan previously executed by a team including Hideo Sasaki and Victor Gruen, two participants in the Harvard urban design conferences.

The concurrent historical alignment of these two contrasting events affords a potential alternative history for what came to be urban design. This is true even if we do not recall that Mies was approached about the leadership of architecture at Harvard prior to the appointment of Gropius. The history of urban design as recounted here would be a very different one had Mies and Hilberseimer chosen to spend their academic exile in Cambridge instead of on the south side of Chicago . . . but I digress.

Of course, all these histories—the authorized one published here, my brief counter-history, and all the potential unwritten alternatives—have everything to do with positioning urban design in the current debates. The histories collected in this book and the contemporary positions they imply are, in and of themselves, sufficient evidence of urban design's persistent and enduring relevance. This is equally attested to in the production of such a robust and well-capitalized *Festschrift* for the field on the occasion of its semicentennial. A careful reading of the various contributions here would suggest at a minimum that the discourse around urban design at fifty conflates at least three potentially distinct subject matters.

First are those accounts and arguments describing the city as an object of empirical observation and historical inquiry. This includes the construction of contemporary accounts of urbanization as well as various urban histories. Here Peter Rowe's approach to urban design—