

within schools of design has been an important and long overdue correction, it has the potential to overcompensate. The danger here is not that design will be swamped with literate and topical scholarship on cities, but that planning programs and their faculties run the risk of reconstructing themselves as insular enterprises concerned with public policy and urban jurisprudence to the exclusion of design and contemporary culture.

The most immediate and problematic dimension of this historical overcorrection has been an antagonism between design culture and public process as a surrogate for the construction of a more legitimately social position within urban planning or the design fields. In lieu of endless public consultation as a form of Postmodern urban therapy, I would argue for a reconsideration of the broad middle-class mandate of midcentury Modernism. While a recuperation of Hilberseimer or other protagonists in Modernist urbanism is not without its challenges, the potential benefit is a precedent for an ecologically informed and socially activist practice reconcilable with high-status design culture. The very fact that Hilberseimer built precisely one planning project in his career is testament to the difficulty of this model but equally points to its viability and efficacy. As we have collectively abandoned Modernist urbanism, we have lost access to the only brief moment in American history in which socially progressive, ecologically informed planning practice was available.

This brings me back to Lafayette Park and that other '56, the year which evidenced the best-laid plans of the New Deal and the American welfare state. Among the successes of Lafayette Park was that it could imagine a mixed-class, mixed-race future for American cities precisely at the moment that most Americans were beginning to leave the city in favor of the suburbs. Ultimately, this is the promise, as yet unfulfilled, of urban design as described in 1956. If it were to recommit its resources to the historically informed, empirical description of urban form and its epiphenomena, urban design would find ample evidence in the way that most Americans live and work.

Much of what constitutes urban design culture is produced in a thin band of urban density between Philadelphia and Cambridge, while most Americans live in suburban settings of decreasing density across flyover country. The centrality of this dilemma for contemporary reconsideration of urban design is attested to by the no less than three competing and occasionally contradictory book reviews of Robert Bruegmann's controversial *Sprawl: A Compact History* that appear