

downtown Los Angeles demonstrate this point. At Playa Vista, the planning efforts of New Urbanism's elite, millions of dollars of planning expenditures, and city regulation that sought to codify master plan intentions have culminated in the creation of a "town within a town" as well as the restoration of one of the last wetlands along the regional coastline. On paper this result bespeaks success, yet it was not developers or planners but citizen opponents who worked their way through a twenty-year public review process and lawsuits to finally encourage the state to intervene, purchase the signature feature of the development—a park constituting half the site—and force the restoration of both fresh and saltwater marshes. In exchange for the wetlands park, the developers received the right to build the project but also acquiesced to reduce their build-out from the originally proposed 13,000 housing units and millions of square feet of commercial space to 5,800 units as well as less commercial space.⁴

Meanwhile in downtown Los Angeles—an environment full of never completed, if not quite foiled, urban renewal projects—tweaks of the building code relieving parking and fire requirements that were long demanded by organized preservation groups and development interests helped usher in the adaptive reuse of dozens of older and historic buildings. With the changes in regulation, a 10,000-unit building-by-building residential rehabilitation boom occurred within the confines of the central city. Dwarfing Playa Vista, this boom at first glance seems an unmitigated planning success. Yet, like Playa Vista, this most recent downtown historic building renaissance involved twenty years of hard work and endless conversations, dialogues with developers and property owners, occasional lawsuits by preservationists, and the input of politicians and public officials who believed that the premises of downtown redevelopment focused too heavily on the new. And despite this success that utilizes an incremental approach spurred by a discursive process, planning proceeds on two old-school mega-redevelopment projects. One of these projects is adjacent to Disney Hall, the other integrated with the downtown sports arena, Staples Center. Both will reportedly feature internally oriented "experiences." Given that these two developments will be constrained by the voice of the recently formed Downtown Neighborhood Council, a relationship to context will likely be grafted, if not forced upon, both enterprises. The most likely end result for these two projects will be a hybrid, neither this nor that, and thereby consistent with the larger emerging Los Angeles urban landscape.