

sign. The students take several urban theory courses and a yearlong urban design studio with the idealized (and occasionally achieved) objective of creating a special synergy that will make their individual backgrounds indistinguishable upon graduation.

One of the strengths of the Cities Programme is the degree of interaction it has stimulated among all the spatial disciplines. The degree program in City Design and Social Science is administered by the Department of Sociology, and close ties exist with several programs in Geography, including City, Space, and Society; Regional and Urban Planning; and Urban Development. I can think of no major university in the United States where all the spatial disciplines are so effectively intertwined or where architecture and urban design students have such close ties with geographers, planners, and a range of urban social scientists. One of the most striking effects of this interaction has been the way specific design projects are put into context, linking project sites not just to their immediate surroundings but also to broader developments in the urban region, national politics and policy, and questions of distributional equity and social inclusion. I cannot help but think that if urban design is to recapture some of the ecumenical spirit and creative vision it had fifty years ago, it needs to position itself in an environment that encourages significant interaction and synergy among all the spatial disciplines.

Metropolitan Transformations and the Actual New Urbanism

The startling metamorphosis of the modern metropolis that followed in the wake of the 1960s urban crises caught the city-building professions and the broader academic field of urban studies by surprise. Even well into the 1980s, traditional theories and practices of urban development persisted despite their growing disconnection to what was happening to cities worldwide. When the new urban worlds were recognized, their incomprehensibility, at least when seen from older ways of looking at the city, led many to proclaim the end of urbanism. New terms multiplied to mourn the death of the city as we knew it: *transurbanism*, *city lite*, *chaos city*, *posturbanism*. It is from this theoretical vacuum and professional confusion that New Urbanism boldly consolidated its support and appeal, presenting to the world a way out of the incomprehensible chaos of the present through a comforting retreat to an idealized past.