

in increased scrutiny of public and private plans by local citizens and groups. Concern for local context and a rise of contextualism in the shaping of urban environments also emerged.

The second episode occurred around the end of the 1980s and into the 1990s. The demise of the Soviet Union ended competition between the two most distinctive modernizing regimes of the twentieth century decidedly in favor of the West. A concomitant unraveling of prior global financial arrangements and other accords, which had dictated the shape and flow of the world's economy for so long, gave way to increased free trade, commerce, and resource availability. The number and scope of multinational and transnational firms blossomed, and novel new instruments for financial and economic participation were perfected to multiply and exploit business opportunities in the more liberal era, including instruments more readily available to individuals.⁸ Advances in computers and information technology, particularly public access to the Internet and the World Wide Web in 1993, also made data-processing tasks possible that were previously only imaginable, and significantly increased the scope and density of communication and transaction, now in a comprehensible and ubiquitous virtual space. Further empowerment of individual experience and action was thus made possible, at least in principle if not entirely in practice. Then, too, this was a period of privatization of public functions and a significant loosening of labor relations, as well as of the emergence of many more nongovernmental organizations, each pursuing wider community-based and international quasi-public functions.⁹ Moreover, amid all these geographic and modal expansions of transactional possibilities, as well as reductions in spatial frictions, there emerged the idea of the "global city"—a node in a network of communication and productive capacity extending well beyond national borders. As command and control centers in this network, cities such as New York and London took on added importance. Agglomerations also occurred around areas fertile for high-tech industries, although there the role of sustained government interest and investment should not be overlooked. With declined national population growth rates in many places, still rising affluence, at least for some, plenty of building on hand for an even more footloose society with a wide range of lifestyle preferences—quite apart from more strongly entrenched attitudes toward conservation in their own locales—adaptive reuse of older urban structures, historic preservation, and repair and reoccupation of abandoned or underutilized sites and