

CRAWFORD: The public loves the idea of urban design as working with something physical instead of something more abstract like zoning.

SAUNDERS: Has everyone had a chance to present his or her compelling example of successful or unsuccessful urban design?

PIEPRZ: Maybe ten years ago I would have said Battery Park City—it was a breakthrough project that did a lot of things quite well. But it's getting worse and worse. So I can't think of a recent project or a place or district where urban design has been a great creative force.

MACHADO: A few years ago we had West 8's Borneo Sporenburg, and it was wonderful.

PIEPRZ: But that's just a sea of housing. Maybe it needs to mature.

KRIEGER: In the postwar period the discussion about urbanism shifted to America, and most of the Europeans were supportive of this. Europeans still seem to appreciate more of the particular new characteristics of malls or suburbia than we do. I wonder if there is a comparable shift under way now toward a new conception based on Dubai or Pudong.

PIEPRZ: The only good recent project I can think of is South Bay in San Francisco, where they built the new stadium and infill buildings. I can't tell where this area begins and where it ends. It just merges into the grids. There's a really interesting mix of things and beautiful streets with complicated geometry. A transit line is coming in, and a new university is going up. The AT&T baseball stadium is spectacular, and there's a waterfront. All this is actually more interesting than Battery Park City has ever been.

CZERNIAK: Implicit in the South Bay example is a shift from downtown infill to peripheral sites like decommissioned military bases and capped landfills, some of the largest development parcels in emerging cities. You won't find a Battery Park City example in most contemporary North America cities.

PIEPRZ: But there are also the redeveloping areas around universities. With less powerful city planning departments, universities are doing interesting planning. Look at Columbia, Penn, Yale, and Harvard.