

his personal values; but other people, with other social roles, without the interests or values which derive from an artistic training, may not share them, or if they do, may not give them the same importance. Because interpretations and values are immediately transposed to stand for the material objects they describe the kind of plurality of meaning places and features might have is not appreciated. The basis of design becomes a limited aesthetic made up of serial vision, place, content and (superficial) function.

### Roy Worskett

The influence of Cullen's writing, both in *Townscape* and in his occasional series for the *Architectural Review*, has been enormous and much British work on urban design can be related to the same visual principles.<sup>9</sup> Roy Worskett, for example, builds on Cullen's definitions to identify four 'design disciplines' as the basis for an urban design framework for conservation.<sup>10</sup> Again the emphasis is on spatial organisation and tends to exclude reference to other values in the environment. Thus, the *Town-Landscape Relationship*, even though it is intended to consider vantage points along routes of approach to a settlement to assess 'the appearance of town in its countryside setting' (p. 78), does not mention the navigational or functional values that such an appearance may have to those approaching or how such appearances might relate to the decisions the observer might have to make—getting his luggage ready or changing lanes on a motorway.

Although functional aspects of urban analysis had already been developed on a wider perceptual basis by Kevin Lynch and others, Worskett, while he recognises that this is the least objective part of the architect's work, nonetheless states that it is the architect alone who 'must get the feel of the townscape and communicate it to his colleagues' (p. 119).

### A framework for comparative evaluation

Fundamental criticism of the values and standpoints embodied in the visual tradition is rare,<sup>11</sup> and, although Sitte himself showed some concern about the suitability of places to their use, the elements and working methods of an alternative approach to the design of urban environments have not received very much attention. Recent work, most particularly that of Kevin Lynch and Christopher Alexander, develops and re-affirms the validity of a social usage

approach, which treats urban environments as social settings rather than works of three-dimensional art. The suggested framework for comparative evaluation is derived from Martin Kreiger's recent review of large-scale planning, in which he identifies three 'binds', that is, three sets of inescapable limitations of particular attitudes.<sup>12</sup>

### Kreiger's three 'binds' applied

Kreiger's first bind is a consequence of the desire for a formal, general model which will provide a scientific foundation for planning analysis and proposals; it leads, unfortunately, to the exclusion of richly described personal viewpoints both of, and within, the (planning/design) process. Recent attempts to model visual effects in urban design have also met this limitation. Either there has been an explicit exclusion of the anecdotal (in terms of a connected narrative of events and incidents in context) in preference for a mathematical calculation of quantity<sup>13</sup> or the viewpoints have remained those of a highly-trained and gifted observer of the scene.

The second bind identified by Kreiger, which also has parallels in urban design, is that of the general omission of feeling persons, and the woodenness of their introduction when they are used. An extreme example of this limitation occurs when fictional 'representative' characters or places are used to exemplify interests and processes of change in order to represent aesthetic qualities of visual interest to a lay audience or readership.<sup>14</sup>

Kreiger's third bind is the 'aesthetic from nowhere', a disembodied critical modification of past practices, which is strikingly exemplified in urban design by the recent design guides. For instance, the earliest guide rejects the recent past as 'depressingly characterless and subtopian in appearance',<sup>15</sup> and proceeds to re-establish a new visual theory with little reference to its contemporary social and economic context, to the extent that the suburb is replaced either by 'new urban' or 'new rural' styles in the 'spectrum of settlement patterns'.

Kreiger's resolutions for these binds are especially interesting as he directs attention towards a newly established group of disciplines that attempt rationally and methodically to understand and explain everyday experiences of the world—the very element missing from *Townscape*—and which can provide orientations away from formal models. Among these (p. 161) for instance, are phenomenology (which 'tries to explain how the world comes to make sense to us in terms of how it is organised and structured, and