

and abstract regulations. In making room for such interventions, orthodox economic thought may come in handy in physical planning meant only to resolve simple spillovers; however, since it still conceives of such economic failure as the aggregated result of self-interested individual actions, it does not, and inherently cannot, provide intellectual tools for guiding design. Making assumptions diametrically opposed to those of the organicists, orthodox market-failure theory, though widely thought of as a foundation of policy analysis and even planning, fails as a coherent intellectual foundation for urban design. It fails because it ignores the integrity (noncommodifiability) of the built environment (Sternberg, 1996).

Though an urban designer may, to some extent, indeed be concerned about a building's distinctly identifiable spillover effects on neighboring parcels, as by overshadowing or blocking a view, his or her greater concern is the building's broader interrelationships: with street walls, roads and avenues, neighborhood, land gradient, views, and other landscape features. The designer is concerned, furthermore, not just with neighbors observing from fixed points, but with onlookers moving by and perceiving the building from near and far, from varying angles and with respect to its various perceptible interrelationships with other structures. The building exerts its effects on beholders for whom it is one of a series of urban experiences—it is part of the experience of an urban whole. Orthodox theories of market failure do not appreciate this "organic" relationship between a building and its urban surroundings. They cannot serve as the theoretical foundation for a planning field that seeks to reintegrate built form. In contrast to schools of policy analysis built on market-failure theory, urban design requires concepts through which it can recognize and work with the cohesive interrelationships that constitute the built environment. Urban designers need to base their work on intellectual principles through which they can recognize, sustain, and reconstitute environmental integrity.

While recognizing the market forces that generate the built environment, Karl Polanyi's work establishes a theory that can inquire into environmental integrity without succumbing to the weaknesses of organicism. This is true even with regard to urban design, a subject Polanyi did not write about. It turns out that the great writers about urban design, such as Camillo Sitte, Edmund Bacon, Kevin Lynch, and Jane Jacobs, depended on an ill-formed organicism. The rest of this article argues that we can reinterpret

organicist ideas in urban design and thereby restore this important stream of thought to its rightful place at the heart of planning thought. We can do so by reformulating the problem as follows: Urban design has as its special concern the non-commodifiability of the human experience of the city.

Though the great writers about urban design are not especially known for their interest in economic questions (with the exception of Jane Jacobs), they implicitly recognize that it is the integrity of the urban experience across property boundaries that the urban designer should seek to reassert. Gordon Cullen (1961) writes, for example, that urban design is an "art of relationship" (p. 10) that seeks to weave together environmental elements like buildings, trees, landscape, and traffic. Using such elements, "we can manipulate the nuances of scale and style, of texture and colour and of character and individuality, juxtaposing them in order to create collective benefits" (p. 14). Or as Edmund Bacon (1974) puts it, "Movement through space creates continuity of experience" (p. 34). The very challenge Bacon sets down for the field of urban design is to create such "experiential continuity" (p. 294). Indeed, principal authors have long recognized that the designer should strive to integrate urban form across private property lines (on the general importance of property to planning, see Krueckeberg, 1995). These authors have often relied on concepts of the "organic" to make their point. As we shall see, however, each has emphasized a different facet—a different integrative principle—of the urban whole, whether good form, legibility, vitality, or meaning.

## Good form

In Camillo Sitte's classic work *City Planning According to Artistic Principles* (1965, first published in Vienna in 1889) and much later in Edmund Bacon's *The Design of Cities* (1974), good urban design was to be based on artistic principles of *good form*.

Responding to the 19th-century's new city building, which tried to maximize the salability of properties through abstractly rationalized land subdivision, Camillo Sitte (1965) provided one of the first book-length treatments of urban physical planning in market society. Anticipating the ideas of the next generation of planning theorists, he advocated planning because the making of public spaces had become an impersonal, mechanistic project, one that was overtaking the formerly "organic" city.