

As compared to Lynch's later works, which are theoretically more ambitious but less distinct in content, his early book firmly establishes legibility as one integrative principle underlying the urban inhabitant's experience of the city.

Moreover, in this early work Lynch (1960) makes clear that nodes, edges, etc. are of little concern in themselves. Rather, they are design elements in achieving something that the haphazard work of developers, owners, and architects individually could not achieve. These elements are crucial in the "interrelation of parts into a whole" (p. 108). The planner who uses the concepts properly "would deal with the interrelations of elements, with their perception in motion, and with the conception of the city as a total visible form" (p. 116). As formal interrelationships are a city's collective asset to Sitte and Bacon, so legibility is in Lynch's early work. It crosses property boundaries, escaping market commodification, to constitute an integral whole, a whole that can be shaped through the exercise of design intelligence.

## Vitality

Whereas Sitte, Bacon, and Lynch conceive of urban design from the perspective of the solitary beholder, Jane Jacobs is preeminent among those who have a more gregarious concept of the urbanite who partakes of city life because of its vitality. In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), one of the most lucid books in our field, Jacobs forcefully knocks down the vapid mid-century planning that artificially separates uses, creates dead vacant zones, and (as in American "urban renewal" programs) tries to renew cities through urban clearances, thereby destroying the diversity on which urban health rests.

At the heart of Jacob's argument is the idea that a bustling street life is essential to a good city, and vital streets need "a most intricate and close grained density of uses that give each other mutual support" (p. 14). She holds, moreover, that certain conditions nourish these interrelationships among uses.

Especially since her ideas are popular, it needs to be said that concepts for texturing streets to make them more vital do not by any means exhaust urban design ideas. A good city should offer not only bustling mixed use areas, but also residential areas purposefully designed for quiet streets and undisturbed home life. Density can be taken to excess,

since it can produce congestion that actually hampers a street's vitality. And a streetscape can, after all, be engaging when one is alone to experience it; a formalist like Bacon (1974) appreciates the perspectival features of, say, Brasilia, especially when there is no one else there to distract him. Just as Sitte and Bacon focus on form and Lynch's writings of 1960 stress legibility, so Jacobs, too, should be understood to have focused on one integrative principle: vitality. We can best appreciate her ideas about vitality when we do not elevate them into an all-purpose, single-minded design goal.

As do other prominent writers on urban design, Jacobs elaborates primarily on one facet of the neighborhood or street as an experiential whole—in her case the urban texturing that generates vibrant activity. In keeping with all planning thought, she stresses that the conditions that generate a good place can be shaped through public or other nonmarket guidance. And like much contemporary planning, she retains the ambivalent relationship to private markets: She recognizes that free real estate markets are essential for urban diversity, but sees that these markets operating on their own cannot effectively create the textural conditions on which vital places depend. Unhindered markets can undermine or even destroy urban vitality, replacing diverse places with exclusive uses, so that, as she puts it, planners should actively plan for diversity (Jacobs, 1961). Indeed, though a property owner may make decisions that add to density, fine grain, and permeability, that owner is one of many owners interacting through an anonymous market mechanism, a mechanism that cannot in itself generate consistent density, grain, and permeability, and may just as well undermine them with box stores, parking lot entrances, empty lots, and blank walls. Working alongside the real estate market, the planner's task is to foster textured interrelationships among many disparate properties.

## Meaning

In reaction to modernism that focused on building forms that are pure and impersonal, streets that are little more than conduits for traffic, and urban patterns replicated around the world without regard to locality and context, a new generation of thinkers has stressed still another integral facet of the city: its capacity to exhibit history, tradition, nature, nationality, or other themes that heighten meaning and solidify identity. In professional design practice, *purposeful*