

work done in the new town. It had a veto power over proposals as did the panel supervising the development of the Denver Technological Center (see Chapter 8).

Commentary

All urban designs are ultimately shaped not only by design ideas but also by public and private sector marketing decisions and sources of financing. The change in nature of urban design products since the beginning of the 1990s is due not only to changes in urban design ideologies but also to the change in capital markets. Finances for investments are being moved around internationally. Much development in the United States is financed by British and Canadian sources. Asian institutions have invested heavily in Australia, Canada and the United States. Much of the recent development in Vietnam (e.g. South Saigon) has come from Taiwan. Reliance on local sources still exists but financiers look for investment opportunities internationally and architects work internationally. Neither architects nor investment sources have shown much interest in local sensitivities (Abel, 2000; Olds, 2001). This attitude explains why so many projects (e.g. Lujiazui, Shanghai; see Chapter 8) are now financially pragmatic designs that are architecturally global in nature.

The range of mechanisms available to public officials and urban designers aiming to shape the behaviour settings and aesthetic qualities that they aim to create in specific schemes are generally universal but subject to local legal codes and precedents. The willingness of public agencies charged with protecting the public interest to do so varies from place to place too, as does the level of corruption and the willingness of government bodies and the courts to enforce laws and design guidelines. The case studies presented in this book range from those in totalitarian societies to *laissez faire* ones. Each needs to be seen within its political and social context.