

THE TRADITIONAL DESIGN PROFESSIONS, THEIR PRODUCTS AND URBAN DESIGN

PART 2

One of the reasons for there being so much confusion over the nature of urban design is that each of the traditional design professions regards the products of its own domain as urban design if they are located in cities. In addition, architects assume many urban problems can be treated as architecture, landscape architects as landscape architecture and city planners as city planning. They look at urban design through the norms of their professional products. The position taken here is that most of such professional work in urban environments is on the periphery of urban design *per se*. By stating that it is on the periphery does not mean that it is unimportant in enhancing the quality of human settlements, but that it really is part of the core work of the three professions: city planning (see Chapter 4), landscape architecture (see Chapter 5) or architecture (see Chapter 6).

The labours of these three major environmental design fields (civil engineering could easily be added to the list) involve collaborative work. City planning involves the collaboration of sociologists, economists and lawyers as well as planners in designing urban policies and programmes. Architecture involves a variety of engineers and specialists in the design of any building and landscape architecture the assistance of engineers and horticulturalists. Urban design is the field that involves all three design fields but except for some total urban designs not at the level of detail that they address. Urban design products are different and so is the process by which they are developed.

The nature of the city-planning endeavour varies considerably across the world. In a number of countries in Europe and Asia, it is very much urban design oriented. It deals not only with broad urban policies but also with precinct plans and specifications for the buildings within them. More generally in the English-speaking world, however, city-planning deals with broad policy concerns that may or may not have an impact, predicted or not, on the physical quality of cities. Much of the attention in recent years has been focused on social and economic change with policies and programmes as the products of this type of planning. Physical planning, other than in dealing with the desired distribution of land uses, has been very much neglected. The product of such city-planning work is the land-use master plan with zoning codes as the mechanism for achieving its ends. The social and economic policies developed by municipal governments do