

the cash-strapped municipality. In such circumstances even the most basic of environmental concerns – pollution, traffic problems and the degradation of the natural world – are shelved in the name of progress. Design quality is seen as a minor issue; it is perceived to be concerned only with urban cosmetics and not with life – not with behaviour settings.

Physical planning has very much focused on the distribution of land uses and transportation concerns (ideally in an interrelated manner) and, until recently, certainly with the segregation of activities so that polluting and annoying uses are kept out of residential areas. Much planning legislation began with concerns for public health and safety by insisting that buildings and neighbourhoods be designed to provide at least a minimum standard of public open space and sunlight and ventilation to habitable rooms. These concerns together with efficiency in transportation and the elimination of air and water pollution remain important in city planning and in urban design, but they are not the only matters that require attention in making good cities.

Urban design concerns within city planning reflect the state of public policies towards planned intervention in the development process. At times there are calls for more control over what is being built and how it is built and at others there are calls for less control and greater freedom for private actions. Economic conservatives see design controls as a deterrent to economic growth while socialist politicians see design quality as an elitist concern. Interestingly enough many large-scale property developers recognize both the financial benefits derived from rich, high-quality design and that purchasers are making increasingly discerning choices. Sometimes developers form their own private regulations to control the quality of the public realm created by sub-developers. They take on the quasi-public role described in Chapter 1.

In many places the public is demanding a greater role in deciding the future directions in which their cities should go. The diversity of its views has led to many architects, in particular, taking the position that all design concerns are arbitrary and subjective and that their personal beliefs are as good as those of anybody else. The development of the theoretical body of knowledge about the interaction of people and the environment has, however, led to the recognition that serious questions about goals and means can be discussed intelligently within public forums.

City Planning Public Realm Policies and Urban Design

It is the public realm policies within city planning that are often closely related to the urban design endeavour. Most such policies do not deal directly with the geometrical qualities of built form but they, nevertheless, have a direct impact on the form, liveliness or quietness, and general ambience of the places and links of a city. They deal with such matters as eliminating antisocial behaviour and providing a high-amenity level for the inhabitants and users of public spaces. These general policies may be urban-wide or targeted at specific precincts of cities. The