



REMINISCENCES

I

Looking Backward: Notes on a Cultural Episode

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IN THE MIDDLE YEARS OF THE LAST CENTURY, Jose Luis Sert summoned designers and critics to Harvard with the intention of defining a discipline to be called urban design. Records of the annual meetings show reams of tentative disquisition.¹ That no conclusions were drawn, even though the gatherings took place in the presence of the exemplary urbanism of Cambridge, signaled from the outset that empirical evidence was to be held outside the discourse.

Not until 2010, with the semicentennial proceedings commemorating Sert's quest, did it become clear that his legacy to urban design, at least in the academy, had been a consensus to avoid consensus. This clarification arrived by way of contrast, as a replacement paradigm became visible: the highly focused academic agenda called Landscape Urbanism.

Meanwhile, outside the academy, another consensus had become dominant, this one based specifically on the empirical observation of places like Cambridge. It was called the New Urbanism.²

By the end of the century, the practicing design professions had come to support the principles of the New Urbanism (by its several names) with remarkable unanimity: Americans should drive less and live more compactly because of concerns related to pollution, health, economics, social equity, and energy use.³

The particulars were still in debate, but that basic outline of the

human habitat had largely been settled. The instruments to achieve it would be based on the pedestrian shed, an urban pattern in which the basic needs of daily life are within walking distance. These would be integrated to regional and transportation patterns for access to the complete repertoire of special needs. The buildings would not be megastructures, but multiple and compatible and designed sequentially in response to evolving circumstances, under the guidance of the existing administrative protocol of codes — which would be re-written accordingly.⁴ From this model would ensue what was then known to be sustainable for both the human and the natural habitat.⁵

The New Urbanism was close to supplanting the tenacious paradigm of suburban sprawl, which had been the unintended consequence of a century's search for the "true synthesis" of the social and natural realms. The original proposition, called the Garden City, had dissipated long before — when geographic discipline was made unnecessary by the ubiquity of the automobile. But the New Urbanism, especially through Transect-based codes and LEED-ND (for Neighborhood Development), was poised to become a new standard. Rather than administering protection of nature, the new strategy would be projective, enabling an urbanism that humans needed and desired, and would therefore be loath to abandon. And it was to be market-oriented: those who could choose would not *want* to inhabit suburban sprawl.

As the Congress for the New Urbanism conceived the campaign, the effort seemed to provide enough intellectual content to support research, stimulate debate, and keep reform-minded designers well occupied: How much compactness should be expected, with development driven also by market expectations? To what extent could natural processes be accommodated without undermining human prerogatives? How could the socioeconomic segregation enabled by the automobile be reversed? Should urban growth be bounded as conceived by Howard, or channeled as proposed by McKaye? How to incorporate food production, energy sourcing, and the inevitable impoverishment into an urbanism adapted to the twenty-first century? These proposals would have to be implemented within then-current bureaucracies, through the friction of an angry and confused public, a venal political system, a development industry programmed for simplistic solutions, and — as it turned out — the opposition of the design academy.

At the turn of the century it became clear that the more intellectually compelling debate was no longer against conventional suburbia, but between the New Urbanism and Landscape Urbanism, two paradigms with differing visions of nature and society. Landscape Urbanism had managed to overcome the reflex that had kept the academy uncommitted for half a century — not by challenging Sert's discourse, but by unifying the academies against an opponent: explicitly taking on the threat of New Urbanism and proposing to “undermine its certainties, explode its limits, ridicule its preoccupations.”⁶

The New Urbanists did not initially engage the challenge. Ann Spirn's early critique in *The Granite Garden* — that there had been “a fundamental lack of understanding of how natural processes shape cities, towns and regions” — was dismissed with the facile retort that Commonwealth Avenue, which appeared on the cover of her book, could not be built following the prescriptions of the text within.⁷

In retrospect, the New Urbanists' failure to assimilate Spirn's prescient and reasonable message was a strategic blunder. Years of practice complying with mandatory federal standards had coarsened their ecological sensibility. The natural processes, which were accommodated only as required by law, had not been *polemicized*. A withering emphasis on socially determined designs for public space opened New Urbanism to the accusation that it was dismissive of nature. New Urbanists, responding to the architectural critiques of Jane Jacobs, William White, Jan Gehl, and Oscar Newman, were both socially and environmentally responsible, yet did not *appear* to be so.

For years, the emergent challenge had been overshadowed by a distracting debate over architectural style. It seemed that academic architects would not go along with a New Urbanist standard of a contextual architecture cooperating toward spatial definition. The *discipline* was seen as an intrinsic constraint on their creativity. New Urbanism had underestimated their profound discontent. Not even the spectacular success of modernist buildings within a New Urbanist discipline, of HafenCity in Hamburg (opened in 2015), could assuage the avant-garde architect's prerogative of unfettered innovation.

In strategic contrast, Landscape Urbanism sought favor within the architectural academy by providing refuge from urban *discipline*. Nature's “indeterminacy and flux”⁸ was understood to allow freely designed

buildings as freestanding objects within a landscape both buffering and unifying their individualism. A brilliantly argued and lavishly illustrated agenda to restore unconstrained form-making was on offer⁹ — in exchange for the dominant position within Sert's old Urban Design triad of architecture, urban planning, and landscape architecture, where landscape architecture had been the junior partner.

Rather than an urban fabric based on the spatial definition by buildings, landscape would be the “structuring medium.” “The look and shape of the city” was to be a matter of “open space within which buildings are set.”¹⁰ When Stan Allen stated that “designers can activate space and produce urban effects without the weighty apparatus of traditional space making,”¹¹ it was a radical proposition only against the then-consensus that a disciplined building frontage was the primary component of a successful urban outcome — and its absence a catalyst for failure.

This “critical” position forced Landscape Urbanism to discard *all* the constituent elements of the dominant paradigm, leading to a *deformation professionnelle*. With an aplomb unique to the academy, there would be an exploration of density, without reference to “traditional” models. This was simply *hors le discours*.

As Landscape Urbanists had transcended Harvard's 50 years of dithering by systematically asserting whatever positions were contrary to the New Urbanism,¹² the design syntax was backed into the categorical rejection of grids, blocks, sidewalks directly associated to building frontages, primary ground planes, standard-issue pavement, trees coinciding with paths, multiple buildings accreting to define public space, and *any* of those design techniques that could promote and reconcile the superadjacency of disparate social and functional programs.

This position was, at least, unambiguous — far from Sert's confusion of coveting the forbidden traditional city, a self-imposed distance from the exhausted CIAM, and reluctant avoidance of the glamorous but non-Harvard brand of Team 10. The one continuity with Sert was the prerogative of high design. Indeed, the exceptional quality of Landscape Urbanism's designs would long obscure the evidence that attracting free-willed pedestrians required disciplined frontages. Until it was proven otherwise by the built projects, trust would be placed in the swarms of Photoshopped pedestrians.

Given the decisive failure of *espace vague* in the last half of the twentieth

century, the belief that street frontages were dispensable required a kind of deliberate amnesia that could be effected only within a delimited academic discourse. Evidence was buried that the attempts at a non-spatial, landscaped, public realms at the earlier touchstone urbanisms of Vallingby, Stevenage, Toulouse-le-Mirail, Firminy-Vert, Don Mills, Brasilia, Pruitt-Igoe, Tyson's Corner, Columbia and Hansaviertel, without exception, had failed to support pedestrian activity at levels approaching those of the nearby corridor streets, which — unless they had been economically undermined or demolished — stood as their permanent indictment.

New Urbanists believed that walkability was the essential element that made urbanism intrinsically sustainable — and that, conveniently enough, it was also urbanism's greatest competitive advantage. Why would one choose to live in higher density if not for the *street life*? The compensation for the absence of a private yard out the back door was to be the vitality teeming out the front door. Even the omni-skeptical New York critic Michael Sorkin could not deny the delights of the spatially defined street. In his autobiographical *Twenty Minutes in Manhattan*, there was nothing but the *rue corridor* to salve his quasi-penitential apartment.¹³

The discourse of the Landscape Urbanists was unusual in excluding Manhattan, otherwise the *maison mère* of the architectural avant-garde. But...Manhattan's urbanism was a model for New Urbanism. A list of its differences from Landscape Urbanist principles would be quite long. Proportionally (height to width), Manhattan's streets were the opposite of *espace vague* and — above all — the natural and the urban were radically juxtaposed as in Central Park — and not in the least interspersed. Indeed, in those years, when a modernist object-building within Manhattan (or any other historic core) was seen to support pedestrian life, it was predictably embedded into and braced by the pre-existing urban fabric. This had been the case with the Seagram Building and Foster's Gherkin, neither of which had exterminated pedestrian activity. This was a reason that the "starchitects" increasingly *demand*ed inclusion in the historic urban areas of London, Milan, St. Petersburg, Washington, and Paris — rather than accept sites in such then-new enclaves as La Defense and Crystal City. Modernist buildings succeeded only when they were parasitic on traditional urban fabric. Among other object-buildings, they coalesced into a *strada comica*, as Rem Koolhaas eventually demonstrated with his Starchitect Collage.¹⁴

Just as CIAM (and Team 10) had done previously, Landscape Urbanists banned the *rue corridor* for ideological reasons, and the result eventually proved to be the same. Proscribed from emulating the world's stock of functioning urbanism, only the dreary social housing and suburban sprawl would have remained as the models. The disinterment of the unverifiable projects like Usonia and Hilbersheimer had necessarily to follow.

Besides, as modernist housing schemes were demolished or gentrified, the evidence of failure was fortuitously eliminated. The demolition of the Robin Hood Gardens at the turn of the century was not permitted to have the devastating effect on Landscape Urbanism that Pruitt-Igoe had on CIAM's legacy. A new justification, *environmentalism*, was brought into the avant-garde discourse for the first time, replacing the failed social commitment. The high proportion of *espace vague* became justified, not as social space: Landscape Urbanism never succeeded in conceptualizing an *integral* social agenda (see Talen: "The Social Apathy of Landscape Urbanism," *Landscape Urbanism and Its Discontents*, 2013), but as the locus of environmental mitigation through bucolic implantations. Surrogate hill and dale, prairie, woodland, and stream embalmed the residue between buildings. The result was highly appealing visually, and endowed Landscape Urbanism with the appearance of superior environmental performance.

These audacious and untested propositions were dissimulated by an attack on the New Urbanists' purported inability to deal with the realities of practice. Thus James Corner defined Landscape Urbanism as "a response to the failure of traditional urban design and planning to operate effectively in the contemporary city." The "out of control" metropolis was "not a weakness but its strength."¹⁵ A crossover vocabulary of "indeterminacy," "openness," and "flux" was developed to affirm the unwillingness to engage the American planning system, contradicting the ideal of predictable outcomes through codes and standards *because* the New Urbanists had done so. The incompleteness and temporality of nature became the "antidote to the implicit finitude" of New Urbanist planning tools, not acknowledging similarities with the successional and parametric technology of the widely used Rural-to-Urban Transect, which was the basis for the SmartCode freeware.

While the social agenda was elusive, the treatment of the "ecological" landscaping was curiously honest: there would be no pretending that the plantings were natural. Landscape Urbanism's design tropes were careful

to signal that even the layout of “native species” would be on the artificial order of a plant nursery. Naturalistic planting, when unavoidable, would be as quotation — to be framed literally and physically. Anything that might be confused with the natural was proscribed. Olmsted’s successful replicants were ignored in general and avoided in detail.

A greater difference permeates the ethos of both movements. For Landscape Urbanism the environmental crisis was not a scientific reality to be mitigated, but an incubator of metaphor. As an example, one proposal presented at a conference on Ecological Urbanism held at Harvard in 2010 involved the replacement of a street intersection in downtown Berkeley by a plug of landscape. That this intervention clipped the street grid, reducing transportation capacity and thereby density, was an externality. The concept was to provide an explicit allusion to a coastal wetland some miles distant. This was understood as a “critical” position by the cognoscenti present, but taken as effective environmentalism by the trusting elsewhere.

James Corner dismissed even McHarg’s foundational overlay maps because they attempted to impose measures. In the absence of metrics, the kind of *technical* arguments deployed by New Urbanism in favor of compact urbanism could be ignored.¹⁶ There would be no accounting for suburbia’s dismal ecological performance. Only one metric was retained for its scientific gloss: hydrology. Water filtered to the aquifer was elevated to a rhetorical position whose merits were beyond verification. Eventually hydrology came to be mandated — ironically, for those disapproving of fixed standards — by federal policy.

The perverse implications of hydrological privilege gradually became evident. Manhattan and Charleston emerged as polemical counterexamples. What would the effect be on Manhattan’s transportation network if the nearly 3,000 streams and wetlands then in pipes were to have remained “riparian corridors” as per Landscape Urbanist praxis? How much street connectivity would be interrupted, thereby severely reducing density? How many thousands of square miles of actual, functioning, wilderness would have been consumed by the dwellings, stores, and offices of the millions of consequently dispersed Manhattanites — all adding their lower-density carbon footprints to the global crisis?

But this argument failed to have an effect — as it missed the point of Landscape Urbanism. An ethical commitment — even to ecology

— could not alone provide a decisive argument within the then-current relativistic discourse — where power would be the only objective verification. Landscape Urbanism could not be successfully analyzed as a design movement, or even an environmental reform strategy. Its peculiar combination of agendas would be finally understood as a campaign to amass power.

Landscape Urbanism had enlisted the support of constituencies that the New Urbanists had either ignored, annoyed, or anathemized. Among them were: 1. The profession of Landscape Architecture, whose design concerns had been made subordinate to social determinants; 2. Environmentalists, specifically those seduced by the visual foregrounding of “nature”; 3. Academic faculty, otherwise constrained by New Urbanism’s research agenda which privileged proof over speculation; 4. Architects, who would be able to retain their prerogatives to formal innovation; 5. Infrastructure purveyors, confronting NIMBYs, eager to underwrite the high cost of visual mitigations; and 6. Unpopular suburban sprawl developers, who could be made to, literally, “look good.” These groups were strategically embraced by Landscape Urbanism.

First among these constituencies were the architects, to whom Landscape Urbanism offered a reprieve. They rediscovered that interspersed “nature” could provide the visual shock absorber between the mutually destructive shapes of their buildings. The New Urbanist proposition had required a collective discipline and a formal cooperation. Architects could retain the prerogatives of untrammelled formalism in exchange for ceding urban design to the Landscape Urbanists. This finally slipped the Beaux-Arts assumption that architecture was the master art. Furthermore, there was something to be gained by aligning with an agenda that was exclusively ecological — there would be no further need to sustain the tiresome CIAM/New Urbanist commitment to social equity.

In symbiotic relationship, architects supported the “ecological projection” of Landscape Urbanism by evolving a formal repertoire that provided an “urban” metaphor equivalent to the “natural” one. There was a *look* that identified the corresponding architecture: the quality of the carefully *random* — from arbitrarily complicated repertoire of materials and a diverse massing to a laborious misalignment of details such as walls, columns, openings, and mullions. This architectural syntax, which had previously emerged to express the uncertainty inherent in the

relativist discourse, was re-framed as a surrogate for the complexity of urbanism. The visual multiplicity provided camouflage for what were in fact functionally homogenous buildings. The “critical” method privileged appearance as the expression of intention — and so representation trumped the evidence of an absent functional and social diversity.

The timing of the architectural alliance was fortuitous. By that time a generation of students had been educated having had no exposure to the necrotic European New Towns or the narcoleptic American Planned-Unit Developments, or to the social failure of H.U.D., which together had extinguished what was left of modernist planning’s reputation. All reference was lost of the mercy killing that had once come from every direction: *Collage City*, *Delirious New York*, *Townscape*, *Architecture Rationelle*, *The Golden City*, *Jane Jacobs*, *the Krier brothers*, *Defensible Space*, *the Charter of the New Urbanism*. There was only revulsion for the “postmodernist” episode, when the practitioners, the academy, the publications had experienced the rare moment of consensus that whatever may still have been viable about modernist architecture, nothing could survive of modernist planning. But that consensus had occurred in the 1980s. A full generation of amnesia had since been stage-managed.

The trusty *rue corridor*, which was the *one* weapon the executioners all held in common, was slated once more for the trash heap of history¹⁷ (further proof of Jane Jacobs’ observation that the “pseudoscience of planning seems almost neurotic in its determination to imitate empiric failure and ignore empiric success”). Jacobs herself was replaced by her nemesis, Robert Moses — with reputation refurbished from a scourge of cities to the builder of infrastructure. His achievements would be tapped by Landscape Urbanists as another means of connecting to the infrastructure constituency. This became an important agenda, manifested in the aestheticizing of the arterials, highways, stormwater facilities, and parking lots. The traffic impact and carbon emissions that such auto-dependent transportation systems induced were statistical externalities to the ecological discourse. If there was a gloss of “science,” it was at the scale of advancing plant-bed technology in unnatural locations: on roofs, decks, walls, and high slopes.

“Cutting-edge” design was essential to Landscape Urbanism’s academic credentials, but it was a fiction that could not be maintained indefinitely, even within the highly edited history curriculum pioneered

by Michael Hays at Harvard. One of the requirements of an avant-garde position, duly achieved, was the sidelining of the pioneers like Anne Whiston Spirn and Ian McHarg (while still alive and in academia!). But the enormous threat remained: the indisputable and ineradicable evidence of Olmsted's success under a virtually identical agenda.

As the establishment of a suitable prehistory became a priority, Charles Waldheim, the *eminence grise* of Landscape Urbanism, put forth three decoys — Andrea Branzi's Agronica, Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonia, and Hilberheimer's New Regional Pattern — taking recourse in three unbuilt concepts that could not therefore be challenged by objective measurement. But all three resisted resurrection until they were bundled with an emergent aspect of ecology — food self-sufficiency. This development coincided with an important New Urbanist initiative, becoming a first instance of agreement between the contending parties. The contemporaneous *Theory and Practice of Agrarian Urbanism*¹⁸ could have become a Landscape Urbanist text had the illustrated buildings been flat-roofed. Yet another point of agreement became the hydrology agenda, not as metaphor but as the utilitarian, cost-effective Light Imprint technology formulated by the New Urbanist Tom Low.

When the national debt finally curtailed the infrastructure projects, the environmentalists became the principal Landscape Urbanist constituency. The seeds had been long-ago planted. A century and a half earlier, the American environmental movement had emerged from the campaign to create the National Parks. This agenda held wilderness as the ideal. Humans and their activities were thereby necessarily conceived as other than nature (per Woody Allen: "Nature and I are two."). As the toolbox limits the craft, Landscape Urbanism's pervasive rustication of the city was recognizable, while New Urbanism, with its focus on density, connectivity, and contiguity, could not be conceived as anything but a clipper of green corridors, purveyor of impervious surfaces, and creator of heat islands.

The New Urbanist response was technical: that the application of visual greening de-tuned those attributes of urbanism that supported walkability and hence *lowered* the environmental performance by fostering vehicular traffic. This argument was forcefully engaged in the compendium *Landscape Urbanism and its Discontents* (2013).¹⁹ But it was too complex a discourse for the time — lacking the reflexive appeal of visual biophilia.

Besides, politically, the “green” aesthetics continued to provide the most effective vaccine against NIMBYism. The otherwise unpopular suburban sprawl could be re-packaged. Sprawl developers had long been adverse to New Urbanism, so the new alliance with Landscape Urbanists became a direct existential affront. Conventional development had been reduced by the thirty-year campaign of the New Urbanism — by government-administered protocols like the SmartCode and private ones associated with LEED-ND. But this kind of legalistic and technical progress was invisible to designers. The superb design associated with Landscape Urbanism managed to (somewhat) refurbish the reputation of suburbia, a pattern that had not only been failing economically and environmentally, but *looked* as if it were. The social, economic, and environmental consequences of the old “unprecedented typologies” such as big-box retail were camouflaged by green roofs, plant-laden screens, and porous-pavement parking lots. Landscape Urbanists were so skillful that most failed to recognize they were protracting the car-dominated, sociofugal places that few outside the then-ascendant Tea Party/Agenda 21 alliance could continue to condone.

Landscape Urbanism settled into arranging buildings that were urban in their statistical density, but not in their performance: “an expansive form of urbanism,” disaggregated, not only to accommodate the automobile but also to become “integrated with nature and agriculture,” dispersed under a “sustainable energy grid”.²⁰

And there was a further bonus for the architects: the elusive phenomenon of making modernism widely marketable. Landscape Urbanism had delivered at long last a connection to the *populus*. As any Visual Preference Study²¹ will show, human biophilia is such that an image of anything with leaves will tilt the selection in its favor. Americans accepted “green” modernism from the same stimulus that had enamored them to the original suburbia embedded in landscape. For managing acceptance by the middle class, as much as the ecological benefits claimed by its rhetoric, was the reason Landscape Urbanism first gained disciplinary preeminence *outside* the academy.

That other great constituency, the regulators of a scientific persuasion, principally at the U.S. Department of Environmental Protection, did not at first discern that the biophilic visuals of native plants, enhanced topography, and ground plane permeability had scant measurable effect

on performance. They had been thoroughly seduced by the practice to re-present the metrics of their studies in gorgeous graphic formats, displayed as totems justifying the actions of the designers. Landscape Urbanists evolved a brilliant escalation in the representational quality of scientific analysis. The once-lugubrious environmental reports were aestheticized. Analytical drones had been promoted to protagonists, while the New Urbanists had done no more than follow their rules.

The Landscape Urbanists thus succeeded for a time in avoiding scientific verification. When the effective environmental performance was eventually revealed, the benefits proved to be paltry, and — because of the extremely high cost of producing natural effects where they did not naturally occur — counterproductive. Vignetted nature was expensive to install and maintain.

This problem had been obscured for a time by the propensity to apply Landscape Urbanist technique only to civic space — which justified the higher investment. But with both the economic and environmental crises becoming truly serious, the counter-doctrine emerged that ecology was effective only where natural systems were preserved or restored in substantial areas — not as implants between buildings. Ecology as a science could not validate Landscape Urbanist theories and techniques.

While Landscape Urbanism made a bucolic contribution to civic space, it was ultimately incapable of delivering ordinary urban fabric. The claim that it was a comprehensive theory of urbanism was more than it could bear. The fundamental rhetoric of “process” failed because there were no means of coordinating the sequence of urbanization. The problem was technical and intrinsic: when an infrastructure of nature permeated between, above, below, and within, both private buildings and public spaces had to be designed and built simultaneously. There was no possibility of successional protocols. The coding that would have permitted the sequential generation of urbanism, by many, over time, belonged to the New Urbanism, and was therefore outside the Landscape Urbanists’ discourse. The avowed aspiration to flux and indeterminacy was reduced to the prerogative of choosing sympathetic architects to design the grey voids between the landscaped areas on the plan. A planning method based on the designer’s and patron’s personality could not be sustained in the long-running timeline of urbanism, which exceeds the human and the political.

The conceptualized “quotations” of implanted nature gradually became a physical necessity. The puritanism of “native species” rather than the exotic hardy urban ones required that the “frame” become actual railings and planters to keep humans from trashing the landscape by walking on it. The landscape could be gazed upon, but that was all. An enormous amount of urban open space was thereby removed from its primary recreational purpose — at the very center of cities where it was most necessary. After the first sections of the High Line were completed, a prophylaxis of “temporary” fencing and signage became necessary. Subsequent sections had to include the “exotic” common lawns that could actually be used by humans in the original, Olmstedian function.

Another well-known failure came out of Portland, Oregon, with the juxtaposition of New Urbanist Jamison Square from the 1990s and the Landscape Urbanist Tanner Springs Park, one block away and a decade later. Jamison is usually packed with people of all ages, while Tanner is virtually devoid of humans whose feet and posteriors would crush the prairie grasses. In yet another square in Portland, the restoration of “woodland” resulted in objections — not so much to the outdoor sexual activity enabled by the mask of dense landscape, but to the residue that dogs would find when they were walked in the mornings. The New Urbanist Transect would have prevented such misfits of human nature and Nature.

Slowly, the reputation of Landscape Urbanism would have eroded exactly like the ethanol initiative, which arose concurrently — both driven by elegant intention rather than practical effect — had it not been subjected to the Rural-to-Urban Transect. This taxonomic engine absorbed Landscape Urbanism’s techniques wherever they were contextually appropriate and effective. Not being ideologically proscribed, New Urbanists were able to assimilate Landscape Urbanism at the sub-urban end of the Transect. They refurbished those aspects of their own open space design where it had been weak. The Urban Center and Urban Core Transect Zones remained intact, as Landscape Urbanism had never really engaged either. The *rue corridor* survived after all.

New Urbanists absorbed the compelling polemical vocabulary as well. Using Lars Lerup’s “areas of stimulation,” or “stim,” within the “unfortunate economic residues,” or “dross,”²² was more interesting than what New Urbanists had been calling “sprawl retrofit” and “districts.”

But above all, Doug Farr's compendium, *Sustainable Urbanism*,²³ as an operational manual across the entire field, exposed that the hydrological concerns, in the end, were primarily a formalist design agenda.

The Landscape Urbanist episode within the New Urbanist discourse became important, as it shared the fate of other intelligent alternatives: assimilation. The effective techniques were absorbed as a matter of pragmatism. The result was a truly Ecological Urbanism that dealt with a greater range of constituencies, wielding a more extensive design repertoire, cultural as well as natural.

The perennial avant-garde at Harvard, as expected, moved on. The demands of the times do not necessarily coincide with the interests of the academies — nor should they, despite the difficult century that is still upon us.

Endnotes

- 1 Sert was president of the Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) from 1947 to 1956, and Dean of Harvard's Graduate School of Design from 1953 to 1969. See Mumford, Eric. *Defining Urban Design CIAM Architects and the Formation of a Discipline 1937-69*, Yale 2009.
- 2 Krieger, Alex and William Saunders, Eds. 2010. *Urban Design*. University of Minnesota Press.
- 3 By evidence, as reported in, e.g., Bartholomew, K. and R. Ewing. 2009. Land Use-Transportation Scenario Planning: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 75, 1: 13–27; Ewing, R., K. Bartholomew, et al. 2008. *Growing Cooler: The Evidence on Urban Development and Climate Change*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, Washington.
- 4 See *The Charter of the New Urbanism*, Michael Leccese, Kathleen McCormick, Congress for the New Urbanism, Eds. 1999, McGraw-Hill.
- 5 Mumford, Lewis. 1956. The Natural History of Urbanization. In William L. Thomas, Ed., *Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 382–400; Jacobs, Jane. 1961. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Vintage Books; Cronon, William. 1996. The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature. In William Cronon, Ed., *Uncommon Ground*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. Pps: 69–90.
- 6 Koolhaas, R. 1995. Whatever Happened to Urbanism? In *Design Quarterly* 164: 28-31.
- 7 Spirn, A. W. 1985. *The Granite Garden: Urban Nature and Human Design* (1st ed.). New York: Basic Books; Spirn, A.W. 2000. New Urbanism and the Environment. *Places* 13, 2: 2–79.
- 8 Corner, J. 2006. Terra Fluxus. In Charles Waldheim, Ed., *The Landscape Urbanism Reader*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press. Pp. 21-33; see also Wall, A. 1999. Programming the Urban Surface. In *On Landscape Urbanism*. Austin, TX: Center for American Architecture and Design University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture. Pp. 182–93. Mostafavi, M., Ed. 2010. *Ecological Urbanism*. Zurich: Lars Muller Publishers.
- 9 Waldheim, Charles. 2006. *The Landscape Urbanism Reader*.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Allen, Stan. 2009. *Practice: Architecture, Technique and Representation*. London: Routledge.
- 12 See *Urban Design* by Alex Krieger and William Saunders (2009, University of Minnesota Press). A passing dismissal of the New Urbanism is one of the few themes common among the 21 papers.
- 13 Sorkin, Michael. 2009. *Twenty Minutes in Manhattan*. New York: Reaktion Books.