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Planning Places: Enabling the Practitioner

by

David D. Brown

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF CITY PLANNING

Department of City Planning

Faculty of Architecture

University of Manitoba

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**PLANNING PLACES:
ENABLING THE PRACTITIONER**

BY

DAVID D. BROWN

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University
of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree
of
MASTER OF CITY PLANNING**

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ABSTRACT

Urban design is concerned with the social and physical aspects of the urban environment, and is argued to be a powerful agency for developing social well-being. The contemporary city, however, offers a challenging context for urban design. This thesis aims to develop new insights into urban design practice by investigating how the urban design practitioner, as a holder of valuable skills and knowledge, might be enabled to contribute within the contemporary practice context.

The thesis offers perspectives on the present-day forces of urban change and the social effects from which participatory planning has emerged. The responding paradigm shift in planning theory is investigated, and identifies principles with which guide urban design practice based on creating dialogic space, developing inclusive democratic processes, and validating multiple ways of knowing. The traditional role of the built environment professional within the social processes of producing the built environment is discussed, and the limitations of that role identified. The epistemological and ideological foundations of the built environment professions in the contemporary context are questioned.

Empirical research into the topic, including a case study of urban design in the Winnipeg context, identifies a need to review contemporary professionalism cultures and to focus urban design activity on implementation.

This thesis argues that urban design practice based on professionalism is not appropriate in the contemporary practice context of public participatory planning and design processes. The urban designer must come first as a citizen, and add value to that involvement by bringing knowledge and skills to the table. Finally, a range of principles intended to enable the urban design practitioner in the contemporary practice context are offered.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| ABSTRACT | i |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | ii |
| LIST OF FIGURES | vi |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | vii |
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| OUTLINE OF THE THESIS CONTENTS | 5 |
| | |
| CHAPTER 1: URBAN DESIGN PRACTICE AND THE CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT | 8 |
| 1.1 THE URBAN DESIGN FIELD..... | 8 |
| 1.2 THE CONTEMPORARY CITY AS THE CONTEXT FOR URBAN DESIGN PRACTICE..... | 12 |
| 1.3 THE GLOBAL ECONOMY | 13 |
| 1.4 THE EFFECTS OF GLOBALIZATION | 15 |
| 1.5 COUNTER-MOVEMENTS TO THE EFFECTS OF GLOBALIZATION | 21 |
| 1.6 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD | 22 |
| 1.7 PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES..... | 24 |
| 1.8 URBAN DESIGN PRACTICE AND THE CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT | 25 |
| | |
| CHAPTER 2: CROSS-THEORIST ANALYSES FOR URBAN DESIGN | 26 |
| 2.1. AN ANALYSIS OF ANALYSES: FRIEDMANN, HEALEY AND SANDERCOCK..... | 26 |
| 2.2 PRESCRIPTIONS FOR FUTURE PLANNING | 29 |
| 2.3 HEALEY’S COLLABORATIVE PLANNING MODEL..... | 30 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 2.4 SANDERCOCK’S INSURGENT PLANNING MODEL | 34 |
| 2.5 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS..... | 38 |
| 2.6 PARADIGM SHIFT IN URBAN DESIGN | 40 |
| 2.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR URBAN DESIGN | 41 |
| 2.8 CROSS-THEORIST ANALYSES AND URBAN DESIGN | 42 |
| | |
| CHAPTER 3: SHAPING THE ROLE OF THE URBAN DESIGNER..... | 43 |
| 3.1 URBAN DESIGN WITHIN THE PRODUCTION OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT | 44 |
| 3.2 PROFESSIONALISM AND URBAN DESIGN..... | 49 |
| 3.3 EXPERTISE AS A BASIS FOR PROFESSIONALISM | 52 |
| 3.4 THE FORMALIST DESIGN APPROACH..... | 56 |
| 3.5 THE INTER-PROFESSIONAL PROCESS | 59 |
| 3.6 PLACEMAKING | 63 |
| 3.7 SHAPING THE ROLE OF THE URBAN DESIGNER..... | 70 |
| | |
| CHAPTER 4: REFLECTING ON URBAN DESIGN THEORY FROM URBAN DESIGN | |
| PRACTICE..... | 72 |
| 4.1 UNDERSTANDING AND VALUING URBAN DESIGN ACTIVITY | 74 |
| 4.2 WINNIPEG’S LOW-GROWTH CONTEXT..... | 78 |
| 4.3 URBAN DESIGN AS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT | 81 |
| 4.4 URBAN DESIGN CAPACITY WITHIN THE CITY OF WINNIPEG | 82 |
| 4.5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES IN WINNIPEG | 86 |
| 4.6 POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR WINNIPEG URBAN DESIGN PRACTICE..... | 97 |
| 4.7 AN EMERGING DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN INSTRUMENT..... | 104 |
| 4.8 COMMUNITY-BASED URBAN DESIGN RESOURCES | 110 |
| 4.9 URBAN DESIGN IN WINNIPEG | 112 |
| 4.10 CONTEMPORARY URBAN DESIGN PRACTICE..... | 114 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| 4.11 URBAN DESIGNER’S ROLE IN PUBLIC PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES..... | 120 |
| 4.12 EQUIPPING THE URBAN DESIGNER..... | 124 |
| 4.13 CONTRIBUTING TO SOCIAL LEARNING VALUE OF PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES | 130 |
| 4.14 EDUCATING THE URBAN DESIGNER | 132 |
| 4.15 BRIDGING THE PLANNING / DESIGN GAP..... | 135 |
| 4.16 THE URBAN DESIGNER | 142 |
| 4.17 REFLECTING ON URBAN DESIGN THEORY FROM URBAN DESIGN PRACTICE | 143 |
| | |
| CHAPTER 5: ENABLING THE URBAN DESIGNER..... | 145 |
| | |
| 5.1 A RECOMMENDED MODEL FOR THE CONTEMPORARY URBAN DESIGN PRACTITIONER..... | 146 |
| 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENABLING THE URBAN DESIGN PRACTITIONER..... | 148 |
| 5.3 SOFT PROFESSIONAL ISSUES | 150 |
| ADOPT NEW ATTITUDES AND APPROACHES | 150 |
| ACQUIRE A WILLINGNESS FOR NON-HIERARCHICAL INTER-DISCIPLINARY WORKING | 150 |
| SUBSTITUTE PRAXIS FOR DESIGN PHILOSOPHY..... | 151 |
| LEGITIMIZE OTHER WAYS OF KNOWING | 152 |
| DEVELOP COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS..... | 152 |
| DEVELOP AN ATTITUDE TO ENCOURAGE MUTUAL LEARNING | 153 |
| AMEND THE DOMINANCE OF FORMAL AESTHETICS | 153 |
| DEVELOP A WORKING UNDERSTANDING OF FACILITATION | 154 |
| DEVELOP ABILITIES TO ENGAGE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION | 154 |
| DEVELOP UNDERSTANDING OF DEVELOPMENT PROCESS | 155 |
| 5.4 HARD PROFESSIONAL ISSUES | 155 |
| REVIEW LEGISLATION THAT PROTECTS PROFESSIONAL TITLES AND FUNCTIONS..... | 155 |
| REAPPRAISE THE CLIENT / PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP..... | 156 |
| REVIEW PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION METHODS..... | 157 |
| 5.5 ENABLING THE URBAN DESIGNER | 158 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| APPENDIX A: EMPIRICAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY | 160 |
| RESEARCH PARADIGM | 160 |
| CHOICE OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENT | 161 |
| SAMPLE SELECTION RATIONALE..... | 162 |
| RESEARCH PROCESS: | 163 |
| | |
| REFERENCES | 168 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|---|-----|
| FIGURE 1: THE PROFESSIONAL URBAN DESIGN FIELD: | 10 |
| FIGURE 2: CROSS-THEORIST CRITIQUES OF THE RATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING MODEL AND PRESCRIPTIONS FOR FUTURE PLANNING: | 27 |
| FIGURE 3: HEALEY'S DEVELOPMENT OF A COLLABORATIVE PLANNING MODEL: | 31 |
| FIGURE 4: SANDERCOCK'S DEVELOPMENT OF AN INSURGENT PLANNING MODEL: | 35 |
| FIGURE 5: DEVELOPMENT PROCESS MODELS: | 45 |
| FIGURE 6: COMPARATIVE TABLE OF URBAN DESIGNER MODELS: | 147 |
| FIGURE 7: THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES FROM PLANNING LITERATURE TO INFORM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR URBAN DESIGN PRACTICE: | 149 |

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INTRODUCTION

The research problem (Booth *et al.* 1995) is concerned with the contemporary role of the urban design practitioner. The thesis aims to develop new insights into urban design practice by investigating how the urban design practitioner, as a holder of valuable skills and knowledge, might practice in the context of widespread adoption of planning and design participatory processes.

A sub-set of this research problem comprises the following three inter-connected questions:

- How might practitioners contribute knowledge(s) as resources within democratic, inclusive urban design processes?
- What are the contemporary constraints on urban design practitioners, and how might they be mitigated?
- What opportunities to enable urban design practitioners exist within the emergent paradigm shift in planning from a top-down to a bottom-up participatory approach?

As holders of expertise, planners and other built environment professionals have traditionally performed a function in the implementation of urban development proposals. Rance *et al.* (1995b: p.157) note that traditional professional roles are changing, and that new practices, new roles, and new relationships are being developed. As well as

technological and organizational advances, these changes are being driven by the adoption of participatory planning/design processes by the public sector (Lowry *et al.* 1997; Rance 1995a; Innes and Boothe 1999).

The thesis is titled *Planning Places* since the ideal of the urban design planning process might be argued to aim at creating public *spaces* as frameworks for subsequent public *places* — which come about as citizens take ownership of city spaces, and lay new or renewed meanings to make them into city *places*.

Sandercock (1998) offers a definition of planning as being concerned with a set of socio-spatial processes subject to continuous change. Madanipour (1996) states that urban design should also be approached as a socio-spatial process, rooted in political, economic, and cultural processes. According to Madanipour (1996), urban design is a comprehensive activity addressing the social and physical aspects of the built environment:

. . . all the buildings, objects, and spaces in an urban environment, as well as the people, events, and relationships within them (p.xi).

Within this interpretation, Madanipour suggests that the social and physical aspects of the urban environment are closely related:

The social and physical dimensions of urban form have a dynamic relationship. Physical fabric is produced and conditioned by different social procedures. At the same time, the form of urban space, once built, can exert influence upon the way these procedures occur (p.33).

Given these physical and social aspects of urban design activity, the premise of this thesis concerns the contribution of physical form to the creation of equitable cities. Urban physical development, with social development and economic development, is argued to be one of three complementary approaches to creating urban environments in which people might flourish, and in which all people have equal opportunity to flourish, including other species and members of future generations who cannot speak for themselves.

The case for perceiving the built form of the city as an essential shaper of 'quality of life' and equity is offered by Sandercock (1998), who notes the importance of the physical form of the urban environment for marginalized people:

In the end, we cannot ignore the inescapable connections between the built environment, and individual and collective human well-being. We can't deny the power of design in daily life, for good and bad. This can be as simple and obvious as the transformative effect of trees in a residential street, the qualities of natural light in a dwelling or workspace, the sounds of water created by a fountain in a busy downtown development. Or it can be as complex as the workings of patriarchy in and upon space, through design. Feminist architects, urban designers and planners have been interested in these connections specifically as they affect the lives of women in cities and suburbs. Books like *Redesigning the American Dream* (Hayden 1984), *Discrimination by Design* (Weisman 1992), and *Gendered Spaces* (Spain 1992) are all insightful about the powers of design to express and enforce relations of subordination. Other writers on urban design have noted the architectural tropes which send messages about who belongs in this space, referring to shopping malls and other public/ private places where only certain kinds of people are wanted, and how particular design solutions can achieve these purposes of exclusion (Davis 1990; Sorkin 1992). Why do women feel unsafe in cities, or at least in certain city spaces? Why do homeless people often prefer to sleep on the streets than in city-run shelters? Why are some public parks never used, while others are full of life? How would dwellings, neighbourhoods, and public buildings look if they were designed to foster relationships of equality, environmental health, and cultural difference? How can design contribute to a radically

different landscape of power, to cosmopolis? We cannot avoid the implication of design in debates about the good city, the meaningful community (p.229).

The cultural importance of urban design is set out by Miller (1991), who notes that “the vitality of a community is lost when there is indifference to scale and vernacular history, to commerce and cultural context, to the subtleties of continuity and the contrasts of the socio-economics of its inhabitants” (p.v).

Urban design is argued to be a powerful agency, and the urban design practitioner holds valuable skills and knowledge that can contribute towards the creation of Galbraith’s (1996) “good society” of personal liberty, basic well-being, racial and ethnic equality, and the opportunity for a rewarding life. The contemporary city, however, offers a challenging context for urban design. As Healey (1997: p.32) asks, how can the consequences of planning and design within the contemporary city be reconciled within the context of cultural diversity, and when the initiating forces of change are difficult to identify?

This thesis results from a personal mission to discover more about contemporary practice. The author is a registered UK Architect, and has practiced in both the public and private sectors in the United Kingdom. This experience includes working at a senior management level as an associate in a London architectural practice, involving the coordination of multi-disciplinary activities. During the six years previous to the writing of the thesis, the author worked in Canada as a principal of a landscape design and environmental planning firm. During this period, the firm worked increasingly with stakeholder groups on public

sector projects, which challenged the author's conceptions of professional practice that had been derived from professional education and the culture of professional institutions. While this thesis has been approached as a conventional research undertaking, this practice experience has served to direct and shape the contents of the thesis.

OUTLINE OF THE THESIS CONTENTS

The thesis is organized into the following five chapters.

Chapter 1 reviews urban design practice, and presents perspectives on the context within which urban design practitioners work — the nature of the contemporary city and the forces acting upon it. The chapter focuses on the relationship between urban design and contemporary culture, and concludes that participatory planning and design processes at a local scale are central to contemporary urban design activity.

In Chapter 2, models for urban design practice are identified from contemporary planning theory as possible informants of urban design practice. This chapter is structured around an analysis of analyses, looking first at Friedmann's (1987), Healey's (1997), and Sandercock's (1998) analyses on why technical-instrumental planning is now discredited — each theorist's critique of the modern project. Second, Healey's (1997) and Sandercock's (1998) subsequent positions are identified as offering two models for the contemporary urban design practitioner within the new planning paradigm that they are

championing in epistemological and practice terms (in other words how planners might *know*, and what planners might *do*).

Following the discussions of the urban design field and the contemporary urban context outlined in Chapter 1, and the prescriptions for guiding urban design practice described in Chapter 2, the shaping of urban design practice is investigated in Chapter 3. The traditional role played by the urban designer in the production of the built environment is considered. Expertise as the basis for professionalism is explored, as is the professional culture of orientation toward formalist design solutions. Alternative forms of design practice are noted as having remained peripheral, but the emerging placemaking model is discussed as offering a coherent model of an inclusive, democratic process to which urban design practice might aspire.

Chapter 4 presents empirical research into conceptualizations of the contemporary role of urban design practitioners within various practice perspectives. The data is concerned principally with the Winnipeg context, and the changing capacity for urban design within the City of Winnipeg is integrated into this research as case study material. The research looks at how practitioners view their role, and how other actors in urban design decision-making view the position and contribution of practitioners.

Finally, Chapter 5 provides recommendations and conclusions for enabling the urban designer practitioner based on the theoretical material offered in Chapters 2 and 3, and the

empirical research presented in Chapter 4. A model for contemporary design practice is offered, and principles for guiding urban design practice set out.

The rationale for the empirical research methodology and a description of the empirical research process is set out in Appendix A.

CHAPTER 1: URBAN DESIGN PRACTICE AND THE CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

This chapter outlines a theoretical view of contemporary urban design practice and a perspective of the contemporary city as the context within which urban design practitioners contribute their specialist knowledge and skills. The content of this chapter is arranged around the following issues: defining the field of urban design, global economic integration and its effects, the emergence of counter-movements in response to its effects, and the widespread adoption of public participatory planning.

1.1 THE URBAN DESIGN FIELD

The term ‘urban design’ is defined broadly within this thesis; it extends beyond the appearance of the built environment to concerns with the form, use, and management of cities. Urban design is therefore seen as “the process through which we consciously shape and manage our built environments” (Madanipour 1996: p.155). As such, urban design is involved with the production and regulation of the urban environment, and images of ideal urban environments (Madanipour 1996 p.91).

Barnett (1982) suggests that “urban design is the generally accepted name for giving physical design direction to urban growth, conservation, and change” (p.12). Within this role for managing change lies Miller’s (1991: p.v) suggestion that urban design constitutes “a search for a framework to give form and ownership to a larger collective

consciousness”, and that urban design aims to address “the need to find solutions compatible with our life styles, technological imperatives, and ideals.”

The urban design discipline therefore draws on a broad base of knowledge, encompassing “the study of politics, economics, and sociology at one end, to an alliance with architecture emphasizing physical design, space, and form at the other” (Schwartzing and Karahan 1991: p.3).

To understand urban space as the context of urban design, Madanipour (1996) argues for using perspectives from above (which includes a limited scientific understanding of urban space), and perspectives from below :

From above we have the perspective of political economy, where systems of money and power are at work to create built environments and where scientific inquiry offers an objective understanding of urban space. From below, we have the perspectives of everyday life, where disorder and spontaneity can take over and where human behavior in, and use of, urban space endows it with meaning (pp.87-88).

A professional perspective of urban design might describe how the discipline has emerged during the last two decades as a specialty from the planning and architectural disciplines’ common concerns for shaping and transforming urban form. Indeed, those practitioners styling themselves as urban designers largely emerge from the planning, architectural and landscape architectural professions. The activity of urban design can be placed where these design and planning professions overlap, as diagrammed in Figure 1.

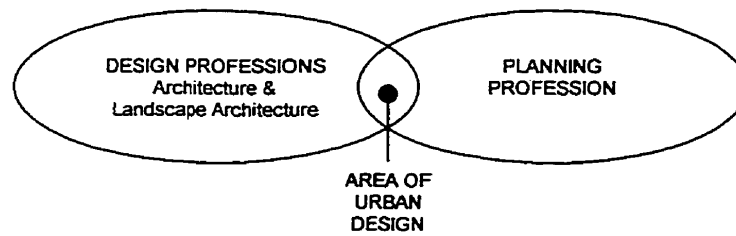


Figure 1: The professional urban design field

Blau *et al.* (1983: p.viii) suggest similarities between the planning and architectural disciplines: both professions are concerned with the shaping and transforming of the urban environment; and social responsibility and usefulness are criteria employed by both professions. Urban design, they suggest, has emerged as an amalgam of architecture and planning from an awareness of these concerns. In this professional perspective, the built environment professional's role is about bringing city dwellers' needs into balance with those of the private or public clients that they serve. But in the sense that the term *practitioner* implies an occupation, the informal practitioner also exists, such as community activists operating within the third sector. As Madanipour (1996: p.218) suggests, urban design might be perceived as being carried out by the state, by the market, and by civil society.

As indicated above, this conception of urban design encompasses a broad range of professional disciplines. Madanipour (1996) argues that urban design is a multidisciplinary activity with which to shape and manage urban environments:

Urban designers are interested and engaged in this process and its product . . . the multidisciplinary activity of shaping and managing urban environments, interested both in the process of this shaping and the spaces

it helps shape. Combining technical, social, and expressive concerns, urban designers use both visual and verbal means of communication, and engage in all scales of the urban socio-spatial continuum (p.117).

[*Urban designers*] . . . need to be familiar with all scales of processes and products (pp.220-221).

To underscore the breadth of professional urban design activity, Madanipour (1996) catalogues the diversity of services offered by UK-based firms mentioned in the *Urban Design Source Book* (Billingham 1994):

masterplanning; development frameworks and concepts; concept design; development briefs; design guidelines; urban design in development control; urban design training; environmental and visual impact assessment; site appraisal and context studies; environmental statements; environmental improvement; building and area enhancement; town centre renewal; public realm design; transport and traffic management; pedestrianization; infrastructure strategies; computer modeling; project management; engineering; interior, graphic, and product design; landscape design; architectural design; urban design; town planning; land-use planning; policy formation and promotion; strategic planning studies; local planning; public inquiries; conservation; new design in historic contexts; planning in historic and sensitive areas; decontamination strategies; adaptive re-use; enabling development; implementation; urban regeneration; small town and village regeneration; integrated regeneration of streets and buildings; community participation; civic and community architecture; new settlements; large-scale site planning; landscape planning; physical planning; urban housing; shopping, employment, tourism, recreation and leisure planning; urban parks and spaces; urban squares; waterfront buildings and strategies; marinas; planning for pedestrian crime prevention and security; and energy efficient design.

A further aspect of urban design is the shaping of development forces through development control. Madanipour (1996: p.120) suggests that urban design plays an integral role in shaping the built environment through proposing new forms or regulating proposals, and by enabling or controlling development.

These conceptions, drawn from the planning and design literature, imply that urban design is a conscious and coordinated activity within which professionals have traditionally played a key role. The plausibility of this perception is examined in Chapter 3, which looks at the role of urban design in the production of the built environment, and in Chapter 4, which provides empirical research into this topic. First, however, the discussion will turn to look at the context within which contemporary urban design activity takes place.

1.2 THE CONTEMPORARY CITY AS THE CONTEXT FOR URBAN DESIGN PRACTICE

Sandercock (1998) suggests that three contemporary socio-cultural forces are shaping the contemporary city: first, complex migrations with multi-cultural implications; second, a rise of “civil society” — including the formerly-termed “minority groups”; and third, the post-colonial reclaiming of urban space by indigenous peoples. Other social forces include a regional moving to the city and a local moving out of the city to ex-urban areas.

The contemporary conceptual city might therefore be characterized by an economic, cultural, and racial multiplicity. This situation is argued by Sandercock (1998) to constitute economic, cultural, and psychological threats to longer-standing residents — the traditionally dominant groups. Associated with these demographic shifts are citizenship issues — as Sandercock (1998) rhetorically asks: Who belongs where? And with what rights?

1.3 THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

Economic forces are argued to be a primary motor driving this social change. As Sandercock (1998) points out, the “single undeniable hegemony is that economic rationality is paramount, and every city and region and nation has to realize its ideals as best it can within the constraints of a profit-maximizing world market” (p.7). Indeed, the contemporary conceptual city is in a global network that is perceived by many to be competitive. Global economic integration, usually assumed to be beyond the control of any one city or region, has forced urban political regimes to embrace global investors or put their city at risk (Sandercock 1998). Included within this issue is the environmental problematic that continues to accompany modern capital.

Friedmann (1987) argues that industrial capitalism generates both costs and benefits, but, when calculated in socially relevant terms, the costs of continued growth would exceed benefits by an increasing margin. He also notes that households and the state have historically absorbed the social costs of economic growth, and there now is a decline in the state’s ability to alleviate hardship. Further costs are identified by Jacobs (1991), who argues that it is the ways in which production and consumption are currently organized that create environmental degradation.

Knox (1995) describes the origins and development of the new global economy as a shift from an international to a global economy during the 1970s and 1980s. Previously, the trading of goods and services in an international economy was closely regulated by nation-states. Within the developing global economy, goods and services are produced and

marketed by an oligopolistic web of global corporations whose operations span national boundaries. These corporations operate through strategic links and alliances, which are only loosely regulated by nation-states. Each corporation, Knox suggests, aims at gaining commercial supremacy in its sector by focusing on the approximately eight hundred million consumers in the triad of core economies within the world-system that are able to sustain materialistic lifestyles — North America, Europe, and Japan. These regions comprise the most important theatres of accumulation, accommodating the key business functions of the players and providing the neo-liberal operating arena of free enterprise with minimal government intervention (Hanke 1997). Friedmann and Douglass (1995) suggest that politics, in this context, be confined to arrangements between states and corporations.

In concert with the development of the global economy, an enabling globalization of finance has developed providing capital for mergers, acquisitions, and operational restructuring. Knox identifies the following characteristics of global financing: currency trading; the emergence of transnational banks and investment companies; 24-hour global trading; and a global venture capital industry. National governments of the core countries have responded with a deregulation of finances and labour, and have provided subsidies for scientific and technological innovators. Banks have turned from their traditional role of supporting trade between firms and nations to supporting manufacturing capacity of large concerns in a transnational context. From this global context, Knox points out that a connected group of technologically highly developed city-regions is evolving.

Knox (1995) suggests that world cities, as the centres of transnational corporations, finance, telecommunications, and information processing, constitute the bases and control points of financial and cultural flows that support and sustain the global economy. World cities have therefore become centres of authority.

1.4 THE EFFECTS OF GLOBALIZATION

Fellman *et al.* (1999) argue that the world is undergoing a cultural convergence through a sharing of technologies and integration of economies. This situation is creating new pressures on the environment to accommodate new patterns of production and exploitation. A general result is indicated by Ellin (1996: p.104), who notes that globalization has been accompanied by a decline in the public realm and an obscuring of power. The following commentators offer suggestions for the cause of this situation and its cultural effects.

Friedmann and Douglass (1995) note that global capital is not accountable to any nation or government, and that the elites of wealth and power of the new global economy probably amount to 10% of the population in industrial countries, and approximately 1% in developing countries. They suggest that this elite holds no special allegiance to local culture and history, focusing instead on accumulation of wealth and influence. Urban locations therefore suffer the doubtful care of absentee landlords, as Madanipour (1996) points out:

Rather than local elites who used to be the largely influential force in shaping local urban environments, it is now the international elite of

corporate institutions which plays a major role in shaping localities without any physical or emotional contact with them (p.142).

While people value traditions and inhabit specific places, in this context they are “rendered silent as consumers of global offerings” (Friedmann and Douglass 1995).

Galbreith (1996) offers another polarized view; he suggests that contemporary society comprises a polity where the fortunate are socially and politically dominant (p.2). In his analysis, the contemporary economic and political alignment places the rich on one side, and the economically less fortunate and the poor, together with those who speak out for them, on the other side (p.7).

With the emergence of the global economy, the development of the archetypal landscape of today's international cities, described by Keil (1995) as the generic metropolis of the late twentieth century, has arguably been accelerated and further homogenized. Keil suggests this conceptual city expresses the dialectics of utopia and dystopia: a fusion of Fordism — airport-freeways-downtown-infrastructure; and post-Fordism — fragmentation-human and environmental degradation-polarized power. Winkoff (1995b) points out that the physical structure, social structure, and cultural profile of an area are integrally linked with its economy. Communities are being shaped by new demographics brought about by economically driven movements of labour and management. The post-modern context of the conceptual city is a pluralized, political realm of multiple contradictions — including class, race, ethnicity, and gender (Keil 1995). Madanipour points out (1996: p.24) that “the centre of a world city is fast-moving with a multiplicity

of identities and a potential for plurality and therefore fragmentation of social relations.”

And, culturally, the relationship of communities to ‘place’ is being constantly repositioned (Guppy 1995).

Knox (1995) identifies six cultural flows from first-order world cities that underpin the contemporary world-system:

1. Ethnoscapescapes: flows of people — business personnel, labour, etc;
2. Technoscapescapes: flows of technology, machinery, software;
3. Finanscapescapes: flows of currency and securities;
4. Mediascapescapes: flows of images and information through print media, film, Internet;
5. Ideoscapescapes: flows of ideological constructs mainly derived from Western world-view — democracy, individual sovereignty, rights;
6. Commodityscapescapes: flows of material culture from architecture to clothes and jewelry design.

These cultural flows are clearly powerful. Ellin (1996: p.105) notes that “new technologies have facilitated the rapid movement of people and information; they have also profoundly transformed the perception of space and time, lifestyles, and our senses of community and self.” Ellin notes that as knowledge, information, and entertainment derive from mass-mediated sources rather than from personal experience, our “sense of reality has been reconfigured” (p.105). Ellin suggests that a secondary reality has emerged that is derived from the media, and has been accelerated by widespread access to television which, as a homogenizing agent, has served to cement the consumer society, and has become a substitute for communal activities.

Piel (1998:p.2) identifies the threat to the public realm, with its implications for urban design practice, resulting from the compression of space and time by global networks of finance, people, media, ideology, and technology. Piel suggests that spatial territories no longer play the same role in constructing personal and group identities as before, and that attachment to physical space is being eroded. The resulting increase in individuation, also fostered by the postmodernist 'culture of differences', is identified by Healey (1997:p.42) as a further threat to the public realm. Healey suggests that individualism assumes that "we can isolate ourselves from each other, creating a little 'culture' around ourselves." This, Healey argues, leads to problems of managing urban space through orientation away from public life, through lack of engagement, a reinforcing of differences as obstacles to understanding each other, and an absence of common principles and values.

Madanipour (1996: p.144) notes that the growth of development companies and access to global financing creating a trend in the privatization of public space. He suggests that this has occurred as large-scale developers have sought safety for their investments and developed totally managed environments with on-site security, such as gated neighbourhoods and shopping malls, in the face of increasing fear of crime. Concurrently, the provision and maintenance of public space as a public service has been met by "an inability or reluctance by public authorities to meet these costs" (p.146). This, he argues, results in a deepening of social and spatial segregation by social and economic processes that are sanctioned by public policy (p.146).

However, the commentators also indict professional designers. Ellin (1996: p.3) argues that a corporate landscape characterized by placelessness, anonymous impersonal spaces, massive structures, and automobile thoroughfares, is not only the product of an increasingly corporate society, but is also the legacy of the modern movement. As Willis (1991) rhetorically asks, “if architectural education is international, and if the work force is international, why shouldn’t Singapore, Abu Dhabi, and New York all start to look the same?” (p.35). A legacy of the modernist approach to urban planning is pointed out by Madanipour (1996), who suggests that “rapid movement . . . and fragmented geography, where land use zones and social classes are set apart . . . provide the possibility of escaping from difference,” and that “losing the ability to live with the difference is a major problem of the modern city” (p.78).

The importance of place is noted by Ellin (1996: p.1) to have diminished over the last several decades as global flows of people, ideas, capital, mass media, and other products have accelerated. She describes this shift as geographical and perceptual — a de-territorialization and placelessness — and suggests that a sense of loss has resulted in a nostalgic search for a lost world. This search is manifested in initiatives to preserve and rehabilitate old central cities, build in a traditional manner, and to reassert traditional social values and institutions, such as marriage, the family, and religion (p.1). But she notes that this has not been accompanied by any desire to relinquish technological advances that raise the standard of living, or of progress and modernity.

Madanipour (1996) describes a further trend in a globalization of real estate (p.142), in which large-scale developers attain access to international capital markets and operate with local partners who are familiar with local markets and regulations. However, with regard to the widespread homogenization of landscapes that might be expected to ensue, Madanipour points out that a standardization process was already in place through modernism.

The culture resulting from these global flows might be described as a wholly material, homogenizing consumerism. Friedmann and Douglass (1995) suggest that people are subordinated to this global culture of capital and to structures of elite power that control and commodify its penetration into local spaces. Hahn (1992) argues that this economic model reduces city dwellers to mere consumers; it has proved to be ineffective for developing a life-sustaining socio-ecological relationship. A sensitivity to culture and the need to establish separate urban identities within the homogenization of the landscape is clearly needed (Willis 1991). Willis also asserts that each city has its own identity, and that a re-examination of the city's cultural and ethnic values, roots, and traditions would provide a basis from which to reinforce its identity and strengthen its character.

However, in the face of this relentless popular and homogenizing culture directing people to consume, counter-movements have developed.

1.5 COUNTER-MOVEMENTS TO THE EFFECTS OF GLOBALIZATION

At the global scale, Healey (1997: p.3) notes that the perception that we live in worlds of multiple forces over which we have little control, helps to mobilize the activities of pressure groups concerned with the environmental effects of global economy. Similarly, initiatives have occurred at the local level. Healey (1997) characterizes contemporary conflicts over public change as also often being initiated by complex, economic forces. Such conflicts, she suggests, have arisen from a growing awareness of questions emerging from progress, and reflect the dilemma of resolving economic-oriented neo-liberal philosophy, and a long-term-oriented re-emphasis on qualities of places. Ellin (1996: p.1) notes that “local efforts have arisen to assert, rediscover, or even invent traditions to combat homogenization or ideological colonialism.” It is largely from civil society that such reaction has emerged.

Civil society is defined by Friedmann and Douglass (1995) as the society of households, family networks, civic and religious organizations, and communities that are bound together by shared histories, collective memories, and cultural norms of reciprocity. Civil society comprises ‘citizens’; a term they define as acknowledging a territorial unit politically organized for life in common. Rights and obligations within this political community are legitimized by democratic theory and include the right to claim *new* rights, which has occurred from the 1980s as its members have challenged existing regimes, particularly over environmental and development issues. According to Friedmann and Douglass, this collective empowerment has been based on the following three issues.

- Rights in terms of an inclusiveness in democratic procedures, including transparency in government transactions, the accountability of the state, and the rights of all citizens to be heard in matters affecting their interests and concerns at a local level;
- A demand for public policies that assert the value of different collective identities living together in the increasingly multi-cultural cities in the world economy (in the context of homogenizing commercially-produced popular culture). A response is required to the needs and interests of different groups, particularly those that have been traditionally marginalized, such as women, indigenous peoples, and minorities.
- The right to human flourishing gained through access to the material bases of social power as the basic conditions of livelihood, including housing, work, a life-sustaining environment, and financial resources. Friedmann and Douglass (1995) ask for an inclusive democracy practiced at the local level, based on asserting a fundamental right to human flourishing.

1.6 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

In Hahn's (1992) model of levels of action for sustainable development, the neighbourhood level is at the interface of the micro- and macro-level. Paralleling Madanipour's perspectives of urban space (see Page 9), Hahn's characterizations of these levels are, at the macro-level, an anonymous, bureaucratic social framework for living and working; and, at the micro-level, involvement, direct perception, and transparency. Hahn also notes the following features of the micro-level: local familiarity for those living and working from daily experience; transparency of social, technical, and ecological functions and causes; distances that can be covered on foot or bicycle; direct experiences for

children and young people; an urban framework for most everyday activities; identification with the neighbourhood as ‘extended self’; sensibility of the threats to a way of life; and the formation of civil action groups. Sustainable restructuring, argues Hahn, will occur primarily at the micro-level where people work and live. This is the situation, according to Hahn, in which people are most directly affected by environmental problems and the consequences of poor planning, and where they have begun to put up opposition.

As Hahn (1992) points out, the neighbourhood offers many opportunities for integrated strategies for technical, social, political, and economic action. Perhaps most importantly, the neighborhood forms the landscapes of everyday life, and, according to Hahn, is structured by past values and attitudes to place. These have a powerful effect on collective consciousness and symbolize the culture of an urban location (Ryan 1995), and yet the neighbourhood is a public realm currently threatened by homogenization.

The contemporary neighbourhood faces further opportunities and constraints. Ahrentzen (1991) points out that the concept of the “separate spheres” of work and home that “masked women’s contribution of unpaid labour” (p. 23) is challenged by increasing use of the home as a base for work. In this context, daily lives, she points out, “spatially fuse public and private activities.” Ahrentzen suggests that tighter-woven communities may emerge within neighbourhoods as the visibility of homeworkers will deter potential criminals, lead to more local shops, and more people in the streets and the shops subsequently recognizing each other. This scenario implies an emergent greater engagement of people with their community.

1.7 PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES

The rise of civil society, through the strength of the demand for greater public accountability, has achieved an increasing level of political response. Public participatory processes offer a manifestation of that political response.

Lowry *et al.* (1997: p.177) trace US legislation requiring citizen participation in planning back to the 1960s. Public participation is now a central feature of professional activity in the public sector (Rance 1995a: p.34), and is required in a wide range of public programs at all levels of government (Lowry *et al.* 1997: p.177). Indeed, Innes and Booher (1999 p.11) point to a universality of inclusive public decision-making:

People all over the world are experimenting with consensus-building to deal with complex, public controversial issues, changing contexts, and uncertain futures in an institutionally and politically fragmented society.

As the above discussion indicates, globalization and its effects are argued to have contributed to the widespread adoption of public participatory processes, as Madanipour (1996) points out:

. . . the two trends of public participation in planning and design and the emphasis on urban public spaces are both reactions by civil society to the pressures that the systems of power and money have created in urban development” (p.220).

1.8 URBAN DESIGN PRACTICE AND THE CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

This chapter has explored the broad definition of urban design as concerned with the processes of urban change. The multiplicities of the contemporary city have been outlined as the context for urban design, and the emergence of public participatory processes as a response to the cultural and economic forces of globalization has been traced.

Given this context for urban design practice, the following chapter will look at the paradigm shift in planning from the modern project to inclusive participatory planning models. The contemporary planning prescriptions proposed by Healey (1997) and Sandercock (1998) are explored as models for urban design processes.

CHAPTER 2: CROSS-THEORIST ANALYSES FOR URBAN DESIGN

This chapter looks at how planning theory has re-structured in response to the contemporary conditions described in Chapter 1, and how such theory might inform urban design practice. Through a two-stage analysis of contemporary analyses, this chapter traces the theoretical emergence of the interactive planning paradigm, and its application within urban design decision-making processes. First, Friedmann's (1987), Healey's (1997), and Sandercock's (1998) critiques of the modern project analyses will be examined. Second, the planning paradigms proposed by Sandercock and Healey are looked at in epistemological and practice terms; in other words, how planners might *know*, and what planners might *do*. The chapter concludes with a statement of how the debates in planning can be seen to be reflected in urban design process theory, and the following chapter will extend this discussion by looking back on this theoretical position from practice perspectives.

2.1. AN ANALYSIS OF ANALYSES: FRIEDMANN, HEALEY AND SANDERCOCK

Figure 2 provides a cross-theorist tabulation of Friedmann's (1987), Healey's (1997), and Sandercock's (1998) analyses. A clear commonality exists among these commentators on the obsolescence of the rational planning model: it is considered anti-democratic; they call for multiple ways of knowing to replace positivism as the epistemological basis for planning; and the concept of a unitary public interest is considered redundant as it is disinterested in differences in race, ethnicity, and gender.

| | | Friedmann | Healey | Sandercock |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| CRITIQUE OF RATIONAL, COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING MODEL | overview | A "science of society", that will guide the world to social progress through social rationality | Three planning traditions — economic, physical development policy analysis—trapped inside modernist instrumental rationality | Rationality, comprehensiveness, scientific objectivity, project of state-directed futures, notion of 'public-interest' |
| | evolution | Integration of market rationality — the pursuit of self-interest; and social rationality — as the exercise of reason for the group | Basis of scientific knowledge (for problem identifying and solution creation) and instrumental rationality (relating means and end) | A "totalizing modernist narrative" that omits the contribution of women and ethnic groups to city-building |
| | reasons cited for discrediting rational planning model | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis of knowing: the certainties of positivism regarding knowledge about society has become discredited, undermining planning as a 'scientific endeavor'. • Accelerated pace of historical events: stability is needed for planning to function — the creation of policies, plans, and programs entail time-consuming processes; many are obsolete by the time they are ready for implementation • Unprecedented nature of the events society faces: contemporary scale — such as the magnitude of environmental degradation and the size of cities, render 'laws' gained from precedents to be worthless. Similarly, there is a lack of any genuine knowledge concerning such events. | Evolutionary perspective based on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • economic planning tradition moving to increasing appreciation of institutional preconditions for economic health; • physical development tradition moving to recognize social processes underpinning spatial organization and urban form and the range and complexity of the demands of environmental management • policy analysis tradition seeking to escape from emphasis on instrumental reason and scientific knowledge to incorporate greater understanding of people's ways of knowing and valuing in order to make policy development and implementation more interactive • shifting of conceptual ground into a phenomenological interpretation of the relationship of knowledge to action • displacement of moral, emotive, and aesthetic issues from public life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern with making public decisions more rational creates means-focused, rather than goals-focused, planning activity. The basis of technical-rationality can be replaced by communicative-rationality based on practical knowing, argued to be more appropriate given the future uncertainties with which planning is concerned • The desired multifunctional and multisectoral comprehensiveness of rational planning is oriented to the production of documents; planning needs to be interactive and centered on people • Positivist grounding of the rational model precludes experiential, intuitive, and contextual knowledge held by local communities • Rational planning argued to be a project of state-directed futures; community-based planning practice based on community empowerment is a better means to attain social and environmental justice, and local economic community development • The rational planning model operates 'in the public interest', argued to be invalid given the contemporary conceptual city is characterized by <i>multiplicity</i> |
| PRESCRIPTION FOR FUTURE PLANNING | overview | SOCIAL MOBILIZATION: Recentring of political power in civil society to transform the state and corporate economy from within | COMMUNICATIVE: urban regionalist perspective of organizing political communities for collective, collaborative management of shared spaces for improving the quality of urban environments. Relation-building processes | INSURGENT: Progressive planning practice based on social justice, citizenship, community, multiple publics. |
| | epistemology | All knowledge is perspectivist and provisional gained from dialogic process. Expression of subjective realities, search for meaningful action. Includes cognitive fields such as mythology, folklore, history and linguistics | Postmodern conception of knowledges and values as social constructions; based on Giddens theory of structuration and Habermas' communicative action and communicative ethics | Experiential, intuitive, local knowledges based on talking., listening, seeing, contemplating, sharing, including visual and symbolic expression |

Figure 2: Cross-theorist critiques of the rational comprehensive planning model and prescriptions for future planning

Sources: Friedmann (1987), Healey (1997), Sandercock (1998).

Beauregard (1996: p213) offers a useful summary of the intent of the modern project. He suggests that the period during which the modern project maintained its integrity was from the early years of the century to the 1960s, but by the 1980s the modernist planning project was under attack. He suggests that planning within the modern project was directed at four aims:

. . . to (1) bring reason and democracy to bear on capitalist urbanization, (2) guide state decision-making with technical rather than political rationality, (3) produce a coordinated and functional urban form organized around collective goals, and (4) use economic growth to create a middle-class society (p.213).

For placing planning theory in context, Innes (1995: p.183) identifies the importance of Friedmann's (1987) history of planning. As Friedmann (1987) points out, the planner's role is reactive: thought follows practice, and planners respond to actors' needs. Friedmann lists these needs as including information, interpretation, problem-definition, projection, evaluation, and strategic programming. Friedmann's analysis of planning traditions is broad, and an examination of his chronology of planning within the twentieth century illustrates how emergent planning theory has responded to momentous events producing social change (notably WW1, the Great Depression, WW2, and the popular protests of the 1960s). Friedmann argues that industrial capitalism is in crisis, and suggests that because social guidance is part of the system-in-crisis, it is part of the problem and therefore incapable of coping with the crisis of industrial capitalism. 'Alternative' development, less integrated with the dynamics of industrial capitalism, he argues to be emerging around two strategies: collective self-reliance in development, and the recovery of political community.

Sandercock (1998: p.4) points out that the modernist paradigm, founded in scientific and technical reason, came to dominate planning during the 20th century, and still endures despite the damage it has done to “the environment, community, cultural diversity, and to the human spirit.” However, Sandercock points out that planning is now in the midst of a “paradigm shift”— from the order, coherence, regulation and homogeneity of the modernist technical-rationality, to a progressive, postmodernist planning that embraces the multiplicity of the contemporary city. The post-war move in planning to an applied social science lost, in Sandercock’s view, the importance of place and place-making, and local knowledges that were manifest in the structures and memories of communities.

2.2 PRESCRIPTIONS FOR FUTURE PLANNING

As Figure 2 illustrates, from the theorists’ criticisms of rationalism it can be seen that a paradigm shift in planning theory has clearly taken place. The new paradigm involves communicative action and interactive practice (Innes 1995), and is based on a bottom-up inclusive approach that recognizes multiple knowledges. As Healey (1997) points out:

It is now widely understood in the planning field that planning is an interactive process, undertaken in a social context, rather than a purely technical process of design, analysis and management (p.65).

Figure 2 also outlines each theorists’ prescription for future planning. The analysts’ prescriptions for future planning are differentiated, but are underpinned by the common principles that inform the new planning paradigm.

The core of Friedmann's (1987) agenda for planning as a broad based social movement, might be summarized as generating social, environmental, cultural, and political developments. These are aimed at achieving a just world order from self-reliant action within each territorially based community.

Healey's and Sandercock's proposals might be placed within Innes' (1995) conception of a paradigm shift in planning theory in which new theorists "take practice as the raw material of their inquiry" and, particularly in Healey's case, "do grounded theorizing based on richly interpretive study of practice"(p.183). Innes suggests that such theoretical work greatly reduces the gap between planning theory and planning practice (p.183).

Friedmann's (1987) contribution is recognized for its development of a theoretical platform. However, the later prescriptions of Healey's (1997) collaborative model and Sandercock's (1998) insurgent model are carried forward here and examined in more detail, since they provide more contemporary models focused on planning practice, and are therefore considered more useful for this inquiry.

2.3 HEALEY'S COLLABORATIVE PLANNING MODEL

Healey's (1997) proposals are based on an urban regionalist perspective of organizing political communities for collective, collaborative management of shared spaces to improve the quality of people's environments. The development of Healey's position is diagrammed in Figure 3.

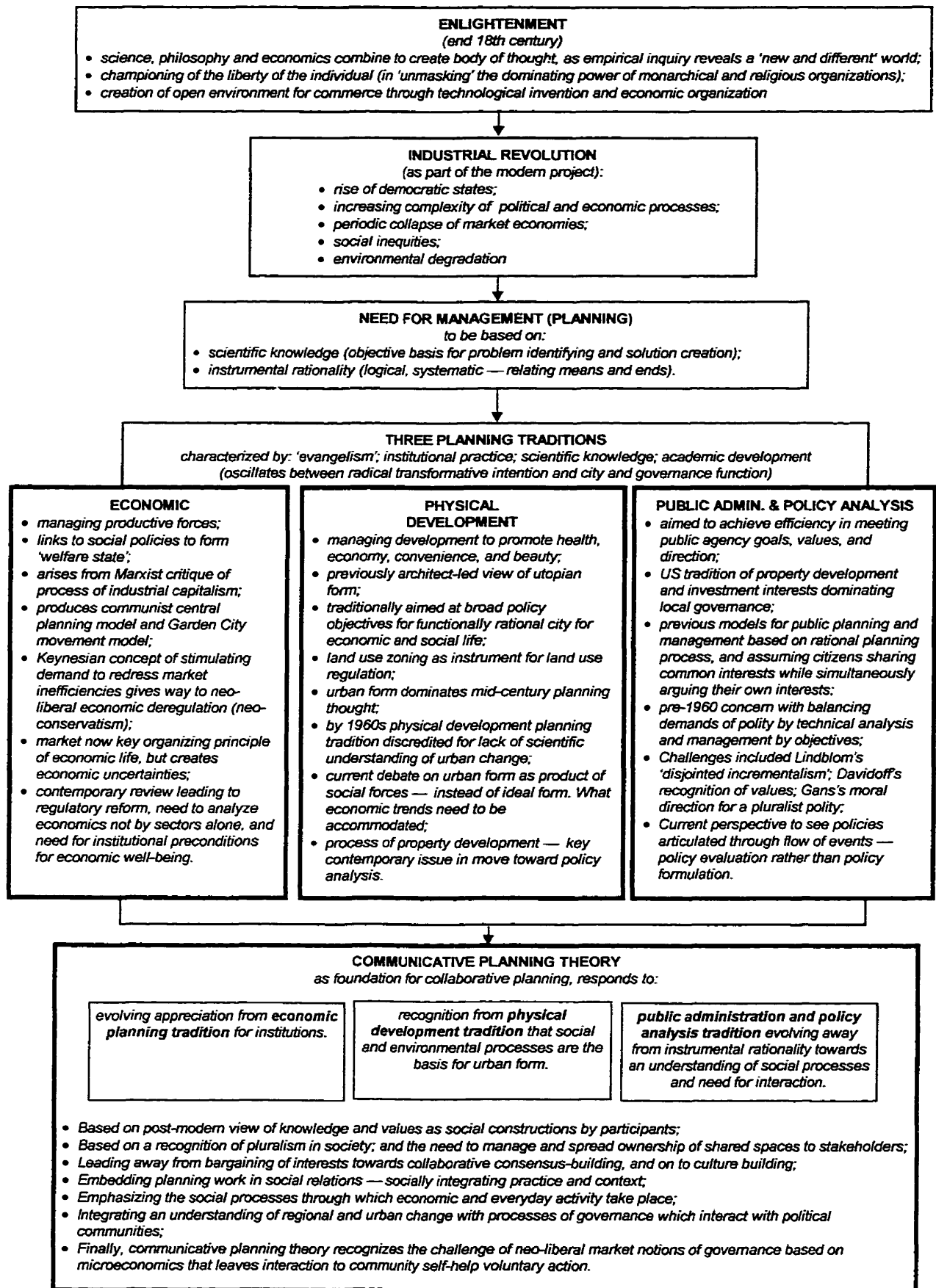


Figure 3: Healey's development of a collaborative planning model

Source: derived from Healey (1997).

Healey's proposals constitute an approach to governance in a postmodern world that is rooted in everyday life:

. . . an *institutionalist* approach to understanding urban and regional change, drawing on recent developments in regional economics and sociology. This focuses on social relations through which daily life and business organization are conducted, and the way social and biospheric relations interweave. It develops a *communicative* approach to the design of governance systems and practices, focusing on ways of fostering collaborative, consensus-building practices (p.5; emphasis original).

As explained in the principal text (1997), the development of communicative planning theory, proposed by Healey as the basis for collaborative planning, is traced from three planning traditions: economic planning; physical development planning; and public administration and policy analysis.

Healey notes that her proposals for collaborative planning as an inclusive means of managing environments draws on the work of two contemporary thinkers:

The first, Anthony Giddens . . . offers a social theory which helps to interpret individual ways of being in the context of social constraints, through a *theory of structuration*. The second, Jurgen Habermas, drawing on the German tradition of critical theory, provides a normative philosophy for the reconstitution of the public realm, built on a conception of inter-subjective consciousness and the *theory of communicative action* (p.44).

Healey uses these conceptions to point out that people live within structures abstracted from daily life. People are culturally embedded within geographical and historical structures that carry ways of thinking, sets of values, and forms of behaviour between generations within webs of relations. By challenging the dominance of instrumental-

technical reasoning with moral reasoning and emotive-aesthetic reasoning, and using honesty, sincerity, and openness in communication, new structures can be invented and new appropriate culture-building can take place. Healey's proposals might therefore be described as being based on reconciling the differences in understandings, values, and identities that different groups hold; and then building consensual solutions for the design, planning, and management of shared, urban spaces.

Healey explores the contemporary nature of community in terms of inequalities, and the need for building capacity within communities for co-existence. She argues for building capacity at local levels to ameliorate economic environments, and for improving environmental quality through giving individuals access to public strategy-making, creating a pluralist participation through which social and cultural resources can be accessed.

Healey is proposing a fundamental need for creating places for dialogues, and her work constitutes proposals for a re-design of the public realm based on notions of social and intellectual capacity-building. According to Healey, conflict mediation and consensus-building offer twin benefits: first, that in collaborative discussion of shared concerns people can learn about the issues, each other, and themselves; and second, that a store of intellectual and social capital is built up with which to deal with new conflicts (1997: p.33).

Healey's position might be seen to be reinforced by Madanipour's (1996) perspective on the relationship of postmodernist and modernist forms of rationality in urban design:

According to instrumental rationality, the process would only be rational if it ends in the purpose that was expected from it. As distinct from that, the [*proposed*] form of rationality . . . is one which aims at consensus between the players involved, and is in general making reference to norms and values shared by them as a point of departure (pp.113-114).

Healey's concept of soft governance infrastructure, which comprises inclusionary collaborative processes, generally remains abstract in her program. Chapter 5 offers some principles for enabling urban designers in the postmodern context as the recommendations and conclusion of this thesis. As noted in Chapter 1, urban designers currently emerge from the built environment professions of planning, architecture, and landscape architecture; and these professions traditionally share, with Healey's work (1997), a focus on improving urban environments. It is hoped that the principles included in Chapter 5 will help to concretize at least the built environment professional's role in Healey's concept of soft governance infrastructure.

2.4 SANDERCOCK'S INSURGENT PLANNING MODEL

The development of Sandercock's (1998) insurgent planning model is diagrammed in Figure 4. Sandercock's prescription is based around a progressive planning practice aimed at empowering communities, and using experiential and intuitive knowledge:

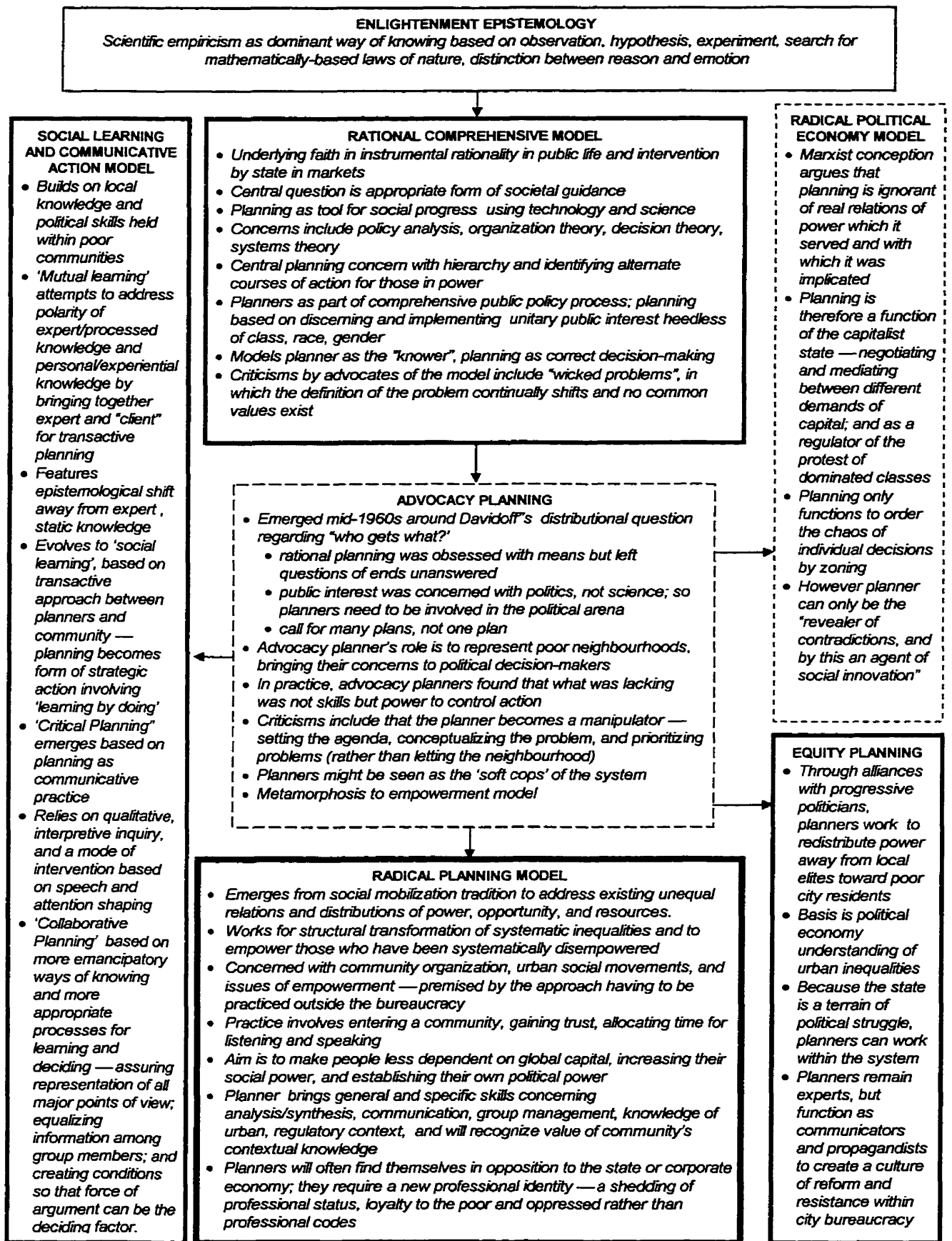


Figure 4: Sandercock's development of an insurgent planning model

Source: derived from Sandercock 1998

. . . an emergent planning paradigm which is grounded in the rise of civil society and embodies a new definition of social justice for cities and regions, which includes, but goes well beyond, economic concerns, engaging problems of marginalization, disempowerment, cultural imperialism, and violence. This new paradigm requires a very different kind of planning, a familiarity with the lifeways of communities, and new kinds of cultural and political literacies (p.6).

Sandercock argues for an insurgent planning that will address issues of social, cultural and environmental justice in the postmodern context:

It is with a certain exhilaration that I write . . . of the death of the ‘Rational City’ — that is, of modernist notions of technical rationality providing order, coherence, regulation, homogeneity — and celebrate instead the spaces of insurgent citizenship, the rise of civil society in the form of organized social movements which confront modernist planning with its anti-democratic, race and gender-blind, and culturally homogenizing practices (p.4).

Sandercock’s analysis identifies six shifts within the planning paradigm from the 1940s (see Figure 4); and she notes that all six are still contemporary. Sandercock summarizes her position with her ‘foundations of modern postmodern praxis’ (p.30), which comprise five principles:

1. Means-ends rationality may still be a useful concept - especially for building bridges and dams - but we also need greater and more explicit reliance on practical wisdom.
2. Planning is no longer exclusively concerned with comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated action (multi-sectoral and multi-functional plans), but more with negotiated, political, and focused planning. This in turn makes it less document-oriented and more people-centred.
3. There are different kinds of appropriate knowledge in planning. ‘Art or science’ is the wrong way to phrase the question. Which knowledges, in what situations, is more to the point. Local communities have experiential, grounded, contextual, intuitive knowledges, which are manifested through speech, songs, stories, and various visual forms (from cartoons to graffiti, from bark paintings to videos), rather than the more familiar kinds of

planning 'sources' (census data, simulation models, etc). Planners have to learn to access these other ways of knowing.

4. From our modernist reliance on state-directed futures and top-down processes, we have to move to community-based planning, from the ground up, geared to community empowerment.

5. We have to deconstruct both 'the public interest' and 'community', recognizing that each tends to exclude difference. We must acknowledge that there are multiple publics and that planning in this new multicultural arena, requires a new kind of multicultural literacy.

Sandercock's proposals are focused on generating political process aimed at empowerment within marginalized communities:

The role of these planners is 'to teach people how to fish': that is, to help marginalized communities to find their own voice, but *not* to speak for them (p.7; emphasis original).

Sandercock's prescription might be viewed as asserting the value of marginalized communities within dominant culture. However, the focus of Sandercock's planning model on marginalized communities, and their relationship to the mainstream, might be perceived as limited. The model not only confines planners' activities to working with low-income communities; it also requires an allegiance to a particular community. On a city scale, it presents a community-unit competitive environment, rather than a co-operative, coordinated effort by low-income communities. Sandercock paints a picture of the planner as a non-combatant champion: involved; yet not involved. The proposal offers no guidance for relations between marginalized communities. Sandercock's focus on the low-income communities is a strategy that reinforces identities and divisiveness; it may not in fact transform society, but rather entrench the current position. However, the premise of community empowerment from which her model might be argued to develop, provides an appropriate and positive basis for progress.

2.5 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The content of Sandercock's and Healey's proposals coincide, yet each focuses on different planning arenas: Healey's model ranges from the local to the regional scale; Sandercock's focus is the marginalized community. However, both proposals are argued to focus on a geographical communities.

Sandercock herself provides a comparative perspective on her insurgent planning approach and the collaborative planning approach proposed by Healey:

There are at least two faces to this new planning. One face looks benign enough. It belongs to the folks who wear suits and have higher degrees and are mostly white though not all male, and which are trying to address the crisis of planning institutions by introducing techniques of negotiation and mediation, collaboration and consensus-building. They are grounded in the social and political thought of Jurgen Habermas and, within planning, in the writings of John Forester and Larry Susskind, Patsy Healey and Judith Innes. The other face is less benign. It may scowl at you and cuss. It may set you as the enemy. This face doesn't usually dress in suits and it's not interested in institutions because those institutions have traditionally excluded such people.

The above quotation clearly indicates that friction may exist between these two planning positions. It is argued here, however, that while the focus of each opposition differs, common principles inform each in practice.

The following common themes emerge:

- the need to create dialogic space;
- the need to develop inclusive, democratic processes aimed at bringing together the interests of geographical communities;

- the need for planning to function at neighbourhood levels;
- the need to validate multiple ways of knowing.

In sum, it is argued that both Healey's and Sandercock's foci for planning offer strong theoretical guidance for urban design practice. Healey's and Sandercock's positions, it is argued, provide models for two roles for urban designers identified by Ellin (1996).

Ellin (1996: p.4) notes two alternate future prospects for society: first, the conservative approach manifested in "the call to re-everything — rehabilitate, revitalize, restore, renew, redevelop, recycle, renaissance, etc.," which she suggests affirms the existing power structure; and second, a radical prospect which sees the opportunity for introducing ideas and practices that will bring about greater social equality. Correspondingly, Ellin (1996: pp.133-134) suggests that the urban designer's role has shifted during the postmodern decades to that of a facilitator, who aims at giving people what they want, or a political activist, who aims at empowering people. Healey's prescription for planners, while being cooperative and grounded in a regional perspective, might be argued to tend toward the former of these alternatives, and Sandercock's to the latter. However, this thesis considers neither position wholly satisfactory for urban design practice, and develops an alternative position that is described in the final chapter.

The above discussion provides a perspective the paradigm shift in planning theory, from the modern project model to a participatory planning model. This paradigm shift is also traced by urban design commentators, as discussed below.

2.6 PARADIGM SHIFT IN URBAN DESIGN

Madanipour (1996) notes that modernist urban design in cities was based on the use of reason to rationalize urban spatial structure (p.76), and that, subsequently, “the relationship between physical and social space, i.e. between form and function in modernist architectural language, has been one of the key themes of the postmodern challenge to modernism” (p.11). Furthermore, the engagement of urban design with culture in the postmodern context addresses Moore Milroy’s (1990) claim that culture has been “largely ignored or taken for granted in social science theories and planning.” (p.181).

A major precept for abandonment of the modern project lies in its abstraction of people into a unity public interest. Drawing on postmodern epistemology, Madanipour (1996 p.63) points out that a multiplicity of environments exist as ‘mental constructions’ through interpretations that vary from people’s background and experience. These, he suggests, can be broadly divided into perspectives that “see the city as a site of opportunity and interaction, and those that see it as a place of deprivation and alienation” (p.64). In terms of environmental cognition, the “mental maps of individuals largely depend on their real or perceived place in social and economic hierarchies” (Madanipour 1996 p.69). While urban design can be approached solely as a creative process, it needs to address “changes in socially-constructed forms of behaviour and environment, which vary through time and place” (p.xi), illustrating the need for viewing urban design as a broad activity responding to social and physical urban aspects.

In describing the position facing planning from the 1980s, Madanipour (1996) uses two perspectives from above and below on this paradigm shift. These perspectives align with Madanipour's views on urban space (quoted on Page 9):

. . . two sets of pressures were pulling the planning system in different directions. The structural pressure from above was aimed at loosening the grip of the planning system in order to help the growth of the economy through the growth of the private sector. It was therefore expecting to emphasize the exchange value of the built environment as an incentive for economic growth. On the other hand, the pressure from below was demanding an emphasis on use value, on improving the quality of environment for the users and inhabitants of the built environment (p.157).

This has resulted, Madanipour argues, in a new role for planning, as it has been encouraged to “adopt a softer, less interventionist form of control through negotiation and enabling,” with the role of the planner changing accordingly:

The planner as an enabler is now expected to respond equally to the structural pressure for space production and to the local pressure for public participation and better-quality built environments” (p.158).

2.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR URBAN DESIGN

In the urban design context, Madanipour (1996 p.63) suggests that urban space is defined by patterns of meaning and behaviour. These are the complexities of everyday life that stand against the notions of order traditionally advocated by urban planners and designers. Similarly, Madanipour (1996 p.62) argues for a socio-spatial viewpoint as a premise for urban design based on “an understanding of the small-scale, unstructured dimensions of human behavior within cities and the way symbolic interaction with urban space endows it with meaning (p.62). This perspective includes a postmodern conceptualization of place as

“a contested space with multiple identities” (p.24). Lowry *et al.* (1997) point out, “the ideal of citizen involvement . . . is central to contemporary planning ideology.” Both Sandercock’s and Healey’s conceptions provide for addressing these concerns through focusing on validating everyday forms of knowledge within inclusive participatory processes.

2.8 CROSS-THEORIST ANALYSES AND URBAN DESIGN

This chapter has looked at how emergent planning theory can inform urban design practice. The discrediting of the modern project and the paradigm shift to communicative action and interactive practice has been investigated through Friedmann’s (1987), Healey’s (1997) and Sandercock’s (1998) analyses, and through Healey’s (1997) and Sandercock’s (1998) prescriptions for contemporary planning. The need for creating dialogic space; developing inclusive democratic processes aimed at bringing together community interests; and the validating of multiple ways of knowing have been identified as principles with which guide urban design practice.

The following chapter looks at the role of the urban designer in the contemporary social context outlined in Chapter 1, and the prescriptions for guiding urban design practice described in this chapter.

CHAPTER 3: SHAPING THE ROLE OF THE URBAN DESIGNER

This chapter looks at the issues that shape the traditional role of the urban design practitioner, and continues the exploration of contemporary urban design practice set out in the preceding chapters. Chapter 1 provided the context for this inquiry, looking at the field of urban design, and the multiplicities of the contemporary city as its context.

Chapter 2 looked to recent planning theory as the informant of contemporary practice, and identified two theoretical models for urban design practice based on inclusive, democratic processes that validate alternatives to rationally based knowledge.

This chapter explores the practice and professional context in which urban designers work. The traditional role of the planner/designer within the production of the built environment is investigated. Professionalism is explored as the provider of principles for professional planning and design activities; and, in particular, the appropriateness of expertise as the basis for professionalism. The formalist approach to design, which is argued to be a central feature of the culture of the design professions, is investigated as a constraining factor on establishing people-centred practice. The importance of processes, both participatory and interprofessional, is looked at from a professional perspective. As an alternative form of practice, *placemaking* is outlined as offering a coherent inclusive planning and design model to which mainstream urban design practice might aspire.

3.1 URBAN DESIGN WITHIN THE PRODUCTION OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Madanipour (1996) suggests that the process of development has political, economic, and aesthetic dimensions, and that it is within the development process that the place and role of urban design might be found (p.91). But while suggesting that design is an integral part of the development process, he challenges the primacy of both built environment professionals and developers in the development process (p.119). Madanipour suggests that the widely held belief that urban planners and urban designers shape urban spaces (which has attracted widespread post-war criticism to the respective professions) is illusory. Similarly, he argues that the belief that developers make the main decisions and designers act merely as associates of these business interests is also illusory. These convictions, he suggests, are based on the conception that designers and developers hold different beliefs and aims: that the designer is held to be concerned with aesthetics and function, while the developer is guided by markets and profit margins. Madanipour argues that the arenas of urban design and property development are not, in fact, separate, but that design and development are different aspects of the same process (p.120).

Madanipour (1996) proposes that both design and development lie within a conception that contains “the structural imperatives of the state and markets, and the individual responses and initiatives of individuals and firms” (p.122). Madanipour’s review of the models of the development process within this conception (pp.122-126) is summarized in Figure 6, which outlines supply-demand, event-sequence, and structure-agency approaches to the development process, and the implications of each for urban design.

| DEVELOPMENT PROCESS MODEL SETS | DEVELOPMENT PROCESS MODEL | MODEL CHARACTERISTICS | URBAN DESIGN IMPLICATIONS |
|--|---------------------------|--|--|
| models based on supply and demand analysis | EQUILIBRIUM MODELS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on neoclassical economy and the Chicago school of human ecology — analytical basis for understanding urban systems is spatial relations • Spatial relations (including the physical shape of the city and the relations between urban areas and individuals) take place within free-market framework • Underlying assumption is that land and property is in equilibrium between supply and demand achieved through marketplace competition — as new or recycled supplies enter market to satisfy consumers demands, buyers and sellers engage in competitive bidding process • Model fails to explain and account for political intervention; diverse form of demand; non-economic interests of participants; uncertainty regarding future gain; and distortions produced by appraisal and valuations methods; and the complexities of development process comprising different actors involvement in events taking place over time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design can be conceived as either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>aesthetic responses to demand</i> • <i>a supply-side tool for creating marketable products</i> |
| | EVENT-SEQUENCE MODELS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of time-scale and stages of development process, generally comprising: <i>evaluation - preparation - implementation - disposal</i> • Models fail to address the interests of participating actors, and the wide variety of conditions specific to various projects. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design process is an identifiable stage within a long and complex development process |
| | AGENCY MODELS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracing and description of various actors such as planners, developers, landowners and their roles interests, and relationships within development process • Models fail to address the driving forces of the process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspective that identifies designers and design process within an interactive process that integrates actors and events |
| models based on political economy analysis | CAPITAL-LABOUR MODELS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on market structures and role of capital, labour, and land within process • Space treated as commodity and its production is subject to same processes as other goods and services • Tends to view conflicts in urban space as reflecting other capital-labour tensions — corporate capitalists are the only actors that matter as they control the means of production | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design is viewed as a relatively unimportant element in a process signified by capital and labour conflict, and will take the side of one or other of the adversaries • Design might be viewed as a tool for the smooth operation of capital. |
| | STRUCTURE-AGENCY MODELS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambrose's model (1987) divides main political and economic forces of the state, the finance industry, and the construction industry into number of actors with different roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The state, as the political force within the development process, comprises central and local governments, and influences the production of the built environment through planning regulations, public spending policies, tax incentives, and direct spending</i> • <i>Investment decisions made within the finance industry, are influential in the development or dereliction of an area</i> • <i>The construction industry has wide-ranging impacts as development agencies on the built environment it produces. It is characterized as fragmented, with small firms predominant</i> • Model fails to explain the driving forces in the relationships between the state, the finance industry, and the construction industry • Healey's (1991) <i>institutional</i> model attempts to be universal through addressing the agencies, events and diversity of processes within different conditions, and identifying their roles and interests in relation to the rules, strategies, and interests of the development process. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design is an element within the developer's role — i.e. as a tool for the development industry to symbolically represent economic and political interests |

Figure 5: Development Process Models

Source: Madanipour (1996)

However, other than Healey's conception of the structure-agency model, the role of urban design in the production of the built environment in these development process models is generally not significant. Madanipour points out that while design, as a cultural factor, is not entirely subordinate to the economics of the development process, urban design might be viewed in these remaining models as a process in which designers are only part of the cast of performers.

Healey's (1997) perspective on the production of the built environment is consistent with the social theory used in the development of her collaborative planning model discussed in Chapter 2. She summarizes the institutional view of development activity as follows :

This emphasizes the social relations of the production and consumption of space. Its dynamics need to be understood in the same way as that of other economic sectors. This involves understanding the relational webs which interlink landowners, developers, investors, purchasers, leasers and renters in the development process, and how these interconnect with the regulatory and investment processes pursued by governments. It also concerns analysis of the driving forces of the processes, and how these vary in place and time. Finally it focuses attention on the institutional relations of the development industry and how these are both embedded in local specificities, such as land-ownership patterns, and open to national and international development and investment activity. The result is a 'land and property market', with particular capabilities to deliver sites, buildings and local environments (p.149).

In this institutionalist conception, the urban designer can be viewed as linked to the many players in the process of producing the built environment, and offers urban designers the opportunity, however limited, to shape events within that process.

Urban design can also be seen as an important contributor to the dynamics of the process. The Marxist conception of relating *use value* and *exchange value* (in which a single property has both a functional *use value*, e.g. as a place in which to live; and a market-based *exchange value*, e.g. as a generator of rents) developed by Logon and Molotch (1987, cited by Madanipour 1996: p.130) offers a further perspective on the designer's role. In this model, design can be seen as maximizing *exchange value* and therefore serving investors in their profit-making capacity, while at the same time serving users and their requirements. In this perspective, design becomes a major factor of both production and consumption (Madanipour 1996: pp.130-2).

Madanipour argues for a greater awareness amongst designers of the complexities, contents, and processes involved in the production of the built environment; otherwise the designer's awareness is limited to the creation of form — an activity which he argues may often be more constrained than designers traditionally believe. Madanipour points out that developers may never see the development they promote or buy, and that design decisions may therefore be seen by them as secondary considerations (p.121). Additionally, investors, surveyors, and developers make many design decisions before a designer is involved — these decisions affect the form of the property and the urban space it helps to produce. He suggests that investors or developers may be neither engaged nor interested in the final design of a development, which further marginalizes design as a non-essential aspect of development.

A further economic perspective of design is offered by Madanipour's investigation (1996: p. 137) into the commodification of space and the standardization of its design. He suggests that the nature of development agencies, and their expectations of a development, has a large impact on its form:

As space has been increasingly produced and exchanged as a commodity, its qualities are largely influenced by this transformation. Therefore, commodification of space, the changing nature of development agencies and the evolving socio-spatial structures will all be reflected in the urban design process and its product.

Madanipour states that the impact of predominant financial capital and the subsequent high turnover in the property market has been significant for the built environment. He tells us that developers prefer safe, conventional locations and spatial forms (pp.140-1). He argues that larger organizations, who have driven out local developers with the growing involvement of the financial industry in property (p.139), tend towards a standardization of design in speculative work as they seek to create as flexible a property as possible to find a larger potential market. Standardization of design also reduces the risk of low appraisals (p.139), and occurs as investors seek to reduce the gap between exchange and use values. Additionally, retail chain stores, another type of larger organization, insist upon a 'house-style' for their properties. In this conception, the role of design to provide locally derived solutions to the form of the built environment is again marginalized.

In this discussion, it can be seen that the theoretical production of the urban fabric occurs where the social and physical environmental contexts overlap. However limited the actual role of the urban designer in the process of producing the built environment, it might be argued that the outcome of the work of the urban design practitioner is a powerful agent in its dynamics. The discussion will now turn to look at aspects of professionalism as the informants of professional urban designers' actions.

3.2 PROFESSIONALISM AND URBAN DESIGN

This discussion of professionalism looks at two themes: a professional perspective and a counterprofessional perspective. This dialectic concerns the role of the professional as holder of technical-instrumental expertise and as societal servant; and the radical view of the professional as the instrument of social control (Schön 1983).

Muir (1995a) suggests that the growth in specialization is a central issue in exploring the role of contemporary built environment professionals:

Specialization of roles and skills resulted inevitably in interdependency and thus created the growth of communities, with people becoming increasingly **reliant on each other for the provision and maintenance of their total environment.** From this development can be seen the expectation of our modern society which is that each person will acquire a specific skill that can only be ultimately productive when used in conjunction with other skills (p.11).

As suggested in Chapter 1 (see Figure 1) the primary professions concerned with urban design are planning, architecture, and landscape architecture. Planning and landscape

architecture can be traced to have emerged, initially, as specializations from within the architectural profession. In describing the relationship between planning and design, Madanipour (1996) notes that “town planning had evolved as the branch of architecture dealing with urban design.” and that the complexity of large-scale state intervention in the city brought about the need for administrative management and planning as a separate discipline (p.158). As well as the common concern for the urban environment, built environment practitioners share professional foundations for their activities.

Grant (1991: p.59) points out that architects and designers are “motivated to create beautiful, useful, and good environments and buildings,” and underlying planners’ activities is the seeking of a common good (Innes 1996). However, despite this intent of professionals, Schön (1983) suggests that the professions are immersed in a crisis of confidence — primarily following a societal loss in faith in the technical expert.

As Muir (1995b) points out, the essential requirement for professionalism in the private sector is the basic need for financial solvency (p.47). In tracing the historical development of the professions, Muir (1995a) notes that “one of the prime achievements of the (mediaeval) guilds was to protect the interests of their members and to defend their ‘employment territory’ ”(p.6). Fisher (1993), speaking from within the architectural profession, points out how the initial intention of architecture as a profession — to safeguard the broad interest in the environment — has eroded through the twentieth

century and might be argued to be no longer applicable within a new commercially-oriented perception of professionals:

Architecture, like most of the leading professions, was established in the 19th Century as a counterforce to commerce, as a public trust that would attend to matters the business world ignored for their lack of profitability. So, while the art of architecture traditionally glorified the public's guardians — the princes and popes — the profession of architecture was founded to guard the public, not just the public's health and safety through building and zoning codes, but the public realm and the public interest broadly defined. In this century, the architectural profession has strayed far from that original purpose. Although architects must daily confront the problems of working in or running small businesses, we too often let that commercial frame of mind dominate the profession's guardian role. Evidence of that exists wherever architects let the self-interest of clients run counter to the best interests of the public: wherever a building destroys its site, ignores its context, offends its neighbors, wastes limited resources, or neglects user needs. There are plenty of excuses for such negligence. But every time it happens, the public's trust in the profession erodes, to the point where architects are now dismissed by too many people as hired guns for anyone who will pay (p.7).

Schön describes increasing signs of a crisis of confidence within the professions as stemming from well-publicized misuse of autonomy for private gain, the visible failures of professionally-designed solutions to public problems, and conflicting recommendations from professionals to such problems (p.4). These, Schön suggests, have led to a loss of faith in professional judgement.

Indeed, the rise of civil society described in Chapter 1 might be argued to be largely due to public disenchantment with environmental change, with implications for the planner-architect-landscape architect nexus of built environment practitioners. This disenchantment is noted by Ellin (1996: p.3), who sees the erosion of the political, economic, social, and

symbolic functions of the central city, and a general dissatisfaction with the products of modern architecture and city planning. Barnett (1982: pp.7-8) too suggests that the emergent emphasis on community participation and review, and an increased popularity for historic preservation, is due to people's changed perception about development: while change was previously seen as both necessary and desirable; it is now sometimes considered with deep pessimism.

Commentators' criticisms of the professional condition create victims of both the public and of professionals themselves. Schön (1987: p.7) cites Illich's (1970) criticism of professionalism: "misappropriating and monopolizing knowledge, blithely disregarding social injustices, and mystifying their expertise," while Blau *et al.* (1983: p.ix) point out that the legitimacy of professionalism has contradictory implications for the institutional and ideological integrity of the design field. The question of status, however, remains. As Schön (1987: p.7) asks, "when professionals' claim to extraordinary knowledge is so much in question, why should we (society) continue to grant them extraordinary rights and privileges?"

3.3 EXPERTISE AS A BASIS FOR PROFESSIONALISM

Schön (1983) suggests that professional institutions are "committed, for the most part, to a particular epistemology, a view of knowledge that fosters selective inattention to practical competence and professional artistry" (p.vii). In his (1983) inquiry into the epistemology of practice, he concludes that it largely comprises an intuitive knowing-in-

practice, most of which is tacit. This concept of reflective practice has implications for the professional's relationship to her/his client, for the organizational settings of practice, for the future interaction of research and practice, and for the place of professionals in the larger society (p.ix).

Schön (1983) describes the (male) professional's dilemma:

Whenever a professional claims to "know", in the sense of the technical expert, he imposes his categories, theories, and techniques on the situation before him. He ignores, explains away, or controls those features of the situation, including the human beings within it, which do not fit his knowledge-in-practice. When he works in an institution whose knowledge structure reinforces his image of expertise, then he tends to see himself as accountable for nothing more than the delivery of his stock of techniques according to the measures of performance imposed on him. He does not see himself as free, or obliged, to participate in setting objectives and framing problems. The institutional system reinforces his image of expertise in inducing a pattern of unilateral control. (pp.345-6)

Schön (1983: p.5) points out that the questioning of professionalism concern professionals' autonomy, including their right to determine who shall be allowed to practice, and especially the claim to extraordinary knowledge. Schon asks, "is this specialized knowledge misappropriated in their own interests, and in the interests of a power elite intent of preserving its dominance over the rest of society?" (p.5). Sandercock (1998) also notes that quantitative, analytical modes, and technical jargons exclude those without professional training. The professions have effectively disabled those without professional training from these formal processes through protection of function and title, the use of technical language and methods, and using elitist aesthetic values (Schneekloth

1995). Indeed, as Newmarch (1995) observes, it is only recently that roles between artists and architects have been separated, and artists have been excluded from playing an integrated role in shaping public spaces.

Rance (1995a: pp.32-3) notes that the traditional view of a profession stresses the technical nature of the activity. A body of technical knowledge must be acquired; technical objective judgement must be used; and decisions made are not affected by the values of the decision-maker. Rance argues that in seeking to conform with this model, even those professions involved in subjective judgements are prone to the use technical jargon that promotes exclusiveness and to protect the professional's judgement from criticism or examination.

Sandercock (1998:p.5) notes that one of the most basic issues confronting professions is: what kinds of knowledge are regarded as valid; and who possesses these knowledges?

With the common call for the use of other ways of knowing identified by Healey and Sandercock (amongst others) as described in Chapter 2, lies Schön's (1987: p.xi) proposal for a "new epistemology of practice . . . taking as its departure the competence and artistry already embedded in practice." As he notes, the problems of real-world practice do not present themselves to practitioners as well-formed structures, and the areas of practice are often uncertain, unique, and contain value conflicts which escape the canons of technical rationality.

However, the very basis of technical expertise is called into question by Muir (1995b), who points out that progress of technology creates a pressure on professionals:

. . . to acquire ever more complex and specific technical knowledge about an industry which, through increasingly sophisticated materials and transferred technologies, is becoming beyond any one person's capacity to 'keep up' (p.49).

This presents a perspective on professionalism as based on excluding those without expert knowledge, yet working within a context where technological progress renders an individual unable to qualify as an expert. 'Knowledge-in-practice', it is argued, can only be valid where the form of practice in which such knowledge is gained remains appropriate.

Design professionals are also likely to consider their core skill as an ability to design. However, questions emerge as to appropriateness of professionals' perception of design in the postmodern context. Madanipour (1996) suggests that a gap between social and physical space exists within architecture. The modern movement, he argues, placed emphasis on the physical fabric of the city, and that the design of buildings, objects, and landscapes would shape space that would lead to the creation of a better society. By the 1980s, Madanipour suggests that the design professions had "largely lost their interest in the social dimensions of built form" (p.28)

3.4 THE FORMALIST DESIGN APPROACH

Grant (1991), who insightfully identifies and contrasts the ‘formalist’ and ‘citizen participatory design’ attitudes, highlights an expropriation of design knowledge. He describes the formalist design approach as being based on aesthetic theory:

[*The*] formal aesthetic places high priority upon beauty or pleasure from mainly visual interpretation of patterns and structure or the order of the environment. Proportions, scale, rhythms, texture, shapes are all subject matter of formal aesthetics. Classically, the Formalist design approach suggests a distinction between the very process or making of design and the finished product or building. It is exclusive in the sense that it tends to divorce the formal result or end product from the rest of the designing experience, the design process. This separation allows the Formalist aesthetic eye or judge to develop canons or artificial criteria of beauty or good based on abstract ideals, compositional formulae, and visual order that can be, and quite often are, quite separate from the reality of the very making of the product, the cultural and human experience, or the experiential context of the work. This separation gives a teleological approach to environmental design, a results-oriented approach to evaluating designs and buildings. The design process is reduced to just a means used to achieve beautiful or good ends [*buildings or environments*]. It doesn’t really matter if the process of design is meaningful, good, and beautiful, especially if the end product is evaluated as meaningful, good, and beautiful; the outcome or consequences is the basis for judgement. (p.61)

Grant defines the participatory process as seeking design input and involvement from the interested and/or affected people — who may not have formal design training — along with the designer or design team. He points out that participatory design, converse to the formalist approach outlined above, “suggests that there is no separation between the actual process, or act, of design and the resulting design or building” (p.59). Grant argues that the participatory approach is “total and holistic”, and, as it relates to the directly to people’s physical and spiritual interaction, becomes the “not only the correct, socially

responsible process, but also the best aesthetic process” (p.60). It recognizes that people “have aesthetic expertise and a moral right to be part of their environmental change, a mean(s) of ‘environmental justice” (p.60). In this conception, art and architecture might be viewed rather as the social and aesthetic pulse of a community expressing its individual identity, rather than elitist values and beliefs (Winkoff 1995a)

In Grant’s analysis, the formalist approach is “rational, elitist, and simplistic” (p.61), and might be argued to be underpinned by the separation of means and end that characterizes the Modern project.

The issue at large in Grant’s analysis is that the separation of process from product in the formalist approach “encourages a separation of the design professional from the very people that who are to use or enjoy the final design” (p.62). Grant’s notion is that the “aesthetic yardstick” — the measuring device by which design is evaluated — is claimed solely by professionals as the experts with the skills, knowledge, and talent to judge on aesthetic grounds, but these remain separated from context and so are limited since they place the designer as spectator rather than participant.

Grant points out that “reconciling the formalist and citizen participatory processes seems to have been present in earlier traditional projects” (p.62), and offers the act of barn-raising as an example of tying process and result:

The regenerative forces, the social bonds, the cultural ties, the process along with the physical elements, all are bound together as one experiential reality in regard to aesthetic judgements or formal considerations. (p.63)

The culture of the architectural profession might be argued to be committed to the formalist approach — as Blau *et al.* (1983: p.vii) argue, the chief commitment of an architect is to a particular building, and he or she “often fails to take into account . . . the impact of the building on people’s everyday lives.” Urban design, however, should be concerned with how professional effort might concentrate on everyday life, rather than on abstract visualizations of the city (Madanipour 1996 p.76).

But the irony of the formalist design approach lies in the question of who, in fact, designs? In the traditional client / professional arrangement, the perceptions of the client and the professional planner / designer about who makes design decisions is unlikely to coincide. While designers carry out design work, this merely results in making proposals. It can be argued that it is the client organization that makes the overall planning and final design decisions. This limits the extent of professionals’ power over the built product, and, at the same time, compromises the formalist designer’s position and product.

The importance of process has been argued to be central to the urban design practitioner working in the contemporary context. A focus on process also extends to the implementation stages of urban design initiatives.

3.5 THE INTER-PROFESSIONAL PROCESS

Given the complexities facing urban design in the pluralist context of postmodern cities, doubts have been cast about the validity of traditional professional approaches. Rance *et al.* (1995b: p.160) note that teamwork is likely to be necessary in this context, and that professional boundaries are obstructive:

It has been suggested that traditional definitions of a specialist professional are full of inner contradictions and problems and that traditional views of how the development process is organized are insufficiently flexible to deal with current circumstances. Basically the message is one that traditional professional demarcations are untenable and new collaborative team work approaches are required involving a partnership between all interested parties.

Rance *et al.* argue above that the complexity of professional situations require interprofessional approaches. They suggest (p.161) that the traditional view of specialist professions, with their inflexible role demarcations, should give way to new flexible approaches, and that the education of young professionals should lay the foundation of new professional cultures. The instilling of professional cultures commences, according to Muir (1995a), early on during professional training. He offers the following case for breaking down stereotyped attitudes:

It does not take long for new recruits to the professions to acquire a complete 'kit' of stereotyped views about their fellow professionals — the sports-car driving architect with bow tie who cares only for the aesthetics; the long-coated, homburg-hatted developer who sees only profit in a development; the 'hardhat' engineer lost in calculations, etc. These caricatures may be amusing, but the attitudes they reflect run deep within the [*development*] industry and are divisive. They inhibit honest communication and often mask ignorance, thereby denying the logical resolution of complex problems that require genuine collaboration to solve.

Madanipour (1996) also points out the incompatibility between the traditional divisions of the concerns of the built environment professions, and the social process orientation of urban design in a postmodern context:

The key is to go beyond the narrow boundaries of professional and disciplines and to approach urban space from an inter-disciplinary, socio-spatial perspective (p.109).

The need for improved interprofessional collaboration is also being market-driven. Rance (1995a: p.26) points out that complex relationships between professional groups is a central feature of current professional practice. Muir (1995a) notes that the move towards interdisciplinary collaboration has been brought about by three issues: a preference of increasingly sophisticated client organizations to deal with 'like' organizations, the emergence of 'package deal' contractors directly employing professional consultants, and the increased use of prefabricated components. However, this new context has produced different responses from within the professions. Rance suggests that architects feel their role as traditional leader of the design team is threatened; landscape architects are presented with a positive opportunity for greater, earlier involvement; and planners, who often have a key role to play in public-private partnership ventures, become active participants, rather than agents of constraint. Yet, as Muir (1995a: p.20) points out, interdisciplinary working processes can help to reinforce the primacy of the project over other goals or objectives. The critical factor is not a person's title, but their willingness to participate in open discussion to share, respect, and explore ideas for a project (Taylor (1995).

The need for planners to interact with members of other built environment professions evokes the issue of the move, during the modern project, of planning toward the social sciences. The argument for redressing this move is put by Sandercock (1998) in terms of improving planners' design literacy:

. . . the case has been made that urban planning is really a social science, or a policy science, and that questions of design belong to the architecture schools. This separation of design from planning, of the built environment from the social and political environment, has impoverished our understanding of the urban field and the arts of city-building. The retreat from design was in part a reaction against simplistic cause-effect notions of how the physical environment determines human behaviour; and in part a rejection of the aesthetic emphasis of design programs in favor of a social and political-economic emphasis. Much has been lost as a result of this separation . . . (the City of Memory, of Desire, and of the Spirit). First, there is the ability to 'read' the built environment and understand what makes it work, or why it doesn't work; to look at a streetscape or park or square or ensemble of buildings and analyze the qualities of good public space. Second, there's the ability to read the 'maps' and blueprints of the design profession and comment on them intelligently, to be able to translate visual renderings into a completed three-dimensional scheme and speculate about its likely impact. Third, there's the ability to engage in site planning as part of a team whose other members are trained in the design professions. And, finally, there's a more general wisdom, an understanding of and feel for the city of memory, the city of desire, the city of spirit (p.229).

Sandercock (1998) above argument calls for planners to engage, once more, with the built environment in a proactive manner.

Democratization of decision-making within the design process is wished for by many urban design practitioners — a wholly formalist approach to urban design might be argued to be irreconcilable with Miller's (1991: p.v) claim that "a social consciousness calls for a

sense of neighbourhood and community.” The trained practitioner holds valuable skills, knowledge, and resources. Indeed, these are the specialist knowledge and skills associated with urban environments. The remainder of this chapter looks at how these might be democratically utilized.

A historical perspective on the pre-professional act of city building and the shaping of urban form might conclude that it resulted from the efforts of an untold number of ordinary people (Lynch 1954). Sandercock (1998) states that the post-war turning of planning into an applied social science dominated by positivist epistemology loses the city of memory and spirit, and the importance of place and place-making. The extent to which these people have been disabled from involvement in the formal process concerns the hegemony of the built environment professions — architects, landscape architects, and planners — during this century.

Sandercock (1998) indicates that the beginning of the end of this situation is in sight, since the world-view upon which the city-making professions were constructed, and the problems they were devised to solve, have changed dramatically during the last two decades. Yet, while mainstream practice shows the first signs of recovery, it remains stylistic: Ellin (1996) charts a nostalgia-driven romanticist response to functionalism by the design and planning professions that focuses on “the self and past, and which values imitation, tradition, and roots.”

However, Blau *et al.* (1983: p.vii) suggest that there is a growing belief in planning and architecture that the meanings of design should reflect democratic, rather than elite, values. Ellin (1996: pp.134-135) identifies the need for urban design to respond to the challenge of placelessness, the need to create urban community, to convey meaning and express a value system. Various alternative forms of professional practice have emerged during the last few decades, such as the community architecture movement in the United Kingdom (Towers 1995), community design centre practice in North America (Association for Community Design 1999) and, more recently, the placemaking model (Schneekloth 1995, Winkoff 1995a). However, these forms of practice are peripheral. The community architecture movement and community design centre practice might be described as initiatives by professionals, and offer broad-based strategies for professionals to play advocacy roles within community-based forms of practice. However, the placemaking model, as described below by Winkoff and others, offers an initiative by citizenry, and is wholly focussed on citizen participatory processes. Placemaking may provide a coherent methodology for future urban design practice.

3.6 PLACEMAKING

Placemaking aims to turn public spaces into places; places which engage those who inhabit them, places through which people do not merely pass, but have reason to 'stop and become involved'; places which offer people a 'sense of belonging'; places, in short, which have meaning, which evoke pleasure or contemplation, or reflection and, most importantly, an appreciation of cultural and environmental diversity. (Ryan 1995).

It is not the ambitions of placemaking that are important — Ryan's above writing could be the ambition of any contemporary urban design project. What is important, however, is the democratic inclusive process that it champions; this, it is argued, may offer a viable process for creating a successful and sustainable urban realm.

Winkoff (1995a), writing in the Australian context, notes that an emerging desire to achieve a more harmonious relationship between the built and natural environments is stimulating communities and governments to explore new patterns of human settlement that innovatively use the skills of designers and artists in the process. This process, termed *placemaking*, also has a political agenda; it proposes a redefinition of the value and qualities of public space through its repossession by communities (Ryan 1995).

Yencken (1995) describes *placemaking* as an act of collaboration involving bringing together the contributions of artists and designers (as those who have studied and profess an understanding of public places) and the local knowledge of those familiar with the area and its associations. The results are intended to express the cultural values of communities and social organizations through the design and use of public spaces (Cotter 1995). The *placemaking* process therefore provides a means to communally develop wider views of the urban environment that extend beyond economic activity, addressing local social, cultural, and environmental issues, and subsequently hoping to influence regional and national policy (Ryan 1995).

Placemaking might therefore be seen as a community-driven response to the homogenizing culture associated with late twentieth century consumerism and its attendant environmental ramifications, as outlined in Chapter 1. The process attempts to define what cultural values are rooted in local residents' experiences of urban life to lead to the construction of a community-based social and cultural attitudes to the local and global environment (Ryan 1995). The value of collaborative projects is that they can change ideas (Cotter 1995); subsequently, the urban environment is unlikely to be solely regarded as a focus for economic activity, and will provide the means to recognize and address the detrimental environmental and social effects of the increasing dominance of the car (Winkoff 1995a).

As Ryan (1995) notes, most planning is traditionally concerned with public space in terms of amenity — traffic movement, facilities, and the necessary infrastructure. *Placemaking* processes, however, offer the opportunity to local residents, business people, and users to think about the interconnection between the elements that impact everyday life, such as environmental factors, work, retail and community services, transport, recreation and leisure, domestic life and cultural experience (Winkoff 1995a). Winkoff also notes the decline in popularity of bus stops and train stations as popular meeting places and landmarks — contributed to by security risks and underfunding of services. *Placemaking* processes, she suggests, offer the means of renewing community awareness and bring about a change in attitude towards more environmentally-responsible transportation, such as bikes and light rail.

The basis for *placemaking* as a democratic, inclusive process that will integrally promote environmental sustainability lies in its experiential basis. Civic or community identity is located in public spaces; they express the cultural values of a community, and subsequently shape the nature and quality of people's daily lives (Ryan 1995). It is in these public spaces that socio-environmental relations might be best recorded through the nature and manner of its design.

To assess the implications of *placemaking* processes on urban design practice, and to help inform the subsequent recommendations for practice offered in Chapter 5, some characteristics of *placemaking* are outlined below.

Winkoff (1995a) identifies four approaches to Australian *placemaking* practice:

- Alliances of community groups attempting to influence urban planners over issues such as conservation, social justice, ecologically sustainable development, and participatory approaches to design;
- Alliances between local government and local communities that commission a range of skilled people to work with them on built environment projects;
- Organizations established to initiate and resource placemaking projects and work with stakeholders;
- Government assistance, advisory, and advocacy programs that encourage adoption of placemaking strategies.

Winkoff (1995b) describes collaboration as the single most important element of a successful *placemaking* project. She identifies that need for professionals to be able and willing to work collaboratively, for government and community to work together; and for government collaboration across departments. Other elements include the following:

- A management plan for research and development of the project, including setting out methods for implementation and co-ordination amongst the number of decision-makers;
- A statement of project objectives and strategies in clear language, setting out participants' responsibilities and accountabilities;
- The establishment of a management committee representing the involved groups;
- The establishment of terms of reference between the management committee and participants;
- The design of a process of active group involvement throughout the participatory process, ensuring that the process does not become overly bureaucratic, but appropriately consultative of individuals as the process progresses.

Winkoff also notes the following characteristics of community consultation within the *placemaking* context. Public meetings are, she suggests, an insufficient way of accessing community information and creative participation, since meetings are prone to be dominated by a few vociferous individuals with interests vested in one outcome.

According to Winkoff, some members of a community may be unwilling to participate due

to lack of skills or lack of confidence, stemming from differences of culture, gender, and marginalization. She advocates workshops with professionals aimed at information gathering, vision setting, brief writing, designing, project management and implementation, for which techniques might include brainstorming, search conferencing, and role-playing. Materials might be based on physical, social, cultural or environmental mapping, and might include photographs, drawings, observations, oral histories, storytelling, and model-making. Winkoff also suggests the use of community-devised exhibitions and displays, local issue forums, questionnaires and surveys, media articles, and community parties, performances, and festivals.

Yencken (1995) and Walker (1995) note benefits of locally-derived solutions. Yencken (1995) asserts that memorable public places are satisfying to local people, attractive to visitors, and help generate local economies. Embarking on a townscape program may involve stimulating commercial activity, enhancing the amenity and visual appearance of a central business district, and preserving the architectural heritage of a town (Walker 1995). Ryan (1995) notes three issues that generate community interest and encourage community confidence: (1) significant economic improvement due to increased retail and business turnover; (2) community participation and collaboration with council and professionals that increase community interest and involvement; and (3) increased visual pride and stimulation.

Participatory processes, as embodied in the *placemaking* model, may also offer to address the claim by Madanipour (1996) that too much of urban design practice is directed by expediencies:

The highly prescriptive and practical nature of design requires a set of information to be assembled, often too quickly due to time limits, and to be employed in a solution-finding exercise. Far too many such exercises take place on the basis of assumptions that are in need of a critical evaluation and a more informed approach to existing urban space (pp.3-4).

Given the product-oriented nature of practice, it might be argued that participatory processes, such as embodied within the *placemaking* model, offer to mitigate this situation by widening the basis of assumptions through bringing together a multiplicity of perspectives to bear on urban design initiatives.

However, as noted above, threats to engagement in citizen participation exist, and the design of participatory processes requires careful consideration. Madanipour (1996) offers the perspective that “the role of civil society in space production is limited to the role of consumers who interact” (p.220), and the degree of citizen engagement in planning and design processes is central to its philosophy. Yencken (1995) suggests five factors that challenge effective community participation: (1) the problem is too remote; (2) the number of people involved is too great; (3) the cost is too high in terms of time, distance and money; (4) people feel inadequate, e.g. they feel unable to communicate with educated experts; and (5) people feel they are unlikely to influence the outcome. Guppy (1995) notes that community consultation techniques are often inadequate, and that those

conducting them are often ill-equipped to read community attitudes — local colour and identity is often therefore absent from projects and the special needs of unrepresented or marginal groups often not addressed. While urban designers may or may not act as a facilitators, a working understanding of what Innes and Booher (1999: p.11) describe as the “special management techniques that allow all participants to be heard and informed, and encourage discussion that is respectful and open-ended” is likely to help urban designers contribute to creating effective processes.

3.7 SHAPING THE ROLE OF THE URBAN DESIGNER

Madanipour (1996) provides the following prescription for urban design practice:

The role of urban designers who are aware of the development industry’s tendency towards maximizing exchange value therefore becomes to **emphasize the use value in a sensitive way**. Yet they should be aware that they often operate at the intersection between the two values. Urban designers can be in a position to maximize the exchange value of space, or to help the lifeworld develop its independent spheres of activity. At the intersection between the systems and the lifeworld, between exchange value and use value, between space production and everyday life . . . they ultimately have to strike a balance (pp.218-9).

The balance, of which Madanipour speaks, is between the needs of the market and of civil society. He calls for urban design to “promote a socio-spatial agenda in which both social and aesthetic concerns matter,” and so bring “a sensibility and a balance between social and spatial concerns” to architecture and planning agendas (p.219). Grant suggests (1991: p.62), the goal in this context is to make the urban designer first “an informed citizen”

This chapter has outlined how professionals' involvement in the production of the built environment is limited. However, professional practice may have opportunities to shape events within this social process of urban development, especially since professional activity has been seen to affect the dynamics of the development industry. A greater comprehension of the development industry, and a more realistic view of the professionals' place in the process of producing the built environment, have been identified as potential positive informants of practitioners' actions. It has been noted that the role of urban designers within participatory processes must be based on trust, but that societal trust in professionals has been eroded. The professions, therefore, subsequently face the challenge of regaining that trust. The very basis of expertise as the foundation for professionalism has been brought into question, as has the professional culture of orientation toward formalist design solutions. A need for better mutual understanding between professions has been identified. Alternative forms of design practice are noted as having remained peripheral, but the emerging *placemaking* model offers an example of an inclusive, democratic process to which urban design practice might aspire.

The following chapter presents empirical research that reflects back on the theoretical contents of Chapters 2 and 3 from a practice perspective.

CHAPTER 4: REFLECTING ON URBAN DESIGN THEORY FROM URBAN DESIGN PRACTICE

A theoretical basis for this inquiry into the role of urban design practitioners in public participatory urban design projects has been presented in the previous chapters. To reflect back on this content, this chapter presents empirical research into conceptualizations of the contemporary role of urban design practitioners. The data is concerned principally with the Winnipeg context. The changing capacity for urban design within the City of Winnipeg is integrated into this research as case study material.

From this research, themes concerning urban design practice emerge which, it is argued, are largely applicable in a wider context. These themes subsequently contribute, along with the contents of Chapters 2 and 3, to form the basis of the recommendation presented in Chapter 5.

The research approach was qualitative. Field research interviewing was the chosen research strategy, comprising ten face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. The informants were selected to represent perspectives likely to be present in a typical urban design participatory process, as follows:

Planner; Architect; Landscape Architect; Urban Designer; Politician; Community Leader; Public Sector Economic Development Professional; Private Sector Economic Development Professional; Citizen (non-planning/design professional).

The rationale for the empirical research methodology and a description of the empirical research process is set out in Appendix A.

In the course of analyzing the empirical material, a number of themes emerged. This presentation of the empirical research is structured around these themes within the following two parts. Part 1 is concerned principally with the nature of urban design activity within the Winnipeg context. Themes that emerged during the interviews included the understanding and valuing of urban design activity; the implications of Winnipeg's low-growth context on urban design activity; the progress of urban design capacity within the City of Winnipeg; the nature of public participatory processes in Winnipeg; and the political shaping of urban design practice in Winnipeg. Further themes concern emerging urban design agencies within the Winnipeg context, specifically the development of a Downtown Development Authority as a downtown urban design instrument. Part 2 is concerned with prescriptive themes that emerged during the interviews around conceptualizations of the contemporary role of the urban designer in public participatory processes. This part includes perceptions of the professional cultures from which urban designers emerge; the need for urban design professionals to develop communicative and educative skills; the need for urban design professionals to legitimize 'other ways of

knowing' in practice; and, finally, the need for urban design professionals to develop broader project management skills based on a wider understanding of the development process.

A bias is present in that the informants were Caucasian, able-bodied, and mostly male, reflecting the professional population involved in practice. To mitigate this bias, and to present, as far as is practical, the descriptive experiences offered by the informants in an intact, unmanipulated form, the following data has been presented as foreground within this analysis. This strategy provides the reader with expansive access to the data, which includes personal reflective histories, and is intended to provide the reader with the best opportunity to draw her or his own conclusions from the data.

Part 1: Urban Design in Winnipeg

4.1 UNDERSTANDING AND VALUING URBAN DESIGN ACTIVITY

This theme presents informants' views on the role of urban design. As noted above, the informants were selected on the basis that they were experienced with some aspects of planning and design participatory processes. As might be expected, all informants displayed an understanding of urban design as involving both design and planning expertise.

In the view of a design professional, urban design activity overlapped the traditional boundaries of planning and the design professions:

It's not an architect; it's not a landscape architect; it's somebody who has a planning and a design background.

For the same informant, however, the issue of scale was a qualifier for urban design:

To me, urban design is a very large scale thing. And, to me, a plaza design is either an architectural design or a landscape architectural design. It is not urban design. Every place where you can study urban design in North America, if it's truly urban design; they say it's a combination of planning and architecture, of planning and landscape architecture. You have to bring both a planning perspective and a design perspective to the issue. And the planning perspective, if I get really general about it, addresses the social side. And the design side is addressed by architecture/landscape.

This issue of scale was felt to bring a challenge to urban designers of cross-property working that professional designers, focused on single-site projects, rarely faced:

Urban design goes beyond a single property, beyond a single point. I've got a very institutional view of what urban design is. I look at a thing like the Richardson building; I look at the pavement of the plaza and there is a saw-cut line in the pavement where the plaza turns into the public sidewalk. And the paving material changes. And there isn't a tree within 30 ft. There's absolutely no reason other than this false/artificial boundary called a property line, and they changed material in response to that. And to me that is totally ridiculous. And that's what I spent most of my time doing at the —, it seemed; trying to do work over the property line. So that to me is one definition of what urban design is.

All the informants valued urban design. For a design professional, urban design was essential for creating the stage for life:

If you're talking to me about urban design, which is like downtown hard stuff, involving transportation engineers and housing, this is real business. This isn't life anymore; this is a part of life that you do so you can have a life.

A politician's perspective put urban design into the physical planning context of downtown revitalization underpinned by entrepreneurship, and outlined the City of Winnipeg's commitment to that aim. This view outlines these initiatives as a means to address use and exchange values with the Winnipeg downtown area:

I don't think there's any question that in today's city there's a greater recognition about the quality of urban life. The City has made it very clear in its priority plan this year — the five priorities of the City. Among them being the revitalization and redevelopment of downtown. There have been a lot of individual initiatives that show we're going in that direction. The baseball stadium at the Forks, \$6 million investment in North Main Task Force, the Portage Avenue Property Association dollars that are being written by the Winnipeg Development Agreement. Heritage tax credits. And so forth. There are a lot of things that point to the fact that there's very much a commitment to revitalizing this downtown. I think the final step to bring it all to fruition would be to have the faith to go ahead with the Downtown Planning Authority. They have to work in conjunction with groups like the Forks, who were very successful in their own right, because they've had very much an entrepreneurial zeal. And I happen to subscribe to that.

A design professional saw urban design as central to maintaining or developing the quality of life in Winnipeg, with underlying economic implications:

Winnipeg is much more a city of neighbourhoods and communities than my impression of ——— ever was. The Folkorama, the ethnicity of the community, the multi-cultural mosaic, and the quality — there are certain aspects that make Winnipeg a very desirable place for family. That is often used as a rationale for people that can live anywhere in North America — that they chose to live, stay, in Winnipeg. I think, maybe, the way that we've been going as a city, and certainly urban design and planning and social planning and social issues related to planning, has a major role in whether or not we're going to move forward and the quality of life is going to improve. Or whether we're going to lose ground.

A planner felt that the physical urban environment was acknowledged throughout Winnipeg's communities as contributing to social and economic well-being. This conception parallels the function of urban physical development, with social development and economic development, as one of three complementary approaches to creating urban environments in which people might flourish that was identified in the Introduction to the thesis:

I think it's been recognized, particularly in the last few years, that, yes, you need a great urban environment to promote everything else. And I think there's been a political and community belief that if you don't have a positive physical environment, you're not likely to get an economic or social environment being that strong. They support the other. It doesn't depend on which one may come first — you need both. And, in some cases, like North Main, the physical planning — demolitions and re-construction — is to promote the social and the economic. There's been areas within the city, I think, where the economic has started first, and the physical design has supported that, to create a larger synergy, with some of the streetscaping — Corydon Avenue is used a lot as an example — but the economic turnaround had already happened. So, the support from urban design — in creating plazas and parks, the amenities within that strip in the community — was a reflection of an ongoing economic turnaround. In North Main, we're attempting to use the physical changes to promote the other. I think there has been an adoption by the community and the

politicians that the urban context in which we work, live, play, recreate, is critically important.

The same informant also talked of the symbolic function of the downtown physical environment as providing the popular perception of city identity and character:

Winnipeggers have their neighborhood, a couple of places they go that they consider part of their community. Be it Assiniboine Park Zoo. Or a shopping mall. Or whatever. And I think it's that [*the downtown*] that helps create an image of the city. The struggle has been that without a vibrant downtown a [*negative*] perception gets created of the city, rightly or wrongly. Perhaps it's a carryover from medieval days and the town square being where all the activity happened. Despite having suburbs that you drive to, and two car garages, and everything else, we still view the downtown and being able to walk through it as a very important aspect of urban living. The picture is never of a suburban tract development on the outskirts. It's of the city's downtown. For Winnipeg, the Forks has helped to create an identity. The people can say, this is where we live.

The above material indicates that the respondents valued the physical well-being of the city in symbolic, social, and economic terms, and that urban designers had a important role to play in helping to shape that physical urban environment.

4.2 WINNIPEG'S LOW-GROWTH CONTEXT

The economic character of Winnipeg is shown below to be an important determinant of urban design activity within the city. Due to its low economic growth context, Winnipeg was identified by the informants as presenting a challenging arena for urban design activity.

To a planner, the low-growth characteristic of Winnipeg offered urban design activity the task of achieving a consistent approach:

. . . Because we've been in a low growth status in Winnipeg, most of them [*City of Winnipeg projects the informant worked on*] have been reshaping small pieces of the existing fabric, as opposed to large scale urban intervention. We're in no-growth. It's tinkering . . . You adjust a piece here, you adjust a piece there. It's slow. It takes a much longer commitment to the overall plan, and I think the challenge in Winnipeg for urban designers, and people working in an urban context as a designer, is to stay away from tinkering. But that slow incremental growth makes keeping to a larger plan very difficult. Hence, we have streetscaping that looks like it's 'Design of the Month Club', or whatever, because everything takes on its own flavor; because there's no pressure to make sure it's all integrated; and there's no consistency of approach. And particularly in the Exchange District, where it's been block by block. I guess that's the issue in no-growth: you don't make bold dramatic statements like some of the US inner cities have. It's a block-by-block, or business-by-business, reclamation that tends to happen.

A design professional viewed Winnipeg's low-growth characteristic as creating difficulties, relative to high-growth cities, for private development funding of public realm improvements:

In other cities, where they have a lot of corporate head offices, it's almost a shame thing that happens —where the corporations want to show their image and they compete with each other. Here, in Winnipeg, there's none of that. The low growth scenario is the toughest context in which to do good design, because land doesn't cost anything and everybody says, "Got the land for less than the improvements that you want me to do to this." If it's going to cost a zillion dollars to do something in Vancouver, and you say, "I'm sorry, you've got to put skylights on that old building. And you've got to do this incredible plaza; and you've got to do this," they look at it and say, "That'll add 1%. Fine; we'll do it." It's easy in a really high land value, heavy development scenario. That's when you can do good design, because nobody recognizes it as costing more. The incremental

value of urban design in Winnipeg is a lot more. And that's where it gets tough to do.

A planner's perspective saw the low-growth scenario as undermining the support that urban design initiatives presented community-building programs:

North Main is . . . a \$6 million initiative. It's really a commercial revitalization and social revitalization, versus urban design. And the urban design component is to support the community programs that are already in place. And I think the interesting part in my career [*at the City of Winnipeg*] is that everything can be community building. From a neighborhood playground, and groups coming together over a neighborhood playground, or common issues, to how do you address a zone within the city? Or an area within the city of several blocks? How you look at it, particularly in a no-growth situation? In a high-growth situation, you shape the growth. We spend a lot of energy getting it to the point where maybe something will happen. As opposed to shaping what's happening. I guess in Calgary it would be how you're managing the growth. Here we're attempting to promote some growth.

These perspectives indicate that, in urban design practice terms, a low-growth economic context contrasts starkly with more favourable economic contexts. The low-growth economic context presents the challenges of creating coherent urban environments through incremental development, difficulties in obtaining private sector funded improvements to the public realm, and restrains urban design initiatives aimed at community building.

4.3 URBAN DESIGN AS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT

Another theme within Winnipeg's low-growth context concerned the role of urban design as an economic development instrument. The views below indicate the value placed by the public sector on the physical environment for fostering economic well-being, despite the place of urban design as a form of development control.

In this design professional's view, urban design provided public sector support to private initiatives:

[Name of City urban designer] was very much involved in the streetscaping program in the Exchange District. And the way *[the City]* approached that, instead of just doing streetscape, *[the City]* used it a lot more as an incentive. If someone was fixing up a property, *[the City]* would go and do streetscaping there. That's what happened on Lombard Avenue. They were fixing up where the Liberty Grill is now — the Great West Life building, and *[the City]* went in and fixed up in front of them. *[The City]* did the design for them of the wheelchair ramp as part of *[the City's]* project, and, I think, they used *[the City's]* contractors to build it. At McDermott — Johnny G's restaurant — they did all their own construction. But *[the City]* did the planning and design of it.

A politician informant saw a benefit of the process of a streetscaping urban design initiative as likely to encourage local commercial investment:

And I think there's a heightened self-confidence among the people *[BIZ members]* that are working with the design professional.

However, despite these public sector urban design initiatives aimed at promoting economic growth, one design professional saw a component of urban design as an arm of development control:

And that's a lot of what urban design, in a negative way, is about — it's control. There's that aspect to it. Of controlling the product.

A planner considered this development control aspect of urban design to be the popular perception of urban design in Winnipeg:

Most of our [*City of Winnipeg*] projects have tended to be renovation projects rather than new projects. And, for us, that brings a big issue about, what role does government play? Are you a proponent? Or are you seen, as has been traditional over the last eight or nine years, as a hurdle. Something to work around.

The above views illustrate contrasting characteristics of the urban design field in an economic context. Examples of initiatives in which urban design is used by the public sector to encourage economic growth are set against the perception of urban design as development control, in which market forces may be constrained within broader interests.

4.4 URBAN DESIGN CAPACITY WITHIN THE CITY OF WINNIPEG

The following perspectives present contrasting perceptions of the role of urban design as a public sector activity, and traces the mixed recent history of urban design capacity within the City of Winnipeg.

The formation of an urban design group within the City of Winnipeg during the late 1980s was considered by a City of Winnipeg design professional to be the result of inadequate development control. This function had remained the central part of that urban designer's work:

Well, I was hired in 1988 to deal specifically with design review in downtown. And there was, I guess, a core group of urban design types that was separate from the planning functions. There was the district planners dealing with various conditional uses — rezonings and so forth. Then there was another very small group — a couple of individuals — who started with design guidelines and primers for design review in the Exchange District. There were a couple of other projects, like Fort Garry Place at the back of the Fort Garry Hotel, and some of the planners were saying: What in the hell is going on! We'd better do something about this! We need to broaden the scope of the design review. Downtown's in trouble. So they said we need a new zoning bylaw for the downtown. And that was evolved in the two or three years leading up to 1988, and then I was hired to deal with design review in the downtown because there wasn't an architect with the city in the planning department, and they wanted an architect to be dealing with other architects and get them to toe the line when dealing with design review. So my role has been mainly with the downtown and it expanded to design review of industrial parks. I've been involved with some bylaw work on third party advertising and signage elsewhere in the downtown and design review where there's planning approval requirements on rezonings or on planning approvals as part of variances or conditional uses.

While the City of Winnipeg urban design group was seen to have been born out of a need to improve development control, the same informant offered a perspective, however, that the initial proactive urban design function of the group had been eroded through City staff losses:

We saw, when I joined the city in '88, a building up from two or three people to a core group of seven in the urban design branch. At one point our efforts would include proactive urban design schemes for the rejuvenation of south Portage Avenue: the retail, the street connections, the urban design standards, bylaws, relationships of road networks, stuff that through the public consultation process was being done through the Centreplan initiative. And then we gradually lost staff to the point where we now no longer have an urban design group as a separate entity. We've got [name of planner] who's dealing with the heritage aspects, the historic warehouse district and listed buildings and so forth, and he's in long range planning. He's doing some project work; I'm doing some project work and some bylaw work beyond that, but most of my job is reactive to proposals that come through the door, whether it's the baseball stadium or Manitoba Theatre for Young People at the Forks, the festival site for Pan Am games, the work on Portage Avenue; anything that happens in downtown really that's a project. The process is more one of applying, from an applications standpoint, the standards of the bylaw and then reviewing the design to see if we're comfortable with approving the design. And getting the applicant those approvals so that he can carry on and meet the building code requirements and work off with a plan review and deal with the interfaces on infrastructure and services. And get a building permit to proceed with the development.

Another perspective, however, from a design professional, was that the demise of the group was a direct result of marginalizing the City's urban design proactive function:

When [name of landscape architect] was here [the City], there was an urban design branch — this is 1987, when I first started — of about eight people: [name of architect], and [name of planner], and [name of planner]. I was brought in as a landscape architect/history kind of guy. I was the historic project coordinator. There was [name of planner], who was an historian, a technician, and a secretary. So what happened to this group was . . . first of all, after [name of landscape architect] left, they replaced him with [name of landscape architect/planner] . . . And he didn't last very long either — he left. So they took [name of planner] and [name of planner] and put them in a new branch with [name of planner]. They took [name of architect] and myself and put us with [name of planner] — with the district planners. And they left us on a separate floor for a couple of years, and then took the other guys away. And then, with the Cuff

report, in the last two years they reorganized the planning and came out with the Planning and Land Use division. And they asked me — the new division manager, [name of planner] asked me, “How do you think this branch should be structured?” I said, “You’ve got two options. You can either do it zoners, planners, and designers”— understanding that you do a plan and then implement it by zoning and designing projects. These guys had gotten away by this time. The district planners — all they were doing was zoning. They weren’t doing proactive planning well at all. The neighbourhood planners were in specific locations that had certain criteria, doing these strategic planning exercises for two years, and then using money to implement little park improvements and things like that — but it wasn’t city-wide. The district planners used to do things on a neighbourhood basis, like building conditions, surveys, land use identification, come up with secondary plans for little development scenarios. They stopped doing that; they were only using an implementation mechanism and adjusting that and calling that planning. That got ridiculous. So I said, “That’s one thing you could do, but it’s not the way to go, because we’ve downsized and every time a project comes in we’re going to look for resources to solve the problem. If it gets to be a complicated problem, you’re going to need all of these things happening at the same time. So, instead, what I suggest you do is do downtown, river banks and parks, and neighbourhoods, which could include industrial neighbourhoods outside of the downtown commercial neighbourhoods, and residential. Within each one of those you’ve got that kind of capability. Split all these people up, put them into a geographic area.” They ended up and did this [first option]. They said this was the model. In between, there was this other reorganization, and [name of planner] and [name of architect] and I came into the same branch and [name of planner] left for another area. So the three of us were back together again. Under this model, [name of planner] went into the planning branch, [name of architect] went into the development control branch and I went into the design branch. We were completely dispersed. So, in [month] when they chose this model, I said that urban design is dead in Winnipeg, because they didn’t choose this model. So they’ve marginalized urban design in that way, starting over the last eight years, disassembling the urban design branch.

However, a planner offered an alternative view of the demise of the City's urban design group. This perception focuses on inadequate coordination on the part of the urban design group:

I think the urban design group that evolved was seen as more of a SWAT team. But they never — personal opinion — I don't know if they ever got a handle on the downtown, which was seen as their focus. And, from having an urban design branch, there never was a downtown plan that came out. And I think that was the unraveling of it. At some point you can have lots of opinion, and be involved in lots of projects, but unless you're fitting into an overall comprehensive plan and it's value-added . . . The role was questioned.

The demise of urban design capacity within the City of Winnipeg appears above to indicate a lack of value placed on it by political leaders, although the degree of urban design capacity may, in fact, have been questioned through economic rationality in the context of Winnipeg's low economic growth.

4.5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES IN WINNIPEG

The period of the formation and demise of the urban design group ran concurrently with the adoption of public planning methods by the City. The following perceptions address the principles and strategies of public participatory processes in Winnipeg

A design professional informant described participatory methods as the best of three general alternatives:

Basically, I think that a participatory process is better than a dictatorial process, or an exclusionary process.

A politician's view valued the involvement of a multiplicity of perspectives in building urban design solutions as including more 'types of knowledge' than just the professional expertise:

It's a classic example of where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

A planner described the formation of task-oriented groups as an indicator that community involvement is now recognized as necessary in urban design projects

We seem to be in an era for task forces. And, I think, that's an acknowledgement that broader community involvement is needed in any final design and or planning solution.

The case for inclusionary solution-building was also offered in a citizen's perspective on the changing nature of urban life. In this view, expertise — and the conceptualizations upon which it is constructed — was considered as an inappropriate means with which to address the emergent complexities of urban living:

I have to say that, as somebody that's been a big advocate of downtown, I sometimes wonder at for whom we're planning it. There are offices still downtown; there are the wrecks of big stores still downtown — that are about to dissolve. Another one on the edge of downtown. All the characteristics of downtown are changing, yet we're planning it for ideas. And we keep catching ourselves that maybe retail doesn't work anymore. But we still built Portage Place. Who are we planning it for? Are we planning it for people like me, that go downtown only for business now, as

often as I have to do, which can be almost every day. But it may only be for two hours, or an hour. Who are the real people that live downtown? It's more and more aboriginal, very poor people. So there's certain truths about Winnipeg that I think are very hard for people to confront, even people in the planning business, because they have almost insoluble characteristics to them. We've got to realize that we're bumping our head into hard surfaces more and more if the reality is that it's not where we really live — it's not where we carry on much of our real life. If you had your office downtown and if you shop downtown, and your wife joins you to go to a show, you aren't holding up downtown, going out of your way to make it live. It lived because of the way people really lived [*before*]. Now, I will try and support things downtown. I will go to a festive event or whatever. Business things mean downtown happens. But it's not taking me and many people down there as much. Yet it's taking another kind of person downtown, who's more *that* downtown. That's a different kind of person around for whom you can't plan all the things you used to plan. You can't have the same expectations about them. But, more and more, you start to accept certain truths about the city. And not that it's going downhill. I don't know if we know enough about it. And I'm not saying we give up on downtown, but I recognize how my life patterns are different. I've always lived in downtown, until about twenty years ago. But I know people that were brought up in the suburbs and don't know the Exchange District — other than they've heard about it. Their life doesn't involve the centre of the city. In a way, I've always thought these people not to be citizens. But you can understand how it happens. Your life changes, and downtown doesn't become the focus of the city as much as it used to be. Maybe the occasional trip to the concert hall, or your drive through Portage and Main to go somewhere. It's not a major part of how you live. Trying to plan it on the way we used to live might be an irrelevance.

Other examples were offered during the interviews to support the need for community involvement in urban design decision-making. The first, at a neighborhood level and described by a community leader, promises that a community would have addressed a perceived public danger had it been given a chance:

The [*name of project*] started with [*landscape architect*] and a few people visiting the site, mainly talking about planting, and coming up with some

ideas. And [*landscape architect*] taking them on. Ideally it would have been nice to have had more input from people and also spent some time with options. What happened in the winter, for example, was there was a wonderful tobogganing site for kids, but it's dangerous as it goes by the outfall. But the kids knew to go to the side. Then, all of a sudden, without notice, snow fences were put up which just cut out that activity. Maybe it came from a councilor saying, "That's dangerous. We won't allow it!" Instead of saying, "This is a space people use. Look at the positive." It was actually the most used space for tobogganing.

And at the downtown scale, a design professional offered the following two examples of how community involvement brings both more equitable urban design solutions and offers educational opportunities for the urban designer:

A learning experience for me was on North Main, when we talked about the park development across from the Roundhouse. We said, "Are we going to light it or not light it? But we have to light it because of safety issues." And, after a long discussion, we decided not to light the park, because that's where the sniffers went and the guys doing their needles and everything else. And the community stated that those people need somewhere. So why are we going to push them out of this corner, simply because we're adding fresh paint. It's safer for them to be in a park on a main street. Nothing bad will happen to them there. Apart from what they do to themselves. And I was going to light the hell out of it! Chase them! Our intent had not been to chase people around the city solving problems. Our community workers and our solvent abuse workers know where to go and find these people. Why don't we just leave them there? And try to deal with the problem. As opposed to chasing a symptom of something else. So, that's a minute example of how a community can shape and start to address its own problems. And it may appear as an unsafe park in the future. But we're making some decisions now to attempt to deal with that street problem. Deal with it, as opposed to chasing it one block over.

What do you do to make it safer for the girls who work the streets? If there's teenage prostitution going on, what does an urban designer do? Design it so there's nowhere for them to loiter? Do you light the heck out of it? Or, as we heard from the North Main community, could we make it safer? So we have low level lighting. These girls are part of the economy of the area. They live in the area; they use the stores in the area; hotel rooms,

etc. As someone who's a citizen within the city, how can we make it safer for them? Would it be low level lighting, so they could see license plates? They would like to see the john's face before they get in the car. But they don't want to be lit as if it's a football stadium, because there's an ambience or a mood [!] As an urban designer, okay, I thought we'd light the heck out of it to chase them away. A white middle-class perspective! So that's the seamy side.

For another design professional, public participation also offered a means to democratically challenge professional engineering solutions within public planning:

Money is the issue here. Who's got the money to spend? And how much involvement is there in an MWCRP program or a BIZ streetscaping program that has \$400,000.00 per annum for the seventeen BIZs? Then there's, "Lets go in and talk about a main public bridges project." That's \$130 million — yikes! And what did they do? They said, "Well, darn, this new planning stuff just came along; we would have been in there; we would have been asking you right from the beginning whether you wanted a bridge at all. But those planners were just too slow to inform us that we should have been consulting with the public and being accountable. We just happen to have a functional planning study. But we'll get you involved with the aesthetics; and you can decide whether you want an ash or an oak tree; and whether you want to use Tyndall stone or metal. But the bridge is there, I'm sorry, and its got twenty-nine lanes of traffic, to make sure that when this wall of traffic comes and hits the downtown it . . . [*informant laughter!*]. So we decided to go through this thing with the Provencier Bridge. The bridge engineers come along and consult with us at planning and say, "Well, what do you think? How shall we set up this public consultation?" And I said, "Just a minute here; we're starting at the beginning this time aren't we? What if I wanted to ask, are you open to say maybe we don't want the bridge going across Provencier at all? Maybe we want to move it up to the high line and take it in between Whittier Park and the residential area and not upset things — and it makes a great connection. If you do it that way, you can get right to Nairne, a great line." So there is a public consultation process going on, but it's to consider whether we've got twin bridges, and how many lanes of traffic. One step better than we had with the main Norwood Bridge, with which we've got twenty-nine lanes!

However, despite the support indicated by the informants for the concept of public participation in urban design, frequent criticisms arose of the design and management of processes involved in preparing two major recent Winnipeg planning documents — Plan Winnipeg and Centreplan. The criticisms mostly centred on implementation as the strategic objective of the participatory processes.

In the view of an design professional, both processes, while meritorious in terms of participation, lacked strategic focus:

Plan Winnipeg . . . what did they do with their \$170,000? They ate \$170,000 worth of sandwiches. So they came out with this plan. It was good; it was structured; and there was an incredible amount of citizen involvement in it. Then they went through a similar kind of thing with Centreplan. Now that they're gone [*the two responsible planners*], to me, it's totally disintegrated. And we don't have any people any more who are thinking strategically about getting things implemented.

The same informant expanded on this theme by outlining what, in his view, was required to direct such processes to implementation:

See, they [*City planners*] don't know what a project is, and what it takes to do a project. They know a lot of process, and what it takes to run a planning process. When the comes down to the project — the deadline . . . Implementation to me means prioritizing, cost estimating, and brokering on funding. And they don't even know that, so you get, where did this \$500,000 come from? Well that's for you to do Portage Avenue. But I can only do one block, and that's thirteen blocks, and they're surprised. I don't think there's room to be surprised. It hasn't been a smooth flow into the project, and that's why they haven't got a whole lot done. And they keep —ing around with these little \$30,000 grants and stuff. We've done that, we've spent \$196 million through the first ten years of the Winnipeg core

area initiative. I'm still at a loss, other than some of the strategic initiatives that have happened, to see the results. They weren't self-sustaining; they just dribbled and died.

A planner also questioned the overall strategy of the meetings:

Sometimes there wasn't much good process occurring at the meetings where the sandwiches were being eaten to keep a project going, to get some desired results or outcomes. And so a part of the problem is the ways in which those meetings were held. They really weren't very focused, going from Centreplan meeting to Centreplan meeting. And it's like going to a meeting where there was nothing done that related from one meeting to the next. There's no building; there's no progression; every meeting is like this little island unto itself. To me that speaks of a lack of focus in moving the plan along.

A citizen's perspective compared the public sector participatory planning initiatives with a private sector focus group process involved with product design:

They would have a goal; they would have a plan; and presumably a flexible way of achieving that plan. But they have an objective. And they probably have a deadline. And for sure they have resources. And they're motivated to make money. You don't see that in the public sector. I was on a committee of the Winnipeg Core Area Initiative that handed out the heritage grants for eight or nine years, and that had time limits, it had procedures. It had a good guy responsible for it and a date when it would die. And they did things. They spent the money and things got done. Where you don't give people resources, as in Centreplan, people seem to be happy to engage in a spiraling networking kind of thing. I was surprised at how satisfied people were to just go to meetings. If you come from the private sector, and everyday you've got to earn a new dollar from somebody by giving something of value, and you recognize your time has a value, you try to spend it on those things that seem to go somewhere. People that don't really have a job that lets them do something, in terms of achieving a goal, start many of these [public] processes. They want to have an acceptable methodology by which to plan. And, that there may not be something done after it, may not be such a tragedy. Whereas, for someone like myself, I don't like to waste my time on things that don't get done . . .

And when you do have a serious plan, that is to be achieved, often there you do not really get the honest chance to influence it. For example: a bridge project, or the design of a bridge project, or other elements in the community. So I would think that's the goal – it's to honestly plan. Because I think these planning processes try to accommodate democratic principles and the notion of citizens' rights. And balancing expertise with the users. I think they're all very sound. But if the context isn't one where there's a productive goal in mind, it may be a form of masturbation. No, honestly, that's how I see it. Nothing bugs me more than to go into a room of twelve people and I'm the only guy that isn't being paid to be there. And I'm the only one that cares that we do something with the two hours for the year, or the four years. And I'd feel that way if I were being paid. I'd feel the same way.

The citizen's remedy involved a visible commitment on the part of the planner:

. . .that it is *really* being offered as a project to be done. And the process is a tool to make it as good as it can be. That will have attached with it time and resources. If you're ever involved in a planning project that doesn't have those, you should realize that, as a planner, maybe its not really what you've been hired to do. You've been hired to give the illusion, or the *hope* that it could happen. I think that part of the problem is to ensure that you're in that [*right*] kind of planning process. To honour the process. That you're really going to do it. And, of course, don't even start it unless there's the money and a time frame.

However, while supporting these public participatory processes as a means of engaging communities, a designer professional's questioning of the dynamism of the processes concerned the quality of consensual solutions for improving the physical urban environment:

And I have found that Centreplan, and the way the planners have approached things more recently . . . it strikes me that they're a bunch of pollsters. I don't even call them facilitators anymore. They take public opinion, and it's consensual stuff. I think that sort of stuff is good for engaging and getting the community up. But the fact is, it's about as

interesting as white bread. I really think that you need to do something far more dynamic if you're going to say that you're really approaching urban design. I almost don't consider Centreplan an urban design process.

The above comment raises the question of how to avoid putting participants into a consumer role, rather than into an empowering role in which participants can gain some control over the decisions that affect their lives. However, another informant, a planner, offered the following view that suggests the legitimacy of such a position within a participatory planning process:

If you're polling public opinion of the people that are sitting around the table, that to me can be a part of the process. If there is, in fact, a process to follow — it's going somewhere. But if it's not, then that's exactly what it is.

A citizen's perspective on the evolution of planning in Winnipeg during the past thirty years drew a pessimistic view of the intent of public participation:

There were people like [*a city planner during the 1960s*] who at least had vision. He knew what he wanted to do. And he knew he was smarter than most people. He developed a plan; he got supporting data for an undeveloped area in the south central business district of Winnipeg. It also came at a time when the city wanted to see new development, when it had been a sleepy city for three or four decades, and in the '60s started to see development, and was hungry for it. That eroded through the '70s and, by 1980-82, there was not very much planning going on. When [*the city planner*] left the city, to go to ———, they never replaced him. So, you don't have a planning department any more. You used to. So what are they going to do? Every few years, there's money from the Feds and the Province, and they try and do a few things together. But you yourself don't know where to go, have no efforts. You try not to find out where you should be going. So you go to these innocuous planning meetings. You're going to be heavy that we're going to do this on Portage and Main, or this

is going to be our strategy on Main Street. You consult, you consult, and you consult. You don't really know what to do.

The same informant's views on City culture imply that the effect of the culture of government employment upon public servants has, in part, contributed to the increasing use of private sector consultants:

I think there's been a kind of acquiescence to an attrition of the mission to plan. I think it's the fairest way of putting it. And I've been astounded that people have allowed it to happen all these years. But I recognize how, on the political side, planning takes guts. Because you're likely to offend someone if you want to spend money that doesn't exist. You're offending a whole group of people if you try and solve too many problems. It's seen as beyond the role of government. And I might be one of those that agree with that. Certainly, there's no question that it has resulted in a very strong reliance, all the way from streets and traffic, and other parts of the urban design process, almost entirely on third party consultants who are now involved. I don't think it's a bad thing. I don't necessarily think it's costing more, either. When the city changed to Unicity and a new structure, [*name of outspoken planner*] did not get the job of the Planning Commissioner. Do you know who got the job of planning commissioner? A fellow I worked with who had been an engineer. Never offended anyone in his life. Had always been used to making sure things happened, rather than guiding the city to a new destiny. Not that there's always one, but the glimmer of a dream that you're making something that could rejuvenate it, is worth a guy making lots of mistakes. The planners who spend all day planning know all the things you can't do, and I think that's one of the inherent problems. When a person has done the same job for six, ten, or twenty years, they know what the management will support, what there'll be a budget for. They know what the politicians will agree to. And once you know all the questions of what you can't do, you just go to meetings and say what can't happen. Whereas private sector people — they *don't know* what you can't do . . . If we're speaking of the City of Winnipeg, for example, I think it's almost been a decision not to actively plan. And not to use the internal staff to plan. I think the end result is that there isn't an expectation that the city plans. They no longer feel they have a capability. They also feel that the politicians and others may second-guess their work, so let's bring in an outside consultant. An outside consultant is the solution

to it all. Because, hopefully, they're more up to date. Hopefully, they can tell you what they really think. They probably have the expertise. Because we haven't done a plan now in ten years. All we've done is gone to meetings and critiqued other people's plan. And I think that's what's happened. How attributable is it to downsizing? Or how attributable is it to a different idea about a city that no longer realized the importance of planning, having more direct control over the shape of the city? I can't say which of the two it is.

Within a personal view of planning in Winnipeg, the same informant expanded this perspective on the increasing use of external consultants:

My first job was working at the University of Winnipeg as a community facilitator in urban research at urban studies. We were experimenting with those American introductions of citizen participation: housing issues, vehicles of how you develop downtown. My first paid job, when I was in second year university, was to study a downtown development corporation as a model. And it's fascinating to see it being touted again thirty-two years later. You know, like: Isn't it obvious that you should do it, and you should do it quickly. I guess we were kind of enamoured with the idea of consulting citizens, because this was the time of the technocrat having come forward in social planning rather than just physical planning. It was refreshing to just touch base with those consumers of housing in the neighborhoods. But, I think what it really did was enlarge a role of the facilitator. I think when you talk about it in terms of accountability, I really wonder if it's not just a political correctness. And unwillingness — when you recognize that the city of Winnipeg has no planning department that plans . . . with very few staff internally that plan. So they're hiring consultants. It's less of a matter of public accountability, and more of an application of a role. And a wish to have a vision. So I don't see it at all as a result of accountability to consult the public. I see it as lacking any vision. I was involved in the Centreplan study project, and no one ever came with major ideas. They never came with a sense of a budget. So I don't buy that it's done for purposes of accountability. I think it's done out of a lame duck mentality. The people that practice it . . . I don't feel they have the political support to plan strongly and with vision and that they don't want to be on the hook. So they're just as happy to hire a consultant. And the consultant said this, we think nothing, we dare nothing. That's the context

for this whole business of citizen participation now. I don't know if you'd think of all that as cynical.

The above perceptions are evidently supportive of the principle of public participation. However, the design and focus of the participatory processes were clearly called into question, raising issues of professional capacity to manage processes within a comprehensive understanding of the development process.

4.6 POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR WINNIPEG URBAN DESIGN PRACTICE

The political shaping of urban design also emerged as a theme that impacted the quality of participatory planning processes, and subsequently the resources that urban designers might offer within them.

In the view of a City design professional, political support was essential to the urban design function:

Well, without it [*political support*] our hands are tied. Where, ten years ago, it may have been that the administration was sizable enough, and there were more councillors and they worked full-time, and the administration was stronger and able to set direction. I think much more of the direction is being given effectively by council; is being driven by deficit reduction, tax reduction, or holding the line on taxes. And by the borders that put them there. This is a city in particular that's a status quo city: it's conservative in terms of what we're doing, in terms of planning and architecture. Zero growth. I don't think that the planners, architects and so forth are getting the opportunities in Winnipeg to be proactive as there are in Calgary, Edmonton, or Vancouver, for example. There's probably an even greater need. But there's not the same opportunity.

From the perspective of a planner, the process of planning and design in Winnipeg suffered a lack of dynamism because of the level of awareness of political decision-makers of planning and design quality:

I always say that the reason planning/design becomes dysfunctional is because of politics. That's the great irony. You can't take politics out of it because they're ultimately involved in the decision making. If I was to point to one thing as to why things don't get done, it's politics. That's why things drag on forever. And that's why, in my view, some of the very poor decisions are made as to the kinds of developments that you see happen. It's because you've got people at City Hall who really have no business suggesting what design is better than another, because they have no background to contribute to it. Yet they're the ones who are the first to say, "No, you're wrong, and I'm right." Which may, on the surface, sound like I don't believe in public participation. But they're separate.

The same informant considered that political processes had, in fact, overtaken design and planning processes in the city:

I think that the process to get to the product — that's where it breaks down. Here, in this city, the process is not very well defined. Or followed. Or prescribed. And it seems that the process has become entirely overtaken by politics. And so, this process that you speak of becomes a political process. As opposed to a design process engaging architecture, planning, and landscape architecture. It's related to decision-making.

A design professional informant viewed the culture of government, and an ability to contain the self-interest within a collective interest, as central to the success of public participatory processes:

You see, there are folks who are going out attempting to do this [*public participatory planning*]. There's the public, the government bodies, etc.

And there are so many vested interests in this. Everybody's trying to cut it or hedge it or direct it to achieve their own ends. You really have to be willing to let go when you do this kind of thing, because otherwise people just sense that they're being driven in a certain direction. And then the whole process stops. So, something has to be done about the government; we have to have some way of equipping them with a different understanding. It's a cultural undertaking. It tends to be sporadic. Or it will have limited success. It has a lot to do with who happens to be coming to the table and the nature of what it is they're working on.

However, the professional informants' views were consistently pessimistic about the value with which politicians and decision-makers held planning and design.

A planner's views were that the planning and design expertise were considered of no value:

The importance of that function [*architecture, landscape architecture, and planning within the public sector*] has been cast aside . . . If you look at the history of this city and its administration, why is it that the city has no functional planning department? It was viewed as one of those things that needed to be downsized and not that important. So it got blown away.

A corresponding perspective was held by a design professional:

Meanwhile, with the City, they seem to marginalize [*urban design*]. There's no understanding amongst the politicians, and, I think, there's a very weak understanding amongst the administration of what urban design is about. Because it keeps getting marginalized.

Staff losses in the city planning and design resources was considered by a design professional informant as evidence of a lack of understanding in city government of the value of planning and design expertise:

Some of my colleagues have said that the reason that we don't have support for staff to replace vacancies and so forth, when we're probably down to a third of the staff we had ten years ago, is that the politicians don't hold the planning functions in very high esteem. They really don't understand the benefits. It's [*seen as*] more of a clerical thing. They don't see us as adding value to the process. So obviously we're losing something. We're not perceived as professionals that could develop exceptional urban fabrics that will move the downtown forward, or will move a particular neighbourhood forward. I think we've got a little bit of a credibility problem . . . There's not a lot of people on councils that really understand urban design and architecture. And care about it. It [*design*] is often perceived as fluff.

The same informant, one of the remaining urban design staff within the City, viewed the result of staff cutbacks as having undermined the role of the City's urban design staff to be progressive, since time resources only allowed staff to carry out development control activities enabled by existing legislation:

. . . the amount of time and resources that there are for research, for example. I don't have any time during the work day to do what most of us would consider research — to apply new information to current bylaws or current projects. So it's becoming much more reactive than proactive.

The following design professional's view indicates that if credibility of city planning and design staff was previously suspect, then it is unlikely to change without more staffing resources:

. . . because they've been zoners; they haven't been planners. They've been dealing with, shall we have a one foot side yard, or shall we have a three foot side yard, like the bylaw? They sit there and they spend their whole day scratching their heads about those kinds of things. It's just micro.

A planner viewed politicians' conception of the need for City planning and design resources as negligible.

Cursory — that's been the nature of my experiences. The amount of attention that's been given to urban design [*in the City*] has been very cursory. I think it's something that's overlooked.

The same informant suggested that this extended to an incomplete understanding by politicians of planning and design processes, and offered the example of separating planning and design issues as retarding the revitalization of the Winnipeg's historic Exchange District:

. . . looking at how broad planning machines are influenced, or can be influenced, by landscape architecture. And, likewise, with the architecture and built spaces, and how do those relate to broader planning issues? Look at some of the buildings that are old and underutilized, and the city's process for trying to enter calls for proposals for redevelopment of those buildings. If it wasn't for a great deal of pressure being placed on them to consider some of this, all they would be doing is looking at what kind of the use can the architecture — the built form of the buildings — support. As opposed to what use makes most sense, in a planning context. And how does that relate to broader policies of the City or of the District? Very seldom are they actually commented on upon the same page. So there's been a real deficiency, in my view, of trying to find this middle ground.

In the same informant's view, a BIZ board, an example of community leaders, displayed a similar disregard for planning process. The following example indicates a BIZ organization's wish to be reactive, rather than proactive, regarding a significant extension of the BIZ area's roadways:

Even in [*name of BIZ organization*], proper planning process isn't real important to certain members of the board, as community leaders. Part of the difficulty that I face in dealing with people in my organization is getting them to try to see the future instead of reacting to what someone else does. For example, the whole project of extending the Pioneer Boulevard to hook into Lombard. So this is a road that comes out of the Forks, around the stadium, along the river. Engineers were designing what that extension of road was to look like. The question thrown to me was, what did our organization think that road should look like? What kind of traffic should it accommodate? The thought behind all of that discussion was that the design of this road extension could impact on the future design of a riverside drive. So I took it to the Board, saying, "Here's a planning issue, this road. What should it look like? What should it accommodate? What should its function be?" And the response was, "We don't need to talk about that. Why do we need to? It's not going to affect us. We'll deal with that when there's a design to look at." They don't want to look forward; they just want to react to something that someone's done. And, to me, that's a whole breakdown in the process as well.

The same informant offered the view that this reactive policy was due to a lack of understanding of the importance of planning and design process:

. . . the urban design process in the city fails because people are too concerned about, we've got to get a product now! So it's to hell with the appropriate process to come up with design for something that fits in the urban form, and that serves more than one purpose . . . I think, in this circumstance, there's a variety of reasons [*for the lack of design processes*]. There's the apprehension of trying to get the politicians to approve expenditure on design work, because it's not tangible. It's not bricks and mortar. There was the factor of some downtown organizations feeling that they needed to show a result or a product — now! Sometimes I think it's ignorance of the importance of process.

A planner offered the view that the reduction and nature of the planning function within the City provided evidence of this political disregard of process:

If there was a block of land out here that's empty, and someone wanted to develop it, they go to the city to share their ideas about what they want to put there. The city will require an architectural rendering and report. But they're not necessarily going to ask the private proponent for a planning report. Typically, because they'll get somebody from the city to provide it. But they don't look at it anyway. To me, the planning component is entirely regulatory in nature. It's not so much advisory; in terms of how does this fit in the fabric of the community. It's in there as a particular zoning issue that we need to be aware of. Or how many parking stalls are there going to be. That's the role of planners that the city finds value in. And I think that's misplaced.

And the same informant offered the opinion that closing this gap in the process did not meet politicians' agendas:

Because — not to defend politicians — but their defense would be that they have to be accountable to the electorate; it's difficult to be accountable with intangible things. "I can't show them a process; I can't show them that we were sensitive to the social implications of a particular built form."

In the view of a design professional, even with the preparation of strategic plans, such as Plan Winnipeg, politicians would not necessarily follow the policies contained in them.

How do you rationalize, from the planning standpoint, the health of downtown? Many people feel, as downtown goes, the city of Winnipeg will go. With the major land sales of city lands to developers from outside the province for big box retail, or the loss of industrial lands, or the conversion of industrial lands to commercial or retail, all the issues should be dealt with under Plan Winnipeg. But in many cases there are inconsistencies with planning policy and councillors moving forward with projects that are not appropriate for the City of Winnipeg.

The above views might be argued to indicate a limited understanding on the part of the professionals of the economic rationality that is clearly employed by politicians and commercial interests to guide decision-making within Winnipeg. The collective view of professionals that political support for planning and design is deficient is contrasted by the endorsement offered by the same group for a citizen-led downtown development committee, as described below.

4.7 AN EMERGING DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN INSTRUMENT

Urban design agencies at the downtown and neighbourhood scales emerged as interview themes. The professional informants expressed notable interest in the emerging Downtown Development Authority as an urban design agency.

A planner offered the view that the formation of a Downtown Development Authority indicated that the need for an urban design agency was recognized by City Council:

Part and parcel of what the downtown authority is supposed to be doing is this [*urban design function in the city*]. Because there is some recognition that it's not been in the current system. Because the Authority that gets created — its mandate, its structure, how it's staffed, and what its responsibilities are — are all going to have a direct relationship to either fitting or not fitting this whole kind of [*urban design*] model.

And a design professional viewed such an agency as possibly driving an implementation function that he had considered to be missing from the previous City participatory planning processes:

I think this debate that's going on about the Downtown Development Authority is all pretty healthy. It's trying to get into that domain of implementation, and it's not going to be through a Centreplan process with the planner taking the notes from the public at a chalkboard. I mean this is high level stuff. You have to launch into this brokering, financing, big projects involving the private sector. In joint venture deals, it's a lot of deal-making to bring together all of the forces.

The Downtown Development Authority was viewed by another design professional to be the latest in a lineage of City of Winnipeg urban design initiatives that included the formation of the Urban Design Group and Centreplan, but now with the power of implementation:

Centreplan attempted to focus on downtown because that urban design group hadn't been able to coalesce a downtown plan. Centreplan and its planning process and consultation process evolved out of that. But it was limited in having the power to enact. You had a large board to obtain grassroots support, and at the same time they're all volunteers. Which makes that very difficult with one or two staff support. So the implementation arm at Centreplan was handcuffed a little bit. So, hopefully, you learn lessons as you move. The Downtown Development Board will have some grassroots support, but, at the same time, have its own authority and power — if it's simply endorsing projects and shaping projects to move things forward. And that's the challenge of Winnipeg. They're not looking at, "Gee, all these developments are going on; what's the best way to integrate and link them?" It's, "Wouldn't it be nice to have a development going on!" So it's an economic development that will then lead to the urban design coming out of that.

In the same informant's view, the aim of the Downtown Development Authority will be to promote improvement to the physical urban environment within a social and economic context:

The physical environment is the demonstration of the economic community. And so we jump into the physical, I think, because it has some political and community support. Because you can see it, touch it, taste it, walk around it. Knowing there's an extra two thousand people living in the downtown may or may not affect me as I work, or go to the theatre, or anything else. It may in more subtle ways. Because an extra two thousand people living downtown will probably make it safer for me to walk the streets. But that's a slow perception that changes over time. Versus, "We've streetscaped!" And you can drive by it and see it.

A politician's perspective on the Downtown Development Authority comprised an entrepreneurial agency, rooted in the business community, representative of the multiplicity of interests in the downtown physical environment, and functioning as a private-public partnership development corporation:

And I think the keynote . . . is that there are disparate interests downtown. You have the Portage Avenue Properties Association, the Exchange BIZ District, the Downtown BIZ, the Exchange, the North Main Task force, and the Forks. Always a challenge to bring together groups with very different goals under an umbrella organization. I'm a firm believer that we have the academic expertise in-house, through a planning process here. But, in order to bring about a lot of the change, you have to give some real authority to a downtown planning authority that can act with rapidity. One of the big constant criticisms about the city of Winnipeg is that is over-studied. And that there's inertia, as far things accomplished and action realized. The report that came from John Lathan and Associates on a Downtown Planning Authority specifically said that you needed someone with a real entrepreneurial zeal. You have to have somebody who has the confidence of the business community as well as the academic community to go out and, basically, make some deals. Two of the things that I've seen recently in the paper were interesting. One was an article citing the fact for a city to be successful was that it had to have 750,000 people. I noticed a recent article that talked about the fact that Calgary is very, very aggressive. More so than even Vancouver, for that matter. So, I think that recognizing that, we have to go out and sell ourselves aggressively in order to be successful. And I think you do need somebody who has a strong

work ethic; one who's got a host of strong connections within that business community; and is respected.

A design professional's view of the proposed Downtown Planning Authority paralleled the politician's perspective of an autonomous, representative body aimed at creating a vibrant downtown environment through stakeholder involvement:

They're talking about the Downtown Development Authority having a budget to be funded for the first couple of years. And then to be self-supporting. Or operate at a profit. In what way, shape, or form, I'm not sure. So it becomes more of an independent corporation, as opposed to an arm of the city organization that's funded. And the question right now is whether or not they would own land or any of those kinds of things. And I don't think that's been resolved. The report that was prepared was that the Downtown Development Board would be a good idea. Now what? And that will resolve itself over the next three or four weeks. They've conducted interviews with people from that as to feelings, impressions, etc. The report was very broad, and so probably lacked the legs to be implemented. More, it talked about the direction the Board would take. And it's very hard, because the Board was made up of all the stakeholders who hold property in the downtown, and were involved in the BIZs, the Forks, and North Portage. So they brought together, under one umbrella, a series of very different viewpoints. Of which, of course, there's always self-interest . . . And the question that has been that's kicked around for a while is, how many independent authorities do you need operating in a downtown of our size? Between the two BIZs, three maybe, that operate in the area, resident groups, the Forks North Portage, Winnipeg 2000, the Chamber having opinions, Portage Avenue Property Owners Association, all of the larger landowners – be it Richardson's, be it Aspers. Be it whoever else in the downtown. There are a number of organizations that have similar goals, slightly different agendas perhaps. And I don't know how you broaden that to have this development board, say, while not being altruistic, to look at what are the best opportunities to be pursued and how to develop and create it. It's [*the Downtown Development Board*] seen as being above. And what they struggle with is, how many others will roll up into it? I'm not familiar with the role of the Winnipeg Economic Development Corporation, whatever they've rolled into. Because there was concern, previously, as to what business liaison and intergovernmental activity did within the city. Versus Tourism and Trade. Versus Winnipeg

Tourism. They'll all have a role in promoting and creating a vibrant city downtown.

However, a design professional's view included the requirement for broad stakeholder representation as a downtown shaping force:

And, I think, what they [*the City*] would like to happen is a smaller functioning board, as opposed to Centreplan, which is larger, more community-driven. But to have the Board represent all aspects of the downtown. Because, when the word development comes in, you don't want the eighteen people who own the majority of the land in the downtown sitting advocating their interests. What you want are the artists, the residents, a broader constituency that shapes the downtown.

The same informant, however, viewed political relations as critical to the success of the Downtown Development Authority as an urban design agency:

I guess it [*the Downtown Development Authority*] was a taskforce that was authorized by the mayor. And so, probably, municipal-driven. The challenge is, what role does the Province have in this? And should they have a role? And do they want one? The problem's been always that our problem-unit might be municipal. And in dealing with the province, they may always want to have opinions about what happens. But what are they going to fund? And, as is always said, whoever invests the money have a proportional say over the outcome. So, if the Province was to completely fund the Downtown Development Board . . . Yes, they would appoint members. If the City was to fund it for the first couple of years, you'd think they'd appoint the majority of the members. And, depending on who appoints, it means that they have trust, or they don't have trust, in the Board. And that's going to be a critical step. Because there always is a suspicion, if you have a vested interest. So you can be a substantial landholder in the downtown; you will speak for the downtown. You maybe will be viewed with suspicion as development plans and zoning variances and all the other items come forward to Council to be approved for funding. And I think that's the intent of how do you broaden the board's makeup? And mandate and get around that?

A politician's perspective of how the Downtown Development Authority would function involved a partnership between business expertise and urban design expertise:

I think that the business people are not urban designers, and urban designers, in many instances, are not business people. I think what you have to do is bring those two visions to the table simultaneously. I think that if we want a healthy vibrant downtown, we also want one that is sustainable. One that is exciting and is going to attract future development downtown. It isn't as straightforward as just handing it over to a group of property developers, saying, take the ball and run with it. We need to plan, we need design expertise relative to traffic flows, relative to architecture, to uses of open space, issues of safety and so forth. There has to be, very much, a theme. And it can only be realized by bringing together the expertise of the business community coupled with the design expertise in the urban design field. I don't think anybody is naïve enough to believe that any singular faction has all of the answers. And, I go back to this thing that, if we're working in conjunction, there has to be a certain respect and a recognition that you're going to treat the other side with dignity. Every idea doesn't fly. But I think you have to create an atmosphere and a culture where people can bring forth diverse opinions and know that they're going to at least be given an initial review. And to me, when I've seen things work down here, the best success has been for people that make decisions on the merit of the issue, not on personalities.

And a city design professional saw an important function of the Downtown Development Authority, as a private-public partnership, to provide much-needed continuity to the usually lengthy duration of revitalization initiatives:

What we struggled with on public versus private sector and roles of involvement . . . is that you need someone who guards a vision. And then the role of urban designers and planners and economists is to come in and see what works and what doesn't work within in it. The City should purchase expertise to promote that overall vision. And that's the empowerment of the community, I guess. To say that what the mayor has, or what I have, or what another administrator has, may not be the correct vision. It may be part of a vision. It may be a perspective on it. But the

Board will have to develop their own. And see those opportunities as they come up . . . The Chair of the Board [*has a very important responsibility for this group*], because, I think, the chair will dictate a flavor and approach and style, which will reflect how successful they will be. Guard the vision and endorse those [*projects*] that really support the vision. Because many projects will come. What are the best ones to support, and nurture, if you have to fund and give land to them?

The concept of the Downtown Development Authority, although not clearly formulated at the time of research, enjoyed considerable support from the informants. It provides some optimism as a citizen-led initiative in the context of the previous research concerning decision-making in the economic conditions of Winnipeg.

4.8 COMMUNITY-BASED URBAN DESIGN RESOURCES

The neighbourhood scale emerged as a theme during the interviews as another arena of urban design activity. Presented below are perspectives on the role of urban design within this context.

In a community leader's view, a community-based urban design resource offered the advantages of continuity, local knowledge, and a greater ability to initiate projects within an urban designer's role as community resource:

Well, somebody who's actually grounded in the community. If there's that possibility, that's great. Somebody who's seeing what's happening, who knows the environment and someone who isn't just in on a short contract and gone. There's the other approach, which is an ongoing support so something starts to happen and you can build things on, and understand the dynamics.

However, a design professional's view was that a community advocate position for the urban designer presented the challenge to the urban designer of retaining a city-wide perspective:

I support working with community to build, but I think the danger could be that you end up solving a series of small problems that don't solve a bigger issue. How you step from solving the issues that are local to dealing with the larger [picture]. And [the] larger [picture] can simply be the neighborhood. Or it could be the city. I think, it's very important for urban design professionals to realize there's a point at which you're trying to respond to all these contexts. And balance the best ones.

The establishing of community-based urban design resources clearly offers benefits to the immediate geographical community. However, as identified in Chapter 2, the need to coordinate neighbourhood-based initiatives would emerge. A suitable coordinating organization is therefore considered necessary for the successful functioning of such community-based urban design resources within the city-wide context.

Urban design agencies at the downtown and neighbourhood levels may offer a viable strategy for improving social-well-being through urban design. Such initiatives provide for raising awareness about planning and design issues, and may begin to address the view held by planner informant regarding the definition of urban design tabled for the interview as, "a process through which we consciously shape and manage our built environments" (Madanipour 1997) (see Appendix A).

If it were, in fact, conscious; we wouldn't, in fact, be having the problems that we have.

4.9 URBAN DESIGN IN WINNIPEG

Part I has presented empirical research concerned with urban design in the Winnipeg context, and offers a consensual view that developing the quality of urban environments would contribute to social and economic development in Winnipeg, particularly in the light of Winnipeg's low economic growth. The mixed history of the City of Winnipeg's urban design capacity is not thought to indicate that the City undervalues urban design; but rather that the degree of urban design capacity has been determined through economic rationality on the part of politicians and other decision-makers in the context of Winnipeg's low economic growth. In this perspective, the strategy for improving the urban environment is expeditious, concerned with encouraging private sector development forces, and a planning function is secondary. Indeed, the form outlined for the Downtown Development Authority allows it to be seen as a descendant of the City's urban design group, created out of market rationality in a low-growth economic context, as a planning function that can implement projects in order to encourage private sector investment. However, the number of initiatives reported as being undertaken by the public sector, whatever their intent, as well as the future establishment of a Downtown Development Authority, indicate the adoption of planning processes that are being citizen-led, rather than professional-led. While the principle of public participation was clearly supported by the informants, the integrity of some of the participatory processes carried out in Winnipeg

was questioned. Clearly the development of a more appropriate attitude and more appropriate skills by professional practitioners would be instrumental in improving both the processes and the perception of the processes. Market rationality appears to support the use of private sector consultants; however, whether urban designers operate from a public sector or private sector base does not appear to be at large in considering the content of the role that urban designers might play.

The above context indicates that there is an important role for urban design and its practitioners, as holders of special expertise concerned with the built environments. Urban designers can work within public forums to help to shape development initiated by the public sector and public / private partnerships, as well as helping to shape any private sector development forces, toward community-wide benefits identified within public participatory processes. Clearly, the role of urban designers is a support role, since the adoption of stakeholder involvement in public decision-making, embodied within the planning paradigm set out in Chapter 2, is firmly established in the perceptions of these sample representatives of those involved in practice. In Part 2 the empirical research concerned with the nature of that role is reported.

Part 2: The urban designer

This part presents research concerning informants' perceptions of the role that urban designers currently play, and views of the professions from which urban designers emerge.

This prescriptive theme includes what role urban designers *might* play, particularly in emerging arenas, and how the urban designer might be equipped to meet such challenges.

4.10 CONTEMPORARY URBAN DESIGN PRACTICE

Within this theme, contrasting views of the role of the urban designer within public participatory processes are presented.

A City design professional viewed the role of the urban designer in participatory processes as supportive:

We tend to be either facilitator or a resource to the community, or the council, and to the community committees.

However, within this perspective, public participation processes are seen to provide the contemporary urban design practitioner with a design briefing resource:

In the city there's been a tendency in the last probably five years to involve the public more in the planning process, to work in the manner of facilitation rather than in the manner of wise counsel of experts developing the plan and saying to the community, "Isn't this wonderful, won't you buy into it?" You're going to the table, using the community as a resource; you're assuming you can find your groups or individuals within the community that are both knowledgeable and interested in developing your plan and that have a vested interest in that, and then working with them to develop the terms of reference that you can then respond to through a design or exercise to come up with a strategy for redevelopment. I think the role is more one of experience and background and wise counsel in the sense that there's planning expertise there, there's experience there, but soft-pedaled. Because the role is more one of facilitation than, "I've got

this one figured out.” So, it’s a more cautious role than the planners of ten years ago would have preferred.

In response to a question to the same informant of how urban designers communicated with groups, the perception was that the content of urban design practice had not have changed, only the manner. The notion of the ‘expert’ operating outside of the group still underpins this conception:

I don’t know if that’s changed a whole lot. The technology has changed. Everybody deals with it differently. Some people are more comfortable with words; some people are more comfortable with images. Generally, I think people with a design background tend to use both, and place more weight on images. So if they want to achieve a certain kind of character, they might draw on images from other cities, or other projects that convey to the people that you’re working with a particular character that you intend to achieve. Because what you’re really trying to do is define the terms of reference, get some kind of buy-in or commitment to those terms of reference, and try and remain true to those points of reference in the execution of the design. And then try and sell that back to the broader community or the politicians because you’re competing for limited resources.

Other respondents appeared not so confident that professionals were indeed fulfilling, or were able to fulfill, a role within participatory process. A design professional offered a contrasting view of his peers’ abilities:

You can get an architect to show up, but it doesn’t mean that he can possibly run a participatory process. It probably means he can’t. I know there are guys here in town who can, there’re more in the minority by far than the majority. So, what’s the value of their professionalism?

In a planner's view, planner's skills were inappropriate for the urban design process:

I find so much of the planning side of things very weak in the [*urban design*] processes, because there have been so many policy planners for so long.

A community leader's example indicates that, despite attending a community focus group meeting, a solution had been previously conceived elsewhere. This suggests, at worst, that lip service was being paid to the consultation content of this project:

The [*river access*] project came from an initiative by [*name of councilor*], bringing together representatives from the different neighbourhoods. They had a pretty clear idea about what they wanted to do. Our neighbourhood was the only one where there was really community input. [*Name of community leader*] ran a little focus group. In that project, the designer — a landscape architect — was already hired, and did at some point come out to each of the groups to get input on the ideas they had. But there was some preconception about where the docks should go.

A community leader offered a further example of how time constraints prevented an urban designer, in this instance a landscape architect, working to allowing a community to take more control over decisions affecting it:

Some [*community consultation*], yes; not enough, just in terms of time. I don't think there's ever enough time. For example at the [*name of project*], I don't think there was ever a time that [*name of landscape architect*] went around with the whole group.

A number of themes emerged from the interviews to explore what is preventing designers and planners from responding in an appropriate manner to the ethos of public participatory planning.

First, a design professional informant offered an example of the claim of formal aesthetics on designers within their professional training:

There was a practicum that was presented out there [*at the Department of Architecture, University of Manitoba*] two years ago. The designer was asked about a particular space — a curious space. What did they understand was going to be taking place in that space? And they had absolutely no idea. It's stuff and nonsense. Nobody can ever control anything, and you can use it then as a tool to hammer people. It's [*obtuse formal design*] at virtually any jury I've gone to out there.

And another design professional's view illustrated architects' focus on the constructed entity as divorced from its wider, social context:

Architects produce something within a budget and a time. But the product that they produce — I don't think the public thinks about it as large scale. But I think they have credibility with the public in that sense; maybe not in the urban design sense. In the urban design sense it might end up being like our weather protecting walkway system here in Winnipeg, where everybody says, "That's terrible, look what those architects did. It's building; they don't consider that planning."

A possible further outcome of the architect's focus on object-design was highlighted by another design professional, resulting in a characteristic shortcoming to carry through the development process required of successful urban design activity:

And one of the knocks, I think, against a lot of the professionals is that they are not real practical when it comes to the economics of the plan, and how do you make it happen? How do you implement it? We [*architects*] don't have a reputation for being good business people.

A planner perceived the relations between the built environment professions as problematic:

Each one of these respective domains, or disciplines [*architecture, landscape architecture, and planning*], think they're more important than the other. And that has an impact [*on urban design*].

To a design professional informant, the nature of the inter-disciplinary relationship resulted in strategic problems within the urban design process:

Internally [*in the City*], there's a real problem with the people who are controlling or assigned the job. Which is usually the planners, because it's the first stage in the process. They don't want to give up the reins; they don't want to pass it on; they don't want to include people who have a design background, as an integral part of the process. They keep you on the outside until they have sorted it out and then they say, go bake us a loaf of white bread. Instead, you would have been rabble-rousing as an urban designer and it might have come off as whole-wheat, something a little more interesting. You might have brought in that perspective that gets it out of the consensual acceptable thing. Which in terms of architecture and design . . . consensual art? What would it look like?

A planner viewed increased sensitization of the challenges faced by each profession would lead to better urban design:

I've heard comments that people coming out of community planning backgrounds are more able to see the bigger picture than those coming out of landscape or architecture backgrounds. The bigger picture being the

whole issue of how different projects can impact on one another; and how does that relate to achieving more than one outcome, as opposed to a single project-specific perspective. I don't think that ability is valued or recognized. In some instances, I think there could be great value in people that come into planning in having some more than token exposure to architecture and landscape architecture. I can see real value in that. So that they understand more about specific projects and how they are designed. So that can be more effective in relating those project-specific concerns to the bigger picture. I think that might also change the perception of planners with the other professions. I always thought there was very good value in being a generalist rather than being a specialist. I tend to view these particular disciplines [*architecture, landscape architecture*] as being a bit more specialist, than this one [*planning*]. And the fact that people coming out of this [*planning*] tend to be more generalist, is what enables them to see the bigger picture. But then you start to lose some of the detailed knowledge and specifics about the way a building is designed like it is for a particular purpose.

Emerging from this theme is a perception of a lack of understanding between the professions, and hence an obstruction to a concerted multi-disciplinary effort viewed as necessary by an urban designer for large scale interventions in the urban environment:

To me there aren't very many urban designers around. There might be consortiums. Like this [*diagram showing urban design activity within an overlapping space between design and planning activities*] might indicate a consortium that can, because of the overlap, do the middle. As far as individuals, there aren't too many individuals who have a grasp of what urban design is. Sometimes you get consortiums that kind of click, and manage to address it. I think there's the need for the team, ultimately, to get really large scale.

However, despite views expressing concern for the capacity of professionals to undertake public participatory work, either through lack of skill or inappropriate attitudes, to one design professional the problem was external to the professions. It could be solved through better marketing:

I think that planners, architects and landscape architects and the other professionals that have an interest in urban design need to be much more proactive in promoting the value of their services to the community, and to the leaders within the community. Whether they're leaders at the grass roots level, or whether it's the politicians — provincial, civic, or federal level. It should be perceived to be good business to have professionals involved in your project. And a cross-section too.

Conversely, a design professional felt that while some professionals had become more responsive to working with communities, professionals did not generally enjoy the complete faith of communities:

The paradigm shift — it's happened to a degree, I think. With a lot of the professional groups, they come in and say, we're going to work with the community first. As opposed to, here's the answer. I think 'distrust' [*of professionals*] is maybe not the right word, but 'suspicion' or 'credibility' give a better color to it. Because people have seen plans and then ten years later they're revisiting the same issue or problem. And the professional who gave them the original one is gone. Sometimes he's brought back again, which I always find interesting.

The above perspectives parallel some of the concerns identified in Chapter 3. The notion of the professional expert, for whom the participatory process is not, in fact, a planning and design process, but an opportunity for wider briefing, is evident. Doubts are also raised about the professionals' capacity to work with such processes, and approach such work openly.

4.11 URBAN DESIGNER'S ROLE IN PUBLIC PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES

The informants' offered various prescriptions for the role of the urban designer in public participatory processes, which are presented below.

First, a community leader offered the example in which an urban designer might “reach out to the users,” and be proactive in developing participation in a neighbourhood context:

The [*name of project*] started actually with a student in landscape architecture who had summer position in [*name of neighbourhood*]. We started right at the beginning with: Well, we've got this space, what shall we do with it? We could go door-to-door in the neighborhood, and [*name of student*] said he was willing to do that. The way he did it was to get a letter and a sketch and drop it off. No responses! But if that role can be there as well, of the person who has some understanding how to take a space and create things — the possibilities. And also the time and willingness to do that. Rather than, say, me going door-to-door, asking people, and then having to translate what they are saying. That would be a useful thing. Reaching out to the users. Whether it would have changed things, I don't know.

In a more general context, a citizen viewed the role to be within, and led by, the participating group:

Work with the momentum and the dynamic of the group . . .

For a design professional, the role was necessarily supportive, involving the bringing of resources particular to a project:

And . . . there's a distrust of the professional. So that's why you want people from the community as your task force chairs. Then you buy the professional expertise to fit the goal that you want to achieve.

The same informant offered the following historical context in which the urban designer emerges in a supporting role:

The city used to be run by engineers: “Let’s spread this out. Development is good.” Which was fine, because at that time we had fifty councillors in the city who were all part time. So it was a part time job. They looked after the ward concerns. So someone had to run the bigger system. So, we had engineers as Board of Commissioners and Chief Commissioners, running large sections of departments in the city. Because that’s what was needed. As our Council has shrunk, councilors have become full time, mostly. The wards have become bigger. So they’re having to balance needs within their own areas, whilst still being an advocate for their community. But the role has shifted a little. So that it’s not the professional, as the god out of the machine, giving you the answer and leaving. It’s a level of sophistication within the city saying, “No, that doesn’t work in my neighborhood or my community.” West Broadway would probably be an example of that. You couldn’t hire someone to go in and solve that problem. But, what can be done is that the community can work it out within itself. Bringing in expertise and support where they need to.

To another design professional, the role involved coming as a participant, and adding value through the bringing of appropriate knowledge:

. . . the value-added part. And I’m saying they’re bringing, for me, a planning and a design perspective. I’m not interested so much in whether the urban designer is kept on the outside; or whether the urban designer is part of the group. The part that I don’t like about it is when the expectation is that the urban designer is simply the facilitator, and stands at the easel, and takes the notes. I think there’s more; you have to be an active participant. And the urban designer does bring certain information to bear, whether it be about development processes, what has happened in different processes, whether it be design review, working with engineers, sewer and water, utility issues or decorative lighting, or urban form — any of that stuff. That’s what they could bring to the table. And it’s quite a different thing to be a resident in a neighbourhood, and then to understand that every time you do a design that gets built that you are creating this life stage. And I really view it that way. It’s wonderful. It’s amazingly

complex, because let's look at it out there [*points out of window*]. That's what you're doing. And everybody's acting out their lives in this. I totally believe that the designer is an expert; that they bring an expertise; that there's a value-added component to what they bring to the process. And they function much better if they aren't simply listening to a bunch of people discuss the project and then being asked to go and design it. They are much more valuable as an integral part of the discussion, bringing that kind of expertise into the discussion. And it becomes part of the information that works along with the rest of the public and people that participate. There has to be that.

Another design professional informant, who offered an example of how each member of a group was likely to have appropriate skills, offered a similar perspective.

It comes out of the person. You see who you are as where it starts. So what can I bring? Well, they can bring themselves. So how do you maximize what you can bring as a person? Rather, it's coming not as a facilitator, it's not an agitator, it's not a director, and it's not an organizer. It may entail performing those tasks occasionally. But there's something that precedes it. And what precedes it . . . is bringing them. And in the form of whatever capacities. I have a friend who's an empath; this is a guy that can sense what's going on emotionally in other people, very accurately, at huge distances. When you have a number of people together, and issues are starting to get played out, this person is able to sense from below what's going on. Now, well, that's very different from number crunching, but very valuable. So we come as persons, and then we come as persons with certain gifts. And some of the gifts, then, have been refined, or honed. Trained. So we have certain technical skills, which may be on the quantitative side or the qualitative side.

The same informant identified the very the idea of 'role' as being problematic. In this view, it obstructs achieving the implementation goal of a participatory process:

The tendency at these sandwich-munching things is that everybody's there playing a role. And it's this kind of 'role-ness' that really gets in the way. The role is to drop the role! To some degree, that's, don't lose your interest in the environment; but don't try to bounce things in. There has to

be a will to get it to the implementing stage. How do you get it there? There's a wonderful analogy: You have a frog and there are a number of ways of relating to that frog. You might have a long twig and touch the frog and it might jump away there. Touch it again, and it jumps here. Round and round and round. Quite an interesting tour. But, then, you can also have the preconceived notion that we're going to get the frog through here [*the door*]. So you pick up a piece of 2 x 4 [*play acts whacking the frog*] and the frog goes through. We really need to get to the bottom line. It's often unstated, and it may not be fully defined, but it's there already. We're driving for it. But we're so worried about it, you know. That's what gets us into all these masks and stuff, and roles. So what can they do? Drop all those roles!

These perspectives display the widespread support for the principles of participatory processes, and for the urban designer to become a participant working within processes.

4.12 EQUIPPING THE URBAN DESIGNER

The interviews explored how the urban designer might become qualified to come to a public participatory process and be an integral part of a process. This resulted in themes, presented below, concerned with the professional cultures from which urban design practitioners emerge, and with how the urban designer can act as an agent to further democratize public participation initiatives.

In the view of a citizen informant, the need to possibly overcome constraints of time and money in order to carry out that participation with commitment:

Often you're not paid enough to spend that much time with your client. If you aren't there, who speaks for them? And are they accurately imparting to you the knowledge and the direction of the group? So you've got to be

there and it's up to the individual to decide when they can afford, and whether they are being compensated adequately, to be there for all the time that it may take, with enough integrity to make sure that they're not just happy to earn a fee, and resign themselves to, "This is all it's going to be, but I could use the fee anyway." Where you don't really think it's going to happen. I don't think that's enough — to be involved in that kind of planning.

A number of perspectives emerged during the informants concerning professionalism. To a community leader informant, expertise, upon which much of professionalism is constructed, was an unsafe premise for community urban design work:

If you're coming in as the expert, then you tell people what they need to do. Then you're gone. People are left a bit . . . well, you know . . .

In the view of a design professional, the idea of the expert was also inappropriate at a larger scale. An attitude was required that was built from the needs of the community — rather than the desires of the professional:

[The professional traditionally said . . .] "Here's the best answer! We've gone off and thought about this, and here's the answer!" I think it works on moving vehicles. But it may have a number of impacts on the people who live around where vehicles are moved and traffic and those kinds of things. I think the recognition from that by the professionals, which has almost killed some, has been that shift to, how do we involve the community in this? So that we have a better answer at the end. Some people come being part of the community. And they will understand the community first. And then look to solve the problem, or address the issue, after that.

A politician informant called for a realism and open attitude from urban design practitioners:

I think the key consideration, if you take something like the [*name of project*] example, where you're integrating design professional peoples with expertise — planning/architecture — and having them work in conjunction with shop owners, they don't always have the same set of ultimate objectives. I think somebody who's sensitive to the situation is needed to bring out the best in that kind of process. The first consideration always has to be that, whoever the professionals involved are, they gain the confidence of the parties that they're working with. And that they're seen as being realistic in what it is they're trying to bring to the process. And not unduly academic or solely idealistic.

To a design professional informant, the notion of professionalism was no longer appropriate in a postmodern context:

It doesn't [*fit into a postmodern context*], it's built on an outdated notion. There's too much complexity out there for anyone to be an expert. And it's also getting worse. What constitutes a professional, I think, has to become much more generalized. Because my little segment, what I know about, is the little part over here. Like, what do I know about hospitals? I don't do hospitals! Or even with the complexity of construction now, there's so much stuff out there. There're far more players at the table. So what does it mean to be a professional? Well, perhaps we profess something. What is it we profess? We're a member of an association; but that in its own way is highly limited. It means that you've had an accredited education; you've had internship of three years, that it's stamped or whatever; and that you've written whatever examinations followed all of that. And then all of that's been reviewed and you've been accepted by an approved provincially designated body. And you pay your dues. So what! Now the guy who built this thing here . . . [*the rehabilitated heritage building we were in, which might be described as tastefully renovated*]. The realm of knowledge is probably small enough, so that he could be thought of as professional in the sense of being relatively competent in most building types. He'll come along with a design challenge, and this guy probably could have done a decent job on whatever it was. Now you can't. So now we've got a lot of

puffery and buffoonery when you walk in and say, we've arrived. There's nothing to back it up; you've got to bring in a gang. Does turf make sense?

To the same informant, the values upon which professionalism were included within a broader malaise stemming from a positivist cultural basis:

Absolutely, the culture of the profession [*needs reviewing*] . . . and the culture itself! Because, in terms of the kinds of things that I encounter, I think one of the major difficulties we've got is that we're divorced from our whole affective emotional lives. People don't know how to constructively speak about their emotions; often they don't know how to identify them. I do values exercises and get people to sit down and identify their values. I've done this on dozens of projects now. What I ask them at the beginning of this particular exercise is, have you ever done this before? They're not even sure what a value is. How do you govern what you're going to do? One would hope that one's actions grew out of what was valuable to one. If one hasn't defined that . . . well, it's no wonder that it's chaos out there. We have no way of remunerating people, largely, in our culture for what they might be able to do out of those modes of operation. We don't even know how to bring it to bear. Often we can't recognize it. It can be sitting there, and, culturally, we can't even see it. And then, in western culture, I believe we've taken this whole cult of independence to such an extent that we've forgotten what it means to be interdependent. Which cuts us off from each other; which bifurcates us from our physical environment. We literally do not have a cosmology that matches our current existence. So we don't have any way of placing ourselves in the big context, as we move down. It seems to me that if somebody is going to go out and work effectively, they have to begin to address those types of realms. This guy named Bernard Donovan, who's a methodologist, has spent a lot of time articulating the various stages that western culture has gone through in terms of developing meaning: How was meaning generated? And his second stage is a stage that died out when the Royal Society came along and said, the only thing that's going to have any standing is anything that's verifiable experimentally. And that prescriptive kind of stage of meaning is the second stage of meaning — it operates heavily in our culture. It's four hundred years ago, but still there to some degree. The third stage of meaning grew out of experience. What the Royal Society was talking about was that they'd had enough of angels dancing on heads of pins. What in the world was that about? They wanted to verify experience. The problem was that they so narrowly defined what constituted experience. We need to develop a stage of meaning now where we rely on experience. But that experience must have a much wider definition.

The same informant called for legitimizing everyday knowledge to give a broader conception of what professionals might value:

My discussion, about quality and values and all of that, is really pointing at that whole a-spiritual realm. We're talking about the spirit of the place, but nobody wants to talk about anything spiritual. I don't mean religious, but that transcendent. [*So do we need to include all those other ways of knowing? Not just positivist, logical, quantifiable?*]. Yes, absolutely. We have to become aware that they are there. Then we have to begin to know how to experience them, and then how to work with them. Because, what we've done really, is cut off what we conceptualize about from our experience. We just tend to conceptualize. We don't actually go back to our experience in all those realms. So we have all those wonderful thoughts, but they don't actually work. So we need to go back to find some way to get in touch with life experience. And then we need to develop methodologies that will allow us to grow, to call up those dimensions. How do we get a handle on that kind of stuff?

From a politician's perspective, too, the abstract knowledge upon which professional expertise was based was no longer broadly applicable:

I think that there's a recognition that a city is made up of a series of neighborhoods that are not all the same. There isn't a template, for instance, that you drop into River Heights, that is necessarily going to work in Charleswood. There has to be recognition, both from the people that live within that area, as well as the professionals you're dealing with, that each set of circumstances is unique unto itself. And I think that's the real challenge for the professional.

A further theme, associated with legitimizing everyday knowledge and democratizing public participatory processes, involved communicative quality. A community leader

informant viewed the use of specialist language as wholly inappropriate to work in neighbourhoods:

Well, I think if you're working with community people, it's important to translate the ideas into images or words so that people can respond. Avoiding jargon, like 'built environment' [*points to tabled definitions!*] You could go to a group and say, "I'm an urban designer, etc." It would be better to say, "Let's have a look at the grounds here and see what we can do." So I think the language needs to fit the understanding of people. I'm not a super visual person, so for me to look at sketches sometimes is challenging. One way is to actually be on site, just walk around with a group of people. "Let's walk around these grounds and just look at it, look at things that are working or not working." Drawing out from groups, for example. If it's a group of parents whose kids are using the grounds, they probably have all the wisdom, and don't know they have it. Designers need to take that in, and say, "Here's what you said, and here's what we did."

To a politician informant, the ability of a professional to communicate democratically within a public participation process was central to the professional's involvement:

So design professionals — whether they're architects, engineers, city planners — have to come in and work with people on a level that they understand and appreciate. They have to be working with them, and not talking down to them. That's an art unto itself. Obviously the first thing you have to do is gain the confidence of the parties working there.

The same informant also pointed out that communication includes being able to listen so that one can learn:

I think that if you're a merchant you understand that the bottom line speaks loudly. These people pay tremendous property and business taxes; they have issues relating to staffing and have to stay competitive in the marketplace, and so forth. And, I think, there has to be recognition from the professionals coming in that they obviously have different perspectives

than what professionals bring in. And I think that a good professional has to listen carefully.

Within the above perspectives, professional culture and the traditional professional approach emerge as key issues that require addressing within a prescription for contemporary urban design practice.

4.13 CONTRIBUTING TO SOCIAL LEARNING VALUE OF PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES

Perspectives within the theme of mutual education in the participatory forum are presented below.

A City design professional viewed the possibilities of public participatory processes for mutual education as an important benefit of working with communities:

I think we're all educated in a process like that. As planners, it's very easy to be out of touch with the bigger community, and Winnipeg is a very diverse community. So if we're working with the neighbourhood in St Boniface, we may have gone through a planning exercise where it's two years to develop something that makes sense for St Boniface, and is appropriate to St Boniface. And the community in St James, or elsewhere, might have entirely different objectives and different rationale and wind up with an entirely different map. In both cases, ideally, they learn from the process of communication with one another and from whatever wise counsel we bring to the table. We have a better understanding of what the pulse of the community is, and what they see as being relevant in 1999 for their community.

The importance of participants having adequate information was underlined by a citizen informant. In this perspective, planners' and designers' knowledge can raise consciousness about issues, and is essential for constructing considered solutions:

You know, I think people, even someone like myself who thinks he understands things and has a sense of the soul of the city, still want to be given an education. Because I'm not up to date. You lose touch. I don't know what the market is truly like. I don't know what the economic forces are in the city. I don't know who wants to be downtown anymore, either as an economic enterprise, or for residential reasons, or for institutional location reasons. I think that it's part of the job of the City [*planners*] to be doing that. And, to take that a step further, with where we should be going as a city. Then I'm happy to say, "Yes; no; or it should be number 3a, rather than number 3c, which you've recommended." But we could have a context. We need to be educated. To have new information about a neighborhood. For example, that these are the types of people that have been moving into the neighborhood, and from the school population we know . . . blah. And that maybe there's a neighborhood group that's done a needs assessment study, bringing new data forward. But also to have, "Here's how it's been done, here's how its been done in a similar way, and here's how it's been done in a totally different way."

A politician informant's perspective saw greater awareness of planning and design issues within a community result from a participatory process:

And, I think, through the public consultation process, there's very much a spirit of compromise. Usually the net result is that you'll find the party — for instance, individual shop owners, come into a situation where they become far more enlightened by the opportunity to be in contact with seasoned professionals. The net result is, for instance, as you see at a place like [*name of project*], a real continuity of theme there. I think there's value for the dollar. I think there's a heightened awareness of design and architecture in the area.

And a community leader provided an example of how an urban designer's sharing of specialist information was beneficial to a group:

The other thing was that [*name of landscape architect*] brought educational materials; she brought a video of [*foreign*] experiences. And that was very good.

From the above, the theme of mutual education within the participatory forum can be seen to be central to contemporary urban design practice.

4.14 EDUCATING THE URBAN DESIGNER

The following views concern the question of how urban designers might achieve an appropriate background and attitude to work with participatory planning and design groups.

From a planner's perspective, being able to purposefully direct meetings was an essential skill for all the built environment professions:

In professional education for planning —actually any one of these domains [*landscape architecture and architecture*] — the one area of education that is sorely lacking is the ability to teach somebody how to facilitate meetings and group discussions. To move something forward in a focused and directed way. Because that's something in the planning realm you do all the time. Particularly if you're using a participatory approach, which is more common now than not. Certainly when I went to school, that was never a part of course work, and yet we use it all the time. That's a big part of the process, which is, project-by-project, better managed in some than others.

In the view of a design professional, bridging the gap between planning and design involved extensive formal training to be effective:

I think there's a special education that you need, and I don't think its offered in Canada. Urban design is a cross-field discipline, and requires expertise in the study of urban design at university and must be from a joint masters perspective. Or else it is not useful. Except as a sensitization exercise.

The same informant offered the alternative of extensive experience:

Urban designers — you tend to be older by the time you can do it. Maybe, then [*over fifty years of age*], it's safe to say that an architect could be an urban designer, or a landscape architect after they've gone through it enough times and they have an understanding. But it involves so much information; you have to have such a good grasp of it.

However, another design professional informant questioned the applicability of contemporary formal education, and offered the following personal history:

Practically, right now, maybe there are schools that are doing it. I'm not sure where they are. In terms of my own experience: How did I do it? I had a native interest in it. Then, I just went out and did it. Now, when I said I did it, I mean I became a workshop junkie. I traveled the continent. I found anything and everything that would allow me to expand. More to the point, be myself. Which meant expanding way past what I was being given out there [*points to University*]. Because this ideological stuff. . . I mean, nobody's stood up and said, "The kings wearing no clothes." This is the whole modernist movement. Wonderful, but really a lot of hot air. They weren't able to just sit at the table and say, well here's my idea; it might have some value; the value may be limited; and that's just fine. It went beyond that to an attempt to actually enforce it. Then build that box in downtown Bangkok just the way you did in downtown New York. My background was history. I had a whole separate education before I came to

this. So I had some other tools to measure all of this. And that was very useful. But I found I didn't like some of the ideological stuff. What I did find was useful was that the people who were there at the time I was there [*university*], really were wonderful in terms of helping me learn to penetrate the nature of things. So then you're forced to go out and find things that will change your perspective. The kinds of participatory techniques that I use now are an amalgam of all kinds of workshops that I went to. And I simply studied people. How does this person do this? Does this work or doesn't it? How does it bring this kind of information? What does it not bring in? And so I built up a technique while I was building up an attitude. And the attitude is one where I see all of this as a process of mutual education. Everybody coming to the table possesses wisdom. When I run any of these participatory weekends, or daylong seminars, with the groups that I am working with, I urge them to invite everyone. To make sure that it's absolutely open. To make sure that the people who have contrary views — views that might be contrary to the building committee, or the organizers, or whatever — understand that they too are as welcome as anyone else. And that there are opportunities to voice whatever they need to voice because none of us have a total hold on the truth. And often that lone voice, hollering out there, may in fact have a much better perspective. Now, how to encourage people to do this, or equip them, I don't know. Maybe in practical terms, here and now, it's finding people who run good processes and have them run training seminars. Beyond the notion of people having to travel the continent. Terribly pricey! Because it's not so much being offered in the formal environments.

The same informant traced the premises of traditional education, and offered a holistic alternative:

I can speak I guess most effectively from other architects' stance. I think they have to get a non-traditional education. The traditional education has been one where you didn't bring dedication and service, you brought a gift to the lowly masses, and proceeded from there. You knew how people could live better, and silly them if they didn't pay attention to you. So the changes that are required are really a fundamental change of attitude.

The above perspectives indicate that a blend of formal and informal education are required for urban design practice within the participatory context. In Chapter 3, Schön's conception of an intuitive knowing-in-practice was discussed, and this appears to be particularly relevant to this area of practice.

4.15 BRIDGING THE PLANNING / DESIGN GAP

A final theme that emerged from the interviews was the need for urban designers to bridge the planning and design domains, and offer an implementation focus within pre-construction project stages. This is the area of project management, but with the added dimension for the urban designer of championing the project between planning and design project phases— or supporting a project champion that emerges from the group.

Three of the informants identified a recurring problem with urban design projects in the taking of planning work into an implementation phase.

Indeed, a design practitioner saw the bridging of the planning and design/implementation gap as the focus of the urban designer's role:

There seems to be a real difficulty with the urban design stuff in making the transition from the planning framework into turning it into a project and saying: We've got resources, we've got time, people, we've got deadline, we've got to accomplish a specific set of objectives within a defined time frame, at a certain cost. And that's where it really breaks down for planners. There's a whole set of things in between the planning thing that isn't being done right now in Winnipeg. And that is, going back to the

Centreplan thing, it's that nobody is doing cost estimating — high level cost estimates. Somebody comes up with a policy, nobody says, what the hell does that mean, can you implement it? They've got to be able to turn it into a project and be able to say this should be budgeted for at this dollar amount, and you get that we've got a pot of money like this, and we should go and identify the people that we can lever money out of, chase after them, get them to commit, set the priorities on these things, and then go and turn it over to the people who build things. Which gets into the architectural end of that continuum. So there's nobody doing a good job of bridging between the design and the planning end, and that is the realm of urban design. You've got to do all of those things in the process. The continuum is dreadfully missing something, and that's because people aren't aware of the project that has to come out at the end. And the fact of how long a project takes. A project is 10% planning, and 90% implementation; and these guys eat up 90% of the time chatting about it and eating their sandwiches. You know there's no time left to do the project, I'm afraid. And some of that doesn't matter; if you don't have a deadline; if you're dealing strictly with a planning process.

At the neighbourhood scale, a community leader viewed the moving of a project between planning and implementation stages as a central problem to community revitalization, and one that an urban designer might be equipped to face:

If we look at all the projects that are happening here, we've got the designs, but what's left is a huge uphill battle to make it happen. Because of the absence of resources, or, say, the talk about trying to get the vacant lot from the city. So there's a role for somebody, maybe that's part of what we're talking about. How do you go from design into implementation, and what are the obstacles? At [*name of project*] they really want to do something, but there's no one there with the personal drive. So how do you keep something going there? If it's a community group's role, then it's a lot of pressure on the community group. And at times when resources are hard to come by. But it's not just resources, because you can have a pile of money. Or someone to help with information. Like, here's how you do some tendering.

The same informant offered the following example of a project and the institutional character of the problems that needed to be overcome, through project management, for implementation:

In the [*name of school project*] there was some initial discussion with the vice-principal. We've got this person who might be able to do some things, look at a design. And almost from the beginning, [*name of landscape architect*] was involved in the process, meeting with the teachers and vice-principal, parents, and looking at some issues. And that hasn't gone anywhere, because I think we probably needed to clear up things connected with the Winnipeg School Division and a lot of other things. So all that work has gone in, and it's sort of sitting there. And maybe that needed to be done a little more slowly, or some groundwork done to say that we really want this to happen, can you make the institutional changes to allow things to happen?

A planner's perspective identified the post-planning process stage as when a project is most likely to be frustrated:

There are lots of people who have lots of ideas, but have no clue how to operationalize the idea, to implement it. That's more often than not where the wheels fall off.

The same informant offered the following example of how adequate process may be avoided by expeditious decision-makers, even at the expense of the project's initial purpose:

To me it's not paying for the sandwiches, or the sandwiches that are the problem. It's what's done with the results of people eating the sandwiches together. That's the problem. And that's the point of breakdown. Because there have been lots of working groups. Here's an example: I was chairing a Centreplan working group for way-finding for downtown, coming up with recommendations for how to get a system in place for downtown

Winnipeg incorporating comprehensive signage and way-finding elements, so that the pedestrian user of the streets will be better able to find their way around downtown. And so we went through a process of assessing all of the current way-finding elements that currently exist, and looking at not only what's there, but what works and what doesn't work, and where some real problem areas are that need to be addressed. We commissioned a study, and what came out of that was the recommendation of a kit of parts, or family of parts, each addressing different segments of a way-finding system. The study was intended to be used for a terms of reference to commission an overall design, with design guidelines for each of the kits in this family of parts. I ran into great resistance from a variety of levels to spend money on designing a system that would be functional and effective. They would rather take the money and implement one kit/one family part and just put it in at Portage and Main. So my argument was always: Well, how can you do that when you're trying to get a system in place that integrates the various ways people get around? Integrates bus stop information and pedestrian maps and street signs. You're putting the cart before the horse; you're designing something before you have design guidelines. To me the whole process was thrown out the table just to get a product.

Working knowledge of the development process and its broad context was identified by a planner informant as a means to aid moving a project to implementation:

I would even suggest that part of the reason why the wheels fall off in implementation in the urban design process is, perhaps, because it shouldn't be limited to addressing physical and social dimensions. I think it also has to reflect on economic dimensions. That's where some of the realities come into play for implementation.

A design practitioner also viewed project management skills as necessary to carry projects through to implementation, and noted that neither planners nor designers traditionally spanned the entire development process:

You've got to be very business-like about it. I get worried that there's not enough cognizance of the project — the time and all of the things necessary. So I somewhat disagree about planners knowing the development process, they know the political process. [*The design professions?*] Well, [*they'd be lost*] especially at this end [*planning end of process*]. When you get into the politics and committee structures. So, they [*urban designers*] need to understand political processes. They need to understand the development process beginning at how these embryos of ideas start working their way up. They need to know the political process, the development process. They need to know the design information and then they have to have an incredible ability to work that system. So many times your client is not very well informed. It's interesting working with BIZ groups. They might come forward with a sort of business perspective on improvements and things like that. They don't have a clue about what the city structure is. If you accept that this [*urban design*] is large scale stuff that crosses property lines, a lot of the times you're crossing into the city turf. You have to understand how that city animal works; how it functions; all the different departments.

The knowledge of city structures, alluded to above, was also felt to be necessary by the same informant for urban designers within the City to achieve project goals, as the following example illustrates:

If you knew the system backwards, you could pull all sorts of favours that should have taken years to do. And we did it [*large streetscaping project*] in a year. We had \$500,000 when we started. And we just kept going. We needed \$6 million. And when the project was tendered, that same day the Province called and said, "You've got the other three million." We had structured the tenders so we could let Phase 2 as soon as funds became available.

And a private sector planner included the City in the untold challenges to downtown revitalization:

If you look at even residential conversions of warehouse buildings — it's been talked about for a long time, why don't you just do it? Well, what if it was that easy! No one stops to realize that there are a number of factors; and they're each playing a role in providing obstacles for that to happen.

Within this theme, the associated topic of project management that emerged during the interviews concerned the involvement of the urban designer throughout all project stages.

A community leader's perspective included the advantages of involving continuing design expertise from project initiation:

[*Name of project*] started with a group of people who said that they were interested in living in co-housing, and then them trying to get a coherent group of people. It's a small group of four or five, trying to expand. And then the role for the architect/planner, or whatever, is to come into that space. They could have come in from the beginning, but the most important thing for the group was to build trust and community, then bring in people. [*A book on co-housing*] mentions stages, and there is a stage where professionals come into the project, but when there are already coherent groups. And that I think the realities are that co-housing takes a long time to get going and you need to build trust. It would be very nice if you had those kinds of people there who said, "Let's take on this project." The organizer, the architect say, who could meet with those people, and they are there for a long period of time.

In a design professional's view, continuity played a central role, particularly where municipal government is supporting economic development in a context liable to change:

On the downtown side, we're spending \$7 million to dress up Portage Avenue to support those businesses that are there, that own \$9 million worth of real estate on one little corner. We [*the City*] are supporting

businesses in one way, and community in a different way. How [*do*] we marry those together at some point in time? There are different solutions in every context with different groups. And when your groups change, you may not be left with the best solution.

For the same informant, the nature of urban designer involvement presented the challenge of linking planning and implementation stages:

. . . there's always a group, when you look at these processes, that has to be moving onto the next project all the time. And they're the ones with the vision. Generating the ideas. And being the visionaries. There's also a group, like on North Main, that sweep up after the parade goes through. Who try and get all the bits and pieces done and keep things moving. Within communities, or neighborhoods, the urban planner or urban designer has to keep moving from one to the other. You have to be the visionary and support in making sure that things are still going in the correct direction. And that it's making sense. And that it can be implemented. Sometimes you don't know how. And then coming back at a smaller detail, project-by-project level, making sure that the work is done and wrapping up and moving along. Because, every now and then, the visionaries come back and revisit the details. So it's linking the two that has to happen. For the urban designer.

Finally, within the theme of bridging planning and implementation project stages, the nature of private/public funded projects in particular presents the challenge of obtaining project financing, and the need to 'sell' the project at that stage. To a citizen, that 'champion' of the project emerged from the group — either as the urban designer, or someone supported by the urban designer:

I've seen [*landscape architect*], for example, on the [*name of project*] almost emerging as the spokesman for it. Where he'll take the flak for what people weren't happy with. He will emerge, from that whole morass about who's responsible for it, as someone who you can say is responsible for it. I like that.

A person who has the poise and the ability to come forward. And I don't mind who they are. Because in these amorphous planning efforts, it's being left more to where the consultant, if they have the personality, is going to emerge as almost a spokesman for the project. They can explain it to outsiders; they fully grasp it; and they really believe in it. That comes through, or it doesn't come through. "We really believe in this!" As that lynchpin. As that thing that holds it all together. I think that person would come by force of personality and the dynamics of the group. It could be anyone. It could be the designer. It could be someone at the city that is more dynamic and really believes in it. It's actually doing a project they believe in personally — not for personal wishes, but they're really committed to it. In a neighborhood organization — say a housing project — it had better be someone on that group. It should be as close to who signs your check as possible. But it needn't, given these delusions of power in the city, be a planner. I recognize that it might be through natural selection. Whoever's dynamic; who is trusted by the group; whoever really is the epitome of that project.

The need for urban designers to focus involvement on bringing planning projects to implementation clearly emerged as a major issue for contemporary urban design practice. This was seen to require both a comprehensive understanding of the development process and of project management.

4.16 THE URBAN DESIGNER

A number of issues emerged from Part 2 to inform the urban designer's activities within public participatory processes. The most widely offered issue concerned a role for urban designers to aid implementation of projects through bridging the planning/design and implementation gap. Project management skills based on a working understanding of the development process and of governmental procedures, as well as entrepreneurial skills were seen to be required. Professionals were considered to be well placed for helping in

group facilitation, but largely ineffective in focusing public participatory processes.

Developing skills to promote citizen engagement in processes might be regarded as an associated activity. The orientation of designers towards objects was criticized, as were interprofessional relationships. A call for professionals to discard the posture of expert and to look to work democratically within processes, including broadening a view of legitimate knowledge to include everyday knowledge. Professionals were considered to have poor communicative skills, which were considered important for raising public consciousness about issues within their specialty. The relevance of professional institutes to the contemporary context was questioned, evoking a call for a radical review of professionalism.

4.17 REFLECTING ON URBAN DESIGN THEORY FROM URBAN DESIGN PRACTICE

Chapter 1 offered a broad definition of urban design as concerned with the processes of urban change. This definition was readily understood and accepted by the informants, as was locating the field of urban design activity within the overlap between the planning and design professions. From an urban design perspective, Winnipeg was seen as diverse and complex, and the use of public participatory processes to gain citizen and stakeholder contributions to decision-making was fully supported by the informants. Themes associated with the paradigm shift in planning to communicative action and interactive practice, explored in Chapter 2, including creating dialogic space; developing inclusive democratic processes aimed at bringing together community interests; and the validating

of multiple ways of knowing, all emerged during the interviews. Indeed, both roles identified by Ellin of facilitator and political activist, which were associated with Healey's and Sandercock's models in Chapter 2, can be identified within the data. Chapter 3 traced how professional involvement in the production of the built environment is limited, and the unanimous call by the informants for urban designers to focus on bridging the perceived gap between planning and implementation of projects echoes Madanipour's (1996: p.121) call for greater understanding by professionals of the development process. The challenge for professionals to regain societal trust appears, from the interviews, to be challenging indeed. Associated themes emerged during the interviews of adopting more open, less hierarchical attitudes which offer to address this issue, at least in part. Interprofessional relationships were also discussed in Chapter 3, and the concerns expressed about their quality were echoed in the interviews. Indeed, the whole question of professional demarcation is identified as inherently problematic.

These issues are carried forward with the findings from Chapters 2 and 3 to form the basis of the recommendations for contemporary urban design practice presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: ENABLING THE URBAN DESIGNER

In the previous chapters, a broad definition of urban design as a concern with the processes of urban change has explored. The multiplicities of the contemporary city have been outlined as the context for urban design, and the emergence of public participatory processes, as a response to the cultural and economic forces of globalization, has been traced. Emergent planning theory that discredits the validity of the modern project and proposes a paradigm shift to communicative action and interactive practice has been investigated through Healey's (1997) and Sandercock's (1998) prescriptions for contemporary planning. This new paradigm identifies principles to guide urban design practice, involving the need for creating dialogic space; developing inclusive democratic processes aimed at bringing together community interests; and the validating of multiple types of knowledge. Professional involvement in the production of the built environment has been seen to be limited, although professional activities affect the dynamics of the development industry. A role for urban designers within participatory processes must be based on confidence and trust, yet societal trust in professionals has been continually eroded; urban designers subsequently face the challenge of regaining that trust. The basis of expertise as the underpinning of professionalism has been brought into question, as has the professional culture of orientation toward formalist design solutions and the need for better mutual understanding between professions. The emerging *placemaking* model has been identified as offering an example of creating inclusive, democratic urban design

processes that validate other ways of knowing. Empirical research into the research question, including a case study of urban design in the Winnipeg context, has concluded that the use of public participatory processes to gain citizen and stakeholder contributions to decision-making is fully established. However, due to a lack of focus on implementation, such processes are vulnerable to becoming an end in themselves. Within practice, the needs are recognized to validate everyday knowledge, to focus urban design activity on implementation, to gain societal trust through adopting more open and less hierarchical attitudes, and to review contemporary professionalism.

5.1 A RECOMMENDED MODEL FOR THE CONTEMPORARY URBAN DESIGN PRACTITIONER

This thesis argues that the role of urban designers in the contemporary context of public participatory planning and design processes extends beyond the playing of a 'role'. The urban designer must come first as an informed citizen, and add value to the participatory process with planning / design knowledge and expertise, in the same way as any other participant adds their individual knowledge and perspective.

This model lies parallel to the model of the urban designer as facilitator, and the urban designer as political activist models, identified by Ellin (1996: pp.133-134) and related, respectively, to those proposed by Healey (1997) and Sandercock (1998) (see Chapter 2).

Figure 6 compares these models.

| | URBAN DESIGNER AS FACILITATOR identified by Ellin (1996); derived from Healey's (1997) collaborative planning model | URBAN DESIGNER AS POLITICAL ACTIVIST identified by Ellin (1996); derived from Sandercock's (1998) insurgent planning model | RECOMMENDED MODEL FOR THE URBAN DESIGNER |
|--|--|--|--|
| PARADIGM | inclusive, interactive practice | inclusive, interactive practice | inclusive, interactive practice |
| ARENA | neighbourhood to regional | marginalized neighbourhood | neighbourhood to regional |
| ROLE OF URBAN DESIGNER | facilitator | combatant | informed citizen |
| URBAN DESIGNER'S LOCATION RELATIVE TO PARTICIPATORY PROCESS | peripheral | varies with project intent | integral |

Figure 6: Comparative table of urban designer models

As Figure 6 indicates, the recommended model for urban design practice within participatory planning draws on characteristics of both the facilitator and political activist models. In common with these models, the urban designer's activities are informed by the planning paradigm discussed in Chapter 2, using communicative action within interactive practice, and based on a bottom-up inclusive approach that recognizes multiple knowledges. Like the facilitator model, the recommended model uses a broad focus that includes the range of scales from neighbourhood to regional. This will to enable the practitioner to make an appropriately wide contribution of specialist knowledge and skills. The role of the urban designer differs within each model. In the recommended model, as noted above, it extends beyond the mere playing of a role to that of an informed citizen, adding value to the participatory process with planning / design knowledge and expertise, as other participants add their individual knowledge and perspective. The role of the facilitator political activist model is considered to play the role of an combative and

engaged advocate. Finally, Figure 6 identifies the relative position of each model to the participatory process. As noted in Chapter 2, Ellin suggests the facilitator model aims at giving people what they want, hence the peripheral description in Figure 6. The political activist's position is considered to be variable. The degree of engagement is likely to reflect the relevance of a project to the interests of the represented community, and participation itself may be tactical. Unlike the facilitator and political activist models, the recommended model, based on citizenship, is wholly and continually integrated within the process.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENABLING THE URBAN DESIGN PRACTITIONER

This concluding chapter offers recommendations to enable practitioners to make this contribution and mitigate the constraints that emerge from professional cultures. Set out below are a number of principles as recommendations and observations for urban design practice, which generally concern the review of the culture of the built environment disciplines. These principles are drawn from the theoretical material provided in Chapters 2, and 3, and the empirical material presented in Chapter 4.

In addition, Figure 7 summarizes further theoretical sources for informing these practice recommendations:

| AREA OF PLANNING THEORY | THEMES | PROPOSERS / SOURCES |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Public participation in the post-modern social context (esp. re. urban design) | stakeholder representation; capacity-building; pluralist society; professional's role; methodologies | Arnstein (1969); Rocha (1997); Healey; Innes (1996); Schneekloth and Shibley (1995); Sandercock (1998) |
| 2. Communicative quality | comprehensibility, truthfulness, sincerity, legitimacy | Healey (1997); Forester (1980). |
| 3. Post-modern epistemology | other ways of knowing; legitimization of informal knowledge | Healey (1997); Sandercock (1998) |
| 4. Practitioner's role | the professional as enabler and educator; interactive practice; change in the nature of the client | Schon (1983); Healey (1997); Innes (1996); Sandercock (1998) |
| 5. Social learning | practice as mutual learning; reconstruction through education | Friedmann (1981) |
| 6. Praxis | guide to planning action; relationship with design philosophy | Friedmann (1988) |

Figure 7: Theoretical principles from planning literature to inform the recommendations for urban design practice.

The following recommendations include soft professional issues, concerned with reviewing professional culture and developing the professional's abilities; and hard professional issues, concerned with the legislation that has traditionally informed professional practice.

Soft professional issues are concerned with adopting new attitudes and approaches to urban design practice. In Chapter 3, the professional activities of built environment practitioners were seen to have a limited effect on the production of the built environment; but it was noted that opportunities are likely to arise for practitioners to shape events. These principles are offered to enable the practitioner by developing her or his ability to shape events.

5.3 SOFT PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

Adopt new attitudes and approaches

Chapter 2 outlined a new planning paradigm for democratic, inclusive planning practice. An understanding and empathy towards such bottom-up practice needs to be established within professional cultures. This involves, in particular, allowing communities (whether communities of geography or interest) to own and improve their places, as well as building intellectual capacity and social capital in those communities. Professional culture needs to move from the expertise-based idea of what is the ‘best thing to do’ — implying a unitary public interest — into thinking in terms of accommodating the needs of a differentiated society, and seeing groups as made up of individuals representing collective concerns. This requires listening and humility on the part of professionals, recognizing that there are multiple positions, and that the experience of people with no official voice in developing their environments is valued. This characterizes practice to be far removed from the traditional professional perspective of offering service as an expert and agent. Practitioners therefore need to approach group situations differently, and see the making visible of the processes of design work as not being counter-productive.

Acquire a willingness for non-hierarchical inter-disciplinary working

As noted in Chapter 3, a willingness to work in a peerless team may be incompatible with the culture of certain professions — this issue may need to be addressed by the individual professional. Individual practitioners need to be willing to work beyond their traditional

areas and in non-traditional ways in a spirit of cooperation. Accordingly, professionals also need to take account not only of a pluralism of values within society as a starting point in their supporting work, but also of the pluralism of values within the professions.

Substitute praxis for design philosophy

Within the formal approach to design discussed in Chapter 3, designers' work is often directed by a design philosophy, usually concerned with meaningfully synthesizing design issues. Practitioners need to develop this notion into a praxis, as moral public action (Friedmann 1988:128), which might be concerned with an all-embracing, sustainability-based concern for the qualities of life, rather than the design philosophy basis for work drawn from formal aesthetics. Guiding practitioners' activities through praxis, rather than a design philosophy, will more likely lead to a social-focus to design professionals' work in place of the object-oriented focus often encountered in practice. Such a strategy, it is argued, will lead to a greater concentration towards democratization of decisions affecting the public realm. Two models offer guidance for contemporary practice in this context. First, Arnstein's (1969) 'ladder of citizen participation' explored variations in citizen participation in planning ranging from manipulation and therapy to citizen control. Second, Rocha's (1997) 'ladder of empowerment' provided a model of empowerment from the individual level to the political (community) level.

Legitimize other ways of knowing

Critical theory-derived concepts, upon which much of Healey's (1997) collaborative planning model that was described in Chapter 2 is based, give authority to and extend everyday knowledge. Practitioners need to acquire a working understanding of post-modern epistemologies and social theories that validate everyone's opinion, including practical reasoning, knowledge and values as social constructions, and cultural embeddedness.

Develop communicative skills

Participatory design and planning requires the generation of a vision that informs the development and use of a place, and that brings about a consensus between the stakeholders. Realizing the vision involves citizens having a sense of responsibility for the development of strategies to achieve outcomes with which they can identify. To achieve these objectives, practitioners need to develop the necessary communicative skills.

Urban design practitioners need to develop appropriate receptivity to enable gaining an understanding community attitudes. Communicative theory, described in Chapter 2 as informing Healey's (1997) position, equips the practitioner with a model with which to address this issue through honest, open communication.

Develop an attitude to encourage mutual learning

Within the concept of communicative planning and interactive practice, participatory planning centres on process and dialogue rather than plans. Encouraging professionals to come to participatory processes as citizens first will encourage the practitioner to share their knowledge and expertise in order to help to raise community consciousness about planning and design issues, and empower communities to take more control over the decisions that affect their lives. Practitioners can learn within processes about a community's values, and use their knowledge and skills to help implement projects accordingly. Practitioners can help people to see things in alternative ways, and help them through making using graphic skills to make tangible what people can discuss but often cannot visually articulate. Social learning (Friedmann, 1980) might be seen as the key to building understanding and developing intellectual capacity for the future, as noted within Healey's (1997) model described in Chapter 2.

Amend the dominance of formal aesthetics

Barriers are erected by intellectualizing design. This ideological approach provided the modernist architects with their legitimacy. Within the *placemaking* model outlined in Chapter 3, the possibility of art and architecture expressing the social and aesthetic identities of a community were discussed. Urban design practitioners need to develop an awareness that extends beyond the professional conception of expertise, to be more appreciative of the contributions to design processes that people. This strategy can lead

urban design professionals to orient work to address people's concerns, and not just aesthetic concerns. Accordingly, substituting praxis for design philosophy will help to amend the value systems of designers.

Develop a working understanding of facilitation

While it is noted that facilitation of processes is a secondary function for the urban designer, strategic progressing of group discussions is needed to focus projects towards implementation. With an overall understanding of the development process, the practitioner is well placed to contribute to this end. In Chapter 2, the need for using special management techniques for the facilitation of participatory processes was identified. It is recommended that urban designer practitioners develop a working knowledge of these techniques to enable them to contribute to efforts to meaningfully direct participatory processes.

Develop abilities to engage citizen participation

Practitioners are often well-placed to work within processes to develop wide participation and representation of all stakeholder groups. A role for the urban designer in seeking to help in the construction of democratic solutions to the built environment is to work toward encouraging citizen engagement with the planning and design process, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Develop understanding of development process

The empirical research presented in Chapter 4 identified a function for urban designers to work to bridge the gap between planning processes and implementation. A realistic understanding by practitioners of the built environment practitioner's capacity within the development process is argued to be rare, as is a comprehensive understanding both of the social processes that produce the built environment and the external forces that shape its production — particularly within a constantly changing and complex global context. It is recommended that urban designers develop working understandings of these realms, and also accompanying project management skills, which are not usually core parts of professional courses, to help to progress projects to implementation.

5.4 HARD PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

Review legislation that protects professional titles and functions

Professional institutes are viewed by some to be self-serving. Eroding the defences of professionalism would provide individual practitioners with greater freedom to practice. Professional institutes, by maintaining a right to determine who shall be allowed to practice, are vulnerable to domination by internal commercial interests in whose interests it is to exclude other capable individuals from contributing their skills, including 'foreign' professionals who may offer participatory groups a broader fund of experience. Adopting inclusive policies by existing professions would also encourage greater mutual learning between professionals. In creating a model for the urban design practitioner that involves

coming as an informed citizen, the need for a professional title is considered not only redundant, but obstructive, since the allocation of place-making to professionals in society is *disabling* to others, as discussed in Chapter 3. A formal loosening of the professionals' grip on urban design practice might therefore be investigated. Any close professional collaboration creates a degree of mutual learning, and every action that serves to erode the barriers that professional institutes have erected is welcomed. North American architects and engineers are afforded more governance duties than, for example, their British counterparts through a statutory requirement that they certify compliance of their structures with building regulations. In some sense, this role is artificial since development control legislation to ensure health and safety is also administered by municipalities. This role might be argued to serve to both protect these professions, and render them more conservative in their perception of the role that they should play in a society.

Reappraise the client / professional relationship

The concept of the client professional relationship is central to traditional professional practice, particularly within the design professions. Within an urban design process, professionals may be employed by the government or by a community organization. The prevailing public sector premise that consultants, as contractors, work "at arms length" means that the practitioner works on a need-to-know basis. The traditional client / professional is clearly inappropriate since the consultant is required to work *with* rather than *for* a community. Currently, the relationship between the consultant (as practitioner)

and a stakeholder group is often with the practitioner outside the group — the brought-in experts. Stakeholders are therefore always at some distance from the solution, and everything is filtered through the practitioner. Although the practitioner has direct access to particular local interests and stakeholders have direct access to the practitioner, it is effectively modernist practice — it is more or less top down and might be termed *practicing for*. However, within the communicative planning paradigm, the practitioner will be working with the participants, straddling the process. The solutions will still be filtered through the practitioner, but the stakeholders have a closer relationship with the solution — it will be more owned. This might be seen as post-modernist practice — it is tending towards being bottom-up and might be termed *practicing with*.

Review professional education methods

In professional design schools, the jury system trains students to be able to defend themselves — its character is adversarial. It is argued that a method of professional training premised on defence in the face of criticism helps to create a professional culture incompatible with community participatory work. It is proposed that jury systems, if continued, include ‘lay’ people, to obviate the development within young professionals of exclusive professional language. In Chapter 3, the detrimental effect of separate professional cultures on interprofessional teamwork was identified. It is suggested that a multiplicity of disciplines in faculties will also help to check the early development of such perspectives.

5.5 ENABLING THE URBAN DESIGNER

This concluding chapter of the thesis has provided a range of principles intended to guide urban design practice. Urban design practice based on professionalism is argued to be inappropriate in the contemporary context. A review of the built environment professions and their cultures is needed to enable practitioners to respond to working within participatory processes. This review includes discarding the notion of the 'expert', and coming to public forums as a knowledgeable citizen to help, in a non-hierarchical manner, towards building planning and design solutions. Professionals are required to adopt open attitudes, include a wider knowledge base, and work with people to raise consciousness about planning and design issues in the public realm. Those citizens with appropriate knowledge and skills who are members of the built environment professions will be enabled by a review of professionalism that includes a loosening of professional monopolies over design and planning activities.

The planning profession is arguably in the vanguard of a move by the built environment professions toward a new way of practicing. This thesis concludes that the design professions concerned with the built environment profession should follow this lead, and work towards cultures that orient their work towards social processes, and not ideological design.

In the contemporary postmodern context, with its call for general empowerment, perhaps Jacobs' (1992) model of contradictory commercial and political moral syndromes gives the

professions an ethical perspective from which planners can lead the built environment professions to a praxis-directed future — discarding the professional notion of the 'expert' with its increasingly discredited basis of technical-instrumentality.

Finally, it is reiterated that the urban designer's involvement in public participatory processes is not, in fact, about playing a 'role'. The goal is to make the urban designer an informed citizen, bringing knowledge and skills to the table to add value to public participatory planning processes.

APPENDIX A: EMPIRICAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This appendix outlines the methodology for the empirical research presented in Chapter 4. This research aimed to gain knowledge in order to confront the preconceptions established in the literature review content of the thesis with empirical evidence (Zeisel 1981).

Data-gathering took place in interviewees' offices. As such, the project may be categorized as field research, using face-to-face social interaction, with the researcher in a participant as observer role (Neuman 1991).

RESEARCH PARADIGM

The concept of researcher as expert and researched as objects of study was firmly rejected on the grounds that it disallows a respect for the dignity, integrity, and creativity of the participants as critical individuals with rights to table their concerns and issues (Neuman, 1991). The interpretive approach was preferred to the positivist approach since attitudes are fundamentally social, political, and value-oriented (Neuman 1991), and to recognize that people create multiple realities as they make sense of their particular situations (Guba & Lincoln 1989). Unlike the conventional positivist paradigm, which is based on a single true reality, the interpretive paradigm was considered to be a preferable approach for this research because the approach integrally recognizes the influence of social and cultural factors on individuals; it therefore presents an opportunity to obtain better quality and

more appropriate data. Another advantage of using the interpretive rather than the positivist paradigm for this study is that the process itself provides the opportunity for mutual learning about the premises of a topic, and may generate further and enriched perspectives. The flexibility of an interpretive data-gathering approach also allowed self-correction during the process.

CHOICE OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Given the premise of using an interpretive approach, the appropriate data-gathering techniques for this study are discussed below. These techniques include using a written standardized questionnaire, conducting small group work, or face-to-face interviewing.

Although open-ended questions could be used to gather descriptive data, a written standardized questionnaire was eliminated as an option on the grounds outlined above. Additionally, as a non-interactive technique, it would offer a far less satisfactory means of data-gathering than direct communication. A scaled standardized questionnaire technique was similarly considered inappropriate because of difficulties in defining the topic. The likelihood of errors and misunderstanding were therefore considered to be unacceptably high.

Small group work and face-to-face interviewing were considered appropriate to the interpretive approach to the study. However, while small group work methods present an

elegant instrument considering the consensus-building characteristics of the topic, the likelihood of achieving a suitably representative assembly of informants was considered to be low. Face-to-face interviewing was thought to be more reliable and expeditious, providing for confidentiality, but (compared to small-group work) limiting the opportunity to build up a consensual construction concerning the topic. However, the benefits of using a semi-structured interview technique similarly include flexibility and using tacit knowledge. The process is action-oriented, and gives participants a sense of ownership in the research process (Guba & Lincoln 1989).

The selected method was therefore face-to-face interviewing as a mutual learning process, within which the researcher is a collaborator rather than a controller (Guba & Lincoln 1989). Babbie (1989) points out that the researcher as a participant is bound to affect the findings, which was considered beneficial since the interviewer has professional experience of urban design participatory processes. Nevertheless, every effort was made during the data-gathering sessions to present background information in a non-persuasive manner.

SAMPLE SELECTION RATIONALE

As described in Chapter 3, the key informants were selected from professionals and non-professionals based in Winnipeg having experience of public participatory urban design projects. These informants covered a range of interests likely to be represented in a typical public participatory urban design project. This selection strategy aimed to create a sample

that is relevant and representative of the multiple perspectives of the designer's role likely to exist in public participatory urban design projects.

The research process is set out below.

RESEARCH PROCESS:

1. Initial Contact

Interview candidate called, brief verbal explanation of topic provided, and interview requested.

2. Forward information

The preliminary information mentioned above was forwarded by fax to each informant as follows:

The interview format will be a conversation guided by the following question:

Drawing on your experiences, how do you conceptualize the role of the urban designer in urban design public participatory processes?

In this context, 'urban design' might be defined as projects concerned with the improvement of the city as an urban environment, e.g. plazas, parks, streetscaping, etc. 'Urban designer' might be defined as the practitioner bringing design / planning expertise to the process, usually landscape architects, architects, and planners.

Within the topic, I hope we might explore the following issues:

*How does the planning/design practitioner **communicate** with the group?
What **posture** does the planning/design practitioner take, e.g. 'expert',
'facilitator', 'informed participant', etc.
Does the planning/design practitioner perform a role as an **educator**
regarding planning / design issues?
What **other reflections** might you have on the planning/design
practitioner's role in public participatory processes?*

I should like to record the interview. Every effort will be made to keep the identity of the interviewee confidential.

3. Carry out interviews and analysis

Each session started with a confirmation that recording the interview was acceptable. As noted above, the pre-prepared path for the session giving an informal outline was tabled, and it was underlined that this merely provided a direction that the session might take — it was not a set structure. Using the interview tape and other notes, a record of the interview was made as the basis for subsequent analysis.

As Judd (1991) notes, establishing findings in fieldwork relies on systematical analysis from methodical examination of field notes. An analytical method of successive approximation (Neuman 1991) was used, comprising repeated iterations or cycling through steps to a final analysis. The analysis was therefore a dimension of research, rather than a stage (Neuman 1991), and commenced early in research project while still collecting data to guide subsequent data collection.

The goal of the analysis was to organize the specific details of the data into a set of interlocked concepts (Neuman 1991). These concepts were used as analytical tools, and were formed and refined throughout the data collection. The research process therefore moved from broad ideas and concrete details to a comprehensive analysis with generalizations.

Following the preparation of the transcript of each interview, the data was coded to aid organizing the project. Three kinds of coding were used during the analysis: *open coding*; *axial coding*; *selective coding*. The collected data was passed through three times using the following different types of coding in sequence:

- *Open coding*: locate themes to set up categories. Look for critical terms, events, themes. Be open to changing initial codes. Move back and forth between abstract concepts and specific details.
- *Axial coding*: begin with an organized set of themes, go through data and review initial codes. Look at causes and consequences, conditions and interactions, strategies and processes.
- *Selective coding*: major themes are now identified. After most data collection completed. Scan data and previous codes and look for cases that illustrate themes and makes comparisons and contrasts around the core generalizations.

(Neuman 1991)

The codes were revised and refined throughout the process using analytical memos to records thoughts about the coding process.

Interview questions were *descriptive* for the first three interviews to explore the topic.

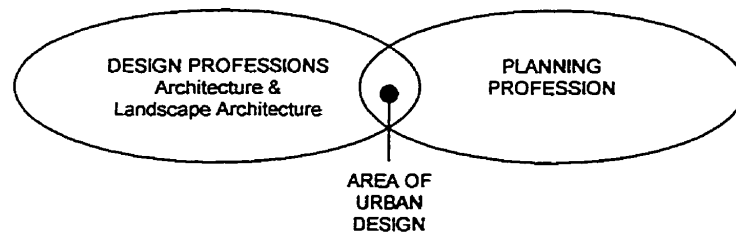
As the themes became apparent through analysis, further questions were added as coding of topics presented patterns within the data:

- From your perspective, how important is the quality of the urban environment?
- What is the aim of the new Downtown Development Authority?
- Is there a role within the activities of the Downtown Development Authority for urban design type people?

After the first two interviews, a sheet of definitions was tabled to accompany the tabled path. This addition aided progress by clarifying a common basis from which the interviews could proceed. The contents of the definitions sheet is set out below

Urban design is . . . a process through which we consciously shape and manage our built environments.

Urban designers are interested and engaged in this process and its product.



6. Incorporate data analysis into thesis.

The results of the analysis were used to inform the discussion on the role of the practitioner and as a base for the recommendations and conclusions of the thesis presented in Chapter 5.

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