The Promise of Great Design.

AND The Dangers of Great Design.
The Promise of Great Design.
The Dangers of Great Design.

Urban and architectural design is often seen as the primary tool with which to achieve urban revitalization and Place Making.

This perception is both true and false.

- Design is a critical tool for urban revitalization.
- Design as the solution creates problems.
The Promise of Great Design
The Promise of Great Design

Design:
- A building block of great cities
- A critical component of great projects
- More important now than ever before
- Defining Design
- Potentially linked to greater profitability
A Building Block of Great Cities

Our image of cities are defined in part by their design.

Paris  Seattle  Boise
A Critical Component of Great Projects

Design helps to create the experience and place.

### Defining Design

Design means many things and takes place on many scales.

|------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|

![Image of urban planning, district design, building architecture, and store interior design]
Defining Design

- Design is not just architecture.
- Some of the most critical design decisions are two dimensional—Boise downtown grid.
- Brand, identity, marketing—critical design components.
More Important Now than Ever Before

- Compact development requires greater attention to design.
- Interiors:
  - The Moda Condos, Seattle
  - In 300 square feet, every inch counts.
More Important Now than Ever Before

- Public spaces and site design
- More people + less space requires more thoughtful design

Neighborhood Park  Urban Plazas
More Important Now than Ever Before

- Cities and projects now sell experiences.

- Compete on price, convenience.
- Uniformity.
- Shopping trip for product x.

- Compete on quality of experience.
- Uniqueness.
- A trip for coffee-conversation-browsing-shopping-hangout…
- 2006: 144 new or redo lifestyle centers, 0 new malls.
More Important Now than Ever Before

- Design is the story that connects people to places and products.

TARGET:
“Great Design, Everyday, for Everyone.”

SONY:
“We assume that all our competitors’ products have the same technology… Design is the only thing that differentiates one from another.”
More Important Now than Ever Before

Economic Development Paradigms

20th Century
Employers Draw People

Resources
Incentives
Factories
Offices
Jobs

21st Century
People Draw Employers

Quality of Life
Schools
Community
Desirability
In-Migration
Jobs Follow
Potential Link to Profitability

- Enduring, enjoyable places *can* realize greater revenues over time.

High quality
High design

Bland
Poor design
Good design—in whose opinion?

The ultimate judges:
Residents, tenants, and visitors. Not an architectural panel.

Is this space well designed?
This family thinks so!
The Dangers of Great Design
The Dangers of Great Design

Places and cities are in danger when:

- Design takes place alone, without other essential city-building considerations.
- People believe design will solve all problems.
- People believe the rendering is real.
- Fads and cookie-cutter solutions are used.
- Form fails to respond to function, needs, desires.
More than Just Design

- Silos – Our Modern Problem
- Too many specialists, not enough generalists
- Designers should understand how investors think.
- Lenders should understand the built environment.
- Real estate should be part of the planning DNA.
More than Design

- 20th Century: Left brain thinking
- 21st Century: Whole brain thinking
  - For individuals and organizations
  - Communication is essential
- The Saturn Model
More than Just Design

Successful projects require a holistic approach.

- Community Goals
- Developer Experience
- Financial Capability
- Design Excellence
- Public Private Partnership

Success
More than Just Design – Decision Sequences

Backwards
Design ➔ Feasibility ➔ Implementation

A Bit Better
Feasibility ➔ Design ➔ Implementation

Best – Iterative, Holistic, and Multidisciplinary
Feasibility ➔ Marketing ➔ Politics ➔ Outreach ➔ Design ➔ Feasibility ➔ Implementation
Design Alone: Town Creek

- What happens when design takes place alone?
- Town Creek, New Braunfels, Texas
- Textbook New Urbanist Design
Design Alone: Town Creek

A quarter mile of retail on a dead end main street.

Retail fundamentals
- Visibility
- Access
- Auto traffic and parking
Design Alone

- Portland Condos
  - Middle-income neighborhood
  - $500k condos
  - 7-Eleven parking lot
  - Limited parking

- Santana Row
  - Bottom two floors off limits
Design Alone

- Town Creek and Portland Condos not alone
- 60 Percent + of mixed use projects fail under initial developer
- Beware Heat and Serve Fads
- Respect Real Estate Principles
Conditions for Success

- Market Understanding
- Timing
- Location
- Visibility and Accessibility
- Experience and Capability
- Capitalization
- Design
- Public Policy
- Many other components
Understanding the Market: Cycles

**Phase II - Expansion**
- Declining Vacancy
- New Construction

**Phase III - Hypersupply**
- Increasing Vacancy
- New Construction

**Phase I - Recovery**
- Declining Vacancy
- No New Construction

**Phase IV - Recession**
- Increasing Vacancy
- More Completions

Long-Term Average Vacancy

Supply/Demand Inflection Point

Cost Feasible New Construction Rents

- High Rent Growth In Tight Market
- Rent Growth Positive But Declining
- Below Inflation & Negative Rent Growth

Negative Rental Growth
- Below Inflation Rental Growth
- Rents Rapidly Toward New Construction Levels

May 2008
Understanding the Market: Consumers

Baby Boomers
Up to 1/3 (25 million) will downsize and urbanize.

Generation X
Seek unique, urban, authentic, and edgy experiences.

Generation Y
Shopping is entertainment and opportunity to socialize.

Gourmet, sensual, and high quality experiences.

Social, environmentally conscious.

Expect high tech.
Understanding the Market

- Markets are people and their
  - Needs
  - Desires
  - Ability to pay
  - Willingness to pay
- With choice, positive price – value is essential
- People reject places and products that are not responsive to their needs, desires, or budget
The Market: Flexibility vs. Assurance

- Classic issue in complex developments
- Developer requires *flexibility* to respond to changing markets over time
- Community wants *assurance* of quality and successful Place Making
Fads, Systems, and -isms

- Fads come and go, buildings remain.
- Form must still follow function; places must serve users.
Fads, Systems, and -Isms

Form still follows function:

It looks slick, but
Where’s the door?
Is it a fortress or museum?
Aircraft carrier?
Prison?
Fads

“There are now new approaches, new movements, new isms: Post Modernism, Late Modernism, Rationalism… Which add up to what? To such things as building more glass boxes so as to reflect the glass boxes next door and distort their boring straight lines into curves.”

- Tom Wolfe
The Rendering is not always Reality

Modern Metropolis in 2027 (Drawn 1926)

Hillsboro, Oregon in 2030 (Drawn 2008)

Note: Some shifting may occur.
What is Design Excellence?
Design Excellence

- In cities design excellence is founded in good urban design
- So, what is good urban design?
Principles of Urban Design

- Sense of Place
- Sensitive Architecture
- Land Use Mix
- Ease of Circulation
- Active Public Spaces
- Compact City
- Livable Neighborhoods
- Well Defined Street Edge
- Variety of Character
- Adaptability
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Achieving Good Urban Design
Achieving Good Urban Design

- Streetwalls
- Buildings
- Spaces and Landscapes
- Connections
- Activity Generators
Good Urban Design: Streetwalls

- Street Enclosure
- Sun Penetration
- Short Blocks
- Scale of the Street
- Respecting Original Lot Widths
Good Urban Design: Streetwalls
Good Urban Design: Buildings

Prominent Corners

Human Scale Frontage

Quality Architectural Details

Engaging an Active Frontage

Weather Protection
Good Urban Design: Buildings
Good Urban Design: Spaces and Landscapes

- Trees
- Gateways
- Parks, Squares & Plazas
- Sidewalk Environment
- Public Art
- Traffic Calming
- Multi-modal Transportation
- Intersections
- Parking
Good Urban Design: Spaces and Landscapes
Good Urban Design: Connections

Physical and Visual Links

Views and Vistas Termination
Good Urban Design: Connections
Good Urban Design: Activity Generators

Street Life

Land Use mix

Residential Density
Good Urban Design: Activity Generators
Enabling Great Design
Enabling Great Design

- Performance (not Prescriptive)
  Design Control

- Avoid legislating good design
  - “Materials of lasting value”

- Vancouver B.C. model:
  All major deals negotiated
Enabling Great Design

- Recognize the increasing importance of Design
- Shape a Vision
- Communication
- Whole Brain Thinking & Multidisciplinary Teams
- Design at many scales
- Understand the Market: Cycles, Consumers, & Flexibility
- Avoid Fads, Design for People
Good Urban Design

- Good urban design is vital to achieve a more compact, dense and sustainable city without sacrificing livability.
- Good urban design is essential for Boise to truly become the world-class city to which its leaders and citizens aspire.
- Good urban design is crucial for a better quality of life.
- Good urban design is NOT a luxury.
LELAND CONSULTING GROUP
Urban Strategists

STASTNYBRUN ARCHITECTS, INC.
Architects and Planners