

At the Margins of Ordered Freedom: The Problem of the Sidewalk as Public Space in New York

by Eleanor Fawcett

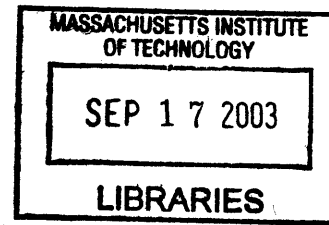
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the historical planning discourse concerning New York City's sidewalks. It focuses on the forces within the city that have shaped the sidewalk and attitudes towards it, and the translation of theory and ideals regarding this key public space into planning policy.

The sidewalk is defined morphologically by its existence in the marginal space between buildings and road, representing powerful private and public interests respectively. It is demonstrated that key moments in the history of New York's planning affecting the sidewalk were defined by negotiations between these two forces – and conditioned by their agreement over the vision for a leisured pedestrian experience. These measures, including the invention of new typologies of cleansed public space away from the sidewalk, represent the embodiment of what is termed a 'scientific' form of planning - which seeks to provide rational solutions - such as efficient circulation and increased light and air - to the problem of the city as a system.

The work of Jane Jacobs and William Whyte in the 1960s is studied since it represents a critical engagement with the sidewalk, and a reaction against the 'scientific' planning orthodoxy exemplified by the public housing projects of Robert Moses. Jacobs' reappraisal of the social qualities of the existing sidewalks contributed to a reversal of attitudes towards public space within the city; Whyte then aided their translation into planning policy by retroactively applying these criteria to the city's invented typologies of public space.

The study then charts the subsequent development of ideas and planning policies, culminating in the contemporary revitalization of the sidewalk through the Business Improvement District. It demonstrates that through the contesting of its legacy, the work of Jacobs and Whyte has suffered a distortion through its assimilation into the older trends which have shaped New York City's sidewalks – the public interest in efficient circulation and the private concern for profitability through attracting customers, both of which ultimately aspire to cleanse and smooth the experience of the city.

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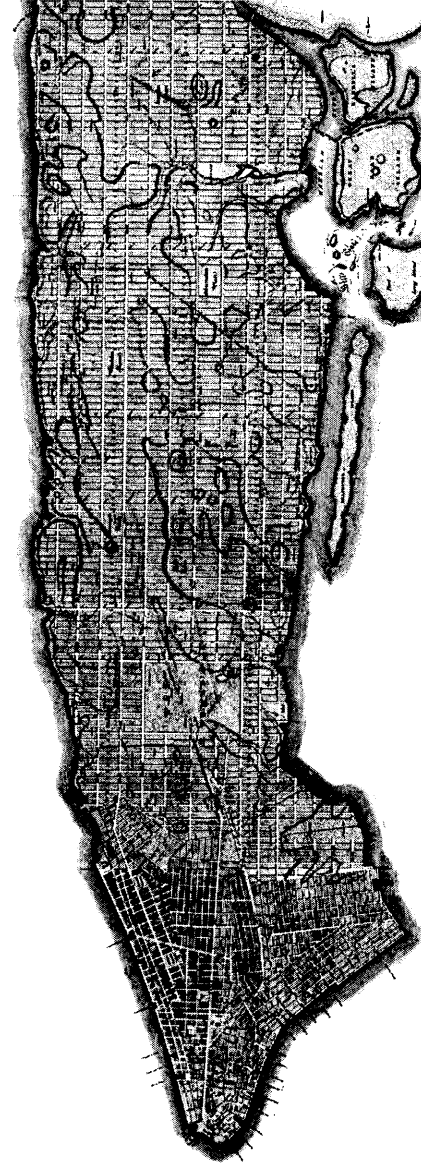
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1 Introduction

1.1 The Sidewalk in the New York Grid: The Residual Space of Ordered Freedom

Manhattan's famous skyline can be seen as the product of the city's gridiron street layout, in which homogeneous plots are built to radically different heights in a three-dimensional projection of its social, economic and cultural topographies. In addition to this distant image, the grid also determines the immediate experience of the city – its systematic order forms a neutral background in which spatial variety is limited, and attention is focused upon the life and activities on the sidewalks. It is the peculiar qualities of this urbanity which have long been the inspiration for filmmakers, photographers and writers. This study is also concerned with the public space of Manhattan's sidewalks. In particular, it charts the history of changing attitudes and responses to the sidewalks amongst those involved in the shaping of the public realm, such as the city's planners and theorists. It is a complex story told through this most basic type of public space.

Despite this history, the essential characteristics of Manhattan's sidewalks can in fact be recognized as latent within the grid diagram of the 1811 Commissioners' Plan; its fundamental assumptions concerning the interplay of public and private interests and



'Map of the City of New York and Island of Manhattan as laid out by the Commissioners', 1811

attributes of public space typologies are arguably as significant in shaping the development of the city as the physical grid structure. As a blueprint for the expansion of the city, the plan delineated the separation between public space and private property. Mappings of this binary condition outline the city blocks for private development, with the remaining area between blocks representing the public realm. Most of this 'white space' is the grid of city streets; clearings shown within this grid are intended as open spaces for various utilitarian and recreational purposes.

In simple terms, Manhattan has two fundamental public spaces: the streets (of which the sidewalk is a part) and the parks (and other open spaces). Whereas the street grid has been implemented basically unchanged from the original plan, the open spaces have been the subject of constantly changing proposals representing shifting concerns within the city. The Commissioners were originally requested to recommend 'what grounds ought to be retained or procured by the Common Council for military parades, pleasure grounds or other public uses for ornamenting the City in its future growth and extension'¹; while none of their initial proposals were implemented, the city today contains many public open spaces including parks, plazas, arcades and playgrounds. Each of these types of public space are the deliberate product of the particular ideological campaign which produced it – thus the city's public spaces can be read as an archeology of visions or traces of previous chapters which shaped the city.

Many of these new types of public space are critically linked by the underlying intention to offer conditions emphatically unlike those found on the streets. Within this opposition between the sidewalk and the 'non-sidewalk' public spaces, the sidewalk acts as the pervasive base condition which forms the basis for other proposals, establishing it as the

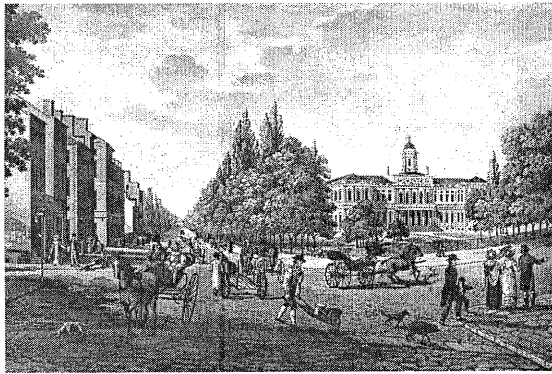
¹ Quoted in Spann, 'The Greatest Grid', in Daniel Schaffer (ed.), *Two Centuries of American Planning*, (London: Mansell Publishing Ltd. 1988), p.16.

primary typology for New York City’s public spaces. The sidewalks have an integrity generated by the logic of the grid which seemingly puts them beyond intervention. Thus whilst the focus of this study is the evolution of attitudes towards the sidewalks, this is necessarily understood in the wider context which includes the spaces developed in response to the streets and sidewalks and their changing conditions.

It should also be said that the binary condition of public and private – so clearly delineated on the original mapping of the city’s grid – has been hugely complicated by developments of spaces that can be understood as hybrids; neither pure public nor pure private. Many of these innovations have been the outcome of the debates surrounding the sidewalks and alternative forms of public space which form the core of this study. Hence it is necessary to clarify at this early stage what meanings are to be attached to terms that are now loaded and contested beyond their original and simply defined opposition according to ownership. Within this study therefore, ‘public space’ is broadly used to describe spaces which offer the experience of being amongst others which has long defined the traditional urban realm of streets, parks and squares. Today this realm has been broadened to include new types of space which still usefully function as a public domain – for example shopping malls, and the atrium spaces found in Trump Tower and the Citicorp building in Manhattan – despite the fact that these spaces are privately owned and managed. For the purposes of this study, this broader acceptance of spaces which seem to be public in spirit is preferred to the pure definition of public space which demands that it should be publicly owned and managed, and fully accessible to all social groups.

The cultural importance of the sidewalk as a venue for the urban public dictates its status as the preeminent public space of the city. However, in the history of New York’s planning

1733	Bowling Green First public open space in New York, 'for the beauty and ornament of the said street as well as for the recreation and delight of the inhabitants of this city.'
1790	Laid out on the west side of Broadway from Vesey to Murray Streets near City Hall. Made from brick and stone, just wide enough for two people to walk abreast.
1811	Commissioners' Plan for Manhattan is approved established a rectangular grid of streets and property lines without regard for topography. Twelve avenues and 155 cross streets created about 2000 city blocks. It established a basis for the orderly sale and development of land.



Early sidewalks at Broadway and the City Hall
Manhattan, 1819

culture, this view has not been typical. As a basic physical typological configuration at the edge of the street to facilitate the safe circulation of pedestrians, sidewalks warranted little consideration from the Commissioners, or indeed from most subsequent city designers. The city's first sidewalk had been laid out along Broadway adjacent to City Hall only two decades before the 1811 Plan, barely wide enough for two people to walk abreast. Given this, it is perhaps unsurprising that there was no design consideration or even reference to the sidewalks or the public pedestrian in the 1811 Plan – in which widths of streets were measured from property lines with no requirements given for sidewalks.²

This absence is in fact indicative of the 'marginalization' of the sidewalk between road and building that continued to influence the sidewalk. Hence this study will seek to characterize the sidewalk as a 'residual' space – an understanding which holds both in literal (physical) terms and also conceptually, since the sidewalk exists between the dual concerns of street layout and demarcation of private property, as established by the 1811 Plan. Accordingly the sidewalk has been subject to the forces of the street as a vehicular conduit – involving public planning and the desire for efficient circulation – and of the building as a source of private profit. The rational approach to the efficient circulation of traffic and air which lay behind the simple geometric order of New York City's street grid is one of the first manifestations of a 'scientific' approach to planning within New York City; the principles of simplification and 'cleansing' which characterize it have been of great significance for subsequent conceptions of desirable public spaces.

The term 'scientific' is applied to a particular approach to city planning in this study. In order to clarify this, it should be stated that this characterization is based on a definition of science as an empirical and mechanical enterprise, rather than the contemporary relativistic

² In the 1811 Plan, the north-south avenues were set at 100 feet wide; the east-west cross streets were 60 feet wide, with their roadway given as 34 feet.

indeterminate view. The approach can therefore be characterized by a faith in predictable outcomes and logical relationships between cause and effect. Thus issues such as traffic circulation and sunlight penetration provide the most obvious fields for the application of this approach – in which the city is regarded as a quantifiable system, supporting interventions at a large scale. However, the same attitude can also be detected in approaches towards less predictable situations such as moral reform and improving living conditions for the poor. It should also be noted that whilst this may often be characterized as a planning approach, it actually refers to the wider planning culture to which developers and architects also contributed.

The 1811 grid also enabled the quick and efficient development of city blocks by the private sector, a force whose importance and power in New York cannot be overemphasized. This includes a tradition of private provision of public amenities, from the construction of sidewalks by building owners during the eighteenth century to ‘privately owned public spaces’ during the late twentieth century. Indeed this history of the sidewalk is punctuated by measures which arise from negotiations which establish common ground between these forces of public and private interest, often with little direct concern for the sidewalk itself.

The complexity of the interdependent relationship between city planners, representing the public interest, and the city’s private sector derives from the types of power which both possess. Whereas the city planners have legal power of controlling development, exercised primarily through zoning regulations in New York, the private sector has tremendous financial, and consequently also political power. Ultimately, the private sector has been responsible for the development and success of New York City, and the planners have a responsibility to support and foster this success, to encourage private ambition and

1827	Washington Square Park Land was acquired by city for a public park	1830s	Brooklyn Heights World's first commuter suburb developed, property advertised as the 'nearest country retreat' for businessmen.	1845	Engels, <i>The Conditions of the Working Class in England</i> overcrowding, conditions of working class in industrial Manchester, document them through descriptions. Air and water pollution, physical – psychological links.
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effort within the general limits of an ‘ordered freedom.’³ The place of the public interest within city planning is complicated by the traditional American conception of the role of democratic government, which is to protect and not to interfere with individual rights; in this context, planners are charged with defending both public and private interests.

This basic physical urban condition of buildings and street can thus be seen as representing larger forces which have been of central importance to the history of planning New York City. This strategic characterization of the sidewalk as a marginal space subject to these two forces enables them to be seen as common threads whose continued influence can be traced through the histories of New York City’s public spaces.

1.2 Jacobs and Whyte: The Role of Ideas in the Story of the Sidewalk

The writings and research of Jane Jacobs and William Whyte are key to this study as they represent the first major critical appreciation of the conditions of New York City’s existing sidewalks amongst the city’s professionals and academics. Their work fostered an appreciation of the particular conditions of crowding, diversity, sociability and mixed-uses that they encountered on the city’s sidewalks – primarily during the 1950s and 60s. They articulated a new approach to the city which represented a significant shift away from the prevailing approach amongst planners which emphasized an understanding of the city as an abstracted system, and was characterized by large-scale masterplanning and redevelopment projects.

³ See for example the 1811 street grid and the 1916 zoning regulations.

The new social and cultural understanding of the city’s public spaces – sidewalks, parks and plazas – fostered a more holistic approach to their evaluation and design than the narrower criteria previously employed in the ‘scientific’ analyses of physical attributes of city fabric. Whilst this was certainly part of a much larger cultural shift in society taking place at that time, the work of Jacobs and Whyte played a key role in catching this new spirit and recognizing its implications for planning public spaces in New York City.

This study will examine the effects of the work of Jacobs and Whyte both upon the discourse within urban planning, and upon the concrete realities of New York City’s sidewalks. They each affected attitudes towards public spaces in different ways, reflecting differences in their engagement with the discourse. Jacobs effectively outlined a vision for urban living through her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), describing the qualities which public spaces should possess, and thus setting the goals and criteria for future planners and designers to follow. However, she did not personally participate in developing planning policies or strategies to realize this vision. Whyte, who was involved in studying New York City’s public spaces several years after Jacobs’ work in the city, collaborated directly with the city planners to develop policies to implement his vision of a desirable urban public space. Thus, whereas Whyte more directly shaped New York City’s physical fabric, Jacobs more profoundly shaped the vision that planners ultimately sought to implement.

In many ways the role of Jacobs and Whyte as non-professionals in helping to define ‘official’ visions for the city, and shaping the accompanying planning policy, can be seen as unusual, if not unique, within the twentieth century. Certain precedents can be found in the nineteenth century, notably in London, such as doctors, writers and social reformers whose

1857	Central Park	Venue for wealthy families' carriage rides, healthful alternative to saloon for workers. Opened 1859. Olmstead described it as a place for different classes to mingle.
1860s	Haussmann creates Paris' boulevards	
1870	first elevated train line in NY opened	Greenwich and 9th avenues - success led to more opening. Earliest form of rapid transit in US. Tracks laid about 30ft above ground in the center of streets. Trains were noisy and placed those below in constant danger of being hit by falling ash, oil or cinder

campaigns for improved conditions in the city's slums ultimately led to new planning legislation. It was perhaps the methods used by Jacobs and Whyte to communicate their ideas which most contributed to their impact: Jacobs' powerful and lively journalistic style of writing was engaging and convincing to an extent not seen in the more academic work of other theorists on the city; Whyte's use of photography and videos as an empirical method of research provided irrefutable evidence to planners for his arguments.

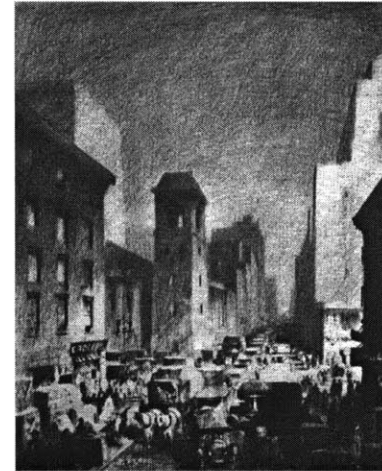
Together, their research has formed the basis for almost all subsequent understanding of the issues surrounding public spaces in New York City and beyond, to some extent being employed in place of further engagement with the sidewalks themselves by urban designers and planners. Indeed today their work seems to have almost gained the status of abstraction, as it continues to be evoked to support contemporary proposals, and debates continue to revolve around its legacy, despite the changes in public life that have occurred since their research was begun nearly fifty years ago. Whilst their work arguably provoked a key shift in planning ideologies (Chapter 3), it has subsequently been consumed and reworked by its inevitable relationship with the larger historical forces shaping the sidewalk. The translation and development of these ideas is reviewed in Chapter 4, in the context of the historical trends identified in Chapter 2.

⁴ Thomas Adams, *The Building of the City: 1929 Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs Volume 2*, (New York: Committee on Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs. 1931), p.310.

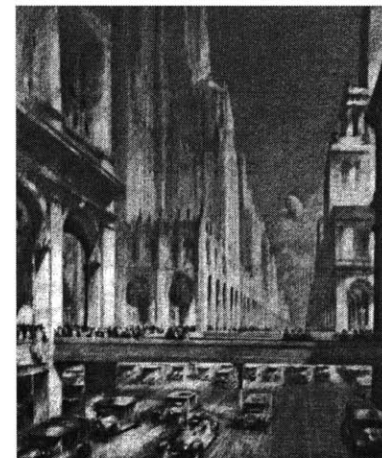
2 Pre-1960: Planning as Science and the Leisured Pedestrian

2.1 The Leisured Pedestrian Experience and the Paradox of Congestion

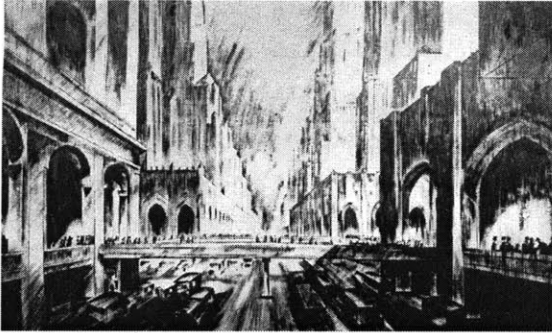
New York City's sidewalks have been subject to many ideologies, of which one of the most recurrent throughout the twentieth century has been the idea of establishing the sidewalk as a space for an enjoyable, leisured pedestrian experience. An early example of the creation of an 'improved' pedestrian space is the proposal made by Harvey Wiley Corbett in 1923 for a network of elevated sidewalks in midtown Manhattan. This proposal aimed to improve efficient circulation by increasing road capacities within a three-level circulation system. Accordingly, rail services would run below ground, and with the removal of existing sidewalks, vehicles on ground-level would be able to occupy the full width of the street between the buildings. Corbett argues that through these rational measures, effective traffic capacity could be increased by 700%.⁴ 'Basket weaved' intersections would be built at major junctions to further ease traffic flow. Thus these proposals are ostensibly the result of a 'scientific' planning approach concerned with efficient, free-flowing pedestrian and vehicular circulation under even higher building densities, achieved by simplifying the current situation through the separation of different traffic types: 'The New York of the



'Typical conditions in a commercial district',
Corbett's Proposal, 1929 Regional Plan



'Realisation of increased street capacity',
Corbett's proposal, 1929 Regional Plan



'Architectural possibilities of second level pedestrian walks and arcades', Corbett's Proposal, Regional Plan, 1929



'Times Square as it would appear with the proposed raised sidewalks' Regional Plan, 1929

⁵ Ibid., p.309.

⁶ Ibid., pp.308-9.

⁷ Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye: the design and social life of cities*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1990), p.150.

⁸ Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: The body and the city in western civilization*. New York: W. W. Norton + Co. 1994), p.327.

⁹ Ebenezer Howard, *Garden Cities of To-morrow*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. 1965).

¹⁰ As described in nineteenth-century Paris by Walter Benjamin in 'The Arcades Project'.

future will be an adaptation of the metropolis to the needs of traffic, freeing the city from the unsightly congestion and turmoil of the present.'⁵

However, the terms in which the proposal is described reveal Corbett's additional concern for the provision of an aesthetic setting for a leisured pedestrian experience:

'We see a city with sidewalks, arcaded within the building lines, and one story above the present street grade. We see bridges at all corners, the width of the arcades and with solid railings. We see the smaller parks of the city (of which we trust there will be many more than at present) raised to this same sidewalk-arcade level... Pedestrians will move about through the arcaded streets, out of danger from traffic, protected from the snows of winter and the glare of the summer sun. Walking would become a pastime (it is now of the most hazardous occupations). Shopping would be a joy. The overwrought nerves of the present New Yorker would be restored to normalcy.'⁶

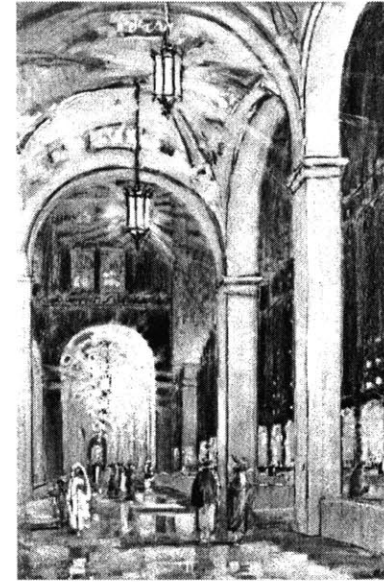
The perception of New York's existing sidewalks as undesirable, chaotic places, coincided in the early twentieth century with the idea that being a pedestrian in the city could be an enjoyable, leisure pastime rather than merely a functional method of circulating in the city. This concept was already well established in European cities where American visitors experienced Haussmann's new Boulevards in Paris and Nash's Regent Street development in London, both of which represent prototypical settings for the leisured pedestrian experience. Streets such as Boulevard Richard Lenoir were designed with a clear separation of different types of traffic; with fast and slow traffic carefully managed, the generous tree lined sidewalk was explicitly reserved for promenading and sitting at cafés.⁷

In addition to the provision of elegantly designed spaces for a relaxing experience in public, the leisured pedestrian experience is closely linked to shopping and consumption as a pastime. This association has a long history – as seen for example in Regent Street (1811-30) which Nash conceived of as a commercial district, designing a continuous shop frontage at street level, which represented a new organization of the urban environment – effectively ‘Nash had moved the principle of the shopping arcades... into the street.’⁸

The rising importance of shopping within the urban leisure experience is also illustrated by its role within Ebenezer Howard’s ‘Garden City’ proposal made in 1898. In seeking to bring the ‘social opportunity’ of the city to the countryside – asserting that ‘human society and the beauty of nature are meant to be enjoyed together’ – Howard proposes a conflation of the urban activity of leisured shopping with the rural conditions of open space in what is effectively a simulated city sidewalk set within a park:

‘Running all round the Central Park is a wide glass arcade called the “Crystal Palace”, opening on to the park. This building is in wet weather one of the favorite resorts of the people... Here manufactured goods are exposed for sale, and here most of that class of shopping which requires the job of deliberation and selection is done.’⁹

Time spent in this space was clearly intended to be an enjoyable pastime, with strong echoes of descriptions of nineteenth-century shopping arcades and department stores – sites of a public life based on consumption rather than discourse or social engagement.¹⁰ In addition it is interesting to note that Howard’s emphasis on the protection offered from unpredictable weather conditions echoes descriptions of Corbett’s arcades and subsequent ‘non-street’ public space typologies.



‘Architectural possibilities of second level pedestrian walks and arcades’ Corbett’s Proposal, Regional Plan, 1929

1870	Dept of Public Parks formed in Manhattan
1881	NY Park Association Private group to protect parks as they improve quality of life and raise value of adjacent property
1882	Tuberculosis found to be contagious not hereditary
1885	Tenements limited to 70/80 feet high depending on street width



Fifth Avenue, 1968

On the basis of these precedents, New York City's sidewalks were not conducive to the quality of experience which it was believed that the public sought and deserved – New York City could not replicate these European precedents because the streets of its grid were both highly congested and were also dimensionally constrained by the strong private control of the property lines at its edges. In the light of these difficulties, New York's favored response has been the development of superior public spaces that would provide an environment which improved on the street, beginning with the parks of the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, new sidewalk-like typologies of public spaces were developed, beginning with projects such as Corbett's proposal and the Rockefeller Center. All these spaces have shared the ambition to eliminate sources of discomfort, which can be characterized as those elements outside the individual pedestrian's control – for example unpleasant weather, dangers from vehicular traffic, strangers and the risk of crime or disturbances, and crowding or congestion.

This ambiguous motivation behind the proposals of Corbett – part efficient circulation, part idealized shopping leisure experience – is a clue to one of the key paradoxes of planning within New York: congestion, whilst an anathema to 'scientific' planners' ambitions of achieving continuous, efficient traffic flow, is beneficial to private interests, to whom it represents workers and customers, and therefore increased profits. As Koolhaas has observed, Corbett effectively addresses both parties within his proposal:

'Not for a moment does [Corbett] intend to relieve congestion; his true ambition is to escalate it to such intensity that it generates – as in a quantum leap – a completely new condition, where congestion becomes mysteriously positive... They know instinctively that it would be suicide to solve Manhattan's problems, that they exist

¹¹ Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*, (New York: The Monacelli Press. 1994), p.123.

by the grace of these problems, that it is their duty to make its problems, if anything, forever insurmountable.’¹¹

Given the clear logic of the private sector’s argument, the only real possibility for a reconciliation of this paradox was that planners find an understanding which enables them to view congestion in a more positive light; it is my contention that the work of Jacobs and Whyte actually provided this basis in the latter part of the twentieth century, and that the pedestrian leisure experience continues today as the ideal for New York City’s public spaces, and particularly the sidewalk.

2.2 The Orthodoxy of Planning as Science

The ‘scientific’ conception of city planning has been of central importance to the shaping of New York City’s public spaces. Essentially representing a belief that cause and effect arguments can be applied to a city with predictable results, the scientific approach has been brought to problems ranging from traffic and circulation, public health to moral reform. Although these approaches were challenged by the work of Jacobs and Whyte, this study demonstrates the persistent influence of rational planning on New York City’s vision of public spaces. This can be traced back to the 1811 plan establishing the city’s street grid, whose morphology could be seen as an embodiment of the ‘scientific’ approach.

The 1811 Commissioners’ Plan for New York City was intended to create a healthier, more orderly future through the rational and organized physical layout of the city: Hence the plan represented a shift away from the socio-political and aesthetic concerns of earlier urban

1887	Small Parks Act funds enabled the city to acquire new small parks in overcrowded neighborhoods.
1890	Riis, <i>How the Other Half Lives</i> squalid living conditions of working classes described and documented
1897	Columbus Park, lower east side Demolition of overcrowded tenements at Mulberry Bend for public park to improve public health and morals. Campaign led by Riis.



Lower Manhattan, 1851

planning, as seen for example in the planning of Philadelphia, Savannah and Washington DC. Inefficient circulation of both air and traffic were seen as the greatest problems of the unplanned, haphazard layout of the streets in lower Manhattan. Beginning with the response of the 1811 plan, these were established as primary concerns which have continued to dominate planners' approaches. (It is through these dual concerns for efficient circulation and for improved light and air that the scientific approach is described in this chapter.)

The 1811 plan's attempt to structure Manhattan 'scientifically' is part of a longer history which has placed emphasis on efficient circulation within cities. The biological metaphors for the city which are frequently used to describe parts of the urban system – for example roads as veins or arteries, parks as lungs – derive from the understanding of the body's circulation system developed by Harvey in the early seventeenth century. His model of a hierarchical network of veins and arteries which supplied blood to the body was first applied to the understanding of cities in eighteenth century Europe. A particularly significant aspect for cities was the understanding of the importance that a state of continuous movement be maintained in the healthy circulation of blood – blockages or clogging in the system would ultimately lead to death. The analogy between this model and dense, haphazard unplanned urban fabric was clear to many eighteenth century and nineteenth century thinkers on the city (including Haussmann, Nash, and L'Enfant), for whom the importance of planning efficient circulation routes within the clogged and 'unhealthy' existing city effectively transformed city planning from an artistic to a scientific enterprise.¹²

The technological innovations of the industrial revolution further developed the understanding of efficiency as a universal ideal, and the possibility of achieving continuous movement within a system. Thus the biological metaphor for efficient circulation within

¹² Sennett, *Flesh and Stone*, p.263.

¹³ Adams, *1929 Regional Plan*, p.277.

the healthy city was reinforced by the metaphor of the city as a machine, in which the smooth, regulated interaction of its moving parts promised to create an unsurpassed level of productivity.

New York is fundamentally premised on this metaphor of the city as a system or machine, with the implicated goal of efficiency and a functional/utilitarian (not aesthetic) rationale for interventions. The 1811 street grid was seen as an efficient layout for the dispersal of traffic, and its configuration was further shaped according to assumptions about the projected future traffic flows. Denser development was expected around the docks lining Manhattan’s river fronts, which were major centers of commercial activity in the city (New York was the busiest port in the world between 1830 and 1960), and in response to this, an unusually high number of cross streets were proposed, just 200 feet apart, to accommodate the heavy volume of traffic crossing between the docks. In addition, the twelve north-south avenues were laid out with somewhat closer spacing towards the edges of the island, creating a higher density of streets around the docks.

However, with the unimagined increased speeds and volume of traffic in the city, and the unanticipated orientation of the contemporary city predominantly north-south, the many intersections and the uniformity of the grid has been widely criticized as an inefficient layout for ease of vehicular movement around the city. The 1929 Regional Plan, for example, points to the grid as a cause of congestion, as its layout creates ‘serious interruption of traffic at intersections, which greatly reduces the effectiveness of comparatively wide streets.’¹³

Whilst the 1811 grid represents an initial embodiment of the scientific planning orthodoxy in its concern for efficient circulation, its layout was equally driven by concerns for

1898	Ebenezer Howard, <i>Garden Cities of To-morrow</i>	new typology, overcome horrors of cities. Lots of open space around buildings, parks, wide tree lined streets. ‘crystal palace’ shopping arcade around park.
1900		
1901	washing drying over streets banned	12,000 tuberculosis cases in NYC; 25% of deaths
1903	first public play-ground owned by city opened, lower east side	

enabling private investment in the growing city, demonstrating another of New York planning's recurring themes: the careful reconciliation of public and private interests. The grid is therefore the first in a series of such negotiations between public and private interests, whereby benefits to the powerful private sector often exist as a subtext to the stated intentions to serve the public interest. As I will seek to demonstrate, each of these negotiations (denoted by italics) have helped to establish key moments in the history of New York planning as it relates to the sidewalk.

Negotiation 1: The 1811 Commissioners' Grid

The delicate and ambiguous balance of power and influence which exists between the public and private sectors in New York City can be seen emerging in the 1811 Commissioners' Plan, in which the rational approach to city planning extended beyond concern for efficient circulation to the creation of an environment in which private development would be 'attended with the least inconvenience' – notably through the laying out of building plots for private buyers.

The elongated block proportions of the grid can be seen as a response to the need to provide the optimum land configuration for private development of the land. This configuration creates desirable regular plots with generous street frontages – indeed the uniform application of the regular grid is a response to rational, economic considerations: 'they could not but bear in mind...that strait sided and right angled houses are the most cheap

¹⁴ Quoted in Spann, 'The Greatest Grid', p.20.

¹⁵ Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, p.20.

¹⁶ Quoted in Spann, 'The Greatest Grid', p.26.

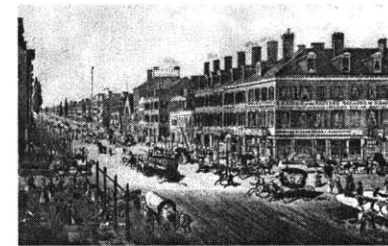
to build and the most convenient to live in. The effect of these plain and simple reflections was decisive.'¹⁴

Despite the overbearing utilitarian nature of the grid, it came to be welcomed by private landowners for the stable, assured basis which the order and permanence provided for their speculative developments. In addition, by specifying no use regulations, the Commissioners did not attempt to define the nature of development, but created an open context for the unknown future, as recognized by Koolhaas:

*'The Grid's two-dimensional discipline also creates undreamt-of freedom for three-dimensional anarchy. The Grid defines a new balance between control and de-control in which the city can be at the same time ordered and fluid, a metropolis of rigid chaos.'*¹⁵

This positive effect of the grid's ordered freedom for the city's real estate market came to be widely appreciated, for example by John Randel Jr, the head surveyor for the 1811 plan:

*'The Plan of New York... is now the pride and boast of the city; and the facilities afforded by it for the buying, and improving real estate, on streets, avenues, and public squares, already laid out and established on the ground...at the cost of the city...thereby avoiding the frequent error of laying short, narrow, and crooked streets, with alleys and courts endangering extensive conflagrations, confined air, unclean streets etc., must have greatly enhanced the value of real estate on New York Island.'*¹⁶



Broadway, Manhattan. 1836

1904	first NY subway line opened, segment of route from City Hall to Times Square, and up to 96th St and the Bronx - whole route opened 1908.
1905	36,000 TB cases NYC - first municipal clinic opened
Park Association of NYC	parkland cannot be used for other purposes without approval of state legislature.
Max Weber, <i>The City</i>	first modern effort in urban studies. Under what conditions could cities be positive and creative influences on men's common lives. Model of old cities promoted.



Fifth Avenue, 1949



Lower East Side, 1900

2.3 Efficient Circulation

The circulation of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic emerged as one of the most pressing concerns for city planners during the early twentieth century. Increased building density and bulk accommodated additional workers and shoppers who flooded into Manhattan, and led to crowds far beyond the capacity of the original streets. The 1929 Regional Plan saw a ‘failure to adjust the building development to the streets’¹⁷ as the major source for this congestion, although in reality the ever larger buildings constructed by developers in Manhattan were responding to a wider context: the population was growing rapidly (Manhattan’s population peaked between 1910-20 at 2.3 million) and the new transit systems could bring even more people directly into the city, intensifying its status as the hub of the growing New York City.

The problem of congestion on the city’s roads increased as new modes of mass transportation developed, most significantly with the rise of private car ownership – car registration in New York City increased 250% between 1920 and 1926. Proposals to alleviate the congestion that ensued focused on the provision of an arterial network of freeways across the city and region, including proposals for expressways along Manhattan’s riverfronts and across the island. The design of these roads was a pure embodiment of the concern to achieve efficient, continuous circulation; as a new type of conduit for the circulation of motor vehicles, no longer even a street, it had no relationship to a sidewalk or pedestrians, and thus was effectively not part of the public life of the city in a traditional sense. However, mass automobile ownership was not to be denied in a democracy, thus there was no questioning of the projected rapid growth in this trend and its far-reaching impact on the physical and cultural landscape of the city.

¹⁷ Adams, *1929 Regional Plan*, p.277.

This goal of continuous, efficient movement was also applied to the increasingly crowded sidewalks of Manhattan in the late nineteenth century. Proposed physical solutions were designed to create additional pedestrian circulation space and predominantly focused on introducing arcades to increase sidewalk widths, or building new raised or sunken sidewalks, similar to Corbett’s proposal described in section 2.1.

An alternative approach to the problem was to limit sidewalk activity to circulation only, arguing that additional activities taking place in the same physical space would impede circulation and should therefore be relocated to other spaces. The implication of such an approach would be that the experience of the sidewalk itself would be ‘simplified’, and new typologies of public spaces would need to be invented to rehouse the activities being displaced. The multitude of activities found on the streets of low income neighborhoods were a particular target for a series of strategies for greater efficiency within the city’s circulation. As the only open spaces available to the residents, these streets seemed to reformers to host an appalling jumble of activities; adults socialized and children played in the same congested corridor where people and vehicles circulated, markets and street peddlers sold their wares, and trucks delivered goods to the establishments lining the sidewalks.

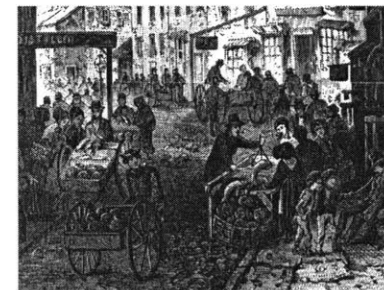
The ‘problem’ of the street markets and push carts – those activities other than circulation that crowded the sidewalks - was addressed in the early years of the twentieth century. These abounded in New York City and fulfilled a key role in the provision of goods and services, and employment within immigrant communities. However, with few regulations in place these markets were perceived both as creating unsanitary conditions, and as generators of street congestion. In 1923 there were over fifty open air markets in New York City, and a



‘A two-level arrangement proposed for Broadway in 1870’
Regional Plan, 1929



Children on street, New York City, 1908



Street market and peddlers, Five Points, Manhattan, 1869

1913	Committee on City Planning	Consider aspects of building controls - work led to 1916 zoning regulations
1908	Street cries of- ficially banned (not very successful)	
1907	Fifth Avenue Association	Established to fight encroachment of garment manufacturing lofts, and their workers on sidewalk. Force for 1916 use zoning.
1907	Lewis Hine starts at National Child Labor Committee	(until 1916)



Socializing on the sidewalk
New York City, 1938



Fifth Avenue scene, 1898

¹⁸ Times, July 1st 1930, quoted in Adams, *1929 Regional Plan*, p.406.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Max Page, *The Creative Destruction of Manhattan, 1900-1940*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), p.57.

decade later 15,000 peddlers were counted in the city. At this time Mayor La Guardia took action to establish dedicated market buildings to replace the street markets. With federal funds the city erected several indoor municipal retail markets, and banned all pushcarts in 1938 – by 1945 only 1200 remained in the city.

Socializing and play on the sidewalks was also seen to be undesirable, both in terms of restricting the flow of pedestrians and as private activities deemed inappropriate to take place in public, as revealed by this journalist's contemporary account of the Lower East Side:

‘What with groups of women guarding baby carriages inside the curb, or huddled on stoops or on doorsteps, little ones toddling about and older children racing and darting in and out, pedestrians have difficulty in making their way. Everywhere there is such squalidness, such ugliness of surroundings, such turmoil, that one wonders how life can be endurable there.’¹⁸

This led to the creation of parks by both social reformers and the city authorities to accommodate the socializing activities displaced from the sidewalk. Of particular concern were the children playing on the streets, as commented on in the Regional Plan of 1929 – ‘the real nursery for the majority is the street and the disorderly vacant lot’¹⁹ – a concern which led to the ‘invention’ of playgrounds as dedicated spaces for these children to formalize their play in safe surroundings.

It is interesting to note in this regard that there appear to be considerable class differences between the acceptability of the sidewalks as a site for social and leisure pastimes. Whilst the use of the sidewalks as a leisure space by the lower classes was being criticized, this role

was simultaneously being promoted for the wealthy. For New York’s elite, streets such as 5th Avenue emerged as an important place to spend time out in public, observing others and being observed. For example, the tradition of the annual Easter Parade emerged from this culture in the 1870s, when the elite would stroll along Fifth Avenue after church, displaying new outfits before visiting friends and having lunch at lavish hotels nearby. This points to the fact that visions for the sidewalk had a narrow definition of the acceptable range of social activities. It is this distinction that provides the background to the 1916 zoning resolution, in which use zoning effectively enabled the control of the social population of the sidewalk that was desired by private landowners.

Negotiation 2: 1916 Zoning Resolution – Social Control

The desire to protect private property values underpinned the acceptance and success of New York City’s 1916 zoning resolution. Two private groups who played a particularly significant role in lobbying for its development were the Fifth Avenue Association, and downtown property owners and developers. Whilst both had different motivations for promoting an increased intervention into private freedom by planners, they shared a belief that it was necessary to maintain their profits by acting to influence the public spaces of the city. The Fifth Avenue Association was founded in 1907 by property owners, residents and retailers on Fifth Avenue with this in mind, intending to pursue the ‘betterment of trade and traffic conditions on the Avenue by taking up for instance questions relating to heavy trucking, garbage disposal, public nuisances, etc.’²⁰ Here the latter objective is crucial: their vision of an improved sidewalk environment was specifically developed in response

1915	Equitable Building largest office bldg in world - impact on value of neighboring properties galvanized support for zoning
1916	First Zoning Resolution Problem of so many skyscrapers causing overshadowed streets - limits to building height and bulk bring more light and air to the street. Use zoning also introduced.
1919	first traffic signal in NY At 5th Ave and 42nd Street
1922	Le Corbusier, ‘A City of 3m people’ de-congest city center, high density, efficient transportation, parks and open spaces 48-95% ground is open.

*to the encroachment of garment manufacturing lofts onto the Avenue around the turn of the century. The perceived 'derogatory effect' on the neighborhood was particularly linked to their employees: 'These buildings are crowded with their hundreds and thousands of garment workers and operators who swarm down upon the Avenue for the lunch hour. They stand upon or move slowly along the sidewalks and choke them up.'*²¹

That these workers were predominantly immigrants increased concern with maintaining the 'quality' of the people on the street. In this case, New York City's liberal traditions of assimilation and pluralism were rejected in favor of segregation. Initially the Fifth Avenue Association instructed police to arrest the workers for loitering, and discussed the possibility of roping off sections of side streets for the 'hordes'. The 'solution' to this situation which the Fifth Avenue Association developed and lobbied for was the introduction of building height limitations, and the separation of residential and industrial activities, such that lofts would be effectively excluded from the Avenue. These proposals were elaborated on a city-wide basis, and became the comprehensive zoning plan produced by the Commission on Building Districts and Restrictions in 1916.

Aided by a variety of ordinances such as this passed on its behalf, the association maintained the street as an elite residential and commercial area, by restricting the types of traffic on the Avenue, forcibly removing beggars and peddlers, eliminating 'unsightly' signage - keeping Broadway's popular culture away, and influencing the architectural design of new buildings. It has been written that 'The Fifth Avenue Association most powerfully shaped the narrative that would be used to justify new forms of urban space'²² - certainly the success of the group in stabilizing land values and regulating the area's character may well

²¹ Ibid., p.64.

²² Ibid., p.55.

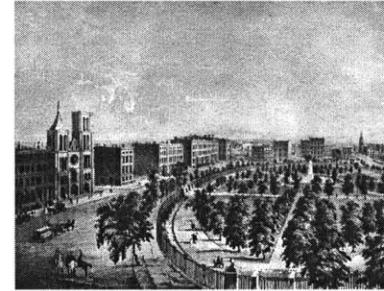
²³ Quoted in Spann, 'The Greatest Grid', p.17.

have served as a model for the later Business Improvement Districts, which constitute the major contemporary form of sidewalk intervention.

2.4 Light and Air

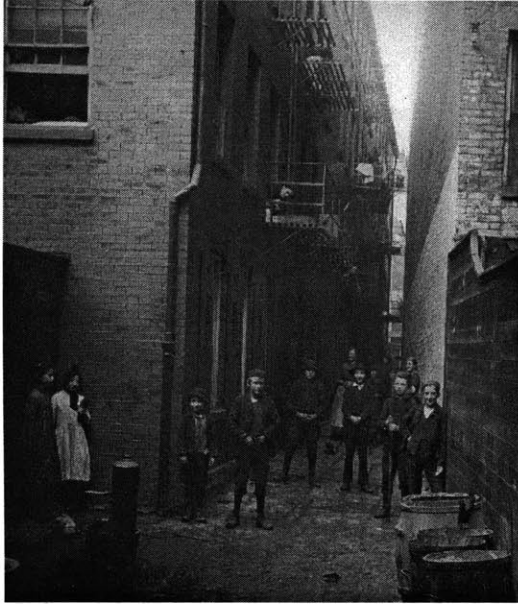
Many of New York City’s significant public open spaces were established as a response to concerns over public health and the spread of contagious diseases. This concern drove successive strategies to improve the infiltration of clean air and adequate sunlight into the city fabric. This discourse is interesting because it demonstrates evolving attitudes to the problems of the sidewalk, and because of its highly ‘scientific’ motivation: the problem of light and air is perhaps the clearest and most demonstrable instance where changes to the physical environment can ‘scientifically’ ameliorate a specific issue.

The provision of adequate fresh air was one of the chief responsibilities of the 1811 Commissioners, who were required to lay out ‘the leading streets and great avenues...and in general to lay out said streets, roads and public squares of such ample width as they may deem sufficient to secure a free and abundant circulation of air.’²³ It was believed that the impure air and congested conditions of lower Manhattan contributed to diseases such as the yellow fever epidemics of 1803 and 1805 which had forced massive evacuations of the city. The Commissioners adopted two strategies to achieve this – in addition to the public open spaces such as parks set out within the city, the many straight cross streets of their gridiron street plan were intended to bring a supply of fresh air to the city from the two ‘large arms of the sea’ (the Hudson and East rivers).



‘View of Union Park, from the head of Broadway.’ Manhattan, 1849

1920s-40s	Chicago School of Sociologists (Wirth, Park, Burgess, Redfield)	1924	Robert Moses president State Parks Council	1928	First CIAM conference
internal character of city, different parts and experiences - define city in terms of relations between parts, and how these shape emotional, human experience of city men. Urban freedom, men can express themselves more fully.			built 9700 acres parks on Long Island, inc Northern State Parkway and Southern Parkway. This was Moses’ first major city appointment		



Children in Mullin's Alley, Lower East Side. Riis, c.1890



Columbus Park, Lower East Side, 1907

²⁴ Published in Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*, (1890).

²⁵ Page, *The Creative Destruction of Manhattan*, p.80.

Late nineteenth-century measures to combat the prevalence of tuberculosis in the city by increasing light and air reaching the public had far-reaching results on the creation and shaping of public open spaces, including both parks and streets. The link between the prevention of tuberculosis and healthy living conditions was confirmed with the discovery in 1882 that it was a contagious not a hereditary disease, reinforced further by the discovery that sunlight would kill the microbes within fifteen minutes. Tuberculosis was a serious problem in overcrowded New York – in 1901 there were a total of 12,000 cases, accounting for 25% of deaths in the city, and this number had tripled by 1904.

Initially the drive to bring more light and air into New York's built environment focused on the overcrowded slums. This campaign was spearheaded by the journalist and reformer Jacob Riis, who documented and exposed the overcrowded and squalid conditions occupied by the working classes of the Lower East Side.²⁴ His belief in the many benefits of increasing the penetration of light and air into these areas led to the 1887 'Small Parks Act', which gave financial aid for clearing slums to create parks. The Tenement House Commission echoed his vision by insisting that:

'no one can become familiar with life in the most crowded districts of New York without the conviction that no greater immediate relief can be afforded the inhabitants than by letting in more air and sunshine by means of playground and small parks, and furnishing thereby, near at hand, places for rest, recreation and exercise for young and old.'²⁵

Implied within this act was the rejection of the existing streets and sidewalks to provide the light and air to the inhabitants: remedial measures necessitated the creation of new 'healthy' spaces which were strictly separated from the streets. The first of these projects was the

demolition of some of the most overcrowded slums at Mulberry Bend on the Lower East Side to create Columbus Park, opened in 1897.

Negotiation 3: 1916 Zoning Resolution [Part 2]

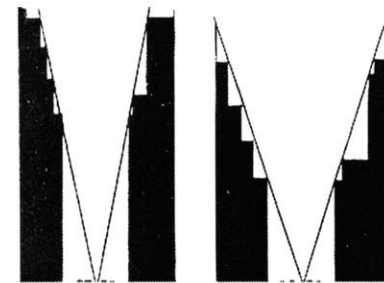
Although efforts to combat tuberculosis were centered on the city's slums, it also influenced concerns within the wealthy commercial areas – the outcome of which was legislation which would come to radically affect the future shape of midtown Manhattan.

As the construction boom in the early twentieth century led to ever higher and larger skyscrapers being constructed in Manhattan, concerns that the scale of development was unsustainable and unhealthy for the city led to ongoing calls for some government control. However, it was only when developers' profits were threatened by the effects of overshadowing that action was taken to limit development. When the lower floors of speculative office buildings were cast into permanent shadow by neighboring developments, owners found them difficult to let as the inadequate provision of light and ventilation was believed to increase the threat of tuberculosis.

Finally, the shadow cast over its neighbors by the Equitable Building (the largest office building in the world on completion in 1915) was so dramatic that the tax values of adjacent properties were reassessed. This situation dramatized the vulnerability of commercial real estate values to the autonomous actions of neighbors. The height and setback restrictions of the new zoning proposal offered a guarantee of stability to developers, compensating for the loss of floor area it implied. This can be seen as another example of an 'ordered



Equitable Building, Manhattan, 1915



Building setback lines creating a 'zig-zag' shape, 1916 zoning resolution

stock market crash - start of great depression, end of skyscraper building boom in NY

Hugh Ferriss, *The metropolis of Tomorrow*
Ferriss promoted more sculptural bldgs, unity out of chaos of fetishizing individual structures. architecture with little sense of urban form, apart from competition. Absence of inhabitation in drawings.

Rockefeller Center begun
Seeks to reconcile culture of congestion with 'light and air' zoning concerns. Adds streets to Manhattan's grid, and creates an open plaza for public use in the center.

1929



Children on street, Lower East Side, c.1910



Stuyvesant Town under construction on slum clearance site, Manhattan, 1943

²⁶ Jacob Riis, quoted in Page, *The Creative Destruction of Manhattan*, p.82.

²⁷ New York Committee on Slum Clearance, *Title 1 Slum Clearance Progress*, (September 1958), p.12.

²⁸ US Supreme Court in *Berman v. Parker*, 1954. quoted in Todd W. Bressi (ed.), *Planning and Zoning New York City*, (New Brunswick: Center of Urban Policy Research, 1993), p.62

freedom – refining that originally offered by the 1811 grid, and even more explicitly serving to secure future investments and profits.

Beyond the concerns for health and profit, the ‘light and air’ strategy became increasingly also used to shape attempts to overcome other ‘diseases’ through changes to the physical environment. Essentially it was believed that social ‘ills’ could also be ‘cured’ with the provision of an improved physical environment. Specifically, reformers believed that the order of parks and the restorative powers of nature would transform the morals of the slum residents, which were currently being corrupted by the existing streets. This environmental determinism represents the application of ‘scientific’ logic to a social context. Riis strongly subscribed to this approach, insisting that ‘there is a connection between the rottenness of the house and that of the tenant that is patent and positive.’²⁶

Of particular concern were the children roaming the streets – Riis and his contemporaries believed that they were corrupted and criminalized by the conditions, and therefore private groups of social reformers pioneered the building of playgrounds for their ‘healthful influence upon morals and conduct.’ This was the obvious solution, according to the logic of scientific planning: by reforming the children’s environment with purpose-built space for ordered and disciplined play away from the streets, their characters would also be reformed. In 1891 the New York Society for Parks and Playgrounds was established, and the first playground built by the city was opened in 1903 in Lower East Side.

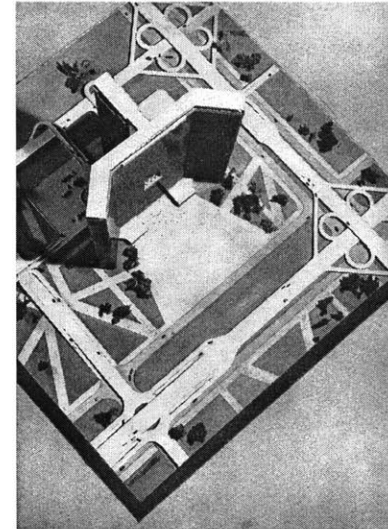
The principles and prejudices developed through efforts to improve New York City’s slums reached their apotheosis in the design of the city’s public housing projects: the rejection of the sidewalk and street as an intrinsically undesirable setting for ‘Christian men and

children’, and the perception of open spaces as the necessary antidote, entirely underpinned these new environments. The use of ‘scientific’ principles in planning the public housing projects can be seen in the simple logic applied: by literally eliminating the existing streets and thus also all the negative activities they sustained, their harmful effects on the residents would also be eliminated. Emphasizing their ‘non-street’ qualities, a report on the progress of public housing projects under Robert Moses described them thus: ‘All the projects provide adequate parking, additional open green space and play areas. In most cases traffic improvements will result from the widening of streets and the elimination of useless and confusing street patterns.’²⁷

On this basis, the new projects demanded the complete clearance of the existing urban fabric in order to create an entirely new environment - this approach was promoted by the 1949 Housing Act, and was endorsed by the US Supreme Court who stated in 1954 that:

‘It was important to redesign the whole area so as to eliminate the conditions that cause slums – the overcrowding of dwellings, the lack of parks, the lack of adequate streets and alleys, the absence of recreational areas, the lack of light and air, the presence of outmoded street patterns.’²⁸

Furthermore, the characteristics of crowding and the confusion of activities found on the existing streets and sidewalks are systematically eliminated through the clear separation of activities in the public housing projects. Shops and commercial activities are separated from housing, if not entirely banished from the housing estates. Children’s play and adult socializing each took place in dedicated, widely spaced zones; circulation was further separated into efficient vehicular circulation around the edge of the project, and footpaths along lawns replaced the sidewalk’s function of pedestrian circulation. This rigorous



Model of a skyscrapers of the future:
‘This skyscraper harmonizes in scale and in form with the landscaped areas and the parkway design that constitute its essential complements.’
Can Our Cities Survive, 1942, Sert.

1929	Regional Plan of NY Privately organized by businessmen, at a total cost of \$1.2m. Had a major impact on development of highways, parkways, open space, but effectively obsolete by WW2.
1933	CIAM 4: The Functional City 4 functions - dwelling, work, recreation, transportation
1934	La Guardia becomes mayor (until 1945). Closely involved in public housing projects.
CIAM's Athens Charter	



New York City public housing project, illustrated in *Can Our Cities Survive?*, Sert, 1942

²⁹ Charles Edouard Jeanneret-Gris (Le Corbusier), *The Radiant City*, (New York: The Orion Press. 1933/1967), p.121.

³⁰ Jose Luis Sert, *Can Our Cities Survive? An ABC of Urban Problems, Their Analysis, Their Solutions*, (Cambridge, Mass.: The Harvard University Press. 1947), p.46.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp.78-80.

³² The influence of CIAM on New York's changing attitudes towards its streets and public spaces may have been more directly lined to Le Corbusier's visit to New York City in 1935, when he met with Langdon Post, the chairman of the New York City Housing Authority, and toured the early housing projects.

³³ Vorhees Walker Smith & Smith, *Zoning New York City*, (New York Department of City Planning. 1958), p.127.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.128.

deconstruction of the street as public space successfully achieved its goal of eliminating the life which it once sustained.

These projects would seem to have clear links with the town planning principles of CIAM, who also subscribed to the wholesale rejection of traditional streets and the benefits of open space, light and air. This vision was particularly vigorously set out in Le Corbusier's 1933 book *The Radiant City*, where he states that: 'our streets no longer work. Streets are an obsolete notion. There ought not to be such things as streets: we have to create something that will replace them.'²⁹ Streets were to be purely dedicated to the circulation of vehicles, disconnected from the pedestrian life of the city, forming the basis of the 'tower in the park' model for developments: 'Dwellings bordering street lines are undesirable... It has not occurred to most people that the actual function of the street, which is simply that of serving as a channel for traffic, might be independent of the orientation of houses.'³⁰ In addition, the particular rejection of the street as an immoral space for socializing and play is echoed by Sert:

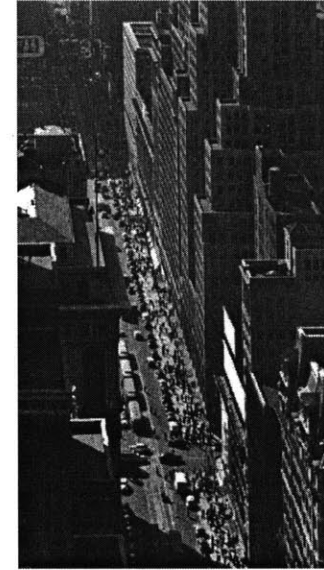
'the use of pavements for games by adults and children is a consequence of the universal need of proper recreation areas... The want of play space in crowded cities fills the streets with idlers, encourages the activities of corner gangs, and consequently creates sociological problems that reach far into the life of the city.'³¹

However, the direct influence of CIAM's writings and proposals on the development of these attitudes in New York City is unclear. In several instances, their recommendations were in fact already well established in New York City, indeed several illustrations and examples in CIAM's publications are of projects in New York City. For example *Can Our Cities Survive?* (1942) by Jose Luis Sert, which was intended to promote CIAM's

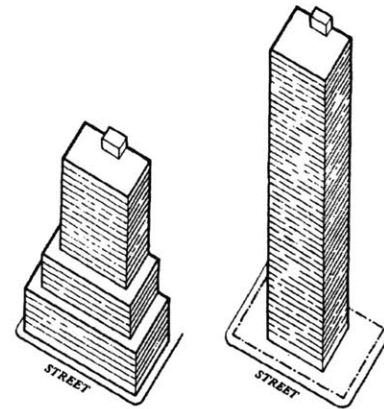
urbanistic agenda in the United States, contains photographs of completed New York housing projects.³²

The final major example in the planning tradition of New York City of the need for light and air and the provision of open space in the existing urban fabric was the 1961 zoning resolution, which privileged open space at street level and was designed to create plazas in the central business districts of Manhattan, especially in midtown around Grand Central Station. The promise of buildings set back from the street in a plaza was that they would offer relief from the consistent, strongly defined street wall that had developed in New York's central commercial areas as a result of the 1916 zoning resolution, with almost no deviation or open space at street level. It was perceived that New York was overbuilding, and that its streets had become barren, inhospitable places for the public, as the 1958 zoning text explained: 'the adverse effects of the dark and narrow canyons created by massive buildings on narrow streets have long been apparent.'³³

The desired effect was achieved through incentives to encourage developers to set back buildings from the street line, with the intention 'to insure that public streets and all portions of buildings fronting on streets have access to light and air, and to provide a general feeling of openness at street level.'³⁴ Essentially it was the plaza at the Seagram Building designed by Mies van der Rohe which formed the basis of this vision – its radical departure from the prevailing street conditions in Manhattan and its elegant modern form so impressed the planners that the zoning was designed to replicate its form throughout Manhattan.



'dark and narrow canyons'
42nd Street, 1940's



Highest possible bulk office buildings in
CBD, under 1961 zoning regulations.

1934	<p>Moses as Parks commissioner playgrounds rose to 777 from 119 during his tenure, 11 large outdoor pools. Parkways built: Riverside Parkway project constructed 1934-37 (Moses had developed the vision in 1914)</p>
1935	<p>NY City Housing Authority established Aims to eradicate slums and provide better dwellings for poor families - first in US. But not the very poor - families had to have insurance. Racial steering. Initially low rise blocks, under control of La Guardia.</p>
1935	<p>Le Corbusier in NY - met chairman of NYC Housing authority, and the Rockefellerers</p>



Lever House, completed 1952, Park Ave
'Zoning New York City', 1958

Negotiation 4: 1961 Zoning Bonus Plazas

The 1961 zoning regulations created an incentive system to encourage the private sector to provide the plazas required to realize this vision of increased open space on the city's streets. By awarding up to 20% additional floor space to developments, in addition to the intrinsic commercial benefits of including a plaza, the planners made the development of these public open spaces irresistible to developers. The rationale behind this strategy was described by the authors of the zoning regulations:

*'open plazas are encouraged by means of a floor area bonus. Three additional square feet of floor area are permitted for each square foot of open space provided in a plaza. The slight increase in maximum permitted bulk resulting from this bonus is well justified by the benefits of increased open space.'*³⁵

*These 'benefits of increased open space' were to be improved conditions for the public pedestrian, and also increased prestige and profits for the private developers and building owners – a mutual positive for public and private recognized in the zoning text: 'measures designed to insure adequate light, air and open space are also necessary in order fully to promote a high standard of commercial development within the City.'*³⁶ *The fact that the precedents for this typology, including the Seagram Building and Lever House, were built voluntarily, is evidence of the additional prestige plazas lent to developments. For these projects on Park Avenue (and later ones on Sixth Avenue), the ground floor was of little value for commercial activities - unlike on the prestigious adjacent Fifth Avenue, Park Avenue was not a shopping street, and therefore the idea of using sidewalk proximity to directly generate profits did not hold. The plazas were an indirect means to take advantage*

³⁵ Ibid., p.127.

³⁶ Ibid., p.127

³⁷ 'Rockefeller Center', Fortune, December 1936, pp.139-53. Quoted in Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, p.178.

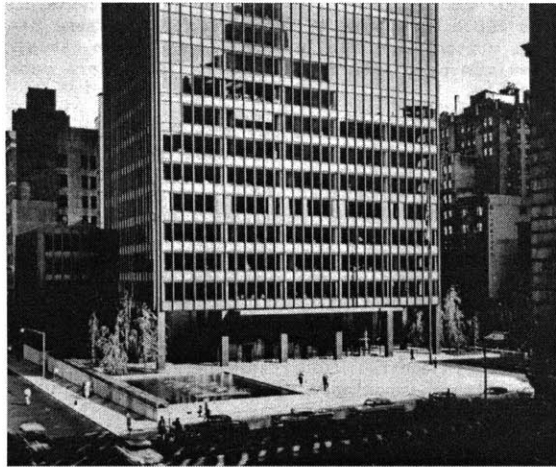
of sidewalk proximity as an asset to commerce, creating a setting where the building itself could serve as an advertisement for the corporation.

The Rockefeller Center is an important earlier precedent for the use of new types of public open space within Manhattan. The intentions behind the design of the complex were described in 1936 as: ‘The Center must combine the maximum of congestion with the maximum of light and space ... a commercial center as beautiful as possible consistent with a maximum income’³⁷ Thus the (privately owned) public plazas and new streets in the center of the development serve to attract the public from the surrounding streets, increasing ‘congestion’ and the prestige of the buildings within Manhattan. The open spaces serve as an adornment of the surrounding buildings, adding formal significance to the Rockefeller Center complex, just as the open space in front of the Seagram Building and under Lever House did.

Once again, this demonstrates that in New York City planning strategies are typically only successfully implemented when they include clear benefits for both the public and private sectors – indeed this is embedded in the actual grid structure of the city. Whilst this is not restricted to New York, the wealth and power of the private sector has ensured that it is of particular significance there. The crucial point of overlap is where strategies can serve both the private sector’s desire for greater profit, customers or prestige, and the planner’s desire for improved efficiency and ‘cleansing’ of the public realm.

These bonus plazas can be seen as part of New York City’s tradition of ‘non-street’ spaces, as they share the characteristic of being created as a space deliberately unlike and separate from the sidewalk. Although the concern to improve the pedestrian experience with

1935	Radium NJ finished (begun 1927)	1937	<p>US Housing Act Federal money for housing - Moses became interested, but Mayor La Guardia retained control - 13 projects built by 1941.</p>	<p>NY City Planning Commission established</p>	<p>Louis Mumford, <i>The Culture of Cities</i> human potential, both individual and social, of urban life - city as theater, sense of dramatic dialogue fundamental for a city.</p>
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'Open area at ground level permits a higher rise before a setback is required, as well as a bonus in FAR'
 Seagram Building, completed 1958, Manhattan
 image from 'Zoning New York City', 1958

increased light and air represents a modest re-engagement with conditions on the sidewalk itself, the extent to which the plazas were envisaged as spaces with a very different character to the sidewalks is indicated by the details of permitted obstructions given in the original zoning regulations; these include 'flag poles, steps, terraces, awnings, or canopies' and in residential areas 'arbors or trellises.'³⁸ The park-like sensibility of these items is indicative of a particular intention for a space whose use would be outside the ordinary, functional life of the city, and which is instead presented as a type of leisure space. Given this vision, the omission of items such as benches and trash cans which would be conducive for the comfortable inhabitation of the space is revealing of the apparently uncertain intentions for the role of these plazas.

Beyond acting as an improvement to the physical conditions of the sidewalk, it seems that the planners did not envisage these spaces in terms of the types of inhabitation they could sustain. This is borne out by the fact that as the zoning plan was being developed the Seagram Building was under still construction – it was completed only in 1958, the same year that the zoning text was submitted. Therefore the admiration of authors of the zoning resolution (a team of architects) for the project would have been based on its physical appearance alone – indeed the photograph of the plaza used in the zoning document shows it virtually empty, with just two people walking away from the building across it. Moreover the Seagram plaza itself had not been designed as a public gathering place - Philip Johnson is said to recall that 'when Mies van der Rohe saw people sitting on the ledges, he was quite surprised. He had never dreamt they would.'³⁹

This somewhat sets the bonus plazas apart from the established tradition in New York City of creating alternative public spaces for specific obstructive activities that were

³⁸ Vorhees, *Zoning New York City*, p.135.

³⁹ Quoted in Jerold Kayden, *Privately Owned Public Space: The New York City Experience*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons. 2000), p.11.

displaced from the street in order to promote efficient circulation on the sidewalks. Unlike the examples of playgrounds, parks and markets presented above, the bonus plazas were not initially intended to receive any displaced activity. However, the work of William Whyte in particular would come to lend these plazas a strong association with the social life of the city. Whyte's studies were built upon a body of work whose methodology was more journalistic than scientific, in which Jane Jacobs' celebration of the complexity and importance of ordinary sidewalk life was important – as was the studying of sites of public life as complex social phenomena rather than in terms of a set of questions with definitive and predictable answers. In the case of the plazas, Whyte effectively socialized them, post-rationalizing their role within the city as a setting for the types of urban experiences described by Jacobs.

The shift that this body of work effected upon New York's planning ideologies and policies was both profound and complex. The next two chapters address this work and its consequences respectively, placed within the longer history of New York's planning negotiations which has been established above.

1937	Louis Wirth, <i>Urbanism as a Way of Life</i> distinct urban personality, diff from rural person - adaptation to living in large, dense, socially diverse urban environment. Urban sense of community.
1939-40	open air pushcarts banned By La Guardia. 15,000 peddlers in 1933; only 1200 in 1945.
World's Fair	Flushing Meadow - inc Futurama. Represented a vision of urbanism more important than CIAM in USA, of remade downtowns, highways, suburbs.

⁴⁰ Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities: The Failure of Town Planning*, (New York: Random House. 1961), p.29.

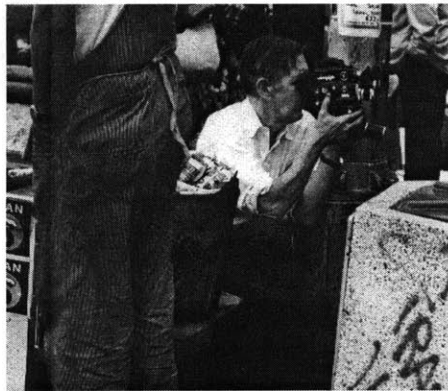
3 The 1960s: New Urban Sociology

The planning ideologies shaping New York City and consequently the perception of its sidewalks and public spaces underwent significant rethinking during the 1960s, as part of a broader re-evaluation of the place of urban life within the new culture that was emerging in the United States. Jane Jacobs and William Whyte were highly influential figures in New York during this period; together their contributions seem to articulate or chart the shifts as they developed, and in some cases their work served to provoke change. However, these changes should be seen within the trajectory of the planning traditions already established in New York – the principles of ‘scientific’ planning and its negotiations with private interests have continued to exert influence, but realigned with the new understandings and attitudes. Thus the 1960s can be seen as a turning point, a period of intense searching within New York’s city planning profession, but not as a break with its history.

Jacobs and Whyte’s direct engagement with New York City’s sidewalks give them a special significance within this study, as described in section 1.2. Their recognition of the important role which sidewalks played within the city was emphatically made by Jacobs: ‘Streets and their sidewalks, the main public places of a city, are its most vital organs.’⁴⁰ Their work was based on direct observation of and involvement in the life of the streets to an unprecedented



Jane Jacobs (standing) on Hudson Street, Greenwich Village, 1961



William Whyte recording street life New York City, 1970's

⁴¹ Jacobs in William H. Whyte (ed.), *The Exploding Metropolis*, (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1958), p.159.

⁴² Whyte, *The Exploding Metropolis*, p.19.

⁴³ A. Melamed, 'The Death and Life of Great American Cities' [review] in *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, Vol 28, No. 2. May 1962, (pp.137-9), p.137.

⁴⁴ Whyte, *The Exploding Metropolis*, p.7.

extent. Jacobs strongly advocated this straightforward approach, recommending that 'you've got to get out and walk. Walk, and you will see that many of the assumptions on which the projects depend are visibly wrong.'⁴¹ This sentiment was closely echoed by Whyte: 'Looking at models and bird's-eye rendering gives no clues; you have to get out and walk.'⁴²

It could be argued that the 'commonsense', anti-intellectual approach seen in this empirical approach to their research was a crucial part of its power, as opposed to the detached, theoretical approach which had previously characterized attitudes amongst planners and private developers towards the city, especially regarding the marginalized space of the sidewalk. The sense of detachment from the realities of life in the city characteristic of 'orthodox' planning was revealed by the distance and abstraction of the aerial views commonly used by city planners to delineate the areas for clearance, as recognized by Whyte above.

The freshness of Jacobs and Whyte's approach is perhaps due in part to the fact that neither were native New Yorkers, or were trained as architects or planners, and thus it was not pre-defined by prejudices or the biases of planning theory. As journalists, both approached the city as enlightened observers; in this sense they can be seen as continuing the tradition of Jacob Riis' work in Manhattan's slums. All three were acting as concerned individuals rather than trained professionals, directly recording conditions that they had observed and felt demanded the attention of the city authorities. Whereas Riis was exposing deplorable slum conditions to demand their eradication, Jacobs and Whyte were exposing the eradication of highly desirable conditions to demand their preservation.

Their work is significant for understanding the changes within planning culture which took place at this time: their major projects bracketed the 1960s and can be seen to mirror the wider shifts occurring. Because their work was based around a similar appreciation of New York's ordinary public life based on direct observation, and both were a significant catalyst in the shifting in the attitudes of the city's planning professionals, it is possible to refer to Jacobs and Whyte together. However, the differences between the contributions of these two major figures, in addition to their commonalities, should be recognized. Jacobs was most active during the early part of the decade after the publication of her major work *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* in 1961; indeed she had already moved away from New York City before Whyte's 'Street Life Project' survey of bonus plazas began in 1969.

3.1 Context for Change: *The Exploding Metropolis*

Part of the genius of Jacobs and Whyte was the timing of their work: the extent to which their work seemed to articulate ideas and attitudes just as they were starting to emerge. This was perhaps most powerfully achieved by Jacobs with the publication of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, which reportedly 'hit the planning profession like a dose of salts.'⁴³ This work emerged from her growing sense of concern over the physical and social effects of current planning strategies, a concern which began to surface in professional journals and amongst unhappy city residents in the late 1950's.

These themes formed the basis of *The Exploding Metropolis* – 'a book by people who like cities'⁴⁴, published in 1958 and edited by Whyte (who also contributed three essays),

1941	<p>Moses appointed to City Planning Commission responsible for wide range of postwar projects - highways, parks, hospitals, housing</p>
S. Giedion, <i>Space, Time and Architecture</i>	<p>Based on lecture at Harvard 1938-9. Describes CIAM's principles, reject streets, Haussmann, function separation. Admires Rockefeller Center.</p>
1942	<p>J L Sert, <i>Can our cities Survive?</i> promotes CIAM's urbanistic ideas in USA, based on Athens Charter - functional city. Includes images of some NY public housing and Moses' parkways and highways.</p>



Midtown street corner, 1970's.
from Whyte, *Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*

⁴⁵ Jane Jacobs interviewed by Jim Kunstler for *Metropolis Magazine*, 9/6/2000.

⁴⁶ Whyte, *The Exploding Metropolis*, p.7.

⁴⁷ William H. Whyte, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, (Washington DC: The Conservation Foundation, 1980), p.122.

⁴⁸ *Architectural Forum*, February 1958, p.98.

and including a formative essay by Jacobs entitled 'Downtown is for People'. This book is significant to this study as it represents the closest professional collaboration between Jacobs and Whyte, who knew each other professionally and as friends, as Jacobs confirmed in a recent interview: 'I admired William Whyte. He was a friend of mine. And we used to talk together. He was an important person to me...we were on the same wavelength.'⁴⁵ The book can also be seen as the opening shot in their contribution to New York City's planning culture.

Criticism of the effects of massive urban redevelopment projects formed the core message of the book. Whyte's summary of the book's philosophy in the introduction establishes its sensibility and approach:

'Everybody, it would seem, is for the rebuilding of our cities, and with a unity of approach that is remarkable... It is the contention of this book that most of the rebuilding under way and in prospect is being designed by people who don't like cities. They do not merely dislike the noise and the dirt and the congestion. They dislike the city's variety and concentration, its tension, its hustle and bustle. The new redevelopment projects will be physically in the city, but in spirit they deny it – and the values that since the beginning of civilization have always been at the heart of great cities.'⁴⁶

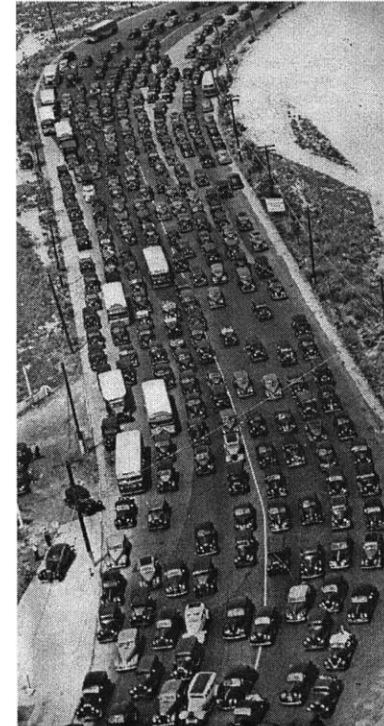
The topics covered indicate the contributors' sense of the major issues shaping the cities at that time. The decline of the traditional downtown city environment was perceptively related both to the public housing projects and the accompanying slum clearance, as well as to the rise of suburban living, private automobile ownership and the resulting sprawl. While these trends can be seen as the results of rational responses to changes in technology and lifestyle, the appreciation of the intangible, un-quantifiable 'hustle and bustle' of cities

that the book provided was radically new in the context of planning's reliance upon the measurable and rational. This criterion was unrelated to previous traditions, and even contradicted them – and its assimilation into the vision of city planners formed the basis of the shift in planning policies affecting the sidewalk whose implications continue to be played out today.

Whyte later commented that he felt that this book 'was a bit ahead of its time.'⁴⁷ Indeed, in many ways this book came at a critical moment. The huge government-funded urban redevelopment projects were at their peak – and under Robert Moses New York City was in the midst of the continued construction of public housing, expressways and bridges, and the construction of the Lincoln Arts Center would begin the following year.

However, concern about the redevelopment projects had already begun to be voiced by both city residents and professionals: at a round-table meeting held by the Architectural Forum in June 1957, a group of housing experts almost uniformly recommended that the standard large scale high-rise design of public housing be replaced with smaller scale interventions into existing neighborhoods. Other examples of unease can be found in the architectural press: 'For two years the city-gouging preparation of a route for the Connecticut Turnpike went on with a destructiveness that seemed indiscriminate, at times wanton...the charming mansion and its tree-shaded street were blasted beyond memory.'⁴⁸

In addition to this growing concern amongst planning professionals, the findings of Jacobs and Whyte regarding the value of the social life of the existing city streets were already well understood within popular culture. The vibrancy of New York's ordinary street life had long established its iconic status in song lyrics and films – 'The Sidewalks of New York'



Cross Bay Boulevard, Long Island, 1940's

1943	<p>Stuyvesant Town developed by Metropolitan Life Insurance company, organised by Moses. First 'bulldozer' approach to housing.</p>
1946	<p>Moses appointed as City's construction coordinator Moses' power to shape NYC extended. Many more expressways. Enables Moses to be financially involved in public housing - finding sites for developers. Construction peaked 1950's.</p>
1949	<p>Federal Urban Renewal Law Middle-income projects in desirable locations sanctioned by Title 1 funding. Moses exploited for NY, more tower projects. Eminent domain. Racial segregation. By 1959 added 16 projects under Title 1 - 314 acres.</p>

was a popular song which was used as a Presidential campaign theme in the 1920's, and included the lines 'We won't get home until morning 'cause we're going to take a walk/ on the sidewalks of New York.'⁴⁹ Artists have also had been inspired to record the realities of the full spectrum of life found on the city's streets, including painters such as John Sloan and the 'street photographers'. Part artist, part photojournalist, this latter group recorded the street life of the city; during its height 1930-60 it included figures such as Berenice Abbott, Walker Evans, Sid Grossman and Weegee.

The growing concerns about urban redevelopment projects, in which Jacobs in particular played a role, provided a context for change. And the 1960s opened with three events that can be seen as the foundations for these coming changes: Robert Moses relinquished his grip on New York City's development in 1960, and the following year both Jacobs' *The Life and Death of Great American Cities* and the revised New York City zoning regulations were published. Within this chapter these milestones shall be used to structure an understanding of the changes as they relate to attitudes towards the public sidewalk.

3.2 Milestone 1: Robert Moses resigns, May 1960

Robert Moses resigned as parks commissioner and from the Mayor's Committee on Slum Clearance amidst growing resentment for the impact of his high-handed approach towards the city, culminating in public protests, which Jacobs participated in, over his proposals to construct a road through Washington Park. His resignation is significant as it marks the end of an era of large-scale projects that radically reconfigured New York City, beginning

⁴⁹ From 'The Sidewalks of New York'. Lyrics: James Blake and Charles Lawlor; originally written in the 1890s.

⁵⁰ Lewis Mumford quoted in Robert Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1974), p.12.

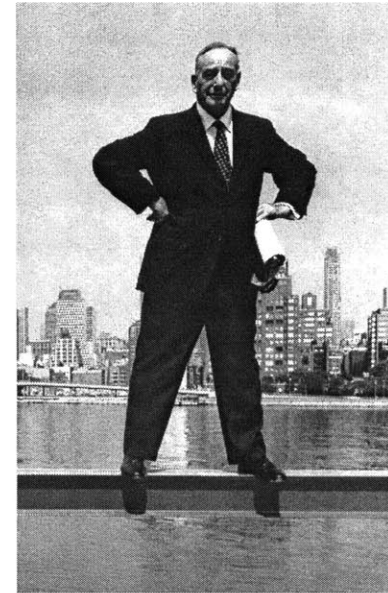
⁵¹ Caro, *The Power Broker*, p.12.

⁵² In 1968 dollars. *Ibid.*, p.9.

in the late 1920s – and which can be seen as the apotheosis of the city’s dual traditions of scientific planning and collaboration with private interests. That the extent of his projects is impressive is beyond question – the issue of their long-term benefits for New York City is less clear. Even Lewis Mumford, one of his bitterest critics, said that ‘in the twentieth century, the influence of Robert Moses on the cities of America was greater than that of any other person.’⁵⁰

It is beyond the scope of this study to present Moses’ work in great detail, but an enumeration of some of his projects gives an indication of their significance for New York City: by 1957, New York had spent \$267 million on urban renewal, twice as much as in the whole of the rest of America.⁵¹ The public works that he personally conceived and completed in New York amounted to \$27 billion.⁵² During his tenure as parks commissioner (1934-1960) the number of playgrounds in the city rose from 119 to 777. Under his the direction 90,555 apartments were built in 1946-60 - construction of public housing in the city peaked during the 1950s at a yearly average of 7,500 units. Moses built 416 miles of parkways, and immediately after World War Two constructed six expressways through the existing city fabric; 250,000 people were evicted from their homes for the building of his highways alone.

For Jacobs and those who sympathized with her arguments, Moses was the chief villain in the destruction of the existing city. His projects had a vital impact on the developing attitudes towards the city’s sidewalks, primarily through the rejection of these existing streets. The erasure of streets within public housing projects was the most powerful and visible manifestation of the negative impact of this planning ideology for Jacobs. She states that ‘the whole idea of doing away with city streets, in so far as that is possible, and



Robert Moses, 1950’s



Projects by Moses - view across Manhattan and Bronx from Queens

1950	UN Headquarters Le Corbusier initially involved in design. Urban renewal midtown project.
Levittown built, NY	Dept of Traffic duties transferred from police - parking rules, parking meters, city garages, one way streets (all avenues one way by 1966).
1951	Plan for Rezoning the City of New York, Harrison not accepted



West Park housing estate under construction,
New York City. 1958

downgrading and minimizing their social and their economic part in city life is the most mischievous and destructive idea in orthodox city planning.⁵³

The large scale redevelopments led by Moses amount to the re-conceptualization of the city fabric to focus on the city blocks instead of the street as the underlying organizing unit. It is this key shift that is proposed by both Jacobs and Whyte as an explanation for the neglect and demise of the street. They argue that whereas the street is traditionally a unifying element in a neighborhood, by making it a divider or border, the integrity of the street is undermined. By designing projects as blocks, the streets are relatively unimportant in their own right. 'Believing their block maps instead of their eyes, developers think of downtown streets as dividers of areas, not as the unifiers they are.'⁵⁴

3.3 Milestone 2: *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, October 1961

The Death and Life of Great American Cities forms a comprehensive attack on the entire basis of 'orthodox' city planning, as exemplified for Jacobs by Moses' projects. The effect of the book was described by a contemporary as having 'challenged planners to re-examine every goal and value which has shaped planning during the past sixty years.'⁵⁵ An important basis for this rejection of these principles is Jacobs' appreciation of the street as socially valuable public open space, drawn from her own experience of living in Greenwich Village. This bias is clearly revealed by her perception of the assumptions behind 'powerful and city-destroying' planning, which can be summarized as follows:⁵⁶

- the street is bad as an environment for humans

⁵³ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, p.87.

⁵⁴ Jacobs in Whyte, *The Exploding Metropolis*, p.173.

⁵⁵ Melamed, 'The Death and Life of Great American Cities' [review], p.137.

⁵⁶ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, p.20.

- houses should be turned away from the street and faced inward toward greens
- frequent streets are wasteful
- the basic unity of city design is not the street, but the block
- commerce should be segregated from residences
- the presence of many other people is undesirable and good planning should seek isolation and privacy.

This list is more revealing of Jacobs' particular obsessions than as an account of modern US planning: each of these points is based on its distance from the paradigm of the traditional street and sidewalk. In rejecting the tradition of 'scientific' planning, Jacobs specifically addressed many of the principles which underpinned it – thus her thinking is presented here in terms of its relationship with the categories of 'light and air' and 'efficient circulation' established in Chapter 2.

Light and Air = 'Science Fiction Nonsense'

Jacobs recognized the marginalization of the street implied within the tradition of developing public open spaces to bring light and air to city residents. Her criticism of these orthodox planning strategies was based around deconstructing their supporting arguments. The intention of bringing increased light and air into the city fabric had been taken up by two different groups when Jacobs was studying in New York. Applied to midtown Manhattan it would result in the 1961 zoning which encouraged building set-backs and plazas. But applied to low income housing projects – Jacobs' main focus – the desire to improve health



Sidewalk activities, Lower East Side, Manhattan, 1970's

1952	Lever House, SOM	Seagram Building, Mies van der Rohe
1952-59	Washington Square Park battle	1958
	"some provision for healthy family living and some vestige of quiet and beauty must be allowed to survive" - final victory by local residents against Moses' proposals for a road through the park. (Jacobs and Mumford involved)	



Children playing on sidewalk, New York City, 1952



Sidewalk, Lower East Side, Manhattan, 1970s

was conflated with the desire to reform behavior. These housing solutions were part of a long standing attempt to provide more parks in New York City. Stating that ‘too much is expected of city parks’, she dismisses both their ‘real’ and ‘mythical’ uses.

What the proponents of new open spaces considered to be their ‘real’ or functional uses – to provide fresh air and spaces for safe and morally sound recreation – are provided equally well by the street and sidewalk, according to Jacobs. The assumption that open spaces are needed to provide light and air, based on the inadequacy of streets to fulfill this role is described as ‘science-fiction nonsense’. She asserts an equivalent area of streets provides equal quantities of fresh air: ‘The oceans of air circulating about us, not parks, keep cities from suffocating.’⁵⁷ The need for dedicated spaces for children to play is also called into question: Jacobs argues that lively sidewalks are safer and more enriching places for children to ‘play, to hang around in, and to help form their notions of the world’⁵⁸; moreover, she claims that the sidewalks are often safer than the playgrounds, where there is little supervision by passers-by and onlookers.

The ‘mythical’ uses to which she refers were the beliefs that open spaces, light and air were capable of moral reform. Jacobs’ knowledge of the patterns of New York City’s public life rendered this an absurd notion, and she observed the redundancy of these open spaces within urban life: ‘In orthodox city planning, neighborhood open spaces are venerated in an amazingly uncritical fashion ... People do not use city open space just because it is there and because city planners or designers wish they would.’⁵⁹ Furthermore, her sense of the need for an engagement with the realities of the city contributes to her statement that ‘City parks are not abstractions, or automatic repositories of virtue or uplift, any more than sidewalks are abstractions.’⁶⁰

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.91.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.81.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.90.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.111.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.101.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p.222.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.30.

For Jacobs, a successful neighborhood park is a space not unlike a successful sidewalk: ‘it must get shoppers, visitors and strollers as well as downtown workers. If not downtown, it must still be where life swirls.’⁶¹ This ideal is clearly unlike the ‘non-street’ places of deliberate separation and contrast to the sidewalk, that had been sought within previous approaches towards the city.

Efficient Circulation vs. ‘Hustle and Bustle’

Jacobs’ celebration of the benefits of busy, crowded sidewalks was perhaps her most radical and significant argument in terms of its impact upon the rethinking of New York City’s public open spaces. Jacobs demonstrated that sidewalks which contain multiple types of economic and social activities in addition to serving as well-used circulation routes are positive, lively places, and not chaotic and ‘evil’: ‘Intricate minglings of different uses in cities are not a form of chaos. On the contrary, they represent a complex and highly developed form of order.’⁶² This represents a direct contradiction of the planners’ previously held belief that this condition of ‘congestion’ was both inefficient and undesirable. In simple terms, through Jacobs’ argumentation, what was formerly seen as ‘bad’ became viewed as ‘good’.

Whereas efficient circulation had previously been seen as the primary function of streets and sidewalks, Jacobs asserts that public security is another primary function: ‘to keep the city safe is a fundamental task of a city’s streets and its sidewalks.’⁶³ Jacobs develops this argument in response to increasing street crime in New York City during the time she was researching. While not advocating the severe crowding of midtown’s sidewalks during peak

1958	<p>W. Whyte (ed.), <i>The Exploding Metropolis</i> Essays expressing concern over the con- temporary trends in American city planning - highways, slum clearance, suburbia. Published by Fortune, contribution from Jacobs.</p>	1959	<p>Voorhees, Zoning New York City draft of 1961 zoning resolution, including incentive zoning proposal to achieve increased open space at street level.</p>	<p>Lincoln Center for Performing Arts largest performing arts complex in US. Completed 1969 as part of urban renewal project. contains a big public plaza.</p>
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'Eyes on the street', New York City, 1947

hours, Jacobs arguing that well used and busy sidewalks had an important contribution to make to the healthy culture of a city community: 'A well-used city street is apt to be a safe street...the sidewalk must have users on it fairly continuously, both to add to the number of effective eyes on the street and to induce the people in buildings along the street to watch the sidewalks in sufficient numbers.'⁶⁴

'Eyes on the street' refers to the security which Jacobs observed naturally occurs within a healthy community, through both the patterns of inhabitation and the physical configuration of the street environment. This security is created by the continuous informal surveillance of the sidewalk provided by pedestrians, shopkeepers and 'people watchers' inside buildings – described by Jacobs as 'an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among the people.'⁶⁵ The physical configuration of the street given as necessary to achieve these conditions is:

- clear demarcation between public and private spaces
- buildings oriented towards the street
- fairly continuous sidewalk use
- substantial quantity of stores and other public places along the sidewalk – primarily stores, bars and restaurants.

In the recommendation for a variety of uses lining the sidewalk, both in the mixed use buildings and in the more informal activities of socializing, play and vendors on the sidewalks, Jacobs is clearly describing a traditional city street such as those in her own Greenwich Village. Therefore the sidewalks of low income areas are proposed as a new paradigm for city planners; the irony that these were precisely the sidewalks being

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp.34-35.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.32.

⁶⁶ Orville Prescott, 'Books of the Times' in *New York Times*, Nov 3 1961.

demolished for slum clearance, and whose social characteristics had long been condemned by reformers, indicates the profound shift in approach which Jacobs spearheaded.

The concept of ‘eyes on the street’ to create a safe public environment is well known today. The clear logic and concrete benefits set out – in addition to the escalation of problems of crime in subsequent decades – ensured that this has been the most widely accepted and influential argument in favor of the traditional street. It was seized on as an aspect of her work which could be neatly translated into physical proposals and planning practice; for example, through the work on defensible space by Oscar Newman, it formed the basis for the rehabilitation of public housing projects. To some extent Jacobs foresaw this retro-active application of her principles to the ‘non-street’ park spaces of public housing projects. She argued that the failure of these projects to provide the basic physical conditions she recommended to achieve ‘eyes on the street’ – the high crime rate in such projects was cited as evidence of this direct link between the physical configuration of public spaces and public safety.

Critical Reaction

The Death and Life of Great American Cities was received with almost universal acclaim on its publication in 1961. Even amongst non-professional reviewers the book is recognized as important and controversial, and the profound shift it represents is recognized: ‘Following her arguments requires a considerable feat of mental adjustment, conditioned as most of us are to the thought that crowds of strangers are bad.’⁶⁶ Despite the book’s stated hostility to

1960	Robert Moses resigns Evidence of financial irregularities within his projects is uncovered, revealing their hidden costs to the city. Also growing dissatisfaction with the scale of projects. Moses resigns to take over World's Fair project.
1961	New zoning resolution adopted Incentive zoning intended to insure that public streets and all portions of buildings fronting on streets have access to light and air, and to provide a general feeling of openness at street level'. Based on text submitted in 1958 by Vorhees.
Jacobs, <i>Death and Life of Great American Cities</i>	First major critical engagement with NYC streets and sidewalks. Importance of busy streets, rejected belief that parks=good, crowding=bad.

planners, reviews from the professional planning press were also overwhelmingly positive – perhaps sensing that the book was really seeking to teach how to love big cities, not how to dislike planners. There was some criticism from the professionals both of Jacobs’ loose understanding of planning theories - with one reviewer commenting ‘I wish her analysis were as sophisticated as her feelings are strong’⁶⁷ - and also of her single-mindedness – ‘she imposes her tastes and values on the city more narrowly than any planner would dare to do.’⁶⁸ However the more fundamental criticisms which underpinned her arguments were recognized, and described as ‘valid and devastating’⁶⁹ by one planner. Despite the debate over the validity of the book’s individual arguments, the feeling that it had at the very least identified a set of problems is summed up by Lloyd Rodwin who wrote that ‘whether Jane Jacobs is right or wrong, the first big efforts to do something about our cities are not conspicuously successful.’⁷⁰

Despite this positive response to the powerful ideas in Jacobs’ book, the question of its implications for planners was unclear. Although she convincingly rejected current planning policies, the book did not offer a clear alternative beyond the model of Greenwich Village – it seemed that Jacobs ‘did not believe in planning at all,’⁷¹ effectively creating ‘a sort of manifesto towards stasis, or nondevelopment.’⁷² As an action-oriented profession, it was the job of planners to find a concrete response to Jacobs’ work. In many ways, Whyte’s later work with the New York City planning commission can be seen as fulfilling this need for an interpreter to enable the translation and implementation of Jacobs’ arguments.

Outside the planning debates, the immediate impact of *The Life and Death of Great American Cities* on the residents of New York City was two-fold. Its ideas and arguments contributed to citizens’ campaigns against urban clearance programs, and thus helped

⁶⁷ Morton Hoppenfeld, ‘The Death and Life of Great American Cities’ [review] in *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, Vol 28, No. 2. May 1962, (pp.136-7), p.136.

⁶⁸ Melamed, ‘The Death and Life of Great American Cities’ [review], p.138.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.139

⁷⁰ Lloyd Rodwin, ‘Neighbors are Needed’ in *New York Times*, Nov 5 1961

⁷¹ Melamed, ‘The Death and Life of Great American Cities’ [review], p.138.

⁷² John McMorrough, ‘Good Intentions’, in Chuihua Judy Chung and Sze Tsung Leong, *The Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping*, (Köln: Taschen. 2001), (pp.371-379), p.372.

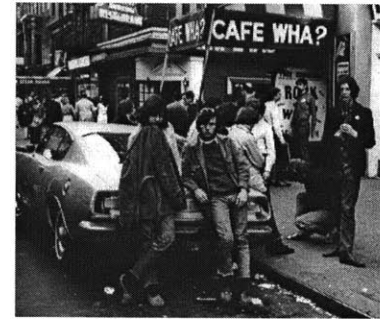
⁷³ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, p.70.

⁷⁴ Grace Glueck, ‘A Gallery Scene That Pioneers in New Territories’ in *New York Times*, June 26 1983.

⁷⁵ Blake Fleetwood, ‘The New Elite and an Urban Renaissance’ in *New York Times*, Jan 14 1979.

to bring about the demise of high-rise public housing and big freeway projects – whose driving force was already unraveling by the time of the books publication.

The trend of gentrification could also be ascribed to Jacobs’ influence in celebrating the types of traditional, close knit city environments that would become the settings for revitalization. Jacobs comments on the beginnings of gentrification: ‘many of the rich or near-rich in cities appear to appreciate sidewalk life as much as anybody. At any rate, they pay enormous rents to move into areas with an exuberant and varied sidewalk life. They actually crowd out the middle class and the poor in lively areas.’⁷³ Indeed Jacobs herself could be seen as an early pioneer of this trend in Greenwich Village. Several of the earliest areas to be gentrified – Brooklyn Heights, Greenwich Village, East Village and SoHo – had been labeled as slums and slated for clearance just a few years previously. The gentrifiers were part of the middle class bohemian counter culture of the 1960s – artists, writers and musicians drawn by ‘the cheap housing and the casual street life,’⁷⁴ for whom the variety and acceptance they found in the neighborhood’s public life was closely aligned with their emerging culture of informality and freedom of individual expression. However, the extent to which these newcomers were outsiders to the sidewalk life is revealed by its decline as the original community moved away – as observed by a young lawyer in the newly gentrified upper west side: ‘This neighborhood is becoming sterile...people don’t hang out on the stoops anymore, and everybody is beginning to look the same.’⁷⁵



Bohemian culture on Greenwich Village’s sidewalks, 1968

1962	WTC project begun	urban renewal project, Port of NY Authority. Opened 1970-76. Plaza modeled after St. Mark’s Square in Venice, included raised and sunken pedestrian network.
1963-5	Pennsylvania Station demolished	
1964-65	World’s Fair	President was Robert Moses. Held at Flushing Meadow. Included ‘Panorama of NYC’ model, Futurama II



Midtown Manhattan, 1968.
The proliferation of new generic office towers amongst the pre-1961 'ziggurat' buildings can be seen.

⁷⁶ Whyte, *The Social Life of Small Open Spaces*, p.14.

⁷⁷ Kayden, *Privately Owned Public Space*, p.44.

⁷⁸ Peter Blake, 'Slaughter on 6th Avenue' in *Architectural Forum*, vol.122, June 1965, (pp.13-19), p.17. Interestingly, Blake states that the spaces formed between the buildings – the streets, sidewalks and plazas – 'IS the city', indicating the degree to which these public spaces had been reconceived in planning culture as significant and valuable spaces.

⁷⁹ Harmon Goldstone (City Planner) quoted in Gregory Gilmartin, *Shaping The City: New York and the Municipal Art Society*, (New York: Clarkson Potter, 1995), p.430.

⁸⁰ Elliott quoted in Richard F. Babcock and Wendy U. Larsen, *Special Districts: The Ultimate in Neighborhood Zoning*, (Cambridge: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 1990), p.58.

⁸¹ Special Regulations for Fifth Avenue Subdistrict, March 1982. Reprinted in Babcock, *Special Districts*, pp.171-176.

3.4 Milestone 3: Revisions to New York zoning regulations, December 1961

The new zoning regulations were the product of the planning culture of the mid 1950s – the draft text had been submitted to New York City planning commission in mid-1958, and was barely altered before it was accepted and became effective three years later. As described in Section 2.4, the experience of sidewalks in midtown Manhattan were reshaped by the use of FAR bonuses to encourage public plazas at the base of tower buildings. The history of the incentive zoning plazas represents an important turning point in the conception of public spaces in New York City. Initially the product of the dominant 'scientific' themes acting before 1960, their perceived failure and subsequent legitimization by Whyte as social venues mirrors the new forces acting within city planning during the 1960s.

In Section 2.4 it was shown that that within the 'scientific' model of city planning the bonus plazas were originally intended to bring light and air into the congested city fabric – but the inhabitation of the plazas was not considered. This rational principle was combined with their integral benefits for private interests: developers and building owners gained significantly from these ambiguous plazas, with increased profits both from the additional floor area permitted, and the increased prestige and desirability which the plaza lent the building. The scale of the benefits to the private sector is indicated by the fact that every eligible development took advantage of the incentive zoning and included a plaza,⁷⁶ regardless of its appropriateness for the site or the willingness of the developer to create a pleasant environment for the public. By 1975, 133 bonus plazas had been built, representing over 20 acres of additional public space.⁷⁷

In terms of the original intentions of creating a more spacious urban fabric at street level, the strategy was highly successful – particularly on Sixth Avenue, which became lined with such plazas. However the public benefits of these new public spaces was less clear, and clearly not commensurate with the private gains – planners, architects and contemporary commentators began to express the opinion that the building set-backs diminished the integrity of the street, and the plazas themselves typically did not serve as a useful amenity for the public. Just four years after their introduction commentators such as Peter Blake, in his article entitled ‘Slaughter on 6th Avenue’, were criticizing the impact of the ‘surfeit of plazas’ in midtown as a ‘sadly shapeless succession of urban spaces.’ Because of the lack of coordination between open spaces, he said, ‘Sixth Avenue has ceased to be an avenue or even a street.’⁷⁸ Overall, it seemed that the plaza ‘had been a trap, and the destruction of the street was very disturbing. What seemed like this dream didn’t work out.’⁷⁹

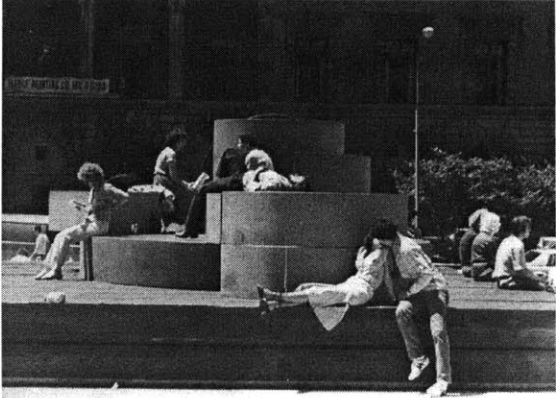
Planners attempted to address the negative, homogenizing impact of the generic tower develop promoted by the 1961 zoning in various ways – the creation of new incentive zoning categories for specific districts was initiated in 1967. The example of Fifth Avenue Special District created in 1971 is quite typical; fearing that the street ‘would become just simply another office street,’⁸⁰ planners attempted to develop special regulations to preserve the ‘traditional ambience’ of the existing sidewalk. FAR bonuses were now to be granted for specific ground floor retail activities, notably clothing stores, and in the ultimate rejection of the 1961 zoning, building setbacks were prohibited: ‘no urban plaza or any part thereof shall be permitted in or within 50 feet of the Fifth Avenue street line.’⁸¹

An attempt to remedy the problem of the existing plazas was the ‘Street Life Project’ established in 1969 by William Whyte. Its intention was that ‘if we could find out why the

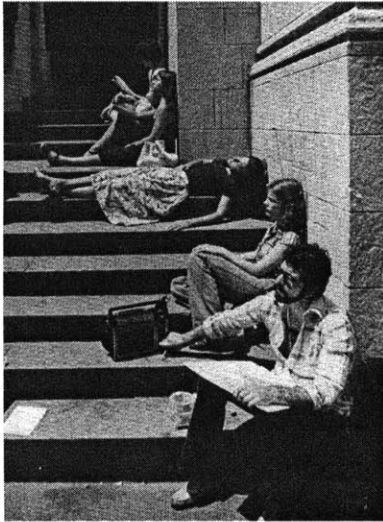


General Motors bonus plaza, constructed 1964-68, Fifth Avenue, Manhattan

1965	Landmarks Preservation Commission To protect old buildings and neighborhoods of NYC - can designate landmarks to be protected.
1967	John Lindsay elected as mayor Supported progressive urban design within the Planning Department, major supporter of subsequent changes.
	Urban Design Group Established by mayor Lindsey within the City Planning Dept to focus on the city as a design problem. Initially led by Donald Elliott, later Jonathan Barnett.
	Paley Park vest pocket park in midtown Manhattan - privately developed, very popular.



Seagram Plaza.
Image from Whyte, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*.



Steps of St. Thomas Church, Manhattan.
Image from Whyte, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*.

good plazas worked and the bad ones didn't, and come up with hard guidelines, we could have the basis of a new code.⁸² The new criteria used to judge the success of the plazas indicate the role of this project as an application of Jacobs' arguments regarding the social phenomena of the sidewalk to the creation of concrete new planning policies and design proposals for public spaces. In this sense, Whyte can be seen as a bridge between the ideas of Jane Jacobs and the city planners – he attempts to render the issues in meaningful terms that can ultimately become detailed implementation strategies. This involves the translation of her general propositions and theories into testable criteria, and ultimately to guidelines – a process in which a degree of interpretation is inevitably necessary. Whyte drew heavily on Jacobs' understanding of the benefits of existing, ordinary New York sidewalks as a model for the vision of a vibrant, sociable public life in the plazas. On this basis, a plaza like Seagram was judged to 'work' because 'on a good day, there would be a hundred and fifty people sitting, sunbathing, picnicking, and schmoozing.'⁸³

By studying the plazas as social phenomena, assessing them in terms of their inhabitation and the quality of experience offered to the public, rather than by the 'scientific' measures of light and air, William Whyte's 'Street Life Project' gave the plazas a new form of legitimization within the city. The findings of this study became a new open-space zoning code adopted by the city in 1975 (and still in force today), setting far higher standards for bonus plazas, and causing a marked decline in the number of new plazas constructed. These improved 'urban plazas' were defined as 'accessible to the public at all times for the use and enjoyment of large numbers of people.'⁸⁴ Guidelines were developed with the primary emphasis on 'use and enjoyment', with functional and visual amenities mandated for the first time, including requirements for seating standards, trees and decorative paving. To

⁸² Whyte, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, p.15.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.14.

⁸⁴ Quoted in Kayden, *Privately Owned Public Space*, p.17.

enliven the space, retail or service establishments were required to occupy at least 50% of building frontage on the space. An important model for this vision of public space was Paley Park, completed in midtown in 1967 by a private group, which was far closer to the emerging public spirit than the Seagram Plaza: its intimate scale and provision of a snack bar and movable chairs under shady trees was deliberately conducive to socialization in a way that the bonus plazas were not.

The park-like qualities of this space can be seen in the revised plaza requirements, conflated with Jacobs' emphasis on the importance of stores to ensure activity and 'eyes on the street'. However, whereas Jacobs' sidewalks were quotidian spaces that are a basic, integral part of the city with a clearly public, democratic function, Whyte's plazas were conceived of in a similar role to parks – as 'special' spaces which are destinations and thus apart from the 'ordinary' spaces, sustaining very different types of activity.



Paley Park, Midtown Manhattan, 1967

1967	Special Districts	Special zoning to preserve, protect and promote the character of specific areas. Times Square is first area - afraid office towers building under 1961 zoning would squeeze theaters out: theater bonus.
1968	Urban Development Corporation	initiate, finance, construct, and manage building projects. Stimulate economy, increase housing, construct public facilities.
	elevated plaza - first new public space category	encourage raised pedestrian network

4 Post-1960s: Contesting the Legacy of Jacobs + Whyte

4.1 Business Improvement Districts: the Controlled Sidewalk

If the work of Jacobs was the first major critical appreciation of the qualities of the existing sidewalk, then the current trend for BIDs represents the first major engagement with the sidewalk itself at a practical level within planning policy. For the BIDs, the traditional sidewalk has re-emerged as the city's primary public space: rather than attempt to create yet new typologies of public space, BIDs are instead concerned with controlling and shaping every physical and social aspect of the existing contemporary sidewalk. This represents an unprecedented engagement by developers and the private sector with conditions on the 'ordinary' sidewalk. Furthermore, the work of both Jacobs and Whyte has become the standard frame of reference for such sidewalk improvements, if not their explicitly quoted inspiration. Given the nature of these sidewalks – in which some degree of private control necessarily raises questions about the nature of public freedom – the link between the BIDs and the sensibility shared by Jacobs and Whyte is therefore somewhat problematic.

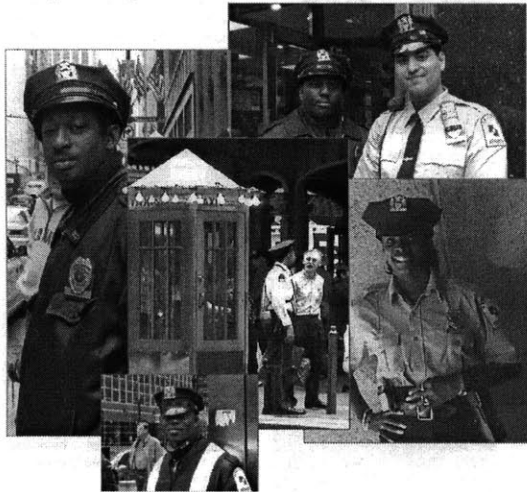
BIDs are created to improve the quality of the commercial and physical environment in a delineated part of the city by providing services to complement those provided by the city through self-taxation of the businesses within the area, including enhanced security,



What We Do

Public Safety

GCP's team of uniformed public safety officers, in direct communication with the New York City Police Department, provides visible auxiliary security services in the district. The force also staffs taxi dispatcher operations at various locations throughout the neighborhood.



Grand Central Partnership information pack, 2003

⁸⁵ Grand Central Partnership information pack.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, p.29.

⁸⁹ For example Simon Breines and William Dean, *The Pedestrian Revolution: Streets Without Cars*, (New York: Random House, 1974), p.11.

sanitation, and social services. They emerged in New York City during the 1980s, motivated by the business community's sense of helplessness over its inability to control the declining quality of the city's public spaces – primarily the sidewalks, which were seen as affecting the value of its real estate and the success of its commercial activities. Today there are 44 BIDs in New York City, of which 19 are in Manhattan; they have become an important element in the distribution of power in the city – the large midtown BIDs are particularly wealthy and powerful, notably Fifth Avenue Association, Grand Central Partnership, 34th Street Partnership and Times Square.

The example of Grand Central Partnership is quite typical of the activities of a BID, although as one of the largest and oldest BIDs in the USA, covering 68 city blocks around Grand Central Station, its resources are greater than most. The partnership was established in response to a film made in 1984 by the Mobil Corporation which documented the problems in the neighborhood as seen by their employees – homelessness, crime, graffiti, litter, pedestrian obstacles and deteriorating public structures. At the end of the film this was contrasted with the landscaped suburban headquarters of the some of the company's Fortune 100 counterparts, and concluded with the question 'what do we tell our employees?'

A plan to revitalize the area was developed around 'streetscape improvement, public safety, sanitation, and visitor services.'⁸⁵ Grand Central Partnership has created a 'signature look' for the neighborhood, with the investment of over \$30 million in the design and installation of street furniture, new street lights and traffic signals, new signage – all clearly branded with the partnership's logo, and the construction of 172 'distinctive granite street corners'. There is an extensive horticultural program of tree planting along sidewalks, and hundreds of planters and hanging baskets. The street are kept 'pristine' by a private team of

uniformed workers seven days a week, including a specialized team who ‘remove graffiti and handbills, clean street signs, paint street furniture, pressure washes the district’s distinct granite corners, and keeps street furniture in top condition.’⁸⁶ A private team of uniformed ‘public safety officers’ supplement the work of NYCPD to police the streets, and operate taxi dispatcher operations – public safety incidents in the neighborhood dropped by 19% between 2002 and 2003. Beyond these functional services, the partnership funds tourist ‘greeters’ and information carts, concerts and other special events. The Grand Central Partnership sees its own achievements as having ‘restored vigor and diversity to the area... providing the impetus for an urban makeover that was nothing short of extraordinary. A reborn neighborhood aesthetic and cleaner, safer streets, spurred private investment and drove pedestrian traffic into the area.’⁸⁷

The extent to which the principles of BIDs draw on the work of Jacobs and Whyte can be found in both explicit statements by professionals, and in the criteria and principles they adopt. ‘Think of a city and what comes to mind? Its streets. If a city’s streets look interesting, the city looks interesting; if they look dull, the city looks dull.’⁸⁸ This statement by Jacobs is now immediately familiar to most city planners and developers, and has been widely used in support of many street improvement programs in since the 1960s,⁸⁹ not least by BIDs. Their sense of the significance of the public appearance of an area to its ultimate success and profitability seems to be supported by Jacobs’ logic. The role of Whyte’s work in shaping the intentions and philosophy underlying the strategy of BIDs has been further developed by Andrew Manshel, counsel for the Grand Central Partnership and the 34th Street Partnership:



Grand Central Partnership street furniture, 2003

1968

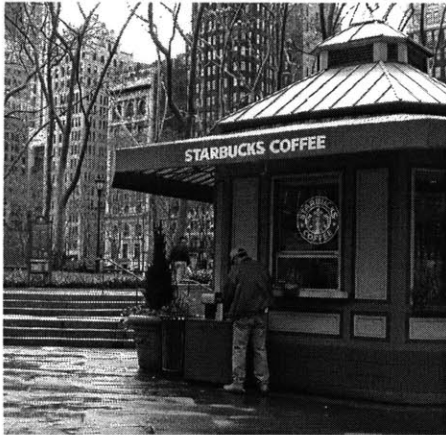
L Halprin, *Study of quality, character, and meaning of open space*

Commissioned to investigate quality of open space in NY housing projects, and suggest improvements. Emphasised character, sense of place, territoriality, creative engagement.

1969

Plan for NYC, City Planning Dept
By Urban Design Group, in collaboration with Whyte who writes much of the text. address street cleaning, crime on streets and in parks. Lots more parks in dense areas. Not adopted - controversial

Riots at Columbia University, with violent clashes with police



Bryant Park, 42nd Street. 2003

‘We have a general program here to deal with quality of street life, building on the work of George Kelling, James Q. Wilson, and William H. Whyte, who wrote *City*... everything that gets done in this office is very self-conscious and very studied, and draws principally on these intellectual sources.’⁹⁰

Whyte’s social design principles, informed by Jacobs’ ‘eyes on the street’ and Oscar Newman’s defensible space argument, have been particularly influential for proposals developed by BIDs to remake public spaces previously occupied by ‘undesirable’ groups. He states that ‘the best way to handle the problem of undesirables is to make the place attractive to everyone else.’⁹¹ Thus public spaces are made safe by attracting lots of ‘normal’ users. Sharon Zukin shows that this principle was particularly applied to the revitalization of Bryant Park by the Bryant Park Restoration Corporation BID, where the park was made attractive to ‘desirable’ sectors of the public with ‘victorian kiosks selling cappuccino and sandwiches... paths were repaved and covered with pebbles, a central lawn was opened up, and performers were enlisted to offer free entertainments.’⁹² She argues that these ‘cultural strategies that have been chosen to revitalize Bryant Park carry with them the implication of controlling diversity while re-creating a consumable vision of civility.’⁹³ The legitimation of this argument might be that although total diversity is sacrificed, the majority enjoy a greater sense of public freedom under controlled conditions which can equally be seen as offering a welcome protection from the fear of crime.

This vision of a controlled public ‘civility’ characteristic of BIDs’ strategies towards the sidewalks, in particular the extent to which they control the sidewalk population, attempting to remove characters deemed ‘undesirable’, seems problematic in claiming to represent a vision of city in line with that promoted in Jacobs’ writings, since it raises questions about

⁹⁰ Quoted in Mitchell Duneier, *Sidewalk*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 1999), p.234.

⁹¹ Whyte, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, p.63.

⁹² Sharon Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities*, (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers. 1995), p.30.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.31.

⁹⁴ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, p.55.

the meaning of public space. Whilst the public ownership of BID's sidewalks', and the sense of the 'ordinary' they offer, effectively maintain the sidewalks' status as public space, those more specific concerns that public space should be a venue for, and characterized by, public freedoms are clearly not satisfied. Ranging from social control (removal of beggars) to visual control (coordinated, branded street furniture), the BID in fact represents the use of an unprecedented level of control within the space of the sidewalk – a space which has always been less subject to mechanisms of control and order than the buildings and road either side of it. In contrast to this vision, Jacobs' work is associated with an appreciation of the sidewalk as a truly public place, tolerant of difference where diverse individuals are free to engage in a range of activities and interactions. This pluralistic sensibility can be seen in Jacobs' work where she states that 'the point...of city sidewalks is precisely that they are public. They bring together people who do not know each other.'⁹⁴

Is public 'civility' as envisaged by BIDs what Jacobs intended to promote with her work? Whilst this unexpected legacy could be seen as a distortion of her original intentions, that her work could inform and be reconciled with the city's already dominant planning traditions has significantly increased its impact and longevity. To understand how her work came to be linked to this approach, it is necessary to look at the evolution of attitudes and policy towards the sidewalk in the decades since her work was published, beginning with those policies that emerged in the immediate aftermath of her apparent 'victory' over the planning orthodoxy.



Privately employed street cleaners/
security guards
Rockefeller Center, 2003



Privately employed street cleaner, East
Midtown Association, 2003

1969

Urban Design Manhattan

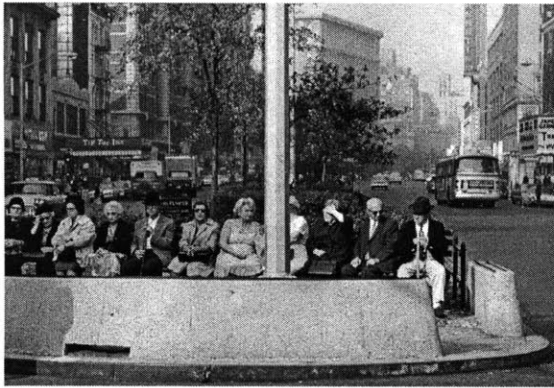
Recommends separation of vehicles and pedestrians, raised and sunken plazas/walkways. Sitting spaces, trees, fountains - leisure, away from uncomfortable, unsafe existing city streets.

Sennett, *Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities*

Reprints essays from urban sociologists working before WWII, focus on role of theory in cities, concerned about creating just and humane urban life.

through block arcade - new bonused public space category

relieve sidewalk congestion, shelter from bad weather, short cuts. Could be used as shopping malls - permitted on Fifth Avenue.



'Self-congestion', Broadway and 73rd Street, Manhattan

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.47.

⁹⁶ Whyte, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, p.19.

⁹⁷ Rai Okamoto + Regional Plan Association, Inc., *Urban Design Manhattan*, (New York: The Viking Press, 1969), p.26.

⁹⁸ New York City Planning Commission, *Plan for New York City: a Proposal*, 1969, p.5.

⁹⁹ New York Department of City Planning, *Pedestrianspace*, 1982, p.17.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p.7.

¹⁰¹ Babcock, *Special Districts*, p.11.

4.2 Reconciling the Paradox of Congestion (Negotiation 5)

It is essential to understand that the work of Jacobs and Whyte provided an opportunity for the collaboration of the public and private interests around an issue that had previously acted as a fundamental divide. The 'paradox of congestion' had existed due to the planners' desire to eliminate congestion in pursuit of efficient circulation, as opposed to the private sector's welcoming of crowding as both a sign of and a means to achieve thriving business.

Both Jacobs and Whyte advocated a critical mass of people on sidewalks to generate the type of social benefits they had observed. For example Jacobs proposed that the sight of people attracts other people, which is 'something that city planners and city architectural designers seem to find incomprehensible. They operate on the premises that city people seek the sight of emptiness, obvious order, and quiet. Nothing could be less true.'⁹⁵ Whyte reiterates this with his theory of self-congestion: 'What attracts people most, it would appear, is other people. If I belabor the point, it is because many urban spaces are being designed as though the opposite were true, and that what people liked best were the places they stay away from.'⁹⁶

By rejecting the logic of the planners' assumption that people sought privacy and isolation – 'places to escape from the crowd or to relax in an open space'⁹⁷ – it could be argued that Jacobs' work contributed a new appreciation of congestion as part of the urban experience by the city planners. Whyte's translation of this attitude for the city planners can be seen in the 1969 Plan for New York City, which he co-authored with the City Planning Department; evidence of this new sensibility can be seen in statements such as: 'concentration is the genius of the City ... the source of its vitality and its excitement.

We believe the center should be strengthened, not weakened.’⁹⁸ Subsequent planning documents continue to cite this approach and Whyte's work, for example *Pedestrianspace*, which quotes his view that Manhattan offers 'the best street life in the world', and the findings from his survey of plazas to conclude that ‘the vitality of the street and sidewalk crowding are indispensable characteristics of the city that resist addressing the problems of congestion by purely technical or empirical means.’⁹⁹

4.3 New Typologies: Persistent Characteristics of Planning in New York

The sensibility towards the city promoted by Jacobs and Whyte’s work came to dominate the work of New York City’s planning department, as seen, for example, in the tone of their reports which increasingly included statements such as: ‘it is the on-foot, pedestrian scale of movement that allows for the close proximity and complex interrelationship of activities that are key to the extraordinary vitality and excitement of Midtown.’¹⁰⁰ Whyte himself is directly linked to the first significant new planning policies developed in relation to the sidewalk in the aftermath of their criticism; namely the additional categories of public spaces which were made eligible for FAR bonuses in 1969. A catalyst for this rethinking of public spaces was the establishment of the Urban Design Group in 1967 within the city planning department as part of Mayor Lindsay’s commitment to urban design. This was something of a heyday for planning in New York City – ‘under Lindsay...urban design, planning, and zoning were a major concern of the Mayor’s office.’¹⁰¹ Whyte was closely associated with this group (their help is acknowledged in *The Social Life of Small Urban*

1970	<p>Parks Council incorporated Nonprofit organisation for preserving open spaces and improving recreational facilities (merger of Parks Association of NYC and Council for Parks and Playgrounds)</p>	<p>Sennett, <i>The Uses of Disorder</i> ‘The great promise of city life is a new kind of confusion possible within its borders, an anarchy that will not destroy men, but make them richer and more mature.’</p>	<p>covered pedestrian space: new public space category ‘efficient pedestrian circulation system and an attractive sheltered public space.’ commercial activities. Subway connection rewarded.</p>	<p>William Whyte began studies of bonus plazas with grant funded Street Life Project.</p>
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Sony Plaza covered pedestrian space, with 'rules of conduct', 2003

¹⁰² 1970 Zoning Regulation, quoted in Kayden, *Privately Owned Public Space*, p.13.

¹⁰³ 1970 City Planning Commission Report, quoted in Kayden, *Privately Owned Public Space*, p.13.

Spaces), who shared his vision for 'special' public spaces that emphasized sociability and leisure time, and a more locally based approach towards the city.

Within the incentive zoning strategy, a series of additional 'non-street' public space categories were added, according to which a project could receive extra density if it included shop-lined and/or covered public spaces. The first of these new spaces was the 'through block arcade' introduced in 1969, and the 'covered pedestrian space' introduced a year later. These were both essentially pedestrian routes through a building that connected two streets.

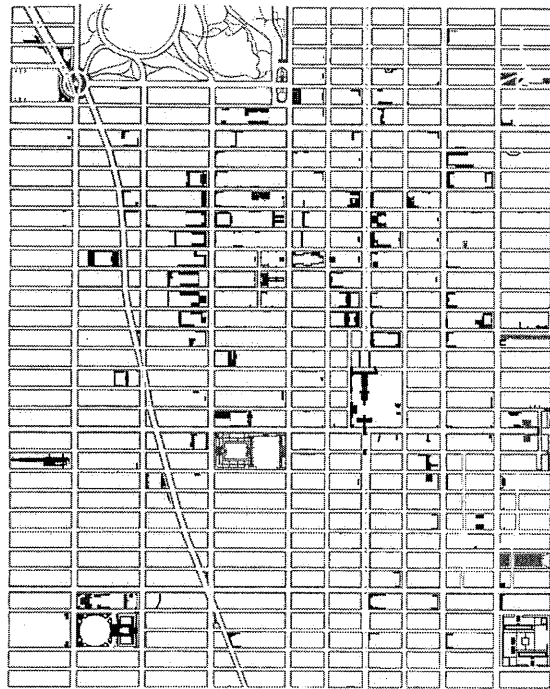
The influence of Jacobs' work can be detected in the ambition of these new space categories to achieve a sidewalk-like mix of social, circulation and shopping activities. They were to include public sitting areas and commercial activities 'such as small stores and cafes fronting the space.'¹⁰² This apparent desire to replicate the qualities of the existing sidewalk was clearly influenced by the new respect for it, which Jacobs' studies had helped to create. Yet in the very same policy is contained a desire to improve upon these same sidewalks. The covered pedestrian spaces in particular emphasized the extent to which they were envisaged as 'attractive sheltered public spaces.'¹⁰³ Hence the extra bonuses given for air-conditioning and heating the space reveal the extent to which they sought to create an environment that would be differentiated from and improve upon the sidewalks.

In this policy one can therefore perceive a distinct retreat into the familiar themes of the planning of New York's public spaces and its history of 'scientific' attempts to provide a smoother pedestrian experience. Not only were these measures once again intended to reduce pedestrian congestion by creating additional circulation capacity, but they reveal

three characteristic traits of past and future strategies. Firstly, they did so through the invention of new typologies of pedestrian space. Like the plazas before them, and despite the influence of Jacobs' appreciation of 'ordinary' city sidewalks, these spaces were defined as 'non-street' spaces; and whereas the plazas created spaces unlike sidewalks which had a strong physical and visual engagement with the street, these new models were disconnected from the actual city sidewalks, albeit with similar characteristics. Secondly, and almost by definition as spaces apart from the sidewalk, they sought to offer a superior experience to the existing sidewalks, primarily by providing protection from weather and traffic and by removing other undesirable or uncomfortable factors. Thirdly, the smooth protected environment was intended to provide a leisured pedestrian experience that would serve the private interests of those who sought to profit from shopping. All these three characteristics were present in one of the very first attempts to improve the pedestrian experience through the easing of congestion – Corbett's raised walkways of 1923.

Yet the dual forces which had combined throughout this history to create such 'cleansing' tendencies – public interest in efficient circulation and private interest in maintaining property values and attracting customers – had also been given a new motivation by new ideals of public space which begin to be imported back into the city from the rapidly growing and ever more popular suburbs. In this respect, one can note parallels between these new enclosed shopping spaces and the protected, convenient environment offered by the suburban shopping mall. Although few major shopping malls were built in New York City itself, as a typology it was a very powerful precedent as the city struggled to contend with dramatically rising crime levels and growing public disorder with riots and protests during this period of the late 1960s.

1970	<p>Movement in Midtown, Van Ginkel Associates Proposal to pedestrianise Broadway, Times Sq, Madison Ave, Lexington Ave.</p>	1971	<p>Special Greenwich Street Development District (WTC) Implement plan for improved pedestrian and vehicular circulation, grade separation to avoid congestion, and encourage desirable urban design relationship between buildings.</p> <p>5th Avenue special zoning protect status as showcase of retail shopping, ensure continuous street frontage, 'as of right' plazas prohibited, retail space bonus.</p>
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Pedestrian walkway space in midtown Manhattan, 1975. Despite the addition of arcades and plazas, the persistence of the sidewalk as midtown's primary public space can be seen.

¹⁰⁴ Richard Plunz quoted in Bressi (ed.), *Planning and Zoning New York City*, p.114.

¹⁰⁵ Okamoto, *Urban Design Manhattan*, p.10.

The policies are therefore tainted by the same anti-urban bias that has permeated New York planning at various points, and which Plunz detects in the 1961 zoning: 'It was rooted in a popular culture that discounted the city. As far as people were concerned, the less of the city there was, the better ... at the heart of [it] was an antiurban bias, which pervaded the whole country.'¹⁰⁴ Recalling the accusation from *The Exploding Metropolis* that the city was 'being designed by people who don't like cities,' it is evident that in their hands, the work of Jacobs was subtly shifted from a polemical celebration of the existing to a influential planning policy which was implicitly critical of the existing.

One can suggest that the persistent characteristics detected in the new categories of public spaces can also be detected within the BID model, despite its reliance upon the physical certainty of the existing and known sidewalk. This understanding takes us to the heart of their problematic relationship with the work of Jacobs. For fundamentally, they can be seen as part of the same urge to cleanse and control the spaces of pedestrian activity, and this follows the characteristics identified above; firstly, despite the BID's use of the physical conditions of the existing sidewalk, it is still a new type because it uses completely new methods of social control. The desire to eliminate aspects of public life from the BID's sidewalks represents an unprecedented level of control within public spaces – and crucially, one that is enacted through the privatization of the sidewalk. Thus it actually overlays a new social model on an existing physical one.

Secondly, BID's explicitly aim to improve upon existing sidewalk conditions through measures ranging from those which aim to visually smarten (street cleaning and 'decorative' features) to those which aim to offer a more comfortable social experience (enhanced safety from additional policing) – all of which are intended to be different, and often visibly so,

from 'ordinary' sidewalks elsewhere. Thirdly, these measures are once again put in place explicitly to foster a leisured pedestrian experience, helping to maintain property values and retail profits within the area. These culminate with an all-encompassing control which measures itself against suburban environments, which are at once its competitor and its paradigm. This opposition is vividly revealed by the video made by Grand Central Partnership, which juxtaposes the problems of midtown Manhattan with the apparent ideal of the suburban corporate campus.

4.4 Theming the City: the 'authentic' sidewalk

As a new type which was closely related to an admiration of the existing sidewalk but ultimately distanced from it by greater means of visual and/or social control, the BID was preceded by two other examples which developed an understanding of the benefits of strengthening the identity of an area through its sidewalks. These were strategies of pedestrianisation and the development of Special Zoning Districts, both of which can be seen to be influenced by Jacobs' and Whyte's appreciation for a more locally based public life; and thus marking another key moment in the problematic lineage between their work and current debates about the sidewalk.

The campaign for pedestrianisation of streets in midtown developed in the early 1970s, supported by Mayor Lindsay and the Urban Design Group. The 1969 study by the Regional Plan Association Urban Design Manhattan called for the 'creation of vehicle-free pedestrian enclaves'¹⁰⁵ amongst its proposals for improvements to the pedestrian experience of midtown



Temporary pedestrianisation of Fifth Avenue, 1970's

1971	<p>sunken plaza new public space category light and air and direct pedestrian access to subway</p>
1973	<p>Madison Avenue temporary pedestrianisation For 2 weeks, closed 12-2pm daily. Double numbers pedestrians recorded on street. Never became permanent after shopkeeper's protests</p>
	<p>open air concourse new public space category sunken area connecting street to subway platform - provide for large number of persons and improve subway air and ventilation.</p> <p>US involvement in Vietnam war ends</p>



Madison Avenue pedestrianisation proposal.
Van Ginkel Associates, 1970

¹⁰⁶ Gilmartin, *Shaping the City*, p.428.

¹⁰⁷ However, in 1977 a ruling closed Nassau Street in lower Manhattan to vehicles between 11am-2pm every weekday, and temporary street closures for weekend crowds (e.g. Museum Mile), protests, parades, markets etc. are commonplace today.

¹⁰⁸ Breines, *The Pedestrian Revolution*, p.34.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.11.

Manhattan, but it was the Movement in Midtown study published the following year by Van Ginkel Associates which most strongly championed the cause. This report proposed a network for pedestrian streets connecting existing parks, subway stations and key midtown areas by closing sections of 48th and 49th streets, Madison Avenue, Lexington Avenue and Broadway to vehicles. Precedents in European cities were crucial to these proposals, in particular the Strøget in Copenhagen which was declared a pedestrian zone in 1964, and became a widely recognized success in terms of the quality of pedestrian space it provided. Grand Central Terminal and Rockefeller Center were two oft-cited local examples of highly successful pedestrian environments; revealingly these are privately owned and controlled spaces, which are more akin to the bonused public spaces than the street.

The Madison Mall proposal came closest to fulfillment in 1971, with the success of the experimental closure of the Avenue between 12-2pm for two weeks leading to Mayor Lindsay supporting the permanent implementation of the project. Ultimately, the private interests of the local stakeholders saw the project rejected: storeowners (including the Fifth Avenue Association) were concerned that the street's 'quiet dignity' would be replaced by 'carnival and street fair,'¹⁰⁶ whilst the Independent Taxi Owners Council opposed the loss of potential customers. A proposed three month trial met with a lawsuit from nineteen plaintiffs, which ultimately doomed the project. The movement never succeeded in seeing any permanent street pedestrianisation projects implemented in New York City.¹⁰⁷

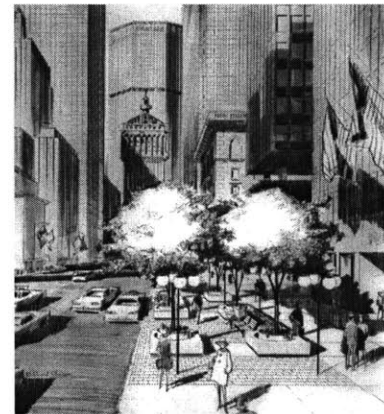
Despite the fact that they were never widely implemented, these visions of public space were championed by city planners and as such are revealing of emerging approaches to the sidewalks. The link of the pedestrianisation movement to the work of Jacobs – in its evocation of a lively, community-based pedestrian experience which aspires to Jacobs'

descriptions of her local sidewalks – is clear, and is explicitly made by Simon Breines, an important figure in the development of these new typologies:

‘The automobile destroyed the age-old amenities of the pedestrian realm. Park streets will restore them. Streets will again be an integral part of home and community life. “Lowly, unpurposeful and random as they may appear, sidewalk contacts,” Jane Jacobs has written, “are the small change from which a city’s wealth of public life may grow.”’¹⁰⁸

However, once again, the pedestrianisation movement used the analysis of Jacobs to promote another new type. There is an evident connection between the pedestrianised streets and the through-block arcades which also emerged at the same time. Breines himself was not only a proponent of the pedestrianised street, but was also responsible for a proposal made in 1964 for a pedestrian route linking Bryant Park with Central Park, comprising a network of aligned through-block arcades, traversing seventeen blocks. In the evolution between through-block connections and BIDs, the pedestrianised street can therefore be seen as a mid-point, retaining the concern to create a leisured pedestrian experience but returning the site of this experience to the open-air street, albeit in a fundamentally altered form. This is demonstrated in both the artist renderings of the proposals, typically showing a scene of an idealized pedestrian environment with avenues of trees, benches, flocks of birds and rapid transit within the familiar setting of midtown Manhattan, and in published descriptions of the envisioned experience:

‘The goal of the walking city is to increase the opportunities for every resident to enjoy the richness of urban life. People should have the right to.. converse with friends without the noise or threat of cars; to escape the summer heat along tree-shaded avenues; to relax on benches and survey the passing stream of life.’¹⁰⁹



Park Avenue as a pedestrian way. Simon Breines, 1970s

1975	<p>Plaza zoning regulations amended following Whyte's recommendations</p> <p>Became 'Urban Plazas' - 'as of right' status revised, real public usability insisted upon 'for the use and enjoyment of large numbers of people' - retail/service establishments required.</p>
1977	<p>Pushkarev, Urban Space for Pedestrians</p> <p>scientific study of NYC started 1969, pedestrian numbers, amount of space required, recommendations.</p>
	<p>New plaza zoning regs applied to residential buildings</p> <p>'living rooms of open space, accessible, inviting, sunlit, safe and beautifully landscaped.'</p>

The reference to the 'threat of cars' also makes it clear that the pedestrianised street retained a motivation for its creation in New York's old concern to alleviate the perceived problems of congestion. Indeed the measures proposed in the Van Ginkel Associates report were explicitly based on concerns over 'unbearable congestion, noise and stress – and massive inefficiency' on the existing streets.¹¹⁰

Whilst this would seem to signal a return to the existing streets as the primary site for public life, ultimately this strategy sought to transform the traditional street and sidewalks into another new typology of urban environment. These were not intended to be 'ordinary' spaces like the existing sidewalks. In excluding vehicular traffic from these spaces, the streets were profoundly transformed into spaces exclusively for leisure, rather than the holistic streets which accommodate functional circulation alongside the social activities of the sidewalk which Jacobs popularized.

Whilst the pedestrianisation movement provided a precedent for the BIDs' approach to the appropriation and transformation of the existing streets, their vision was also shaped by the influence of the special zoning districts and their desire to preserve characteristics of existing streetscapes. More specifically, the usefulness of this approach was proved by the evident benefit to private interests, aided by the forces of gentrification, that the creation of a distinct 'sense of place' and identity could achieve. Again, it is possible to detect the influence of the work of Jacobs in the initial stages of this transformation of public attitudes towards the existing streets, which were then effectively codified by the creation of historic districts in 1965 and special zoning districts two years later by the city planning department.

¹¹⁰ Van Ginkel Assoc., 1970, quoted in *Pedestrianspace*, p.A3.

Since one of the conclusions that can be drawn from *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* is a preference for stasis in existing neighborhoods in order to avoid erasing the unique qualities of the community through redevelopment, Jacobs' work could be used in support of New York City's fledgling conservation movement. The rise of the status of the 'ordinary' city which she helped to create can be seen in a desire to 'save' entire neighborhoods, as well as the more traditional protection of notable individual buildings. The latter emerged in the 1960s – galvanized initially by local resistance to the threat of Moses' clearance projects, and subsequently the impact of the 1961 zoning on the character of New York's urban fabric which led to contextualism being valued as a planning goal. The impact of new apartment towers in previously low rise residential areas, and the demolition of several buildings which did not fit the zoning prototype to make way for developments which did (most controversial was Pennsylvania Station, demolished 1963-65) fuelled a greater understanding amongst city residents and planners of the value of the specific characteristics of different areas, and their vulnerability to erosion through inappropriate projects. Under the Landmarks Law passed in 1965 the Landmarks Preservation Commission was created as a group charged with the designation of historic buildings, parks and districts, ensuring their protection by law.

The inclusion of districts as a category of historic landmarks is notable – the recognition that the integrity of an entire environment was worthy of preservation, including 'ordinary' buildings, the sidewalk and street as well as the 'special' buildings, represents a major shift in perceptions of valuable and desirable types of city environment. This shift is clearly illustrated by the fact that many of the first areas designated had been labeled as slums and slated for clearance just a few years previously; Brooklyn Heights (the first area to

1978	Sennett, <i>Fall of Public Man</i>	1978	Section 8 Housing Assistance Program	Koolhaas, <i>Delirious New York</i>
	Examines the imbalance between public and private life, and how the withdrawal from urban public life occurred through history.		End of major public housing construction - encourage lease of privately owned apartments instead and rehabilitate them.	Describes the shaping of New York City through the grid, 'culture of congestion', Manhattanism. Rockefeller Center resolved culture of congestion with light-air. Celebrates the hidden intentions behind projects, dominance of private enterprise

be designated, in 1965), Greenwich Village (designated 1969), East Village (designated 1969) and SoHo (designated 1973). These districts also share the status of being some of the earliest examples of gentrified neighborhoods in New York City, suggesting that the place of gentrification in this process should not be ignored. Jacobs herself comments on the beginnings of gentrification: 'many of the rich or near-rich in cities appear to appreciate sidewalk life as much as anybody. At any rate, they pay enormous rents to move into areas with an exuberant and varied sidewalk life. They actually crowd out the middle class and the poor in lively areas.'¹¹¹ Not only could she be seen as an early pioneer of this trend in Greenwich Village, but the role of Jacobs' vivid descriptions of sidewalks life contained in *The Life and Death of Great American Cities* in shifting the perception of these districts from 'bad' to 'good' is clear.

Within historic districts, the emphasis on retaining the complete configuration of the public environment intact (including building facades, and the sidewalk and street) also suggests the influence of Jacobs' descriptions of the extent to which the street functioned as an integrated system. However, the planning policy itself was in fact only concerned with the exterior appearance of the streetscape. Even today, designated buildings are referred to as 'exterior' landmarks; in New York the interiors which have been designated must also be customarily accessible to the public. Likewise, it is interesting to note that to win public support for historic preservation the Municipal Art Society began a program of walking tours in New York City during the 1950s – thus, from its beginning, the preservation movement was oriented towards the external, public aspect of landmarks and their presence for the pedestrian on the street. This came to be primary concern of such special zoning districts and would continue to have a major influence on the ethos of the BIDs.

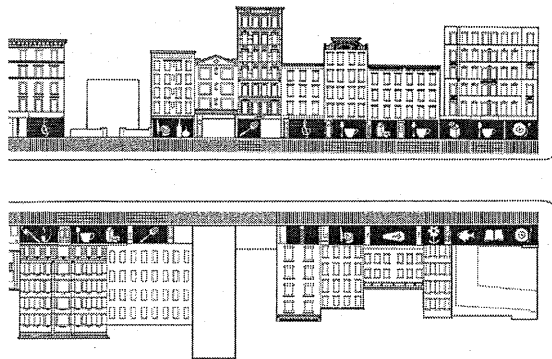
¹¹¹ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, p.70.

In this climate, the importance of identifying what made a neighborhood ‘special’ became a key part of the planner’s approach as developed by the Urban Design Group within the city planning department. In special districts the sensibility of the historic districts was to be applied to the principle of incentive zoning, whereby the inclusion of activities or qualities which reinforced the existing identity of the area were rewarded with FAR bonuses. In place of the more aesthetic criteria of the historic districts, criteria which were considered for these special districts included the particular morphology of the urban fabric and the crucial activities it sustained.

The first special district (and foreshadowing a BID covering the same area established in 1992) was Times Square, established in 1967 in response to concern over the declining numbers of theaters in the area as offices were built on theaters' underused sites. To address this, under zoning rules developed specifically for the area, new office developments were eligible for an FAR bonus if they included a new theater. In addition, other requirements were established to maintain the public experience of the area, including mandatory retail and entertainment-related uses, continuous street walls and large-scale signs.

The process of identifying what makes a neighborhood ‘special’, and rendering these qualities in planning code, inevitably necessitates an over-simplification of the complexity of an urban environment. As the effects of the regulations take shape, this simplification is evident in the controlled and overstated character of the reshaped environment, which can be described as ‘themed’ according to its identity originally selected by planners. The paradox of this situation is the loss of authentic character through the very attempt to preserve it, and this can be seen in responses to the Times Square project. The large electric signs of the area were identified as part of its identity and required on new developments,

1979	South Street Seaport	1980	Bryant Park Restoration Corporation	Whyte, <i>The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces</i>
Project began with Rouse Company. Opened 1983. Festival marketplace with historical preservation + museum.	Established to restore declining historic park which had been taken over by criminals, BID.		Results of ‘Street Life Project’, findings already incorporated into revised planning policies. Qualities, amenities, characteristics, behavior in public spaces. Transition from street to plaza. Sociological and physical understanding of public space.	



Analysis of Mulberry Street's activities
How to Save Your Own Street

¹¹² M. Christine Boyer, 'Cities for Sale: Merchandising History at South Street Seaport', in Michael Sorkin (ed.), *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), (pp.181-204), p.195.

¹¹³ Raquel Ramati, *How To Save Your Own Street*, (New York: Doubleday & Co. 1981), p.9.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.13.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.19-20.

¹¹⁶ Cameron, 'East Village, USA', in University Art Museum Santa Barbara. *Neo York: Report on a Phenomenon*, (1984), p.13.

¹¹⁷ Quoted in Rosalyn Deutsche and Cara Gendel Ryan, 'The Fine Art of Gentrification' in *October 31*, (Winter 1984), p.93.

¹¹⁸ Glueck, 'A Gallery Scene That Pioneers in New Territories'.

with the assumption that this would preserve the infamous atmosphere of the area. However, commentators such as Christine Boyer wrote of the inadequacy of this simulation:

'if all the massive redevelopment towers are forced to simulate a "Times Square look," they can be only cold and distant reminders of the razzle-dazzle that sparked Times Square's fame. Moreover the bulk and height of this purified complex of commerce and culture will certainly destroy the fragile remnants of the incongruous and the unusual that once made Times Square the most provocative spectacle in town.'¹¹²

Recognition of such problems with this deliberate theming of the public appearance of neighborhoods did not diminish its promotion by planners, as it continued to characterize their new engagement with the streets and sidewalks of New York. A book by the New York City Urban Design Group entitled *How to Save Your Own Street* clearly furthered this same approach, advising community groups to 'look for the fundamental character of your own street...then set out to amplify that uniqueness.'¹¹³ The tendency towards stereotyping that this approach inevitably fosters can be seen in their suggested example: 'is it a shopping street in the North End of Boston with pasta and sausage displayed in the storefronts?'¹¹⁴ In addition, the assumed vision behind these street revitalization projects is revealed as closely linked to the leisured pedestrian experience which has characterized New York City planners' underlying approach towards the city's public spaces throughout the twentieth century:

'Your street is a place for shopping, sitting, kissing, walking dogs, and making friends...The intent here is to establish an environment where people can walk freely and undisturbed, a place that imparts a sense of order and safety as people stroll along the street...to their shopping destinations.'¹¹⁵

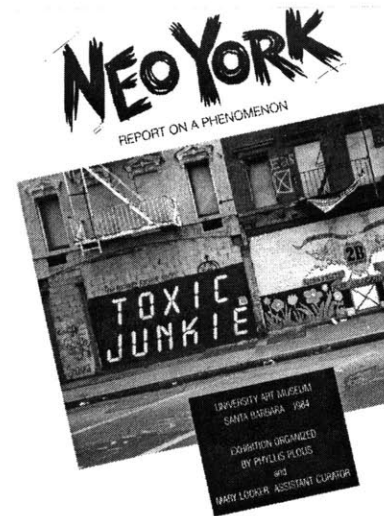
Even in cases where there was a determined interest to keep the ‘authenticity’ of the street as authentic as possible, with no desire to cleanse or improve the conditions, this desire was ultimately futile. An example of this can be seen in the in the New York avant-garde art scene’s move to the Lower East Side in the early 1980’s. The area’s ordinary streets were all-important to this art sub-culture – Jacobs’ traditional sidewalk typology was maintained, with galleries established within existing storefronts; and the first major radical contribution of this scene was bringing graffiti into the gallery from the street – described as ‘the closest the art world has ever veered toward the action of the street.’¹¹⁶

The real and perceived danger on the streets of the East Village was perhaps an extreme manifestation of the celebration of an ‘authentic’ street life originally articulated by Jacobs. It is revealingly described by a contemporary as a ‘unique blend of poverty, punk rock, drugs, arson, Hell’s Angels, winos, prostitutes and dilapidated housing that adds up to an adventurous avant-garde setting of considerable cachet.’¹¹⁷ This sensationalist image was based on the experience of the neighborhoods’ streets, where the indicators of poverty and abandonment adjacent to the artist’s galleries and studios were celebrated – for example photographs of boarded up, burnt out, graffitied buildings were copiously used to illustrate a 1984 exhibition ‘Neo York’, a review of the East Village scene.

The significance of the ‘authenticity’ of this East Village scene was explained by one artist: ‘one of the great blessings of this area is that all kinds of people live here. The co-existence has produced some marvelous people and ideas, and I wouldn’t want a plastic SoHo, where the richness of the community is compromised by a commercialism.’¹¹⁸ Despite this, as any visit to the East Village today will quickly reveal, the pattern of gentrification and

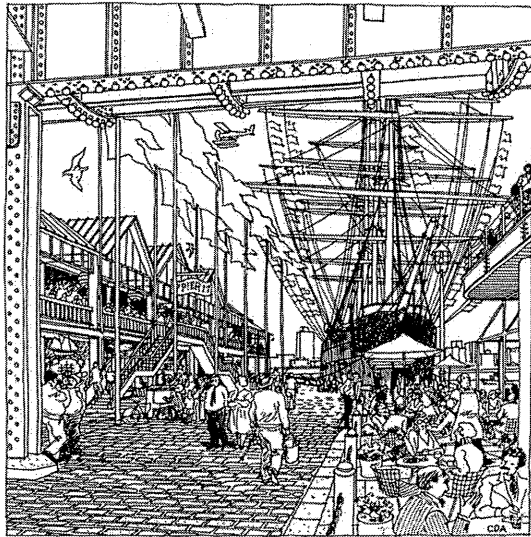


Civilian Warfare storefront gallery, East Village. from Neo York catalogue, 1984



East Village, as depicted on Neo York catalogue front cover, 1984

1980	Central Park Conservancy private company to run park, rescue it from decline.
1982	590 Madison Ave sculpture garden privately owned covered plaza for public use
Pedestrianspace: Midtown Pedestrian Study	differentiated grid - pedestrian 'oases', pedestrianised streets
Wilson & Kelling, 'Broken Windows'	Article published, offering evidence that relatively minor problems (a broken window) leads to bigger problems and decline of order.



South Street Seaport proposal.
Rouse Company, 1981

commercialization was unavoidable under the glamorizing influence of the artists, which has numerous historical and geographical precedents.

The problems with such approaches to the revitalization of existing pieces of cities, including sidewalks, are encapsulated by the example of the South Street Seaport redevelopment in lower Manhattan, completed in 1983. This area had been assigned the status of both a special district (in 1972) and of a historic district (in 1977). The Rouse Company, building upon the revitalization of this area which had begun with the South Street Seaport Museum (1967), created a 'festival marketplace' of shops and restaurants within original and rebuilt shipping warehouses, which sought to provide a controlled leisure experience based on a recreation of the formerly bustling dock-side marketplace. It was observed at the time by architectural critic Paul Goldberger that this approach serves only to 'take the conventional aspects of the urban experience, the little cafes and the energetic markets overflowing with produce, and turn them into something tame...[it] asserts that it is about spontaneity and variety, as real cities are; it is, in fact, about order and conformity.' This approach seemed especially paradoxical in New York – Goldberger comments that the South Street Seaport project is a 'curious situation of an imitation of urban life amidst the real thing.'¹¹⁹

With the stress upon authenticity and variety transforming these virtues into their opposites – imitation and conformity – the problems of such policies are clear. They also hint at the problems of a very similar nature which underlie the BIDs, and which contribute to their uneasy relationship with the work of Jacobs and Whyte. They are the problems of a simulated urbanity – and the fundamental restrictions which are an inevitable part of its possible benefits – which I will seek to address in the next section.

¹¹⁹ Goldberger, 'Baltimore Marketplace', *New York Times*, February 18, 1981.

¹²⁰ Richard Sennett, *The Uses of Disorder: Personal Identity and City Life*, (New York: Alfred A. Kopf. 1970), p.108.

4.5 Simulations of Urbanity?

The paradoxes and inversions identified above are the background to contemporary debates over BIDs, which in turn can be understood to threaten the legitimacy of their inheritance of the Jacobsian vision of the ‘good life’ of a city sidewalk. The criticisms of this type of public space can be broadly grouped into two categories. Firstly, the accusation that they represent a simulation of urbanity – both visual and social – with unprecedented levels of control. Secondly, that this urbanity is fundamentally compromised by the private control of public space, an issue which attains the status of an almost ethical dilemma in the contemporary debate.

The level of social control found within BIDs, where undesirables are removed by private police forces, would, for example, be regarded as an anathema by those such as Richard Sennett, who extol the public benefits of disorder:

‘For if the multiple points of social contact once characterizing the city can be reawakened under terms appropriate to affluence, then some channels for experiencing diversity and disorder will again be open to men. The great promise of city life is a new kind of confusion possible within its borders, an anarchy that will not destroy men, but make them richer and more mature.’¹²⁰

According to this viewpoint, the vision of a more orderly, controlled, exclusive public realm promoted by BIDs represents the denial of genuine urbanity understood in terms of definitions of public space which emphasise diversity and the presence of strangers and ‘others’, described by Lofland as ‘meaningful’ differences between members of the public.

1983	Trump Tower completed covered Pedestrian spaces, landscaped terraces
1984	‘Neo York’ art exhibition of the East Village avant garde scene.
1988	Grand Central Partnership established BID formed by property owners seeking to combat a period of marked physical and economic deterioration. Privately managed sanitation, maintenance and public safety operations. Create signature look.’



Greenwich Street pedestrianisation proposal, early 1980s

Under her argument – which strongly echoes Sennett’s – BIDs’ efforts to create a more civilized public experience deny people the possibility of becoming ‘cosmopolitan’:

‘[the public] must, in the normal course of their everyday lives, rub shoulders with – accomplish uneventful interactions with – persons of whom they disapprove, with whom they disagree, toward whom they feel at least mild antipathy, or who evoke in them at least mild fear. That means that any city that is capable of teaching urbanity and tolerance must have a hard edge. Cleaned-up, tidy, purified, Disneyland cities (or sections of cities) where nothing shocks, nothing disgusts, nothing is even slightly feared may be pleasant sites for family outings or corporate gatherings, but their public places will not help to create cosmopolitans.’¹²¹

The earlier sections of this chapter have already traced the links between the work of Jacobs and Whyte and those policies that have played a role in the genesis of the BID. Furthermore, Jacobs has also been directly implicated in these problems of the contemporary public realm by a number of authors who see her work leading to the conditions found within BIDs. In his article ‘Good Intentions’, John McMorrough argues that the four conditions outlined by Jacobs as necessary ‘to generate exuberant diversity in a city’s streets’¹²² were adopted as guidelines for an environment ‘aimed at a vitality that would surpass the reality of a place’s existence as a set of stores.’¹²³ Trevor Boddy expands further on the links between Jacobs’ appreciation of New York’s sidewalks, and their commodification as retail environments which are themed on ‘the city’:

‘Sadly, the cornerstones of Jacobsian urbanism – picturesque ethnic shops piled high with imported goods, mustachioed hot-dog vendors in front of improvised streetcorner fountains, urban life considered as one enormous national-day festival – are cruelly mimicked in every Rouse market and historic district on the continent...

¹²¹ Lyn Lofland, *The Public Realm: Exploring the City’s Quintessential Social Territory*, (New York: Aldine De Gruyter, 1998), p.243.

¹²² Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, p.150.

¹²³ McMorrough, ‘Good Intentions’, p.374.

¹²⁴ Boddy, ‘Underground and Overhead: Building the Analogous City’, in Sorkin (ed.), *Variations on a Theme Park*, (pp.123-154), p.126.

¹²⁵ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, p.71.

¹²⁶ Boddy, ‘Underground and Overhead’, p.126.

¹²⁷ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, p.50.

¹²⁸ Whyte, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, p.65.

Jacobsonian urbanism has not failed, but succeeded too well – or more accurately a diorama of its most superficial ideas has preempted the public domain.¹²⁴

This analysis raises questions both about the true content of the work of Jacobs and Whyte, and about its subsequent interpretation as it has been marshaled to support policy and criticism.

There is evidence to encourage one to assume that Jacobs and Whyte would object to the controlling strategies of BIDs. The extent to which BIDs control sidewalk users, attempting to remove characters deemed ‘undesirable’, seems to be rejected by Jacobs’ assertion that the contact with strangers enabled by the public nature of city sidewalks is key to maintaining a healthy society: ‘Sidewalk public contact and sidewalk public safety, taken together, bear directly on our country’s most serious social problem – segregation and racial discrimination.’¹²⁵ Boddy shares this interpretation when he makes the accusation that ‘contemporary developers have found it eminently easy to furnish such obvious symbols of urbanism, while at the same time eliminating the racial, ethnic, and class diversity that interested Jacobs in the first place.’¹²⁶ Similarly, Jacobs has echoed the value of diversity in terms which recall the arguments of Sennett: ‘Once a street is well equipped to handle strangers, once it has both a good, effective demarcation between private and public spaces and has a basic supply of activity and eyes, the more strangers the merrier.’¹²⁷ And on the question of private control, Whyte argued against its possible use for social control in his chapter entitled ‘The Undesirables’ in *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*. He maintains that ‘the public’s right in urban plazas would seem clear...[the building owner] has not been given the right to allow only those public activities he happens to approve of.’¹²⁸

1988	Whyte, <i>City: Rediscovering the Center</i> Fuller presentation of the ‘Street Life Project’ and the urban vision underlying the recommendations.	Tompkins Square Riots, over eviction of homeless residents of East Village park. Resulted in clashes with police, dramatized the city’s new attitude towards ‘undesirables’.	Sennett, <i>The Conscience of the Eye</i> How fear of public realm developed in society, wall between inner and public lives. ‘outside’ as dimension of human experience.
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Harlem riot, 1968



Manhattan, as depicted in *Taxi Driver* (Scorsese, 1976)

¹²⁹ Pauline Kael quoted in James Sanders, *Celluloid Skyline*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001), p.366.

¹³⁰ Quoted in Duneier, *Sidewalk*, p.158.

According to this evidence, their work has suffered a distortion through its assimilation into the older trends which have shaped New York City's sidewalks – the public interest in efficient circulation and the private concern for profitability through attracting customers. As previously characterized, these two forces are represented by the street and buildings respectively – rendering the sidewalk as a marginal space both physically and conceptually in the practical negotiations between these forces. And it is the operation of these dual forces which accounts for the subtle shift described earlier in this chapter. In this story, Jacobs' admiration of the existing sidewalk is crucial to the creation of new types of pedestrian space, but through their aim to also improve upon and distance themselves from the sidewalk, these policies are implicitly critical of the same existing condition.

However, the possibility of making this reading of the work of Jacobs and Whyte, and alleging a subsequent misreading, is made more difficult once one considers the social changes which have occurred in the intervening years. In particular the rising problem of crime within New York during the 1980's played a key role in defining the nature and premises of the BIDs.

In the years following *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, New York's problems of crime, drug abuse and racial tension spiraled, compounded by the city's simultaneous financial crisis which rendered it unable to fully combat this situation. A dramatic rise in violent crime which occurred during the 1960s, with the city's homicide rate doubling in the second half of the 1960s, and again in the early 1970s. It continued to rise, with over 1,500 murders committed each year during the 1970s and 80s and with similar increases in other violent crimes including rape and assault. In addition a series of violent racial and political riots occurred on the city's streets in the late 1960s.

The state of New York City at this time is perhaps most vividly illustrated by its popular status as the ‘nightmare city’ depicted in movies of the era, as observed by Pauline Kael in 1971:

‘the New York movies have been set in Horror city ... a permanent record of the city in breakdown. The city has given movies a new spirit of nervous, anxious hopelessness, which is the true spirit of New York. It is literally true that when you live in New York you no longer believe...that life will ever be sane and orderly.’¹²⁹

This crisis was about the rise in violent crime, but also about a deeper sense of a breakdown of public order. The changes were most strongly felt on the streets, and movies such as *The French Connection* (1971) portrayed dirty, decaying traffic-choked streets, bleached of color and set with a sound track of a cacophony of sirens and horns.

This declining quality of city life and especially the sense of disorder which underpinned it was vigorously taken up by Rudolph Giuliani, who was elected mayor in 1993 after a campaign focusing on quality of life, and against the deviance symbolized by panhandlers, squeegee men and vendors. Giuliani’s approach was based on the ‘broken windows’ idea first introduced by Wilson and Kelling in 1982, which was anchored by the principle that relatively minor problems give the sense that greater problems are possible and inevitable:

‘Crime, as well as fear of crime, is closely associated with disorder. For most people, New York’s crime problem comes down to the fear they endure as a consequence of disorder ... a sense that the street is disorderly, a source of distasteful, worrisome encounters ... One unrepaired broken window is a signal that no one cares ... so breaking more windows costs nothing.’¹³⁰

1992	Times Square BID established To make Times Square clean, safe and friendly and to promote the neighborhood to the world. Reinterpretation of Special District established in same area 25 years previously.	Sorkin (ed.), <i>Variations on a Theme Park</i> Contemporary urban design almost wholly preoccupied with reproduction, creation of urban disguises, simulations	Special midtown district rezoning more constraints on plazas.	Bryant Park reopened
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This hard-line approach towards the city's crime problems has been successful, and rates have dropped considerably in the past decade. Yet it has also significantly altered the nature of the city's public spaces by forming an argument for the BIDs' strategies towards controlling the sidewalk.

These strategies are premised on the perceived need to eliminate 'undesirables' from public spaces – undesirable people, undesirable behavior and undesirable sidewalk appearance. Alongside the direct action of additional policing and street cleaning, indirect strategies are implemented through the design of the physical environment; for example, the elimination of places for panhandlers and street vendors to work by installing planters, trees, bicycle racks and newspaper dispensers on the sidewalks. As with the Fifth Avenue Association's battles against immigrant garment workers, the midtown BIDs were also alarmed by the 'invasion' of a large number of low income 'others' into a wealthy area, threatening their land values – in this case these were low income unemployed, many of whom were homeless black males who begged and slept on the neighborhood's streets. The users of midtown felt threatened by their presence and the issues they associated with this presence: petty crime, harassment of pedestrians, graffiti, and drug use – all of which seemed to have become unmanageable. Thus it was hoped that all signals of an uncared for environment would be addressed by this approach – in the absence of Jacobs' public characters and 'eyes on the street' to create a safe environment, the streets were to be cared for by private teams employed to fill this role.

In the context of these crime problems, the BIDs' seemingly extreme policies of control, inherent in the 'broken windows' approach, were seen by the city's businesses and residents to be appropriate and welcome, commensurate with the level of disorder felt within the city.

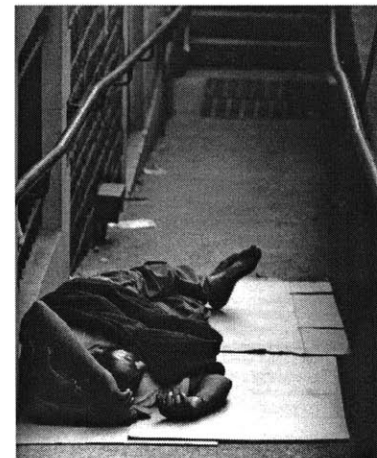
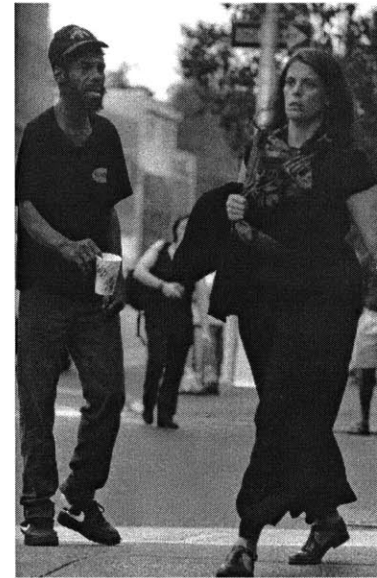
¹³¹ Ibid., p.192.

The crime situation was particularly potent on the city's streets, and with the population feeling increasingly unsafe in public spaces, it had already affected routines of daily life. It had contributed to the unpopularity of midtown's bonus plazas, some of which had become utilized predominantly by criminals and homeless – a problem which building owners had responded to by illegally fencing them off or using spikes on ledges to discourage occupancy. In the light of these events, it could be (and was) argued that the BIDs were simply trying to return a basic sense of civility to the city's sidewalks.

The problems of crime and disorder within New York therefore not only provide an initial motivation for forming BIDs, but also have the potential to be used as a continuing defense against the claims that they are betraying Jacobs' true understanding of urban life. According to this argument, the street life that Jacobs had experienced in New York of the 1950s, and that which Sennett experienced in the 1960s was not the same as that which the BIDs were against in the 1980s:

'Sidewalk life today is different from how it was when Jacobs was writing. In Jacobs' time, sidewalk life brought people into limited contact with other strangers substantially like themselves. Because the strangers appear so different now, so do the problems... her account of sidewalk life is different not simply because the sidewalk was different but because the lens for viewing the sidewalk was different.'¹³¹

Indicative of this is not only the rise in crime described above, but the fact that the type and number of homeless existing on New York City's streets did not exist before the late 1970s. Homeless people during both Jacobs' and Sennett's time were typically elderly white men who were concentrated around the 'skid row' on Bowery and could support themselves through day labor pools. But the loosening of vagrancy laws and the deinstitutionalization



Homelessness in midtown Manhattan, 1990s

1993 | Rudolph Giuliani becomes mayor, introduces 'zero tolerance' policy towards undesirable street conditions

1994 | First Starbucks coffee bar opened in NYC

1995 | Zukin, *the Cultures of Cities*

1996 | new 'as of right' plazas proscribed

'by accepting these spaces of consumption without questioning their representations of urban life, we risk succumbing to a visually seductive, privatized public culture.'

of the state's mentally disturbed population during the late 1960s led to a growing homeless population on the city's sidewalks. This group swelled further during the 1980s, quadrupling from 1980-87 primarily due to Vietnam War veterans and ex-prisoners (following the police clampdown on crack cocaine in the 1980s). The presence of these new strangers on the sidewalks thus presented a radically different range and scale of threat to anything to which Jacobs addressed her analysis.

BIDs see critics of their policies as divorced from the realities of the situation they were facing. Indeed they see themselves as defending the type of civilized urbanity advocated by Jacobs and Whyte, whose original ideas in their pure form are simply not applicable to contemporary problems:

'There are professors who do work on public spaces and we drive them crazy... They are these people who distort Jane Jacobs... They believe that anomic stuff that happens on the street is good and healthy and organic. They believe drug dealing is a small-scale business, and that to believe otherwise is kind of racist. They're people who believe that graffiti is a valuable cultural expression. That's not what we're about.'¹³²

Yet to many critics, these same conditions – crime, homelessness and neglect – which the BIDs were fighting, are truly to be equated with the rich urbanity described and advocated by Jacobs, in which strangers were to be welcomed. The uncertainties of this debate, however, when located within the wider story of New York's sidewalks, reveal the clear historical significance of the work of Jacobs and Whyte and its subsequent reinterpretations.

¹³² Andrew Manshel (counsel for GCP and 34th St Alliance) quoted in Duneier, *Sidewalk*, p.234.

1996 | Building owners gain right to close bonus plazas at night for security reasons.

Last remaining adult-use stores close on West 42nd Street as part of the major cleaning up and redevelopment of Times Square.

1997 | **Dag Hammarskjold Plaza**
\$2.3m project in midtown, supported by Giuliani - symmetrical layout, 6 ornate steel pavilions with fountains. Design creates a public space which replaces the sidewalk,

5 Conclusion

It is the longer trends established within the history of the sidewalk as public space in New York that offer the best explanation of the complex translations of the work of Jacobs and Whyte from theory into practice. The issue of the private control of public spaces, hotly debated within contemporary criticism, must be placed in the context of the fact that New York has always been a commercial not a political city. Within this history, the role of the authorities in the protection of private interests has always coexisted with examples in which private actors have taken the lead in taking measures which would later be adopted by the authorities as general policy. Examples relating to the sidewalk include the Fifth Avenue Association's anticipation of the contemporary BID and the public open space provided by Lever House and Seagram Building upon which planners would base the 1961 zoning.

The history of policy with respect to the sidewalk in New York, which this study has traced, is one that is defined by a series of negotiations between public interest and private profit – most evident in the pre-1960 orthodoxy described in Chapter 2. Key moments of collaboration between the two interests in the shaping of New York City's public spaces occurred in the 1811 Commissioners plan – with its concern to provide efficient circulation through the rational planning of its gridiron street layout to maximize conditions for

private profit; the 1916 zoning resolution which improved sidewalk conditions in order to increase private profits of the adjacent commercial premises; and the 1961 incentive zoning which promoted specific types of privately owned public spaces – the plazas, which predominantly attempted to improve the public realm by providing ‘invented’ spaces which were of superior quality to the sidewalks.

The work of Jacobs and Whyte amongst others in the 1960s provided a new understanding of the question of the sidewalk that was based on its social rather than physical characteristics (Chapter 3). The years which have followed this apparent shift in ideology – covered in Chapter 4 – can be regarded as a gradual assimilation or accommodation of these new ideas within pre-existing trends and historical predispositions. Most specifically, these pre-existing trends are the dual forces of the planner’s interest in efficient circulation by reducing congestion and the private concern for profitability through attracting customers and tenants with the provision of an enjoyable and pleasant environment. Both forces collaborated in pursuing the vision of a leisured pedestrian experience which was both inspired by and was to be the product of a ‘scientific’ planning approach. As described in the Introduction, these two forces are embodied in the street and buildings respectively – and hence it is these crucial forces that have rendered the sidewalk as a marginal space both physically and conceptually in the physical negotiations between these forces.

It is a series of such negotiations that account for the (mis)translation of the writings of Jacobs and Whyte into practical planning policies which have in turn affected the real cityscape. The first planning policies to be influenced by their admiration and advocacy of the sidewalk’s qualities of sociability and diversity were the through-block arcade and covered pedestrian space of 1969 and 1970. Yet, despite this, these policies nevertheless

implicitly criticized the state of the existing sidewalk by seeking to improve upon it – removing sources of discomfort through physical distancing and environmental control, and easing congestion through the provision of additional circulation space. Thus the vision of the leisured pedestrian experience was transformed into something more related to the traditional sidewalk experience, but permeated by the original desire for cleansing and ‘improving’ that experience which was seen as beneficial by both planners and private interests. If this is a distortion of Jacobs and Whyte’s work through the cleansing urges upon which private and public could easily agree, then at least it can be said to have been utterly predictable one.

Indeed, it was made even more predictable since their work offered a ‘resolution’ of the paradox of congestion, and an opportunity for the collaboration of public and private interests upon a question which had previously acted as a fundamental divide. The ‘paradox of congestion’ was established by the planners’ distaste for congestion as a barrier to efficient circulation and the private sector’s welcoming of congestion as both a sign of and a means to achieve thriving business. The work of Jacobs and Whyte effectively provided a solution to this disagreement by reversing the planners’ view of pedestrian crowding from something ‘bad’ to something ‘good’. In facilitating this new agreement, the work of Jacobs and Whyte was always liable to be put to the service of these larger forces; and so in the history of its distortion through the current trend for BIDs, it is not wholly surprising that the work was manipulated to suit the ends of the continuing and evolving collaborations between public and private.

1998	<p>Special Greenwich Street Development District repealed City concluded that attempt to create a multilevel urban design plan for pedestrian circulation improvements has fallen far short of its original ambition.</p>
1999	<p>Lofland, <i>the Public Realm</i> cleaned-up, tidy, purified, Disneyland cities where nothing shocks, nothing disgusts, nothing is even slightly feared may be pleasant sites but their public places will not help to create cosmopolitans</p> <p>Debut of Nasdaq technoturret at Times Square.</p>

The Place of Ideas

This study of the history of New York's sidewalks has been conducted in the silent recognition that the sidewalk itself is physically unchanging. Its basic configuration – a raised pedestrian footpath edging the vehicular roadway and buildings – is a stable element in the city's topography. The strategies and projects implemented by planners and designers of New York City affect its patterns of inhabitation and not the physical artifact itself. Hence, the authors of the *1929 New York Regional Plan* who wrote that 'the least that can be said is that sidewalk planning is capable of much more flexibility than has been given to it'¹³³ have been proven wrong.

Nevertheless, this study has been about ideas and attitudes relating to the sidewalk. The question therefore arises of what their possible role or contribution can be in the context of this morphological persistence. The work of Jane Jacobs and William Whyte has provided one particular focus. This work significantly contributed to a radical shift of attitudes towards planning in New York City, whereby attitudes towards busy streets and traditional mixed-use neighborhoods were fundamentally reversed. It thus acted as a catalyst for change by articulating a developing popular unease with existing methodologies: 'policy makers and the public needed a picture of what they were throwing away by allowing those forces full sway, and Jacobs provided it.'¹³⁴ And with the persuasive ability of an enlightened outsider, her work would ultimately have significant implications for the field which she observed.

¹³³ Adams, *1929 Regional Plan*, p.293.

¹³⁴ David Hill, 'Jane Jacobs' Ideas on Big, Diverse Cities: A review and commentary' in *APA Journal*, Summer 1988.

The content of this study is therefore also a history of ideas about the city’s public spaces; ideas that have shifted rapidly, and, on occasion, fundamentally reversed. It has encountered the complex nature of the translation of ideas into practical policies for implementation, a process which has allowed for a series of mis-readings and unexpected results. This suggests that what has been examined, and what continues to exist, is in fact a fluid body of theory set against the unchanging physical certainty of the sidewalk itself. What is therefore important is not that this theory arrives at ‘fundamentals’ that are definitively right or wrong, but that it continues to exist as a debate in which ideas themselves can serve to question the deeper implications of planning strategies for the public spaces that are vital to the life of a city.

2001	<p>Prada Store SoHo, OMA intentions to include public activities within store - performances etc. But very high security, reality not very 'public'.</p>	<p>Hajer, <i>In Search of New Public Domain</i> public space unequivocally important for new urban planning strategies - much less insight into the degree to which this can be deliberately created. New social and spatial patterns today.</p>	<p>World Trade Center attacks</p>	<p>Lower Manhattan Development corporation redevelop NY south of Houston St after 9/11, memorial. 'public realm' specific requirement for WTC comp. Public involvement</p>
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