elements in such a way as to best accomplish a particular purpose' (Neuhart, Neuhart & Eames, 1989, p.14). The definition places a good deal of emphasis on the eventual outcome and rather less on the process of arriving at a result. It does imply, however, that design is always concerned with some future event; that it is an attempt to forecast that event by whatever means are appropriate and available at a particular time: a drawing, a model, an electronic simulation. In a real sense it is a prophecy. In architecture, preceding that, must invariably come visual thought.

Forecasting a future event occurs, of course, in many other pursuits which involve visual thought as well as those that concentrate on verbal thinking. Several carry out some form of design in the widest sense. What goes on in architecture may thus be of significance to a wide range of activities unrelated to architecture.

The generally interesting and, I believe, relevant question is therefore: how do we proceed from the past and present to a forecast of the future. Moreover, although we know that the outcome is time dependent, we need to ask whether the process, and especially the sequence of design, is also historically variable. If some general pattern were to emerge both over time and between individuals, we might be somewhat nearer to at least a tentative explanation of the process; to a theory.

An interest in theory is neither novel nor idiosyncratic. A standard work – *A History of Architectural Theory from Vitruvius to the Present* by Hanno-Walter Kruft, first published in German in 1985 and in English in 1994 – consists of 609 pages of closely printed text. A great part of the work deals with historical aspects such as analysis of styles while another significant part is devoted to theory that is prescriptive rather than explanatory. Vitruvius is a case in point. In his dedication of the work to the Emperor Augustus from whom he was receiving a pension he wrote:

'Furthermore, with respect to the future, you have such regard to public and private buildings, that they will correspond to the grandeur of our history, and will be a memorial to future ages. I have furnished a detailed treatise so that, by reference to it, you might inform yourself about the works already complete or about to be entered upon. In the following books I have expounded a complete system of architecture.'
(Vitruvius, 1983, p.5)

The so-called system is largely a 'how to do it' manual; a theory, however, is not a set of rules. Despite their apparent usefulness, the '*Ten Books*' were little regarded after their publication at the end of the first century BC. That did not prevent them from becoming, over a thousand years later, one of the most influential works ever written on architecture. The same primary interest in the final product could be ascribed to the manifestos and pronouncements of the Futurists or the Metabolists in the 20th century.

Such a lack of discussion of design is surprising and regrettable. Yet to take a recent publication, very few of the 59 architects, critics and historians whose texts appear in the anthology *Architecture Theory Since 1968* devote much space to this topic (Hays, 2000).

It is only in a few journals that the subject has received much attention (Bamford, 2002, p.245). What distinguishes this book is that it is primarily interested in that part of the theory of architecture which touches the necessary and primary activity of design. And it is design which determines the end result; but always, it should be remembered, design created at a particular period.