A Handbook for Architects, Designers and Planners

RIBA

Rob Cowan

ESSENTIAL URBAN DESIGN

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RIBA Publishing

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Rob Cowan is a writer, editor, speaker, consultant, cartoonist, illustrator and lexicographer. He is editor of *Context*, the journal of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation, and has been editor of *Town and Country Planning*, editor of Shelter's housing magazine *Roof*, and deputy editor of the *Architects' Journal*. His many books include *The Dictionary of Urbanism*; *By Design* (the UK government's ground-breaking urban design guidance, co-authored with Kelvin Campbell), and *Designing Places* (the Scottish Government's equivalent); *Urban Design Guidance*; and *London After Dark* (with the photographer Alan Delaney). He gave the Royal Town Planning Institute's masterclasses on urban design for many years, devised Placecheck and was the first director of the Urban Design Group. He presents the Plandemonium series of online videos.

See www.robcowan.co.uk

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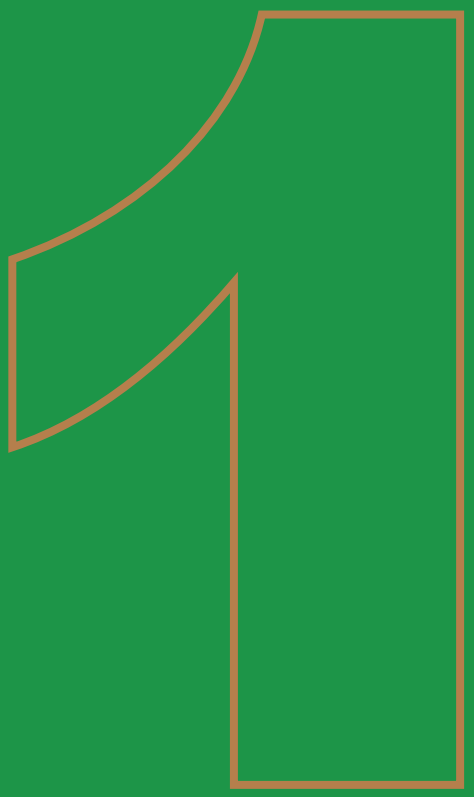
To Liz, Jess and Andy

PLACE, PIONEERS AND PRACTITIONERS



INTRODUCTION

Urban design focuses on three questions: What do we know about this place? How can the place change? Who will benefit from that change? We think about those matters through appraisals, briefs, policies, guidance, strategies, masterplanning and development schemes. In each case the thinking, planning and designing processes involve a wide range of people. They include local authority planning officers, who prepare local planning policy and guidance, and assess the quality of planning applications; councillors, who provide political leadership and make planning decisions; applicants and their design teams, who prepare applications for planning permission; people in local communities and their representatives; and a wide range of other professionals (urban designers, architects, planners, landscape architects, surveyors, highway engineers and building conservationists among them) who are, in the widest sense of the term, urban designers. This book is for all of them.

When it was being written, the government in England was proposing a major reform of the planning system, hoping to achieve deregulation, on the one hand, and higher standards through design coding, on the other. It will be some years before we know how that turns out. Progress can be traced through the latest versions of the government's Planning Policy Framework and the online Planning Practice Guidance. Here we focus on the essence of urban design. Chapter 1 (Place, Pioneers and Practitioners) tells the story of how the ideas behind urban design evolved. Chapter 2 (Eight Design Objectives and How to Achieve Them) shows how these ideas can be applied. Chapter 3 (Context, Character and Quality) explains how applying the ideas needs to be based on understanding the place, and how the end result can be judged. Chapter 4 (Politics, Collaboration and the Role of Local Authorities) looks at urban design in its political setting. Chapter 5 (Strategic Urban Design and Masterplanning) shows it working at the large scale.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

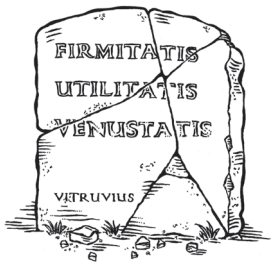
First, a definition. Urban design is the process of planning for land use and of devising the physical form of development in cities, towns and villages. You might ask: is that not equally a definition of planning? Yes, it is, if the planning process in question focuses on the physical form of development, rather than on the uses alone. But too often planning lacks that dimension, which is why urban design emerged as a distinct field of activity.

There are two things wrong with the term 'urban design'. The first is the word 'urban'. It tends to make people think of development in towns and cities, whereas urban design is concerned with settlements of all sizes, including villages and rural settings. The second thing wrong with the

term urban design is the word 'design'. It makes many people think of what architects and landscape architects do, rather than the much wider range of skills and activities involved in making places.

If urban design is such a problematic term, why use it? The first answer is that it has become established, at least in a professional context. The more familiar the term becomes, the less likely people are to agonise about the meaning of its two component words. It is true that the term might be misleading to people outside the professional world who are unfamiliar with it, but none of the alternatives are less confusing. Some alternatives have been tried. 'Placemaking', for example, has been fairly widely used as an alternative to urban design, but recently its association with controversial schemes to redevelop council housing estates has led to it acquiring negative connotations. The term urban design has never lost its innocence in that way, and it is a convenient term to use for a professional audience. There is no simple, abstract term that will convey to laypeople what this complex subject involves.

Urban designers analyse places, write policies and guidance, draw up masterplans and design codes, review the quality of building proposals, and design development schemes and spaces, among much else, working at every scale from a region to a single building. Urban design as we know it today has evolved through the efforts of people with a passion for finding practical means of understanding places, bringing about change, and ensuring that the right people benefit from that change. Through the stories of those pioneers we can trace the development of knowledge, techniques and movements that this book outlines.

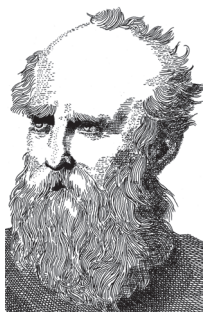


1.1: *De architectura* and the essentials of architecture

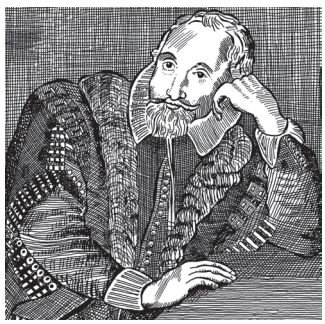
PIONEERS OF URBAN DESIGN

If urban design is the answer, what is the question? Probably the question is 'What makes a successful place?'

In the first century BC the Roman writer, architect and engineer **Marcus Vitruvius Pollio** (commonly known as **Vitruvius**) defined the essentials of architecture in his treatise *De architectura*. There were three essentials, he wrote: 'firmitatis, utilitatis, venustatis' (Figures 1.1 and 1.2). People have been translating those terms ever since. Most famously, and much quoted, **Sir Henry Wotton** in 1624 translated them as (with archaic spellings) 'commoditie,



1.2: Vitruvius



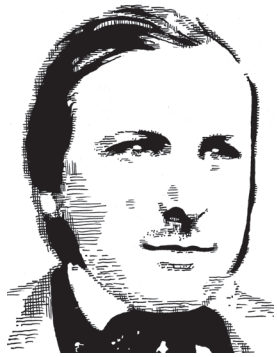
1.3: Sir Henry Wotton

firmenes and delight'. Firmness and delight are easy enough to understand in relation to buildings, and 'commoditie' has been generally understood as meaning 'usefulness'. Later, in the 1670s, **Sir Christopher Wren** defined the principles of architecture as 'beauty, firmness and convenience'. In 2001 the Construction Industry Council used the three concepts as the basis for developing a set of performance indicators for buildings. Its equivalent terms, translated into contemporary industry jargon, were 'functionality, build quality and impact'.

1.4: Sir Christopher Wren

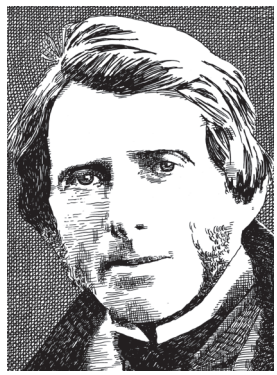
Many writers have used those three terms, in one way or another, to describe the essentials of urban design. What makes a successful place? It is fit for purpose, it is well built, and it delights the people who use it or see it. That is a good start. But we need a set of criteria that will help us to design successful places, and to explain to others what we want to achieve.

A look back to the nineteenth century shows how the ideas behind urban design developed. Debate raged about both architectural style and the future development of towns and cities. In *Contrasts*, published in 1836, the architect and designer **Augustus Pugin** (1812–52) compared the meanness of the architecture of contemporary towns and cities to the glories of the medieval Gothic. He wrote in 1842 that reforming church architecture was an ambition 'not inferior to the rescuing of the Holy Land from the Infidels'.[1] His was a major influence on the widespread use of the Gothic. He famously collaborated with Charles Barry on the design of the Houses of Parliament, although he felt his (Pugin's) Gothic detailing was merely cloaking what was essentially a classical building.



1.5: Augustus Pugin

The writer, social commentator, and critic of art and architecture **John Ruskin** (1819–1900) was, like Pugin, an influential advocate of Gothic architecture for important buildings, and a fierce opponent of industrial methods, not least in building. Ruskin's writings inspired not only architects but also a generation of social reformers.



1.6: John Ruskin

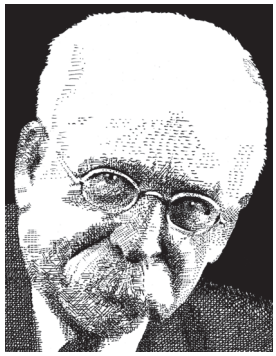
Octavia Hill (1838–1912) was a pioneer of many aspects of community development. She developed social housing (provided for social purposes, rather than for profit), housing management (meeting a landlord's obligations) and social work (supporting people to improve their lives), and she campaigned for open space. She began by managing three houses that John Ruskin had bought to house unskilled labourers. Her example showed how such housing could be managed in the interests of the tenants, and how supporting the tenants' lives, work and education could help to lift them out of poverty. Eventually she was managing thousands of houses. Her conviction that the urban poor needed places to sit in, to play in, to stroll in and to spend a day in led her to become one of the three founders of the National Trust, whose mission was to protect open spaces and endangered buildings of historic interest.

1.7: Octavia Hill

1.8: William Morris

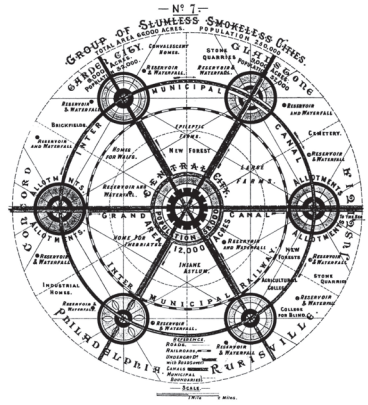
William Morris (1834–96), the writer, designer and campaigner for socialism, called for architecture based on handicrafts and people's love for their work, and he advocated the creation of new small communities. He and Ruskin inspired the Arts and Crafts movement, which began in the UK as a reaction to the dehumanising effects of nineteenth-century industrialisation, and flourished between around 1875 and 1915.

The Arts and Crafts movement was more an ethic than an aesthetic, at least initially. Its architectural leading lights were committed to reviving traditional building and craft skills, using local materials and seeking inspiration from the local vernacular. Later Arts and Crafts designers and architects saw it more as an aesthetic, while still advocating high standards of craftsmanship and inspiration from vernacular buildings. The influence of the movement on the urban landscape was immense in the first decade of the twentieth century. In the interwar years of the 1920s and 1930s speculative builders and local housing authorities took it up and made Arts and Crafts – with such features as hips and gables, half-timbering, roughcast walls, leaded windows and tile-formed arches – into a truly popular style.

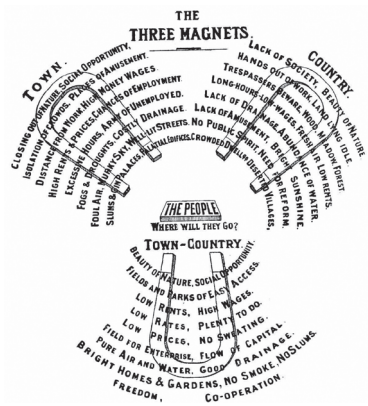


1.9: Sir Ebenezer Howard

Sir Ebenezer Howard (1850–1928) founded the garden city movement. His famous diagrams of future cities explained his ideas rather than showing a layout or an architectural style (Figure 1.10). Howard is credited as being a founder of town planning, though his real aim was much more ambitious: to introduce a practical means of radical social and economic reform in Britain. Howard dreamed of a society based on cooperation. He believed that garden cities in the countryside would attract people from the old cities, whose densities would decline, allowing them to be re-planned on garden-city lines. The garden cities would combine the best of country life with the best of city life, without the disadvantages of either (Figure 1.11). The freehold of each garden city would be collectively owned, so the rise in land values brought about by



1.10: Ebenezer Howard's diagram of the Social City



1.11: Ebenezer Howard's Three Magnets

1.12: *Garden Cities of To-morrow* (1898) by Ebenezer Howard

the creation of the city would be retained as part of the community's wealth, rather than being siphoned off by landowners, developers and speculators. Collective ownership would also allow planning control in that era before there was a planning system (Figure 1.12).

The Austrian urban design theorist, architect and planner **Camillo Sitte** (1843–1903), a pioneer of the townscape approach, derived urban design principles from his experience of what a city looks like to someone moving through it. He set out his ideas in his book *City Planning According to Artistic Principles (Der Städtebau)*, published in 1889,[2] which was partly provoked by a controversy about the siting of a new church in Vienna. Sitte argued that monuments and public buildings should not be placed in spaces, but should be at their edges, helping to define them. A public space should be like the room of a house: for living in, not for cluttering. Medieval cities had the qualities that he looked for, such as irregularity, and he believed modern designers should emulate them. Sitte was concerned not just with what an urban space looked like, but also with how the mix of uses brought streets and spaces to life.

1.13: Camillo Sitte

'We have at our disposal three major methods of city planning,' Sitte wrote, 'the gridiron system, the radial system, and the triangular system. Artistically speaking, not one of them is of any interest, for in their veins pulses not a single drop of artistic blood.' Instead, he thought cities should be planned and designed by people who had aesthetic intent.

The housing reformer, architect and pioneer of town planning **Sir Raymond Unwin** (1863–1940) agreed with Sitte, but he had a wider vision, inspired by the socialism of Ruskin and Morris. Unwin's comments in his 1909 book *Town Planning in Practice: An Introduction to the Art of Designing Cities and Suburbs* could be describing the UK today. Local authorities, he wrote, 'have looked on helplessly while estate after estate around their towns has been covered with buildings without any provision having been made for open spaces, school sites, or any other public needs. The owner's main interest, too often his only one, has been to produce the maximum increase of value or of ground rent possible for himself by crowding upon the land as much building as it would hold.'[3]

1.14: Sir Raymond Unwin

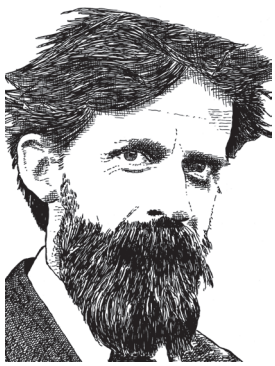
With his architect and planner partner Barry Parker (1867–1947), Unwin became an advocate of the Arts and Crafts movement, and the designer of Letchworth, the first garden city, and Hampstead Garden Suburb. Always practical, he became a civil servant when he realised that nothing would have more effect on the form of urban development than government law and regulations on housing and planning. Still, it was beauty that mattered. 'Beauty is an elusive quality, not easily

defined,' Unwin wrote in *Town Planning in Practice*, 'not always easily attained by direct effort, and yet it is a necessary element in all good work, the crowning and completing quality.' The best civic art was not ornamentation, he said, but something that worked from within. 'Beauty results when life and the joy of life, working outwards, express themselves in the beauty and perfection of all the forms which are created for the satisfaction of their needs.'

Beauty is not something that is simple to create or specify when developing in an urban context. Urban aesthetics is more than just finding a place and its buildings attractive. Experiencing a place may evoke one or more of a wide range of emotions. These may be positive: aesthetic pleasure, calmness, delight, excitement, interest, satisfaction or surprise. Or negative: anger, anxiety, boredom, confusion, disgust or fear. The combination that we experience in a particular place is likely to be the result of a complex interaction with other factors that have nothing to do with the place at all.

What helps to trigger these emotions may be equally varied. It might be the physical form of buildings and structures, through shapes, colours, textures, materials, proportions and rhythms. It might be the presence or absence of people or traffic; the ease with which one can find one's way around, and can move around; whether there is anything interesting to do or look at; whether the place is pleasantly warm or uncomfortably windy; and so on. All these are concerns of urban design. Different people are likely to be affected in different ways, depending on such factors as their age, gender, abilities, interests and values.

The place will also have an impact on people who are elsewhere in space and time. People in other places may feel the development's impact on the climate and on biodiversity. People in the future may experience the effects of the place's success or failure to adapt to changing conditions.



1.15: Sir Patrick Geddes

Sir Patrick Geddes (1854–1932) was not a designer, but he was still one of the most important pioneers of the processes of making and remaking places. A biologist, botanist, ecologist, geographer, town planner, educator and social philosopher, he saw himself primarily as a sociologist. Early in his career he organised practical, low-cost improvements in Edinburgh's historic, decayed Royal Mile, living with his wife and first child in a slum, and involving fellow residents and volunteers in the improvement process. He developed the technique he called 'conservative surgery'. This was an incremental approach to area improvement that involved the people who lived and worked there and, unlike much practice then and since, ensured that they were able to remain there and benefit from the improvements. Throughout his career Geddes campaigned for or practised regional planning; community action; public participation in

planning; environmental education; women's rights; cultural planning; and the three-stage process of survey, analysis and plan. Much of what he advocated was forgotten by subsequent town planners and rediscovered only in the late twentieth century.

Ada Salter (1866–1942), the first woman mayor in London, pioneered the role of local authorities in urban improvement. As a politician and social reformer, she moved to the slums of Bermondsey, south London, to put her ideas into action. In partnership with her husband, the physician and politician Alfred Salter (1873–1945), she organised slum clearance, area improvements and social housing. She promoted tree planting and gardening, campaigned against air pollution, and organised music concerts, art competitions, sport and the building of children's playgrounds.

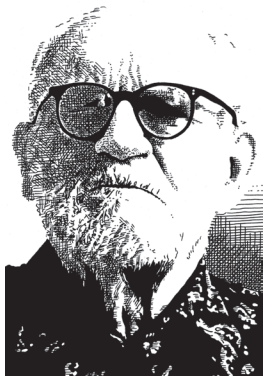
1.16: Ada Salter

In the late 1940s and 1950s the townscape movement dominated the debate, with a focus on urban form and its visual appearance. The author, broadcaster and campaigning journalist **Ian Nairn** (1930–83), one of the townscape movement's most effective advocates, wrote of 'the missing art of townscape midway between town planning and architecture'.[4]

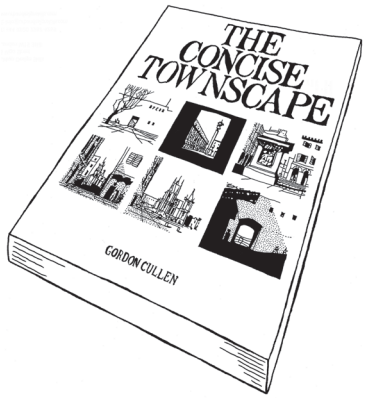
1.17: Ian Nairn

Writing in the 'Outrage' special issue of *Architectural Review* in 1955,[5] Nairn bemoaned 'the annihilation of the difference' by development that tended to make one type of scenery standard for town, suburb, countryside and the wild. 'What has to be done,' he wrote, 'is to maintain and intensify the difference between places.' He saw this not just as 'the basic principle of visual planning,' but also 'the end to which all the other branches of planning – sociology, traffic circulation, industry, housing hygiene – are means.' He explained: 'They all attempt to make life more rewarding, more healthy, less pointlessly arduous. But if they at the same time destroy our environment they are denying us the end to which they were designed to be the means.' Nairn's advocacy of the visual over all other aspects of planning is striking.

The urban designer, draughtsman and writer **Gordon Cullen** (1914–94) played a leading part in developing the townscape approach. He used the technique of 'serial vision' (a series of drawings or photographs showing what a person will or would see at a succession of viewpoints when walking through an area), and developed new methods of recording townscape (Figure 1.19).



1.18: Gordon Cullen



1.19: *The Concise Townscape* (1961)

In 1953, at the time of a major housebuilding programme in the UK, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government published *Design in Town and Village*.[6] This book discussed 'problems of design in the grouping and lay-out of buildings'. It was written by Thomas Sharp (on the English village), Frederick Gibberd (on the design of residential areas) and William Holford (on design in city centres). Its foreword was by housing minister (and later prime minister) Harold Macmillan. He wrote: 'It is very hard to analyse what makes a good design. But it is very important to try to do this.' A book by three individual authors was more appropriate than an official manual, Macmillan suggested, since 'the questions involved are matters of taste; and very much, therefore, matters for individual opinion.' (That was the government's last guidance on urban design until 2000, when the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, in collaboration with the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, published *By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System, Towards Better Practice*.[7])

1.20: Thomas Sharp

The town planner and writer **Thomas Sharp** (1901–78), one of the authors of *Design in Town and Village*, was an enthusiast for the townscape approach. He wrote in his 1940 book *Town Planning* (which sold a quarter of a million copies in 10 years, as wartime Britain dreamed of the future): 'Each street … must be judged as a single composition, as a single picture. And the word picture is important here, for curiously enough it is on the question of picturesqueness that the traditional continuous street has generally been condemned of recent years. The very word picturesque has been vulgarised out of its proper meaning. Nowadays it is only applied to the quaint, the irregular. Yet picturesqueness is essentially the quality of being like or being fit to be the subject of a picture. A picture demands composition, unity, balance.'[8] (See Figure 1.21).

1.21: The best-selling *Town Planning* (1940) by Thomas Sharp

In the Town Planning Institute, of which he was president, Sharp challenged the profession's move from physical planning to socio-economic planning. In 1966 he bitterly criticised the new system of strategic planning which, he said, made an impossible distinction between policies in a plan and the physical form that they would lead to. Any planner who refused to provide a drawing could not be said to be planning in any meaningful way: 'Either they have the plans worked out or they've got a nonsensical document.'

1.22: Jane Jacobs

On the other side of the Atlantic, the writer and urban activist **Jane Jacobs** (1916–2006) was concerned not only with what a place looked like but also with how it worked – in all its human complexity. As a young architectural journalist she at first wrote approvingly about urban renewal projects in New York, but she soon noticed that lifeless housing projects were being created and lively neighbourhoods – rich in economic and social life – were being destroyed.

Jacobs is best known for *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, one of the most influential books in the history of planning and urbanism (Figure 1.23).[9] Written in 1958–60 and published in 1961, it attacked contemporary planning practice and passionately advocated for traditional, mixed-use neighbourhoods. Never before had the essential complexity of urban life been so revealingly described and the street so effectively promoted as the focus for urban life. Richard Sennett saw Jacobs in action in public meetings in the 1960s when she was fighting proposals by New York development tsar Robert Moses to put a freeway through Manhattan's SoHo. 'Other people would scream at Moses,' Sennett recalls, 'but she just politely asked him questions like: "How do you know this is what people want?" "Do you know any of the people in this room?" "Who do you know?" It drove him crazy. Rather than telling him the community was against him, she focused on his position. I was at one meeting where she asked him: "What is beautiful for you?"'[10]

1.23: *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) by Jane Jacobs

In 1962, a year after the publication of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, the biologist and writer **Rachel Carson** (1907–64), published her most influential book. *Silent Spring* highlighted threats to the environment, particularly from pesticides. 'Over increasingly large areas of the United States,' Carson wrote, 'spring now comes unheralded by the return of the birds, and the early mornings are strangely silent where once they were filled with the beauty of bird song.'[11] Humans had long assumed that their role was to control nature, but unless they learned to live with nature, as part of it, we were doomed. Her message, an important inspiration to the green movement, led eventually to urban designers promoting biodiversity and combating climate change as urgent priorities.

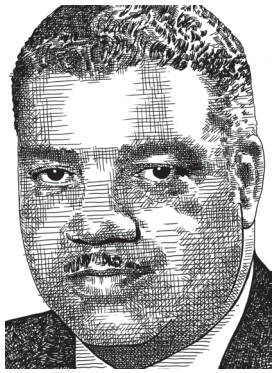
1.24: Rachel Carson

The sociologist **Ruth Glass** (1912–90) studied the process in which people with higher incomes move into a residential area and displace previous residents, often reducing social and economic diversity. The term she is credited with having coined in 1964, 'gentrification' (discussed in Chapter 4), caught on. One of the major issues in urban design remains whether the focus should be on improving the place, on the assumption that the benefits will generally trickle down, or on designing in the interests of specific categories of people.

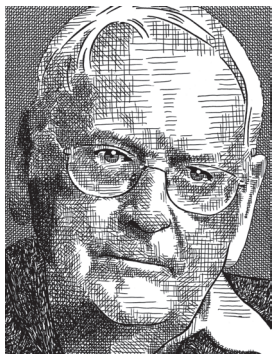
1.25: Ruth Glass

The New York-based urbanist and sociologist **William H. 'Holly' Whyte** (1917–99) recorded his studies based on close observation of how people used streets and plazas in books such as *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (1980). He found, for example, that the success of public plazas and parks depended on whether they were close enough to street level to allow for visibility and easy access, and whether they had trees, water features, sculptures and food vendors. Places where streets faced

1.26: William Whyte



1.27: Whitney Moore Young Jr



1.28: David Lewis

1.29: James Baldwin

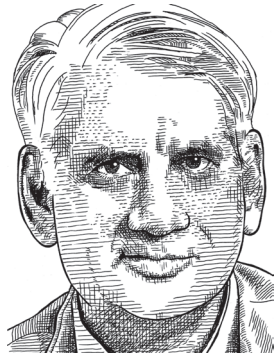
blank walls and had no shops, windows or doors were unlikely to be successful. Most of all, people liked watching people. 'It's hard to design a space that will not attract people,' he wrote. 'What is remarkable is how often this has been accomplished.'[12]

The civil rights leader **Whitney Moore Young Jr** (1921–71) made a lasting impact on planning and design when, in 1968, as the executive director of the National Urban League, he gave a keynote speech at the American Institute of Architects' national convention. He told his almost exclusively white, male audience: 'You are not a profession that has distinguished itself by your social and civic contributions to the cause of civil rights … You are most distinguished by your thunderous silence.'[13] Architects had collaborated in creating urban development from which black people were excluded. High-rise urban renewal projects, Young warned, were creating 'vertical slums'. His encouragement helped to set the scene for progressive architects to work with communities.

One of those progressive architects was the urban designer and architect **David Lewis** (1922–2020), who left his native South Africa at a young age after campaigning against apartheid. He spent most of his career in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, developing urban design as a professional discipline, and pioneering methods of involving communities in the design and planning of their own neighbourhoods. He was prominent in developing the form of intensive working sessions carried out over several days that are also known as charrettes or Enquiry by Design.

The writer and activist **James Baldwin** (1924–87) was an important influence on thinking about urban development in the 1960s. He recognised that the aim of many urban renewal programmes in the USA at that time was to improve ghettoes (parts of a city where a particular group is concentrated or segregated), but pointed out that their effect was merely to move the ghettoes from one part of the city to another. Baldwin wrote that the government studied black communities to discover why they were dysfunctional, whereas it was the racist attitudes of white people that were the problem. 'White people in this country will have quite enough to do in learning how to accept and love themselves and each other,' Baldwin wrote, 'and when they have achieved this – which will not be tomorrow and may very well be never – the [African American[14]] problem will no longer exist, for it will no longer be needed.'[15] Eighty years later, on both sides of the Atlantic, the issues of gentrification and racism remain central to the challenge of ensuring that urban design does more than just create pleasant places for people who can afford to live there.

The Indian architect and urban designer **Charles Correa** (1930–2015) pioneered new forms of architecture and urban form appropriate to the poorest communities. He showed how design could be rooted in local cultures and climate, drawing on traditional methods and materials.



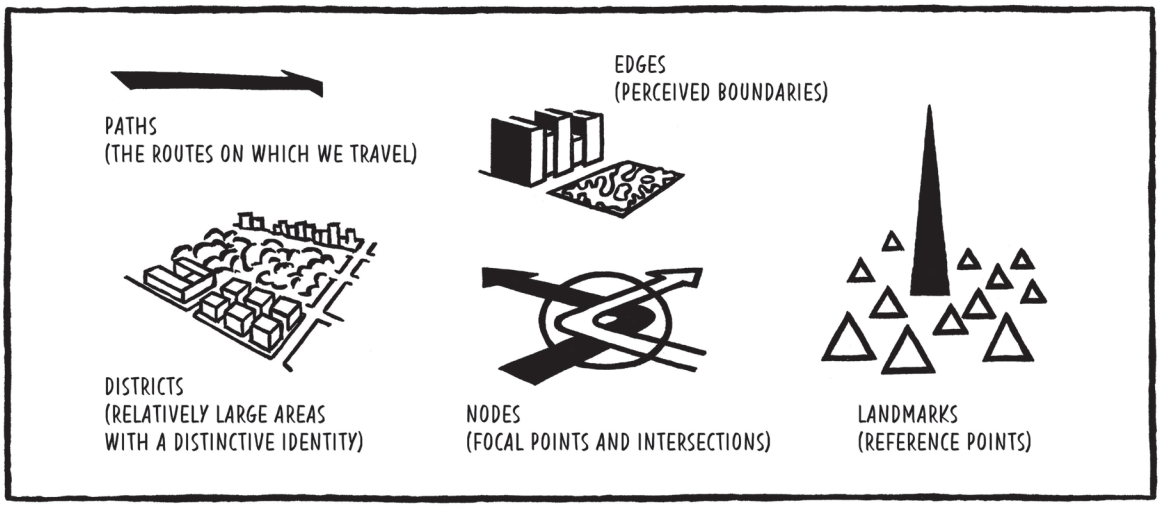
1.30: Charles Correa

In the 1970s, for example, Correa designed mass affordable housing at Belapur, in his role as chief architect of New Mumbai, India's largest planned city. High densities were achieved there by building low-rise courtyard homes, using simple materials without shared party walls, making them easy to extend. Clusters of between seven and 12 pairs of houses were arranged around communal courtyards. Correa's observation of traditional Indian settlements suggested to him that cities should be developed according to a spatial hierarchy, starting at the private world of the individual dwelling, through to the communal court, and on to larger public space, the scene of the community's public promenade.

The urban planner and designer **Kevin Lynch** (1918–84) studied with Frank Lloyd Wright from 1937 to 1939, and studied and later taught at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from the late 1940s, becoming professor of city planning in 1963. Lynch's work on the theory of city form was highly influential. Studies carried out in collaboration with Gyorgy Kepes led to Lynch's 1960 book *The Image of the City*. This established the concept of legibility (ease of understanding) as a major theme in urban design. Lynch's methods of analysing and graphically notating urban form are the most commonly used by urban designers today.

1.31: Kevin Lynch

The Image of the City reported that people understood their urban surroundings by forming mental maps with five elements (Figure 1.32). Urban designers still carry out 'Lynchian analysis', drawing simple plans that analyse a site or area in terms of these five elements.



1.32: The five elements of mental mapping

In his book *Good City Form*, published in 1984 in the year of his early death, Lynch broke new ground in defining seven criteria of successful places. These criteria are:

1. **Vitality:** The degree to which the form of the settlement supports the vital functions, biological requirements and capabilities of human beings.
2. **Sense:** The degree to which the settlement can be clearly perceived and mentally differentiated, and structured in time and space by its residents, and the degree to which that mental structure connects with their values and concepts.
3. **Fit:** The degree to which the form and capacity of spaces, channels and equipment in a settlement match the pattern and quantity of actions that people customarily engage in, or want to engage in.
4. **Access:** The ability to reach other persons, activities or places.
5. **Control:** The degree to which the use and access to spaces and activities, and their creation, repair, modification and management are controlled by those who use, work or reside in them.
6. **Efficiency:** The cost, in terms of other valued things, of creating and maintaining the settlement.
7. **Justice:** The way in which environmental benefits and costs are distributed.

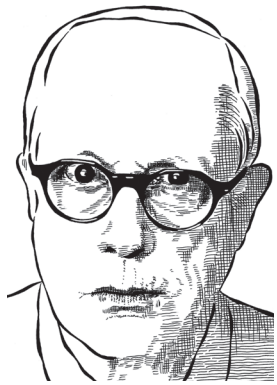
Lynch explained that the last two criteria (efficiency and justice) applied to each of the other five. The first five were 'meaningless until costs and benefits have been defined by specifying the prior basic values. In each case, one asks: first, what is the cost (in terms of anything else we choose to value) of achieving this degree of vitality, sense, fit, access or control? And, second, who is getting how much of it?'

Here were a set of criteria that could be used to assess a place, and to guide the process of planning or designing places. And they put that process in its political context, asking who would benefit from the development.

1.33: Denise Scott Brown

The urban planner, architect and theorist **Denise Scott Brown** (1931–) and her architect husband and partner Robert Venturi (1925–2018) helped to develop alternatives to the Modernist design sensibility of their time. They aimed to show how urban design and architecture could be enriched by popular (and even kitsch) culture, and how masterplanning could be inspired by historical and urban context. Scott Brown's own battle for recognition in a professional world dominated by upper-middle class white men contributed to slow moves towards diversity among urban designers and architects.

In the late 1970s the German industrial designer **Dieter Rams** (1932–), the celebrated designer of many products for the Braun company, among others, set out his 10 principles of good design. 'Good design,' Rams wrote, 'is innovative; makes a product useful; is aesthetic; makes a product understandable; is unobtrusive; is honest; is long-lasting; is thorough down to the last detail; is environmentally friendly; and is as little design as possible.'[16] Rams was thinking about products rather than places, but his principles may well have influenced thinking about urban design. The need to make a product understandable was taken up, following Kevin Lynch's lead, by the concern of many urban designers to make places legible – easy to understand and find your way around.



1.34: Dieter Rams

Christopher Alexander (1936–) is an architect, mathematician and theorist. Born in Vienna, he was raised and educated in England, and after 1963 was professor of architecture at Berkeley, California. His book *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction*, published in 1977, describes what he says are well-established ways of building that people can draw on in designing for themselves. Focusing on relationships between the scales of the city, neighbourhood, street, buildings and fine details, Alexander claims to show how places can be shaped by creating a web of these evolving relationships.

1.35: Christopher Alexander

Michael Mehaffy and Nikos Salingaros describe Alexander's views on architecture and the built environment as 'iconoclastic'. They write: 'Most of the architecture we have been making since the 1920s – however visually appealing it might be to some people – uses technology in a highly incomplete and deeply flawed way, with serious consequences for the adaptivity of the human environment. Its various design stylings – modernist, postmodernist, deconstructivist, blobitecture, etc – are really just varieties of elaborate decoration, masking an underlying kind of fragmented, objectified structure that is incompatible with evolved, sustainable form. They are visually exciting compositions … meant to help market what is at heart a series of commodified industrial objects. However exciting and promising they may first appear, in the end they can only add to the growing disaster that is the human built environment.'[17]

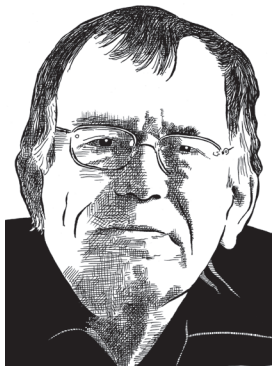
In 1985 Ian Bentley, Alan Alcock, Paul Murrain, Sue McGlynn and Graham Smith (academics based at Oxford Polytechnic, later Oxford Brookes University) published an influential primer of urban design, *Responsive Environments* (Figure 1.36). The book sets out seven urban design principles:

1.36: *Responsive Environments* (1985) by Ian Bentley, Alan Alcock, Paul Murrain, Sue McGlynn and Graham Smith

1. **Permeability:** There should be a choice of alternative ways through any environment.
2. **Variety:** Places should offer varied experiences through their range of uses.
3. **Legibility:** People should be able to understand the layout of a place.
4. **Robustness:** Places should be usable for many different purposes.
5. **Visual appropriateness:** The appearance of a place should make people aware of the choices it offers.
6. **Richness:** Detailed design, materials and construction techniques should contribute to increasing the sense-experiences users can enjoy.
7. **Personalisation:** People should be able to put their own stamp on their environment.

1.37: Francis Tibbalds

The town planner, urban designer and architect **Francis Tibbalds** (1941–92) was influential in introducing American urban design ideas to the UK – for example in his 1990 city-centre design strategy for Birmingham. As a founder and chairman of the Urban Design Group, he helped to show planners, architects, landscape designers and others that finding common ground in urban design was more productive than competing for professional supremacy. Tibbalds's '10 Commandments for Urban Design', set out in various articles in 1988, helped to shape professional practice. The commandments included 'consider places before buildings', 'design on a human scale' and 'avoid simultaneous change on too great a scale'.

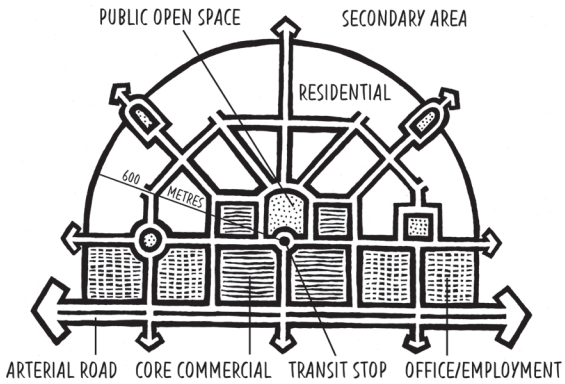


1.38: Jan Gehl

The Copenhagen-based architect and urban designer **Jan Gehl** (1936–) is noted for his close analysis and understanding of what makes successful streets and public spaces. 'In a society becoming steadily more privatised with private homes, cars, computers, offices and shopping centers, the public component of our lives is disappearing,'[18] he writes. 'It is more and more important to make the cities inviting, so we can meet our fellow citizens face to face and experience directly through our senses. Public life in good quality public spaces is an important part of a democratic life and a full life.'

Gehl learned the importance of understanding the human scale from Jane Jacobs. 'Fifty years ago, she said: go out there and see what works and what doesn't work, and learn from reality. Look out of your windows, spend time in the streets and squares, and see how people actually use spaces, learn from that, and use it.'[19] He has stressed the potential of incremental change, persuading the authorities in his home city of Copenhagen, for example, to gradually reduce the number of parking spaces in the city over the years so that eventually it has been transformed without most people noticing the change happening.

1.39: Peter Calthorpe

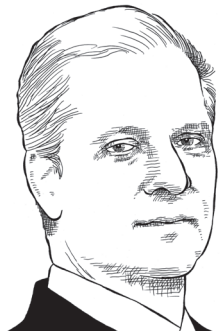


1.40: Transit-oriented development encourages walking

The US architect, urban designer and planner **Peter Calthorpe** (1949–) pioneered the new urbanist concept of transit-oriented development (TOD). (New urbanism is the approach to town planning and urban design advocated by the Congress for the New Urbanism, emphasising the physical characteristics that traditionally have made successful neighbourhoods.) TOD is concentrated around public transport stops at a scale that encourages walking, with some workplaces and local services. Terraces of family housing are served by on-street car parking.

Calthorpe also proposed the concept of the 'pedestrian pocket': a walkable, mixed-use urban area of up to 45 hectares, linked to public transport, with a park at its centre. The pedestrian pocket accommodates low-rise, high-density housing, and retail and commercial development.

The architect and planner Doug Kelbaugh has described the origins of the American new urbanist movement. 'The movement has grown out of two intellectual strains in America. One wing, represented by liberal Peter Calthorpe and his west coast colleagues, is environmentalism,' Kelbaugh writes. 'The other wing, represented by politically conservative Andrés Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk of Miami and of European sensibility, grows more out of a traditional architectural and urban formalism. One from the left and one from the right, they independently and happily came to the same conclusion: America needed to reject the modernist paradigm of specialized land use with specialized buildings designed and developed by specialists for specialized communities.'[20] Well-known examples of new urbanist communities include Seaside in Florida, designed by **Andrés Duany** and **Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk**, and Poundbury in Dorset, masterplanned by Léon Krier.



1.41: Andrés Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk

The sociologist **Saskia Sassen** (1947–) has influenced perspectives on urban design by her analysis of cities in a globalising world, including the impacts on urban life of economic restructuring, and the movements of labour and capital. Sassen's 1991 book *The Global City*