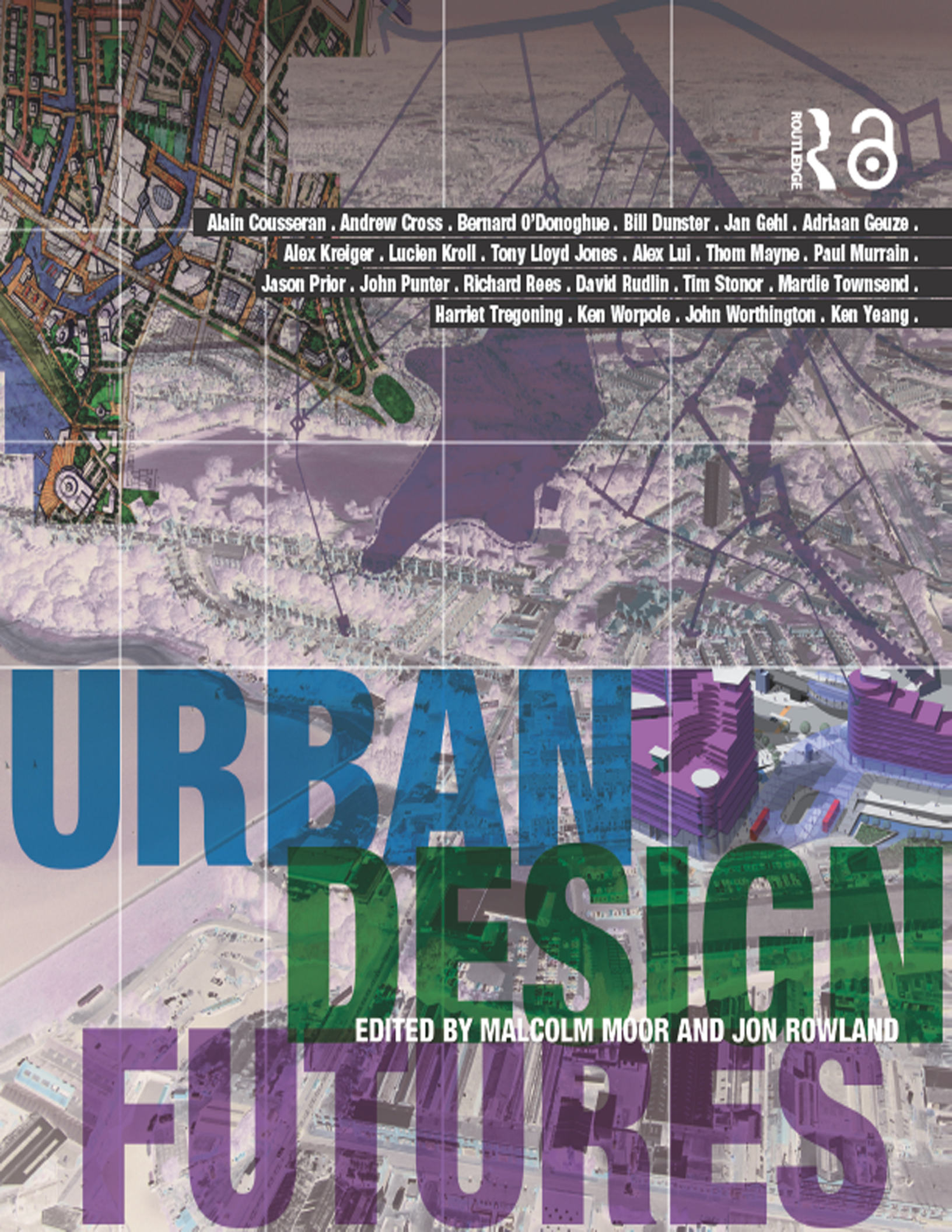

ROUTLEDGE

Alain Cousseran . Andrew Cross . Bernard O'Donoghue . Bill Dunster . Jan Gehl . Adriaan Geuze .
Alex Kreiger . Lucien Kroll . Tony Lloyd Jones . Alex Lui . Thom Mayne . Paul Murrain .
Jason Prior . John Punter . Richard Rees . David Rudlin . Tim Stonor . Mardie Townsend .
Harriet Tregoning . Ken Worpole . John Worthington . Ken Yeang .

URBAN DESIGN FUTURES

EDITED BY MALCOLM MOOR AND JON ROWLAND

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CITY PLANNING

BERNARD O'DONOGHUE

Carthago est delenda
Looked down on from the tower-top, it's fields
by other means: the street's the headland
where the mown hay has to be pulled back
making room for the tractor's clumsy, ribbed
back wheel. The Cathedrals, both persuasions,
face each other out across the skyline,
two swollen ricks, one of wheat, one barley.

So we, God's caretakers, are at liberty,
to reshape it or knock it all back down
and start again: to cut corners; leave fallow
the ground which only last year was (say)
the fruitful Eden where the Euphrates meets
the Tigris: to rub out the olive-drills
and rows of lights, the wide wrinkles of night-life.

And we're entitled too to smooth away
rough features, to erase them from the air
just as we'd brush the hair out of someone's eyes.
We make straight lines, arcing out from the centre,
just as in the old days we'd knock down
a fence between two fields and bulldoze it
into the quarry, covering the standing stone forever.

But you must have seen those light-maps, photographed
from space how the city's light shows up
by infra-red, and how the dark stays dark,
asleep at the edges. And those aerial pictures
of ringforts, how their subcutaneous
veins show through the earth's light covering
which has been hurriedly thrown over them.

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FOREWORD

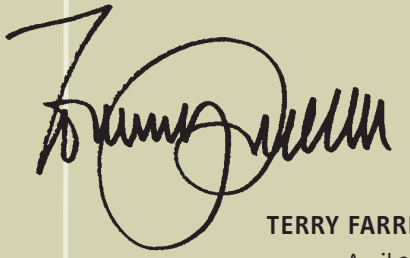
Speculating about the future of cities is an important critical endeavour for our times.

Our urban places, villages, towns, cities and metropolises are built slowly and by many hands. Planning them is an inexact art and the results range from effective to ineffective to the all too obviously downright damaging mistakes. But the importance of man's primary habitations and the future of the environment for all creatures on this globe necessitates that those who make urbanity their interest take stock, anticipate inevitable changes, speculate and then wherever possible plan in order to improve the eventual outcomes for us all. The evidence of successful speculation and planning is all around us, from the New Town in Edinburgh to Philadelphia's geometric grids, right up to the regeneration of the post-industrial landscapes of the world's urban docklands today.

This is an important book. It is unusual in that it is a book of beliefs and observations by some of the best practitioners and thinkers on urban design in the world. Its remit is global, the views of the authors reflect the social concerns of 'place' and the more dynamic ideas on form that are emerging from Europe, the Far-East and the US.

I cannot claim any credit for the excellent contributions to this book other than that it began as a result of a conversation at a happy gathering in my house where we were entertained by a jazz chanteuse and champagne. Of course, underlying this is my long association with Jon Rowland through the Urban Design Group. This important organisation brought many like minds together between the late 1980s and early 1990s at a time when the conjoined words of 'urban' and 'design' had to be expressed slowly with clear diction as the concept seemed to be new to most people – particularly political leaders and even, surprisingly, to many practitioners in the related fields, including architects, planners, engineers and landscape architects. Today of course it is another story, as many Prime Ministers and Presidents and their various ministers and departments declare their support for new initiatives in a worldwide urban renaissance.

With over half of the world's population now living in urban settlements and with our increasing acceptance that it is these settlements that are rapidly changing our climate and environment, the need for conjecture, imagination and debate on urban design futures is absolutely pressing and necessary. What's more the tools now at hand, particularly the electronic ones, make it much more possible to study the complexities, options and future projections of change that modern city planning involves. By simulating change and by engaging with a wide spectrum of those involved, choice and fairness in decision-making are made possible on scales that have not been achievable before. Urban design has come of age and the future is without doubt full of creative potential and discussion. This book is a catalyst for that debate.



TERRY FARRELL
April 2006

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Millennium Community and the regeneration of Lewisham. He is co-author of *Designing Our Environment* and the author of *Community Decay*. He was Chairman of the Urban Design Group and is now a Regional Representative for CABE. He has advised the Crown Estate and English Partnerships on urban design and was a visiting lecturer at Oxford Brookes University.

David Rudlin is a planner and urban designer. He joined URBED in 1990 to head up the BURA best practice award-winning Little Germany Action project in Bradford. Since joining URBED, he has worked on numerous projects including masterplans in Brighton and Bristol, among others, and regeneration studies in places such as Swansea, Barnsley, Moss Side and Liverpool. He has written widely, including research projects for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the DETR, the Urban Task Force, the Housing Corporation and Friends of the Earth. David was a co-author of the groundbreaking *Hulme Guide to Development* and was also a founder member of the Homes for Change Housing Co-operative in Hulme. He is a founder member of CUBE (the Centre for Understanding of the Built Environment) in Manchester and a policy council member of the Town and Country Planning Association.

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Mardie Townsend is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Health Sciences at Deakin University, Melbourne, where she teaches in 'Public Health' and 'Family and Society'. Her research interests include: housing and homelessness; sustainability and health; human health benefits of interaction with nature; social and health impact assessment; and corporate social responsibility. Her current research into the human health benefits of interaction with nature includes exploring the effects of inequity in access to nature for the health and well-being of individuals, groups and communities. She has recently been involved in overseeing the development of a new community centre within an aged care facility designed to bring the outside world into the aged care facility and thus to break down the barriers between residents and the outside community.

Harriet Tregoning was appointed Special Secretary of the Maryland Governor's Office of Smart Growth in July 2001. As Special Secretary for Smart Growth, she acts as an advocate for Smart Growth and co-ordinates the State's comprehensive Smart Growth Initiative. Previously, Harriet was Secretary of the Maryland Department of Planning, where she emphasised strengthening links between transportation, land use and housing policies and contributed to Maryland's Smart Growth initiative, winning the prestigious 'Innovations in Government Award' from the Ford Foundation and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. Harriet also served as the Director of the Urban and Economic Development Division of the US Environmental Protection Agency, where she founded the national Smart Growth Network.

Ken Worpole is one of Britain's most influential writers on urban social policy, and the author of many seminal reports and books. He has lectured and worked extensively in Europe, Australia and North America. His principal interests concern the quality of contemporary urban life, new forms of civil society, the planning and design of urban landscapes, the development of new kinds of institutions which support more convivial forms of democracy – and the pleasures of life in the open air. In 2001 he was appointed a member of the UK government's Urban Green Spaces Task Force. The same year he took on the role of English Editor to the UNCHS report *The State of the World's Cities*, published in New York in June 2001. In 2002 he was appointed as an expert adviser to the Historic Buildings and Land Panel of the Heritage Lottery Fund, and in 2003 to the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), notably on issues concerning the contemporary public domain.

John Worthington is a founder of DEGW, an international strategic design consultancy focused on enabling the process of change from the scale of the workplace to the city. He is currently chair of Building Futures, a joint CABE RIBA initiative, and Visiting Professor at the University of Sheffield and Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg. He is past President and current Patron of the Urban Design Group.

Ken Yeang is an architect specialising in the design and planning of signature buildings and masterplans that are green or ecologically-responsive. He has pioneered a new genre of tall buildings, referred to as the 'bioclimatic skyscraper'. Ken studied at the AA (the Architectural Association) School in London and completed his doctorate at Cambridge University. His doctoral work on ecological design was published by McGraw-Hill USA (in 1995) as a book, *Designing with Nature*. He is the author of several key books and articles on skyscraper and ecological design, including *The Green Skyscraper: The Basis for Designing Sustainable Intensive Buildings* (1999).

URBAN DESIGN FUTURES is a book about ideas. It is about the exciting ideas in urban design at the moment and it puts forward a series of provocative scenarios for directions in which urban design could evolve. These scenarios take the form of a series of 'think-pieces' on different aspects of urban design by leading practitioners and theorists. This book celebrates the plurality of thinking and approaches in urban design and recognises the emerging ideas on how to arrive at what we all agree is the destination, more attractive liveable cities. We have addressed this issue of plurality by allowing our contributors as thinkers and practitioners to freely express their thoughts of what they see as the central issues and how they would like to see urban design developing. We believe that this is the right time to produce such a book. Urban design theory is at a point where debate is essential. This book contributes to the debate and presents some avenues of future development that all those involved in reshaping urban areas should be considering.

We decided upon the form of this book by choosing broad themes and a list of potential contributors to address them in their own terms. The contributors include talented urban designers that we know well and have co-operated with on projects, as well as those whose work and writing we have admired, to whom we wrote asking for a contribution. We have been fortunate in receiving stimulating and original work from all our twenty-two contributors and are grateful to them for their time and energy, but mostly for their ideas. Not surprisingly, we have learnt a great deal from the interchange of views that has greatly expanded our own knowledge and opinions on how to move urban design forward.

PREFACE

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

The book is structured around four themes with introductory and concluding contributions from the editors:

Part 1 Overviews of the key objectives that urban design addresses and the role and territories of the urban designer.

Part 2 The heart of urban design, the public realm and those for whom it is designed.

Part 3 The big issue of sustainability and how technology could be a means to achieve it through new building typologies.

Part 4 New forms of urbanism that are being created from the cross fertilisation of urban design with contemporary forces such as networking, branding, rapid change and uncertainty.

In the prologue to the book, Bernard O'Donoghue speaks of the layers of human occupation of the fragile land and the responsibility of those who build over but never totally erase earlier settlement patterns.

In the Introduction, Malcolm Moor sets the scene of where urban design is at the moment and how it arrived at the present situation, then signposts the themes and ideas set out by the different contributors.

In **PART 1**, **'Urban Design Comes of Age: The Bigger Picture'**, six contributors present overviews of urban design and development patterns. What are the central issues that urban design sets out to tackle and what are the trends taking place in society that are reflected in the form of the built environment?

Chapter 1, **Alex Krieger** gives a number of definitions of urban design and sets out ten spheres of urbanistic action starting with the basic position of the bridge between planning and architecture.

The objectives of 'mainstream urban design' are becoming well recognised in the developed world but are these same objectives applicable to third world cities? **Tony Lloyd-Jones** in **Chapter 2** lists these objectives and asks whether in a global world any form of universal urban design is feasible or desirable.

Harriet Tregoning in **Chapter 3** describes how Americans are schizophrenic about the built environment. They want to preserve green space but don't see how that relates to their own house built on former farmland.

In his **Chapter 4**, **'Civitas'**, **Paul Murrain** begins by defining what we mean by the 'public realm' and 'urbanism' and how the word 'tradition' is usually misunderstood. This article is an edited version of the introduction for Civitas, an exhibition of traditional urbanism in contemporary practice. The original has now been published in the Civitas Catalogue.

How to both raise standards and ensure that design effort is properly channelled into projects that get built? In **Chapter 5**, **John Punter** points to the recent experience in Europe and the USA that can teach us how to create more effective mechanisms for design control.

Endeavouring to revive 'the slow art of urban design' and make it exciting and memorable forms the core of **David Rudlin**'s **Chapter 6**. He is concerned that now urban design is finding acceptance it could be in danger of becoming boring and predictable.

PART 2, **'Connecting Social Spaces: Creating the Public Realm'**, shows how achieving an exciting yet safe public realm with a good balance between order and surprise is at the heart of urban design. Contributors cover all aspects of the design of the public realm and how we should set about its successful creation.

'The major attraction of any city is its people, its life and vitality.' This is how **Jan Gehl** begins his **Chapter 7**, **'Life, Spaces, Buildings – and in Said Order Please'**. The title aptly sums up his argument.

Tim Stonor uses his chapter 8 **'The Insecurity of Urbanism'** to express his concern that urban design methods are currently less secure than they should be. The answer, he says, is to study the link between space and activity using space syntax as a tool to create better urban places.

The public realm is the setting for everyday activities as well as civic and cultural events. **Chapter 9**, by **Adriaan Geuze**, shows how the street is an effective regulator of human activity.

The rapidly growing cities of Asia have embraced modern architecture as the embodiment of economic progress but in the process have rejected much of their own built heritage and traditional street-life. **Alex Lui** tells of a rare conservation success story in Hong Kong in **Chapter 10**.

In **Chapter 11**, **Ken Worpole** reinforces the view that urban designers need to pay attention to the fine detail of human needs and aspirations to create places that enlarge people's capacity for self-confidence and sociability.

That male-oriented perceptions continue to dominate the conceptualisation of space is the theme of **Mardie Townsend**'s **Chapter 12**. Townsend states that women's role as both carers and professionals has been ignored.

In **Chapter 13**, **Alain Cousseran** gives an account of how the Modern Movement rejected the idea of external space as something sculpted from the built volume and he criticises this ignorance of what has constituted public space.

Lucien Kroll passionately attacks the hypocrisy of modern architecture. In **Chapter 14**, he shows how through trial and error all the modernist diversions have been called into question. He illustrates his viewpoint with his own humanistic designs.

PART 3, '**Sustainability Through Technology: Creating New Typologies**', states that the challenge of the sustainable agenda is to rewrite the way we do things. Reducing environmental impacts can range from refining existing building forms to making them more energy-efficient, to the creation of new building typologies that can totally change our perception of what constitutes the building blocks of urbanism.

In **Chapter 15**, **Bill Dunster** argues against carbon complacency and asks 'What is the new ordinary?' His BedZED project in Sutton sets a challenge for the building industry to mass-produce zero-energy housing as well as redefining what is considered good urban design.

The intensification of built form to maximise use of land is another route to increased sustainability, which means getting to grips with the high rise and redefining its role in the city. **Ken Yeang** has pioneered the green skyscraper and now puts forward his vertical theory of urban design in **Chapter 16**.

PART 4, '**Networks Expand Choice: New Frameworks for Urbanism'** shows how powerful economic forces descend on cities, defy the street patterns and move the urban life blood, core retail and office space, into new shopping and commercial typologies. Business and industrial parks, airports and the complex networks of linkages of networked cities: are these the new urban dynamics?

Richard Rees of architects BDP has been involved in many major urban design projects with large retail elements. In **Chapter 17**, he reports that 'The Brand New Authentic Retail Experience' is all around us and is developing new forms of architecture which have a retail component at their core.

The networks that link economic and industrial activity are becoming increasingly complex. In **Chapter 18**, **Andrew Cross** looks at this phenomenon and asks, 'Can place be an experience defined more easily by movement?'

In **Chapter 19**, **Jason Prior** illustrates how the London Olympics is based on the dynamics of movement and the flexibility of specialised buildings to being adapted to post-Olympic urbanism.

Other forms of urban growth could be patterns for sustainable urban growth. **John Worthington**, in **Chapter 20**, takes us through the networked cities based on information technology where a new typology of places is beginning to emerge with overlapping functions and a synergy of complementary uses.

In the **penultimate chapter**, **Thom Mayne** succinctly describes his Morphosis competition entry for the World Trade Center site and how they rethought the concept of the tower.

In the **Conclusion**, **Jon Rowland** explores the various approaches with some thoughts of new directions that have emerged from the polemical views of the contributors. The future of urban design is still evolving and we hope that this book may guide its further development.

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Our thanks go to Caroline Mallinder for her encouragement to edit this book and her determination to produce a final product of which we can all be proud.

We wish to express our unswerving appreciation to our assistant Nicole West who helped maintain the project momentum and kept us focused on the task with efficiency and humour. We also greatly appreciate the work put in by our contributors' support staff.

Thanks also to Annie and Marie-José for their support and patience, which have now been rewarded with seeing more of us at weekends.

This Introduction sets out the factors that have led to the current situation where urban design is at the forefront of the drive to improve our urban areas and achieve an urban renaissance. The past few years have seen real improvements in many urban areas. Regeneration is taking place on a broad front and at different scales of intervention from major developments to small-scale interventions of new buildings, changes in the nature of streets, refurbishment and renewal. An urban design vision provides the focus for these changes and acts as the point of communication for the increasingly broad range of disciplines of the modern design team of transport and traffic engineers, town planners, ecologists, landscape architects, property surveyors, civil engineers and sustainability specialists.

0.1 Davygate, York. Well-designed modern infill, makes positive contribution to historic street while providing needed deep-plan shopping floorspace.
Source: Panter Hudspith Architects

INTRODUCTION

MALCOLM MOOR

0.2 Vandalised garage court, Marsh Farm Estate, Luton. Isolated garage courts that are not supervised by housing are little used and become targets for vandalism.

0.3 Residential towers in park, Rochdale Road, Manchester, reflect Le Corbusier's view of the park integrated into the high-rise city but these flats are still due to be demolished.

0.4 Ring road severance, Bury. Shoppers prefer to negotiate the road at the grade crossing rather than the forbidding underpass to reach the new superstore.

0.5 Retail boxes along inner ring road, Telford, present blank façades to drivers negotiating Telford town centre one-way box road.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Urban design has evolved into its present form by learning from both the good and the bad examples of the past and through tapping into exciting ideas and innovation taking place in the built environment throughout the world. It is both these positive and negative forces that are driving the enthusiasm to produce exciting urbanism for the future. The book draws on the ideas and experience of thinkers and practitioners throughout the world in order to set the context. This Introduction first looks at the way past events have formed our views in the UK before giving a brief overview of the environmental and social forces for change that we must respond to now. It then sets out some potential future directions, most of which are applicable internationally.

'THOSE WHO CANNOT REMEMBER THE PAST ARE CONDEMNED TO REPEAT IT'

This quote from the philosopher George Santayana[1] is his interpretation of Darwin's evolution of species. Santayana's view was that we will get better at dealing with the ever changing world if we are both retentive and flexible; conscious of the past and yet adaptable. This describes the way urban design is driven by our determination not to repeat the mistakes of the past as well as responding to changes in the way we live now and could be living in the immediate future. Urban planning has progressed in a series of cycles that usually begin well and end badly. New urban theories gestate to a level of intellectual acceptance. Funds are then found through enthusiastic promoters to build a model scheme. The resulting seminal project is then praised by the critics and copied uncritically by other professionals, often in inappropriate locations. For example, Le Corbusier's Unité at Marseilles is an inspired design, but has been the inspiration for thousands of drab and usually poor quality high-rise housing projects worldwide. Clarence Stein's housing at Radburn, New Jersey, was an interesting concept of how the car could be safely segregated from the pedestrian. In certain communities it works but it was copied indiscriminately and became the standard rubber stamp layout for soulless suburban housing estates where cars seldom park in vandalised garage courts and residents prefer to park on the grass verges.

The cycle continues as time usually reveals the original concept to be flawed or used inappropriately. A period of disillusionment and stagnation follows as professionals wonder why problems were not spotted earlier, before another new theory comes into vogue, gains a sufficient level of acceptance to be built and the cycle is underway once more. This cyclical situation is often aggravated by abrupt changes of policy direction in line with the prevailing political climate and the demands of the most pressing issues of the moment. Viewed from this historical perspective, it is not surprising that so little real progress has been made in improving the quality of urban life.

IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO HAVE GOOD INTENTIONS

Moving forwards while looking backwards with only a vague idea of the route ahead, both planning and rowing progress in a similar fashion. Looking backwards to Ebenezer Howard's bold concept of the Town-Country Magnet[2] is still the

0.6 **Deck access housing, Gospel Oak, North London. Dramatic entrance ramp probably looked better on the architect's sketch than it does in stark reality.**

most evocative expression of the peculiarly English desire to make a fresh start away from the pollution and constrictions of the industrial city. Clean air, a job down the road, kids in the local school and a cow looking over the back fence was the poster image of the perfect family life. Britain has exported this new town model world-wide with varying degrees of success and quite a few cases of 'new town blues'. The new town exemplar in the UK was Milton Keynes, where the planners, fresh from their US studies, boldly gridded up the fields, made a shopping mall serve as a town centre, and then, as if embarrassed by their boldness, hid the whole enterprise behind belts of shrubs and trees.

People at the time of Howard's book and today believe that the new town approach is a distraction from the crucial issue of making the best of our existing cities.[3] Modernism took the opposite premise of bringing the countryside into the city. The Modern Movement dismissed the new town's picturesque ethos, the industrial city was the place to build a better world for the future. This new city would of course require a new man, one who would evolve to fit this modern utopia.

THE MODERN MOVEMENT

The discoveries of science and the theories of Darwin, Marx, Freud and Einstein, together with the traumas caused by the Great War and the Depression, had set in motion the spirit of modernism that a new generation of artists and architects embraced. Gone were the shackles of conventional multi-purpose streets lined with houses, corner shops and the municipal park. Architects were the protagonists of the new, free of the stifling brick overcoat of the nineteenth-century industrial city and free to create the ideal city in the park, the best of town and country on everyone's doorstep, a choice within easy reach of society or solitude. Every new building was a step towards re-engineering the human soul.

In Chapter 13 Alain Cousseran explains how the Modern Movement eliminated the idea of the clearly defined 'inscribed space' in favour of more fluid 'open space' and split the complex function of public space into separate areas. Colin Rowe has traced the schism that this view of space represented between the old and new worlds to the CIAM Congress of 1923. In his introduction to Rob Krier's *Urban Space*, he speaks of modernism as 'the architect Pied Pipers who charmed and seduced only to leave us in a wilderness far from home'.[4] Modernism required people to fit the architect's vision but many residents clearly did not adapt as there was a fundamental mismatch between the way architects intended people to behave in their new environments and how they actually did behave when living there. In the worse cases, tenants were marooned in high rises with no contact with the ground or had to negotiate scary labyrinthine deck access ways to their front door. The result was alienation and trashed estates set on a downward spiral of decay where few people wanted to live.

Not wanting to be left behind, traffic engineers argued that towns would not work without allowing unrestricted use of the car. Town centres were sliced up with inner ring roads and strict traffic segregation forced pedestrians off the streets into grim forbidding subways. The Labour Government of 1967 was determined to clear the slums and set a target of 300,000 new houses a