Urban Design: The American Experience

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Urban Design the American Experience Jon Lang Urban Design: The American Experience places social and environmental concerns within the context of American history. It returns the focus of urban design to the creation of a better world. It evaluates the efforts of designers who apply knowledge about the environment and people to the creation of livable, enjoyable, and even inspiring built worlds. Urban Design: The American Experience emphasizes that urban design must take a user-oriented approach to achieve a higher quality of life in human settlements. All the keys to this approach are spelled out in chapters that address:
* Urban design as both a product and process of communal decision-making
* Types of knowledge required as a base for urban design action
* How to apply recent environmental and behavioral research to professional design
* How human needs are fulfilled through design
* The true role of functionalism in design
Urban design efforts of the twentieth century in the United States are examined within their socio-political context. Jon Lang reviews the urban design experience from the beginning of the "City Beautiful" movement, paying particular attention to developments since World War II. He explores how the twentieth-century city has developed, as well as discusses the attitudes that have driven major movements in urban design. Readers learn a neo-Modernist approach that builds on the successes and failures of Rationalism and Empiricism, the two major streams of Modernist thought in architecture and urban design. They also gain an understanding of how the environment is experienced by people, and the implications of this experiencing for architectural and urban design. Numerous illustrations throughout demonstrate how various design schemes can be used. Urban Design: The American Experience provides architects, designers, city planners, and students in these fields with a model for their own future development as professionals. It is a valuable guide to design methodology (procedural theory) and other issues related to creating optimal urban environments.

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