



Towns and Cities: Function in Form: Urban Structures, Economics and Society (Design and the Built Environment)

Julian Hart

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Challenging existing assumptions about how our towns and cities are structured and formed, Julian Hart provides an engaging and thought-provoking alternative theory of urban design. This is not urban design in the sense of the practice of design; rather it is a theory of the form of the town at all scales - why towns and cities happen to be structured the way they are as a result of the social, political, legal and (especially) economic forces that create them. The shape of the city at every scale, from the internal configuration of dwellings all the way up to the superstructure of the whole city, can be seen to arise from the interplay between three antagonistic socio-economic tensions. In going about our daily business and in championing particular political objectives, we collectively fashion our cities in terms of their structure and form. This leads to various new ways of understanding how and why our cities so happen to be configured the way they are. The book makes a step change from any other comparable studies by understanding our towns and cities in terms of function in form. This helps us to appreciate why every town is a recognisable town, wherever it is. Different urban environments in different parts of the world, past and present, can come to be seen according to their similarities instead of their differences. Furthermore, by appreciating how the economic influences of everyday life structure our towns and cities, we can in turn begin to understand better how the shape of towns and cities affects the quality of life of inhabitants and the cohesiveness of communities. In covering all scales from inside the home to macrostructure of the city, the book encapsulates urban design through to town planning and does not seek to distinguish between the various design disciplines.

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