


Urban Design

An overview of the field, its techniques, and its uses

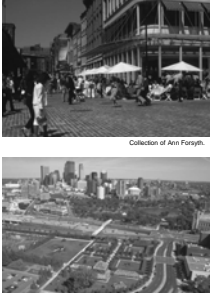


Main Menu Created by the Design Center for American Urban Landscape, University of Minnesota for Community Planning and Economic Development, City of Minneapolis

Urban Design

Contents

1. [What is urban design?](#)
2. [The value of urban design](#)
3. [Issues in urban design](#)
4. [Approaches to urban design](#)
5. [A history of urban design](#)
6. [Scales of urban design](#)
7. [Analysis and representation techniques in urban design](#)
8. [Implementing urban design](#)



©2003 Regents of the University of Minnesota. All Rights Reserved. Used with the permission of Design Center for American Urban Landscape.

Main Menu Contents • [Urban Design](#) • Approaches • History • Scales • Techniques • Implementation
Urban Design

1. What is Urban Design?

Urban design is the making of better places for people.

It is usually done at a scale larger than a building, and usually with multiple groups involved.

It is an overlapping specialty within architecture, landscape architecture, and planning.

It tries to balance many considerations: physical form, functional needs, social issues, economic issues, community values, environmental sustainability.

Main Menu Contents • [Urban Design](#) • Approaches • History • Scales • Techniques • Implementation
Urban Design

Urban Design in Minneapolis




In Minneapolis, urban design can create long-term value, livability, and efficiency by coordinating investments in areas such as:

- Districts around new transit lines
- Commercial corridors
- Community corridors
- Neighborhood centers

©2003 Regents of the University of Minnesota. All Rights Reserved. Used with the permission of Design Center for American Urban Landscape.

Main Menu Contents • [Urban Design](#) • Approaches • History • Scales • Techniques • Implementation
Urban Design

2. The Value of Urban Design



©2003 Regents of the University of Minnesota. All Rights Reserved. Used with the permission of Design Center for American Urban Landscape.


In an era of crowded freeways, placeless development, and environmental problems, urban design offers the possibility of creating places that are more attractive, satisfying, efficient, and environmentally sound.

Main Menu Contents • [Urban Design](#) • Approaches • History • Scales • Techniques • Implementation
Urban Design

3. Urban Design Issues

Urban designers must consider a wide variety of issues that affect the built environment:

- Physical form
- Functional needs
- Human issues
- Social equity
- Community values



All images ©2003 Regents of the University of Minnesota. All Rights Reserved. Used with the permission of Design Center for American Urban Landscape.

Main Menu Contents • [Urban Design](#) • Approaches • History • Scales • Techniques • Implementation
Urban Design



©2003 Regents of the University of Minnesota. All Rights Reserved. Used with the permission of Design Center for American Urban Landscape.

Physical Form

The arrangement of physical elements in a place and their aesthetic character (proportion, scale, surfaces, organization) are the most visible aspect of urban design.

Main Menu Contents • [Urban Design](#) • Approaches • History • Scales • Techniques • Implementation
Urban Design



©2003 Regents of the University of Minnesota. All Rights Reserved. Used with the permission of Design Center for American Urban Landscape.

Functional Needs

Basic functions such as transportation, economic development, and ecology must be understood and incorporated in urban design.

Main Menu Contents • [Urban Design](#) • Approaches • History • Scales • Techniques • Implementation
Urban Design

Human Issues

Urban design is also concerned with how the built environment supports its users, such as its fit with human needs, sense of vitality, meaning, and history.



©2003 Regents of the University of Minnesota. All Rights Reserved. Used with the permission of Design Center for American Urban Landscape.

Main Menu Contents • [Urban Design](#) • Approaches • History • Scales • Techniques • Implementation
Urban Design



©2003 Regents of the University of Minnesota. All Rights Reserved. Used with the permission of Design Center for American Urban Landscape.

Social Equity

Social vitality and equal access to opportunities can be encouraged through urban design.

Main Menu Contents • [Urban Design](#) • Approaches • History • Scales • Techniques • Implementation
Urban Design



©2003 Regents of the University of Minnesota. All Rights Reserved. Used with the permission of Design Center for American Urban Landscape.

Community Values

Urban design can help express shared priorities of the community, such as efficiency, fairness, and respect for nature.

Main Menu Contents • [Urban Design](#) • Approaches • History • Scales • Techniques • Implementation
Urban Design

4. Approaches to Urban Design

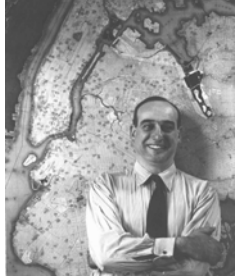
There are different approaches to urban design, which are often used in combination with each other

1. Civic architecture—big or contextual projects
2. Urban restoration—(re)creating or filling in historical patterns
3. Participatory or community design
4. New town and land planning
5. Urban infrastructure e.g. streetscapes
6. Sustainable urban form from small to large scale

[More on urban design approaches](#)

Main Menu Contents • [Urban Design](#) • [Approaches](#) • History • Scales • Techniques • Implementation
Urban Design

What urban design is not, or at least not often these days:
a single vision written into the land



Source: Hixson University Archives. Used by permission.

5. History of Urban Design, part 1

<u>Pre-industrial city</u>	Traditional design
<u>Industrial city</u>	Aesthetic, housing, and transportation problems as cities grow
<u>19th and Early 20th century</u>	Early attempts to beautify cities, rationalize transportation, create suburban alternatives
<u>Early 20th century</u>	Increasing gap between planners, housers, and designers doing "civic design"

[More on urban design history](#)






History of Urban Design, part 2

<u>1950s and 1960s</u>	Urban renewal, modernist architecture, and suburbs all seem ugly and inhumane
<u>c. 1960</u>	Urban design emerges in its contemporary form—key authors include J.Jacobs, Lynch, Cullen. Educational programs develop in architecture; landscape architects do a lot in practice
<u>1990s</u>	Success of big revitalization projects and new rounds of criticisms of sprawl increase urban design interest among the public and in planning

[More on urban design history](#)

6. Scales

Urban design can be applied at a variety of scales

<u>Areas</u>	<u>Linear systems</u>
 <u>Site</u>	 <u>Street</u>
 <u>Block</u>	 <u>Corridor</u>
 <u>Center</u>	 <u>Other</u>
 <u>District or Neighborhood</u>	 <u>Natural Systems</u>
 <u>City or Group of Cities</u>	
 <u>Metropolis</u>	

[More on scales](#)

7. Analysis and Representation Techniques in Urban Design

Many different techniques are used to understand the urban environment and to represent changes:

1. Observing and recording
2. Drawing physical plans and three dimensional analyses
3. Representing history and meaning
4. Analyzing density, activities, and movement or circulation
5. Understanding ecology and sustainability
6. Assessing public needs
7. Representing alternative options

[More on analysis techniques](#)

Common Proposals

When proposing changes, urban designers frequently use organizing strategies, and descriptive terminology, such as:

Areas and districts	revitalized blocks, new urbanist neighborhoods, urban villages
Corridors	green streets, waterfront promenades, greenways
Centers	town centers, activity nodes, transit-oriented development, landmarks
Gateways	gateway treatments, way-finding signage

8. Implementing Urban Design

Ideas become reality through many means, from actually building or planting through first raising awareness

- Built projects (buildings, infrastructure, art)
- Master plans
- Regulations and standards
- Policies, guidelines, performance criteria
- Incentives and bonuses
- Commissions and reviews
- Education/awareness (books, tours, talks)



©2003 Regents of the University of Minnesota. All Rights Reserved. Used with the permission of Design Center for American Urban Landscape.

[More on implementation](#)

Main
Menu

Contents • Urban Design • Approaches • History • Scales • Techniques • Implementation
Urban Design

Conclusion

1. [What is urban design?](#)
2. [The value of urban design](#)
3. [Considerations in urban design](#)
4. [Approaches to urban design](#)
5. [A history of urban design](#)
6. [Scales of urban design](#)
7. [Analysis and representation techniques in urban design](#)
8. [Implementation strategies for urban design](#)

Main
Menu

Contents • Urban Design • Approaches • History • Scales • Techniques • Implementation
Urban Design

Further Resources

- Camona, Matthew, Tim Heath, Taner Oc, Steve Tiesdell. 2003. *Public Places, Urban Spaces: The Dimensions of Urban Design*. Oxford: Architectural Press.
- Ching, Francis. 1979. *Architecture: Form, Space, Order*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Gehl, Jan. 1987. *Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Jacobs, Jane. 1961. *Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Random House.
- Jacobs, Allan. 1993. *Great Streets*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Lynch, Kevin. 1984. *Good City Form*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Whyte, William. 1988. *City: Rediscovering the Center*. New York: Doubleday.

Main
Menu

Contents • Urban Design • Approaches • History • Scales • Techniques • Implementation
Urban Design

Image Credits

All images by the Design Center for American Urban Landscape except as noted below:
Image on slide 2, Design Center for American Urban Landscape, collection of Ann Forsyth.
Image on slide 6, Design Center for American Urban Landscape, collection of Ann Forsyth.
Image on slide 13, Museum of the City of New York. Used by permission.
Image on slide 16, Metropolitan Council. Used by permission.
Image on slide 16, City of Minneapolis. Used by permission.

Main
Menu

Contents • Urban Design • Approaches • History • Scales • Techniques • Implementation
Urban Design

Credits

This presentation was produced by the Design Center for American Urban Landscape, College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, University of Minnesota:

Ann Forsyth, Director
Dan Marckel, Senior Research Fellow
Nancy Miller, Research Associate
Wira Noeradi, Research Fellow
Nathan Burt, Research Assistant
Matt Finn, Research Assistant
Ian Kaminski-Coughlin, Research Assistant
Allison Rockwell, Research Assistant
Jorge Salcedo, Research Assistant
Katie Thering, Research Specialist
David Lowe, Office Specialist II

This presentation was funded by the Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development Department. It was compiled with the guidance, review, and advice of the Community Planners in the CPED/Planning Division:

Lee Sheehy, CPED Executive Director
Barbara Sporlein, Planning Director
Pamela Miner, Community Planning Supervisor
Community Planners: Jennifer Bever, Jack Byers, Beth Elliot, Mark Garner, Mike Larson, and Tom Leighton.

Main
Menu

Contents • Urban Design • Approaches • History • Scales • Techniques • Implementation
Urban Design

Credits

© Design Center for American Urban Landscape, College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, University of Minnesota. The Design Center is solely responsible for statements and errors in the materials.

Permission is granted for use of this presentation for non-profit educational purposes. Acknowledgement is required. Stand-alone use of Design Center images is permitted with acknowledgement. Stand-alone use of non-Design Center images or materials requires permission of their authors.

If used as part of a larger project, the Design Center requests two copies of any materials thus produced. If used in its original state, please email to inform the Design Center of its use (dcaul@umn.edu)

Design Center for American Urban Landscape
1 Rapson Hall
89 Church Street
Minneapolis, MN 55455
612-625-9000
www.designcenter.umn.edu

Main
Menu

Contents • Urban Design • Approaches • History • Scales • Techniques • Implementation
Urban Design