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# PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The subject matter of this book is sustainable city development. Any discussion of urban design which does not address environmental issues has little meaning at a time of declining natural resources, ozone layer destruction, increasing pollution and fears of the greenhouse effect. The long-term survival of the planet as a hostess for sustained human occupation in anything other than a degraded lifestyle is in some doubt. In these circumstances any discussion of aesthetics in a pure or abstract form unrelated to environmental concerns could be thought to be superficial. This book considers architecture and its sister art, urban design, to consist of ‘Commodotie, Firmness and Delight’ (Wotton, 1969; Moughtin, 1992). One aspect of ‘Commodotie’ in urban development is sustainability, that is a development which is non-damaging to the environment and which contributes to the city’s ability to sustain its social and economic structures.

The requirements of sustainable development closely mirror the current agenda in urban design. The reactions to modern architecture and modern planning have led to a new appreciation of the traditional European city and its urban form. The

current preoccupations of urban designers with the form of urban space, the vitality and identity of urban areas, qualities of urbanity, respect for tradition, and preferences for developments of human scale can all be encompassed within the schema of sustainable development. The two movements – Sustainable Development and Post Modern Urban Design – are mutually supportive. Post Modern Urban Design gives form to the menu of ideas subsumed under the title of Sustainable Development; in return it is given functional legitimacy. Without this functional legitimacy and the discipline a functional dimension imposes on the design process, Post Modern Urban Design may develop into just another esoteric aesthetic. The foundation of urban design is rooted in social necessity: society today is faced with an environmental crisis of global proportions and it is coming to terms with the effects of this crisis on the world’s cities which gives purpose and meaning to urban design.

Pursuit of sustainable city structures presupposes also the development of a built environment of quality. The pursuit of environmental quality in the city requires