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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

Attitudes to the embellishment of cities with ornament and decoration range from a puritanical iconoclasm that sees such embellishment as decadent and pernicious, to one of joyous pleasure in the experience of complex, intricate and extravagant patterning. The Modern Movement in architecture, epitomized by the writings of Le Corbusier, the pronouncements of CIAM, the work of the Bauhaus and the much criticized post Second World War city developments in Europe, North America and elsewhere, was a time when decoration in architecture was eschewed.

We are now experiencing an attempt to re-humanize our cities aesthetically as well as tackling their social and economic problems. In this book we have adopted an aesthetic approach to urban design, primarily because this is an area that has recently been neglected in the literature. There is a need to discuss the principles that have governed ornament and decoration in cities to guide current efforts to heal and humanize our cities making them more delightful experiences. Sir Henry Wootton described the fundamental qualities of architecture as 'firmness, commodity and delight'. Over the past few decades we have concentrated on the first two criteria. It is therefore timely that we return and explore 'delight'.

In many cities, the city centre streets are being reclaimed from cars and the tarmac replaced with intricate and expensive floorscaping for traffic-calmed streets, but this has not always been successful. Most cities are making an effort to have sculptures in their squares or decorative fountains but few of these are as memorable as the statue of Marcus Aurelius in the Campidoglio or the Trevi Fountain. Thus, it is necessary to identify the principles for the successful embellishment of our cities before we make further mistakes. This book is written to help architects, urban designers, planners, city politicians, developers and citizens in their effort to re-humanize and heal our cities with the assistance of ornament and decoration.