

This Page Intentionally Left Blank

# PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The aim of this book is to examine the purpose of decoration when used to embellish the city. It does not set out to advance the cause of ornate city architecture nor does it provide a manual of good decorative design. It is simply one starting point for a rational discussion about the nature of, or the need for, ornament and decoration in urban design. For this purpose the authors attempted to find out where and why decoration was used in the built environment. Decorative treatments were classified in terms of form and function, an essential step in any teaching or learning process. Many local authorities are preparing design briefs and design guidance notes. These documents may have something to say about materials, colours and details to be used in some parts of the city. It would be preferable for these documents to be prepared and administered by those with an understanding of the principles involved in the art of decorating the city and the flexibility of outlook which appreciates an innovative mind that challenges those principles. Such a flexible mind is more likely to result from a broad education in the principles of urban design, the fundamental aim of this and the other books in this urban design series.

A new chapter has been added to this, the second edition of *Urban Design: Ornament and Decoration*, which draws out the relationship between decoration and the building technology that

underpins it and gives it meaning. The chapter is based upon the traditional mud cities of the Hausa people of Nigeria. The traditional Hausa cities are so different and so far from our own urban world in Western Europe or North America that it may be possible to discuss the use of decoration without being drawn into the polemics which surround the subject here. One source of inspiration for the *avante garde* of movements in art and architecture, early in the twentieth century, was the artistic endeavour of people wrongly described as primitive. For example, African sculpture had a formative influence on the Cubists, while the primitive hut or basic shelter is of recurring interest for the architect. Le Corbusier, for example, is said to have been greatly influenced by such wonderfully sculptural buildings as the churches on Mykonos. With this long tradition of inspiration derived from the artistic work of peoples whose cultures are so different from our own, it might be apposite to look once again at an example of their urban architecture. The chapter on Hausa cities is also included for the obvious photogenic qualities of Hausa urban architecture, in addition to any lessons in broad principle which may be learned about the use of decoration in the city. Chapter 9 is a personal statement presented as an epilogue to retain the integrity of the original work, which is the result of the pooled insights of the three original authors.