

DEFINITIONS

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INTRODUCTION

The theme of this book is the Method of Urban Design. In particular the book will examine the techniques used in urban Design Method to achieve sustainable development. Dictionary definitions of method include a number of key words such as procedure, systematic or orderly arrangement together with the idea of a clearly defined goal as an end product. For example, *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* defines method as: 'procedure for attaining an object, a special form of procedure adopted in any branch of mental activity', or 'a way of doing anything, especially according to a regular plan'.¹ *The American Heritage Dictionary* defines method more simply as: 'The procedures and techniques characteristic of a particular discipline or field of knowledge - **the Method**'.² It is this definition which is taken as the starting point for the development of the argument in this book. Identifying and describing a unique **Method** for Urban Design, using this last definition of the word method, is central to the development of the subject as a discipline. Clearly, method, when used here, will include concepts such as procedures, objectives and plan.

The word technique has its origins in the Arts. It is defined as: 'Manner of artistic execution or performance in relation to formal or practical details (as distinct from general effect, expression, sentiment, etc.); the mechanical or formal part of an art, especially fine arts ... mechanical skill in artistic work'.³ Technique is therefore related to specific tasks as opposed to Method which is the description of a total process. *The American Heritage Dictionary* includes a definition of technique which conforms more closely to the nature of Urban Design: 'The systematic procedures by which a complex or scientific task is accomplished'.⁴ Technique, as used in the title of this book and as developed in the text, refers to the set of detailed operations used in the various stages of the Urban Design process. Method, on the other hand, refers to the structure and form of the Urban Design management process.

The title of this book elicits, by association, the words methodology and technology. The book, however, is not about either methodology or technology although the text does cover both topics. Methodology is: 'The science of method; a treatise or dissertation on method'.⁵ The study of method is dealt with summarily in this chapter where the broad outlines of alternative methods