

Commentary

In discussing the nature of urban design, the literature has focused much more heavily on product types and design paradigms than on procedural types. There are many books on new towns and new urban places. They focus on the architecture of places and neither on the processes of bringing them into existence nor on what dimensions they are successes or failures. The reason is that design is largely a mimetic process in which known, or generic, types are adapted to particular situations. In this book, I have classified projects primarily by procedural type and then by product types but have attempted to point out their focus of attention and the intellectual paradigms within which they fall.

An understanding of types is the basis for problem solving in all the design fields. For architecture it is building types (e.g. for housing types, see *Building Types Study 832*, 2004), for landscape architecture open space types (e.g. *Plazas*; see Krier, 1990) and for planning it is probably city types (e.g. *global cities*; Simmonds and Hack, 2000). How types will be used, professionally and in education, shapes their nature. No single typology is correct. Each has advantages and poses potential constraints on whoever uses it. The one presented here should be regarded as a first, but significant, step in developing a typology of urban design projects. Its utility will depend on how others can or cannot use it. The basic categorization is, however, sound although the labels given will sound strange to many ears. No doubt the typology will evolve as the field of urban design and the range of projects that are subsumed under that title evolve.