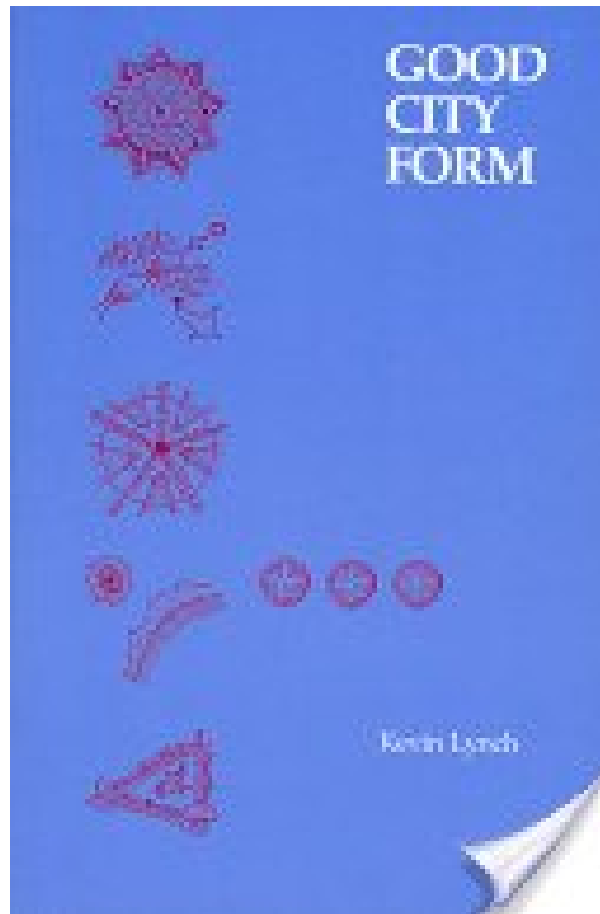
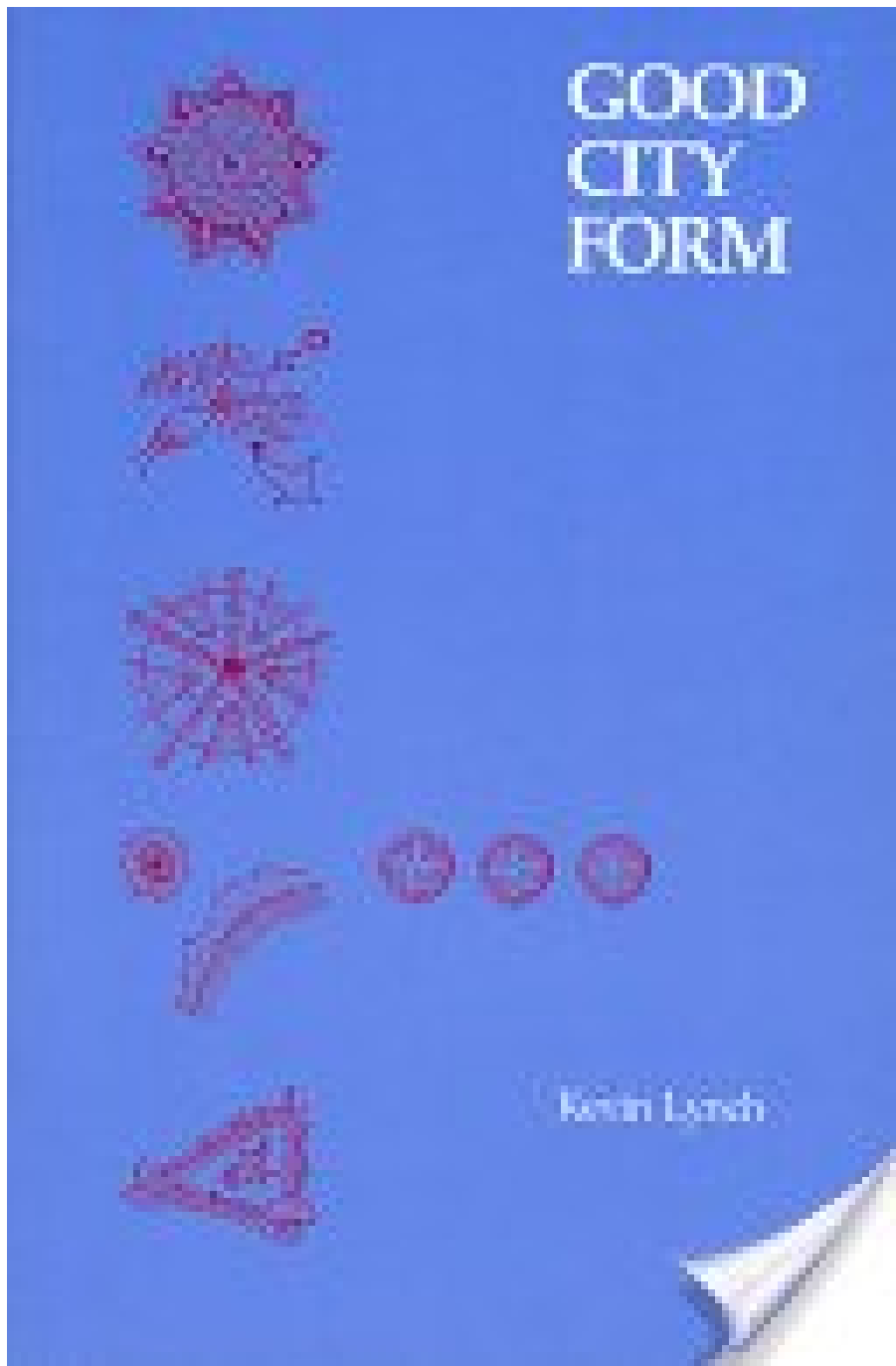


A THEORY OF GOOD CITY FORM BY KEVIN LYNCH



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Review

This is a major work...Lynch looks at connections between human values and the physical forms of cities, sets requirements for a normative theory of city form, reviews earlier physical images of what utopian communities might be, sees what is to be learned from hellish images, and helps us place city forms into one or another of three theoretic constructs: cosmic or ceremonial centers, the machine city, and the city as an organism. He tells us at some length how we might evaluate the 'goodness' of cities, speaks to the enduring issues of city size, growth, and conservation, and, having done all this, tells us about what his good city form might look like. The appendixes are a major part of the book, taking well over 100 pages...This is a volume that in short order will be (or at least should be) standard, desired, provocative, influential reading for just about anyone concerned with why cities are the way they are and, more important, with achieving good places for people to live.

(Journal of the American Planning Association)

From the Back Cover

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A Theory Of Good City Form By Kevin Lynch. In undertaking this life, lots of people constantly attempt to do and get the most effective. New understanding, encounter, lesson, and everything that could improve the life will certainly be done. Nonetheless, several people sometimes feel puzzled to get those points. Feeling the minimal of experience and resources to be far better is among the lacks to own. Nevertheless, there is a quite straightforward point that can be done. This is just what your instructor always manoeuvres you to do this one. Yeah, reading is the response. Reading a book as this A Theory Of Good City Form By Kevin Lynch and various other recommendations can enhance your life top quality. How can it be?

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A THEORY OF GOOD CITY FORM BY KEVIN LYNCH PDF

Available in paperback under the title Good City Form

With the publication of *The Image of the City*, Kevin Lynch embarked on the process of exploration of city form. *A Theory of Good City Form*, his most important book, is both a summation and an extension of his vision, a high point from which he views cities past and possible.

The central section of the book develops a new normative theory of city form—an identification of the characteristics that good human settlements should possess. This follows an examination of three existing normative theories—those which see the city as a model of the cosmos, as a machine, and as a living organism—which are shown to be finally inadequate and unable to hold up under sustained analysis. In addition, an appendix demonstrates the inadequacies of a number of functional theories—those whose aim is simply to describe how settlements work rather than to evaluate how they ought to work. Among these theories are models of cities as ecological systems, as fields of force, as systems of linked decisions, or as areas of class conflict.

Lynch puts forth his own theory by searching out the qualities that produce good settlements, qualities that allow "development, within continuity, via openness and connection." He identifies five interrelated dimensions of performance—vitality, sense, fit, access, and control—and two "meta-criteria," efficiency and justice. As in all of Lynch's writing, the theory flows from and leads back to specific examples and everyday realities. The final section of the book is concerned with applications of the theory.

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Most helpful customer reviews

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

An ambitious attempt but too academic and random.

By Don Broussard

I have owned this book since the 1980's and it provides little practical guidance or coherent theory for urban planning and design. It presents only an abstract discussion of how cities or city elements have been designed — not a normative philosophy of how they should be designed except in an abstract sense. The late Kevin Lynch does deserve credit for trying to keep some focus during the 70's and 80's on the physical design of cities as opposed to public policies and economic programs. "Good City Form" does assemble a strong bibliography of the research and classic articles on city planning through the middle of the 20th century. But his work has been far surpassed by books on new urbanism (such as: The Smart Growth Manual; Retrofitting Suburbia; The Urban Design Handbook; and Rural by Design) a movement which presents a much more coherent critique and approach to city planning — and which has had a successful impact as a result. Buy / read "Good City Form" if you are interested in the history of city planning.

12 of 14 people found the following review helpful.

Power of Practicing Theory in Urban Design

By CityLover

As one who straddles the two worlds of practice and scholarship with great ease and comfort, I am struck by that rare work of craft which is at once profoundly thoughtful as well as clearly directed. Most serious scholars bend over backwards to embrace the myth of "objectivity", while most practitioners salivate over superficial "best practices". Kevin Lynch's masterpiece, Good City Form, avoids both traps while offering a template for judging the effectiveness of different types of urban form and providing a guide for successful urban design projects. His starting points, a masterful overview of models of urban form throughout history and a sensitive ode to humanist values, help establish a foundation for performance dimensions to measure "good city form": Vitality, Sense, Fit, Access, Control, Efficiency and Justice.

As an example, the discussion of what city design is (i.e. urban design) on pages 290-291 is masterful. Unlike many design theoreticians, Lynch uses simple and direct language rather than resort to pretension and manipulation of terminology. Beyond the deceptively simplistic tone is a multilayered understanding and more importantly a genuine love of the city. Lynch is a keen observer, a sensitive designer, and a profound thinker. Thus, his definition of what urban design should be discusses three aspects of cities: human activity, process and control, and of course, physical form. Indeed, as my own professional experience has shown to me, in order to be a truly impactful urban designer, one needs to pay close attention to all these aspects of

what makes a city.

I would highly recommend this book to reflective practitioners, scholars interested in the practice of urban design, and students interested in shaping the future of our cities. Practicing urban designers would do well to pay heed to Lynch's discussions of control and justice in the design process. For those who are new to the field, the book works well with two others as an excellent advanced introduction to urban design: "The City Shaped: Urban Patterns and Meanings Through History" by Spiro Kostof, and "Urban Design Downtown: Poetics and Politics of Form" by Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris and Tridib Banerjee. What the three books share is a profound sense of humanity in the design of cities that is much more critical than the ebb and flow of design fashions.

24 of 26 people found the following review helpful.

Good City Form

By Anselmo G. Canfora

In the world of urban design, obsessed with spectacular novelty and superficial aesthetics, this ambitious and profound work of Kevin Lynch is refreshing, yet enduring. He suggests a theory of urban design based on fundamental human values and examines how such values lead to the notion of a "good city form". His performance dimensions (e.g. access, fit, vitality) are broad enough to be interpreted and re-interpreted for specific contexts and sites. And the appendix, which briefly summarizes other theories of city form, is a tour-de-force by itself. A masterpiece which deserves greater attention and consideration, especially by those under the illusion that urban design is more or less architecture writ large!

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