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INTRODUCTION

There are advantages to be gained from the gathering together of people to form a town. A single family living in the country can scarcely hope to drop into a theatre, have a meal out or browse in a library, whereas the same family living in a town can enjoy these amenities. The little money that one family can afford is multiplied by thousands and so a collective amenity is made possible. A city is more than the sum of its inhabitants. It has the power to generate a surplus of amenity, which is one reason why people like to live in communities rather than in isolation.

Now turn to the visual impact which a city has on those who live in it or visit it. I wish to show that an argument parallel to the one put forward above holds good for buildings: bring people together and they create a collective surplus of enjoyment; bring buildings together and collectively they can give visual pleasure which none can give separately.

One building standing alone in the countryside is experienced as a work of architecture, but bring half a dozen buildings together and an art other than architecture is made possible. Several things begin to happen in the group which would be impossible for the isolated building. We may walk through and past the buildings, and as a corner is turned an unsuspected building is suddenly revealed. We may be surprised, even astonished (a reaction generated by the composition of the group and not by the individual building). Again, suppose that the buildings have been put together in a group so that one can get inside the group, then the space created between the buildings is seen to have a life of its own over and above the buildings which create it and one’s reaction is to say ‘I am inside it’ or ‘I am entering it’. Note also that in this group of half a dozen buildings there may be one which through reason of function does not conform. It may be a bank, a temple or a church amongst houses. Suppose that we are just looking at the temple by itself, it would stand in front of us and all its qualities, size, colour and intricacy, would be evident. But put the temple back amongst the small houses and immediately its size is made more real and more obvious by the comparison between the two scales. Instead of being a big temple it towers. The difference in meaning between bigness and towering is the measure of the relationship.

In fact there is an art of relationship just as there is an art of architecture. Its purpose is to take all the elements that go to create the
environment: buildings, trees, nature, water, traffic, advertisements and so on, and to weave them together in such a way that drama is released. For a city is a dramatic event in the environment. Look at the research that is put into making a city work: demographers, sociologists, engineers, traffic experts; all co-operating to turn the myriad factors into a workable, viable and healthy organization. It is a tremendous human undertaking.

And yet . . . if at the end of it all the city appears dull, uninteresting and soulless, then it is not fulfilling itself. It has failed. The fire has been laid but nobody has put a match to it.

Firstly we have to rid ourselves of the thought that the excitement and drama that we seek can be born automatically out of the scientific research and solutions arrived at by the technical man (or the technical half of the brain). We naturally accept these solutions, but are not entirely bound by them. In fact we cannot be entirely bound by them because the scientific solution is based on the best that can be made of the average: of averages of human behaviour, averages of weather, factors of safety and so on. And these averages do not give an inevitable result for any particular problem. They are, so to speak, wandering facts which may synchronize or, just as likely, may conflict with each other. The upshot is that a town could take one of several patterns and still operate with success, equal success. Here then we discover a pliability in the scientific solution and it is precisely in the manipulation of this pliability that the art of relationships is made possible. As will be seen, the aim is not to dictate the shape of the town or environment, but is a modest one: simply to manipulate within the tolerances.

This means that we can get no further help from the scientific attitude and that we must therefore turn to other values and other standards.

We turn to the faculty of sight, for it is almost entirely through vision that the environment is apprehended. If someone knocks at your door and you open it to let him in, it sometimes happens that a gust of wind comes in too, sweeping round the room, blowing the curtains and making a great fuss. Vision is somewhat the same; we often get more than we bargained for. Glance at the clock to see the time and you see the wallpaper, the clock's carved brown mahogany frame, the fly crawling over the glass and the delicate rapier-like pointers. Cézanne might have made a painting of it. In fact, of course, vision is not only useful but it evokes our memories and experiences, those responsive emotions inside us which have the power to disturb the mind when aroused. It is this unlooked-for surplus that we are dealing with, for clearly if the environment is going to produce an emotional reaction, with or without our volition, it is up to us to try to understand the three ways in which this happens.

1. Concerning optics. Let us suppose that we are walking through a town: here is a straight road off which is a courtyard, at the far side of which another street leads out and bends slightly before reaching a monument. Not very unusual. We take this path and our first view is that of the street. Upon turning into the courtyard the new view is revealed instantaneously at the point of turning, and this view remains with us whilst we walk across the courtyard. Leaving the courtyard we enter the further street. Again a new view is suddenly revealed although we are travelling at a uniform speed. Finally as the road bends the monument swings into view. The significance of all this is that although the pedestrian walks through the town at a uniform speed, the scenery of towns is often revealed in a series of jerks or revelations. This we call SERIAL VISION.

Examine what this means. Our original aim is to manipulate the elements of the town so that an impact on the emotions is achieved. A long straight road has little impact because the initial view is soon digested and becomes monotonous. The human mind reacts to a contrast, to the difference between things, and when two pictures (the street and the courtyard) are in the mind at the same time, a vivid contrast is felt and the town becomes visible in a deeper sense. It comes alive through the drama of juxtaposition. Unless this happens the town will slip past us featureless and inert.

There is a further observation to be made concerning Serial Vision. Although from a scientific or commercial point of view the town may be a unity, from our optical viewpoint we have split it into two elements: the existing view and the emerging view. In the normal way this is an accidental chain of events and whatever significance may arise out of the linking of views will be fortuitous. Suppose, however, that we take over this linking as a branch of the art of relationship; then we are finding a tool with which human imagination can begin to mould the city into a coherent drama. The process of manipulation has begun to turn the blind facts into a taut emotional situation.

2. Concerning place. This second point is concerned with our reactions to the position of our body in its environment. This is as simple as it appears to be. It means, for instance, that when you go into a room you utter to yourself the unspoken words 'I am outside it, I am entering it, I am in the middle of it'. At this level of consciousness we are dealing with a range of experience stemming from the major impacts of exposure and enclosure (which if taken to their morbid extremes result in the
symptoms of agoraphobia and claustrophobia). Place a man on the edge of a 500-ft. cliff and he will have a very lively sense of position, put him at the end of a deep cave and he will react to the fact of enclosure.

Since it is an instinctive and continuous habit of the body to relate itself to the environment, this sense of position cannot be ignored; it becomes a factor in the design of the environment (just as an additional source of light must be reckoned with by a photographer, however annoying it may be). I would go further and say that it should be exploited.

Here is an example. Suppose you are visiting one of the hill towns in the south of France. You climb laboriously up the winding road and eventually find yourself in a tiny village street at the summit. You feel thirsty and go to a nearby restaurant, your drink is served to you on a veranda and as you go out to it you find to your exhilaration or horror that the veranda is cantilevered out over a thousand-foot drop. By this device of the containment (street) and the revelation (cantilever) the fact of height is dramatized and made real.

In a town we do not normally have such a dramatic situation to manipulate but the principle still holds good. There is, for instance, a typical emotional reaction to being below the general ground level and there is another resulting from being above it. There is a reaction to being hemmed in as in a tunnel and another to the wideness of the square. If, therefore, we design our towns from the point of view of the moving person (pedestrian or car-borne) it is easy to see how the whole city becomes a plastic experience, a journey through pressures and vacuums, a sequence of exposures and enclosures, of constraint and relief.

Aising out of this sense of identity or sympathy with the environment, this feeling of a person in street or square that he is in it or entering it or leaving it, we discover that no sooner do we postulate a here than automatically we must create a there, for you cannot have one without the other. Some of the greatest townscape effects are created by a skilful relationship between the two, and I will name an example in India, where this introduction is being written: the approach from the Central Vista to the Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi. There is an open-ended courtyard composed of the two Secretariat buildings and, at the end, the Rashtrapati Bhawan. All this is raised above normal ground level and the approach is by a ramp. At the top of the ramp and in front of the axis building is a tall screen of railings. This is the setting. Travelling through it from the Central Vista we see the two Secretariats in full, but the Rashtrapati Bhawan is partially hidden by the ramp; only its upper part is visible. This effect of truncation serves to isolate and make remote. The building is withheld. We are Here and it is There. As we climb the ramp the Rashtrapati Bhawan is gradually revealed, the mystery culminates in fulfilment as it becomes immediate to us, standing on the same floor. But at this point the railing, the wrought iron screen, is inserted; which again creates a form of Here and There by means of the screened vista. A brilliant, if painfully conceived, sequence2 (illustration, page 20).

3. Concerning content. In this last category we turn to an examination of the fabric of towns: colour, texture, scale, style, character, personality and uniqueness. Accepting the fact that most towns are of old foundation, their fabric will show evidence of differing periods in its architectural styles and also in the various accidents of layout. Many towns do so display this mixture of styles, materials and scales.

Yet there exists at the back of our minds a feeling that could we only start again we would get rid of this hotchpotch and make all new and fine and perfect. We would create an orderly scene with straight roads and with buildings that conformed in height and style. Given a free hand that is what we might do . . . create symmetry, balance, perfection and conformity. After all, that is the popular conception of the purpose of town planning.

But what is this conformity? Let us approach it by a simile. Let us suppose a party in a private house, where are gathered together half a dozen people who are strangers to each other. The early part of the evening is passed in polite conversation on general subjects such as the weather and the current news. Cigarettes are passed and lights offered punctiliously. In fact it is all an exhibition of manners, of how one ought to behave. It is also very boring. This is conformity. However, later on the ice begins to break and out of the straightjacket of orthodox manners and conformity real human beings begin to emerge. It is found that Miss X's sharp but good-natured wit is just the right foil to Major Y's somewhat simple exuberance. And so on. It begins to be fun. Conformity gives way to the agreement to differ within a recognized tolerance of behaviour.

Conformity, from the point of view of the planner, is difficult to avoid but to avoid it deliberately, by creating artificial diversions, is surely worse than the original boredom. Here, for instance, is a programme to rehouse 5,000 people. They are all treated the same, they get the same kind of house. How can one differentiate? Yet if we start from a much wider point of view we will see that tropical housing differences from tem-

1 The President's Residence, lastly Viceroyal Lodge.
2 It was the cause of bitterness between Lutyens and Baker.
perate zone housing, that buildings in a brick country differ from buildings in a stone country, that religion and social manners vary the buildings. And as the field of observation narrows, so our sensitivity to the local gods must grow sharper. There is too much insensitivity in the building of towns, too much reliance on the tank and the armoured car where the telescopic rifle is wanted.

Within a commonly accepted framework—one that produces lucidity and not anarchy—we can manipulate the nuances of scale and style, of texture and colour and of character and individuality, juxtaposing them in order to create collective benefits. In fact the environment thus resolves itself into not conformity but the interplay of This and That.

It is a matter of observation that in a successful contrast of colours not only do we experience the harmony released but, equally, the colours become more truly themselves. In a large landscape by Corot, I forget its name, a landscape of sombre greens, almost a monochrome, there is a small figure in red. It is probably the reddest thing I have ever seen.

Statistics are abstracts: when they are plucked out of the completeness of life and converted into plans and the plans into buildings they will be lifeless. The result will be a three-dimensional diagram in which people are asked to live. In trying to colonize such a wasteland, to translate it from an environment for walking stomachs into a home for human beings, the difficulty lay in finding the point of application, in finding the gateway into the castle. We discovered three gateways, that of motion, that of position and that of content. By the exercise of vision it became apparent that motion was not one simple, measurable progression useful in planning, it was in fact two things, the Existing and the Revealed view. We discovered that the human being is constantly aware of his position in the environment, that he feels the need for a sense of place and that this sense of identity is coupled with an awareness of elsewhere. Conformity killed, whereas the agreement to differ gave life. In this way the void of statistics, of the diagram city, has been split into two parts, whether they be those of Serial Vision, Here and There or This and That. All that remains is to join them together into a new pattern created by the warmth and power and vitality of human imagination so that we build the home of man.

That is the theory of the game, the background. In fact the most difficult part lies ahead, the Art of Playing. As in any other game there are recognized gambits and moves built up from experience and precedent. In the pages that follow an attempt is made to chart these moves under the three main heads as a series of cases.

New Delhi 1959

INTRODUCTION TO 1971 EDITION

In writing an introduction to this edition of Townscape I find little to alter in the attitude expressed in the original introduction written ten years ago.

It has been said that a new edition of Townscape should rely on modern work for its examples instead of these being culled from the past. This has not been done for two reasons.

Firstly the task of finding the sharp little needles in the vast haystack of post-war building would be quite uneconomical. This leads to the second point, why should it be so difficult? Because, in my view, the original message of Townscape has not been delivered effectively.

We have witnessed a superficial civic style of decoration using bollards and cobbles, we have seen traffic-free pedestrian precincts and we have noted the rise of conservation.

But none of these is germane to townscape. The sadness of the situation is that the superflials have become the currency but the spirit, the Environment Game itself, is still locked away in its little red and gilt box.

The position may indeed have deteriorated over the last ten years for reasons which are set out below.

Man meets environment: unfamiliarity, shock, ugliness and boredom according to what kind of man you are. The problem is not new but is this generation getting more than its share? Yes. Reason? The reason in my view is the speed of change which has disrupted the normal communication between planner and planee. The list is familiar enough: more people, more houses, more amenities, faster communications and unfamiliar building methods.

The speed of change prevents the environment organisers from settling down and learning by experience how to humanise the raw material thrown at them. In consequence the environment is ill-digested. London is suffering from indigestion. The gastric juices, as represented by planners, have not been able to break down all the vast chunks of hastily swallowed stodge into emotional nutriment. We may be able to do many things our grandparents could not do but we cannot digest any faster. The process, be it in stomach or brain, is part of our human bondage. And so we have to make organisational changes in order that human scale can be brought into effective contact with the forces of development.
The first change is to popularise the art of environment on the principle that the game improves with the amount of popular emotion invested and this is the crux of the situation. The stumbling block here is that in the popular mind administrative planning is dull, technical and forbidding whilst good planning is conceived as a wide, straight street with bushy-topped trees on either side, full stop. On the contrary! The way the environment is put together is potentially one of our most exciting and widespread pleasure sources. It is no use complaining of ugliness without realising that the shoes that pinch are really a pair of ten-league boots.

How to explain? Example: the nearest to hand at the time of writing is Sées Cathedral near Alençon, p. 14. The Gothic builders were fascinated by the problem of weight, how to support the culmination of their structures, the vault, and guide its weight safely down to earth. In this building weight has been divided into two parts. The walls are supported by sturdy cylindrical columns: the vault itself, the pride of the endeavours, appears to be supported on fantastically attenuated applied columns which act almost as lightning conductors of gravity between heaven and the solid earth. The walls are held up by man, the vault is clearly held up by angels. 'I understand weight, I am strong', 'I have overcome weight, I am ethereal'. 'We both spring from the same earth together, we need each other'. Through the centuries they commune together in serenity.

As soon as the game or dialogue is understood the whole place begins to shake hands with you. It bursts all through the dull business of who did what and when and who did it first. We know who did it, it was a chap with a twinkle in his eye.

This is the Environment Game and it is going on all round us. You will see that I am not discussing absolute values such as beauty, perfection, art with a big A, or morals. I am trying to describe an environment that chats away happily, plain folk talking together. Apart from a handful of noble exceptions our world is being filled with system-built dumbs, blondes and a scatter of Irish confetti. Only when the dialogue commences will people stop to listen.

Until such happy day arrives when people in the street throw their caps in the air at the sight of a planner (the volume of sardonic laughter is the measure of your deprivation) as they now do for footballers and pop singers, a holding operation in two parts will be necessary.

First, streaming the environment. It is difficult to fight for a general principle, easier to protect the particular. By breaking down the environment into its constituent parts the ecologist can fight for his national...
parks, local authority for its green belts, antiquarians for conservation areas and so on. This is already happening.

Second, the time scaling of these streams. Change, of itself, is often resented even if it can be seen to be a change for the better. Continuity is a desirable characteristic of cities. Consequently while planning consent in a development stream might be automatic one may have to expect a built-in delay of ten or even twenty years in an important conservation area. This is not necessarily to improve the design but simply to slow down the process. This also is happening, if grudgingly, in the case of Piccadilly Circus.

But the main endeavour is for the environment makers to reach their public, not democratically but emotionally. As the great Max Miller once remarked across the footlights on a dull evening 'I know you're out there, I can hear you breathing'.
These three sequences, Oxford, Ipswich and Westminster, try to re-capture in the limited and static medium of the printed page a little of the sense of discovery and drama that we experience in moving through towns. Oxford: the cube, 1, the drum, 2, and the cone, 3, and the street, 4, create an unfolding drama of solid geometry. This is the unfolding of a mystery, the sense that as you press on more is revealed. Ipswich: a modest archway performs the office of dividing the prospect into two things, the street you are in and the place beyond, into which you emerge so that you move out of one ambience into another. Westminster: the shifting interplay of towers, spires and masts, all the intricacy of fresh alignments and grouping, the shafts of penetration and the sudden bunching of emphatic verticals into a dramatic knot, these are the rewards of the moving eye, but an eye which is open and not lazy.
The sequence in New Delhi (read the photographs from left to right) emphasizes the role of levels and screening in serial vision, for here what could simply have been one picture reproduced four times, each view enlarging the centre of the previous view and bringing us near to the terminal building, turns out to be four separate and unique views (see description in the Introduction).
occupied territory (facing page)
Shade, shelter, amenity and convenience are the usual causes of possession. The emphasizing of such places by some permanent indication serves to create an image of the various kinds of occupation in the town, so that instead of a completely streamlined and fluid out-of-doors a more static and occupied environment is created, like the ones shown opposite where a periodic occupation (chatting after church?) is woven permanently into the town pattern by means of floorscape. The furniture of possession includes floorscape, posts, canopies, enclaves, focal points and enclosures. Although the amount of possession may be small yet its perpetuation in the furniture gives the town humanity and intricacy in just the same way that louvres on windows give texture and scale to a building even when the sun is not shining.

possession in movement
But static possession is only one aspect of the human grip on the out-of-doors and the next stage is to consider possession in movement. In the accompanying illustration the church walk is a definite thing having a well-defined beginning and end with a well-defined character; and this may be possessed while moving through it just as surely as the village cross may be by a villager sitting on its steps.
advantage
Again there are lines of advantage which can be colonized; the line along the parapet of a bridge which people seem to prefer for the sake of the immediacy of its view and position is one such (see also line of life p. 111).

viscosity
Where there is a mixture of static possession and possession in movement we find what may be termed viscosity, the formation of groups chating, of slow window-shoppers, people selling newspapers, flowers and so on. The overhanging blinds, the space enclosed by the portico and the meandering character of the street provide the proper setting which may be compared to the picture below. Windwept and inhospitable, it emphasizes the segregation of outside and inside.

enclaves
The enclave or interior open to the exterior and having free and direct access from one to the other is seen here as an accessible place or room out of the main directional stream, an eddy in which footsteps echo and the light is lessened in intensity. Set apart from the hurtly-burly of traffic, it yet has the advantage of commanding the scene from a position of safety and strength.

enclosure
Enclosure sums up the polarity of legs and wheels. It is the basic unit of the preciactual pattern; outside, the noise and speed of impersonal communication which comes and goes but is not of any place. Inside, the quietness and human scale of the square, quad or courtyard. This is the end product of traffic, this is the place to which traffic brings you. Without enclosure traffic becomes nonsense.
focal point
Coupled with enclosure (the hollow object) as an artifact of possession, is the focal point, the vertical symbol of congregation. In the fertile streets and market places of town and village it is the focal point (be it column or cross) which crystallizes the situation, which confirms 'this is the spot'. 'Stop looking, it is here.' This magnificent clarity illuminates many a community but in many others the chief function of the focal point has been stripped away by the swirl and hazards of traffic so that it becomes merely an indifferent piece for the antiquarian's notebook.

precincts
Left, in this significant picture, can be seen the whole urban pattern as it was and to some extent still is. Inside is the tightly built-up pedestrian town with its enclosures and no doubt areas of viscosity, its focal points and enclaves. Outside are the expressways for car and lorry, train and ship which exist to serve and vitalize the precincts. This is the traditional pattern at its clearest. The small photograph below shows some of those elements at their most disorganized, the chaotic mixture of houses and traffic in which both pedestrians and traffic suffer a diminution of their proper character.
indoor landscape and outdoor room

This is the watershed. Up to this point we have presented the environment as occupied territory serving the legitimate social and business needs of people and irrigated by traffic routes. Now arises the natural corollary that if the outdoors is colonized then the people who do this will attempt to humanize the landscape in just the same way they already do for the interiors. At this point we can find little difference between the two, and the thesis Indoor Landscape and Outdoor Room make sense. In the top picture can be seen the patterned pavement (floorscape) and arcade. Over this is a building in which a man lives whilst the vault of the sky spans over. To the right an avenue of trees leads out to the hills. Here in this picture of an interior is all the spatial quality of a landscape. Below, the diners are gathered together under the ceiling lights and the Houses of Parliament sit on the perimeter like a model on the mantelpiece.

We cannot draw back. If the outdoors is to be colonized architecture is not enough. The outdoors is not just a display of individual works of architecture like pictures in a gallery, it is an environment for the complete human being, who can claim it either statically or in movement. He demands more than a picture gallery, he demands the drama that can be released all around him from floor, sky, buildings, trees and levels by the art of arrangement.

the outdoor room and enclosure

In this section of the book we are concerned with the person's sense of position, his unspoken reaction to the environment which might be expressed as 'I am in it or above it or below it, I am outside it, I am enclosed or I am exposed'. These sensations are basically interlocked with human behaviour and their morbid expression is demonstrated in claustrophobia and agoraphobia. Enclosure or the outdoor room is, perhaps, the most powerful, the most obvious, of all the devices to instil this sense of position, of identity with the surroundings. It embodies the idea of HEREDITY (which in the next five pages will be seen also to include multiple enclosure, space, looking out, etc.). The two exits to the same square in Bordeaux, above, provide an object lesson in how to preserve enclosure or how to let the sense of Heredity leak away into the remote distance. Left, a near-perfect example of the outdoor room with three-dimensional wallpaper.
mobile
The effect of air currents on isolated branches and leaves can be likened to the mobile against a plain wall.

sculpture
Here again there is scope for the specimen, be it one kind or another. It may be chosen as one would choose an objet d'art.

Change of Level
The art of manipulating levels is a large part of the art of townscape. Variations in the level of the ground can occur either directly, as a result of the contours of the site, or artificially, arising out of the needs the planner has to meet. But however they are caused, one's reactions to levels are coloured, in the first place, by the peculiar sensitiveness that man has to his position in the world.

Every place has its datum-line, and one may be on it or above it or below it. (There is an opening for misconstruction here, since we tend to take our own datum-line about with us as well.) To be above datum produces feelings of authority and privilege; to be below feelings of intimacy and protection.

These sensations imply a very direct relationship between the observer and his environment. The enjoyment of a feeling of authority and privilege is of quite a different order from the enjoyment of other townscape effects—the sparkle of texture in a wall or the shape of a letter-face on a shopfront. In the first case the observer is committed; in the second he can regard himself as more detached. Yet each is a legitimate and desirable effect to aim at.

Objects acquire significance from their relationship to levels. The would-be imposing building is placed on the top of a slope, just as the statue is placed on a plinth. Hence the difficulty of designing buildings on a slope; there is no datum and the result is often ambiguity. Besides the obvious relationships between buildings and levels there are many subtleties that can be exercised in practice; an example of this is the use of the double order in St Paul's Cathedral, which enables the building to use the skyline of London as a plinth.

The manipulation of levels has, of course, its purely functional uses (see 'Hazards'), but even in the many functional uses of levels there are cases where a choice can be made between alternative solutions, where the problem cannot, honestly, be solved solely by reference to utilitarian conditions. Thus, for instance, one may wish to separate sitting space from circulation space in a park or square.

How to do it? By change of level, but whether to raise or lower the space can best be determined by reference to the psychological effect, already mentioned, of being above or below datum.

Is there then any other aspect of levels besides the functional and the psychological? Yes, the third aspect is concerned with the purely visual, or objective, qualities inherent in a world which for many reasons refuses to be flat.

The simplest of all consists of seeing, of being aware of, the undulation of the ground—the cultivation of the sculptor's eye. How many places, which at first glance appear to be flat, reveal on closer inspection the subtle rise and fall which gives a scene vitality? This can be the more easily observed if there is a datum-line against which it can be measured, or a tell-tale—the handrail (see the tell-tale, p. 180) which indicates what happens beyond the immediate horizon.

The fact that a sloping surface is more in evidence than a horizontal one can be put to good use in order to create a sense of space, especially where there are crowds. Visitors to the South Bank Exhibition will remember the grassy slopes which provided such a good foil to the paving and remained green because no one could trample on them. This point introduces the major one of changing level with elegance. The transition is often accompanied by a confusion of unnecessary trimmings—railings and shrubs and the like—obscuring the true qualities of geometry and homogeneity. To regard a slope as vacant space, a visual vacuum which must be made to look pretty, shows precisely the same outlook as that which decorates the traffic roundabout with rockeries.

Changes of level should contribute something positive to the townscape. The point has already been made that the floor is a unity which is too often disrupted, and it may be appropriate to start our survey of levels bearing in mind the thought that although levels change we need not be their slaves.
above datum

Although the phraseology of politics defines a person's position in terms of being left or right or centre, the more usual and natural classification is up and down. We look up to some people, we describe others as having a low mentality. The awareness of relative height is engrained in human nature.

below datum

whether its significance derives from the primitive hunt or battle strategy or from the doctrine of heaven and hell, it cannot be denied that even in the humdrum modern town awareness of level stimulates the citizen. Height equals privilege, depth equals intimacy: the point made in the pictures here.
above datum
It isn’t only the view you get from being high, it’s the feeling of advantage, the feeling that you have got into a position of privilege, a position that is just as enjoyable if you look at the view or ignore it. It can be excitingly exposed and exhilarating as in the South Bank lookouts, top right, or more modest, just a raised platform, but a solid vantage, as on the jetty at Minehead, top left. Surely there is something very playful and instinctive in this, for it is just the same as a child’s love of walking on walls. The lower two pictures illustrate that both places and buildings assume significance by their position. The raised square at Agde, bottom left, at once appears somehow special, a place worth going to, and the unpretentious buildings in Salamanca, bottom right, situated on what is in fact only a gentle slope, are dramatized by the treatment of channels and steps which serves to exaggerate the change of level.

below datum
By contrast with the area above the general level, the area below assumes an intimate and cozy character. It can be exploited functionally to give a sense of seclusion where it is appropriate, as in the French street in the drawing below, or socially as in that experiment in physical planning known as the South Bank exhibition, top. How right this looks—the small urban place, made friendly and concise by its lower floor.
the tell-tale

We have described the psychological effect levels have on us; here we are concerned with the purely visual implications. And of these the first is the observation of undulation, the vitality which it gives to a scene. Even the floor of a quad gains in interest by being laid to falls for drainage. But the very fact that often the undulations are slight makes it the more interesting to have tell-tales, the true horizontal which exposes a slight deviation on, as above, Lyme Regis, the railing which follows the contour and reveals what happens behind the immediate horizon. This is the sculptor's view.

changing with elegance

The sloping plane which joins two levels, being unusable, is generally regarded as a dead spot in the scene and too often attempts are made to prettify it. But this example from Stavoren, Holland, opposite top, shows there is no need to camouflage the change; the geometrical precision, together with the cohesion arising out of uniform materials, shows the virtue of the direct solution which achieves a monumental dignity. A different kind of treatment, a fragment from Dartmoor, below, derives its charm from the organic moulding of earth and retaining wall which is enlivened by white paint just where it is needed. Nothing to it? Just a rough wall?
Here and There

On a flat plain a house is built. It is an object standing up on the flat surface. Inside the house there are rooms, volumes of space; but from the outside these are not obvious. All we see is the object. Many houses built together form streets and squares. They enclose space and thus a new factor is added to the internal volumes or spaces... the outside spaces. Whereas internal volumes, rooms, are justified in the purely functional sense of construction and shelter, there is no such straightforward justification for external space/volume. It is accidental and marginal. Or is it?

In a purely materialistic world our environment would resemble a rock-strewn river, the rocks being buildings and the river being traffic passing them, vehicular and pedestrian. In fact, this conception of *flare* is false since people are by nature possessive. A group of people standing or chatting on the pavement colonize the spot and the passer-by has to walk round them. Social life is not confined to the interior of buildings. Where people forage, in market place or forum, there will therefore be some expression of this to give identity to the activity. Market place, focal point, clearly defined promenade and so on. In other words, the outside is articulated into spaces just as is the inside, but for its own reasons.

We can therefore postulate an environment which is articulated; as opposed to one which is simply a part of the earth's surface, over which ant-like people and vehicles are forever swarming and on to which buildings are plonked at random. Consequently, instead of a shapeless environment based on the principle of flow, we have an articulated environment resulting from the breaking-up of flow into action and rest, into corridor street and market place, alley and square (and all their minor devolutions).

The practical result of so articulating the town into identifiable parts is that no sooner do we create a *here* than we have to admit a *there*, and it is precisely in the manipulation of these two spatial concepts that a large part of urban drama arises. On the following pages of drawings are some points relevant to this use of space in urban scenery.

here and there

Man-made enclosure, if only of the simplest kind, divides the environment into here and there. On this side of the arch, in Ludlow, we are in the present, uncomplicated and direct world, our world. The other side is different, having in some small way a life of its own (a withholding). And just as the prow of a boat visible over a wall tells you of the proximity of the sea (vast, everlasting) so the church spire turns simple enclosure, below left, into the drama of Here and There, below right.
inside extends out

The corollary of this is the expression of inside volumes externally. In the case of the public house, below, the normal street façade is interrupted by the bulge which expresses the function. Again, the section through the shopping street shows how on one side, the left, we simply have shop windows whilst on the right the savings and costers' barrows form an enclosure which transforms the whole street from an arid inside/outside statement to a comprehensive and dramatic linear market.

space continuity

Similarly but on a larger scale this view of Greenwich market, above produces the effect of spatial continuity, a complex interlocking of volumes in which the quality of light and materials denies the concept of outside and inside.

public and private

Emphasizing this difference are the various qualities attached to parts of the environment, qualities of character, scale, colour, etc. In this case the change is from a public here (Victoria Street) to a private or preenusual there (Westminster Cathedral).

external and internal

A different aspect of space is shown at Kingston market where two similar spatial systems run side by side. First the Market Square, which is entered by devious small roads, widens out into the busy centre which is heightened by towers and statues. The sky is the dome of this outdoor room. Directly off the Market is the Wheatsheaf Inn which also has a central busy area approached by a narrow corridor. This central area has its own sky, a glass dome. In summer the house is open from back to front and in walking through one is struck by this unity of space sequence.
space and infinity
The effect of infinity is not normally apparent in sky seen over rooftops. But if sky is suddenly seen where one might reasonably expect to walk, i.e. at ground level, then there is an effect of infinity or shock.

captured space
The carved frets reach out and grip space, the slender rail and posts enclose it, the pierced wall reveals it. Behind, the louvered openings reveal the next dim layer of internal space and the windows complete it.

projection
Space, being occupiable, provokes colonization. This reaction may be exploited by placing space to achieve the desired results. In this view of the Bank of England the lofty portico, left, elevates the spirit more than a lofty solid building might.

deflection
Where a view is terminated by a building at rightangles to the axis then the enclosed space is complete. But a change of angle in the terminal building, as here in Edinburgh, below, creates a secondary space by implication. A space which you cannot see but feel must be there, facing the building.
Immediacy

It may be more prudent to have £50 in the bank than in your pocket, but your pocket is more exciting. Water, sky and buildings are not affected by considerations of prudence. They are there to be enjoyed in the here and now or not at all. There is no Bank of Visual Deposits. The directness of visual contact between man and environment we term here Immediacy, a quality which is on nodding terms with the Victorian practice of Opening Up. The difference between the two lies, of course, in that townscape aspires to practices more organic than was dreamed of by Victorian town-planning, which treated a town as a museum of separate exhibits, a lantern-slide lecture. The key to our modern conception of townscape lies in the fact, the simple but surprising fact, that the items of the environment cannot be dissociated the one from the other. Further, the effects of juxtaposition are in themselves as exciting as the objects juxtaposed—often more so. It is in this light that we attempt to clothe the word Immediacy with its distinct and proper meaning.

Left, Blakeney; below, Iseo
water

Water provides the most obvious example because the transition between it and dry land offers the biggest of all psychological contrasts. Towns that live by the sea should live on the sea in the sense that the visible presence of the ocean should be apprehended from as much of the town as possible. (This doesn’t mean always a full view of salt water but maybe the glint of reminder or even a chasm of space closing the vista at the end of a street.)

For the coastal town the sea is its raison d’être and even if the inhabitants live in cozy parlours with their radio sets just like any family inland, it is not an inland town. It is on the edge of the deep, it faces the constant but enigmatic horizon.

The same is true of the individual standing on the quay, only for him the main tension is concentrated on the demarcation line between land and water. It’s the emotional experience of this tension which gives the sense of immediacy. This visual and emotional condition may be best achieved by omitting railings at the line of vision as at Blakeney, Norfolk, p. 138, where you may stand on the brink or even lean out over the water against the concrete mooring posts and glance down at the boats.

Immediacy might be defined as a mental leaning out over.

A great deal of the impact of immediacy arises from the degree of contrast, and at Isco, Italy, p. 189, this can be observed. The hard, infinitely prolonged edge of urban construction (fixed in urbanity by the lamps and trees) butts directly against the sheet of water. Were all safely wrapped up with railings and flowerbeds, the water would lose its depth and sparkle, the mountains would recede and the wind would not blow as clear.

But there are other combinations, there is the intimate mingling of pleasure garden and ocean at Limone, Italy, above, where the two elements play with each other by indentation and promenades and also by the change of levels: the sea bed rises, the ground is terraced; all views are exploited. More to the point of English conceptions is the direct visual connection with the rougher and more serious jolly-jack-tar’s sea, which must physically be held back from the buildings. But the perspective of the hard and absence of railings gives immediate psychological access to the deep, at Limone, left. Here the cobbles imitate waves both in their shape and shine, but are as hard as the waves are soft, a contrast which heightens the sensation of proximity.
domes

From the most obvious of nature's examples to the most obvious of architecture's—from water to the monument. Wherever one goes in Florence the Duomo is the Inescapable Monument. It is always there closing the vista with impressive sheer physical bulk. It is an architectural personality, a presence as jovial as a fat man in an overcoat, as magnetic and as outsized as a balloon which has made a forced landing in somebody's backyard.

The message of this book is that there is a lot of fun and a lot of drama to be had from the environment. The reader may reply, 'Yes, but you have combed the world for examples. Come and see where I live in the overspill housing of Liverpool or Manchester, in the new suburbs of Paris or the grid-iron cities of American cities. See what you can make of that.'

Agreed. But I have not combed the world just to make a picture book that can be picked up and put down. The examples are assembled for a purpose. The purpose is to expose the art of environment which, had it been understood and practised, could have prevented the disasters mentioned. The reason for this book is to reach out to people like you to try to show you what you are missing and to try to implant a growth point of what could be.

Even if you lived in the prettiest of towns the message is still just as necessary: there is an art of environment. This is the central fact of townscape but it has got lost on the way, the environment gladiators have cast lots for it and parted it amongst them. On the one hand it has devolved into cobbles and conservation, and on the other it has hived off into outrage and visual pollution. Neither of these, if I may be allowed to breathe it, is germane to the art of environment. And consequently, ten years later, it becomes necessary to start again. Now is the time to fashion a much more realistic tool. Thanks to the aforementioned gladiators the subject is now not unknown. But it is linked to constraints and exhortations. What is missing is the central power of generation. The art of putting the environment together has now to be more clearly defined, its rules stated and its typical products familiarised over a broad field of the lay population. This will be the subject of my next book.

There is an attitude of mind which recoils from the systematisation of aesthetics, believing that the bird on the wing can never be the same when caught. There is another attitude which inclines to the view that unless you define your notes and establish a musical grammar you will never be able to play a tune, even a simple tune let alone Mozart. This seems to me to be self-evident. At the risk of repetition let us get the field of activity defined.

A. The environment is put together in two ways. First, objectively, by means of commonsense and logic based on the benevolent principles of
health, amenity, convenience and privacy. This may be compared to God creating the world as someone outside and above the thing created. The second way is not in opposition to this. It is a fulfilment of creation by employing the subjective values of those who will live in this created world. Without disrespect this may be compared to God sending his Son into the world to live as a human, find out what it is like and redeem it. Both these attitudes are complementary. To take a simple analogy, commonweal lines of latitude which are parallel on the map diminish to vanishing points when observed by the individual. There is no moral distinction involved, both observations are true. The truth is where you are. In these studies we shall not be concerned with objective values, which appear to be thriving. But we shall be concerned with the subjective situation which is disturbing.

What we are witnessing is the extreme difficulty of switching from one kind of truth to another, i.e. from the objective benevolence of the town-hall to personal response and experience especially when, in this mad world, there is usually so little time to adjust.

The main claim of TOWNSCAPE is that it has assisted in charting the structure of the subjective world. For unless it is charted to what can you adjust? To opinions, to fashion or to personal morality? How difficult it is to adjust to vagueness and how time wasting.

B. From what base do we set out? The only possible base surely is to set down the ways in which the human being warms to his surroundings. To set down his affirmations. Not the grandiose views on Art or God or the Computer, but the normal affirmations about our own lives. It may help to observe human response to living itself. The baby is born, it has arrived, it is hungry, it cries, it sleeps. It is utterly helpless and utterly arrogant. Later the growing child begins to discern things outside itself, some things are hot and others cold, sometimes it is light and sometimes dark, some big things move about singing. The youth grows up in the family and learns the do's and don't of family life. When not to ask questions or stay up late, how to get on the right side of dad and so on. Still later as an adult he decides to make his own life, marries and becomes responsible for the organisation of his family.

Our response to the environment is very much the same and can be expressed in four affirmations:

1. I am Here, I am in this room, it is now. Awareness of space.
2. They are There. That building is charming or ugly. Awareness of mood and character.
3. I understand Behaviour. We walk about inside a web of perspectives that opens before us and closes behind us. There is a time structure.
4. I Organise. I can manipulate Spaces and Moods, knowing their Behaviour, to produce the home of man.

All very fine and large. But what happens if we simply brush all this to one side and get down to a bit of designing?

anti 1. There is then nothing to belong to, nothing but waste-land.
    Non-homes stretching to the horizon and a continuum of emptiness. The Expulsion from Eden.
anti 2. There is nothing to communicate with. We turn this way and that but all is faceless and mindless. Nobody laughs or weeps.
    We hold out a hand but there is no response from the silent army.
anti 3. An environment as ignorant and clumsy as a crashed gear change, scenery as catastrophic as the implications of a remand home for girls.

C. Our first move in creating a system must surely be to organise the field so that phenomena can be filed logically in an Atlas of the environment. So far we have a column of affirmations on the left hand side.

Across the top we can set down the differing dimensions of the environment in which they operate. First there is the physical world of length, breadth and height. Second is the dimension of time and third is the dimension of ambience. From these two breakdowns, vertical and horizontal, we can construct a grid or elementary Atlas which, if the premises are sound, should be capable of immense growth.

Having arrived at the concept of an Atlas we now consider the fourth affirmation, that concerned with organisation or manipulation. If we consider the Atlas as a reference library of (visual) words then organisation is the art of putting this word with that to make a lucid statement which is inherent in the particular design problem. And it is this glorious sense of communication that we all need. For God's sake say something.

You can see that it is no more complicated than a cookery book: first you list your ingredients, then you describe how they behave in heat or water or whatever and then you put them together and there it is, a loaf.

The only difference between the two is that most people have a lust for eating which justifies the apparently inexhaustible supply of cookery books whereas the environment is, at the moment, a lust-vacuum. It isn't really surprising. The dialogue stopped when they killed off the
environmental virtues of Victorian architecture and substituted a lot of personal virtues such as truth, honesty and self-expression. You can see where that’s got us, everybody is bored stiff. We’ve lost our audience. We have to join, separate, divide, conceal, reveal, concentrate, dilute, trap, liberate, delay and accelerate. Throw the ball about, get those stiff muscles working. There is much to do.

Human life apart, there are few things more poignant than the still-birth of an idea in the human brain. Suddenly in the rich humus of the mind an idea pushes up into the light of comprehension. The telephone rings, no we haven’t got anthracite grains only nuts. And the idea has gone. Quite often gone forever. The Gods who threw the dice groan in frustration. Our world is continually throwing up concepts, ideas and solutions but a vast amount withers and dies whilst the rest recedes into the paper mountain. What is needed is a frame of reference in which these homeless ideas can be housed: an environmental equivalent to ‘Shelter’, the British organisation that is privately tackling the housing problem. It is my view that there is an incredible waste of fertility and that this should be halted by the creation of a collecting, sorting and retrieval agency.

And so we end up with a box of concepts and a range of gambits, the whole being co-ordinated and internally self-justifying like a crystal. A weapon with which we can hack our way out of isolation and make contact with the educators, with the mass media and so to the point of the story, the public.