



The Language of Towns & Cities: A Visual Dictionary

By Dhiru A. Thadani

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The final word on the language of urban planning and design. *The Language of Towns & Cities* is a landmark publication that clarifies the language by which we talk about urban planning and design. Everyday words such as "avenue," "boulevard," "park," and "district," as well as less commonly used words and terms such as "sustainability," "carbon-neutral," or "Bilbao Effect" are used with a great variety of meanings, causing confusion among citizens, city officials, and other decision-makers when trying to design viable neighborhoods, towns, and cities. This magnificent volume is the fruit of more than a decade of research and writing in an effort to ameliorate this situation. Abundantly illustrated with over 2,500 photographs, drawings, and charts, *The Language of Towns & Cities* is both a richly detailed glossary of more than seven hundred words and terms commonly used in architecture and urban planning, and a compendium of great visual interest. From "A" and "B" streets to Zero Lot and Zeitgeist, the book is at once comprehensive and accessible. An essential work for architects, urban planners, students of design, and all those interested in the future of towns and cities, this is destined to become a classic in its field.

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The Language of Towns & Cities: A Visual Dictionary By Dhiru A. Thadani Bibliography

- Rank: #1304827 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Rizzoli
- Published on: 2010-11-16
- Released on: 2010-11-16
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 10.25" h x 2.65" w x 10.26" l, 8.86 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 781 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

The Language of Towns & Cities: A Visual Dictionary" by Rob Krier As a boy, I used to passionately peruse the pages of Larousse , Brockhaus or Herder s Volkslexikon from my grandfather s bookcase and felt as though I was holding all the knowledge in the world right there in my hands. Topics followed one another in a colorful mix of rich illustrations. The alphabet skipped across the subject fields, not rounding off chapters as textbooks do, but instead stringing together with cheery exuberance everything worth knowing. One experiences the same joy of surprise the first time one leafs through Dhiru Thadani s book. At first one thinks, Oh, an encyclopedia! before one realizes that this would require an edition of several volumes. It remains succinct and tightly gathered, delivering food for thought for young and old, for scholars, students and specialized professionals; it s simultaneously informative and critical and is sometimes almost morally didactic, as Dhiru treats his subject from the standpoint of a responsible teacher and enlightener. His subject is not a manual for the care and repair of a machine, but instead deals with the technique of housing man in cities: an eminently caring mission. Apart from historical information about cities, such as Rome, Paris, Pienza, Chandigarh, New Delhi or Hong Kong, there are typological and morphological chronicles of town squares and streets, right up to details of street crossings, traffic circles and paving patterns, terraced houses, passages and arcades everything that s beautiful, arranged in alphabetical order. There is no lack of biographies for distinguished urban planners, such as Daniel Burnham, landscape architect Olmsted, or the metropolitan planner and statesman, Jefferson and, equally, for urban critics and writers, such as Jane Jacobs and Lewis Mumford. He provides explanations and design guidance for entire urban figures, such as Poundbury, Arcosanti, Auroville, Brandevoort or Seaside and exemplifies the hierarchical order of centers, suburbs and districts, naming the built contemporary models. He is not shy of interlacing values and ponders both the fashionable and serious trends of present-day urban architecture. In doing so, this book does not become bogged down in its lexical function, but instead also has a constructive and critically instructive appeal. It s more than just a handbook, it is a guide. Rob Krier Berlin, April 2010 (Translation from German: Cathal Whelehan) --Rob Krier

About the Author

Dhiru A. Thadani is a practicing architect and teacher who has worked in North and South America, Europe, and Asia, in urban design, town planning, architectural design, landscape design, and construction management.

Léon Krier is a renowned architect who has taught architecture and town planning at the Royal College of Art, London; Princeton University; Yale University; and the University of Virginia.

Andrés Duany is one of America s most influential architects and town planners.

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