

## The Concise TOWNSCAPE

"Townscape" is the art of giving visual coherence and organisation to the jumble of buildings, streets and spaces that make up the urban environment. Its concepts were first developed by Gordon Cullen in *The Architectural Review* and were later embodied in the book TOWNSCAPE (1961) which instantly established itself as a major influence on architects, planners and others concerned with what cities should look like. Its interest, however, goes far beyond the professional sphere. Some may see it as an important contribution to art and architectural history since, for the first time, it explores the fact that certain visual effects in the grouping of buildings were based on quite definable, if often spontaneous, aesthetic principles. Others may find that it teaches them to appreciate, as no other book has done, what it is that makes a town "work" architecturally. A third group may want to study it for Cullen's superb drawings of city scenery — a skill at which he is the acknowledged master. The fascination of this book is endless for anyone who has any kind of visual sense.

In this shortened version, the studies of specific towns have been left out and instead Cullen has contributed a new foreword and conclusion which set his ideas in the context of the seventies.

Gordon Cullen worked for two London architectural firms, and as an illustrator and exhibition designer in Britain and the West Indies before becoming assistant editor of *The Architectural Review* just after the Second World War. The drawings and articles on civic design which he produced during this period attracted wide attention, both for their ideas and their style of presentation. Since 1956 he has been in practice as a townscape consultant to a number of British cities and local authorities, as well as to the Ford Foundation team developing plans for New Delhi and Calcutta. He was made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1970.

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