

Building the Urban Environment: Visions of the Organic City in the United States, Europe, and Latin America (Urban Life, Landscape and Policy)

Harold L Platt

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Building the Urban Environment is a comparative study of the contestation among planners, policymakers, and the grassroots over the production and meaning of urban space. Award-winning historian Harold Platt presents case studies of seven cities, including Rotterdam, Chicago, and Sao Paulo, to show how, over time, urban life created hybrid spaces that transformed people, culture, and their environments.

As Platt explains, during the post-1945 race to technological modernization, policymakers gave urban planners of the International Style extraordinary influence to build their utopian vision of a self-sustaining "organic city." However, in the 1960s, they faced a revolt of the grassroots. Building the Urban Environment traces the rise and fall of the Modernist planners during an era of Cold War, urban crisis, unnatural disasters, and global restructuring in the wake of the oil-energy embargo of the '70s.

Ultimately, Platt provides a way to measure different visions of the postwar city against actual results in terms of the built environment, contrasting how each city created a unique urban space.



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