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Building the 21st Century Home: The Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood

By David Rudlin BA MTP, Nicholas Falk BA (University College Oxford) MBA (Stanford Graduate School of Business California) PhD in Urban Regeneration (London School of Economics), URBED



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The book reviews the way that planning policies, architectural trends and economic forces have undermined the viability of urban areas in Britain since the Industrial Revolution. Now that much post-war planning philosophy is being discredited we are left with few urban models other than garden city inspired suburbia. Are these appropriate in the 21st century given environmental concerns, demographic change, social and economic pressures? The authors suggest that these trends point to a very different urban future.

If the 19th century home was the terrace and the 20th century was the suburban semi, what will be the 21st century home? In the 21st century it is likely that a change will take place in the way that we build our towns and cities, as dramatic as that brought about by the garden city pioneers a hundred years ago.

Change should not, however, be brought about by regulation or by forcing people against their will to return to towns and cities. Instead, this book argues that we must reform our towns and cities so that they become attractive, humane places where people will choose to live. The Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood is a model for such reform and the book describes what this would look like and how it might be brought about.

David Rudlin BA, MTP and Dr Nicholas Falk MBA are directors of URBED (The Urban and Economic Development Group), a not-for-profit consultancy which has been working since 1976 to devise practical solutions to the problems of urban areas. They were responsible for the '21st Century Homes: Building to Last' report for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation which first developed the notion of the Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood. David Rudlin is a town planner and urban designer and has been closely involved in the redevelopment of the 'Hulme Guide to Development'. He was also a member of an advisory panel responsible for drawing up the 'Manchester Guide to Development'. Nicholas Falk is an economist and strategic planner who formerly worked for the Ford Motor Company before establishing URBED in 1976. He has written and lectured widely on urban issues and was the principle author of 'Vital and Viable Town Centres: Meeting the Challenge' for the Department of the Environment.

- Explore how to combine social, environmental and economic thinking with urban design
- Benefit from Rudlin and Falk's expertise in urban planning and development

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Editorial Review

Review

'Building the 21st Century Home is the best analysis I have read of the crisis of the contemporary British city. If poor cities, towns and neighbourhoods, where 90% of us live, are once more going to work as economic, social and cultural powerhouses then we need to develop compact, mixed use, environmentally sustainable urban development based on good design. This book offers a chance to rethink our priorities, break the cycle of decline and to create sustainable cities suitable for citizens.'

Richard Rogers

'The book helps to reveal some of the deeper currents behind the froth and bubble of the current debate over cities and urban areas.'

Housing Signpost, DETR

'This book says some good things and some things that in my view are quite misguided, but all of it is interesting. Every British planner should read it forthwith.'

Sir Peter Hall, in Town and Country Planning

'There are many books published now with a revisionist urban programme, but Rudlin and Falk's is one of the best and most comprehensive.'

The Architect's Journal

'It is certainly a useful and compelling book and might come to be seen as an important and influential one.'

RSA Journal

'This is an important book that deserves to be read widely, if only because it will, undoubtedly, be contested by those who take a different view of the urban future.'

Built Environment

'Leading protagonists of a burgeoning cult of the city...URBED know their subject intimately, put it across with lucid arguments, copious examples, fascinating statistics and attractive illustrations.'

The Land is Ours

'An excellent and very valuable contribution to the necessary new thinking on urban planning and development.'

David Walton Llewellyn-Davies

'The Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood goes to the heart of what we are trying to do across this department and across government.'

Dinah Nichols, Director General Environmental Protection DETR

'The authors have integrated a range of concerns into a well-structured argument which will be hard to rebut - though one could easily think of some who will try to do so. The very weight and intellectually respectable nature of the book signifies a case to answer.'

Timothy Cantell, Royal Society of Arts Journal

'I can recommend Building the 21st Century Home as a key text, of interest to planners, architects, community workers and all who feel passionate about improving their local environment.'

Herbert Girardet, Chairman of the Schumacher Society.

From the Publisher

This book reviews the way that planning policies, architectural trends and economic forces have undermined the viability of urban areas in Britain since the Industrial Revolution. Now that much post-war planning philosophy is being discredited we are left with few urban models other than garden city inspired suburbia. Will this be appropriate in the next century given environmental concerns, demographic change, social and economic pressures? The authors suggest that these trends point to a very different urban future.

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About the Author

Professional Town Planner, URBED Director, BA MTP

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