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Karsten Pålsson

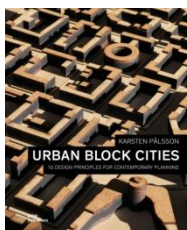
Urban Block Cities

10 Design Principles for Contemporary Planning

What could the ideal city look like? It is dense and organic, the building structures are interconnected and the common urban spaces are easily accessed. It offers variety and architectural qualities that entice people to go exploring on foot or by bike; and the distances are short enough to encourage this. The city conveys vibrancy and a sense of openness and provides opportunities for conversations in public spaces. Its environment supports social and cultural cohesion, it provides a safe space. And it is rooted in a built vernacular from which it will continue to develop by respecting its cultural heritage. In short: the ideal city is social, healthy and sustainable.

Such a city is laid out by Karsten Pålsson in his new book *Urban Block Cities*. In it, the Copenhagen-based architect and urban planner illustrates why urban blocks are the structure best suited to promoting sustainable building developments. In this instance a block is, in the broadest sense, a multi-storey building complex which shapes, separates and connects public spaces such as streets and plazas, semi-private transitional spaces such as courtyards, and private areas. In the history of the European city - as well as in other cultures - this kind of built structure has repeatedly proven itself to be the most sensible solution and can even today satisfy contemporary needs. Pålsson investigates which urban qualities have evolved from the blocks. He looks at examples from a selection of European cities such as Berlin, Amsterdam and Zurich, as well as the old and new quarters in the recently declared architectural capital of the world - the Danish capital Copenhagen. The most significant elements that define an "urban block city" are outlined, and its potential for the future are examined. Finally, ten comprehensive design principles are proposed for the practical implementation of transforming older urban districts or planning of new ones.

This book is an appeal for developing urban blocks and a denser, more organic city. It can also be used as a catalogue or tool kit for urban planners and is aimed at developers, businesses and local councils as well as architects, urban planners and students. A Ukrainian language edition is - in light of the rebuilding of the destroyed cities there - currently in planning.



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