

Reading List: 7 fascinating books on architecture, people, and place

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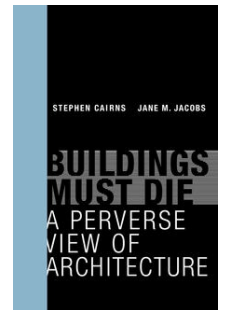
2014-7-21

Last week, **LSE's Saw Swee Hock Student Centre** was [shortlisted for the 2014 RIBA Stirling Prize](#). In this Reading List we bring together a selection of inspirational books on the relationship between buildings and their users. Urban scholars, architects, and sociologists will all find exciting ideas amongst these pages.

Interested in the life and death of buildings?

Buildings Must Die: A Perverse View of Architecture. Stephen Cairns and Jane M. Jacobs

Buildings are often assumed to have “life”. But what of the “death” of buildings? What of the decay, deterioration, and destruction to which they are inevitably subject? In *Buildings Must Die*, Stephen Cairns and Jane M. Jacobs aim to examine spalling concrete and creeping rust, and pick through the rubble of earthquake-shattered churches, imploded housing projects, and demolished Brutalist office buildings. Richard Jones finds this a strikingly original and provocative book which deserves a wide readership across the social sciences. [Read the full review.](#)



Find this book: 

Interested in how design is getting greener?

The Greening of Architecture: A Critical History and Survey of Contemporary Sustainable Architecture and Urban Design by Phillip James Tabb and A. Senem Deviren

The *Greening of Architecture* considers how multiple strands of green design thought and practice have come to influence today's trend for eco-living and sustainable design. Andrew Karvonen finds that the most useful contribution of the book is the exposition of the multiple ideas and projects that have inspired and informed green and sustainable design approaches. By highlighting the complex and dynamic trajectory of green and sustainable design over the last half century, the authors provide inspiration for how these practices might evolve and expand in the twenty-first century. [Read the full review.](#)

Find this book: 

Interested in China's growing cities?

Chinese Urban Design: The Typomorphological Approach by Fei Chen and Kevin Thwaites

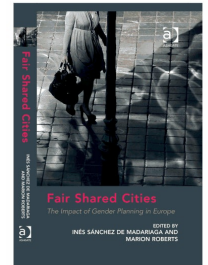
The traditional Chinese city is undergoing an identity crisis. With rapid developments taking place, there is growing conflict between this new building and the existing urban heritage. In *Chinese Urban Design* Fei Chen and Kevin Thwaites argue that urban design needs to play a far more important role in China's urban development if cities are to become places that are relevant to the lives of local residents, be sustainable and adaptable to meet future needs. This book should prove to be essential reading for urban design scholars and city policy-makers, writes Amy Tang. [Read the full review.](#)

Find this book: 

Interested in how buildings can be gender-friendly?

Fair Shared Cities: The Impact of Gender Planning in Europe edited by Inés Sánchez de Madariaga and Marion Roberts

Bringing together a diverse team of leading scholars and professionals, Fair Shared Cities offers a variety of insights into ongoing gender mainstreaming policies in Europe with a focus on urban/spatial planning. Natalie Novick finds that through the examples of effective policy contained in these pages, the contributors shows how the successful implementation of gender mainstreaming is in the collective interest and it is possible that the city can be constructed more effectively into a place that is more equal for everyone. [Read the full review.](#)

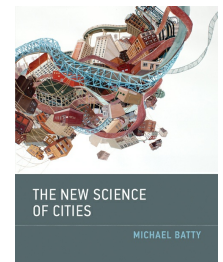


Find this book:  

Interested in how cities function?

The New Science of Cities by Michael Batty

In The New Science of Cities, Michael Batty suggests that to understand cities we must view them not simply as places in space but as systems of networks and flows. Drawing on the complexity sciences, social physics, urban economics, transportation theory, regional science, and urban geography, and building on his own previous work, Batty seeks to introduce theories and methods that reveal the deep structure of how cities function. Andrew Karvonen is impressed and convinced. [Read the full review.](#)



Find this book:  

Interested in architecture and postmodernism?

The Dissolution of Place: Architecture, Identity and the Body by Shelton Waldrep

The Dissolution of Place investigates architecture on the margins of postmodernism: those places where both architecture and postmodernism begin to break down and to reveal new forms and new relationships. The book examines in detail not only a wide range of architectural phenomena such as theme parks, casinos, specific modernist and postmodernist buildings, but also interrogates architecture in relation to identity, specifically Native American and gay male identities, as they are reflected in new notions of the built environment. Reviewed by Andrew Molloy. [Read the full review.](#)

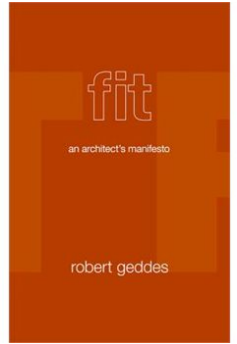
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Interested in the how buildings are designed to fit the place?

Fit: An Architect's Manifesto by Robert Geddes

Fit: An Architect's Manifesto seeks to fundamentally change how architects and the public think about the task of design. Architect and urbanist Robert Geddes argues that buildings, landscapes, and cities should be designed to fit: fit the purpose, fit the place, fit future possibilities. Andrew Molloy finds that unfortunately Geddes never truly engages with the many ideas from philosophy and sociology which now contribute to architectural theory. An enjoyable read, but one to be read critically. [Read the full review.](#)

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