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Civic Purpose

Urban Design in Private Practice

William Fain

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Territory	World excluding USA, Canada, Australasia, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan
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- Illustrates the practice of Urban Design for projects that range from large regional plans to urban infill, for practitioners and students of architecture, landscape architecture, and city planning
- Content includes illustrations and descriptions of the public process which includes consensus building, design workshops and presentations essential to the success of urban and regional plans, today
- A compendium of projects with a wide array of programs and user groups, done for both public and private clients, illustrating the value of ten (10) Urban Design principles as a guide for implementing urban design projects

Time is a factor in urban design. Projects sometimes take decades to materialise. Some never make it. This monograph features three decades of urban design projects at Johnson Fain varying in type and scale from conceptual architecture to the design for major city additions, to environmental plans for sites thousands of square kilometers in area. Some have been built; some remain in process. They represent a wide range of engagements, and all seek to address our goal to achieve "civic purpose," benefiting the city, the community and the project's sponsor.

Civic Purpose — contributing to the civility of a city — is central to all our projects, public or private. Public and private sponsors may share similar views of civic purposes, yet often are motivated for different reasons — the public interest in social equity and environmental quality, and the private in engendering support for a project's entitlements. The urban design project benefits from both. Listening to stakeholder voices surrounding a project helps us understand the possibilities and the impossibilities, and to establish through involvement of all parties a sense of ownership and commitment assuring its success over time. Engaging others in conceptualising urban design involves both the art of persuasion and the art of accepting other viewpoints, ceding credit for good ideas because our process is never about a single idea, encouraging robust discussion, concept development, and evaluation of alternatives in a collaborative process.

Across this spectrum of work, innovation is achieved both programmatically by defining the urban problem in different and interesting ways, and structurally by offering a formal framework from which participants contribute to the evolution of a plan. Our designers share a zeal for understanding how cities evolve and are committed to a principled practice that ensures they evolve in a beneficial direction for everyone.

William Fain is both Managing Partner and Director of the Urban Design and Planning Studio of Johnson Fain. He has over 50 years of experience in the practice of architecture, urban design, community planning, downtown redevelopment, and environmental conservation and resiliency at an urban and regional scale.

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