

History and Evolution of Urban Design

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1. Foundations – Early Settlements

Period	Key Features	Representative Examples
Pre-Agricultural (c. 10,000 BC – 5,000 BC)	Small, organic clusters around water & fertile land; no formal planning.	Çatalhöyük (Turkey)
Neolithic & Bronze Age (c. 5,000 BC – 1,200 BC)	Grid-like streets appear; defensive walls, central plazas.	Mohenjo-Daro & Harappa (Indus Valley)
Classical Antiquity (c. 1,200 BC – 500 AD)	Formal orthogonal grids, axial streets, public forums, zoning for civic, religious, commercial uses.	Greek polis (e.g., Miletus), Roman colonies (e.g., Timgad, Italy)

Takeaway: Early urban design was driven by **defense, water access, and social organization**, laying the groundwork for grid systems and public spaces.

2. Medieval & Renaissance Urbanism (500–1700)

- **Medieval Towns**

- Organic, winding streets; market squares at the heart.
- Fortifications (walls, gates) dominate layout.
- Example: **York, England; Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Germany.**

- **Renaissance Planning**

- Revival of classical geometry; emphasis on symmetry, perspective, and monumental avenues.
- Introduction of “**ideal city**” concepts (e.g., star-shaped fortifications).
- Notable projects: **Palmanova (Italy), El Escorial (Spain).**

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Key shift: From defensive, irregular forms to **orderly, symbolic layouts** reflecting power and humanist ideals.

3. The Industrial Age (1700?–?1900)

Issue	Design Response	Notable Figures
Rapid population growth	Dense, mixed-use neighborhoods; emergence of tenements.	John Snow (epidemiology) highlighted need for sanitation.
Public health crises	Wide boulevards, sewer systems, parks for ventilation and recreation.	Georges?Eugène Haussmann – Paris redesign (1853?1870).
Transportation revolution	Railways, streetcars ? new corridors, transit-oriented districts.	Ebenezer Howard – Garden City model (1898).

Concepts introduced: Zoning, sanitary engineering, green belts, and the garden city prototype that blended urban and rural benefits.

4. Modernism (1900?–?1970)

- **Core Principles**

- Function over ornamentation.
Le Corbusier's "Radiant City" ? high-rise towers on a **grid of open space**.
- Separation of uses (residential, work, leisure).
- Emphasis on **automobile circulation**