



## Dream Cities: Seven Urban Ideas That Shape the World

By Wade Graham

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### **Dream Cities: Seven Urban Ideas That Shape the World** By Wade Graham

From the acclaimed landscape designer, historian and author of *American Eden*, a lively, unique, and accessible cultural history of modern cities—from suburbs, downtown districts, and exurban sprawl, to shopping malls and “sustainable” developments—that allows us to view them through the planning, design, architects, and movements that inspired, created, and shaped them.

*Dream Cities* explores our cities in a new way—as expressions of ideas, often conflicting, about how we should live, work, play, make, buy, and believe. It tells the stories of the real architects and thinkers whose imagined cities became the blueprints for the world we live in.

From the nineteenth century to today, what began as visionary concepts—sometimes utopian, sometimes outlandish, always controversial—were gradually adopted and constructed on a massive scale in cities around the world, from Dubai to Ulan Bator to London to Los Angeles. Wade Graham uses the lives of the pivotal dreamers behind these concepts, as well as their acolytes and antagonists, to deconstruct our urban landscapes—the houses, towers, civic centers, condominiums, shopping malls, boulevards, highways, and spaces in between—exposing the ideals and ideas embodied in each.

From the baroque fantasy villages of Bertram Goodhue to the superblocks of Le Corbusier’s Radiant City to the pseudo-agrarian dispersal of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Broadacre City, our upscale leafy suburbs, downtown skyscraper districts, infotainment-driven shopping malls, and “sustainable” eco-developments are seen as never before. In this elegantly designed and illustrated book, Graham uncovers the original plans of brilliant, obsessed, and sometimes megalomaniacal designers, revealing the foundations of today’s varied municipalities. *Dream Cities* is nothing less than a field guide to our modern urban world.

Illustrated with 59 black-and-white photos throughout the text.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

“An excellent and novel exploration of key ideas behind city spaces and the behaviors they engender. . . . Mr. Graham is as masterly as a novelist when it comes to character development and narrative.” (*Wall Street Journal*)

“An intriguing architectural history and an effective antidote to the excesses of urban renewal and city planning.” (*Kirkus*)

“*Dream Cities* offers a fascinating look at seven trends in urban planning that shaped the modern world.” (*Shelf Awareness*)

Praise for *American Eden*: “An ambitious study of the forms and ideas of the contemporary city.... Graham wants us to see these urban and architectural forms afresh, not as the drab commonplaces they have become but as the work of visionaries ‘whose dreamed-of cities became the blueprint for the world we actually live in.’” (*New York Times Book Review*)

#### From the Back Cover

A lively, unique, and accessible cultural history that explores our cities in a new way—as expressions of ideas, often conflicting, about how we should live, work, play, make, buy, and believe

Beginning as visionary concepts, the blue-prints for the world we live in today—sometimes utopian, sometimes outlandish, always controversial—were gradually adopted and constructed on a massive scale in international cities from London to Dubai to Ulan Bator to Los Angeles. Wade Graham uses the lives of the pivotal dreamers behind these archetypes, as well as their acolytes and antagonists, to deconstruct our urban landscapes—the houses, towers, civic centers, condominiums, malls, boulevards, highways, and spaces in between—exposing the ideals and ideas embodied in each.

Through in-depth portraits that take us from the baroque fantasy villages of Bertram Goodhue to the superblocks of Le Corbusier’s Radiant City to the pseudo-agrarian dispersal of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Broadacre City, our upscale leafy suburbs, downtown skyscraper districts, infotainment-driven shopping centers, and “sustainable” eco-developments are seen as never before. In this elegantly designed and illustrated book, Graham uncovers the original plans of brilliant, obsessed, and sometimes megalomaniacal designers, revealing the foundations of today’s varied municipalities.

*Dream Cities* is nothing less than a field guide to our modern urban world.

#### Praise for Wade Graham’s *American Eden*

“Mr. Graham recounts his tale with considerable verve and a vast erudition in the history of gardening and the arts generally. . . . Among much else, Mr. Graham shows us that the history of how our nation grew can be found in what it has grown.”—*Wall Street Journal*

“A blazingly fresh, critical, and ecologically astute masterwork.”—*Booklist* (starred review)

“Enjoyable . . . well researched, posing an interesting historic tie from the past to the present.”—*Washington Post*

“Informative and absolutely engrossing . . . an astute analysis—and, ultimately, a joyous celebration—of four hundred years of ingenuity and vision.”—Ross King, author of *Brunelleschi's Dome*

“We are what we plant, LA-based writer Wade Graham posits in his history of gardens. When he isn't explaining the economic and cultural influences, he crafts fascinating profiles. . . . An engaging look at our own pieces of paradise.”—*Los Angeles Magazine*

#### About the Author

Wade Graham is a Los Angeles–based garden designer, historian, and writer whose work on the environment, landscape, urbanism, and the arts has appeared in the *New Yorker*, *Harper's*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Outside*, and other publications. An adjunct professor of public policy at Pepperdine University, he is the author of *American Eden: From Monticello to Central Park to Our Backyards: What Our Gardens Tell Us About Who We Are*.

#### Users Review

##### From reader reviews:

##### Michelle Chase:

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