CHAPTER FOUR: THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF PLANNING

There is a vast range of history of planning books available as shown below. But if we had to narrow it down to just a few books, I would suggest the following three:

Mumford’s book, *The City in History*, (1965) for an overview and it is strong on the historical and cultural aspects of urban development.

Summerson’s book on *Georgian London (1986)*

Cherry’s book on *Pioneers in British Town Planning* (1981) on the new forms of planning called forth by the Industrial Revolution.

To give you a wider choice, if you cannot get hold of these, I would suggest any books by the following authors on the history of planning, Ashworth, Bacon, Bell, Bor, Benevelo, Betjeman, Burke, Cherry, Dyos, Hall, Geddes, Kostoff, A.E. Morris, Mumford, Oliver, Pevsner (Forsyth, Prizeman, Ravetz, and Summerson. Some of their work is listed in the bibliography but you may find other editions and texts are still available. Any edition of these books is suitable, as they are dealing with past development, and so do not go out of date. You don’t have to read them all! But, it is worthwhile just to flick through the history of planning section in your library to appreciate the scope and nature of what is available. Perhaps, you may decide to pick out a few books for your specific project work needs.

There is a great deal of material available on the internet on every period of urban history, but much of the material tends to be descriptive and factual, rather than discursive and reflective. Try, when reading, to get an understanding of how and why things changed, rather than just collecting loads of interesting facts and figures.

The emphasis in this chapter has mainly been upon English and European architecture and planning, but if you may want to trace the history of other civilisations such as India and China which also have a major and detailed heritage of urban form and architecture. For example, *The Chinese City* by Weiping Wu and Gaubatz (2012) includes chapters on both historical development and the major changes that have occurred in recent years.

For lighter material, look at Osbert Lancaster for a more humorous approach to the history of architecture from the 1930s and also second-hand copies of the Observer pocket guides to architecture are still informative as are the Pevsner guides. There are many good tourist guidebooks, for example for Greece, Italy, Egypt, and for that matter England, which include material on the main famous buildings and cities of note.