“A British Planning Model: Provincial Civic Design
in the Late-Victorian and Edwardian Period”

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The late-Victorian and Edwardian period represents a significant era in the urban development of British towns and cities, particularly with regards to their form and appearance. Many major design and planning schemes were undertaken not only in London but elsewhere, which helped infuse order into somewhat disarranged urban environments and emphasised the role of beauty and the further need to apply art into the cityscape. This paper thus provides a detailed outline of more than 100 public architectural schemes undertaken within the largest sized provincial places in England, Scotland and Wales from the end of the nineteenth century to 1914. The paper will present a comparative examination of examples of civic design in Britain, in so doing identifying the design features and planning principles that appeared to govern civic design by analysing the structural design components, internal arrangements and the surroundings of public buildings erected at that time. More successful examples of civic design will be noted and discussed, as will the professionals undertaking it, so as to not only provide a comprehension of what British civic design was understood to mean but to also show who was practising it at a time when formative British Town Planning emerged. In addition, this work aims to provide an opportunity for the consideration of the influences upon the built environment, such as the American City beautiful movement, during a time when a greater control of the urban environment was exercised by public authority, legislation relating to slum clearances was passed, municipal governments continued to develop, modern design cultures such as the Baroque revival emerged, and imperial sentiments filtered into national and local affairs.

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