



**TOWN  
+GOWN:  
NYC**

## **The Built Environment in Town+Gown**

Town+Gown modified the recognized multi-disciplinary Built Environment field to include the six disciplines described below. Town+Gown takes a flexible and creative approach with the built environment field parameters so that most proposed project ideas can easily fall within it. In other words, if a project isn't metaphorical, it will likely be suitable for Town+Gown.

- **Management**

These projects can focus on the built environment from the perspectives of its archetypal participants—owner, designer, constructor and financier. A critical objective for participants is to align their various interests in budget, schedule, safety and quality to make individual projects successful, in a context where information asymmetries continually change. Practitioners adapt to changes “on the ground” and innovations in materials, building methods and information technology by using an evolving menu of service delivery methodologies and management theories, techniques and tools, not dissimilar to those found in other industries or sectors.

- **Geography**

These projects can be in urban planning, regional planning and placemaking, as well as land use practices, which can also be projects under Law.

- **Economics**

These projects can focus on how government acts *in* and *on* the built environment in the different roles it often plays simultaneously. Public capital programs are, in essence, work orders for facilities relating to “social” or “public” goods and to “mixed goods” that correct for negative and positive externalities. Yet, at the same time government participates in the built environment as an owner, it also operates as economic catalyst and policy maker, regulator and financier— increasing the complexity of built environment systems and affecting the effectiveness and efficiency of public and private capital programs and projects.

- Law

These projects can focus on the impact of laws on built environment activities from the perspective of the archetypal participants—owner, designer, constructor and financier. Statutes and regulations, contractual forms and provisions, and related case law all affect the relationships among built environment participants, their expectations and their behaviors. Deconstructing the law in the context of its impact “on the ground” can provide powerful explanatory insight for the other disciplines analyzing built environment issues and provide a foundation for policy and practice change.

- Design

These projects can focus on any aspect in this complex disciplinary field. Both public and private construction projects become part of the visible built environment, and this aspect of Design includes both Architecture and Engineering. Within or surrounding built objects, several other design disciplines also operate and contribute significantly to the overall success of any built environment intervention. Interior design, lighting design, landscape design, service design, communications (or visual) design, digital design and product design comprise a suite of integrated design services that interface with Architecture and Engineering.

- Technology

These projects can focus on ways technology can assist built environment participants in their respective domains. While technology can be analyzed in conjunction with, for example, management techniques and methodologies, technology has aspects resulting from technology *qua* technology and how it relates to society, and these projects can highlight one or more of these aspects. Large public owners have an ability to advance technology innovation, as economic policy makers and as collateral from their public capital programs by participating in research and development activities necessary for innovation in construction- and built environment-related technology.

The Town+Gown disciplines are plotted on the Biglan matrix of academic disciplines below.

