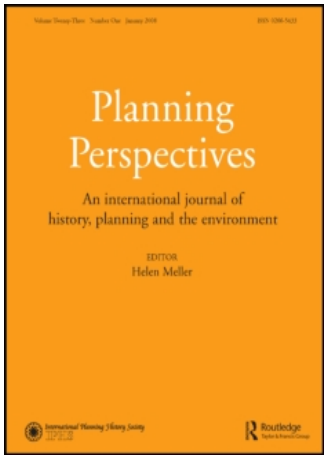

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Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

Urbanismo Europeo en Caracas (1870–1940)

Arturo Almandoz, Caracas: Equinoccio, Fundación para la Cultura Urbana, 2nd edn, 2006 442 pp., hardback, BsF65.00 (Venezuela Bolívares Fuertes), ISBN 908 6553 56 X

After its first edition in 1997 quickly sold out, the much-needed reprint of this work constituted good news. It represents a great contribution to the literature of the history of Latin American cities, as it goes beyond specifics and engages in a reflective and methodological exercise.

Within the framework of a scrutiny of the history of Caracas, two parallel questions take shape: the flow of European urbanism into Caracas and the emergence of modern urbanism as a discipline in the country, the result of debates over its capital city. In this vein, the author very successfully combines historical and epistemological objectives that go beyond the specific case of Caracas to shed light on other critical issues in the historiography of Latin American urbanism.

Its treatment of issues is divided into three sections. The first one – 'El arte urbano Guzmancista' – describes a period in the late nineteenth century under the Guzman Blanco administration when the Haussmannian model became relevant, albeit more prominent in the realm of ideals than of actual works. These would only be reflected in the remodelling of public parks and boulevards as well as some buildings, but the movement came nowhere near to the scale of reform and reshaping that took place in Paris. That would only appear in the second stage – 'La Bella Epoca y los años locos: Higiene y Progreso' – where sanitary issues took centre stage by the turn of the century. Equally important, however, was the implementation of various strategies aimed at dealing with urban growth and its ensuing congestion, with New York as a model rather than Paris. The third part, 'Urbanismo Monumental', examines the 'Rotival Plan' of 1939, where sanitary as well as functional problems are dealt with in a formulation that again refers back to the French capital, although this time from updated ideas characteristic of the Haussmannian legacy in the École Française d'Urbanisme.

In this sequenced structure, the author redefines political stages 'from the perspective of urban epistemology', thus opening up different avenues of thought. He presents a continuum between the bourgeois Haussmannian city of the Guzman administration and the Rotival Plan, evidencing coherence between the two: the former is realized fully beyond mere ideas only upon the implementation of the latter. In parallel, the author centres his discussion on the influence of urbanism – its models, styles, results – thus taking urbanism and its bearing on the construction of a city into the sphere of urban culture.

To meet this aim, the author adopts a cultural approach to urbanism and expands his sources. A well sought-out selection of urban discourses that include technical, legal and fiction pieces – among others – are used to expand the definition of the urban phenomenon. As a result, urbanism is shown as a discipline that goes beyond technical issues and joins the

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cultural debate through constant references to Paris and New York. The phrase 'a capital with halls but no palaces' is an example of the way that ideals preceded attainments and urbanism was one of many elements present in a social lifestyle closer to culture than to urbanism.

This new edition of the book contains some final comments that clearly and precisely lay out the methodological co-ordinates to the book. Almandoz also argues for the existence of a field of study where his work should be inscribed: cultural urban history, an idea that has evolved for years now through many articles and lectures that substantiate his claim. Also new to this edition are an updated bibliography and notes as well as an index to names and places, which improves the readability, strengthens credibility and constitutes invaluable help at locating sources for future research. Having said this, my only quibble is the lack of photographs and illustrations. They were few in the first edition, and now are completely absent in this one. It is to be regretted, as they would have provided spatial and visual support to the author's arguments.

In conclusion, and given the contents and merits reviewed, the book, its formulations and methodological strategies should become essential reading for those engaged in urban history and urbanism in general – a field of study that is constantly expanding in Latin America.

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England's Seaside Resorts

Allan Brodie and Gary Winter, Swindon: English Heritage, 2007
209 pp., hardback, £24.99, ISBN 978 1 905624 65 2

Academic historians of planning and architecture have recently realized that, as well as being enjoyable places to spend recreational time with their families, coastal holiday towns warrant serious study as complex and fascinating urban environments. *England's Seaside Resorts*, the outcome of a four-year project undertaken by Allan Brodie and Gary Winter for English Heritage, is a welcome addition to the body of material on these special places, for it provides a clear and cohesive account of their built heritage. A brief history of the phenomenon of English seaside resorts is followed by chapters examining how their forms developed, the architectural styles which they adopted and adapted, their role catering for people's health needs, the provision of entertainment for visitors, and the various kinds of accommodation that they have offered them.

Coastal holiday resorts are ambivalent places. The circumstance of their physical location is itself peculiarly suggestive:

> Seaside resorts stand at the edge of nature, facing the untamed beauty of the sea. The desire for this proximity, to be beside the sea, has created something special: only at the seaside does our dense urban environment meet, so abruptly, the uncompromising and overwhelming natural domain (p. 61).

Perhaps it is this dramatic juxtaposition of civilization with wilderness that encourages people – the visitors and their hosts – to be irreverent towards convention and constantly test the limits of respectability. At the seaside, health and hedonism are pursued with equal vigour; the homely and the exotic are both vividly apparent; the commercial imperative to be up to date brings innovations here before most other provincial places, but typically in the most superficial and transient ways; and the setting relentlessly changes, by the work of nature or by human activity. Coastal resorts must be continually reinvented to flourish, yet they must also appear familiar to reassure returning visitors. The architecture is an expression of the impulses towards innovation, fashionability and sheer pleasure, and often also of the resistance they have met: 'An important part of the story of resorts is about tensions' (p. 178). As such, the built environment is an excellent record of these towns' socio-cultural history, typically more pronounced than is to be found inland. In seaside resorts, 'architecture was used as entertainment and mood-setter, as a backdrop to the frivolities of the seaside holiday and as a tool of the entertainment industry to lure visitors: bigger and brighter equated with more fun' (p. 180). Of course, this has been especially true of the seafront: 'The taste for the exotic and the exuberant came to epitomise seaside entertainment buildings and the spirit of the promenade' (pp. 179–80).

Due to their different attitudes and expectations, conflict has often occurred between the towns' residents and holiday-makers, most markedly when a pre-existing settlement, such as an agricultural village or a small town based upon fishing, has been rapidly developed and radically transformed to become a holiday destination. Fishermen were eventually driven away from the Steyne at Brighton (p. 50), but their resilience paid off at Hastings and at Beer, where officially managed zoning segregated sections of the beaches for their use or for recreation, and in those resorts the fishermen, with their boats, nets and drying sheds, became appreciated as a visitor attraction in their own right (pp. 43–5). At more than a few seaside resorts in the nineteenth century, 'new tensions, between residents and visitors and between wealthier visitors and the day trippers, had become obvious' (p. 179). Segregation was attempted for this too:

> All towns have areas of housing developed for particular classes of resident and the same applies at resorts. However, this may be more obvious in some seaside towns where special measures were taken to safeguard the genteel resident and visitor from less affluent residents and particularly the hoards [*sic*] of trippers who descended on the towns (p. 31).

This observation is supported adequately by the plans of housing schemes and various contemporary testimonies. However, the authors claim that the separate 'excursion station' opened at Scarborough in 1908 had a purpose additional to easing congestion at the main railway station, that it 'was to separate trainloads of trippers from the regular rail users' (p. 50) and from here those visitors 'could make their way to the beach, not via the heart of the town, but down a valley where fewer genteel residents would be disturbed' (caption to Fig. 3.32, p. 50), an assertion that is not substantiated. Nor does it seem to make sense when the location of this station meant that visitors remained most likely to proceed through the town centre (which had obvious economic advantage for the businesses there); and by that time in Scarborough's development, the main drag to the seafront had ceased to be genteel, whereas Valley Road – the route which the authors suggest was intended – consisted mainly of middle-class housing.

Contrary to most people's perceptions – mine included – that the golden era of the English seaside holiday was in the 1950s, Brodie and Winter insist that 'the peak actually occurred in 1974 when 40.5 million people took a holiday in Britain of four days or longer' (p. 30). Be that as it may, it was abundantly clear by the 1980s that our coastal resorts were unable to compete with Mediterranean destinations which guaranteed warmer, sunnier weather, a calm sea, more extensive sandy beaches and newer hotels. The advent of cheap air fares clinched the deal. Meanwhile, the English resorts were visibly suffering from neglect, which made them lose out further:

> A potentially vicious circle can develop where decreasing popularity leads to less private and public income to invest, which in turn leads to poorer facilities and therefore fewer visitors. Add to this media stories of dirty beaches, crime, and benefit bed-and-breakfasts and the seaside can appear an unappealing option for a family holiday (p. 30).

It now seems faintly possible that the unsustainability of air travel could bring an end to most foreign holidays and consequently a big revival of the English coastal resort, but that is hard to envisage. Some once-popular seaside towns are virtually finished as holiday destinations. Others continue to draw fairly large numbers of people for secondary holidays or short breaks.

Brodie and Winter observe that 'Seaside tourism is now largely entertainment driven and the most striking feature that separates resorts from ordinary towns is no longer the bathhouses and bathing machines, but the entertainment facilities that dominate the seafronts of most seaside towns' (p. 121). That is indeed the case, but I would suggest that those resorts with more to offer than their seafront attractions are best equipped to survive. Incidentally, I do not share the authors' confidence that on seafront open spaces 'art has a key role to play in enhancing the local environment' (p. 185), mainly because most of what is actually commissioned is of poor quality; but their milder judgement, earlier in the book, that 'In recent years large works of art have been recognised as a way of enlivening seafronts' (p. 38) is more agreeable.

Appealing to niche markets is another way for seaside resorts to undergo a renaissance. For instance, the growing popularity of surfing has manifested itself at every location that is suitable for it, although to most dramatic effect at Newquay. The authors recognize that, 'While hedonism has often been the motivation for visiting the seaside, resorts have continued to cater for people seeking a quieter stay' (p. 152). In recent years, a number of major museums and art galleries have been established in seaside towns. And it hardly needs saying that, for any town, a well-preserved architectural heritage can be a very significant asset. By its numerous illustrations as well as through its text, this book reveals that England's seaside resorts possess architecture that is beautiful, quirky, pompous, extravagant, confrontational or gloriously tacky, and even when it deserves none of these epithets it is nearly always interesting as evidence of a town's socio-economic and cultural history.

Brodie and Winter are convinced that the coastal holiday resort 'will always retain a special place in this island nation's affections' (p. 186). However, to be living towns, they require more than happy memories from afar: 'In resorts there is a need to balance the nostalgia of past holidays with exciting new facilities. As long as the seaside remains at the heart of popular culture, striking a suitable balance will be a challenging test for planners and architects alike' (p. 92). The authors do not venture to suggest how 'a suitable balance'

might be achieved; some examples of successful – or, if that is premature, merely promising – initiatives would have been helpful. Yet their comment, almost as an aside, that, 'today resorts are recognising that a good place to live will create a good place to visit' (p. 179), might be the best possible advice to planners and architects. As far as visitors are concerned, the English seaside resort has largely become 'a venue for short breaks, day trips and conferences' (p. 30). Surely that is where local government and business investment in infrastructure, facilities and marketing needs to be concentrated. Moreover, it will be wise for each resort to differentiate itself from the others, highlighting its location, its best facilities and its unique character. This has already begun at several resorts; for instance, Brighton now portrays itself as youthful and Blackpool as glitzy, traits which they have long enjoyed but which are now strongly emphasized to mark themselves out for special market groups. With sufficient reasons, one trusts, the authors suggest that, 'Instead of seeing the seaside resort as being in decline, it may be more accurate to consider it as being in transition' (p. 183).

This book is a closely researched, well-referenced and clearly written historical account of why and how English coastal resorts developed and, as such, it deserves a place in any university library serving students of history, architecture, planning, geography or cultural studies. As *England's Seaside Resorts* is rather more empirical than discursive, I would recommend reading it in conjunction with Fred Gray's *Designing the Seaside: Architecture, Society and Nature* [1], because he much more willingly grapples with the sociology and culture pertaining to holidays by the sea, and his comparisons between the British and foreign experiences provide further illumination.

Throughout their book, Brodie and Winter concentrate upon architectural *styles*, giving relatively little attention to these buildings' forms in relation to their functions, particularly how their internal spaces were designed to be used and what happened in practice, and how changing uses affected their fabric – internally at least as much as externally. This is disappointing. Architectural history should habitually engage with much more than aesthetics and changing fashions.

I was surprised by several omissions from the authors' printed sources: John Piper's influential essay on 'The Nautical Style' in the January 1938 issue of the *Architectural Review* (illustrated by John Piper and J. M. Richards); John Betjeman's marvellous radio talks on coastal resorts including Bournemouth (1937), Ilfracombe and Sidmouth (both 1949), the scripts of which have been published in his *Trains and Buttered Toast: Selected Radio Talks*; and Ken Worpole's *Here Comes the Sun* [2]. My local knowledge of Scarborough made me notice the misspelling of 'cobles' (a traditional type of fishing boat used on the Yorkshire coast) as 'cobbles' (caption to Fig. 5.1, p. 94).

On the whole, Brodie and Winter maintain an accessible and concise writing style, which imparts a great amount of information whilst avoiding tedium, so that both the scholar and the general reader will feel comfortable with the text. Unfortunately, however, there are occasions when the authors state what is blindingly obvious to anyone. For example: 'The vast majority of buildings in resorts were built for residents and to accommodate visitors' (p. 62). Similarly: 'The price of lodgings depended on the location in the town, the size of the house and the standard of the rooms' (p. 156). Nevertheless, *England's Seaside Resorts* is a significant publication and should be regarded as essential reading for anyone studying the architectural heritage of coastal holiday towns. The few

flaws and shortcomings of this book – which I have indicated – do not seriously detract from its achievement and service.

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Notes and references

1. Fred Gray, *Designing the Seaside: Architecture, Society and Nature*. London: Reaktion Books, 2006.
2. Respectively, John Piper, The nautical style. *Architectural Review* 83 (1938) 1–14 (see also Eric de Maré, *The Nautical Style: an Aspect of the Functional Tradition*. London: Architectural Press, 1973); John Betjeman, *Trains and Buttered Toast: Selected Radio Talks*. London: John Murray, 2006; and Ken Worpole, *Here Comes the Sun: Architecture and Public Space in Twentieth-Century European Culture*. London: Reaktion Books, 2000.

La arquitectura y el urbanismo: puntos de confluencia

Rosa Chacón (ed), Caracas: Equinoccio, Instituto de Estudios Regionales y Urbanos (IERU), Universidad Simón Bolívar, Instituto Tecnológico Superior de Cajeme, Universidad Tecnológica del Sur de Sonora, 2005
226 pp., hardback, no price given, ISBN 980 237 227 7

The city is a fascinating yet complex object that has almost obsessed diverse disciplines, ranging from the more theoretical, such as sociology, philosophy and economics, through the more practical, such as architecture and town planning. All of them have enriched both urban theory and practice, but it is rare that their heterodox views and contributions are put together in one single book. So this is the first achievement of Rosa Chacón's compilation, in which architects and urban planners engage in dialogue about theoretical, historical and professional dimensions of the *oficio* (trade) of studying, building and managing Latin America's city at the opening of the twenty-first century. Co-ordinated by Professor Chacón – a trained architect and specialist on environmental issues – the book's interdisciplinary structure features ten contributions by professionals from Venezuela, Mexico and Cuba, all of which have been grouped in three areas: history and heritage preservation; professional performance for solving urban problems; and community participation in urban management.

The book's first part – 'Heritage preservation and city history' – gathers four articles that assert the importance of historiography, memory and heritage for understanding and analysing the city. Written by Arturo Almandoz, the first article provides a brief yet complete account of the differentiation between the historiographies of modern architecture and town planning or *urbanismo*, which enables the author to frame the epistemological process that took place in Latin America from the 1960s. The second contribution, by Lorenzo González, explores memory, history, preservation and heritage as complementary components for the academic training and professional practice of architecture, planning and related disciplines.

In a provocative style, Jorge Villota offers, in the third article, an interesting stroll around Brazil's Salvador de Bahía, adopting for that purpose the standpoint of nineteenth-century travellers. Finally, Dora Angélica Correa completes this part by reviewing the problems confronted by the city of Colima, Mexico, while identifying the possible interventions aimed at preserving the important historical heritage of its urban centre. In spite of their different scales and contexts, the contributions of this part illustrate all the historical ingredients with which built environment professionals usually deal.

In the second part – 'The professional performance in the analysis and solution of urban problems' – four practitioners present their experiences resulting from natural, structural and environmental situations and events faced in the city. This part is opened by Rosa Chacón's exploration of the dynamic and structural changes undergone by some of the public spaces of Caracas, which serves the author to explore the effects on the city's environmental quality in general. Written by Eloy Méndez, the second article studies the modern types of *urbanismos* that had appeared by the late twentieth century in Latin America and how they responded to the demands of a small population, to the detriment of the city's continuity and quality of life. As a case of the environmental tragedies confronted by planners, Elisenda Vila reports how architects and urbanists coped with the challenge of reconstructing towns and villages in Venezuela's littoral after the torrential rains and flooding of December 1999. Finally, moving to the financial aspects that also inform the profession, José Pancorbo closes this part with a paper about the urban factors that improve the marketing of Latin America's cities.

The book's last part – 'Community participation in urban management' – combines two professional experiences in which the interaction with citizens was a key element for defining the city's image and the design of proposals for urban intervention. The first praxis was based on the principles of environmental psychology, whereby Fabiola Vivas relates social behaviour with the 'degree of environmental satisfaction' in the city of San Cristóbal, in the Venezuelan Andes. In the second case study, Mónica Scobedo reports and analyses the planning process of Bilbao by the late twentieth century, while trying to draw lessons from the Spanish metropolis for rehabilitating the urban centres of Latin America's cities.

The variety of the approaches and the scope of the topics involved make Professor Chacón's compilation a work that can be consulted by professionals working with the theory, history and practice of Latin American cities, especially by those who try to establish common grounds with environmental evaluation and quality of life.

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Stadtwohnen: Geschichte, Staedtebau, Perspektiven

Tilman Harlander with Harald Bodenschatz, Gerhard Fehl, Johann Jessen and Gerd Kuhn (eds), Munich: Wuestenrot Stiftung and Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2007
400 pp., hardback, €49.95, ISBN 978 3 421 03560 8

The Wuestenrot Foundation is the research arm of the large Austro-German building housing company that is now expanding into Eastern Europe. It promotes humane planning, low densities and owner-occupation, holding frequent events and exhibitions. Research results are often published by the respected Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt to its customary high standard.

This book is a team effort but it is inspired by Gerhard Fehl's powerful contribution to German housing and planning history since the 1960s. Fehl's neo-Marxist critique of old was forced off the road when 'die eiserne Lady' took the wheel in the 1990s but the ghosts of the VW and the Trabbi still weave through the BMW city of our own day. Fehl ensures that solid research and historical perspective still shape our understanding. All the authors in this book owe a debt to Gerhard Fehl, some of them over many years (as does this reviewer).

The book contains a phalanx of thirty case studies covering the development of housing and planning form, centred on Germany. Some go back to the Renaissance but most are set in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The editors have grouped them under five headings: early model planning, nineteenth-century forms, housing schemes in the 1920s, post-1945 reconstruction, and the transformation of the inner city since the 1970s.

Gerhard Fehl kicks off with three contributions on the early modern city, linking street planning with site and house plans. While lords and princes shaped the external view, the houses were built and occupied by the middle classes (Stadtsbuerger). Using specially drawn internal plans, Fehl follows the evolution of the city as a complete spatial experience. Ursula von Petz develops this approach with a study of the Strada Nuova in Genoa, followed by Andreas Weiland on the Place des Martyrs in Brussels. Gerd Kuhn discusses the arrival of 'modern planning' and mass house types in Germany between 1800 and 1850, followed by Paul Roth on high-density housing in Frankfurt. Harald Bodenschatz pursues the evolution of middle-class housing between 1850 and 1914, with the large apartment house and rear court set in a controlled street pattern. He detects more green space than is usually acknowledged. Essays follow by Lisa Kuechel (the Boulevard Haussmann, Paris), Frank Betker (the Ringstrasse in Cologne), Carsten Benke (central residential development in Goerlitz), and a green setting for medium-rise flats in the Rheinisches Viertel, Berlin. Ursula von Petz (the Oudwijk district in Utrecht), and Wolfgang Voigt and Reinhard Bartolles (two-storey row housing in Bremen), stress low rise layouts. Enclosure of space in courtyards and gardens is a subsidiary theme in these essays, as continuous frontages survive into the twentieth century.

The Weimar period studies reveal fundamental continuity, though with more ambitious planning and lower densities. Gerd Kuhn surveys the whole period. Block enclosure by flats of medium height persists, especially in the Nordic countries exemplified by the new districts of Copenhagen, as viewed by Britta Tornow. Ursula von Petz focuses on luxury suburban development in 1920s Rome where mainly independent villas and apartment blocks (palazze, palazzine) stand back from the street with no enclosed courts, picking up what air flow there was in the torrid summer months. While looking forward to more recent Roman development on palazzine lines, they served richer people than the other examples in this

period. Lisa Kuechel's study of the Rue Mallet-Stevens in Paris, the work of a campaigning architect-developer, is also an exceptional example. Le Corbusier's tower city concept of 1922 makes little impact in Germany, but Dorine van Hoogstraten detects the adoption of towers in the Zuider Amstel district of Amsterdam.

Treatments of the 1930s bring a change of mood and pace. Tilman Harlander discusses urban housing and slum redevelopment, mainly in Germany, between 1933 and 1945. He takes advantage of the lack of physical achievement to skate over the National Socialist policy debate. Ursula von Petz on improvement (Sanierung) in old Brunswick will surprise many non-German readers, though this sensitive patching had been discovered by German historians in the 1970s. Low- and medium-rise dominate new building until the war, with Marcel Lods' notorious towers at Drancy very much the exception, even in France. However, when Harlander comes to reconstruction between 1945 and 1975, we encounter an emphasis on height and space inspired by the Modern Movement. The essays by Laura Calbert i Elias on Barcelona show Cerda's continuing influence within a 1950s and a 1990s planning framework. Row housing in Christian Holl's Bremen also draws on older traditions. Holl goes on to discuss owner-occupied flats in Munich in the 1950s. The improvement and redevelopment of inner city districts since the 1970s is covered in a long essay by Christian Holl and Johann Jessen. The references to similar foreign experience do not disguise the German emphasis here, which stresses individual blocks of flats set in public space, much of it paved. Holl goes on to discuss a Berlin scheme of owner-occupied, low-rise flats in the 1980s, and Gerd Kuhn covers high-density low-rise in the Connewitz district of Leipzig in the 2000s. Kuhn returns later to low-rise owner-occupied flats in Karlsruhe in the 2000s. Johann Jessen writes about Castlefield, the first Manchester industrial area replanned and converted to residential use in the 1990s. This, and Sandra Schluchter's Oostelijke Handelskade scheme, are independent of German models, though Gerd Kuhn on Frankfurt's Westhafen deals with a waterside scheme of mainly new buildings, and Dirk Schubert on Hamburg replanning emphasizes the 'HafenCity', including the conserved Speicherstadt. Lisa Kuechel's island development in Nantes features French neo-modern planning at its humanized best, while Claus Kaepplinger will introduce many amazed readers to the high-density low-rise housing association schemes in inner London, in this case the Donnybrook Quarter in Bow, by Peter Barber Architects, the competition winners. Harald Bodenschatz's recent Friedrichswerder town houses in Berlin (2005–7) are more conventional, though with comparable tenure systems.

To sum up, this book is essentially about Germany (with even Austria not getting a look-in). The other European examples are used mainly as a counterpoint to the German story, and America, eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have no place here. However, this mass of information on German practice with rich illustrations and plans, all of it carefully documented and drafted by top authors, will be a revelation even to German readers. The only caveat is that the historical examples may be a backward projection of Wuestenrot interests, as exemplied by Ruediger Breuer's isolated essay on the legal development of home ownership in Germany. Nevertheless, the great Seely used to say that history should be written backwards!

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The Impact of Railways on Victorian Cities

John R. Kellett, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 2007
467 pp., hardback, £80, ISBN 0 415 41813 5

Starting in 2006, as part of their 'Library Editions – The City' series, Routledge has reissued some of the last century's most significant tomes in the fields of urban economics, sociology, politics, geography and history. As part of this venture a number of notable works relating to the shaping of the urban form have been reprinted, amongst which is John Kellett's *The Impact of Railways on Victorian Cities*.

Originally published in 1969, *The Impact of Railways on Victorian Cities* has become greatly appreciated since that time because of its comprehensive account of the physical effects of railway construction within the nineteenth century British city, a 'major incident in the life of all British cities between 1830 and 1900' (p. 1), the demarcating of the Victorian city's numerous districts, its influence upon daily life, and the spur it bestowed to the urban economy. Despite Kellett candidly stating that *The Impact of Railways on Victorians Cities* is primarily a study of railway business activity (pp. 25–30), the book none the less pays attention to the spatial transformations instigated by the evolution of the train system. Thoroughly probing the attitudes, activities and management practices of railway companies in the milieu of Britain's urban development, *The Impact of Railways on Victorians Cities* meticulously covers other matters of interest to urban historians, including topics such as property rights and land purchase, company organization, operational policies, manipulation of public authorities, land usage, suburban expansion, environmental dilapidation and the social effects of trains, thereby revealing why and how trains were able, in the words of Thomas Carlyle, to set towns a-dancing.

Although the role of railways as a symbol of progress and change was outlined from the mid-1950s by the 'founder' of British Urban History, H. J. Dyos, as part of his investigations into housing patterns in Victorian London, and from the early 1960s by Asa Briggs in his acclaimed work *Victorian Cities* [1], *The Impact of Railways on Victorians Cities* has proved itself vital to academic discourse through its careful explication of the impact of railways on the economy, the Victorian mindset, and its comparative evaluation of the urban fabric in London and large-sized provincial cities. Focusing, as just stated, on the largest provincial British settlements, e.g. Birmingham, Glasgow, Liverpool and Manchester, Kellett articulately delineates exactly how the Victorian railway became 'the most important single agency in the transformation of the central area of many of Britain's major cities' (p. 289), a phenomenon shown to have consumed as much as 9% of central land within already cramped urban cores (p. 290) and indirectly influencing the functions within another 20% (p. 2). Bringing forth the term 'rail land hunger' (pp. 289–95) to describe the insatiable appetite of train companies to acquire land, Kellett discloses that in Glasgow, Liverpool and Manchester rail companies by 1900 had purchased land on a scale covering up to 75% of the cities' urban sprawl in 1840. Under such conditions the bearing of the train upon land prices (pp. 297–9) and urban density (pp. 337–46), for example, cannot be overstated.

Comprising three principal sections – '"Natural growth"' in urban railways', 'Case histories' and 'The impact of railways on Victorian cities' – Kellett's book is, as already mentioned, an extensive piece of work. Providing in excess of 400 pages of highly detailed

and eloquently formed text, the true potency of *The Impact of Railways on Victorian Cities* lies not only in its exhaustive account of railway development, or its adroit integration of wide contexts relating to business, politics or urbanization, but in its factual depiction of how the train as a business venture came to affect the lives of millions in urban Britain. As Kellett suggests in 'Did the Victorians count social costs?' (pp. 25–59), the railway was a paradox that brought both benefits and detriments to urban living, a paradox which, significantly, railway companies had little or no grasp of. Accordingly, the direct and indirect effects of the railway as it cut swathes through cities on a scale comparable to a blitz (p. 419), the impact rail entrepreneurs had via selecting rail routes and choosing sites for stations, was remarkable.

There is a great deal that may be said of *The Impact of Railways on Victorian Cities*. To be brief, given its heavy reliance upon primary sources, its detailed analysis and density of findings relating to transport development, entrepreneurial activity, urban growth, and the competition for urban land, it is little wonder that since its initial publication *The Impact of Railways on Victorian Cities* has become utilized widely by authors researching the Victorian city. For scholars interested in the forces determining the shape, scale and pressures apparent within the British urban environment then this tome should not be bypassed. Moreover for an account of urban transformation, and how the railway decisively changed the plan of the British city, this book should be taken equally seriously for, as Kellett constantly illustrates, the railway fundamentally shifted the spatial nature of the British urban place. Whereas once settlements held a degree of individuality given their local and regional circumstances, in the aftermath of 'rail mania' British communities were uniformly inscribed with geometric iron brushstrokes. Rightly pointing out (pp. 3–4) that British cities are not the creations of the train, *The Impact of Railways on Victorian Cities* nevertheless grants an exceptional opportunity to comprehend and measure the range of effects the railway subscribed to Britain at an exceptional point in its cultural, political, economic and urban development.

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The Horse in the City: Living Machines in the Nineteenth Century

Clay McShane and Joel A. Tarr, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007
242 pp., hardback, $US50, ISBN 0 8018 8600 7

'I don't even like *old* cars. I mean they don't even interest me', says Holden Caulfield in J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, 'I'd rather have a goddam horse. A horse is at least *human*, for God's sake'.

When Salinger wrote those words in 1951, the urban horse was on its last legs. As Clay McShane and Joel Tarr explain in this intriguing book, horses shaped life and landscape in nineteenth-century American cities. Indeed, horses were central to urbanization, providing the energy needed for the transportation of people and freight and the power necessary for manufacturing, in spite of the development of the steam engine. Furthermore, it was not simply the horse's contribution to urban energy needs that explains its importance to urban economic life. Even their waste – piled up in huge heaps throughout city streets – commanded, at least at one point in the nineteenth century, a nice price on the market before being shipped off to the countryside to bolster soil fertility. Dead horses too had their virtues, rendered into all kinds of useful products, including leather, oil and bootblack. The authors call the horse a 'living machine', but even in death it had a role to play in a culture that made a fetish of commodities.

The notion of a 'living machine' is, of course, an oxymoron, and one with important implications for nineteenth-century cities. Reliance on horses for all manner of economic activity put cities at the mercy of equine biology. For example, an epizootic in 1872, which extended across the entire continent, led to the death of as many as thirty-six horses a day in New York and, more important, paralyzed street railways. Disease may have spread more rapidly in the East because large cities were positioned closer to one another than in the West. The use of densely packed stables to house the horses also increased the vulnerability of the animals both to disease and to fire. A New York stable fire in 1887 alone killed 1185 horses. There were so many corpses that health officials advised simply dumping the dead animals in the Hudson River.

The centrality of the horses to urban life – its role in shaping the roads and built environment of downtown areas, its importance for shipping, and as a power source for manufacturing – began to erode by the late nineteenth century. Electric-powered streetcars, the authors argue, flourished in part because of the disadvantages posed by manure piles, epizootics and equine traffic congestion. Increased passenger traffic on horsecars led to inefficiencies as the amount of time it took for passengers to board and disembark increased. Electric streetcars, meanwhile, bolstered property values in a way that horsecars had never done, prompting real estate investors to line up behind the new technology. In just fifteen year's time, electrified trolleys superseded horsecars to the point where in 1902 only 67 of 817 streetcar companies used horses. Still, horses persisted in US cities and not until well after World War II would their presence on urban streets be completely obliterated to where few people today realize how the so-called teamsters started out. If nothing else, this book demonstrates the importance of animal life to the course of American urbanization, a story that is too often rendered in a way that obscures the links between history and ecological realities.

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Culture, Urbanism and Planning

Javier Monclús and Manuel Guàrdia (eds), Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006
293 pp., hardback, £55, ISBN 978 0754 64623 5

In *Culture, Urbanism and Planning*, edited by Javier Monclús and Manuel Guàrdia, nineteen authors examine, from different perspectives, the relations between culture and urbanism. The words urbanism and planning in the title are somehow redundant but, as the editors argue, it offers a better coverage of an area of problems that each word *per se* does not. The book is organized into three parts, including also a foreword by the President of Expo Zaragoza 2008 and an introduction where the editors briefly survey the topics to be examined. The fifteen essays included in this volume were presented previously in the International Planning History Society conference, in Barcelona, in 2004.

In the first part (Historical and Cultural Perspectives), three essays scrutinize the role of cultural dimensions in urban planning in the past century and explore future relations as well. This being a book about culture, urbanism and planning, it includes a discussion of these concepts in several of these papers. In the first chapter, Michael Hebbert and Wolfgang Sonne look at the use of history in twentieth-century urban planning; Robert Freestone and Chris Gibson offer a historical analysis of the cultural dimension of urban planning in chapter two, and Greg Young explores the role of culture in planning in the past, present and future, in the last chapter of this section. As the notion of culture has changed over the years it is not a surprise to find evidence that each major cultural paradigm influenced in different ways how urbanism and planning relate to culture. For example, the change from a notion of culture associated usually with the idea of high culture, with manifestations of an elitist character, to a more comprehensive and anthropological vision, due to several factors (i.e. the influence of critical thinking in the social sciences, the rise of cultural diversity in major cities and the development of mass culture, among others), led to different perspectives about culture and its relation with urbanism and planning. Simultaneous with this move, from an elitist to a more democratic vision of culture, in the 1970s and 1980s, culture became an explicit tool in mainstream local economic development policies, a trend reinforced to some extent by the international exchange of planning ideas.

The following five chapters in the second part (Images and Heritages) examine a number of themes associated with the planning of our cities or parts of it and about the role of culture and history in that process. One of these themes is the symbolic importance of capital cities for national identity and how culture is an essential element in that process. David Gordon (chapter four) dissects this issue and discusses the impact of globalization on nation-states and on the role of capital cities in that context, as an image or symbol of national identity. In chapter five, Margarita Gutman discusses the importance of history and urban heritage in the construction of the image of the future of cities, taking the case of Buenos Aires as a reference, concluding that even in the construction of an image of the future, urban history is a key variable. Giorgio Piccinato reviews the debate on historical city centres, urban heritage and on issues of place identity in Italy, which tend to be associated with the diversity of each place, based primarily on history, now seen as an aspect of modernity and no longer as a barrier to progress. Laura Kolbe examines the preservation movement and its dilemmas in the twentieth-century in the Scandinavian capitals. John

Pendlebury compares the planning of the historic cities of Bath and York in the 1960s. The impact of immigration and the new values associated with it on the interaction between culture and urbanism is explored by Alessandro Scarnato in chapter nine, who also investigates the connexions between immigrants and the construction of an urban multicultural identity, based on two cases, Barcelona and Florence. Christopher Silver, in the last chapter of this section, offers an interesting critical analysis of New Urbanism, comparing it to other past approaches.

Finally, in the third part (Cultural Urbanism and Planning Strategies), five chapters address a number of issues usually associated with the contemporary meaning of cultural urbanism. Graeme Evans discusses the branding of cities based on culture and the multiple forms it can adopt, for example, cosmopolitan city brand or iconic urban images. F. Javier Monclús addresses the case of international exhibitions and flagship projects and shows how they can act as catalysts for urban regeneration. This is followed by an interesting critical analysis, by Lilian Vaz and Paola Jacques, on the spectacle-city, which is often associated with a decrease in citizen participation and with the gentrification of the areas where intervention takes place. Tradition and modernity in old urban centralities is the theme discussed by Roberto Segre based on the experience of several South American cities. In the final chapter, Stephen Ward discusses the Baltimore model of cultural urbanism and its global importance as a reference for urban transformation of the redundant spaces of port and industrial cities in the last decades of the twentieth century, questioning how far all the inhabitants of the cities where this model or one of its multiple versions have been applied really benefit from it.

There are a number of themes that cross the boundaries of the different sections in which the book is organized. One such theme concerns the multiform interaction of history and culture with urbanism and planning, in which the main argument seems to be that urbanism was shaped in different ways by history through a myriad of historical references employed by planners over the nineteen and twentieth centuries, with the exception of the CIAM modern or functionalist urbanism and architecture, which however was never a monolithic block in this respect. Even the modernist movement, associated with the destruction of historic urban structures is in that sense a form of cultural urbanism, in the same way that the reaction to the CIAM principles and practices, which led to the development of a broad movement at the end of the twentieth century, for which history is again an important reference and for whom the knowledge accumulated over the centuries on human settlements is an essential asset, is also considered a new model of cultural urbanism.

The articulation of history and culture with urbanism and planning in the future is another theme addressed in several chapters. The need to create new heritage and the importance it will have in the future and the relation between this and the various currents that prevailed in the preservation movement in the past century is an important point in the discussion about the future. Moreover, if preservation of local memory is a key element in the equation of culture and urbanism, it cannot be the only element and the planner should now be seen, not so much as an agent of modernity and technical progress, as in the past, but as a mediator with a role of environmental stewardship.

The benefits of cultural urbanism constitute another important issue in this book. Some of these essays reinforce the idea that it is not always clear to what extent cultural urbanism policies are the result of a real social need or of a business strategy considering, for example,

the power relations between planning and the tourist industry, in particular the fact that a substantial part of the revenues generated by investments in cultural urban infrastructures and in major cultural events tend to go primarily to external tourist enterprises more than to be reinvested in the cities themselves. The evidence suggests that historical urban centres can be, in some cases, just a part of a thematic park, where culture serves primarily to increase profits of external organizations instead of being an instrument for community development and for the democratization of the public space.

Taken as a whole, this is a well-structured book, based on sound empirical evidence, with an interesting sample of different perspectives about the articulation of culture with urbanism and planning. Not all articles are confined to the Anglo-American planning experience, a positive point that must be highlighted here, and most of them offer useful information on the diffusion of planning ideas. Culture in the cases examined is mainly elite culture and not popular culture or culture as a way of life. The book challenges a number of preconceived ideas about the relation between culture and urbanism, offering ample evidence on how culture as an element of urbanism and planning is not a recent idea since, as early as the nineteen century, museums and other cultural infrastructures and cultural events were conceived as strategic investments for the stimulation of the local and national economies (i.e. Arts and Crafts Movement expositions and World's Fairs). The book also shows that, despite the continuous international exchange of planning ideas and the application of universal principles, cultural urbanism tended to consider, in most countries and cities, the specificities of its own national or local history and geography. In short, the book sheds new light and offers different perspectives on the interaction between culture and urbanism since the end of the nineteenth century and makes it easier to understand some of the limits and risks associated with the new planning ideas and the new forms of urban management. Therefore, scholars and practitioners of urbanism and planning and related disciplines interested in cultural urbanism can certainly benefit from the different cases and perspectives examined in this book.

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Desire Lines: Space, Memory and Identity in the Post-Apartheid City

Noëleen Murray, Nick Shepherd and Martin Hall (eds), London: Routledge, 2007
328 pp., paperback, £27.50, ISBN 978 0415 70131 0

Memorialization and the inscription of the past in the public spaces of cities through architecture and heritage practice has acquired particular salience within contemporary South Africa. The ending of the apartheid past has raised various topical issues and pertinent questions. Given the evident release of energies in South Africa post-1994, how might potentially profound social and political transformations be written into its cities and public spaces? What tensions may be emerging in the (re)inscriptions of the past in an apparently forward-looking 'multicultural' South Africa? As *Desire Lines* indicates, efforts to transform the

spatial and visual landscapes of the past have been accompanied by contestation of the relevance, meaning and the nature of what constitutes communities and their histories. Equally, the issue of heritage practice elicits daily debates and discussion about what, precisely, the definition, identification and development of heritage sites involves.

A 'timely' and ground-breaking new work, *Desire Lines* is a collection of essays that examines the fertile, surprising and highly contested intersections between notions of space, memory and identity in the post-apartheid city. The collection investigates cities as 'sites of memory and desire (and of fear and forgetting)', as 'contested spaces given to plays of power and privilege, identity and difference'.

'Desire lines' – the central theme of this volume – traverse the spaces between that which is projected and planned, and that which is circumstantial and accidental. This space, heterotopia in the Foucauldian concept of the instable zone of creativity, both builds on the organized project of modernity and subverts it. Desire and nostalgia are interleaved, resulting in contradictions and uncertainties. Such dimensions form the main conceptualization within which the collection of essays is framed.

This pioneering collection draws together a cross-section of South African scholars to provide a lively and comprehensive review of the under-researched area of heritage practice following the introduction of the National Heritage Resources Act. It sets out to explore attempts to recast heritage in contemporary South Africa as well as the conditions of constraint under which newer cultural practices and representations are emerging. Looking at the daily heritage debates, from naming streets to projects such as the Gateway to Robben Island, *Desire Lines* addresses the innovative strategies that have emerged in the practice of defining, identifying and developing heritage sites and the problems that emanate from the process. Multidisciplinary contributions are featured from a broad spectrum of fields, including the built environment and public culture and education. Showcasing work from tour operators, photographers and museum curators alongside that of university-based scholars, this book is a comprehensive and singularly authoritative volume that charts the development of new and emergent public cultures in post-apartheid South Africa through the making and unmaking of its urban spaces.

By way of situating the book in local–global debates and the traditions of the spatial disciplines, the Introduction first reviews the 'Tropes of Space' through which the South African landscape has been configured and re-configured. Secondly, it identifies key points of departure – publications challenging traditional urban studies as well as exhibitions and architectural and planning projects in South Africa. Together, these points of departure shape the themes and approaches (especially including the new methodologies that engage with hidden histories and occluded experiences) within the volume. Using these approaches and themes in different ways (such as photo journalism, ethnographic accounts, and museum and tour guide narratives), contributors to the book attempt to map alternative approaches to the city, its spaces, memory and identities.

The remaining structure of the book is organized around four sections encapsulating particular standpoints on cultural constructions of the South African past. Part 1 examines 'Planning Fictions', grappling in innovative ways with the tensions surrounding various top-down spatial interventions over time (notably the 'Moments of Modernism' and 'discourses of development') and the grounded, spontaneous responses of people, groups and communities 'at the margins'.

The second set of essays in Part 2 explores 'Sites of Memory and Identity', constituting the 'evolving cartography of sites devoted to apartheid memory and narrative'. A range of heritage sites and non site-specific cultural institutions are examined as spaces within which South Africans may acknowledge, reconcile or rework specific pasts and histories within the context of the present. Such 'nation building' spaces include museums, which are seen to act as repositories of 'institutionalized' collective memory or hegemonic discourse in some cases but as local spaces for reflexive self-representation in others. Possibilities of replacing institutionalized forms with living memory are highlighted in reproductions of photography of 'Landmarks' in the newly democratized Cape Town that, a decade on, evoke a fresh set of meanings and their 'own lines of nostalgia and desire'. The general oppositional tensions involved are explored further in particular essays that emphasize the cross-cutting complexities of local memory and global heritage industries and which, rightly, caution that consequent proliferation of museums and monuments risks 'double temporalities' perpetuating (now perceived) negativities of South Africa's past.

In Part 3, chapters are concerned with 'Burial Sites' as focal points for negotiating legacies of the past and contemporary notions of development and heritage management. Case studies open debate on the erasure of subaltern histories but also provide compelling evidence of contestations of culture, identity and memory in the post-apartheid city, as well as 'points of fracture' through which to glimpse urban imaginaries.

The final set of papers considers 'Transit Spaces' – spaces that are simultaneously sites of change and sites of accommodation and conflict of everyday life. The papers reflect on what is termed 'the paradoxical openness of the post apartheid city' – that is, on the one hand, 'the existence of profoundly new opportunities'; on the other, 'the perpetuation of past discourses and entrenched inequalities'. Case studies here offer a fascinating diversity of perspectives and exemplification. These range from township photographs 'from above' that (subversively of the genre) seek out sites of potentialities and transformation, through 'voices' of post-apartheid news columnists, to explorations of constructs within new spaces of consumer economies (the mall and casino) and repackaged spaces of post-apartheid city and township tours. Each richly illustrates the ways in which these may develop their 'own traceries of promise and desire'.

Martin Hall writes an 'Afterword' in which he reflects on the historical embeddedness of desire lines in the social construction of space and time, closing (very effectively) with a pair of improbable images – 'Rem Koolhass in the President's helicopter, aloft over a smouldering Lagos, and the melancholy fate of the Khoi woman "Eva"/Krotoa, the "woman between"'.

Overall, this collection is an indispensable guide for those working within or studying heritage practice and especially so for those working within post-colonial contexts. It offers insights into the debates that have reconfigured the shape of city spaces, and of heritage and public culture, while posing new questions in the direction of scholarship.

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