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Design, Process and Institutions

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Abstract

Although many Anglo-American social historians would like to believe that they have invented planning history, their assumption is incorrect. The field has deeper roots. Its earliest practitioners - architects, archaeologists and classicists - engaged in questions of urban design, the origin of cities and urbanization.

Comments

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7 ————— Design, Process, and Institutions: Planning in Urban History

EUGENIE LADNER BIRCH

Although many Anglo-American social historians would like to believe that they have invented planning history, their assumption is incorrect.¹ The field has deeper roots. Its earliest practitioners—architects, archaeologists and classicists—engaged in questions of urban design, the origin of cities, and urbanization. They frequently, but not always, concentrated on the preindustrial periods. They fashioned an inquiry that focused on the physical artifact, the city or urban element, and its changes over time.² Additionally, they evaluated individuals, usually architects or planners of national stature. They established a scholarly tradition that is thriving today, particularly in the works of John W. Reps, Norma Evenson, Norman J. Johnston, Thomas S. Hines, and Carl W. Condit.³

Although Anglo-American social historians did not invent planning history, they certainly transformed it. In the 1970s, they turned their attention to planning as one of the phenomena shaping the modern city. Drawn in part by the flowering of urban history a decade earlier, they set the parameters of their studies by concentrating on the process and context of planned urban development. In so doing, they expanded the definition of planning to include not only design but also more generalized land use patterns. These authors had a dramatic influence on the field. While they did not forget about the city as a physical artifact, they

documented the decisions, people, and events that created the artifact. As they concentrated on the modern period, they assumed a more critical or evaluative stance than their predecessors. An essential part of their work was to question who benefited from planning. Representative of this group are Anthony Sutcliffe, Jon A. Peterson, Blaine A. Brownell, David R. Goldfield, Zane L. Miller, and Daniel Schaffer.⁴

At about the same time, a third group of planning historians emerged. Largely drawn from the profession, they were occupied with establishing a systematic study of institutionalized planning. They focused on its roots, practitioners, internal organization, accomplishments, and failures. Driven in part by a desire to restore a collective memory to a field that had rejected its past, they also sought to interpret the place of planning in American society. They synthesized the approaches of the others, incorporating the design consciousness of the architectural historian and the process orientation of the social historian, yet they rarely strayed from their institutional focus. Some participants here are Donald A. Krueckeberg, Laurence C. Gerckens, Peter Marcuse, Marc A. Weiss, Roger Montgomery, and Eugenie L. Birch.⁵

These three approaches, however different their backgrounds, are currently linked by two themes: their common definition of the field and their focus on the modern period. They are concerned with the collective and conscious decisions that have created comprehensive land use and spatial patterns or special use areas in a city or region, usually in pursuit of an ideal physical environment. They are illuminating the heritage of these decisions in today's world.

Clearly these three traditions—the design based, process oriented, and institution concerned—have shaped current offerings. While these streams are now developing not so much independently as in parallel fashion, they have influenced each other. For example, design-based authors are providing richer contextual material, process-oriented contributors are integrating more design in their analyses, and institution-concerned authors are incorporating design and process into their interpretations.⁶ The result is a literature rich in quantity as well as in scope.

Planning History Surveys

A healthy general survey literature has developed over time. Some of this work carries on the tradition of Pierre Lavedan, A. E. J. Morris, and Erwin A. Gutkind.⁷ Primarily concerned with assessing the physical attributes of cities and placing metropolitan growth in a chronological context, Leonardo Benevolo, Mark Girouard, and John W. Reps answer the questions of how much, what kind, and where planning existed. Their output, encyclopedic and documentary in character, favors description over analysis. These authors treat the American experience within the time frame and scope of their own studies. Benevolo, in his sweeping *The History of the City*, for example, pays scant attention to the United States, for his view spans prehistory to the present. In contrast, Girouard's *Cities and People*, a narrower Western civilization survey starting with the

Middle Ages, selects cities that "at the time [had] a star quality." Thus New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles dominate the latter part of his narrative. Finally, John W. Reps, with a sole focus on the United States, yields reference-quality description of American cities from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. His latest survey is *Cities of the American West: A History of Frontier Urban Planning*.⁸

Ideology underlines some recently published surveys of an interpretative nature. Following Manuel Castells, Giorgio Ciucci, David Harvey, and Josef W. Konvitz question the economic and political basis of city development. In a series of four essays, Ciucci and his co-authors advance the Marxian argument that architecture and city planning are agents of the American capitalist system. Their well-documented treatment of city beautiful schemes, park designs, regional planning, Broadacre City, and the rise of the skyscraper, however, is marred by their turgid political arguments. Harvey, in his two-volume work, relates urbanization and capitalism. Konvitz, in concentrating on growth and development, labeled "the city building process," assesses urban adaptability to changing social, economic, and cultural trends over time. He concludes that the modern period is inflexible.⁹ Similar to this work, but not so ideological, is Jane Jacobs' *Cities and the Wealth of Nations*. Polemical and assertive as is her wont, Jacobs argues that national growth is dependent on the economic health of cities, not the opposite, and she uses historical cases to bolster this point.¹⁰

The survey genre also includes what might be called the intellectual or cultural history of planning. Studies such as Anthony Sutcliffe's *The Metropolis, 1980–1940*, designed to assess the impact of urbanization and its effects on planning, have come a long way since Morton White and Lucia White's *The Intellectual versus the City* and Thomas Bender's *Toward an Urban Vision: Ideas and Institutions in Nineteenth Century America*.¹¹ This new work, which includes Andrew Lees' *Cities Perceived* and William Sharpe and Leonard Wallock's *Visions of the Modern City*, shows how the dynamism of the urban environment, the rise and fall of metropolises, and the growth of slums and city pathologies have helped create the mental framework around which planners, policymakers, and the general public have formed their basic prescriptive outlook toward reform, change, and improvement in the urban arena.¹² According to these authors, nineteenth-century urbanization and technological advances led contemporary observers to call for progress, conquest, and control as they optimistically asserted that the modern city could be planned, organized and placed in the service of society. Such sentiments found expression in architecture, the arts, and literature and indeed fueled the growth of institutionalized planning.

Professional Development and Institutionalized Planning

That the modern industrial city, of a size and complexity unknown in history, led to conflicts between the free market economies that spawned them and the individuals who lived in them is well documented.¹³ That many professions

found their roots in relieving the resulting tensions is also reasonably well illustrated.¹⁴ Until recently, however, the growth of the planning profession has not received a full measure of attention. An official history commissioned by the American Institute of Planning in 1969, Mel Scott's encyclopedic *American City Planning since 1890*, provides a detailed outline of the evolution of the field. Laurence C. Gerckens' more concise "Historical Development of American City Planning" summarizes the landmarks. Neither gives voice and flesh to individual planners, interpretive substance to their plans, or an understanding of how their ideas have been transferred, accepted, or rejected in different times and places in America.¹⁵ Others have taken on these tasks.

Recent biographies of planners and urban theoreticians have centered on evaluating their influence on the field. For example, in *The American Planner, Biographies and Recollections*, editor Donald A. Krueckeberg restricts his scope to subjects whose careers span the teens to the immediate postwar period.¹⁶ He illuminates how practitioners defined their work by emphasizing the issues they attacked and attempted to resolve. Although focused on activists who participated in a rather narrow band of planning projects, his portraits treat the evolution of zoning, housing reform, and regional planning. Although his book is not comprehensive—it neglects transportation planners, for example—its coverage of John Nolen, Alfred Bettman, Edith Elmer Wood, Harland Bartholomew, Charles Eliot, and Charles Abrams provides a chronological framework for planning thought and practice. Like other works, such as Michael Simpson's *Thomas Adams*, it shows that the field was ever changing and constrained by external events and public opinion.¹⁷

Several authors employ biographies to address how public opinion has limited the field. David R. Hill's "Lewis Mumford's Ideas on the City" uses the decline of Mumford's influence on planning practice and education to illustrate this theme.¹⁸ Underscoring Mumford's reliance on the regional city concept (a rejection of contemporary settlement patterns in favor of a restructuring of metropolitan areas according to garden city principles), Hill argues that Mumford's vision was too utopian to capture the popular imagination. Further, he asserts that Mumford's proposals, based on physical determinism and ignorant of political reality, did not fit practitioners' needs for workable strategies. Mark I. Gelfand's "Rexford Tugwell and the Frustration of Planning in New York City" shows a similar failure on the part of the New Deal economist known for his advocacy of urban resettlement programs and instituting planning as a fourth power of government.¹⁹ He demonstrates how Tugwell, as the first head of the New York City Planning Commission, failed to create his envisioned model agency, apolitical, autonomous, and powerful enough to guide municipal capital decisions and urban development. In attributing this defeat to popular attitudes that thoroughly rejected this scheme, Gelfand highlights the precarious position of planning when extended beyond socially accepted bounds. Robert A. Caro's *The Power Broker*, with its focus on Robert Moses, an enemy of institutionalized

planning, tells the other side of the Tugwell story. Further, essays on Roosevelt's Greenbelt towns by Daniel Schaffer, and Joseph A. Eden and Arnold A. Alanen on Greendale and sections of Zane L. Miller's *Suburbs, Neighborhood and Community in Forest Park, Ohio*, confirm that the American public was not ready to accept direct government intervention in town building efforts despite its advocacy by planning theorists and practitioners.²⁰ By the same count, John Robert Mullin in "Henry Ford and Field and Factory: An Analysis of the Ford Sponsored Village Industries Experiment in Michigan, 1918–1941" shows how privately sponsored forays into population dispersion were equally unsuccessful.²¹ Their failure resulted not only from popular opposition but also from their economic impracticality.

While biographers have focused on individuals and their impact on the field, others have analyzed the substance of planning. They seek to reveal its essential nature and to show the transferral of ideas among planners in America and Western Europe. For example, Daniel Schaffer in *Garden Cities for America: The Radburn Experience* traces the attempt to transplant English town planning to the United States, while contributors to *The Rise of Modern Urban Planning, 1800–1914*, edited by Anthony Sutcliffe, and *Shaping an Urban World*, edited by Gordon E. Cherry, demonstrate the common reform traditions embodied in the profession throughout the world.²² All demonstrate the strong strain of physical determinism, largely drawn from the garden city ideal and city beautiful format, underlying pioneering efforts.

Many researchers have documented the roots of this physical determinism. They add subtlety to earlier interpretations, which tend to overemphasize the importance of the Chicago World's Fair as the sole source of city beautiful schemes. Particularly useful in this regard are two essays by Jon A. Peterson. Although Peterson does not treat planning per se, he lays out popular and professional antecedents that were to set the stage for the public acceptance of planning. Further, he demonstrates the development of the ideals of civic beauty that would be later embedded in zoning, subdivision regulation, and downtown development schemes.²³

Taking the city beautiful literature beyond the usual urban design analysis and its stress on beautification, new contributions focus on the planning process surrounding the adoption and execution of the monumental schemes of the early twentieth century. In "The Ideology, Aesthetics and Politics of the City Beautiful Movement" William H. Wilson reveals the more mundane concerns of its proponents—flood control and drainage—and the grass-roots marketing strategies used to implement the programs. Robert L. Wrigley, Jr.'s discussion of the 1909 Chicago plan investigates many of the same questions, exposes the intensive campaigning for public acceptance, and demonstrates its results. Finally, Jon A. Peterson's treatment of the McMillan Plan for Washington, D.C., charts the behind-the-scenes action that yielded the components of the influential scheme for the capital.²⁴ All three of these articles are particularly useful for their dis-

closure of the controversy and compromise surrounding the programs. Earlier work, in ignoring this aspect of planning, conveyed a rather misleading view of the political nature of the field.

Another group of writers shows how planners extended their promotion of model environments to encompass neighborhoods, shopping centers, transportation schemes, and regional development. For example, resolving fragmented social identities, heightening community participation, and organizing irrational and chaotic land use were some of the aims of the neighborhood unit concept (the arrangement of a residential area around a school), a basic tenet of city planning practice. Both Christopher Silver and Howard Gillette, Jr., trace the origin and subsequent transformation of this idea.²⁵ While arguing that it ultimately incorporated a far different scheme than first envisioned by its original popularizer, Clarence Perry, they uncover its complicated lineage and contradictory strains. For example, they contrast its segregationist consequences with its city building potential. Finally they carefully document important challenges to its wholesale use. A modern assessment, *Beyond the Neighborhood Unit: Residential Environments and Public Policy* by Tridib Banerjee and William C. Baer, continues the dissenting tradition and attests to the continuing strength of this idea in planning dogma.²⁶

Howard Gillette's study of planned shopping centers provides another example of the dominance of physical determinism in the profession. He demonstrates how planners used malls to provide "an exciting environment without its usual attendant nuisances" in the suburbs and later in downtowns. In this work, as well as in his earlier neighborhood unit research, he exposes a theme critical to understanding the history of the profession: the internal struggle among practitioners to shape policies designed to serve the public interest. As Gillette and others illustrate, however, differing interpretations of the public interest by planners, contemporary critics, and today's historians muddy the evaluative waters.²⁷

While these students cannot divorce themselves completely from their personal value systems as they judge professional activity, some do attempt to be more objective by employing other standards of assessment. Sometimes they apply a general sort of cost-benefit analysis to gauge the results of a given planning program. At other times, several scholars will look at the same project or policy but measure different factors. Thus, as they lend different weight to their answers, the determination of the success or failure of planning in a given situation is not always clear.

This dilemma is particularly evident in the evaluation of one of the most massive regional planning projects in American history, the Tennessee Valley Authority development. Here, for example, Andrew Isserman, a favorably disposed observer, in "Dare to Plan," is pitted against Nancy Grant, a critic, in "Blacks, Regional Planning and the TVA."²⁸ Since they construct the public interest component in far different terms—service delivery versus economic displacement—they arrive at opposite conclusions.

Scholarship focusing on the responses of planners to the popularization of the

automobile also reflects a division of opinion. Some simply point to professionals' seemingly rapid acceptance of cars as a self-serving device. Mark Foster in *From Streetcar to Superhighway* and Martin Wachs in "Autos, Transit, and the Sprawl of Los Angeles" argue that planners sought to legitimize their profession by becoming expert in traffic management.²⁹ Others, such as Blaine A. Brownell, reveal the internal conflicts among different practitioners who envisioned many uses for the automobile—an agent of population deconcentration or downtown stabilization.³⁰ His accurate conclusion that the profession did not operate in a vacuum but within the socioeconomic milieu of the country is confirmed by Kenneth T. Jackson in *The Crabgrass Frontier*. Jackson starts his analysis of transportation policy in the early nineteenth century and argues that advances in transportation certainly enabled population dispersion, but the change in cultural values favoring country living was the driving force behind the twentieth-century growth of suburbs. Planners, he asserts, simply followed popular currents and used their trade to assuage demand. The street, under their direction, switched from being a recreational open space to a vehicular artery. Mark Rose in *Interstate: Express Highway Politics*, a survey of the postwar period, demonstrates the increasing importance of highways in urban renewal schemes advanced by planners. Here, practitioners reasserted their mastery of traffic problems to plot courses to enhance economic development and thus improve the fiscal and physical health of decaying central cities.³¹

While case studies based on elements of planning doctrine usefully explore disparate aspects of the field, few focus on the one principle planners claimed essential to their expertise: the comprehensive vision. Employed in the effort to distinguish their profession from their forebearers—architecture, engineering, and later the individual social sciences—practitioners attested to their ability to view a city or metropolitan region holistically. Two recent studies explore this theme. Further, they trace how the idea changed drastically over time. Robert B. Fairbanks' study of downtown redevelopment in Cincinnati and Dallas shows planners replacing their prewar vision of well-balanced regions of stable neighborhoods and strong central business districts interlaced by rational transportation systems with more limited schemes featuring strong downtowns in the period following the passage of urban renewal legislation.³² Looking at Washington, D.C., Howard Gillette, Jr., outlines what components changed: circumferential freeways replaced radial parkways; urban business-based redevelopment supplanted carefully designed urban neighborhoods and suburban subdivision. Although planned recentralization, not population decongestion, became the bywords, the planners' basic strategy remained the same: to manipulate a whole metropolitan area.³³

Many retrospective studies condemn postwar urban policy favoring downtowns and middle-class residential development over slum clearance and public housing. They look to planners' activities to document a misalliance between planners and housers and to blame both for the sorry results of public housing and urban renewal programs. Piece by piece, they construct a picture of conflicting pur-

poses. Peter Marcuse traces the primary separation between the two groups in the early years of the twentieth century, asserting that planners were concerned not with housing problems but with order, public health, and economic stability.³⁴ Robert B. Fairbanks explains their reunion in the mid-twenties in a common vision of rebuilt neighborhoods.³⁵ In a special issue of the *Journal of Urban History*, "The Early Years of Public Housing," Rosalie Genevro, Ann Buttenweisser, Peter Marcuse, and Joel Schwartz examine the interwar period to expose deep conflicts among housers and planners over site location, tenant selection, citizen participation, and development goals.³⁶ John F. Bauman confirms the continuation of the separation of the two groups with their divergent visions—rehousing slum dwellers versus downtown revitalization—and argues that their joining behind urban renewal at the local level would be doomed to failure.³⁷ In fact, Marc A. Weiss holds that housers made a strategic mistake in supporting the Housing Act of 1949 with its slum clearance legislation because their allies, the planners, had no interest in low-cost shelter, only district replanning.³⁸ Evaluating the implementation of urban programs, Arnold R. Hirsch indicts planners for employing segregationist policies in site location.³⁹ Roger Montgomery tempers a similar view with an appreciation of the forces of external events, and Kenneth T. Jackson focuses only on socioeconomic conditions without acknowledging the role of planners at all.⁴⁰ All would agree, however, that these urban programs directly contributed to racial unrest, the wholesale discrediting of traditional planners and their plans, and the rise of advocacy planning. Allan David Heskin documents the professional alienation and redefinition in the 1960s in his discussion of some practitioners' disillusionment with contemporary programs.⁴¹

While metropolitan-centered land use planning flourished through the first half of the twentieth century, so did national planning. Both Otis L. Graham, Jr., and Mark I. Gelfand relate the story of an expanded role for the federal government.⁴² Their account of the ten-year life of the National Resources Planning Board exemplifies this phenomenon. Phillip J. Funigiello outlines the application of the latest planning techniques under federal sponsorship.⁴³ He points to important innovations—expansion of physical planning to integrate social and economic concerns, neighborhood conservation, and urban redevelopment—as rooted in this work. In contrast, an eyewitness account, Carl Feiss' "Foundations of Federal Planning Assistance," states that the board had little impact on planning.⁴⁴ Marion Clawson's *New Deal Planning: The National Resources Planning Board* provides still another interpretation.⁴⁵ Supplementing these evaluative studies are personal accounts of the experience from participants Albert Lepawsky and Charles W. Eliot II.⁴⁶

To capture the essence of planning as a field of knowledge without establishing causal relationships between outside events and planning practice and de-emphasizing individual participants and their backgrounds is Christine Boyer's approach in *Dreaming the Rational City*.⁴⁷ A subscriber to the French philosopher Michel Foucault's teachings, which call for the examination of the discourse of

a field—that is, looking at "everything that is said"—Boyer employs a historian's meticulous examination of primary resources to provide a chronology of the field through the documents and teaching of its practitioners. She alludes to external (national or local events) conditions but focuses on internal developments (the adoption of zoning or the promulgation of the neighborhood unit) to portray the advance of the profession. She does not write history—she acknowledges this—but uses history to frame a critique of planning from a Marxist perspective. The result is an interesting book. Some might call it a testimonial to the youth of the 1960s and their disillusionment. It bears witness to that generation who entered planning (and many other professions) to make the world a better place. Once there, they found their values and ideals compromised. Their chosen profession could not or would not accomplish what they hoped. In response, they turned to history to discover what went wrong. Along the way they framed their search in class arguments. The dialectics they produced provide clear reading and give a seemingly systematic understanding to the past. They place their predecessors' actions in simple, uncompromising terms. Yet in the process, they lose the craft of conjecture and logic that their less doctrinaire associates convey in more traditional historical narrative.

Politics, Planning, and Urban Growth

In turning from a narrow focus on institutional planning to a more general look at urban growth, a series of recent studies in local history refines the political science-based debate on the nature of power. Although these works deal with different eras and distinct places, they are unified by their common quest to investigate decision making by examining the relationship between politics and planning. They ask critical questions about who is determining the use and distribution of land, public investment, and the delivery of municipal services. They also speculate about the beneficiaries of various policies. Their provocative answers outline the political environment and social conditions surrounding the city building activities defined as planning. For these scholars, the scenario is broader than the institutional framework laid out by the authors discussed in the previous section. Their scope lies within a more extensive urban growth model. Their planners are not only the professionals but also a larger group of political actors.

Taking the broadest possible view of planning, David R. Goldfield in "Urban Growth in the Old South" uses an unrepresentative region and period to argue that even in the antebellum years, businessmen constituted a closed, self-serving elite who directed public investments to serve their own interest: rapid urban growth.⁴⁸ David C. Hammack challenges this interpretation in his study of greater New York.⁴⁹ He argues that such decisions as municipal consolidation and transportation planning were in the hands of not one elite but several competing groups differentiated by distinct social, economic, and cultural values. Confirming the pluralistic model advanced by political scientists Wallace Sayre, Herbert

K. Kaufman, and Robert A. Dahl, Hammack asserts that the presence of different groups resulted in a failure to agree on a common set of initiatives.⁵⁰ Thus when Andrew H. Green, an influential activist, repeatedly called for a comprehensive plan to determine the city's infrastructure and open space patterns, he received no support.

Despite wide differences among nineteenth-century leaders, American municipal governments did manage to plan and provide a higher standard of public services—water, light, parks, public transportation—than their counterparts abroad. Additionally, as Jon C. Teaford maintains in *The Unheralded Triumph*, they did not accomplish this without some highly trumpeted failures—corruption and devastating political infighting. But they did indeed work out a practical mode of operation: “a system of compromise and accommodation, a balancing act among elements of society that shared no mutual respect.”⁵¹ One facet of the compromise is most important for planning historians: the growing importance of the professional in this political arena. The civil engineer or the landscape architect, for example, had the expertise to plan a sewer or park. As an unsailable bureaucrat or highly respected consultant, he directed the course of urban development with little need to enter into the political fray. The political boss, uneducated in technological matters but savvy in negotiation, took care of that part of the deal. Teaford's clear analysis of this process illuminates that later posture of the early twentieth-century planners who cast themselves as politically disinterested technicians.

The close linkage of politics and planning in the twentieth century is exposed in three surveys: of Richmond, Virginia, by Christopher Silver, of Portland, Oregon, by Carl Abbott, and of Chicago by Arnold Hirsch.⁵² These authors reject distinctions between public and private spheres in policy analysis and assert that for planning, at least, the two are the same. They view planning as a reflection of dominant corporate and institutional values. Consequently it is pro-growth and conservative. It blindly pursues a self-serving course at the expense of minority needs. These characteristics, they argue, are clearly exhibited in postwar planning activities: the levels and type of expenditures, the location of downtown renewal projects, public housing, and highway systems. A particularly pernicious aspect, outlined by Silver and Hirsch, is its institutionalized racism. Hirsch's careful plotting of the location of public housing and clearance projects in Chicago during the crucial 1940 to 1960 period shows the same patterns as Silver's analysis in Richmond: clear-cut residential segregation. Further evidence comes from J. Anthony Lukas in his Pulitzer Prize-winning account of Boston, *Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families*.⁵³ He delineates the conflicts inherent in municipal housing policies—gentrification, 221 (d) 3 subsidies, site programs—and their relationship to the school busing crisis. While these authors acknowledge that the problems of competition for space in a highly restricted environment certainly had deeper roots than the postwar period, they show how the planners' subscription to private practices limiting black mobility and their use of public funds to contain new-

comers within ghetto areas would sow the seeds of deep discontent and disillusionment among the black population.⁵⁴

Politics and planning are clearly linked in the pursuit of another pro-growth goal: capturing military expenditures. Roger W. Lotchin's “The City and the Sword in Metropolitan California, 1919–1941” demonstrates the unquestioned popular acceptance of the use of comprehensive planning for harbor development and transportation to attract the defense dollar booty to several cities.⁵⁵ During World War II, however, politicians bypassed established planning to meet short-term housing crises and other emergencies, according to Carl Abbott's account of Portland. Here the power structure (the mayor, city council and business interests) did not have the time or need to co-opt planners into promoting their programs.

In *The Contested City*, John H. Mollenkopf finds this analysis of the relationship between planning and politics too parochial.⁵⁶ He looks elsewhere for explanations of planning decisions. While he admits the existence of local pro-growth coalitions, he sees their roots in national New Deal politics and the rise of Democratic liberalism. From his study of Boston and San Francisco, he holds that support for urban redevelopment was not the creature of private interests but the offspring of the pragmatic “political entrepreneurs,” clever, risk-taking politicians who forged disparate interests into unbeatable power bases. The federal government cemented this process, funneling well-funded, carefully directed programs to the local leaders. This partnership fell apart, however, in the 1970s when national demographic and economic trends transformed American cities and disturbed earlier arrangements. His argument that political logic, not private initiatives, shaped the course of planning policy is rather startling in the light of previous analyses.

In another interesting corrective, Joel Schwartz's study of redevelopment in New York City looks beyond party politics to examine the part of liberals, radicals, and leftists in forming the urban policy.⁵⁷ He argues that these groups failed to temper the segregationist, private sector dominance of the projects for several reasons, including an inability to agree on a proper course and disparate, selfish motivations.

Town Site, Urban Design, and Utopian Planning

Physical planning has generated its own rather separate literature. Its most prolific and wide-ranging author is John W. Reys. Surveying American city development for the past twenty years, he has uncovered enough evidence of European design precedents, colonial new town policies, gridiron arrangements, and religious and utopian schemes to convince even the most skeptical observer that the United States has a strong and vital town site planning tradition.⁵⁸ His most recent work, *Cities of the American West, A History of Frontier Urban Planning*, disputes the Turner thesis, which held that rural settlement preceded urbanization on the frontier. He demonstrates that, contrary to the Turnerian

vision, western cities did not develop incrementally but were laid out as wholly planned communities.⁵⁹ Consequently, he argues, the western city shaped frontier life, not the reverse.

Recent works by architectural historians demonstrate the range of inquiry covered by historians of physical planning. For example, Dora P. Crouch, Axel I. Mundigo, and Daniel Garr's *Spanish City Planning in North America* shows the enduring strength of the Laws of the Indies in shaping Spanish colonial cities in North America, while John S. Garner's *The Model Company Town* demonstrates that planning is not only a public sector activity.⁶⁰ Other authors, such as John Archer, describe how design ideals are transferred from place to place, a thesis held by architect Robert A. M. Stern in his accounts of suburbs. Finally, a special issue of *Public Interest* discusses public space in America by looking at parks, streets, and civic buildings.⁶¹ The authors here provide more than a stylistic analysis by probing deeply into the motivations of the sponsors.

Investigations of the utopian strains of planning usually focus on physical designs for whole communities. Robert Fishman's *Urban Utopias of the Twentieth Century* treats the schemes of Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier. Herbert Muschamp's *Man about Town* deals only with Wright but does it very well,⁶² while William H. Wilson's "Moles and Skylarks" contrasts idealistic and pragmatic thinkers in a cleverly written essay.⁶³

A refreshing contribution to the traditional utopian literature is Dolores Hayden's *The Grand Domestic Revolution*.⁶⁴ Assembling a collection of unknown schemes, Hayden's provocative account demonstrates a planning counterculture calling for a radical restructuring of the physical environment to make it suitable for women in the modern industrial age. Other surveys of domestic architecture and design that have some treatment of utopian schemes are David P. Handlin's *The American Home* and Gwendolyn Wright's *Moralism and the Model Home* and *Building the Dream*.⁶⁵

Basic Documents and Other Resources

No bibliographic essay on the history of planning would be complete without reference to the growing but scattered body of resources. Anthony Sutcliffe's *The History of Urban and Regional Planning: An Annotated Bibliography* provides a thorough account of American and European writing through 1980.⁶⁶ Donald A. Krueckeberg's reference list in *Introduction to Planning History* is more up-to-date and focuses on the United States. John W. Reps' bibliographies accompanying his books are especially authoritative. Of particular note are his citations in *Cities of the American Frontier*.

There are three types of sources for documentary evidence of American urbanization and planning. The first, exemplified by Reps' *Views and Viewmakers of Urban America*, demonstrates the wide variety of maps available. Here nineteenth-century growth and public investment can be charted.⁶⁷ The second, represented by Peter Bacon Hales' *Silver Cities: The Photography of American*

Urbanization, 1839-1915, indicates the power of the picture.⁶⁸ Offerings like Hales' are valuable for their analysis of how photographers used their medium to provide a message about city life and urban problems. The third, private papers, is illustrated by *Creating Central Park*, the third volume of the Frederick Law Olmsted papers, edited by Charles E. Beveridge and David Schuyler.⁶⁹ The editors' careful annotations and selections as well as their publication of the full park plan make this resource more readily accessible. Very few such collections are published, however. Researchers must depend on library collections, such as the vast assemblage of planning papers at Cornell's Olin Library, whose holdings were recently surveyed in a fine exhibition. Its catalog is available on request.⁷⁰

Finally, the appearance of oral histories and reminiscences of some of the major actors in the modern planning movement has provided useful material. Donald A. Krueckeberg's *The American Planners, Biographies and Recollections* and the *Journal of the American Planning Association* have several. Of particular note are Robert C. Weaver's "The First Twenty Years of HUD" and "Between the Housers and the Planners: The Recollections of Coleman Woodbury."⁷¹ For an excellent view of the 1920s and 1930s, see *Findings and Keepings* by Lewis Mumford and Carl Sussman's *Planning the Fourth Migration*.⁷²

Planning History Today and Tomorrow

As this assessment of the development of planning history demonstrates, the field is alive and healthy, benefiting from the contributions of three types of scholars: the design based, process oriented, and institution concerned. While some observers question the legitimacy of planning history, its prolific output stands as testimony to its existence.⁷³ Further, the firming of its definition, its scope, and its format serves to guarantee it as a focused and expandable area of inquiry.

Clearly social historians have had a dramatic impact on planning history. This group, with their societal outlook, has broadened the definition of planning to include nonprofessionals as well as practitioners. They have extended the field's scope beyond the examination of urban physical artifacts to a more comprehensive regard of the city. While at times they downplay the built environment in analysis, others (design-based and institution-concerned scholars) stand by to correct them. Additionally, they have circumscribed the time frame of their inquiries to focus on the modern period. Although their view is somewhat narrow, they do concentrate on the relationship between urbanization and industrialization, an important theme. Finally, they have added a strong evaluative dimension. This flows naturally from their interest in process. Not content merely to record metropolitan change, they seek to explain how and why it has occurred. This aspect adds great interest to the literature and lends to the imposition of value judgements in interpretation. All is not perfect in planning history, yet it is more defined and has more potential than ever before. Planning history is a field of

accomplishment as well as promise. It has produced surveys, biographies, case studies, and documentary collections. The current growth of interest in the area indicates an intriguing future.

Notes

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21. John Robert Mullin, "Henry Ford and Field and Factory: An Analysis of the Ford Sponsored Village Industries Experiment in Michigan, 1918-1941," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 48 (Autumn 1982): 419-31.
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