



BOOK REVIEWS

Planning twentieth century capital cities by David L. A. Gordon (ed.) Routledge, New York, NY, USA, 2006, 318 pp. ISBN 0-415-28061-3.

David Gordon asserts in the introduction to *Planning twentieth century capital cities* that there are over 200 capital cities today whereas there were only about 40 nation states with capital cities in 1900 – and that this burgeoning number alone justifies the existence of a volume on the ‘planning and development of capital cities in the twentieth century’. Gordon as well as Peter Hall and Lawrence J. Vale, who each contribute essays that frame the fifteen case studies of capital cities, argue that the twenty-first century is unlikely to see major changes in the number and character of capital cities given that most large entities have already split into their component parts and the dominance of globalization and ‘informationalization’ will compel national governments to protect the viability of their major cities in the face of intense global competition – and thereby reduce the likelihood that countries would consider moving a capital city and jeopardize its prospects.

Peter Hall’s analytical framework, a reprint of an essay first published in 1983, distinguishes seven types of capital cities – multi-function, global, political, former, ex-imperial, provincial, and super capitals. These types often overlap in individual cities and the process of change that they undergo differs depending on their particular characteristics and contexts – thereby justifying an analysis based on these types. Hall’s analytic perspective is followed by Lawrence J. Vale’s essay on the urban design of capital cities – with a focus on those that emerged from the ‘dismemberment of empires, the emergence of new federal systems, and the growing importance of super-national groupings’. His essay is richly illustrated and annotated (see especially the plans, pp. 34-5, comparing the fifteen cities discussed in the essays) and presents a broad foundation illustrating the relationship between

ideology and power in urban design schemes.

After these three framing chapters, there are fifteen essays on capital cities by authors who have first-hand and long-term experience working in and studying their particular city. Consequently the essays are well crafted and concise. Although shifts in political and economic ideology have had an impact on the form and appearance of cities, the essays in this volume make it clear that the shape of cities and their design are much more enduring than the politics that shaped them. Only under the most drastic conditions (war, revolution, natural disaster) can significant change be made to a city’s form. To implement change those in power need to have not only a strong vision but also resources and control over land and property. Many of the case studies demonstrate the futility of preparing plans for cities when a planning entity has no power to appropriate land, preserve or demolish structures, or raise funds. As is also evident from the case studies, national and international economic and political crises have also often undermined the realization of urban plans.

The planning history of some of the cities in the collection has been amply studied, yet the authors are able to illustrate concisely the historic challenges for planners and, most interestingly, the present-day ramifications. Paul White argues that Paris changed little from the time of Haussmann through to the early post-war years. In France, the powerful presidency enabled de Gaulle from 1958 and his planner Paul Delouvrier, followed by Presidents Pompidou, Giscard, and Mitterand, to create major projects scattered throughout Paris that enhanced the city’s cultural profile while mitigating the long-term imbalance between the capital and the rest of the country. Dennis Hardy finds that although London is no longer the seat of imperial power, and is still unclear of its role in Europe, it has survived and grown because people simply want to live there. He situates the emergence of London as a major global city as starting in the 1980s with financial deregulation under Margaret Thatcher, but argues that it received little other political support or

positive planning to achieve this status beyond the Festival of Britain held in 1951. According to Shunichi Watanabe, Tokyo started its modern development after the 1923 earthquake. However, the form of the capital city resulted more from private enterprise and economic necessity than from planning principles. Isabelle Gournay's essay traces the well-known history of Washington, DC and considers the longer-term impact of the McMillan plan and the negative impact on the neglected areas of the city outside of the ceremonial core. She further develops the changes that so-called home rule brought to the city although does not consider the more recent attempts by Mayor Williams and his planner Andrew Altman to enhance the capital by developing areas such as the Anaconda riverfront and efforts to remove the barriers between the eastern and western sides of the city. Michael Lang's essay considers the roles of the imperially-created capital St Petersburg and the historic capital Moscow that was transformed under Stalinism into the Soviet capital – and briefly situates them in the post-Soviet era. The impact of privatization and shifting demographics on these two cities as well as the resistance to public engagement under Putin's leadership need to be considered further to understand how these cities will function as part of a global economy in the twenty-first century. New York is a 'former capital', a super-national capital by virtue of the United Nations headquarters, and a global capital. Eugenie L. Birch focuses on three major projects and the multiple official and private partnerships that promoted them and argues that these contributed more to New York's position as a major capital than any particular planning programmes.

Although the general outline and details of the founding of Canberra, Brasilia, Chandigarh, and New Delhi, four of the new capitals created in the twentieth century, are well known to many planners and architects, the authors each bring a new perspective to the material. Christopher Vernon argues that Canberra's design and development is squarely rooted in a distinctive landscape – both native and recollected – that transformed the 'bush' lands into a picturesque setting for the capital. He also briefly but not very explicitly discusses the conflict between the representation of indigenous and non-indigenous peoples that surrounds the unofficial Tent Embassy that first emerged in 1972 and the official Reconciliation Place created in 2002. Geraldo Nogueira Batista, Sylvia Fischer, Francisco Leitão and Dionísio Alves de França trace Brasilia's planning history with more attention to the various agencies involved than usually encountered. They

emphasize the institutional changes introduced at the end of the military dictatorship in 1985 and the problems since the listing of the area of Brasilia, that is the Pilot Plan, as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987. This planning focus on the Pilot Plan that includes fewer than 9 per cent of the population of what is known as the Integrated Region (RIDE) has left the area outside the core unplanned, creating unmanageable sprawl without forming a strong urban fabric. Souro D. Joardar acknowledges the complexity of maintaining Lutyens's low-density bungalow neighbourhood in the face of extreme population pressures around New Delhi. Nihal Perera interestingly discusses the financial costs of developing Chandigarh and the process through which the inhabitants have been participating in its 'urbanization, familiarization, and Indianization'.

In addition to essays on the re-established capital cities of Berlin and Rome, three essays include cities not often considered: Brussels, Helsinki and Ottawa. In his essay on the rebuilding of Berlin, Wolfgang Sonne explains that through the reuse of existing buildings and careful integration of new structures, planners have managed to re-establish connections between east and west Berlin as well as to transcend their Hitlerian and Socialist past. He attributes the successful implementation of the plans for Berlin to strong administrative authority and political stability. Giorgio Piccinato describes Rome's re-establishment as the capital in 1870, its fascist development and post-1945 planning, and highlights the weakness of planning in resolving the complex modern problems of this ancient city. Events such as the 1960 Olympic Games and the World Cup in 1990, among others, did more to improve Roman infrastructure than overt planning. Laura Kolbe traces the multiple international influences on the early planning of Helsinki and the local planning emphasis on its water and harbour resources in the later-twentieth century. The challenge for Finland was to establish an identity for the capital that recognized its long association with Sweden and separated it from the 'Russian and imperial' Senate Square. Carola Hein has published a number of valuable books and edited volumes on the challenges of housing European Union facilities and distills them in her chapter on Brussels. She describes the transformation of the Quartier Léopold into a 'faceless bureaucracy' because of the European Union's inability to unanimously agree on a capital city and plan with global and local constituents in mind. David Gordon uses the conflict among Canadian politicians, who finally had to ask Queen Victoria to select the location of Ottawa-Hull as the site of Canada's national capital, to set the stage for the

interesting evolution of Canada's capital city. Gordon's illustrations are well annotated and enhance the text.

Elaborating the ramification of early planning decisions on the recent planning of fifteen major cities is the strength of *Planning twentieth century capital cities*. The short chapters give enough background in a concise way to make them useful for anyone interested in planning history as well as current issues. The order of the fifteen chapters and the rationale for the particular cities chosen is not explicitly presented and I did not review the chapters in the same order as the book. Some of the cities chosen have been already considered numerous times in such a context but the 'local' authors are able to bring some new perspective to the research. However, a broader geographic perspective would have been valuable – why two chapters on India but not Ankara? Why six European cities and only Tokyo in Asia? The essays presented clearly show that although capital cities have common characteristics, the way planning issues play out in a particular place is tied to the city's context as well as to the local, regional, national and even international governing structures. The major weakness of the work is the poor quality of the images and maps, and in some chapters the inadequacy of the image notes, as well as the cost of the volume (\$125 or £85). Several other books on major cities complement this work. Wolfgang Sonne's *Representing the state: capital city planning in the early twentieth century* (2003) and Lawrence J. Vale's 2nd edition of *Architecture power, and national identity* (2008) both review many of the same cities from a longer historical perspective – although not into the present. Vale's illustrations (black and white) and Sonne's (some in colour) are also much more legible than those of Gordon.

Marie Alice L'Heureux, School of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Kansas, 1465 Jayhawk Boulevard, Marvin Hall, Lawrence, KS 66045-7614, USA. Email: malheur@ku.edu

Mapping London: making sense of the city by Simon Foxell, Black Dog Publishing, London, England, 2007, 278 pp. ISBN 978-1-9061-55070.

Upon browsing through Simon Foxell's *Mapping London: making sense of the city* those with an interest in the evolution of the urban form might

well ask if any other tomes have recently been produced that make a richer attempt to plot the changing terrain of a European metropolis, or for that matter endeavour to make such a grand impression upon the reader's eye? Yet irrespective of the use of about 150 maps derived from Medieval, Georgian, and Victorian documents, board and video games, transport maps, satellite imagery, space syntax diagrams, insurance graphics, utilities and services pictures, and grandiose proposals such as Rem Koolhaas' London Strip (1972) and Terry Farrell's Nash Rambblas (2002), this book offers more than a vivid anthology of images of Britain's largest, and historically most important city. Indeed the manuscript ventures to investigate through means of a cartographic lens how London has been considered, recorded, and understood in the past.

Arranged into four contrasting yet corresponding sections, these being 'London: change and growth', 'Serving the city', 'Living in the city', and 'Imagining London', *Mapping London: making sense of the city* explores the evolution of the metropolis's spatial configuration, and how it has been documented over the past 400 or so years. Inspired by Stephen Hall's dictum that 'out of one territory, one map can bloom a thousand geographies',¹ it covers in impressive fashion a range of subjects that have fundamentally shaped the urban fabric, and likewise yielded grounds to plot incessantly the city's spatial disposition: climate and environment, advancements in urban planning, the desire for military protection, government expansion, commercial growth, transport technologies, shifting work and living arrangements, and community-based emotions (such as apprehension, a feeling associated with intermittent outbreaks of crime, disease, and fire). However, as Foxell notes, the affiliation between sentiments such as fear and the mapping of London has at times been heightened by agents such as the media, who from the mid-1800s have printed maps within newspaper stories so as to make stories about crime recognizable: 'as a result, the fantasy of the fog-laden, dirty and violent city, and its horrific streets, became much more real, and no doubt helped to sell more papers and news-sheets' (p. 213).

Much attention is given to contextual affairs that have helped forge the narrative of London's history in maps, and the history of maps in London. As a case in point, Foxell emphasizes London's ability from as early as the seventeenth century to attract migrants from mainland Europe, including Huguenots like John Rocque from France. Not only did such migration lead to demographic growth, and

so grant further reason to chart the city's form but, as Foxell also points out, migrants such as Rocque were able to translate London society's obsession with its image as a 'new Rome' into maps of a style like those undertaken by contemporaries in Italy. They composed drawings that offered a depiction of streets in the manner of an idealized picturesque landscape (p. 31) rather than the reality of grime, menaces, and poverty evident in literature at that time. Moreover the psychosomatic nature of London's map makers is not neglected. To provide two brief examples, Foxell refers to Charles Booth, an individual of deep benevolent intentions, whose interest in documenting working-class life led to the creation of colour-coded maps in the 1880s. This is revealed to have granted the first detailed glimpse into London's socio-spatial structure (p. 76). Unfortunately it also offered a map type that, when used in the 1890s to plot the dispersal of London's ethnic communities, became a source of propaganda for xenophobes (p. 75). Similarly attention is drawn to the obsessive nature of Phyllis Pearsall, a lady who in the mid-1930s walked and charted thousands of streets so as to create the present-day staple of every tourist's travel bag, the *A-Z atlas and guide* (p. 52).

Despite presenting a splendid narrative of time and place, and thereby falling within the scholarly tradition of urban biography, the underlying tenor of *Mapping London: making sense of the city* is not merely that of a chronicle of spatial continuity and change, but rather the articulate scrutinizing of the value of maps in comprehending an urban place. Accordingly whilst it may at cover glance appear to be similar to works such as Peter Whitfield's *London: a life in maps* (2006), in many respects Foxell's work differs. For example, in the short introductory section Foxell candidly outlines the value of maps as historical sources, and their role in appreciating and illuminating the underlying patterns of a city. In this regard Foxell not only makes reference to the layers of information contained within cartographic illustrations, and so the details of a place they can confer, but in effect he alludes to their significance in urban historiography (p. 16). For cultured morphologists instructing students in appraising the urban fabric, the statements put forth by Foxell will have much didactic weight.

Notwithstanding its drawing together of diverse and colourful cartographic images, this book is attention grabbing. Emphasizing map makers as active story tellers who offer more than snapshots of the urban tissue at fixed points in time, Foxell effectively explains how through the development of cartographic technology the makers of London's

maps have in effect empowered themselves to do things that they never originally anticipated, in this manner exposing patterns, connections, and ideas that were as interesting as they were unexpected (p. 9). Significantly, as *Mapping London: making sense of the city* makes evident, how the city is shown and 'read' is an ongoing challenge to fathom, and one of great relevance given the contemporary academic world with its computation technology and its revolutionizing of the way data can be graphically portrayed. How this is harnessed will, as the book reveals, affect how we make sense of cities.

Note

1. Hall, S. S. (2004) 'Mercator', in Harmon, K. (ed.) *You are here: personal geographies and other maps of the imagination* (Princeton Architectural Press, New York).

*Ian Morley, Department of History, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Sha Tin NT, Hong Kong.
Email: ianmorley@arts.cuhk.edu.hk*

Invented Edens: techno-cities of the twentieth century, by Robert Kargon and Arthur Molella, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., USA, 2008, 208 pp. ISBN 0-262-1130-1.

This short book traces the history of a specific application of utopian planning ideas, as implemented in building entirely new cities from scratch. It does not address itself to urbanists, and thus does not contain suggestions of how to plan new cities today. Instead, it takes the reader to both the garden cities of the West and dreary industrial towns of Soviet Russia, showing how their basic model was one and the same. The authors are historians, and have done a thorough job of digging up background material and making it available in digestible form. Let me go through some of what I found fascinating in this book. First, I was interested to learn that Ebenezer Howard, the British originator of the Garden Cities movement, was an amateur, and had to self-publish his classic book *Garden cities of tomorrow*. His direct influence, and support by the American Lewis Mumford had profound consequences for the future suburbanization of the world.

Leading up to the Second World War, the idea of building instant industrial cities appealed to

American, German, and Soviet leaders. In Germany, the industrial city Salzgitter was built under the direction of Hermann Göring. Interestingly, the architectural style was intentionally divided: industrial Bauhaus (implying a machine efficiency) for the production buildings, and a stripped traditional style (implying authority and reassurance) for the central direction. This was only the first of several unfortunate examples that acquired evil memory. Once the war started and manpower was scarce, the German industrial cities had to be run by utilizing slave labour, and eventually became concentration camps with the dual purpose of industrial-production/extermination.

Back in the USSR, the government saw the solution to industrial production by means of such instant cities, the best-known example of which is probably Magnitogorsk in the Urals. This model served them well during the War, but its inhuman efficiency was continued as State building policy for years afterwards. The USA tried its hand at new cities, from a purely utilitarian and humane intention. Later, the two great protagonists in the Cold War, the USA and the Soviet Union, implemented similar ideas for instant cities. In the USA, wartime laboratories were built as isolated cities. These include Los Alamos and Oak Ridge National Laboratories. Contrary to the other examples mentioned above, the US Government really tried to make the residents and workers in these industrial cities feel as comfortable as possible in their isolation. The way this was done was to make the living quarters into a proto-suburb, which had momentous consequences when the same model was universally applied after the War.

The second fact I found fascinating is that the great American scientist Norbert Wiener wrote a paper that established the city as a connective network, back in 1950, but it was never published in full. This idea was to be developed much later by a group of urbanists, including the reviewer. Wiener's concerns came about after the first atomic bomb was developed, when it was realized that centralized urbanization was vulnerable to the new weapon. The obvious solution was decentralization, and this is where the dispersive ideas for new towns came in handy at exactly the right historical moment. Sprawling suburbia and the Federal Highway system were conceived initially as America's antidote to the Soviet nuclear bomb. It was soon realized, however, after the development of the hydrogen bomb, that no urban structure was really safe, and that decentralization was an illusory protective strategy. Tragically, the mechanism of sprawl had been set in

motion, and could not be stopped.

The heroes of this book turn out surprisingly to be the new towns built under the Italian Fascist regime. These industrial towns were so well planned that they survive today as examples of good urbanism on the human scale. An example is the city of Torviscosa. Unlike in the USA and in the Soviet Union, where new cities absolutely 'had' to be designed as a total break with past urban typologies, Italian urbanists were more responsive to traditional urban models, and were thus far more successful. Those post-war industrial cities in Italy that have managed to copy the urban patterns of the earlier towns have also fared better than the ones that turned to the inhuman utopian model as defined by the Swiss architect Le Corbusier.

The instant city was exported to Latin America, without great success. The book discusses Ciudad Guayana in Venezuela and Le Vaudreuil in France as mixed or failed examples of new industrial cities (but does not mention Brasilia). The problem here is that the industrial city model was adopted throughout the world without revision, based purely on the original utopian ideals that led to trenchant problems since its initial implementations. The last example discussed is Celebration in Florida, a New Urbanist development sponsored by the Disney Corporation. This is not an industrial city, however. In an even-handed analysis, the authors conclude that by adopting people's ideas of individual comfort and traditional urbanism, a new town can indeed be built to include at least part of those human qualities missing from most industrial cities. Of course, there are detractors of New Urbanist towns such as Celebration, but despite some correct points, the hostility tends to centre on ideological grounds – that we should not *allow* a return to traditional planning principles. Being part of the New Urbanism movement, the reviewer is not sympathetic to those arguments.

Altogether, this book is a valuable addition to the literature on the history of urban planning. By including Celebration alongside the strictly industrial city examples, the authors are pointing to a broad critique and comparison of industrial and garden city typologies. One can draw many conclusions from the discussion given here, and it is good that the authors allow this without imposing their own agenda upon the reader.

Nikos A. Salingaros, Department of Mathematics, University of Texas at San Antonio, One UTSA Circle, San Antonio, Texas 78249, USA. E-mail: salingar@gmail.com