



## BOOK NOTES

**Riga beyond the walls: the city's planned growth and transformation from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the First World War** by *Irena Bakule* and *Arnīš Sīksna* Neputns, Riga, Latvia. 2009, 248 pp. ISBN 978-9984-807-36-2. Riga, the capital of Latvia, is one of very few European cities whose physical extension beyond its medieval core was undertaken by successive, comprehensive plans. The aim of this book is to provide a systematic and detailed analysis of all the maps and plans prepared between 1650 and 1885 in terms of their town-planning and urban morphological characteristics. It provides a clear understanding of the specific influence of each sequential plan on the formation of the physical structure of Riga's present day central area beyond its medieval core, generally extending to the railway ring. Some of the plans were more extensive than others, but all were important in shaping the physical form of the city beyond the fortification walls, as it grew and transformed from a suburban fringe to the central area of Riga. Much of this area, together with the medieval core, now constitutes the Historic Centre of Riga included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

**Stockholm** by *Thomas Hall*, Routledge, London, UK, 2008, 232 pp. ISBN 978-0415-339-99-5. This is the first history of Stockholm's development from its unique seventeenth-century redevelopment and extension to the postmodern, post-industrial period. The city's planners borrowed ideas from abroad at certain periods, but they provided the lead for the rest of the world at others. For much of the mid-twentieth century Stockholm was a model for Europe and elsewhere. Written by an acknowledged authority on the city and Swedish architecture and planning generally, this well-illustrated book provides a much needed explanation of one of Europe's great cities.

**The historical quarters of Karachi** by *Yasmin Cheema*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, Pakistan, 2007, 185 pp. ISBN 978-0195-979-76-3. This book addresses a much

neglected topic: the protection and conservation of the historic architecture and architectural monuments in Karachi. Karachi's historic fort still exists in the form of streets and *mohallas* embellished with a number of *dharamshalas*, temples, mosques, shrines, and traditional bazaars. The older suburbs of Karachi survive; some even retain their winding streets and open squares. The nineteenth- and twentieth-century British quarters which flourished with commercial and port activities are largely intact. The boulevards, streets and richly embellished stone buildings from that period are comparable to the nineteenth-century historical areas of other major cities around the world, such as Cairo, Istanbul and Delhi. Since independence, the historical core of Karachi has been subjected to functional pressures: if the present policies and practices of safeguarding only its monuments persist, only a fraction of old Karachi will remain. The book includes photographic documentation, maps and sketches. It is intended for students of conservation and to initiate a process for the preservation of Karachi's historic tangible and intangible cultural assets.

**Pirate modernity: Delhi's media urbanism** by *Ravi Sundaram*, Routledge, London, UK, 2009, 228 pp. 978-0203-875-42-1. Using Delhi's contemporary history as a basis for reflection, *Pirate modernity* moves from a detailed discussion of the technocratic design of the city by US planners in the 1950s to the massive expansions after 1977, culminating in the urban crisis of the 1990s. As a practice, 'pirate modernity' is an illicit form of urban globalization. Poorer urban populations increasingly inhabit non-legal spheres – unauthorized neighbourhoods, squatter camps – and they bypass legal technological infrastructures (media, electricity). This pirate culture produces a significant enabling resource for populations unable to enter the legal city. But this unstable world brings such populations into the harsh glare of permanent technological visibility and attacks by urban élites, courts and the media. The book examines Delhi's modernist planning design and new technological urban networks that bypass states and corporations.

**Florence Taylor's hats: designing, building and editing Sydney** by *Robert Freestone* and *Bronwyn Hanna*, Halstead Press, Sydney, Australia, 2008, 252 pp. ISBN 978-1920-831-36-3. Australia's first lady architect is one of the most unconventional leaders in Australian journalism, building and urban design. Her colourful private life, right wing politics, idiosyncratic feminism and hostility to Walter Burley Griffin contrast with her impact as a publisher and flair for business. Florence Taylor had a way of reinventing her past, but the authors have sorted out inconsistent stories to create a true and absorbing illustrated biography.

**Mapping manifest destiny: Chicago and the American West** by *Michael Conzen* and *Diane Dillon*, Newberry Library, Chicago, 2008, 119 pp. ISBN 978-0911-028-81-2. Published to coincide with an exhibition at Chicago's Newberry Library, *Mapping manifest destiny* charts the historic role maps have played in imagining, understanding, promoting, and exploiting the Western frontier of North America. Featuring more than 60 full-colour maps and views from the sixteenth century to the twentieth century, this fascinating book documents how maps encouraged Euro-Americans to see the West as a land of promise: maps helped visualize a nation destined to expand across the continent to the Pacific Ocean. There is a rich, carefully researched selection of items drawing on the Newberry's superb collections of historic maps and Western Americana. These are organized into four sections: maps for empire, maps for building a new nation, maps for enlightenment, and maps for business. Chicago emerges first as a dot on one of these maps, but it subsequently becomes a bustling metropolis and a major centre of cartographic production.

**Urban design** by *Alex Krieger* and *William Saunders*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, USA, 2009, 320 pp. ISBN 978-0816-656-38-7. Fifty years ago a landmark conference at Harvard University established urban design as a distinct architectural and planning practice. In *Urban design*, Krieger and Saunders

have assembled prominent figures in architecture, planning, and landscape design to look back on the evolution of the discipline of urban design, assess the current state of the field, and anticipate the challenges posed by the unprecedented rate of urbanization, particularly in the developing world. The volume opens with excerpts from transcripts of the 1956 Harvard conference, followed by essays that contextualize and critique its assumptions and ambitions. Subsequent essays address such topics as the social conscience of urban design and stake out the competing perspectives in the field.

**Becoming places: urbanism/architecture/identity/power** by *Kim Dovey*, Routledge, London, UK, 2009, 216 pp. ISBN 978-0-415-41637-5. This book examines the practices and politics of place and identity formation – the slippery ways in which who we are becomes wrapped up with where we are. It links everyday aspects of place experience to the social theories of Deleuze and Bourdieu in a very readable manner. It extends the social critique of built form through detailed fieldwork and specific case studies. Ranging from nationalist monuments and new urbanist suburbs to urban laneways and avant garde interiors, answers are sought to a range of questions. What is neighbourhood character? How do squatter settlements work and does it matter what they look like? How do monuments and public spaces shape or stabilize national identity?

**Dubai: behind an urban spectacle** by *Yasser Elsheshtawy*, Routledge, London, UK, 2009, 294 pp. ISBN 978-0415-444-61-3. This book explores Dubai's history from its beginnings as a small fishing village to its place on the world stage today, using historical narratives, travel descriptions, novels and fictional accounts by local writers to bring colour to the history of the city's urban development. With case studies and surveys, the author explores the economic and political forces driving Dubai's urban growth, its changing urbanity and its place within the global city network. He looks beyond the glamour of Dubai's mega-projects, and provides an in-depth exploration of a select set of spaces that reveal the city's 'inner life'.