



BOOK NOTES

The post socialist city: urban form and space transformations in Central and Eastern Europe after socialism by *Kiril Stanilov*, Springer, New York, USA, 2007, 490 pp. ISBN 978-14020-6052-6. In the large body of literature produced during the last 15 years on the transformation of Eastern European societies after the fall of communism, studies investigating changes in urban form and structure have been quite rare. The book shows a profound reorganization of the manner in which urban space is appropriated has taken place, affecting the life of over 200 million urban residents in the region. The patterns of spatial organization that have been established during this fairly limited but critical timeframe are likely to set the direction of future urban development in Central and Eastern European cities for a long time.

Urban transformation: understanding city form and design by *Peter Bosselmann*, Island Press, Washington DC, USA, 2008, 336 pp. ISBN 978-1-597-26481-5. How do cities transform over time? And why do some cities change for the better while others deteriorate? In articulating new ways of viewing urban areas and how they develop over time, Peter Bosselmann offers a stimulating guidebook for students and professionals engaged in urban design, planning, and architecture. Introducing readers to the value of seeing 'maps' of the world's twenty largest cities, Bosselmann puts forward the idea of urban morphology to demonstrate how cities transform. By utilizing the street grids of San Francisco as examples, he explains how to *define* urban spaces. Modelling, he suggests, is not so much about creating models as it is about bringing others into public, democratic discussions. Finally, he shows how to *interpret* essential aspects of 'life and place' by evaluating aerial images of the San Francisco Bay Area taken in 1962 and 2005.

Béatrix & Consolascio: a shift in perspective by *Sylvain Malfroy*, gta Verlag, ETH Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland, 2008, 272 pp. ISBN 978-3-85676-226-1. This first monograph devoted to Swiss architects Béatrix & Consolascio is both a survey of their oeuvre and an inquiry into the public

reception of architecture. Sylvain Malfroy examines the communicative levels on which the architects achieve their stylistic effects and seek to enter into a dialogue with their audience. A comprehensive synoptic section offers a review of Béatrix & Consolascio's work as well as insight into the way they use proportions, their appropriate use of materials, and the expressive power of their bearing structures.

The concrete dragon: China's urban revolution and what it means for the world by *Thomas J. Campanella*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, USA, 2008, 335 pp. ISBN 978-1-56898-627-2. This is a well-written and accessible overview of recent changes in Chinese cities. The book was written for general audiences from the perspective of an urban planner. Its eleven chapters present both the processes of urban change in contemporary China and the results of those processes through a wide range of brief sketches and case studies. Many of these discussions are placed in historical contexts. Four chapters (one on Shenzhen, one on Shanghai, two on Beijing) are devoted to city-specific case studies. These are followed by thematic chapters addressing, in turn, urban redevelopment, rural-to-urban migration, suburbanization and urban sprawl, the impacts of motor vehicles, and designed spectacle landscapes such as theme parks and shopping centres. The book is illustrated with numerous photographs and other illustrations but lacks maps or plans.

City between worlds: my Hong Kong by *Leo Ou-fan Lee*, The Belknap Press, Cambridge, MA., USA, 2008, 322 pp. ISBN 978-0-674-02701-5. Written by a professor of literature, this excellent introduction to the city of Hong Kong evokes a strong sense of place and identity for each of the six areas of Hong Kong it chronicles. Although the title suggests a personal memoir, the book is more a detailed explication of the evolution of landscapes and urban space rich in history. There is some building-by-building analysis. Historical narrative, architecture and landscape analysis, literature and art are interwoven to produce a holistic portrayal of the city. Each of the

first six chapters is devoted to a different part of the city – Victoria, Central, Wan Chai, the Peak, Kowloon, and the New Territories. The final two chapters address Hong Kong's evolving culture and identity. The book is illustrated with colour maps and photographs.

Model city blues: urban space and organized resistance in New Haven by *Mandi Isaacs Jackson*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, PA, USA, 2008, 279 pp. ISBN 978-1-59213-604-9. This book chronicles the impacts of the development of inter-state highways and urban renewal on the city of New Haven, Connecticut during the 1960s. It explores a changing urban landscape through an analysis of the processes of planning and public dissent as New Haven struggled with massive changes in the midst of the American civil rights movement. Chapters are devoted to planned change and resistance to that change in different urban neighbourhoods: Oak Street, Dixwell Avenue, the Hill neighbourhood, and the downtown. Another chapter chronicles the development of major highways and parking garages in the city. The dramatic and sometimes violent change in a city undergoing social upheaval is emphasized. There are black-and-white photographs and reproductions of urban planning documents.

Designing the city of reason: foundations and frameworks in urban design theory by *Ali Madanipour*, Routledge, Abingdon, UK, 2007, 352 pp. ISBN 978-0-415-42092-1. This is a practical approach to theory offering new perspectives on how different belief systems and philosophical approaches impact on city design and development. It explores how approaches changed before, during and after the impact of modernism in all its rationalism. Looking at the connections between abstract ideas and material realities, this book provides a social and historical account of ideas that have emerged out of the particular concerns and cultural contexts that inform the ways in which we live. By considering the changing foundations for belief and action, and their impact on urban form, it follows the history and development of city design in close conjunction with the growth of rationalist philosophy. Building on these foundations, it goes on to focus on the implications of this for urban development,

exploring how public infrastructures of meaning are constructed and articulated through the dimensions of time, space, meaning, value and action.

Lost buildings: demolished, destroyed, imagined, reborn by *Jonathan Glancey*, Goodman, London, 2008, 256 pp. ISBN 978-1-84796-001-6. This is a very personal exploration of 'lost' buildings in the broadest sense, including imagined (never-built) as well as those destroyed in a number of ways. The author is an architectural journalist, not an academic; and the book does contain some errors of fact. Nevertheless it provides an interesting perspective on urban change, exploring a number of motives for demolition/destruction and responses to it. A counter perspective is the treatment of several 'lost' buildings that have been, or will be, re-created. The final sections of the book are less relevant to morphologists, dealing with fictional structures, and the well-trodden ground of unrealized plans. The book's main strength is its clear high-quality illustrations on large-format pages.

Stadtgestalt im zeichen der eroberung: englische kathedralstädte in früh-normannischer zeit (1066-1135) by *Ulrich Fischer*, Böhlau Verlag, Köln, Germany, 2009, 583 pp. ISBN 978-3-412-33205-1. In the years following the Norman conquest of England in 1066, state and society in England were in upheaval. This was made strikingly manifest in the country's cathedral cities. The new masters – spiritual and worldly – initiated a unique building programme, together with an equally comprehensive demolition of elements of old urban landscapes as well as cultural monuments of the pre-invasion Anglo-Saxon period. In this book Ulrich Fischer analyses and describes the profound changes, affecting all 17 English cathedral cities to some extent. He systematically explores in detail the attitudes and intentions of the new monarch, William the Conqueror, in relation to the construction of castles and lavish residences, the construction of monumental cathedrals and often urban monastic churches, and eventually the radical transformation of the urban infrastructure – even the multiple relocation of some Bishops' seats formerly found in other cities.