



## BOOK NOTES

**Urban nation: Australia's planning heritage** by *Robert Freestone*, CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood, Australia, 2010, 336 pp. ISBN 978-0643-0969-81. This first national survey of the historical impact of urban planning and design on the Australian landscape considers every state and territory from the earliest days of European settlement to the present day. It identifies and documents hundreds of places – parks, public spaces, redeveloped precincts, neighbourhoods, suburbs and whole towns – that contribute to the distinctive character of urban and suburban Australia. It sets these significant planned landscapes within the broader context of both international design trends and Australian efforts at nation- and city-building.

**Spacematrix: space, density and urban form** by *Meta Berghauser Pont* and *Per Haupt*, NAI Publishers, Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 2010, 280 pp. ISBN 978-9056-6274-23. This is an exploration of urban density as a potentially positive and certainly decisive tool for urban planning and design. Examining the logic of urban density and urban form, this manual is an indispensable resource for architects and urban planners, as well as developers, economists, engineers, policymakers and students.

**Railways, urban development and town planning in Britain: 1948-2008** by *Russell Haywood*, Ashgate, Farnham, UK, 2009, 418 pp. ISBN 0-754-67392-8. The British railway system was nationalized in 1948, the same year that the modern planning system came into operation in that country. In theory, this should have encouraged the development of an integrated approach to planning policy and railway management. In practice, the two sectors operated largely in isolation from each other, but with periods of a more consciously integrated approach, 1968-76 and 1988-94. This book provides an overview of the relationships between planning and railway management and development during the key period in the twentieth century when the railway was in public ownership, 1948-94. It examines why the relationships were never very

strong. It considers first, the institutional arrangements of each sector and the degree to which they enabled a positive relationship; secondly, it analyses the policy for each sector and the extent to which this sought to promote the relationship between land use and railways; and finally, it reviews what actually happened on the ground as a result of the interplay between institutional structures and policy. The conclusion shows how these findings reflect on the interplay between planning and the railway since privatization and points to best practice for future institutional structures and policy development.

**Berliner Altstadt: von der DDR-Staatsmitte zur Stadtmitte** by *Hans Stimmann*, DOM, Berlin, Germany, 2009, 160 pp. ISBN 978-3-938666-27-2. This work by the former director of town planning for Berlin brings together a number of essays that focus on current German urban planning debates. It offers the author's vision for the spatial development of the historical core of Berlin so as to establish a central quarter that defines the city and is identified with by all the citizens. It is particularly relevant to those engaged in studies of the reconstruction of historic city centres.

**Built on commerce: Liverpool's central business district** by *Joseph Sharples* and *John Stonard*, English Heritage, Swindon, UK, 2008, 80 pp. ISBN 978-1905-6243-48. The vast trade that passed through Liverpool's historic docks was managed and organized in an increasingly specialized and sophisticated business district. New and ever-larger offices, banks, warehouses and salerooms, often innovative in design and of spectacular architectural quality, were built in a highly concentrated area, which powerfully represents the confidence and prosperity of the period. This book, illustrated by photographs and drawings, tells the story of the business quarter from the eighteenth century to the present day and emphasizes that conservation of historical commercial buildings is important in retaining the area's distinctive character.

**Time, space and order: the making of medieval Salisbury** by *Christian Frost*, Peter Lang, New York, USA, 2009, 297 pp. ISBN 978-3-03911-943-1. This book offers insights into the concerns of urban Christianity in the first half of the thirteenth century and points to an alternative way of looking at Gothic architecture. Its contents include: the development of Old Sarum in relation to key historical events; a survey of thirteenth-century Salisbury, including key institutions, occupations, and the built fabric; medieval modes of representation; geometry and form; drawings and contemporary written accounts; description of the cathedral buildings, the Close and the city and their relationship to sacred time and space; and the orientation of the city and its processional structure.

**Shrewsbury: an archaeological assessment of an English border town** by *Nigel Baker*, Oxbow Books, Oxford, UK, 2010, 272 pp. ISBN 978-1-84217-315-2. Shrewsbury is one of England's most celebrated historical towns. It is renowned for its black and white timber-framed buildings, its Old Market Hall, the Abbot's House on Butcher Row, and picturesque, winding, ancient streets. The paradox of Shrewsbury is that its extraordinarily rich townscape has until recently undergone less archaeological investigation than many others that are more damaged and compromised. This book addresses a number of questions. How far has the archaeological investigation of the town progressed? What is now known? What is most significant? And, above all, what are the mysteries that remain and what direction should archaeological research take in the future? The book is the outcome of a major English Heritage project, and uses the results of archaeological and historical research from the late-eighteenth century to the present day to trace what is known of the story of Shrewsbury from its post-Roman origins to the 1920s.

**Once the American dream: inner-ring suburbs of the metropolitan United States** by *Bernadette Hanlon*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, USA, 2009, 224 pp. ISBN 978-1592-13936-1. At one time, a move to the suburbs was the American Dream for many

families. But despite the success of Levittown, impoverished 'inner-ring' suburbs – those closest to the urban core of metropolitan cities – are in decline. *Once the American Dream* analyses this downward trend, considering 5000 suburbs across 100 different metropolitan areas and census regions in 1980 and 2000. A ranking system is provided for assessing and dealing with inner-ring suburban decline. Detailed statistical analysis and vivid case studies are combined. The book closes with a discussion of policy implications and recommendations for policy makers and planners.

**The urban project: architectural intervention in urban areas** by *L. Van Duin, R. Cavallo, F. Claessens* and *H. Engel*, Delft University Press, Delft, The Netherlands, 2009, 456 pp. ISBN 978-1-58603-999-8. This book covers three major themes. First, research by design: design studies that investigate the spatial potential for transformation and renewal of specific urban sites by means of concrete projects. Secondly, understanding urban and metropolitan form: analytical studies that investigate aspects of urban form and the dynamics of their transformation. Thirdly, research, design and education: experiments and experiences in research driven education in the fields of architecture and urban design, relating urban analysis and architectural design.

**Cities and design** by *Paul L. Knox*, Routledge, New York, USA, 2010, 282 pp. ISBN 978-0-415-49289-8. Competitive spending among affluent households has intensified the importance of style and design at every scale. This book explores the complex relationships between design and urban environments. It traces the intellectual roots of urban design, appraises the imprint and effectiveness of design professions in shaping urban environments, examines the role of design in the material culture of contemporary cities, and explores the complex linkages among designers, producers and distributors in contemporary cities: for example, fashion and graphic design in New York; architecture, fashion and publishing in London; and furniture, industrial design, interior design and fashion in Milan.