

descriptions and careful identification of the objects and people in the photographs serve to clearly and vividly illustrate the Soviet construction project. In sum, Austin's *Building Utopia* is not the story of the ideological conceptualization of the socialist city, but a detailed, engaging account of the adventures (and misadventures) of the American engineers and technicians of the Austin Company, who struggled to build the Gorky Automobile Factory from 1930 to 1931.

Reference

Kotkin, S. (1995) *Magnetic mountain: Stalinism as a civilization* (University of California Press, Berkeley, CA).

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Reforming suburbia: the planned communities of Irvine, Columbia, and the Woodlands by Ann Forsyth, University of California Press, Berkeley, Calif., USA, 2005, 379 pp. ISBN 0-520-24166-5.

A persistent undercurrent running throughout Ann Forsyth's study of three American master-planned communities of the 1960s and 1970s is the newness of the so-called 'New Urbanism'. While the earlier massive developments of Irvine Ranch in southern California, Columbia in Maryland, and the Woodlands in Texas may not look like 'new urbanist' projects, they do fulfill most of the design principles of the more recent movement trading under the sobriquets of New Urbanism and 'smart growth'. Forsyth thus treats these case studies not as fossils from another epoch, but as sober examples for planners today of what can still be considered cutting-edge planning ideas put into practice over three decades.

The bulk of the study is composed of an exhaustive planning history of the three case studies. With the aid of official planning materials, newspaper articles, and numerous interviews, Forsyth provides a rich narrative of the defining values and goals behind the implementation of these developments. The planned towns arose from the

'new communities' movement which defined itself in opposition to the prevalent pattern of unplanned subdivisions and 'packaged suburbs' such as Levittown, New Jersey. While the three communities shared long-term planning visions, with like-minded planners, and large scale – and they continue to be financially profitable – they differ from each other in important ways. The Irving Ranch has remained private and has focused on built form; Columbia, led by James Rouse, has pursued social goals such as racial integration and income mixing; while the Woodlands arose free of zoning but was shaped by the ecological and environmental concerns of Title VII designation. These contrasts permit Forsyth to explore nuances in their relationship to current development philosophies.

Chapter 6, 'Alternatives to sprawl?', provides a comparative study of the new communities with New Urbanism's Kentlands in Maryland and the Stapleton Airport Reuse project in Colorado. Forsyth chose not to examine some of the earlier and most publicized New Urbanist developments, such as Seaside, which lacks economic diversity, or Celebration, which does not achieve sufficient densities. Overall the developments were compared on the basis of density, aesthetics, design, identity, social equity, diversity, efficiency of access, and environmental issues. By the set criteria, Forsyth's case study communities did exceedingly well, which is a testament to their planning given their large size and maturity. In general, 'where [the new communities] have weaknesses, so do the current proposals for a new generation of best practices, because in large part the new practices mirror this older generation of responses to sprawl' (p. 271). The one area where New Urbanist developments show some strength is in their efforts to reduce automobile dependence. Conceived during the 1960s, the new communities Forsyth examines lacked transit-oriented development and the automobile remained the primary mode of transport. Nevertheless, she found that 'densities that conform to smart growth and new urbanist practices, pedestrian paths, and even mixed-use layouts are not enough in themselves to significantly shift inhabitants away from car use' (p. 269). In other words, some changes to design and layout do not lead to dramatic lifestyle changes.

Of particular interest to urban morphologists will be Forsyth's fifth chapter, 'Organizing the metropolis'. Here she examines the physical layout of the new communities, both as self-contained entities and as part of the larger metropolis. Looking to the internal organization of each

community, Forsyth proposes a three-part typology: cell, corridor-and-centre, and landscape-frame. This typology is useful and corresponds to the planners' development concepts in each case. Irvine's planners, for example, used and explicitly cited Kevin Lynch's *The image of the city* (1960) as their cardinal idea in creating a legible landscape within their development (pp. 73–7). Here, as elsewhere in the text, Forsyth's presentation would have been more effective had she used maps to illustrate the point. Their paucity is perhaps a by-product of the book's intention to reach a general audience and spurs a complaint which geographers will forever voice. Nevertheless, Forsyth's proposed typology is helpful in understanding the various communities as their developers saw them, as well as how they have grown over time.

Ultimately, *Reforming suburbia* is a sobering reminder to those enthusiastic about the possibility for, and potential speed of, change that planning horizons have to be long, and that the newest models of anti-sprawl urbanism are not necessarily superior to past innovative efforts. The three communities studied here were backed by massive private financing, by corporations comfortable with small immediate dollar returns. After nearly four decades of continuous habitation and continued planning, these communities, judged by the satisfaction of residents and the regard of outsiders, are still on the cutting edge. Surprisingly or not, for example, this year's *Money* magazine listed Columbia as the fourth-best place to live in America. Forsyth is right to turn the planning world's gaze back to communities that stand as good design ideas put into practice. The book's extensive research, comparative analysis, and lengthy appendices make it a valuable addition to understanding the complexity of truly revolutionary design.

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Geology and settlement: Greco-Roman patterns by *Dora P. Crouch*, Oxford University Press, New York, USA, 2004, 372 pp. ISBN 0-19-508324-5.

Dora Crouch has been a force in international archaeology for more than three decades, making

major contributions to understanding cities in both the Old and New Worlds. The co-author of *Spanish City Planning in North America* (Crouch et al., 1982) and *Traditions in architecture: Africa, America, Asia, and Oceania* (Crouch and Johnson, 2001) has now written a broad survey of urban site conditions and environmental history in the Classical World. Her latest book concerns the role played in urban morphology and ancient city life by the physical nature of the ground beneath towns and the influence natural events such as earthquakes and volcanoes had on them. The book extends her earlier study, *Water management in ancient Greek cities* (Crouch, 1993), on a more interdisciplinary basis.

For a long time, understanding of ancient cities has been approached through historical, literary, and archaeological sources, with little concern for geology or engineering. This new work seeks to extend and deepen the attention archaeologists pay to the geomorphological composition of the environs surrounding ancient settlement sites. Although the necessity for considering this dimension of earth-human relations in settlement history was laid out by Karl Butzer in *Environment and archaeology* (Butzer, 1964) four decades ago, detailed and systematic studies answering his call have been slow in coming. Here the relation of city infrastructure to environmental resources and limits is emphasized, particularly its influence in shaping urban form and development. The book is organized in three parts: background, case studies (the bulk of the study), and findings and reflections.

In laying out her task, Crouch seeks to demonstrate several key propositions: that (1) similar physical environments engender similar urban morphological outcomes; (2) departures from ideal city planning can sometimes be explained by responses to different geomorphological conditions; and (3) the relations between the geological 'challenge' and the human 'response' are reciprocal, each being influenced, and changed, by the other. A major accomplishment of the book is the way in which it confronts the artifactual evidence of standard historical and archaeological study with that from the very different time scale of geological investigations, and the way it interprets them within a common framework.

The topic is approached through careful examination of ten Greco-Roman cities, selected as clusters of nearby sites in three representative Mediterranean regions: four on the island of Sicily (Agrigento, Morgantina, Selinus, and Syracuse);