

approach to organizing what urban designers should know' was reprinted in *Designing cities*. (He also cites Jivén and Larkham's 2003 commentary on sense of place, authenticity and character in the *Journal of Urban Design* in his chapter on philosophy). Had Cuthbert looked beyond Moudon's 1992 work, he might have incorporated the issues, debates and theories of urban form embodied in the work of members of ISUF.

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**Caribbean urban modernization: a typomorphological study of two towns in Guadeloupe (1928-2003)** by *Katrine Dupré*, Department of Architecture, Tampere University of Technology, Tampere, Finland, 2004, 312 pp. ISBN 952-15-1162-1.

This is a beautifully designed book. The cover photograph shows a typical Caribbean house: small, with yellow stucco walls and red tin roof, juxtaposed to a large, white, modern, stucco building. What a perfect illustration for the subject of this study. The story could almost end there.

Imagine my surprise to find when I opened the book – a dissertation! Publishing a dissertation is fine, but it should be edited and restructured for an audience larger and more diverse than the dissertation committee. Not being privy to the dissertation committee's agenda, I was initially at a loss as to how to proceed. From my point of view, it is a perfectly acceptable dissertation, but it is, in all kindness, not ready to be launched on the cruel seas of academic scholarship. However, in this dissertation lie the seeds of a number of interesting monographs and perhaps even a more generalized, broad ranging work in the manner of Braudel, whom the author mentions as a source of inspiration.

As I read through this work, a number of questions arose that were suggested by the research and observations of the author. It occurred to me that I could best write about this dissertation by discussing those areas of interest that could and should be expanded upon. In doing so I may have some critical comments about the dissertation, but only in the sense that I think the author needs to step back herself and look at her subject more critically and in some cases in more detail.

Dupré's study is centred on two towns: Gossier, about 3 km to the west of Pointe-à-Pitre along the coastal road, and Trois-Rivières on the adjacent island of Basse-Terre along the coastal road to the city of Basse Terre. One of the statements that the author makes that indicates to me she has been too close to her subject, particularly Gossier, is that both towns are 'more alike than different'. From her own evidence, I see many more differences. About the only similarity is that both are located on a coastal road, but in the case of Trois-Rivières the coastal road is inland from the coast, perhaps by 1 km or so, whereas Gossier is truly a beach town. The author also describes both as unplanned ribbon developments. I would agree that that is true about Gossier, whose public buildings are spread out along the colonial road without apparent rhyme or reason, but in Trois-Rivières there is actually a city centre and the public buildings have a relationship to one another. This leads me to believe that someone guided the layout of this town. I think Dupré needs to do some more research on the founders and foundations of these towns. She does give the reader some broad generalities: Gossier was essentially a fishing village and Trois-Rivières was a plantation town. I need to know more. What were the names (if not faces) of these early founders? How was the land allocated? How was it surveyed? What was the land tenure system? Who were these early settlers – free blacks, Creoles, Europeans? Why Gossier? Why Trois-Rivières? There are many more questions to be answered if Dupré were to undertake a broad spectrum work, which I wish she would. However, if she sticks to a typomorphological approach, she should pick up the essential differences in the architecture of the stone buildings common to Trois-Rivières and the wood shacks of Gossier, both full of architectural charm.

Dupré does an excellent and detailed job of describing both modern and traditional floor plans. I would like more comparison and contrast, particularly of single-family dwellings with the new multi-family projects that have sprung up in recent times. Although I suspect apartment living is common in the cities of Guadeloupe, I think it was an innovation in the small towns. In investigating the impact of this life-style change, a sociological and anthropological approach might be most appropriate – speak to the inhabitants. There should be some interesting and valuable information gleaned from talking with those who have made the transition from traditional single family to apartment living. Dupré has included commentaries from ordinary people on other

subjects, which I particularly enjoyed.

And if she wishes to pursue the contrast with modernism, I would like to know more about the two architects she mentions – Ali Tur and Chérubin – and their buildings. Judging from the photographs and the author's own comments, most buildings in these towns are owner designed and built. Nevertheless, it is architects that set the standards and provide the ideal. Related to design and construction, I would like to know more about the permitting and inspection of construction. The author provides a fascinating comparison of the elevation drawing of a building submitted for a building permit and a photograph of the building as built. Surprise! These appear to be two different buildings.

Then there are the really big issues relevant to Caribbean countries today – tourism and preservation. Gossier has been a tourist destination since the 1930s, which is the era of a photograph Dupré provides of what appears to be a large resort complex dated 1936. Tourism has swelled Gossier to a population of 15 000 or more today. Unlike Gossier, Trois-Rivières has fallen on hard times. Not being on the beach, it has not been a tourist destination, but it does have a collection of interesting stone buildings, 100 of which survived the 1928 hurricane and subsequent modernization. Apparently the government of Trois-Rivières has been protective of these buildings and supportive of preservation. Gossier appears to be a typical beach town, but I am intrigued by Trois-Rivières to the point of planning a visit. If I do not see some preservation oriented work on Trois-Rivières soon, I may write an article myself, in which case Dupré can take her revenge on me.

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**Lots of parking: land use in a car culture** by John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville, Virginia, USA, 2004, 308 pp. ISBN 0-8139-2519-3

This book delves into the mysterious and mundane topic of parking, and does so in a comprehensive, historical manner. Some of the major phenomena in the built environment of our times are parking lots, cars all over the place, the destruction of the pedestrian realm, the dysfunctionality of

downtowns, and the emergence of entirely new urban typologies such as the strip mall, suburban sprawl, and parking garages. Tremendous forces have shaped urban form for the better part of a century. They are linked to parking, but we seem to be ignorant of their exact nature. Or is it that we still stick with explanations of a quasi-religious nature that do not allow one to question pre-conceptions even in the face of obvious evidence to the contrary? Have we studied the actual phenomena using the scientific method? Actually, no: therefore this book is a very welcome addition to the new critical thinking about urban form.

I can heartily recommend this book to any urbanist, and to any person interested in urban structure. It contains information on the history of parking available nowhere else. Even if the reader is not specifically interested in parking lots, the fact is that twentieth-century urbanism is profoundly influenced by parking. What we naively imagine are urban downtowns and suburban precincts shaped by individual design decisions are nothing of the sort: the enormous needs of parking shape our cities, our houses, and eventually shape our psyche. We have so far ignored those forces, accepting the dogma that the car and easily-available parking everywhere were more important than urban structure itself. Few people seemed to notice that parking *replaces* urban structure and urban civilization.

We have seen downtowns destroyed – not by aerial bombing, but through the piecemeal demolition of perfectly good older buildings. In every case, the political process permitting such demolition promises replacement with 'taller and better' buildings, which are supposedly responses to the increased pressures of downtown space and rising real estate values. Nevertheless, what actually replaces many of those excellent buildings is a flat parking lot. 'Temporary' open parking somehow lingers for decades. This book studies the phenomenon like one would study a mysterious plague that turns vast regions of green growth into a desert. Aerial views of our cities clearly show that this 'plague' covers at times more than one-half of their total surface area. What about the urban forces that inexorably drive up buildings to become 'taller and better'? The myth of ever-higher density is undone by sprawl, and the lowest-density urban feature of them all is the vast open parking lot.

If a reader gets nothing else out of this book, at least he or she will discover a basic law of urban morphology: skyscrapers are linked to vast parking lots or monstrous parking garages the same way that a lizard is linked to its tail. There is no strict