

principles of urban design in 1950, their main task was to allow political demonstrations to take place. However, as Betker and Bemke show in their papers, planning new central places was confined to only certain towns and a few city centres. But, despite the theories, socialist urban development in practice was largely confined to centralized procedures and forms of organization. Its urban designs did not differ strikingly from those common in much of Western Europe. May uses Eisen-hüttenstadt, formerly Stalinstadt and once named 'Germany's first socialistic city', to explain the principles and forms of socialist urban development.

Pedestrianized areas have been invented in the post-war years and created new types of public spaces. Schubert presents a Coventry case study with some comparisons with Lijnbaan (Rotterdam), Kassel, Kiel, the Barbican (London) and others to assess the changes, adjustments, potential, disadvantages and risks of pedestrianized areas in both central and peripheral urban districts.

Returning to the ideas of the introduction, Harlander and Kuhn conclude that urban open spaces fulfil transit functions (traffic, transport), economic functions (trade, markets, fairs) and political functions (representation, assembly, demonstration) but also more vague and changing communicative, recreational and societal ones. After their long nineteenth- and twentieth-century histories the question remains as to whether public spaces will experience a decay or a renaissance. There is a rediscovery of the 'historical city' that may camouflage the economic crisis of city centres and central urban spaces. New patterns of privatization come into being, and the loss of old uses and functions is sometimes eased by the arrival of new ones.

This collection of papers is well illustrated and worth reading, even if it is unduly confined to German planning history of public spaces and the German social and political background. To illustrate what could have been or what were the alternatives, both in terms of urban design and public attitudes towards open urban spaces, some more glances across the German border would have been appreciated.

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**Urbanismo e morfologia urbana no Norte de Portugal** by *Mário Fernandes*, FAUP Publicações, Porto, Portugal, 2005, 497 pp. ISBN 972-9483-69-8.

In this book, Mário Fernandes provides an analysis of the evolution of the urban forms of six cities in the North of Portugal – Viana do Castelo, Póvoa do Varzim, Guimarães, Vila Real, Chaves and Bragança. The period covered is principally from 1852 (the date of the creation of the Public Works Ministry) to 1926 (the date of the coup d'état that led to a 50-year dictatorship). The book builds on a PhD thesis in urban geography presented in the University of Oporto in 2002, and was preceded by the author's first book, focusing solely on one of these cities, Viana do Castelo (Fernandes, 1995).

There are three main chapters. The first focuses on the history of urban cartography in Portugal, analysing the specificities of this particular data source, identifying its origins and main developments, and evaluating the rigour of the existing documents and the quality of the information they provide. The second builds a framework for the study of the main transformations of the town plan (streets, plots, and buildings). It moves from a general view of European cities and planning to the description of the main public works at national and regional scales promoted by the Portuguese central government and, finally, to the description of the evolution of the town plans of the selected cities since the medieval period. Grounded on the empirical work of these six case studies, the third chapter provides a number of key arguments to explain the different stages of the process of town-plan transformation in the north of Portugal. It highlights the influence of local governments in this process based on the analysis of the main available instruments – the legal framework, the plans and projects prepared in this period, and the existing financial resources – and carefully assesses the main outcomes, largely urban facilities and municipal services.

Throughout these three chapters the author builds his main argument – that urban cartography is a key data source in the study of the city, and a fundamental instrument to understand other information, such as municipal budgets and the development decisions described in the minutes of Council meetings. One of the main purposes of the book is to offer a solid contribution to the history of Portuguese urban cartography that is able to support a more systematic study of other, particularly medium-sized, cities.

Fernandes presents three main reasons to justify his emphasis on the town plan and urban cartography. First, the town plan constitutes the summary of a city's history, in which one can follow the various development stages. Secondly, the examination of town plans enables effective comparisons between different spaces. Thirdly, the redrawing of town plans – a method that is used in this research – allows the interpretation of the existing situation, the representation of planning forecasts and the planning results so far achieved, and the identification of the stages of development and the most important decision makers.

In Portugal, the study of urban form has been developing in a fragmented way, mainly due to the existing disciplinary boundaries between geography, architecture, planning and history, and the virtual absence of research centres undertaking effective morphological studies in a systematic way. The fundamental contributions to the debate have been mainly individual, as can be seen in a recently-published synthesis of Portuguese morphological research produced during the last decade (Oliveira and Pinho, 2006). This is also the case with this very welcome book, which is founded on the work of two Portuguese authors, Orlando Ribeiro and Pereira de Oliveira, and clearly influenced by the Conzenian school and studies by Pierre Lavedan.

Three main themes from the current debate in urban morphology are inevitably raised by this book. The first theme, developed by authors such as Slater and Lilley, within a line of research on the origin, form and change of historical towns, is the dialectic between planned and non-planned contributions to the process of urban development. As a human artifact, the city is the result of planning and spontaneity, of regular and irregular forms, of systematic reflection and improvisation, and of detailed regulations and general guidance. What is particularly interesting in the work of Fernandes is that he demonstrates how these apparently opposed poles are in fact two elements of a continuum. The second theme, developed by authors such as Arntz and Larkham, is the impact of legislation on urban form. The exploration of this line of research led Fernandes to find clear links between a law decree published on 31 December 1864 – traditionally little-regarded by other Portuguese authors – and the main urban transformations in the selected cities during the period under analysis. The third theme is the local appropriation of international models. Fernandes carefully assesses the interpretation of a number of European planning models, highlighting the

specificities and the pragmatism of each particular interpretation, and the delay in their effective implementation in these six cities.

This is a thoroughly-researched book. The text is copiously referenced (1076 footnotes), profusely illustrated (140 original and redrawn maps), and grounded in complementary texts and tables (fourteen appendices). It is a major contribution to understanding the process of urban development in the north of Portugal during the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century. It is hoped that an English translation of this book will become available in the near future.

#### References

- Fernandes, M. (1995) *Viana do Castelo, a consolidação de uma cidade 1855-1926* (Edições Colibri, Lisboa).  
 Oliveira, V. and Pinho, P. (2006) 'Study of urban form in Portugal: a comparative analysis of the cities of Lisbon and Oporto', *Urban Design International* 11, 187-201.

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**The English semi-detached house** by Finn Jensen, Ovolo, Huntingdon, UK, 2007, 255 pp. ISBN 978-0-9548674-3-0.

This title is inviting to all those with an interest in the development and form of English suburbia. Jensen, a Dane, has published the result of his research at Liverpool John Moores University as an attractive and readable book that manages to combine something of the outsider's thoughtful overview – as of his fellow Dane Steen Eiler Rasmussen's book on London – with a thorough exploration of one specific house type, as Muthesius (1982) did for the terrace.

Although based on academic research, this book is not written primarily for an academic audience; nor is the publisher familiar to academics. Instead this is a worthy attempt to find a much broader public readership from a publisher better known for 'how to' titles often published in association with *Homebuilding and Renovating Magazine*. This has, perhaps, facilitated the use of a large number of