

in the context of current problems and pressing challenges pertaining to natural disasters, economic crises and population displacement.

In Chapter 2, Weiwen Huang questions the lacunae of urban planning in China by examining the case of the city of Shenzhen. Developing a strong argument in favour of a new model, a solution is envisaged that seeks planning outside the rigidities of the governmental system in order to contribute to the sustainability and heterogeneity of urban networks. Urban villages are taken as a model, since their particularities reflect better local needs and dynamics than centrally planned urban spaces. It is argued that public participation is a key to the success of the proposed approach.

Alejandro Echeverri introduces in Chapter 3 an experiment in the Colombian city of Medellin that is rich in theoretical and practical lessons. Over a period of 7 years, the city has experienced a socio-spatial reconfiguration of its northern sectors, where the daily life of the inhabitants had traditionally been marked by violence, segregation, and insecurity. By so-called *social urbanism*, the community was able to propose a strategic urban development project in which architecture and urbanism were keys to the social and spatial integration of poor and segregated parts of the city. It constitutes a good model by providing detailed lessons pertaining to the different stages of the implementation of the urban strategy.

Christopher C. M. Lee posits that punctual architectural interventions, that is *seeds*, that are well-adjusted to the local conditions and to the typological formation and transformation process are better at producing integrated, diversified, flexible, and durable urban contexts that have a ripple effect on the city as a whole.

Based on the analysis of two university campuses (in Singapore and Mexico), Dennis Pieprz explores in Chapter 5 the social, cultural and economic impacts of such amenities, and their overall influence on city development.

Aaron Tan reveals the uneasy relationship of the city of Hong Kong to its heritage. While experts from the University of Hong Kong advocate *adaptive reuse*, rather than destruction and reconstruction, others favour projects that introduce contrasting modern buildings in close proximity to old buildings, literally and metaphorically overshadowing urban heritage.

Kais Samarrai traces the striking urban development of Abu Dhabi, while stressing its environmental challenges. A recent shift in planning policy has entailed the development of sustainable

transportation, a policy aimed at fostering measurable sustainability performance and the development of the ground-breaking pilot project of Masdar City.

In the penultimate chapter, Lim Eng Hwee considers Singapore's ambitious planning initiatives in favour of sustainable growth, in particular through the expansion of key infrastructure projects (port, airport, rapid transit lines, and the housing programme).

Bruno de Meulder and Kelly Shannon focus in the concluding chapter on the impacts of infrastructure and vegetation on public space. They argue in favour of a better integration of landscaping, infrastructure and architecture to achieve sustainable combinations at different scales that will contribute to the greening of the city and improved quality of life. The approach has been tested in the city of Kortrijk, Belgium, and the city of Cantho in Vietnam.

The multidisciplinary group of contributors to *Shaping cities* has provided an original approach. It will benefit a wide readership, including researchers, practitioners and students in urban planning, urban history, urban geography, architecture and urbanism.

Islam Boukhelkhal, Faculty of Architecture, Larbi Ben M'hidi University, Oum Bouaghi, Algeria, E-mail: islam25000@hotmail.com

Designing San Francisco: art, land and urban renewal in the city by the bay by *Alison Isenberg*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, USA, 2017, 232 pp. ISBN 9780691172545.

In the critical years between the end of the Second World War and the mid-1970s there was a huge transformation of US cities. The interstate highway system invaded existing cities and spread the plague of low density suburbs, while urban renewal attempted to address the subsequent economic doldrums of older urban centres by the wholesale destruction of 'blighted' territories. In San Francisco, the story played out in the contested land along the waterfront, beginning with the Embarcadero Freeway, which was truncated by successful protests (and ultimately brought down by an earthquake in 1989), followed by a series of urban renewal proposals. The book rehearses many of them – for example, Transamerica Tower,

Embarcadero Center, and Golden Gateway – but one in detail: Ghirardelli Square.

The latter was remarkable because, in an era that embraced urban renewal projects of huge proportions and formidable modern concrete towers and walls, Ghirardelli (begun in 1963) was one of the first projects to marry a preservation project with modern uses and light modern architecture. Apart from a cluster of buildings that once housed a chocolate factory and a garden, the project offered people-oriented plazas and innovative shops in a quaint historical structure, a formula extremely familiar today from its many imitations, such as Boston's Faneuil Hall Market, New York's South Street Seaport, and Baltimore Harbor. In one of many themes of the book, the author makes a strong case for recognizing this project as a genuine innovation in urban design, especially when compared with the multi-block sterile buildings that comprised large-scale urban renewal design at the time. Ghirardelli's success surprised almost everyone involved in urban design and real estate.

In this book, author Alison Isenberg brings prodigious research together to embrace several interwoven themes that characterize the land, preservation and politics of this era. One theme is clearly the turning point in urban design that Ghirardelli Square represents. Isenberg does not tell a straightforward story of this project, however. She sprinkles the story out over six or seven chapters that explicate the roles of various people in the project's development, including the publicist, the property manager, the sculptor, and the graphic designer (all women). Other minor characters also make outsized appearances, while William Wurster (architect), Lawrence Halprin (landscape architect), and William Roth (developer) play only supporting roles in the drama. Isenberg makes a point of introducing and lionizing the roles played by otherwise obscure women, almost as if compelled to bring forward relatively minor players selected for their gender.

In each chapter, an individual who might not have claimed any historical value previously is lavishly treated with biographic details, and the entire project under discussion becomes framed by their perspective. For example, a chapter on Sea Ranch introduces Bobbi Stauffacher, a graphic designer who introduced Helvetica supergraphics to many of the urban renewal projects. All the characters introduced have connections to multiple projects, so that a chapter on Marion Conrad, a publicist for many of them, also tells a smidgeon of the story of Embarcadero and Sea Ranch, while generally

explaining her life, how she got started, her dinner parties, who worked for her, her contacts, her husband's support, and her untimely death.

In the end, the introduction of myriad characters works primarily to convince the reader of the importance of collaboration in the urban scale project. Moving the focus from headlight-bright planners and designers such as Wurster, Halprin or Allan Jacobs, the city planner, allows the contributions of other players to shine through. Isenberg also notes the many cases where the same team members came together over and over in very different projects.

Another theme of the book is the role of public representations (Conrad's publicity machine, for example, also renderings, paintings, competitions and models) in the success of any project. These are posited by the author as creative endeavours in their own right, interpreting and refining the designs, thoughts or visions of others. Slick representations were challenged by enlightened public campaigns, which countered and even stopped some of the most damaging projects. Even people who protested about the high-rise projects, such as the Golden Gate and the Transamerica Tower, used images and cartoons to illustrate their misgivings.

The most important theme, though, is the framing of urban renewal as a land grab, particularly public land. Urban renewal in San Francisco, as elsewhere, accumulated private and public land that was thought to have little value, since it was in areas of abandoned buildings, 'slum' housing and obsolete uses near the centre. In San Francisco, these accumulations sometimes included block after block of historical buildings and the streets between them. San Francisco had vacated multiple streets and sold them to private interests prior to a showdown over this policy, which eventually stopped the International Market Center project. Isenberg illuminates, in her final chapters, the continuing story of contested urban public land, and how the story of San Francisco is just as revealing about land policy as it is about design.

Alas, a shortcoming for morphologists is the lack of precise maps about the projects and their place in the city. A few before/after maps would have been complementary to the text, as well as providing a quick index to help follow the non-linear story. A timeline featuring all the projects would also go a long way to untangling the interwoven narrative.

Overall, this book is a compelling guide to the era, as illustrated by San Francisco. However, Isenberg's method of exposition undercuts all

the themes and all the projects in her story, leaving the minor characters and their perspective, lives and contributions to raggedly construct the narrative. The text jumps around from topic to topic, year to year, place to place, theme to theme, even in one paragraph. The story loses its thread and restarts with every new minor character, and tediously reproduces every titbit of trivia that the author has accumulated in her 10 years of research (What *does* Marion serve at her dinner parties?) This is very unfortunate, because the story is a well-chosen one, with interesting themes that are timely and ultimately very applicable to the urban morphologist.

Brenda Case Scheer, School of Architecture, The University of Utah, 375 S. 1530 East Rm 235, Architecture Building, Salt Lake City, UT, 84112, USA. E-mail: scheer@arch.utah.edu

Açores, cidade e território. Quatro vilas estruturantes, by *Antonieta Reis Leite*, Instituto Açoriano de Cultura, Angra do Heroísmo, Portugal, 2014, 494 pp. ISBN 978-989-8225-41-2.

Açores, cidade e território. Quatro vilas estruturantes (Azores, city and territory: four 'structuring' towns) is based on a PhD thesis presented to the Department of Architecture at the University of Coimbra in 2012. It considers the evolution of land planning in the Azores from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, revealing the practices of urbanism in four so-called structuring towns. It is part of a series of investigations carried out in the University of Coimbra on the nature of the Portuguese city, in both Portugal itself and overseas, which seeks to unveil cultural identity as manifested in the territories and cities subject to Portuguese influence.

Colonization proved to be fundamental as it served to establish specialized practices as an instrument for the establishment of urban nuclei and land-use planning. Urbanization in the Azores is at the beginning of Portuguese expansion in new territories. It consolidates and refines practices already used in Portugal and it defines paradigmatic models, encouraging and assisting settlement processes that were to continue in the overseas lands from Brazil to the Far East.

Chronologically, the study is framed by the Azores islands discovery dates (1427–1452) and

the separation of the crowns, which takes place in the archipelago in 1642. The author aims at 'understanding the original installation and consolidation processes of the Azores main cities and territory' and unveiling the structuring of the primary urban network. She presents the phenomenon of insular urbanization through an analysis of the territorial planning process, identifying the main actors and their achievements. For that purpose, four case studies are conducted on the formation and transformation of the towns of Angra, Praia, Horta and Ponta Delgada.

The results of the research are presented in two parts, which take different approaches regarding the focus and scale of the analysis. In the first part, which corresponds to the first research phase, the focus is on individual cases. Each city is studied in concrete terms and is the subject of a well-illustrated discussion of its history and morphological evolution, from the formation phase through to that of consolidation. The second part aims at addressing the broader theme of Portuguese urbanism. The territory's composition, occupation, planning and management are examined, taking into account the actors and their practices. A comparative assessment of the previously analysed cases is then conducted. A reflection on the territory is presented, based on an iterative interpretation, both deductive and inductive, according to which the initial understanding of the material produced in the case studies is questioned. This leads to clarification and amendment, and fresh interpretations.

In research on architecture and urbanism, analytical drawings are central. Beyond illustration, they contribute to the understanding of the argument. Drawings are used to enable consistent reading, of general, detailed and complex spatial contexts. The graphics present a diversity of data, stemming from thorough documentary research.

The methodology used – referred to as 'drawing history' – entails the production of analytical drawings that are an integral part of the historical research and interpretation. Illustrating urban evolution and growth, these drawings are based on rigorous contemporary surveys and are carefully substantiated and validated by various sources and historiographical material.

The production of cities from models grounded in the culture of European urban foundations is central to the discussion: '... it is on the islands that the medieval foundational urbanistic practices will continue, as well as the colonizing tactics previously experienced in the lands of the reconquest'. The author contends that the Portuguese