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competition for the building. Furthermore, he sees Pennethorne's scheme in a new light and suggests that "Pennethorne should have been allowed to design the Foreign Office" (p.258).

Complications in dealing with government are further highlighted in chapter 4, Architecture and Politics, but in spite of the often difficult relations much good was to come from Pennethorne. Chapter 5, Public Offices, discusses some memorable works, not least the Public Record Office. This Gothic design betrays the symmetry and order of Pennethorne's classical leaning, while the walls of brick-clad iron and brick-arch floors, and the truthful use of structural ironwork in the Round Room, leave no room to doubt Tyack's assertion that the "Public Record Office ... was one of the most forward-looking buildings of its age" (p.160). The Ordnance Office extension is a classic of the palazzo manner, while Tyack regards the extension to Somerset House as one of Pennethorne's most successful designs (p.172).

Museums and Buildings for the Royal Family are respectively examined in chapters six and seven, while chapter nine is devoted to The Final Years. In each of these areas Pennethorne is rightfully presented as a true master of classically ordered design who successfully incorporated progressive elements in his buildings—the palazzo facade with the use of iron and glass in the main gallery of the Museum of Practical Geology; the butterfly-shaped plan and use of fire-proof brick arches in The Duchy of Cornwall Office; and the influential semicircular-arched iron roof of the Patent Office.

The Epilogue, chapter 10, assesses Pennethorne's buildings in the context of nineteenth-century architectural developments. A Catalogue of Executed Works is given in Appendix I.

In sum, this study is warmly recommended to urban and architectural historians. In particular, the careful consideration of the relationships between the architect/planner and the patron, and the sorts of compromise necessary in creating the final design, bear on architectural/urban studies well outside the period of this book.

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The most striking, and the most enduring, feature of any city is its built environment. We cannot think of Paris without its boulevards, of Toronto without its brick facades, of Jericho without its walls. Although the artifactual character of the city is so obvious, its character and importance are poorly understood. We can describe and explain the growth and social structure of a city in terms that anyone can understand, but the same is not true of its physique. There is a popular vocabulary of architectural styles, but not of street and lot forms, or other morphological features. Arguably, the most complete language of urban form is that developed by M.R.G. Conzen. This language offers the prospect of being able to talk, meaningfully and in a comparative way, about the physical landscape of very different cities. Until recently, however, it was employed by only a small group of scholars, including an active group in Birmingham, England. With increasing popular concern for historic preservation, however, and as people have come to see that preservation might include streets and districts as well as buildings, more scholars have

become interested in describing and interpreting the urban form. Reflecting this interest, *Urban Landscapes* contains nine papers, with an editorial introduction and a concluding prospectus, most of which were presented at an international conference held in Birmingham in 1990.

The editors acknowledge a debt to the ideas of M.R.G. Conzen but, as they emphasize, contributors draw upon a variety of intellectual traditions. Following the introduction, Anngret Simms notes Conzen's distinction between the three basic elements of urban morphology: town plan, building fabric, and land use. She argues that for the analysis of medieval European towns, the town plan is in many respects the most enduring and significant feature. Looking at medieval English towns, N.J. Baker and T.R. Slater take a similar point of view, and build on Conzen by describing how they developed a "precise, verifiable and repeatable method for plan-unit definition" (45), with specific reference to Worcester. In a contemporary setting, two papers examine the changing form of suburban middle-class residential areas. Anne Moudon uses examples from Seattle to generalize about American cities since the 1920s while, in a piece co-authored with A.N. Jones, the editors examine very recent changes in England. Focussing upon city centres, J. Vilagresa builds upon the work of Jeremy Whitehand in Britain to develop a comparative morphological analysis of two cities, Worcester and Lleida. If Baker and Slater refine Conzen's methodology in a two-dimensional context, Deryck Holdsworth adds a third by using computer graphics to reconstruct the changing built environment of a portion of Lower Manhattan in the early twentieth century.

The authors of the remaining papers find inspiration elsewhere. David Friedman examines the architecture of urban pal-

aces, tracing the changing ways in which they related to public streets in late medieval and Renaissance Italy. He writes as an architectural historian, sensitive to the urban setting of his buildings. Micha Bandini compares the way in which British and Italian architects have treated the question of urban design, noting the relative strength of the British empirical tradition. Finally, Paul Knox argues that a new kind of packaged residential development emerged at the fringe of American metropolitan areas during the 1980s. This piece sits uneasily in the collection, for Knox's interest is more with the economic context and social meaning of such developments than with their morphology. (Indeed, the editors suggest (p.304) that, in morphological terms, packaged developments are not especially distinctive.) Even so, its inclusion indicates that new areas of dialogue are opening up between morphologists and other urban scholars.

If this exchange is to proceed, morphologists need to clarify the connections between urban form and wider processes of economic and social change. The editors acknowledge (p.2) that earlier research concentrated upon description, at the expense of explanation. Some of this imbalance is being corrected. But even an explanatory account of lot lines, street orientations, or building facades, gains significance only when it can be shown to have been meaningful, or to have had an impact upon urban life. Like James Vance—a prominent morphologist whose work is almost completely ignored in this collection—many contributors to *Urban Landscapes* simply assume that historic morphological features are significant, and therefore worthy of preservation. I am sympathetic to this point of view. To be useful, however, its proponents must make it clear whether urban form is significant as a source of aesthetic experience, or as a unique insight into the past. A striking

landscape may tell us nothing about the past that we cannot discover another way. Another may be ugly, but instructive. An argument could be made that both should be retained deliberately. Only when such reasoning is made explicit, however, can we decide which landscapes are worthy of attention, and which are not. Such a distinction is fundamental, not only for the scholar choosing what to study, but also for those planners and politicians who daily decide which building or neighbourhood to save and which to abandon safely to the irreverent attrition of the market.

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**Marrelli, Nancy, editor. *Montreal Photo Album: Photographs from Montreal Archives*. Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1993. Pp. 140. 59 black and white photographs. \$22.95 paper.**

Urban historians, perhaps because of their interest in the built environment and the spatial aspects of city-building, seem particularly attuned to the use of visual sources. One thinks of the emphasis on photographs and maps in the History of Canadian City series or Peter Bacon Hales' *Silver Cities: The Photography of American Urbanization, 1839–1915*. Thus the publication of a book devoted to archival photographs of Montreal is worthy of a close examination. Do we learn something new of the city's history from these images from the past? Does this volume contribute to discussions of the photograph as a source in the study of urban history?

Edited by Nancy Marrelli, Director of Archives at Concordia University, *Montreal Photo Album* accompanies an exhibit that highlighted the photographic collections of Montreal's archival institu-

tions, organized as part of the Association of Canadian Archivist's 1992 conference held in that city. Clearly, as the book vividly illustrates, Montreal's archives contain a wealth of visual information on the city's past. Here are views of buildings, city streets and markets; pictures of public events, such as the visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in May 1939, or the mass wedding of 105 couples later that summer; and images of institutions, particularly religious, devoted to the education and health of the city's inhabitants. A note on the page facing each photograph gives a brief description of the subject and its history, and indicates the date, photographer and source. The appended list of participating university, religious, government and corporate archives further whets the appetite, holding out the promise of hours of fruitful research on a variety of topics, from the architectural to the social aspects of Montreal's history. What treasures are held in the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives, or hidden away in the files of the Archives des Soeurs Grises?

Dating from the 1870s to the 1950s, the photographs in *Montreal Photo Album* present varied perspectives of urban life. They range from the surrealistic quality of the book's opening image, of a dirigible hovering beside the Sun Life Building under construction (1930), to the studied artistry of William Notman's composite of curlers on the St. Lawrence (1878), to the candid snapshot of a dancing couple at Victoria Hall (1942). Yet despite this diversity of time, subject, and style the selection of photographs (and Marrelli's prefatory remarks) suggest a celebration of the heritage of one of Canada's great cities. Following the family photo-album analogy of its title, this book of photographs presents the public face of Montreal. And like the family album, conflict and tension are kept hidden in this orderly presentation of urban life.