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Stelter, Gilbert A. and Artibise, Alan F. J., eds. *Shaping The Urban Landscape: Aspects of the Canadian City-Building Process*. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1982. Pp. 436. Tables, maps, illustrations. \$15.95 (paper)

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743). Kaplan suggests that systems theory helps. In his concluding sentence, however, he candidly admits that "If a theory cannot convince people that its way of looking at familiar events is better than the prior, commonsensical way, the theory doesn't deserve to take hold" (p. 746). Systems theory has not "taken hold" and it is most unlikely that this book, notwithstanding its bulk, will change things.

There are at least two major problems in taking a systems approach to Canadian urban politics. First, this approach — at least as it is articulated by Kaplan — takes scant account of provincial governments. Although Kaplan is quick to acknowledge that municipal political systems are affected by all kinds of external factors in their environment, he provides no special analysis of the provincial role. Provincial premiers, ministers, legislatures and regulatory bodies appear from time to time, but the reader is given no comprehensive account of their pervasive presence. Sorting out the autonomy of municipal politics in relation to provincial politics would seem to be the first step in any successful systemic approach. If the two levels are inextricably intertwined, then the theory must be structured accordingly.

The second problem is more serious. As with other studies using the systems approach, this one tells us little about who wins and who loses in urban politics. We learn how municipal systems persist, develop, and adapt over time, but there is little enlightenment as to how these systems connect with the major political and economic forces in society or how they act to advance or hinder the particular interests of such forces. It is this kind of issue which is once again pre-occupying political science and that is why the systems approach is not "taking hold."

Students of city politics in Montreal, Winnipeg, and Toronto will not be able to ignore this book. There is enough new information and insightful comment to reward the persistent reader. Unfortunately, however, the factual material needs to be double checked. Without footnotes, this is no easy task.

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Stelter, Gilbert A. and Artibise, Alan F.J., eds. *Shaping The Urban Landscape: Aspects of the Canadian City-Building Process*. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1982. Pp. 436. Tables, maps, illustrations. \$15.95 (paper).

The fifteen essays in this latest of "S and A/A and S"<sup>1</sup> enterprises forms a collection generously organized around a central though intellectually diffusive theme. Among and between essays, the concepts "Landscape" and "City-build-

ing process" are variously accorded the broadest of interpretations, the narrowest or widest of methodological approaches and a wide spectrum of historical periods. Whether justifiably or not will not be argued here; suffice to say, a collection of this design and variability defies review by conventional criteria. There is also the problem of whom to address: architects and planners? historical geographers? students of social history? of economic or political history? scholars and researchers of Canadian urbanism? In the face of these many considerations, your reviewer might be forgiven the device of going his own way.

Whether or not, as Stelter and Artibise assert, this is a collection of the "best work available," it deserves to be warmly welcomed by students and teachers. There are definitely elements of originality in it; in a number of instances, the courage of synthesis; and a good deal of plainly interesting history. It is a sorely needed publication in Canadian urban studies. Not all of the essays, however, ought to be taken as models for research into, or interpretive approach to what is, in final account, a multi-dimensional subject. Nor are the essays of uniformly high calibre. Some of the essays exceed the textual economies warranted by their essential substance (for example McCann, Artibise, Ganton and MacDonald). These reservations notwithstanding, the book offers ample opportunity for worthwhile reference, be it on a specific locality, on illustrative method, or in the interest of finding building blocks or inspiration to more comprehensive studies.

In a prefatory essay, Stelter discusses how the study of city can be approached — as "entity," "process" or "setting" — and suggests a classification of the relevant historical periods in Canadian urbanism as "mercantile," "commercial" and "new industrialism." It has been, of course, largely via setting and industrialism that cities (more accurately, urbanization) have been made known to most Canadian students; that is, by treating the city as locus for economic and political "forces," but whose localized physical environmental impacts, influences, designed form and internal patterning were matters of indifference. As Stelter claims, Canadian studies have been developing in a more cross-disciplinary fashion than the traditional American scholarly model by drawing unto them physical development disciplines. If so, the effect of this may be that "urban as entity" could be emerging in Canada as an engaging subject with a legitimacy of its own, and in which the treatment of city is freed from the a-historical strictures of (Parsonian) social science or the preoccupations of (Innesian) economic geography. The set of essays assembled for the book "usually represent *urban as entity*." Had they done so *exclusively*, and with more consideration given to architectural, environment design and institutionalized city-building aspects, the whole book would, I believe, have had greater vitality and possibly a little more charm and strength of coherency. In addition to inciting our interest in understanding Canadian urban history in terms of entity, Stelter has provided in his essay a valuable short

discussion of Canadian city development through the three historical periods of patterning.

Four essays are grouped under “urban growth strategies”; the remaining eleven appear under “evolving urban form.” Over half of these works are reprints. This design of the volume suggests the editors had in view a compendium of titles with, for the most part, established and enduring merit to be commended to serious students of Canadian cities. An index would, therefore, have helped; the editorial dereliction in this regard is a serious shortcoming. The added omission of a list of illustrations is a lesser sin but another dereliction no less.

Among the first four essays, only two are faithful to the “strategy” theme. In saying this, I mean only to make a distinction, to define a term, not to discount the other two essays (the authors of which no doubt had no say in the classification of their works in any case). Strategy should be understood as the declared or discernible practical goals set by men in order to win a specified contest, and for which they design and marshal the means to win it; be these means institutional, human (labour), or financial, or all of them at once. In short, what we know of *what men set out to do* is what gives “strategy” any sensible meaning. Johnson’s account of monopolistic ventures and public ownership in Guelph, and the Artibise essay on prairie city boosterism are written with sound reference to the meaning of strategy. These are informative and insightful documentary works which highlight two significantly influential strains in Canadian urban development. Contemporary idioms of civic aggrandizement and development politics, demonstrable in east and west, can be traced to the ideological and political behaviours so well described and discussed in the Johnson and Artibise essays. They are recommended reading for today’s would-be city builders.

A third essay, McCann’s analysis of post confederation Halifax, is really about non-strategy. The non-growth that McCann detects in his data is said to equate with “failure” to “industrialize.” Considering what Halifax today represents as a richly endowed, sought after “urban as entity” resource, this is not exactly a tragedy in my view. In any event, the failure occurred essentially by defect of marginal advantage within the policy of economic continentalism; by default of entrepreneurial public leadership to an extent; and by a perceived deficiency of certain raw city-building resources (for example suitable urban lands, water). Similarly, the Rudin article about antipathetic Montréal anglophone banks searches for the explanation of a non-event: the retarded commercial-industrial development of franco-phone towns from 1840 to 1914. He relies heavily on data inference and very little upon the pro-active decisions and verifiable intentions of actors. Rudin does not say it, but it could easily be implied from his construction of the evidence that the anglo-banks operated a conspiracy (a strategy?) of deprivation. Still, as Somerset Maugham once wrote, “Fact

is a poor story-teller.” Had Rudin gone further in a cross-disciplinary sense, seeking additional explanatory factors or hypotheses to be found in cultural and elite, sociological and financial histories of Montréal and Québec society, he might have confirmed a fragile thesis — but, I suspect, the contrary is equally probable. In fairness, Rudin acknowledges his data does not uncover “motives,” and that a larger study is in progress. But these are insufficient excuses for presenting a thesis without disposing of possible counter-explanations or counter-hypotheses. McCann’s thesis, over-extended as it is by maps and tables, is more impressive in range and depth of confirming analyses; as a result, he offers an interesting confirmation of urban Maritime “victimization” under Canada’s heartland-hinterland politico-economic regime, but not a strategic analysis.

The longest of the “form” essays, by Elizabeth Bloomfield, is among the best for its storyline quality and original research. It is an excellent case study of town planning in Kitchener/Waterloo, 1912-26, and it situates nicely between the ideological/political sheaves of urbanism laid out by Johnson and Artibise. An essay by Buggey on the prosperous mid-nineteenth century building industry in Halifax is among the better-packed, with short, readable accounts of actors and their institutional settings. One gets the feeling, however, of a reluctant attempt at scholasticism in Buggey’s classification of Halifax builders according to E.W. Cooney’s four-part typology.<sup>2</sup> The attempt is not substantial or persuasive. But never mind, the portraiture of builders and their social antecedents is interesting. The use of photographs is excellent. Also, one gets some sense of the organization and style of the building industry, a topic which should now be pushed to advantage and receive the attention of other scholars in a variety of Canadian urban settings.

There is an interesting comparison to be made between Bloomfield’s town planning history and the Linteau essay on entrepreneurial city layout and development in an earlier period, in a different cultural setting (Montréal, 1883-1918). Bloomfield’s selected time and setting make correspondence with the flourishing work and missionary zeal of Thomas Adams and the Commission of Conservation; when City Beautiful from the United States and public development control from the United Kingdom were coming together to form a Canadian planning movement. That hybrid movement never really took hold in Québec; but City Beautiful did, on occasion, as Linteau illustrates. There is none of the tension or *crise de conscience* of Kitchener/Waterloo planning (between public control/public initiative and private entrepreneurialism) in Linteau’s Maisonneuve example from twenty-five years earlier. In Maisonneuve, pride in progress dictated that municipal government and entrepreneurial city-building be married in spirit and corpus. “Pittsburg of Canada” would be the ideal, but architectural idioms as well as planning concepts could be copied with equal enthusiasm from *l’Amérique contemporaine*, eighteenth century and Beaux-Arts France, Victorian England, Olmsted, and (I

rather suspect) from Tony Garnier. The result was sweepingly original for Canada, in its environmental aesthetic as well as layout, and in the architectural merits of working class housing (however modest they appear to us in retrospect). Linteau is correct in stating “Maisonneuve was unique . . . an impressive beautification program for which there are no Canadian equivalents.” Would that the C.P.R. (see MacDonald’s essay on Vancouver; see Calgary!; see Regina!) had a Viau and a Dufresne to steer land and civic developments rather than a parsimonious Presbyterian Board and their unimaginative surveyors who saw cities only as profitable sub-divisions and entrepôts.

City-building is elsewhere treated in this book from a descriptive, geographic or socio-cultural perspective. I must confess to not being enamoured by the bent of some history scholars to engage in massive number-crunching and/or mapping virtually for the sake of it. Modest sampling combined with inferential data or dialectical reasoning can frequently yield more productive insight on history; especially as the territorial slice or time frame enlarges. The Ganton essay on Toronto subdividing, for example, arrives at prosaic conclusions after endless mapping, all of which, incidentally, flows from a flat earth environmental perspective that makes for bland historical urbanism. The Lafrance-Ruddel article on eighteenth century Québec City social differentiation, while fundamentally interesting, acquaints us with percentage increases (of buildings) inconsistently calculated to *two* decimal places. Aquatints are gratuitously inserted in the text. In Doucet’s Hamilton land speculation study covering thirty-four years, the manipulation of series of large numbers attains virtuoso proportions (although without evident tests of statistical reliability, it should be said). Interesting facts emerge in the Doucet essay as to characteristic stages from original subdivision through speculation to development; what classes of people owned lots; who engaged in speculation or asset-holding; rates of ownership turnover; and so forth. One does get a detailed, albeit bloodless, picture of the land development process. But when the author asks, what should we make of this, his conclusions reach beyond interpretation of the dynamic process investigated. And they are of an order and kind that might have been more economically arrived at, by means less oriented to series analysis, and in part by a priori reasoning from economic theory, visual observation and engineering records. What Doucet has accomplished, but does not emphasize directly enough, is a fair description of the primitive states of municipal institutions, urban technology, and organized public purpose and control. Sporadicism ruled, and opportunities in land were boundless for worker and merchant alike. In such a golden age of *laissez-faire* urbanism (1840-70), it is hardly surprising that half the players were losers.

An essay by Weaver also studies land development in Hamilton — a single, 800 acre tract, taken through 40 years leading up to 1951. This essay demonstrates a skillful blend-

ing and linking of observations on public policies, entrepreneur organization and strategies, land planning and capital finance, housing and community character. It could have succeeded as well without some of the very many data tables; still, the text is not beholden to them. Through Weaver’s evident feel for significant evidence, and from excellent writing, the complex making of a suburb — construction and community — is revealed and perceptively interpreted. In a revised article of 1978 date, Doucet contributes a second essay, an account of Toronto’s early tramway system. This work has similarities of purpose and method with Weaver’s account of the Westdale suburb: to explore an interplay between public policy, political attitudes, expansionary development pressures and private corporate strategies. The story is well balanced in its interpretation of a utility company partnership with public authority in an era when municipal institutions in Canada were subordinate instruments of capitalist interests (and often their creditors). The resolution between competing conceptions of public responsibility and private interest in Toronto is interestingly developed. And, the essay compliments well a number of other works in this book; for example, Johnson’s, Linteau’s, Weaver’s in the matter of ideology and developmental urban politics.

MacDonald’s “C.P.R. Town” offers a concise, competent overview of demographic change, economic and community expansion, public institutional development and real estate activities in Vancouver, 1860 to 1914. The opening third of the essay establishes the pre-eminent influence of the C.P.R. in *all* aspects and dimensions of urban shaping. It is written without ideological thesis but with good selection of evidence, and occasional nuance, such that one cannot fail to be impressed by the contradictions and deficiencies of social purpose in private ethos and corporate power, public settlement policy and state of social technology which characterized the outermost frontier of the Dominion. But then, in the same period of history, was Hamilton any different? (see Doucet’s essay). Montréal appears to have been (Linteau on Maisonneuve), and Halifax as well (see the Buggey essay). In these latter cities, private corporate power was seemingly more constructively modulated by municipal politics; and, it would seem in turn, imbued with a more mature, even imaginative, sense of a modernizing urbanism.

The C.P.R. was the beneficiary of a 6,845 acre grant of lands located in the strategic path of urban development. The enormity of control over environmental development this gave the corporation is imaginable, particularly when account is further taken of the C.P.R. as the single biggest employer (five or six hundred employees), spender of the first order in the local economy and participant in the municipal councils. From MacDonald’s essay we get some fair impressions of these influences. One looks forward to an equally good essay some day which explores more directly the consequential behaviour and decisions of the C.P.R., how these shaped the three-dimensional environment and what they implied for

community staging and the characteristic form(s) of Vancouver's urban environment today.

A reprint article (1978) on resource towns by Stelter and Artibise winds up the fifteen essay collection. Resource towns constitute a distinct urban species within the economic and cultural geography of Canada. They are very much a part of economic development history, and also intimately linked with the history of ideational themes in planning. The Stelter/Artibise essay essentially synthesizes extant research, providing thereby a decent overview of the role of resource towns in the frontier economy, their social character, and the evolution of plan motifs. It is, however, much too light on the discussion of "function" and "form." There are a couple of impressions conveyed by this essay that are, in my view, erroneous. While the earliest resource towns were, strictly speaking, "company towns" by virtue of the authorities who designed, built and ran them, and the more recent ones are not company creations in the same terms, the latter are *in reality* company towns in social-cultural and political meaning. The newer public institutional formalities governing resource town planning and municipal governance have not altered (or remedied) significantly the social issues that flow from the single enterprise structure. In another vein, Stelter and Artibise are not correct in giving the impression that no cognizance was given to the British models of Port Sunlight, Bourneville, and other such garden-city schemes. True for the pre-1920 period; but in the "interwar-years" episode of new town building, Canadian company managers and experts were being sent to England to study ideas and accomplishments of these model towns. All in all, however, the essay on resource towns does provide a good rounded introduction to the topic as well as an historical appreciation according to chronological phases.

In summation, this collection is a valuable reference for a variety of students of Canadian history, and not just the "urbs." I would hope, too, that selections from it will find their way into Canadian planning schools' curricula, government studies and political science.

Finally, *Shaping the Urban Landscape* provides a good set of building block materials for researchers working in the design history fields, such as architecture, civic design, and planning. There are a number of stages set in the book upon which the particularized and the comprehensively interpreted dramas in historical Canadian urbanism can be played.

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#### NOTES

- 1 Earlier co-edited works by Artibise and Stelter are *The Canadian City*, no. 109 (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1977); *The Usable*

*Urban Past*, no. 119 (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1979); and *Canada's Urban Past: A Bibliography to 1980* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1981).

- 2 See E.W. Cooney, "The Origins of the Victorian Master Builders," *Economic History Review*, vol. VIII (1955), cited by Buggey in footnote 32.

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Karni, M.G., ed. *Finnish Diaspora I: Canada, South America, Africa, Australia and Sweden. Finnish Diaspora II: United States*. Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1981. Vol. I. Pp. xiv, 305. Vol. II. Pp. xii, 319.

I was born a Finn  
I had to leave my childhood home  
In search of work, in order to live  
To a foreign land I had to roam.<sup>1</sup>

A major demographic factor, Finnish emigration has drawn the attention of scholars in that country. Meanwhile, the Finnish immigrant community has produced "ethnic" histories of widely varying quality. The latter have played an important role in the collection of a surprising volume of resources which, of late, have found archival protection.<sup>2</sup>

These beginnings have promoted further study of the Finnish immigrant experience. Scholars of emigration and immigration came together in conferences held in Duluth (1974) and Thunder Bay (1975).<sup>3</sup> Their efforts, supported by a growing body of graduate research, moved Finnish immigration studies beyond fileo-pietism or ethnic antiquarianism. Indications of the progress made, and the questions which remain, can be had in *Finnish Diaspora*.

The papers in these volumes were presented at the "Finn Forum" held in Toronto, November 1979. Some essays are quite reflective of their "Forum" counterparts; others, more finished than the busy schedule of that conference would permit. In any event, these papers suggest they myriad of approaches pertinent to immigration studies. Contributors include non-academics as well as specialists in sociology, linguistics, geography, history and other disciplines. These studies stretch beyond national, or even continental boundaries: Finns in Latin America, South Africa, Australia and Sweden, as well as North America, are discussed. Given this geographic and disciplinary range, it is hardly surprising that this is a rather uneven collection. Nevertheless, *Finnish Diaspora* sports more merits than flaws.

To the uninitiated, these papers, as summaries or continuations of fuller studies, touch upon many important issues. While their notes are, therefore, useful, it is to be regretted that no introductory notes or bibliography are provided. Furthermore, the geographical arrangement of these volumes seems less conducive to comparison than the thematic format of the "Forum."