Urban History Review
Revue d'histoire urbaine

URBAN HISTORY REVIEW
REVUE D'HISTOIRE URBAINE

Peterson, Jon. *The Birth of City Planning in the United States, 1840-1917*. Creating the North American Landscape. Gregory Coniff, Edward K. Muller & David Schuyler, eds. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press. 2003. Pp. 431. $73.00 (hardcover)

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Volume 33, Number 2, Spring 2005

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1016389ar
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7202/1016389ar

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Publisher(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (print)
1918-5138 (digital)

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Cite this review

Dudley, M. (2005). Review of [Peterson, Jon. *The Birth of City Planning in the United States, 1840-1917*. Creating the North American Landscape. Gregory Coniff, Edward K. Muller & David Schuyler, eds. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press. 2003. Pp. 431. $73.00 (hardcover)]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine, 33*(2), 65–66. https://doi.org/10.7202/1016389ar

Comme le démontre minutieusement l'auteur, ces développements se produisent dans un contexte opposant les acteurs partisans de la propriété privée, de la liberté individuelle, du contrôle local et du conservatisme fiscal, d'une part, aux tenants de la mise en place d'institutions régionales et mûs par une logique plus centralisatrice, fondée sur les trois principes suivants : celui de l'interventionnisme dans la gestion publique ; celui de la reconnaissance de l'interdépendance sur le plan physique et économique de la ville moderne conçue comme un système où les frontières entre ville-centre et banlieue, bien-être public et propriété privée, richesse individuelle et ressources collectives s'estompent ; celui, enfin, du principe de la possibilité d'une certaine adéquation entre le bien-être individuel et collectif. Tout au long de l'ouvrage, Revell démontre bien que l'adoption de politiques plus globales n'a pas toujours représenté une panacée, les systèmes qui en résultent donnant parfois lieu à de nouveaux conflits émergeant de l'existence de cette nouvelle échelle. Comme il le conclut lui-même, si les tenants de la culture civique de l'expertise ont eu un impact profond sur la structure physique et institutionnelle de la ville, ils n'ont cependant pas réussi à obtenir la reconnaissance d'une nouvelle approche de l'intérêt public tout comme celle de la ville considérée comme un tout. Partant de ce constat, la conclusion de l'ouvrage cherche à convaincre que, pour difficile qu'il soit de parvenir à faire émerger une manière unifiée de concevoir et de gérer la ville, cela ne devrait pas invalider le fait qu'il a existé une volonté réelle et sincère d'améliorer le bien-être collectif. Il n'empêche que, dans cette conclusion comme dans le reste du livre, Revell ne définit jamais vraiment ce qu'il entend par intérêt commun ou bien-être collectif donnant à penser que ces données existent de manière objective alors qu'il s'agit plutôt de constructions sociales. S'il s'agit là d'une question qui pourrait faire l'objet d'une longue discussion, il n'empêche que l'auteur aurait dû la considérer.

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In the past few years, the history of city planning has received considerable attention in the publishing world. From Robert Fishman's edited collection *The American Planning Tradition* (2000), to Kenneth Kolson's *Big Plans: The Lure and Folly of Urban Design* (2002), to Sir Peter Hall's revision of *Cities of Tomorrow* (2001) and Leonie Sandercock's postmodern critiques, *Towards Cosmopolis* (1998) and its sequel *Mongrel Cities* (2004), there is a renewed interest in understanding the influences of the planning profession. Most of the attention in the literature tends to concern postwar planning; it is less usual to see authors pursue this investigation very far into the nineteenth century.

Jon Peterson's *The Birth of City Planning in the United States* is an attempt to divine the origins of the city planning movement since 1840, and while its closing pages take the story briefly into the 1990s, it is the role of planning and planners in the decade before the First World War—the Progressive Era—that is his primary focus. His book is only the most recent volume in the critically acclaimed series Creating the North American Landscape, from Johns Hopkins University Press. While most other titles in the series concern the United States, they do include *Unplanned Suburbs: Toronto's American Tragedy* by Richard Harris (1996) and *Manufacturing Montreal: The Making of an Industrial Landscape, 1850—1930* by Robert Lewis (2000). The series editors include such distinguished figures as David Schuyler, longtime member of the Society for American Regional and City Planning History, and editor of the *Journal of Planning History*. Peterson himself is a professor of history at Queens College, City University of New York, and he brings his expertise as an urban historian to full measure in the book's more than 330 lucidly written pages. Peterson has published previously on the impact of sanitary reform on city planning in the United States (1983), and it is on this theme that his new work begins.

The book is organized more or less chronologically, with thematic divisions emerging as a pleasing coincidence. The two principal antecedents to planning—concern over sanitation and the need for parks in America's congested cities—are shown to have given way to the emergence of the City Beautiful movement, the development and evolution of which Peterson devotes almost one hundred pages. Peterson shows how this truly was a *movement*, a popular cause taken up by civic associations—including many women's groups—all across the country. He shows how City Beautiful proponents, such as Charles Mulford Robinson (author of the seminal *The Improvement of Towns and Cities* [1901]) took up the cause of beautifying America's cities with nothing less than religious fervour: "Protestant traditions of collectively enacted and emotionally charged spiritual renewal, [were] now expressed more secularly as community revitalization" (124).

It was this movement that would encourage the warm reception for the 1902 McMillan Plan for Washington, a plan that would itself prove so influential. The standard narrative of the history of city planning is that it was the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, with its iconic "White City," that gave birth to modern city planning. Peterson exposes this as a myth: the White City did not provide a practical model for real city planning, only an ideal. It would take the real-world example of the McMillan Plan for Washington, DC, to truly show what was possible—although that this groundbreaking plan should have existed at all when it did Peterson calls one of "the great puzzle[s] of American Planning History" (77). He explains that even though there was

some influence of the White City in the plan, the McMillan Plan was really the result of a confluence of events in the capital city itself.

Other myths are dispelled along the way. Zoning, so often conflated with planning and pilloried in postwar critiques of North American built form, is shown to have emerged quite independently of planning, from "market forces . . . outside the planning field and not wholly congenial to it" (308). Peterson also provides more depth to what Leonie Sandercock (1998) calls the "heroic" narrative of the planning profession: he shows that the origins of the profession were hardly so tidy and monolithic—in fact, they were fraught with infighting and power struggles. At the formative National Conferences on City Planning in 1910 and 1911, the battle between Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and Benjamin Marsh and their partisans over whether to include concerns over housing congestion within planning's purview, led to a formal distinction between the two fields that Peterson shows was practised more in the breach than in the observance. The Progressive origins of the profession were, at least in the early years, difficult to uproot.

It is this Progressive impulse, this goal to serve the "public interest" and redress social injustice, that dominates much of Peterson's narrative. However, he shows that this idealism gave way in the postwar years to "planning as a continuous administrative process" (327) to such an extent that the (mostly) internal critiques of the profession that emerged in the 1960s and afterwards—focusing as they did on comprehensive planning as a self-aggrandizing project—displayed a "noncomprehension of the idealism that had once anchored the movement. In sum, the ideological foundations of the city planning movement had weakened and, for many participants, collapsed beyond recall" (328). Indeed, the book concludes that "city planning" as it was known in the Progressive Era simply doesn't exist anymore—just as the "great city" to which it was applied has morphed into something "too vast, too fragmented and too multidimensional to submit to a single, all-purpose, all-controlling master plan" (330). The profession, like the city, has become a "fragmented art."

The book is handsomely produced, has numerous black-and-white illustrations, and is exhaustively documented. Highly recommended for all academic and specialized library collections.

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