

**Huxtable, Ada Louise. *Goodbye History, Hello Hamburger: An Anthology of Architectural Delights and Disasters.* Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1986. Pp. 206. Index, black and white photographs. \$14.95 (U.S.)**

Judy Oberlander

---

Volume 17, numéro 3, february 1989

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1017649ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1017649ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

---

Éditeur(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (imprimé)

1918-5138 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

---

Citer ce compte rendu

Oberlander, J. (1989). Compte rendu de [Huxtable, Ada Louise. *Goodbye History, Hello Hamburger: An Anthology of Architectural Delights and Disasters.* Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1986. Pp. 206. Index, black and white photographs. \$14.95 (U.S.)]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 17(3), 227–228. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1017649ar>

that the Daley years had nurtured. Some of the optimism that buoyed the authors in the writing of this study will undoubtedly be challenged by the new shape of municipal government after 1988 as the Washington revolution in participatory democracy undergoes new strains.

Christopher Robert Reed  
Department of History  
Roosevelt University, Chicago

**Huxtable, Ada Louise. *Goodbye History, Hello Hamburger: An Anthology of Architectural Delights and Disasters*. Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1986. Pp. 206. Index, black and white photographs. \$14.95 (U.S.).**

On 21 March 1971, Ada Louise Huxtable, the renowned architecture critic, wrote an article in *The New York Times* entitled, "Goodbye History, Hello Hamburger". The focus of this article was the destruction of Mapleside, a stately century-old home in Madison, Wisconsin, and its replacement by a Burger King restaurant. As Huxtable observed at the time, "from historic home to 'home of the whopper' with the swing of the wrecker's ball."

The article gave its name to this anthology of Huxtable's writings which have been reprinted by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The book should be a welcome addition to everyone's library since it addresses issues which concern us all. Written in engaging prose and well illustrated, each chapter is a short essay in the on-going development of the preservation field. Recurring themes, such as the demolition of buildings and their replacement by parking lots or fast-food restaurants, or the unsympathetic integration of old and new buildings, have become commonplace in the literature concerned with the urban environment.

The irony is that these themes have not changed much in the past 17 years. In fact, Huxtable is a true pioneer who early articulated these themes while she served as *The New York Times'* architecture critic from 1962 to 1973. Looking back at these articles today, one is struck immediately by their timelessness. On the one hand this is a real tribute to Huxtable's thought-provoking essays, and on the other hand, a rather sad observation that the battles of the sixties and the seventies to save historic buildings and neighbourhoods continue to rage at the end of the eighties. Indeed there has been some very real progress in changing the public perception that "new is better," and it is because of critics like Huxtable that urban issues are debated in the public realm. Her desire to ensure harmony among the past, present, and future, through the preservation of older buildings and neighbourhoods, has given her the conviction to speak out against developers, architects, and governments, while inspiring her readers to take a look around and consider the state of the built environment.

*Goodbye History, Hello Hamburger* contains 60 reprinted articles which have been organized into seven thematic groups with titles such as "How to Kill a City," "Urban Scenes and Schemes," and "Where the Past Meets the Future." Unfortunately the entire list of articles and their original date of publication are only listed at the end of the book so the reader is sometimes left wondering where and when the articles first appeared. In many cases, it is surprising how long ago they first reached the pages of *The New York Times*, and it would have been nice to see these dates at the beginning of each article. This would also serve to reinforce their foresight.

Since most of these articles were written for *The New York Times*, they focus to a certain extent on the buildings of Manhattan or other parts of the United States. Although for some readers this may seem to be too narrow a focus, it was in Manhattan that many

preservation initiatives emerged. Celebrated landmarks such as Penn Station were lost; court cases were fought, including the one involving Grand Central Station; new preservation techniques were initiated, such as the transfer of development rights in order to save the late 18th and early 19th-century warehouses at South Street Seaport; and one of America's most extensive historic district networks was developed. As a result, during the past two decades, Manhattan has served as the testing ground for these preservation planning strategies and in turn the city has provided the rest of the nation with a myriad of preservation case-studies. Indeed, a number of these strategies have been adopted in Canadian cities.

One of this book's most likable characteristics is its readability. Huxtable is an outstanding stylist whose witty and perceptive remarks make this book a delight. She also is an effective writer who provides novices as well as serious scholars with sufficient information to comprehend specific aspects of a subject with which they might not be familiar. In perhaps her most important contribution to the preservation movement, she has inspired millions of readers to open their eyes, to learn from others about how to save threatened buildings, to oppose the construction of yet another row of faceless skyscrapers, and to work collectively to create better urban environments throughout North America. As Huxtable herself writes in the book's afterword,

This is an extremely troubling and uncertain time, but I would not swap it for any other ... there are many successes and pleasures to celebrate as well, in new and old buildings and in a burgeoning sensibility to the built environment. I measure success by the street corner. My obsessions are now shared and my coconspirators are everywhere. Assuming survival, the battle for the future is well joined. I'll still be kicking buildings for a while.

Probably everyone in the preservation field hopes Huxtable will continue to do so since we need her unique voice wherever buildings and neighbourhoods are threatened. Her inspiration through all her writings has been immeasurable and it is in books such as this that we are reminded of her foresight and dedication to building a better urban environment.

Judy Oberlander  
Commonwealth Historic Resource  
Management Limited  
Vancouver

Friskin, Frances. *City Policy-Making in Theory and Practice: The Case of Toronto's Downtown Plan*. London: University of Western Ontario Press, 1988. Pp. 101. \$10.00 (paper).

In this compact volume, Frances Friskin has given clarity and momentum to a body of information that resists both. Any historical sample of Toronto's CBD planning and development delivers a quagmire of intergovernmental plans, plots, and legalities; a case-book of popular democracy; and a foundation for the ascendancy of Canadian development negotiation. Friskin is among the few who have made the process generally accessible, and even if we argue over the details, we can at least agree on the value of her synopsis as a context.

Her thesis is that despite evidence to the contrary, municipal governments in fact have the capacity to develop distinctive policy: they are able to do more than simply channel the demands of the most powerful interests. They are, however, often severely constrained. The particular nature of their function as provider of services or "public goods" to a diverse and mobile clientele restricts their ability to implement certain unpopular policies such as income redistribution. Constraining as well is the need to serve the cities' economic interests; the policies of parent governments,

particularly in relation to housing; historical geography and its legacy of developable land; and local demographics. Friskin is concerned to clarify the importance of external influences — particularly the reliance of municipal on provincial and national governments — but at the same time to avoid deterministic explanations. In doing this, she is consciously presenting a counter argument to those who define the problem of urban policy development without reference to context and those who defend deterministic economic or power-related theories.

Her work is organized so that discussion of theory is separated from that of the case study, although, of course, she relates the two throughout. While the latter is strong, the former is not well developed. Her thesis, as far as it goes, supports the work of this analyst, but she does not clarify its structural foundation or relate it at that level to the other theories which she reviews. Cited are their aims and contributions but not their structural weaknesses and strengths. It seems to have been important to keep text to a minimum but the compactness of the argument makes it difficult to follow her through the variety of theoretical frameworks, especially since the development of her own explanation integrates terms from several that are structurally incompatible.

The escalating power of international capital in the urban policy arena makes the need for incisive explanations of policy development ever more pressing. The sheer complexity of urban phenomena weighs against theories that compress all dimensions (e.g. rational, power-based, economic) into one; this complexity gives increasing credibility to those, like Friskin's, which connect and integrate the insights of many. To be theoretically sound, however, this integration requires a reformulation of concepts and a clarification of the compatibility of the

conceptual relationships. This, perhaps, is Friskin's next step.

Brenda Lee  
School of Urban and Regional Planning  
University of Waterloo

Berdoulay, V., et Phipps, M. 1985. *Paysage et système*. Ottawa, Éd. de l'Université d'Ottawa, 195 pages.

À travers une analyse systémique du paysage, 19 spécialistes tentent de démontrer qu'il est possible de relier les analyses de type écologique aux analyses sémiotiques liées à l'organisation visuelle du paysage.

Définissant le paysage comme système intégré d'unités spatiales et écologiques, les trois auteurs du premier chapitre élaborent une cartographie des systèmes écologiques (J.-P. Ducruc), définissent le rôle des nités symphytosociologiques (C. Anseau) et entreprennent une démarche méthodologique basée sur l'analyse des relations fonctionnelles solvégetation. Principalement descriptif, ce chapitre s'énonce résolument autour du concept d'unité, nait en quelque sorte la primauté de l'espace (M. Phipps).

La deuxième partie rassemble quatre textes autour de la thématique du paysage vu et analysé comme un modèle d'organisation spatiale et écologique, tel que postulé précédemment, mais dans une perspective conceptuelle différente. De la définition d'unité, élément de paysage naturel, nous passons au format de cellules topologiques (unités artificielles) dans les approches énoncées pour la formalisation du concept de paysage. La théorie de l'information en tant que théorie applicable à l'analyse de systèmes organisés (J. Baudry et F. Burel) est centrale dans ce paradigme systémique. Elle offre des champs méthodologiques fort intéressants : l'auto-organisation (A. Armand), la thermodynamique (M. Phipps) et la théorie