

efforts to circumvent the preservation process.

One of the more avoidable losses occurred in 1989 when the law firm of Ingersoll and Block revealed plans to build a 400-unit apartment house at the site of 7 late-19th-century rowhouses on Rhode Island Avenue. A community association sought landmark status for the rowhouses, which would have delayed action until the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Review Board could examine the case. The law firm then obtained "midnight" demolition permits for three of the houses; the next day the fronts of all seven were smashed, destroying their character. The firm was fined a paltry \$500 for not waiting the prescribed 48 hours after demolition permits had been issued and for not having permits to demolish 4 of the 7 buildings. The firm had not even secured funds to build the apartment house when it began demolition, and the lot was still vacant at the time of the publishing of Goode's second edition in 2003.

The book succeeds admirably in its original mission to call attention to what has been lost in Washington since World War II; the second edition illustrates the continuing destruction. Where the book falls short is in identifying the root causes of the destruction, the social, technological, and economic changes that may have rendered some old buildings obsolete. Many of the old buildings were unsuited for modern use without extensive and expensive modifications. To be fair, identifying causes of destruction was not a stated aim of the book, but its absence reveals a limitation of the book's focus.

The book fills a void in the documentation of the loss of architecturally significant historic buildings in the District of Columbia. Other volumes have examined changes in the city, including *Washington Past and Present: A History* and *Washington, D.C. Then and Now*, but none has touched this particular subject.¹ Goode's volume remains the seminal work documenting losses in the nation's capital since World War II.

Many people will find this book interesting and useful. For those interested in historic preservation, the book will serve as a poignant reminder of what was and still can be lost due to a lack of foresight and the pressures of urban growth and renewal. While not overly technical, the book will be valuable to architects and historians as an overview of what makes a structure significant. Readers interested in the history and evolution of the District of Columbia will find the architectural perspectives helpful. Finally, casual readers will enjoy the book's fascinating subject matter presented in a simple and straightforward style.

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1. John Clagett Proctor, ed., *Washington Past and Present: A History* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1930); Alexander D. Mitchell IV, *Washington, D.C. Then and Now* (San Diego, CA: Thunder Bay Press, 2000).

*The Architecture of Baltimore:
An Illustrated History*

Edited by Mary Ellen Hayward and Frank R. Shivers, Jr., Foreword by Richard Hubbard Howland. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004; 456 pp., photographs, drawings, notes, glossary, index; cloth \$55.00.

Many things about Baltimore are peculiar, and its architectural history is no exception. The city is rich with character, with acres of vernacular fabric punctuated by high-style monuments designed by national and local practitioners. The architecture exemplifies virtually every major trend, style, and tendency in American design of the past two centuries. Baltimore has justifiable local pride in the buildings of its past, yet it is prone to self-effacement, as if it does not quite "measure up" to some Platonic standard of innovation or quality that characterizes other American cities. While Baltimore's important monuments are included in

surveys of American architecture, Baltimore has had no survey book of its own, until now.

Much anticipated, *The Architecture of Baltimore: An Illustrated History*, goes a long way towards filling a void in the scholarly literature of the city and its built environment. Organized as a straightforward outline, the book divides its subject first chronologically, then by building type or style, and finally by analyzing individual buildings. Each chronological section begins with an economic sketch to establish the sources of the city's prosperity and the conditions of its wealth in a period. With the emphasis on economic determinism as historical context, it is startling that the authors do not mention slavery in the early chapters, given the growth of the port and the city's role in the plantation economy. Future scholars will need to include this economic information in their conclusions about Baltimore's social and cultural character and how the evolving character, in turn, affected building and design.

The volume collects vast quantities of useful information, including biographic and professional data on architects, formal analyses, chronologies, and images of Baltimore's notable buildings. The book should become a standard reference work for students and scholars of American architecture. Yet, perhaps because its contributors and editors are local residents, the book mirrors a characteristic ambivalence towards Baltimore's place in the larger context of American architecture and history.

The foreword by Richard Hubbard Howland points out that the last attempt to survey the architecture of Baltimore was his own pioneering work, *The Architecture of Baltimore: A Pictorial History*, written with Eleanor Patterson Spencer in 1953.¹ As the title indicates, Howland and Spencer's book aimed at a popular audience of enthusiasts and its scholarly content, while still useful and solid, is tantalizingly brief. Since then, John Dorsey's and James Dilts's *Guide to Baltimore Architecture* has

served both the scholar and the merely curious reader as the standard reference on the subject.² The self-proclaimed guidebook focuses on noteworthy monuments in a conveniently portable format, rather than striving to identify trends, themes, or characteristics.

The intended audience for the present volume is not as apparent. The introduction pauses to note the inclusion of a glossary for "lay readers." The vintage illustrations are remarkable documents gathered from a wide array of local archival repositories, but they are not in color or, in many cases, large enough to give the volume the appeal of a general-interest coffee-table book. Small images embedded in the text are reproduced at larger scale in the back material, but still too much detail is rendered illegible. For the specialist, on the other hand, the narrative falls frustratingly short in context and analytical acuity. Moreover, the book's greatest weakness is its evasion of comparisons between the architecture of Baltimore and other American cities in similar periods.

From the early 19th century to the Great Depression, Baltimore was a preeminent American urban center, with a cultural reputation for Yankee cosmopolitanism and southern gentility, qualities expressed eloquently, if sometimes inadvertently, in its built environment. In the early 20th century, the social pages of the *New York Times* featured updates from Baltimore, alongside those from other satellite social centers such as Chicago, Boston, Newport, Palm Beach, Paris, and London. Clearly, in the past, Baltimoreans were not perceived as provincial, nor did they consider themselves provincial. Thus it is somewhat surprising to find that the authors in the introduction state a *caveat* regarding the importance of their own subject—

Baltimore by and large has been content to follow rather than set architectural taste. Its patrons of architecture have from time to time preferred cosmopolitan styles; rarely have they indulged in stylistic

hyperbole, and the architects who served them have accommodated their taste.

With that self-effacing statement, Hayward and Shivers's *Architecture of Baltimore* not only pre-empt any possible accusation of local boosterism, it also passes up the opportunity to advocate for the importance of the very topic that it sets out to explore. From Latrobe's Baltimore Cathedral to important early works by the then-fledgling firm of McKim, Mead, and White, to the radical Brutalism of the Mechanic Theater and the recent Mattin Center at Johns Hopkins University by Tod Williams and Billie Tsien, Baltimore has hosted its fair share of gutsy patrons and of-the-moment design. Despite little national context to support their reticence, the volume's authors assume a posture of deference: we're sorry we're not New York or Washington. For example, in describing the end of the federal era in the city, when Mills, Godefroy, and Latrobe all parlayed local patronage into nationally recognized achievements, the authors opine, "By 1820, all the celebrated architects were gone," as if Baltimore had failed to honor a tacit promise to thrive and was left uniquely bereft of professional skills in the period that followed. Lacking a connection to the development of nearby Washington, DC, and the crucial role of Mills and Latrobe in defining a vocabulary for a new national architecture, the reader is given no sense of how Baltimore's architectural identity developed in relation to the capital's and how both contributed to developing an enduring official style of the United States.

Like kindred manufacturing cities such as Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, Baltimore has maintained a vital, working-class culture, which had its distinctive environment of red-brick rowhouses, shadowed by mills, factories, and portside warehouses. With the rise of the Colonial Revival in the late 19th century, the legacy of Baltimore's federal-era past became the preferred high-style point of reference for scholars of the decorative, fine, and design arts, who paid little notice to the post-Civil

War work of nationally known practitioners such as McKim, Mead, and White; Cram and Goodhue; John Russell Pope; and Carrère and Hastings.

Unlike Hayward's previous typological study, *The Baltimore Rowhouse*, where the author made a case to shift the historical emphasis toward vernacular architecture as defining Baltimore building and its character, the present volume reinforces the Colonial Revival mythology that forces of industrial modernity supplanted Baltimore's "genteel" antebellum past.³ Indeed, the perception persists that the architectural character of pre-Civil War Baltimore was defined by its genteel aristocrats, and the post-Civil War city by its workers. Despite acknowledging the implicit racism and class bias of this perception in the book on the rowhouse, Hayward and her co-editor minimize the contributing factors of race and class in the present volume.

Hayward and Shivers's *Architecture of Baltimore* acknowledges the range of architectural forms and expression, including both high-style and vernacular examples. Industrial structures, a welcome inclusion, are treated in a separate chapter, apart from the residences, institutions, and monuments that laborers and their labors supported. While the text makes an admirable leap forward in portraying both high-style and vernacular architecture in the post-Civil War eras, it stops short of reinstating the vital dynamic of socio-economic class and architectural diversity that gives Baltimore such rich and resonant character, even today.

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1. Richard Hubbard Howland and Eleanor Patterson Spencer, *The Architecture of Baltimore: A Pictorial History* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, with the Municipal Art Society, 1953).

2. John Dorsey and James Dilts, *Guide to Baltimore Architecture* (1973; Centerville, MD: Tidewater Press, 1981 and subsequent editions).

3. Mary Ellen Hayward and Charles Belfoure, *The Baltimore Rowhouse* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999).

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