

Landscape and
Architecture

occupied places on the same side of the table, the very same side where the architect also sat . . . suggesting that the title architect applies to those who create social or economic schemes as well as to those whose design buildings" (p. 4). In linking these concepts, *The Architecture of Landscape, 1940–1960* also changes our perspective on those schemes, along with various interwar and Cold War ideologies that continue to govern the appearance, the function, and the social limits of the global landscape.

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Modern Arcadia: Fredrick Law Olmsted Jr. and the Plan for Forest Hill Gardens

SUSAN L. KLAUS

University of Massachusetts Press, 2002
207 pages, illustrated
\$39.95 (cloth)

Suburban Space: The Fabric of Dwelling

RENEE Y. CHOW

University of California Press, 2002
193 pages, illustrated
\$44.95 (cloth)

Suburbanism and the Art of Memory

SÉBASTIAN MAROT

AA Publications, 2003
88 pages, illustrated
£15.00 (paper)

The amount of research and writing on historic and contemporary exurban culture and its built environments has accelerated since the mid-1980s. Much



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of it laments the socially and environmentally unsustainable character of sprawl's relentless advance. Other writings focus on the clever and often humorous ironies found in exurban life and its space. This second breed of commentary has become a rather predictable, even reflexive, formula for discussing the subject in popular and critical literature, film, art, and architecture.

Three new books by Susan Klaus, Renee Chow, and Sébastien Marot resist this facile tendency and offer new ways out of the cul-de-sac of sardonic reactions toward exurbia. As articulated by Carol Burns in her seminal essay "On Site," each benefits from an increased awareness of site, either as an urban or open terrain, that is a rich and culturally "constructed condition." Each author approaches

the problem through different means, exposing the true complexity and potential sophistication of designing exurban built environments.

Susan Klaus's book, *Modern Arcadia: Fredrick Law Olmsted Jr. and the Plan for Forest Hill Gardens*, is an extensively researched history of one of America's most influential suburbs designed by the underrated son of Central Park's codesigner. The book is filled with the backgrounds of Forest Hill Gardens designers, organizers, and patrons, the meetings and correspondence that lead to the project's development and realization, as well as lengthy descriptions of various architecture and landscape elements. Although the casual reader may find this detail tedious, the scholar will value the text as an essential resource on the subject. Olmsted Jr.'s design for Forest Hill Gardens fits into a body of pre-World War American urban and landscape design that offer, even today, numerous strategies for developing more civically and spatially connected exurban infrastructures. Forest Hill Gardens is the first among communities like Shaker Heights and Mariemont in Ohio, Radburn in New Jersey, and the New Deal Era's three Greenbelt towns that were informed by Ebenezer Howard's "Garden City Principles." While there is discussion of both British and American garden cities in the book, Klaus could make more of the influence of Howard, the subsequent Parker and Unwin design for Letchworth Garden City on the development of Forest Hill Gardens as well as the subsequent influence of the project on the constellations of the aforementioned exurban designs. At the very least, more plans and images of these projects would allow readers to make additional comparisons on their own.

It is precisely the use of original comparative drawings and photographs that distinguishes Renee Chow's *Suburban Space: The Fabric of Dwelling* from the increasing number of books on the subject. For the first time, there is a graphic method for comparing suburban built environments at the scale of the house and site. This is a historically significant accomplishment. By examining the relationship