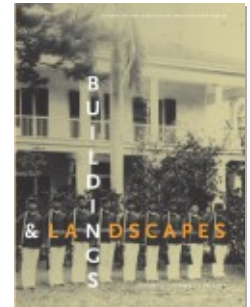




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Buildings of Delaware , and: *Buildings of Pittsburgh* , and:
*AIA Guide to the Architecture of Washington, D.C. 4th
Edition* , and: *The Town and Gown Architecture of Chapel
Hill, North Carolina, 1795-1975* , and: *Carriage House to
Auto House* (review)

Mark Reinberger



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Book Reviews

W. Barksdale Maynard

Buildings of Delaware

Society of Architectural Historians,
Buildings of the United States
Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008.
352 pages, 259 photographs, 46 maps.
ISBN 978-0-8139-2702-2, \$45.00 HB

Franklin K. Toker

Buildings of Pittsburgh

Society of Architectural Historians,
Buildings of the United States
Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007.
272 pages, 160 black-and-white illustrations.
ISBN 978-0-8139-2658-2, \$45.00 HB

G. Martin Moeller, Jr.

***AIA Guide to the Architecture of
Washington, D.C. 4th Edition***

Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006.
400 pages, 391 halftones, 18 line drawings.
ISBN 978-0-8018-8468-9, \$19.95 PB

M. Ruth Little

***The Town and Gown Architecture of
Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1795–1975***

Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.
320 pages, 320 halftones, 12 color photographs, 13 maps.
ISBN 978-0-8078-3072-7, \$25.00 HB

Roger Reed and Greer Hardwicke

Carriage House to Auto House

Brookline Preservation Commission, 2002.
86 pages.

Review by Mark Reinberger

Before us is a whole passel of guidebooks and surveys, a genre (or genres) alive and well in the United States. Their impressive content represents the fruit of the last fifty years of architectural research and survey in America, proof of the maturing of architectural history and the effect of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which called for a countrywide survey to catalog America's architec-

tural resources. These books could not have been written a generation ago because too little was known about the architecture of their respective locales. They also suggest that the guidebook genre is a moveable feast and invite speculation on the purpose and format of such volumes.

Palladio originated the modern architectural guidebook in his two volumes on the architecture of Rome, volumes inspired by medieval pilgrimage guides but also addressing the architectural qualities of structures.¹ His guide to ancient classical edifices was arranged typologically; the other, to sacred Christian sites, was arranged by "tours" of the city, methods of organization still employed by guidebooks today. As Palladio arose from working-class roots, so guidebooks by their very nature are egalitarian; they are popularizers, spreading the knowledge of a few to many. Fairly rare through the seventeenth century, the guidebook flourished during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which saw the rise of tourism, especially of antiquities, country houses, and gardens.

American beginnings in this genre were sparse: Robert Mills's *Guide to the National Executive Offices and the Capitol of the United States* (1841) mostly concerned the persons employed in government offices but also included floor plans of all the buildings. Tourists mostly had to carry with them published accounts of other travelers. The increased interest in American history associated with the colonial revival, along with motor car touring, resulted in many guides of the sort of "Old Byways around [Your Fair City]." A notable advance in this genre in America was the series of Works Progress Administration guides produced during the Great Depression. These were not exclusively architectural, but they did contain much information on history and historic sites.

As he did with so much of modern architectural history, Nikolaus Pevsner pioneered the modern architectural guidebook. Between 1951 and 1974 Pevsner produced the Buildings of England series (revisions are still continuing). He was inspired by the shortcomings of existing guides to the architecture of England. The Buildings of England series was uniform (and small) in size and format, so that the books could be carried on foot or bicycle.²

The earliest modern American architectural guides dealt with individual cities, produced in response to growing interest in historic preservation and burgeoning tourism. Urban chapters of the American Institute of Architecture (AIA) began producing guidebooks for large American cities, the first being New York in 1967. Most of these have the characteristic AIA tall, narrow format (much like the Michelin guides), easy to carry. Entries in these were short (sometimes extremely so), and the selection of monuments was guided mostly by whether buildings' designers had national or local importance.

Alongside such true guidebooks came architectural histories or surveys of counties, parts of states, and cities. England can again probably claim pride of place for this genre, with the surveys published by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (beginning in the 1930s), distinguished and quite complete surveys of shires, parts of shires, and cities. A precociously early example in America was Charles Stotz's *The Early Architecture of Western Pennsylvania* (1936). Some state and local archives and historic preservation organizations produced volumes that were the fruit of surveys. Early examples include: Eberlein and Hubbard's *Historic Houses and Buildings of Delaware* (Public Archives Commission, 1963); Downing's *The Architecture of Newport, Rhode Island* (1967); and the splendid volumes published by the Maryland

Historical Trust of individual counties. These typically had longish essays dealing with the history and architecture of the locale, followed by an inventory of specific examples with a short paragraph of text for each. These volumes did not have the small format of guidebooks; they aimed to be architectural histories of the area covered.

Pevsner challenged American architectural historians to do for the United States what he had accomplished for England. The result was the Buildings of the United States (BUS) project by the Society of Architectural Historians; two of the present books are in the BUS series. The goals of the BUS series were several. They were to “record, to analyze, and to evaluate” the architecture of a state, so as to produce a “portrait” of it, but not only of itself but as it “relates to the architectural development of the country at large.” They were to represent both an “overview and inventory” of American architecture, requirements that gave rise to their format—an essay or two on the architecture of a state, followed by geographical listing of sites, that is, the format of the older survey or local architectural history rather than Pevsner’s abbreviated listing. However, the BUS volumes are also “intended as guidebooks as well as reference books,” meant to be used in the field and in the library for “serious research,” and thus on the shelves of major libraries and in glove compartments.³ As previous reviewers have noted, this was a tall order and one that BUS volumes were not able to completely fill to everyone’s satisfaction. The most common complaints were that the volumes were too big to be guidebooks and that the text was too long and scholarly.⁴

As this reaction suggests, one problem of producing a guidebook is balancing size and completeness. As the number of buildings and the amount of information per building increases, the volume loses usefulness as a true guidebook, although it gains usefulness for scholarly research and reference, teaching, and preservation efforts. For the most part, Pevsner included only very short entries

in his books and he omitted buildings constructed after 1830, thus managing to keep all of his books on the shires of England small. Similarly, most of the AIA guides can be slipped into a pocket. Books in the BUS series, by contrast, have a uniform but much beefier format and none could be considered pocket-friendly (they would fit into some glove compartments).

The number of sites to include is inevitably the chief vexation for the writers of guidebooks and surveys. How many of a locale’s thousands or tens of thousands of buildings deserve mention? Below is a table of randomly selected architectural guidebooks, giving statistics of number of buildings included, along with population, land area, and age of settlement, all factors that presumably should affect the number of buildings worthy to be represented.

Perhaps a mathematician could derive an algorithm to explain this data, but clearly these books represent an extraordinary range

of inclusiveness. Goldberger discussed only 398 buildings out of 53,339 that are in Manhattan, less than 1 percent.⁵ How can volumes on Philadelphia or Baltimore discuss fewer buildings than those on Chapel Hill or Rowan County, North Carolina? The Philadelphia guide describes one building for every 6,550 citizens of that city; that on Chapel Hill, one for every 216 people. How can the state of Delaware have fewer structures worth noting than New Haven, Connecticut? How can tiny Rhode Island have three times more eligible structures than not-quite-as-tiny Delaware, and even 20 percent more than much larger, and just as old, eastern Virginia? A volume on the whole of New York City done at the same level of inclusion as the Washington BUS volume might have over 6,000 entries and be 5,000 pages long; if done at the rate of inclusion of the Chapel Hill volume it would have 37,000 entries. If a volume on California statistically matched that on Iowa, it would have over 18,000 entries and be almost 6,000

BOOK	# OF ENTRIES	PAGES	POPULATION	AREA (mi ²)	AGE (Yrs)
States					
Gebherd, BUS, Iowa	1554	500	2.80m	56000	200
Jordy, BUS, Rhode Island	1328	610	1.00m	1200	400
Wilson, BUS, E. and Central VA	1117	500	4.90m	13600	400
Maynard, BUS, Delaware	424	300	.80m	2000	300
Counties					
Hood, Rowan Co., NC	496	400	.14m	511	250
Cities					
Brown, New Haven	505	200	.12m	18	400
Lee & Scott, BUS, DC	494	420	.60m	69	200
Goldberger, Manhattan	398	340	1.50m	23	350
Moeller, AIA, DC	386	350	.60m	69	200
Little, Chapel Hill, NC	231	300	.05m	19	200
Found. for Arch., Philadelphia	229	170	1.50m	136	300
Dorsey & Dilts, Baltimore	211	400	.70m	80	200
Toker, BUS, Pittsburgh	191	180	.40m	60	200

pages long. Pevsner's volumes, after all, had only to deal with a single shire, a unit much closer to our county than our state.

Clearly, the authors conceived their purposes and publics very differently. Books such as those on Philadelphia and Baltimore do not have extensive introductory essays; the number of entries is limited; and the short entries are aimed at a general public less interested in historic detail. At the other extreme, the Chapel Hill and Rowan County volumes have extensive essays synthesizing the architectural history of their locales, a very high concentration of buildings per unit population or area, and very complete entries. The former can probably be considered true guidebooks; the latter, local architectural histories backed by an inventory or survey.

Another recurring concern for producers and users of guidebooks and surveys is the question of whether to include a photograph of every monument discussed. Not all guidebooks do, but the consensus of reviewers, including this one, is that they should. If used in the field, a photograph confirms identification. If used to seek out resources of interest to the reader, a photograph quickly conveys information such as style, scale, and type.

Analyzing the numbers of individual monuments highlights guidebooks' adherence to the structure of traditional architectural history, which treats the monument as the basic unit of study. Such an objectified approach is not illogical given that all buildings have a life cycle, as well, often, as the necessity to deal with a building as a unit of private property. However, buildings can also be looked at in groups—of neighborhood, of social structure, of ethnic identity.⁶ Some more recent guidebooks and surveys tend to incorporate, at least in part, this more holistic approach through discussion of such topics as community history, neighborhood structure, ethnic and social history, and vernacular building types.

W. Barksdale Maynard's *Buildings of Delaware* (2008) is the latest in the BUS series. Maynard is a historian with extensive expe-

rience in the mid-Atlantic region and family ties to Delaware. He begins the book with an Introduction that notes, "Admittedly, [Delaware's] contributions to the architecture of the nation have been modest," and yet the book proves there is great richness in the architecture of the state. The introduction concisely summarizes Delaware's history from Native American times to the present and includes the distinguished history of the state in historic preservation. The bulk of the book is then the normative BUS breakdown of the state by county and township.

As much of Delaware is largely rural, and because that rural heritage has been so well researched, there is a sizeable inclusion of rural and vernacular resources. Page 285 even has an entry and photo of Sussex County chicken houses, surely unique in the BUS series, at least so far. Inclusion of vernacular sites is a stated goal of BUS volumes and marks perhaps the biggest change in American architectural historiography of the last quarter century. Vernacular here includes much on post-World War II resources, especially suburban ones, as Wilmington has witnessed much sprawl in the last 50 years.

The Buildings of Delaware is quite heavy on text; entries are fairly long, giving quite detailed history of the buildings. It has relatively few photographs, which are mostly reproduced at a small scale, and many sites are not illustrated at all.

Franklin Toker's *Buildings of Pittsburgh* (2007) is the first in the BUS series to deal with the architecture of a city, rather than an entire state. It will be one of several volumes on the architecture of Pennsylvania. Toker, professor of art and architecture at the University of Pittsburgh, was the logical choice to author this volume; no one knows the city's architecture better. The book begins with a succinct but clear developmental history of the city; the bulk of the book breaks down the city geographically, starting with Pittsburgh's historical core at the Golden Triangle and moving outward in ever wider bands, mirroring the development of the city over time.

Inevitably the greatest attention is to individual, architect-designed buildings. These date from all periods in the city's history, though the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are perhaps favored. Pittsburgh was one of the wealthiest cities in America at the turn of the twentieth century and it has enormous architectural riches from this period. Neighborhoods and their vernacular housing types are also considered, often in text boxes that cover broader topics alongside the usual entries about individual buildings. A few readers might find Toker's critical comments about recent architecture out of place in a guidebook, though, in fact, Toker is quite moderate in his critiques. For example, he mildly praises Phillip Johnson's PPG Place for its contextualism and appropriate symbolism, while it could well be seen as a soul-destroying pile more appropriate to Tolkien's Mordor than the centerpiece of an attempted urban Renaissance.

This book is smaller than most of the BUS series and it will be useful for travelers and touring. Individual entries are fairly long and give both historical background and comments on form, but Toker has kept the number down, reducing the book's bulk. Further, the review copy was in paperback, making it lighter and less expensive. It is well illustrated, with a photo for most entries. The individual area maps are clear, but an overall map is needed that relates the section maps to each other.

G. Martin Moeller Jr.'s *AIA Guide to the Architecture of Washington, D.C.* (2006) is the fourth edition of the AIA Guide to Washington (earlier were 1965, 1974, 1994). Unlike BUS volumes, written by architectural historians, AIA guides are written primarily by local architects who were advised by a board made up mostly of prominent local architects. These volumes do not pretend to the scholarly quality of the BUS guides: entries are much shorter; there is no bibliography; and aesthetic critiques are common, even obligatory, at least in the entries on more recent buildings. Moeller's Preface is unapologetic about this, perhaps in an attempt to distinguish itself from the recent

BUS *Buildings of the District of Columbia*. “This guide is not intended to serve as a purely factual historical record; much of the content, in fact, is utterly subjective and may take the form of positive or negative criticism.” The introduction to DC’s contemporary architecture offers a prime example:

Soon, downtown was becoming filled with polite buildings, each with a clearly articulated base, middle, and top, typically with punched windows, and ever respectful of the street line. The better ones had well-controlled proportions and carefully conceived ornament, while the poorer ones were simplistic, formulaic, and ultimately quite dreary. (20)

Indeed recent architecture is one of the strong suits of the volume. Also reproduced is the introduction from the 1974 edition, which is structured around the usual stylistic periods.

The book is organized clearly by “walking tours,” a true guidebook. Each entry is illustrated by a small photograph. The majority of entries deal with major, architect-designed buildings, and there is less attention paid to vernacular structures than in the BUS series. However, several entries and commentaries deal with the DC row house, the most important vernacular type in the city. The book has the AIA’s trademark narrow and tall format and would fit in a large pocket or pocket book. Again, an overall map would be useful for someone who did not know the city.

M. Ruth Little’s *The Town and Gown Architecture of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1795–1975* (2006) is an architectural history of a university and the town that grew up around it. As related in the Foreword, the book is the culmination of preservation efforts in Chapel Hill by the Chapel Hill Preservation Society, which recognized early on that a comprehensive survey was vital to preservation efforts. The book forms part of the superlative North Carolina tradition of survey and publishing on that state’s architectural history, of which the author has been a significant part through her

work with the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office. Though the dust jacket calls it a guidebook, the book belongs in the class of a survey or local architectural history because of its substantial size and extensive essays. Part I, a full third of the book, consists of six chapters of the history and architectural history of Chapel Hill, which develop central themes.

For example, a major theme of the book is that a progressive spirit has pervaded Chapel Hill architecture, at least at certain times in its history, primarily because of the presence of the university. As the title suggests, the University of North Carolina campus has always been a vital part of the town, indeed the main reason for the town’s existence (although a village did predate the University), and campus buildings take up a goodly part of the survey. This centrality of the university is laudable because often universities are neglected in university town preservation efforts.

Chapters in Part I are organized chronologically and give a brief history of the town and university through their eras; discussion of the architecture is tied mostly to styles, as is typical for surveys of this type. Styles are a convenient and popular way to break down architecture, particularly in the style-obsessed nineteenth century, but at times the parsing of styles is not particularly helpful. For example, the Greek Revival is lumped with other mid-nineteenth-century styles as “Romantic,” but it can equally be seen as tied to the neoclassicism of the eighteenth century, and a sentence such as “Gerrard Hall was the first Romantic design on campus because its monumental Ionic portico . . . was a Romantic Classical feature” (13) involves circular reasoning.

The survey deals extensively with the impressive array of nationally ranked architects whose buildings grace Chapel Hill and UNC, including Alexander Jackson Davis, Samuel Sloan, Frank Milburn, and a host of modernists. Indeed modernism gets much more than the passing glance typical of local surveys, governed as they often are by the fifty-year rule in preservation. The Midcentury Modernism chapter is by far the longest in

Part I and discusses biography and exemplars for several of the major exponents of modernism in Chapel Hill. It also includes an insightful comparison and contrast between a traditionally styled post–World War II suburban residence and a modernist one (85).

Part II consists of the actual survey or guide. It is organized geographically, beginning with the campus, then the close-in neighborhoods, and finally the suburbs. Most entries are short to moderate in length and each is accompanied by a small photograph. Clear maps for the city as a whole and for each neighborhood are included.

Finally, Roger Reed’s and Greer Hardwicke’s *Carriage House to Auto House* is a guide (though not a guidebook) to a specific building type in a single community: transportation buildings associated with personal travel, most especially residential automobile storage structures, though their predecessor, the carriage house, and their contemporaries, commercial garages, are also covered. A distinctly service structure, sometimes but not always given architectural consideration, the garage, along with much about roadside America, has received scholarly attention over the past few decades (literature included in a useful bibliography in the book), but not the kind of in-depth, close-up attention that houses have received. Brookline would appear to be a good case study for such a look, because it is indeed fortunate in retaining so many garages of different periods, especially early ones.

The book (published by the Brookline Preservation Commission) is based on a survey done by Arthur Krim and constitutes a summary and presentation of the survey, an extremely valuable resource. It includes brief background material on the history of the garage and on transportation history in Brookline, with clear implications that similar stories could be told in many cities. The heart of the book is the chapter on the evolution of the “Auto House,” subdivided into ten categories or subtypes. Examples include the “auto stable,” the “suburban estate garage,” and the

“auto house.” Though function is inevitably the primary focus of the book, distinctive form is also noted, as when the different shapes of parapets are analyzed and illustrated for the subtype known as the “auto shed with parapet” (with examples mostly from the 1920s). Besides helping to organize this material, this analysis demonstrates the pride taken in these newfangled structures by their owners. Anyone interested in the history of the garage or any community interested in preserving what is left of their own garage structures would be advised to consult this book.

Guides, guidebooks, and surveys declare what we think is architecturally significant. A book on garages would have been unthinkable fifty years ago; as Pevsner himself said, “A bicycle shed is merely a building, Lincoln Cathedral is architecture.” The field is much more broad-minded and egalitarian than it used to be about what is considered worthy of attention (and preservation). At the same time, this very shift means we sometimes swim in data and are swamped with examples, an acute exasperation when producing a guidebook. Fortunately, as these books demonstrate, the answer to this dilemma does not have to be “either/or”; it can be “both/and.” No guidebook or survey will ever be complete and none will be definitive. Each generation must produce its own, reflecting the evolving concerns of the time and the ongoing state of research.

NOTES

1. Alan Day and Vaughan Hart, “The Architectural Guidebook: From Palladio to Pod,” *Architectural Research Quarterly* 11, no. 2 (2007): 151–58. Vaughan Hart and Peter Hicks, *Palladio's Rome* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press 2006).

2. Bridget Cherry, “Fifty Years of the Buildings of England,” *Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain Newsletter*, no. 73 (Summer 2001): 1–3. Bob Harbison, “Guiding Lights,” *Building Design* (July 29, 1988): 18–19. Alex Clifton-Taylor, “Architectural Touring with the Little Guides,” in *Concerning Architecture*, ed. John Summerson, 238–51 (London: Allen Lane, 1968).

3. These goals are presented in the Forewords to the volumes in the series. They were also announced in several SAH publications: Osmund Overby, “A Monumental Series,” *Society of Architectural Historians Newsletter* no. 4 (1994): 34–35; Nicholas Adams, “Architectural Touring American Style,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 52, no. 3 (September 1993): 265–66.

4. Reviews of various volumes in the BUS series, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 54, no. 4 (December 1995): 489–95.

5. Data on number of buildings in other jurisdictions was unavailable. Manhattan has a low number of buildings per unit of population because of the prevalence of apartment buildings. There is approximately one building for every twenty-eight people in Manhattan.

6. Mary Corbin Sies, Review of BUS volume on *Buildings of the District of Columbia*, in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 54, no. 4 (December 1995): 493.

Jack Williams *E 40°: An Interpretive Atlas*

Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006.
248 pages, photographs, maps, plans, diagrams.
ISBN 978-0-8139-2524-0, \$30.00 PB

Review by Paul Kelsch

The enigmatic title of *E 40°* is a geographic reference: *E 40°* is the angle from true north of the Appalachian Mountains as they run from Alabama to Maine. Jack Williams uses the line of the mountains as a spatial and geographic armature to link studies of five sets of towns: courthouse towns of Alabama; river, wagon, and railroad towns of Alabama; soft-coal towns of West Virginia and Kentucky; hard-coal towns of Pennsylvania; and fishing and boat-building towns of Maine. Each set of towns is tied in its own way to the mountains and to the resources that each exploited

in its development and heyday. Each also has a distinct and concise plan, usually gridded, that results from the specific circumstances of geography, transportation, and resource extraction. It is this relationship between town plan and geographic and cultural circumstances that is the focus of the book.

The subtitle of the book, *An Interpretive Atlas*, while more mundane, is more informative of its actual content. Simply defined, an atlas is a bound volume of maps and diagrams, and *E 40°* is a map-based interpretation and analysis of the various sets of towns. Some of the maps are historical, including maps of early transportation routes, bird's-eye views of the towns, and Sanborn maps of streets and their surrounding buildings. Others were made for the purposes of this investigation, including figure-ground drawings, street plan diagrams, and composite maps of buildings, street grids, railroads, waterways, and topography. Though relatively conventional types of maps, they are beautiful and clear representations of the towns' structure, and they make Williams's assessment of the relationships between the geography of the Appalachians and the urban structure of the towns very believable. Indeed, the book is so graphically engaging that it is hard not to just flip through it, looking at the pictures, before reading the text. In doing so, many of the relationships between topography, resources, and transportation are evident from a preliminary visual survey.

The graphic interpretation is accompanied by well-written narrative accounts of the historical and geographic circumstances that led to the towns' settlement and prosperity. The narratives are further illustrated with historical photographs, showing the towns as places of social engagement and thriving commerce. Though it would be easy to romanticize life in them, the text and photographs acknowledge the hardships of life there: the oppressive racial segregation in Alabama, the drudgery of work in the mines, and the potential perils of working on the sea.

Though each town has its own history and