in bourgeois American society. Thus, Victorian sanctuary seating was upholstered, not simply because Americans craved comfort, but also because the church was cognitively an extension of their overstuffed parlors.

Evangelism, or the spreading of God’s word to the unconverted, was expressed by congregations during this time by providing Christian education to children of the community at large and by assisting less well financed congregations to erect churches in new territories, termed in this period “denominational extension.” In each undertaking, tensions arose concerning whether resources were better expended on evangelism or family ministry, on whether the first responsibility was to tend the flock already in the pasture or to try to convince errant sheep to enter the fold. Kilde explores this conflict in an articulate extended analysis of “Akron plan” Sunday-school facilities, a model developed in Ohio in the 1860s by that city’s First Methodist Episcopal Church. Even when facilities such as gymnasiums, bowling alleys, dining rooms, and parlors were added to churches by advocates of the Social Gospel specifically for the use of the neighborhood poor, Kilde argues, they often came to serve members of the congregation rather than nonmembers. “Natural interaction between disparate social groups within a church plant,” she writes, “was difficult to achieve” (195).

Kilde’s story ends with auditorium churches going into eclipse in the first years of the twentieth century. She notes that these buildings expressed the ideology of a specific time in American history. When that period ended, such structures were no longer built, and in many instances pews were once again made of hard wood arranged in straight lines. The author points to a number of causes that undermined the popularity of the form, including the increasing irrelevance of the boundary between public and private spheres, a move toward a more individualized society, and the eventual schism in the 1920s between liberal and fundamentalist branches of the evangelical denominations. She argues that within certain evangelical circles, however, the auditorium form has continued currency in contemporary megachurches.

Kilde’s work belongs to the school of architectural history that uses buildings as documents to understand human actions and beliefs. She engages the buildings skillfully, but uses them primarily as tools within a larger humanistic endeavor rather than as an end in themselves. Thus, some noteworthy architects and firms—including Stanford White and Carrere & Hastings of New York, and Warren H. Hayes of Minneapolis—are treated in this study as supporting cast rather than as featured players. Doctrinal and functional requirements of the architectural program form the focus of the work, not the individual architects’ genius in creating appealing compositions to house the congregation’s requirements. The black-and-white illustrations, while buttressing Kilde’s arguments, unfortunately inadequately communicate the grandeur and polychromatic designs of these monumental buildings and their interiors.

Kilde has accomplished an extraordinary task in interpreting such a large corpus of buildings. She gives her readers tools with which to decipher this built form and challenges us to see familiar structures with new eyes. Her evidence, however, is drawn primarily from only a handful of examples, including, most prominently, the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Baltimore, the First Congregational Church of Minneapolis, and Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church of Denver. Although Kilde’s conclusions are persuasive, readers may find themselves wishing for case histories drawn from a broader range of edifices. Since this reviewer is based in North Carolina, for example, he cannot help but lament that the American South is almost completely absent; this is a notable lacuna in a book purporting to discuss American evangelical worship. Further, this bias begs the question of whether the form was truly a national phenomenon, or rather a genre characteristic of industrializing regions.

The work’s greatest shortcoming, however, is its unfortunate title. The name under which this groundbreaking volume has been published focuses on one portion of the author’s argument to the detriment of other equally significant points she makes within her broader study, withholding from prospective readers the full scope of her subject. More than simply addressing when churches became theaters, this volume compellingly explicates how one particular architectural form came to embody the complexities of late-nineteenth-century evangelical American Protestantism.  

WILLIAM D. MOORE  
University of North Carolina at Wilmington

American Topics

Susan R. Braden  
**The Architecture of Leisure: The Resort Hotels of Henry Flagler and Henry Plant**  
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From Calgary to Calcutta, “Florida” means “vacation,” a fantasy world free of the pressures of household and business management. Despite the fact that the state, perched on the southern tip of the United States, has long served as a cultural and economic crossroads with a dramatic and sometimes violent history of economic struggle, social competition, and uneasy alliances among its diverse populations, for outsiders, the very name “Florida” conjures up images of sun-drenched beaches and endless days of rest and pleasure. That a place fraught with conflicts and difficulties of its own could come to be so widely viewed in such a rosy light is one of the crowning glories of modern tourist propaganda. Moreover, the creation in the nineteenth century of an image of luxurious relaxation and freedom from responsibility for upper-class men and

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women clearly required a prodigious refinement of those very management skills and aggressive business practices that hotel guests admired and understood only too well in “real life.”

Architectural design and skillful planning lay at the heart of the enterprise, since resort hotels were (and continue to be) the principal environments in which tourist experiences were created, presented, and shaped into memories to be treasured after the return to “civilization.” Clearly what was needed was a marshaling of four of the nineteenth century’s most powerful and highly prized forces: efficient organization, theatricality, romanticism, and deception—the last of which was key to the successful concealment of both back-of-house activities and the overarching commercial and business goals of the tourist industry. As John Merven Carrère—himself the master of the genre as designer of some of Florida’s earliest and most prominent hotels—explained in a speech to the New York Architectural League in 1906: “When you decorate a hotel so artistically that you get a man to go there for something else than to eat or sleep you have accomplished a great deal for art” (157).

The story of the resort hotel industry, in Florida and elsewhere, is in large measure a history of effective image-making through the adept deployment of now-familiar components (thanks in part to studies of Disney theme parks and contemporary Las Vegas resorts): “exotic” architecture; cutting-edge technologies that streamline communication and the movement of goods and people; strict separation of service and served spaces through the planning of efficient circulation routes and the use of high walls and lush, tropical landscaping as boundary markers and screening devices; the employment of enormous numbers of workers at every level, from the managers, who exercised unquestioned authority and maintained military-style discipline, to the armies of workers whose job it was to see to the guests’ every need and then disappear behind the scenes; the provision of a range of amenities for eating, drinking, socializing, exercising, and relaxing—from elegant dining rooms, dark rathskellers, and theaters to large swimming pools and sheltered garden promenades; and, finally, the creation of cultural and social cachet through the strategic placement of works of art and antiques or, in some cases, the presence of working artists in specially constructed studios and exhibition galleries.

In her appealing and well-written study of Florida’s earliest resort hotels, Susan Braden explores the systematic and occasionally brilliant exploitation of these elements by two of the industry’s most colorful and prominent founders, Henry Flagler and Henry Plant, whose development of their railroad and real-estate interests throughout Florida in the 1880s and 1890s was anchored in the construction of a series of successful hotels. Braden’s book is divided into two parts, balancing in-depth studies of the architecture, planning, economics, and daily activities in the resort hotels built by Flagler and Plant with a complex yet readable overview and analysis of historical and cultural themes. Although written for a general audience, the book is admirably thorough, not only in its treatment of the sometimes tortuous subtleties of architectural style, but also in its discussions of the elaborate social organization of resort hotels, from major divisions between guests and staff to the ideologies of gender and race that structured hierarchies of power and the use of space within the complexes.

The opening chapters help provide the historical and interpretive context in which the specific buildings and their clientele are to be understood and analyzed. Braden’s efforts to elucidate such terms as “the Gilded Age,” “conspicuous consumption,” and “conspicuous leisure” take her deep into the subtleties of late-nineteenth-century architecture’s often shadowy relationship to elite cultural values, tastes, and aspirations, yet she remains consistently clear-headed and direct in her presentation and analysis of the historical facts. Moreover, she decisively avoids the trap into which writers about the lives and livelihoods of the rich and privileged so often fall: adopting a stance of either breathless admiration or strident moralizing. Though the rather concise treatment of complicated issues may be frustrating at times (indeed, many of Braden’s topics in social and architectural history could easily be expanded upon at considerable length), one is struck by the wide range of thorny historical problems confronted here.

The most extensively interdisciplinary and layered analysis comes at the end of chapter five, “Florida’s Gilded Age Resort Hotels: The Guests and the Hotel Staff,” where the author considers the hotels as settings for the widely varying experiences of the guests and the workers who served them. Braden carefully examines both the relative freedoms enjoyed by upper-class women, for whom the resort hotels “provided a relaxed setting and functioned rather like private estates and country clubs, allowing women to participate more freely in bicycling, sports and simply strolling around the hotel grounds” (116), and the narrowly constricted roles in which African-American workers were cast by the theatrical, economic, and social exigencies of the fantasy resort hotel genre in the segregated South. Just as hotel operators sought to foreground the “New England” connections of the white workers who arrived in season from the resorts of the Northeast, they also constructed and publicized (through advertising brochures and souvenir postcards) images of black women and men as happy, docile, and industrious southerners whose work in the hotel kitchens and laundries, or as drivers of carriages, taxis, and “Aromobiles” (bicycle chairs for guests pedaled by black workers), was secondary to their role as exotic entertainers at gospel song fests, exhibition baseball games, and at the “cakewalks.” These events, as Braden describes them, “typically featured elegantly dressed African American couples competing in a dance context. The winning couple ‘took the cake,’ and hotel guests participated in judging the contestants, often hotel employees, and awarding the
prizes. In 1894 the Tatler described how one cakewalk opened with a ‘buck dance’ performed by waiters and bellmen from all three of Flagler’s hotels in St. Augustine” (125–26).

In the detailed case studies, Braden demonstrates how these strategies were put into play within the architectural and management structures of the hotels. From the Spanish Renaissance style of Carrère & Hastings’ Hotel Ponce de Leon (1888) in St. Augustine to the Georgian Revival of the firm’s Royal Poinciana in Palm Beach (1894)—both of which were built by Flagler—to Plant’s Moorish Revival Tampa Bay Hotel (1897–91) by New York architect John A. Van, the Florida resort hotels developed and refined a winning formula that combined architectural fantasy with the latest in modern technology and a sure-fire appeal to their clients’ sense of superiority. References to historical European prototypes—signaled by palatial scale, expensive materials and furnishings, lavish ornament, and high staff-guest ratios—offered testimony to the arrival of civilization in this remote, treeless, and decidedy provincial world, and, not coincidentally, sealed the success of these ventures.

Braden goes to great lengths to unravel the precise meanings of the disparate elements that frequently appeared in a single project (sentences like “The American Renaissance and Beaux-Arts classicism helped inspire the popularity of the neo-Georgian aspect of the Colonial Revival” [211] unhappily reveal the amount of heavy lifting that confronts any historian intent on analyzing the sources of these pastiche designs), but her most significant contribution lies in revealing how skillfully architecture was combined with capital investment, improved transportation, ambition, and a large dose of theatricality to create a new building type and a new cultural environment. In the fantasy world of the late-nineteenth-century Florida resort, guests marveled over baskets of oranges, specially designed entrances and galleries for “ladies,” in-room intercoms (or “annunciators”), modern refrigerators, electric lights and nighttime illuminations, cavernous Roman-style swimming pools, and didactic exhibitions (such as might be found at the Tampa Bay Casino and Exhibition Building of 1896 by Mil- lar and Kennard, a local Florida firm) as they partook of the truly modern experience of conspicuous leisure in fin-de-siècle American style. Like the Poinciana villa or the suburban ranch house, the Florida resort hotel came of age at a precise moment in time; like them, it is a building type invented to meet the complementary needs of developers, architects, workers, and clients. Braden’s book establishes a firm foundation for future research and a model on which students of this fascinating topic can draw.

ALICE T. FRIEDMAN
Wellesley College

Ronald E. Schmitt
Sullivanesque: Urban Architecture and Ornamentation

Ronald Schmitt defines his subject with admirable clarity (bless him) in his first paragraph: “SULLIVANESQUE ARCHITECTURE was based on an aesthetic derived from the designs of Louis H. Sullivan (1856–1924) and adapted to mass production” (1). He claims it was a genre distinct from the Chicago or Prairie styles, a striking vernacular evident chiefly in terra-cotta shopping-street façades of the teens and twenties common throughout the Midwest. In this publication, he documents the phenomenon in its numerous if sometimes unglamorous manifestations; does the hard work of explaining mass building production in the broad Chicago hinterland through the identification and documentation of fabricators, developers, and local designers; and provides a detailed history of the Midland Terra Cotta Company. The book ends with a thirty-two-page inventory of examples, state by state. Both Sullivan himself and contemporaneous admirers repeatedly insisted that he was merely setting an example to be followed; in Dwight Perkins’s words, “He is not the only Sullivan.” Schmitt’s book enables us to follow out one possible result—a Sullivan vernacular. This book will be profoundly important for preservation in the Midwest.

The author’s ambition is to give a history to miles of decent Midwestern shops and apartment buildings—street-front architecture—that emerged almost a century ago and are now threatened with demolition as a result of the effects of the automobile and shopping mall. Schmitt not only decries the negative social consequences of this pattern, but sees these old neighborhood streets as valuable and beautiful in their own right. Many of us are fascinated by the hints of imagination occasionally glimpsed in their architecture—hoping to discover some “mute Milton” or Michelangelo of the terra-cotta shop-front. Whole neighborhood streets may be saved because of the interest that Schmitt’s book may arouse, in the same way that renewed appreciation of Art Deco rescued similar urban spaces in the South- west. As Sigfried Giedion long ago made us respect Seth Thomas clocks, so Schmitt makes us value these terra-cotta fronts. Bravo! Schmitt’s focus on what appears to be the most exotic and fascinating passages on these façades—the Sullivanesque—brings out these streets’ most simple claim for preservation—that they were works of sincerity and even, perhaps, genius.

The problem with the book, for me, lies in two areas: Schmitt’s definition of what “the Sullivanesque” might be, and the impact this work might have on Midwestern urban architectural preservation. The buildings caught in his net are those bearing terra-cotta ornament imitating Sullivan design—it is “Sulli- vanesque” if it looks like Sullivan, literally. Although admirable in its clarity, the definition is too simple, for a variety of reasons. Although Schmitt often extends his purview beyond street façades, the fronts are clearly his focus and he has