The welcome attention to Latin America documents several projects from the region. The Brazilian architect Lina Bo Bardi renovated in 1977 a factory complex near São Paulo that includes a social center, library, theater, sport center, and public buildings in a neighborhood setting respecting the original industrial character of the site.

The next chapter, “The Pattern of Urbanism,” focuses on the neighborhood and its effect on social structure, exploring working, shopping, recreation, education, and pedestrian and vehicular requirements. The section opens with several examples of Clarence Perry’s “Neighborhood Unit” (1929), a model updated by Duany and Plater-Zyberk in *The Lexicon of New Urbanism*. Peter Calthorpe’s Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), designed to reduce automobile usage, also echoes Perry. Eliel Saarinen’s plans for a Greater Helsinki (1918) and Greater Tallinn (ca. 1915) propose individual compact town units within an open-space system. Radburn, New Jersey (ca. 1928), by Clarence Stein and Henry Wright, is another example of the clustering of neighborhoods and the confronting of the impact of cars. A two-page spread is devoted to the interventions anticipating the Olympic Games of 1992 in Barcelona. Featured are El Cinturón, the extensive ring road, and additional public spaces similar to the popular Ramblas in the city center. Calatrava’s bridge connecting districts separated by the highway is unfortunately placed further along in the volume, rather than with other interventions in Barcelona. Curitiba, Brazil, has gained renown for adopting a farsighted comprehensive master plan in the mid-1960s, which successfully groups new neighborhoods along public transit. This chapter appropriately includes the urban mainstay, the grid. It is shown in sixteen versions assembled by Manuel de Sola Morales in 1978 and in numerous other historic and contemporary applications. The grid, as it was proposed by CIAM, Hilberseimer, and Le Corbusier, was transformed by the latter into “streets in the air” and by Peter and Allison Smithson into the “stem” at their “Golden Lane.” The term “Transsect” for the transition of the urban to the rural, from city density and streets to an open settlement and roads, was developed in *The Lexicon of the New Urbanism*. Duany and Plater-Zyberk consider that the Transect, which recalls Patrick Geddes’s “Valley Section” (1909), is an important element to resolve the town-country conflict. The concluding pages of the chapter are devoted to this concept, shown in the authors’ own projects and other successful applications of the Transect.

The following chapter, “The Public Realm,” addresses most clearly the topic of civic art as public space and conveys the “pre-eminent concern of civic art” in the public realm (147). The text provides a welcome emphasis on contemporary examples demonstrated in plazas, squares, and a variety of built complexes from around the world. Recent achievements represent building types that were neglected by modernism and are again compelling attention. Categories of public, civic, and commercial, frequently combined, invite civic activity. They include streets, intersections, gateways, parks, arcades, and shopping plazas with parking facilities.

Interventions by currently, or recently, practicing architects impart a sense of optimism regarding the future metropolis. A brief sampling can begin with J. C. N. Forestier’s, Karl Brunner’s, and Josep Lluís Sert’s projects in Latin America that bring the plaza and patio traditions of the region into the twentieth century. Constantin Doxiadis, Leon Krier, and Demetri Porphyrios devote attention to the transition between public and private space. Proposals by Machado and Silvetti transform a highway intersection into a viable public space in Palermo, incorporate a parking garage into a multifunctional gateway entrance to Venice, and propose monumental stairs to connect sections of Providence, Rhode Island.

The *New Civic Art* is an impressive survey of both noteworthy and flawed examples of urbanism. The authors conclude: “Hopefully the work comprised in this volume will provide the designer and the civic activist with the tools to both retrofit past mistakes and meet the situations that will surely present themselves in the future.” This commendable wish could be expedited by a less weighty, as well as more affordable publication. The book might have benefited from reducing the number of historic examples and developing a more succinct focus on concepts, substantiated by comparative groupings of illustrations. Nevertheless, in its present format, *The New Civic Art* earns a place among the essential literature on present and future urbanism.

**North America**

Sally A. Kitt Chappell

**Cahokia: Mirror of the Cosmos**


This book represents an ambitious, unusual, and largely successful effort to examine a major archaeological site in North America—arguably the most significant one north of Mesoamerica—and trace its changing uses over time. The site, Cahokia, is located on the floodplain of the Mississippi River, close to St. Louis, in the American Bottom. It may have been settled as early as 8000-9000 B.C.E, but at its pinnacle between 1050 and 1300 C.E it housed a population of as many as 10,000, and contained more than one hundred earthen mounds. The largest of these was Monks Mound, a terraced pyramid that covered more than fourteen acres and required 22 million cubic feet of earth to construct, while the stockade fence around central Cahokia involved felling 20,000 trees (62).

Chappell begins the story by outlining the geography and geology of the
area and provides information on the occupation of the site area from its first known settlers to the present. Her own background is in architectural history, but she has incorporated information and perspectives from a number of other disciplines: geography, archaeology, anthropology, and history. She considers several questions of interest to all of these disciplines as well as to educated members of the general public: How did the land become fertile? Why was this site constructed? Who were the people who built it? Why was it so large and elaborate? Why did its occupants “abandon” it? What has happened to the area since? She addresses some of these quite creditably, relying on a range of sources and experts.

Chappell outlines Cahokia’s ecological setting, its geological development, its rich loess soils and ample water provided by five rivers. She explains how the rivers facilitated transportation and the way that settlement accumulates around “breaks” in transport, from canoe to foot, for example (23). A random series of environmental factors meant that this area had the potential for feeding many people. Her account of prehispanic life in the Mississippi and Illinois River valleys (present-day Illinois) from about 7500 B.C.E. on relies on a good grasp of archaeological information and offers credible insights into daily practice. She covers the Archaic and Woodland periods, relying on the nearby site of Koster, and some farther away, such as Poverty Point, Louisiana, and a series of Hopewell sites in Ohio. Poverty Point and the Hopewell sites are significant because they, too, have mounds and involve earth-moving activities, although they were much smaller in scale than Cahokia’s massive efforts. Subsistence in the Archaic period was provided by gathering and hunting, and the Woodland period is marked by the beginnings of agriculture, but not yet by maize agriculture, the base for the Mississippian of Cahokia.

The Mississippian culture spread to sites throughout the southeastern quadrant of today’s United States. While it varied in expression and extent throughout this area, in general it was marked by sociocultural complexity; intensive farming of maize, squash, and beans; new forms of pottery and projectile points; and new craft and burial forms. Perhaps the most important attribute of Mississippian society was its three-tier hierarchy of settlement sizes: hamlets, villages, and towns. The towns were often palisaded and marked by platform mounds, a characteristic thought to have derived from Mesoamerica. Mounds of this size and character required a significant labor force and a significant power to compel the contribution of labor. It is believed that leaders in this system had both political and religious power. The question of why these mounds were built at all only makes sense if one is not aware of the propensity in many cultures in many parts of the world to create large monumental structures. Whether they were meant to show the ruler’s power, or establish a claim to a place, or impress deities, peoples at a certain stage of sociopolitical complexity often construct elaborate buildings with complex layouts that make use of solar and lunar alignments.

Chappell insists that Cahokia was a city—one marked by sacred geography—that expressed a belief system and was laid out to represent an ordered universe. I think that the debate over whether it is a true city is not important; it was, in any case, a central place during its time, and there is no doubt that it was constructed as a cosmological system. Questions of abandonment are significant to archaeology in a range of cultures. In adjacent North America, the Maya and the prehispanic southwest offer similar puzzles. In general, issues of climatic change, an expanding population in conflict with a shrinking food base, and a loss of the leaders’ power, which normally relies on success and good times, seem to be the favored explanations. Unusually aggregated populations are also subject to epidemic disease. In most cases, the site is not truly abandoned, but the number of people occupying it is drastically reduced, and Chappell notes that some archaeologists suggest that a movement away from Cahokia may better be seen as a positive adaptation to difficult circumstances than as a decline (75).

In some ways, the most notable contribution to knowledge of Cahokia comes in the second half of the book when the author traces changes in land use from the seventeenth century on—the period of French, Spanish, and British contact—followed by American appropriation of indigenous lands in the late nineteenth century. She deftly explores the various European attitudes toward Native Americans, not only by nationality. She observes the differences among the attitudes of missionaries, commercial interests, and settlers (though there is little of the indigenous perspective). The development of archaeology is outlined as another form of intervention in Cahokia’s history, as knowledge of it fueled the interests of would-be travelers and settlers and ultimately led to destruction of some portions of the former community, negatively affecting its existence in ways that previous European contact had not.

The final segment of the book outlines the effort to preserve Cahokia, which began early in the twentieth century and was finally successful when it was decreed a Historic Park (1935), a National Historic Landmark (1964), a State Historic Site (1970s), and a UNESCO World Heritage Site (1982). Lastly, Chappell describes today’s interpretation of the site: the ways volunteer docents and indigenous peoples revere and make use of it to tell stories about the past and inevitably about the present.

The book is permeated with the author’s reverence for Cahokia and its makers. In some cases, there is a slightly mystical quality in her reactions to the place. She describes “a profoundly architectural” emotion when viewing the mounds (58). In her awe, she overstates the “primitiveness” of Mississippian technology; after all, people with stone and simple metal tools have constructed many impressive monuments throughout the world. Her surprise at their ability to align mounds with natural
phenomenon is also somewhat naive. One other question that she poses is not really answered and may not be answerable: What can we learn about ourselves in looking at the changing meanings of the site? She does offer a personal response to this question, but it is clearly not “ourselves” but “myself” that is speaking. A few other awkward or misplaced statements appear now and then—for example, “From the days when the Native American farmers needed to store corn for months . . . then for example, “From the days when the Native American farmers needed to store corn for months . . . to today when highway plows move tons of snow and scatter salt over vast areas . . . midwesterners have needed to be socially fit and socially well-organized”(8). However, these are minor criticisms. On balance, this is a lovely and interesting study, offering insights to a range of people from a variety of backgrounds. I recommend it to those who know the site and those who do not; the latter will surely be motivated to visit it after reading the book.

NAN A. ROTHSCHILD
Barnard College, Columbia University

James D. Kornwolf, with Georgiana W. Kornwolf
Architecture and Town Planning in Colonial North America

Marian Card Donnelly
Architecture in Colonial America
Edited by Leland M. Roth

Those of us who teach colonial or early American architecture have long bemoaned the lack of an appropriate text for use in the classroom. Hugh Morrison’s Early American Architecture (1952; repr. New York, 1987), had served this role for many scholars and for many years. During the interval when Morrison was out of print, some chose William H. Pierson’s first volume in the American Buildings and Their Architects series, The Colonial and the Neo-Classical Styles (Garden City, 1976), or Fiske Kimball’s Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and Early Republic (New York, 1922; repr. 1966). But the field of architectural history has changed in the last decades of the twentieth century, and new research methods have transformed our understanding of both individual buildings and the cultural landscape. Frustration with these classic volumes grew, but replacements were scarce. The two authors reviewed here were sufficiently dissatisfied to attempt their own histories of the architecture of colonial America.

James Kornwolf’s Architecture and Town Planning in Colonial North America, with its large size and prestigious press, could not help but gain the attention of the discipline. He casts his net more widely than did earlier authors: to buildings, he adds landscapes and town planning; to the United States, he adds Canada. Kornwolf’s colonial period begins with European settlement attempts in the sixteenth century and ends at various dates, most commonly near the turn of the nineteenth century, but often stretching well into it. Beyond these definitional differences, Kornwolf chooses to address many more examples of colonial buildings and landscapes than did earlier books, hinted at in the nearly 4,000 illustrations. The result is a sprawling work, spread over three volumes, and any student of the field will be awed if not appalled by the ambition of the project—vast in geographic scope, various in the cultural strains represented, enormous in the number of buildings and landscapes presented.

Kornwolf defines and defends his title and the scope of his work in volume one with a short preface and introduction. He intends his work to serve as a long-overdue “survey of American architecture of the Renaissance” (xi), whose “key philosophical tenets” he defines as “the aesthetics of classicism and the ethics of humanism” (1). The sections on the Italian Renaissance and those on Renaissance design in Spain, France, and the Netherlands (in volume one), in England (in volume two), and on the “architectural revolution” of the eighteenth century (in volume three) provide brief overviews of the European landmarks that are at the core of the author’s comparative analysis. He establishes a canon of design sources and innovation flowing from Italy to the rest of Europe and its colonies. Though broad in scope, both chronologically and geographically, he intends to be “traditionally art historical” and focus on “works of art” (xi-xii, 1). Kornwolf revisits Pevsner’s contrast of “architecture” and “mere building,” making a distinction that essentially eliminates all noncanonical examples: architectural historians may study barns, for example, but they are “background buildings” (xx, 10). His interest is rather in public buildings that serve as “monuments” and in “houses built by the affluent, the intellectual, or the artistic” (10). Not surprisingly, he rejects recent scholarship that diverges from his approach, characterizing it as “revisionist,” as social rather than architectural history, and calling its practitioners critics rather than historians (xx, xxiv n. 26). The introductory material also includes brief discussions of plan, materials, building techniques, and general architectural vocabulary. It is paralleled by the materials at the end of volume three, where Kornwolf provides two appendices, one covering builders (over seventy pages long) and the other a list of colonial buildings (nearly fifty pages), as well as a bibliography that includes separate sections for states and provinces (twenty-two pages).

Most of the material in the three volumes is organized primarily geographically and secondarily chronologically. Each volume is divided into parts, such as “Continental Powers and Peoples in North America,” “England in North America,” and “Great Britain in Canada and the United States.” The parts are further divided into ten chapters, primarily defined by the colonizing power in part one and by the colony in parts two and three. The first part, which constitutes the remainder of vol-