erratic in its choice of entries, and there is no index to aid readers in navigating the text. More frustrating is Gorman’s provision of only a single blanket credit for the many illustrations he has gathered from the Fuller Papers, giving scholars interested in pursuing further research no guidance in locating specific images within the 1200 linear feet of materials at Stanford.

For more sustained analysis of Fuller’s work, readers can turn to publications of the past decade edited by Reinhold Martin, and Joachim Krausse and Claude Lichtenstein. These and other recent analyses help us to see Fuller’s works not only as the “light, self-sufficient structures” Gorman describes (205), but also as compelling nets drawing consumers into new relations of power. Since the questions of globalization and ecological sustainability that Fuller engaged are of increasingly widespread concern, it is likely that his significance will only grow—as an inspiration or cautionary tale, depending on what we learn from the expanding field of historical and critical research.

JONATHAN MASSEY
Syracuse University

Notes
1. R. Buckminster Fuller, Nine Chaise to the Moon (Garden City, 1971), 256–59.

C. Ford Peatross, editor, with Pamela Scott, Diane Tepfer, and Leslie Freudenheim


The completed cataloging of some forty thousand drawings, prints, and photographs depicting the greater Washington area is cause for celebration, and Johns Hopkins University Press has produced a fitting volume to mark the occasion. Lavishly illustrated and carefully documented, this introduction to the Washington Collection at the Library of Congress represents much more than a guidebook. Addressing high and vernacular form, six distinguished authors examine and evaluate many unfamiliar and intriguing elements of the capital region’s built environment. In doing so, they not only direct attention to the Library’s collection, but they offer their own insights on subjects of ongoing interest in the field of Washington area studies.

As befits such an auspicious occasion, C. Ford Peatross, curator of Architecture, Design, and Engineering at the Library of Congress, serves as exuberant host for his collection’s debut. Peatross’s opening essay on the unbuilt city is wry, witty, and provocative. While some of the images he chooses have been previously published, notably through a series of essays in Washington History, the journal of the Historical Society of Washington, most are entirely unknown. In showing both inappropriate treatments of iconic monuments and a number of projects he wishes had been completed, including an extravagant apartment and hotel complex designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, Peatross reveals the considerable range of works suggested for the city. He does so in a lively manner, describing a proposed monument to mothers as evocative of Batman’s Gotham City and a post-World War I treatment of the Capitol as emasculating “the building’s baroque qualities in a manner that is both coolly elegant and dishon- est. It is architecture what a stretch limo is to automobile design. Longer sometimes is no more than that” (48).

The essays that follow on two of Washington’s most iconic buildings—the Capitol, discussed by Damie Stillman, and the White House, addressed by William Seale—are both more sober and less suggestive. Each draws from the Library collection to test received wisdom about their subject’s evolution. While the range of images related to the White House is more limited, both Seale’s and Stillman’s essays use visual material as a guide to construction. Some of the pictures, especially those included in the fifty-five color plates, are stunning. Specialists will undoubtedly want to follow the authors’ arguments with care, and even the general reader will appreciate the great skill involved in creating such beautiful renderings. Pamela Scott’s essay on the Vietnam Memorial stands more narrowly as an invitation to examine the various design proposals from the memorial’s competition, which are held in the Library’s collection.

The most useful essays for seeing how the Library of Congress’s images advance our understanding of the capital region are those by Richard Longstreth on commercial structures and Gwendolyn Wright on twentieth-century residential architecture. Their surveys of major collections from lesser-known architects such as Arthur Heaton and George N. Ray help reveal a collective portrait of the city and its adjacent suburbs. In his assessment, Longstreth is especially strong at incorporating previous work on shopping centers and department stores. Neither scholar sees images reveal a handsome and commons- dimous city emerging in the twentieth century.

A volume that divides its attention between the examination of well-known monuments and more obscure vernacular buildings is bound to reflect Washington’s own divided character as
both capital and city. There is no effort at synthesis here, and that is proper given the book's intent to stimulate future research. It is possible, nonetheless, to make some preliminary observations suggesting this book's special contribution to the study of the Washington area's history.

Most striking are the ways in which builders cast totally utilitarian functions in formal architectural styles. Shortly after the McMillan Commission plan of 1901–02 introduced high-style Beaux-Arts as the ideal for Washington, a citizens' organization attempted to extend similar design guidelines from the city's monumental core to its residential sectors. The belief was that a city aspiring to world-class status should not be embarrassed by aesthetically inadequate residential architecture. The effort failed, but proponents need not have worried too much, given the evidence in this volume. Both Peatross and Longstreth describe an Amoco gas station constructed across from the Capitol in the 1920s. Far from detracting from the government precinct through inappropriate commercialism, Heaton, the architect whose nonmonumental designs are most cited in this volume, made his building fit right in. Described as “more like a small museum than its actual purpose,” the resulting design featured a handsome clock tower flanked by two wings that were capped with domes worthy of the Capitol precinct (133). If function truly followed form, one would have expected to see scholars rather than automobiles filing through the porticos.

It is harder to dress up a hamburger stand, but again both Peatross and Longstreth reveal a high level of dignity in humble structures. Longstreth's treatment of neighborhood shopping centers constructed in the 1930s and 1940s argues that, far from detracting from residential character, commercial architecture and even the design of parking facilities positively enhanced the residential milieu. One of these areas, the Stop and Shop in fashionable Cleveland Park, which Longstreth helped save some years ago from demolition, had the distinction of being the first development in the nation to synthesize the idea of neighborhood shopping with a drive-in capacity. Its dignified style and retail function, however, could be described as largely pervasive in the Washington area.

Wright's essay, by seeking the normative standard suggested in residential structures, helps confirm the picture of a city that developed in an architecturally restrained but dignified manner. Here, Peatross's essay assumes greater importance than simply inducing speculation on what might have been. The very rejection of designs that countered the formal yet often modest pretensions of Washington's built environment serves to heighten an appreciation of the norm. A color plate of the proposed Dolphin America Hotel drives home the point. Part museum, part restaurant and health spa, part convention hall and ballroom center, Douglas Michael's pastiche of form, style, and function might have worked in New York City, not Washington. Similarly, by choosing an illustration of a massive helmet marred by a bullet hole and connected to a dog tag large enough to record fifty-five thousand names, Peatross has provided the most unrestrained of representational designs rejected for the Vietnam Memorial. Neither in the city's core nor its residential precincts do such extravagant visual statements sit well with a public indoctrinated in balance and restraint.

There are elements of Washington's architecture that deserved more attention, not the least government-built housing. While the book contains excellent material on the dormitories accommodating workers during World War I, the pioneering work of the nation's first public housing agency, the Alley Dwelling Authority, is only briefly treated. Less a function of available images than her own unfamiliarity with Washington, Wright's oversight can be forgiven. Still, I suspect examination of philanthropic as well as government housing in Washington would extend the thesis that a common design ethos ran through much of the city.

Capital Drawings is both more and less than it appears: more in that at fifty-five dollars, this handsome coffee-table style volume is a bargain, thanks to a generous subsidy from the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation; less, however, in falling short of fulfilling the book jacket's promise to “tell the story of the capital's planning and growth.” The volume's documentary evidence and essays, as fine and enticing as they are individually, represent fragments of this larger untold story. Yet, Capital Drawings is also more than a compendium of its parts, for what the volume may ultimately do best is draw new scholars to the rich Library of Congress collections described and sampled. Already some three thousand images are accessible through the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog, and thematic essays as well as profiles of the architects and engineers collected will soon appear on the website of the Library's Center for Architecture, Design, and Engineering. These digital resources contain numerous illustrations, all of which are hot-linked to catalog information. Peatross also teases us with some wonderful renderings from parts of the Library's holdings still not fully open for research, like the recently acquired Paul Rudolph collection. In its essays and their accompanying illustrations, Capital Drawings is full of such suggestive material. The tasks remain, for those who choose, to delve more deeply into and incorporate this rich treasure trove of material into the capital region's metropolitan history.

HOWARD GILLETTE JR.
Rutgers University, Camden