expressed by a “corridor-shaped drawing room” (68). Klimasmith subtly analyzes that ways that this row house, at first so private in contrast to the publicity of boardinghouses, slowly opens its doors to public gatherings and transforms Olive’s life. Klimasmith quotes folklorist Henry Glassie who wrote about the arrangement of rooms and their proportions: “in these volumes . . . psyche develops” (69). But Glassie is an odd reference in this context, since his research identifies timeless folk building principles in contrast with the developer-driven economics of Olive’s recently built narrow urban row house. Indeed, James’s novel demonstrates the impossibility of preserving timeless qualities in the streetcar bustle of the modernizing city.

The two books under review take quite different approaches to the way nineteenth-century characters lived out their domestic ideas and ideals. Gamber’s characters wanted the social security that an idealized home would confer, yet experienced the failures of boardinghouses to live up to the ideal. Her evidence in the experiences of people who tried boarding conveys the vivid, daily-life textures of this form of multiple dwelling. Further, we glimpse the experiences of boardinghouse keepers and the ways they responded to the drudgeries and pleasures of making money from their homes. Klimasmith’s book is the more theoretically grounded and intellectually nuanced. She steps back from what her novels’ characters desire to reflect on the ways that urban architecture presented them with multiple choices and conflicting meanings. These characters grew and changed in unexpected ways as they negotiated the properties of their permanent and transient dwellings.

Though neither author is a trained observer of architecture, both provide expanded views of the meanings and performance of their dwelling types, taking up issues that architectural historians more committed to formal analysis might never see. Both books remind us that the history of architecture is as much a history of how buildings performed for their users as it is a history of aesthetic choices or stylistic qualities.

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Andrew Dolkart
Biography of a Tenement House in New York City: An Architectural History of 97 Orchard Street

Jan Jennings
Cheap and Tasteful Dwellings

Both the promise and difficulty of the study of vernacular architecture lie in the source material. Where plans, working drawings, designers’ sketches, and notes have formed the heart of architectural historians’ archival resources, scholars of vernacular architecture must turn to other evidence to examine the making and meaning of the daily landscape. In studying the ordinary environment—the accumulation of buildings, additions, and renovations of owner-builders or speculative developers—a scholar may have to do without such evidence and rely on more quotidian sources, such as building permits, probate inventories, and deed transfers, or may have only the site itself to investigate.

Andrew Dolkart’s Biography of a Tenement House in New York City, published in conjunction with the 2006 annual meeting of the Vernacular Architecture Forum, starts with a single building: 97 Orchard Street on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, which now serves as home of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum. From its construction in 1863 until 1935, the five-story building with a raised basement housed up to 111 residents, largely recent European immigrants, in cramped, dark, mean, and utilitarian confines. Dolkart’s work begins and ends with the tenement itself, one of thousands like it built in postbellum and Gilded Age New York. He traces the obscure and varied history of the building through field research on the site, archival sources—such as maps, census data, and contemporaneous periodicals—and oral history to bring a seemingly anonymous, unremarkable building alive to the reader.

Like other biographical works, Dolkart’s book exhibits many of the peculiarities of the genre. Central to this framework is the effort the author makes to build a narrative at the expense of developing an argument. This choice yields a close examination of the structure at 97 Orchard Street, one that may become an important reference work for researchers seeking information on this urban mixed-use building type. At any particular stage in the work, we know of demographic changes in the building and neighborhood and of upgrades to the building’s mechanical systems or other architectural alterations mandated by building codes.

What Dolkart sacrificed by offering such scrutiny of a single building is a means for understanding the relationship of the tenement to broader issues affecting the urban landscape in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Fortunately, such work has been carried out by other historians of the urban landscape of New York, providing context for the story Dolkart tells in Biography. This volume draws on Richard Plunz’s A History of Housing in New York City: Dwelling Type and Social Change in the American Metropolis (1990). Additionally, recent books such as David Scobey’s Empire City: The Making and Meaning of the New York City Landscape (2002), Max Page’s The Creative Destruction of Manhattan, 1900–1940 (1999), and Keith Revell’s Building Gotham: Civic Culture and Public Policy in New York, 1898–1938 (2003) provide clues to the larger civic, cultural, and capitalist structures in New York and American Victorian society that regulate, invest in, create, and inhabit such neighborhoods as the Lower East Side and buildings like 97 Orchard Street.

As a real estate investment, the tenement at 97 Orchard Street served the cap-

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work researching interior design in the United States. Part of her broader work on interior design theory, Cheap and Tasteful Dwellings is, according to the author, “really about the competitor’s attempts to apply an interior architectural theory to houses” (205). Arguing that architects underwent a fundamental shift in their conception and design of residential buildings, Jennings claims that the competition participants worked “to elevate interior design to the status that exterior form had claimed for centuries” (205). While she asserts that design professionals changed from exterior-focused artists to practically motivated interior designers, this change seems to embrace the values and processes that scholars such as Henry Glassie have attributed to vernacular designs throughout the ages—practical interior spaces influencing, if not defining, the exterior massing and fenestration of a residence.

Though Cheap and Tasteful Dwellings may emphasize the importance of residential interiors, it is about much more. Jennings, in discussing the eighty-six design-competition winners from the three decades of competition, helps provide a better picture of the Victorian-era architectural profession than we have seen to date. Wood’s From Craft to Profession: The Practice of Architecture in Nineteenth-Century America (1999) developed a framework for understanding the origins of the architectural profession by emphasizing leading lights of nineteenth-century architecture, such as Benjamin Henry Latrobe, H. H. Richardson, and McKim, Mead, and White. Through archival research, oral histories, and a sociological drive to understand the features and subtleties of the profession a century ago, Jennings broadens our view of architectural education, life in a firm, and the tension between professionalism and business sense that faced architects of local, regional, and national stature.

Following a cross section of designers throughout their careers, Jennings argues two interesting points about this “middle group of ordinary architects” (204). First, competition winners, like T. F. Schneider of Washington, D.C., and Charles Inisco Williams of Dayton, Ohio, were future notables in their profession, judged by the number of their executed buildings on the National Register of Historic Places. Though architectural historians may not have revered their work, certainly preservationists found their designs valuable to community building traditions, practical architecture, and civic statements. Second, Jennings argues that the proportion of nineteenth-century buildings designed by architects is much greater than previously recognized, indicating a more robust role for the architectural profession in this period. Comprising Eastern and Western practices; urban, suburban, and rural projects; and serving clients from the upper class to skilled craftsmen, professional architecture must be considered as part and parcel to not only civic building in the Victorian era, but to everyday middle-class residential life.

Like their more prominent counterparts, Jennings’s architects lent cultural authority to their clients even as they designed for convenience and practicality, offering taste as one of their commodities for market. These men and a few women abided by ideals of style for cottages and suburban homes in the tradition of prominent mid-century architects like Andrew Jackson Downing, building demand for their services and promoting the growth of the profession.

Jennings’s project in Cheap and Tasteful Dwellings is largely successful. The number and depth of her subjects—both competitions and competitors—provide a look into the values, aims, and participants of the profession most historians have been forced to confront piecemeal in their own work. The book poses a few difficulties, however. The parade of heretofore unknown architects can prove difficult to keep straight. In addition, the choice to give intense scrutiny to the competitions of a single periodical and its operations brings with it emphasis on details that stand in the way of the larger thrust of the work.

Both Biography of a New York City Tenement House and Cheap and Tasteful Dwellings should prove valuable as refer-
ence for scholars of vernacular architecture, historic preservationists, and more traditional architectural historians. However, the last will likely find Jennings’s book the more useful for its broader scope and ambitions as well as its investigation of interior design theory. Taken together, these books illustrate the dramatic social and economic disparities of the Gilded Age and Victorian era, and the grounding of architecture and building in larger systems of economics and production. Perhaps most importantly these two books on nineteenth-century vernacular architecture—one about a single tenement-turned-museum, the other about popularizing domestic design—help bridge the gap between the study of the everyday environment and that of high culture. In reality, they were, and are, not so far apart.

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Mauro F. Guillén
The Taylorized Beauty of the Mechanical: Scientific Management and the Rise of Modernist Architecture

In 1911 a self-made engineer from Pennsylvania, Frederick Winslow Taylor, published a pathbreaking study in industrial efficiency, The Principles of Scientific Management. Scientific management made cardinal virtues of careful planning and waste reduction in the performance of all tasks in the industrial workplace. The introduction of flow charts, standardization, and time and motion studies reduced each job to its most basic, efficient steps, at all times supervised and improved upon by expert managers. Of immense appeal to a young generation of architects interested in combining engineering with artistic principles, scientific management, author Mauro F. Guillén tells us, enabled modernist architects to move away from prevailing eclecticism and present themselves as organizers, technocrats who could ameliorate social conflict and improve standards of living (4). Although developed in the United States, scientific management inspired architects first and foremost in Continental Europe, and the resulting philosophy and forms of modernist architecture were by and large reexported back to the United States and, indeed, to many other parts of the world beginning in the 1930s and 1940s.

In Guillén’s brief but wide-ranging account of architects’ experiences with Taylorist principles we learn, for example, that Charles-Edouard Jeanneret read Taylor’s book in 1917. Shortly thereafter, Jeanneret’s and Ozenfant’s purism would reflect a Taylorist penchant for a “law of mechanical selection” that sought to bring the rationalism of the engineer into harmony with more artistic sensibilities. By the time Jeanneret completed his self-fashioning into Le Corbusier in 1920 in the pages of the avant-garde journal L’Esprit Nouveau, the architect was advocating rigorous analysis and clarity in the statement of architectural problems: a direct application of Taylor’s principle that each task should be understood in its simplest, clearest form. Vers une Architecture/Towards a New Architecture, published in 1923 and then widely accepted as the most influential text on architecture in the twentieth century, was a veritable Taylorist tract. Le Corbusier compared architecture’s “unhappy state of retrogression” to the field of engineering, which, he maintained, was soaring to its “full height.” Drawing on Taylor, Towards a New Architecture saw the reformulation of the house as a “machine for living in,” the armchair as “a machine for sitting in,” and so on (Le Corbusier quoted in Guillén, 31). Le Corbusier unambiguously concluded that “In order to BUILD: STANDARDIZE to be able to INDUSTRIALIZE AND TAYLORIZE” (32).

By 1927, Walter Gropius and his Bauhaus colleagues would employ stopwatches to put into practice Taylor’s time and motion studies at projects in Dessau and Prunheim, maximizing the efficiency of serialized housing construction. Two years later, the “minimum existence housing unit,” the product of close Taylorist analysis, would be the subject of presentations at the second International Congress of Modern Architecture, or CIAM. The group’s La Sarraz Declaration (1928) promoted the “simplification of working methods on the site and in the factory” and the “employment of less specialized labor working under the direction of highly skilled technicians” (26).

Yet for all its success in recalling architects who became enamored with scientific management, this book has a far more ambitious agenda. Guillén, a professor of international management and sociology at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School of Business, combines his earlier studies of organizational change with significant new material on the development of twentieth-century architecture in the six largest countries in Europe (Russia, Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, and Spain) and the four largest countries in the Americas (the United States, Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina). Without question, firms like Mannesmann, Siemens, and the AEG in Germany, Aeroplanes Voisin in France, and FIAT and Olivetti in Italy were leading early adopters of Taylor’s principles. The author underscores the importance of these firms in helping launch the careers of such innovators as Peter Behrens, Le Corbusier, and Giacomo Matte-Trucco. While these vignettes provide architectural historians with valuable institutional and historical context, they are especially important as evidence in the argument assembled by Guillén. Such cases of industrial creativity and architectural innovation in discrete national contexts help Guillén advance a multifaceted argument concerning modern organizational behavior in general, and the evolution of complex fields such as architecture between 1890 and 1940 in particular.

To Guillén, the rise of scientific management offers the key to understanding how architecture could “modernize” in the first place: in the world’s leading industrial nations, the success of modernist architecture depended on the