in the book as determinants in the replacement of terracotta by concrete fireproofing, a further examination of Holabird & Roche’s Born Building (1908) might establish a link.

Entering the twentieth century, Leslie inverts his focus from the influence of technology and manufacture on form to the architectural expression of technological innovations. Here he contributes pioneering work in the form of an essay on skin innovations. Here he contributes pioneer-architectural expression of technological

Elain Harwood

Space, Hope and Brutalism: English Architecture, 1945–1975

New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2015, 736 pp., 347 color and 18 b/w illus. $125, ISBN 9780300204469

When first picking up this splendid, massive book, published by Yale University Press in association with Historic England for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, one has the immediate urge to congratulate the author, photographer, designer, and publisher. That may sound rather hackneyed beginning, but in this case it does not refer to yet another work on popular ancient treasures or to one of today’s architect’s sparkling exuberances; rather, all splendor is lavished here on a so far rather unloved period of architecture, the world of postwar English building. Up to now one could read about this period only in modestly illustrated academic kinds of publications. What is more, Elain Harwood far outdoes all these previous contributions in terms of length and breadth, based on her relentless study of all conceivable sources, including documentary material and innumerable interviews.

The book is divided strictly by types; within each type the chapter proceeds with a loose mix of places, architects, and individual buildings. Each chapter is introduced by the broadest kind of contextualization: political, economic, legal, administrative, technical. As with all such monographic kinds of tasks, one asks oneself which of all the diverse introductory matters are to have a bearing on the understanding of the buildings themselves and which are not, and may thus be considered as mere chronicling details that could and should have been left out.

British—or, in the case of this book, English—architecture was underpinned by a “sense of mission” (564), that of the new “welfare state,” and for Harwood that covers the totality of the three post–World War II decades.1 The simplest explanation of the idea behind the welfare state is that essential services, such as education, health, and the dwelling, can be satisfactorily organized only by the state, which thus becomes an organ operating on a huge scale. During the early 1970s came the disillusionment with precisely that scale, and Harwood’s brief but astute analysis of this reaction ends the book.

Harwood begins with the new towns, reaching from Harlow to Milton Keynes, as well as with the war-torn centers of some cities, notably Plymouth and Coventry. The chapter proceeds with multiple themes in housing, such as housing types, although it curiously leaves out one of the hottest topics of the 1950s, “mixed development”—that is, diversity of housing types in all estates whatever their size. Then follows the actual major chapter on housing, dealing with “prefabs” (temporary cottages), the London County Council’s housing output, and housing in a small number of other cities, including a short but incisive account of the intellectual background of the celebrated Park Hill blocks in Sheffield. Architecturally advanced private groups of houses are also discussed. Altogether the chapter focuses on the contributions of major architects; it does not offer a sense of the broader world of public housing up and down the country, in cities like Birmingham and Liverpool, whose contributions to welfare state architecture have been rated highly, too—though, of course, many would argue, more in terms of quantity than quality.

“Private houses” come next, clearly an antidote to public housing; it comes as somewhat of a surprise that after 1954 “private housing soared” (117). The chapter proceeds with almost no narrative and with hardly any conclusion.2 Attempting a very brief ordering, one might cite those English designers who followed Ludwig Mies van der Rohe; those, like Richard and Su Rogers, who followed Craig Ellwood; as well as Edward Cullinan, who was impressed by

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Corbusier, and the German interwar architecture outside England. On balance, absolute completeness. The book is intended to convey a sense of libraries, and newspaper offices. In short, one finds any number of further subheadings, on "ship" the discussion of urban offices should per- mitly maintained and publicly built schools. Harwood confirms, once again, that “the Hertfordshire programme, in sophistication and influence, outstripped its peers" (171). The next major contribution of the welfare state was that of the universities. That said, more than a third of the chapter is taken up by Oxbridge’s largely privately sponsored innovatory buildings, but the civic ("or Redbridge") foundations, as well as those in the newly structured technical education sector, are also addressed, as are of course the seven or so completely new campuses of the “New” or “Plateglass” universities, large, complex, and diverse as they were. The massive impact made by the new university architecture from 1960 resulted also from the fact that British higher education buildings had sustained an antimodernity as late as the mid-1950s. Hospitals are next in importance, although arguably they were the new welfare state’s most important built manifestation, serving its best-known innovation, free health care for all. Here, too, it was the large size of the new buildings and their modernity that impressed. For most users modernity was synonymous with comfort—suddenly patients thought they had been put into a room "at the Hilton" (295).

Thereafter come another six sections: on transport; on "energy, agriculture and industry"; on commercial buildings (where the discussion of urban offices should perhaps have been longer); on "places of worship"; on "leisure and culture"; and, finally, on "public buildings." Within the chapters one finds any number of further subheadings, on topics such as sports halls, indoor swimming pools, police stations, country libraries, and newspaper offices. In short, the book is intended to convey a sense of absolute completeness.

Harwood quite often refers to architecture outside England. On balance, references to the United States probably outnumber those to Scandinavia, Le Corbusier, and the German interwar avant-garde combined. Can one also expect a direct, clear answer to questions about Englishness? Hardly. Very occasionally Harwood alludes to a “Britishness,” for instance, when showing the smallish, inti- mate, redbrick housing by Neylan & Ungless of around 1970 in Harlow and London (98). The end of the last chapter is marked by the Civic Centre in Uxbridge in suburban London, built 1973–77 by Robert Matthew, Johnson Marshall (RMJM)—a key firm all through those decades. The complex, which “returned” to red brick and a domestic-looking high-pitched roof, a novelty for a public building, was duly dubbed “Arts and Crafts” and local to "Southern England” (561). Must this be classified as “regionalist," in contrast to the “national" identification of an English picturesque modern that Nikolaus Pevsner had proposed for the London County Council housing estate at Roehampton a dozen years earlier?

However copious the information, many users of the book will value the illustrations more than the text; the vast majority of them are photographs newly taken by James Davies. There is a wide range here between images that are striking in their own right but give little idea of the building as a whole and those that are both striking and do justice to their object. Strongest are the images of interiors, notably institutional ones, such as dining halls in colleges. Invariably a central viewpoint is taken so as to convey a maximum of spaciousness. By contrast, photos of private houses are taken diagonally, preferably at twilight, with Technicolor purple skies combined with glaring autumnal colors and garden textures, and with the floodlit interiors bursting out. An architectural history book branches out to the world of glossy home journals seen on the shelves of the railway station kiosks; on the other hand, one has to admit that grayish period-style illustrations would not impress the onlooker today.

Problematic is the photographer’s penchant for excluding people. Not a single student or teacher is sitting in the long, tidy rows of chairs of a Cambridge refec- tory. Unarguably serious is the total lack of building plans (except for one small sketch plan of a hospital) in a book on building types.

The very title of the book leads one to another lacuna. “Brutalism” is dealt with only very briefly at the beginning, and in any case its problematics are best discussed in conjunction with the personal styles of designers, rather than with types of build- ings. Moreover, while the publisher casts this volume as challenging previous scholar- ship, there is nothing in the text that explicitly engages with recent important writings on the subject by, for instance, Nicholas Bullock, Andrew Saint, or Alan Powers, or that deals to any extent with issues of method generally. There is no general bibliography. Once again, the book addresses only “high style" architecture; it stays with the prominent members of the profession—allbeit with a vast number of them; and a London bias is even admitted (vii). A long and most useful list of short biographies is appended.

In the end what matters are the images and the chapter and verse of the information, almost all of which are “new.” The book grew out of a task set by England’s state monument protection body, Historic England (formerly English Heritage), namely, to provide a record of all buildings of the period deemed architecturally re- markable. It thereby lifts a vast number of buildings out of the unknown into a spec- tacular presence. Nobody would wish to argue with that.

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1. Nicholas Bullock offers a somewhat different interpretation: the “heroic” postwar years lasted until the mid-1960s; after that a more commercial frame of mind emerged. Nicholas Bullock, Build- ing the Post-war World: Modern Architecture and Re- construction in Britain (London: Routledge, 2002).
2. For a useful supplement to the discussion in this chapter, see Elaine Harwood and Alan Powers, eds., Houses: Regional Practice and Local Character (London: Twentieth Century Society, 2015).