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Book Review: Development Control

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BOOK NOTES

Walking is Transport by Mayer Hillman and Anne Whalley, London, Policy Studies Institute, Vol. XLV No. 583, 1979, vii + 119 pp., £3.50

This book highlights a much neglected issue. Walking is the basic means of personal movement, and accounts for a third of all journeys. The book relies heavily on the National Travel Surveys, and five chapters analyse and discuss the extent of walking, as the sole means of movement, for different journey purposes—school, work, shopping, personal business and leisure. These chapters show, for example, that people have taken to walking to work because fares are too high, and that walks to shops are longer in densely populated places where shops are nearer home, as people avail themselves of the better choices available. There is plenty here to suggest that some policies to help walking are needed. It is also getting more dangerous to walk. Traffic dangers do figure largely in official policies; perhaps if walking were regarded as seriously as this book suggests it should be, the creation of attractive pedestrian traffic solutions would substantially reduce these dangers.

Walking is often omitted from travel statistics, a bad policy which leads to further bad policies, under-providing for low-energy transport and neglecting walking in research projects. The National Travel Surveys have provided some important information for this book, and another one would prove valuable. Walking appears to have declined appreciably, as measured by the number of journeys made, between the two surveys. Is this trend continuing? If so, why?

The book suggests some policy aims, implicitly and explicitly. Walking to shops is the second most common type of journey, close behind using a car to go to work, which receives plenty of attention from transport planners. Surely walking to shops could and should be made a more pleasant journey for nearly as many occasions? This would seem to be an extreme case of policies being made by technocrats who have built up a specialised body of knowledge, little imagining lives unlike their own.

Car ownership, as well as the proportion of journeys walked, is affected by the accessibility of

facilities. Higher car ownership leads to more car usage, and to a decline in walking. Thus the accessibility of facilities can affect our environment, and official projections of car ownership and usage. There could be plenty of scope for planners here.

The book covers well the extent of walking and many people's need for it, but not design to help walkers. Many of them, in particular shoppers, use walking literally as transport—to carry something. Pedestrian aids on wheels also need more consideration, in the design and maintenance of pavements, for example, and they can reduce the need for cars. The next National Travel Survey should include these too.

Development Control by John Alder, London, Sweet & Maxwell, 1979, xxii + 194 pp., £4.85

Development control is a subject which could doubtless fill several weighty volumes, and to some extent this small book's title is misleading in that it gives rather selective coverage of the field. This is the latest volume in the publishers' 'Modern Legal Studies' series, which clearly attempts to depart somewhat from the standard textbook approach. The publications in this series often seek to relate 'black letter' law to the social and other considerations which underly it. In this tradition, Mr. Alder's book is a lucid and informative contribution.

The book is largely concerned to analyse the impact of judicial decisions in the courts on planning law relating to development control. This is a field which presents considerable difficulty for anyone approaching it for the first (or even second) time. As the author puts it: 'judicial review is "inevitably sporadic and peripheral"'. The inherent uncertainty of the Law has also provided opportunity for fluctuations of judicial attitude both between individual judges (vide the many dissenting judgements in administrative law cases) and over periods of time' (pp. 110–111). John Alder provides a thread through this maze which is both of interest to the planner, and the student of judicial review. Conflicting decisions are carefully considered, but the author always emerges with a clear and sensible approach to the problems posed. Not least of the merits of the book is the way very recent decisions have been incorporated fully into the text, an important consideration in an area where the law is still developing apace. It may be

helpful to note that the important case of *Western Fish Products Ltd. v Penrith DC* has now been reported in (1978) 38 P & CR 7.

Obviously there is a limit to the material which can be incorporated. Nevertheless, having regard to the fact that the author does devote some space to the Community Land Act 1975, it might seem unsatisfactory to dismiss Development Land Tax in a few lines. Like most 'temporary' measures (e.g. the early history of the Official Secrets Acts), it shows remarkable endurance, and bearing in mind its close relationship with the Community Land Act 1975, is surely worth some space in a book on development control. Doubtless because it came too late to be incorporated, no mention is made of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites Act 1979, which one would have thought could have considerable impact on development plans. One might also question the treatment of the new RSC, Ord. 53 (S.1 1977, No. 1955) procedure in the discussion of remedies. A reader might read pp. 107–109 and gain a rather pessimistic impression of the scope of the reform, which has for all practical purposes swept away the old technicalities relating to choosing the right remedy.

The only typographical errors that might lead to complete confusion are on pp. 119–20, where there are some curious unconnected lines. The invention of a new fielding position in cricket on p. 26 is minor in comparison. Such statements are not, however, meant to detract from the fact that this is a critical, readable and stimulating account of its subject matter, and a worthy contribution to an excellent series.

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Medieval England: An Aerial Survey by M. W. Beresford and J. K. S. St. Joseph, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1979 (2nd edn.), xvii + 286pp., £10.00

This beautifully produced volume is the second edition of a most highly-praised 1958 work of 'observation, illustration, comment and suggestion' portraying through map, commentary and pre-eminently aerial photograph the physical manifestation of human economic activity in towns and villages of the middle ages, broadly from the Conquest to the middle of the seventeenth century.

The book contains aerial photographs, often accompanied by plans, of one hundred and

eighteen different towns and villages. Each photograph serves as a visual counterpart to a brief, but scholarly and explicit, verbal exposition on the subject under investigation. The settlements are not arranged in geographical or necessarily chronological order: their dispositions relative to each other are subject-orientated.

Eight main topics are covered, most of which are self-explanatory: 'The Fields', demonstrating the importance of arable farming in early settlement; 'The Fabric of the Village'; 'The Multiplication of Villages'; 'The Dissolution of the Medieval Landscape', dealing with changes in the landscape from the early enclosures to the late parliamentary apportionments; 'Village Plans'; 'Features in the Town Plan'; 'The Planned Towns, 1066–1307' dealing with town plantations (including a section on Edward I's Welsh towns) and 'Some Industrial Remains', which looks at quarrying, iron-, lead- and tin-mining, salt extraction, cloth manufacture and turbaries. A final, perhaps too-brief, section deals with roads, bridges and causeways.

It is impossible in a short descriptive note to do justice to this magnificent book. Its relevance to the bulk of modern town planning is perhaps peripheral, but for anyone engaged in conservation planning or in planning in rural areas containing villages and towns that are mediaeval in origin it is essential background material. Finally (and subjectively), although the authors deny quite rightly a preoccupation with decay in their choice of pictures (bustling towns with much post-mediaeval development obviously mask their origins), this reader found some of the photographs of decayed and abandoned villages to have a haunting beauty of their own and to provide a lesson in themselves of the potential transience of human settlement.

Il 'Male' Citta: Diagnosi e Terapia—Didattica e Istituzioni nell' Urbanistica Inglese del Primo '900 by Donatella Calabi, Roma, Officina Edizioni, 1979, 437 pp., L.11 500

In this book Dr. Calabi presents the first results of a more extensive, continuing study of urbanism and planning in England. This volume concerns itself with an examination of the development of the new discipline of town planning in the early years of the twentieth century and concentrates