

**Barrett, Anthony A. and Rhodri Windsor Liscombe. *Francis Mawson Rattenbury and British Columbia: Architecture and Challenge in the Imperial Age*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983. Pp. xii, 391. Illustrated. \$29.95**

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of the economics of real estate development forms. The social policy objectives, the expected impacts of built form design on users, and notably residential users, and the strategy of neighbourhood as opposed to project planning, are assessed concurrently with the financial and administrative concerns. The detail of the data presented by Hulchanski makes this integration extremely useful as a teaching tool for academics and as a measure for practitioners of the degree to which we have been successful in avoiding the design mistakes of the last round of inner city renewal projects.

These are two separate case studies. The author makes no attempt at a comparative analysis. However, in my opinion this is not a weakness of this report. Each neighbourhood had its own unique development and design strategy and confronted very different contextual constraints. Hulchanski's treatment of each makes these studies valuable, independently, as contributions to Canadian urban literature. To the extent that the objectives of the False Creek and St. Lawrence developments are similar, a future comparative assessment may well be in order. However, given that neither site has been fully developed, and that post-construction evaluation studies have yet to be completed, we shall have to wait for such a formal analysis.

There is however, a rich detail of information available in this study on two of Canada's large scale municipal redevelopment efforts. It is a report readily suitable to urban planners, designers and social scientists alike. It will also be a historically important document, when assessments are made of the efficacy of development strategies of the 1970s and 1980s as compared to those of the previous two decades. To learn from our errors and successes will require more case study efforts of the form reviewed here.

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Barrett, Anthony A. and Rhodri Windsor Liscombe. *Francis Mawson Rattenbury and British Columbia: Architecture and Challenge in the Imperial Age*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983. Pp. xii, 391. Illustrated. \$29.95.

In the spring of 1893, a 25 year-old Francis Mawson Rattenbury, scarcely one year out of Yorkshire, beat out 66 rivals in the competition to design the new British Columbia Legislative Buildings. The plum commission opened numerous social and professional doors; as the ambitious apostle of the latest English styles, Rattenbury was soon moving easily in the clubs and homes of Victoria's anglophilic society. Advantageous business and social connections generated a profitable flow of individual domestic and commercial com-

missions and multiple commissions for eastern enterprises profiting from western expansion. Rattenbury designed branch offices for the Bank of Montreal (1896-1899); resort hotels and terminals for the Canadian Pacific Railway's Pacific Division (1900-1906); and unexecuted hotels and terminals for the ill-fated Grand Trunk Pacific (1912-1914). Taken together with government commissions which included courthouses in Victoria and Vancouver, Rattenbury's designs "set the pattern, or patterns, given the number of styles he used, for institutional architecture in British Columbia before the First World War" (p. 3).

The present book attempts with uneven success to provide a comprehensive professional study of a man known more for a few famous buildings and an infamous private life. To the extent that they can be determined from public, corporate, and private archives (Rattenbury's own plans, sketches, business records and correspondence were lost in a 1910 fire), all of the architect's commissions are included. Many are illustrated, with plans, elevations, and photographs provided for the most prominent. Rattenbury's unsuccessful attempts to profit from northern development with a Yukon steamboat line and land speculation along the Grand Trunk Pacific route are also reviewed.

The problems of the study lie in its strictly chronological organization, insufficient critical assessment, and weak handling of the social and professional context of Rattenbury's career. The problems lie at least in part in the dominance of one source, a recently discovered cache of Rattenbury's family letters, most addressed to his mother, through which the authors seek to convey "the striking and salient features of his personality, inasmuch as these affected his career" (p. 3). The study proceeds letter by letter, building by building with an indiscriminate and eventually numbing juxtaposition of major and minor details, and insufficient analysis and overview. The treatment of the buildings is descriptive, with parallels to contemporary design offered, but little sense conveyed of Rattenbury's inspiration or the place of his work in the development of the profession. Given his belief in 'appropriate' styles — neo-Tudor Arts and Crafts for homes, Queen Anne for resort and Chateau for urban hotels, Classical and neo-Renaissance for major public buildings, etc. — a more systematic stylistic treatment would have allowed the authors to locate more clearly Rattenbury's changing designs in relation to contemporary taste, and expand on their view that his "talents as an architect should not be inflated" (p. 3).

Purely conventional in his designs, Rattenbury's success owed much to his social, business and political connections, yet these contexts are dealt with only incidentally in a book written with little reference to recent work on the historical sociology of turn of the century Canada. Although typical of the 'networking' professionals, entrepreneurs, and self-styled gentlemen who directed the province's development, Rattenbury's participation in these worlds is individualized

and so remains two-dimensional. His land purchases and political involvement to 'protect the character' of the Victoria suburb of Oak Bay could be clarified by reference to the broader issue of professionals in protective urban 'reform,' and the significance of his corporate contracts and speculative investments could be underlined by reference to the business history of the period. Working without the private letters employed by Barrett and Liscombe, Terry Reksten made these social worlds figure more prominently in his popularly-oriented *Rattenbury* (1978). Barrett and Liscombe's *Rattenbury* is a more thoroughly documented subject, but without the broader context necessary in a professional biography, analysis succumbs to narration and the promise of a treatment of "Architecture and Challenge in the Imperial Age" remains unfulfilled.

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Wilson, Bruce G. *The Enterprises of Robert Hamilton: A Study of Wealth and Influence in Early Upper Canada, 1776 — 1812*. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1983. Pp. iv, 248. Maps, Tables. \$9.95.

When Robert Saunders wrote his valuable 1957 *Ontario History* article that still stands as the basic survey of the Family Compact of Upper Canada, his opinion, based on then current research, was that it was not in essence a business-related oligarchy. Increasing interest in business history during the last few years has considerably changed this interpretation. Some business aspects of the Compact, particularly such fields as land acquisition and speculation, have been extensively reexamined. Far more studies of the careers of the merchants are now available through the two relevant volumes of the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, and in more extensive articles such as Edith Firth's Alexander Wood, Max Magill's William Allan, Syd Wise's John Macaulay, and my own examination of George Jervis Goodhue and James Dougall.

Modern monographic treatments are rarer. Douglas McCalla's Isaac Buchanan presents a most interesting case of an Upper Canadian merchant whose career came at the very end of the Family Compact era, just as Hamilton's activities came at the very beginning. These biographies presented the authors with unusual difficulties because the absence of personal papers meant that the subject's life could not be rounded out beyond their business careers. Possibly, the unavoidable gap is not too serious; one rather wonders if their personal lives were not completely subordinated to business activities and love of political power. The latter, of course, was useful for business purposes as well as desirable in itself. Such dignities as the designation "the Honourable,"

obtained on becoming a member of the Legislative Council, enhanced one's social status *vis-a-vis* the "socially superior," yet frequently impecunious provincial officialdom.

Wilson's study of Hamilton's enterprises, which began as his doctoral thesis, is an interesting and detailed account of the commercial development of the Niagara Frontier from the earliest settlements to its role in the relatively well-established province at the beginning of the War of 1812. It is particularly valuable for the way in which it traces the development of business activity from the military supply-fur trade economy to the merchant activity of a settled agricultural region. The trade along the economic axis that grew up from Detroit to London, England, via Niagara, Kingston and Montreal is well described, and the battles for monopoly, land and office carefully analyzed. Rather surprisingly, in view of its importance by the early years of the nineteenth century, no analysis is made of the trade with Britain via the alternative upstate New York routes to New York city. Although Hamilton may not have used this method of shipment, its existence played a role in peninsular trade and the success of some of his later rivals. Naturally, in Wilson's story the trade and development of Niagara is strongly emphasized; at times it seems that the importance of Hamilton and his region are rather overemphasized considering Upper Canada's development.

Wilson's discussion of the relationship between Hamilton and the newly-established central government of Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe and his successors after 1791 provides another major theme of the work. Merchants like Hamilton, who had operated virtually free from any control, strongly resisted the centralizing policies of Simcoe; equally Scottish merchants, again like Hamilton, had little sympathy with Anglo-Irish President Peter Russell and his York coterie after Simcoe departed. They would, however, form a natural alliance with Peter Hunter, when the Scottish second governor arrived. The struggles were activated by both the dislike of central control and economic expediency. Wilson's discussion raises many important questions, not the least of which is in how far the case study of Hamilton can be applied in other areas.

The problem of local government, and the formation of a local oligarchy for the Niagara peninsula, is also examined in some detail. Wilson demonstrates how the initial loyalist establishment was supplanted by the merchants, whom he feels formed the local elite in contrast to office holding compacts of other districts. An analysis is made of local elections and appointments to the magistracy; but an examination of the extent of the provincial officials dominance of local office before the Niagara area became a separate administrative district in 1800 might shed further light on the suggested late development of an oligarchy at Niagara.

Another important theme is the examination of the Scottish system of kinship interlinkage, which was so important