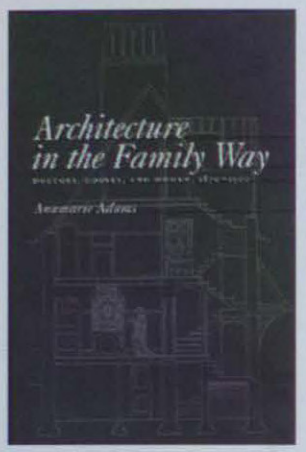
Reviews

Books



Annmarie Adams
Architecture In The Family Way
Doctors, Houses and Women, 1870-1900.

Montreal:
McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996.

Kent Fitzsimons

It is never surprising to read histories of architecture that celebrate the important place of professional architects in the creation of our material and cultural heritage. Usually focusing on the heroic struggles of our most esteemed forbears, these stories render colourful images of the relationship between our profession and society at large. Given our great love for bound volumes of Corbu's *Oeuvres Complètes* and the satisfaction we derive from uttering the name "Imhotep," we, as proud architects, must feel uneasy when faced with the stories presented in *Architecture in the Family Way*.

In her first book, Annmarie Adams, Associate Professor of Architecture at McGill University, maps the common ground in the histories of Victorian feminism, health reform and architecture. Using the English middle-class house as both a point of reference and a tool for analysis, Adams questions usual conceptions of the limits of feminine power, the division between domestic and public social issues, and the role that architects play in social reform. Putting aside the progressive image of architectural culture in late 19th century England, the book presents women and doctors as the main players in political and professional debates played out on what is usually considered the architect's turf. Drawing from sources almost never found on a design student's reading list, Adams deftly demonstrates how misconceptions about hygiene, unabashed grabs for power and outright inter-profession squabbling made architecture, and in particular the Victorian middle-class house, not a vehicle for reform, but a battlefield.

This is where the uneasiness sets in. It comes from what the book says about how our hermetic pro-

fession sees its past and present. Adams's keen eye reveals gross misconceptions about the role that architecture plays in social change and, perhaps more disturbingly, how architects may or may not participate in this process. From the start, the idea that architects and architecture play an active, predictable role in cultural evolution is abandoned. Rather than asking, for example, how the design of houses hindered or promoted the emancipation of women in the late Victorian period, Adams wants to know how women used ideas about the home in advancing a feminist agenda. She sees architecture not as a prescriptive force, but as a way to measure the process by which various groups pursued political and social projects. The evidence suggests that architects did not always make the grade.

Adams presents her argument with an engaging walk-through style in five independent essays, each developing a theme around Victorian bodies and space. The rise of Sanitary Science and its focus on the link between the built environment and the public's health is explored in a clever narrative reconstruction of London's 1884 International Health Exhibition. The second essay, "Doctors as Architects," documents the medical profession's foray into the domain of the master-builder, linking the origins of the Modern application of rational principles and scientific objectivity in the fields of health and architecture. The contradictory roles of women as both victims and sources of disease in the home are juxtaposed in two separate chapters. These two essays weaken the feminist "separate sphere" argument while laying bare problems that will occupy feminist thought in the next century: the first demonstrates how the casting of women as regulators of family health brought both power and blame into the female-gendered home, and the second shows how the dangers associated with childbirth at home were central in the struggle between women and physicians for the control of reproduction—a struggle that gave way to the professional objectification of the female body.

Finally, Adams explores domestic architecture as an instrument of Victorian feminism, placing emphasis on the role of domestic ideology in the emancipation process.

Central to the book's success in elaborating this unique look at architecture is its approach to the documentary and physical record. By consciously favouring sources ignored in traditional architectural histories, Adams hopes to avoid the bias of the Architect Historian. Placing herself outside of the advocate role, she looks at buildings as pieces of a material culture rather than as objects of belief. The difference is critical: society makes buildings; the reverse is only rhetoric. People express their conception of the order of things through the material world, but this physical manifestation is anything but absolute. With this in mind, Adams scrutinizes the architectural canon: reading Ruskin and sketching Villa Savoye won't tell you much about how domestic science established itself as a legitimate field through a spatial surrogate. Or, for a non-architectural yet contemporary example, if you want to know how expensive cigars are used as symbols of Hollywood savvy among the minimum-wage members of the Microsoft generation, the memoirs of the city's premier tobacconist alone won't be of much use. What would be fruitful would be a study of *Entertainment Tonight's* archives and the kinds of magazines that put a material-girl sporting an *Hecho en Habana* on the cover. And you must also abandon the idea that the cigar itself enforces conservative behaviour; in certain situations the smoker, if she wishes, can be exceptionnally subversive. As a piece of material culture, a building is like a cigar: while you may find it useful or even enjoyable, it doesn't necessarily make you either.

This approach to architecture, whereby a building is considered an object open to multiple forms of appropriation rather than the locus of predictable modes of behaviour, requires that *Architecture in the Family Way* use the built environment as a means of exploring social change while constantly checking itself against the danger of cause-effect explanations. It is difficult to fall into clichés when drawing from sources as diverse as women's advice books, the minutes of sanitation movement meetings, speeches given by doctors at public fairs, furniture catalogues, advertisements, medical texts and illustrations, plumbing manuals and trade catalogues. Bypassing Rizzoli coffee-table books can allow surprisingly complex relationships between doctors, women and architecture to surface.

The main casualty of this project is the accepted conclusion that the Victorian middle-class house constituted a separate sphere, neutral in terms of social power because of its physical and functional remoteness from "the world of science, politics, and men." Domestic Sanitation Movement records disclose an almost obsessive concern with the physical environment, due mostly to misconceptions about the

effects of urbanization and the spread of disease. Model houses at the International Health Exhibition in 1884, for example, dwelled on fears stemming from pre-bacteriological explanations of disease transmission, and the proposed remedies located the blame for sickness in the physical realm by placing great emphasis on ventilation and drainage. So powerful was the rhetoric of "dangerous plumbing" that doctors, in their crusade for public health, were able to cast architects as villains. By applying "scientific principles" in the analysis of a house's health, the "building doctor" created the illusion of technical negligence on the part of the architect. With this in mind, a plumbing guide written by Harriette M. Plunkett in 1885 appears to be a call for woman to enlarge and strengthen their "separate sphere." Inspecting the connection of the house to the municipal sewer system and assuring the proper disposition of soilpipes and airpipes came to be a woman's responsibility. Thus the very public, scientific and dirty subject of disease control became central to the definition of the "woman's sphere," making the home a politically charged site that linked the professional status of (male) doctors and (male) architects with the simultaneous emancipation and vilification of women.

Again we feel uneasy. Why did we refuse to take seriously the importance of standing pipes?

While placing much emphasis on the part that technical aspects of construction played in the evolution of feminine roles in Victorian society, Adams is also very interested in the link between architectural form and cultural practices. As an example of a social struggle played out in the physical environment, she cites the prescribed isolation of mothers from the onset of labour until one month after delivery. This medical imperative involved significant alterations in the spatial functioning of the middle-class home. An architecture of confinement developed around the conversion of an ordinary bedroom into the birthing room, or "lying-in room." Doctors insisted that birth take place in the sunniest room in the house. The lying-in room was to be located above the ground floor at the back of the house, well removed from the sounds of traffic and "all bad smells." Because of the association of disease with childbirth, a woman moving from her lying-in room to a dressing room was never to pass through the main hallway of the house. Entry to the lying-in room was limited to the doctor and nurse, the husband being permitted access only after "the soiled clothes" are out of sight. In this development of an architectural ritual around childbirth, Adams sees the beginnings of the "obstetrical takeover" of reproduction and the perpetuation of the paradoxical situation of Victorian women.

Those expecting Adams to draw a theory of politically active architecture from her observations will be disappointed. While she is quick to demonstrate how architecture is a forum for the promotion of social practices, she seems sceptical that wilfully disjointed planning or the original use of building materials can have predictable cultural effects. The lying-in room, despite its role in medical history, "was usually completely invisible in the architectural drawings." When the book does consider prescriptive-style architecture, as is the case with the sections on doctor-designed healthy homes and purpose-built housing complexes for women, it doesn't apply the same rigourous inside-out method of analysis that so effectively illuminates the typical townhouse and its place in Victorian society. While we know we can cynically use architectural rhetoric to further our cause, we don't know if we can conceive of a genuine progressive architecture.

Also absent is a clear timeline tracing the evolution of the architectural form alongside the social content of the Victorian home. Can we see if these houses, as sites of the growth of feminine power, physically change in a significant architectural manner through these three decades? Are they really, as is hinted, in the family way? One might argue that these are the sorts of questions predicated on the idea that a given physical structure has a particular cultural analogue. And Adams might remind us that the way you talk about bodies or houses is sometimes more important than how they actually work.

The uneasiness returns. If architects are not at the vanguard of cultural production, who is? How will our conceptions of architecture's role in social progress appear alongside DOW Chemical Corporation's involvement in the prescription-loaded Next Home exhibit? What does floor wiring have to do with democracy, anyway?

We'll leave these questions for future researchers, along with the task of determining a method for isolating historical truth: while *Architecture in the Family Way* is refreshing in its subversion of the masculine-gendered canon, Adams's goal is not to free architectural history from a real or imagined elite. Far from being guilty of the vulgarization of our heritage, she focuses on middle- and upper-class phenom-

ena. The record shows that neither the feminist nor sanitation movement in the Victorian period was much concerned by the mechanisms of stratified social organisation. While broadening the scope of the usual cone of vision, *Architecture in the Family Way* does not pretend to liberate History from identifiable interests. On the contrary. Adams understands very well the implicit partiality of writing histories, and does not hide her own motives. Nor does she pretend to reveal for us a 20th century conspiracy to blot out the shame of Victorian architects. A conspiracy was never necessary. It is not difficult to get architects to romanticize or exaggerate the value that their craft, knowledge, and profession may have had in the past. Is it surprising that the perceptions of this overwhelmingly-male group about its power during a difficult time in its history might be debunked by a study that focuses not only on another profession, but on the original other?

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Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Steven Parcell, ed. *Chora Volume Two: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture.* Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996.

David Theodore

Chora Volume Two: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture, is the second in series of essay collections published for the History and Theory of Architecture Graduate Program, McGill University. Volume One appeared in 1994; Volume Three is in the works. Contributors are recent graduates of the program, usually offering revised portions of thesis work, and friends of the program, fellow travelers and visiting critics. The essays cover diverse topics from classical antiquity to the present, from angels and golems to dioramas and museums, from problems of history (Philibert de l'Orme) and philosophy (Heidegger, of course) to those of architectural representation (Rachel Whiteread's *House* and surrealist Paris).

Chora is a Greek word usually translated as space, but used here in a rhetorical and ideational sense: Chora denotes "an empty gap that is not nothingness...[it is] the meaning of architecture." Such substantial claims for one word are similarly made for the entire project. "*Chora* is the site of darkness," writes Alberto Pérez-Gómez in the introduction to Volume One, "the space of *mimesis* that is our nature and must be preserved for the survival of humanity" (32). In Volume Two, the crisis that these works are supposed to help resolve is not that of all humanity, but more specifically that of architecture. The end of architecture is at hand, the centre cannot hold: "If its [architecture's] role as the stage for the perpetuation of human culture is not recognized and redefined, its demise would be inevitable"(ix). The agenda for both the History and Theory program and for *Chora* is thus apocalyptic and ambitious: in architectural work, "humanity recognizes its purpose." But this recognition is only possible if the proper kind of architectural work gets done. *Doing* that proper work is the purpose of the program and publication.

The title *Chora* signals a return to Plato, specifically to the *Timaeus*, and to all the mythological, transcendental, essentialist and idealist thinking of the Socratic dialogues. Plato is viewed through hip, contemporary, "Continental" philosophical lenses: the *Chora* agenda stems from "phenomenology and hermeneutic ontology." This philosophical basis is never argued for directly here; the content of the essays never confronts the hermeneutic ontology, so that non-believers will probably not be convinced of the importance of that philosophical position. Such a basis is resolutely political and ideological, however much presented as theoretical and philosophical. It includes a "transcendental understanding of embodiment" (Galvin 85) which leaves little room for talk of classed or gendered bodies, or even bawdy bodies. It allows attitudes usually unacceptable in academia today, including, for example, Dagmar Motycka Weston's sympathetic gloss of the gross misogyny of surrealist Paris.

One of the avowed enemies of this philosophical bent is "technological reductions" (ix and *passim*). It also condones a constant harping against materialism as a "reduction" of human life, a reduction seen as a result of mathematical and technological instrumentality (e.g. Weston 151). But it is not at all clear

that a "technological spirit" has been the first cause in human history to reduce human beings to "material" although it may be currently prevalent; and what about "technology's ability to liberate human beings and thus to allow them to become more truly themselves" (Harries 103)? Lily Chi's study sets out to examine one particular manifestation of this problem in architecture, namely the rise of the concept of functionalism. She clarifies the history of terminology, but then perversely conflates functionalism with modernism, as, of course, an evil architectural theory. The argument thus is tendentious and not historical; it also ignores how *persuasive* functionalist explanations have become in the twentieth century, that is, the degree to which our notions of integrity and truth are tied to materialist and positivist epistemologies.

Beyond fostering this general philosophical orientation, the essays are supposed to demonstrate an opening up of architectural opportunities, a nurturing of innovative, interdisciplinary, experimental research. Experimentation makes its own demands, but for an academic journal some of the commonplaces of scholarly writing are not so much overcome as ignored. Two examples will have to suffice.

First of all, even though the essays include many images, these images are often used only as decorations rather than as documents or pieces of the argument. Sometimes this curious use of sources is a kind of uninnovative art-historical illustrative mode: in Gregory Caicco's essay "Socrates in the Agora," what does David's *Death of Socrates* to do with the argument? Other images, such as the image of the Golem, are gratuitous, Sunday-supplement decoration, akin to showing a photograph of Alexander Fleming in an article on penicillin. One more successful use of images occurs in Jean-Pierre Chupin on Philbert de l'Orme. He analyzes the images he presents, drawing on them as evidence, and incorporates them into his argument.

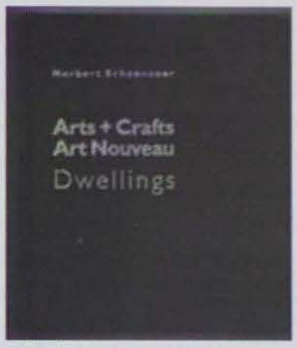
A second problem is that for scholarly writers, the authors show an unusual lack of interest in current research and a concomitant uncritical use of certain "authoritative" sources. These authorities are, unabashedly, stars of the postwar European intellectual scene—Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Ricoeur, Eliade—but there is little sense that this body of work needs to be challenged or has been challenged in the twenty or fifty years since it was published. Moreover, there is little sense that architectural projects actually modify or supplement or transform or correct this received heritage. The closed set of references is perhaps inevitable in a group of essays mostly developed within a single school program, but the repetition of not only specific touchstones—Flaubert, Surrealism—not to mention specific phrases and images—Breton 's fear of being cut in two by a window, "full fathom five" from *The Tempest*—turns them into shibboleths rather than authorities, and dims an initial sense of prodigious erudition to a feeling of in-jokes made within a hermetic circle.

These problems shape Karsten Harries clear, sympathetic and utterly unconvincing explication of Heidegger's celebrated essay "Building Dwelling Thinking." The image of a Black Forest farmhouse, shown out of context from its site and abstracted very conventionally into plan, section, elevation and detail, displays an ignorance of the problems of representation of such concern to other contributors. Harries makes a strange reduction of Heidegger's metaphysics of technology to functional, literal, considerations: he asks, "Is artificial light compatible with Heideggerian dwelling?" (103). He thus restates Heidegger's problem as the nineteenth-century problem of Zeitgeist: can we "delineate a dwelling genuinely of this age?"(103). This question is bewildering because clearly Heidegger's intention was to link the activities of building and dwelling with that of thinking, a link which Harries does not make explicit at all. But finally what is most strange is Harries' abject attitude toward Heidegger, namely, an unwavering belief that Heidegger must be *right*, that he must have something important to say, something of great importance to architecture. A truly "fresh" approach to Heidegger's famous essay would I think start from a consideration of how architecture contradicts and contravenes Heidegger's philosophical authority, drawing out the problems presented to Heidegger's formulation by the discipline of architecture.

The thrills of escaping from the authority of academic conventions are exemplified in the final essay, Tracey Winton's "When the Old Mirror is not yet Polished, What Would You Say of It? (Fragments Toward a Reconstruction of a weak Myth Through the Passages of the Museum)." According to the preface this is an article on the museum as a paradigmatic modern building. This thesis is not argued but rather demonstrated by a brilliant cutup of narrative fragments and citations. But the rigour of the method comes at a loss of critical rigour. A typical example

might be the assertion that "The picture postcard, widespread through the postal system since the Chicago Colombian Exhibition of 1893, is the forerunner of the mail-order museum" (275-6). No proof, historical or logical (or even a reference) is offered for this story of an intriguing set of historical events (the proliferation of the postcard; the emergence of the mail order museum), nor are the implications of such an historical sequence analyzed. Thus while Winton tries to use these allusions, citations and aphoristic histories to interrupt and open up the normal ways of thinking about museums (while simultaneously attaching herself to the tradition—the *locus classicus* of this method is *The Waste Land*) the essay actually reads as if structured by some preconceived normative model. That is, she does not follow the logic of her finds, but rather arranges them into a pattern whose meaning is almost entirely predictable by the time one encounters her essay at the end of the book. Plopped into an issue of the *JSAH* the essay would have considerable impact; here its thrust is thwarted by a dull litany of the same names and the same citations: Heidegger, Adorno, Merleau-Ponty, Baudelaire, Breton, Bruno. Sigh. Nevertheless there is a bravado and vigour, and rigour in its own way, to the writing that does present a challenge to the conventions of architectural writing and thinking.

Such conventions, however, do not disappear simply by making forays into other disciplines with other conventions. Philosophy couldn't care less about architecture; the success or failure of philosophical research today doesn't and perhaps never has hinged on architectural issues. But whatever the stakes for a philosophy of architecture, the counter position—what can architecture contribute to or critique in philosophy?—is scarcely acknowledged here. In these essays architecture depends on or explicates philosophy, but never confronts or changes it. Perhaps what is required is not only a "substantial rethinking of traditionally accepted values" (x), but also a much more critical attitude to the axioms of these non-traditional approaches, a testing of unconventional ideas and not just a description of the expansion of architectural conventions.



Norbert Schnoenauer.

Arts & Crafts and Art Nouveau Dwellings.

Montreal: McGill School of Architecture, 1996.

Conor Sampson

I suppose any analysis of a book's aesthetics would normally be tacked onto a conclusion, recommending it or condemning it as a nice or ugly object to hold in one's hand and spend time with. In this case, the author's voice and illustrations, combined with a well-considered layout, attempt to form an overall-work-of art, or *Gesamtkunstwerk*, as termed within the tradition of Austrian Art Nouveau. Beyond being a clever device for concretely illustrating some of the main premises of both titular movements, this approach unites what could have been a disparate collection of descriptive entries.

The cover, wrapped in cloth and embossed with a M.H. Baillie Scott floral print immediately sets the tone for the comfortable pace and inglenook feel of the book. Down to re-sketching A.H. Mackmurdo's 1883 cover for Wren's *City Churches*, Schoenauer has gone to great effort to unify the publication, giving a fittingly hand-crafted micro-press aesthetic to a book produced by independent designer David Morin and distributed by the McGill School of Architecture. While this seems quite appropriate considering the subject matter, it strikes an odd contrast with the plethora of "alternative" manifesto toting zines that crowd the stands at present. Why doesn't it have a splash of radioactive colour and a scratch and sniff embossed flower?

There is, however, something rather disquieting about Schoenauer rendering all his examples in freehand sketches. Beyond the nostalgic bookishness it exudes, it leaves the buildings timeless; timeless in that they are removed from their historical contexts. One has no idea if they were ever built, or, if they were built, what state they are in now. Schoenauer mentions that the Donald Forbes Angus house built in Westmount in 1926, was subdivided in 1962 as it was "deemed too large for the real estate market." This

seems tacked on as an afterthought, and leads one to wonder, whether beyond the practical viability of some of these efforts, the social intent was fulfilled; and whether Arts & Crafts and Art Nouveau ever stretched beyond simply a quaint aesthetic used by large houses in order to appear smaller.

The political concern manifest at the turn of the century that motivated these designers to produce everything from model cities down to cutlery in the name of improving the standards of living of the working man is pointed out on a number of occasions, and is in marked contrast to other descriptions of dwellings as "homely" or "charming." Perhaps the clash of terms is the product of a modern overtone, but it leads one to wonder if both were ever were reconciled; "homely" being anything but New England antique shops, and whether people actually lived in "charming" cottages before they became country retreats.

The focus of Art Nouveau on decoration and the use of luxuriant materials seems to preclude issues such as low cost housing, and leads one to suspect that both movements were actually at the genesis of politely practiced craft, and veering sharply away from the utility of a wicker work chair. It raises the issue of whether any well-intended rational analysis of a craft art form could ever avoid becoming a big "A" art form (witness the beautiful polycarbonate weaving coming out of Scandinavia these days) and thus becoming inaccessible to a majority of people. Though I criticize such misguided idealism, I find idealism lacking in undergraduate architecture programs at present, especially in applied design courses, and would welcome even misguided idealism for the relief it would bring to boring formalism.

Schoenauer's emphasis on the relevance of precedence in architectural design is also worth noting. While one could object that Arts and Crafts was simply the lifting of a peasant cottage archetype and application of it to the composition of palatial dwellings to create a sense of "homeliness"(a frequently occurring word in the text), he points out that in large part the motivation for adopting such an aesthetic was to identify national character in indigenous architectural tradition. It was concerned with the *impact* of an aesthetic and mimicked with a purpose. I suppose a formalist objection to the relevance of this approach to a national architecture might be, that in an American context, there is only need for novel devices, that all historical archetypes are borrowed from Europe. In an apt quote from Percy Nobbs, Schoenauer critiques Modernism, which was to follow Art Nouveau, for precisely this reason: "One must distinguish between modernistic absurdity and modern genius in design–the one denies the past, the other realizes the present as the step between the past and future."

The conclusion, however, does not provide any sort of epilogue or follow up on the impact of these movements on contemporary design and housing patterns. Schoenauer does provide a brief synopsis of the evolution of Modernism, but is less than verbose on how Modernism modified or complimented Arts & Crafts and Art Nouveau. His concluding sentence hints that the societal concerns that motivated Parker and Unwin to design Letchworth Garden City in 1904 are resurgent. He would have done well to perhaps include some of these new projects as the progeny of ideas that originated in the Arts & Crafts period. It would have been even valuable had Schoenauer written a slightly more opinionated volume that draws these concerns into the present, legitimizing their idealism in a contemporary context.

Conor Sampson, also B.Arch McGill '96, is working in Ireland.

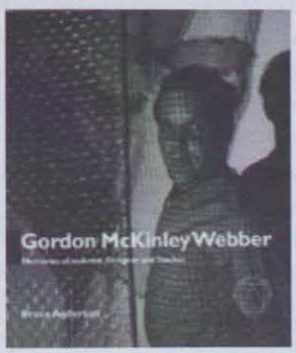
Women in Architecture Exhibits Committee. *Constructing Careers: Profiles of Five Early Women Architects in British Columbia.* Vancouver: Women in Architecture Exhibits Committee, 1996.
Andrea Merrett

Concisely and well-written, *Constructing Careers* tells the stories of five pioneering women in architecture in British Colombia from the nineteenth century to the present: Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart, Marjorie Hill, Sylvia Grace Holland, Leonora Markovich, and Catherine Chard Wisnicki. The book is a record of an exhibition of the same name organized by the Women in Architecture Exhibit Committee, and displayed in Vancouver in the spring of 1995.

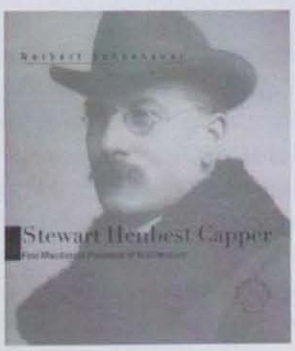
As a woman studying architecture, I feel the lack of female role models. Women still make up less than half of practising architects. The stories of these women are inspiring, even if little of their work is still standing. Each of these architects, in her own way, confronted the norms of a male-dominated field to pursue a successful career. In 1996 Catherine Chard Wisnicki was awarded a doctorate *honoris causis* from McGill University.

Due to the lack of documentation, much research had to be done in compiling both the exhibition and the catalogue. Not having seen the exhibition, I do not know how well it is represented by the book, but as a publication, the catalogue stands on its own. The authors have integrated the photographs, drawings and texts beautifully, making it both a pleasure to read and to flip through. Also included is a time line of women in the history of Canadian architecture.

Andrea Merrett is studying Architecture at McGill and loving every minute of it.



Bruce Anderson. *Gordon Mckinley Webber: Memories of an Artist, Designer and Teacher.* Montreal: McGill School of Achitecture, 1996.



Norbert Schoenauer. *Stewart Henbest Capper: First Macdonald Professor of Architecture.* Montreal: McGill School of Achitecture, 1996.

Conor Sampson
David Theodore

In 1996 the School of Architecture, McGill University, celebrated its Centennial Anniversary. Part of the celebrations involved special promotions of books written by or about the School's graduates and staff. In this issue of *The Fifth Column* we feature reviews of a half a dozen of the most recent publications.

The School also commissioned two short books, *Stewart Henbest Capper* and *Gordon McKinley Webber*. These two books were written about former McGill teachers by Norbert Schoenauer and Bruce Anderson respectively, two current McGill teachers, designed by McGill alumnus David Morin and published in-house. Both are sharp, clean, easy to look at, easy to read, and commemorative.

Capper (1859-1925) was the McGill Department of Architecture's first director (1896-1903), and the first to hold the Macdonald Chair of Architecture, while Webber, trained at the School of Design in Chicago, brought a significant Bauhaus attitude to the school's curriculum after his arrival in 1943. Although both booklets contain some important historical information about architectural education earlier in this century, in both the emphasis is on hagiographic profiles of Capper's and Wilson's professional careers. Neither teacher had a particularly high profile outside of McGill, however, so the story of those careers, as intended, is most interesting to those most interested in McGill.

That said, these books could have a special place in the school's history in addition to their promotional and commemorative value. For perhaps now enough has been written about the school (including books on Percy Nobbs and the recent issues of *ARQ* devoted to Peter Collins, John Bland and the School itself) to spark an interesting, detailed, critical evaluation of the School's history.

Sampson and Theodore are TFC *editors.*