

ation of small projects initiated by locally based community organizations in the last decades of the 20th century. The process was a gradual one, undertaken with small steps with few guideposts to mark the way. In the end, a gradual process was the best approach, one that could withstand the test of time and ensure the preservation of the nation's urban legacy.

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Capital Losses: A Cultural History of Washington's Destroyed Buildings

By James M. Goode. Second Edition, Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2003; 539 pp., photographs, illustrations, notes, index; cloth \$69.95.



The 1979 publication of James Goode's *Capital Losses: A Cultural History of Washington's Destroyed Buildings* was ground breaking and helped to raise awareness of the destruction of many noteworthy District of Columbia buildings since

World War II. As a history teacher at George Mason University, and later as a curator at the Smithsonian Institution, Goode personally witnessed the loss of dozens of landmarks. In the first edition, Goode examined significant buildings that had been lost, ranging from federal-style buildings of the 1790s to landmarks of the Modern style of the 1930s.

Goode's book served as a call for preservationists to step forward and ensure the preservation and management of the city's architectural legacy. Since its initial publication, public awareness of historic preservation has risen, and the passage of the Historic District and Historic Landmark

Protection Act of 1978 has significantly slowed loss. The destructive process has not ended, however; instead, it has warranted the publication of a second edition. The new edition encompasses the original 252 structures, and adds 18, including Valley View, a historic country home, razed in 2001.

The format of the second edition is identical to the first, with lost structures organized in two groups: residential and nonresidential. The groups are further divided into 19 categories based on architectural style. The categories include commercial buildings, row houses, temporary government buildings, and, perhaps most intriguing, street furniture, such as lampposts, streetcar tracks, and gates.

One of the book's strengths is the clear and concise narrative that includes a description of each building or feature, what made it significant, an overview of its history, and the circumstances of its destruction. Goode manages to convey the key data in a straightforward manner, without excessive technical jargon. Generally, the entry for each building and feature is limited to one page, although some merit multiple-page extended histories.

Each entry includes at least one photograph. Some entries include other images, such as owners, interiors, or context. The photographs complement the narratives and provide stirring visual reminders of what was lost. The large format of the book allows each photograph to convey important details of each structure. In addition to photographs, the book includes architectural plans and other related items.

Another useful aspect is the foreword by architectural historian Richard Longstreth, entitled "Capital Gains, Capital Challenges: Historic Preservation in Washington since 1979." Longstreth examines the trials and tribulations of historic preservation in Washington since the 1978 preservation act, an often sobering overview. While the act preserved many structures, its weaknesses have resulted in some tragic losses and some appalling

efforts to circumvent the preservation process.

One of the more avoidable losses occurred in 1989 when the law firm of Ingersoll and Block revealed plans to build a 400-unit apartment house at the site of 7 late-19th-century rowhouses on Rhode Island Avenue. A community association sought landmark status for the rowhouses, which would have delayed action until the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Review Board could examine the case. The law firm then obtained "midnight" demolition permits for three of the houses; the next day the fronts of all seven were smashed, destroying their character. The firm was fined a paltry \$500 for not waiting the prescribed 48 hours after demolition permits had been issued and for not having permits to demolish 4 of the 7 buildings. The firm had not even secured funds to build the apartment house when it began demolition, and the lot was still vacant at the time of the publishing of Goode's second edition in 2003.

The book succeeds admirably in its original mission to call attention to what has been lost in Washington since World War II; the second edition illustrates the continuing destruction. Where the book falls short is in identifying the root causes of the destruction, the social, technological, and economic changes that may have rendered some old buildings obsolete. Many of the old buildings were unsuited for modern use without extensive and expensive modifications. To be fair, identifying causes of destruction was not a stated aim of the book, but its absence reveals a limitation of the book's focus.

The book fills a void in the documentation of the loss of architecturally significant historic buildings in the District of Columbia. Other volumes have examined changes in the city, including *Washington Past and Present: A History* and *Washington, D.C. Then and Now*, but none has touched this particular subject.¹ Goode's volume remains the seminal work documenting losses in the nation's capital since World War II.

Many people will find this book interesting and useful. For those interested in historic preservation, the book will serve as a poignant reminder of what was and still can be lost due to a lack of foresight and the pressures of urban growth and renewal. While not overly technical, the book will be valuable to architects and historians as an overview of what makes a structure significant. Readers interested in the history and evolution of the District of Columbia will find the architectural perspectives helpful. Finally, casual readers will enjoy the book's fascinating subject matter presented in a simple and straightforward style.

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1. John Clagett Proctor, ed., *Washington Past and Present: A History* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1930); Alexander D. Mitchell IV, *Washington, D.C. Then and Now* (San Diego, CA: Thunder Bay Press, 2000).

*The Architecture of Baltimore:
An Illustrated History*

Edited by Mary Ellen Hayward and Frank R. Shivers, Jr., Foreword by Richard Hubbard Howland. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004; 456 pp., photographs, drawings, notes, glossary, index; cloth \$55.00.

Many things about Baltimore are peculiar, and its architectural history is no exception. The city is rich with character, with acres of vernacular fabric punctuated by high-style monuments designed by national and local practitioners. The architecture exemplifies virtually every major trend, style, and tendency in American design of the past two centuries. Baltimore has justifiable local pride in the buildings of its past, yet it is prone to self-effacement, as if it does not quite "measure up" to some Platonic standard of innovation or quality that characterizes other American cities. While Baltimore's important monuments are included in

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