

RICHARD LONGSTRETH. *The American Department Store Transformed, 1920–1960*. New Haven: Yale University Press, in association with the Center for American Places at Columbia College, Chicago. 2010. Pp. xi, 323. \$60.00.

For well over a decade, the architectural historian Richard Longstreth has steadily chronicled what must be the most significant understudied aspect of the built environment: its retail landscapes. His books on Los Angeles in the first half of the twentieth century filled a gaping hole in scholarship by documenting and analyzing the profound impact of decentralization on the spaces of shopping in particular and on the urban fabric as a whole. Among the building typologies that formed the dramatis personae of *The Drive-In, the Supermarket, and the Transformation of Commercial Space in Los Angeles, 1914–1941* (1999), the department store was a bit player. In several chapters of *City Center to Regional Mall: Architecture, the Automobile, and Retailing in Los Angeles, 1920–1950* (1997), it took center stage briefly, though importantly. Now, in Longstreth's latest book, the department store finally gets a well-deserved star turn.

Longstreth is hardly the first scholar to train his critical gaze on the great emporia. Indeed, the literature of the American department store is as vast as its cultural significance, ranging from monographs of individual stores to its role in the creation of gendered space and, especially, its relationship to consumerism. Longstreth's singular contribution is to examine the department store as one of the defining institutions of the modern city, one whose commercial *raison d'être* was in no way at odds with its civic contributions. An important aspect of the book is that Longstreth's conception of the city embraces both the urban center and the suburban periphery as part of an expanded metropolitan landscape, the social and spatial implications of which became clear during the period bookended in his title.

The study is national in scope, dealing with 185 department stores and shopping centers that were active in the middle of the twentieth century. Some of these are storied: Macy's, Marshall Field's, Neiman Marcus, Bullock's. Others are long forgotten, except in the communities where they once thrived and whose fortunes frequently mirrored the stores' own rise and fall. Few of the firms examined in the book are still in operation under their original names, as Longstreth notes in a useful appendix (which also includes what may be one of the first scholarly citations of Wikipedia). But this makes the book even more compelling as it narrates the history of a retail form that is past its heyday but is not yet obsolete.

Although the narration focuses on the department store's built form, Longstreth demonstrates the complex forces that influenced its evolving morphology, from demographics and transportation to merchandising and marketing to architecture and design. To do this, he draws on diverse source material: newspapers,

corporate annual reports, business and shelter magazines, and especially trade journals. As the book's copious endnotes and excellent source list make clear, *Women's Wear Daily* and *Chain Store Age* were just as important to the author as *Architectural Record*.

This is not to imply that Longstreth's study does not foreground architecture. The work of such key mid-century firms as SOM, Victor Gruen, Pereira and Luckman, and I. M. Pei are all featured, along with that of prominent retail specialists like Abbott, Merkt and Company and Kenneth Welch. Their department stores are not considered as isolated monuments; no matter how distinguished or sophisticated, these designs are understood as the concretization of shifting commercial forces. But this, in turn, does not diminish the undeniable glamour of many of these buildings, as is evident in the text's generous black and white illustrations, including period photographs by the likes of Julius Shulman and Ezra Stoller.

The book's structure is one of its greatest strengths. An underlying chronology is key to Longstreth's organization as he explores how the department store changed in the decades before and after World War II, concomitant with the decline of downtowns and the expansion of the suburbs. Throughout the text Longstreth shows how the department store responded to, and shaped, the cultural shifts, business cycles, and real estate patterns that occurred between 1920 and 1960. Happily, though, Longstreth avoids the false periodization that a decade-by-decade survey would have produced. Instead, he divides the material far more usefully into studies of nine distinct retail strategies. These include the expansion and modernization of downtown stores and the construction of branch and "station wagon" stores on the periphery as well as those strategies most directly related to the proliferation of the automobile: provisions for parking and opening stores in shopping centers and regional malls. The final chapter considers last-ditch efforts to revitalize downtown stores in the midst of a 1950s urban decline that was, as Longstreth shows, frequently exacerbated by the department store's own programs of suburban expansion. This is a poignant reminder of how competitive retailing begat a parasitic urbanism that continues to wreck havoc on the metropolitan landscapes of the twenty-first century.

GABRIELLE ESPERDY
New Jersey Institute of Technology

STEPHEN H. NORWOOD. *The Third Reich in the Ivory Tower: Complicity and Conflict on American Campuses*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 2009. Pp. xi, 339. \$29.00.

MICHAELA HOENICKE MOORE. *Know Your Enemy: The American Debate on Nazism, 1933–1945*. (Publications of the German Historical Institute.) New York: Cambridge University Press. 2010. Pp. xviii, 390. \$85.00.