

# UCLA

## UCLA Previously Published Works

### Title

Notes From the Incoming Review Editor

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2p56h31j>

### Journal

Journal of the American Planning Association, 87(4)

### ISSN

0194-4363

### Author

Millard-Ball, Adam

### Publication Date

2021-10-02

### DOI

10.1080/01944363.2021.1958552

### Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Peer reviewed

## **Notes from the Incoming Review Editor**

Adam Millard-Ball

September 2021

Preprint of an article published in the  
*Journal of the American Planning Association*, 87(4): 585-586

<https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2021.1958552>

*JAPA*'s book review section occupies a distinctive niche in the ecosystem of planning journals. As with *JAPA* itself, the book review section straddles the divide between research and practice, focusing on academic books that have lessons for planning practitioners as well as theory. As I take the reins as the new review editor, this dual mission is foremost in my mind.

I am indebted to my predecessor, Dr. Gerard Sandoval, for passing on the book review section in excellent shape and for leaving me with a healthy pipeline of reviews. All of the reviews that you can read in this issue, and most of those slated for the next two issues, have been commissioned by Dr. Sandoval.

What can you expect from *JAPA* reviews in the future? First, I aim to continue the mission of Dr. Sandoval to ensure breadth in topical and geographic coverage, while also providing a home for reviews of relevant books from adjacent disciplines such as sociology, architecture, political science, and law. My own career has taken me from geography to planning to environmental studies and back again to planning, and I see the porosity of its disciplinary boundaries as one of planning's great assets. And the growing international coverage of *JAPA* is evident in this issue's reviews, which address housing policy in Britain and urban design competitions in Sydney (Australia) as well as U.S.-focused contributions on neighborhood planning and housing.

Equally important, I aim to build on the progress made by Dr. Sandoval in promoting racial and gender diversity among both reviewers and the authors of the books that are reviewed and in encouraging reviews by PhD students and other emerging voices. A diversity focus also means spotlighting books on topics such as social equity, racial justice, and queer communities.

You can expect to see different types of reviews in *JAPA* over the coming years. The standard 800-word review will continue as a mainstay but will be complemented by review essays that contrast two or three books on a similar theme. I hope for these essays to be stimulating reads, going beyond the merits of the individual books and placing them in the broader context of the research frontier. Some notable books, meanwhile, might warrant a mini-symposium with several reviews and a response by the author. Great books are lasting landmarks in a field, and these new review formats can provide the flexibility to contextualize their contribution and importance.

These directions are just a starting point. If you have feedback or ideas for the review section, I would love to hear from you. And if you have a book that will be coming out shortly, let me know. I want to publish timely reviews, so advance notice of forthcoming titles would be very helpful. Even better: Volunteer to review for *JAPA* and encourage your PhD students to do so too.

The reviews in this issue address housing, neighborhood planning, urban design, and economic development. First up is a review by Dennis E. Gale of *The Great American Housing Bubble: What Went Wrong and How We Can Protect Ourselves in the Future*, by Adam J. Levitin and Susan M. Wachter. According to Gale, the book is not for the faint of heart but provides “an intensive forensic analysis of the bubble” and an excellent dissection of the crisis and federal responses that will be appreciated by those in housing finance.

The second review, of *Understanding Affordability: The Economics of Housing Markets* by Geoffrey Meen and Christine Whitehead, addresses housing in the British context. Reviewer Helen X. H. Bao is impressed by how Meen and Whitehead combine rigorous economic analysis with a discussion of the interactions of markets and planning regimes and the political constraints to housing policy. But she warns that the book is a challenging read for those without much background in economics.

Neighborhoods are the topic of *Making Our Neighborhoods, Making Our Selves* by George Galster. In her review, Emily Talen urges planners to read this book as a “one-stop shop” that integrates sociological, housing, and behavioral economics perspectives on neighborhood change, segregation, and housing markets. She appreciates how the book builds the case against segregation through empirical analysis rather than taking it as a starting assumption and how Galster goes beyond his modeling and case studies to offer policy strategies for achieving more socially desirable neighborhoods.

Few if any cities have made more use of design competitions than Sydney, as chronicled in *Designing the Global City: Design Excellence, Competitions and the Remaking of Central Sydney*, by Robert Freestone, Gethin Davison, and Richard Hu. The one-off nature of design competitions in most cities makes them hard to evaluate, notes Tridib Banerjee in his review. Sydney’s institutionalization of such competitions, however, enables the book’s rigorous evaluation, drawing on 26 completed projects. Banerjee finds the book an informative account of Sydney’s experience but also an “essential contribution to the comparative literature on urban design.”

Finally, Joan Fitzgerald reviews Jennifer Clark’s *Uneven Innovation: The Work of Smart Cities*. Fitzgerald praises the book for its political economy perspective that highlights how urban technologies can exacerbate inequality and economic precarity. She also appreciates how the book considers not only corporate-driven projects but also the urban innovation networks supported by philanthropies and nongovernmental organizations on topics such as climate change. The tentacles of smart cities reach far.

**Adam Millard-Ball** is an associate professor of urban planning at the University of California, Los Angeles.

