



Re-forming Britain: Narratives of Modernity before Reconstruction

Elizabeth Darling

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Re-forming Britain considers the nature and practice of architectural modernism in inter-war Britain in a new light. Bringing hitherto little considered protagonists and projects to the fore, it argues that rather than being an imported idiom, the new architecture in Britain formed part of an ongoing attempt to make a modern nation.

Spanning the period 1925-42, the book focuses on the key sites from and through which architectural modernism emerged in the UK. Part one considers the main arena in which a will to modernize Britain developed in the 1920s. In parts two and three the author documents, contextualizes and explains how this modernizing will was given modernist form, discussing the work of architects such as Wells Coates, Maxwell Fry, and Connell and Ward, and their allied ventures with likeminded reformers in other fields. These collaborations produced 'narratives of modernity': buildings, projects, exhibitions and books, through which, the book argues, modernist reformers were able to persuade politicians, and those with influence upon them, that modernism was the means to re-form the nation.

Re-forming Britain offers the first in-depth analysis of well-known modernist schemes such as Kensal House and the Pioneer Health Centre but also brings previously little studied or unknown activities to light. This important work invites a new understanding of the nature of architectural modernism in inter-war Britain and the ways in which it ultimately gave form to post-war Britain.

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