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Monadnock Summer: The Architectural Legacy of Dublin, New Hampshire

William Morgan

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The small, high, mountain town of Dublin, New Hampshire was known as an artistic and literary retreat in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Its climate, unpretentious life style, and magnificent scenery attracted artists as diverse as Joseph Lindon Smith, George de Forest Brush, Abbott Thayer and his young proteges Frank Benson and Rockwell Kent. Mark Twain, who summered there twice, called it "the one place I have always longed for, but never knew existed in fact until now."

Less well known, but equally fascinating, is Dublin's claim as home to just about every architectural style and several major domestic architects of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. On its slopes, overlooking deep, spring-fed Dublin Lake and the looming Mount Monadnock, we find a virtual encyclopedia of building styles, ranging from the plain and unadorned to the most ornate and ambitious. A list of the architects who plied their trade in this small town reads like a list from Who's Who: Charles A. Platt, Peabody & Stearns, Rotch & Tilden, Henry Vaughan, and Lois Lilley Howe.

In this immensely readable and enjoyable survey, veteran architectural historian William Morgan takes the reader on a verbally vivid and visually varied tour of the terrain, concentrating not only on the traditional and expected examples that crop up in Dublin as often as elsewhere, but also on the eccentric, unusual, and often unique extravaganzas that pepper its slopes. For Dublin was a great melting pot, a place which for a century had both the money and the taste to indulge architects of all stripes and styles, and to give them commissions to design among the most beautiful and original examples their talents could produce.

Profusely illustrated, comprehensive in its treatment, and written with verve, style, and a scholar's eye, Monadnock Summer will be recognized as among the best books on New England architecture to have been published in the last 25 years.

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