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Peter Guillery. *The Small House in Eighteenth-Century London.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004. 304 pp. $60.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-300-10238-3.

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In 1945, Sir John Summerson published his famous history of the classically designed, brick buildings of Georgian London. He was able to use the extensive estate records of the great landed developers like the Russells and Grosvenors, as well as the large amount of standing building evidence, often whole streets and squares, mainly in the West End of London, to paint a picture of increasingly comfortable and fashionable housing for the well-off. Since Summerson, our understanding of metropolitan housing developments in the long eighteenth century has advanced only to a limited extent, through the work of the Survey of London, English Heritage, and others on particular areas and buildings in London. Peter Guillery's new book is a radical attempt to get away from Summerson's elitist vision of London housing to look at the much wider range of residential building constructed in the capital for the middling, artisan, and working classes during a period of massive expansion (eighty thousand or more new houses may have been built in the Georgian capital during the long eighteenth century). The problems facing the researcher are considerable. Much of the development in this sector was small-scale, so the records are patchy; and many early houses were demolished in later redevelopment. Indeed, so much poor working-class housing has disappeared that the real topic of the book is the smaller rather than the small house–houses for traders and artisans rather than for laborers. Despite this, the book sheds exciting new light–illumined by many maps, plans, prints and photographs–on the metropolitan built environment in the Augustan age.

The opening chapters provide an overview of metropolitan development. Here Guillery demonstrates the continuing importance of vernacular wooden housing in London through much of the period, along with traditional building styles and plans. But the book also uncovers the great variety of housing in different parts of the metropolis. A series of case studies investigate, in turn, Spitalfields and Bethnal Green; Southwark and Bermondsey on the south bank of the Thames; the Mile End Road area; Deptford and Woolwich and then the outlying periphery. For each district a detailed analysis of social and economic developments is offered, which relates these to housing construction. There is no space here to recount all the complexities, but two examples will suffice. For Spitalfields and Bethnal Green, Guillery describes the rapid growth of population, fueled by the silk industry and immigration. Many of the inhabitants were journeymen, though there were a number of better-off artisans (and strikes were recurrent in the area). Most construction was done by small, local builders, though by the later eighteenth century, larger operators with good political connections, like the Mer-

cerons, were at work. Houses were mainly built for multiple occupation as growing poverty led to one family per room. Early houses were small, often two or three square rooms in two stories and garrets, but after 1720 taller houses became more common. One vernacular feature surviving in this district was the front-staircase layout, but brick-building was widespread compared to other parts of the East End where wooden construction was more prevalent. From the 1760s there was a shift away from high density tall buildings towards a more horizontal arrangement of rooms. In Bermondsey and Southwark, where the commercial and leather trades were widespread, timber housing was the norm well into the eighteenth century, despite the1707 Building Act making it illegal. Many houses were two-roomed, offering limited living space, but other wooden houses were more spacious and substantial, providing comfortable amenity for tradesmen and artisans. Across the district there were also larger and smaller brick houses.

In a final wide-ranging chapter, Guillery discusses the impact of improvement on the eighteenth-century vernacular metropolis, including the Paving Acts, the enclosure of the Docks after 1799 (which involved large-scale destruction of lower-class housing), and above all the Building Acts of 1764, 1772, and 1774. No less crucial, by the later eighteenth century there were major changes in the London building industry, with increased standardization and the rise of large contracting firms. By 1800 speculative redevelopment increasingly swept away many of the earlier, smaller, often wooden houses and replaced them with "instant slums"–back-to-back terraces in some cases–for the working classes.

In sum, this is a splendidly illustrated and important book, which opens a fascinating window on metropolitan development in the eighteenth century. Inevitably not everything is perfect. The publisher's decision to produce the book in a large, heavy format will make it difficult to read outside the library. But a cheap version in a more convenient size would ensure Guillery's book is as widely read and indispensable for any student of the eighteenth century as Summerson's classic issued over half a century ago.

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