ARCHITECTURE NEBRASKA

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The views expressed herein are solely those of the individual authors, several of whom produced these essays on assignment for academic credit.

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Editor's Message

It is with considerable pride that we begin the third issue of *Architecture Nebraska* with an article by the well-known author and critic, Reyner Banham. His essay was developed from a presentation given at the College of Architecture, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, in the fall of 1978. We are extremely grateful for his notable contribution.

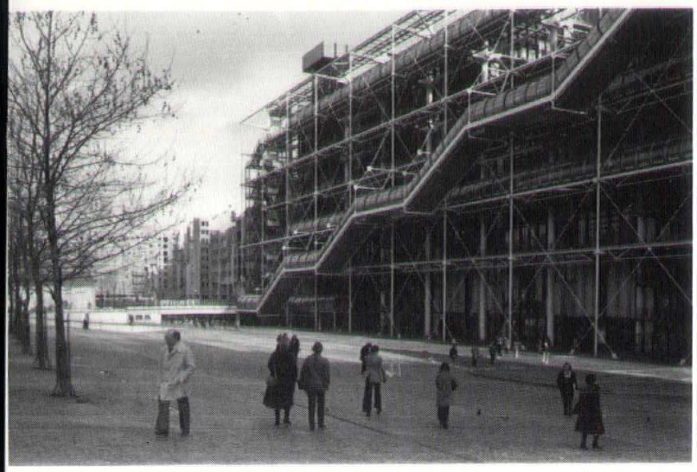
A feature of the current issue that sets it apart from previous issues of the magazine is the inclusion of several projects generated by the 1979 graduate seminar that utilize rather unconventional methods of conveying content. Investigation of the intentions of architectural criticism as developed in a recent book by Wayne Attoe, *Architecture and Critical Imagination*, led to a keener awareness of the various tactics at the critic's disposal. The result was a series of explorations and experiments based upon techniques associated with what Attoe terms "interpretative criticism". In each case the author has presented a very personal view of his subject, the building serving more as a vehicle for expression than the object of factual and detailed evaluation.

As in previous issues a portion of the magazine has been devoted to projects receiving recognition in the annual awards programs of the Nebraska Society of Architects. Buildings receiving awards for 1978 and 1979 are included in this issue. We wish to thank the awards program chairmen, Donald Polsky (1978) and Keith Dubas (1979) as well as the architectural firms receiving recognition for their cooperation and generosity in providing photographs, drawings and building program data.

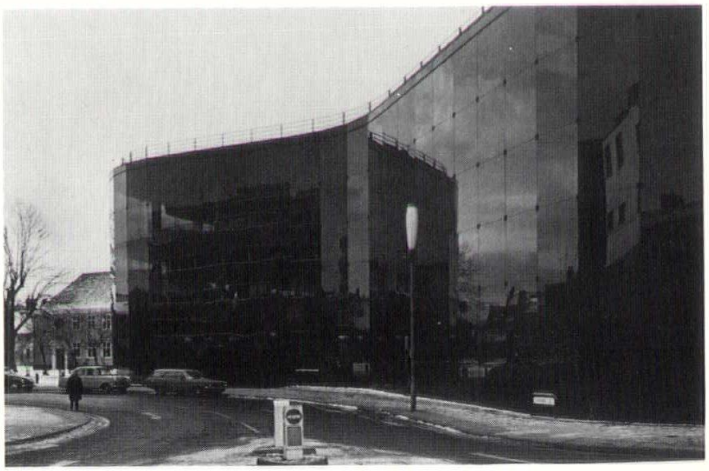
The Arts of Ineloquence

Reyner Banham

Centre Pompidou, Paris



Willis Faber & Dumas, Ipswich



The Sainsbury Arts Center, University of East Anglia, has been described as 'Pompidou inside-out' — a comparison that conceals more than it reveals. Certainly there are resemblances: both are in some sense arts centers; both appear to be 'High Tech'; both consist of open and generalized interior volumes flanked by 'servant spaces' in the interstices of the flanking structure; both were designed by former members of the erstwhile *Atelier 4* partnership. . .

. . . and neither of the erstwhile partners, I suspect, would thank you for the comparison. While both buildings are perceived as 'machines for being cultured in', Centre Pompidou is a rhetorically explicit machine, bellowing in color-coded epithets 'Look at me, I'm ventilated, sanitated, escalated, illuminated, elevated. . .' whereas the Sainsbury Center says almost nothing at all that can be read off in that declamatory mode.

Its format has been variously described as a 'Super-shed' or a 'half tube,' an envelope of standardized and interchangeable panels carried on a system of massively triangulated steel-tube bents which contain mechanical and other services and are lined on the inside by a second skin of movable aluminum louvers. Studied neutrality appears to be the name of the game, evoking such recent British attitudes as Peter Smithson's admiration for the ineloquence of Braun radio styling 'without rhetoric,' Cedric Price's call for a 'well-serviced anonymity' or Peter Cook's description of the Center itself as 'almost the ultimate cool tube.'

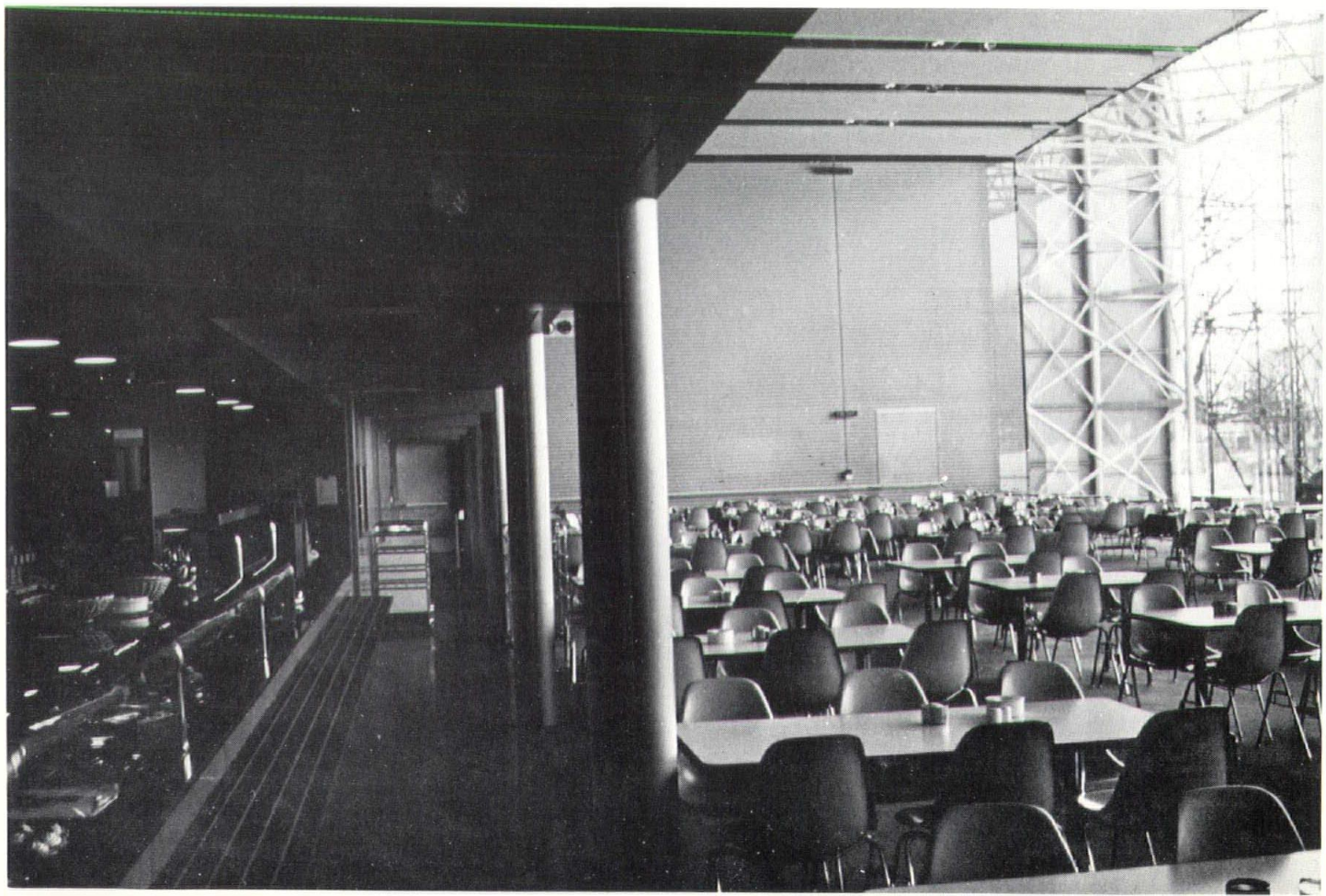
Yet ineloquence carried to such lengths — such literally exaggerated lengths, since it is over 400 feet long — becomes in itself a statement of some sort, even if it is felt in some quarters to fall into the military disciplinary category of Dumb Insolence. It certainly is not an ineloquence of failed intentions, or inattention — not if one knows Norman Foster or any of his office's previous works. One of their most conspicuous achievements has been to produce neutral surfaces that are neither bland nor boring.

For a triumphant demonstration of this among earlier work, see the facetted detail-free suspended glass wall of their Willis, Faber & Dumas office-block in Ipswich, England, following the historical outline of the site and reflecting the splendours and miseries of the surrounding urban environment. A clue to the possible significance of that urban mirror may be found in comparing it to a building that also demands comparison to the Sainsbury Center: The Pacific Design Center — a.k.a. the Blue Whale — by Cesar Pelli (or was it Anthony Lumsden?).

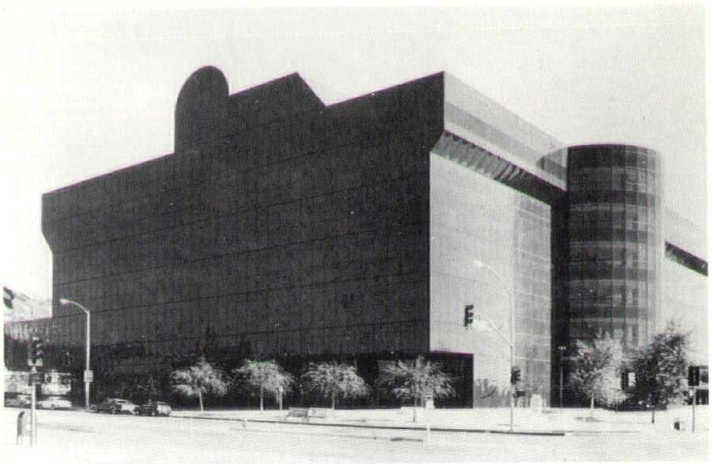
Very clearly, the extraordinary 'extruded section' format of that urban monster, with its overhangs and reentrants (not to mention a cresting quoted from Joseph Paxton's 1851 Crystal Palace) in no way results from local history and topography, as does Willis, Faber's irregular plan, nor from interior functions, as — presumably — does Sainsbury Center's half-tube section. PDC's form is a pure act of architectural will, as disdainful of its surroundings as it is indifferent to its contents — one automatically suspects that the form and surface of its envelope has nothing to tell us of those contents.

One cannot suspect the same of the Sainsbury Center; however little it may directly reveal of interior functions, no-one has ever proposed that the relationship of shell to function is one of indifference. If it were, why would the skin consist of three clearly differentiated types of panel, arranged in what is clearly a considered configuration, even if the considerations behind the configuration are at first sight inscrutable.

Part of the inscrutability derives from the panels' manifest interchangeability. In the established conventions of anti-modernist polemic, interchangeability equals indifference — if panels (or people) are interchangeable and therefore indiscrimatingly equal, there is no explicit hierarchy of functions or values to order our designs and the public's experience of them. All is simply one grey wash of indifference and — it is implied — indistinguishable mediocrity.



Pacific Design Center, Los Angeles



Even if we do not consciously recall that the interchangeability of one brick with another has never led necessarily to indifference, mediocrity or boredom, the impact of Sainsbury immediately gives the lie to the proposition. If the system consists of three *different* interchangeable panel-types, then the question of which type goes where is far from being a matter of indifference, since the three types propose, and serve, three different cladding functions — solid, ventilating, and transparent.

Now, it is conceivable that their distribution over the exterior could be entirely random — and in some early construction photographs that is indeed how it appears to be, but when one compares those construction shots with the finished building, the final arrangement of panels is confirmed as deliberate, responsive to some body of causes external to themselves, and therefore presumably meaningful.

The most conspicuous clue to the possible causes of their final configuration is given by the large areas of clear glazed panelling, behind which air-handling units may be discerned, containing doorways. Though none of these four areas can decently be said to 'denote' or 'signal' ceremonial entrances, the discovery that they are disposed in matching pairs, two to each side of the building, at least implies an orderly internal arrangement, a zoning of the tube along its length, even though the uses of those zones cannot be read from outside.

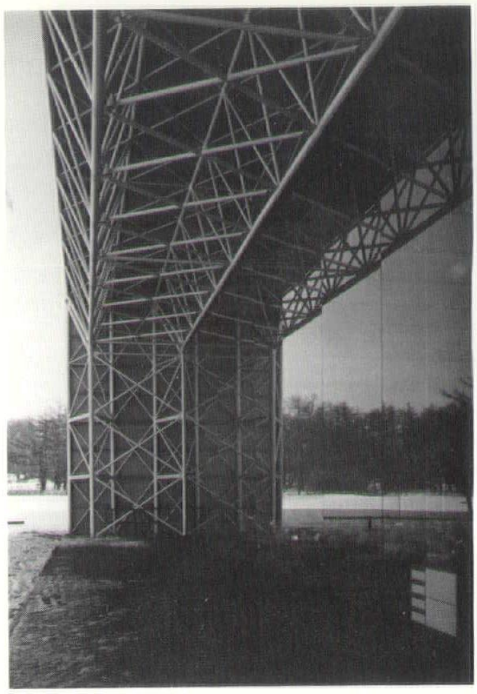
Other single glazed or ventilated panels, even single doors, may be found distributed about the exterior skin. Their distribution will appear enigmatic, perhaps random, until close inspection reveals their functional relationship to minor servant spaces (stores, labs, access to plant) in the depth of the structural bents. This is a relationship that the ordinary visitor may never perceive, but he/she can hardly fail to understand the relationship of the larger glazed assemblies to the specified public spaces inside the Center.

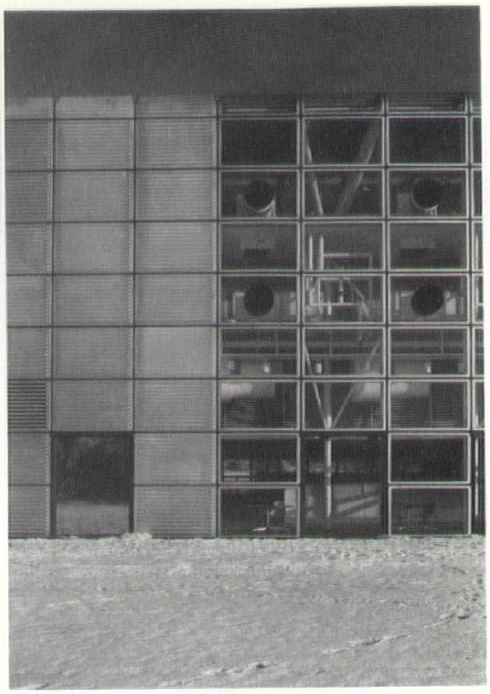
One pair gives directly on to the administrative zone of the Art History department, which is flanked by one-story blocks of private offices and seminar rooms, each of which has a useable deck on top, one serving as a study area for art history students, the other as a kind of coffee-room for the faculty club (senior common-room in English academic parlance). The other pair bracket the entrance space to the public art gallery, which occupies almost half the length of the tube.

Again, however, the casual passer-by (architecture's most demanding observer) will have no idea that this end of the tube contains any such thing as an art gallery. Unlike the north end, where the open glazed gable exposes the restaurant within, the south end normally reveals nothing, since its equivalent glazing is backed by wall-to-wall and floor-to-roof venetian blinds to protect the art works against direct sun-fall, and the visitors' eyes against excessive glare. In other words, it must conceal its function in order to serve it well.

This is far less a paradox or fault than has been commonly proposed. All the building can signal, admittedly, is that the contents, as well as the orientation, of its two ends are different. Indeed, that is all that any of its exterior aspects offer to signal: *changes in interior function,* not the functions themselves. This is not to be taken as a sign of symbolic or semantic poverty; buildings of earlier periods or styles have usually been able to communicate less than this.

Compare a regular Neo-Classical art gallery, such as can be found in many American cities or campuses; with its rusticated basement, its flight of steps leading up to a columned portico. its deeply framed windows and its cornice, all it is in fact capable of saying to the casual passer-by is 'I am an important building.' It cannot signal its contents or functions because the same truly indifferent box might equally well contain municipal offices in a city, or the architecture school on a campus. The complaints of latter day semiologues, like the flashier followers of George Baird or Juan Pablo Bonta, that modern architecture doesn't 'signify,' simply mean that it doesn't signify an ancient, caste-stratified and forcibly hierarchical order of society like that of ancient Rome or Egypt.





Recent semiological exercises also touch the inscrutability, or ineloquence of the Sainsbury Center in other ways as well. For instance, Charles Jencks has rightly observed that the codes by which buildings (and everything else) are able to communicate, are artificial and arbitrary, and one of these codes forces the Sainsbury to communicate things it does not mean. There is a code of forms and usages, invented (ironically enough) by Jencks himself, as well as Archigram, *Esquire,* and the New York *Times* and others, that is now — arbitrarily and artificially — read as signifying 'High Tech', and the Center exhibits many such forms and usages. Not because Foster Associates intended it to be so read, but because (they claim) that was the logical, or most efficient, or most elegant, or only way that these things could be made, joined or assembled (the pressure-formed aluminum cladding panels are the most obvious case in point). Nevertheless, the building has been persistently 'read' as High Tech. In fact, it is a comparatively low-energy building, and its technology is no more than medium — or 'Appropriate' as Foster will have it.

Its interior volume is not even air-conditioned, and although technical gismology such as that which controls the louvers is very visible, five-sixths of the structure by weight is constituted by the massive concrete basement, something which buildings have had since well-before technological times. This is not the place to rail at the superficiality of most casual (and professional) architectural judgments, but we must acknowledge that Appropriate Tech is very difficult to 'denote' because its appropriateness can only be judged after the building has been totally understood.

So, in the mean time, the prevalence of the Jencks/*Esquire* code virtually ensures that the building will read as High Tech, and thus will also be persistently misconstrued. Foster, of course, could have avoided this mis-construction by cladding the exterior with materials commonly read as 'Medium Tech,' such as cement block or the kind of fake solar panels now beginning to appear in parts of Colorado. . .

As soon as one has said this, the silliness of many current semiotic positions becomes manifest; for Foster to have done this would have involved falsifying, not expressing, the true nature of the building and the way in which it delivers its environmental performance. Foster has rightly or wrongly opted to understate the facts (and the fancies) of the situation, proposing in both the actual idiom of the building (and the accompanying verbal explanations) simply that they are offering a primarily technical solution to the functional problems the client's brief posed.

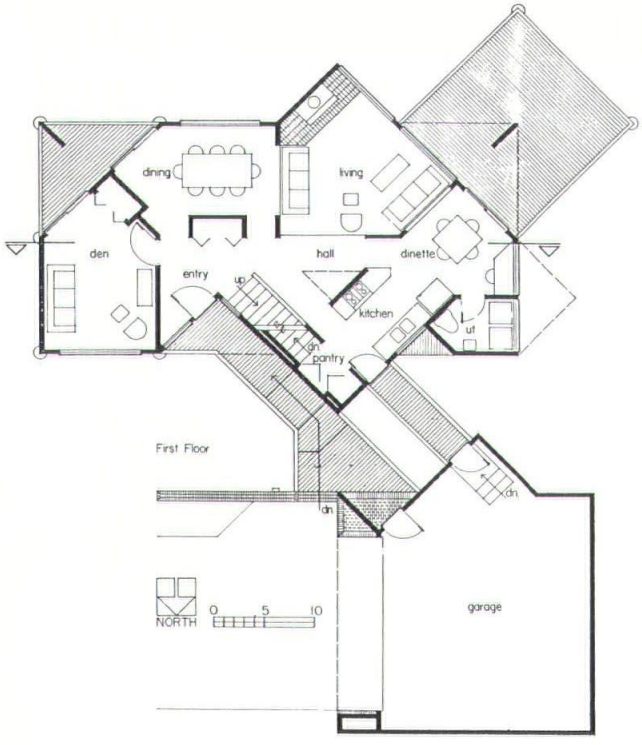
Those who demand 'more expression' or 'more explicit coding,' will not be satisfied by this semantic minimalism, of course, and those who demand 'Multiple coding' will like it even less. But that may be simply because they are so blinded by the unproven Jencksian assertion that purely technical expression is merely 'monovalent' that they cannot see that this is a building so ambiguously coded that its plurality of coding may never be disentangled. Unlike, say, one of Robert Stern's deadordinary little modern houses with 'coding' nailed to its exterior siding, this building whose coded hints, and hinted codes cannot be separated with a nail puller.

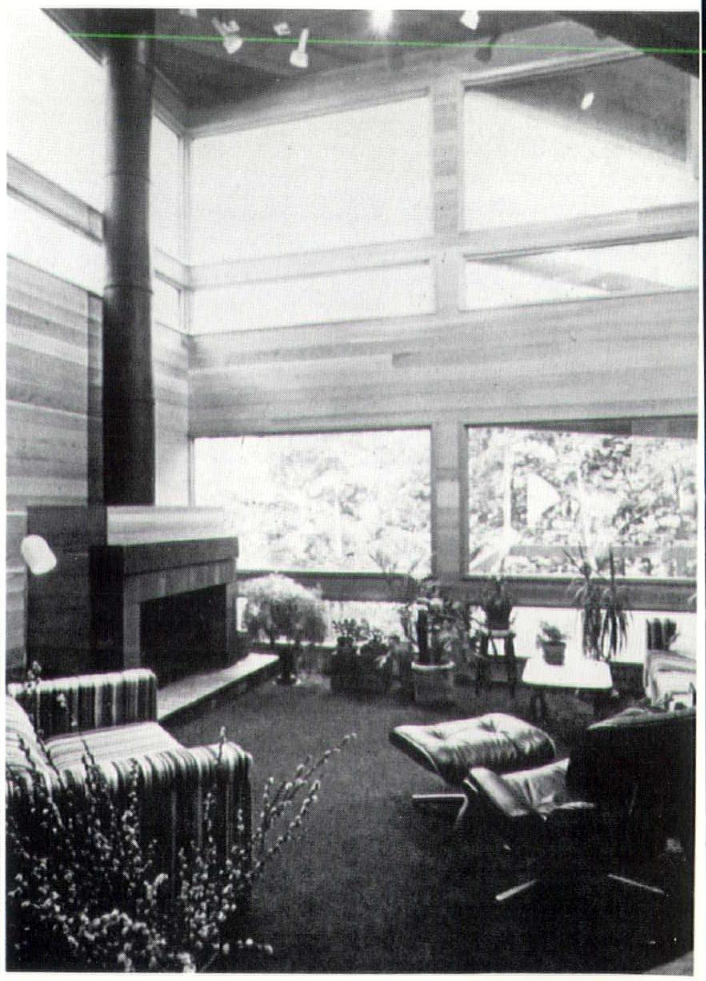
Nor can Fosters attitudes to the Form/Function/Expression dilemma be easily disentangled. His own statements to the press, like those of James Stirling, tend to emphasize the technical, economic and social aspects, and not to mention the semantic or aesthetic. The fact that he does not mention these things does not mean they don't concern him, merely that he has decided not to talk about them. His silences on these subjects are, I suspect, rather like the silences of Marcel Duchamp on the subject of 'art,' and are very like the — shall we say — *reticence* of the Sainsbury Center itself. And such reticence is not necessarily either easy to achieve, inexpressive, nor trivial. It was, after all, for Piero della Francesca's intensely architectural paintings that the phrase *arte non eloquente* was first coined, and that is distinguished company in which to find oneself.

Nebraska AIA Awards, 1978

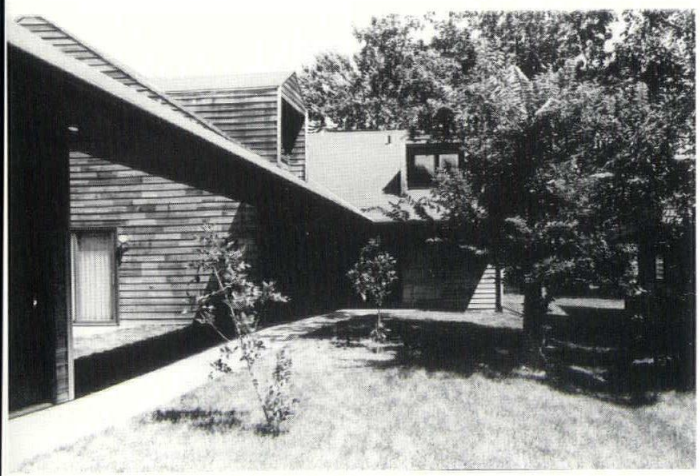
Jury Members:
Raymond Kappe (Chairman)
Kahn, Kappe, Lotery, Boccate Architects-Planners;
Santa Monica, CA.
Robert Marquis
Robert Marquis Associates; San Francisco, CA.
Henrik Bull
Bull, Fields, Volkman & Stockwell;
San Francisco, CA.

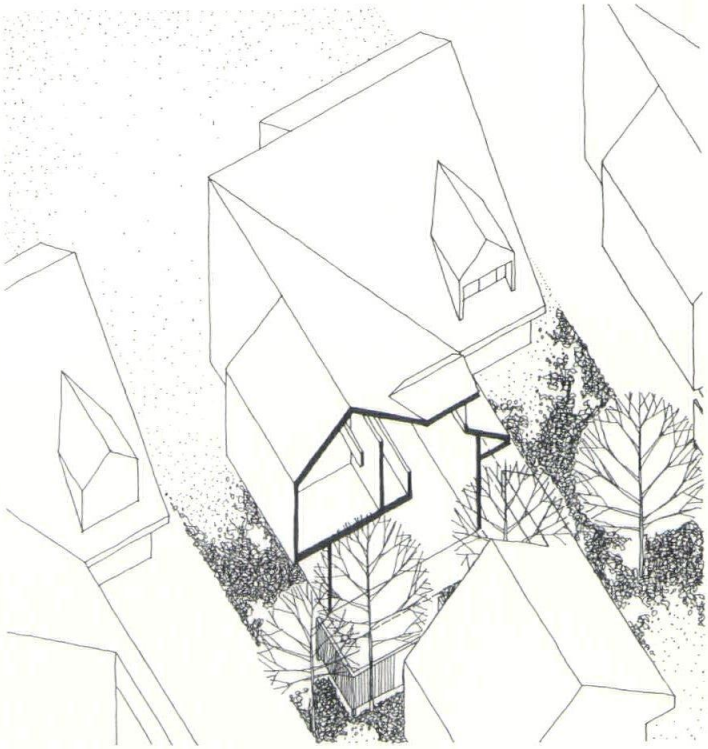
Slack Residence
Omaha, Nebraska
John Slack, Architect



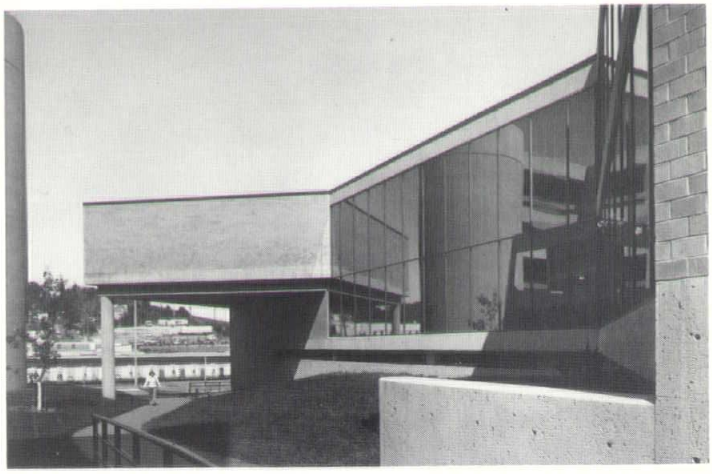


Finwell Duplex
Lincoln, Nebraska
Robert Findley, Associates

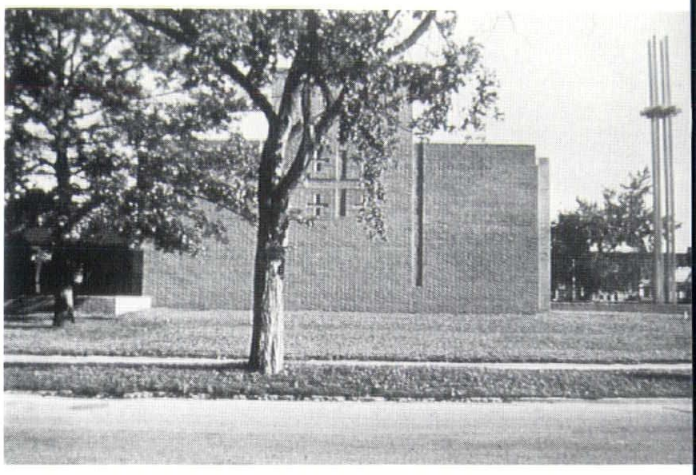




Boys Town Center For Study of Youth Development
Omaha, Nebraska
Leo A. Daly

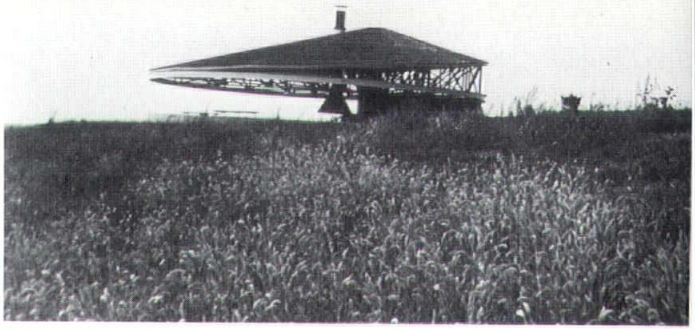


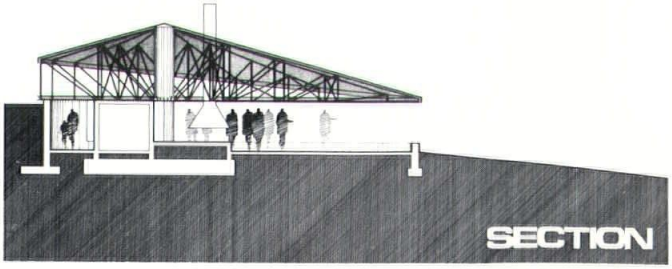
Creighton University Bio-information Center
Omaha, Nebraska
Leo A. Daly



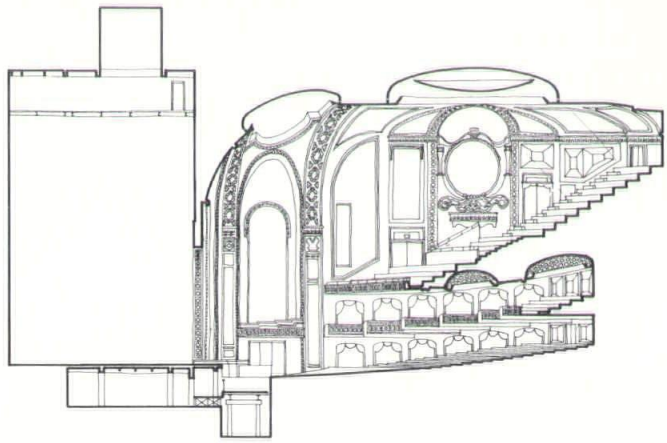
Grace United Methodist Church
Lincoln, Nebraska
Bahr, Vermeer & Haecker, Architects

Black Elk — Neihardt Park Shelter
Blair, Nebraska
Dana Larson Roubal & Associates



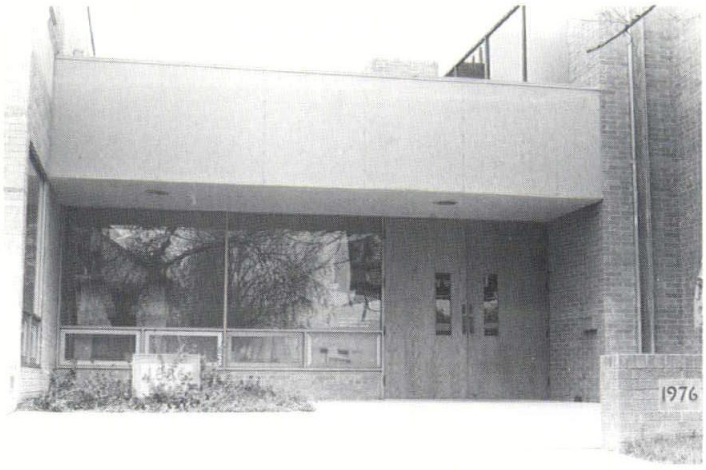


Section



Orpheum Theater Restoration
Omaha, Nebraska
Leo A. Daly

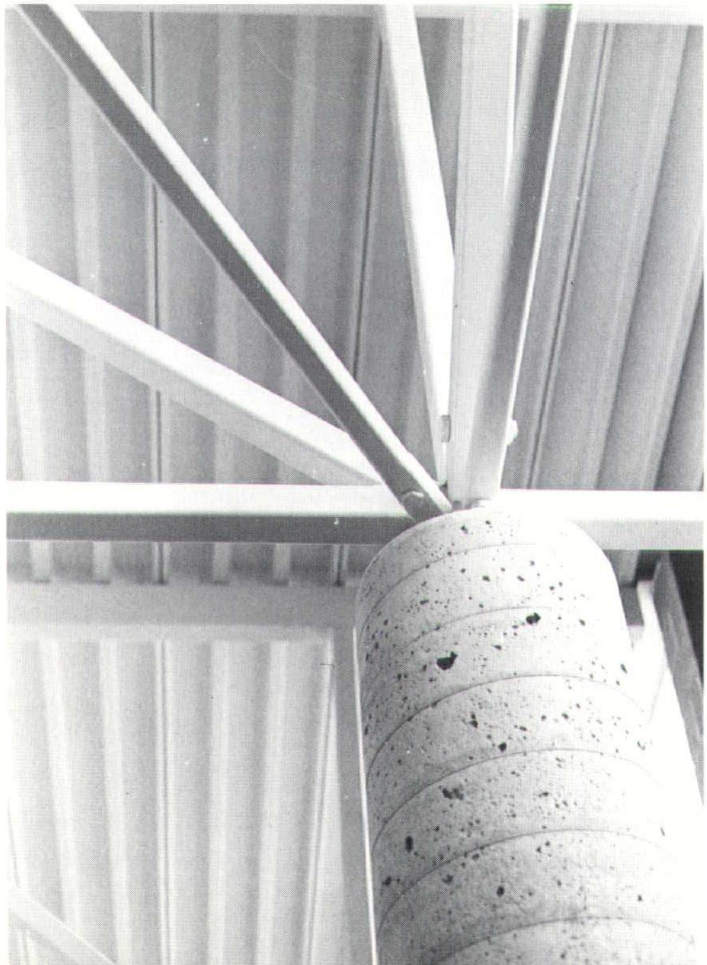
Grace United Methodist Church
David Salyards



They come to you in tones of honor and respect.
To praise through song and prayer.
They come to you to see themselves
To see their friends.
To honor and obey
Till death do you part.

Modern day phoenix
From whose father's ashes you arose.
Gemini Twin.
New respectfully greets old.

Car coughs,
Ghosts,
History falls
To quik-serve and parking stalls.
Yet you still stand proud
Restful.
While an artery pumps an unrythmic music.
An island The isle of Wright (eousness).



Your clothes say I've known you before
Lincoln London Paris
Deja Vu.
Show me the secret behind those protective walls!
I've come to see your soul. You come too.
By photon we enter
Between the mind and soul.
It is your spirit we are after.

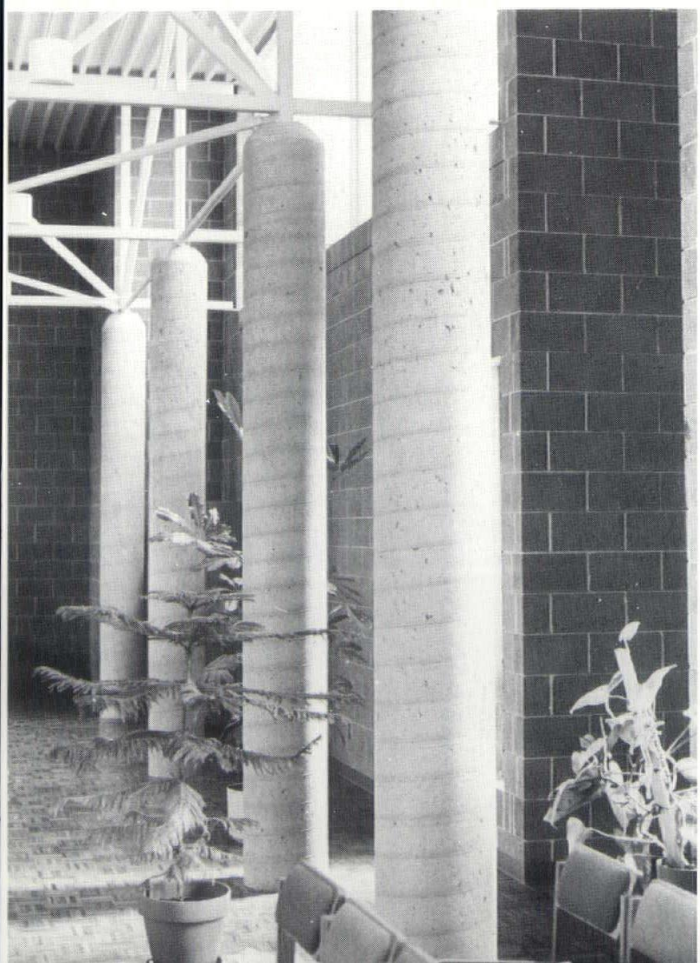
From here we view your mind,
Your stomach
Your bowels
Your spirit Your spirit plays hide and seek.
But your mouths gap open.
You are filled with a gentle light.
Peaceful now.
Quiet now.
Holy now.
Tinted forever.
Are you the Kahnian light
To reveal the square in its infinite moods?
Are you the weatherman?
The timekeeper?

With bowed heads we neglect your structure.
Light and easy.
White upon white
Steel upon steel
Bony clouds that hold the heavens.
Not the clouds of Michelangelo.

Structure that expresses something, the structure
that some think expresses something, the structure
that some think does not express something but
certainly expresses the structure, suddenly
becomes sculptural.
Fulfilled technology transcends into architecture?

Wait something else lives.
The chairs have already found it.
It dances in sunlight.
It rises in authority.

I've known you in more grandeur.
Lincoln London Paris
Deja vu.
Spiritual alter-ego
without the ego.
Your presence commands reverance.
Chairs line in rows before you.
Columns stand at attention.



The columns.
Fingers of Atlas
holding the heavens.
In solitude,
rejected by the walls
as if you had warts.
Separated by distance yet united by species.
Concretian heritage.
Common in your feelings,
starkly elegant in your use.
Awaiting adornment.

Are you meant for eyes so bowed they are unable
to see you?

Spirit Soul
Without your sinners and your saints
Your keyrings and your kleenex.
We see your wholeness.
Molded from the four horizons.

Wood
Steel
Block "guaranteed wrinkle-free"
Clean new sheets
reflect the minds like beds already made up.
So much descends upon you.
Proudly naked.
No wall shrouded secrets.
No structure skinned in frills.
You speak with simple articulation

Unsure heritage.
Your logical clarity speaks of ancient France.
Your stout masculinity speaks old English.
A refreshing newness that is Americana.

Renaissance logic.
Baroquian centrality.
Colonial austerity.
Spirit free from direction.

Universal.
Multi-purpose.
Ambiguous.
Who is here with me?
Martin Luther.
John Paul.
Brigham Young.
Or are those the ghostly echoes of bouncing basketballs?

Where is that sacred dimension?

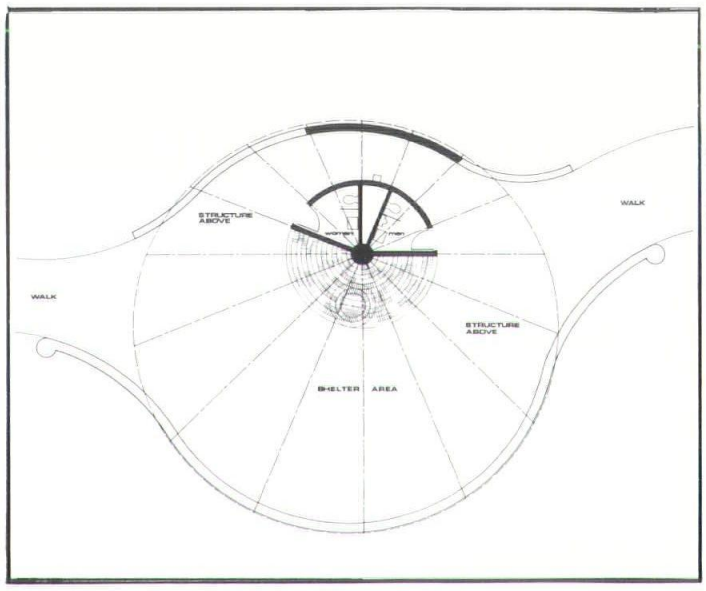
Someone has left it outside.
It speaks not to the spirit
It speaks to the auto.
SONIC BURGER, BURGER KING, KING DOLLAR, church.

Church.
Another hostage of the white lines of the roadway.
STOP. GO. NO RIGHT TURN. NO U TURNS. ONE WAY.

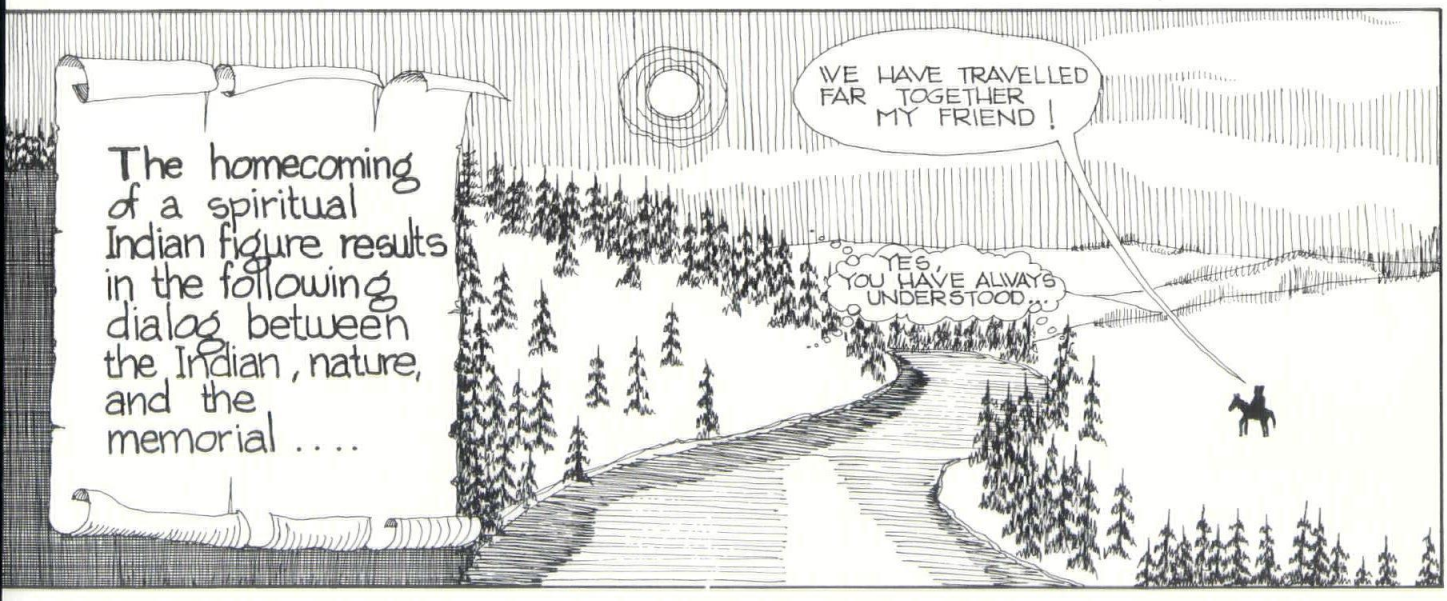
One way.
It also speaks of one way.
I wonder why it speaks where it can't be heard??


GRACE
UNITED
METHODIST
CHURCH

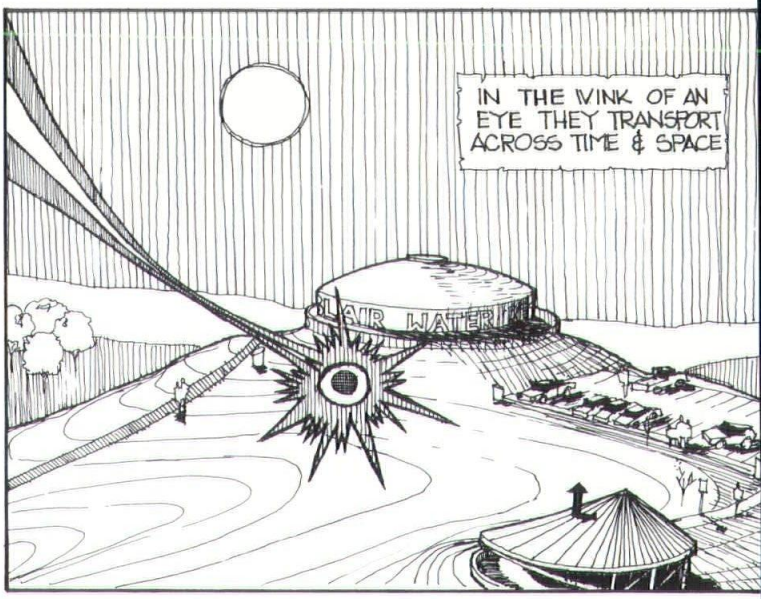
Floor Plan

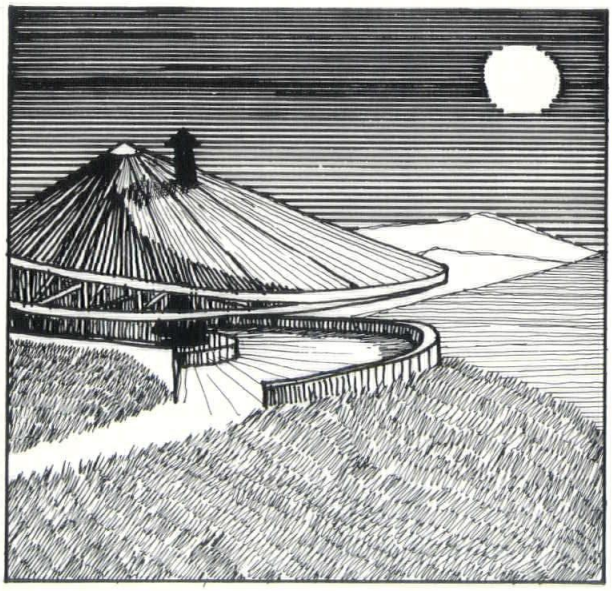


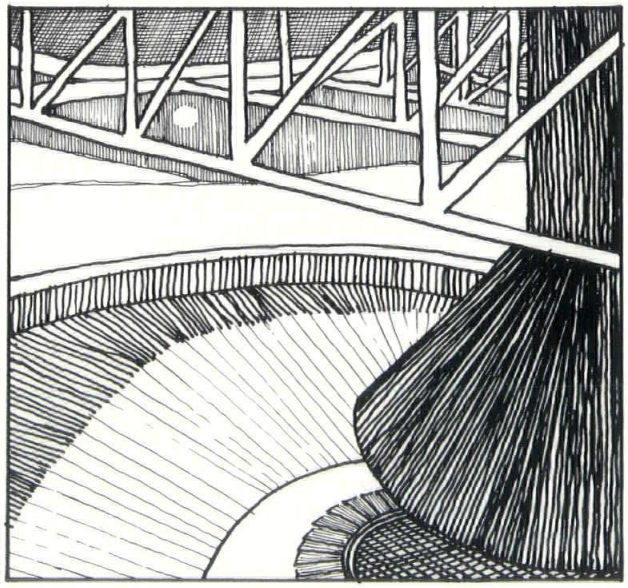
Return to Black Elk
Joe Neuenschwander

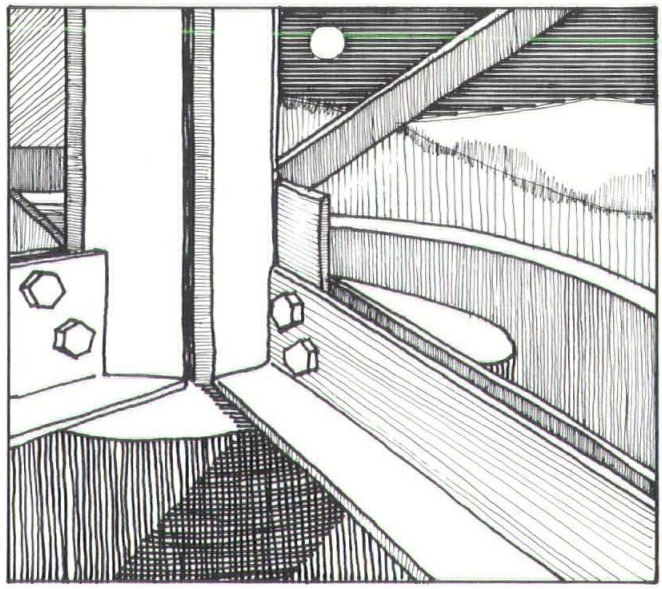


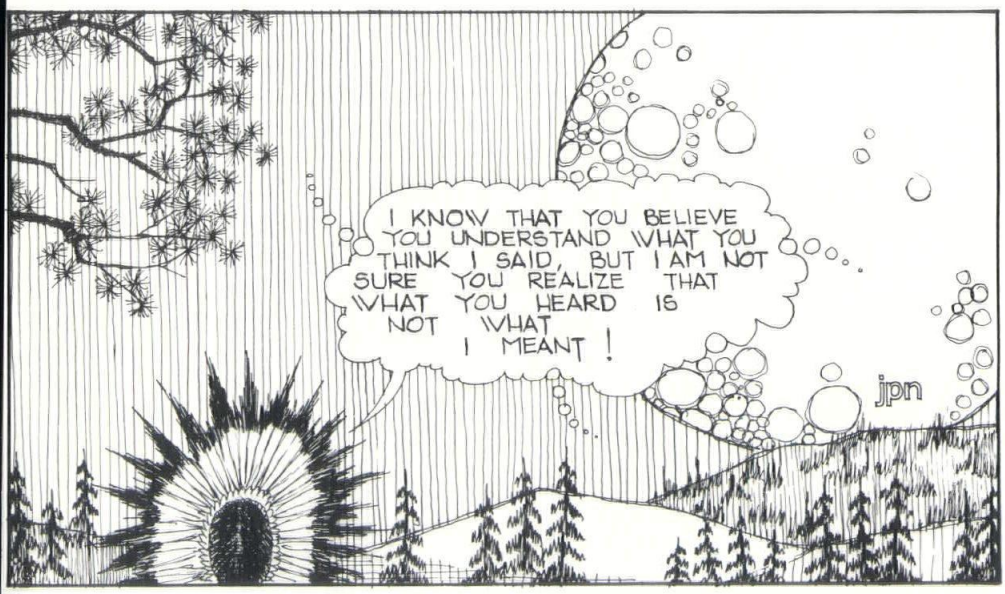

IT SEEMS THAT MANY HAVE LOST OUR SIGNIFICANCE... THEY HAVE BUILT A MEMORIAL TO OUR EXISTENCE
SO I HAVE HEARD. LET US SEE THIS PLACE!


IN THE WINK OF AN EYE THEY TRANSPORT ACROSS TIME & SPACE
AIR
WATER





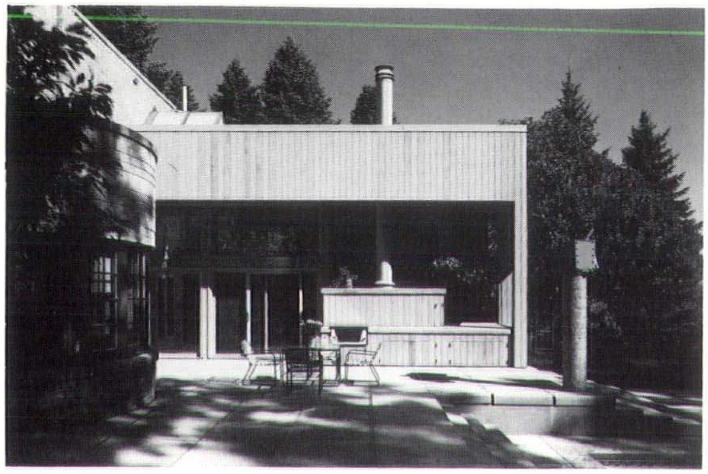



I KNOW THAT YOU BELIEVE YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU THINK I SAID, BUT I AM NOT SURE YOU REALIZE THAT WHAT YOU HEARD IS NOT WHAT I MEANT !
jpn

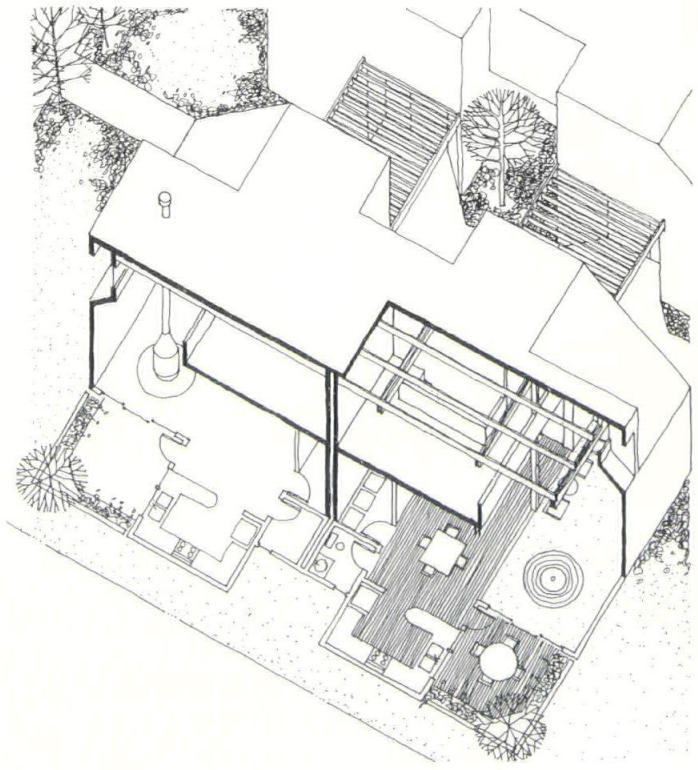
Nebraska AIA Awards, 1979

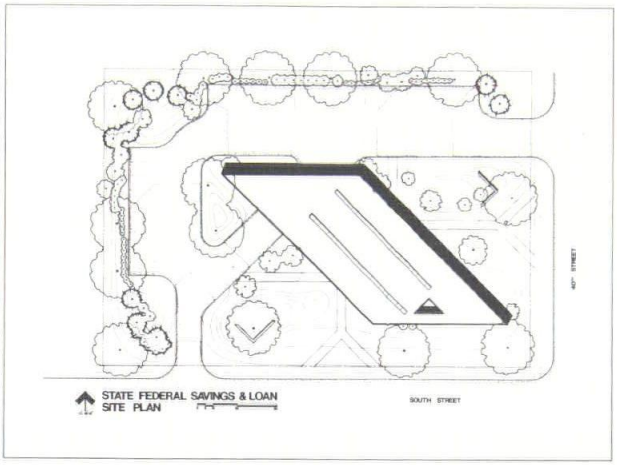
Jury Members:
George W. Qualls (Chairman)
Geddes, Brecker, Qualls and Cunningham Architects; Philadelphia, PA.
Fred L. Foote
Mitchell/Guirgola Associates; Philadelphia, PA.
Charles E. Dagit, Jr.
Dagit/Saylor Architects; Philadelphia, PA.

House Addition
Sioux City, Nebraska
Bahr, Vermeer and Haecker, Architects



Pleskac Duplexes
Lincoln, Nebraska
Robert Findley/Associates

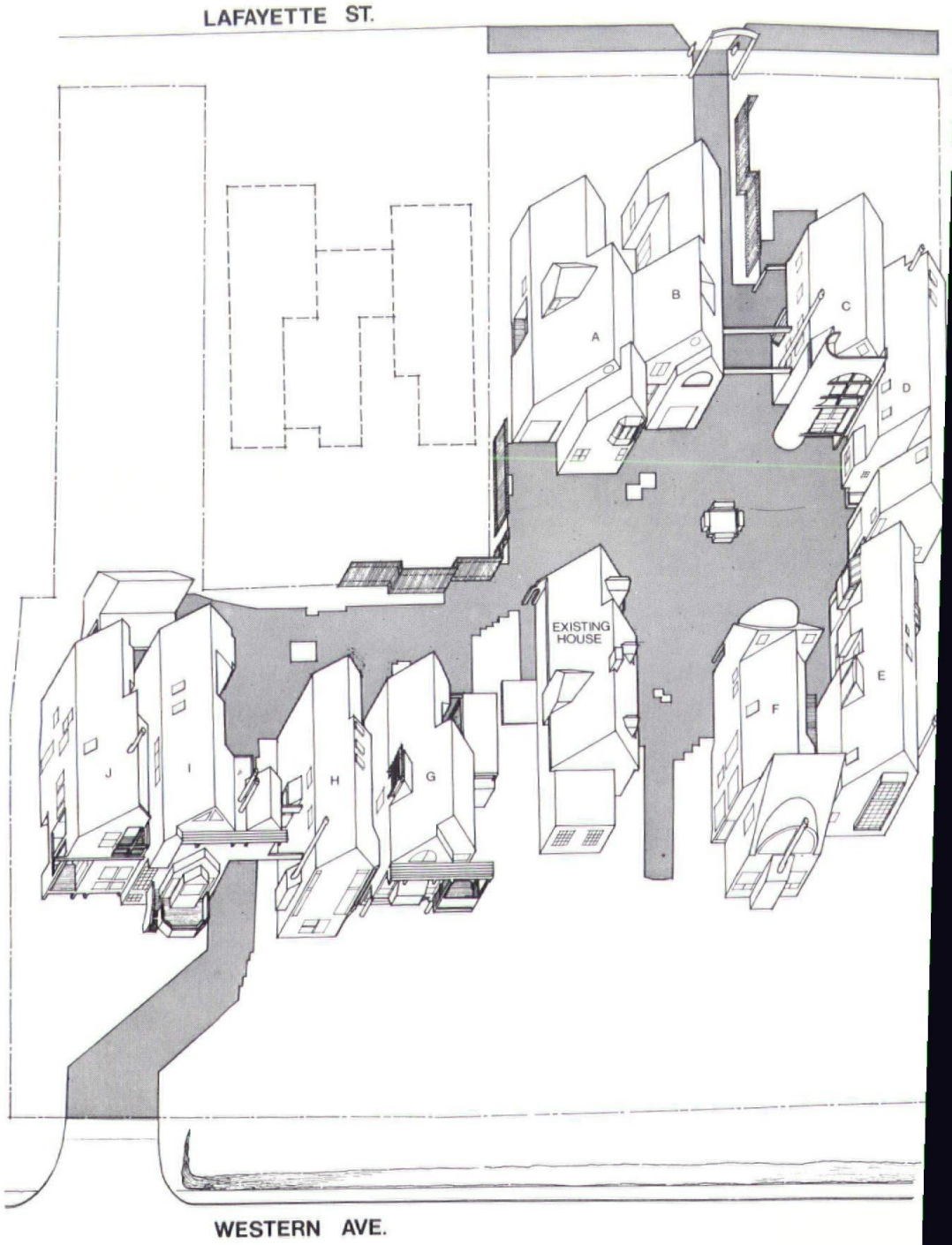




State Federal Savings Branch Office
Lincoln, Nebraska
Davis/Fenton/Stange/Darling

Midlands Mall
Council Bluffs, Iowa
Astle Ericson and Associates

Treehouse
Omaha, Nebraska
Gary Bowen
Scott Findley
Ed Leach
Jack Savage
Gary Tassich


LAFAYETTE ST.
A
B
C
D
EXISTING HOUSE
E
F
G
H
I
J
WESTERN AVE.

Treehouse

David Salyards

The rain did not last. Winter was trying its hardest to be accountable. Come morning, the sun awoke and the air was quietly clear. The reddish ant poked his head out of his nest among the pavers to anxiously view the new day. (If ants are to maintain any sanity, they must be very optimistic about life.)

The buildings and courtyard lie in a cluster of trees. The single tree in the center spreads its limbs with a weary precision, jutting—no, gesturing to the faces of the houses, splattering all that comes near with pieces of shadow, like a Jackson Pollack painting. The black ant puffed through dragging a piece of someone's somekinda sandwich that had long since been left behind.

"Good morning," yelled the red ant from atop his dirt mound.

"Mornin'," mumbled the portion of captured sandwich, which ceased to move.

"Quite a place here, ain't it?" red replied while scurrying (ants cannot walk) from atop his nest.

"Yes siree indeed."

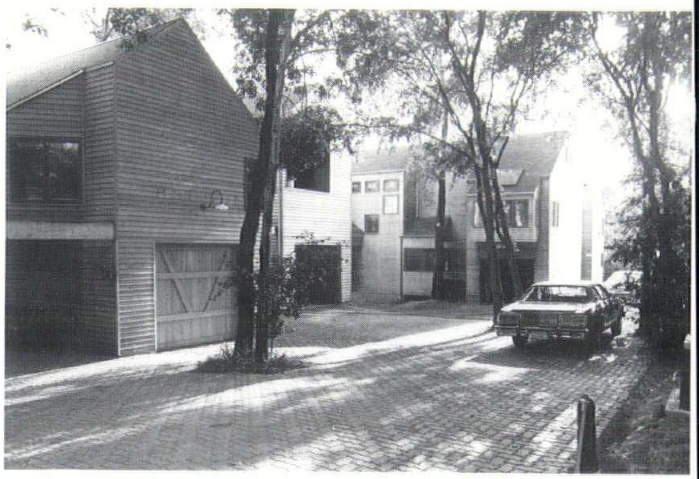
"Swear I was back in Europe or some fishin' village in New England." (Although ants haven't as yet developed any modes of intercontinental transportation, and it still requires half a day for one to scurry to its mailbox, they have been blessed with a mutitude of short lives distributed across the world . . . sort of a relocation reincarnation.)

"Very flashy — exciting, eh? Reminds me of an architectural magazine I ran across once. Award winner, yes siree. This is some pretty obvious stuff, but y'know, beauty's only skin deep."

"Yer baby blues serve ya well, my friend," red added. "All them new houses borrowin' from that ole white house over yonder. I was hoping there was gonna be more to this place than just good looks."

The butterfly spun and fluttered gracefully into place while humming some old Nat King Cole song, instantly creating a trio. She had heard the ants' commotion and wanted to share some observations of her own. They would listen to her as butterflies are known for their wisdom and insight (due to their apprenticeship period as caterpillars.) She spoke in a gentle crystalline tone:

"Wait, back up a moment. This housing development goes deeper than simply architectural vocabulary. Houses should be expressions of one's personal feelings, while hopefully extending beyond the aesthetic — towards a level of community architecture. Certainly you can feel it — you just couldn't express yourself. It allows the opportunity to expand oneself beyond that of physical lot line boundries, yet to be distinguish-



able from the world around, a place with meaning on both the personal and communal level."

"All this by a buncha houses 'round a courtyard?" retorted the ants together.

"More than that," the monarch proceeded. "Think of it like this. The courtyard is a stage; the stage for their daily activities. It allows for a sense of human drama, of transport, so that involvement will endure. It may be seen as a visual focal point, but it is also the community's heart — open to the sky — allowing them to watch and be watched, to venture beyond their door jambs, yet always aware of their relationship to one another."

She was interrupted by the squeaaaaling tires of a Volkswagon entering the courtyard. "Don't the cars interfere with this?" yelled one ant as it darted out of the car's path.

"Think of dance. The movement gives value to the space, not the props or the back drops, the movement. The dancer and the space animate one another as partners."

"The car's just anotha pretty face in the chorus," the ants gleefully chimed as they softshoed a Gene Kelly dance routine.

"Yes," added the butterfly, "but by no means the prima donna. This court functions as both the symbolic center and the activity center. This dance of the auto, that is to say the motions of entering and exiting, is a necessity of their lifestyles, don't hide it. The court is intended to be in constant flux. If it's alive, then it's truly their space and a defensible space at that. This was the rationale behind the design covenants locating the entrances and garages off the courtyard."

"Awright, a buncha buildings around. . ."

"Not building," corrected the reddish ant, "arch-i-tec-ture."

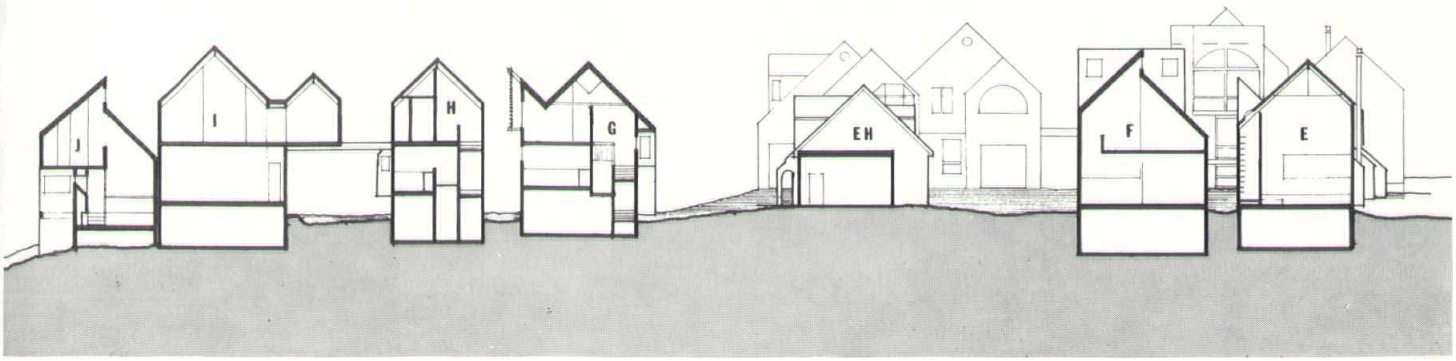
"Huh, what's the difference?"

"Building gives man what he needs—Architecture gives man what he wants."

"Yea, sometimes they don't even know they want it!" quipped the black ant with a tone of finality.

The sun disappeared while the wind began to blow cold through the surrounding neighborhoods, carrying upon it a sense of defensiveness. Leaves rustled in defiance as the ants were forced to turn away. Yet the butterfly understood from years of sailing the winds. She faced squarely into it and replied:

"Most modern housing developments consist only of adequate traffic layouts flanked by bland buildings; sure it's shelter. It just lacks identity because they are designed to slip-slide right on through the planning sieve. Yet people are naturally alert and curious. Many would love some intrigue. It seems in-



SECTION

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tolerable to me that so many should be forced to share their lives with this anonymous suffocation. You ask what's wrong with it?" Her wings began to glow brighter with each word. "If it's wrong for one to ignore their talents, it's also wrong to allow our environment to remain unfulfilled. These contractors and carpenters, or whomever is responsible for these numb environments, are visually illiterate."

A rush of wind came furiously, tossing leaves about like a gruff Japanese gardener. She spoke louder, "An example: a dog cannot speak, yet when it wags its tail or shows its teeth, we know quite well what it means. It is visually literate. This development cannot talk, but it has a great deal to communicate about the individuals, about the community, for those who wish to see."

With each word, the wind grew stronger, trying to peel each color off the monarch's wings. Those of lesser convictions scurried for their dirt nests.

"Authority?" She began to shout using her wings to help form each syllable. "Have you ever risked economic security? Have you ever risked disapproval? Have you ever risked a belief? Real courage is risking something that may cause you to rethink your thoughts and stretch your consciousness to suffer change! Real courage is questioning cliches and it is much safer to mess with a man's wife than with his cliches. Good architecture is to dare—and to have been right."

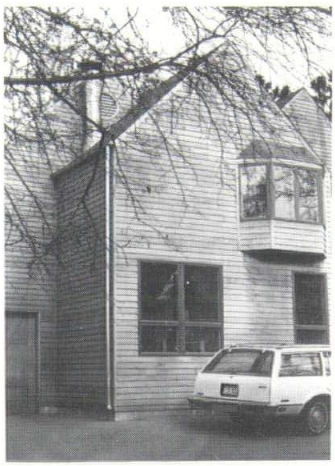
With this the wind stopped as suddenly as it started. Instead, a restful silence emerged calling the ants to return to the butterfly. It was mid-afternoon and the clouds were breaking. The red ant began humbly, "Y'know, I'm beginning to see beyond that of shared roofs and materials."

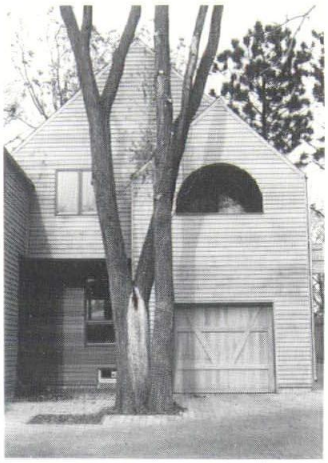
". . . to the essence," added blacky lightly.

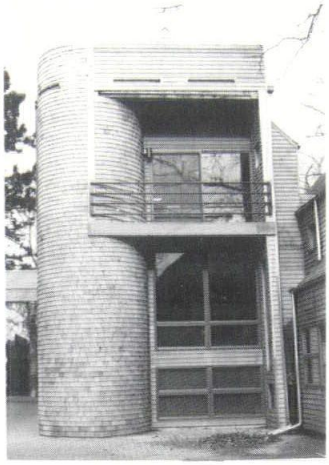
The monarch stood proud and smiled slightly. "Treehouse consists of individuals, while each home was an attempt at identity in the surroundings. As I said before, houses should be expressions of the owner's personal feelings, but about this you must speak to them alone. . ."

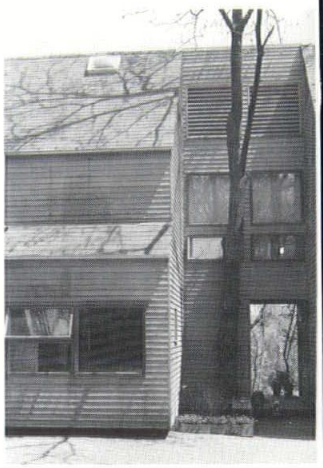
While her last resonance left the air, the butterfly fell upon the two ants and woofed them down. She had worked up quite an appetite this morning and was glad to be about her business again.

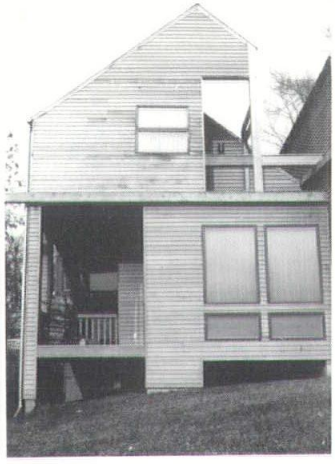
Architecture, as we all know, should never be discussed over lunch.

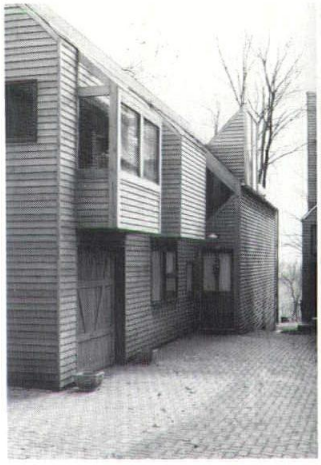


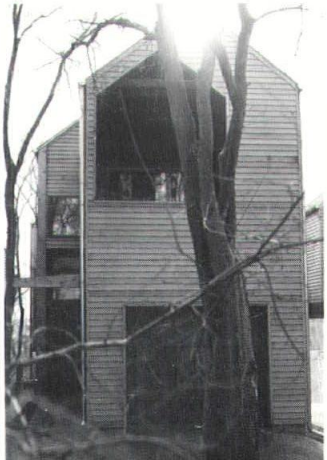


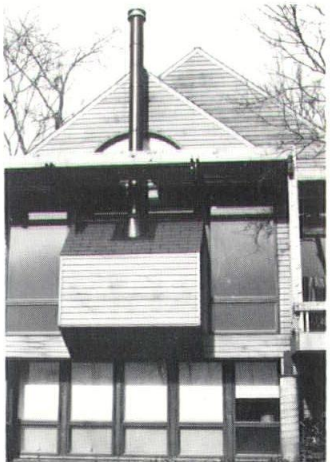


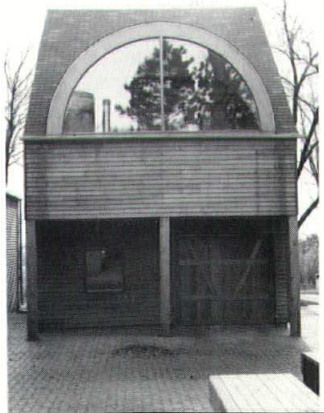


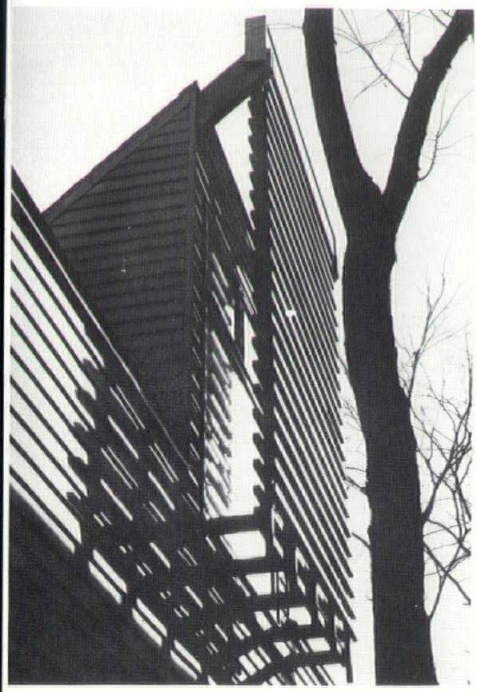


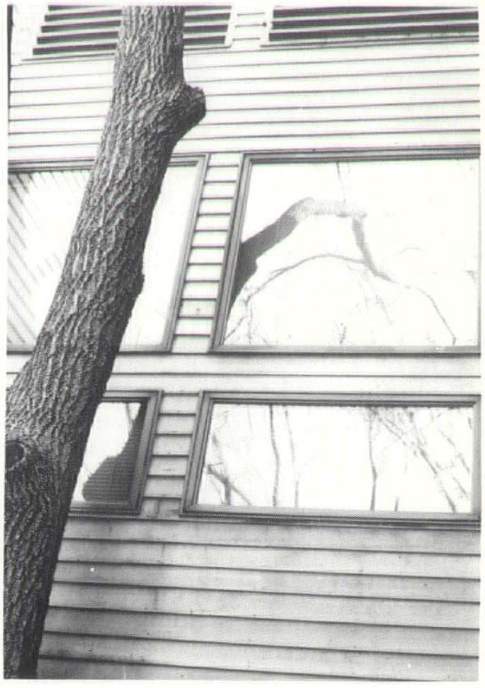


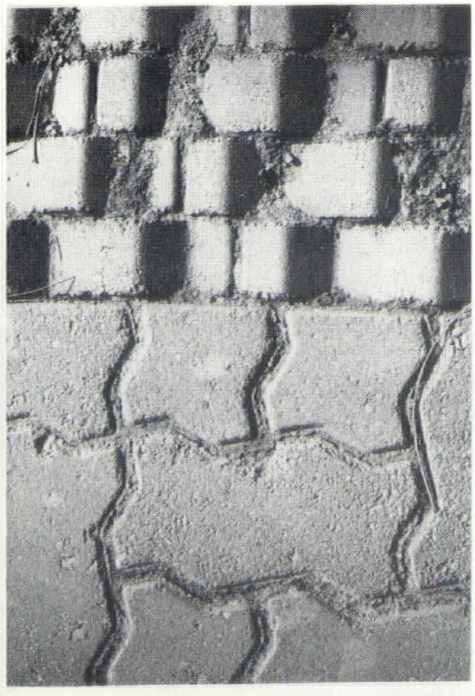


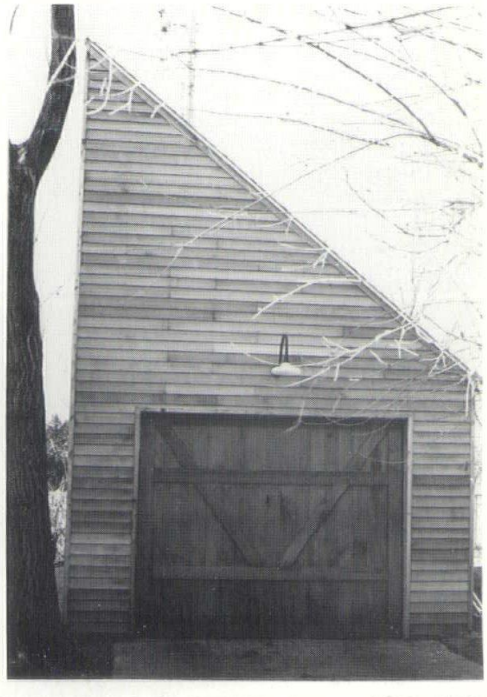


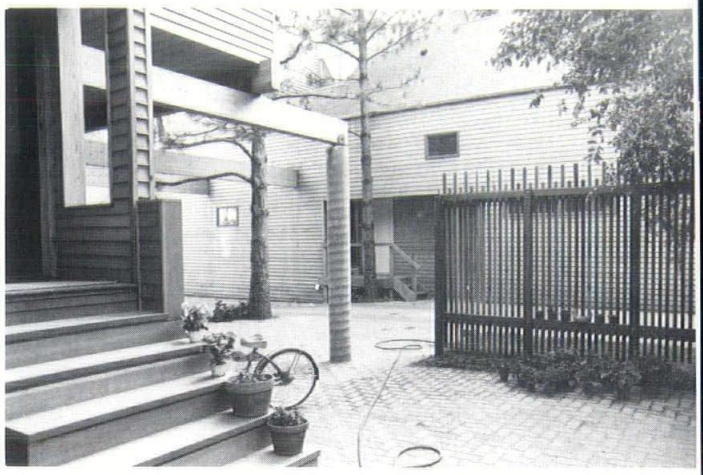












Treehouse
Gregg Wielage

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch![1]

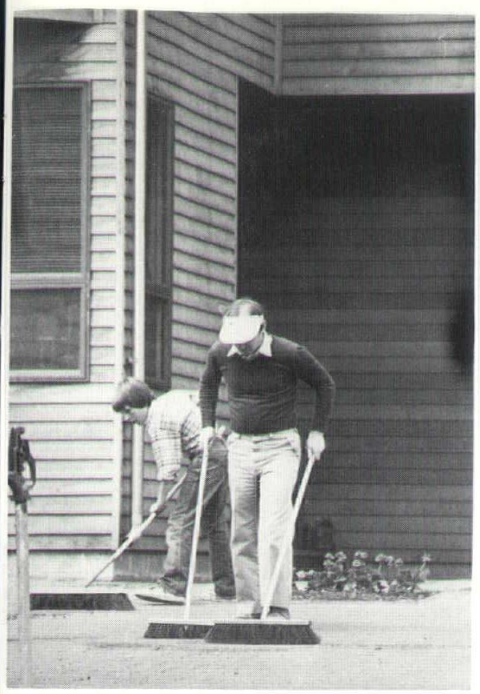
A flower owes its beauty to the fact that it lives according to the regularity of its petals — each one of which has its own identity. This identity is not perfectly geometric. There exists a reciprocal interaction — flower to petals, petals to flower. The petals make a flower, and a flower intensifies the beauty of its petals.

Treehouse shares the duality of the flower. These houses are a rich conglomeration of experiences and imagination proclaiming messages about their owners. One message certainly acknowledges people for a place was created to live in — a place with tell-tale evidence of everyday life — a stage set for that drama. Front doors open off a court; at any moment it seems that someone will appear. Facades do not line up so the size and edges of the court change continuously. Often the court slips between houses, weaving itself around first one house then another. Chance glimpses are offered. Finally the court space reaches the space continuum but just prior to this, at the north end, it is ceremonially signified by an arched gateway.

Each house is a visual delight. Although all houses share many common elements, each is unique. They make no pretense as to style, but it is evident that this is architect's vernacular. It can be stated that the intentions (true meaning?) of a work of art can only be known to the artist. Vincent Scully warns that we are naive to take the architect's statements of intent as fact for often these statements are meant to mislead. "The truth must be read in their forms . . ."[2] The truth read in these forms is poetry — an artistic craft born of care — care for one's life and the lives of others — care for a neighborhood and a city — caring to make things better. The realist is forced to copy, imposing as much as he can. The abstract artist is free to romp with paint as much as he pleases. He takes care of our eyes and allows the sense to take care of itself. The images he uses may suggest vague meanings, or they may have no meaning at all — doing we don't know what.

Footnotes

1. Carroll, Lewis. *Through the Looking Glass*. New York: New American Library, 1974, p. 191.
2. Scully, Vincent. *The Shingle Style Today*. New York: G. Braziller, 1974, p. 2.




Jenny Lee
Extra

24 Kensington Park Gardens
London

London Perceived

Dale Gibbs

"When a man is tired of London, he is tired of Life."
Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784)

Dr. Johnson's famous lines are as true today as they were in the 18th century. London is a fascinating city with great variety and a constantly changing rhythm which leads on with anticipation. It is a seductive cityscape promising something even more interesting around the next corner, beyond the next square, behind those impeccable facades. London is a great laboratory for the study of the vocabulary of urban design. To understand this sense of place, however, requires a historical perspective and an open attitude, a flexibility to adjust, and curiosity. Any foreign study program must recognize these factors if the experience is going to be instructive, stimulating, and lasting.

There is the problem of adapting not only to the cultural shock of a big city, but to a large "cosmopolitan" city filled with millions who come from the far-flung points of the Commonwealth. For the young college student who may have seen nothing beyond Chicago, this can be a traumatic experience. The mechanics of everyday living: setting up bank accounts, learning the subway and bus routes, finding inexpensive places to eat, learning how to scrounge theatre tickets — these things can be mastered within a few days or weeks. The principal problem in London, as it may be in any foreign study program, is to distill from the separate experiences, projects, and events some understanding of the physical, intellectual, historical, and cultural factors which formed this city and country and continue to influence its architecture and urban planning.

The London Program at the University of Nebraska has been operating for about ten years. Each year has been different, reflecting the interests of the instructor and the particular student groups, but the expectations have been constant: that the students should come away with a clearer understanding of the factors which contributed to the development of a great city and its architecture.

The results have, of course, been mixed: some very heavily historical, others focusing on contemporary design or urban design. Sometimes the program has depended heavily on independent projects and individual research and the products have varied from highly personalized studies of furniture and graphic design to research on Compton Wynyates, the great Elizabethan country house. But in all these studies and in the work of each group, there is always the influence of physical setting, intellectual and cultural ideas, and historical background.

History is perhaps the easiest to absorb. A good background in architectural history, some good orientation refresher courses, and a decent background in European History and English Literature helps a great deal. Intellectual and cultural ideas are more difficult and are often the source of a misunderstanding of intent and objective in English town planning and architecture. We understand, if not completely, the Royal System, with the supporting ranks of an informed aristocracy and clergy which influenced English architecture from Norman times to the mid-nineteenth century. It is much more difficult for American students to grasp the great social and cultural ideas in British society which have influenced architecture through much of the 19th and 20th centuries. What is more frustrating is that you cannot see these ideas directly displayed in the modern architecture of London.

In physical or iconographic terms, much of British contemporary architecture is very similar in design vocabulary to modern architecture in America, but with a difference. Exterior appearances aside, it is in the development of the theory of design and planning where the differences really strike home. Architectural students are likely to assume that the English architects with whom they are familiar, such as the Smithsons, Denys Lasdun, James Sterling, or even Richard Rogers are approaching contemporary architecture in much the same way that their American counterparts would. They also tend, along with many professionals, to accept at face value the critical opin-

ions of critics such as Charles Jencks or Reyner Banham without questioning the social and political base from which their writing develops. There is a temptation to assume a certain degree of international unanimity on questions of architectural theory. This is, of course, not the case, and a primary shock to American students is the depth and intensity of theoretical positions, the vigor with which these are pursued, and the political, economic, and social biases they reveal.

A visit to the Architectural Association lectures or a critique at the Royal College of Art will reveal immediately a pervasive consciousness of architecture as a social instrument, not in the same revolutionary sense of the Bauhaus, but with a kind of political sophistication which is at once angry and idealistic. To pretend to grasp this in three months is, of course, a naivete which leads only to shallow generalization about important questions. If you add to this the complexity and often ponderous turnings of local government with its restrictions, controls, approvals, etc., it becomes obvious that traditional studio design problems may very well end up hopelessly out of context, too discrete and uninformed to be useful design exercises. For this reason our program has tended to focus on the urban fabric of London and on analysis of the places, paths, and connections that make up this fascinating city.

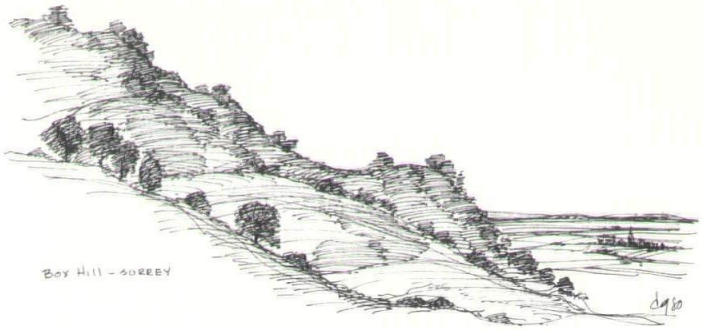
This raises a problem because London is vast. It is not, as we often hear, "a collection of villages." It is more accurately, as Simon Jenkins says, "a collection of towns." Most of these "towns" are larger than the college towns we all know in America and they represent a diversity of economic, social, and cultural attitudes and circumstances which would be stupefying to deal with in most American cities. Add to this an enormous range of ethnic groups, a class system very much alive, and stern economic pressures which determine where people live and you have a physical and social map rather like one of those maddening jig-saw puzzles of a Jackson Pollock painting. But there are patterns within the puzzle and one of the best ways to perceive these patterns is to walk through its paths, places, squares, and enclaves until this intimacy of contact becomes imbedded in memory.

The 1979 London Program did this and did it under rather harsh circumstances. We were forced out of our old quarters at Vicarage Gate but found a new home at Academy House, 24 Kensington Park Gardens. That year was the worst winter in 30 years. The heat didn't always work and it rained or snowed every day for six weeks. During this time, the students explored much of London and recorded their reactions via sketches, maps, etc., and tried in the process to develop an awareness of the urban vocabulary in architecture and city planning.

These explorations varied from such long linear paths as: Tower of London to Limehouse; Hampstead Heath to Highgate; Paddington to Pimlico; to such short paths as; Holland Park Walk and Cheyne Walk in Chelsea. The students discovered also those off-beat hidden places which make any city interesting: Stratford Mews with its artisan studios, Groomes Place (off Belgrave Square), and Dove Mews (near Brompton Road).

On a larger scale, they identified certain enclaves with defined edges and restricted entry where busy streets surround the quiet inner core. Many Americans know Shepherd's Market; few find St. George's Square nearby, between Farm Street and Grosvenor Chapel on South Audley. Tourists and students usually visit the Victoria and Albert Museum but fail to see the quiet open space behind the Museum and the Brompton Oratory. From Kensington Palace Gardens you can see the tower of St. Mary Abbott's Church, but you have to explore to find the Church Walk behind, cutting from busy Kensington High Street through a pleasant garden to the quiet of 18th century Holland Street.

But most of this is Central London, expensive, chic habitat of the well-to-do. To understand something of London beyond this, the students analyzed local housing schemes with the Borough Architects of Wandsworth, Hammersmith and Islington,



middle class areas with severe housing problems. In Wandsworth they got not only some firsthand experience by working with the Borough Architect and the private Architect contracted for the design, but also a very strong dose of citizen reaction to the projects in a depressed area with serious planning problems and a strongly socialist constituency.

One of the greatest opportunities in London, however, one which we often take for granted, is to know through daily living the details, patterns, and urban refinements of your own neighborhood. Each neighborhood is different, of course, but ours had some of those characteristics common to much of London: high density, mixed usage, a combination of old and new architecture and a wonderful combination of community and privacy. To observe this closely—habitually, is almost unconsciously a lesson in urban design, combining the very obvious and the barely perceived. To know one area intimately develops a visual vocabulary and spatial consciousness which prepares us to examine new experiences with a more knowing and sensitive eye. This was our experience with our own neighborhood, Kensington Park Gardens, where our frequent trips to stores, pubs, health clinics, and bus lines brought us into repeated contacts with an intricately variable physical setting and inevitably into a developing sense of social history of place.

In 1830, Kensington was just a village around a church on Kensington High Street. Stretching north from the high street were Holland House, Notting Hill, also a tiny village, and to the west, the Ladbroke Estates from which our neighborhood was created. The main 170-acre Ladbroke Estate, including Ladbroke Grove and the streets, gardens, and crescents surrounding it, is a masterpiece of Victorian planning and landscape. It is designed all of a piece and although some may find its long rows of townhouses monotonous, there is a variety in street patterns and architectural detail which make the area an endless delight.

To attract the new upper classes, architects and builders built ever more sumptuous mansions which would have been considered "nouveau" in the older areas. Academy House at 24 Kensington Park Gardens, our headquarters, was one of these. It was designed in 1853 by Thomas Allom for C. H. Blake, the principal building speculator in North Kensington, who lived here from 1854 to 1859 when he went bankrupt and sold the house. The house is featured in *Survey of London: Northern Kensington* (Vol. XXXVII), and is notable chiefly for its beautiful living room suite still containing some of the original brocade walls, gilded moldings, and painted designs. The house is now deteriorating, its pale pink plaster peeling and the garden walls crumbling, but behind this we can see the scale and detail which made this neighborhood one of the most elegant in London. Opposite Academy House, across Ladbroke Grove, stands St. John's Church on the site of the early 19th century racecourse, and beyond, down the hill, is Clarendon Village, a tiny area of shops tucked away from the heavy traffic heading west to Oxford, the airports, or beyond.

Three months in London allows you to explore a neighborhood as no tourist can. An area like North Kensington is a manageable size which allows you to know it more than casually, to explore the history and character of places. Learning to analyze, record, and extend the vocabulary of that experience is at the core of the London Program. To see London or any great city in this way humanizes the vast size and makes it comprehensible as a design and as a lasting visual experience.

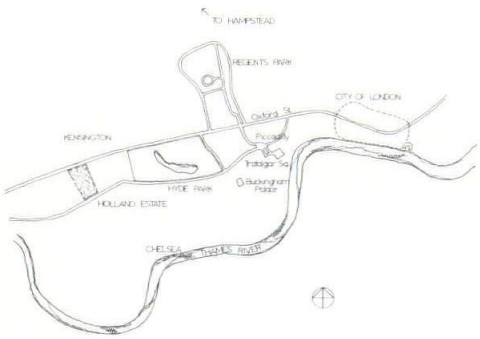
David Vaughan, a student in the 1979 Program, examines in detail a unique area of North Kensington in the accompanying article.

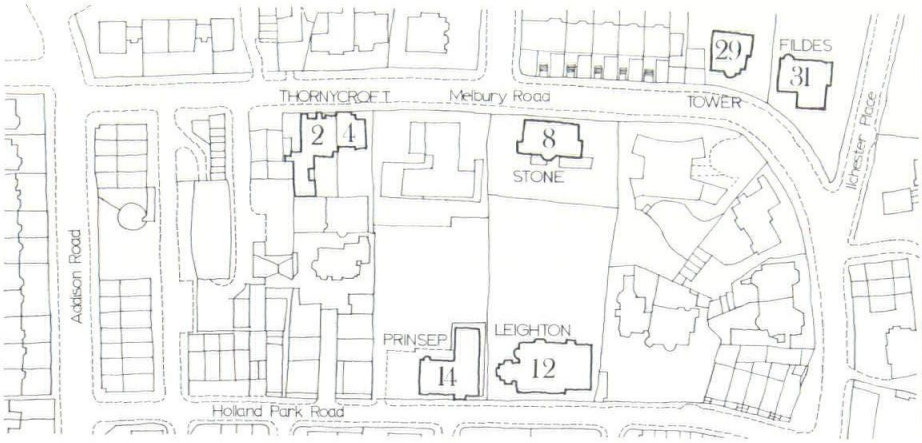
References

1. Sheppard, F.H.W. ed. *Survey of London: Northern Kensington, Vol. XXXVII*. London: The Athlone Press, 1973.
2. Jenkins, Simon "Living in London" *Evening Standard*, London, Feb. 27, 1973.

The Melbury Road Victorian Artists' Houses/London

David Vaughan





The Royal Borough of Kensington; west of the City of London, the familiar Piccadilly Circus, Trafalgar Square and Hyde Park, witnessed the expansive growth of 19th century London under the prosperous reign of Queen Victoria. Here vast estates were carved up into building plots, leased to builders and stamped with the resolute conformity of upper middle class housing. However, on a small portion of the Holland Estate in North Kensington, along the curve of Melbury Road and north of Holland Park Road is a collection of houses that depart architecturally from their more conforming neighbors. The houses, an intriguing enclave of purpose-built studio houses, were designed by leading architects for successful artists and in one case by an architect for his own residence. Six of these houses have survived in remarkably good condition.

This project presents a quick overview of the rise of the Victorian artist's house, its special requirements, and importance to a developing new style and a brief look at the six artists, their architects and the houses they built along and near Melbury Road.

During the last third of the 19th century there was a new enthusiasm for art among the middle classes which released an impressive amount of money into the art world. Additionally artists began to make small fortunes from the sale of illustration and engraving rights. With all this new found wealth it became the vogue to build great studio houses and artists' houses began to appear in several places in London. The more notable areas were in Chelsea, clustered about the residence of the artist Whistler, in rural Hampstead and in Kensington near Camden Hill and along Melbury Road. The compact Melbury Road group is one of the earliest and perhaps most influential.

The special requirements of the Victorian painter set their houses apart from the normal town house. First and foremost was the painting room or studio. Analogous in stature and often in size to the Great Hall of a gentleman's country house, the studio was the working hub and social center of the artist's house. Frequently situated on the top floor of the house, the studio required special consideration in terms of access and the handling of light.

Two paths of access to the London studios were necessary. One had to be ceremonial, providing an impressive ascent to the studio. It was required for the preview of paintings before the opening of the Royal Academy show in the spring. On this 'Show Sunday' vast crowds might arrive and parade through the artist's house to the studio. The second point of access was more functional; a small back stairway used by the models whose scantily clad presence on the main stairway would have been intolerable. Often this stair doubled as access to an easel room or painting store.

A careful handling of light was required in the studio houses. Essential to the genre-scene painters on Melbury Road was the high and even slanting north and east light which cast proper shadows. As a result large, north facing studio windows became a prominent element in the studio house design.

Prinsep House

Heralded as the first English studio house and a harbinger of the 'Queen Anne' style, 14 Holland Park Road was designed for the artist Val Prinsep and is a fine example of the early work of its architect, Philip Webb. Webb (1831-1913) was one of the most quietly influential domestic architects of the last 19th century; a man who shunned publicity and sought to avoid stylistc associations, his work reflects an inventive mix of Gothic and Vernacular details, and an awareness of 17th and 18th century domestic building.

Webb was particulary concerned with relating a building to its site without preconception, local building materials, sensitive incorporation of local architectural features and avoidance of historical styles. As one of the original Morris and Co. designers along with the artists Rossetti and Burne-Jones, Webb is perhaps best known for the 'Red House', Bexley Heath, built for William Morris in 1859. Val Prinsep (1838-1904) was loosely associated with the William Morris circle, a friend of Rossetti and involved in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Consequently, it was only natural for him to select Webb as his architect.

Prinsep's house (1864-66) is Gothic in its massiveness and in the use of pointed arch details over the dominant rear studio windows, while it anticipates the 'Queen Anne' style with the introduction of several small paned sash windows. Originally a small house with a large studio occupying all of the upper floor, it was subsequently enlarged in 1877 and again in 1892 to the designs of Webb. The symmetrically gabled outline of the Holland Park Road elevation is punctuated by the asymmetrically arranged fenestration and tall chimney stacks. Webb's characteristic use of red brick, simplicity of brick dressing and absence of ornament established a strong visual precedent for the developing Melbury Road neighborhood.

London studio houses began to appear as a new building type at about the same time that inventive English architects were in the process of creating a new style. The new style was 'Queen Anne'; an eclectic mixture of vernacular 17th and 18th century English and Dutch red-brick architecture, characterized by asymmetry, gabled roof lines, and long narrow sash windows. On Melbury Road the earlier Leighton and Prinsep houses are precursors of the 'Queen Anne' style while the later Thornycroft, Stone and Fildes houses embrace 'Queen Anne' enthusiastically.

'Queen Anne' was a reaction against the stylistic dogma of historical correctness. Previously, stylistic character was governed by an adherence to historical precedence; Gothic for religious buildings and a classical stuccoed facade done up in the Italian style for secular buildings. Stylistically the works of Richard Norman Shaw and Philip Webb in the Melbury Road area represent a new attitude to the past and a new concern for providing a creative living environment.

Touted as a new phenomenon, the studio houses enjoyed broad and favorable exposure in the periodicals and magazines of the day. The published articles complete with drawings were influential in winning over the public, whose acceptance of the 'Queen Anne' style was to effect a gradual change in the color and texture of London through the last three decades of the 19th century.

Tower House

"A man's home is his castle" acquires literal realization in the house built by William Burges for himself at 29 Melbury Road. Dubbed 'Tower House' for obvious reasons, the whole of the house is a 19th century Gothic fantasy. An exception among its more congenially open and eclectic neighbors, Tower House takes on a defensively closed posture in its garb of stylized Gothic. It is not a purpose-built studio house, but its importance to the developing architectural thought of the day, prominence in the neighborhood, and the inventiveness of its creator rank it alongside the other artists' houses. Burges remained a confirmed medievalist all his career. His work consisted of a few private commissions and is best known for his restoration of Cardiff Castle for Lord Bute. His own home, Tower House, is the only surviving example of his work in London.

Tower House was begun in 1875 and the building and decorating continued until Burges' death in 1881. Built of red brick and stone window dressings, the design is based on 13th century French Domestic Gothic and presents a steeply gabled roof line and conical-topped stair tower to the Melbury Road elevation. The tower is visually the most prominent architectural feature in the neighborhood. An example of the 'muscular' Gothic style, Tower House uses massive forms to achieve a sense of heaviness and strength outside. Inside Burges' romantic medieval imagination runs rampant; each room follows a unifying theme and is richly decorated with stained glass, painted decation and intricate carving. After suffering from neglect, the house was restored to its orignal condition under the supervision of the Greater London Council in 1966 and is once again in private ownership.

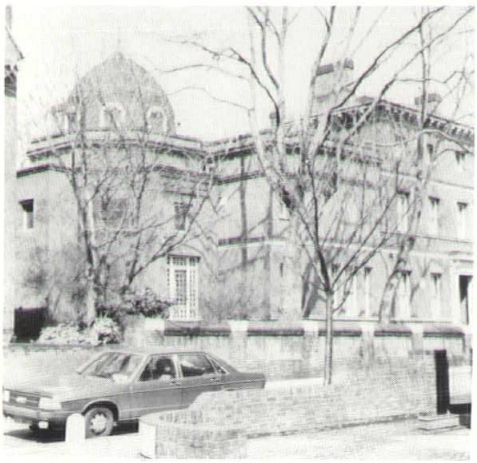
Thornycroft House

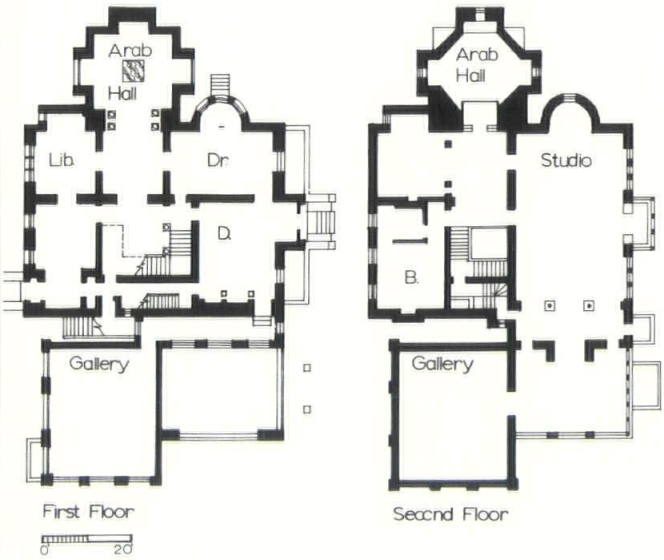
This semi-detached house, the British equivalent of the American duplex, was built in 1875 for the sculptor Hamo Thornycroft. Number 2 Melbury Road was built for his own residence and the adjacent Number 4 as a speculative venture. The absence of dominating north studio windows, a feature required by painters but not sculptors, gives the house less of the distinctive appearance of a studio house.

The houses were built to the designs of Thornycroft who most likely sought suggestions and technical assistance from his life-long friend, architect, John Belcher. Less distinguished and perhaps less fashionable than their Melbury Road neighbors, the houses are executed in the typical 'Queen Anne' red brick with gabled roof lines and narrow sash windows. A tremendous projecting chimney stack punctuates the asymmetrical street elevation and visually separates the two houses.

Originally, the plan of Number 2 established a strong separation between living and working quarters with the several studio spaces banished to an almost separate wing at the back of the house. An entrance porch set in line with the studios provided access directly to the domestic quarters or indirectly to the studios through the skylighted gallery.

In 1892 Thornycroft built another studio house adjacent and west of the original pair to the designs of Belcher (1841-1913). This small addition with its rectangular facade hints at elements of Edwardian Baroque, a style Belcher was to play a major role in developing. As a successful variation of the purpose-built studio house they reveal an additive approach to design and as a whole create a very appropriate and delightful group.





Leighton House

Frederick Leighton's house at 12 Holland Park Road nurtured the budding artistic and architectural development that was to blossom in the next decade on this small corner of the Holland Estate.

Leighton (1830-96), a prominent figure in the artistic world of the last half of Queen Victoria's reign, embodied the attitudes of the artistic community who courted the academic rewards and recognition of the Royal Academy of Art. He was elected as a Royal Academician in 1864 and served as President from 1878 until his death in 1896. Leighton's paintings encompassed biblical and medieval subjects and later turned to mythological and Helenic themes developing an academicism which exerted a strong influence on other British artists. Leighton's house exemplified what could be done with the newly found social and financial successes accorded the popular artists of the day. After his election to the Royal Academy in 1864 Leighton started to build the house designed by the architect, George Aitchison.

Aitchison, a close friend of Leighton, had secured a reputation as a theorist and spokesman for a new direction in architecture based on purity of outline, proportion and absence of ornament and a move away from a dependence on historical style. He was a professor of architecture at the Royal Academy from 1887-1905 and the President of the Royal Institute of British Architects from 1896-99. During his career he built few residences and prior to the Leighton house was primarily concerned with the design of commercial buildings.

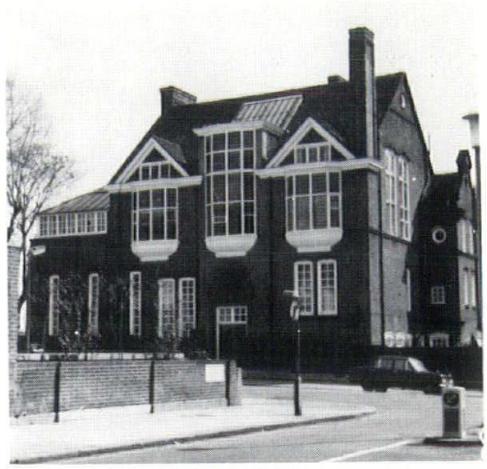
Originally the Leighton house was much smaller than it is today and consisted of two distinct units in plan which pivoted around an impressive central stair illuminated by a skylight. The design placed the north facing studio and a small bedroom on the second floor and the dining, drawing, breakfast room and kitchen on the first floor and basement. A stair led down from

the east end of the studio and was to be used for the entry and exit of models. The exterior is plain and displays a simplified classical style rendered in red brick, an unusual building material in London at this time. The house was intended to be expanded always preserving a classical symmetry on the facade, however additions in 1869 and in 1877 changed the character to an asymmetrical massing.

The most outstanding addition to the house was the erection of the Arab Hall in 1877. The distinctive beehive form with its Islamic inspired cut and molded brickwork is a radical departure from any other building in the Melbury Road neighborhood. A flight of oriental fantasy, it is the culmination of Leighton's enthusiasm for the art and architecture of the Middle East and was built as a setting for his collection of 17th century Syrian, Turkish and Persian tiles. Aitchison was again the architect and based the plan on the reception hall of the 12th century Muslim Palace of La Zisa in Palermo. The interior of the Arab Hall also contains the work of several of Leighton's contemproaries, notably the designer William De Morgan who arranged the tile collection and provided new infill pieces, and the artist Walter Crane who designed the mosaic frieze above the tiles.

The interior spatial quality of the Leighton house with its lofty light washed stairway, two-story Arab Hall and inter-connected spaces was an influential and delightful contradication to the Victorian norm of closed and highly compartmentalized spaces.

Today the Leighton house is open to the public and contains an interesting collection of High Victorian art. The house, with the exception of the furnishings, is virtually intact and as such offers an opportunity for a first-hand look at the interior of a purpose-built studio house.



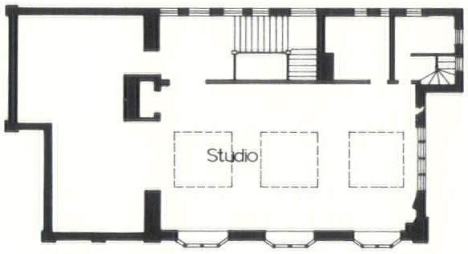
Stone and Fildes Houses

The mid 1870's saw the last two studio houses rising on Melbury Road. Built concurrently for the artists Marcus Stone, at Number 8, and Luke Fildes, at Number 31, both were designed by the architect, Richard Norman Shaw. Sited obliquely across from each other, they form a related pair expressive of Shaw's 'Queen Anne' style.

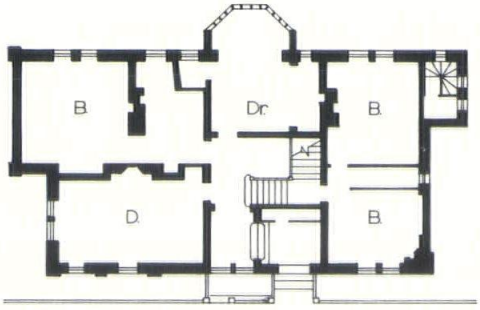
While other houses in the Melbury Road area only hinted at the 'new style' (Leighton and Prinsep) or managed to ignore it (Tower House), the Fildes and Stone houses are representative of 'Queen Anne' in full bloom. Both artists had Academic aspirations in mind and were alert to the fact that a fashionable house by one of the most fashionable architects of the day could help them into the Academy.

Marcus Stone (1840-1921) achieved financial success through his associations with Charles Dickens for whom he illustrated, *Our Mutual Friend* and *Great Expections*. Likewise, Luke Fildes (1843-1927) was concerned with social observation and he was commissioned by Dickens to illustrate *Edwin Drood*. His greatest financial success however was achieved in portraiture which included several royal commissions.

Richard Norman Shaw, the architect of both houses, was one of the most influential figures in English architecture throughout the last third of the 19th century. In the 1870's Shaw's fame was on the rise. His work was extensively published and had broad and immediate influence. A creative designer, he was capable of infinite variation of often used vernacular based elements such as oriel and bay windows, long narrow sash windows, and tiled gables, all of which he combined in his rendition of the 'Queen Anne' style.



Second Floor



First Floor

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The functional arrangement and fenestration of the Stone and Fildes houses are similar. In both Shaw placed the studios on the top floor, assigned the domestic quarters to the ground floor and made use of his characteristic windows. The street elevation of the Stone house resolved the problem of reconciling a domestic front with the need for north light by providing three large oriel windows across the second story. What appears at first to be a symmetrical facade is in fact, with the exception of the upper studio windows, asymmetrical. Similarly, the Fildes house uses symmetry of fenestration on the street facade against the asymmetrical disposition of the building mass, while on the garden side five huge studio windows introduce a strong element of symmetry.

In the Stone house Shaw pays particular attention to the contrived procession from the front door to the studio. The main staircase runs through the center of the house, front to back, rising from the entry vestibule to the first floor level, ascending again to an intermediate bedroom level before climbing up and over the drawing room to the upper studio.

The Stone and Fildes houses seem a fitting finale to the three decades of Victorian building on the Holland Estate. It was a period that witnessed a diversity of architectural thought and encompassed a range of architectural expression from the historically correct to a free use of vernacular eclecticism.

This group of Victorian studio houses built around Melbury Road is a fascinating enclave of great artistic achievement. Intimately woven into the texture and fabric of London and tucked away off the beaten track, it is a distictive and memorable area of the city. This and similar areas, remembered and revisited, contribute to the fascination of London.

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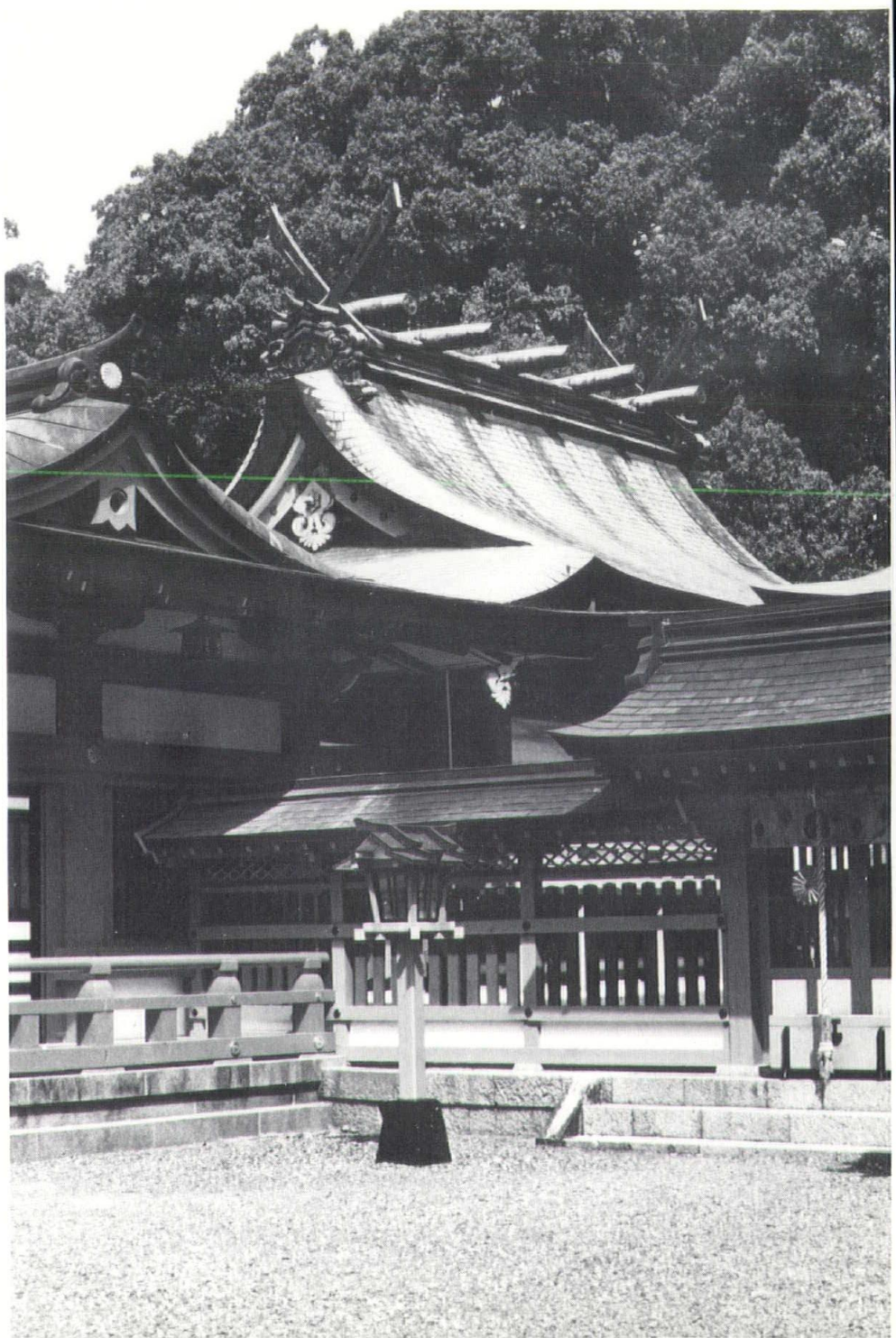


Shrines of Kumano: A Study in Architectural Retrogression
Robert Guenter

Prologue

In his insatiable quest for the truth, man has constantly probed the UNKOWN. As a direct result of this probing, science, logic, trial and error, and other theoretical and empirical techniques were born and legitimized. These disciplines mushroomed to form the operational matrices for modern technologically-based societies, with new self-propagating instruments of industrialization being continuously introduced and then institutionalized. The flint microlith, the bureaucratic organization man, and the solid state computer are temporally-separated but auto-generatively similar examples of such tools.

The chain reaction which he initiated is totally nonreversible; the nostalgic past can never be regained except in imagination, and the future, aside from narrowly-delimited engineering endeavors, will be forever blurred and indistinct. Although we may steal a retrospective glance or two at the "good old days," we are irrevocably thrust into a tomorrow full of promise and pain, of new knowledge and accelerated technology, and of the reasonably anticipated as well as the totally unexpected. In this world of the UNKOWN, the operational bottom line is analysis; but analytic operations are like blobs of mercury: The more you grab them, the more they split apart and squirt away!

The investigation of the UNKNOWABLE is another matter entirely. Mankind has attempted to decipher the UNKNOWABLE through animism, sorcery, mythology, religion and philosophy, in more or less that chronological order, since he first began to exhibit human personality traits. Unfortunately, his metaphysical constructs have often been poorly received: that which is revered or considered divinely-inspired by one group is unadulterated mumbo-jumbo to another. It is one of those ironic twists of history, that human animals have often destroyed other human animals over just such mumbo-jumbo, while, at other times, wholesale borrowings and blendings have taken place in an attempt to accomodate differences of philosophical opinion. Of course, this should come as no surprise to anyone, since competition and cooperation have always been fundamental aspects of the processes of nature.

The conceptual tool for approximating the UNKNOWABLE is synthesis, and synthetic operations have a way of generating permutation after permutation from a relatively small array of design elements. Some of the resultant creations will appear synthetic (in the popular use of the word), and the imagery will seem spurious and contrived. Others will arouse the collective curiosity and stimulate latent interest in all but the most casual of observers. Tantalizing new premises and suppositions are like hydrated gypsum: the more you knead and mold it to realize its plastic potential, the sooner it hardens into inflexible form!

Gu's Box, January 1980

Visitors to Kyoto and the surrounding heartland of Japan are more often than not, directed to the most revered and sacrosanct establishments in Shinto: the Inner and Outer Sanctuaries of Ise. The Goddess of the Sun and the Cereal Deity are enshrined in separate complexes which have been ritually reconstructed every twenty years since the seventh century. This pair of near-identical shrines represents the purest form of archaic wood construction, and subsequently has been well publicized in the West. Presumably, every architect professing an interest in the basics of design has, at one time or another, leafed through Tange and Watanabe's excellent photo essays on the subject. But let the reader beware; in terms of the shrine architecture of Japan, Ise is conceptually and morphologically the exception, not the rule!

An hour or so farther south by express train, but light-years of psychic space away, are a family of shrines having a richer and perhaps older tradition. It was here, at the abrupt juncture of the Kumano Mountains and the sea, that ancient gods first alighted on earth. And it was here, in these very same mountains, that the indigenous nature worship called Shinto combined with imported Buddhist and Taoist beliefs to create a unique, albeit often obscene, form of occult practice. The syncretic culmination in architectural terms provides the enterprising traveler a sequence of experiences which makes the Ise Shrines seem antiseptic and sterile by comparison. The sanctuaries of Kumano owe their richness to the nature of their gods; some of whom were rendered in human form, while others were inscrutable spirits much more difficult to describe.

Indeed, the gods still prowl the forested mountains and deep ravines of Kumano, awaiting eventual extinction at the hands of the most avaricious of predators, the one called MAN. Perhaps it would be a simple case of organic "justice" (some would call it an example of basic Newtonian mechanics), if the only species known to have created divine beings should ultimately be responsible for their demise. Hopefully, the priestly custodians of this spirit-infested land will safeguard the existence of these arcane gods, and thereby circumvent the seemingly inevitable. But for those who are privy to the ancient legends, and are willing to forfeit the comforts of the chrome-plated present, the trip to Kumano is a trip into the eternal, though irretrievable, past.

In this essay, I shall attempt to reconstruct the experiential modes of three of the Kumano shrines: 1) *Hayatama,* which will serve as a sort of comparator; 2) *Kannokura,* best described as a cliffside fantasy; and finally 3) *Nachi,* whose lower precinct vividly demonstrates the occasional superfluouness of architecture!

The starting point for this journey is a logging port called Shingu about one hundred miles south of Kyoto. At the foot of the hills west of town stands the Hayatama Grand Shrine, a synthesis of vermilion-painted structures exhibiting a decidedly *palatial* bearing. But palaces are for human beings masquerading as gods, not for invisible entities of supernormal origin. Indeed, if we search out its history, we discover that the patron deity of this holy place had become personified at some early stage in its evolution. There is no sure way of ascertaining whether this anthropomorphism was part of the sporadic and uneven Neolithic processes of that sort, or if it was the direct result of the Buddhist pressures of the first millenium A.D. which produced the Chinese details in the architecture. In any event, for most Western visitors, the idea of a god in human form provides a familiar and comfortable yardstick for gauging the more exotic divinities and their mysterious sanctuaries; the ones we will visit later.

Consistent with traditional Shinto practice, ordinary mortals cannot gain access to the sanctum sanctorum of Hayatama; rather, they are restricted to the gravel-blanketed forecourt to the south. Here the inquiring pilgrim of antiquity awaited the awesome oracle from deep within the sacred enclosure; and it is here that the modern pilgrim maneuvers to better photograph the imposing roof forms. The sanctity of the interior space is sufficiently preserved by the green-slatted barrier to safeguard the *unknown* and the *unknowable,* but enough remains visible

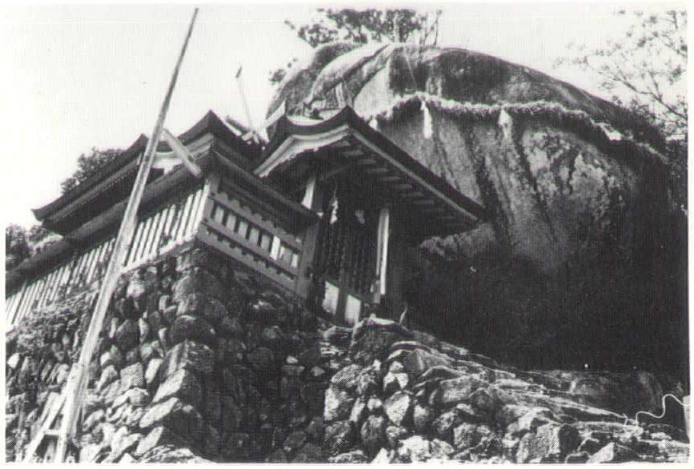
to avoid the frustrations created at Ise by its excessive architectural modesty.

Although the individual buildings exhibit a strong "Chinese" symmetry about their major axes, the composition as a whole relies on a less mechanical, native sense of visual dynamics to achieve the required geometric balance. The principal architectural elements are oriented toward the beneficient south and the aforementioned courtyard, the latter establishing the boundary along that side. To the west stands the Main Sanctuary (Honden), the ridge of its concave roof adorned with five log-like billets called *katsuogi,* and a pair of superimposed crosspieces called *chigi.* The entrance is for the god's use only, and is located under the south-facing gable; the elegantly integrated shed roof which covers this entrance identifies the building as an example of the so-called Kasuga Style. Immediately in front, the innocuous-looking pavilion is a Prayer Hall (Haiden); its position relative to the fence suggests its availability to the worshiper for special occasions. It is the sole shelter provided for human use, and a very small one at that. In fact, it is this absence of significant congregational function that prompts us to use the term "shrine" rather than "temple" when referring to Shinto architecture.

A larger building, with its similarly-ornamented ridge running in an east-west direction, looms to the right of the Honden. The gable flows forward to shelter the entrances to three adjacent shrines dedicated to lesser deities, or avatars of the principal deity, and represents a local variation of the popular Nagare Style. The faithful can advance their petitions to the mysterious and largely unknown gods enshrined inside by clapping their hands before the appropriately aligned gates. This ritual is largely personal and unstructured, handed down from generation to generation, and learned by subconscious induction rather than through any process of conscious instruction.

The purpose of examining Hayatama Grand Shrine, as mentioned earlier, is to establish an architectural norm: a standard through which we can better appreciate the other two shrines, particularly in terms of the *site* and the *situation.* Obviously, the topographical context had minimal effect on the Hayatama solution, for it would be equally at home in the foothills surrounding Kyoto, or on the great Kanto Plain which envelops modern Tokyo. The apparent universality of the scheme has nothing to do with the usual architectonic considerations, but rather with the nature of the deity, for gods in the form of men are like their human prototypes — broadly adaptable. The totality of the anthropomorphism of the enshrined god is manifest in the presence of the white stallion stabled on the far side of the Main Sanctuary, a handsome mount befitting a prince of the Imperial Court. This parallel, of course, is not an accidental one. Like their Western counterparts, many gods of Shinto were conceived of as royalty, and were assigned royal titles. The notion that "gods were kings" facilitated the subsequent transposition of terms which declared that "kings were divine." In real life, the *Yin* has an uncanny way of becoming the *Yang!*

Kannokura, on the other hand, is concerned with a somewhat different set of issues. Clinging precariously to the side of a mountain unusually steep and demanding, *Gotobiki Iwa,* which the local folk translate as "Toad Rock," is the gigantic boulder where the deities descended to earth. The rubble stone steps leading almost vertically upward to this sacred spot are treacherous to all but mountain sheep and nimble sylvan spirits. Cautious pilgrims depart the prescribed route and crawl up the densely wooded mountainside where young saplings provide convenient handholds, and a fall means, at worse, lacerated hands and knees, not a hammering concussion on the valley floor below. Along the way, miniature shrines and altars display the remnants of rice cakes and other offerings which had been placed there earlier by energetic and devoted mountain priests: gifts to the *kami,* the spirits that inhabit the forest and guard the sacred approach. Overhead, Grey Ears, the giant hawk, glides effortlessly through the heavy still air, waiting the next tasty donation from the unsuspecting curators of Kannokura.



The point of arrival is a narrow terrace which twists abruptly ninety degress from the original line of ascent, a transitional device common to Shinto planning. Perfect alignment and geometric directness of approach represents a degree of perfection considered unnatural and blatantly artificial to those versed in the "Way of the Gods." Somewhat above the terrace, the huge boulder crouches nervously on the hillside, loosely girded by a rice-straw rope (shimenawa) which suggests the presence of kami. Since kami are ill-defined, original spirits of nature, they are more closely related to the universally-recognized concept of "mana" than they are to the personified gods as the modern Westerner knows them. Belief in kami is the very essence of Shinto; and, in this particular instance, the kami is the living soul of the great magical rock.

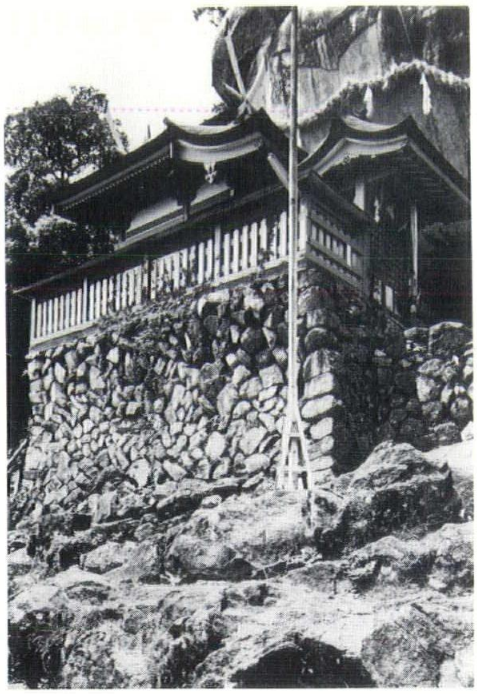
The raison d'etre of the small vermilion and blue building huddled snugly beneath the sacred boulder is unclear. Certainly the rubble wall which supports the Kasuga Style sanctuary speaks of human intervention, while disguising to some extent the uneasy and tentative grasp which Toad Rock maintains on the edge of the mountain. But the man-made construct is no match either visually or physically for the obvious kinetic potential of the natural construct; and Toad Rock poses the ever-present threat of turning from an *object* of worship into an *event* of awesome proportions! Perhaps the mountain priests who fashioned this little sanctuary for the spirits were trying to draw attention to a simple axiom of religious architecture: temples may be magnificient houses to feed the vanity of men, and of gods created in the image of men, but are little more than well-meaning caricatures of the kamis' true domain.

The narrow ledge of Kannokura provides an excellent panoramic view of Shingu and the sea. Below and somewhat to the north is Hayatama Grand Shrine, its brilliant red torii peeking through the surrounding trees. The proximity reflects an interesting but little known characteristic of the sacred environs of Shinto: the doubling-up of sanctuaries. In many cases, the buildings known to the casual pilgrim and foreign tourist are but the conveniently-located "Village Shrine," while some distance away on a secluded hillside, or similarly remote and inaccessible site, stands its complementary "Mountain Shrine." Neither the obvious proximity, nor the presence of Kannokura artifacts within the Hayatama precint, conclusively prove the existence of a formal complementary relationship between the two, but the experiential connection is unmistakable. Even a casual study clearly demonstrates remarkably different stages in the evolutionary continuum: struggling up the mountainside to Toad Rock is a decided step backward in time.

From the vantage point below Toad Rock, one can see the morning mist as it dangles a seductive veil over our final destination—the silver ribbon of cascading water known as Nachi Falls. The ecclesiastic environment of Nachi is clearly dichotomous. On a plateau facing the four hundred foot high waterfall, the upper shrine is coupled to an esoteric sect Buddhist temple in a rather obvious architectural materialization of Kumano syncretism. But in many respects, the character of this amalgam is much too similar to Hayatama to dwell on in this abbreviated essay. It is a bit more exotic and randomly grouped, but nonetheless another variation of the palace scheme already described.

Dramatically sited on a nearby promontory, and reflecting the Buddhist connection all too painfully, stands a recently-constructed pagoda bearing a superficial resemblance to the one depicted in an ancient painting of Nachi. But there the similarity ends. Instead of its traditional function as a respository for relics of the Buddha, this modern version is an observation tower which services the sight-seeing needs of twentieth century visitors.

"What big telescopes you have!" exclaimed the kami of the waterfall. "All the better to see you with," came the achromatic, multicoated reply.



Down, ever downward, into the cool, bubbling darkness of the narrow valley, one plunges into the lower (village) precinct of Nachi Shrine. Here, at the foot of the thundering falls, we discover the virgin primordial world of Shinto: the prehistoric past coexisting with the experiential present. The kami spirit is all-pervasive: it chills the bones to their marrow and whispers arcane, unintelligible messages from another dimension. It is a time-warp of the middle world of man and the peripheral worlds of demons and angels. Telltale clues everywhere identify this engrossing place as a sacred shrine of the first order; but no building disturbs the hallowed ambience. In its stead, stands the ancient symbol of Shinto, mounted on top of a consecrated rock, and facing the nearby falls.

In this inviolable holy of holies in a deep crease of the Kumano Mountains, and beside the glistening black rocks of Nachi, we are struck by the total irrelevance of architecture in the presence of the truly universal. The double chevron *gohei* of gold foil declares the presence of the kami which no human handiwork could ever enclose. But not even this simple external sign is necessary because kami speak directly to the soul.

Epilogue

No one can hope to find the Ultimate Truth,
With Newtonian Physics or Euclidian Geometry.
Such logic is but a shadow of Universal Reality:
A two-dimensional projection of the four-dimensional world.

Fat Monk struggles to fasten his sandals,
While Smart Monk struggles to understand the UNKNOWN.
Wise Monk throws away his Cartesian personality
And whistles "Dixie" in the presence of the UNKNOWABLE.

Gu's Box, Summer 1972

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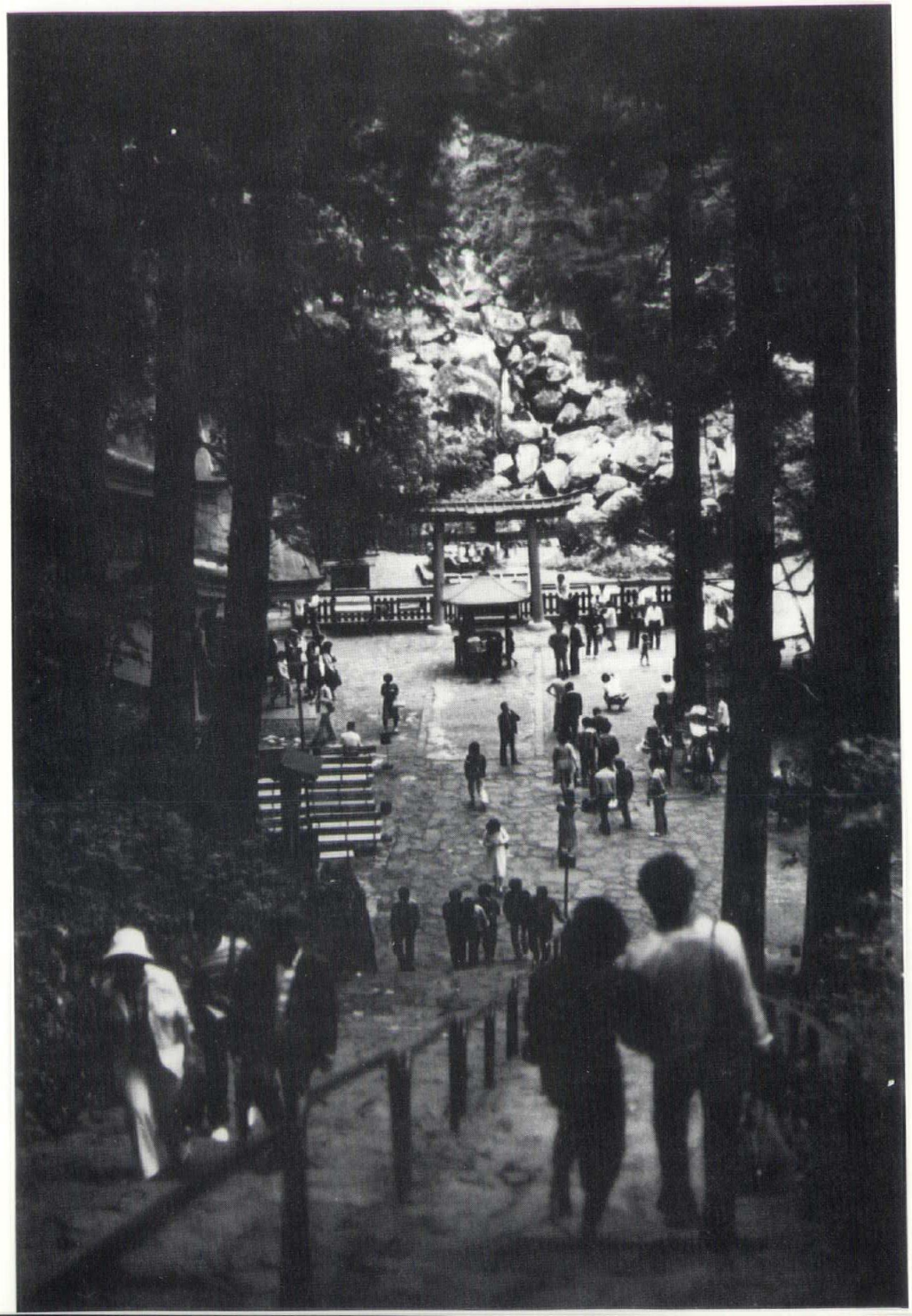
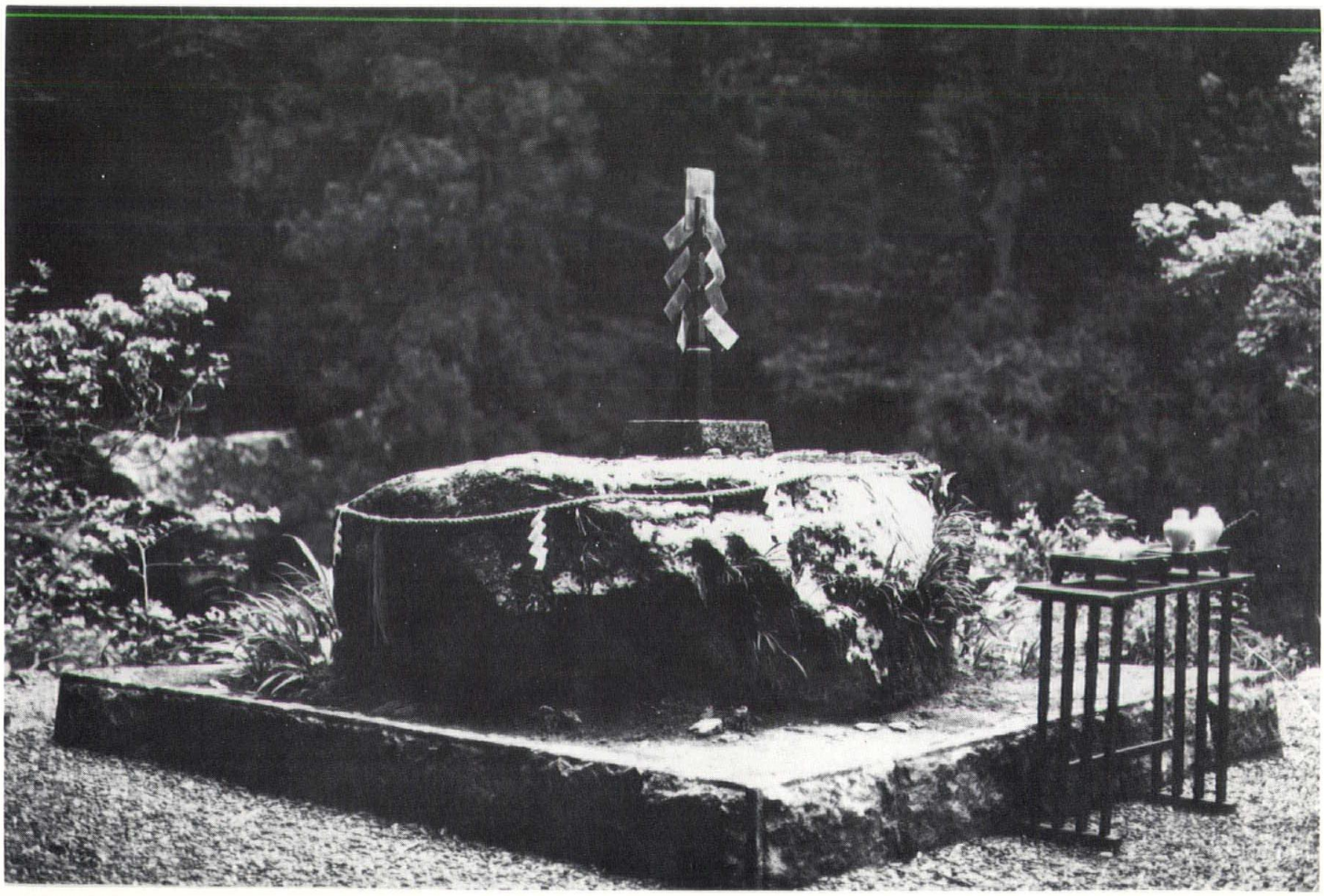




Criticism, Creativity And Crapulence: A Short Essay on "C"-manship

Robert Guenter

The cosmic ultimatum, to the extent that it can be modeled and roughly measured, is NATURE. By this is meant, of course, the overwhelming, omnipresent, dynamic reality of *process* found in every nook and cranny, and in each and every kinetic interaction of the universe in which we are inextricably immersed. The flowering concoctions of this wonderful spring of 1980 are simply local manifestations of that cosmic "bottom line."

An interesting characteristic of NATURE and its[1] organic and inorganic transformations is that it is neither *good* nor *bad*. The concept of *good and bad,* like *beauty and ugliness* and *rationality and irrationality,* are human inventions: dualistic values devised to give a modicum of control over their own lives and those of their fellow men. As such, they perform an indispensable function, providing the building blocks of discernment and of the so-called "objective" critique. Architectural criticism, in its most basic form, reflects the intention of the critic to dominate the defenseless target, thereby massaging his creativity-deprived ego into a sort of pedantic limbo.

Criticism essentially looks backward in time and inward in direction. It caters to the *convergent* thinking aspects of the human intellect: those facets measured by I.Q. tests and fostered by institutionalized education. Logic, mathematical skills, speech, and other sequential abilities identified with the left side of the brain, are attributes fundamental to conventional criticism. The critic's success depends upon reaching an audience that values such highly institutionalized qualities.

Criticism in other words, is the obvious next step in the career development of the neophyte historian. Without this evolutionary transformation, the history teacher would always be relegated to the role of a relatively unreliable phonograph record.

Creativity, in its generic sense,[2] is the antithesis of the rudimentary forms of criticism. Oriented outward and toward the future, it depends upon and, in fact, is generated by the *divergent* thinking modes associated with the right cerebral hemisphere. There is virtually no correlation with I.Q. scores,[3] and its true nature is hidden by a smokescreen of myth and elitism.

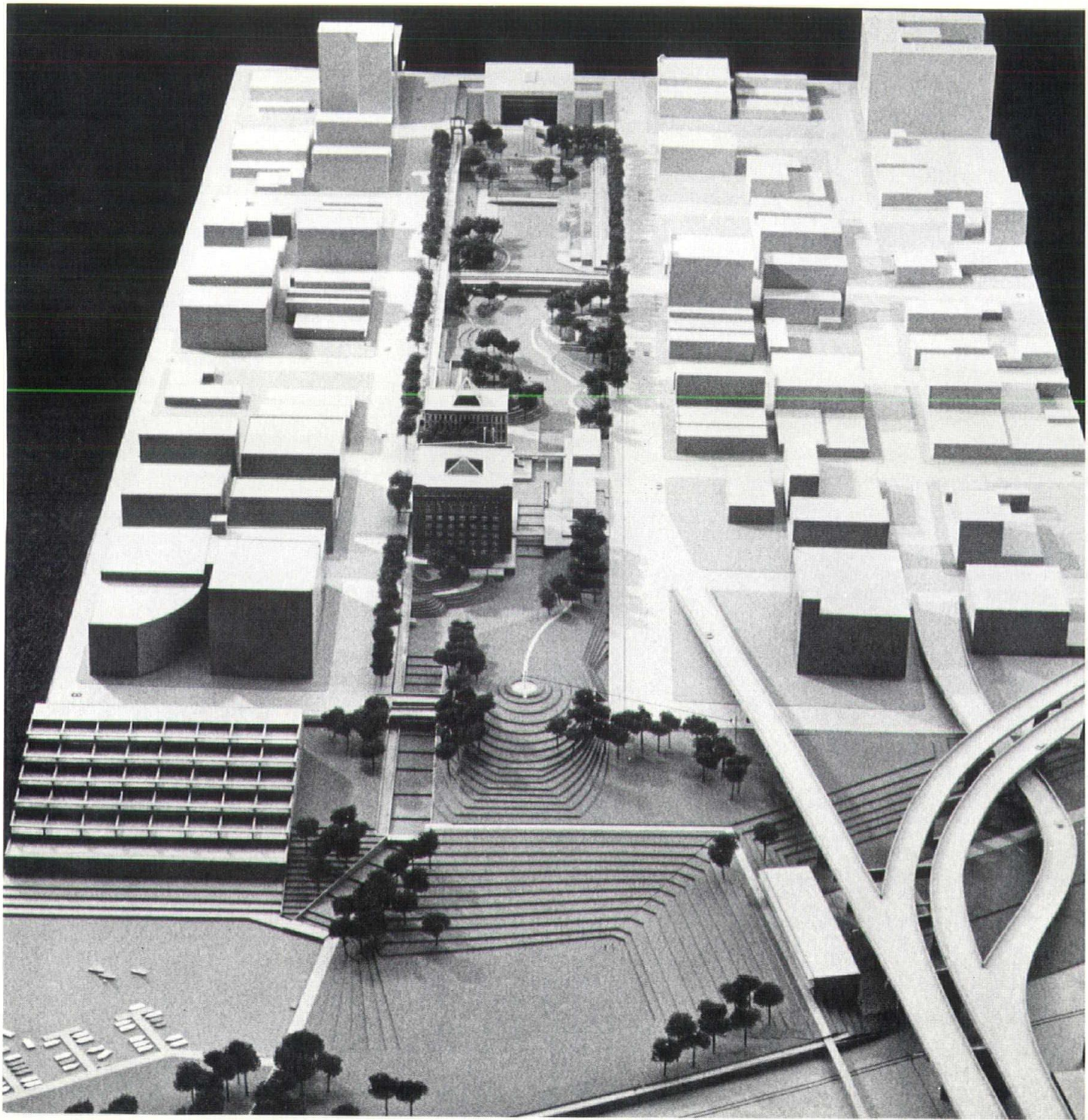
The reason that creative implulses which are innate in every healthy child are systematically squeezed out of the individual by society and its institutions is obvious. Creativity, by its very nature, threatens security and begets change. Despite the clear, unequivocal relationship of *change* to cosmic process, evolution, and all of the tomorrows yet unborn, conservative educational systems continue to replace creative processes with guaranteed methodologies which are less menacing. Unfortunately for the course of human evolution, *fear* seems to be a stronger survival instinct than *creative striving.* But there I go again, inventing values and applying them to NATURE which, after all, simply *IS.*

Crapulence is the last resort. When creative urges are thwarted at every turn, and the critical faculties are eroded and manifestly arbitrary at their origin, there *must* be another way. The "Tao" is probably reserved for only the most dedicated mystics. Parenthetically, everyone is a mystic of some measure, but few recognize it in themselves, and fewer still are dedicated enough to fathom the ultimate reality revealed by the "Zen."

As always, NATURE, in its ungendered, unvalued, random way provides the answer. It is the cosmic bottom line, the universal ultimatum. *Submerged in a raging sea of carbohydrates, protein and naturally-fermenting fruits, modern thermonuclear man can eat and drink his hedonistic way to the organic termination point!* It is the suicidal downhill race of the consummate glutton. If you can't create, why not un-create? It's all in your point of view.

Footnotes

1. For various reasons both pedagogic and political, I hesitate to employ the oft-used feminine possessive pronoun.
2. For the purpose of this dissertation, you must exclude the cultist "skill" interpretation espoused by many academicians and other esthetes.
3. Beware of translating this well-documented fact into the false implication that a negative correlation exists.



Central Park Mall/Omaha

George Haecker

Central Park Mall, Omaha's answer to urban sprawl and the revitalization of its Central Business District, is currently under construction between the existing Downtown Center and the Missouri River. Although a number of urban parks, open space projects, and greenways have been developed across the country during the last twenty years, perhaps none are ambitious as, or of the scope of, this six-square block project, intended to provide the public commitment and urban amenity to revitalize Omaha's Central Business District. Unlike Lincoln, Omaha has neither an urban university nor state capitol complex to fuel its urban activity and, therefore, requires a more grassroots approach to its revitalization.

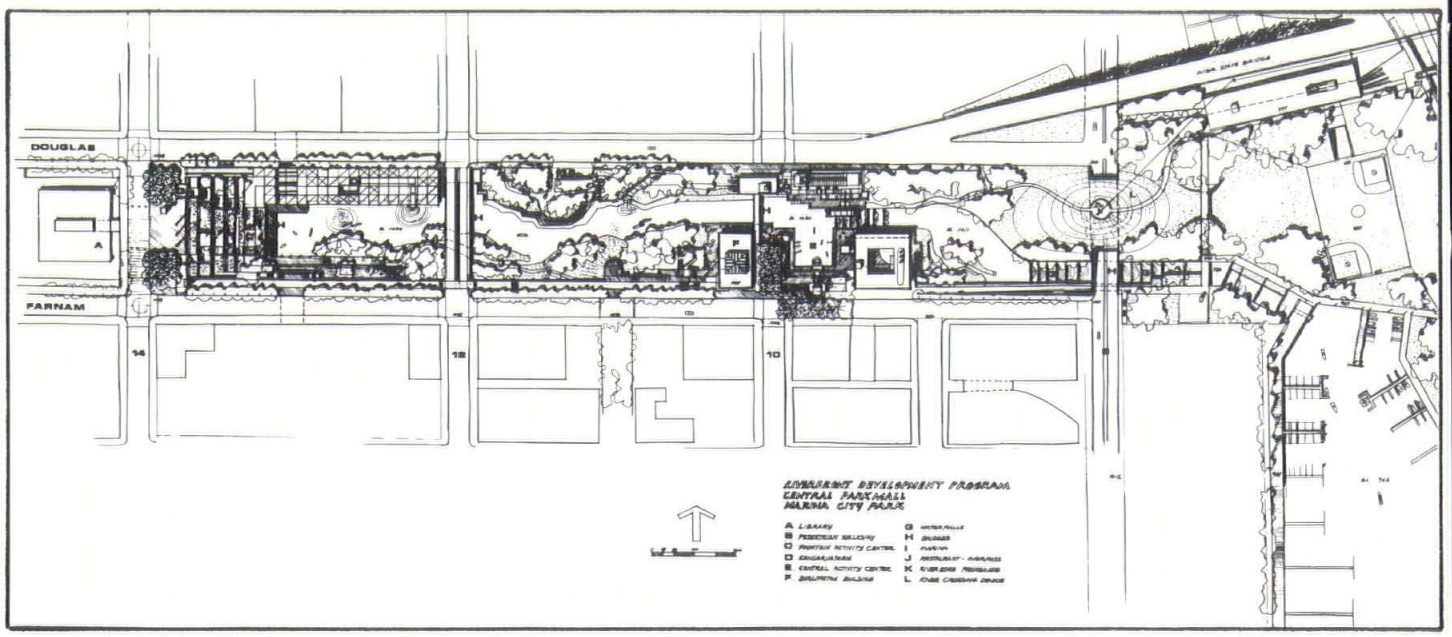
Our firm's role with the Park began in 1969, when Gary Bowen and I served on an American Institute of Architects study committee to investigate the potential of Omaha's urban environment. The initiators of this effort were the Riverfront Development Program and the Omaha City Planning Department. Initial studies documented planning for housing, education, entertainment, and transportation, as well as the Park itself. Subsequent years have seen some activity in these other sectors, primarily the new Downtown Education Center/State Office Building, but the major current project is the Park itself. Our firm, along with Carter, Hull, Nishita, McCulley, Baxter of San Francisco, has since, under various auspices and clients (principally the City of Omaha), continued its work on the Park — currently one block of which is complete. The planning has been documented, and construction is continuing in phases, with a targeted completion circa 1983.

Perhaps the most significant aspect in the process of formulating a viable design for the Park was public participation. The current results must be credited, in part, to the CBD Task Force, a group of individuals interested in helping shape Omaha's future. They, with the architects, had a sensitivity "workship" session, where each person was given a "score" to follow on an Awareness Walk of the site. They saw, they listened, they experienced Omaha first-hand, and they recorded their thoughts about the place where this park was to be. At the conclusion of the Walk, each told what he saw, and they collectively put down their ideas about what kinds of activities should make up the Park: movements, character, landscape features, and even possible names. But, the common denominator in all the discussions was the need for an active place, with a multiplicity of year-round events. These participatory workships continued during the design's formation. Working concurrently with the Task Force and architects for the five other adjacent project areas, the designers synthesized all of the inputs into a plan. Through subsequent recycling, a consensus solution was resolved.

The character of the plan is significantly influenced by its historical and physical context. Omaha's CBD, typical of many of our cities, slowly lost population (primarily retail-based) during the boom years following World War II. Major suburban shopping centers were developed in outlying neighborhoods, and office parks soon followed. County Government added to the exodus by constructing remote offices to "better serve the people." Also Omaha's natural geography did not help matters; with the river to the east and the original town development adjacent thereto, the growth of the town has continually fanned to the west. The construction of an Interstate highway system in 1965 provided a further expedient conduit to move west and greatly spurred retail and office park development as well as residential neighborhoods farther from the City's origin.

A converse, but equally frustrating problem confronting the Omaha CBD question was the fact that while the City was being diluted to the west, the river was being walled off to the east by the railroad and the Corps of Engineers. Flood control projects during the 40's and 50's by way of levees, dikes, riprap, and flood walls tended to more and more isolate the actual river from the City and the people—indeed, to the point where today it is nearly physically impossible to actually get to the river bank within the CBD area. In addition, during those decades of flood control construction, the river was looked upon more and more as a utilitarian nuisance, with one of its prime functions being a sewage system. Therefore, the desirability of

Site Plan



actually getting to, or on, the river was nearly non-existent. However, with the era of environmental consciousness upon us, the river is cleaner, its recreational use is increasing significantly, and, as part of the Riverfront Development Program, it was officially labeled an "asset."

Topography has also played a role in Omaha's growth with original development taking place on the flatlands between the river and the bluffs. Initially, the major businesses, banks, and civic structures were in this location. But slowly, the business center moved west, as the railroads came in and the Riverfront area turned more and more to industrial uses. And, although over the years many of the steeper streets have been regraded to more level conditions, the City is still very much influenced by its hillside topography. Unlike Lincoln, Minneapolis, or Denver, it is sometimes hard for the pedestrian to get around in Omaha, particularly the elderly or infirmed. The Park's location, however, and the predicted development in its vicinity, will lessen this problem by again returning and refocusing the CBD toward the flat topography near the river.

On the positive side, previous to an officially recognized "Return to the River" program, the Old Market area, located close to the Park, began to develop on a grassroots level in the CBD/Riverfront area. This area was primarily owned by the Mercer family who, along with other key individuals, saw it as a romantic and positive asset at a time when it was deteriorating, both physically and economically. This redevelopment was strictly private; there were no grandiose schemes nor public money. Small projects were started, done well, and the area slowly gained popularity to the point where, today, it is the most interesting vital urban section of Omaha and is a mini-object lesson for its larger sister, the CBD, to emulate.

The Park's location was determined during the early days of the Riverfront Development Program by the joint team of consultants and the citizen task force committees. The basic intent was to refocus the Central Business District toward the river, to reclaim the river for people-oriented activities, and to symbolically link the two together. It is a happy circumstance that Omaha's most successful urban pocket, the Old Market area, lies just one block south of the Park and provides a stable anchor and reinforcement to the activities to be generated. Indeed, it might be said that the Old Market is the moving force and that the Park is taking advantage of it, rather than the other way around. In any case, the Park was originally viewed as a lineal, or vista, park that would provide a visual focus to the River from the existing financial/business center. Initially, there was a degree of urban renewal type planning involved, whereby the Park's construction and land clearing activities would clean up blighted areas that had deteriorated over the years as the CBD moved west. These thoughts, at least as far as Omaha was concerned, were previous to much environmental or historic consciousness, and I speculate that, if the Park were being conceived and located today, it would not be of the autocratic configuration it currently takes—but would meander more sensitively through its urban context on its way to the River, thus preserving key historic buildings and ongoing businesses that were in its path.

The Park is a lineal configuration extending from 14th Street on the west to 8th on the east, being one block wide from north to south between Farnam and Douglas Streets. Its Master Plan is one section of a two-part total; the second, Marina City Park, extending from 8th Street east to the River. This section is being developed separately by the County, as opposed to Central Park Mall by the City, but they were initially planned as one unit. Marina City Park is more irregular in its shape with a large open green area, a public marina, a recessed consolidated railroad right-of-way, and a promenade at the river. Central Park Mall, on the other hand, is a rigid rectangle, with hard edges defined by the streets, contrasted to its irregular design within.

The Park, as it has developed, is more of an inter-focusing self entity than a vista park, although there is still mixed judgment on this issue. But, as the designers of the Park, we see

of the City to another. If in the future, with the Marina City development at the river, this intra-city link is realized, this will only be an added bonus to its initial value. Conceptually, the Park is designed to emulate forms, elements, and ingredients of our Nebraska geography—the key elements being water and landscaping. Earlier designs were more structured, with hard-edged plazas, walkways, and decks—with more of an urban aesthetic. However, as the design developed, the solution got softer with more green areas and water. In part this was due to economy because grass and water are more economical to construct than concrete and paving. This more natural result will perhaps be better justified as development intensifies around the Park, and it can, therefore, become a relief for the urban density that surrounds it. However, this rationale currently is weak because the intensity of its urban context is weak. Unlike Central Park in New York City, which is a natural relief valve for the density around it, our open Park sits in a relatively open urban landscape and does not provide the dramatic contrast that hopefully it will in the future.

The major design element of the Park is a large waterway extending some four blocks within its total length. This waterway is the Park's focal point with natural green earth forms surrounding it, at one point emulating the Missouri River bluffs, at other points, subdued and flat, like the prairie. Elements within the Park include a windmill sculpture complex, a series of cascading fountains and terraces, an entry spaceframe gate, an "urban center" (where two historic buildings will remain forming a public court) with restaurants, shops, boat rental, kiosks, and vendors forming an activity node at the center of the Park. There will be outdoor amphitheaters, playgrounds, picnic areas, fountains, and, encompassing all, abundant landscaping and trees.

Original funding for the project came from the Department of Housing and Urban Development Open Space Grant that provided monies for site acquisition and initial consultant studies. The City's funding presently is provided by the Community Development Block Grant "Title One" funds. With a total projected Park budget of some $16,000,000, it is anticipated approximately $2.2 million will be expended on a yearly basis by this grant through 1983 to complete the Park, with construction phased over this three-year period.

The administrative mechanisms and control of the Park have, at times, been difficult with overall lack of continuity of a single client. Various "clients" over the past 10 years have included the Riverfront Development Program, citizen task force groups, the Federal Integrated Grant Administration, the Midwest Research Institute, Stanford Research Institute, Omaha Parks and Recreation Department, Omaha City Council, Omaha City Planning Department, and currently and officially, the Omaha Housing and Community Development Department. Fortunately, during these transitions, there have been key individuals, both in the consultant's office and in the City, who have been continually involved with the work.

It is felt that Central Park Mall will be a key element in determining the fate of Omaha's Central Business District which is at a pivotal point, ready to continue its decline, or to again become an enjoyable, exciting, urban area. Potential and planned projects in the CBD area and adjacent to the Park itself include office, educational, retail, and housing facilities to provide a 24-hour-a-day environment, which is essential to the success of a downtown environment. The Park has already generated some $60,000,000 in new construction activity, including a major office building and an urban university/state office building. Property values are increasing to the point of speculation, and it seems accurate to say that the bloom is back, the tide is turned, and, in due time, it will again make sense to work, play, and live in Omaha's urban center.

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