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L.A. ArchitecT

Charles Jencks on the Latest Moderns

April 1984
Monday 1
River Task Force Meeting 4 p.m. Call (213) 380-4595.
Roy McKean Furniture Exhibit continues through April 16 at UCLA, Perlubie Gallery 1220. Call (213) 825-9414.

Monday 2

Tuesday 2

Wednesday 3

Thursday 4

Friday 5

Weekend 6

Monday 15
AIA ExComm Meeting Washington, DC. Call (213) 380-4595.
River Task Force Meeting 6 p.m. Call (213) 380-4595.
Bill Adams, AIA, Architect Wainscott Library series, Wainscott, New York. 8 p.m. Call (818) 767-4517:

Monday 16
AIA ExComm Meeting 5 p.m. Call (213) 380-4595.
Dialogues with LA Architects UCLA Extension course featuring Steven Elledge, Eric Owen Moss, Frank Israel, Ernesto Cintrero and Jeff Donnies, Morphosis, Frank Gehry office. Burton Pauls, Donald Rennesser, Barrie Myers, and Jon Jorde continues through May 18. 7-10 p.m. at Santa Monica Center, $335. Call (213) 542-9561:

Monday 22
Earth Day Ian McHarg AIA lecture at the Japanese American Cultural Center, 6:30 p.m. exhibition 7:30 p.m. program. Call (213) 380-4595:

May 6
CAIA Board Meeting/Caucus 6 p.m. Call (213) 380-4595.

May 7

May 8

May 9

May 10

May 11

May 13

AIA Board of Directors Meeting Charlotteville, Virginia, continues through May 14. Call (213) 380-4595.
The Contractor's Role Lecture sponsored by Designers Lighting Associates, PDC Seminars Center, Blue Building, 6:30 p.m. 10. Call (213) 208-7112.

For more information on AIA/ LA committee activities, contact: Architecture for Education, Lorne K. Martin, AIA, (213) 380-4595.
Architecture for Health, Richard Schall, AIA, (818) 405-5405.
Awards Program, Michael Parent, FAIA, (818) 824-5190.
Building Performance & Acoustics, John Myers, AIA, (213) 380-4493.
Commissions/Public Relations, Michael J. Katz, AIA, (213) 820-8200.
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Professional Practice, Benjamin Arifin, AIA, (213) 380-4508.
Professional Practice, Robert J. Rosenthal, AIA, (213) 460-4540.
Protocols (Protocol), Donald C. Acern, AIA, (213) 478-4903.
Architecture to Government, Mario Coppola, AIA, (213) 827-4050.
Architecture for Health, Richard Schall, AIA, (818) 405-5405.
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The Architecture Foundation of Los Angeles is sponsoring a seminar and book-signing event on Saturday, May 11, 1991, 9:30 am, at the Pacific Design Center, Green Building, featuring Normand Kaderlan, principal in the Kaderlan Group, consultants in planning, marketing, and management. Mr. Kaderlan will address the subject “Survival in a Soft Economy.” His latest book, “Designing Your Practice: A Principal’s Guide to Creating and Managing a Design Practice,” will be available for purchase, personally signed by the author.

Pre-paid reservations are $10/AFIA members and $15/non-members (at the door, $15/$20). Tax-deductible checks should be made payable to AFIA and forwarded to AFLA at 3127 Los Peliz Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90039, (213) 389-6490.

Architecture in Health
The February meeting featured Marshall Lew, Ph.D. and William Taylor, P.E., who spoke to the committee on current trends in seismic research and how these seismic activities impact architectural design. Mr. Lew presented a description of the motion of the earth’s crust in Southern California and the various earthquake-related hazards. He also described the various regional faults in and around the greater Los Angeles area. He stated that with proper design, engineering and the application of state-of-the-art technology, seismic phenomena can be compensated and properly addressed.

William Taylor led the discussion of base isolation systems, noting that the question that engineers face is whether to make a building rigid or flexible in order to minimize seismic damage. The development of the base isolation foundation system is an alternative—creating a building structure that is both rigid and flexible at the same time. This design is essentially isolating the building structure, a rigid frame construction, from the support foundation, thus reducing earthquake ground motion transmitted to the building. Base isolation systems are limited to four stories in height with a simplified square or rectangular footprint. Since this system was first introduced, the initial costs have been reduced to the point that it is “affordable.” Additional engineering costs for dynamic analysis and response spectra/geological studies are required in addition to the normal geotech survey that would be provided for a conventional structure.

The March meeting featured Cynthia Huisinger, with the Leach/Bates Hospital Group, presenting the subject of materials management for hospitals. The April meeting will feature Lee Taylor, with Lee Taylor, Inc., presenting the subject of cost estimating for hospitals.

Richard Checoul, AIA
Chair, Architecture for Health

Architects in Government
At the February meeting, Robert Grabski, AIA, Director of Facilities Planning and Development, Los Angeles County College District, commented on alternative methods of constructing for public works. Mr. Grabski indicated that the greater incidence of problems in public works lies in the constraints imposed by the Public Contracts Code and its requirements. The public bid requirements seem to rely on four assumptions that are untrue: that the bid documents are 100% complete; that the bid documents are 100% correct; that there will be no changes to the project; that all contractors will perform at the same level of expertise and professionalism. Considering the above assumptions and the fact that the selected general contractor (who is also supposed to be the lowest bidder), only performs 15-20% of the work subcontracted for the rest, the sole solution for obtaining high quality is to involve good construction management.

The public bidding requirements recognize construction management as a necessary professional service. Management input should be brought in at the earliest stages in the construction process. In fact the construction manager can and should become part of the team during the design process, to provide insight early enough to avoid the construction phase problems like oversights, or errors. Also, if the owner is required to hold and administer a large number of individual contracts, they can be assigned to the construction manager to relieve the pressure on the owner and his staff. At the end of the presentation, Mr. Grabski emphasized that construction management is not intended to be a cost savings device, but will result in a more realistic project budget and schedule.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 17, 1991 at the Unified School District, 1425 S. Sao Pedro Street, Room 404. Speakers Frank Orbis, Chief, Disabled Access Division, Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, and architect Omar Siller will discuss barrier design and handicap accessibility.

Maria Magdalena Campeau
Chair, Architects in Government

Professional Practice
On Thursday, April 25, at 5:45 pm, the Professional Practice Committee will sponsor a tour of the Mettoral Red Line station, now under construction at Seventh and Flower streets. Space is limited and reservations are essential. Call Bernie Altman at (213) 204-2290.

In Memoriam
Harold John Nicholas, AIA, formerly a partner in the firm of Burke, Kober, Nicklas, and Archuleta, died on March 7, 1991 at the age of 87. Born in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, in 1903, he moved to California in 1922 and was involved in architectural practice until 1984. The firm’s work included a wide range of retail, commercial, and office buildings, as well as many regional shopping centers.

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L.A. ARCHITECT 10
Mr. Jencks' book, The New Moderns, was published by Rizzoli in 1990.

The more difficult question is whether they can build more than just one. The 777 Tower is a great rarity among contemporary tall buildings anywhere, a skyscraper that is fully original yet still understated and dignified. Its exterior celebrates several regional traits. Its shadow-casting properties and whiteness salute the city's wonderful crisp light and most fitting building color, while its architectural metalwork recognizes the local high-tech tradition. Variant window sizes enliven its visually, and create an illusion of curvature on the structure's two flat sides. This skin is a marvel even for someone as adept at adorning as Pelli. The lobby, particularly the northern portion, is a rich and noble space. Finally, the stepped and semi-curved exterior shape establishes an unassuming but still valid dialogue with the Library Square tower. Indeed, seen from a point on the eastbound Santa Monica Freeway, the two buildings align perfectly and appear as one.

In a later issue of LA Architect, Aaron Betsky will examine these towers in greater depth. My own conviction is that they, along with Richard Meier's nearly completed Southern California Design plant into a first class library setting. There is almost now become the establishment. The supposed anti-establishment culture, which has sunk vital movements, survive the great burden of success and fashion, here there is a good reason for it. Those unfamiliar with the renovation of older buildings have a tendency to think the work is easier than other types of architecture. There is nothing to design, right? Just ask architect Associates.

Mr. Pastier, an architecture critic and planning consultant, currently holds an NEA Fellowship in stadium design research. His office space for rent in architect's office. Convenient Santa Monica location. Use of common areas (kitchen, conference). Call (213) 393-2042.

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They are continuing the Modern project as an unbroken tradition, rather than creating something new and counter to the International Style. I started to use the prefix "New" several years back to point out such distinctions and I think they are very important—and at the same time slightly bittersweet, since, like any movement of architecture, things are both very clear and fuzzy at the same time. We are, after all, talking about both a silly fashion and a serious move—fuzzy at the same time. We are, after all, talking of architecture, things are both very clear and economic and aesthetic optimalization, architecture such as Morphosis break this technologi­cally tendency apart; they proposed the opposite of Neutra's white, clear, efficient High­-Tech—there is a dark, mysterious, redundant "Dead­Tech."

Dagmar Richter, I believe, sees the move­ment as a new form of Expressionism, perhaps a revival in a new way of the impulses of Poelzig, Schuon and the Taut brothers—but she will tell you. I think the New Expressionists energies are as much as anything else in reaction toward the "experience of Modernity" is shared by all, but the "experience of Modernity" is shared by all, and you have the advantage of understanding the willful, romantic, radically personal nature of all the expressionist movements, but one thing is clear: you need a long explanation. It is idiosyncratic and often in a code that is ultimately autobiographi­cal. Eisenman, for instance, speaks one language; one can compare his work to resupply the subtext which explains who the "technomorph" is now on every student's drafting board, and create what Norman Mailer called the "experience of Modernity", which pins down its exaggeration of heavy memory will probably falsify the quote, "cynicism is the precondition of truth today," and this is es­pecially true in an age overthrown with Shack's of the New.

Kazuo Sionahora uses the phrase "Modern­Next," unintentionally comparing the new move­ment to the fashion chain "Next," and it is hard not to be somewhat suspicious of the fact that this fashion is now on every student's drafting board, and create what Norman Mailer called the "experience of Modernity," which pins down its exaggeration of heavy memory will probably falsify the quote, "cynicism is the precondition of truth today," and this is es­pecially true in an age overthrown with Shack's of the New.

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L. A. ARCHITECT
The Library Square Sails

As the sun lowers over the LA plain, casting long shadows between the downtown towers, the Harbor freeway snakes slowly by, carrying commuters home. The skyline landmark, Pei Cobb Freyd and Partners’ First Interstate World Center at Library Square adds a handsome profile to the horizon, vista-scale. Human-scale, the metal-falls of escalators rise up and slide by the lower-register architecture of the Library Square Tower. Panning past the finely engineered granite walls (of curtain-wall guru Michael Flynn), the moving viewer experiences the ever-changing perspective and three-dimensional imposition of the sails.

Designed by John Neary, architect with Pei Cobb Freyd and Partners in conjunction with engineer/contractor Birdair, the paired, white, triangular membrane structures canopy three open-air pavilions. These, in turn, fan out in tiers from the intricate radiating geometry of the tower itself (designed by Henry Cobb and Harold Fredenburg).

For any architect, a highrise building inevitably brings about the challenge of the transition of scale at street level. The Library Square Tower is skirted immediately by the Bunker Hill Steps, a series of neo-baroque sweeps. To bridge this difference in scale and aesthetic, the canopied pavilions mediate gracefully. Covering three steps or landings, which afford entry to the public levels of the tower, the sails create semi-enclosed spaces for sitting, eating, conversation, and special events inherent to the outdoors, but which still require a degree of special seclusion. The nature of the sails, though very much a 20th century technology, references other places and times. In form, they suggest wind-bom sails; as signage, flags; environmentally, sun protecting parasols, in light quality, they evoke the airy festiveness of a circus marquee, while functionally, they remind one of traditional cafe terrace awnings, each pausing to frame the view of the ornately roofed old library.

For Neary, the primary sculptural intent of the sails is “the suggestion of motion...” Harnessing this kinetic energy, each sail is anchored by a tensioned connection at one corner, its opposite edge stretched against a curving steel beam. Each pair of planes intersects through space, braced between the arching colonnade wall of the pavilion and the angular flutes of the tower itself. The translucent tefлон-coated fiberglass material lends a softened, diffused light to the staggered decks it screens. As the sun climbs throughout the day, the nature of the captured space changes, and shade transforms the sails from translucent overlapping planes to silhouettes. Though physically separate, each pair of sails interrelates perceptually as a whole. At another level, one witnesses a uniting of scales, of architectures, and ultimately of disciplines, where the boundary between artist and engineer is temporarily suspended.

Clockwise from top: photo showing sails between First Interstate World Center and Steps; detail; intervention of Sails; sculpture planes; plan. Sails with adjacent Steps.

Barbara-Ann Campbell
Ms. Campbell, formerly with Gensler and Associates’ Los Angeles office, is now working in Japan.

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L.A.Architect
Restoring the Waterworks

by Tim Brandt

Picture the year: 1927. It is a great era of growth not only for Los Angeles, but Beverly Hills as well. As the scene opens, the City of Beverly Hills builds a Spanish Revival Waterworks building at the corner of La Cienega and Olympic Boulevards. It is the first municipal water treatment plant on the West Coast and follows the City Beautiful concept initiated in eastern cities, by placing a civic monument within a large public park. The motive? The Waterworks enables Beverly Hills to maintain its independence from the City of Los Angeles as it pioneers water purification research in aerating, filtrating and treatment of water pumped from its own wells. All is well for almost 50 years.

But then the unthinkable happens. A 1971 earthquake damages portions of the assemblage and the building is abandoned in 1976 after Beverly Hills begins purchasing water from the Metropolitan Water District. And it came to pass that the Waterworks building faced the all too common fate of historic structures in Los Angeles—demolition. However, a glimmer of hope rested in finding an economically viable plan for reuse.

Fortunately, the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences' search for a new home for its archival holdings coincided with petitions calling for the reuse of the Waterworks. The large interior spaces rivaled those of the finest libraries in traditional architecture and could be preserved and modernized to suit the needs of the Academy.

In 1988, the Academy proposed to the City of Beverly Hills a reuse of the building as a home for its Center for Motion Picture Study. The strong visionary direction required to foresee the metamorphosis of this abandoned structure—complete with falling plaster, broken windows, and graffiti covered walls—can be credited to Offenhouse/Mekeel Architects.

The restoration and rehabilitation of this Spanish Colonial Revival landmark and its 130 foot high Moorish style tower has taken nearly three years. Exterior work restored much of the building to its original 1926 appearance, including the tower modeled after the Giralda Tower in Seville.

The two original wings and the tower were treated differently in their design detailing, and the style of the "infilled" Spanish Revival west wing successfully fits into its historic context. This new 10,000 square foot wing connects the main building with the salvaged frontispiece of the original "tool shed" and appears as original to its setting as the pieces it connects. No where is this more apparent than in the board formed concrete walls, painstakingly constructed in the original technique. The two story height of the wings are flanked by roof tiled walkways, necessitated to balance facades which originally had first floor elevations concealed behind concrete water tanks.

The new exterior landscaping handled by the City of Beverly Hills is less successful. Unlike the original landscaping which was fairly lush and added to the building's mysterious atmosphere, the new planting is much too timid. However, the open landscape visually links the site to the rest of La Cienega Park, across busy La Cienega Boulevard.

Surprisingly enough, given its Southern California location, most of the water purification work at the Waterworks building occurred indoors. Water was aerated in the large south wing which now houses archival storage. Sand beds filtered the water in the clerestoried north wing; the Cecil B. DeMille Reading Room now takes advantage of the clerestory light while the film vault storage area replaces the sand beds. The massive rose window once concealed the controls in the head house; now it fronts the executive conference room.

Of primary concern in the design approach was that the spatial expression of the original structure remain evident in the final product. New work, including modern building and safety requirements, does not mimic the structure and is inserted without destroying the integrity or uniqueness of the spaces. In fact, the only new full height walls enclose the toilets and dark rooms. Where programmatic issues dictated full height walls elsewhere, Canadian white birch veneered partitions end below the structure and were infilled with glass. This detail is most successful at the buttressing where the "float- Continued on 9
The Downtown Skyline: Quality at Last Meets Quantity

For most of this century, Los Angeles supported a building type that may be America's greatest contribution to architectural history. Between 1950 and 1957, the city became the premier scrapyard for 13-story, 150-foot-tall office buildings. The exterminator's goal was structural safety, but there were also signs that there would be some opportunity to improve the environment for commercial real estate speculation over a wider area than a concentrated downtown would allow. Ironically, the two principal exceptions to this safety regulation were government office buildings, the 28-story, 454-foot City Hall, and the 18-story, 257-foot Federal Building.

In the time this law was repealed, Los Angeles had the lowest and most diverse skyline of any major urban region, with clusters of mid-rise structures in downtown, Hollywood, mid-Wilshire, the Miracle Mile, Long Beach and Paramount, plus a mini-town or two in such places as Mission Valley, Santa Monica, East Los Angeles and West Hollywood. By far the greatest concentration was downtown, and over the last three decades, despite a visible scattering of tall buildings in new suburban and in-town centers, it has continued to attract the tallest buildings.

When I moved here in 1968, a walking New Yorker fresh out of school, there were just two downtown buildings of any approachable height: City Hall and the almost new Occidental Life (now Transamerica) building two miles to the south. To my Eastern eyes, this lack of a dramatic core skyline seemed a major deficiency, but one that functionally could be compensated through the judicious application of a few hundred million dollars. The Union Bank's framework was rising, about to give the city its first 500-foot structure and downtown its third with a vacant anchor. Soon after, the old Crocketer Bank tower (now AT&T) broke the 500-foot barrier. Since notably the center of the immense triangle formed by its predecessors, it hinted that the city might one day have a visual dominating matrices of tall buildings.

Eventually many more came of an interesting pace, pushing the apex of the skyline ever higher while forming a critical mass along downtown's west side and even jumping the Harbor Freeway in search of cheaper and easily procured land. But as long as the early '70s, it seemed that quantity alone wouldn't do the job. The quality of downtown towers was not sufficiently high, and the appearance of the skyline was hampered by two further factors. The height limit that defined Los Angeles of its rough shape of artifacts from the '20s and '30s-the architect's golden age. And a later regulation mandating handling landing pads on tall buildings made fom the standard architectural haircut, and made any graceful meeting with the sky difficult to arrange. Again, safety was cited, the fire department envisioned dramatic rooftop rescues. But after the first Interstate Bank fire a few years ago, no one could afford any artificial evacuations during the town's entire renaissance.

As the free flow of the tall buildings, the quality of high-rise design has been improving in fits and starts over the last two decades, and the last two years that downtown has outgrown a major threshold in this regard. Better out of town architects are being commissioned, and local firms are growing skill in a building type that was once the antithesis of Los Angeles' architectural genius.

Soon after, the downtown skyline gained an effective focus about a year ago in Fox Plaza. In the Fullerton-Tower Tower at Library Square. Through its stepped shape, 1,072-foot height, and central location, it provides light and a focal point for the new tower's form, it makes a connection between the two himself. This last quarter century, it also offers attention from the Beaux-Arts corner tower that had dominated downtown for 15 years. Few's 71-story shaft works well on multiple levels, with its dark windowing to bring its footing and its prominent structural qualities into the upper half, where they can register above the forest of surrounding lower buildings. Unfortunately, it is less successful at closer range than as a skyline element. Each new tower more completely realized offers a fuller range of satisfaction. A.C. Martin's Mitus Fudosan building in the annex of the pair, fully sculpted, polymeric, amber-colored glass, is impressive. Culler's Pelli-Wilson Tower is quiet and subtle, yet less confident, the first buildings that overshadowed the others. It is the second skyscraper in series of two that the city then never had. (Need one say that the Martin office was one of three architects for the City Hall, to which the new tower borrowed some...)

Continued on 9

by John Pastier

New York, which are already packed together, towers in Los Angeles are often more fluid. Though the city has many more isolated towers, they are more visible in their entirety. The design must produce a sculptural object that can be seen from all sides, not just a primary facade. This lesson is clearly demonstrated by Fox Plaza and 1999 Avenue of the Stars. The architect devises a form for his sensitivity to these conditions, and it is refreshing that such a prominent commission for a Fox Plaza nearly 15 years ago was not automatically taken by a firm in New York or Chicago. The building of talent evidenced by 1999 Avenue of the Stars as compared to its predecessor, Fox Plaza, is also encouraging. The design for Fox Plaza was much simpler—essentially an obelisk generated by the rotation of two square towers about a central point. Although it presents a strong urban object, it does not sacrifice the urban agenda that the new tower does. Finally, to resolve the success of the project from another JMB Urban's point of view, one needs only experience the fact that coming on one of the most depressed real estate markets in Los Angeles history, the building was nearly 50% pre-leased.

J. Peter Devereaux
Mr. Devereaux is a principal in the firm of Fields & Devereaux Architects, AIA.
1999 Avenue of the Stars: The Evolution of a Los Angeles Skyscraper

The completion of Fox Plaza in 1987 signalled a reformation for the venerable Pereira office, now under the tutelage of Ron Burgee. The project’s success in leasing and the nearly universal accolades it received from the design community prompted JMB Urban Development Company to challenge Johnson Fain and Pereira Associates to exceed their previous accomplishment by designing a new office tower for a prominent location in Century City.

JMB’s new tower is located at the corner of Avenue of the Stars and Constellation Boulevard. This 29-story office tower, which contains more than three quarters of a million square feet, is at the geographic center of Century City. The building is located at the corner of the site with associated parking facilities; over 1,500 cars creating an L-shape behind the tower on the rooftop parking. The tower’s unique quality is its dynamic composition in which each side changes according to the manipulation of the curtain wall. This exterior skin is composed of various layers of green and golden granites, custom aluminum glazing systems, and tinted solar glass.

At the ground plane, the primary pedestrian entrance is located at the intersection of the two boulevards. To the north is a generous entrance to the tower; to the south is a generous entrance to the plaza. These days are handled as background buildings; the Beverly Hills Civic Civic Center is front and center. This high-stakes gamble seems to have largely succeeded. Moore/Martin/UG found a way to bring an isolated city hall closer to the life of a downtown area even better, they have created a clear axis and a pedestrian environment amid a jumble of streets. The shortcomings of the project, as it currently stands, are bold patches in detail, some of which can be laid to delays and budgetary problems, rather than any fundamental weakness in the diagram.

The architects took a freestanding landmark in a park as the point of departure for a sweep­ing, urban complex. The program calls for nearly 900,000 square feet of new construction and renovation, including new buildings for police and fire departments, extensive redesign of the library and a refurbishment of the venerable city hall building of 1931. Moore/Martin/UG were not exactly timid about redefining the context of the existing building. The civic cen­ter aggressively cuts a new axis at a diagonal to city hall, so that the pedestrian movement within the civic core tilts toward the Beverly Hills triangle area.

The axis is comprised, primarily, of a string of elliptical courtyards. The finest is a sunken space on the northeast, where the plan seems closest to Baroque Roman. Like good Italian piazzas, this space has an inherently dramatic quality that turns ordinary events into spectacular street theater. (On the day that we walked the project, we saw Dr. Joyce Brothers doing a sound check in the sunken plaza, saying over and over again, “The human heart, like the human mind, is as unknowable as it is inde­cipherable.” her voice rising with each repetition until she was literally bellowing. The whole scene was so moving that I thought about making a documentary of the movie of the 1980s. After climbing the stairs, however, we find the pavement is embedded with pavers too glossy and plastic-ver­nacular, perhaps, but strangely at odds with the rest of the project. At the center of the project, we find a free-standing, transparent “circular image: a circular street harmed in by a tall, exuberant arcade. According to design team leader Stephen Harby (formerly of UG and now with Moore Ruble Yudell), this central courtyard had been de­signed as a paved piazza, with bollards separat­ing pedestrians from cars, as in Italian piazzas; the city, unfortunately, preferred a traffic circle paved in asphalt. Aesthetically, the big problem with the central courtyard is the rear surface of the arcades, which are flat, from a distance, they look like big, cardboard lollipops. Harby says lollipops is expected to extenuate these surfaces, just as new pavements is expected to add some interest to the smallest and least devel­oped plaza on the southeast.

Although the success of the project rests on its courtyard spaces and not the style of the ornament, the style itself is likely to become one of the most debated elements in the scheme. Some observers find this newly coined, neo­Baroque vocabulary too fashionable, while others find it really works. “Disney,” this style is not entirely out of keeping, since the original city hall is something of a confection itself, as is the finest city hall building in Southern California: the great dome of Pasadena. Charles Moore has attempted to revive the serious frivolity of these buildings and perhaps, as well, the ones designed for the world expositions of the early 1900s, such as the buildings that Bertram Goodhue designed in Balboa Park for the Panama/California Expo­sition of 1915. True, Moore’s version in Beverly Hills does not always please. This new style seems a little too flashy in spots, even a little vulgar, at the edge of the original city hall. Yet we realize, after a while, that this style is well calculated; it is strong enough to stand against the original city hall, yet not so strong as to result in the “slaughter” warned of by the jazz critic. Sometimes the twain do meet; perhaps all the civic center needs now is a little aging.

Morris Newman

Mr. Newman is a monthly columnist for California Business Magazine and the associate editor of California Planning and Development Report.
The New Modern Agenda

The following is an excerpted version of a paper delivered by Charles Jencks at "The New Modernism," a symposium hosted by UCLA on March 5.

Whenever two or three New Modernists are gathered together there is bound to be disagreement, but before we can enjoy our differences we have to agree on some rules of the game and quick definitions—what are called after events in Eastern Europe, or the Gulf War, some "defining moments." The cliché defining moment has some use in architecture if we stretch it to cover many years. So, to anticipate Thomas Hines, we can say the "defining years" of the Old Modernism were from 1880 to 1930, what’s called the "Heroic Period" when Walter Gropius was in his Bauhaus, Henry Ford was in Detroit, Le Corbusier was in his white period and all was well with modernity and modernization. Above all, Richard Neutra was in Southern California where the light-weight machine aesthetic—the "almost nothing" of Mies van der Rohe—could keep out the few drops of rain that fell and would not crack up because of a freeze. Neutra’s clean, crisp architecture epitomized the Old Modernism, especially when it was photographed by Julius Shulman against a virgin landscape, for here was the promise of functionality, beauty, low cost and social responsibility all apparently compatible.

By contrast, the defining years of the New Modernism started in 1977 when Peter Eisenman wrote his manifesto "Post-Functionalism," justifying a different sort of architecture—abstract it is true, but so oblique that it paid no attention to time and place, or to the functionalism and humanism of the Modern Movement. To quote Eisenman quoting Michel Foucault, "it dispelled man away from the center of his world," or to quote him misquoting Derrida, it decentralized the house, and decomposed meanings into disconnected fragments. It delivered all the diagnostics and delusions of deconstruction. At the risk of stating the implicit byproducts, or the unstated goals of this new movement—

But although Deconstruction was new to architecture because it was counter to the humanism of the Modern Movement. To quote it was, "a new orthodoxy that was so doxic that it was received about the middle of a script. He went on to say that he was fascinated by Peter Eisenman’s ability to invent a language and then change its meanings with populist consumers. If this event was an accurate representation of current direction in architectural theory, we are in dire straits. With statements by Geyth and Hines nowadays, a literary movement preceded an architectural one, and supplied the underlying ideas. Eisenman, Bernard Tschumi, Daniel Libeskind—and then Philip Johnson in the Decon Show of 1988—were doing the traditional thing and taking their lead from the reigning philosop-

And the great ironies to which this has led, not fully acknowledged or dealt with by these figures, are clear to everybody else: how can the Decons, who are anti-establishment and prac-

tical "resistance" become the establish-
ment, how can Peter Eisenman, who always claims he is a radical, resisting consumer cul-
ture, display himself in the pages of Vanity Fair, how can the revolutionary Bernard Tschumi accept the legion of honor for his follies or "madnesses," from President Francois Mitter-
an? I expect Tom Wolfe to tell us soon, to explain how Bernard—who once defined archi-
tecture as being akin to an act of murder and illustrated it with a man jumping out of a win-
dow how revolutionary, how positively Decon,

Commentary: A Spectator’s Viewpoint

On Tuesday, March 5, 1991, the UCLA Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning sponsored a roundtable discussion entitled "The New Modernism." Participating included Aaron Besky, critic, Frank Gehry, FAIA, architect, Tomo Hines, historian/critic; Charles Jencks, critic, Wolf Prix, architect; and Dagmar Richter, architect. Dean Richard Weinstein moderated the roundtable. The roundtable with ten minute presentation by each of the partici-
pants followed by a discussion among the pan-
elists and then questions from the audience.

To begin, Jencks speed-read through a 15-
minute monologue, borrowing a few minutes from Frank Gehry. He told us, with his usual populist clichés and hyperbole, that he was tracing the sub-movements within Modernism, particularly the semantic distinctions between "Neo-Modemism" and "New Modernism." He also commu-
nicated his frustration at not being able to iden-
tify "new" (Gehry, and his use of frustrating the Deconstructivists/Deconstructionists by classifying them in his self-appointed cate-
cories.

Dagmar Richter, who noted her status as the "token woman on the panel, defined her ap-
proach as a reaction against the negative and dominating aspects of contemporary culture, including Peter Eisenman, and in effect designing projects to reveal and change these horrific ideologies. She observed that through the au-
tomation art and dynamic action, not unlike German Expressionist and new urban typologies can be created, as demonstrated by her Century City project in which order for the new human-
ism is deconstructed based upon infrastructure systems.

Thomas Hines provided the evening’s only intellectual, scholarly review of Modernism, and an insightful, stringing criticism of Jencks’ misuse of critical labels. Hines suggested that when used properly, categorization enables transcendence and rediscovery. But when used by Jencks in so subjective a fashion, not unlike German Expressionist, new urban typologies can be created, as demonstrated by her Century City project in which order for the new humanism is deconstructed based upon infrastructure systems.

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As part of California Architecture Week, March 11-17, CCAIA announced their annual design awards. Of the 15 projects chosen, eight went to Los Angeles firms or projects. Honor awards went to: Barton Phelps & Associates for the North Range of the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library; Anthony Pedrock for a Venice beach residence; Frank O. Gehry & Associates for the Vitra International Furniture building in Germany; Moore Ruble Yudell for the First Church of Christ Scientist in Glendale; Grinstein/Daniels, Inc. for a Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant; and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill for the Solana Marriott Hotel in Westlake, Texas. Merit awards were given to Steven Ehrlich/MAA Architects for the Ehrman-Coons residence in Santa Monica; and David Lawrence Gray & Associates for the Sunset Towers/St. James Club renovation.

The 25-Year Award, honoring California architecture of enduring significance, went to Ghiardelli Square in San Francisco, designed by Wurster Bamardi & Emmons Inc. The rail system is funded by a combination of federal, state, and local contributions and a 1.12 percent sales tax increase made possible by the voter approval of Proposition A in 1980 (35% of which is designated for rail transport).

According to Michali, in the past, rail planning has been dominated by engineering considerations, but more recently, the Commission has recognized the importance of community participation in design decisions. Because a commuter rail alters and intensifies existing land use, station design, right of way landscaping and joint development opportunities are now given more consideration. What is not clear is how much importance urban design issues will be given in the decisions involving route alignments. Given the highly political nature of these decisions, the best intentions and plans of the LACCTC staff can easily be compromised. The final decisions regarding the route alignments will be made in the next few years. For good or bad, we will live with the results for decades. One example, the extension of the light rail Blue Line to Pasadena (in the planning stage) will follow to some extent the Pasadena Freeway through the Arroyo. The Arroyo is a natural for decades. One example, the extension of the light rail Blue Line to the Pasadena (in the planning stage) will follow to some extent the Pasadena Freeway through the Arroyo. The Arroyo is a natural watercourse and environmental amenity in the metropolitan area that the committee has sought to conserve with respect to other planning proposals. Similarly, the extension of the Metro Rail Red Line from the Hollywood and Vine station into the San Fernando Valley remains up for grabs.

Some local Valley groups evidently prefer a monorail or commuter rail system as opposed to the heavy rail system designed and under construction from the Civic Center to Hollywood.

What will likely prove to be the most controversial link is the extension of the rail system to West Los Angeles and Santa Monica. There are currently at least four different routes under consideration as alternatives to the original alignment which followed Wilshire Boulevard to the west. These alternative routes were made necessary by a congressional moratorium on underground rail development in the metropolitan area near Wilshire/Fairfax.

The Urban Design Committee will be monitoring the ongoing design and planning process of the rail system, and will be encouraging the chapter to take positions on the alternative proposals that come before the Commission. If 300 miles of new rail public transit to be constructed in the next 20 years is not enough to capture your interest, there are a score of other equally weighty issues. The committee meets on the first or second Thursday of the month at 6 pm in the chapter office. The next meeting is April 4.

James D. Black
Co-Chair, Urban Design Committee

CDA Committee
The reformed AIA/LA CDA committee will meet on Tuesday, April 16, at the chapter office, to discuss the year's agenda, meeting dates, and to discuss relevant issues. For more information, call (213) 380-4555.

Code Talk
If you are in the dark wondering which disabled access guideline to follow, don't worry, we are too. On February 25, I attended the annual Barrier Free Conference sponsored by the City of Los Angeles 13th Ongoing Education Program.

LA ARCHITECT
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Ian McHarg to Speak at Third Focus Program

AIAA/LA, together with Cal Poly Pomona, will sponsor its third “Focus on Architects and Architecture” program on April 22 at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, at 244 S. San Pedro in Los Angeles. In conjunction with Earth Day, noted landscape architect Ian McHarg will lecture on “Our Commitment to the Environment.” The program will start at 7:30 pm, preceded by a reception at 6:30 pm. The attendance fee is $10/members, and $15/non-members. To make reservations, call (213) 380-4595.

Upcoming Events

The Last Remaining Seats V, sponsored by the LA Conservancy to showcase the city’s historic theaters, begins Wednesday, June 5 at 7:30 pm, and runs four consecutive Wednesdays. For information, call (213) 623-CITY.

“Bare Bones” is the theme for the 1991 Aspen Design Conference scheduled for June 16-21. For information on registration, call (303) 925-2237.

Shake Hands with Santa Fe, a two-day exhibit and sale, will be held April 10-11 at the Olympic Collection in West Los Angeles. The show will feature authentic works of Santa Fe artists, designers, jewelers and craftsmen. For information, and to RSVP, call (213) 473-2836.

Winning Public Design Contracts, an AIA professional development workshop, will be held April 25-26 in Los Angeles. Call (213) 380-4595.

The Pedal for Power/Homeless Pledge Ride is seeking sponsors for a bicycle trip leaving Los Angeles on May 11, and arriving in Boston on June 7. The Boston Society of Architects’ Task Force to End Homelessness will receive 50% of the pledged proceeds. For information, call (617) 566-7567.

A safety seminar, featuring CPR and first aid training, will be presented by the SAAC committee on April 19, at the American Red Cross in West LA, from 6-8 pm. The attendance fee is $50/person, or $55/person if three or more people from the same firm register. To RSVP, call (213) 939-1090, by April 12.

Copyright law and ownership of documents will be the focus of a half-day, morning seminar presented by Nachik Weichboh in Los Angeles on May 7, Laguna Niguel on May 8, and San Francisco on May 9, 1991. Registration deadline is April 24, and the attendance fee is $25. For more information concerning the program, call (714) 241-3832.

An AIA-sponsored lecture by architect Renzo Piano will take place in May. Call (213) 380-4595 for details.

Other Opportunities...

Southern California Home & Garden magazine is actively seeking strong residential projects in the Southern California area, creative solutions to home remodel projects, and “before” and “after” floorplans that illustrate how an architect solved a specific residential challenge. Individuals may submit photographs or plans to the magazine at: 13313 Washington Boulevard #130, Los Angeles, CA 90066, (213) 578-1088.

The AIA/LA chapter office has information on various architectural internships and employment opportunities to help you with your current or future educational needs. Call (213) 380-4595.

Cover photo: Model, view from above, the Library of Los Angeles’ downtown skyline, by William H. Fine, Jr., William Adams, and Rebecca L. Binder. 


Delegates Requested

The 1991 AIA National Convention will be held in Washington, DC, May 17-20, at the Washington Convention Center. The three convention theme topics are dedicated to specific issues. Saturday, May 18, "In Design" features Robert Venturi, FAIA, as keynote speaker. May 19 focuses on "In Community" with Rod Hackney, Hon. AIA, Charles Correa, Hon. FAIA, and Andres Duany, AIA, as keynote speakers. May 20, "In Environment," features Amory Lovins of the Rocky Mountain Institute.

In addition, all newly advanced Fellows will receive their medals during a special investiture ceremony. New AIAA/LA Fellows include William H. Fine, Jr., William Adams, and Rebecca L. Binder.

Chapter members who plan to attend the convention and would like to serve as delegates, and members who have not received registration and housing information should call (213) 380-4595.

On Membership

By now you have heard of the Membership Futures Task Force report, but you may be wondering what specific changes are being proposed and how they will affect you and your membership. The vision as developed by the task force is simple: "to make AIA vital, essential, and indispensable in the year 2000 and beyond, to all architects, their associates, and those allied with them." In his "President's Message" in the March issue, Ronald A. Alton, FAIA, briefly defined some of the specific recommendations of the task force such as the changes in membership categories and dues structure.

The task force will continue to review and refine the report prior to presentation at the National Convention in May. They want your input—the final recommendations will affect every one of us as we look to the future of the profession and the AIA.

The full Membership Futures Task Force Report is available in the chapter office. Take a few minutes to stop by, or contact the staff for a copy. Your comments will not only be forwarded to Paul Welch, Vice President of CCAIA and a member of the task force, but they will better enable the leadership of the chapter to represent your interests at the convention when the final report is presented for approval.

Your membership is important to us! For many, this year is going to be a challenge given the economic conditions and the slow-down of new commercial development. You may be questioning whether you can afford to renew your membership. But can you afford not to?

You have options. Although the renewal of membership dues is due by May 15, there are options available. Although the renewal of membership dues is due by May 15, there are options available. You may be wondering whether you can afford not to?

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