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<td>• SCI Arc/LA NOMA, 6:30p.m.</td>
<td>• SCI Arc/LA Continuing Ed., &quot;The Design Competition: Three Saturdays, Four Wednesdays. Inf. (310) 574-1123/(310) 305-1839.</td>
<td>• SCI Arc/LA EXCOM, 4:00p.m.; Board of Directors, 3:30p.m.</td>
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<td>• SCI Arc/LA Health Committee, Continuing Education, &quot;Explorations in Urban Planning,&quot; Five Thursdays. Inf. (310) 574-1123/(310) 305-1839.</td>
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Books reviewed by Michael Webb and Eric Chavkin


At last, a new edition of LA's architectural bible to replace the dog-eared, loose-leaved, outdated 1985 volume. This is the fourth in a series that LACMA launched in 1965. Most of us get a little fatter and slower with age, and one misses the slightly, generously toned of the original entries in some of the additions. A few read as curmudgeonly essays; awkward introductions in what should be a light-footed field guide. A slim volume could be compiled from the errors, some carried over from previous editions. On the plus side, you can finally locate neighborhoods on a contents page instead of casting the 1 Ching. Photos formerly grouped in a pictorial history have been folded into the text (there are two of the Elysian Park Apartments—burnt!)

The quality would have been even better if the authors had delved deeper into Ely Jacques Kahn's archive. But, despite its faults, this is a marvellous, indispensable guide, and the authors deserve a medal for their industry and eclecticism. We can hope that another edition appears before the 21st century, and that youth complements maturity in its writing.


A sumptuous portfolio of cutting-edge buildings and projects (plus a few turkeys), perceptive essays by Elizabeth Moul and Stephen Polynides, Diane Girard and Kim Coleman, and a veritable London symposium. A portrait of LA as seen through the lens of Sci Arc by an enthusiastic Englishwoman, who introduces sections on recent buildings that were proposed, built, or are yet to come. The level of inaccuracy is what you might expect from an Angeleno editing a book on London. More significant is how much good work by important local architects is omitted from a selection that finds room for Disneyland and City Walk alongside generous coverage of the vast garde. And locals may have trouble recognizing the city they love and loathe from these implausibly beautiful images.


There’s a strong affinity between the early nickelodeons and the tacky little boxes of the typical shopping mall multiplex. In the coming between the movie palaces and the Depression-era bijou. Over 100 of these were designed, in Southern California alone by, S. Charles Lee—who also built the MPFAA Building on Western and remains to this day an excellent study on how to build on Highland. Lee was a master of functional economy and theatrical illusion, who pulled the suckers into the tent and lifted their spirits—no matter what appeared on the screen. His method was scientific: a tower to beckon, a dazzling marquee to entrap, a slow glow in the lobby to flatter female patrons, a grand staircase to lure patrons to the balcony. His Tower Theater on Broadway (now disfigured) comprised a thousand seats and references to Garnier's Opera on a narrow site; the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles inspired the lobby of the Los Angeles, also on Broadway, which currently awaits a new role. European ostentation went out of style in the Depression; Lee redecorated the neighborhood theater as a streamlined composition of cucu curls and angular extrusions. A few drawings survive of theaters that were planned but not built until the early 1940s; Buck Rogers baroque fantasies that supply the missing link between streamline and space age. Someone should enliven a mall with Lee's original design for the Bay Theater—which illustrates the cover of this riveting history. Ben Hall and David Naylor have written on the movie palaces; Maggie Valentine continues the story in an elegantly written, solidly researched study that began together in a spell-binding narrative.


Most architecture books are about architects, building types or stylistic epochs but seldom are they about an individual building. The Audubon House, located in lower Manhattan, is an excellent individual case study on a very important theme: how to design the environmentally responsive office building. When the Audubon Society needed to move their headquarters they bought and retrofit an abandoned 8-story Romanesque Revival structure. This is that story, an enjoyable read, fully illustrated with plans, diagrams and appendices. Highly Recommended.

A primer, case study and consumer products catalog of design solutions for the problems encountered by the aged. The primer; part argument, part class study on a very important architecture book. The excellent chapter on the Forest of Los Angeles that is seen through the lens of Sci Arc by an enthusiastic Englishwoman, who introduces sections on recent buildings that were proposed, built, or are yet to come. The level of inaccuracy is what you might expect from an Angeleno editing a book on London. More significant is how much good work by important local architects is omitted from a selection that finds room for Disneyland and City Walk alongside generous coverage of the vast garde. And locals may have trouble recognizing the city they love and loathe from these implausibly beautiful images.


For those whose eyes glaze over when they encounter the academic jargon that now passes for architectural writing. This book offers a path through the labyrinth, or merely reinforce one's conviction that architects should stop babbling and concentrate on building.

Michael Webb


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Andrea Palladio; the Architect in his Time (Text by Bruce Boucher, photgraphs by Paolo Martin. New York: Abbeville Press. 1995. 263 p.)

There's a plethora of scholarly and splashy books on Palladio: this combines the best of both. Most focus on the individual trees and ignore the forest. "My intention has been to provide a synthesis of Palladio's career—his achievements and their contexts as an architect and theoretician seen against the backdrop of his times, his patrons, and the architectural practice of the Renaissance," writes Boucher with characteristic grace and lucidity. Superbly designed and printed, this book weaves text and pictures together in a spell-binding narrative. It illuminates the emergence of Palladio's genius, his debt to contemporaries, and his enduring influence. Divided as we are today with tepid pomo pastiches, it's invigorating to be reminded of the vigor and spatial complexity that inform the originals. No matter how often you have explored the Veneto, it's hard to resist the impulse to dash back after even a few chapters of Boucher.

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Urban Revisions

Urban Revisions, curated by Elizabeth A. T. Smith, comprises 18 innovative planning and design projects by private-public sector firms and organizations. These projects include practical and visionary alternatives to urban decay and suburban sprawl. But doubts crowd in. Some of the plans are more disaster strategies than others. Are they too fanciful even to be realized as they are shown here. The installation does little to illuminate the merits of individual schemes or to reach out to the visitor.

Five years ago, Hodgetts & Fung captured the excitement of the Case Study houses in MOCA's Blueprints for Modern Living. This installation is credited to "the interdisciplinary design team REDROTO—led by architect Michael Rotondi and graphic designer April Greiman—with communications technology for Eric Martin." The product of this collaboration is oddly dashing and a far cry from Blueprints—and from the sensual, visceral experience that Rotondi and Greiman achieved in L.A. Nicola.

That's the bad news. The good lies in the emphasis on incremental improvements, recycling old buildings, the greening of existing spaces, and grass-roots initiatives to foster community pride. The best of these schemes insist a sense of the possible, a feeling of "what if?"

One that has immediate resonance is "A Greenway Plan for Metropolitan Los Angeles," developed by Johnson Fain and Pereira Associates. L.A. has less than a quarter of the public open space of New York City, and much of that is concentrated in a few large expanses. JFP propose to transform 400 miles of river and canal banks into biking, jogging, and equestrian trails. This green grid would serve as a connector, tying parks, linking paths, transportation hubs, and other public amenities. Light rail links might share these landscaped corridors. Manhattan and Hermosa Beach have already completed green belts. It's conceivable that Rails to Trails, the Tree People, and other volunteer groups might join forces to plant and maintain this network.

Other linear schemes in the show include the Farmington Canal Greenway in New Haven, and the Central Artery Corridor, which may be built through downtown Boston when the elevated freeway is buried. At the opposite end of the scale is Uihor Geden, a 3 1/2-acre demonstration project, located on an empty lot in Watts. Landscape architect Achva Benstein Sieg worked with local residents and community associations to design this project for public use combining productive and educational features.

A team of leading planners, architects and landscape designers has generated the plan for Playa Vista, the first phase of which is scheduled to begin next year. The plan is clearly derived from the neo-traditional grids pioneered by Duany/Plater-Zyberk. The apartment blocks from these blocks in Hollywood between the wars. The development could justify the effort if it served as a replicable model; a Baldwin Hills Village for the 21st century.

In contrast to this picturesque slice of the past, Marc Angelil and Sarah Graham have created a hard-edged, geometrical town center for Zurich, Switzerland. It is ironic that as L.A., "city of the future," gazes fondly backwards, the Swiss are prepared to embrace a radical solution. The new quarter of Esslingen is designed as a technological experiment that relates to the landscape rather than to the local vernacular, and draws its energy from a wall of solar collectors.

For these and a few other plausible proposals, Urban Visions and its catalogue deserve attention. But how much more involving it could—and should—have been.

Above: Model of design for Downtown Strategic Plan, by Benzindberg Stein. The development could justifiably be described as a replicable model; a Baldwin Hills Village for the 21st century.
Above left: Detail of earthquake-resistant Residence, by David Ming-Li Lowe.
Above: Sidley Residence, by Edward R. Niles FAIA. Photo by Marvin Rand.
Left: Geiber Residence, by Martin R. Geiber And Assoc. Photo by Marvin Rand.

Above: Cigoile Coleman House, by Cigoile Coleman. Photo by Erhard Pfeiffer.
Left: Tillman Water Reclamation Plant, Anthony Lumsden/DMJM. Photo by Anthony Lumsden.
A sample of work from

Above: Stringfellow Residence, by Lubewicki & Lanier Architects. Photo by Tom Bonner.
Right: Rancho Mirage Civic Center, by Arthur Golding And Associates.

Right: Schulman Residence, Buff, Smith & Hensman architects. Photo by Mary Nichols.

Above: Pittsburgh Residence, by Frederick Fisher. Photo by Richard A. Stoner.
Right: UCLAEnergy Services Facility, UCLA, by Holt Hinshaw Pfau Jones Architecture. Photo by Tom Bonner.
Alexander Ward addresses the burning issue of Architecture as Art.

The Culver City revised position on architecture as Art is based on the principle that in certain circumstances a developer may claim that construction monies will only be used in an effort to create art. Some architects feel this is a misapplication of the principle.

"Architecture as Art," from an architect's standpoint, is the subject of a discussion in the L.A. Architect magazine. The magazine is published monthly and is a forum for architects and other professionals in the field of architecture.

The article discusses the issue of whether architecture can be considered art. The author, a noted architect, argues that while architecture may be beautiful, it is not necessarily art. The author cites examples of architecture that have been criticized for their lack of aesthetic value or for their architectural flaws.

The author also discusses the history of architecture as an art form, tracing its roots back to ancient Greece and Rome. The author argues that while architecture has been considered an art form in the past, it is not currently considered as such.

The article concludes with a call for a re-examination of the role of architecture as an art form. The author suggests that architects and other professionals in the field should be allowed to express their creativity through their work, but that this creativity should not be limited by the constraints of the law or the marketplace.

The article is a call for a broader understanding of architecture as an art form, and a recognition of the important role that architects play in shaping the built environment.
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WE'RE ON YOUR SIDE
Michael Vance, who, on the previous day, gave a glib, witty, infomercial-style motivational speech about "designing change," exactly how an "out-of-work" architect was to achieve this was not made clear (nor indeed was the practical application of Sutton's vision), though he obviously believed the answer lay in technology, or at least ingenuity, an approach illustrated by a well-worn tale about a multi-purpose, deflatable sleeping bag he made for himself when under siege in Korea. "Change by making things obsolete through technology," he declared.

This is a strategy that has been practiced to perfection by AIA Gold Medal winner Sir Norman Foster, who took the stage on Sunday. Foster is inspired to all those who believe that the world is to be transformed into a better place by harnessing the power of information. Although he attended the screening of many projects (and complete with cold thrown in) on Foster's back, along with its agglomeration of endless lines for limited food (caused by unexpectedly high attendance) and no food service, evidently got into the spirit of the event, it can safely be said that a delightful evening was had by all who attended the Screening of Eames Films in the meadow of the Eames House on the Sunday evening, described by one attendee as "a magical and enchanting" occasion. Organized single-handedly by Shelly Kappe and Eames Beaumont Foundation, the evening event did the Chapter proud.

A similarly charming evening was the Contemporary Japanese Architecture at PDC, a photography, film, exhibit and lecture series sponsored by the Japanese Foundation, and organized by Ted Tanaka FAIA and Merry Norris. The event included a lecture from the gifted woman architect Isuka Hasegawa (whose wit and wisdom was slightly lost in translation), a thoughtful film about Japan's six leading architects by Kenneth Frampton, and an exhibit of a broad collection of contemporary Japanese architecture. More photographs of contemporary architecture and its architects were to be found at the "One Hundred Projects/One Hundred Years" show, a Catholic exhibit of work representing many generations and styles of architects. The exhibit, curated by Cesare Casati, editor of architecture magazine "L'Architettura", as "the most interesting exhibition at the Convention Center." The exhibit was located in the Convention Hall near another piece of contemporary L.A. design, the elegant and well-used Host Chapter Lounge, designed by Lauren Rottet FAIA and organized by Janice Axon Hon. AIA.

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President’s Message

With a grand success on record for this chapter at hosting the 1994 AIA convention, I am among the million plus worldwide who went right (which was almost everything). You all were, I hope, able to take advantage of the free/reduced costs for chapter members and attend many seminars and classes, hear keynote addresses, take tours, conduct AIA business, party, and meet old and new friends at your schools’ alumni receptions.

Look for reports on results as the attendance/income/expenditure data roll in and are sorted. Praise continues to pour in from our colleagues thanking us for a terrific convention experience, and especially for the cordiality we Angelenos showed our 10,000+ visitors.

Warmest thanks from me, the officers, and the entire Board to all who contributed in any way—organizers, donors of cash, products, and services; our dedicated staff; and voluteers in every variety. You will see and hear about special acknowledgments, and you will be invited to a recognition event if you actively helped.

Special thanks are due those who led this effort.

First to Ki Sub Park FAIA, who ably led the steering committee with a firm, yet delicate hand.

Second, thanks also belong to Executive Director Ann Stacy for her contacts and guidance and for generating her friends’ skillful assistance.

To Neci Solomon, for gracefully shouldering the load of convention detail work and simultaneously running the office. Her immense assistance behind the scenes and at our friendly and poised staff—Leonor Landman, Maria O’Malley and Hector Miranda—made everything out from our smooth.

Finally, we mark the departure of two key people on our AIA/LA staff. They have been good to, and thank you Ann Stacy for taking her turn at the Chapter’s administrative helm. We will remember her role in AIA/LA’s progress.

To Frances Anderson, heartfelt thanks. As editor of this publication, Frances has had a genuine impact on AIA/LA’s place in the world. And keep up your own good work!

Virginia Tanzeman, FAIA
President, AIA/LA

Chapter Nominations

Solicited

AIA/LA architect members are invited to submit qualified names in nomination for several offices that will be open for election in November of this year.

Vice President/President Elect Treasurer (2-year term)
Four Directors (2-year term)
Chair Delegate to AIA/CC (2-year term)

Nominations are invited to submit qualified names for any office. Nominations should be in writing, addressed to: Lance Bird, AIA, Chair, AIA/LA Nominations Committee, 3780 Wilshire Boulevard, Ste. 900, Los Angeles, CA 90010, to be received no later than Wednesday, July 13.

Convention Passes Two Resolutions

Four resolutions were put before the AIA convention during its Business Session on Sunday, May 15th; two carried and two failed. (A fifth resolution, introduced from the floor and pertaining to requests from newly formed AIA Chapters overseas, was tabled)

94.2—Firm Membership in AIA, sponsored by AIA Minnesota, called for the Institute to: a) evaluate the current program of services and products that primarily benefit firms; b) consider and expand new firm benefit programs that could be supported by firms; c) study the appropriate nature of adding an "AIA firm" membership category within the Institute, and d) report its findings to the membership at the 1995 Annual Meeting. Cost was estimated at $10,858 and Treasurer Larry Segev, FAIA stated that this task was already underway.

94.4—Guidelines for Use of AIA Funding to components and Non-affiliated Organizations, sponsored by AIA/LA Council, called for the Board to: The AIA is a fund that is dispensed in accordance with the statement of purpose of The American Institute of Architects, as stated in the Bylaws.

One of the two failed Resolutions 94.1, called for the Institute to promote the adoption of uniform architectural registration laws in the United States. This was deemed not feasible, due to the variety of the licensing laws in the different states. The intent of Resolution 94.3 was essentially the same as the successful 94.4 above, but with considerably more conditions, which the majority of the delegates felt were too restrictive.

Note: Resolutions from the membership, if carried, are advisory only.

AIA Convention 94: A Review and Letters

On the Edge

"This view as this a stockholders meeting," announced an earnest Terry McDermott, CEO of the AIA, in a speech at the Saturday General Session that served as the only occasion in the entire Convention where the issues thorny issues raised by the provocative FA article (April 1994) were, by implication at least, addressed.

Clearly in no mood to complain, several thousand architects took part in the tours, parties, panels, seminars and events that constituted, in formal terms at least, one of the most successful Conventions ever.

The place was Los Angeles and the theme was “Succeeding Through Change”—change to be gleaned, apparently, from "L.A.'s changemakers." Yet, while the excellent tours (conceived by Shelly Kappe and including Carl Davis' Real L.A., which made it to the front cover of the L:A Time), the Eames Film Festival and Frank Gehry’s keynote, it was still centered on the theme of “Land of Shake and Bake,” were grounded in Edge City Los Angeles, the convention for the most part, ignored its location.

It concentrated instead on more general issues of change for the profession. "Diversity, sustainability, design and the urban agenda," were singled out by President Larry Chaffin FAIA as issues of the moment, and these were borne out in the AIA Honors Awards, which awarded urbanistic, contextual and socially conscious projects, not significantly only one award went to a Los Angeles firm, and that to a scheme for SRO housing by Koning Eisenberg. "These issues were also addressed in an inspiring presentation at the second General Session by African-american environmental psychologist Sharon Sutton. Referring to herself as the Goddess Mai and dressed in dazzling red and violet, Sutton, eloquently and entertainingly articulated a vision of spiritual and profession al regeneration for architects interested in "guardianship of the environment."

If her audience of largely white men in grey suits were slightly unsettled by Sutton, they were on more familiar territory with the spooky jolly design consultant...
Successful Convention

Neither civil disturbances nor fires nor the dread of earthquakes could stop Los Angeles and old friends. The feeling from these seeing participate in the tours, parties, exhibits, networking, from having a thoroughly successful AIA Convention! Thousands of architects from all over the US descended onto Los Angeles in order to participate in the tours, parties, exhibits, networking, and seeing old friends. The feedback from the Convention attendees was overwhelmingly positive.

This was in small part due to the beautiful new Los Angeles Convention Center facility, the efforts of the AIA/LA under the leadership of Virginia Tanzmann, FAIA, its president, Ki Suh Park, FAIA, the Chair of the Host Chapter Convention Steering Committee, the Steering Committee members and Nicci Solomonos, the Associate Director of AIA/LA. The Convention also owes its success to the tireless work by hundreds of volunteers, led by Bernie Altman, and many key individuals such as Herb Nadel, who chaired the fund-raising efforts. S.D.

Kappe Library Opens

An expanded library at SCI-Arc, named in honor of SCI-Arc founders Ray and Shelly Kappe, opened Sunday May 22nd at a Gala opening ceremony to coincide with the 1994 Graduation. The library, which was begun by the Kappe when they founded the school in 1972, was designed by Gary Paige and built by a work crew of seven SCI-Arc students. The 5000 square feet library contains 11,000 volumes. It has room for expansion, and spaces for individual and group study and a forthcoming multi-media center. Kevin McMahon, manager of the library, said that the space was "quite lovely," and added that the project "was really a terrific effort on the part of the whole school that one hopes will be worthy of the Kappe and the students."

MOCA Exhibit

An ambitious exhibition, reexamining contemporary urban design and planning practices opened at MOCA on May 15. Curated by Elisabeth A. T. Smith and designed by REDROTO, "Urban Revisions: Current Projects for the Public Realm," features current proposals by several Los Angeles architects, designers and planners, including the Greenway Plan for Metropolitan Los Angeles, by Johnson Fam Pereira and the Downto

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