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architecture · design · the arts

spring 1993

four dollars



Design with the Public in Mind • Tennessee Aquarium • Art and Architecture of the Columbian Exposition • Biographer of Buildings: William Seale

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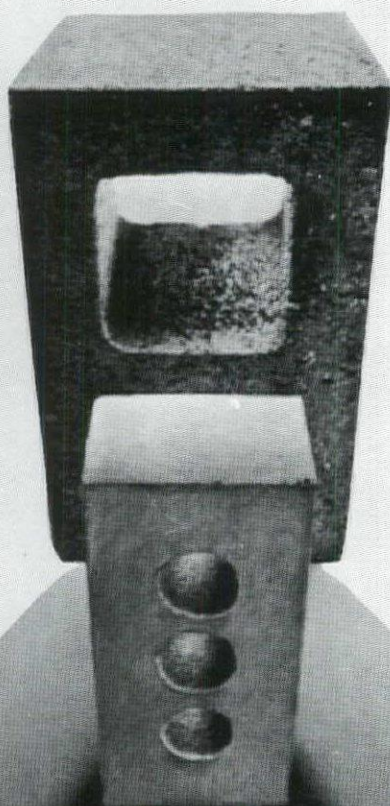
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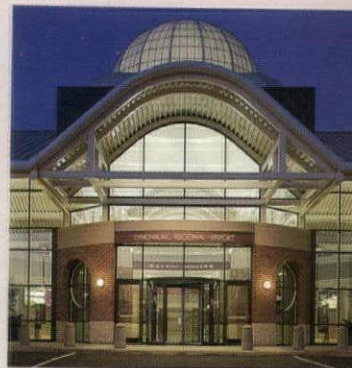
spring 1993
volume four number two

17

Design with the Public in Mind

Within the context of a public architecture based on classical traditions, architects in Virginia often have relied on time-honored forms and materials in the making of new civic buildings. In this issue, Inform presents a range of new works that vary widely in their dependence on those traditions. *By Vernon Mays*

Chesapeake Central Library, The Design Collaborative
Lynchburg Regional Airport, Odell Associates
Lorton Community Library, James William Ritter Architect
Roanoke Regional Post Office Addition, SFCS
Ida Lee Park Recreation Center, Hughes Group Architects
Chesterfield Courthouse, The Moseley McClintock Group
Hampton General Dist. Court, Williams Tazewell & Associates
McLean Fire Station No. 1, Hughes Group Architects
Arlington Fire Station No. 1, Ward/Hall Associates AIA
Firehouse No. 16, The DePasquale/Gentilhomme Group



p. 17

6

DesignLines

new developments in design and the arts

12

Travel

an aquarium with a fresh (water) tale to tell

30

Profile

William Seale, chronicler of historic buildings

32

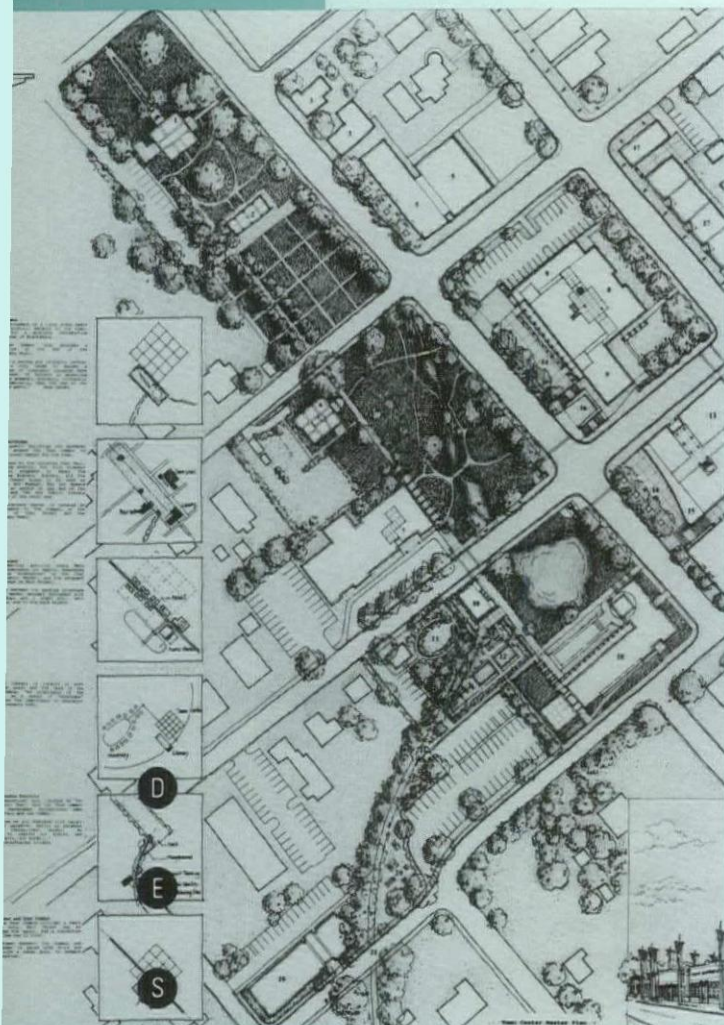
Books

mirror on America: the 1893 Columbian Exposition

On the cover:

Chesapeake Central Library, by The Design Collaborative.

Photo by Prakash Patel.



The first-place entry proposed a park that defines an edge for downtown.

Prizes Announced in National Competition for Blacksburg Center

The \$10,000 top prize in a national competition to design a center for civic activity in Blacksburg has been awarded to two Boston designers. Shannon Taylor Scarlett and Timothy Scarlett took top honors in the open category with an entry that the jury praised for its sensitivity to the fragile nature of a small town and for its success in preserving and integrating the town's physical resources. The winning scheme proposed a four-block-long urban park that borders the town's original 16-block layout and incorporated in its vision a number of adjacent town offices and a new regional library.

The competition, which drew 210 submissions, called for entrants to generate an urban design that weaves existing public land and buildings into a significant place that gives town identity to civic life. Notable characteristics of the site include an existing stream and the terminus of the historic Huckleberry Line railroad right-of-way, currently used as a bicycle and walking trail.

Also in the open category, second prize went to Gilbert Rampy and Matthew Pickner of New York, and third prize was taken by Mitchell Glass, Mark Klopfer and Geoffrey S. Middleleer of Charlottesville. In the restricted category, which was limited to individuals and teams from Virginia Tech, the first place prize was awarded to Joann Im, a graduate student. Second place in the restricted category went to Steve Thompson, Deborah Wildman, Victor Moose and Lisa Moose.

"It was clearly an ideas competition," says Donna Dunay, a professor of architecture at Virginia Tech who managed the program along with Tech professor Frank Weiner. Competition sponsors were the Town of Blacksburg, Montgomery County, the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library Board and Virginia Tech. Dunay says the library board is currently seeking an architect to do preliminary studies for the library design and the town has endorsed the idea of creating a civic center, but has taken no formal steps toward commissioning a detailed urban plan.

Jurors for the competition were W.G. Clark, of Clark & Menefee Architects in Charlottesville, Kathryn Clarke, of Solomon, Inc. in San Francisco, Robert Dripps, an architecture professor at the University of Virginia, Roger Hedgepeth, mayor of Blacksburg, and Mary Fessler, of the library board. A published jury report will be available by mail late this summer.

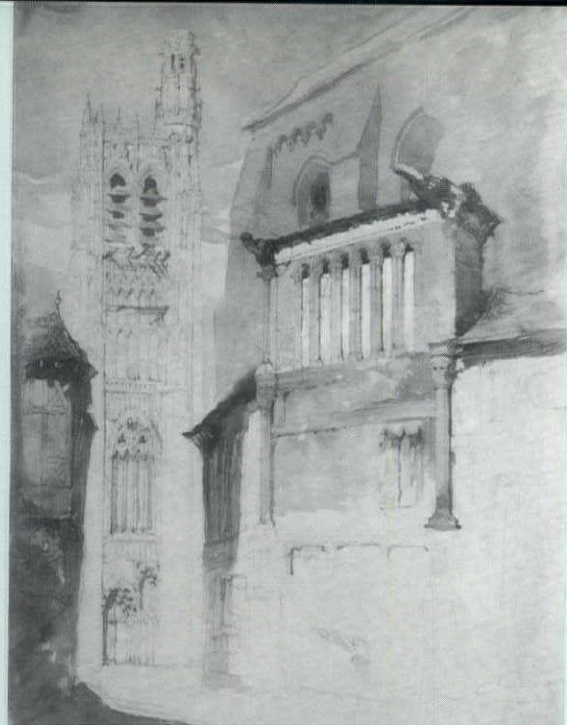
Richmond Architect Leads Minority Group

Richmond architect Robert L. Easter has assumed the presidency of the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA), a 21-year-old group founded to provide a unified voice for black and minority architects. A graduate of Hampton University and Virginia Tech, Easter notes that the group's focus has evolved from being a social outlet for minority architects — often hungry for contact with their peers — to an advocate for involvement within members' communities. NOMA has been active in efforts to restore the areas of South Los Angeles destroyed in the 1992 riots, rebuild low-income areas in Miami hit by Hurricane Andrew, and revitalize minority neighborhoods in Chicago.

Easter began his career in 1979 with Paul Ford & Associates, a minority-owned firm in Baltimore. In 1982, he formed Kelso & Easter with white classmate Jack Kelso after frustrated attempts to find work at established white-owned firms. Easter's work with NOMA, a 500-member alliance, has focused on gaining publicity for minority architects and their buildings because, as he says, there is a need to counter the view that minority architects are under-qualified. Higher visibility of minority architects in their communities also provides positive role models, while raising public awareness of black practitioners.



NOMA President Robert Easter.



National Gallery of Art, Gift of William B. O'Neal

Among O'Neal's treasures: "The Cathedral of Sens," by John Ruskin.

Professor's Collection at National Gallery

A distinctive collection of 58 old master and modern drawings – acquired gradually over 35 years by William B. O'Neal, former professor of architectural history at the University of Virginia – is on view through August 15 at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. The exhibition, "Drawings from the O'Neal Collection," celebrates the scholar's gift and promised gift to the gallery of 322 works of art.

The collection's breadth is represented by drawings from the late 16th to the 20th centuries, focusing on the work of Continental and British authors. Architectural and stage designs, which were among O'Neal's strongest collecting interests, are featured prominently. Included are delicate pen-and-ink drawings of elaborate buildings and design sketches for theater sets and interiors. Among the familiar figures represented are Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, Karl Friedrich Schinkel and John Ruskin. The exhibit's overall subject matter ranges much wider to include landscapes and human figures. Gallery director Earl A. Powell III praised the richness and variety of O'Neal's collection, noting that more than half of the artists are new to the gallery.

Born in 1907, O'Neal trained as an architect at the Carnegie Institute of Technology. He later studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, but high tuition drove him from the academy into the Army Corps of Engineers, where he worked as a draftsman. During World War II, he drew maps for the Army in London and Paris – frequenting museums and art dealers in his free time. After the war, O'Neal joined the faculty at U.Va. and served as curator of the university art museum from 1950-58, when he began collecting seriously. In 1964, he established the architectural history program at U.Va., focusing his scholarship on Thomas Jefferson's fine arts library and Jefferson's buildings at the university. O'Neal, who still resides in Charlottesville, also wrote many books on Virginia subjects, including *Architecture in Virginia* (1968) and *The Work of William Lawrence Bottomley in Richmond* (1985).



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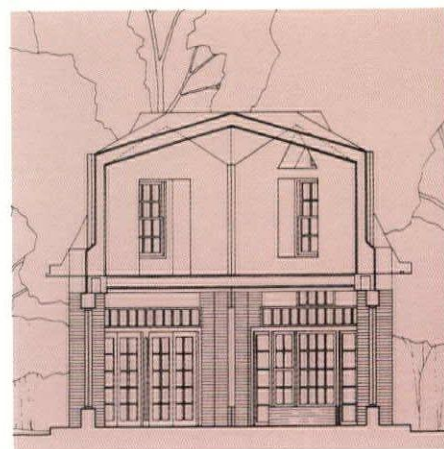
Architects Honored with Masonry Awards



Inventive uses of brick and block were highlighted in the Virginia Masonry Council's 16th Annual Design Seminar held in February. Four architecture firms and one landscape architect received recognition in the awards program that accompanies the event, held each year to promote Virginia masonry contractors, masonry manufacturers and material suppliers. The award winners:

Ernie Rose, Inc. of Richmond, for design of the Virginia Association of Realtors headquarters, submitted in the category for commercial and industrial construction. Project architect for the headquarters was Mark A. Larson, AIA.

Rancorn Wildman Krause Brezinski Architects of Newport News, for the Virginia Air and Space Museum Parking Deck, in the category for government buildings. Partner-in-charge for the project was Walter W. Wildman, AIA.

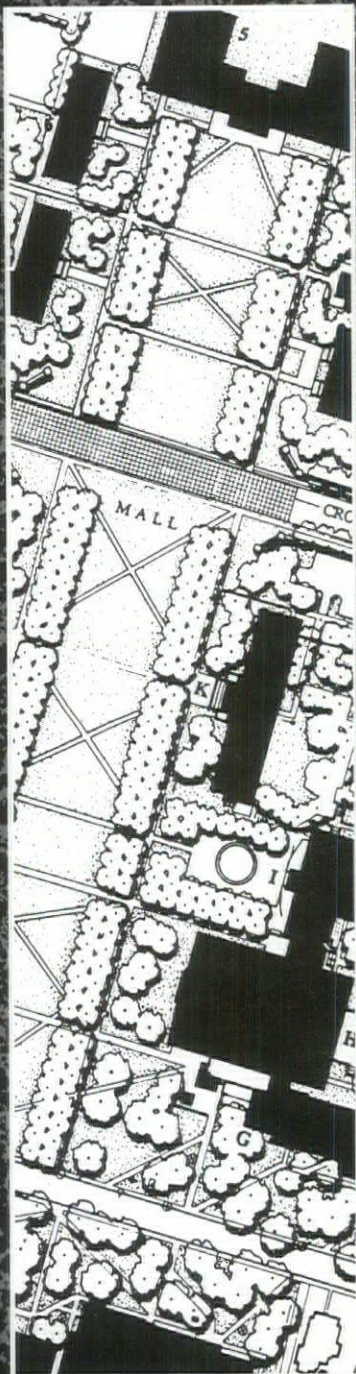


Cross-section of Ludwig Addition (above);
Air and Space Museum parking deck (below).

Motley + Associates of Roanoke, for the Toano Middle School, in the religious/institutional category. Heading the project was Kenneth L. Motley, FAIA.

Dunay Associates of Blacksburg, for an addition to the Ludwig House, for residential design. The project was designed by architects Robert and Donna Dunay.

Van Yahres Associates of Charlottesville, for the entrance walls and gates at Bridgewater College, in the landscape design category. Landscape architect Mike van Yahres designed the project.

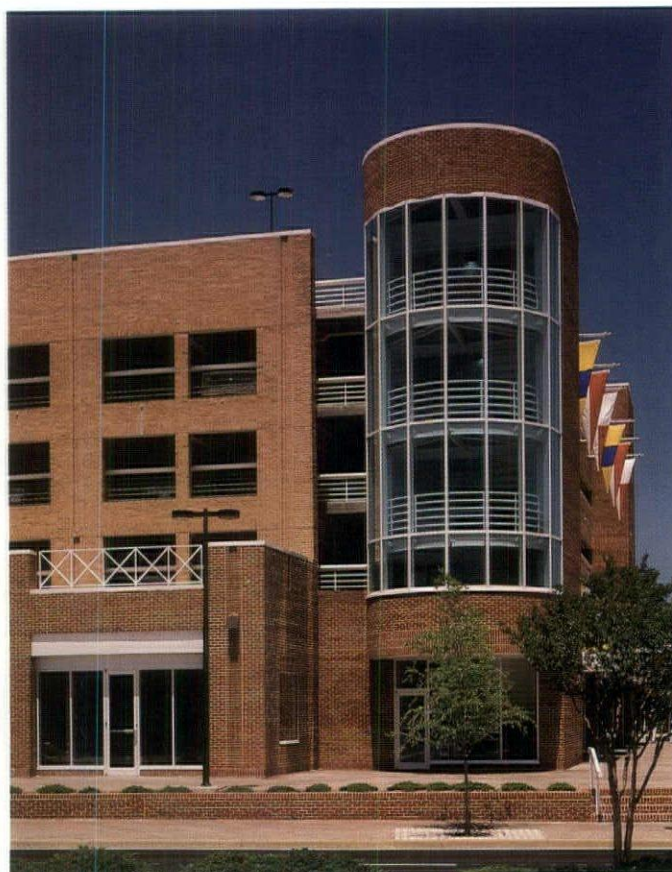


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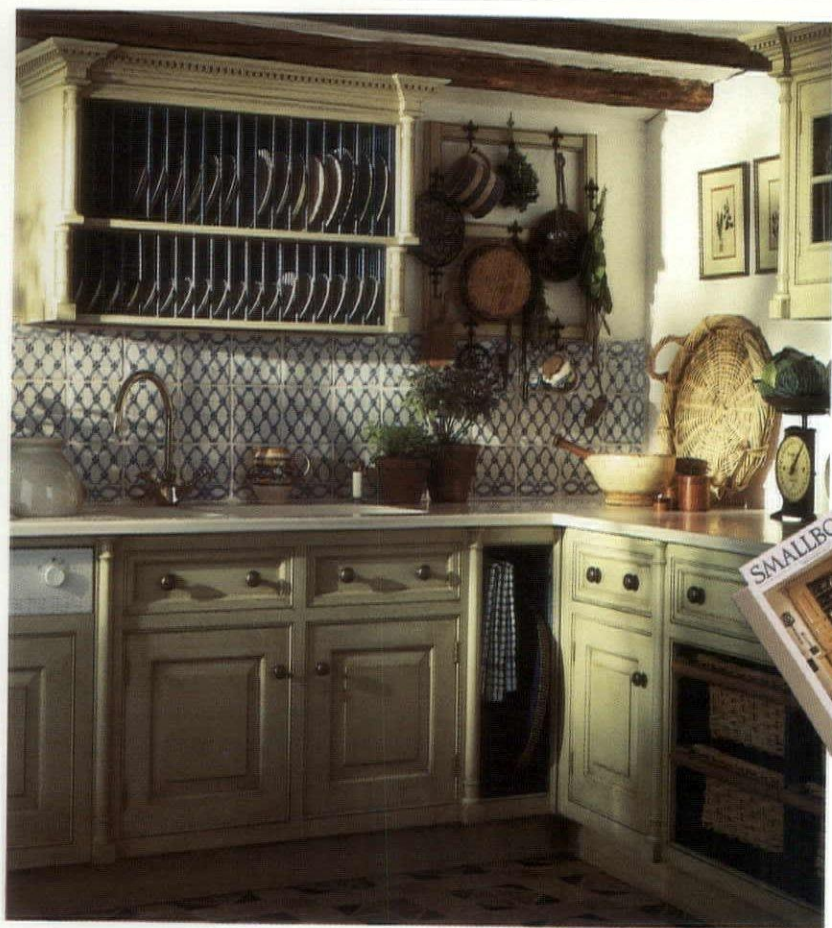
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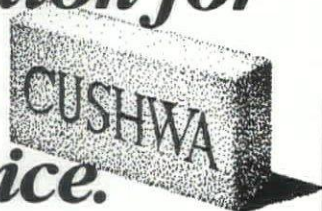
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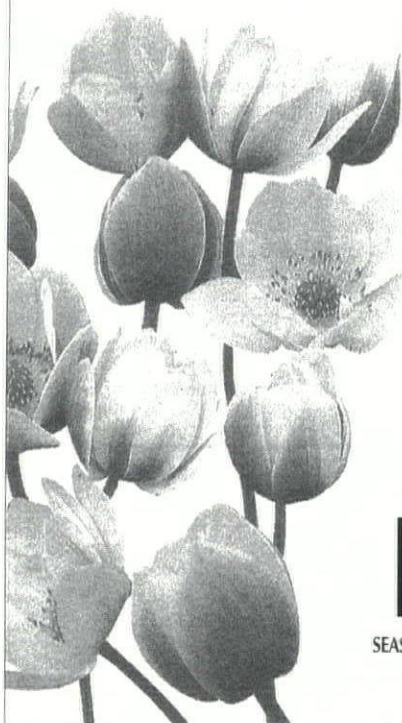
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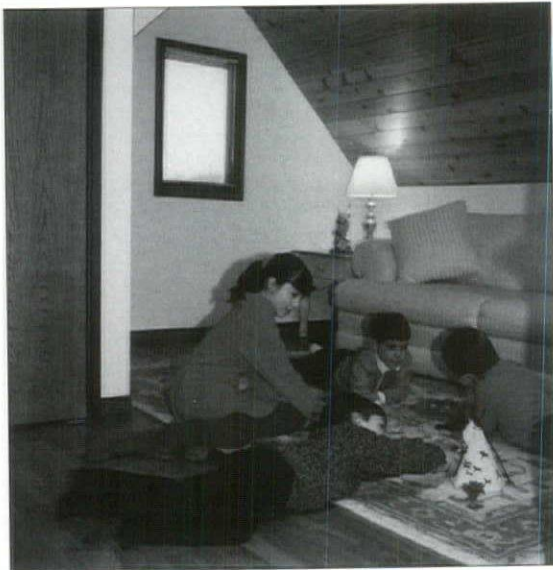
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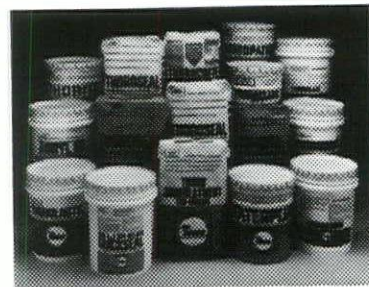


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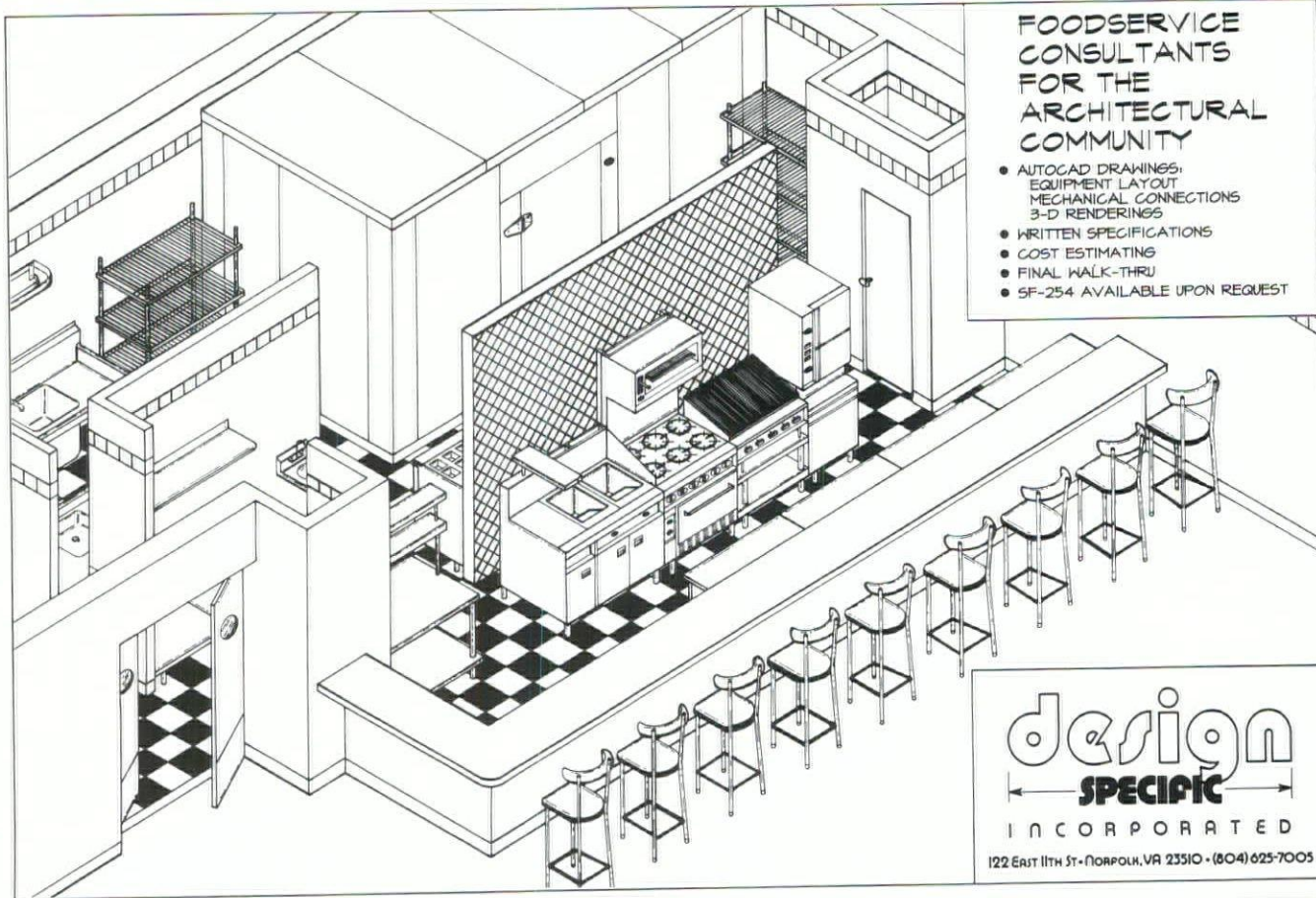


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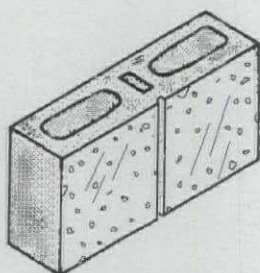
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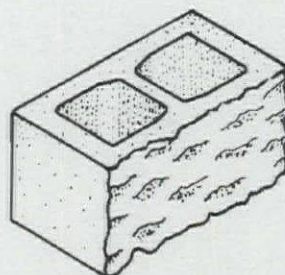
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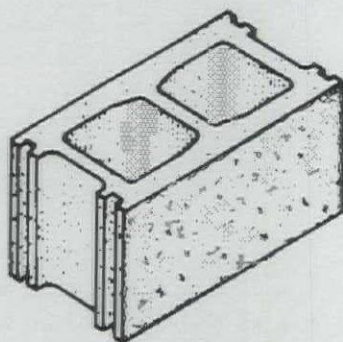
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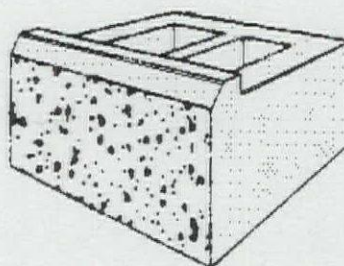
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The pride of Chattanooga features the region's wildlife, habitats and human culture.

Photos: Richard T. Bryant

Tennessee Aquarium

Celebrating River Life

By Edward Gunts

When Chattanooga civic leaders first approached architect Peter Chermayeff about designing an aquarium for the banks of the Tennessee River, they envisioned an attraction like the National Aquarium in Baltimore, the pyramid-topped museum he designed 15 years earlier. But Chermayeff recommended against cloning the global view of marine life offered in Baltimore, focusing instead on the freshwater ecosystems of the Tennessee River Valley. While the suggestion had appeal, there were doubters nonetheless. Freshwater fish, they reasoned, are less colorful than the exotic varieties found in the world's oceans. And a freshwater theme would rule out the crowd-pleasing bottlenose dolphins and beluga whales. What would be the show-stopper?

Silly question. In the hands of Chermayeff and his Massa-

chusetts firm, Cambridge Seven Associates, the entire building became the attraction – Chattanooga's "homegrown cathedral of conservation," in the mayor's words. The aquarium interprets the story of the Tennessee River in a 130,000-square-foot building that simulates riverine habitats from Appalachia to the Gulf of Mexico. The big challenge for Cambridge Seven and exhibit designers Lyons/Zaremba was to take the mostly ordinary occupants of the river – rainbow trout from forest streams, red-bellied turtles from cypress swamps, and river otters from mountain pools – and exhibit them in extraordinary ways. They chose to use the river as a story line, tracing its origins in the Great Smoky Mountains through its midstream and down to the Mississippi Delta. "The key was to find the excitement in what seems ordinary but isn't," says Chermayeff.

The \$45 million Tennessee Aquarium features many Cambridge Seven trademarks, including rooftop pyramids, a one-way circulation path, backlit graphics and fish-themed art. But advancing technology allowed Cambridge Seven to surpass its previous aquarium efforts, creating sensitively interpreted environments that take tourists on a three-dimensional journey to the worlds they inhabit.

Working in tandem with Chattanooga architects Derthick, Henley and Wilkerson, Chermayeff infused the building with historical and cultural references that conjure up images from 13th Century Italian palazzos to Appalachian folk art. As seen from downtown, the 12-story aquarium looms in the distance like a crystal-crowned Oz. Capping the five-story building are glass pyramids that house two terrestrial exhibits – one representing each end of the river. The goal, Chermayeff says, was to put architecture in the service of a larger objective: connecting people to the river by setting up encounters that stimulate an emotional response.

A visitor's experience begins on the banks of the Tennessee River, where a two-acre park and plaza were created to mark the birthplace of present-day Chattanooga. Called Ross's Landing, after city founder and Cherokee Indian chief John Ross, the unusual combination of landscaping and public art is part of a \$750 million program that someday will include a children's museum, visitors' center, Coca-Cola bottling museum, waterfront housing and 22-mile river walk. One of the park's designers, James Wines of New York-based SITE architects, says it was meant to tell Chattanooga's history while serving as a bridge between the hard-edged city and the undulating river bank. Arranged as a series of 35 bands that trace city milestones such as

The banded plaza tells stories of the city's making.





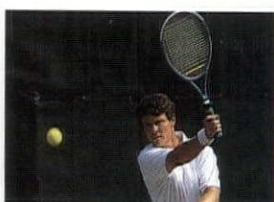
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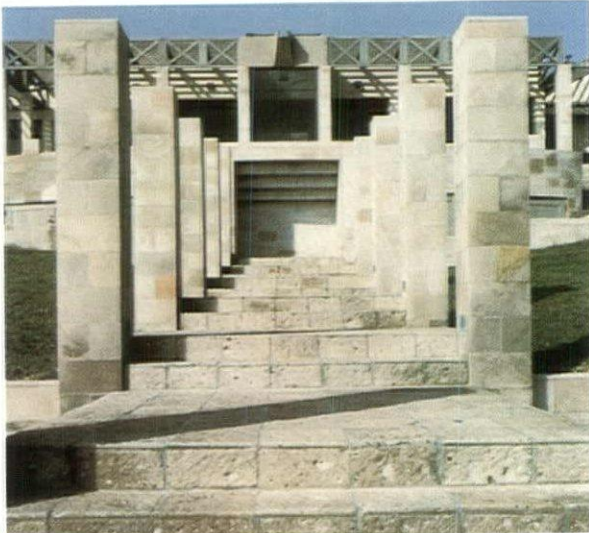


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the Civil War and railroad boom, the park becomes a game of discovery. Other features include a "mountain" that spews water, an arch that evokes distant hills, and a water wall that spawns rainbows.

Inside the aquarium, each floor is subdivided to create habitats for 3,500 living specimens. The diagonal slice through the building is a 60-foot-deep circulation canyon with ramps that wind downward. From the lobby, visitors start their journey by traveling up a slow-moving escalator, surrounded by sounds and video images of the river and its denizens, to a landing with panoramic river views. From there, they proceed to the first major exhibit, the Appalachian cove forest, which combines natural and artificial trees with indigenous plants, animals, birds and reptiles, against a backdrop that includes a 20-foot waterfall and mountain stream. Leaving the forest, visitors descend through the canyon, looping along the way into side galleries that feature manmade lakes and Louisiana Bayou swampland with fishes, alligators, birds, turtles and snakes. At the bottom they encounter a 137,000-gallon tank simulating nearby Nickajack Lake.

Though it makes no attempt to replicate nature, the canyon was designed to immerse visitors in the river by letting them view wildlife beneath the water's surface. Seeing river otters cavorting above the water can be a treat, for example, but seeing them a second time frolicking beneath the waterfall makes them all the more memorable. The natural habitats are so close to nature, in fact, that the animals and fish still breed as if they're in the wild. The aquarium also weaves in the region's human story with touches such as Tennessee music soundscapes and narrative *bas reliefs* that ring the building. Chermayeff says he expects Chattanooga residents will rediscover a sense of themselves by taking the tour. "We've reached into the soul of the place."

Getting In

The Tennessee Aquarium is located at One Broad Street, Chattanooga, TN 37401. Tickets are sold from 10am-6pm (until 8pm weekends during the summer). Phone: 800-262-0695.

Edward Guntz is the architecture critic of The Baltimore Sun.

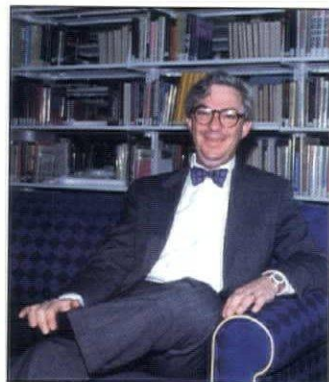
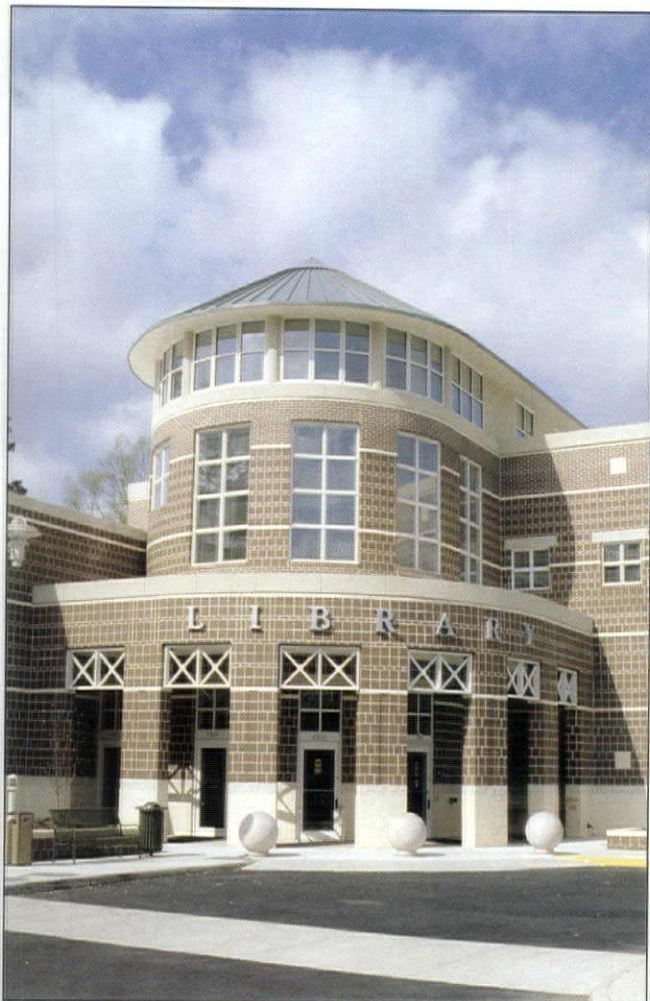
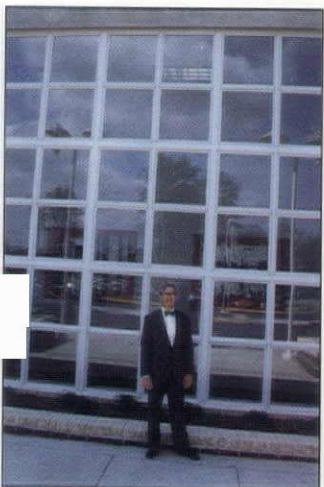


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DESIGN

WITH THE

PUBLIC IN MIND

For generations, classical revival architecture has been synonymous with public architecture in Virginia. As far back as 1791, with the completion of Thomas Jefferson's state capitol modeled on an ancient Roman temple, the prevalent mode of expression in the buildings that housed Southern institutions has borrowed liberally from Roman and Greek traditions. Through much of the 19th century, in the words of one historian, Greek Revival buildings were seen as "eminently practical, modern buildings that made virile collective statements about Southern cultural and economic attainment." Well into the 20th century, the prospect of erecting a public building without a prominent pediment was virtually unthinkable.

17

Within that powerful cultural context, architects in Virginia have been slow to break the mold. Influences such as improved materials, advances in technology and new aesthetic movements have opened the door to new explorations of form, but many have chosen to step only partially through the threshold, staying close to traditions long held dear. Even designers who cultivate a new formal language for today's public buildings often complete them in a time-honored regional material, namely brick. Of the new buildings pictured on the following pages, however, all have bent in some way to meet the demands of that most pervasive of 20th century influences – the automobile. Means of approach, adjacency of parking, vehicle security, even views from surrounding streets and highways, alter many design decisions as the public green gives way to the blacktop as a symbol of contemporary American life.

By Vernon Mays



HALL OF LEARNING

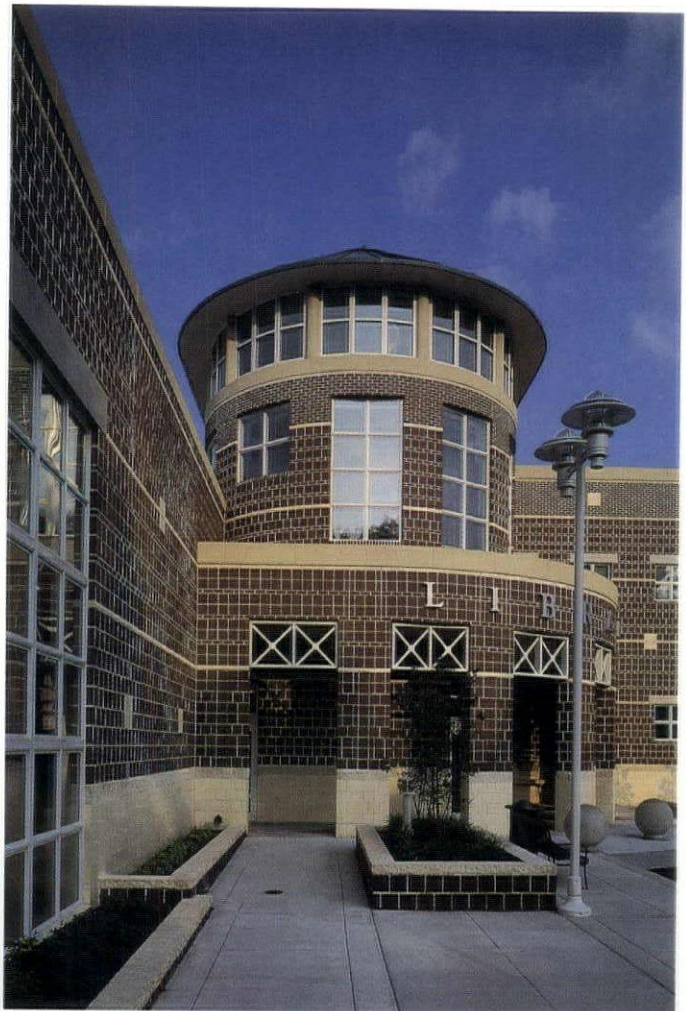
Chesapeake Central Library

The Design Collaborative
Virginia Beach

Rapid growth and change are undeniable aspects of life across most of Tidewater Virginia, especially in densely populated Hampton Roads. So it was little surprise when the city of Chesapeake announced that its existing central library, a rather plain Modern box that had served its community for years, would be tripled in size to meet the needs of a growing populace. Completed earlier this year, the library lends its own stylish but stately touch to the city's complex of civic buildings. Officials had asked for a design that conveyed tradition, but the building is more a hybrid of the old and new. The bowed entrance has something of a Victorian feel to it, while the brown-and-tan masonry walls are patterned in a rich, but clearly Modern, way.

Inside, the new library is designed for the computer requirements of today's circulation and cataloguing systems. Because the collection was being dispersed throughout the building and new services added, the architects strived to make the building self-revealing. "We wanted people to know where they are without having to ask," says architect Edward Lazon of The Design Collaborative. That desire led to the development of the library's impressive central hall, a lofty space reminiscent of grand public buildings from years past. From there, easy-to-read signs and banners enable library patrons to identify the main functions of the building. The abundance of natural light in the central hall adds to its appeal, but Lazon says the issue had to be handled delicately. "We used a controlled approach with clerestories, overhangs and blinds that allow a diffuse light in, but no direct sunlight." An elevator and stairs at the west end of the space solve the difficulties of connecting the two new floors with the slightly elevated mezzanine level of the original building.

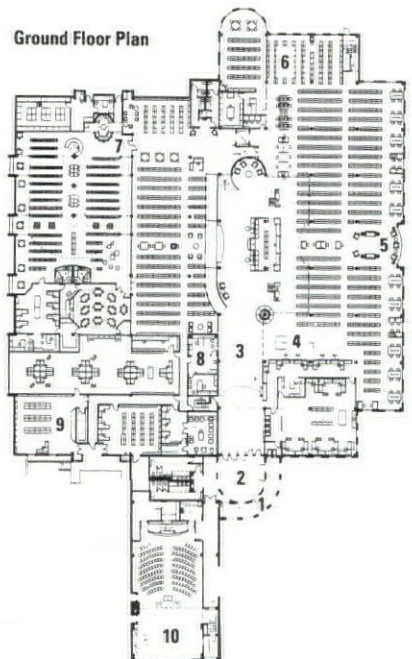
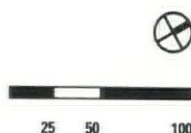
The library's emphasis on children's programs begged for special attention. Interior designer W. Ray Jennings, who consulted on the building interiors, made vital contributions to the children's wing. "Our idea was to do something nonrepresentational – not a storybook theme, but instead something unexpected and colorful," says Lazon. Shape, color and materials conspire to make this a fun, light-filled space which provides ample visual stimulation. Offices for the city library system, which is headquartered here, occupy second floor suites. And, with the addition of other amenities including a law library, auditorium, computer work room, private study rooms, conference room and tutoring facilities, the citizens of Chesapeake, by erecting this building, have gained a resource that is rare by today's standards.



Expanded facilities of the Chesapeake Library are organized around a light-filled great hall (facing page). The exterior form and materials evoke images of turn-of-the-century buildings (above), but detailing is thoroughly Modern.

Ground Floor Plan

- 1 Entry
- 2 Vestibule
- 3 Great Hall
- 4 Circulation
- 5 Reading Area
- 6 Reference
- 7 Children's Collection
- 8 Branch Offices
- 9 Mailroom
- 10 Meeting Room



AIR *of* TRADITION

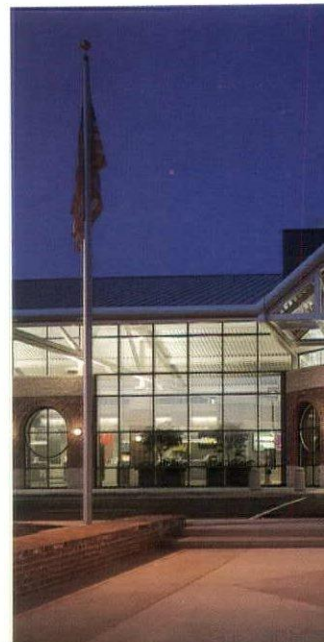
Lynchburg Regional Airport

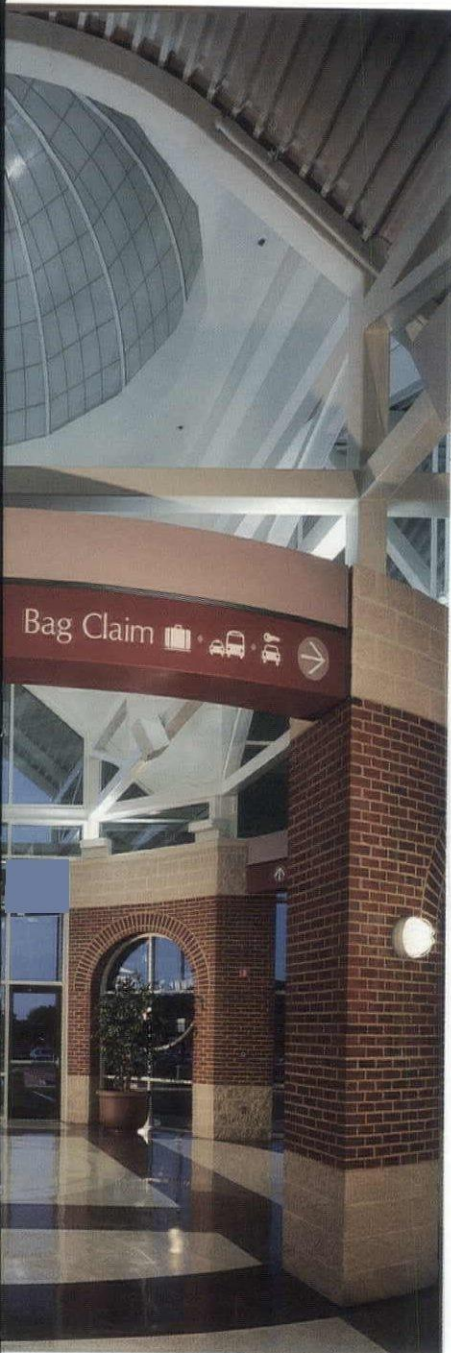
Odell Associates
Richmond

20 Thomas Jefferson, for obvious reasons, never designed an airport terminal. But the city of Lynchburg likes to think that if he had, the result would have very closely resembled their regional facility completed early last year. Jefferson's nearby Poplar Forest estate served as a model for the airport design. Brick and stone banding, the primary exterior motif, recalls the third president's historic house. "We incorporated the dome, which was an original part of Poplar Forest that burned," says Rohn K. Price, director of design for Odell Associates in Richmond. "The arches across the front of the building are drawn from the arches at Jefferson's house. But in the airport they are really artifacts surrounded by glass."

Despite their nod to tradition, the architects devised an innovative strategy for building in the rolling Virginia Piedmont. Rather than level the site as is typically done at airports, Odell wedged the terminal into an existing hillside. The benefits were many. Costs of clearing the site were held down significantly. And, by leaving the hill at the front, commercial airline passengers are able to enter the upper level directly from the parking lot, a convenience that allows direct access to gates. Travelers departing on commuter flights descend to the lower level to reach their planes. Finally, the design scheme produced a front yard for the building that typifies the hilly terrain of Lynchburg, resulting in a prominent profile that faces heavily traveled Route 29. "That's a front door for the city, so it makes a strong statement," says Price.

Construction of the new terminal was aided by a state capital improvements program that has invested tens of millions of dollars in terminal upgrades since 1987. Predicated on the notion that improved commercial airport and general aviation facilities will boost Virginia's economy, the program also has had the effect of allowing architects to specify high-grade materials. Airports in cities such as Roanoke, Norfolk, Newport News, Danville and Charlottesville also have benefited from the program. By placing the ticketing, baggage claim and waiting areas in separate wings, the architects created a building that can expand easily. All told, the use of exposed structural members, ample expanses of glass, and a roof that "floats" above the brick base all contribute to an aesthetic that is appropriate to a technology-based industry. Says Price: "We make it clear that this is the 1990s."

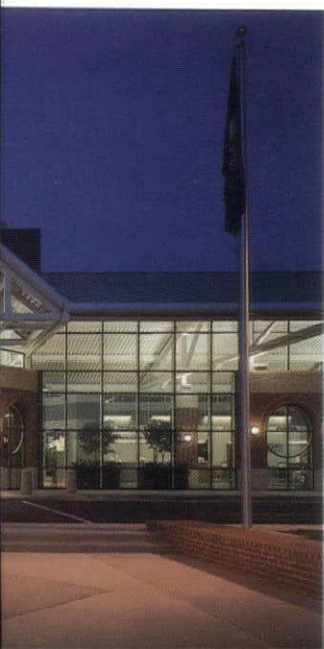
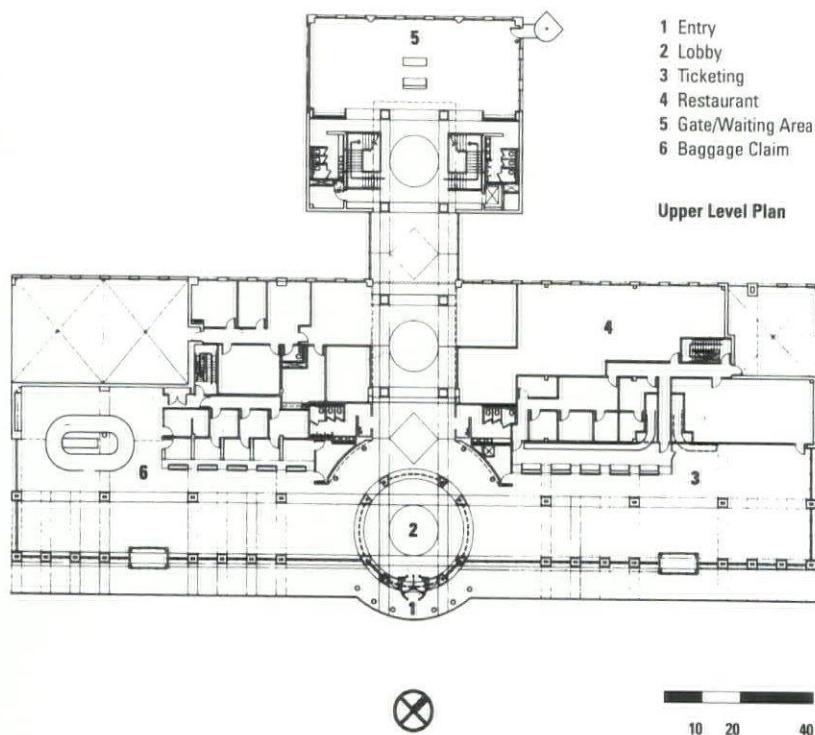




Photos: Timothy Buchman

The airport's domed lobby (top left) draws its inspiration from an early version of Jefferson's Poplar Forest; at night, the roof seems to hover (bottom left). From the runway, both floors of the terminal become evident (above).

21

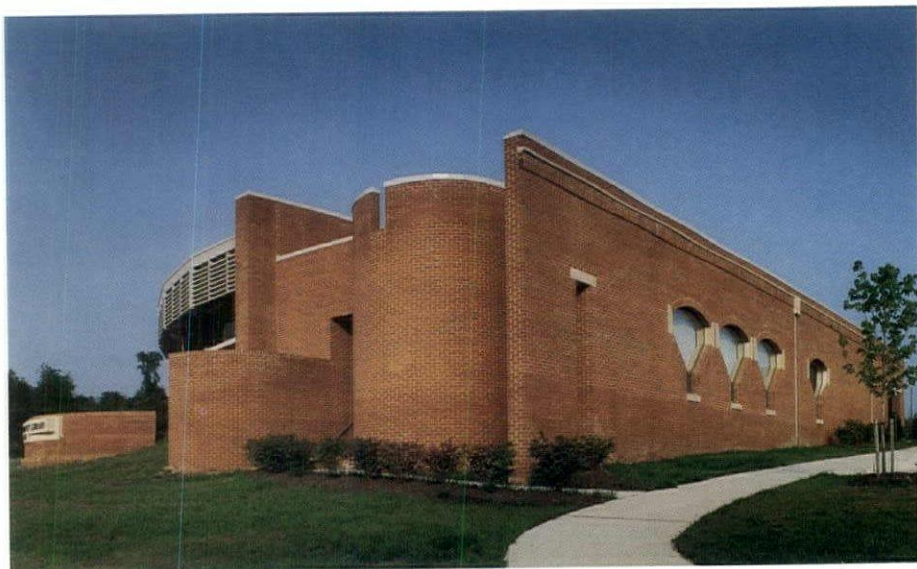


Befitting a Book

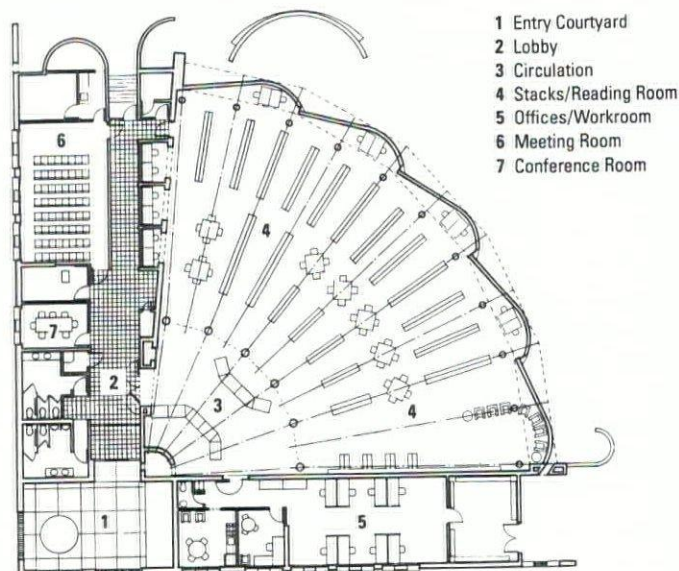
Lorton Community Library

James William Ritter with
Alexandria Architects Partnership

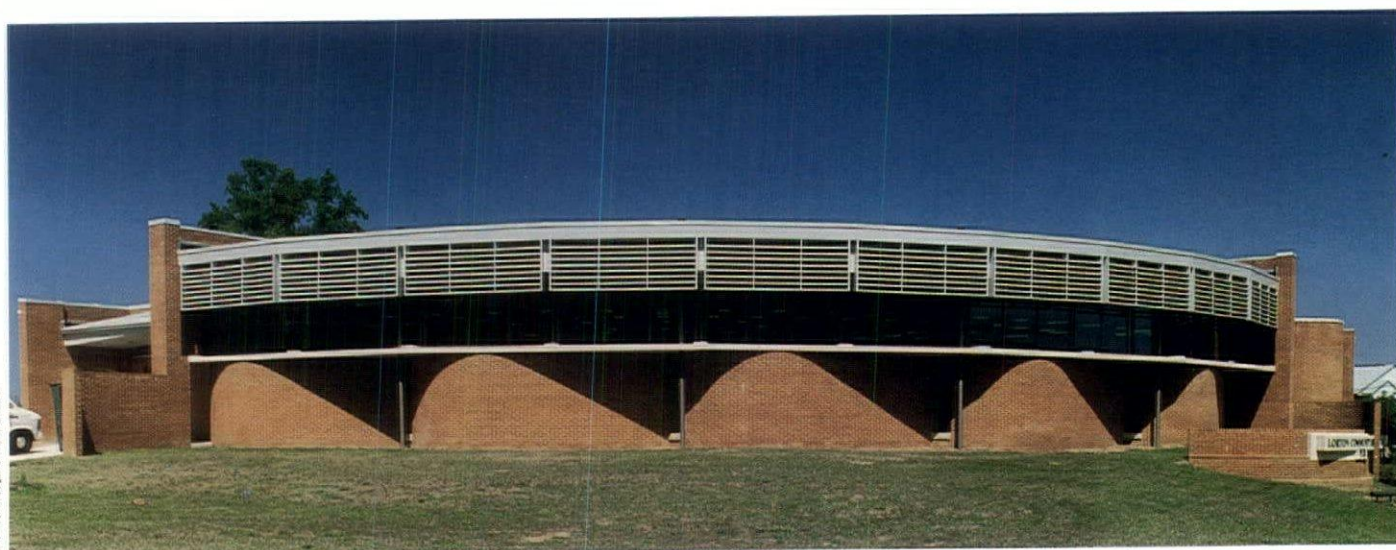
In early discussions for design of the Lorton library, community members expressed a desire for a building derived from traditional Virginia architecture. The library staff, on the other hand, was adamant that the building be Modern in concept and organization. The architect was challenged to find the middle ground between seemingly opposite demands. Set on a rise in the landscape, the library is flanked by park land on one side and a noisy highway on the other. The floor plan is organized around a fan-shaped reading room that is easily monitored by staff members from the circulation desk. Passing motorists are quick to notice the reading room's sweeping scalloped wall and the unique arched windows in the walls that join to enclose a small entry courtyard. Natural light enters the building by bouncing off a light shelf and reflecting against the reading room's ceiling, preventing direct sunlight from damaging the books. Consultants on the project's interior design were Michaels Associates of Alexandria.



Floor Plan



10 20 40





Special Delivery

Roanoke Regional Post Office Addition

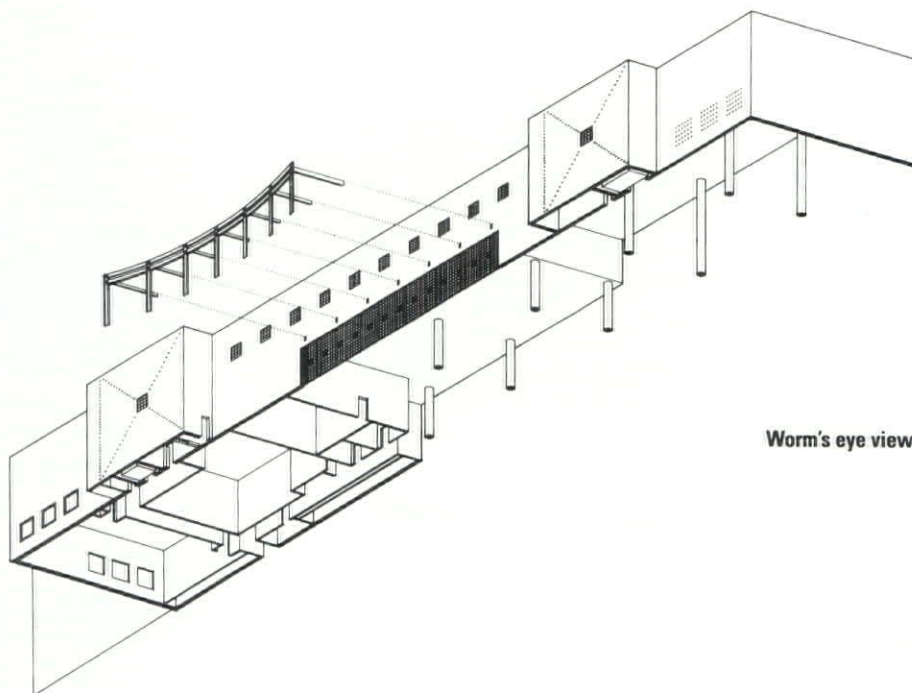
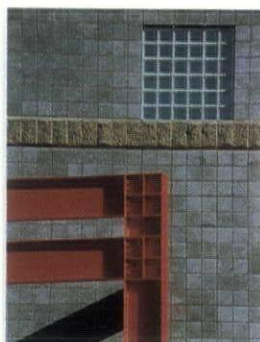
Sherertz Franklin Crawford Shaffner
Roanoke

The clients called for a two-story addition to the existing building which would provide for an expanded workroom, new training spaces, restrooms, stairs and an elevator. By virtue of its location on a side of the building that faces the city's Civic Center and nearby interstate highway, the 34,000-square-foot addition is quite prominent. Design elements in the masonry walls were derived from images associated with the postal service. Repetitive square blocks on the dark central portion of the addition resemble a sheet of stamps, and the prominent "X" patterns in the flanking walls echo the folds of an envelope. A curved steel trellis breaks the uniformity of the large masonry walls while creating a space for picnic tables to be used during workers' lunch breaks.

Photos: Mustafa Kanishka



23



Worm's eye view.



The natatorium's wood ceiling and steel trusses hark back to an industrial era (top). A sunny corridor slices through the building and provides direct access to the center's many amenities (above). Outside, the building is a comfortable fit in the rolling countryside of Loudoun County (facing page).

PARK PLACE



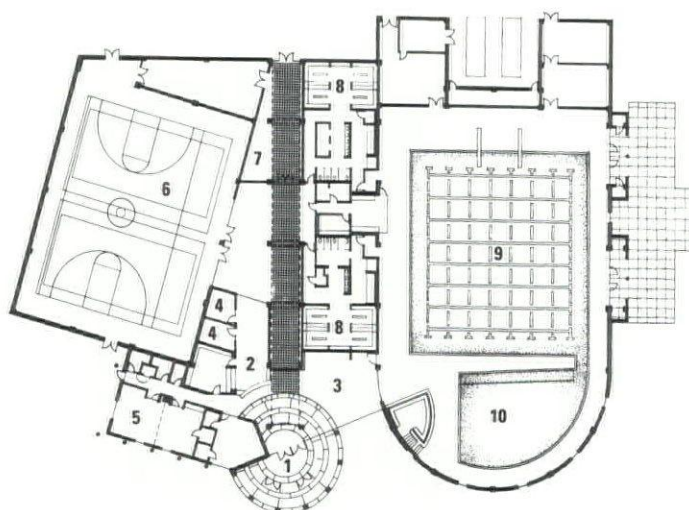
Ida Lee Park Recreation Center

Hughes Group Architects
Sterling

In developing a 150-acre park just outside the picturesque center of Leesburg, Virginia, town leaders wanted to create a complex of buildings that would meet the recreational needs of an increasingly urban-minded populace without compromising the site's agricultural heritage. Among the precious elements already in existence was a farmhouse dating to 1790, a number of sheds and a barn on the parcel that had been donated to the town for public use. Architect Wayne Hughes looked at the layers of history represented on the land, now known as Ida Lee Park, and decided to borrow the same themes for the recreation center that Hughes Group Architects of Sterling had been commissioned to design. "We tried to pick up on the vernacular elements of the site," says Hughes, noting that he divided the facility into a number of smaller pieces arranged in an irregular fashion not unlike a group of farm buildings. "We did the same thing in the combination of roofs. Instead of doing a monolithic kind of recreation building, we combined a variety of forms."

A cone-shaped roof supported by a series of columns signifies the building's entrance. Hughes says the resemblance to the gazebos found on nearby Loudoun County estates was purely intentional. "It was meant to be a compelling, familiar form." Just inside is a reception desk at the head of a long sunny corridor that ends at a glassed-in exercise equipment room. Hughes was directed to make the many functions of the building clearly visible from the central corridor; hence, there's a lot of glass inside the building. Views lead into offices, meeting rooms and a gymnasium, but the most inviting glimpse is into the richly detailed natatorium. With its metal truss roof supports, wood ceiling and curved end wall, this pool area evokes nostalgic images of turn-of-the-century gymnasiums. Bright patterned tile further enhances the skylit space, which includes a shallow recreation pool and spa.

Outside, Hughes was careful to use materials and colors that were indigenous to the area. The exterior masonry walls are in three earthen tones, which marry the building to the site and give it a human scale. Hughes also developed the master plan for the park, which already has a new library and will someday receive ballfields, shelters and picnic facilities. As for the old farmhouse, Hughes Group converted it to offices for the town recreation department.



Floor Plan

- 1 Entry
- 2 Reception
- 3 Lobby
- 4 Office
- 5 Meeting Room
- 6 Gymnasium
- 7 Exercise Room
- 8 Locker Room
- 9 Exercise Pool
- 10 Recreation Pool

Judicial Restraint

Hampton General District Courthouse

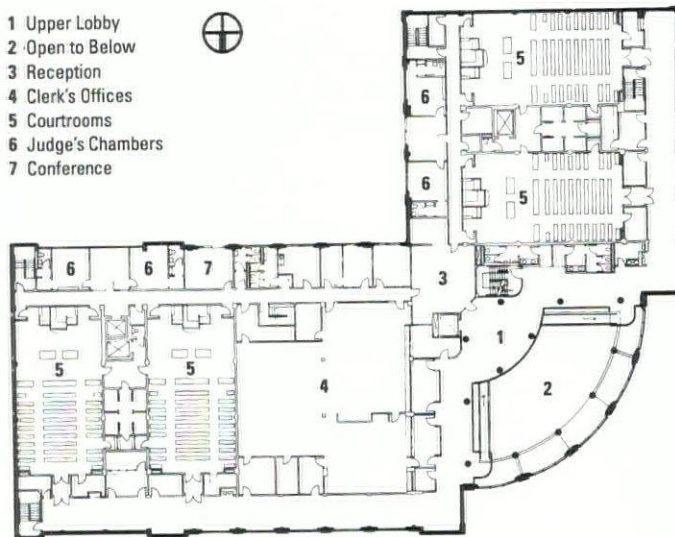
Williams, Tazewell and Associates
Norfolk

The urban setting was a key issue in the design of this new 57,000-square-foot courthouse. Architects Williams, Tazewell and Associates placed the L-shaped building adjacent to the sidewalk in order to recapture a sense of the traditional street scale once present in Hampton's downtown. Its prominent rounded corner houses a two-story lobby – monumental in the spirit of courthouses of bygone days, but clearly modern in its architectural expression. Natural light fills the public spaces, most notably the lobby and main corridors. Magistrates' offices, holding cells and the Commonwealth's Attorney's suite occupy most of the first floor, and an escalator whisks visitors to the second floor, where clerks' offices and courtrooms are located. Custom oak benches placed in the corridors identify public waiting areas, while vaulted ceilings in the courtrooms enhance the sense of openness within the building – just one example of how the ceilings are developed as a design element throughout the building.



Photos: John Wedsworth Photography

- 1 Upper Lobby
- 2 Open to Below
- 3 Reception
- 4 Clerk's Offices
- 5 Courtrooms
- 6 Judge's Chambers
- 7 Conference



Second Floor Plan



Courtly Manners

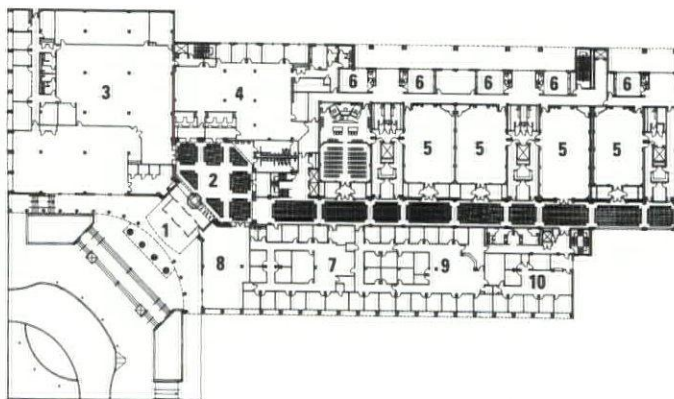
Chesterfield County Courts Building

The Moseley McClintock Group
Richmond

Architectural elements and materials traditionally found in Virginia courthouses – most notably a white-columned portico set against a red brick background – were used in the Chesterfield County Courts Building to convey the dignity and importance of the judicial system. The sprawling 140,000-square-foot building sits back from the road across a grassy lawn that is typical of many rural courthouses in the state. Varied functions are placed on different floors of the building according to the amount of pedestrian traffic they generate. Directly accessible from the main lobby are the two clerks' offices and the general district courtrooms. For security reasons, separate circulation systems are provided for the public, staff and prisoners. The design takes advantage of the site's natural slope to allow prisoners to be transferred in to the rear of the building one level below the main floor directly to holding areas between each pair of courtrooms. Planned expansion of the building in the next century will occur by extending the courtroom wing.



- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 Entry | 6 Judge's Chambers |
| 2 Lobby | 7 Commonwealth's Atty. Offices |
| 3 Circuit Court Clerk | 8 Law Library |
| 4 Gen. District Court Clerk | 9 Probation and Parole |
| 5 Courtrooms | 10 Community Incentive Program |



First Floor Plan

30 60 120



COMMUNICATION

DESIGN

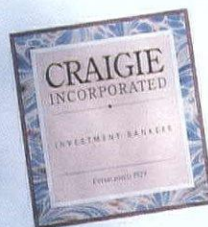
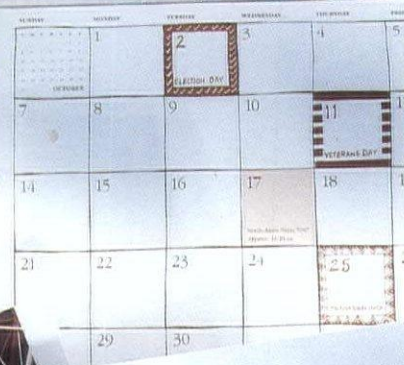
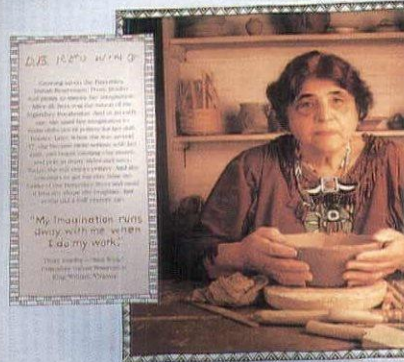
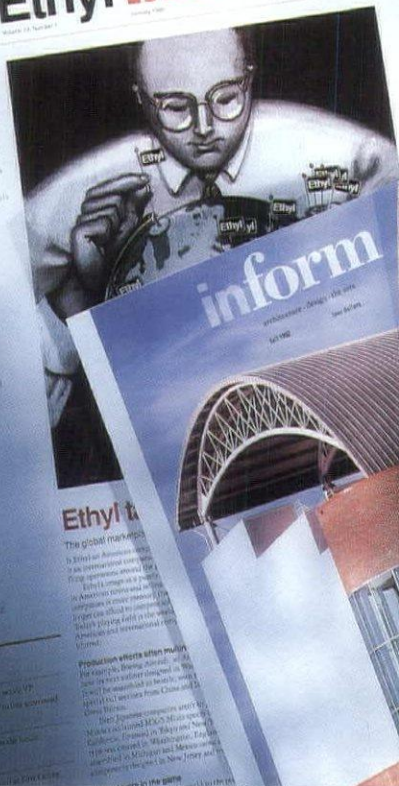
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CIVIC BUILDINGS

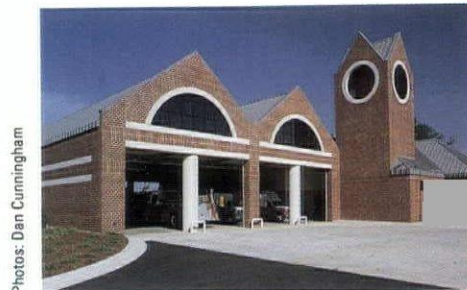
In Case of Emergency



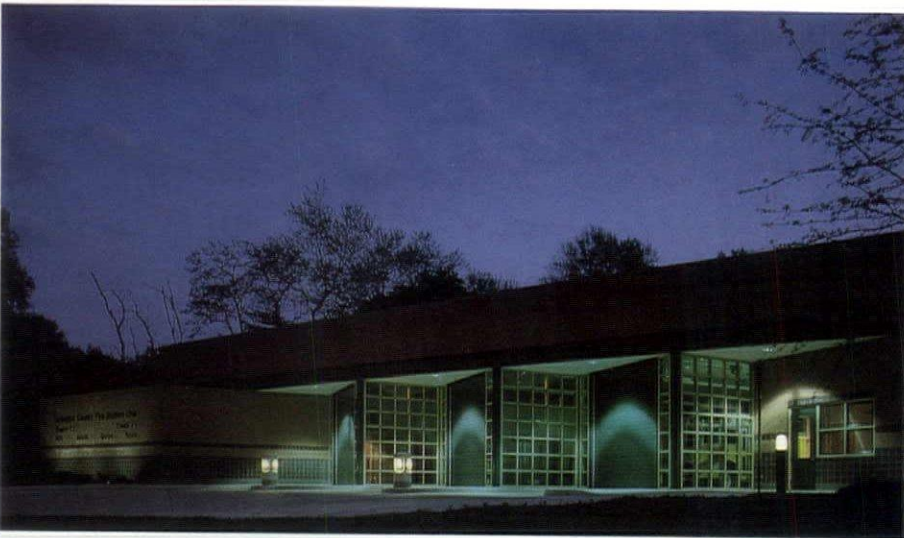
McLean Fire & Rescue Station No. 1

Hughes Group Architects
Sterling

The town of McLean wanted its new station to reflect the pride of the oldest fire and rescue company in Fairfax County; the architects responded with a crisp design whose masonry walls will stand the test of time. Simple soldier courses of brick ring the building horizontally, with precast concrete accents defining each opening. Unusual for this type of building is the addition of a basement level, which houses a large meeting room, exercise room and library. The prominent hose drying tower also functions as a training tower for exterior ladder and rappelling exercises.



Photos: Dan Cunningham



Arlington Fire Station No. 1

Ward/Hall Associates AIA
Fairfax

Outside appearances figured strongly in the development of this project, which is bordered by residential neighborhoods. The building purposefully screens public views of a large paved area required for vehicle maintenance and training exercises. The facade is dominated by three large bays for the station's emergency vehicles. By angling the bay doors, the architects also incorporated glass walls that enrich the facade and admit natural light into the station. Inside are sleeping quarters for 16 people, a training room for 35, and a kitchen, dining area and day room.



Richmond Firehouse No. 16

The DePasquale Gentilhomme Group
Richmond

The surrounding context of Richmond's distinctive Ginter Park neighborhood, a collection of eclectic houses built during the early 1900s, provided ample design cues for this local firehouse. Borrowing from the various architectural styles present in the neighborhood, the architects envisioned this station as "a house for working and living," with an attached garage for the company's apparatus. While intending to convey a residential feeling, the firehouse acknowledges its civic status through its overall massing and the use of recognized symbols such as a pedimented entry and bell tower.



29

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Seale: People may not be reading much, but "they like to go see."

William Seale

A Reverence for Things Historic

By Vernon Mays

Old buildings – particularly old buildings whose walls have been witness to the intrigues of the wealthy and the powerful – are the fuel for wordsmith William Seale's fire. Historian by training, raconteur by birth, Seale has transformed a fascination with old buildings into a career as a prolific author and frequent consultant on restoration projects as notable as the George Eastman House in Rochester, the Old State Capitol in Tallahassee and the Governor's Mansion in Richmond.

The east Texas native's interests range from historical research and design to writing books – increasingly, books that blend social history and architecture. Three such books on historic houses were released under his sole or shared authorship during 1992, though Seale swears in his inimitable way that it was pure happenstance. They include *The White House: The History of an American Idea* (AIA Press), a detailed textural and pictorial history marking the building's 200th anniversary, and *Of Houses & Time* (Abrams), a volume filled with profiles of properties owned by the National Trust for Historic Preservation (seven of which are located in Virginia or Washington). The third volume,

Domestic Views (AIA Press), portrays in luscious photographs and brief text the historic buildings supported by the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America. Primary credit for *Domestic Views* goes to photographer Erik Kvalsvik, who initiated the project.

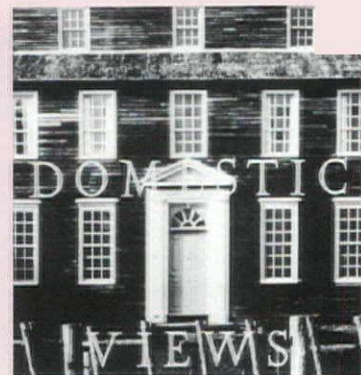
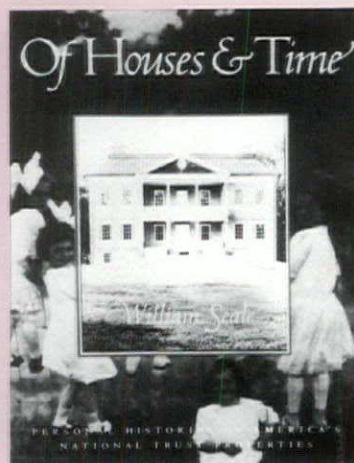
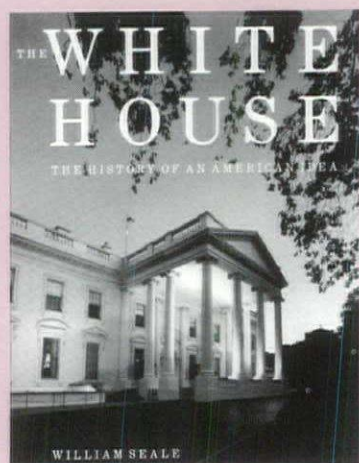
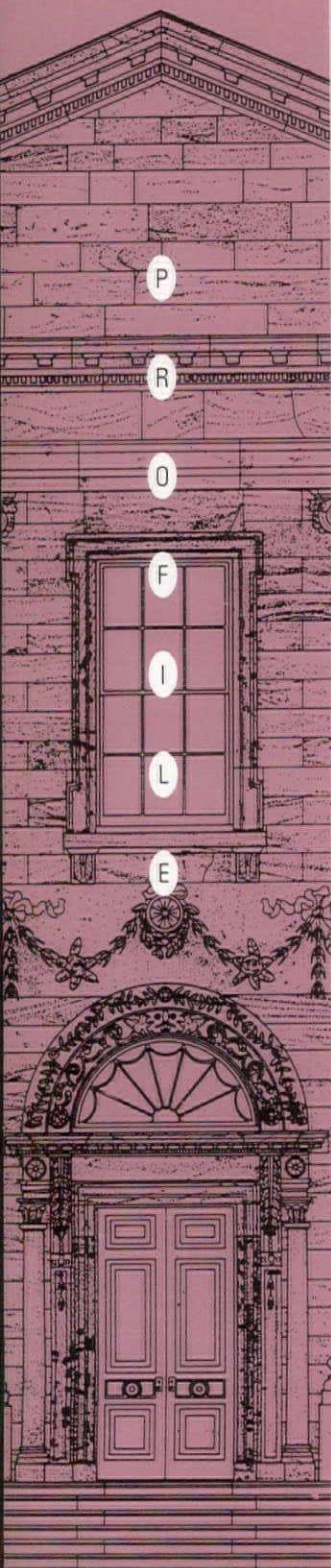
Seale, on the other hand, was the engine behind *The White House*, a follow-up to his authoritative two-volume history of the President's house released six years earlier. Research for the White House books led in many directions, including to the discovery of Scottish stonecutters who worked on the building. "That connection made me see how small the world was, how much smaller than we could imagine," Seale says.

After serving for decades as both office and home, the White House finally outgrew its usefulness after 100 years as a symbol for the Republic. The executive mansion might have been demolished at that point, Seale maintains, had it not been for the fact that Abraham Lincoln's legacy – so intensely revered – was also so strongly associated with the White House. "His legacy was too important to destroy," Seale says. Harry

Truman came closest to accomplishing that feat. From 1949-52, Truman rebuilt the house with a vengeance, peeling it back to the original shell and rebuilding the interior superstructure in steel and reinforced concrete. Such a severe reworking of the mansion was justified by fear of the tragic consequences an air attack might have on the building, not to mention the fact that it was in dire need of repair. "I never realized that a building that had been essentially torn down could be so real and so authentic," Seale notes. "I even lose sight of the fact that the window in the Blue Room is not the same one that Dolly Madison looked out of. You forget that the house was burned after that."

Virginia's executive mansion and its colorful cast of occupants also bore Seale's scrutiny in a 1988 history published by the Virginia State Library and Archives. "The whole drama of American history, certainly up to the Civil War, is right there," he says. But while Seale lavishes praise on the 1989 exterior restoration of the mansion, he says the interior has far to go. "God knows it doesn't just need another decorator. Every First Lady decides she wants to be Jackie [Kennedy Onassis]."

Seale grew up in Beaumont, Texas, and says he can't remember when he wasn't fascinated with old buildings. "I knew people who lived in old plantation houses and I visited them. And my father had



The fruits of Seale's typewriter (above and left) and White House detail (far left).

been a builder when I was little. Even today, the smell of a board being sawed is the most beautiful perfume to me." After attending college at Southwestern University in Texas, he moved on to graduate school at Duke, receiving his Ph.D. in 1965. He became a history professor, first at Lamar University and then the University of South Carolina. In 1973, he joined the Smithsonian Institution as a curator, then worked for the National Park Service as White House historian. Later, he taught historic interiors and buildings in the architecture program at Columbia University. "And it wasn't about decorative arts, it was about how buildings are used and finished."

Since 1978, Seale has been a self-employed restoration consultant. He is impatient with politicians who want to cut money from preservation, noting that he considers preservation "a part of public education, because you get a sense of the past from historical houses. They give us a sense of perspective and context. People who would never delve into textbooks will go to historic houses to learn about historical figures. You can't help but go to Mt. Vernon, for example, and get a sense for the man, a feeling for the man.... I'm also very interested in education, and the whole issue of the house museum. Johnny may not know how to read, but he can see better than my generation because of TV. House museums have a legitimate function in our culture, because they are visual and we are in a very visual age. And while books interest me, I'm not so sure that people are going to be reading more. They like to go see."

Seale lives with his wife in a turn-of-the-century Alexandria townhouse that he bought from two dowagers. "My office is where their old Uncle Oliver, who was a Union veteran, lived his last years and yelled across the street at the Confederate old peoples home." While Alexandria is hardly the small town he moved to in 1971, its proximity to the Library of Congress is a boon to someone who makes frequent use of its collection. Twice a year, primarily to get some writing accomplished, he makes his way back to the old homestead in Texas, originally his great-grandfather's house.

Seale acknowledges the recent surge of interest in historic preservation, but he doesn't know what to attribute it to. "We have spent generations building permanent buildings and now people are deciding, why not keep them? It's as much the way old buildings feel as they way they look." Seale says if he could influence popular thinking about architecture, he would parrot the old-line preservation slogan: Once it's gone, it's gone. "It's as important to me that we preserve man-made things as much as natural things. If you ever go to Detroit - or Norfolk - you will understand what I mean. The core is gone and it can't be regained. Where the preservation movement has failed is that it hasn't helped the average guy be able to articulate why he wants his environment saved."

What *has* changed are people's attitudes, Seale says. "There's a growing reverence for materials in buildings. We've still got a helluva lot to learn, but we are learning. We are way behind Europe. But, when you think about it, architecture schooling has been at direct odds with preservation and restoration for years. There has always been a reverence for the new. Now there's a little more interest in the past."

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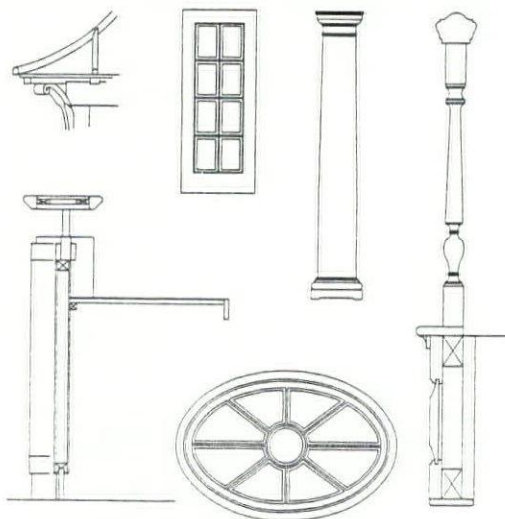
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Collection Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University

Period view shows exposition halls and fountains that were visited by more than 27 million people and continued to influence American design for decades.

Mirror on America: The Columbian Exposition

The World's Columbian Exposition.

By Norman Bolotin and Christine Laing. Illustrated. 166 pp. Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press. \$29.95 cloth.

Revisiting the White City: American Art at the 1893 World's Fair.

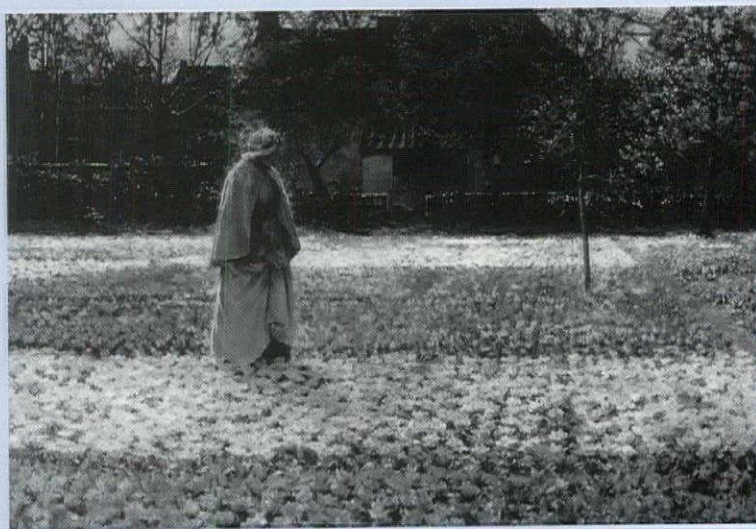
With contributions by Caroline Kinder Carr, et al. Illustrated. 408 pp. Washington, D.C.: National Museum of American Art and National Portrait Gallery. \$60.00 cloth, \$35.00 paper.

By Douglas McCreary Greenwood

It's hard to imagine that a hundred years ago, a fair to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the New World would take on such huge proportions – a mammoth fairgrounds six miles from downtown Chicago on more than 600 acres of land, with 14 Great Buildings and an additional 200 structures boasting 63 million square feet of floor space. Altogether some

40,000 laborers were employed in its construction, with Augustus Saint-Gaudens in charge of sculpture, Francis Millet as director of decoration, and Daniel Burnham as director of construction. All of the buildings were painted white and most were made of "staff," a material composed of plaster, cement and fiber commonly used in temporary constructions. Perhaps the most amazing fact of all, as noted in *The World's Columbian Exposition*, is that a staggering 27.5 million people visited the fair. This figure amounts to more than 40 percent of the estimated population of the U.S. in 1890, though visitors came from all over the world as well.

Norman Bolotin's and Christine Laing's text is studded with many such facts, and with anecdotes that must have been a delight to dig up. Part of the book's charm is that the photo captions are also jam-packed with facts that once again reveal the ingenuity and plain hard work of the authors. The major shortcomings of this book, however, are painfully obvious even thumbing through it. Despite its wealth of interesting data, *The World's Columbian Exposition* is essentially a picture book. Although the fair had a lasting influence on American architecture – Chicago's hosting of the 1993 American Institute of Architects convention is partial recognition of that fact – its importance to America's cultural development is dealt with only in passing. Yet the fair was a show-place for the eclectic architecture of the day, bearing the imprint of leading Beaux Arts architects such as Charles McKim and Richard Morris Hunt and including the Transportation Building of pioneering Modern design by Louis Sullivan. The architecture of the White City is still regarded as a benchmark in the evolution of the building arts in this country and it is generally credited with inspiring the City Beautiful movement that swept the country soon afterward, influencing districts such as Richmond's Monument Avenue. To gloss over that is a serious omission.



Gallery retrospective includes George Hitchcock's "Tulip Culture, Holland" ...

Even for a book that places its stock in pictorial history, far too many of the pictures are grainy or of such poor quality that one wonders why they were included. There is an almost unforgivable lack of color, which could have been remedied by including photos of artifacts from the fair. At the very least, a better quality paper stock would have helped, as would have a map to orient readers to the layout of the site.

A much more captivating book is *Revisiting the White City: American Art at the 1893 World's Fair*, which was written as the exhibition catalog for a collection of roughly 100 of the works of American art that were originally on display at the Columbian Exposition a century ago. The delightful exhibition, titled "American Art at the 1893 World's Fair" and jointly sponsored by the National Museum of American Art and the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., runs through August 15. It reveals much about American taste in the 19th century and gives a wry look at *who we thought we were* – or at least who we were trying to impress.

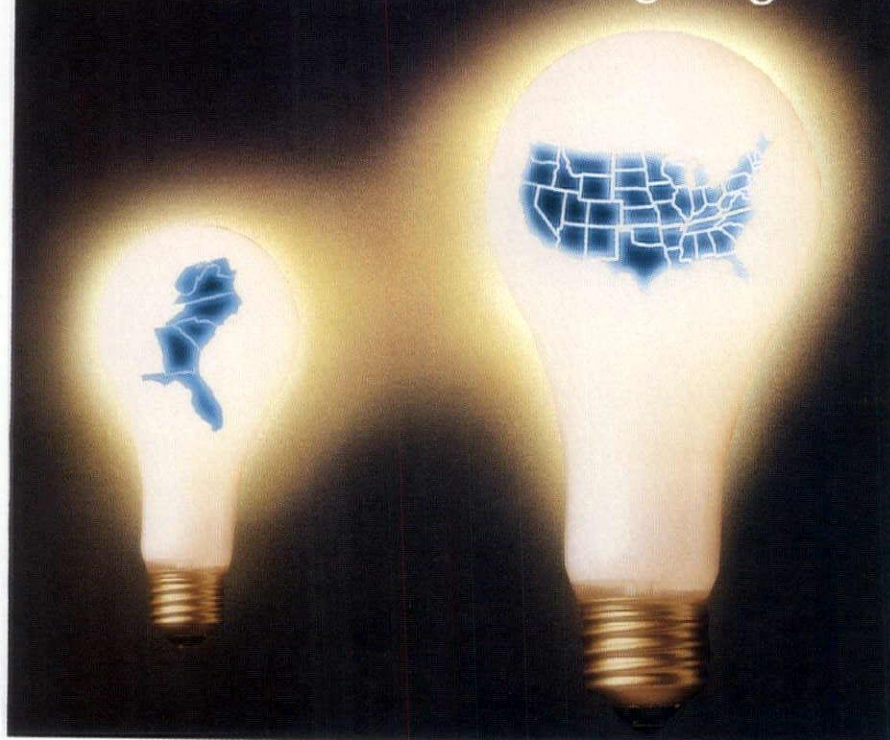
It is as uneven a show as one is likely to see at a major museum, with major works set alongside works that hardly qualify as Holiday Inn wall art. But the show and its catalog are, nevertheless, quite informative. In addition to its inclusion of compelling essays, *Revisiting the White City* is beautifully produced and illustrated. It will provide art historians fodder, cataloging in detail virtually all of the images and sculp-

(continued on page 36)



... and Thomas Eakins' "The Gross Clinic."

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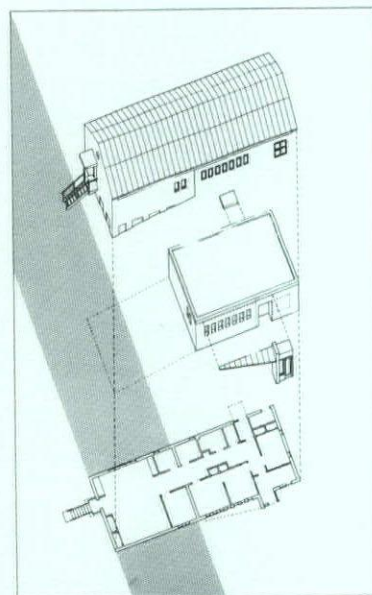
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Architect: Bond, Comet, Westmoreland + Hiner, Richmond
Project: Elementary School in Waynesboro

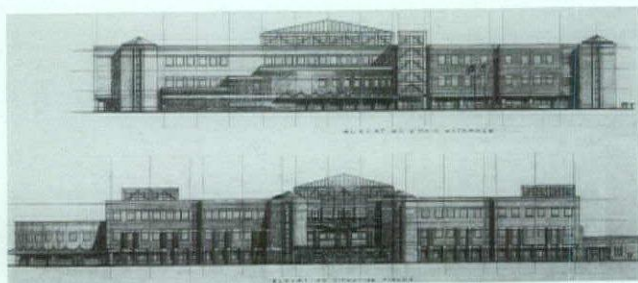
The design of this 600-student elementary school utilizes an axial retaining wall to separate one- and two-story portions of the building and organize circulation and program areas. A bell tower at one end of the wall signals the main entrance; at the opposite end is the school's media center. 804-788-4774.



Architect: Farmer Puckett Warner, Charlottesville
Project: State Police Area Offices

One of three addition/renovation projects, the simple form and materials seek to reconcile the civic mission of the state police within the essentially rural context of their offices. The projects provide expanded trooper office facilities, administrative space and public areas. 804-293-7258.

34



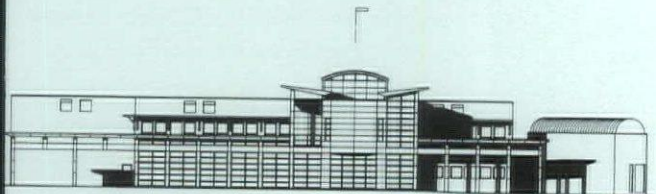
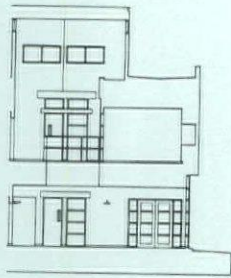
Architect: The Moseley McClintock Group, Richmond
Project: I.C. Norcom High School

In addition to a comprehensive academic curriculum, this new high school in Portsmouth will offer "magnet" programs for students who choose to focus on math, science and technology. The 230,000-square-foot building will be arranged around a three-story atrium. 804-794-7555.



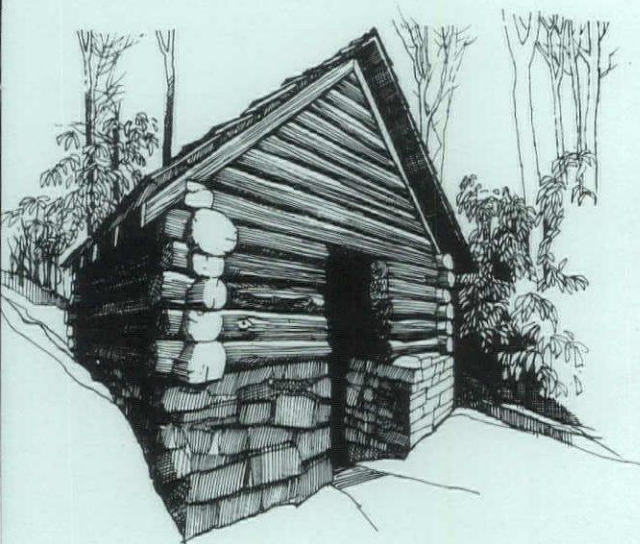
Architect: Odell Associates, Richmond
Project: Health Services Foundation Headquarters

Construction began recently on this 60,000-square-foot headquarters building in Charlottesville, which is expected to be ready for occupation in April 1994. The building, designed to complement the architecture of the Charlottesville area, will be clad in brick and precast concrete. 804-644-5941.



Architect: Hayes, Seay, Mattern & Mattern, Roanoke
Project: Cox Cable Headquarters Building

This new 27,000-square-foot facility in Roanoke consists of a reception and cashier lobby, drive-up teller window and client conference room (glass and metal clad in drawing) as well as office and meeting spaces (brick in drawing). Construction begins in July. 703-857-3100.



Architect: Carlton Abbott & Partners, Williamsburg
Project: National Park Service Guidelines

This drawing of Buck Spring house is part of a book entitled *Architectural and Road Character Guidelines for the Blue Ridge Parkway* being written by Carlton Abbott & Partners for the National Park Service. The publication will be an instructive guide for future development along the parkway. 804-220-1095.



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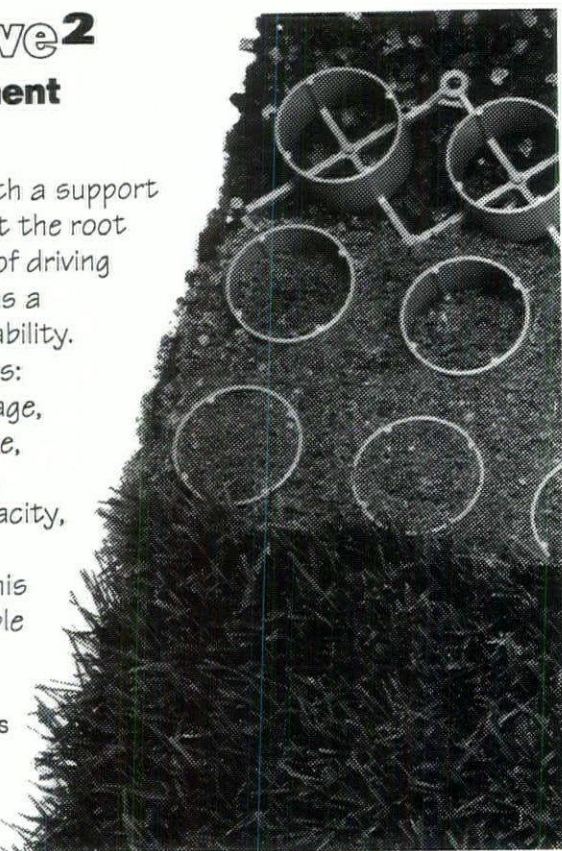
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(continued from page 33)

tures that were on display in 1893, including one of the icons of American art, Thomas Eakins' "The Gross Clinic." With works drawn from private collections and museums, the show features some of America's more familiar artists – Winslow Homer, John Singer Sargent, Thomas Eakins, James McNeill Whistler and Louis Comfort Tiffany among them. Missing, strangely, are many of the giants of the American art pantheon – figures such as John Singleton Copley, Thomas Cole, Albert Bierstadt, and Fitz Hugh Lane.

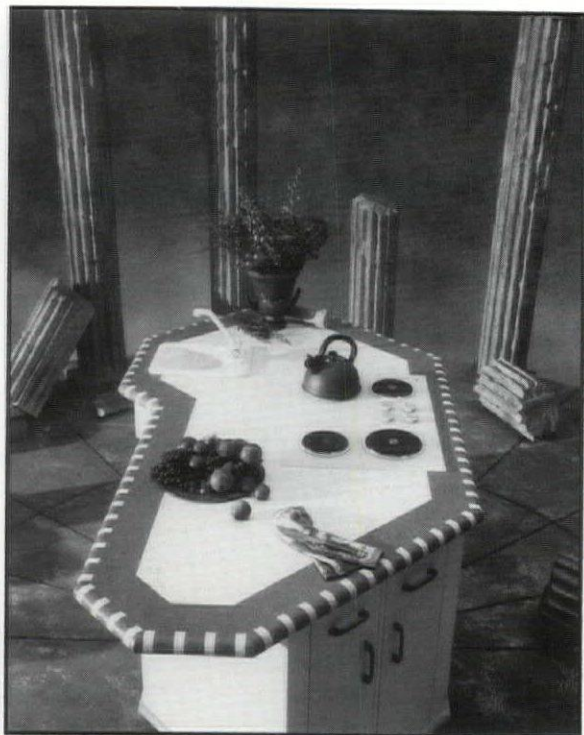
In setting the scene for the 1893 exposition, Robert W. Rydell's introductory essay hits just the right note: "Signs of America's commercial prosperity were everywhere on view at the fair. In a sense, the fair's great exhibition buildings, full of displays emblematic of America's material prosperity, were nothing more than grandiose versions of Chicago's department stores. Among the sights at the fair were giant exhibits of California fruits, maps made of pickles, immense spreads of machinery and glassware, model kitchens, 160-lb. elephant tusks, multitudes of pyramids built out of soaps and copper wires and obelisks constructed out of sardine cans. This was a veritable 'dream world of mass consumption.'"

It was also many other things to other people – a chance to embrace the women's rights movement, the place where the Pledge of Allegiance got its biggest boost, the well-documented launching pad for American architecture. Yet ironically, as Rydell notes, the architecture of the mid-way "probably inspired the 'strip' architecture that would increasingly characterize commercial streets in small-town America."

As we approach the end of the 20th century, it is worth remembering what Americans approaching the end of the preceding one saw ahead not only for the United States, but for the world at large. In its own way, that realization itself is enough to make one shake one's head in both wonder and despair.



Doug Greenwood writes from Washington, D.C., on art and architectural topics.



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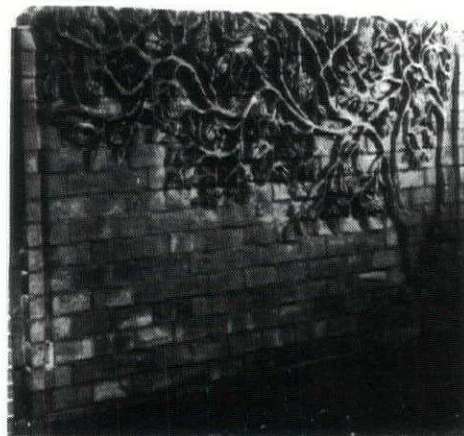
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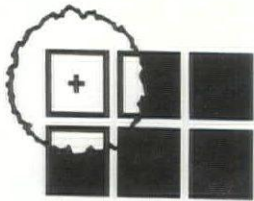
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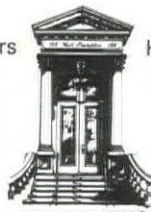
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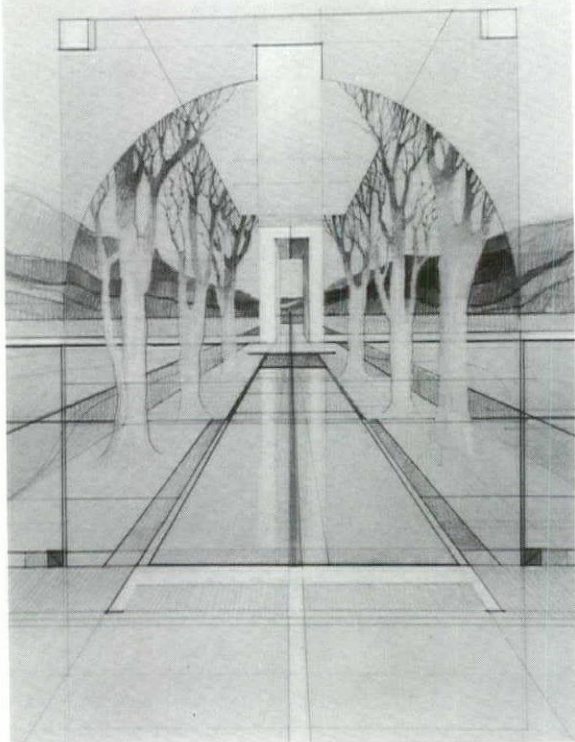
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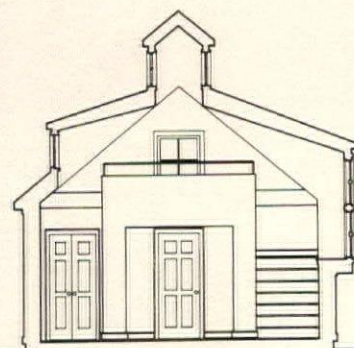
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Coming Up

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Klarfeld Pool House
by Moore-Poe Architects, Arlington

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