

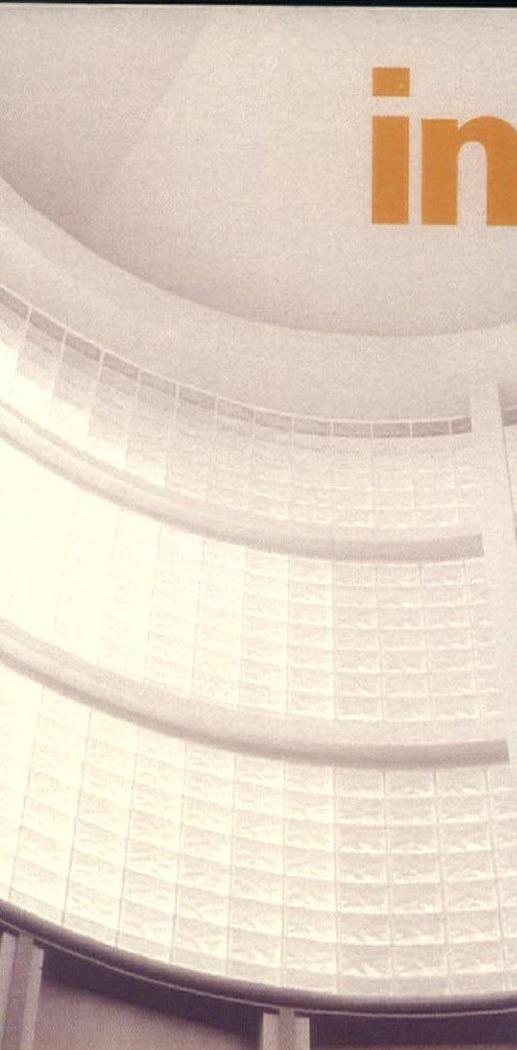
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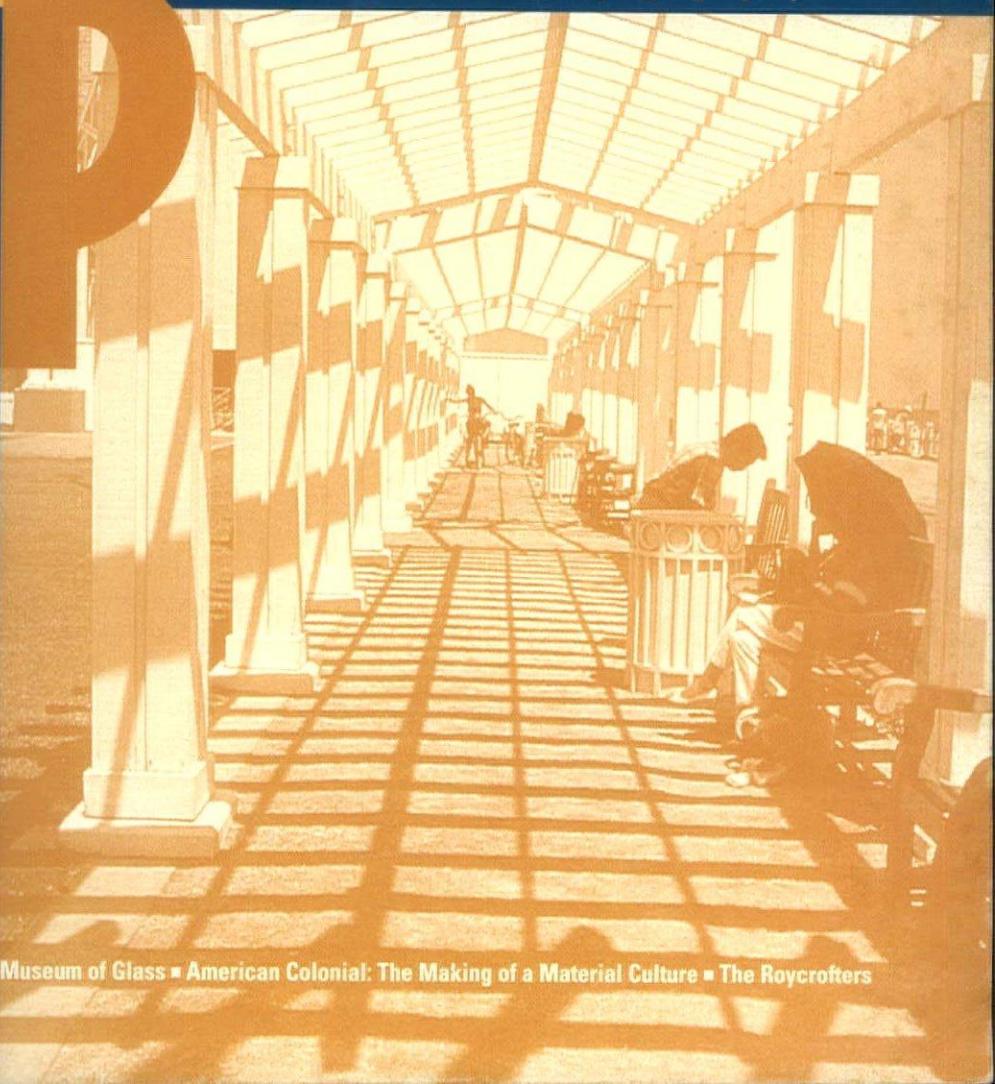
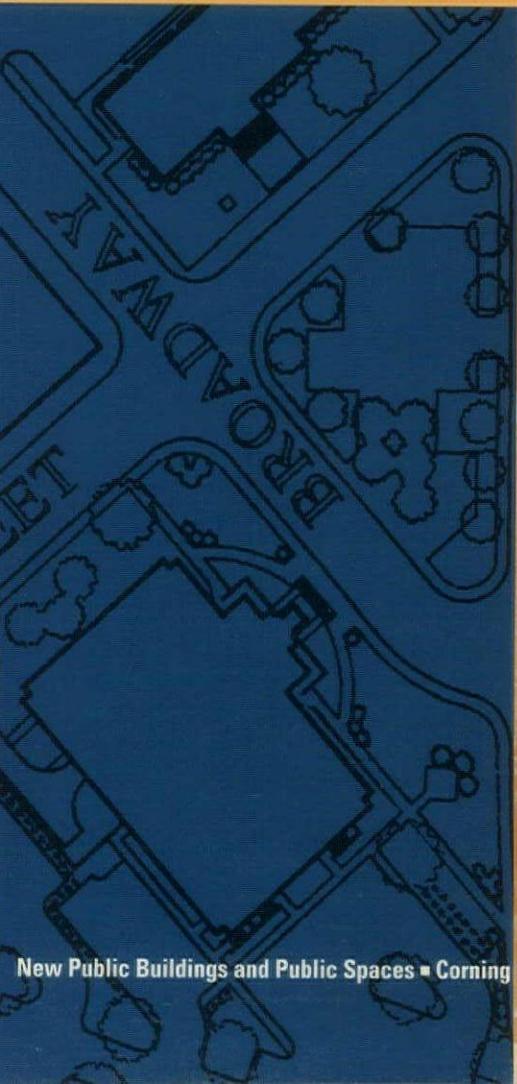
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IN THE

PUBLIC INTEREST



New Public Buildings and Public Spaces ■ Corning Museum of Glass ■ American Colonial: The Making of a Material Culture ■ The Roycrofters

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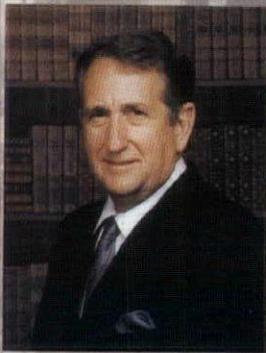
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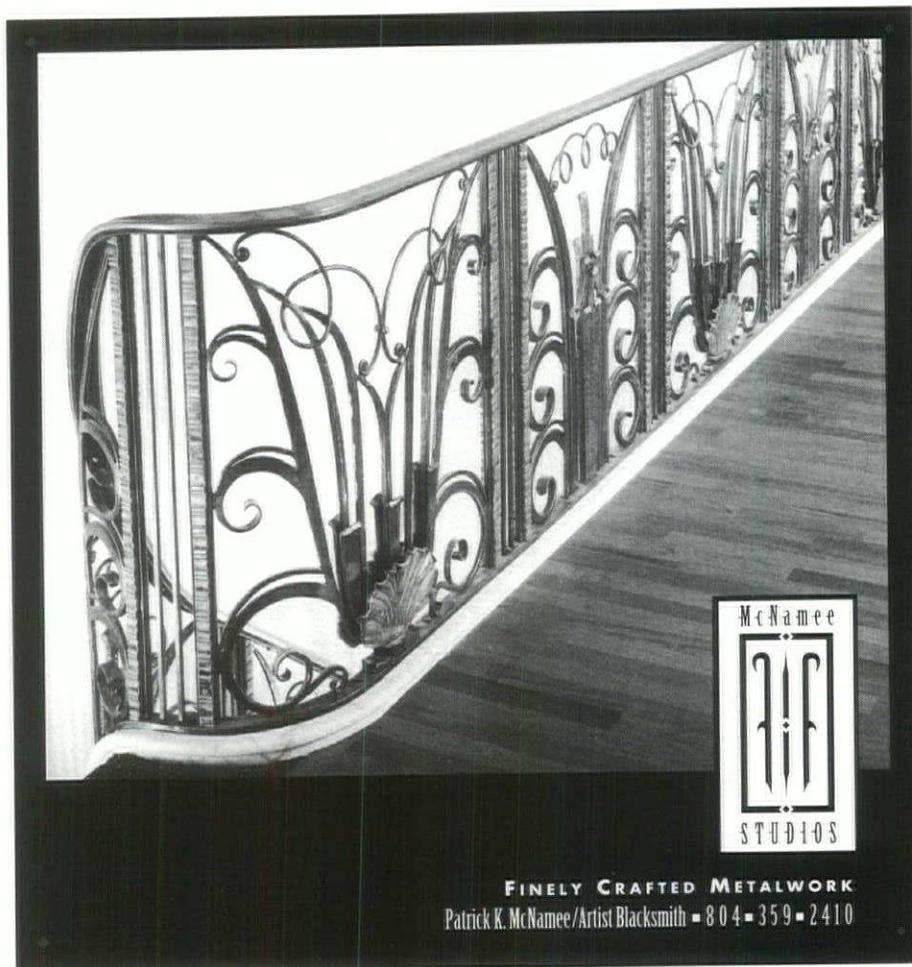
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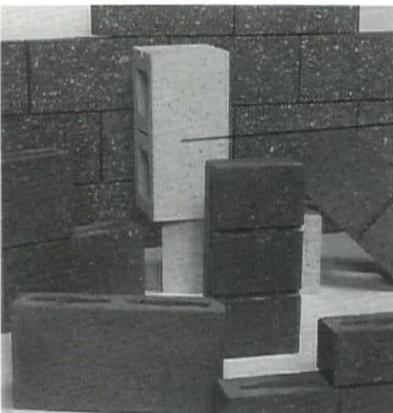
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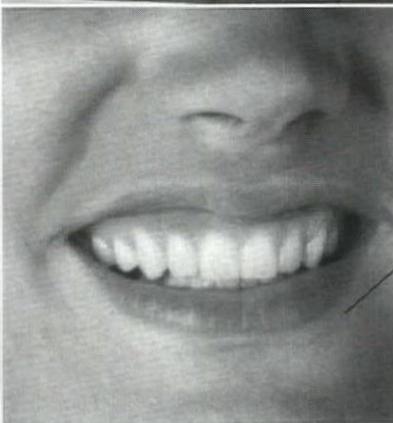
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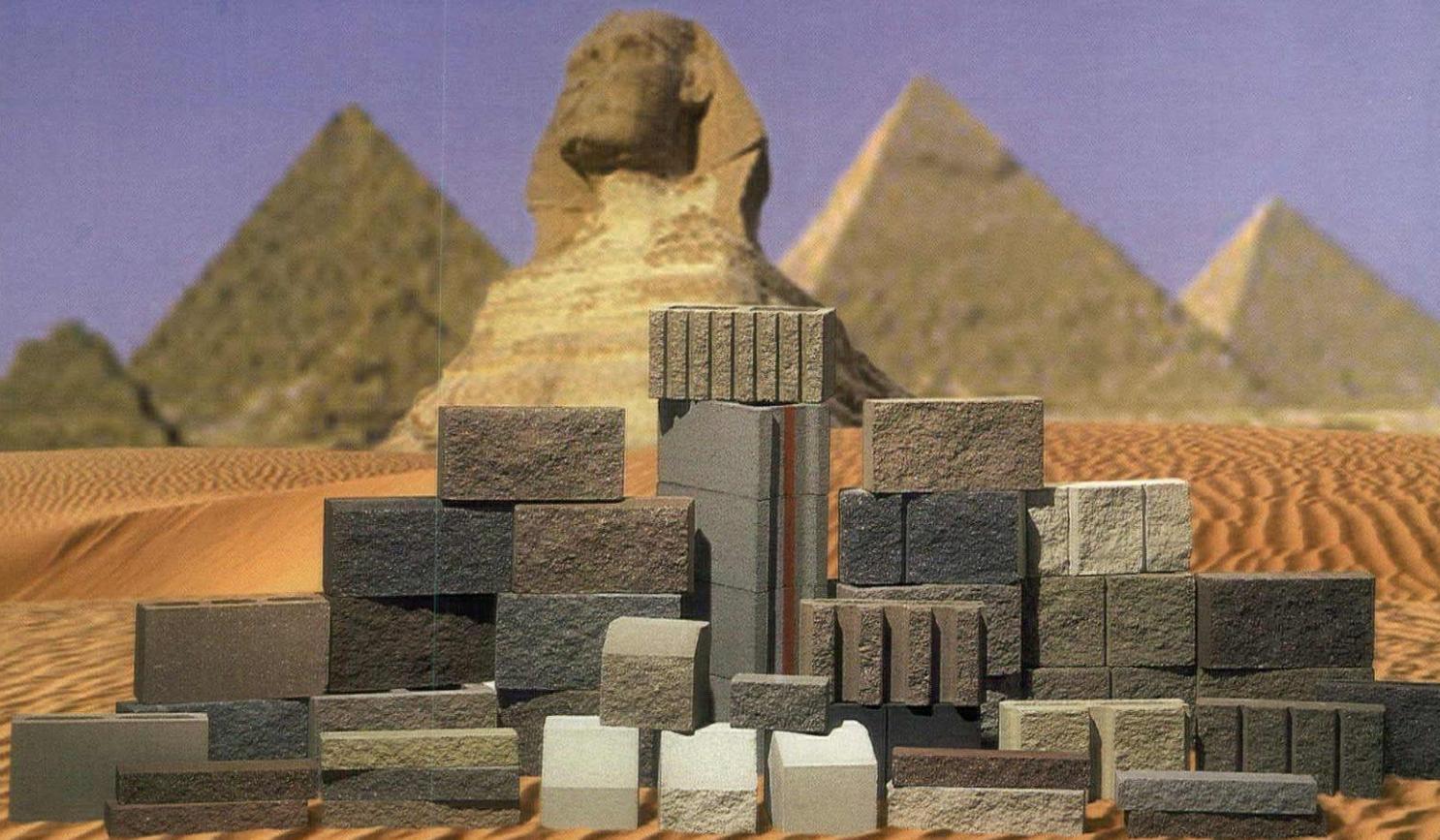


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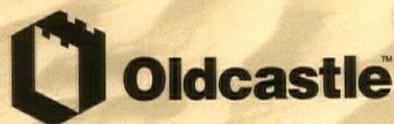


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# inform

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## In the Public Interest

Nationwide attention paid to the New Urbanism has given a renewed importance to public spaces such as squares, plazas, and parks. New initiatives across Virginia have focused energy on restoring the civic life of existing cities or highlighting the importance of public spaces in new developments. *By Edwin Slipek, Jr.*

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## Court Order

A new courts building for the City of Hopewell defines the edge of a triangular plaza that gives definition and stature to an important intersection at the city center.

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## Skyway Span

Once divided in half by its lifeblood – the railroad tracks – Roanoke has reconnected its heart and soul with a dramatic, 363-foot-long, glass-enclosed pedestrian bridge.

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## Seaside Square

The last of available oceanfront sites in Virginia Beach is reconstituted as 24th Street Park, the crowning jewel of a comprehensive \$36 million revitalization program.

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Determined to create an identity for its central core, the town of Herndon embarked on a new government complex surrounding a green space where residents gather for special events.

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doing the small thing well



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On the cover:

Photos (clockwise from top right) by Rick Alexander & Associates,  
Philip Beaurline, and Melanie Davis.

In our next issue:  
**The Tradition of  
Innovation**

# THE ROYCROFT



"Conformists die," Elbert Hubbard said, "but heretics live on forever." Eighty years after his death, Hubbard the heretic is proving himself right.

Hubbard was the guiding force behind a group of upstate New York artists and craftsmen called the Roycrofters, workers who would produce some of America's most popular turn-of-the-century literature, furniture, and metal designs, most of it done in the vein of the Arts and Crafts style. And much of it is on display through January 7, 1996, at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in "American Arts and Crafts: Elbert Hubbard and the Roycrofters." The exhibit, which ranges from illuminated texts to mahogany bedsteads, presents both a portrait of Hubbard, former soap salesman turned popular philosopher, and the Roycroft community, which began 100 years ago in East Aurora, New York.

"Hubbard was way ahead of his time," says Frederick R. Brandt, curator of 20th century art at the museum and one of the exhibit's organizers. "If Hubbard was around today he'd be doing infomercials." As a soap salesman for the Larkin Co., Hubbard employed some then-advanced marketing and promotional techniques. He eliminated salesmen through direct mail, employed premiums as incentives for customers, and enlisted customers to solicit other customers.

By 1893, Hubbard had become a company executive. But he resigned to embark on a writing career. A year later, he enrolled in Harvard, staying only long enough to grow sour on academia, a theme which would infuse his philosophies from then on. "He was basically a frustrated author," Brandt says. "He wanted an outlet for his philosophical writings."

With the help of several members of the Chatauqua Literary and Scientific Circle of East Aurora, Hubbard published "The Philistine: A Periodical of Protest." The magazine brimmed



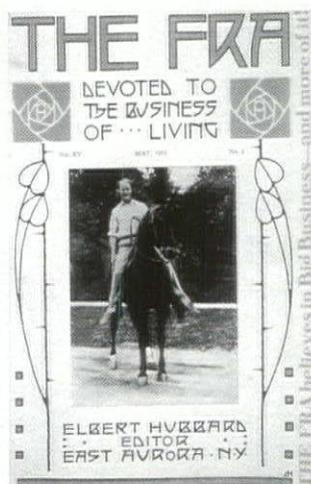
with Hubbard's eccentric ideas about what was right and wrong (he was against organized religion, doctors, lawyers; for women's rights, free thinking, and "Ridicule as an agent of Reform."). Running counter to the stodgier periodicals of the day, such as "Harper's Weekly," the magazine was quite popular. Then came a series of books, almost all written by Hubbard. But not ordinary books. They

reflected a "medieval" sensibility – to produce affordable, handmade objects of high quality by "head, heart, and hand" – that already had spurred an English Arts and Crafts movement, the practical protest against increasing industrialization.

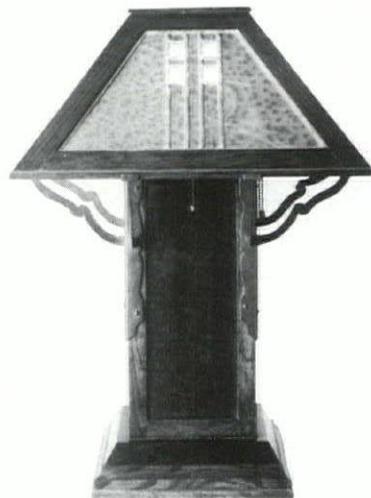
In America, the Arts and Crafts philosophy also was gaining momentum, specifically in the form of furniture by Gustav Stickley and in the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright. But the American version had less socialism than the British model. And Hubbard, for one, was all for big business.

Hubbard's Roycroft printing press surged into commercial success. (Hubbard would never say where the name Roycroft came from, though some have speculated that the name implies "royal craft.") The Roycroft press printed limited edition books with enticing bindings, such as suede and leather, and featured hand-painted illuminations and texts inside. Since they were astutely offered at a wide range of prices, the books broadened Hubbard's customer base.

As the Roycroft press grew in popularity, so did Hubbard's celebrity. The East Aurora community became a tourist attraction, drawing tens of thousands of "pilgrims," as Hubbard called them, every year. "Thus the law of supply and demand took over and the Roycroft Furniture Shop was born," Brandt wrote in the catalog accompanying the exhibit. To accommodate the visitors, Hubbard built the Roycroft Inn and employed craftsmen to build beds, dressers, tables, and chairs – all with a certain plain-spoken



Entrepreneur Elbert Hubbard (above) combined business savvy with an Arts and Crafts sensibility. Among the publications he edited was *The Fra* (left), a magazine "devoted to the business of living."



# E R S

panache. Roycroft craftsmen eschewed veneers and insisted on solid wood construction. Soon Hubbard was penning ad copy for his furniture. "It does not wear out, and like true friendship, grows better with the passing years," he wrote.

The Roycroft community sprouted other shops, and soon the output expanded to china cabinets, clocks, leaded glass lamps, copper steins, hat pins, cigar boxes, andirons, and letter openers. Moreover, the working families of the Roycroft community became a self-contained microcosm, ever sure of their brazen leader. The work force reached more than 500 at one time. Most of the craftsmen toiled anonymously under the group's insignia, an orb containing an "R" and supporting a double cross.

The one person who studiously avoided anonymity was Hubbard. The master of self-promotion jumped on the national lecture circuit, earning substantial speaking fees, sometimes several thousand dollars. Hubbard even came to Richmond in 1914 and spoke at The Jefferson Hotel. His appearance warranted front-page coverage in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, which observed that, "as a writer of advertisements for safety razors, as a maker of mission furniture, or as a publisher of pocket-size literature, his work bears the imprint of his personality—a personality that is suburban or polished, depending upon whether one relishes the blunt and unusual or the carefully put and temperate."

In 1915, Hubbard and his wife, Alice, set sail for Europe aboard the ill-fated *Lusitania*. The ship, of course, sank en route and the Hubbards died at sea. Some 3,000 people attended a memorial ceremony two weeks later in East Aurora. The Roycroft shops continued to produce sporadically for two decades, but suffered a fatal economic blow with the Depression. In 1938, the Roycroft shops closed, bankrupt.

— Sibella C. Giorello

The author covers art for the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, where a similar article appeared earlier this year.



Production from the Roycroft Shops included objects such as table lamps (facing page). The Roycroft Inn teapot featured the shops' distinctive trademark (left).

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The 1895 burning of The Rotunda (left) sparked changes in the university's finances, leadership and architecture.

## CONFLAGRATIONS AND CELEBRATIONS AT U.VA.

Why would anyone want to celebrate a fire? That is the question asked when the Alderman Library at the University of Virginia announced its plans to mount an exhibit commemorating the 100th anniversary of the great Rotunda fire. "That the Library would celebrate its near-total destruction seemed lunatic," write curators Edward Gaynor and Christie Stephenson. But "Arise and Build," the fall exhibition of photographs, drawings, and news accounts scheduled to coincide with a major capital campaign, prompted reflection on the lasting changes wrought by the October 27, 1895, conflagration.

This was not mere sentimentality. At the fall convocation address, architecture professor Richard Guy Wilson said the fire triggered a series of events that fundamentally changed the university. "What did the Faculty Building Committee recommend four days after the fire? Not simply a rebuilding of the Rotunda but correction of all the other ills of the university," Wilson said.

The results were significant. First, the university abandoned its tradition of informal leadership by a faculty chairman, choosing its first president, Edwin Alderman from Tulane University. Second, architect Stanford White was hired not only to rebuild the Rotunda but to create much-needed new buildings that forever changed the university's character. White designed Cabell Hall and two other campus buildings, establishing the pattern for future development of the grounds. Finally, in the wake of the fire, the struggling institution began to receive new private gifts and new assistance from the state General

Assembly, while embarking on a program to update a library whose collection now ranks among the country's 20 largest.

A second exhibition at the university's Fiske Kimball Fine Arts Library focuses attention on the library's namesake, Sidney Fiske Kimball. Called everything from brusque and profane to "a titan of directed energy," Kimball enjoyed a brief tenure at U.Va. His lectures at the Metropolitan Museum of Art resulted in the book *Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and of the Early Republic*. During his first decade as director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Kimball completed construction of a massive new building, fitted the interior with authentic period rooms, and cultivated public funding sources.



Fiske Kimball, c. 1939

Trained as an architect, he approached buildings as artifacts embodying both traditional and vital design principles, says curator Jack Robertson. Kimball's method for historical interpretation was based on attention to details – in drawings and documents, nuances of decoration, and archaeological evidence. Among the most lasting evidence of this approach is Shack Mountain, the octagonal-plan house Kimball designed and built near Charlottesville in the mid-1930s.

### Setting the Record Straight

Photographs of Huffington Library in *Inform* (1995: number three) should have been credited to Maxwell MacKenzie.

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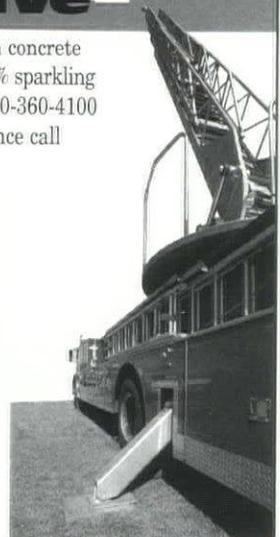
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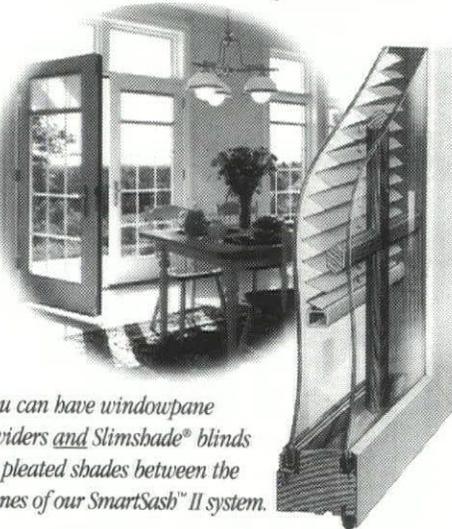
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■ "Form: Origin + Intent." The second Virginia Design Forum features keynote speaker Michael Hopkins and presentations by architects William Rawn and Sam Mockbee, art historian Tom Armstrong, product designer Peter Stathis, and garden designer Julie Moir Messervy. March 22-23 at The Williamsburg Lodge, Williamsburg. 804-644-3041.

■ "Mirrors and Memories: Architecture as Place and Witness." Black and white images by photographer Lowell Anson Kenyon recall the uses and users of buildings. Exhibit extended through Jan. 19 at The Barret House, Richmond. 804-644-3041.

■ "Frank Lloyd Wright: Architect for America." Models, drawings, furniture, and photographs exploring Wright's theories of "organic architecture." Through Feb. 4 at the Art Museum of Western Virginia, Roanoke. 540-628-4000.

■ "The Dome: Symbol of American Democracy." Explores the significance and popularity of the dome as a symbol for America's civic buildings. At the National Building Museum, Washington, D.C., through April 14. 202-272-2448.

■ "Natural Gardens: Gardens for the 21st Century." Landscape architects James van Sweden and Wolfgang Oehme discuss their "new American garden" concept and sign their book, *Gardening with Water*. At the National Building Museum, Feb. 13 at 6:30 p.m. Fee. 202-272-2448.

■ "Building Modern America: An Era of Standardization and Experimentation." Michael A. Tomlan, director of Cornell University's historic preservation program, discusses how U.S. technology created building materials such as aluminum, plywood, and reinforced concrete. At the National Building Museum, Feb. 26 at 6:30 p.m. Fee. 202-272-2448.

■ "Southern City, National Ambition," a joint exhibit of The Octagon Museum and the Anacostia Neighborhood Museums examines Washington, D.C., between 1800-1860 and the attempts to create a city apart from its identity as the nation's capital. Through March 3. Information: 202-638-3221 (Octagon) and 202-357-2700 (Anacostia).

■ "Is There Still a Place for Cities?" Paul Goldberger, chief cultural correspondent of *The New York Times*, appears as part of the Duncan Phillips Lecture Series. March 7 at 6 p.m. The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C. Reservations required. 202-387-3036.

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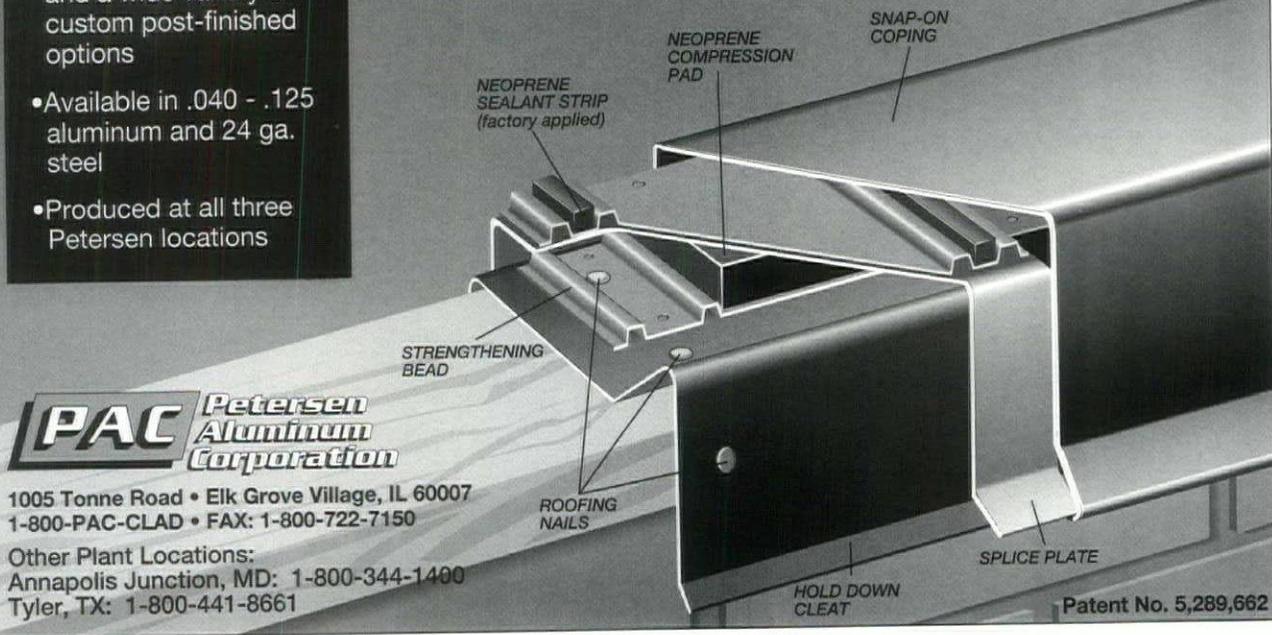
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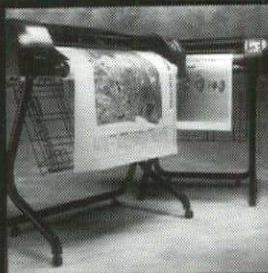
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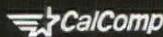
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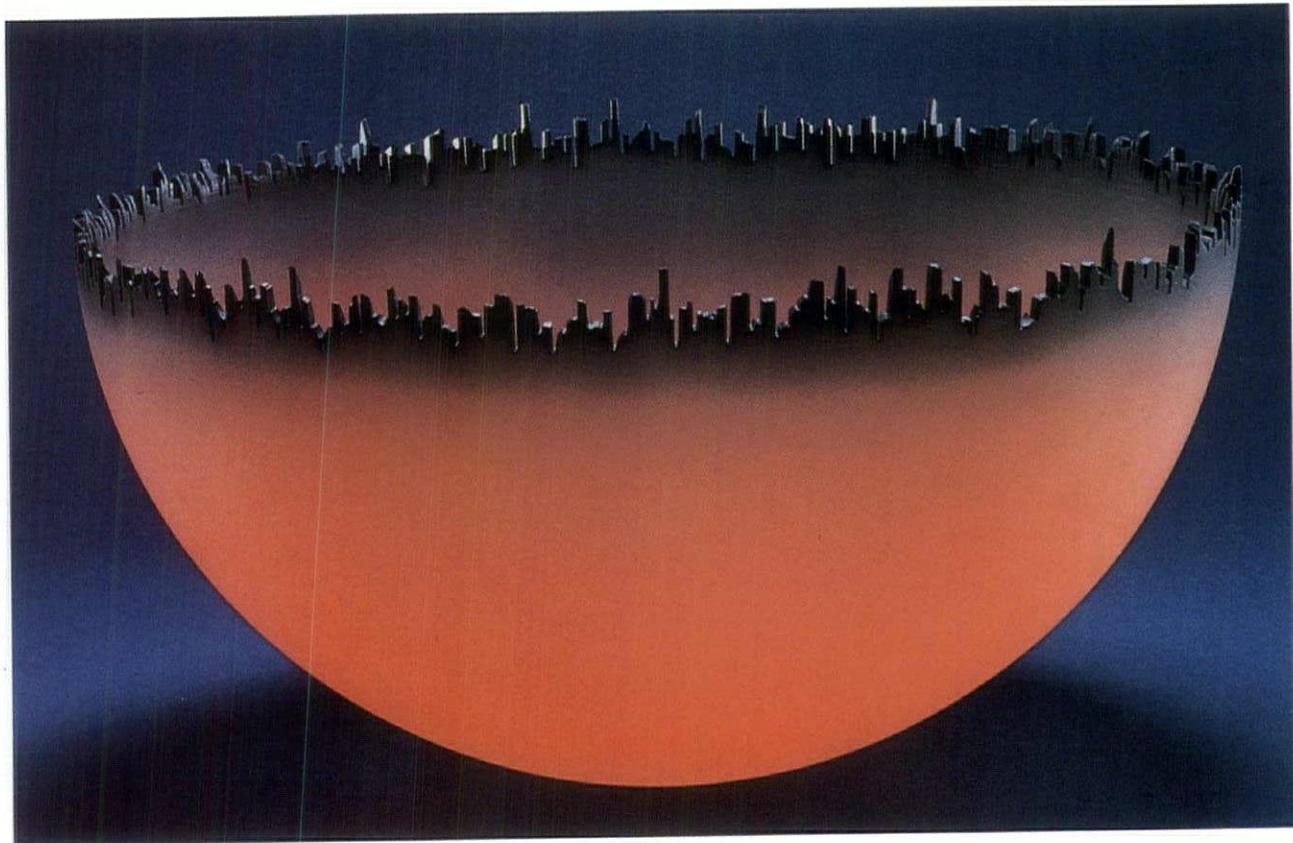


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By *Vernon Mays*

People drink from it. Vision is improved by it. Lives were threatened because of it. Fortunes have been earned making it. Glass – fashioned from the simplest materials – has challenged and intrigued mankind since the beginnings of history. The story of its discovery and manufacture is entwined with the story of civilization itself – spiced with invention and creativity, jealousy and intrigue. And in its highest forms, glass is among the most beautiful manmade things, rightly deserving of a museum dedicated solely to its display.

Just such a place exists in Corning, New York, in a building designed to exhibit the world's most comprehensive glass collection. The Corning Museum of Glass, a private non-profit institution, opened in 1951 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Corning Glass Works. Today, the museum is a popular stop for tourists who come on their own or by the busload – nearly half a million visitors annually. In comparison to other tourist centers in the state, it ranks be-

# Art

you can see through

THE CORNING MUSEUM OF GLASS



hind only New York City and Niagara Falls for the volume of people it hosts each year.

The museum's collection of more than 27,000 artifacts ranges deep and wide. "Our aim is to cover the art and history of glass in all periods," says Jane Shadel Spillman, who heads the curatorial staff. While recent effort has focused on obtaining more contemporary glass, tiny gaps in the historical collection are always being filled. "There's not much doubt now that we have the best,

most comprehensive collection in the world," she says. "There are other museums that may have stronger specific sections, but we have the strongest overall collection."

The 1980 building that houses the glass, designed by architect Gunnar Birkerts, contains seven well-stocked galleries. Visitors proceed up a ramp to the museum, where a single corridor winds through. At regular intervals the corridor is punctuated with lighted kiosks, each one containing a masterpiece that captures a key moment in the history of glass. They include a rare Egyptian figurine, Roman cage cup, Venetian enameled bowl, Chinese carved vase, and English cameo plate.

The pieces are organized chronologically, beginning with prehistory and continuing to the present. Organizers have created a three-tiered display suited equally to the browser, the scholar, or anyone in-between. The historical narrative begins with obsid-

ian, a glasslike rock formed over 40 million years ago by volcanic eruptions. From this hard material Stone Age man chipped tools and weapons. Crude beads represent the earliest manmade glass; then came core-formed vessels made in present-day Iraq about 3,500 years ago. They were created by first coating a clay-and-animal dung core with molten glass, then scraping out the core after the piece cooled. One of the earliest appearances of glass in architecture was at Choga Zanbil, a ziggurat built about 1250 B.C. Its temple was lavishly decorated with glass buttons and rods.

Around the time of Jesus, glassmakers in the Middle East discovered they could form objects by inflating molten glass gathered on the end of a tube. Glassblowing was invented. Vessels could be made so economically that, according to the exhibit, "The impact of affordable glass on daily life in the Roman Empire was as great as the impact of the Mason jar on life in America in the 19th century." Glass began to be used for lighting devices and was valued as a food

container, because it was transparent, reusable, odorless, and left no aftertaste. Interiors of Roman villas often were decorated with mosaics, glass facings, and inlays. Glass was cut in panels to imitate stones such as jasper and marble.

During Medieval times, colored glass windows illustrating Bible stories began appearing in churches, not simply as decoration but as teaching tools. Few parishioners could read. Venice evolved as a glass center because of its strategic location for trade between Europe and Islam. In the late 1200s, the city's glass industry moved to the island of Murano to avoid the risk of fire and to provide a place where formulas could be developed in secrecy. To protect the monopoly, glassmakers were forbidden to emigrate under threat of death. Many did, however, and spread their knowledge throughout Europe. Not until 1612, however, was the first book on glassmaking published.

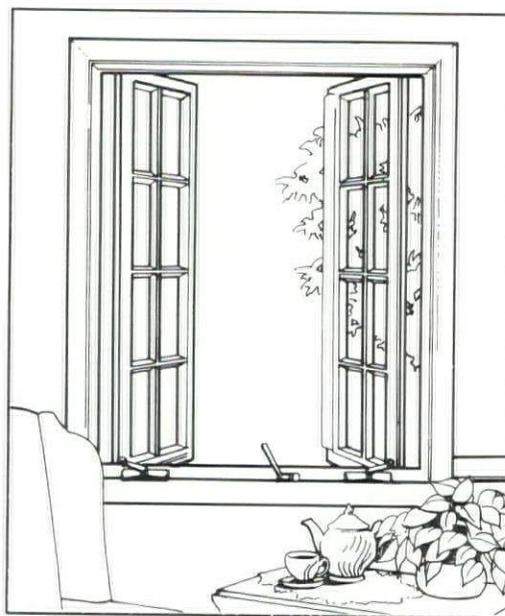


Museum includes Egyptian figure from 15th century B.C. and modern art glass such as Jay Musler's "Cityscape" (facing page). Window by Louis Tiffany, c. 1990 (above).

By the early 19th century, candlesticks, snuff bottles, whale oil lamps, and commemorative glasses came into wide production. Curiosities such as the "glass armonica," a concert instrument made of glass bells nested horizontally along a metal shaft, began to appear. Social manners exerted their own influence on glassmaking. As inexpensive paper became available in the mid-19th century, letter writing flourished. Glass paperweights, a new desk accessory, were made by the thousands in Europe and America. By the turn of the century, Louis Comfort Tiffany was designing leaded glass windows for wealthy patrons. And the budding Art Nouveau movement - created by artists who were seeking an alternative to the impersonality of

(continued on page 26)

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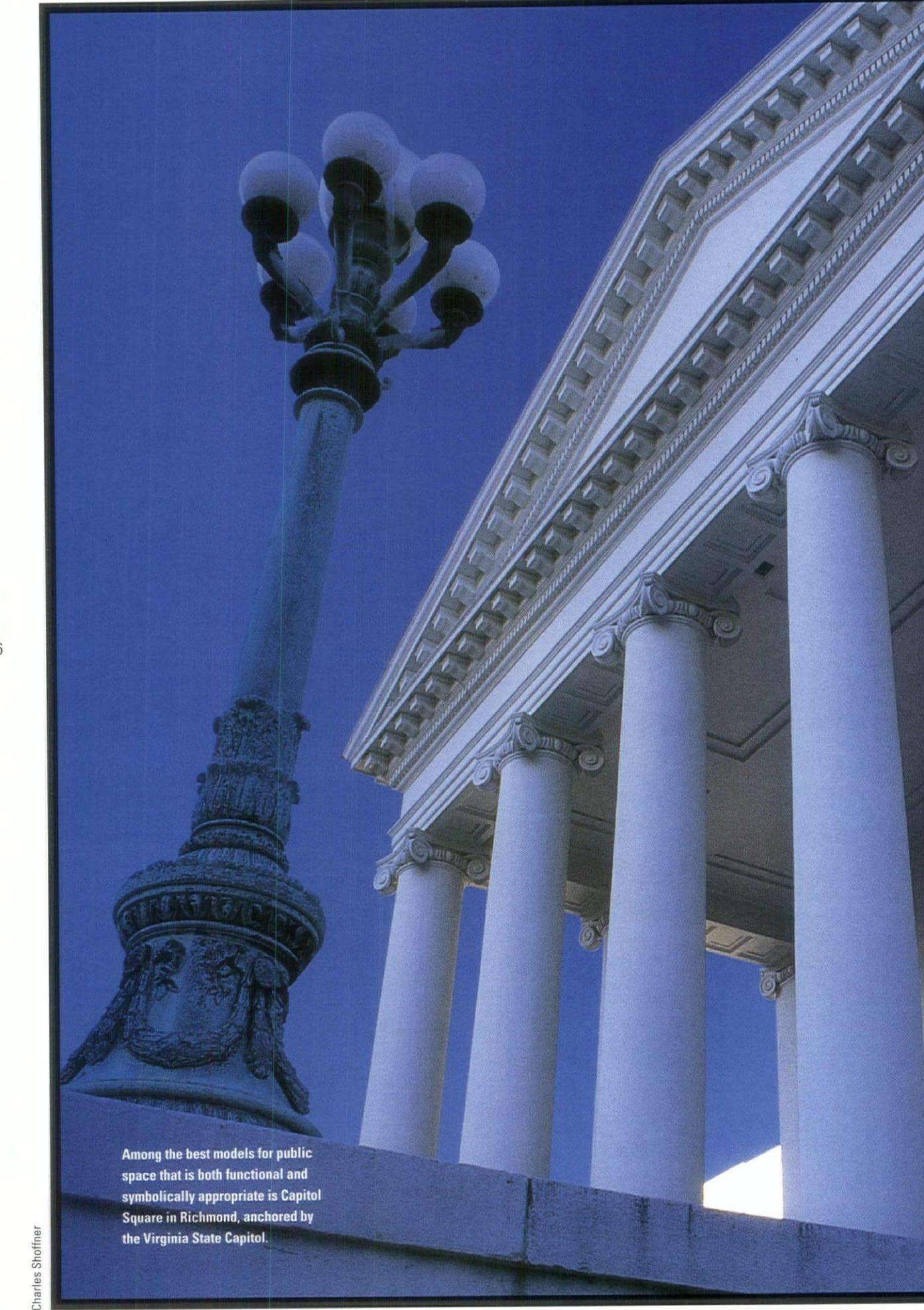
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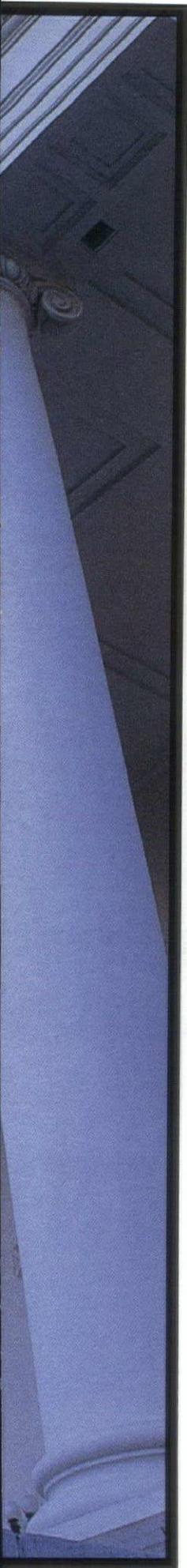
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# PUB IN THE INTEREST LIC

**Virginia  
cities are  
revitalizing  
themselves  
with new  
buildings  
that create  
public space.**

17

*By Edwin Slipek, Jr.*

Last spring, officials in James City County and the City of Williamsburg jointly announced two design competitions: one for a master plan outlining a new town center and another for a new courthouse to be built as the dominant landmark in the 10-acre site. Enthusiastic inquiries poured into the historic Virginia community from architects and planners in Europe, South America, Asia, and Canada, as well as the United States.

What sparked the wide response? Perhaps it was the challenge to link Virginia's long planning and architectural tradition with the 21st century. The colonial capitol dates back to the late 1600s and restoration since the 1920s has revalidated the classic town plan. Its axial vistas are anchored by grand public buildings, which in turn are linked by smaller domestic and commercial structures. Even today, what impresses visitors are Williamsburg's cohesive public spaces and the sense of grandeur and authority they inspire. Without stopping to ponder it, visitors somehow know that the colonial capitol's ordered system of grassy malls, intimate gardens, and pedestrian-friendly streets also convey messages about the social hierarchy of colonial society and the boundaries between public and private space.

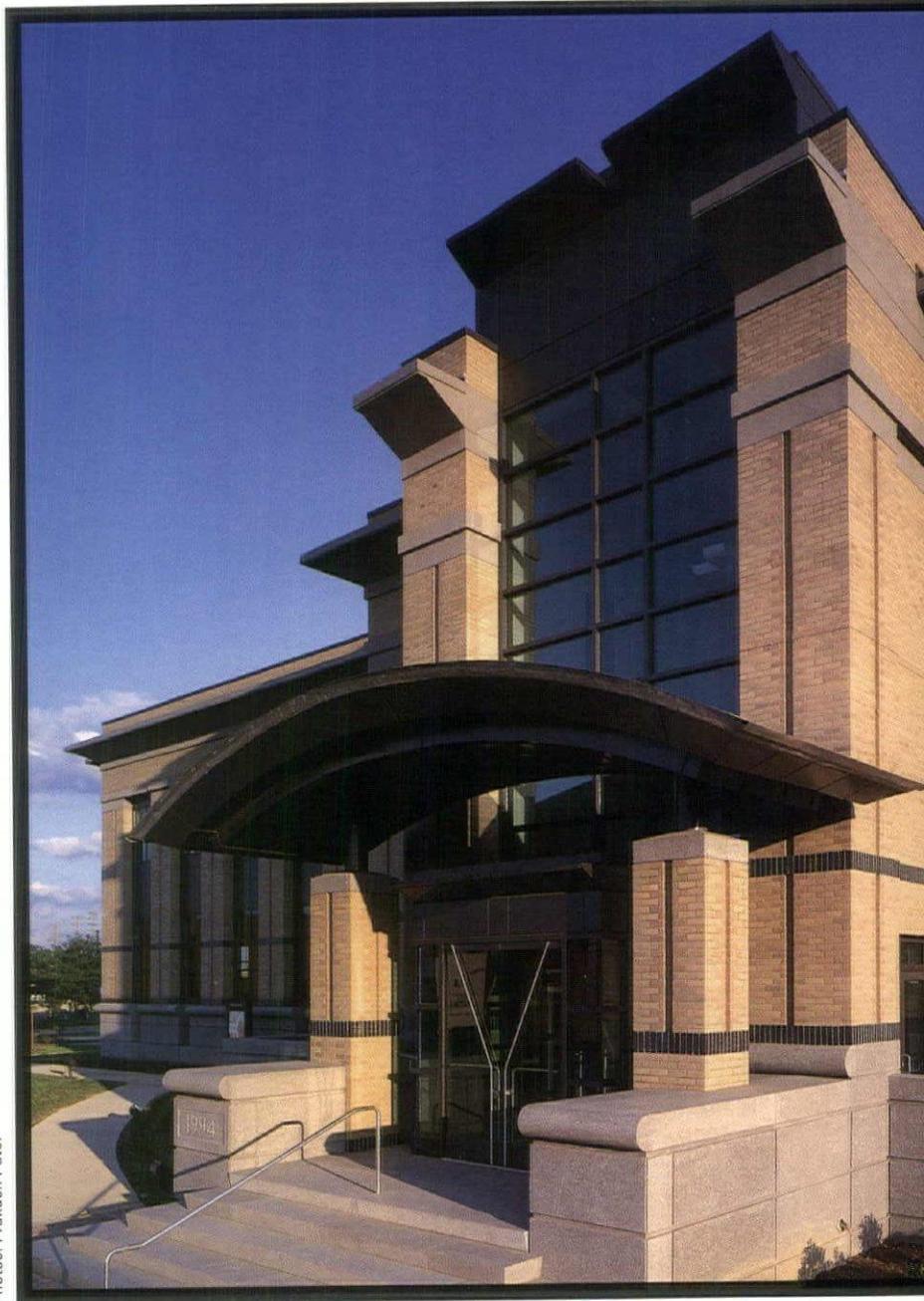
The broad interest in the Williamsburg competitions also may evidence a fascination with highly-publicized communities such as Seaside, Florida, or Haymount, Virginia. In these projects, planners have carefully mixed traditional town layouts with contemporary buildings to create a unified sense of place.

"Periodically, America reinvents itself, simultaneously rediscovering the best of its past and marrying it to irresistible forces for change," writes Peter Calthorpe in *The Next American Metropolis*, a widely heralded treatise on neo-traditional town planning. "I believe that time is now."

Calthorpe is among a group of architects and planners nationwide advocating the "New Urbanism." The concept is the antithesis of urban sprawl. It emphasizes higher concentrations of houses and businesses, it argues against automobile dependence, and it favors the renewal of public amenities such as sidewalks, grid-patterned streets, neighborhood parks, and gathering spaces for community events.

"What most distinguishes the neighborhoods proposed by the New Urbanists is the importance accorded to public spaces like greens, plazas, and parks," writes Todd W. Bressi in *The New Urbanism*. "Like traditional town commons or courthouse squares, these spaces are regarded as the civic focus for neighborhoods. Community facilities are assigned special positions adjacent to

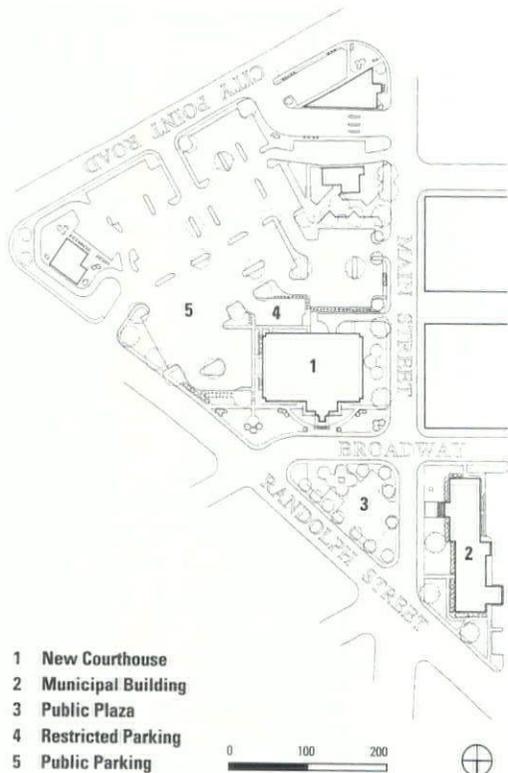
Photos: Prakash Patel



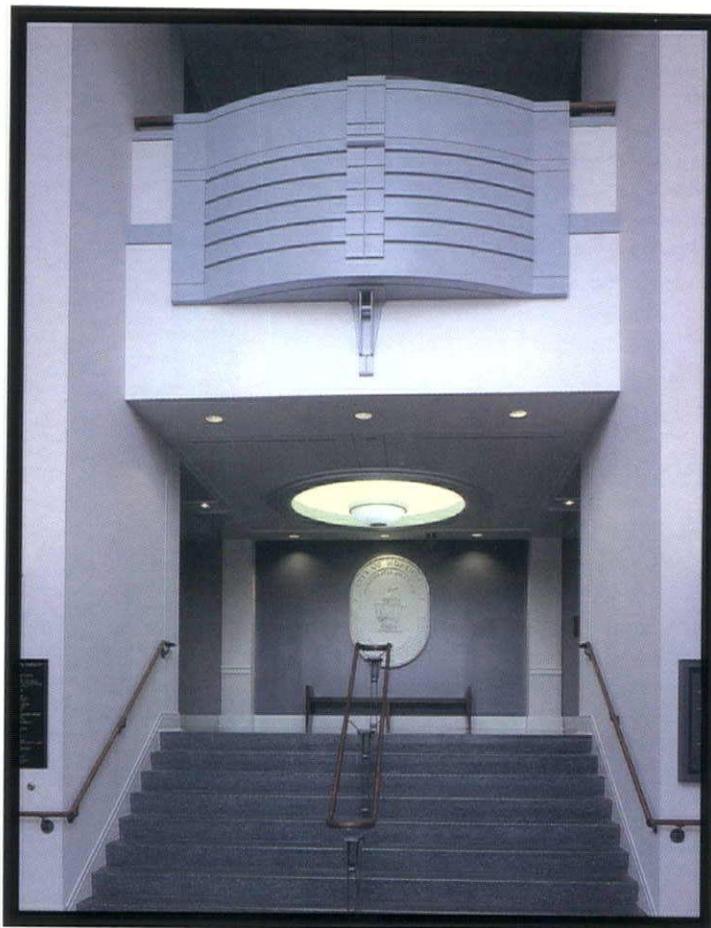
Talk about contextual design is fine – so long as there's some context to respond to. But the Moseley McClintock Group of Richmond had little existing fabric to use as inspiration in designing a new courts building for the City of Hopewell. This gritty industrial city south of Richmond had long since carried out a zealous urban renewal program that removed many vestiges of its industrial and social history.

But once the decision was made to place the new courts center downtown at the three-way junction of Randolph, Main, and Broadway, it became clear that a nearby municipal building – built in 1925 and detailed in a thin veil of classicism – would provide the primary cues for the scale, massing, and color of the new courts building. The 51,000-square-foot facility is an updated classical, brown-brick box with a





- 1 New Courthouse
- 2 Municipal Building
- 3 Public Plaza
- 4 Restricted Parking
- 5 Public Parking



The main entrance opens into a two-story lobby, where stairs lead to the first-floor courtrooms (above). Hopewell's new courts building and 1925 municipal offices define two sides of a triangular plaza (drawing).

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# COURT

Hopewell Courts Building

# ORDER



A sweeping metal canopy draws visitors toward the building entrance (above left). Inside, courtrooms are well-lighted and detailed with cherry casework (left).

slight setback from the street. Large precast concrete panels at the ground level give the building a civic scale, with hints of higher architectural ambition in its stylized frieze, exaggerated cornice, and modified attic order. The entrance bay is more flamboyant – like an oversized floor-model radio combining classical and Arts and Crafts motifs. Parking is wisely relegated to the rear.

The construction of the courts building on the edge of a triangular plaza across the street gives definition and stature to this important intersection. The solution is a major stride in healing a badly scarred urban landscape and strengthening the center of town.

these spaces, underscoring the importance both the institution and the public space play in community life.” Rather than being a revolutionary movement, this strain of thought is a reaction by architects and urban designers against the changes in community planning that took place in the post-World War II years.

Planning policies that gained popularity at mid-century tended to isolate land uses, rather than integrate them. Schools were yanked from neighborhoods, retail stores moved to shopping centers, and complexes of civic buildings were built outside of town centers. Traditional public space, or commons, lost its identity. Calthorpe addresses this very point: “Rather than isolated or residual spaces, the commons should be brought back to the center of our communities and re-integrated into our daily commercial life. Public spaces should provide the fundamental order of our communities.”

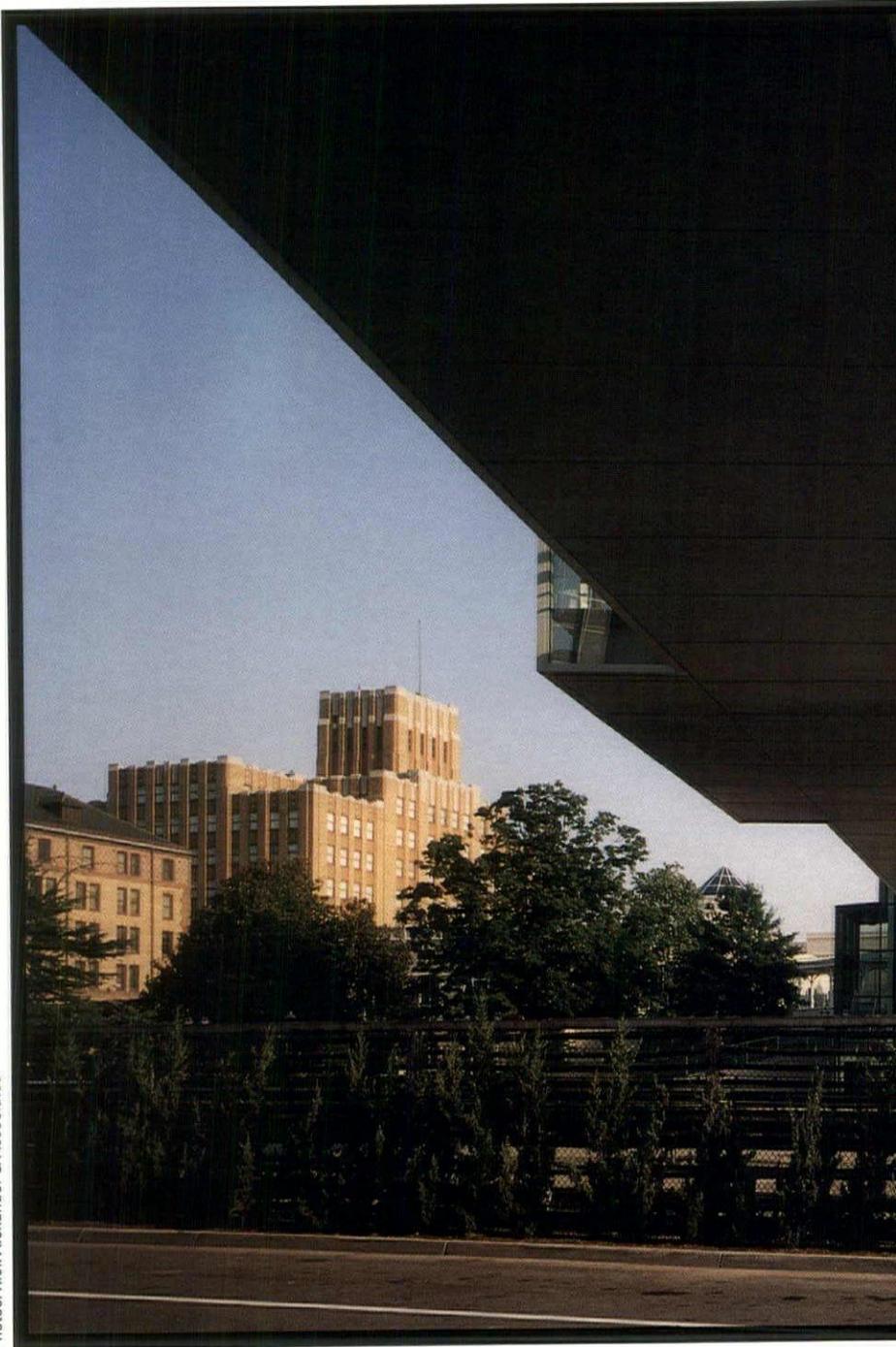
In the wake of such discussions, public space is making a comeback in American town planning. And the effort to create a new civic center for Williamsburg is part of that trend. The germ of the idea for the Williamsburg competitions began with a headline – “Where is Our Downtown?” – that Robert Magoon saw in a local newspaper. He took the question to mean, where could Williamsburg’s citizens go to feel a sense of community?

“Historic Williamsburg is our heart and soul,” says Magoon, principal of Magoon & Associates architects and a member of the James City County Board of Supervisors. But the tourist-filled Duke of Gloucester Street “is not our everyday situation,” says Magoon.

For Williamsburg and neighboring James City County, the forces of change took two forms. First was a court order calling for the replacement of an outmoded judicial building. The second was the availability of a privately-owned 600-acre tract near town for commercial, industrial, and institutional development. Civic leaders wondered aloud: Why not make the proposed 70,000-square-foot courts facility a prominent feature of the development?

“We saw this as becoming our downtown, the hub of activity to

Photos: Rick Alexander & Associates



Roanoke is a mountain city that railroads built. But what has long been problematic is how its downtown is split in two by a broad expanse of train tracks. Until recently, that is, when the city completed a dramatic 363-foot-long pedestrian bridge that links the heart and soul of the city. The heart: Roanoke’s downtown, now energized by a popular marketplace. The soul: the landmark Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center, recently restored to its original 1920s splendor and expanded to house larger conventions.

Previously, the only way for people to walk between the hotel-on-the-hill and downtown was at grade level by a tricky route across the tracks and busy downtown streets. Despite the dangers, Roanokers feared a bridge might obscure the hotel’s prominent skyline profile.

“The view of the hotel from downtown is near and dear to the people of Roanoke, so we wanted the bridge to disappear – to be as open as is could be,” explains Dave Hammond, an architect at Hayes Seay Mattern & Mattern of Roanoke. While the bridge is more of its era



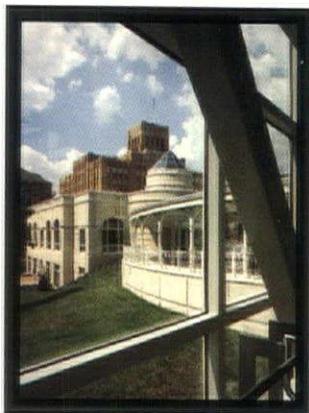
Crossing the tracks is now a straight – and safe – shot across the glass-enclosed bridge (above). The impressive span widens at the mid-point, where trains pass beneath it (left).

# SKYWAY

Roanoke Pedestrian Walk

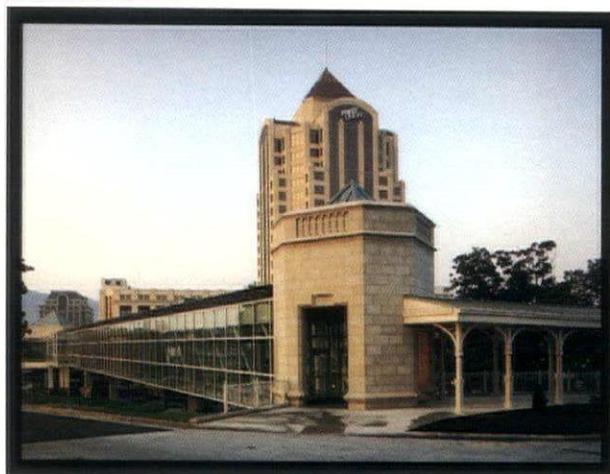
# SPAN

21



than the Tudor-styled hotel, Hammond says the firm strove for a sympathetic design. Security issues were important, as well. "Even the stair towers are glass. There is a real sense of security both day and night." Perhaps the architects' biggest challenge was deciding where to place the bridge's supporting piers. Wanting to achieve the longest expanse possible meant working the supports into a crazy-quilt of real estate. But with the bridge's completion, vital parts of the city are now woven together.

Open steel trusses leave ample room for views of city landmarks (above). When approaching from the hotel, pedestrians enter the skyway bridge through a small pavilion (right).



create a critical mass," says Magoon. "It will be a coherent town center to serve the functional needs of the 21st century population." A competition was seen as a way to attract the best ideas available. And although the development will be built in a rural but increasingly suburban setting, local officials looked no further than the nearby colonial town for inspiration.

"We were looking for an urban design," says John Horne, James City County's development manager and the competitions' staff coordinator. "The inclusion of public space was a requirement."

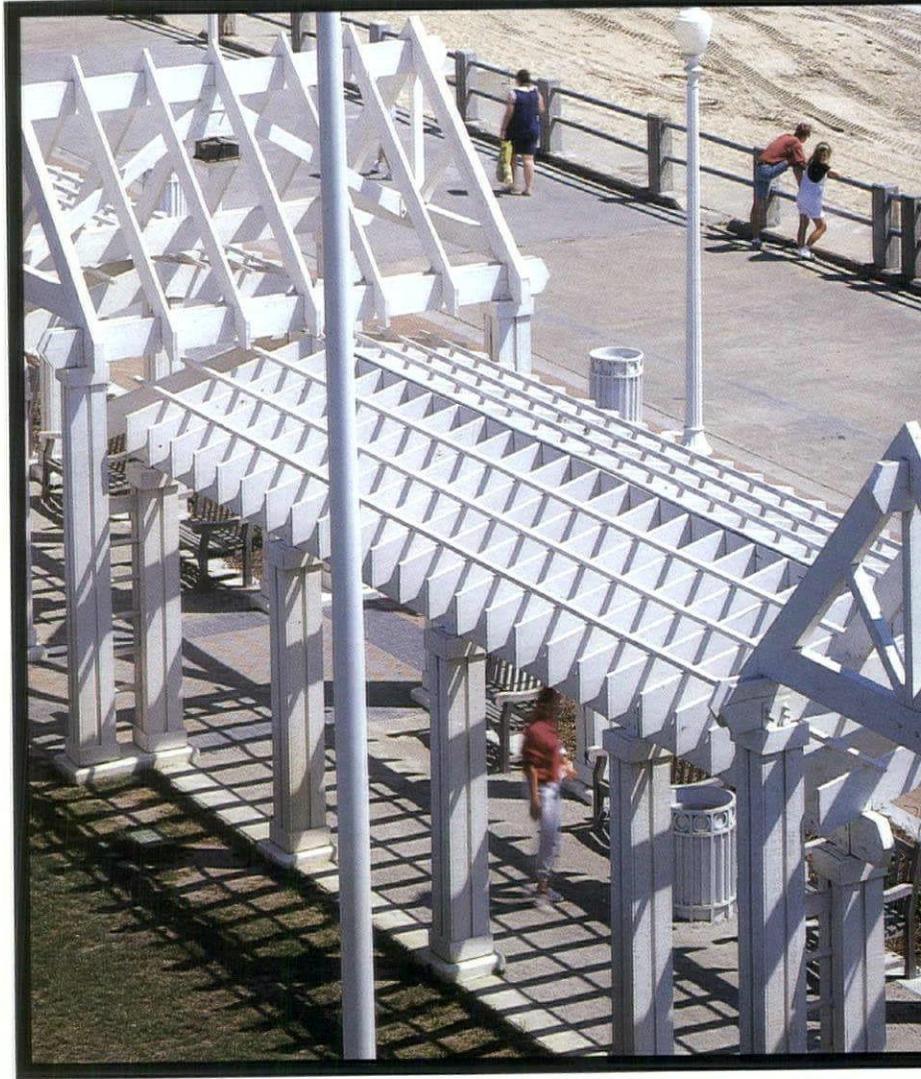
By late November, two juries including nationally known figures in the design community – from critic Benjamin Forgey of *The Washington Post* to architect Ralph Johnson of the Chicago firm Perkins & Will – had whittled some 200 proposals down to four finalists in each category. The courthouse finalists were shown the short-listed town planning schemes so that they could refine their designs with the larger scale in mind. The winners will be named in late January.

Few American communities can boast Williamsburg's rare combination of a vital 300-year-old town plan and the opportunity to establish an entirely new urban center. But increasingly the American public seems to have the desire – and in some cases the urgent social and economic need – to make sense of long-neglected and misunderstood urban and suburban centers. As the outdoor spaces of New York's celebrated Battery Park City proved, there are always opportunities to create new public spaces.

Recently, both in small burghs and big-city downtowns, new courthouses, libraries, municipal buildings, and parks are creating dynamic new public spaces while mending an often-frayed urban fabric. The Williamsburg initiative is unusual because it is seeking solutions for overlapping private and public projects. But local, state, and federal funds are often providing the financial push behind these initiatives.

"Government says it's downsizing," says Sanford Bond, an architect with the Richmond firm of Bond, Comet, Westmoreland + Hiner. "But currently there are more court cases that require more prisons and courthouses or replacements for old facil-

Photos: Philip Beaurline



# SEASIDE

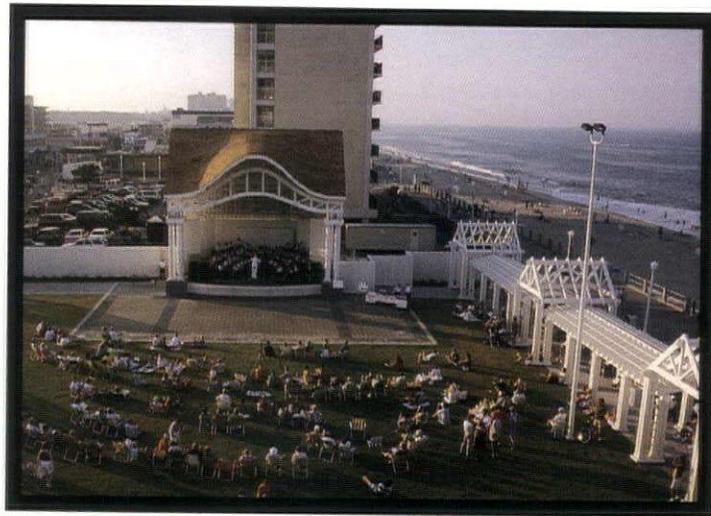
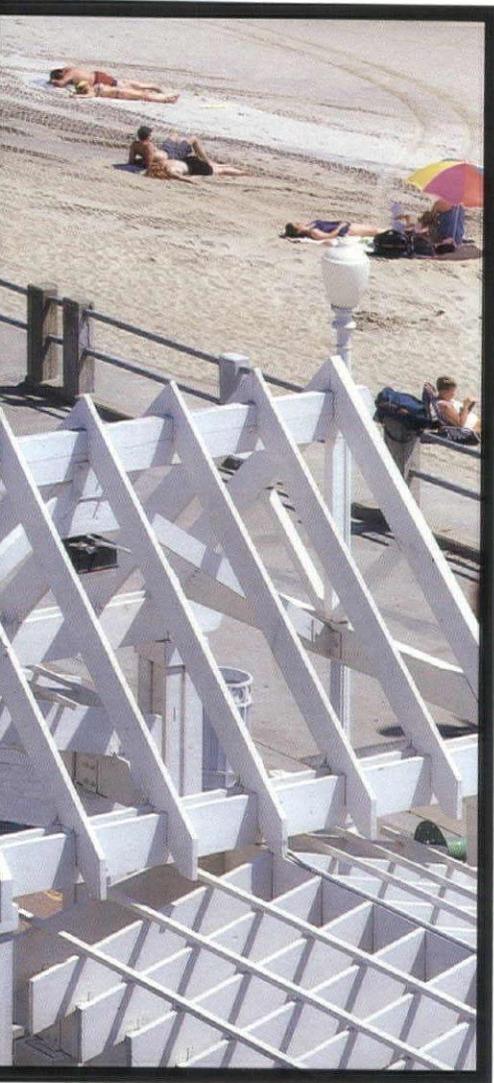
Virginia Beach 24th Street Park

# SQUARE

In Virginia Beach, when planners and concerned citizens began looking for ways to upgrade the resort area, they realized that public open spaces on the oceanfront had all but vanished as a result of runaway hotel development. The exception was one

large parcel of open space at near a historic Coast Guard station which the city had converted into a lifesaving museum.

"The project was fairly complex," says Sydney Knight of Van Yahres Associates, the Charlottesville landscape architecture firm



**A white-painted arbor lines the boardwalk along the beachfront and provides rare patches of shade (left). Now the city has a fitting place to stage concerts for the enjoyment of residents and tourists alike (above).**



hired to develop a park plan. "The space had to be compatible for one or two people strolling through or for hundreds attending a concert. It had to offer some shade, have restrooms, and the perimeter had to be controlled. And we didn't want to block the view to the ocean. It was the symbolic gateway to the ocean."

Today, Knight says city officials call the 24th Street Park with its exuberant bandshell and crisp trellises the crowning jewel of a comprehensive \$36 million resort revitalization program. The new park space makes gentle reference to the long-vanished Victorian resort architecture which once lined the beachfront and offers a respite from glitzy Atlantic Avenue.



**The park's focus is a bandshell (above) equipped with the technology to support a wide range of performances. Its design is a variation on the theme of the adjacent lifesaving museum (drawing).**

ities. We live in an increasingly regulatory environment. And many of the public buildings built during the last wave of Baby Boomers in the '50s or '60s – or even from the Depression – are outdated. So I expect more libraries, more firehouses, more of everything as we look to government to provide more services.”

In many communities, new projects are attempting to return civility, texture, and a sense of place to streetscapes, landscapes, and even seascapes. “It’s a case of government learning what private developers already know,” says Joel Garreau, senior fellow at the Institute of Public Policy at George Mason University and author of *Edge Cities*, a 1991 book that examined suburban America’s development as a new focus for commercial activity. “This is the squishy stuff. If everything else is equal, then the big question is: Is this ever going to be a good place for me to be old, or a good place for my child to be young? Can I imagine a Fourth of July parade here?”

Kent Cooper, principal of Cooper Lecky Architects in Washington, D.C., agrees: “In this society which is so mobile, people are looking for familiar roots. People are looking for a small town feeling. They are fierce about making that happen, but they don’t necessarily know how to make that happen.”

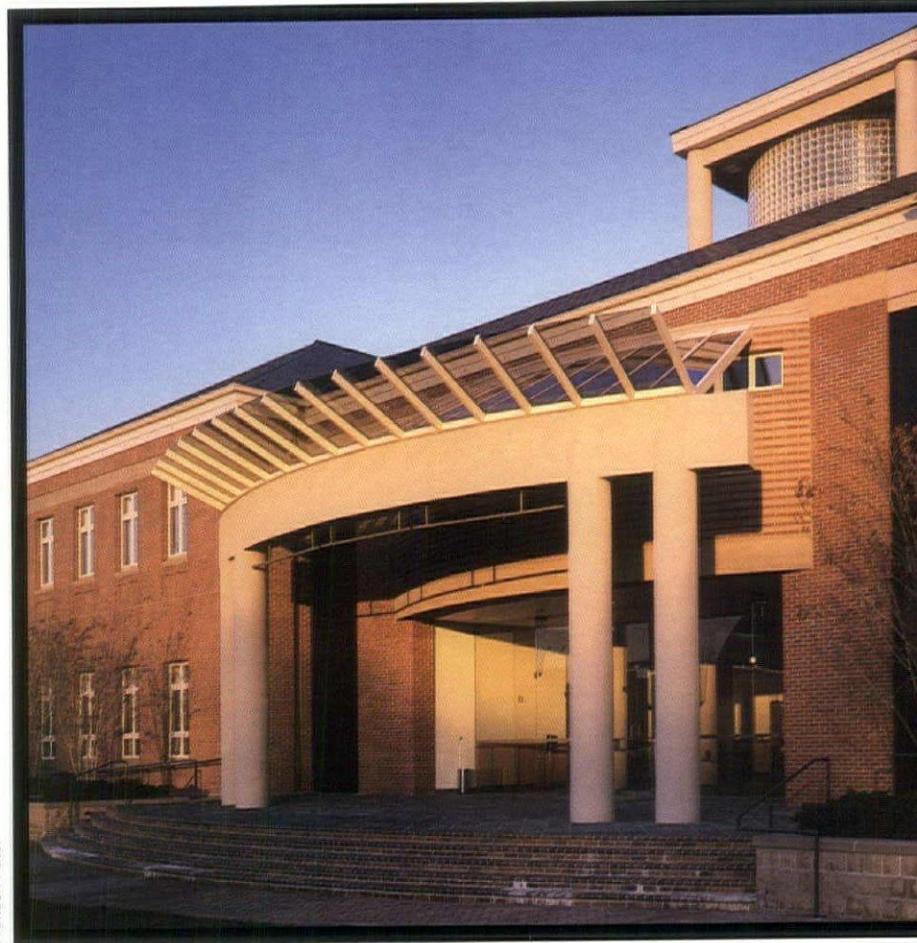
Magoon says one of the reasons he has taken the Williamsburg/James City County project as a mission is that he doesn’t think his community has achieved excellence in public building design. “We have to look in the mirror. Have we done the job we can do?” Putting on his professional cap, Magoon adds, “We as architects are not without fault either as designers or as advocates of good design.” Architects, he says, tend not to put themselves in positions to be effective advocates.

Only time will tell if the Williamsburg competitions will bear the anticipated fruit. But a glance at a range of diverse projects across Virginia reveals that a number of communities are striving to develop significant civic structures, spaces, and pedestrian connections that, in the final analysis, will make them better places to live. ■

The town of Herndon wanted desperately to put some identity into its town center, a nondescript crossroads that has become engulfed by rapidly developing Arlington County. An ambitious town complex, some of which remains to be completed, will give the community a much-needed dose of civic identity. While its traditionally styled municipal center serves the public by day, its curved portico becomes a band-

stand at night. Concert goers gather in the summer on a new town green built atop an underground parking garage.

Cooper Lecky Architects of Washington, D.C., had been working on a master redevelopment plan with Herndon for a decade when the town decided to construct a new municipal center as the hook to bring new life into the economically depressed downtown. The municipal center, which borders

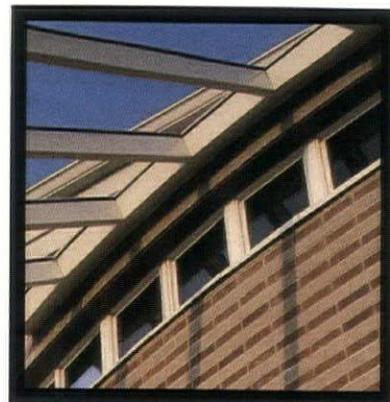


The building's distinctive portico (above) bounces sound outward when used as a bandstand. Local residents already have shown their enthusiasm for the new gathering space (right).



the town green, built on the site of a former parking lot, formed the heart of the redevelopment plan. "We wanted to give the town a sense of place," says architect Kent Cooper. "The design of the building was dictated to be in the stylistic vocabulary of the town hall nearby. The earlier building has a hipped roof with white-trimmed, sash windows in the Williamsburg tradition. So the new building respects both innovation and

tradition." A county library by Hughes Group Architects occupies an adjacent site and Cooper Lecky has designed new council chambers, now being built on the subterranean parking level. The chambers will also be accessible through a glass pavilion. For the area ultimately to work, Cooper says, it must be ringed with additional commercial development. "We're trying very hard to get something going there."



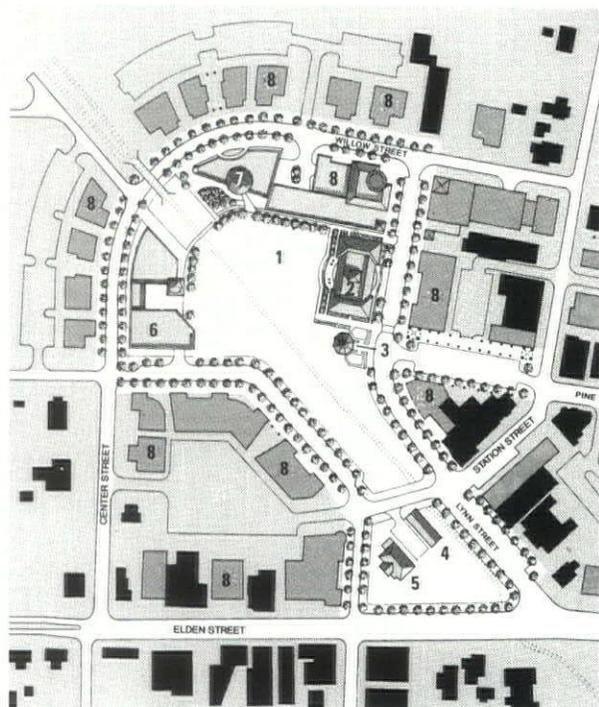
Melanie Davis



# HERNDON

Herndon Municipal Building

# TOWN



Site Plan

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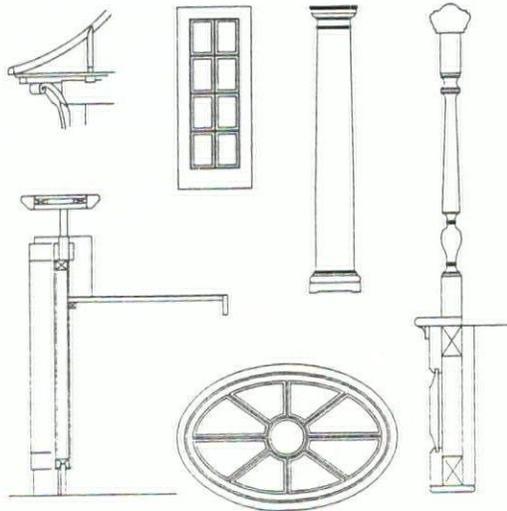


- 1 Town Green
- 2 Municipal Building
- 3 Council Chambers
- 4 Old Train Station/Museum
- 5 Town Hall
- 6 Proposed Art Center
- 7 County Library
- 8 Proposed Retail/Office Buildings

The new town green makes a public asset out of a former surface parking lot (drawing). A striped brick pattern enlivens the wall behind the portico glass (top right).

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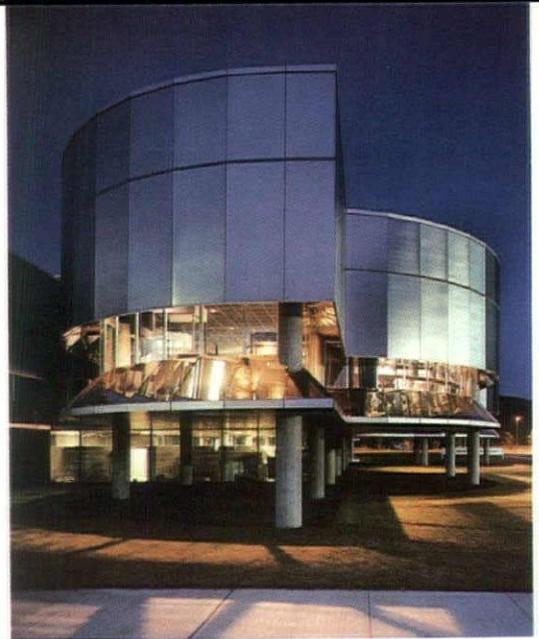
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Courtesy Corning Museum of Glass

A unique arrangement of mirrors reflects daylight into the galleries of the Corning Museum, designed by Gunnar Birkerts.

(continued from page 15)

mass-produced goods – gave new expression to glass, which lent itself to organic forms. But interest in mass-production was kept alive by Modern architects such as Josef Hoffman and Adolf Loos. Corporate self-promotion is largely absent from the Corning Museum, but the ubiquitous 1926 “Roaster with Pyrex Cover” does appear alongside other 20th century glass. At that point, the exhibit makes a clean jump from functional glass to art, including an impressive range of large-scale studio works.

After touring the museum, visitors may want to explore other aspects of the Corning Glass Center. An adjacent wing is dedicated to the Hall of Science and Industry, whose demonstrations range from clever interactive exhibits on fiber optics to rather tired displays of glass products, including Corning Ware and car headlights. Far more interesting is the Steuben Factory. Founded in 1903 by English glassmaker Frederick Carder, Steuben was bought by Corning in 1918 and directed to produce high-quality crystal. Here, where all Steuben glass is made, visitors are accommodated in a well-positioned gallery. The constant roar of the furnaces nearly drowns out the prerecorded video presentation shown on TV monitors. But the better show is on the production floor, where teams of craftsmen move silently through a well-timed routine to build molten glass forms, then shape and trim them.

A visit to the area would be incomplete without a stroll along Corning’s historic Market Street, a five-block stretch of 19th century commercial buildings with shops and restaurants. Steps away is the Rockwell Museum, which boasts a premier collection of American Western paintings and sculptures, including works by Frederic Remington, Charles M. Russell, and Albert Bierstadt. The Rockwell also owns more than 2,000 pieces of Steuben glass – which is not altogether surprising. For, in this town, glass is king.

### ■ Getting There

The Corning Glass Center is in Corning, New York, along the southern tier of the Finger Lakes. By car, take New York Route 17. Airlines serve nearby Elmira/Corning Airport. Information: 607-974-8271.

### ■ Getting In

The center is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Steuben factory may not be operating on weekends. Admission is \$7.00 for adults; \$6.00 for youths age 6-17; under 6 free. Family maximum rate is \$16.00.

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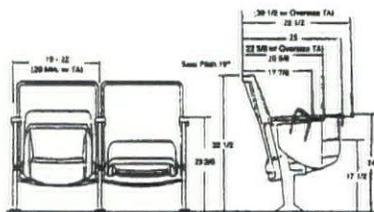
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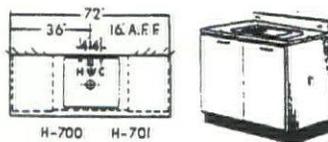
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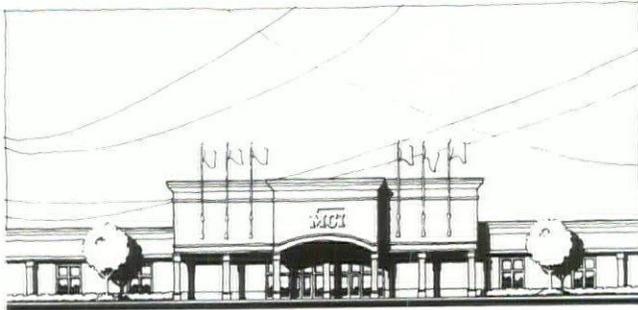
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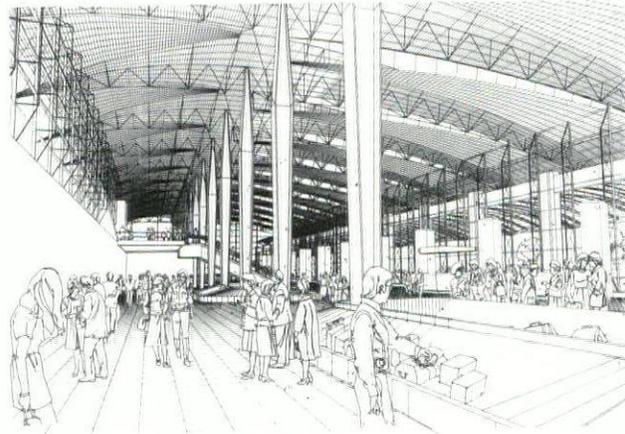
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**Architect:** Williams Tazewell & Associates, Norfolk  
**Project:** MCI Calling Center

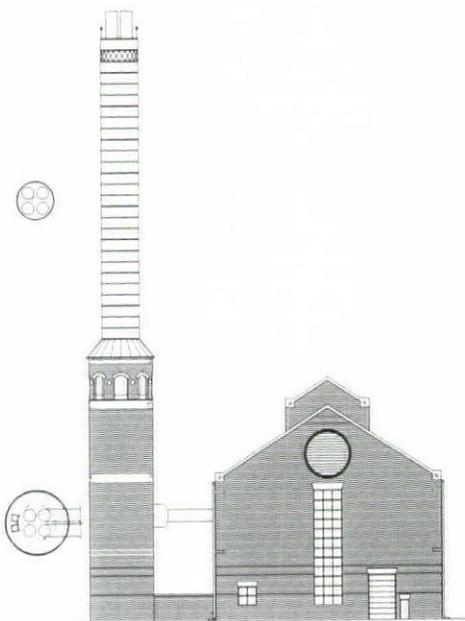
This 80,000-square-foot calling center in Newport News will exist in a fully renovated single-story former retail space. The interior displays colored sails, columned walkways, and suspended televisions to break up the large space. 804-623-6621.



**Architect:** HNTB Corporation, Alexandria  
**Project:** Shreveport Regional Airport Renovation

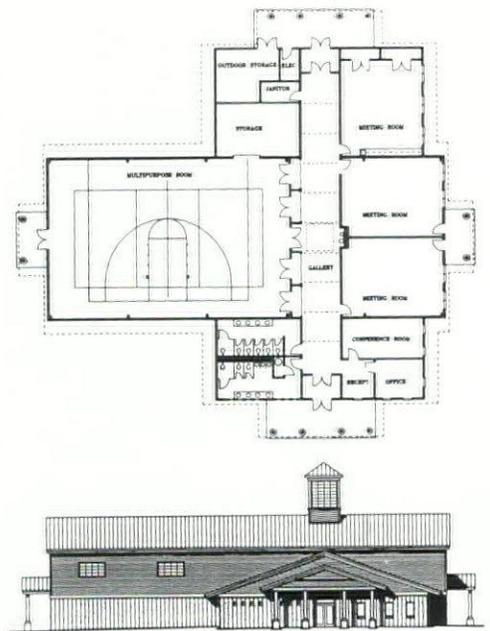
Design of a 64,000-square-foot terminal is the focus of an airport renovation and expansion in Shreveport, Louisiana. The innovative winglike roof form encloses ticketing and baggage claim functions while serving as the gateway to and from the Shreveport region. 703-684-2700.

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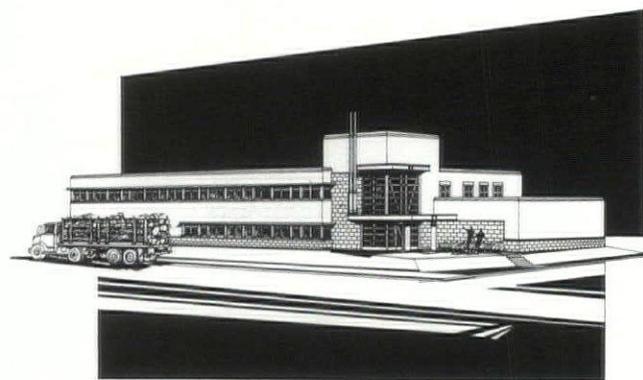
**Architect:** Marcellus Wright Cox & Smith Architects, P.C., Richmond  
**Project:** MCV-VCU Steam Plant

This facility houses natural gas-fired boilers which provide heating steam for the MCV-VCU campus, and Commonwealth of Virginia Seat of Government buildings. Primary materials are masonry, precast concrete, metal panels, and painted exposed steel for the canopy framing and stack enclosure. 804-780-9067.



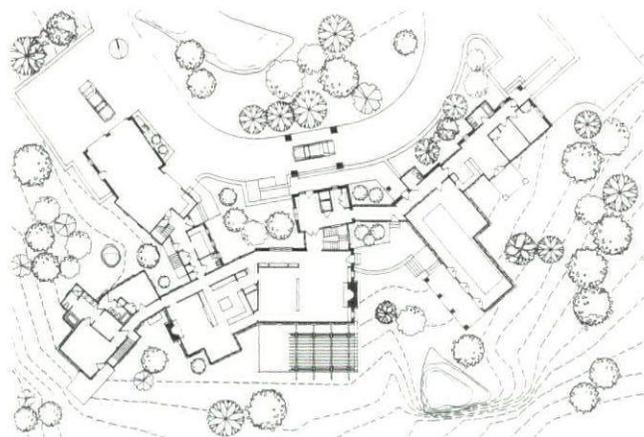
**Architect:** Fauber Architects, Forest  
**Project:** Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center

The project consists of a development of six buildings that form a natural resource center. Included in the complex are a multipurpose building (shown above), conference center, and lodges. The center will provide environmental education and awareness to the citizens of Virginia. 804-385-0495.



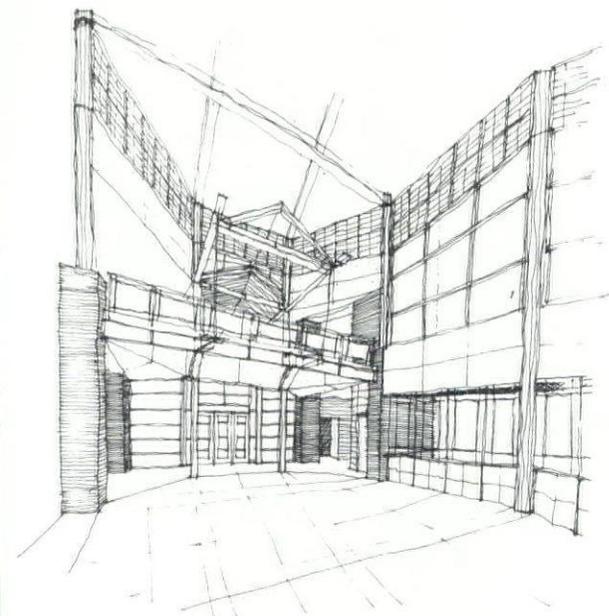
**Architect:** Rose Architects, Richmond  
**Project:** Weyerhaeuser Office Building

This 32,000-square-foot office building is the administrative heart of Weyerhaeuser's new engineered strand board plant in Heaters, West Virginia. The metal-paneled building contains control and monitoring equipment for the plant's production line. Construction was phased to ensure early start-up. 804-747-1305.



**Architect:** Reader & Swartz Architects, P.C., Winchester  
**Project:** Paris Mountain Residence

This 12,000-square-foot house in Loudoun County is a collection of vernacular saltbox and shed-roofed components. Its configuration allows the building to nestle in the rock outcroppings, while reducing the building mass and affording each room a different view. 540-665-0212.



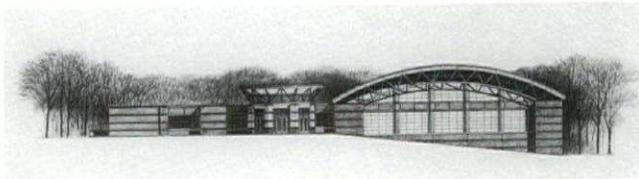
**Architect:** Bond Comet Westmoreland + Hiner Architects, Richmond  
**Project:** James City County-Williamsburg Recreation Center

The 40,000-square-foot addition and renovations will double the size of this community recreation facility. An expanded lobby aids security and ease of circulation. The addition includes a wellness facility, gymnasium, fitness area, community center, child care center, arts center, and offices. 804-788-4774.



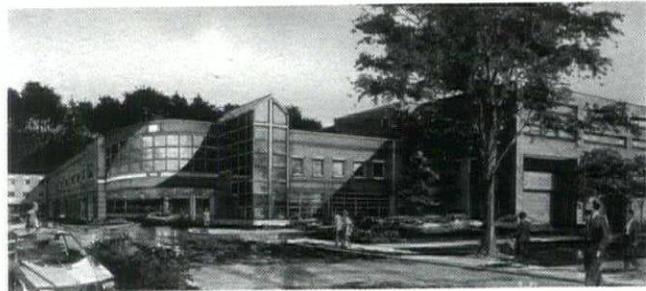
**Architect:** Pentecost, Deal & Associates, Inc., Norfolk  
**Project:** Chrysler Museum Education and Gallery Addition

A proposed two-story addition will enclose a small exterior courtyard and create expanded education space on the museum's first floor. The project also will introduce a new skylit sculpture gallery on the second floor, which will be accessible by a dramatic, monumental spiral stair. 804-466-8881.



**Architect:** Hughes Group Architects, Sterling  
**Project:** George Mason University Pool Facility

The university will receive its first neo-industrialist building with this physical education facility. The 66,000-square-foot building, which houses two pools, exercise and weight rooms, and support spaces, epitomizes the re-emergence of expressed structure and economy of detail. 703-437-6600.



**Architect:** Henningson, Durham & Richardson, Alexandria  
**Project:** Veterans Affairs Medical Center

An open courtyard with a shaded arcade provides central organization for this outpatient addition in San Juan, Puerto Rico. With 137,000-square-feet of new construction and 4,000-square-feet of renovation, the addition's exterior materials reflect the local Caribbean style architecture. 703-518-8500.

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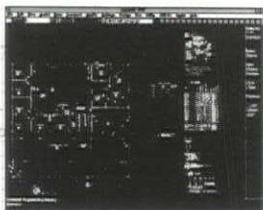
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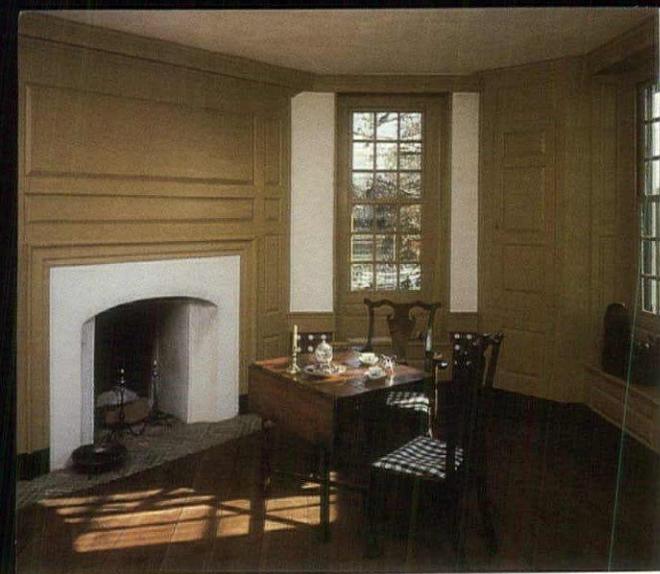
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**American Colonial: Puritan Simplicity to Georgian Grace.** By Wendell Garrett. 276 pp. Illustrated. New York: Monacelli Press. \$65.00 cloth.

Review by Douglas McCreary Greenwood

Books such as *American Colonial*—handsomely designed, well-proportioned, and beautifully printed—often are too expensive and too narrow in appeal to be best sellers. So why publish a gorgeous book like this? Maybe for the same reason that museums are mounting more of the smaller, tightly focused exhibitions of important works in their own collections—because they simply deserve to be seen.

The photographs that illuminate its pages are remarkable not only for their inherent beauty, but for the way they reveal the character of the subject matter. When Paul Rocheleau shoots interiors, you don't get the bland light or the ungainly perspective of an amateur. Rather, you get striking images that reveal many things: cracks in the wall at the Hennage collection in Williamsburg; rutted surfaces in the parlor walls at Poplar Hall, near Dover, Delaware; the lavish harmonies of light in the Chinese hall at Mount Cuba outside Wilmington, Delaware; and the refulgent summer light streaming through 18-paned windows at Hamilton House in South Berwick, Maine.

And this says nothing of the fabulous objects within these venerable interiors—highboys from Newport; stately pencil-post beds carved from New England maple; shimmering 18th century English salt-glazed stoneware; a set of Irish pewter haystack measures; plates and porringers; folk art

## Remembrance of Things Past

paintings, silhouettes, and Philadelphia tea services. All will catch the eye of anyone who likes antiques, especially one who really knows about them.

Wendell Garrett is such a man. As the longtime editor of *The Magazine Antiques* and now senior vice president for American decorative arts at Sotheby's in New York, Garrett is a fine writer. This latest book of his—the completion of a trilogy that includes other books on Federal and Victorian architecture—reinforces his reputation as an accomplished student of early American decorative arts and the forces that shaped American art, architecture, and crafts.

Garrett magisterially unfolds his theme, ranging from Puritan simplicity to Georgian grace. If the word *grace* seems hopelessly lost in the Postmodern, high-tech, violent decade of the 1990s, perhaps it is through a careful understanding of not only our past, but of those objects and ideas which survived the ravages of time, that we can somehow restore that lost grace. It is this concept which inheres in—and informs—colonial art and architecture.



Philadelphia craftsmen most likely made the exquisite desk-and-bookcase at Mount Cuba (above). Furnishings in the Peter Wentz Farmstead (top) include a 1750 walnut table.

Garrett is onto something here, something that is both restorative and civilizing, like the balanced rhythms of Alexander Pope's rhymed couplets. Inside and out, the architecture and decorative pieces in *American Colonial* suggest something very promising about the rudiments of the American character. But they don't exclude what some of the early Puritans feared—namely that left to his own devices, man will somehow manage to mess things up. The simplicity of Hamilton House, for example, with its classically proportioned exterior and ruggedly handsome interior, belies the fact that its first owner, Col. Jonathan Hamilton, who rose from obscurity to prominence as one of New England's most prosperous merchants, exported huge stores of native timber and imported rum, molasses, and slaves from the West Indies. But Garrett avoids the politically correct posturing that some historians have adopted as their *modus operandi*. He simply lays out the facts for what they are, with no apologies.

Garrett has done his homework and shows. He recounts in lucid detail the journey of a remarkably varied people groping for their own identity, well aware of their cultural debts to Europe, striving mightily to preserve the possibilities freedom holds out. Garrett sees these impulses clearly and powerfully made real in the houses they built, the furniture and utensils they crafted, the gardens they tilled. "The differences among the colonies were far less important than the similarities that made American culture different from that of England and Europe," he writes. "At mid-century the 13 colonies were approaching maturity and asserting themselves with enormous vigor, clarity and self-assurance. That maturity crystallized in the self-conscious national self-realization that flowered in the [1750s] and [1760s]—a growing sense of the potential power and grandeur of the America of the future."

That grandeur was nowhere more evident than in Chesapeake society. Garrett writes, whose golden era was manifested in the Georgian mansions of the Tidewater. These houses were not only symbols of wealth and social authority, but they were intellectual statements—"conscious testimony that the colony's leaders were abreast of the latest European ideas." Putting even familiar things in perspective

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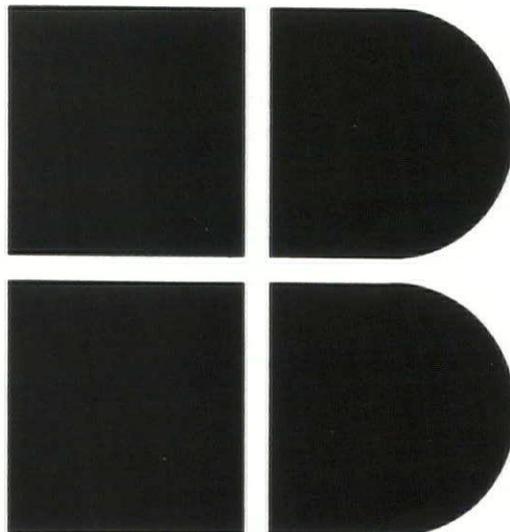
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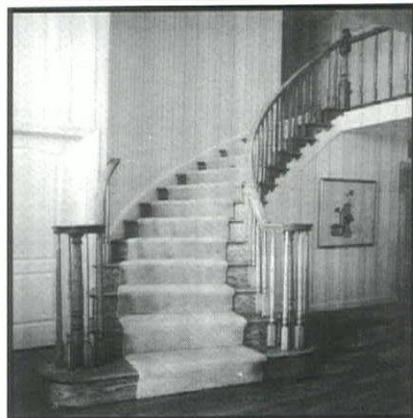


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Garrett tells us that Williamsburg architecture derived mainly from the same Palladian principles that informed New England architecture. "The Georgian buildings followed rules for mathematical symmetry, reflecting both classical taste and the cult of Newtonian science that characterized the Enlightenment," he writes.

In turn, the completion of the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg exerted enormous influence on the grand residences built in Virginia in the decades afterward. Many were conceived from the Palace's fundamental plan – a great house surrounded by clusters of dependencies, often balanced in formal symmetry. This view of the great house as a self-sufficient rural community spread throughout the colonies and in Virginia at sites such as Corotoman in Lancaster County; Westover in Charles City County; and Stratford Hall in Westmoreland County.

In addition to the obvious question that *American Colonial* addresses – namely, what is distinctive about American colonialism? – this book attempts "to demonstrate that being an American colonist did not necessarily mean being homespun, backwoods, provincial," Garrett said in a recent interview. In fact, many colonists made every attempt to be current and up-to-date with styles that were in vogue in England and Europe. By taking the best their overseas compatriots had to offer, colonists were able to mold their art, furniture, and architecture in ways that eventually became recognizably American.

What is quintessential about American colonialism, Garrett suggests, is nothing less than the physical manifestation of the idea that one was indeed free to enjoy the pursuit of happiness. Even the Puritans eventually came to realize that a house that was pleasing to the eye of the beholder could also be pleasing to God. Their direct descendants took this one step further and decreed that certain material indications of prosperity were palpable indications of God's favor.

The easy part of reading *American Colonial* is looking at pictures, which are riveting in their own right. But don't sell yourself short. A close ramble of Wendell Garrett's narrative pays handsome dividends in giving those images far more texture and significance than they have on their own.

*Douglas Greenwood, of Washington, D.C., writes often about books for Inform.*

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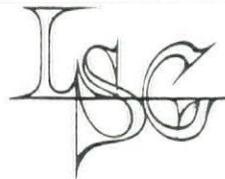
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## Taking Notice

It was a not-so-classic case of what architects call “infill.” Back in the 1920s, the side alley between two buildings in small-town Berryville was transformed into an extension of the dry goods and hardware stores that flanked it on both sides. Rather than build from the ground up, the owner simply spanned floor joists across the alley and put a roof on top. And so it was for 70 years.

Then Michael Hobert, a local attorney, found himself in possession of the buildings that had been in family hands for decades. The stores went out of business and Hobert, who had run his practice from the back room of one of them, decided to renovate the infill building and raise the profile of Hobert, Kerr & Perka, his law firm.

Absent of ladies’ dresses and dining room furniture, the former store was dingy and dated. Its first-floor walls were lined with crude cabinets. And, because the 13-foot-wide space had been an adjunct to the buildings next door, it lacked a front entrance. “The thing that was going for us was that it was raw space – just a roof and two floors,” says Chuck Swartz, principal of Reader & Swartz Architects in Winchester.

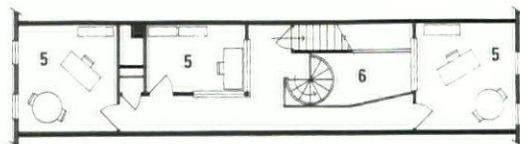
The architects began the renovation by carving an opening in the second floor and treating the upstairs as a mezzanine. That fundamental step accomplished two goals. First, it opened the space so that light would penetrate to new offices in the heart of the building. Second, it created a place to locate a new spiral stair – the best way to achieve compact vertical circulation, given the building’s narrow dimensions. Swartz also recycled a pair of large sash windows that were part of the original storefront. The two windows now form the corner of the first-floor conference room, and matching interior windows were custom-built for the upstairs offices.

Outside, a new storefront complements the neighboring buildings. The new entrance, recessed from the sidewalk, has a gradually sloped walk to allow for wheelchair access. Black 2” x 2” ceramic tiles beneath the front windows mimic the thick black glass used as a base on the other storefronts. — *Vernon Mays*

## An Alley No More

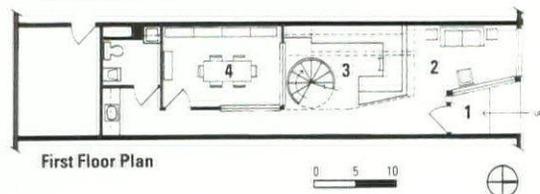


Tight dimensions suggested the design for a spiral stair to the mezzanine (top). Recessed entrance allows a ramped walk for wheelchair access (inset).



Second Floor Plan

- 1 Entry
- 2 Waiting Area
- 3 Reception
- 4 Conference Room
- 5 Office
- 6 Open to Below



First Floor Plan

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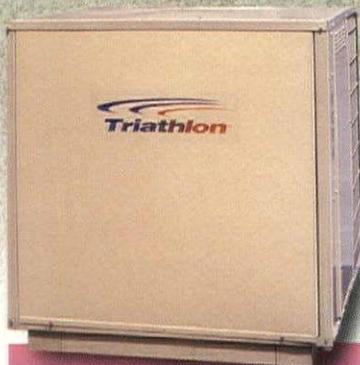
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