Introduction

This issue, with some thoughts on the education of architects, has been a long time coming. A series of roundtable discussions occurred in Seattle with the goal of examining educational philosophy at Northwest schools of architecture. The task proved enormous. Difficulties arose in deciding where to begin and what to compare. Soon it became clear that any discussion of the present must be prefaced by an understanding of what has come before.

One notion which came out of the roundtable discussions was a feeling that architectural education may have been better in the past. Certainly no one felt that architectural education was on a better footing today. Most of the conversation centered on individuals, exceptional teachers. Their personal influence made the difference.

Many participants also felt that the education of architects has taken an unfortunately narrower path. At that observation was that schools may remain remarkably the same, even while appearances change drastically. The three historical pieces which follow are intended to stimulate discussion on architectural education and provoke further comment in ARCADE.

David Schraer

LIONEL H. PRIES: EDUCATOR OF ARCHITECTS

A n act of inspiration is intangible and therefore seldom accounted for in architectural history. Yet the inspiration from a great teacher may find built expression in the work of his students, and this, in turn, may stand as his best legacy. Lionel Pries profoundly influenced architecture students at the University of Washington for thirty years. For many of the architects and educators who were his students, Pries was the school.

Pries' own architectural education was preceded by especially rich experiences, and his predilection for design became apparent quite early. He was born of a cultured and international family. His mother was Mexican and his father a German importer of art objects, and he accompanied them in his childhood on European travels. At the age of nine, he watched as the conflagration ensuing the great San Francisco earthquake destroyed his father's business. His father's spirit broken and health declining, he died in a few years. Young Pries contributed to the family's income by designing clothes for their well-to-do women friends.

For many students ... Pries was the school.

After serving with the army in WW I, Pries attended the University of California at Berkeley as a student of John Galen Howard. Howard had worked for H.H. Richardson and was an enthusiast of the Beaux-Arts system of architectural education. The beautiful Beaux-Arts ink wash interpretations of the classical orders from Pries' freshman year have found their way to the University of Washington Library. He earned a baccalaureate of architecture in 1920 and that same year won a competition for a memorial bench at the University. In 1921 and that same year won a competition for a memorial bench at the University. Pries then returned to the Bay Area and set up practice. There he did several large and some very innovative designs. The Abacadabra Clubhouse of 1926 is particularly interesting for the early use of exposed concrete-block walls. But for the most part, Pries did residential work, and his clientele mainly insisted on the Spanish Colonial Style. Pries designed well in the Spanish style and maintained a lifelong interest in it and things of Spanish derivation. However, as he complained to a visiting former classmate from Pennsylvania, William Bain, he found his Bay Area clients' singular preference for this style unconfortably narrow. Bain had suggested that Pries relocate to Seattle and work with him. One evening in 1928, he received a phone call from William Bain wanting to know how to get to his home. Then began the Bain and Pries partnership with Pries as designer. A comparison of his last work in California and earliest in Seattle is striking and revealing. The residence of 1927 is a large Spanish Colonial style home of the sort Pries had become accustomed to designing, with clever manipulation of features typical of that style, including the arched, internal courtyard. The Youell residence of 1928, until recently owned by Bagley and Virginia Wright, has such elements of the Spanish style as tile roof, stucco, and the deeply recessed arched entrance. The lack of trim almost makes one feel that architectural education was on a better footing today. Most of the conversation centered on individuals, exceptional teachers. Their personal influence made the difference.

The inspiration from a great teacher may find built expression in the work of his students, and this, in turn, may stand as his best legacy. Lionel Pries profoundly influenced architecture students at the University of Washington for thirty years.
Column of Many Orders

Rebecca Barnes

With a 1st Annual Call for New Works sponsored by ARCADE and Blueprint for Architecture, the Northwest architectural imagination will have an opportunity to go public. You, your child, and your best friend will be invited to submit expressions of architectural ideas in any medium. Entries will be available at Peter Miller Books for $10.00. Submissions are due on 24 x 36" boards May 8-28 June. An exhibit and judging by six local luminaries of mixed disciplines will occur at the Seattle Art Museum in Volunteer Park June 5. Tuesday, at 6 PM. Nearly simultaneously, the Design Concern will hold an invited exhibition and sale of architectural drawings and models, real, speculative, or make-believe, due June 15 to July 31 at 12:45 PM. Membership in any organization is not required, nor are any established disciplines of practice, just the willingness to expose yourself.

Have you heard of the sher­burne plan? Do you know what Harborfront means? Seattle's downtown waterfront has special meaning for you, you should know that the City of Seattle is beginning to plan improvements to the "Harborfront" by "scoping" an EIS on April 10, at 7:30 PM. If you care about what kinds of open space and use occur on the Harborfront, then the next 10 or so years, you can give the City planners the benefit of your ideas at that meeting, or write Joan Smith, DCD, 400 Yeader, Seattle 98104. By April 30. A project description is available; call 625-4511. The plan is currently in its most impressive stage.

Aspiring Licensees in Ar­chitecture and landscape architecture can improve their chances of passing the professional exams by enrolling in either a Mock Exam (for architects, given May 26 at 10 AM, sponsored by ARCADE) or the Architectural Women's Gathering for about $30, call Rebecca Barnes at 625-5781 or Pat Shelby at 624-5670 for details) or an Exam Review Seminar (offered for landscape architects over several weeks in May and June, including plant work and planting tech­niques, for $100) by Jestena Boughton at 523-1991 (or Becca Harris and ASLA). This year's exams will be given at Seattle Center the week of June 18.

There's more to Land Use than meets the eye, enough in fact to fill Wash­ington's newest professional journal, Northwest Land Use Review, a bi-monthly guide to changes in land use law, regulation, planning and development in Washington and the Northwest. If you wonder why an architect would have any interest in such a field, ask Tony Case, Seattle architect, who is on the Board.

Two Totem Poles, One Inspired by traditional northwest coast Haida de­signs, and one to a tribute to the Market's customers, have been at home in Market Park since March 11, completing the belvedere park designed by Seattleites Rich Flagg and Victor Steinbrueck, and framing the views of the Sound, mountains, and colorful sun­sets which help make this park such a special place. Cedar and fifty feet tall, the poles invite interpretation of their carved messages. Steinbrueck suggests that the Bear represents strength and power; the Killerwhale, good luck and abundance; the Human, prosperity; and the Raven, at the top, brings light and hope to Seattle, the Market, and to us all. The Hawk in the Bear's paw may signify vigilance, perhaps in relation to our own powers. A little Human Messenger, between the Whale's tall fin, suggests communication among people, and of people with Nature. Raven's swirling wheel may symbolize the work of all of local natural forces.

Architects use words to conv­ince audiences and clients of the rightness of their work when images should speak for them. "One must trust one's eye much more than one trusts one's ear when dealing with architects." Thus Brent Brolin, author of Architecture is Cost, warned non-architects at "Urban Design: Theory and Practice," a conference in Hartford, Connecticut, March 13-14.

Few other controversial statements were made during the two days of experience-based presentations of specific projects, until the wrap-up speaker defined The Emerging Design Imperative. Looking like Ringo Starr with a perm in a 3-piece suit, Michael Pittas, Director of the Design Arts Program at the National Endowment for the Arts, provided the equivalent of the Puke Building's more familiar nickname, "6th Avenue." He attributed the visionary void of the past 30 to 40 years to "the 20th Century's image of beauty; we could build it, and they didn't measure up. The stage has been set by post-mod­ernism's "stock-taking" and the recent in­terest in design competitions. Why? "Visionary statement is of value and of itself as a measure of society's expectations." Thus, even the grant-writers in the audience (potentially a much larger number than any other group in attend­ance) received some practical advice.

April/May Issue
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THE ECOLE DES BEAUX-ARTS AND AMERICAN ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

Before 1865 in the United States, there were few formal architectural schools. In that year W.R. Ware founded a department at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Ware and many other American educators in the last years of the 19th century, looked abroad for educational models. They found three types: the English system of training, the French system, and training offered by German universities, and the example of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris.

Each of these educational models found a place in the early American architectural curricula. By the first decade of the 20th century, however, the French system became predominant. Its residues are evident to us: we look for a patron and go on charrette. This piece will discuss the influence of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts on American architectural education.

Part One: At the Ecole

The Ecole des Beaux-Arts was a national school with departments of architecture, painting, and sculpture. Architectural education at the Ecole was free to any male between the ages of 15 and 30 capable of passing the entrance exams. The implicit goal of all Ecole students was to win the Grand Prix, to be sent to Rome at government expense for 4 to 5 years study, and to return to France after that time and take up a government commission. From its founding in 1819 until the mid-1880s when the diploma first offered in 1867 became an acceptable alternative to premiation, students knew that only one person each year would succeed. Unsuccessful candidates either left the school or stayed to compete again. Few students won the Grand Prix with their first submission. Many made five attempts before carrying away the prize; some made eight. Students combined and recombined pieces, were frequent1y taught by more advanced students, helped older students with their projects, or worked with Ecole-issued programs on their own projects.

Atelier work, as well as outside study of diverse subjects including mathematics, history, color theory, geometry, drawing, and architectural design, was undertaken with the express goal of passing the Ecole entrance exams. In his Autobiography of an Idea, Louis Sullivan gives an account of both his preparation and examination, Frenchmen commonly spent two years in preparation before passing these exams. A passing aspirant gained admission to the second class. He could then participate in second class concours — competitions. There were two of these types: short 12-hour sketch problems, expositions; and longer projects rendered projects of two months' duration. Programs of the longer projects were usually free of charge, though students were permitted to use an atelier (studio) in which to work; at first, access was limited to students who had first place in the entrance exams. The student was then allowed to use the facilities of the school and attend lectures. At the atelier, away from the school, work was the only energy spent in learning through doing. Newcomers helped more advanced students and students working on examinations, and nights of effort prior to the submittal of final projects were typical.

The Rome prize competition was a series of three, 12-hour sketch competitions, a 24-hour sketch, and the final five-month competition project for, usually, a monumental public building. Richard Chaffee describes the details of the competition in "The Teaching of Architecture at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts." Each year a winner was sent to the French Academy in Rome to study. Students undertaking a project rendu of either the first or second class, and those successfully passing to the third stage of the Rome prize competition, upon receiving the program retired to produce in a limited amount of time, usually 12 hours, a spatial-conceptual diagram for their proposed building, a Paris. This was known as going on leg. Using, for the most part, a set of drawings, they were to produce a model of the project. Students combined and recomposed pieces, testing possibilities, until a suitable partie was produced. In the first class six sketch and six rendu programs were issued each year. Students had to participate in but one or two per year to remain in good standing. Passage out of the first class occurred via Rome or "by the backdoor," those not winning the Grand Prix by their 30th birthday, up until the institution of the diploma, simply left the school to practice architecture.

...all students knew that only one person each year would succeed.

The Rome prize contest was a series of three, 12-hour sketch competitions, a 24-hour sketch, and the final five-month competition project for, usually, a monumental public building. Richard Chaffee describes the details of the competition in "The Teaching of Architecture at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts." Each year a winner was sent to the French Academy in Rome to study. Students undertaking a project rendu of either the first or second class, and those successfully passing to the third stage of the Rome prize competition, upon receiving the program retired to produce in a limited amount of time, usually 12 hours, a spatial-conceptual diagram for their proposed building, a Paris. This was known as going on leg. Using, for the most part, a set of drawings, they were to produce a model of the project. Students combined and recomposed pieces, testing possibilities, until a suitable partie was produced. In the first class six sketch and six rendu programs were issued each year. Students of that class could go on leg at each issue. By submitting a studied parti, one entered the concours. A copy of the parti was presented to the school at the end of the allotted time, and this was retained for comparison with the final project. Correspondence between initial and final intentions was required. Projects not like their generating parts were disqualified and received no values. Going on leg provided much practice in rapid analytical thinking about building design, but did not oblige the student to compute in the concours.

Students often prepared independently for exams. Lectures at the Ecole were not required, although passage of exams and concours addressing lecture materials were. Chaffee writes that only construction lectures were well-attended.

Most learning took place in the ateliers, the place of studio work. There were many ateliers, and aspirants were free to choose among them. Ateliers were not organized by the Ecole. Rather, they were formed by a group of students requesting the services of a "patron" a desired architect who dispensed architectural criticism in exchange for a small fee. Admission to an atelier required the permission of one's chosen patron. Ateliers were usually found in small, unattractive quarters near the Ecole. All that was required was enough space to work, and a medicum of heat, light and air. In any given atelier was found a range of students, "aspirants" through "anciens," competing for the Grand Prix. According to Chaffee, a typical patron would visit the atelier two or three times per week. J.P. Carlihan reports one two-hour visit per week as being typical.

In any case, it is agreed that the younger students were frequently taught by more experienced ancien rather than by the patron. The ancien had often been studying for nearly ten years and thus were well-suited for the task. In turn, the young students helped older students with their drawings. The ateliers were the site of the intense work of the charrette, the long days and nights of effort prior to the submittal of any project rendu, especially a Grand Prix submission. In addition to hard work, they fostered a fair amount of jocularity and a remarkable esprit de corps. Walter D. Blair writes in The Brick Builder (March 1907):

The ateliers...occupy quarters in old buildings where cheerfulness and dirt keep company. A crowd of students is not a desirable neighbor; they sing much, often through the night. The walls are decorated with caricatures and pictures until a dark somber tone is attained that accords well with the dirt, dishonesty, and confusion of the place. The lighting is by candle, each man furnishing his one or two candles that are stuck to the board on which he is working. The air of the room is close, for there is no ventilation. Silence never prevails. Jokes fly back and forth, snatches of songs, excerpts from operas, at times even a mass may be sung, yet amid the confusion and the babble — strange as it may seem — work proceeds.

Part Two: America Learns to Draw

The influence of Beaux-Arts educational methods in America has several aspects. With Richard Morris Hunt in 1845, Americans began traveling to Paris to enroll at the Ecole. Returning home, they often took prominent places in a young profession. The value of French study became evident in built fact. An increasing number of substantial public buildings were built by the Beaux-Arts-trained in the last 25 years of the 19th century. These included Hunt's Louvre Library, Carnegie and Hastings' New York Public Library, and McKim, Mead, and White's Boston Public Library. H.H. Richardson's work must be included as well. As late as 1893, the grounds and buildings of the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition continued to popularize architecture of Beaux-Arts inspiration. Indeed, one can conclude that the larger part of monumental American architecture between 1880 and 1920 was based on French theory and practice learned at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. (Daniel Burnham is an exception to this rule, as is Frank Lloyd Wright. Still, Beaux-Arts compositional methods appear in the larger projects of both men; i.e., Burnham's Chicago plan of 1909 and Wright's Wolf Lake Amusement Park.) Thus being the case, it is no surprise that aspiring would-be architects traveled to France for training and that American schools were eventually created emulating the successful French model.

Both Nofinger and Whitehead agree on a chronology marking the ascent and decline of the Beaux-Arts influence on formal architectural education in America. Simply, they identify a period of growing influence beginning with the founding of the department at MIT and lasting until... continued on page four.
continued from page three...

A sophomore at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts

the late 1860s; a period of flourishing Ecole influence in the first 20 years of this century; and a subsequent period of decline. A description of a few important schools in each of these periods will follow.

William Ware, founded the department at MIT in 1865. He established a school at Columbia in 1861. Ware was not trained at the time of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Instead of going to Paris, French theory and practice. In addition, he had an office. Before formulating the MIT program, Ware

was in a very real sense a typical American

department of the time. It was entirely eclectic in its approach to architectural education as ideally as did their counterparts in France, why it freely devoted time to criticism of Ecole work. However, certain elements of the French system did prevail. For example, the importance of design based on historical styles was emphasized. Competition was introduced through exhibitions of student presentations, and judgement, when possible, was by jury composed of members of the staff who had not been previously concerned with the assigned problems. At MIT the education architecture differed from the Ecole chiefly in a planned curriculum with scheduled classes, including courses in construction, and in Ware's insistence on the need for a broad and general background not only of history of architecture but of the entire realm of fine arts.

Design received much less emphasis than it did in France. Although Ware desired a four-year design curriculum, his depart-

ments, subject to the requirements of the engineering school to which it belonged, could offer only four semesters of design. These were undertaken at the school and were taught by MIT instructors. Other required coursework was diverse and time-consuming. Construction courses were modeled after English precedent. Scientific and technical requirements, as well as knowledge of a foreign language, were part of the curriculum rather than prerequisite to it, as at the Ecole. Passage through the course toward a degree was not, under

of Ecole study. In his History of Collegiate Education in Architecture in the U.S., C. Whitehead notes that graduates of schools not offering maximum design exposure, Columbia and MIT for example, were not often great designers. Shifts toward Ecole techniques surely were intended to remedy this situation.

Beaux-Arts-trained architects were familiar with monumental design problems from their school days. American demand for monumental buildings, according to J.P. Carlisi, was in the early years of the 20th century. Twenty-four state capitol buildings were built between 1886 and 1936. Cultural and economic developments in cities by various states, as at the Ecole. Passage through the curriculum was not competitive as at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Letang was in charge of design at MIT. The resulting scheme showed certain elements of the French system did not be copied in its French form, as American counterparts in France, who freely devoted

interest in the new and its class divisions were abolished. The four year curriculum was not competitive as at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts was ascendant. Other architectural schools founded be-

Ware's association with Hunt, a suc-

cessful product of French training, inevitably

toward education as idealistically as did their successors in France who enthusiastically applied the principles of the Ecole. After the arrival of J.V. Van Pelt, an Ecole-trained American, a Cercle

in 1896, the curriculum was princi-

tially technical. French-schooled Albert

had studied at MIT as well as at the Ecole, and there were no final juries. Work done as a final part of the course was submitted to review with other students. All course

ence on the need for a broad and general background not only of history of architecture but of the entire realm of fine arts.

American architects did not view their responsibilities toward education as ideally as did their counterparts in France.
That European monumental architecture could supply material appropriate to an American context seemed doubtful to some observers.

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In The École des Beaux-Arts and the Architectural Profession in the U.S.: the Case of John Galen Howard, "Droper states Howard attempted to introduce an integrated course of design instruction which was not arbitrarily broken up by the unit, grade and year categories imposed by the university. It was this component of the curriculum — design — which was most strongly influenced by the École des Beaux-Arts. Design instructors at Berkeley tended to be Americans trained in France rather than Frenchmen. Progress through the program was measured in points before years. The completion of a course typically required 12 years of liberal arts study and four years of architecture.

The Society of Beaux-Arts Architects (SBA) was founded in 1893 by a group of Ecole alumni in New York City. Its purpose was to offer an Ecole-like program in architectural design to those in and out of formal schools. With the payment of a small subscription fee, anyone could become a student of the Society and embark upon its program of design education through competitions. Participating students were assigned to classes and, as at the Ecole, advancement was based upon the accumulation of points awarded by closed jury. Programs for both sketched and rendered projects were frequently issued. Ex lodges were required for the large problems. As in Paris, final rendered projects had to resemble early parti sketches.

In the 1920s, the influence of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts on American architectural schools began to fade. Criticism of Ecole methods came from several quarters. Beaux-Arts buildings were called structurally dishonest and meaningless copies of history. That European monumental architecture could supply material appropriate to an American context seemed doubtful to some observers. J. Stewart Barney, who had studied at the Ecole, in Architectural Record, November 1908, criticizes Ecole-style teaching technique as being more concerned with precedent than principle, caring more about appearance than function. Further, he questions the emphasis on visual unity, especially the rendering of sections and elevations, and the omission from presentations of perspective drawings that present images of buildings as they are experienced. Even A.D.F. Hamlin, himself an Ecole alumnus and Ecole-style educator, lamented the lack of a principled use of Beaux-Arts compositional devices. Whitehead and others cite an increasing awareness of avant-garde movements in Europe as a factor causing increased doubt about the applicability to modern problems of Beaux-Arts style buildings and teachings. In the 1920s the old eclecticism began to seem ill-suited to the economics of mass production and distribution, and wasteful of materials and effort. By 1925 Ecole-trained architects in search of a modern style began to abandon their dated eclecticism. By Jacques Kahn did so. Paul Cret's building at the Chicago Fair of 1933, too, was hardly a typical example of the Beaux-Arts style.

Education at Columbia University can serve as an example of the move away from French methods. At the school, criticism of Ecole training techniques was eventually manifested at curriculum changes. A committee of Ecole men recommended abandonment of the French methods. The school retrenched toward a position more like that established by Ware years earlier. Under acting Dean Joseph Hudnut (1933-35), economic, social, and technical factors entered into design problems as they rarely did previously. Building programs were tailored to fit student needs; the program was noncompartmental. Professors of design were known as studio masters, a term probably derived from Bauhaus usage. By 1925 Ecole-trained architects in search of a modern style began to abandon their dated eclecticism; Ely Jacques Kahn did so. Paul Cret's building at the Chicago Fair of 1933, too, was hardly a typical example of the Beaux-Arts style.

Certainly it was neither the architecture of everyman, as German and Dutch housing tried to be, nor was it imbued with the lyricism some interpreters found in the machine. It increasingly ceased to engage either the spirit or material conditions of its times, or the interest of students and practitioners. Indeed, Eichler suggests that at Penn in the early 1930s, students were responsible for bringing an awareness of modern architecture to the school. By 1925 Ecole-trained architects in search of a modern style began to abandon their dated eclecticism; Ely Jacques Kahn did so. Paul Cret's building at the Chicago Fair of 1933, too, was hardly a typical example of the Beaux-Arts style.

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April

Sunday

11:30 A.M. Allied Arts Last Friday luncheon discussions over lunch on arts and urban issues. 12-1:00.

1:30-2:30. A tour of Malcolm Caldwell's residential project in Seattle's University District.

Saturday, April 13

1:00 P.M. Allied Arts Last Friday luncheon discussions over lunch on arts and urban issues. 12-1:00.

1:30-2:30. A tour of a new home designed and built by Richard Unrau in Seattle's University District.

Monday

11:30 A.M. Allied Arts Last Friday luncheon discussions over lunch on arts and urban issues. 12-1:00.

1:30-2:30. A tour of the Windermere House, an architecturally significant building in the Eastlake neighborhood.

Tuesday

11:30 A.M. Allied Arts Last Friday luncheon discussions over lunch on arts and urban issues. 12-1:00.

1:30-2:30. A tour of the historic Granada Hotel in the Montlake neighborhood.

Wednesday

11:30 A.M. Allied Arts Last Friday luncheon discussions over lunch on arts and urban issues. 12-1:00.

1:30-2:30. A tour of the historic Montlake Theatre in the Montlake neighborhood.

Thursday

11:30 A.M. Allied Arts Last Friday luncheon discussions over lunch on arts and urban issues. 12-1:00.

1:30-2:30. A tour of the historic Capitol Theatre in the Capitol Hill neighborhood.

Friday

11:30 A.M. Allied Arts Last Friday luncheon discussions over lunch on arts and urban issues. 12-1:00.

1:30-2:30. A tour of the historic Masonic Temple in the Capitol Hill neighborhood.

Saturday

11:30 A.M. Allied Arts Last Friday luncheon discussions over lunch on arts and urban issues. 12-1:00.

1:30-2:30. A tour of the historic Aladdin Theatre in the Capitol Hill neighborhood.

Sunday

11:30 A.M. Allied Arts Last Friday luncheon discussions over lunch on arts and urban issues. 12-1:00.

1:30-2:30. A tour of the historic Aladdin Theatre in the Capitol Hill neighborhood.
The windows appear cut out of the stucco. The plainness is relieved by rustication at the entrance and the corners, also by a window with a small balcony and wrought iron railing between stories over the front door. Restraint and careful use of scale features became characteristic of Pries work. The Spanish style in California was forced to be literal, while in Seattle he could design contemporary architecture according to his own sensibility. It was in this unfettered atmosphere that Pries and others such as Andrew Willians, R.C. Reamer, and Ellsworth Storey contributed to the distinctly high quality of Seattle residential architecture at that time.

Pries had begun teaching architecture part-time at the University of Washington the year he moved to Seattle. He was director of the Seattle Art Museum in 1930 and 1931. In 1932 the partnership was dissolved by mutual consent, and Pries began the full-time teaching career for which he is most remembered.

The University operated under a Beaux-Arts system typical at the time in the U.S. The freshman year at the school was the sophomore year at the University, and it was devoted to the fundamentals: graphic techniques and the classical orders. As a sophomore, the student of architecture was introduced to the esquis, or sketch problem, and the analytique, a quarter-quarter-long development of a design part. Usually assigned weekly at noon, and the assignments had to do with character and development of a design parti. Usually assigned weekly at noon, and the appropriate symbolism as well as introduction to historical or eclectic styles. An esquis would be assigned weekly at noon, and the student was to complete the design and render it in watercolor by ten o'clock. One esquis problem posed by Pries was titled "The Sepulchre. A wealthy Burmese potentate wishes to build a sepulchre for his deceased consort." Horror aside, problems of this nature demanded from the students great leaps of imagination and freed them from the constraints of their own culture.

The scope of initial analytiques was small, perhaps simply "an Arabesque design." Assignments then focused on an important fragment of a building, such as "an entrance to a principle museum of art," in which the student might be required to render in detail at least three elements, which he might choose to be the corinna, doors, and a statue. Eventually the student was assigned the design of an entire building. My favorite is "A Middle Western cheese corporation wishes to beautify the entrance to their grotto made in the curing of roquefort type cheese, the entrance being on a river bluff one hundred feet high." Senior analytiques were correspondingly more ambitious in scale. An assignment of Pries read: "With the successful consummation of Italian imperialistic objectives, a spacious new capitol is to be built in Rome. With this capitol is to be included an imposing monument to machismo."

The character of the assignments reflected that of the professor, and in the Beaux-Arts system the professor's hand was quite evident in the design and renderings of his students. Pries' watercolor technique was distinctive for dark, dark shadows, "repoussoir" (foreground objects), and especially skillful representation of plant matter.

It was not difficult to distinguish Pries' students' projects because the college of architecture had only fifty or so students, and the faculty, in addition to Pries, consisted of two members, Arthur Herman and Lawrence Cowen. The courses "were augmented by structures, drawing, and painting programs borrowed from schools in the University. Herman possessed substantial design skills but also the personality most suited to administration. He devoted his fine oratory skills to teaching the "Appreciation of Architecture," series available at entry level to students throughout the University. Pries taught the more advanced botany series. Cowen was not especially talented at expressing himself verbally, but his watercolors were every bit as good as Pries', though with a hardness and clarity of line not in Pries' renderings. Pries was the romantic.

Pries began teaching as Beaux-Arts influence on education began to fade. Change was hastened in the late 1930s with the arrival in this country of such notable northern European architects and teachers as Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius. The University of Washington ceased to confine student work to historical styles. A 1937 student proposal for "a horticulture building to dominate a World's Fair" is streamlined and thoroughly contemporary. Pries continued to do occasional residential design during his teaching career, and even though he made eclectic reference to decoration, his work was quite modern. The Col. Wilcox residence of 1940 combines in its totem pole-like renderings and upon semo into the diagonal amento abseste shingles. The college sold a major watercolor of this style to the student, which he retained the Beaux-Arts approach for instruction. In 1940 at the peak of Pries' tenure upon the faculty, a Fred. Adlerman was brought from MIT to introduce methodology. He left in frustration after a year.

Pries' 1956 Dick Lea home illustrates his conviction to incorporate the fine arts in his work even during an era of economic austerity. Still, the young faculty had different expectations of the students than did Pries. To do what one said was to invite criticism from the other. The conflict was exacerbated by the practice of teaching in teams. One quarter, Pries wrote a program similar to that for Arthur Erickson's present-day U.B.C. Anthropological Museum for studies shared with Wendell Lovett. The students were to design a shelter in Seward Park to house totem poles and petroglyphs. To Pries it was a question of imagination and romance, and his student projects were strong on composition. For Lovett it was an opportunity to explore technological issues. His students produced extremely innovative structures. Lovett exemplified the naive insistence of the correctness of modern architecture by young proponents of the period. Pries remained true to his own principles. Only Keith Kolb, having a personal relationship with Gropius and a measured view of the modern movement, would defend Pries.

Pries was thought dated by his "functionalist" colleagues for the breadth of his interests and considerations. Yet it was precisely this breadth that made him so influential to students. To young professional Washingtonians he provided an introduction to a larger world. In addition to converting ideas about architectural merit, he exposed them to the worlds of drama, theory, art history, and sculpture. In hindsight, his students wonder if he did not speak beyond his experience in some of these areas, but at the time they were spellbound.

Pries' teaching vocabulary was enhanced by knowledge and expertise in crafts. With characteristic detail he designed the Karl Krueger residence of 1928, including a large chandelier and stained glass, and he painted a mural on the wall above the ceiling. This connection of fine art with architecture was unexpected by the students, gave them a new vision of the importance of architecture, and added a certain freedom to imagination. Students developed an appreciation for the extra dimensions of elegance, detail, and an awareness of regional styles.

Pries was a swashbuckling teacher, a magician, florid and effeminate in manner, and the most cultured of the faculty. A Cock Pries was a swashbuckling teacher, a magician, florid and effeminate in manner, and the most cultured of the faculty. A combination of color in designs and to set about to "break the back of the Beaux-Arts system." A color of color was to be an adject to Pries' "ornamental" class, became its own class. Wire and string were used to teach the articulation of space, not form, as the object of design. Design programs were no longer based in the allegorical, illustrating real situations and the community, but methods of teaching were more rigid. Lovett returned to become the "enfant terrible" of the faculty and the particular nemesis of Pries and Gowan, the senior design faculty, found themselves in a position of having to change their teaching practices.

The influx of students after WW II was different from previous classes not only in magnitude, but in temperament as well. They had gained a sense of expediency with military experience that made the students prickly and of the fine art of architecture difficult to teach, and a savvy that made them impossible to overwhelm. They wanted to learn fast and start making a living. Their interests were economy and function. All in all, they were more acclimated to the needs of the younger faculty. Pries must have breathed a sigh of relief as they graduated.

As a Director of Camouflage Instruction during WW II. Pries was in charge of design and set about to "break the back of the Beaux-Arts system." A color of color was to be an adject to Pries' "ornamental" class, became its own class. Wire and string were used to teach the articulation of space, not form, as the object of design. Design programs were no longer based in the allegorical, illustrating real situations and the community, but methods of teaching were more rigid. Lovett returned to become the "enfant terrible" of the faculty and the particular nemesis of Pries and Gowan, the senior design faculty, found themselves in a position of having to change their teaching practices.

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He disliked soft drinks and music in the studio... gave a wide spread of grades, and occasion­ally could become quite insulting. The degree to which he would draw for a student depended upon how much he liked the fellow. One student, Minoru Yamasaki, felt wounded and complained that Pries didn’t draw on his work, to which Pries explained (to Yamasaki’s complete satisfaction) that he simply didn’t need the help. By the same token, Pries developed a reputation for erasing or sponging out work he didn’t like, and was feared by under­classmen. The strictest teacher with the highest standards, Pries’ reputation always preceded him.

Among Pries’ greatest gifts was his abil­ity as a local critic. He was so highly skilled as to be able to visualize architecture very easily and to express it quickly with his extraordinary graphic proficiency. He helped give form to the nebulous ideas of his students, opening doors to reveal true potential. Sometimes students have a large sense of proprietorship about their designs, and the professor must take care at the drawing board not to appear intrusive. Rather than engage in force of will, Pries took an approach of encouragement. He set about to illustrate how beautiful the students’ ideas could be, and in the end, they wanted to do it his way.

Pries was further characterized by his devotion to and emotional involvement with his profession. Perhaps because he had no family, he developed a sensitivity to the needs of certain students and was especially encouraging to them. He pro­vided accommodation for several favorite students in his home. Frequently he gave parties at which he usually wound up show­ing students his possessions. He had accu­mulated a large number of drawings of buildings, including pre-Columbian textiles, Baroque Central American image vestments and sculptures, Northwest native art, and vari­ous minor Chinese collections. His archi­tectural library outdistanced that of the University for many years. In fact, the Uni­versity acquired its Piranesi collection from Pries for a token fee and in a roundabout manner; there was a policy against making purchases from professors, and in such cases the University Bookstore acted as middleman. In addition to European trav­els, he spent fourteen summers in Mexico accompanied by students, during which time he produced drawings for a never­published book on Spanish Colonial art and architecture. In 1958, Pries abruptly and angrily left the teaching position he loved. Friends blame large tenure, but neither Pries nor the University were willing to discuss the sudden end to a long and distinguished career. To this day, the circumstances of Pries’ departure remain clouded by specu­lation and accusation, and colleagues from the time are reluctant to be quoted. Near­ing retirement age, Pries never received a full pension from the University despite many years of service and was left without the means to support himself. Pries never forgave the University for the mysterious activities which led to his departure.

The final decade of Pries’ life was in some respect a denouement. He worked for his former student Bob Durham at Durham, Anderson and Freed in 1959 and 1960, and for John Graham and Company from 1961 to 1963. He added to their work a spark, exemplified by the crucifix he designed and made for Faith Lutheran Church in Bellingham. However, Pries no longer enjoyed the same command of the design process. The occasional clientele who had approached him while teaching were gentle, cultured and cultivated peo­ple who built in part from a sense of responsibility. A Pries home was a repre­sentation of their values and, in that sense, a contribution to the community. They wanted it done his way. The 1956 home of Dick Lea is very modern, yet retains the attention to detail that was always Pries’ signature. A student of Pries can even rec­ognize the lettering of the address as his. There was no compromise. His final proj­ect was the Robert Winkskill residence in Mill Valley, California, designed in the year of his death, 1968, and executed some time after. Pries left his architectural library to the University of Puget Sound and his other artistic and architectural possessions to Winkskill.

Lovett returned to become the “enfant terrible”...
W.R.B. WILLCOX

THE OREGON MODEL FOR EDUCATING ARCHITECTS

W. R. B. Willcox's Morris at his desk. Photo courtesy of the University of Oregon Library, Special Collections, and Avenu.

EDITORS NOTE: This article originally appeared in the May, 1961, issue of W.R.B. WILLCOX in The Call Number, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Fall 1968). The Call Number was a journal published by the University of Oregon Library which gave its local printings for this reprint in ARCADE. The U of O Library is the principle repository for W.R.B. Willcox's extensive collection of letters, papers, and drawings.

When Ross Baumes Willcox, who died 37 years ago, is still a figure to be found in the School of Architecture and Allied Arts at the University of Oregon. In the court outside the school, his bust a proud-redosed, balding likeness, casts-levered from a brass shaft, keeps watch on the students, most of whom are unaware that his passion for their education was largely responsible for the development of the present method of teaching architecture at Oregon. As the head of the Department of Architecture for 25 years, he cared desperately about students, about architecture, and the relation of both to a better world.

In his address at the opening of the School of Architecture and Allied Arts in 1914, Willcox touched on the lack of communication between architects and the general public, saying that it "seems to be the heaviest indictment against our profession today, that our own people are out of sympathy with what we are doing, are frankly contemptuous of our efforts, or are frankly ignorant of what we call architecture. . . . We should always be aware that we are studying, as it were, a foreign language, a language with which the people of our country are not acquainted, that we are endeavoring to discover whereas lies the secret of style, not with the purpose of attempting to speak it to our own people."

Individual architects in the United States had tried, and for the most part failed, to find acceptance for a suitable alternative to eclecticism, and develop a distinctively American style. Most of them were among the group later known as the "Chicago school," whose work was regarded by established architects in the East as "barbaric" or "vulgar." What Willcox proposed was that under the title "Amateurs join the Department of Architecture."

The purpose of the Oregon Model for Educating Architects was to make available for the first time a complete exposition of the method and philosophy of this noted educator. It is a comprehensive treatment of the subject, based on Willcox's extensive writings and correspondence, and includes a detailed history of the school and its curriculum, as well as an analysis of its educational system and its impact on the profession. The book is illustrated with numerous photographs and drawings, and is a valuable resource for students, teachers, and professionals in the field of architecture. The Oregon Model for Educating Architects is a must-read for anyone interested in the history and development of architectural education in the United States. (Photo courtesy of the University of Oregon Library, Special Collections, and Avenn.)
many students quickly decided they had no aptitude, and left the school; others stayed, finding themselves after a year or two; still others hung on year after year, hoping vainly that they would find security in accepted styles and rigid criteria.

This appealed very much to the examining boards of the American Institute of Architects, who regarded the new experiment which would require the experience in accepted styles and rigid criteria.

But, as one examiner wrote Willcox, "... the ‘method’ as an unusually interesting examiners of the American Institute of Architects, who regarded the new method as " ... an unusually interesting experiment which would require the experience of some years to thoroughly justify." They idolized their teacher, and delighted. They idolized their teacher, and delighted. They idolized their teacher, and delighted.

But, as one examiner wrote Willcox, "There cannot be had on short notice." The Club would meet and talk on into the night. The Club would meet and talk on into the night. The Club would meet and talk on into the night.

For Willcox, systems, methods, curricula, were at least temporary expedients, to be discarded when they were no longer appli-
cable to a given situation. When a system or a method became fixed, it ceased to be, "unnatural," because it was no longer organic. His central concern was the indi-
vidual student. "But what if we try to find out what the human being in the shape of the student is actually like, and fit our plans of development to him? Even stu-
dent is an individual problem, and should be treated as such, which means working with curricula, restrictions, limitations, fixed methodology, and measurements, must, by the quality of the eventual prod-
tect." So Willcox wrote to Dean Lawrence.

This is not to suggest that the new method, or lack of it, was uniformly successful. Some students failed to respond, and one particular group was characterized as "The darnedest bunch of malcontents I ever saw. They were a few sparks at the beginning, but they fizzled in the surrounding humidity."

But Willcox believed that by freeing the individual, responsibility and social con-
sciousness would follow automatically, and that the architect would go forth to take his proper role as interpreter of civilization and leader of a just social order. He carried his 19th century romantic faith in the per-
fectibility of the individual through free-
dom into his teaching of architecture. His ideas met with enthusiastic response, if not by all of the establishment, at least by the students. He wanted to turn out "not only draftsmen and delineators, but architects; not only technicians, but artists, alive to their obligation to the state and society."

The Willcox method is illustrated by his approach to design. His method changed with each class, and students sometimes wished he would clarify the difference between the "style" of a building (something he deprecated) and its "character" (which he insisted upon). The "style" of a building be
dismissed as a subject for an architect rather than an architect. But of his charac-
ter: "It is something comparable to charac-
ter in people. It is manifest in the bearing or manners of a building, if such terms may be used in this competition. Buildings are dignified or flippant, joyous or sorrowful, boastful or decorous, gentle or rough, quiet or noisy, some are actually garish, they shrink at one continuously. They all, as we say, have an air about them. Buildings, as people, can be differentiated by the air they have about them."

There were students who wished their teacher would define precisely what that "air" might be. But most of them seemed to need no such precision of defini-
tion. They knew intuitively what he meant. It was these students who formed the nu-
class of the Willcox mystique that domi-
nated the school. They were the students to whom Willcox wrote long and personal letters after they had left. He kept them informed about classmates, advised them freely, though circumspectly, about their love affairs, encouraged them when they were bleak, and saw to it, if they were jobless. To one student who planned an architectural tour of the East he wrote a ten-page biography of the person he, H.H. Richardson, with a guide to Richard-
son's buildings. These were the students who had true empathy. Willcox had shown them the Truth, and it was their mission to spread the Word.

Willcox carried his nonconformity be-

"... the student [should] de-
termine for himself his apti-
tude for the work of an archi-
tect."
Willcox was sure he knew what was wrong with society: institutions, arbitrary taxes. But these were only the outward manifestations of a deeper evil. At the root of all it was the landowner and the private ownership of land. He scorned the economists who believed that Adam Smith and Henry George, were as natural as the law of gravity. He incorporated them into his city function. These investigations, in his terms, the “character” was missing. As one of his students mourned, "I feel sad for those who will never have known him!"

He was certain that so long as people owned property, a Natural Law was being violated.

At the same time, Willcox was willing to help him out by spreading the Word; private land ownership and taxes should be abolished, the government, acting as an agent of the people, should collect rent in return for those services that society rendered. This was a message he shared with Willcox’s ideas, stemming from Henry George, were as natural as the law of gravity. He incorporated them into his city planning lectures, and into systematic investigations by his students of what makes a city function. These investigations, in which Willcox collaborated, produced a prize. Many of the ideas in the book republished the same year as published privately in 1938, and supported by the Carnegie Foundation, and the School of Architecture at Oregon had, of a committee from Columbia University. He returned in 1936 as an agent of Carnegie Institute, and when he went back to New York described the School of Architecture and Allied Arts as the outstanding school in the nation. When Columbia University, in 1935, and Harvard, in 1936, reorganized their schools of architecture, both used the Willcox “method” as their model. Other major schools followed suit, some with some innovations of their own, and the “non-competitive system,” as opposed to the Beaux-Arts method, was well established.

Willcox was Emeritus Professor in 1940, but continued to teach until shortly before his death in 1947. When he died, the personability that invested the substance of his teaching died with him. The vitality of his method was ephemeral, depending as it did on his presence and his personal concern for each student. He left a structure, but, in his own terms, “the character” was missing. As one of his students mourned, “I feel sad for those who will never have known him.”

Nancy K. Smith

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East Meets Northwest
Seattle Area Projects by W.R.B. Willcox

The following list of Willcox projects is drawn from “W.R.B. Willcox: A Note on the Seattle Years” by Elisabeth Walton Potter, an essay in a 1978 publication by the Northern Pacific Coast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians, West-schrift. This essay contains a much longer list of projects, a valuable bibliography, and much interesting information on Willcox, especially his early years.


DESIGN CENTER NORTHWEST


North Trunk Sewer Shaft House (1913), Lake Washington District, Seattle. Hotel and Apartment Building for Edward Lincoln Smith (1913-1914), S.W. corner 4th Avenue and Marion Street, Seattle. Recently demolished.

Winsor Hotel, 6th Avenue and Union, Seattle.


Burnison, Capt., Water Tank Tower, Mercer Island.

Smith, Edward Lincoln, Residence, Cascadia Avenue, Mt. Baker District, Seattle.

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