

D E S I G N

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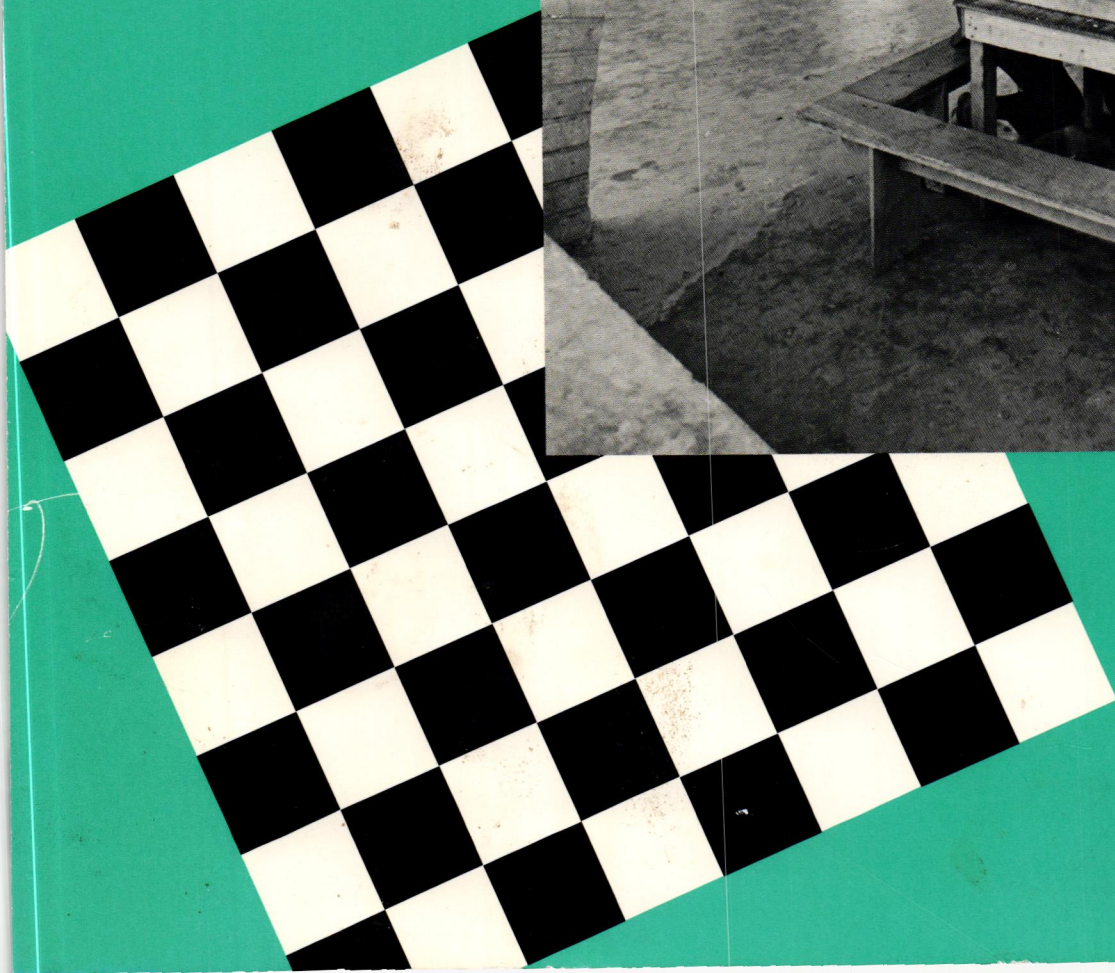
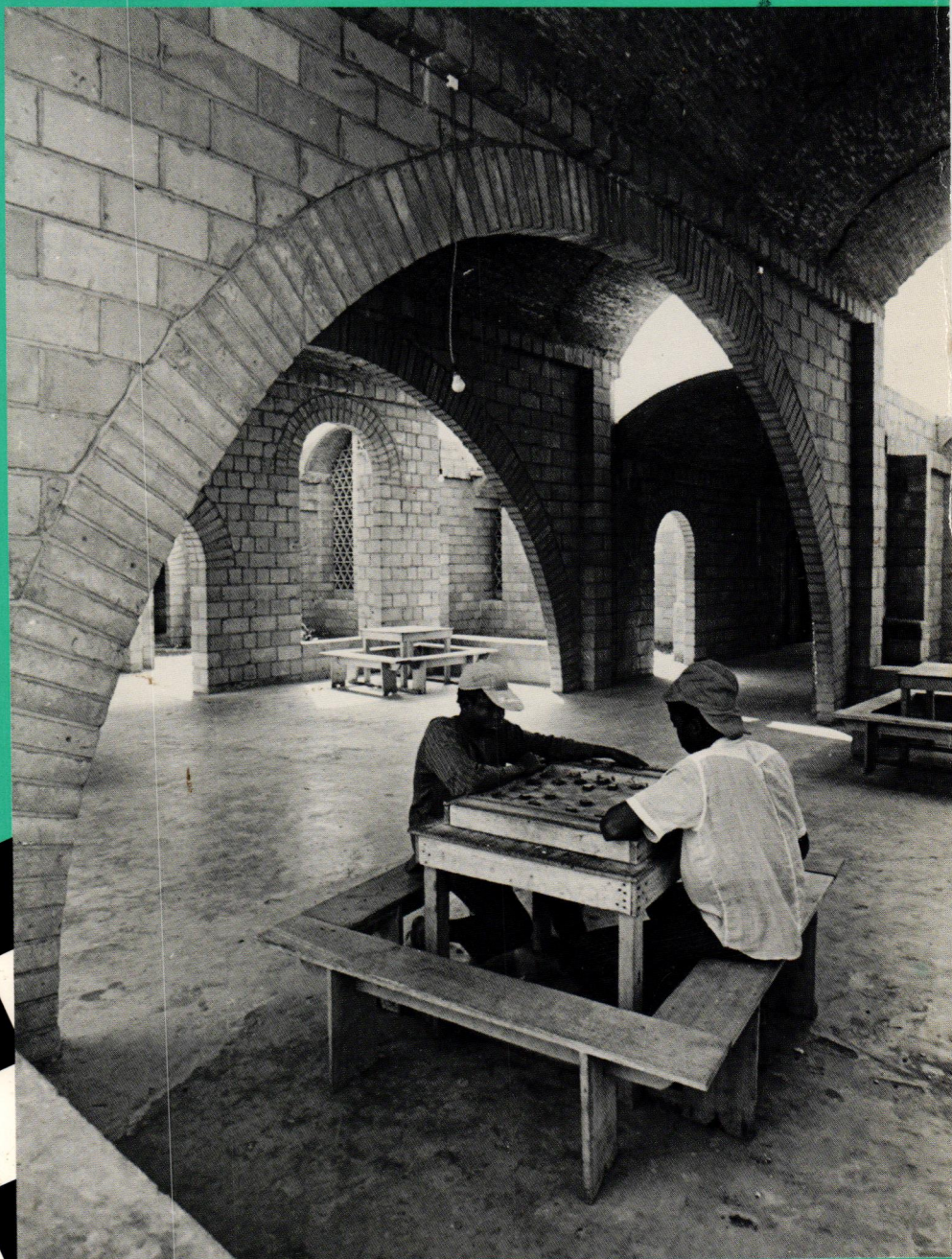
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Fall 1984

\$4.50

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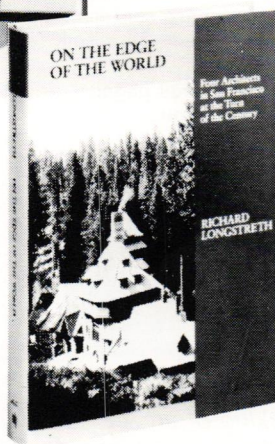
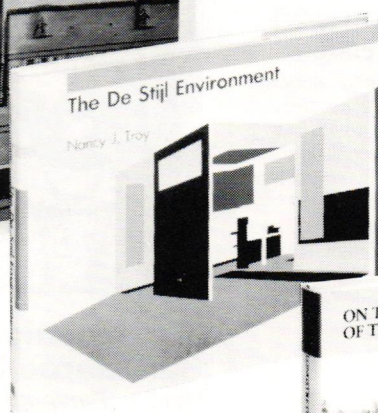
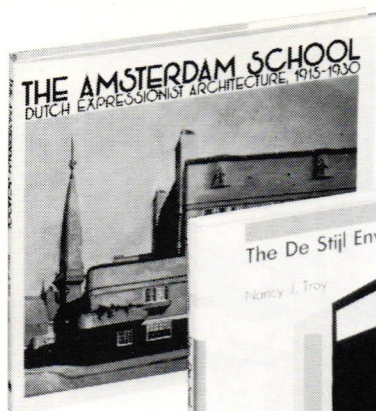
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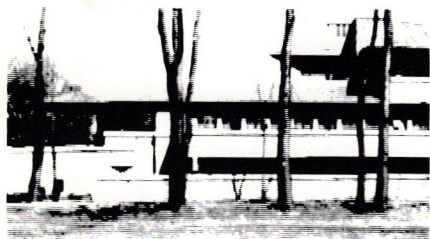
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The Robie House of Frank Lloyd Wright

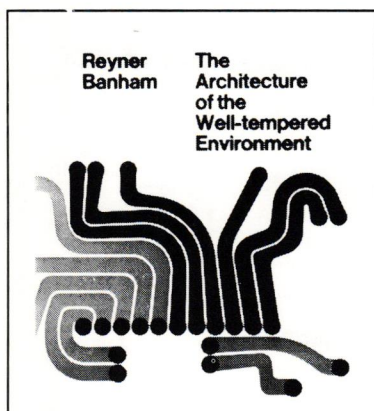
Joseph Connors

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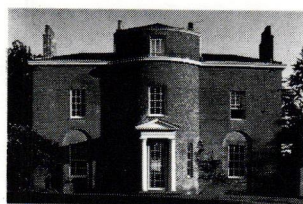
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and The Henry Francis du Pont
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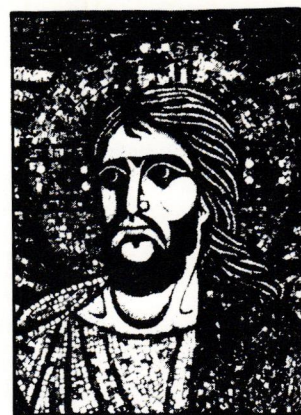
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FALL 1984

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ARCHITECTS**

LELAND M. ROTH

**MCKIM, MEAD & WHITE,
ARCHITECTS**

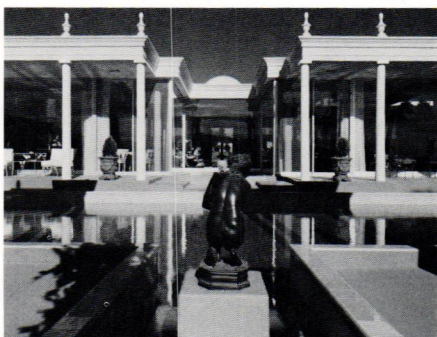
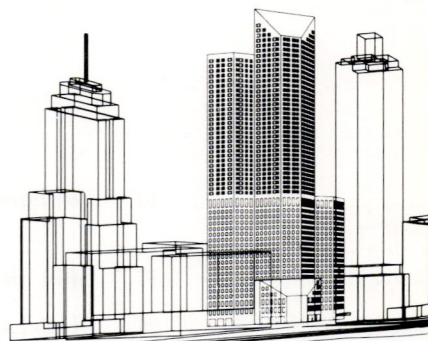
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Norris Kelly Smith:

MCKIM, MEAD & WHITE, ARCHITECTS

LELAND M. ROTH

MCKIM, MEAD & WHITE, ARCHITECTS

RICHARD GUY WILSON

Here are two good books, both written by professors of the history of architecture in a tradition of academic historiography established years ago by Hitchcock, Morrison, Edgell, Hamlin, et al. That is to say, both men trace the history of the partnership in an informative and judiciously objective manner that is not much different from the way either of them might have written about the works of Wren or Mansart or Bulfinch. Neither author urgently addresses our present architectural predicament; neither suggests that a revival of the firm's classicism should or could take place today (as indeed it could not), though both are fully aware of the inferiority of the architectural style that abruptly displaced that classicism fifty years ago.

Richard Guy Wilson's is much the briefer book, but is also the more handsomely designed and illustrated. It consists of a 55-page survey of the firm's history, replete with 61 illustrations, followed by a 160-page section devoted to short critical studies and a visual savouring of 31 characteristic examples of McKim, Mead & White's work—31 out of the 855 buildings and projects that the firm produced before McKim's death in 1909. For each of these we find exterior views, plans, interiors, and details. Many of the plates are full-size, while the wraparound jacket adorns the volume with Francis Hopkin's superb rendering, in the best Beaux-Arts style, of the Brooklyn Museum (by comparison with which any image of virtually any modern building must seem unspeakably sterile).

Leland Roth's book, on the other hand, comes as close to being a definitive study of the firm as anyone is ever likely to write. Its 369 illustrations, mostly drawn from contemporaneous sources, cover the full range and variety of the partnership's enormous output, from churches to casinos, railway stations to power stations, prestigious clubs to elegant stores, and, of course, a plethora of city houses and country mansions. Inevitably, most of these are cursorily dealt with, being allotted a paragraph or two, a single exterior view, sometimes a plan, rarely an interior. A few major works, such as the Boston Public Library, Madison Square Garden, and

Penn Station, are treated at adequate length, and always in a highly readable literary style. Roth enriches his account with a wealth of anecdote and with excerpts from letters and contemporaneous criticism that reveal a great deal about the people for whom and the social context within which the firm worked.

A shortcoming of Roth's book is that, unlike Wilson's, it gives us no street addresses and no indication as to whether or not a building is still standing. Nevertheless, the volume provides an immense amount of information about the architects, their clients, and their buildings. We all need to be reminded that McKim, Mead & White was for many years the largest and most respected architectural firm in the world, one that ill deserved the contempt in which it was held by the overzealous proponents of the Modernist cause.

Wilson concludes his general essay with a six-page section entitled "Meaning," in which he justly celebrates the ideals of what was once hailed, largely on the basis of the achievements of McKim, Mead & White and of their distinguished protégés, as an "American Renaissance." He concludes that the renaissance gave way to the bleakness of the Modern Movement because of a "loss of confidence" in those ideals, though he does not attempt to explain why such a loss of confidence should have occurred. Roth deals with broad issues of evaluation in a nine-page prologue and a fifteen-page epilogue. In the latter he cites various factors that account for the obloquy that overtook the firm's reputation shortly after Mead's death in 1928—factors such as the propagation of a new attitude toward function and "functionalist realism," the rising popularity of Marxist analysis, with its disdain for the rich capitalists who had constituted the firm's clientele, and, in general, the spirit of socialist utilitarianism that marked the era of the New Deal.

Yet the authors' interpretative assessments leave me unsatisfied. For one thing, both professors use the terms "eclecticism" and "historicism" to characterize the partners' attitude toward style. The two ideas have been closely linked in modern critical theory, which has been inordinately dominated by the historicist idea of "style-period"—that is to say, by the notion that the history of art and architecture can be divided into a series of discrete periods, during each of which a single style prevailed, and that that style gave visual expression to, or was the very embodiment of, the homogeneous "culture" of its age. Concomitantly, it was held that each of those styles was more the product of a pervasive *Zeitgeist* than of the conscious decision-making of practicing architects and their patrons. It was the battle-cry of the Modern Movement (which was historicist to the core) that the 20th century had to have a style of its own that would express the nature of our "modern world"—just as Greek architecture had pre-

sumably epitomized the life and thought of ancient Greece—and that for anyone now to choose to build in the Greek or Romanesque or Renaissance manner would be to perpetrate an empty, imitative sham.

Perhaps it is because they are themselves academics that neither Roth nor Wilson recognizes the extent to which the rise of the Modern Movement was an *academic* phenomenon. Unlike any previous aesthetic movement, it derived its motivating force from the new schools of architecture that universities had seen fit to establish (for not very good reasons) and from professors of history and of the new discipline of art history, most of whom were true believers in the historicist doctrine. (It is still true today that the commonest rationale advanced by professors for the vagaries of modern art is based squarely upon the idea of “the times” and of the rightness of what artists feel inspired to do by their “times.”)

For my own part, I would argue that all Western architecture prior to the 20th century was “eclectic,” being based upon a continual reworking of a small number of formal themes or ideas that were for the most part invented by the Egyptians—and mainly by one man, Imhotep. Since architecture is peculiarly the art of established institutions, we should not find it surprising that the organizational modes or patterns that were favored by institutional leaders at any given time and place are discernibly related to the political stance or convictions of those same leaders (though not necessarily of the population at large). Medieval kings and bishops believed in hierarchy and liked hierarchical kinds of architecture, while republican citizens, whether in Rome or Florence or Washington, D.C., preferred non-hierarchical ones; but neither French bishops nor Florentine priors thought it necessary or desirable to step outside the civilizing traditions they were heir to—for there was no more need for a new kind of architecture than there was for a new kind of lawfulness or *recta ratio*, right reason.

I think it self-evident that McKim, Mead & White understood that their patrons were citizens of a democratic republic, wherefore it was entirely appropriate that their architecture, like their political beliefs, should derive ultimately from Greece and Rome, but in ways that had come down to them more directly from the city-state republics of the Renaissance, where the public life had been dominated for the first time by rich and aggressive bankers and manufacturers. Unlike Sullivan and his followers, McKim & Co. were not attempting to “express the life of their age” but rather to make eloquent defense of the ancient traditions and American exemplification of what we usually speak of today as “civic humanism.”

That, in turn, is best understood, I believe, as a manifestation of the *philosophia perennis* that has been with us

for millennia, a philosophy that rests, as M. D. Aeschliman has lately averred, upon a faith in the objective reality of what Plato called the Good, in the validity of right reason as the means for apprehending that reality, and in the true being of a spiritual as well as a physical ordering of the universe. I could wish that our architectural historians had stressed the existence of an *architectura perennis* rather than indulging their passion for setting up classifications, for making relatively meaningless distinctions between and among a host of minor variations on a small number of major themes, and for finding historical “sources” for particular buildings—as if their establishing a quasi-genetic ancestry would contribute significantly to our understanding of an architect’s affirmation. Of the books under review, Wilson’s errs more seriously in that direction than does Roth’s.

Another matter that deserves more attention than our authors have given it is the tension that has long existed between the architecture of urban centers of power and that of the country estate. Among Florentine and American bankers no less than among Roman senators and American presidents it was thought highly desirable to possess both a city palazzo (there was one point at which the proposed White House was called the Presidential Palace) and a rural mansion or villa, such as Monticello or Sagamore Hill. McKim, Mead & White built both city and country houses for patrons who aspired to the same gentlemanly status that had for centuries been associated with that polarity. Certainly there was an element of the aristocratic, a faith in the existence and rightful prestige of the *aristoi* in any society, that underlay both the ancient and the early American conceptions of democracy; and it is equally certain that that conception was dealt a severe blow both by the “managerial revolution” that virtually eliminated the likes of Frick, Mellon, Widener, and Morgan from the business establishment, and by the rise of the radical equalitarianism that undergirded the “advocacy architecture” of the 1950s and 1960s and that so dominates the political life of the present moment. If by their fruits we are to know them, then, as is coming to be recognized on all sides, the new ideas have borne desperately little in the way of nourishing, soul-satisfying fruit.

Chief among those new ideas was the scientific positivism that has mainly displaced the religio-humanistic traditions of the *philosophia perennis*. That positivism represents a mode of thinking that is always reductive; in effect, it quickly reduced the art of architecture to the condition of being a minor specialty in engineering. Leland Roth has the good sense to quote Hannah Arendt’s observation that “utility established as meaning generates meaninglessness,” though he might have done better to quote Kierkegaard’s prediction that “In the end, all corruption will come from the natural sciences”—



MCKIM, MEAD AND WHITE, MAIN STAIRCASE, BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY, 1887-1895. FROM WILSON, MCKIM, MEAD AND WHITE, ARCHITECTS. (PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD CHEEK, COURTESY OF RICHARD GUY WILSON)

not because scientists themselves are corrupt but because their view of the nature of things, and of the nature of man and of the state, is utterly destructive of the religious and metaphysical bases of the perennial philosophy.

Having said that, however, I must acknowledge that McKim, Mead & White were not builders of churches. The few that they did design seem to me the most archaeological of their works, the least relevant to the civic ideals they were mainly devoted to defending. Rather it was the library that inspired their best efforts. One can scarcely think of the name of the firm without bringing to mind the Boston Public Library, the Low Library at Columbia, and the Morgan Library. What those buildings stand for is a far cry from the computerized facility that is today devoted to "information storage and retrieval." So, too, are their academic buildings monuments to an educational ideal of *paideia* that is rapidly being replaced and obliterated by the new emphasis upon quantification, objectivity, and technical specialization. (I learned only last week that a distinguished professor of history at Columbia declares that "the product that universities produce is information.") Members of McKim's optimistic generation probably found it easy to believe that the secular university could assume the role that had once been played

by the church and by church-founded schools in defending and maintaining the old ethical and intellectual ideals—to believe that the library could become the central symbol of the preservation of *sapientia* (so different from *scientia*) among civilized men. If so, they put their trust in a frail reed, for the word "wisdom" is no longer heard among today's academics, nor do our universities any longer regard it as their prime function to educate young persons to play the part of the responsible gentleman (or gentlewoman) in the life of the community. (cf. Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* [Knopf, 1977].)

In his epilogue Professor Roth raises the question as to "what the work of such architects as McKim, Mead & White might teach the next generation of builders," but he does not attempt to answer his question. For myself, I should be inclined to say, "Everything or nothing." One cannot learn a little bit from the Boston Public Library and apply it to a building designed at a computer station; one must either accept or reject McKim's *modus cogitandi*, which, like that of all classical architects, depends heavily upon a recognition of the primacy of the word (*logos*), in virtue of which all the building's parts have names and are arranged according to an agreed-upon grammar or syntax, and upon acceptance of the idea that creative freedom can meaningfully be exercised only within an established framework or shared frame of reference. There was a time when the very existence of a public library bore upon such ideas and the maintenance of such a frame of reference.

One need only stand in Copley Square and look around in order to see that the meanings that Richardson and McKim meant to avow, it matters little whether in Romanesque or Renaissance style, have been defiantly disavowed by the erection of I. M. Pei's monument to an arid, bureaucratized, and "value-free" technologism, a wordless monolith, outrageously out of scale with the humane proportions and purposes of those older buildings beneath it. In every American city the presence of such curtain-walled skyscrapers makes manifest those deep-seated changes of outlook, at least on the part of university-trained architects and managers, that make it almost unimaginable that anyone should ever again erect masonry buildings in the classical orders on the streets and in the squares of our cities. Though they may not have intended to do so, it is good that Messrs. Roth and Wilson should now remind us of how much we have lost, of how great a price we have had to pay, in order to enter the Age of the Computer.

McKim, Mead & White, Architects, Leland M. Roth, Harper & Row, 1983, 441 pp., illus., \$40.00.

McKim, Mead & White, Architects, Richard Guy Wilson, Rizzoli, 1983, 238 pp., illus., \$35.00.

Spiro Kostof:

THE TREADMILL OF HISTORY

It was, of course, inevitable. The Return of the Prodigal Past, in its Post-Modern guise, was bound to spawn popular histories of architecture. There was that newfound urgency of survey courses in architecture schools to capitalize on, the curiosity of reformed, history-minded architects to satisfy.

And spawn it did—nearly a score of general histories, of one sort or another, published on both sides of the Atlantic in the last decade or so. Several more are now in preparation or production. Sometimes there is more than one such volume by the same author: Patrick Nuttgens's *Story of Architecture* follows his *Pocket Guide to Architecture* of 1980 and a volume he edited in the same year called *The World's Great Architecture*. Sometimes one of these volumes gets reissued by a different publisher under a different name when it has barely had a chance to become known. Cyril M. Harris's *Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture* is a republication of his *Historic Architecture Sourcebook* of 1977; Herbert Pothorn's *Architectural Styles* is a reincarnation of his *Styles of Architecture*, which goes back to 1971.

This may not seem like much for such a vast and important subject, but it is a lot more than we had in the preceding forty years. The two most popular pre-Return histories are still Sir Banister-Fletcher's *History of Architecture on the Comparative Method* and Sir Nikolaus Pevsner's *Outline of European Architecture*. The one was written a little less than a century ago (the first edition appeared in 1896); the other, just forty years ago. If you except one or two others since Pevsner, like R. Furneaux Jordan's *Concise History of Western Architecture* of 1969, these have been the most widely used accounts of our built past. Now the floodgates are open.

Fletcher's *History* was revised steadily by its author, and by others after his death in 1953. Presently in its 18th edition, it is still up-to-date and useful, even though nothing much of Fletcher is left in it except those great drawings done by an anonymous draftsman in his office. The drawings were probably the key element in the long success of the book: quickly assimilable graphic material has always appealed to architecture students interested in history. The book's encyclopedic coverage was probably another factor—any building or architect you could think of could be found mentioned in its pages, however briefly. There was also something of the culture of each period there, something of the geography and climate, the religion, and the social and historical influences.

Pevsner's success is brevity—and brevity based on one aspect of architecture alone, style. "Architecture," he wrote in his introduction to the *Outline*, "is not the product of

materials and purposes—nor by the way of social conditions—but of the changing spirits of changing ages." That spirit became manifest in the one prevailing style of each age. So Pevsner gave us a clear, seemingly inevitable arrangement of monuments strung along on the basis of formal resemblances. And the *Outline* kept its character despite several revisions, especially those in 1951, 1957, and 1960, which expanded the pre-medieval section and added an American postscript and a brief account of the period from 1914 to the mid-century. Pevsner was, to the end, unrepentant about his formalist approach, and proud of that celebrated statement about Lincoln Cathedral and the bicycle shed.

Why, we should ask, are we now being treated to this new crop of histories? Obviously, the market looks good. With Pevsner dead, the fate of the *Outline* is uncertain. There is some sense, too, that a new era of architectural history has arrived. We have to contend with Post-Modernism of course; but also Post-Modernists have been looking for inspiration in buildings that do not correspond exactly to the canon of classical histories. Charles Moore is interested in Mexican places, Oak Bluffs, Little Venice, and William Mooser's Santa Barbara County Courthouse; Robert Venturi, in *Complexity and Contradiction*, has made Mannerism of all ages *de rigueur*. More broadly, trends since the decline of the International Style indicate the need for a new kind of history. These trends include a heightened curiosity about non-European traditions; an interest in the vernacular and in typology (both quite variously interpreted); in contextualism à la Krier and Rowe; in a history of use and social ritual; and in the economic and social mantle of architecture in general, as it has begun to be presented expertly in books like Richard Goldthwaite's *The Building of Renaissance Florence*. How well do these new histories respond to all this? Quite poorly, I am afraid. Let me try to be specific.

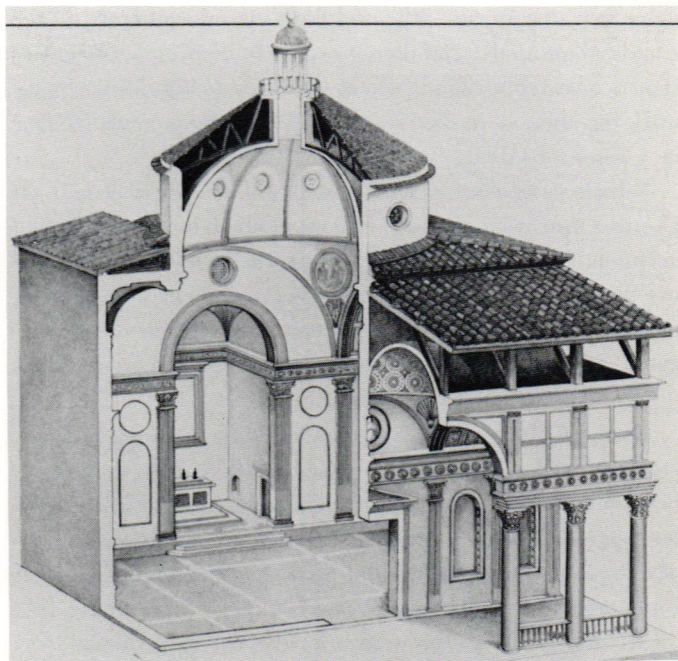
To begin on a positive note: taken as a group, these histories are much more conscious of non-Western architecture than the older histories. They show the willingness not just to deal with Asian, Muslim, and pre-Columbian environments, but also to see these less as something discrete (and often, at least by implication, slightly inferior), and more as genuine alternatives. As a concession to this universalism, the authors are willing to interrupt the customary grand sequence of Western styles, even if the logic is not always transparent. Nuttgens, for example, inserts "Islam" between his chapters on "Romanesque" and "Gothic"; Stephen Gardiner follows up "Baroque and Rococo" with "Indian Asia" and "China and Japan," before returning to the West with a chapter on "Georgian." Harris's excellent dictionary is filled with non-Western terms—*parastara*, *Himeji Jō*, *dynka*, *ch'uan tzū*, *sōbō*, *liu li*, *kidan*, *imam-zadeh*—and the Russian nomen-

clature of building parts is a striking concession that architecture, too, can profit from détente. Calvin Straub goes so far as to put a drawing of a Chinese mosque on the cover of his book.

Straub's *The Man-Made Environment* is, in fact, the most ecumenical of the recent histories, with chapters on the architecture of Morocco, Nepal, and Bhutan. Turning the tables on the usual practice of collapsing millennial cultures like those of Japan, China, or Egypt into a few pages, Straub has a brief chapter, between one on the Greco-Roman world and another on "The Architecture of Russia and the U.S.S.R.," entitled "The 'Western World' of Europe: The Fifth to Nineteenth Centuries." This radical reallocation of the historical material would make Straub's history a prototype for a new kind of survey; but, alas, the book is quite off-balance in every direction, and as hortatory and inspirational as a regulation commencement address: "What a wonderful and beautiful world it is that we live in and are surrounded by! . . . This is your environment. . . . We must not forget that this is the only world we have, and that we are the people who can preserve it and make it beautiful and good—for ourselves and all of mankind!" And so it continues, fairly bristling with hundreds of exclamation marks, breathless to the end.

Straub, in his introduction, sets up a working frame, specifying the determinants of form as "climatic environmental," "geophysical environmental," "technological," "economic," "political," "religious," and, above all, "the spirit of the times." But the discussion of historical instances does not begin to account for this ambitious apparatus. In political terms, for example, Straub explains the Florentine urban palace as follows: "There was no practical, functional reason for [its] height; even on horseback, the prince wasn't that tall! Its purpose was clearly symbolic. He was the most important, the 'biggest' man in the city—and his house told the world he was!" You get the point. With no index (despite twelve blank pages at the back where perhaps it was meant to go) and with capsule entries that would disappoint even devotees of Michelin guides (of Chartres we are told, *in toto*: "Considered one of the greatest examples of medieval Gothic architecture. Remarkable for its 130 stained glass windows and fine sculpture."), the book seems barely adequate for high school, although the dedication to the author's students at Arizona State University implies that his efforts were meant for a more advanced level.

The vernacular does get a nod in these new histories, but usually as a separate item quickly disposed of early on to open the way for the march of monuments. In *The Story of Architecture*, Patrick Nuttgens gives us two or three pages on the subject accompanied by as many pictures—a Taos



FILIPPO BRUNELLESCHI'S PAZZI CHAPEL, S. CROCE, FLORENCE, 1429-1461. DRAWN BY DICK BARNARD. FROM GARDINER, *INSIDE ARCHITECTURE*.

pueblo, a reed hut on the Tigris, the Red Lion Hotel at Weobley—and then proceeds with a clear conscience to "the story of *great architecture*" (his italics). Reid is troubled. His title, *The Book of Buildings*, sounds full of promise: perhaps he will dispense with Pevsnerian distinctions altogether, you imagine, or even ignore the *monuments* for a change. But no. He explains straightaway that "building came first, then the decorated building and finally architecture," this last being "a qualitative term for buildings of a particular excellence." Though we are promised a book "about buildings and not just architecture," it turns out to be basically the same old catalogue of monuments, with the occasional medieval cottage or barn thrown in.

Actually, *The Book of Buildings* is not intended as a history, but rather as a topographical guide for Europe and North America, listing and illustrating buildings worth seeing. It is divided into four sections—"Ancient/Classical," "Byzantine/Medieval," "Modern/Classical" (mid-15th to early 19th century), and "Modern." Within each, the gazetteer is organized by country, and within that, by geographic area: "Northern England," "Greek Islands," etc. Many entries are illustrated, all in the same drawing style, and each of the four sections receives a brief introduction. But do not expect

many new discoveries—the odd buildings absent from all the standard manuals; and do not expect to be directed to entire streets or neighborhoods where the standard buildings might work together, or in conjunction with the monuments, to give us a sense of fabric.

Which is of course what contextualism is all about. It assumes two related attitudes, as applied to the writing of architectural history: first, architecture and urbanism are inseparable and must be discussed together; and second, monuments have a physical context, be it natural or man-made, and should not be presented as if they had an existence quite independent of their surroundings.

On both these counts, the books under review are safely old-fashioned. They are not sure what to do about urbanism, beyond including programs of urban design that have never been *excluded* from architectural history—monumental bits of urbanism like the Piazza of St. Peter's or the crescents at Bath, attributable to "name" architects and planners. One might find a paragraph or two on the "medieval town"—as if it were possible to identify such a thing—but not a word, say, about newly planted towns or bastides, of which there were hundreds; and no talk of urban process, the slow, unremarkable and unsung transformation of great classical cities—the grids of Barcelona or Florence, for example, or the vast stone construct of the Campus Martius in Rome—into viable medieval patterns of modest scale and drastically altered social and political structure. The kind of general history represented by Vincent Scully's *American Architecture and Urbanism* is clearly a long way from becoming normative.

Meanwhile, in plan the key monuments continue to be presented as if in the middle of nowhere. Two of the books under review are entirely devoted to this kind of graphic information. One, *Drawings of Great Buildings*, the work of students at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago, uses a uniform scale—as did a book published twenty years ago called *Building Footprints*. That was, as the title implies, a collection of ground plans alone; the IIT product includes sections and elevations.

The second book, Henri Stierlin's *Encyclopedia of World Architecture*, goes back to 1977, but was reissued in paperback only last year. It, too, uses conventional drawings, with a smattering of isometric and axonometric projections, but it is much more complete. The selection of non-Western monuments is generous; in fact, they take up about half the book. We should recall that Stierlin was the editor of that elegant series of the sixties, *Living Architecture*, which dedicated individual volumes to India, Japan, China, Islamic India, Ottoman Turkey, and two to Meso-America. The same people who planned the *Living Architecture* series—Jose Canosa, Georges Berthoud, Andreas Volwahsen and Gerd Mader—

are listed as the authors of the *Encyclopedia* drawings. A quick spot check reveals these to be, in fact, the very same *Living Architecture* drawings, recycled in a new format without informing the user that this is the case. A short final segment, "International Architecture," is new, since there was no modern volume in the original series; but the drawings in this section simply reproduce what can be found in the published work of the relevant architects. Even so, this is a welcome volume. It expands the predictable family of monuments, not only with the unfamiliar non-Western repertoire made easily accessible, but also with unusual Western examples like the Necromanteion at Ephyra, a Roman oilmill at Brisganum (North Africa), the Bizzos church at Roueih, Syria, and S. Vincente in Cardona, Spain.

The point I am trying to make, however, is that the kind of information these drawings convey is standard stuff: nothing much on structure, or on the architectural details (like doorways, windows, or capitals) that fed the comparative method of Fletcher; and hardly any context to the plans except for an infrequent diagram of a city like Carcassonne or Tim-gad. It surprises me how unadventurous, on the whole, the graphic material is in all of these new histories. Gardiner's cutaway drawings are striking, largely because of the color, but they are really closer to photographs than drawings, and make us admire anew the superb art of those Auguste Choisy axonometrics of more than a hundred years ago.

Only two books stand out graphically and contextually. *The Architecture of the Western World*, edited by Michael Raeburn, is extremely handsome, with carefully selected, high-quality images; moreover, Raeburn has made an effort to include drawings—some old, others specially prepared—that help us see how the buildings are constructed, how they work physically. Bill Riseboro is something else. The 125 or so sheets of drawings in *The Story of Western Architecture* are a *tour de force* of sorts. A reviewer of his more recent book, on modern architecture, commenting on Riseboro's presentation method,* remarked on his "prolific rapidograph." It is also at work in this earlier volume, busily composing sheets entitled "Imperial Petersburg" (the famous palaces but also a peasant village in the snow), "Industrial Society in the 19th Century" (little figures representing the monarchy, agricultural workers, etc., linked by very determined arrows, a coal mine in Northumberland, the Bessemer converter), and "La Dolce Vita" (the Torre Velasca and the Pirelli building in Milan, an Ignazio Gardella house on the Zattere in Venice, the Rinascente store in Rome, a section through a 1963 villa by Pastor and Salvarani in Reggio Emilia).

These are not great drawings, but they communicate a large amount of information easily and rapidly in that cap-

tioned sketchbook style of architects that must make Riseboro's books dear to the professional student. The fact that one-third of his *Story* is devoted to the period since 1850 should be an additional attraction. I am not sure about his prophetic pronouncements, or their place in a history of architecture: "Our present system, based on exploitation and profligate consumption, will eventually fail. . . . The future, as in the 12th century, in 1789 and in 1917, lies with the progressive elements of society, and it may still be possible for an enlightened group to ensure a humane future." But I prefer them to the gushings of a Straub, and the rich harvest of platitudes that pass for social and cultural summation in most of the new histories.

I must dwell on this subject just a little, for it is the most disquieting side of the books under review. By and large, matters of political, social, or economic import are reduced to mere filling. Snippets of this and that are sprinkled haphazardly, cluttering the single-line narrative, and making it aimless and even more superficial than it would have been if the authors had stuck to one subject, like style or structure.

The books commonly make pretentious claims. Nuttgens's *Story of Architecture* purports to answer the question, "Why is it like that?" His treatment, however, does not begin to suggest the many elements that come into play in the shaping of a particular building, the lush complexity of architectural culture. For example, he describes the 700 years after the decline of the Roman empire in these words: "What had happened was that in the course of the several centuries that preceded the millennium, those barbarian hordes we saw in the Dark Ages devastating cities and destroying culture had undergone a transformation. They had not only settled down, they had gradually become peoples whose leaders, in partnership with the Church, were to establish a new order—Medieval Christendom." Now this comic strip view of history explains nothing, least of all architecture. It reduces complicated historical processes to baby talk, as a food processor, run too long, will reduce crisp, fresh ingredients into uniform mush. On the period from 1880 to 1920 Nuttgens comments:

It was an exciting, almost hysterical time. In both Europe and America cities grew, and sophisticated technology developed at amazing speed. Music and the visual arts were as lively as at any time in history. In Europe it was almost as if everyone was waiting for a storm, a cataclysm, which indeed broke with the Great War of 1914-1918. It was an age of apprehension. But if there was a nervous excitement in Europe, there was a growing self-confidence in America. The mounting confidence of a rich nation aware that its resources could buy almost anything was irrepressible.

That's all there is by way of a historical summary of forty

crucial years of the modern epoch. If this is the only way we are able to add a full dimension to the discussion of historic buildings, we should stop trying, and confine our discourse to sticks and stones.

Too often the business of a "story," of why architecture is the way it is, degenerates into occasional anecdotal tidbits, like the one Nuttgens tells in relation to the statue of Ste-Foy, that "the little martyr who refused to give her body to a lewd and pagan emperor was, ironically, honoured by being decorated with the gold mask of a fifth-century emperor's face by Pope Boniface." Social history sinks to the level of passages like this one on the Romanesque period: "Light was primitive, perhaps mercifully so, since, until the thirteenth century, when soap became more common, people were not very clean." Pevsner's abstinence is much preferable, it seems to me, than these attempts to write "fuller" histories.

Preferable, certainly, to Pothorn's recycled *Architectural Styles*, which wastes the few pages at its disposal for each historical period with what the *New Yorker* likes to call "Random Notes from All Over." Had the author kept to style in the narrowest possible sense of the term, we might conceivably have had a useful book. Instead, of the three pages devoted to the entire Aegean culture of pre-Greek centuries, one goes to Schliemann and Evans, and one to the Minotaur. The five pages on Egypt are eaten up by Champollion, Nasser and the Aswan dam, and a dubious account of Cheops and astronomy. It is arguable that summary beyond a certain limit cannot communicate. Palladio receives two sentences in the text; otherwise, he can be found in a caption and in the glossary, where we are told he "originated the 'Palladian' style—Roman architectural forms used in a severe, yet grand way." The two sentences devoted to San Vitale talk of its "white marble capitals"—period.

At the same time, this perverse little book is full of opinionated claptrap. It perpetuates that hoary judgment, old as the hills and true as a tale of Baron von Münchhausen, that the Romans "remained imitators of the Hellenic genius, never managing to produce anything to rival the Acropolis of Athens." This, by the way, is an opinion shared by others in the batch (Nuttgens thinks the Romans "were not a particularly inventive people" and their architecture "was directed to immediate practical purposes rather than to aesthetic satisfaction"), as though Frank Brown, J. B. Ward-Perkins, William MacDonald, Hanz Kähler, and a host of other Roman scholars of the first rank had never written.

Pothorn doesn't think much of Hellenistic architecture, either. He says "modern taste" sees it "as the adornment, as it were, of Roman imperialism—by no means always noble and sometimes downright vulgar." As for the 19th century, his contempt for the revivals makes Gropius look like a rabid

historicist: "During this period theatres were known as temples of the Muses. Alas, poor Muses!" If this is what Pothorn calls "the science of stylistics," there might be a legal argument for banning it outright. As architectural history it ranks with Druids building Stonehenge and the galactic origins of the ground drawings in the Nazca Plain of Peru.

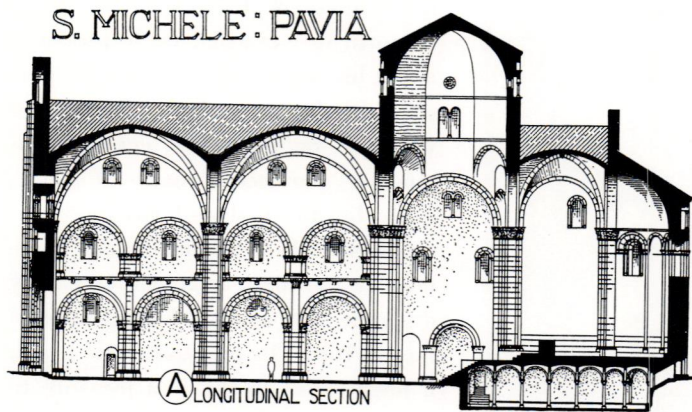
Two grossly abused concepts motivate these new histories, each initially an elaborate system of thought which slowly declined into cliché. One is that architecture is a clear expression of the society that produced it, and can therefore be "read" unequivocally. The other is the ultimately Hegelian formulation of the *Zeitgeist*. This is not the place to review once again the problems inherent in these concepts, or the obstacles they have raised to a genuine exploration of architectural culture. But, reading through these new histories, I am compelled to say at least this much: architecture is a vehicle of cultural expression only in proportion to our own knowledge of the culture involved; in other words, you can "read" architecture only to the extent that you are yourself broadly informed about literature, religion, political history, economic history. And the *Zeitgeist*, if it is to mean anything at all, has to be articulated through a similarly broad and thorough investigation of the particular society under scrutiny. Otherwise, we are doomed to mouthing banalities which had, once, perhaps, a noble pedigree.

We are doomed to warble like Stephen Gardiner in his *Inside Architecture*, somehow believing that we are giving out the essence of things. On China and Japan he states: "The chief differences between the Chinese and the Japanese styles of architecture emerge from the Chinese preoccupation with man and the Japanese preoccupation with nature and man"; on Greece: "The Greeks, while recognizing human failings, believed man could achieve the greatest heights on all sides of life, an optimistic view which is somehow imparted at the Athenian Acropolis"; on the English: "there is no question that the English have a remarkable talent in adopting the grand ideas of others in a universally acceptable manner." And so on. This from a book that professes to be interested in architecture as "a visual art" and proposes to help us "recognize quality in design"; a book that says it is not its business to tell us what we should feel or how we should respond to buildings, and then proceeds to sow superlatives liberally on every page, even to calibrate them ("The Acropolis in Athens was a great architectural conception; at Bath we find a less great conception"). If Gardiner wants to help us to see, he should begin by reading Rasmussen's old, masterful *Towns and Buildings*, again and again, before venturing into the open.

Perhaps the most treacherous pitfall in seeking the *Zeitgeist* and hitching it to architectural styles is that a unity of

formal expression has to be postulated for every age. This forces the architectural historian to ignore the evidence of pluralism of form, to suppress all signs of uncooperative variety, and to treat time spans of many centuries as though they formed an unchanging, still pattern like a tapestry on a wall. Roman architecture is this and such, we say, speaking of a historical chunk of time that lasted one thousand years and more, from the founding of Rome in the eighth century B.C. to the disintegration of the Roman empire in the fourth or fifth centuries A.D. The case of Islam is similar. To try to codify an "Islamic" style is as futile as to speak of "the Christian style." And yet we try, darting back and forth from the Alhambra to Baghdad to Isfahan, summing it all up triumphantly in a sentence for all seasons: "There is no doubt that Islamic architecture was inspired by the effect strong sunshine has on shapes and carvings and stucco mouldings in relief, emphasizing hollows, shadows, knife edges and raised areas and making them appear even more stunningly extravagant" (Nuttgens). We coin glib, shorthand characterizations: Islam is "tent-like," the Romanesque is "fortress-like." We make of the Middle Ages, all one thousand years worth, "the bridge between the ancient world and the emergence of modern Europe" (Raeburn). We are good at inventing myths of unchanging traditions: Egypt, we long ago convinced ourselves, against all visible proof, kept on standing still architecturally speaking. "Styles changed little throughout the long history of Egyptian architecture." (Pothorn). Nuttgens does not hesitate to extend this notion of stylistic arrest to the entire East. "While the Western world romped its way through all sorts of styles and modes of buildings, [India, Southeast Asia, China, etc.] often remained at the same level for many centuries." "Mesopotamia," on the other hand, is a disappointment; it seems to have had the bad grace not to have been able to develop a characteristic style for historians to recognize. No wonder we despair of a stylistic approach for this region's architecture, when it is not uncommon to lump together everything from Sumer to the Sasanians under some umbrella-name like "the ancient Near East." Nuttgens's chapter, fancifully called "Barbaric Splendour," throws in the Hittites and Mycenaeans for good measure, thus trying to exact some sort of logical sense from an area that stretches from the Indus Valley to the Adriatic, and has a history spanning over nine millennia, from about 8000 B.C. to the sixth century A.D.

This sort of frantic publishing activity does not, in my view, advance the cause of history, or help architectural students or practicing architects. Those of us who teach history in schools of architecture have to respond regularly to the question: "Of what use is history to the architect?" This has to be answered with another question: "What kind of his-



S. MICHELE, PAVIA, CIRCA 1117. FROM FLETCHER, *A HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURE ON THE COMPARATIVE METHOD*.

tory?" The content of the books under review merely gilds ignorance. We need new histories. We have not had an economic history of architecture; we have not attempted a good social history since Arnold Hauser. Marxist historians press the theory on us, but have as yet to show that their account of world architecture is substantially different from the run-of-the-mill history. Again, Christian Norberg-Schulz, in *Meaning in Western Architecture*, forcefully advances a phenomenological way of looking at architectural history that marries Heidegger and Piaget, and provides an interesting framework for understanding the process of symbolization and how it relates to architectural form. But when applied to the historical material, the theory serves merely as a brand new suitcase for old belongings. And speaking of suitcases, we also need a history of architecture as an aspect of material culture. Victoria Klossball makes a stab at it in a well-meaning, gentle book, *Architecture and Interior Design*, which is unhappily doomed from the start by its decision to treat architecture and interior design separately. The model for this kind of material history, provided by Alan Gowans in his *Images of American Living* (J. B. Lippincott, 1964), has yet to be adopted for a general world survey of architecture.

One wishes some ground rules existed for such world surveys. Perhaps it is foolhardy today, with the vast literature that has piled up in the last three or four decades, for any historian to undertake alone the task of writing the history of architecture from Lascaux to Bofill. Perhaps Raeburn's history, in which each chapter is written by a specialist, is

the way to go. Personally, I do not believe this need be the case, if one takes either of two options: to stay with one theme—structure, economics, use—and cover the whole spectrum of history; or, to stay with a relative handful of buildings and places and discuss them fully from all angles, telling the reader really why they are the way they are. Whichever the choice, we have to rethink the notion of architectural history as the roll call of architects and their masterpieces. We have to start documenting the building process in all its formidable intricacies.

It is a great, still largely untold story. In recent years architectural historians have produced a lot of good work that has stretched the limits of our field. But a lot of information is also available from other disciplines—social and political history, anthropology, urban geography—if only we would break the habit of getting all our sustenance from architects and architectural historians, if only we would search for a wider circle of knowledge. With so much fresh, exciting material to gather and summarize, there is ultimately no excuse for this vast, movable feast of half-warmed leftovers.

*DBR 4, pp. 45-49. *Modern Architecture and Design: An Alternative History*, reviewed by Doug Suisman.

Drawings of Great Buildings/Zeichnungen grösser Bauen, Werner Blaser, editor, Birkhäuser, Basel, 1983, 175 pp., illus. (no U.S. price available).

Inside Architecture, Stephen Gardiner, Prentice-Hall, 1983, 128 pp., illus., \$8.95 pb.

Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture, Cyril M. Harris, editor, Dover, reissued 1983, 581 pp., illus., \$14.95 pb.

Architecture and Interior Design, Victoria Klossball, Wiley, 1980, 2 volumes, 890 pp., illus., cloth \$100.00; paper \$59.95.

The Story of Architecture, Patrick Nutgens, Prentice-Hall, 1983, 288 pp., illus., cloth \$26.95; paper \$20.95.

Architectural Styles: An Historical Guide to World Designs, Herbert Pothorn, Facts on File, 1982, 255 pp., illus., \$8.95 pb.

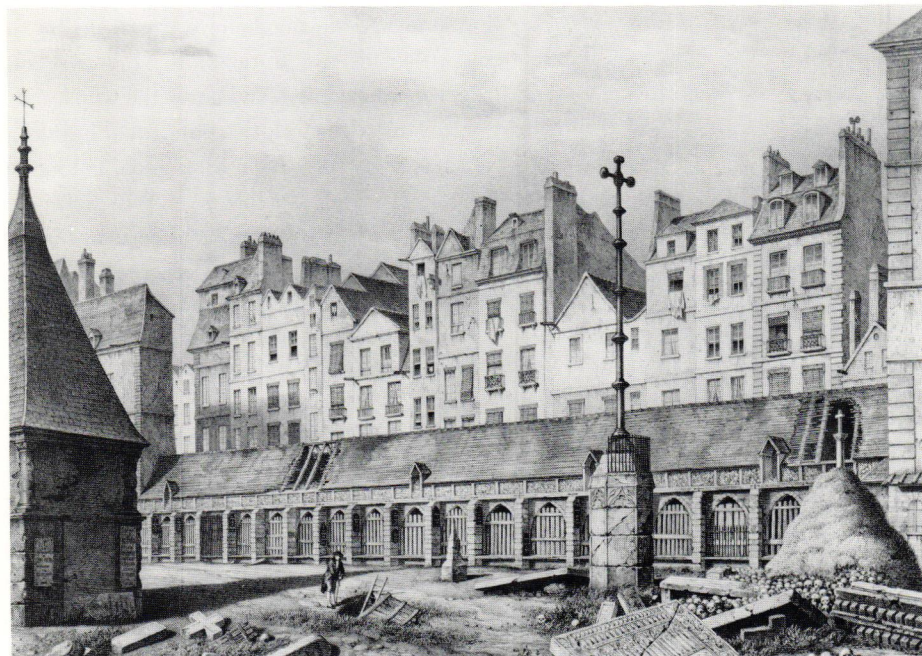
The Architecture of the Western World, Michael Raeburn, editor, Rizzoli, 1982, 304 pp., illus., cloth \$37.50; paper \$19.95.

The Book of Buildings: Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance and Modern Architecture of North America and Europe, Richard Reid, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1983, 448 pp., illus., \$13.50 pb.

The Story of Western Architecture, Bill Riseboro, Herbert Press, London, 1979, 272 pp., illus., £8.95.

Encyclopedia of World Architecture, Henri Stierlin, Van Nostrand Reinhold, reissued 1983, 416 pp., illus., \$17.50 pb.

The Man-Made Environment: An Introduction to World Architecture and Design, Calvin C. Straub, Kendall-Hunt, Dubuque, 1983, 233 pp., illus., \$15.95 pb.



CEMETERY OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS, PARIS. VIEW BY BERNIER, 1786. FROM ETLIN, *ARCHITECTURE OF DEATH*. (COLLECTION: BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS, COURTESY OF RICHARD ETLIN)

Robin Middleton: MEMENTO MORI

Death has been the subject of a surprising number of books in the past few years—the more surprising because the theme of several is that death, as a cultural expression, has been virtually effaced in the West. Clearly, it is still a subject of high interest. Of the books reviewed here, one at least is of central importance, Philippe Ariès's *The Hour of Our Death* (first published in French in 1977 as *L'homme devant la mort*). The range of this book is extraordinary, but throughout there is the firmest control; facts seem to be drawn from myriad sources and from the whole span of history, but one receives nevertheless a clear impression of the author's belief as to how attitudes toward death have changed in the Western world, from at least the early Middle Ages to the present. The base, so to speak, is provided by the accounts of death in the *Chanson de Roland*,

but all manner of other histories, wills, and epitaphs are adduced to chart the subtle changes in the Western assessment of death. Ariès is especially illuminating in his analysis of the relationships between status and place of burial, whether within the church—and where exactly within the church—or without, in the churchyard or, at a later period, in an outlying cemetery. The notion of the place and how it is identified are, of course, intimately related to contemporaneous beliefs and attitudes; the very word cemetery once had different connotations from those we give it today. The cemetery, either within the church or without, was once regarded as the center of all communal activity, all communal life. The living and the dead were intimately connected. Ariès is even able to speculate that the origins of the town square in Paris were in the Cimetière des Saints-Innocents, surrounded as it was with arcaded charnel houses, rather than in the monastery cloister, as is usually thought. He is at all times alert to new

interpretations of this kind, but there is nothing wayward or haphazard about his central thesis, which he pursues with determination and vigor, and which is, on the whole, entirely convincing—convincing, that is, if one accepts that his analysis holds good only for France. In England, though there may be parallels, attitudes were very different, and so also, I suspect, were they in Italy. His book, curious though it might seem to say, is a pleasure to read.

Michel Ragon's *Space of Death*, though more concerned with the artifacts and the architecture related to death, aspires to something of the scope of Ariès's study; indeed its range is even wider, extending eastward and including also the works of primitive tribes, etc. But it offers no thesis, no grasp of the heterogeneous range of information contained therein and can be recommended, if at all, only for browsing.

Ariès writes kindly of Richard Etlin's *The Architecture of Death* on the dust jacket, and this work is indeed a helpful addendum to that of Ariès; but in comparison it is dull and lackluster, oddly unmindful of many of the implications of Ariès's analysis. Etlin does not, in fact, analyze the architecture of death; he itemizes and describes at some length the many projects for large and formal cemeteries produced by architects in France from 1765 (just after the passing of the first laws designed to remove all cemeteries—in particular the evil-smelling Cimetière des Saints-Innocents—from the center of Paris) to 1804, when A. T. Brongniart sketched the first proposal for the Père Lachaise cemetery in the form of a landscape park. The whole point of this history, it would seem, was that an architectural solution in the grand manner was not wanted for the new cemeteries. A more sentimental attitude toward death led to the adoption of the English landscape garden—in partic-

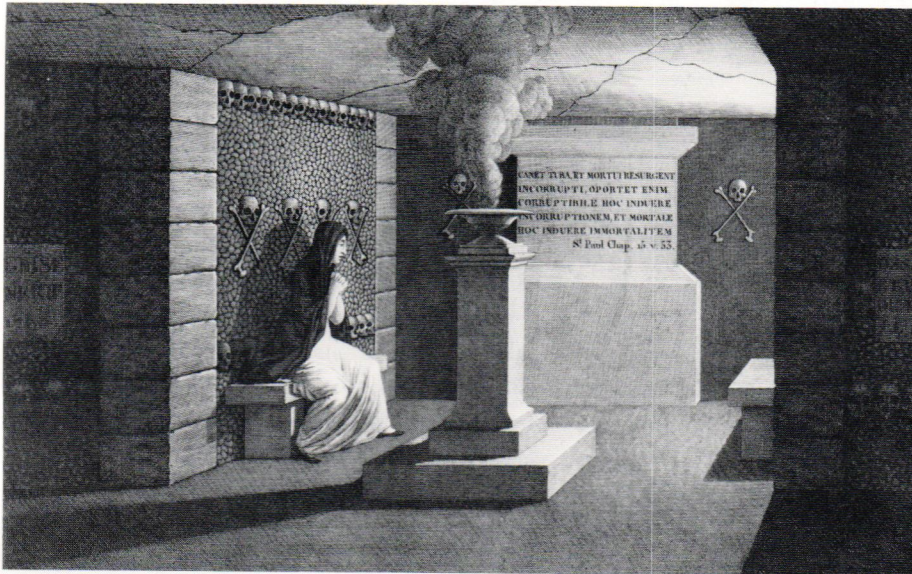
ular those at Stowe and the Leasowes, replete with their commemorative monuments—as the new model.

Etlin has certainly done a great deal of research; he is familiar with the legislation of the period, the endless reports and proposals, and also with the projects submitted, many of them hitherto unknown, and almost all of them illustrated here. Yet there is a failure to grasp the essential in his account, a lack of focus. Even in the detail he has

missed a few fine connections. Thomas Gray's links with Stowe, for instance, are apposite to his discussion; so also, one would think, is Brongniart's earlier design for an Elysée on the estate at Maupertuis—unstudied as yet, but in evidence on the estate maps of the period, in many engravings, and also in the Abbé Delille's doggerel verse. Curiously, though the Père Lachaise is the climax to Etlin's account, its early history remains blurred, and its later his-

tory, when the landscape garden was obliterated by tombs and sepulchers, is altogether ignored. Etlin diverts his attention instead to those American counterparts, Mount Auburn in Massachusetts, and Greenwood, Brooklyn, where the qualities of the landscape were reinforced as time went by.

A summary of Etlin's book appears in the form of an article in *Lotus*, number 38, which is devoted to the theme of the cemetery. Most of the articles in this issue (though not Etlin's, I hasten to say) are of that rhetorical, pretentious, and altogether unintelligible kind now thought acceptable for thinking architects; they are not worth reading. But the illustrated surveys of recent cemeteries in Italy (the dead now firmly separated from the living, as Ariès would note) make the whole a useful source of reference. Alessandro Anselmi's Altilia and Parabita cemeteries, Aldo Rossi's San Cataldo at Modena, and Carlo Scarpa's cemetery at San Vito di Altivole are all recorded in excellent photographs, and, in addition, there are reminders of the felicities of Lewerentz's work in the Woodland cemetery outside Stockholm and Plecnik's at Ljubjana (still too little known). The last article illustrates the living inhabiting the tombs of Cairo.



Top, CATACOMBS OF PARIS. VIEW BY CLOQUET IN HERICART DE THURY, *DESCRIPTION DES CATACOMBS DE PARIS*, 1815. AND, bottom, PILGRIM'S PATH, MOUNT AUBURN CEMETERY, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS. ORIGINALLY IN WALTER, *MOUNT AUBURN ILLUSTRATED*, 1847. BOTH FROM ETLIN, *ARCHITECTURE OF DEATH*. (COURTESY OF RICHARD ETLIN)

The Hour of Our Death, Philippe Ariès, translated by Helen Weaver, Random House, 1982, xviii + 651 pp., illus., cloth \$20.00; paper \$9.95.

The Space of Death: A Study of Funerary Architecture, Decoration, and Urbanism, Michel Ragon, translated by Alan Sheridan, University Press of Virginia, 1983, 336 pp., illus., \$20.00.

The Architecture of Death: The Transformation of the Cemetery in Eighteenth-Century Paris, Richard A. Etlin, MIT, 1984, 464 pp., illus., \$37.50.

Lotus International, #38: Funerary Architecture, edited by Pierluigi Nicolini, Electa (distributed by Rizzoli), 1983, 128 pp., illus., \$20.00.

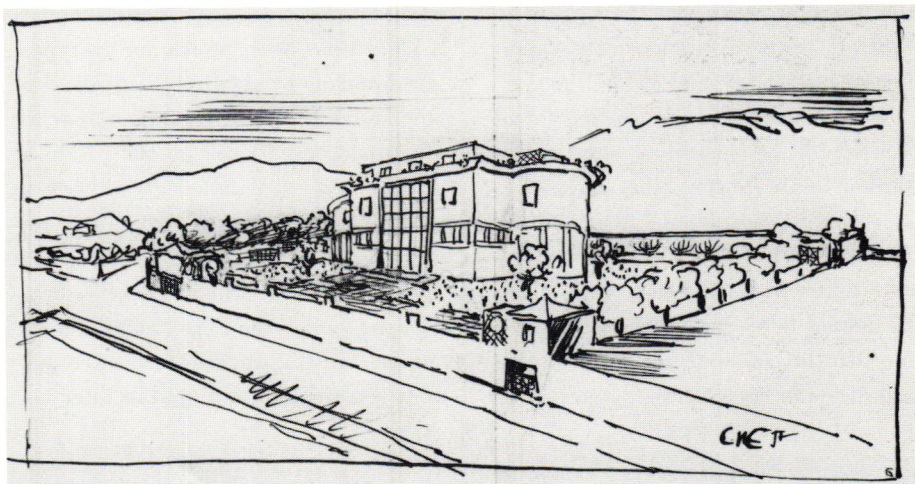
William J. R. Curtis:

THE LE CORBUSIER ARCHIVE

H. ALLEN BROOKS, editor

When Le Corbusier died in the summer of 1965 he left behind him a well-articulated version of his own history in the publications of the *Oeuvre Complète*, and an enormous fund of letters, sketchbooks, drawings, photographs, and models that he must have known would eventually disturb the overtidy picture. Including the work of generations of assistants, there were about 32,000 drawings in all. Eventually these were stored at the Fondation Le Corbusier in Paris. In the early 1970s some scholars were allowed to inspect the drawings firsthand for extended periods of time; I was among the fortunate ones. To sort through the piles of paper with their rich legacy of ideograms and hieroglyphs was to come a little closer to the mental world of the artist. Standard clichés dissolved away as one began to grasp the true intentions behind well-known works. The drawings allowed one to reconstruct the hesitations and hypotheses of Le Corbusier's design process.

It soon became obvious that the delicate drawings would fall apart if constantly handled. The Fondation Le Corbusier wisely embarked upon a program of preservation—photographing and cataloguing the entire collection. Drove of eager architecture students materialized around the tables of the Rue Nungesser et Coli and at the Square du Docteur Blanche, transcribing features of the drawings onto catalogue cards. Images were recorded on microfiches. The scholar who visited the Fondation in the late 1970s found himself presented with a microfiche screen and a sketchy set of catalogue entries, some of them not entirely ac-



LE CORBUSIER, PERSPECTIVE, VILLA SCHWOB, CIRCA 1916. FROM *THE LE CORBUSIER ARCHIVE*, VOLUME 1 (FONDATION LE CORBUSIER #32111)

curate. It was exasperating to be separated from the primary evidence in this way, as one knew that some information essential to a full understanding was locked up with the drawings. Inscriptions offering vital clues to intentions were rarely transcribed. Light pencil jottings done by Le Corbusier on assistants' drawings often did not show up. Pinholes and tape marks, which aided reconstruction of the order of the day's work, also vanished. In certain cases, the separation of the images was blatantly misleading, as Le Corbusier occasionally worked on superimposed layers of thin onionskin trace. The beautiful, bold colored crayon lines of Le Corbusier's late drawings became dull and flat on the screen. As these colors served to signify various realities—circulation, greenery, fenestration exposed to the sun, etc.—significance was also sacrificed. Thus an entirely well-meaning conservation effort actually removed some primary evidence from direct view.

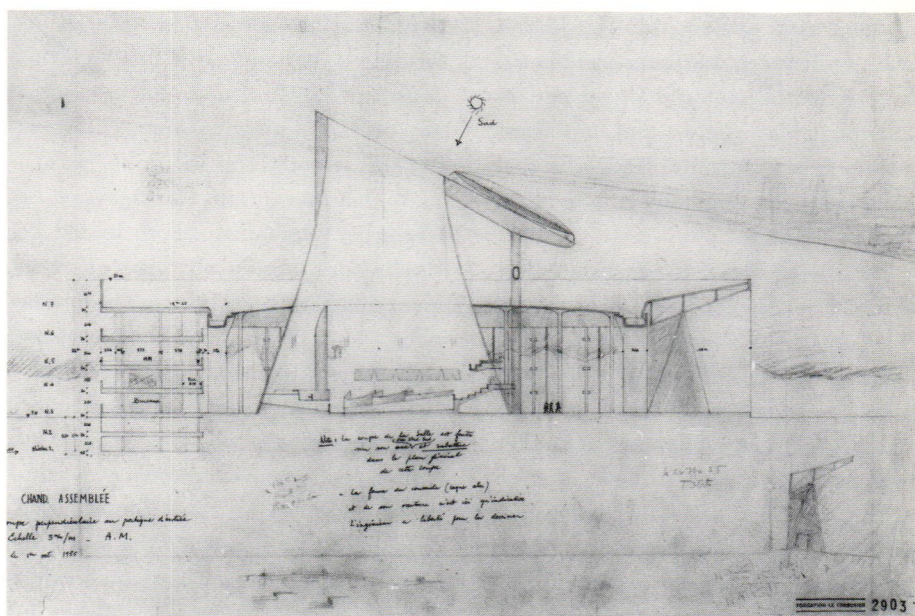
Sometime around 1980, Garland Publishing of New York contracted to reproduce the contents of the archive. In 1982 the first of 32 volumes appeared in hardback in a 9- \times -12-inch format. The last few volumes have still to appear. Taken together they make a

handsome set, although at close to \$200 a volume they may be thought pricey. Each volume contains black-and-white reproductions of drawings made directly from the microfiche transparencies. Some of these are full page, some half page or smaller. The volumes are bound in an off-white cloth vaguely reminiscent of Le Corbusier's *Oeuvre Complète*. The publisher claims that the paper will last 250 years and that only a limited edition has been produced. Any library that can afford to should therefore acquire the entire set, as the drawings provide a unique insight into Le Corbusier's method of work.

Unfortunately, the catalogue entries are separated from the illustrations in a prefatory part of each volume, which makes reference tedious. The Garland brochure claims that the set is the "latest in Le Corbusier scholarship." This is unlikely as the catalogue seems to reproduce the student work done in the mid-1970s, and does not reflect much of the detailed research done on the architect's drawings since then (e.g., Danièle Pauly's work on the drawings for Ronchamp, or the present author's detailed reconstruction of the design process of the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts in *Le Corbusier at Work, the Genesis of the Carpenter Center*

[Harvard, 1978]). Certainly there has been no attempt in the Garland volumes to emulate the thorough cataloguing approach of Patricia Sekler's study on Le Corbusier's earliest drawings. The standard Garland entry contains a title, a description, the scale, the signature, the latest date to appear on the drawing, the medium (ink, pencil, charcoal), the material (e.g., blue-print), the dimensions, and the Fondation Le Corbusier reference number. There are very few detailed transcriptions, and the oversimplified dating system prohibits a subtle handling of chronology, especially in cases where a drawing was made by various people over a few days. The descriptions are cryptic, so that one is often left to guess the real purpose of the drawing. The order of the images is also extremely confusing and only the slightest help is offered in reconstructing the actual sequence of the design. One suspects that some crucial hints for establishing chronology still lie with the original material, and that others may have been lost for good in the separation of wads of attached onionskins. Ultimately, of course, a proper catalogue raisonné will have to be undertaken by scholars completely immersed in the correspondence and context of each scheme. Ideally each entry will contain a thorough analysis of the function of each drawing, as well as arguments in favor of its placement in a sequence, reference to relevant publications and exhibitions, and a careful annotation of inscriptions, marks, stamps, and color codes employed.

If microfiche increases our distance from the artifact, black-and-white photographs prepared from microfiche render details even less distinct. Frankly, it is surprising how well the publishers have done, given the technical difficulties of working straight from microfiche negatives. Some of the images are quite stunning, for example



LE CORBUSIER. SECTION OF ASSEMBLY BUILDING, CHANDIGARH, 1950s. FROM *THE LE CORBUSIER ARCHIVE*, VOLUME 22. (FONDATION LE CORBUSIER #2903)

the sections through the Assembly Building at Chandigarh, the study plans for the Villa Savoie, or the pen and ink perspectives for the Villa Schwob. They draw one immediately into the terminology of the artist's private dream. They also reveal the wide range of graphic conventions employed in the atelier, and supply some clues concerning the master and his assistants. However, they can only provide part of the evidence of the design process. They need to be assessed alongside other species of doodles, models, sketchbooks, and reliable studio reminiscence. Incidentally, anyone expecting the high quality of reproduction established by the Architectural History Foundation's four-volume *Sketchbooks* will be disappointed by the Garland production. And what a pity it is that at least twenty or thirty colored drawings were not reproduced in each volume! In fact, the crucial issue of color is scarcely addressed at all, either by the authors of the essays or by the catalogue entries. This is another example of the way in which the Garland

publications simply reproduce certain limitations of what was undertaken as a crash referencing program rather than an attempt at a comprehensive catalogue of the sort that a Michelangelo, or a Wright, or a Le Corbusier deserves.

For many architects, students, and even historians these issues may not be crucial, of course. Now the casual browser can be spared the trouble of going to Paris and waiting his or her turn at the microfiche reader. Immense stimulus can be had from flipping through the pages and discovering the amazing transitional sketches of the Villa Stein or the finely drawn perspectives of the League of Nations. Even the scholar who wishes to dig deeper has his job made easier with the *Le Corbusier Archive* at his fingertips, for now he can select and isolate questions and evidence for further scrutiny.

The set is adorned with 17 essays by well-known historians, critics, and architects. Some of these offer fresh insights in and of themselves, though it can scarcely be claimed that they make

an integrated whole within the 32 volumes. Only rarely are the essays related directly to the material illustrated in that particular volume and only some of them were written by people with real experience of detailed work on the Fondation drawings.

H. Allen Brooks, the general editor of the series, begins with an essay on "Le Corbusier's Formative Years at La Chaux-de-Fonds." Much of this material is quite new and whets one's appetite for the long-announced further publication of Brooks's other research on this, the most murkily understood period of Le Corbusier's life. Alan Colquhoun and then Vincent Scully attempt sweeping interpretations of Le Corbusier that suffer from a lack of specificity, and which have virtually nothing to say about the ways in which drawings help one understand the architect. The latter article, despite the reiteration of a number of standard "Scullyisms," has some illuminating points to make about primitivism in Le Corbusier's late and middle work, including a fine characterization of the *Petite Maison de Weekend* of 1935 as an "elegant cavern, this ironic grotto half underground." Kenneth Frampton's piece on the League of Nations, the Centrosoyus, and the Palace of the Soviets re-rehearses some well-worn insights into the fusion of the mechanistic and the classical in major state schemes, but does at least link the interpretation loosely to the processes of design as seen through the drawings of these projects. Tim Benton's "Villa Savoye and the Architect's Practice" also adopts this sensible procedure. Benton seems mainly interested in the utilitarian aspects of the design and in establishing a clear chronology of schemes (his arguments here are scarcely conclusive). One laments, however, the lack of a more thorough discussion of Le Corbusier's aesthetic and symbolic intentions. After all, drawings may be

thought of as ciphers to a world of informing ideas. Volume 7, in which this essay appears, is supposed to eventually contain a piece by Michael Graves but this is not yet at the publisher's.

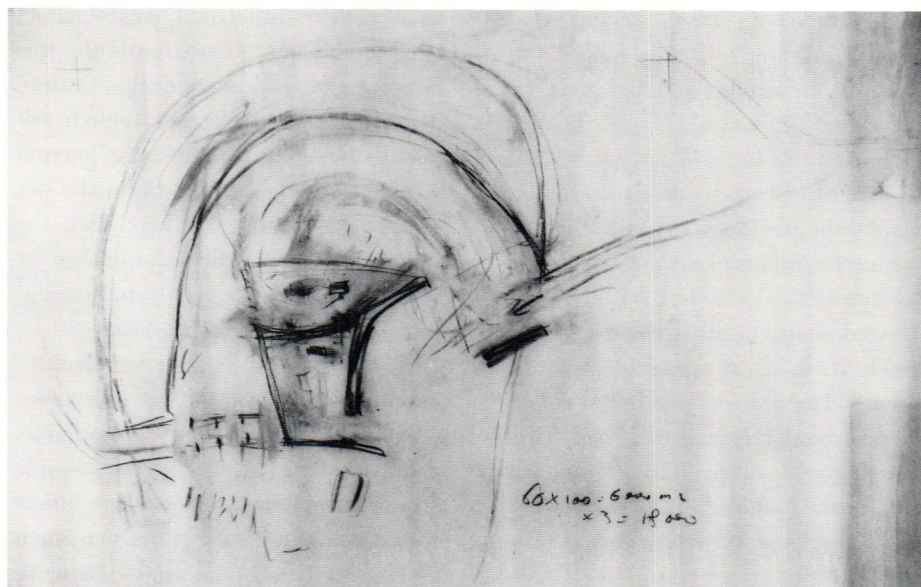
Volume 10 contains two essays on Le Corbusier's urbanism, both by old Le Corbusier "hands": Stanislaus Von Moos and Manfredo Tafuri. The former gives a slightly amended version of the succinct treatment he gave Le Corbusier's urbanism in his monograph years ago, but with the valuable addition of a discussion of the early and never published manuscript "La Construction des Villes" (written when the architect was still based in La Chaux-de-Fonds). Tafuri provides the usual *mélange* of insight and obfuscation, but without the customary ideological bullying from a Marxist perspective. He is perhaps most illuminating when dealing with the Algiers scheme and the artist's sensuous responses to the North African landscape and to local peasant vernaculars. Volume 15 contains yet another article on the city, this time by Norma Evenson. While this offers some useful general reflections, it too casts little light on the role of drawings in Le Corbusier's urban vision. Given Evenson's past insights and interests, one wonders why she was not asked to write something on Chandigarh, Le Corbusier's Indian city, especially as there are four volumes of drawings related to his Indian projects and realizations.

Next there are contributions by two of the architect's previous collaborators: André Wogensky, who writes on the philosophy behind the *Unité d'Habitation* at Marseilles, and Jerzy Soltan, who recalls "Working With Le Corbusier." The latter essay is a delight to read as it sheds light on the artist's creative method in the atelier and in his private painting studio. Soltan also has some pertinent things to say about the superficiality of various Corbusian academies that have reduced Le Cor-

busier's authentic vocabulary to mannerist exercises or frivolous formal games. He points out that to Le Corbusier drawings were a means of evoking profound unconscious content, and emphasizes the difference between merely beguiling graphic exploration and the plumbing of a deeper level of meaning grasped through intuition. Soltan's essay contains many charming and useful reminiscences, embracing details of the furniture arrangements in the atelier in the late forties and the inadequacies of Le Corbusier's mathematics. After this mass of fascinating information, and the depth of insight that comes with it, it is frankly tedious to come across an unaltered reprint of James Stirling's old-hat piece on Garches and Jaoul (first published nearly thirty years ago!).

In the same volume (20), Danièle Pauly writes on "The Chapel at Ronchamp as an Example of Le Corbusier's Design Process." This is a valuable analysis of Le Corbusier's creative procedure of transformation, and Pauly bases her arguments on a careful scrutiny of graphic evidence. She also has some worthwhile generalizations to make about the ways in which history inspired Le Corbusier; although a great innovator, he was also a profound traditionalist intent on reinvoking some of architecture's most lasting lessons.

Volume 21 contains an article by Reyner Banham on Le Corbusier's mass-housing ideas, which once again seems to have been written without much reflection on the drawings; while Charles Correa, in "Chandigarh; the View from Benares" (why not Goa or Bombay?), has some sketchy but vivid personal remarks to make about the pros and cons of Le Corbusier's Indian buildings. Peter Serenyi's scholarly synthesis, "Timeless but of its Time: Le Corbusier's Architecture in India," is a good complement to Correa. Serenyi's article explores the social and religious



PLAN OF CHAPEL, RONCHAMP, CIRCA 1951. FROM *THE LE CORBUSIER ARCHIVE*, VOLUME 20. (FONDATION LE CORBUSIER #7470)

milieu of Le Corbusier's Ahmedabad clients, and makes plausible interpretations concerning the inspiration that the artist received from Indian tradition. Evidently this is one of the most substantial contributions to the series.

The last six volumes—27 to 32—contain only one essay, by Ionnis Xenakis, the musician whose ideas may have stimulated Le Corbusier's own interest in analogies between musical and architectural harmony. According to his version, Xenakis also played a central role in the design of the monastery of La Tourette. Indeed, his essay has some useful insights into the rather confused cruciform walkways near the base of the building, and into the significance of the "ondulatoire," the vertical concrete strut laid out in the uneven spacings used so extensively in the monastery.

In short, the essays are a mixed bag; as the general editor, determined to think otherwise, warns in the introduction: "the reader will not necessarily be aware that an organizational pattern underlies the whole conception." Obviously there is some value in having the contents of the Fondation's archives

—or, to be precise, the Fondation's microfiches—immediately available on a single (sturdy) library shelf; however, a proper understanding of a drawing relies on the most thorough reconstruction of problem, solution, place in the design process, and private graphic conventions. However titillating the Garland publications may be, they do not provide anything like adequate information for this sort of comprehension. Such are the dangers of a surface-mining operation. Yet now that the images are readily available, it may be opportune to broach the question of a thorough and detailed catalogue raisonné. This will require more scrutiny of the original material and a greater complexity of categories; it may even require some further photography. Until such a project is undertaken many aspects of Le Corbusier's profound imagination, manifest in his wonderful drawings, must remain out of reach.

The Le Corbusier Archive, H. Allen Brooks, editor, Garland Publishing Company and Fondation Le Corbusier, 1982-1984, unpaginated (except for text), 32 volumes, illus., \$5,000.00 for the set; \$200.00 each.

Wim de Wit:

HET NIEUWE BOUWEN

Following the success of a coordinated series of architectural exhibitions in 1975, several Dutch museums organized a second series in 1982-1983. The first exhibitions had no central theme, but rather were related insofar as they presented the work of the early Dutch Modernists—Hendrik Berlage, the "Architectura group" (including Karel de Bazel, Willem Kromhout, and Mathieu Lauweriks), the Amsterdam School, and "Americana," a title referring to Dutch-American architectural relations. The new series, however, was conceived around a single topic, concentrating on the work of those architects who were on the one hand influenced by, and on the other reacted against the architecture shown in the exhibitions of 1975: the functionalist architects of the period 1925-1960.

Dutch architects of this era rarely used the term "functionalism," preferring *Nieuwe Bouwen* (New Building or Construction) or *Nieuwe Zakelijkheid* (generally translated as New Objectivity), showing themselves closer in spirit to the German theories of *Neues Bauen* and *Neue Sachlichkeit*, than to the Functionalism, Rationalism, or International Style of their French, Italian, or English speaking colleagues. The common attitude of German and Dutch architects, particularly in the period between the wars, marked a change in the architectural profession's estimate of itself. *Nieuwe Bouwen* replaced *architectuur* (architecture) to signify the new emphasis placed on building and construction: the architect was no longer an artist expressing higher ideals, but a worker or builder. Moreover, he made a totally new sort of building. Architecture was to become *zakelijk*, or businesslike and, more forcefully,

objective, expressing only the essential, again in reaction to the prevailing artistic attitude of the profession. Unlike the Italian and French rationalists, for whom aesthetics were an important part of the design process, the German and Dutch architects of the Nieuwe Bouwen/Nieuwe Zakelijkheid considered architectural design to be a scientific process resulting in *one* objective solution for each project, with “no exceptions.” Through a materialistic analysis of a building’s functions, a solution for the floorplan would gradually emerge, and its three-dimensional form would follow automatically.

This attitude towards the architectural profession accompanied the conviction that the most important problems for contemporary society were public housing and town planning. For public housing, architects proposed the development of a system of standardization and mechanical building production that would allow for rapid “generation of housing for the working class”—the so-called “existential minimum.” Town planning, they felt, called for a scientific examination of the four functions of a city (living, work, traffic, and recreation) in relation to the environment; together these would determine the overall form and internal divisions of the city. The optimistic projection of these new methods was that a new man and a new society would emerge. These positions were advocated at the CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne) by such German architects as Walter Gropius and Ernst May, and their Dutch counterparts, Cornelis van Eesteren, Mart Stam, Willem van Tijen, and Ben Merkelbach, in opposition to the aesthetic bent of the French and Italians.

Most Dutch architects were very strict in their anti-aesthetic attitude. Stam, van Tijen, and Merkelbach believed that a good floorplan guaranteed a beautiful form (a point we can no

longer agree with when looking at some of their buildings). Others, however, including Jan Duiker and Leendert van der Vlugt, advocated these ideas in their writing, but did not apply them thoroughly to their designs. For example, the pavilions in Duiker’s sanatorium for tuberculosis patients in Hilversum (1925-1930) had a functionally derived shape to allow the entry of as much fresh air as possible into the rooms. The glass-covered stairs, however, had a purely aesthetic logic, spiraling through space, half in and half outside the building. Both this building and Brinkman and van der Vlugt’s Van

“Most Dutch architects were very strict in their anti-aesthetic attitude. Stam, van Tijen, and Merkelbach believed that a good floorplan guaranteed a beautiful form—a point we can no longer agree with when looking at some of their buildings.”

Nelle factory in Rotterdam (1926-1929) are totally different from those designed by the strict anti-aestheticists. If the architects of the Nieuwe Bouwen were thus not a clearly homogeneous group, the characterization of their architecture is further complicated by the fact that much of the work that brought the group into prominence, such as J. J. P. Oud’s housing project in the Kieftshoek neighborhood of Rotterdam (1925-1929), antedated the official formation of the group. Not until the late 1920s did two architectural clubs begin to propagate Nieuwe Bouwen ideas. The “De 8” group announced its formation in Amsterdam with a manifesto in 1927, and the “Opbouw” followed two

years later in Rotterdam, transforming what had been a club for both progressive and traditional architects into an association of Nieuwe Bouwen adherents. *De 8 en Opbouw*, the journal published by these two groups, did not appear until 1932. Not long after, the unity among the ranks was broken by differences in opinion on the nature and purpose of architectural design.

The task of dividing the architecture and related ideas of the Nieuwe Bouwen over five exhibitions and catalogues was not an easy one. Faced with the possible strategies—either to choose five different aspects of the Nieuwe Bouwen, such as housing, town planning, etc., or to divide the period into five chronological sequences—the exhibition organizers apparently opted for a little of both. One exhibition was devoted to the fore-runners of the Nieuwe Bouwen, two had a local subject (Nieuwe Bouwen in Amsterdam and Rotterdam), a fourth was devoted to CIAM, and a final to the architecture of the De Stijl movement. This was probably the best solution given the inherent indivisibility of the subject; unfortunately, the catalogues suffer from a general lack of unity and uneven quality, and would have benefited if a single editor had been in charge.

The first catalogue, *Het Nieuwe Bouwen, Voorgeschiedenis/Previous History* was produced by the Nederlands Documentatiecentrum voor de Bouwkunst in Amsterdam. Manfred Bock, in a dense and often obscure introductory essay, shows that Giedion’s view of the 19th-century engineers as predecessors of the functionalist architects of the 1920s is not absolutely correct, and convincingly argues that the Nieuwe Bouwen had its source in the new social conception of the profession held by many late 19th-century Dutch architects. The idea of designing a healthier city by means of new parceling, new floorplans, and new methods of con-

struction had already been fully developed at the turn of the century by Hendrik Berlage. Political and economic circumstances, however, did not permit the realization of these methods until twenty years later, when Nieuwe Bouwen architects drew upon Berlage's ideas.

It is quite surprising to find another essay in the same catalogue that is more or less contradictory to Bock's introduction. In "Rational and Functional Building, 1840-1920," Arie de Groot begins by showing a large number of (interesting) iron and glass structures built by engineers: bridges, arcades, and railroad stations. But he goes further, helping us to understand the importance of these innovative structures by explaining the search for a new style and new modes of architectural education in terms of the struggle for power between architects and engineers.

The rest of this catalogue consists of short essays about such early Nieuwe Bouwen architects as Jan Duiker, J. J. P. Oud, and Jan Gerko Wiebenga, and later members of the movement, Rietveld and Merkelbach. Except for Bernard Colenbrander's essay on Oud, in which he explains how the architect grew away from the De Stijl movement towards a "functionalist" attitude (although he never became a real participant in the Nieuwe Bouwen), the texts are too short and the information barely more than encyclopedic.

Unevenness of quality also characterizes the catalogue devoted to Amsterdam: *Het Nieuwe Bouwen, Amsterdam 1920-1960*, produced by the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. It traces the history of the Nieuwe Bouwen in Amsterdam, emphasizing the period before the Second World War, and focusing on the 1935 General Expansion Plan for Amsterdam. The most important contribution to the catalogue, by Helma Hellinga, shows clearly that the Expansion Plan, contrary to what Gie-

dion led us to believe, was not based on CIAM rules. It was the product of much earlier developments, in which Dutch town planners of the early 1920s, united in the Institute for Housing and Townplanning, had played an important role. The method of making a scholarly research of needs prior to planning, followed in this Expansion Plan, was not exclusively developed in Amsterdam, either; it was, however, widely spread by CIAM when van Eesteren (designer of the Amsterdam Plan) was chairman. When the Amsterdam Plan was realized in the late forties and fifties, it was affected by the postwar housing shortage and the attendant economizing measures. As a result, good design intentions projected in the 1930s did not always survive.

Another article in this catalogue is devoted to planning and construction of the cities and towns in the new *polders*. Apart from the fact that the history of the *polders* has not yet been written, and that an adequate treatment of the subject would require more pages than available here, one wonders why this article is in the Amsterdam catalogue. Although Amsterdam architect van Eesteren was involved as town planning advisor and CIAM theories were applied, the city of Amsterdam was, according to the authors of this article, never seriously interested in the *polders* as possible areas for suburbanization.

Just as the General Expansion Plan is the focus of the Amsterdam catalogue, so the reconstruction of Rotterdam after the Second World War is the theme of *Nieuwe Bouwen in Rotterdam, 1920-1960*. This catalogue enjoys greater editorial harmony than the others as there is a unity among its four solid articles. The most important is Ton Idsinga's "'Nieuwe Bouwen' in Rotterdam 1940-1960: What is Urban Living in an Open Space?" in which he explores the conditions under which the reconstruction of this heavily damaged

city took place. We encounter issues similar to those considered in Hellinga's analysis of the postwar realization of the General Expansion Plan. Idsinga shows that the quality of buildings in Rotterdam also suffered from the new governmental rules that were intended to speed housing production to mitigate the enormous shortage. Ironically, the prewar avant-garde ideas about mechanical mass production proved fatal for the Nieuwe Bouwen, as widespread application of new building techniques occurred at the same time as architects were forced to economize. Good designs that demanded more money than absolutely necessary had no chance of being built. Moreover, the postwar impulse towards collaborations between right and left did not work out well for the Nieuwe Bouwen. As architect Willem van Tijen wrote: "'Restoration and Renewal' was the watchword, but, alas, restoration nonetheless got the upperhand in many respects. After the first shock the conservative Netherlands . . . cautiously withdrew into its self-satisfied conservatism again."

An international audience would doubtless find *Het Nieuwe Bouwen Internationaal, Volkshuisvesting CIAM Stedebouw/Housing CIAM Townplanning* the most interesting of all five catalogues. Written by Auke van der Woud for the Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller in Otterlo (where the last CIAM conference was held in 1959), this catalogue provides the first complete survey of all the conferences organized by CIAM. Established in 1928, in the wake of the disappointing results of the international competition for a League of Nations building in Geneva, CIAM brought together many modern architects during the next thirty years. Thanks to such advocates as Giedion, Sert, and Le Corbusier, for a long time CIAM was held responsible for virtually every new aspect of the modern built environment in the Western world.

Van der Woud shows, however, that CIAM was not the only international organization in search of new solutions for housing and townplanning during that period, citing such relatively neglected institutions as the "International Federation for Housing and Town Planning" and the "Congrès Internationaux des Architectes." Moreover, the number of houses and neighborhoods designed according to the rules established by CIAM was small in comparison to the total building production. Van der Woud is at his best when analyzing the background of each CIAM meeting, showing, for example, how the aesthetically oriented architects, led by Le Corbusier, tried to overpower the materialistic planners, headed by van Eesteren. Occasionally, however, he is too adamant in his attempt to demonstrate that virtually every aspect of CIAM was the result of something other than we once thought. For example, discussing the fifth conference (held in Paris in 1937), van der Woud interprets the fact that Le Corbusier convinced the French government to sponsor this conference as a sign of CIAM's decay into meaningless courtesy. Might this not be instead yet another of Le Corbusier's many attempts to generate interest in his ideas among influential politicians and industrialists? At the conference Le Corbusier defined his plan for "Dwelling and Recreation" in modern life, which called for land expropriation and reallocation. Le Corbusier understood well that neither he nor CIAM could accomplish such goals without the support of the government.

It is sad to see how CIAM, too, suffered from postwar economic conditions. In the period before the Second World War (that is, during the Depression when work was scarce) a small group of architects united in CIAM could dream of a new society based on their ideas; but due to the urgent demands of reconstruction, the postwar

group, grown to at least five times its original size, could find no way to adapt their earlier avant-garde ideas to the new situation. The end of CIAM came in 1959, at its 11th conference, when the membership was once again reduced to a small group, now centered around Aldo van Eyck, Alison and Peter Smithson, and Jaap Bakema: the nucleus of Team X.

The last catalogue, *Het Nieuwe Bouwen, De Stijl, De Nieuwe Beelding in de Architectuur/Neoplasticism in Architecture*, produced by the Haags Gemeentemuseum, is a strange addendum to this series. One would expect an explanation of the relationship between De Stijl and Nieuwe Bouwen, since, despite several recent publications on De Stijl, one important question remains unanswered: did De Stijl influence the architects of the Nieuwe Bouwen, and if so, how? Rather than deal with this issue—so appropriate to the serial conception of the exhibition project as a whole—this catalogue takes a narrow view of its subject. Only two articles in any way touch upon the relationship between the two movements. One piece by Yve-Alain Bois about De Stijl (i.e., van Doesburg) in Paris explains how van Doesburg's anti-functionalist attitude influenced, for example, Le Corbusier and Mallet Stevens, and, though it was not the author's intention, demonstrates how far removed van Doesburg was from the ideas of the Nieuwe Bouwen in Holland. In another article, "The City has Style," Umberto Barbieri argues that De Stijl was little more than a transit station to Nieuwe Bouwen for the architects J. J. P. Oud and Cornelis van Eesteren, and provides a valuable appreciation of their work.

Some words about the design of the five catalogues would be appropriate here. It was, of course, a good idea to have them designed by someone who relates well to this architecture, someone who uses a very strict grid and

swears by sans-serif letters. However, as in the case of the architecture they describe, it seems that cost-cutting is responsible for a mediocre product: the two-column layout and the grouping of the photographs at the end of each article has resulted in books that are not at all exciting to look at.

In addition to the problem of form, an important element of the scholarly apparatus is also lacking. The origin of the photographs is nowhere indicated, which raises a real obstacle for anybody who wants to use these studies as reference works. Perhaps the best way of finding the sources for all the photographs and drawings is to write to the Nederlands Documentatiecentrum voor de Bouwkunst in Amsterdam. There is a good chance that at least 75 percent of the illustrations are from its rich collection.

In summary, the five catalogues offer a sad survey: high ideals and big expectations before the Second World War, followed by many disillusionments thereafter. We all know that the fifties were not great years; these books help us to better understand why.

All catalogues published by Delft University Press; text in Dutch and English.

Het Nieuwe Bouwen, Voorgeschiedenis/Previous History, Nederlands Documentatiecentrum voor de Bouwkunst, Amsterdam, 1982, 177 pp., illus., \$14.75 pb.

Het Nieuwe Bouwen, Amsterdam 1920-1960, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1983, 176 pp., illus., \$14.75 pb.

Het Nieuwe Bouwen in Rotterdam 1920-1960, Museum Boymans-Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 1982, 175 pp., illus., \$14.75 pb.

Het Nieuwe Bouwen Internationaal, Volkshuisvesting CIAM Stedebouw/Housing CIAM Town Planning, Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo, 1983, 169 pp., illus., \$14.75 pb.

Het Nieuwe Bouwen, De Stijl, De Nieuwe Beelding in de Architectuur/Neoplasticism in Architecture, Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, 1983, 179 pp., illus., \$14.75 pb.

Andrew Rabeneck:

CHARLES RENNIE MACKINTOSH

ROBERT MACLEOD

Like many students of art in the mid-fifties, I was introduced to Charles Rennie Mackintosh through one or two greasy little images in a Penguin Pevsner.* Long a casualty of historiography, Mackintosh was thus promoted as a precursor of Modernism, as were the Viennese Secessionists who admired him. The admiration was, in both cases, less a matter of actual design than of an apparent ability to achieve total control which seemed to manifest the *Gesamtkunst* principle so important to the Moderns who were to follow.

Architects of the Free Style in Austria, Belgium, France, and Germany became heroes in this analysis because they seemed to reject the superficial lucky-dip eclecticism that had preceded them, laying the foundations for a modern style. To the extent that their work could be said to prefigure the austerity of fully-fledged Modernism it became elevated in status. Voysey, Hoffmann, Loos, Wright, and Mackintosh were okay, while Endell, Horta, Gaudí, Olbrich, and the entire Ecole de Nancy remained unremittingly decadent and misguided until about 1970.

This orthodoxy, never wholly appealing to adolescent students to whom any hint of decadence was irresistible, had been challenged earlier by the Surrealists—for example Dali in 1933, upholding the “sublime Gaudí” against the tiresome Protestant, Le Corbusier. But architectural history has plowed a narrow furrow in the field of art until quite recently. Today such pigeonholing merely irritates, now that we have developed through scholarship and distance a more relaxed and curious atti-



CHARLES RENNIE MACKINTOSH, MAIN ENTRANCE, GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART, 1895-1896. (PHOTOGRAPH: KEITH GIBSON)

tude toward the contributions of artists of all persuasions.

The exploitation of Mackintosh by apologists for Modernism was unfortunate, however, because it robbed many of the opportunity to properly understand his remarkable talent. Robert Macleod's excellent book does much to redress any residual misunder-

ing. First published in Britain in 1968 as an accurate, if light, introduction to Mackintosh, it is best remembered for containing the first decent pictures available in the south at an affordable price. Professor Macleod has considerably amplified his text in this edition and related it to other works that have appeared in the interim.** Excellent

new color photographs have been added, as well as a directory of Mackintosh sources in Glasgow. The book, although modest in scale and price, is both attractive and scholarly enough to be a fitting marker of the tenth anniversary of the Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society (1983), through whose vigorous advocacy the Willow Tea Rooms have been restored, the Scotland Street School saved, Hill House taken over by the National Trust, and Mackintosh's own house reconstructed as part of the Hunterian Museum.

If these redemptions are not enough, Professor Macleod's new text finally pierces the murk of misappropriated ideology to the satisfaction of anyone who has seen the work in its Glasgow setting but come away asking more questions than he arrived with. To use Macleod's own words,

the fact is increasingly apparent that Mackintosh and his works sit very uneasily in any campaign which numbered among its goals the rejection of tradition, the glorification of new technology, the rejection of ornament, and the substitution of cool generalization for intense individuality. If he intended to be modern, it was never in that way.

Indeed, Mackintosh more readily recalls Pugin and his concept of a morally appropriate architecture, in which terms such as "truthful expression" and "honest structure" codify and prefigure the doctrine of functionalism. By the time Mackintosh gave his 1891 paper on Scottish Baronial Architecture before the Glasgow Architectural Association, he was ready to describe a "valid" indigenous Scottish style—a style whose features may have originated elsewhere, but which had become native by "absorption." This idea, analogous to the "development" theory of styles grudgingly endorsed by the ecclesiological followers of Pugin's prin-

ciples as early as 1846, promoted a responsible eclecticism in the south and led in one vein toward the brick architecture of Queen Anne and the early Georges (championed by Norman Shaw), in another toward the high-tech Gothic of Butterfield and G. E. Street.

For Mackintosh in Glasgow, the quest for validity embraced Japanese and Celtic art, symbolism, an enthusiasm for Michelangelo, and the *Studio*, which, from its inception in 1893, taught him to see Scottish vernacular architecture with fresh eyes. Validity also meant modernity, the essential

quest for a style of the time. This is the modernism not of the 20th century, but of the 19th, emphasizing not technology, space, and structure, but function, method, and iconography.

While Professor Macleod's explanation of Mackintosh is exciting for today's eclectic, it also helps to explain the tragic aspects of Mackintosh's brief professional life. That the work of such a prodigious talent had no influence on the architecture of his time is, after all, remarkable. Only his decorative design, which had the very qualities deplored by historians of the Modern



HILL HOUSE, HELENSBURGH. ENTRANCE HALL LOOKING TOWARD THE MAIN ENTRANCE AND PRINCIPAL STAIRCASE (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUGLAS CORRANCE)

Movement, really appealed to his Viennese admirers.

The efforts to make Mackintosh a hero of the Modern Movement have failed for good reason. For every stern abstraction of an exterior there is a multitude of rich and allusive interiors, for each rational and craftsmanlike decoration, a nearby flower of imaginative retrospection. Macleod concludes—and I must agree—that Mackintosh was not an isolated genius without forerunners. He was, rather, “a last and remote efflorescence of a vital British tradition which reached back to Pugin.” In this view he must be counted among the last, and certainly among the greatest, of the Victorians.

Professor Macleod's book does not attempt to compete with the great recent catalogues of Mackintosh's work referenced below. Instead he offers a concise overview of all the major work from 1889 to 1913, with comment, up to 1920, on that done after Mackintosh left Glasgow, and a perceptive and affectionate analysis of the artist's place in history.

**Pioneers of Modern Architecture*, Penguin, 1960.

**T. Howarth, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1977.

R. Billcliffe, *Architectural Sketches and Flower Drawings by Charles Rennie Mackintosh*, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Academy Editions, London, 1977.

———, *Mackintosh Watercolor*, Taplinger, 1978.

———, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: The Complete Furniture, Furniture Drawings, and Interior Designs*, Lutterworth Press, London, 1980.

———, *Mackintosh Textile Designs*, Taplinger, 1983.

Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Architect and Artist, Robert Macleod, Dutton, 1983, 160 pp., illus., cloth \$24.95; paper \$14.50.



FRIEDRICH WEINBRENNER, MARKTPLATZ, KARLSRUHE, WEST GERMANY, 1804-1824. FROM MIGNOT, *ARCHITECTURE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY IN EUROPE*. (PHOTOGRAPH: H. ROGER VIOLETTE)

Barry Bergdoll:

L'ARCHITECTURE AU XIX^e SIECLE

CLAUDE MIGNOT

ARCHITECTURE OF THE INDUSTRIAL AGE, 1789-1914

FRANÇOIS LOYER

Choice has always been the essential dilemma of the 19th century, as perplexing for the historian, faced with the sheer volume of building and the intensity of the architectural debate, as for the architects of the day, who disposed of nearly the entire past as a source of forms and lessons. While H. R. Hitchcock's volume in the Pelican History of Art (1958) remains the most complete reference, there is still no single interpretive history that synthesizes the architecture of the 19th century. Many historians would in fact argue that the 19th century, the first epoch for which no stylistic rubric has been devised, does not even constitute a "period." Two new surveys by French authors re-

veal, in the diversity of their choices, emphasis, and approach, just how far we still are from agreeing on the essential components of the period's history, meaning, and even its chronological span.

While Claude Mignot, in his picture survey, proposes a straightforward chronicle of European and American architecture from 1800 to 1900, François Loyer has produced a decidedly personal interpretation—a provocative essay rather than a chronicle—as suggestive for the specialist as it is instructive for the *grand public* its format addresses. Both volumes are lavishly produced and exquisitely illustrated with well-chosen photographs (often period views) and architectural drawings, for the most part reproduced in color. The remarkable differences in selection advanced by both authors, that the ensemble, more than the individual monument, best characterizes 19th-century architecture. Mignot interprets that perception by focusing on the development of architectural typologies, while Loyer traces the character and shape of urban structure. Neither ap-



VICTOR BALTARD, CHURCH OF ST. AUGUSTIN, BOULEVARD MALHERBES, PARIS, 1860-1871. FROM LOYER, *ARCHITECTURE IN THE INDUSTRIAL AGE*. (PHOTOGRAPH: CIRCA 1900; COLLECTION: BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE, PARIS)

proach allows the individual architect or movement to get the upper hand. In the case of Loyer they are subordinated to a rigorous conceptual organization. In Mignot's inventory-like chapters the sheer mass of names renders the type or group the only meaningful entity.

Mignot's text is indeed a testament to the embarrassment of choice. Despite his introductory premise that the 19th century witnessed the development of a typological response to the rise of "anonymous" patronage (by institutions and developers), the litany of examples that encumbers his chronicle merely confirms the extent of the phenomenon. He is likewise reluctant to take typology as his single organizing schema, although he believes that architectural form and imagery were influenced more by the challenge of unprecedented programs—railroad stations, department stores, skyscrapers—than by style. This revisionist reappraisal of eclectic strategies is submerged in the matter-of-fact text; one of his most suggestive and engaging themes emerges frankly only once, when he declares that:

The coexistence of different styles is only confusing for us as we no longer know how to read the code. The juxtaposition of several styles was one of the means of expression for 19th-century architects.

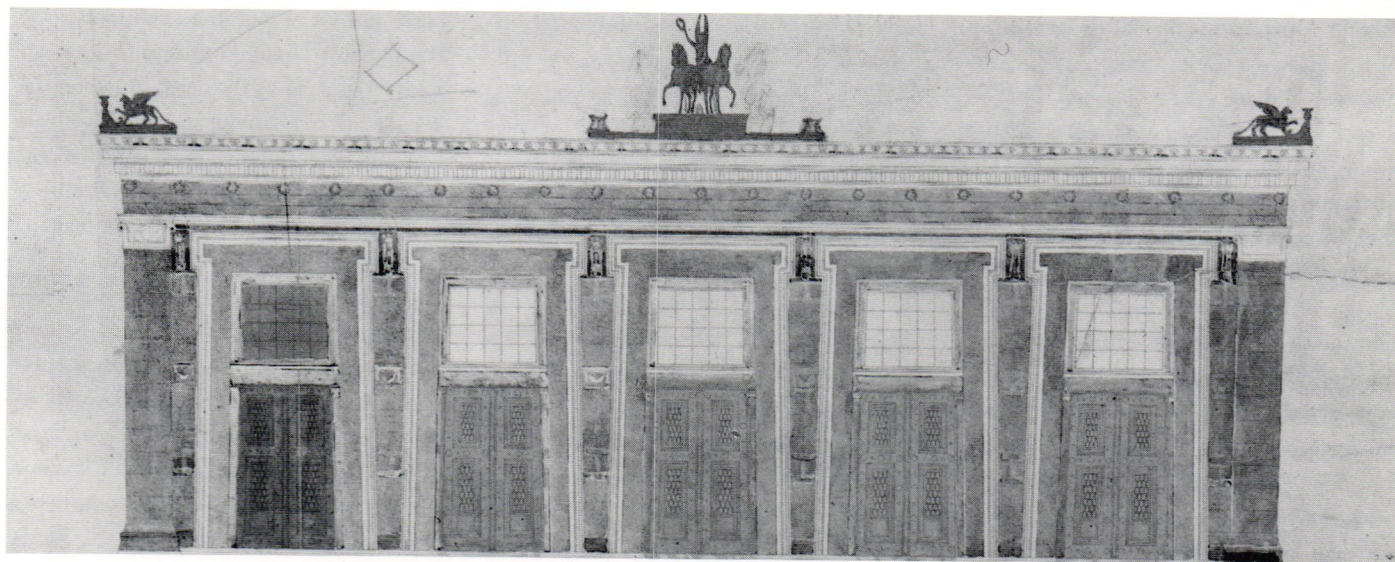
Like many of the architects he discusses, Mignot employs a variety of strategies. His reader, proceeding through the 19th century, also progresses through exercises in the three traditional methods of interpreting it.

The familiar topos of the "battle of the styles" in architectural development before 1840 predictably couples the first two chapters. The definition of Neoclassicism as a universal architectural language is juxtaposed with the development of the Gothic Revival counter-critique, from its first formulation in the gardens of late 18th-century Romanticism to the polemics of moralistic and rationalist theoreticians. The next pair of chapters describes the confrontation of these two styles in terms of the crisis of eclecticism in the 1830s and 1840s, the decades which witnessed the challenges of Hübsch in Germany

and Labrouste and Viollet-le-Duc in France. The formalist analysis of these early chapters alludes only occasionally to contemporary theorists, and this weakness becomes only too apparent in the parallel discussion of those developed systems of historicist composition, the English High-Victorian Gothic and the French mid-century Beaux-Arts. Both, Mignot proposes, were manifestations of an unexplained international shift in the 1850s toward more robust forms, greater plasticity of effects, and an even more eclectic field of reference. Mignot completely ignores the architectural debate that formulated and codified these strategies, while also failing to situate these phenomena in their social or economic context.

Iron, the bugbear of 19th-century architectural historiography, is the subject of Mignot's central chapter. While providing a straightforward summary of the technical developments (a subject handled more comprehensively by Loyer), he also seeks to demystify the material's exceptional status in a century that witnessed the transformation of the entire range of building materials. Moreover, the adaptability of iron to the styles that were already current coinage in the early 19th century did not necessarily threaten eclectic procedure. "Cultural historical references," he concludes, rather than new materials or techniques "remained the determinants of 19th-century architecture." The coherent response to these *programmes inédites* he considers the principle achievement of architects faced with the task of formulating the architectural expression of anonymous social relations.

The balance of Mignot's history is an attempt to describe the 19th century in terms of six of its most prominent new building types: prisons, hospitals, commercial passages (or arcades) and department stores, railway stations, the detached suburban house, and the



GOTTLIEB BINDESBOILL, DESIGN APPROVED FOR THE THORVALDSENS MUSEUM, COPENHAGEN, 1839. FROM MIGNOT, *ARCHITECTURE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY IN EUROPE*. (PHOTOGRAPH: JØRGEN WATZ; COLLECTION: ROYAL DANISH ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS, COPENHAGEN)

skyscraper or tall office building. He assiduously avoids any analysis of the social or economic factors that gave rise to them, as well as the interpretations of philosophy or cultural history which have sanctioned this particular list as "representative." The ideas of Michel Foucault (in the case of the hospital and the panopticon), Walter Benjamin (for the evolution of commercial architecture from *passage* to *grand magasin*), and Bruno Fortier are not even evoked. His juxtaposition of the skyscraper and the house as the privileged types of architectural innovation in the closing decades of the century pays minimal homage to the insights of Scully, Girouard, and others who have viewed style as a function of shifting social patterns, values, and projections. One almost suspects a contempt for the general reader in Mignot's refusal to open his text to a profounder interpretation of typology in its socio-economic context.

His brisk conclusion that the Art Nouveau was a short-lived but vital hinge between two centuries, which "rediscovered the elements and universal principles of architecture, and thus discreetly prepared the Modernist rev-

olution of the 1920s" resurrects a viewpoint already well worn by Giedion and Pevsner. In a text which set out to unravel the code of 19th-century architectural expression, it is perplexing indeed to find ourselves back at the historiographical starting point.

The Art Nouveau looms much larger in François Loyer's *Architecture of the Industrial Age*; a third of his essay comes under this rubric, which he conceives as a broadly based response to the fundamental contradictions of historicism and the dilemma of the relation of art to industry. If Art Nouveau was the foyer to the industrial mythology of the Modernist polemic, its roots, both formal and ideological, were entwined in the central debates of the 19th century.

Loyer eschews the panorama of an international survey, preferring to isolate a series of clearly defined dilemmas in the social and architectural transformations of the century. The unity of the period, in his view, lies in the dialectic of the problems confronting architects: art and industry, history and the present, the mass and the individual. Throughout the period, he maintains, there was a fundamental contradiction between theory and practice,

which gave rise to the critique proposed in the 1920s. The feat of sustaining a consistently illuminating interpretation within the format of an illustrated survey is achieved by frankly limiting the scope. His history is largely French; even the extremes of the period are defined by French events, and correspond to the French industrial revolution, with only occasional insights into German, English, and American counterparts.

Loyer's main premise is that the juncture of industry and urbanization was the motivation for a transformation of architecture, based on the belief that the world could be reorganized according to a set of all-encompassing rational principles. He makes the point—which has been argued by such historians of Neoclassicism as Middleton, Watkin, and Oechslin—that the themes of the 19th century were already defined in the 18th. Like Rob Krier, with whom he has marked sympathies, he proposes the Neoclassical European city as the incunabulum of 19th-century architecture.

There he finds, in three distinct phases, the themes which dominated architecture and urbanism into the

second decade of the 20th century: Academicism, Eclecticism, and Art Nouveau. These categories may correspond to traditional notions of stylistic evolution, but Loyer subordinates all questions of style to the development of social organization and the technological means of its realization and articulation. Indeed, the Neoclassical age had the two-fold problem of restructuring the city as the physical expression of its economic, social, and political organization and of finding a universal language of form at once unified and flexible enough to articulate hierarchies and gradations. This spirit of hierarchical reorganization had its most crystalline expression in Weinbrenner's transformation of Karlsruhe (although Loyer overlooks the political ambiguity of the project, mistaking the pyramidal cenotaph of the town's ducal founder for a public fountain). It extended to the creation of national canal and road systems from the mid-18th century to the First Empire; the entire landscape was subject to a global restructuring of "human activity, its space and its art." The growth of industry transformed the scale and means of this essentially "holistic vision of space," as is evident in mid-century Haussmannization, but did not alter its preeminence as a strategy. In Loyer's view, it continued to dictate the urbanism of early 20th-century Paris, spanning the very years of Le Corbusier's "Plan Voisin" and "Ville Radieuse."

The city, as Loyer is the first to admit, was the stage where the dilemma of stylistic choice and the confrontation of art and industry were enacted. Loyer maintains that the dominance of eclecticism in the cultural debate from 1830 on was a response to industry's opening up of the whole world and its past to artistic exploitation. While the cultural ambiguity present in the multiple readings of eclecticism remained a central contradiction until the end of the cen-

tury, Loyer prefers to analyze it in terms of the key 19th-century concept of the monument, rather than the traditional scenario of the battle of the styles. From Schinkel's Altes Museum in Berlin to the London Law Courts by Street, the monument was a didactic manipulation of historical imagery in the urban fabric, itself resonant with historical recall. In no other city was the gradation of architectural language and imagery in the ordinary buildings—the backdrops for the monuments—as finely tuned as in Loyer's Paris.* Yet the analysis of what Benjamin called "the capital of the 19th century" cannot easily be transferred to the structure of other typically 19th-century capitals, such as Berlin, London, or even New York, where conflicting notions of architecture were expressed in the very profile of the cityscape.

Industrialization altered the patronage of architecture as profoundly as its means of production. While the grand civic monuments and the fantastic neo-medieval châteaux may represent the 19th century to the popular imagination, the mainstay of its fabric was largely the product of the businessman and the engineer. Not only was the architectural debate clearly subordinate to economic considerations, the very notion of the architect was in question. One of Loyer's more provocative suggestions is that rationalism—a doctrine that cut across traditional stylistic battle lines—was a response to the bourgeois mentality and its "metaphorical discourse on the economy of forms," as well as an accommodation to the perceived threat of the engineer's reduction of architecture to construction. The rationalist doctrine inevitably came into conflict with a hierarchy of values in which a monument's form and imagery were determined by its position within a global system of representation. This contradiction (bypassed

entirely by the metallic architecture of the period) became only too apparent toward the end of the century, when the veneer of archaeological culture was appropriated by a new industrial bourgeoisie and applied to everything from mansions to public monuments.

Loyer interprets the last three decades of the 19th century as the confrontation of historicist ideology and hierarchies of urban form with the essential economic and political shifts of the second industrial revolution and the rise of the working class. This view accommodates both those monuments long isolated as forerunners of Modernism and the great symbolic historicist gestures (such as the French basilican churches) long viewed as mere hangovers of Second Empire historicism. In fact, he views the contradiction between rationalism and monumentality as the essence of late 19th-century architecture. Art Nouveau is understood in this context to be a quest to resolve the contradiction between history and invention, to simultaneously respect and create tradition. The resolution however was as brittle as the whiplash line itself. It was indeed a resolution of a dialectic held in place only by a refusal of the most urgent problems. Loyer admires Art Nouveau as a response to the cultural contradictions of industrial society, but his admiration has a polemical edge: he remarks pessimistically on the heroic machine worship of Futurism and Esprit Nouveau, that:

industrial economy now at full maturity has revealed its totalitarian character, it has destroyed art, as it has destroyed so many other values for its own profit.

Loyer's polemical history is far from providing that single volume that will critically synthesize the rapidly accumulating mass of documentation on 19th-century architecture. Its stimu-

lating perceptions and suggestion of a sustained dialectic, however, give an intellectual profile to the period that is a worthy prologue to the survey we still await of "the first industrial age."

*See Loyer's study of the 19th-century apartment house fabric of Paris, *Paris XIXe Siècle: L'Immeuble et l'Espace Urbain*, Atelier Parisien d'Urbanisme, 1983.

L'architecture au XIXe siècle, Claude Mignot, Editions du Moniteur, Office du Livre, Firbourg, 1983, 328 pp., illus., 370 francs (published in the U.S. as *Architecture of the Nineteenth Century in Europe*, translated by D. Q. Stephenson, Rizzoli, 1984, 322 pp., illus., \$60.00).

Architecture of the Industrial Age, 1789-1914, François Loyer, Rizzoli, 1983, 320 pp., illus., \$50.00.

David Gebhard: MIZNER'S FLORIDA

DONALD W. CURL

ADDISON MIZNER

WILLIAM OLENDORF
and ROBERT TOLF

The renewed interest in traditional architectural imagery on the part of Post-Modernist architects and historians has, as one would expect, encouraged a new look into those architects who employed historic imagery in the years 1900 through 1940. From 1919 through the late twenties, one of the most popular and widely used historic architectural images was the Spanish/Mediterranean.

The two principal geographic centers of this romantic imagery were California and Florida, and in Florida the preeminent figure for things Hispanic was the Palm Beach architect Addison Mizner. While Mizner, as an extravagant personality of the twenties, was written about extensively during his life as well as after his death in 1933, his practice as an architect had to wait until 1977, when Christina Orr organized an exhibition and published a catalogue on his work.

Mizner was born in Benicia, California, in 1872. At the end of the 1880s, he accompanied his parents to Central America where his father was United States Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua,



ADDISON MIZNER, K. D. ALEXANDER HOUSE, PALM BEACH, FLORIDA, 1932. FROM CURL, *MIZNER'S FLORIDA*. (PHOTOGRAPH: CRAIG KUHNER, COURTESY OF THE ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY FOUNDATION AND DONALD CURL)

and Costa Rica. After flunking the entrance examinations for the University of California, he went to Spain to study briefly at the University of Salamanca. He was involved in a number of wild escapades after his return to the U.S., finally settled on architecture as a possible profession, and went to work in the San Francisco office of Willis Polk. In the early 1900s he moved to New York, attracted by the social possibilities, and established his own architectural practice, doing remodels, interiors, and houses for the rich and the very rich. In 1918, accompanying the coupon clipper Paris Singer, he came to Florida to recoup his health and to design a convalescent home and hospital for officers returning from France. From this point on until his death, Mizner's life was interwoven with the madness of Florida architecture, land speculation, and social climbing.

Both books under review seek to draw our attention to Mizner the architect, city planner, and producer of furniture and decorative arts. But they go beyond this: their authors are out to place Mizner in the pantheon of America's architectural "greats." Donald W. Curl, a professor of history at Florida Atlantic University, takes the more traditional approach. His book is, in its essentials, an abbreviated biography of Mizner, though his major interest is the architect's work in Florida from 1918 until his death in 1933. Considerable space is devoted to presenting and discussing Mizner's principal buildings. The text is accompanied by excellent (though small) photographs of all of the major ones, and floor plans for most, which are readable but convey only minimal information. Visually, these plans are at best uninspired. No cross-sections or elevations are included, nor original drawings by Mizner or from his office.

Olendorf and Tolf adopt a more unusual mode of presentation, via free-

hand sketches of Mizner's work by the artist William Olendorf, with running commentary by Robert Tolf (described on the book jacket as "an internationally recognized critic and writer").

These two volumes give us a look into the architecture of Addison Mizner by a cultural historian (Donald W. Curl) and a historian-journalist (Robert Tolf), and via the drawings of a practicing artist (William Olendorf). In a number of ways the background and interests of the three authors match the public image Mizner liked to convey—witty, satirical, a man-about-town, concerned very much with social position. Curl, although a professor of history, writes like a journalist; his discussion of Mizner's buildings presents the facts but not the sense or the poetry of them. Like a columnist, Professor Curl takes great interest in social chatter about the client and the architect; and he always insists on presenting Mizner and his products in the best possible light.

If Curl is an apologist for Mizner, Tolf would have to be characterized as an evangelist: "Mizner was," he writes, "an original, a seminal force in American architecture." Tolf is as flamboyant in his use of language as Mizner was in his architecture, and, like his hero, prizes social position and wealth above all. The Spanish Lounge of the Cloister (Sea Island, Georgia) is, he observes, "one of the master's crowning achievements, a thoroughly harmonious room that in later years hosted the world's wealthy, well-born and able."

Olendorf's drawings, though charming line drawings to be sure, neither capture the spirit and the times of Mizner, nor make a forceful contemporary comment on him. Buildings are not easy to present via the written word, photographs, and drawings; it can be done, but neither of these volumes fully succeeds in portraying what Mizner was about. Neither comes off as well as

the 1928 folio monograph by Ida M. Tarbell, *Florida Architecture of Addison Mizner* (William Helburn, New York). The text, by Tarbell and by Paris Singer, Mizner's friend and patron, is really of the twenties, and the large-size soft focus photographs do capture the romance of Mizner's buildings and their gardens.

Another set of problems has to do with (a) the authors' ability to understand the buildings, and to convey this understanding to their readers; (b) their knowledge of the history of architecture and planning; (c) their understanding of how architects in fact function in their profession; and (d) their architectural judgments. In any volume on architectural history one expects all four of these aspects to be well covered, but both these books are to varying degrees inadequate on all four counts.

This is particularly unfortunate with a figure such as Addison Mizner. For, contrary to what both Tolf and Curl assert, Mizner was not considered preeminent as an architect during the years of his practice—not, at least, by his fellow practitioners. Perhaps we should not expect Olendorf and Tolf to place Mizner in the broad context of the twenties and that era's use of historical images, but Curl should have performed this task for his readers, just as he should have discussed Mizner's efforts as a planner at Palm Beach and at Boca Raton. Curl's volume on Mizner is the fourth in the Architectural History Foundation's American Monograph Series, and one would expect it to enlarge our understanding of the architect, his place in American architecture, and his contributions to it. A case in point is the quality of design in Mizner's buildings. A visit to his buildings in Florida and California reveals (as one would expect) appreciable changes between his work of the early twenties and that accomplished toward



ADDISON MIZNER, PATIO, JEROME D. GEDNEY HOUSE, MANALAPAN, FLORIDA, 1928. FROM CURL, *MIZNER'S FLORIDA*. (PHOTOGRAPH: CRAIG KUHNER, COURTESY OF THE ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY FOUNDATION AND DONALD CURL)

the very end of his life. His work in New York, like his early work in Florida, was generally composed of fragments which seldom coalesced. Sometimes these fragments—a door and its frame, an entire wall surface or interior space—were brilliantly handled, but in many instances his sense of proportions was ungainly, and his detailing often had a pasty or cardboard quality. His plans were on the whole inept, yet once again there are splendid individual rooms, loggias, and terraces. Toward the end of his life, he produced some impressive unified designs, such as the E. F. Hutton Office in Palm Beach (1930), and the small Alexander house in Palm Beach (1932). Were these an index of

his maturing abilities as an architect, or were they produced by Byron Simonson and others working in his office at the time?

In these days of Post-Modernism one could well argue that Mizner's fragmented approach was legitimate—but was this in fact what he had in mind?

Mizner's Florida: American Resort Architecture, Donald W. Curl, The Architectural History Foundation and MIT, 1984, 240 pp., illus., \$30.00.

Addison Mizner: Architect to the Affluent, William Olendorf and Robert Tolf (preface by Michael L. Ainslie, foreword by Jon A. von Gunst-Andersen), Gale Graphics, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, 1983, 181 pp., illus., \$30.00.

John Zukowsky:

THE AIA GOLD MEDAL

RICHARD GUY WILSON

The American Institute of Architects initiated a tripartite project in 1978 to honor its Gold Medal winners and to record their achievements. *The AIA Gold Medal* is one part of this project, which will also include videotapes of living recipients of the award and an archive for samples of drawings and sketches by the winners. The archive is not yet complete, but the traveling exhibit of the works of AIA Gold medalists, now being produced for 1984-85

by the AIA Foundation, is in some ways a substitute.

Richard Guy Wilson's book is a generally successful attempt to tell the full story behind the creation of the award, its recipients, and their works as gauges of establishment taste in American architecture. The AIA Gold Medal, inspired by the long tradition of Royal Institute of British Architects Medals, was initiated in 1907 through the efforts of Charles F. McKim (a recipient in 1906 of England's Royal Gold Medal, and a posthumous winner of the AIA Medal in 1909). The medal itself, designed by sculptor Adolph Weinman, illustrates the Beaux-Arts ideal of the unity of the arts of architecture, painting, and sculpture, using the profiles and respective tools of the artists of the Parthenon: Ictinus the architect, Polygnotus the painter, and Phidias the sculptor. Wilson examines the geographic distribution of the awards, the social and political controversies behind some of them, and the generally conservative nature of the validating process, which has tried to promote classical ideals for the national architectural taste. Wilson has also compiled an index of two-page biographies of 44 winners from 1907-1983, which include the award date and place, portrait photographs, and selections of the architect's work. Although dates of birth and death are not consistently included, the biographies are a mini-"Who's Who" of 20th-century architecture. Wilson was assisted by thirty fellow contributors, many of them specialists on their subject—Winston Weisman on George Post, Richard Chafee on Jean Louis Pascal and Victor LaLoux, Leonard Eaton on Howard Van Doren Shaw, Richard Oliver on Bertram Goodhue, Robert Brueggemann on John Wellborn Root II, Kevin Harrington on Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and Robert A. M. Stern on Philip Johnson. In his concluding chapter, Wilson sums up the posi-



A. A. WEINMAN, SCULPTOR, THE AIA GOLD MEDAL 1906. (COLLECTION: THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS ARCHIVES)

tion of these awards as reflections of the taste of the time as well as prevailing architectural theory and education.

His chapters on the development of the prize provide excellent information on the very gradual shift from Beaux-Arts Classicism and Conservative Modernism to Radical Modernism in the late 1950s. He makes acute observations on the revival of Sullivan studies in the 1930s and 1940s and the subsequent award of the medal to Louis Sullivan in 1944, twenty years after his death. Wilson also tells the story of the special 1957 AIA centennial award, when opposing factions supported Frank Lloyd Wright and Ralph Walker; Walker eventually won, but his firm subsequently underwent investigations for violation of the AIA's code of ethics.

Although it is a very good book, *The AIA Gold Medal* has several minor problems, and a few unfortunate typographical and spelling errors (e.g., Wells Bosworth for William Welles Bosworth, Ludwig Hilbersheimer for Ludwig Hilberseimer). Many of the photographs are by the author, and, while adequate for slide shows, blurry images and slightly tilted buildings with no perspective correction are disconcerting here, especially in the larger colored plates. Moreover, the sites that are illustrated are unaccompanied by addresses, or any information as to whether the building is still standing or

not. This poses no problem with Henry Bacon's Lincoln Memorial (1911-1922) or Ragnar Østberg's Stockholm City Hall, but such examples as the 1924 Wilson House in Chicago, by Howard Van Doren Shaw, could use further reference points.

Two larger issues could have been explored further, if only in a speculative way. First, which great architects and planners were not awarded the AIA Gold Medal, and why? Wilson mentions Daniel H. Burnham, John Russell Pope, Raymond Hood, and Albert Kahn; he could have added David Adler and Ralph Adams Cram. Among the excluded, Burnham, who was so influential in both architecture and planning, stands out most conspicuously, with Hood a close second. Wilson compares Burnham with the 1957 Medal winner, Louis Skidmore, in terms of their organizational abilities in the world's fairs of 1893 and 1933, respectively. He might have continued the comparison with the success of both men in organizing large architectural offices that executed important commercial buildings, nationally and internationally. Burnham set the stage for the City Beautiful planning movement at the turn of the century; and certainly his professional and financial achievement was comparable to Skidmore's.

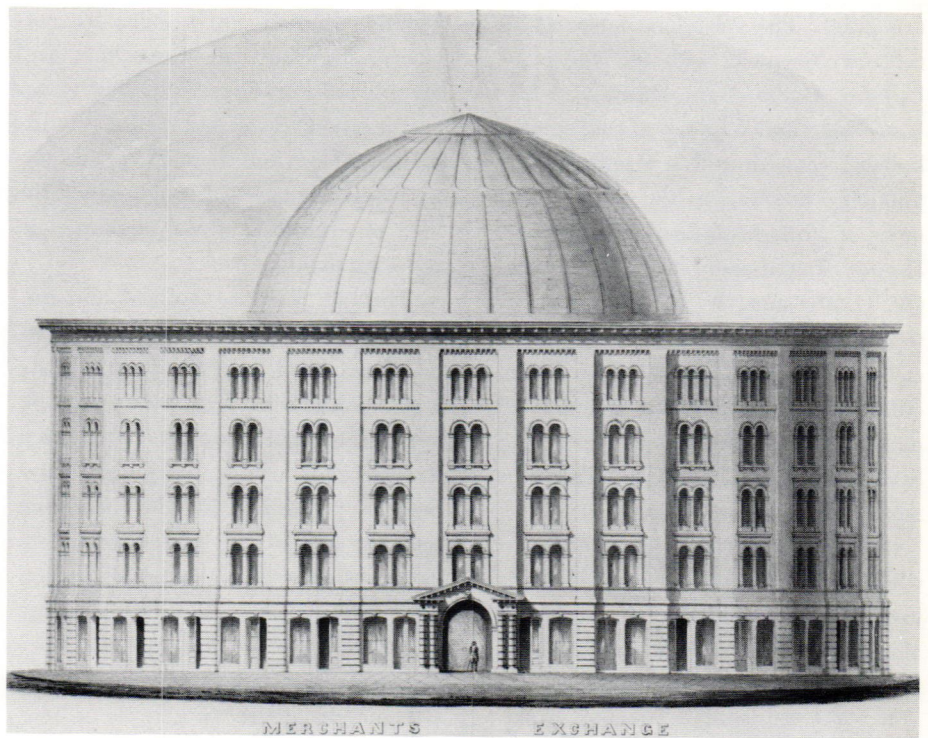
The AIA did not like to present these awards posthumously; as Wilson points out, they had by the 1920s begun to be perceived as a "tombstone to a career." This might explain why H. H. Richardson, Richard Morris Hunt, and Frederick Law Olmsted were passed over. But Burnham died in 1912, five years after the award, with the assistance of his friend McKim, was instituted. Perhaps McKim, to emphasize the association with the English tradition—and not to appear self-serving—helped choose the English classicist Webb over Burnham for the first award. McKim himself received the next AIA Medal in

1909, further reinforcing the English connection, since Webb and McKim had received consecutive Royal Gold Medals for 1905 and 1906. The AIA Board may have felt that a vote for Burnham in 1911 would be redundant with its approbation of McKim's American classicism, and hence chose George B. Post instead. Perhaps the reason was political: Burnham, an active committee member and past president of the AIA, resigned from the organization in 1911 over a dispute about the bylaws relating to competitions. Or perhaps the board, remembering the untimely death of McKim, shortly before the presentation of his 1909 award, simply felt that Burnham, who was eleven years younger than Post, could wait. In any case, the subject deserves further investigation.

It would also have been helpful to place the AIA Gold Medal within the broader history of architectural prizes. While there are admittedly few publications on this subject, the standard works, such as Robert James Eidlitz's *Medals and Medallions Relating to Architects* (1927), and the more recent *Architectural Medal: England in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1978) by Jeremy Taylor, have material that enriches the background of the American prize. Taylor's book publishes what appears to be the prototype of the Royal Institute of British Architects medals, and by extension the AIA prize: the special Gold Medal presented to an elderly Sir John Soane in 1835, decorated with his portrait profile and the Bank of England.

Like the proverbial answer that provokes a question, Wilson's book will, one hopes, stimulate thought and research on other architectural prizes, as well as on aspects of the AIA Gold Medal that have yet to be studied.

The AIA Gold Medal, Richard Guy Wilson, McGraw-Hill, 1984, 245 pp., illus., \$50.00.



THOMAS ALEXANDER TELFORD, PROJECT FOR MERCHANTS' EXCHANGE BUILDING, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND, 1856. (COURTESY OF THE JOHN HAY LIBRARY, BROWN UNIVERSITY)

Samuel Berkman Frank: BUILDINGS ON PAPER

WILLIAM H. JORDY,
CHRISTOPHER P. MONKHOUSE,
et. al.

Buildings on Paper is the catalogue for an impressive exhibition, mounted at the museums of the three sponsoring institutions in Providence before moving on to New York and Washington. Conceived in part as an extension of, and rejoinder to, Henry-Russell Hitchcock's famous show and catalogue of 1939,* *Buildings on Paper* was an event at least comparable in importance.

Hitchcock used his catalogue to write a concise, if somewhat episodic, history of American architecture through the perspective of a richly endowed little state, in the process demonstrating the benefits of the large-

scale architectural survey. Jordy and Monkhouse more than match him with a project that uncovers additional gems of Rhode Island's architecture and introduces a number of unfamiliar designers and their works to scholarly attention. Perhaps more significantly, they draw the medium into discussion (Hitchcock's show was entirely photographic), and counter the distortions of Hitchcock's advocacy Modernism with solid scholarship, commentary on architectural and social history, and exploration of the actual making of architecture.

Rhode Island is a vehicle sturdy enough for such weighty baggage. Since the 18th century the tiny Ocean State has looked beyond its borders to find its fortune, first from seafaring and then through early, specialized industrialization. The state has, in turn, offered the charms of Narragansett Bay to the summering classes of northeast-

ern cities. The splendor of late 19th-century Newport, with its houses by Upjohn, Richardson, Hunt, and McKim, Mead and White, is of course well-known; somewhat less familiar work abounds, however, in the summer colonies of Philadelphians (Wilson Eyre, Horace Trumbauer) and Bostonians (W. G. Preston, W. R. Emerson), as well as in the Newport of New York society (A. J. Davis, Detlef Lienau). Even outside of vacation enclaves imported names spring up often enough, with Strickland, Cram, and Cret among the most notable.

Add to this roster the local architects who have enriched the state with their works, and the importance of this catalogue begins to suggest itself. We get the briefest glimpse of some recognizable names: Dudley Newton, post-mortem hero of the Stick Style, and Norman Isham, antiquarian and educator, better known as an author than as an architect. Less likely to be familiar is Wallis Howe (1868-1960), creator of some marvelous renderings brought to life by Professor Jordy's fanciful narration, and designer of an impressive range of good buildings over the course of a sixty-year career. Another long-lived author of solid, unspectacular architecture whose acquaintance is a distinct pleasure is Albert Harkness (1886-1981), rejecter of the Beaux-Arts, miner of French, English, and American domestic sources, and conservative convert to undogmatic Modernism.

In Thomas Alexander Tefft (1826-1859) we meet a more important and intriguing figure, whose life-span was slightly more than one-third that of Howe or Harkness, and whose career was about one-sixth as long. In his ten years of practice, Tefft produced at least 45 buildings and more than twice that number of unbuilt designs; but the prodigious quantity of his work is overshadowed by its nature, character, and

quality. Besides early Newport cottages, Romanesque churches, and many civic buildings, Tefft had to his credit schools, railroad stations, mills, and a jail—examples of the characteristic building types through which the idea of architecture was reshaped in the 19th century.

Through the biographical and numerous catalogue entries (by Ruth Little Stokes, with contributions by Jordy and Monkhouse), Tefft emerges as an impressive thinker whose contribution to American architecture might have been overwhelming had he lived even past the age at which Richardson seriously began his shortened career. Such speculation aside, Tefft's college education (the first among Providence architects), his association with Horatio Greenough's progressive circle in Newport, his involvement in the emergence of professionalism (as a founding member of the American Institute of Architects), and his exploration of the touchstone building types of rationalist modernity suggest him as the very model of the emerging American architect of the second half of the 19th century—the age that would have been his maturity.

In this extensive catalogue, the drawings exhibited and the building and design processes they represent are discussed crisply but in rewarding detail by 41 contributing authors. The entries are consistently of the highest caliber, placing drawings, buildings, and architects in context, often adding to the currently available scholarship. Equally useful to researchers will be the 34-page biographical section, complete with reference sources.

The choice of illustrations and the quality of reproduction are admirable, and the layout generally clear and attractive. The splendid frontispiece is something of a tease, since there are, disappointingly, no other drawings in color; and, as with any good exhibition

catalogue, the reader will regret the omission of drawings, the absence of which is apparent either from references or through the cataloguing system.

This is not mere gluttony; beyond the epicurean instincts appropriate to any show there are compelling substantive reasons for more completeness in publishing architectural drawings. They are, as even the show title suggests, both artifacts in themselves, and remote describers of a very different artifact, a three-dimensional building. By technique as well as content they help us interpret the building they describe, the designer who drew them, and the era in which they were produced. Individually they can speak to us as artifacts, but their relationship to their ostensible subject is more intricate, leading from drawing to building, and back again to drawing. If the reader is to bring a visualization of the building to bear upon the drawings at hand, the more complete the documentation the better. In the many instances in this catalogue when one or two drawings stand for a larger set—in terms of either the development of the design or the description of a project—one wishes, however ungratefully, for more opportunity to inspect the raw material.

This is perhaps most clearly a problem with Richard Morris Hunt's *The Breakers*, that grandiloquent exemplar of the Gilded Age. *The Breakers* was represented in the exhibition by fifteen carefully selected drawings; only five are presented in the catalogue. Jordy's entry makes note of the development of the building in plan and elevation, and discusses drawings that could not be included in the show. Even the nonspecialist reader is left wanting to know more of the evolution of *The Breakers*, and of how Hunt used his Beaux-Arts drawing techniques, while the historian wants the means to confirm and build upon Jordy's points about stylistic alternatives in late 19th-century Ameri-

can architecture. The feeling is all the more acute because the catalogue's overall excellence induces visions of an encyclopedic ideal (however unwieldy a notion that might be in reality).

The only other change the browser might welcome would be in the arrangement of the catalogue. A chronological or thematic organization might have made for a more coherent whole than does alphabetization by architect or firm, but ease of reference use is a more than adequate counterargument, and is furthered by the excellent biographical section, bibliography, and multiple index. This last item, apparently forgotten in the original printing, is included as a photocopied typescript—the one flaw in a handsome and masterfully produced book.

The only serious reservation, however, is simply to wish for more of a marvelous thing—for example, the two regrettably brief essays by the editors. Monkhouse provides valuable background for the period of 1876, and Jordy displays once again his splendid eye and vivid writing style, intriguing the reader with so many nuances of connection between drawings and buildings that the most appropriate reaction is a recommendation for reprinting in a more broadly accessible form.

As a major reference for Rhode Island architecture, as exemplary scholarship, and as a model for future exhibitions of architectural drawings, *Buildings on Paper* deserves the highest praise and closest study.

**Rhode Island Architecture*, Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art. Reprinted by Da Capo, 1968.

Buildings on Paper: Rhode Island Architectural Drawings 1825-1945, William H. Jordy, Christopher P. Monkhouse, with contributors; Brown University, Rhode Island Historical Society, and Rhode Island School of Design (RISD Museum of Art, 2 College St., Providence, RI 02903), 1982, 245 pp., illus., \$18.00 pb. (plus \$1.50 postage).

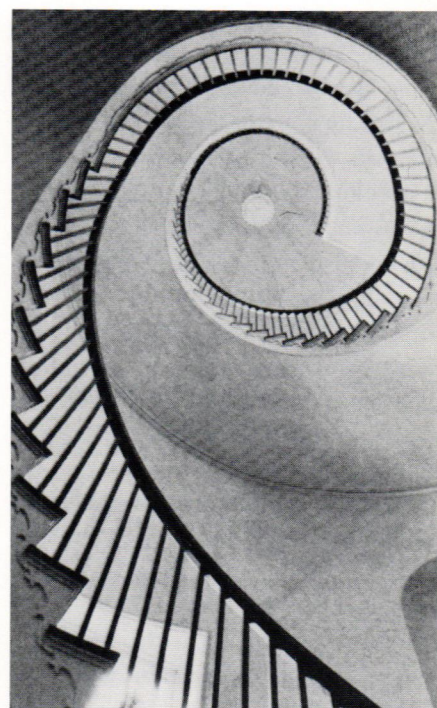
Robert L. Alexander:

WILLIAM JAY

HANNA HRYNIEWIECKA LERSKI

History records many architects who never quite made it. Joseph-Jacques Ramée (1764-1842), for example, had a superb training and completed one notable work—the Revolutionary altar on the Champs de Mars—before leaving Paris for political reasons in 1793, to pursue an unsettled career in foreign countries. He spent five years in the United States (1811-1816), where he designed a few works for a limited number of patrons, before returning to Europe. William Jay, whose Albion Chapel of 1816 graced London for much of the rest of the century, passed six years (1817-1822) in Georgia and South Carolina, but his move, unlike Ramée's, seems to have been a deliberate search for work. His patrons were primarily business associates of his brother-in-law, and, although he built distinguished houses for them, their one-crop, cotton-based economy could not support an architect. When Jay returned to England, too many years had passed for him to pick up the career begun so auspiciously.

Jay was the first son of a famous Nonconformist minister of Bath, and the first two chapters of this book describe that city, and Jay's training and early experience in London. The next four chronicle his American career in Savannah and Charleston, and the last two deal with his life back in England (1822-1835) and on Mauritius in the West Indies (1836-1837), where he died prematurely. The documentation includes a large number of sources that the author has located by perseverance and excellent archival research. Only chance is likely to tell us more about Jay's life.



WILLIAM JAY, STAIRWELL, WILLIAM MASON SMITH HOUSE, CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA. (PHOTOGRAPH: M. RIGGAL)

The author seems to have included every fact she has turned up on Jay's architecture, including the pre- and post-building history of the ownership of the land, significant occupants and events in the history of each house, any number of details about his hotel and public buildings, and outlines of the life and career of each of the patrons—some of it relevant to the study of the architecture. Although the Theatre and the Savannah Branch of the Bank of the United States are gone, the city (along with Jay's reputation) is enhanced by such remaining townhouses as those for the Scarborough, Richardson, and Telfair families (the last now the Telfair Academy of Arts). Essentially Regency in style, with adumbrations of the Gothic Revival, their blocky geometry must have seemed surprisingly modern and cosmopolitan in the small city. As the author makes a well-argued attribution to Jay of the imposing William Mason Smith house in Charleston, edging two drawings in the process,

she demonstrates his flexibility in adopting that city's single house type with a narrow end façade on the street. The buildings are described with loving care, but without a real sense of them as architecture. No one with a comprehension of the nature of architecture would allow the kind of illustration used in this book—perfectly good drawings, prints, and photographs reduced to such a small size that the reader imagines himself a philatelist. Some are illegible, some not even right-side-up.

They are particularly hard on the buildings, for Jay's is an architecture of subtle effects, requiring the most sympathetic representation. The real glory of a Jay interior is the handling of light. He cuts rectangular, circular, and oval holes in ceilings, converts the Scarborough House vestibule into an atrium, and wraps the Smith House staircase around a column of space. Light flows from an oculus or skylight, descending as a flood in some areas, while others remain in shadow, the contrasts in illumination offering a Picturesque experience. A grilled countercurve above a niche in the Richardson House parlor introduces light from a hidden source. These effects were enhanced by such niceties as polished marble mantelpieces, a fashion only recently introduced into America by Latrobe, and gleaming brass inlays in the stair rails. The cult of the Picturesque is evoked as well by the vertical movement through space and by the unusual horizontal shapes created by curved and segmental walls that continue from the Adam style.

This aesthetic character was present in his first building, the Albion Chapel, and reached its culmination in his American works. Both outside and in (as on the Telfair house portico) Jay employed the richest form of Corinthian, that of the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates, which proliferated in Amer-

ica only after 1830, when the Greek Revival style was reaching its maturity. The impact of the Picturesque on the Regency style that Jay brought to America forecast this change: instead of the simple temple form, one finds blocky porticoes and side porches, several methods of breaking the corner and roof lines, and idiosyncratic enlargements and variations on delicate Greek Revival ornament.

All in all, Jay possessed a considerable talent. He was fortunate in having a small group of American clients who encouraged this talent, but his relative inactivity after his return to England meant its death.

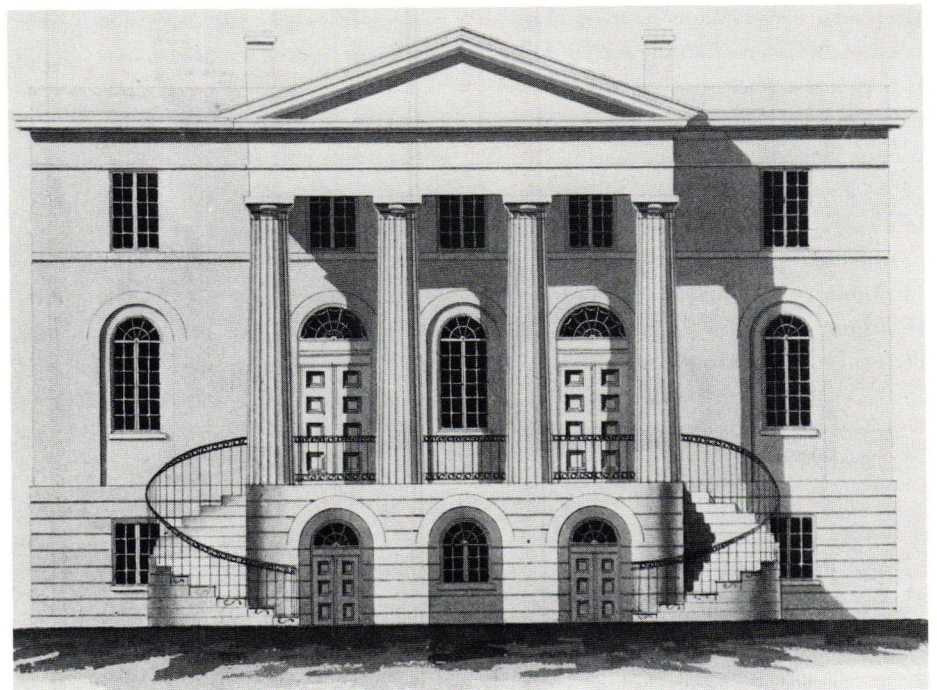
William Jay: *Itinerant English Architect, 1792-1837*, Hanna Hryniewiecka Lerski, University Press of America, 1983, 376 pp., illus., \$27.25 cloth; \$15.50 paper.

Gene Waddell:

THE ART OF THE OLD SOUTH

JESSIE POESCH

This is, as the dust jacket notes, a landmark study of a neglected subject. To prepare it, Dr. Poesch, a professor of art history at Tulane, visited most museums and historic houses in the South and numerous private collections. She read nearly everything in print on Southern art and architecture and made good use of research files at the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, Colonial Williamsburg, and elsewhere. The documentation is thorough; the use of illustrations and quotations from early sources is excellent; and the scholarship is happily matched by a



DRAWING OF THE FIREPROOF BUILDING, CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, 1822-1826, BY ROBERT MILLS, CIRCA 1827. (COURTESY OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL SOCIETY)

handsome format. In fact, this is a scholarly book disguised as a popular one. Every object illustrated has been carefully considered, and the writing is nearly always clear and graceful.

Dr. Poesch covers the area from Maryland to Kentucky and from Florida to Texas, tracing French, Spanish, and English influences through three centuries. The presentation, which is well-planned, is essentially chronological, with the subject matter divided into periods and then subdivided by type of material. The major parts of the book discuss works from four historical periods (beginning about 1560, 1735, 1789, and 1825). For each of the three later periods, separate sections are devoted to architecture, painting, sculpture, and "products of craftsmen" (with emphasis on furniture and silver). Chronology is dispensed with as necessary, and the discussion of historical styles helps to unify the sections on different types of material.

One finds a few basic inconsistencies in the coverage. English and French influences are treated thoroughly, the Spanish much less so; and Spanish architecture in Texas is entirely neglected. Painting and furniture in the cities of Washington and Baltimore are discussed, while architecture in the two cities is hardly mentioned. In other respects the coverage is remarkably even-handed, with due attention given not only to every period, type, and place, but to every important artist, artisan, architect, and patron as well. As a result, the author sometimes slights the objects themselves; she nonetheless succeeds in her attempt "to suggest the historical context and the social and cultural milieu that prompted" the creation of these works. And she rarely neglects to make aesthetic judgments.

City planning, ceramics, textiles, and photography she handles briefly but adequately. A small quantity of sculpture is rounded out with illustra-

tions of carving on furniture and tombstones. Printmaking is represented primarily by references to book illustration; no currency is shown, and only one map, a manuscript one. One plat is illustrated, but plat making as an art is not discussed. Nor is ironwork, though it could have been brought in as an integral part of architecture. Indian art of the historic period and black primitive art are not represented, though they should have been, particularly by their basketry; platted Indian basketry and coiled black basketry are more distinctively Southern than much of the European-style pottery that is illustrated. Wares imported from outside the South are justifiably left out.

Inevitably, the author of such a survey will emphasize what he knows best and values most. Dr. Poesch's sections on paintings are far stronger than those on architecture; they seem almost incapable of improvement. Only occasionally is the biographical information on artists and subjects excessive. By contrast, relatively little is presented on the design of buildings, and very few plans—although a lot of space is devoted to architecture, including a good number of destroyed buildings. Unfortunately, many major buildings are omitted in favor of much less well designed ones over and above the need to include typical examples.

In the architecture sections, only the discussions of churches are exceptionally illuminating, with good material on the influence of liturgy on design. Even so, some major churches are not mentioned, including Robert Mills's Monumental Church in Richmond (considered one of the most original of all Greek Revival buildings), Benjamin Henry Latrobe's Baltimore Cathedral (internationally significant, but shown here only in views of the city), and St. Michael's Church, Charleston (easily one of the most important colonial churches in the United States).

Other building types, such as organizational halls, and universities—in particular the University of Virginia—are not so well represented or evaluated. Houses as a type fare somewhat better, but a good many that would have been selected for almost any national survey are omitted in this regional one: Arlington House, Berry Hill, Bremono, and Stratford Hall, to name a few. Many slightly less important but unusually well-documented buildings are omitted (the Charles Pinckney House, Milford Plantation, and the Charleston Orphan House) that might have provided the basis for a discussion of design sources and of how construction affected design.

The author would have been well advised to have certain sections read by people better versed in local history than she could be expected to have become. A Latrobe drawing is dated 1770 on one page and 1779 on the next; both dates are much earlier than Latrobe's arrival in the United States. (In fact he visited the place in question in 1796.) Robert Mills should not have been held responsible for the portico on the rear of his Bethesda church, an addition which badly disfigures his design. (The rear portico is attached, not an integral part of the temple form; a different order is employed; the doors were cut into the wall, as the absence of flat arches indicates clearly even in the photograph; and the three columns are a solecism.) Mills was not employed by the State of South Carolina from 1820 to 1830 (only from 1820 to 1823 and he was not in charge of the design of waterways during this time.) Jean Ribaut did not place two columns in Beaufort County, South Carolina, in the 1560s. The one illustrated was placed in the present state of Florida. The walled city of Charles Town did not have "an open square in the middle." (The west wall ran through this space, and the space itself was intended to be

an intersection with its four corners reserved for public buildings.) "Mr. John Laurens Saller" refers to John Laurens (who was a *saddler*). Middlebury Plantation should be Middleburg (in both the text and the exceptionally comprehensive index).

While the attributions of painting are extremely cautious, those for furniture are sometimes based on very slight evidence, particularly for the armoire on pages 106 and 107. This piece of furniture has, incidentally, several unusual features identical to those on another armoire (page 205, top) considered more likely to belong to a different period. In this instance, and occasionally elsewhere, the author presents arguments better suited to a monograph or footnote. The selections are in general admirably unbiased, but armoires and hotels from the vicinity of New Orleans seem to have proved irresistible and take up space that could have gone to more significant objects, such as the Holmes bookcase from the Charleston Museum, which has been called the finest surviving example of American colonial furniture.

A more important criticism concerns the use of the essentially accurate mass of information. Although the introductions to the book and its subdivisions are very good, they are too brief, and nearly all the text is given over to an item-by-item analysis. It reads as a result like a series of extended captions, giving the impression that the illustrations were selected and then the text developed around them. If the author had eliminated the less important objects and not discussed each item separately, she would have had ample space for a more analytical study, one that would have been difficult to improve on. Even so, her collage is an admirable one.

The author concludes with a discussion of the distinctiveness of Southern art and architecture. She has by this

time demonstrated that the early types are closely related to European precedents and that the later ones are more American than Southern. Although the Charleston Single House and the peristyle plantation house seem to have evolved in the South, both are local, not regional, types. A few unusual types of furniture are more common in the South than in the North, but are not unique. In painting and sculpture, a distinction can usually be made only when the subject matter is Southern. Most of the South's material culture was imported, and its art and architecture are less distinctive than is generally assumed. Dr. Poesch makes this clear, while providing a good selection to enjoy.

The Art of the Old South: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, and the Products of Craftsmen, 1560-1860, Jessie Poesch, Alfred A. Knopf, 1982, 384 pp., illus., \$50.00.

François Bucher:

FRENCH GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE OF THE 12th AND 13th CENTURIES

JEAN BONY

In contrast to the sciences, which codify new facts, the humanities constantly recycle thoughts and observations, in the process refining them. This is as true for the study of architecture as it would be for the continual redefinition of, for instance, the Trinity.

A modern historiography of Gothic architecture has been available for some time in Paul Frankl's remarkable *Gothic* (Princeton, 1960), which treats the perceptions of the style from its inception in 1144 to the recent past. For the United States, Henry Adams's *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*



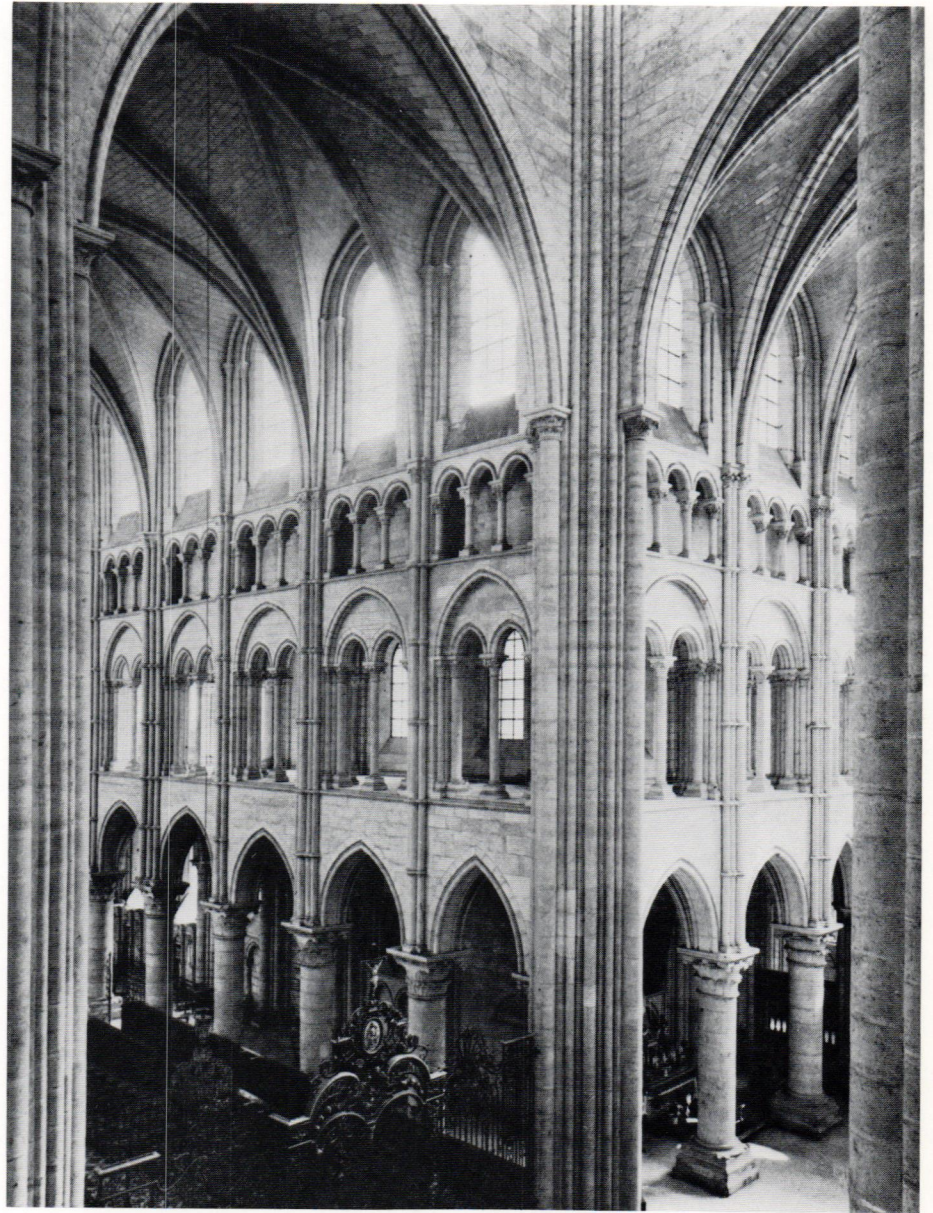
THE HOUMAS HOUSE, BURNSIDE, LOUISIANA, CIRCA 1840. FROM POESCH, *THE ART OF THE OLD SOUTH*. (COURTESY OF *ANTIQUES* MAGAZINE)

(1904) must be considered the cornerstone of the study of cathedrals, just as this study by Jean Bony of sacred French buildings of the 12th and 13th centuries may represent the capstone of the interpretation of a style which had its roots in France, became truly international, and to this day signals the essence of Christian spiritualism.

Bony shares with Adams a Franco-philic point of view, a superb command of language, and a poetic power of description. Adams was intuitive and often romantic, while Bony has fully absorbed the scholarship of the three intervening generations, and transmits it with elegance and verve. His book is important to the general reader because it contains the clearest and most pertinent photographs of interiors (rarely found in overviews), and provides a visual panoply of the full sweep and development of the style in France and abroad. The 38-page listing of the 449 illustrations is in itself invaluable, since it cites such rarely used sources as the Ward Archive of the National Gallery and the *Statistique Monumentale de Paris* of 1867. The photographs, maps, and schematic drawings alone would encourage one to purchase the volume, and their richness is paralleled by their solid variety and often highly sophisticated interpretation of the origins and the spread of the style.

Bony leads us into the subject through easily understood definitions of the steps required for the construction of large and airy buildings. He discusses the invention and use of the flying buttress, the role of the rib, the thinning of the vaults, and the steeper thrust configuration achieved through the pointed arch—which in fact should be seen as a disguised and structurally less efficient catenary curve.*

Both Adams and Bony could have more forcefully initiated their discussions with the key to Gothic architecture: an almost obsessive desire for



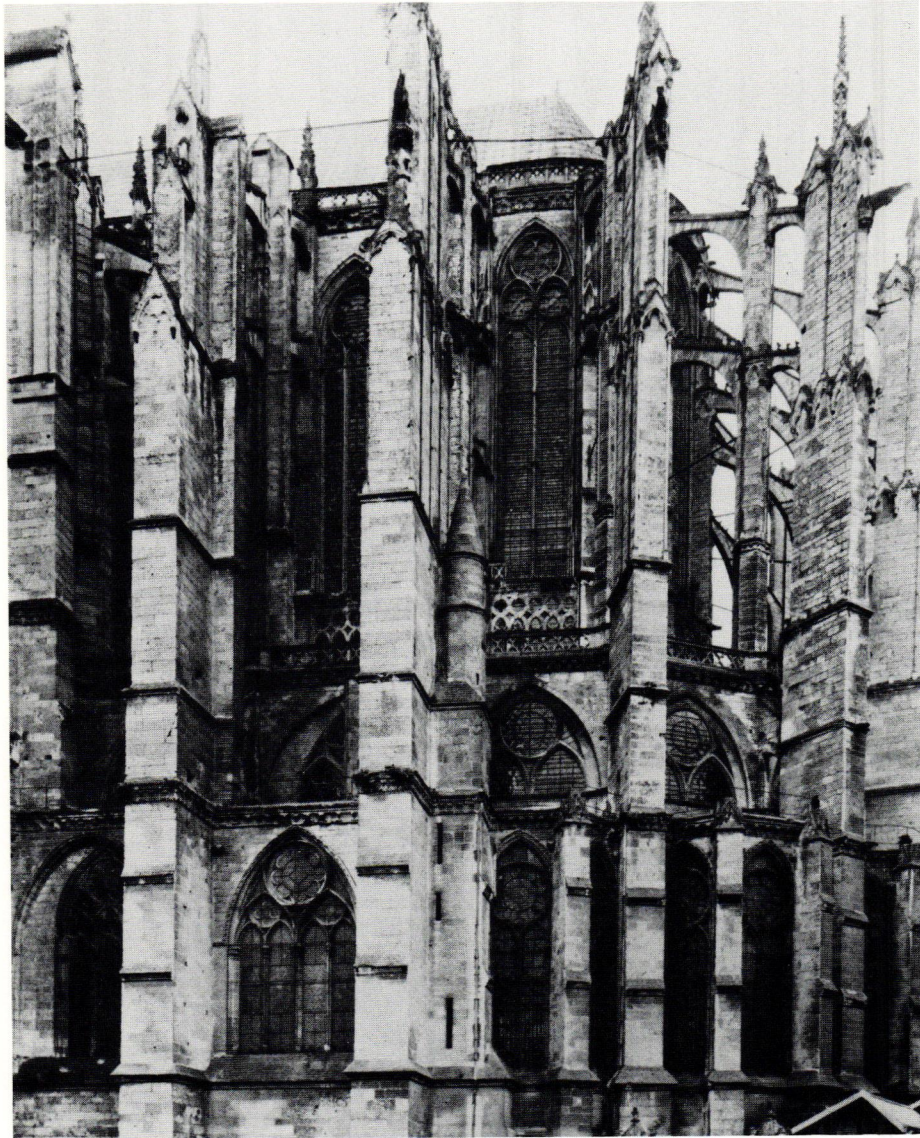
LAON CATHEDRAL, SOUTH SIDE OF CHOIR AND SOUTH TRANSEPT FROM CROSSING, CIRCA 1165-1175. (PHOTOGRAPH: JEAN BONY)

light as the purest expression of the Godhead. Abbot Suger of St.-Denis unequivocally expressed his passion for a diaphanous wall and justified it through the use of the neoplatonic treatises of Dionysius the Areopagite, patron of his abbey and of France.

All the elements designed to reduce structural masonry eventually culminated in the mid-thirteenth-century Sainte-Chapelle in Paris, which turned architecture into a jewelled house of

glass. Bony traces the inventions which led up to the mature style from their sources in Italy, Normandy, and England to their first integrated expression in St.-Denis, the important St.-Martin-des-Champs in Paris, Notre-Dame, Sens, the stunningly experimental Laon, and eventually Chartres and Soissons.

The 12th- and early 13th-century solutions achieving spaciousness, an orderly, increasingly modular grid, a plu-



BEAUVAIS CATHEDRAL, CHEVET FROM THE SOUTH, 1225-1272. (COLLECTION: BILDARCHIV FOTO MARBURG IM FORSCHUNGSINSTITUT FÜR KUNSTGESCHICHTE, PHILIPPS-UNIVERSITÄT, MARBURG-AN-DER-LAHN)

rality of thin, often detached members, and ever more sophisticated systems of flying buttresses led to a masterful handling of magnificent spaces enclosed by surfaces of light, as in Bourges and, eventually, Beauvais with its 157-foot vault, which partially collapsed in 1284.

Most works on French Gothic end the serious discussion of architecture with the collapse of Beauvais. The exceptional value of Bony's account lies in his extensive study of the spread and refinement of the great building inventions. He establishes the series imitat-

ing Chartres, Bourges, and Braine, discusses inventive divergent trends and, above all, comparatively integrates basic English, Italian, and Spanish trends with those simultaneously taking place in France.

Another volume, perhaps in another three generations, will place more stress on the mainsprings of specific solutions—economic, political, theological, technological, and even national developments. Until then, Bony's *French Gothic Architecture* offers the most refined, easily readable, and

poignantly illustrated synthesis of an architectural world that, at Chartres, Bourges, Amiens, still stuns even the most jaded observer.

*A curve defining a vault which, ideally, contains all lines of thrust within its masonry.

French Gothic Architecture of the 12th and 13th Centuries, Jean Bony, *California Studies in the History of Art*, Vol. 20, University of California, 626 pp., illus., \$115.00.

Virginia Jansen:

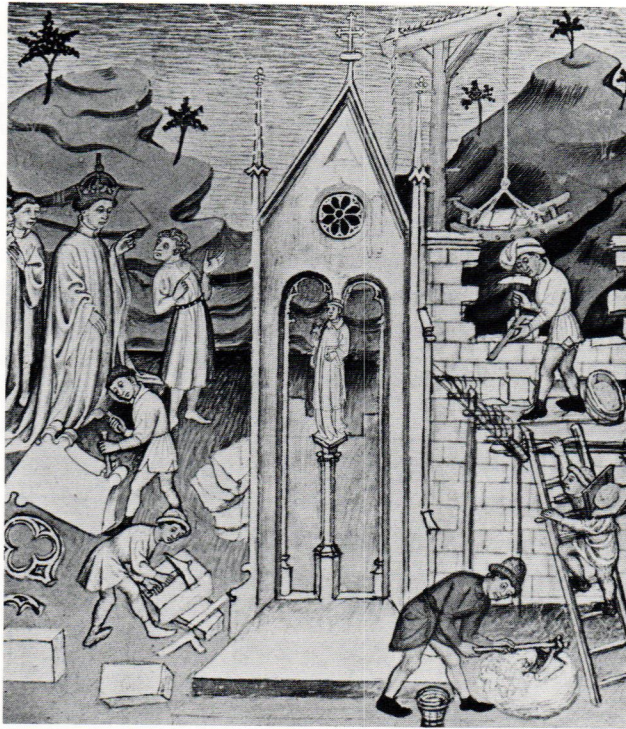
THE CATHEDRAL BUILDERS

JEAN GIMPEL

In three centuries—from 1050 to 1350—several million tons of stone were quarried in France for the building of 80 cathedrals, 500 large churches and some tens of thousands of parish churches. More stone was excavated in France during these three centuries than at any time in Ancient Egypt. . . . The foundations of the cathedrals are laid as deep as 10 meters (the average depth of a Paris underground station) and in some cases there is as much stone below ground as can be seen above.

In the Middle Ages there was a church or chapel for every 200 inhabitants . . . so the area covered by Christian churches was quite considerable in relation to the modest size of the towns.

With these words Jean Gimpel begins his history of building in the Middle Ages, a rich collection of details, anec-



SITE WITH PULLEYS, SCAFFOLDING, AND BUILDERS AT WORK. FROM *GRANDES CHRONIQUES DE SAINT-DENIS*, 14TH CENTURY.

dotes, and thought-provoking comparisons. An abundance of illustrations support the text, many of them depictions of the building process from medieval sources. Although he focuses primarily on churches in 12th- and 13th-century France, Gimpel interprets his topic broadly; he describes not only the building process—with laborers, builders, and designers—but also the society, philosophy, building theory, patrons, and financiers which impinged upon it. He uses an impressive number of documents and secondary sources and his sense of what will hold the attention of the modern reader is unerring. The passage quoted above demonstrates the flair with which he relates medieval Europe to other civilizations (later he will be particularly attentive to analogies with modern American building), but also gives a hint of what is lacking in this book.

This is not an original investigation, with new information or original discoveries; nor does it give new insights

or new interpretations, such as one finds in the recent publications by Lon Shelby, Robert Mark, and John James. It is, in fact, not a new book at all, but a somewhat updated and newly translated version of a book previously available in an inexpensive paperback edition translated by Carl Barnes, Jr., in 1961, and long out of print. Unfortunately, not much of the scholarly work done in the meantime has found its way into the revised edition. The bibliography has been updated, but there are notable omissions.

More critical is Gimpel's old-fashioned bias toward the big, "classic" cathedrals of northern France, which will no doubt alienate specialists. They, and other astute readers, will also trip over the occasional gaffe or overstated generality, such as the claim that few large buildings were constructed north of the Alps previous to Suger's St.-Denis. The book seems, rather, intended for students and for the general reader with an interest in buildings and history.

(For the curious among them, it is too bad that sources for so many of the quotations, which were given in the earlier edition, have been omitted here.)

Gimpel has not organized his book chronologically, but by topic (unlike John Harvey in his highly personal, but less detailed *Master Builders*). Beginning with "The Medieval Miracle," he skillfully introduces the intellectual milieu with a discussion of the opposing attitudes of the two great churchmen of the 12th century, Abbot Suger of St.-Denis and the Cistercian Bernard of Clairvaux. (This chapter also includes a useful appraisal of the destruction of medieval works previous to the 19th century.) In "The Creative Impulse," Gimpel succinctly outlines the theological, historical, and social context of building, following, in "The Canon Builders," with an investigation of the cathedral clergy and their working relations with the artisans. Gimpel notes that:

The title of "cathedral builders" should go to the canons. . . . They directed and masterminded the "cathedral crusade" and continued the work over the centuries, often at their own expense, long after the general enthusiasm had died down.

Among the most interesting chapters in the book is "Working with Stone." Using details gleaned from building accounts (fabric rolls) and tax records, Gimpel studies the work, wages, and privileges of the different types of laborers: quarrymen, carpenters, stonecutters, plasterers (including several women), mortar makers, dressers, pickmen, pavers, and glaziers. He deals with masons' marks and position marks in this chapter, but discusses the lives of the masons and their governing statutes in greater detail in the next, called "Freemasons and Sculptors." In "The Architects," Gimpel examines the remarkable range of activities of the

medieval master builder: engineering, furniture design, sculpture, practical inventions (which Gimpel calls "gadgets," and which include a scheme for a perpetual motion machine), and such concerns as sketching from nature, with particular attention to the 13th-century sketchbook of Villard de Honnecourt. The medieval master's use of geometry is discussed, along with the identification and "secrets" of the masons, who were far from anonymous (the name of the mason Jean de Chelles can be found in an inscription 8 meters long on the transept of Notre-Dame in Paris).

As a complement to the "cathedral builders," Gimpel proposes, in "The Builder Monks," a balanced and well-supported discussion of the controversy over whether monks were engaged in building their own monasteries, and to what extent outside professionals were involved. He brings the picture up to date with the story of the building of Buckfast Abbey in the 20th century. Finally, "Engineers and Technicians" presents information about technological advances, including water mills, windmills, horse collars, and flying buttresses, which is skillfully related to the theoretical notion of progress.

Gimpel concludes with an account of why the "cathedral crusade" came to an end, a chapter which exhibits both the best and the worst features of his book. While marshaling any number of interesting details to support his thesis, Gimpel—who is neither a specialist in medieval history nor an architectural historian—overlooks others that might permit a different interpretation. Structural innovation, for instance, did not end with the collapse of the vaults at Beauvais Cathedral in 1284, but continued on into the 14th century and later, as Robert Mark has shown in his *Experiments in Gothic Structure* (MIT, 1982). Furthermore, although Gimpel prefers to regard the 13th cen-

tury as the end of the period, many imposing medieval structures were begun after that: St.-Ouen in Rouen, Barcelona Cathedral, or Santa Maria del Mar in the same city, the voluminous single nave of Gerona Cathedral, the open hall churches of Germany with their amazing network of vaulting at Nördlingen, Landshut, and the aisles of Ulm Cathedral, the opulent Decorated architecture of the Lady Chapel at Ely Cathedral, and the rectilinear webs spun over Gloucester and Canterbury Cathedrals in England, to suggest but a few. However, most of this activity was outside northern France. Gimpel's bias toward that area is understandable, although he has lived in England for many years and knows English material well. Until recently much scholarship and most popular books on the subject focused on the developments in Gothic architecture begun in the Ile-de-France; other regions were neglected or discussed only in terms of how closely their buildings reflected the first innovations in northern France.

If the readers can overlook some of Gimpel's opinions (which occupy a relatively small proportion of the text, and often enough throw out a thought-provoking challenge to those interested in contemporary architecture), they will find a vivid, well-illustrated, fact-filled, anecdotal history that illuminates the myriad aspects of medieval building and entertains as well. With few exceptions, the translation appears excellent, and reads smoothly. The pity is that the price limits its availability, and makes it too expensive for students. A paperback edition would have given John Harvey's *Master Builders* some real competition.

The Cathedral Builders, Jean Gimpel, translated by Teresa Waugh, Grove Press, 1983, 128 pp., illus., \$22.50.

William L. MacDonald:

ANCIENT ROMAN ARCHITECTURE

FOTOTECA UNIONE

What would Western architecture be like without Roman buildings? In their day they overflowed vast areas, altering existing cities profoundly, firmly seeding lands later held by other, alien cultures. Even while Rome flourished, its building forms were used to shape foreign liturgies and make peripheral work acceptable. It was the fate of Roman architecture to be seen as a paradigm, to be thought a source beyond reproach, and as a result the classical vocabulary of much subsequent architecture was established. Everyone knows this, but what about the Roman buildings themselves? What were they like, the familiar ones of Rome and Pompeii aside? Were they really Vitruvian? And why do we have so limited an understanding of their imagery and meaning when their forms permeate so many different styles and are still vital? Answers to these questions lie in a stupefyingly large body of undocumented evidence, whose size and formal variety bedevils the already difficult task of identifying intangible, fundamental qualities in buildings for whose analysis few theoretical leads, ancient or modern, exist.

These buildings have for generations been the preserve chiefly of classicists and archaeologists, who have done indispensable work but have rarely been historians or theorists of architecture. The critical history of Roman architecture, understandably enough, lags far behind that of Renaissance, baroque, or Neoclassical architecture. If you want to know the facts about it, you need three publications. The first is Axel Boëthius's rather dry and archaeological *Etruscan and Early Ro-*

man Architecture (Penguin Books, 1978); the second, John Ward-Perkins's *Roman Imperial Architecture* (Penguin Books, 1981)—the best handbook, with good coverage of the provinces. Both are detailed, inexpensive paperbacks, well illustrated and annotated.

The third source is the Fototeca Unione's collection of 260 microfiches, of 98 frames each, carrying 24,000 images, as well as site descriptions, plans, and bibliographies. A few numbers will suggest the shape of the work (and perhaps convince librarians and purchasing officers of its value): of the 141 fiches in volume 1, there are 47 of buildings and fragments in Rome, inside the Wall of Aurelian; 65 of other Italian sites, and 29 of sites outside Italy. Of the 119 fiches in volume 2, 38 are of Pompeii, 22 of other Italian sites, and 59 of sites outside Italy.* Both volumes are accompanied by pamphlets containing indices and lists of the abbreviations used in the bibliographies. The emphasis on Pompeii, where the focus

is on representative areas of the town, is largely due to the fragility of the excavated structures, which was revealed by the earthquake of November, 1980. The Fototeca staff mounted a campaign to record three city regions thoroughly in case of greater damage in the future.

Naturally the quality of the photography varies; visitors to obscure, overgrown sites will appreciate the difficulties. The objective was not to beautify or impress, but to record, and on the whole the results are good. Almost all shots are straightforward, people-less, and neutral, in the sense that the photographer's natural desire to frame "interesting" views rarely obtrudes. These were principles of the founder of the Fototeca, the late Dr. Ernest Nash (d. 1974), who, after a varied career as lawyer, administrator, and portrait photographer, turned to the buildings of ancient Rome. He was a meticulous student of its topography and architecture, and his collection grew rapidly. One result was his scholarly, two-volume *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient*

Rome (2nd edition, London, 1968), which contains some 1300 illustrations.

In the sixties forays were made outside Italy, and after Nash's death, under the direction of Dott.ssa Karin Einaudi and with the help of the National Endowment for the Humanities, teams were sent out to North Africa, the Near East, and the European provinces. The Endowment got a good return for its money, a project of great value completed and published. Moreover, the results are available not only on these fiches but in the form of prints ordered from the Fototeca Unione (Via A. Masina 5, 00153 Roma; the images on the fiches carry identifying numbers).

Portuguese and British sites are absent, but supplements are promised. Also missing are important sites such as Corinth in Greece, Salona in Yugoslavia (though Split, next door, is present), Tébessa and Tipasa in Algeria, Aizani and Cremna in Turkey. Perhaps permits to photograph were not forthcoming. But what remains is a feast, the only collection available, and a



THE FORUM, SBEITLA (TUNISIA). (COURTESY OF WILLIAM MACDONALD)



DETAIL OF THE INTERIOR, TEMPLE OF BACCHUS, BAALBEK (THE LEBANON). (COURTESY OF WILLIAM MACDONALD)

proper bargain. The price would buy only about 300 photographs, whereas these images cost seven cents each. Views can be summoned up of the vast majority of significant Roman buildings, together with thousands of close-ups and details, something that could not be done before in even the wealthiest, best-equipped institutions.

The photos show clearly how diverse Roman architecture was. Classical elements of design were used in ways no Greek architect of the fifth or fourth century B.C. would have sanctioned for a moment. There are tombs, for example, of nearly every conceivable shape, decked out with columns, mouldings, temple-fronts, arches, and aediculas. There is even one *tombeau parlant*, a baker's, studded with representations of the kneading-tubs of his

trade; his wife's ashes seem to have been placed in a marble replica of a breadbasket. Some tombs were plain geometric forms, some highly scenic displays of a proto-baroque kind. There were towers, spires, obelisks, pyramids, rotundas, exedras, rectangular and circular temples, four-way arches, piled-up assemblies of some of the foregoing, and large, blocky masonry platforms carrying altars or other religious or funerary forms. The willingness of Roman architects and builders to try out new ideas and combinations comes through strongly, as it does in the architecture of death and remembrance in later times.

The same experimentalism is seen in baths, cult buildings, and domestic architecture. In some ways it is all more like the images in a grand Beaux-Arts

atelier, or those in Alma-Tadema's paintings (provided one supplies color and people in the mind's eye), than what most of us were taught was proper classical architecture. What appears to be license on the part of post-antique classical architects turns out not always to be so, for their ideas and forms were already in existence in Roman antiquity. Often there is no direct line between the two, but the later reappearance of ancient concepts and compositions means that some of our notions of classicism over the long haul need revision. Speer, ironically, may not have been as foolish as he seemed when he wrote, in 1948, "I still find it hard to grasp the difference, beyond generalities, between classical antiquity, the Renaissance, and my own efforts" (*Spandau: The Secret Diaries* [New York, 1972]).

The collection also helps reveal the degree to which Roman imperial architecture was formed by urban requirements and civic pride. The formal homogeneity of Roman towns has been little studied because the context of their buildings has been largely ignored. Plans and elevations of buildings utterly isolated from their surroundings are all too familiar, but there are enough well-preserved sites here to render this habit obsolete: views of streets, plazas, and the quintessential urban furniture of mature Roman architecture—arches free-standing and connective, stairs, fountains, terraces, and other way-stations and amenities. These are the raw materials for improved understanding of Roman urbanism as a set of relationships of solid, void, and the specific function of the space. Post-Mods can have a field day, mining these fiches for new ideas.

Six centuries of extraordinarily diverse design spread through the thirty-odd Roman building types are on display. Outside of temples and theaters, Vitruvian formulas are hard to find after the first century B.C., although

we still use him as a norm or benchmark; when part of a Roman building is uncovered, one thinks immediately, Is that intercolumnar distance Vitruvian? Those proportions? This is because he is presumably the only standard we have. But this publication opens up the possibility of finding actual norms or principles, and not for one period only. We need at least two sets, one for the late Republic, the first century B.C. (Vitruvian days), and one for the second century A.D., the heyday of Roman design. And if the search is in vain, and no norms or governing principles can be established, that loose, permissive word "classical" will, paradoxically, be pinned down a little more firmly.

The Fototeca's work suggests the construction of new formulations and hypotheses, and is made for the computer's attention. It was intended as an archaeological archive, but can serve the history of architecture as well. It is time the study of ancient classical architecture was brought into the 20th century—a difficult thing when almost no building documents exist. With this publication—plus a lot of work, based on a carefully thought out analytical method—a start can be made.

*Three hundred sixty-six sites are represented in all: 213 in Italy, 153 outside it. Some samples of coverage:

Tivoli, Hadrian's Villa (Italy)	283 frames
Porto (Italy)	30
Carnuntum (Austria)	71
Nîmes (France)	61
Mérida (Spain)	44
Timgad (Algeria)	248
Cyrene (Libya)	228
Bosra (Syria)	91
Masada (Israel)	45
Termessos (Turkey)	90
Petra (Jordan)	130
Thessalonica (Greece)	57

Ancient Roman Architecture, Fototeca Unione, Rome (distributed in the U.S. by the University of Chicago Press), 2 volumes of microfiches, 1979 and 1982, \$800.00 the volume.

Judith Patt:

ANCIENT INDIAN ARCHITECTURE

Of the four books reviewed here, three are specialized studies, of interest primarily to historians of Indian art and architecture; the fourth, *Elephanta: The Cave of Shiva*, will appeal to the general reader, as it includes material on Hinduism and Indian sacred architecture which is taken as understood in the other three books.

Elephanta, a sixth-century rock-cut cave temple located on an island an hour's launch ride from Bombay, is not only one of the greatest achievements of Hindu religious architecture, it typifies

the Indian approach to architecture, which was to emphasize the symbolism of the plan and the sculptural quality of the overall mass. The sacred architecture of India was essentially the work of sculptors who displayed a total lack of interest in developing new methods of construction or advanced engineering techniques. Many early Buddhist and Hindu monuments are cave sites, like Elephanta, or temples carved from the living rock; but even constructed temples are primarily masses of rock carved into forms suited to rock-cut architecture. The methods of construction never evolved beyond the post and beam systems, or the corbelled arch and vault.

The pilgrim to a site like Elephanta experiences a spiritual journey through



SADASHIVA—ETERNAL SHIVA PANEL, SOUTH WALL, WITH ROW OF COLUMNS, ELEPHANTA, INDIA. FROM BERKSON ET AL., *ELEPHANTA: THE CAVE OF SHIVA*. (PHOTOGRAPH: CARMEL BERKSON)

a complex series of exterior and interior spaces with shifting and changing views of the sculpture that conveys the special character of the deity. Hindu worship consists of circumambulation, walking around and through the sacred complex, culminating in a final act of *pūja*, or devotion, at the sacred center. George Michell explains in his essay:

All the elements of the architecture at Elephanta are directed toward invoking the divine presence of Shiva and making visible notions about cosmic order. By a complex process of symbolism parts of the cave temple and, more significantly, ritual movements within the interior space are identified with Shiva and the universe that he controls. Not only is the mythology of the god illustrated in elaborate sculpture panels but the very layout of the cave temple—in terms of space, light, and movement—is itself a myth. Here the devotee leaves the world of man and progresses toward the world of gods. . . .

Everything about Elephanta suggests a withdrawal from the everyday world. Several journeys have to be undertaken in order to reach the cave: water must be crossed, a mountain climbed, and a cave entered. . . . For the devotee this passage across, upward, and inside is interpreted as a progression toward god. There is no outer elevation to the cave temple, only the natural mountain, the image of which always dominates the interior space of the cave within the mountain.

Michell discusses the nine great sculpture panels on the walls of the main Elephanta cave in terms of a "program" of related images—drawing, apparently, on the work of Heimo Rau. The paired reliefs on the east, west, and north entrance walls present contrasting aspects of Shiva: the still aspect of

the yogi contrasted with the dynamic, extroverted aspect of the cosmic dancer, the terrifying active form against the compassionate and calm. The three panels on the solid south wall depict the dual male-female aspect of the godhead. Michell proposes that the overwhelming scale and elegance of the sculptures at Elephanta and the emphasis on Shiva and Parvati as "king and queen of the universe" present a "royal" quality that was related to the royal patronage of monuments such as this, in which "the king ensured that his rule was divinely sanctioned and protected."

Michell's essay on the symbolism of the plan includes diagrams that relate the design to a sacred mandala. Although the drawings are not apparently based on any specific mandala system to be found in Indian architectural texts, they are very much in keeping with the general concepts of the mandala-based temple plans presented by Stella Kramrisch in *The Hindu Temple* (Calcutta, 1946), and Andreas Volwahsen in *Living Architecture: Indian* (London, 1969). Much of our knowledge of the surveying methods used to lay out temple plans and of symbolism in ancient Indian architectural treatises indicates that this type of planning concept was basic to the design of Hindu and Buddhist monuments, in India and elsewhere.

Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty contributes a study of the general symbolism of the site and of specific myths associated with Shiva which greatly enhances our understanding of the site—even if, as she states, the deity remains an enigma. Speaking of the "linga," or phallic symbol of Shiva, she says:

This stone is literally a "sign" of the god, in a form even less differentiated than that of the Maheshvara. . . . This is the heart of the god, an image whose simplicity can only be

understood after one has seen its detailed manifestations in the living stones from all the other panels that capture, like still frames frozen out of the eternal stream of images, the activity of the god Shiva in the world.

Carmel Berkson's essay on the historical context of Elephanta and the development of cave architecture is useful, but it is her extensive photography that reveals the unique experience of moving through the cave-shrine. *Elephanta* contains, in addition, an essential "Notes on Terminology" and an excellent annotated bibliography. The three essays in *Elephanta* are an example of the well-rounded contextual approach so often lacking in studies on Indian art. Carmel Berkson is a sculptor and an experienced photographer of Indian monuments. George Michell is an architect, editor of *Art and Archaeology Research Papers*, and author of numerous books on Indian architecture. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, professor of the History of Religions and Indian studies at the University of Chicago, is a noted scholar of Hindu literature and myths, and author of several books, including *Aestheticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Shiva*. These different perspectives provide for a broader discussion than could be expected from the solitary art historian.

If the broad cultural and historical approach of these essays has produced a book that can be understood and enjoyed by general readers and specialists alike, the reverse is certainly true of Asha Kalia's *Art of Osian Temples*, which is intelligible only to specialists, yet probably of little real interest to them. Osian, or Osia, located in Rajasthan, 30 miles northwest of Jodhpur, is the site of the remains of one Jain and fifteen Hindu temples, dating from the 8th through the 12th centuries. Certainly a general study of these temples is to the point, since very little exists

outside the original report for the Archaeological Survey of India and some recent specialized studies (not included in the author's bibliography). This one, however, has many problems; although it is subtitled *Socio-economic and Religious Life in India, 8th-12th Centuries A.D.*, the chapters on "Social Life," "Dress," "Ornaments," "Coiffure and Cosmetics," "Amusements and Pastimes," and "Economic Life"—purportedly based on material found in the reliefs at Osian and in the literature of the period—are simplistic in the extreme. Of more value are the chapters on religion and the various cults: Vaisnavism, Saivism, Saktism, the Ganapatya cult, and the Saurya cult. These religious trends are represented in the temple sculptures, and their identification is a solid contribution to iconographic studies. The author, however, makes little attempt to interpret her material or to see the Osian temples in any particular context.

The eight-page general description of the sixteen temples suffers from the same superficiality, with no discussion of the problems of dating, or any serious plan and site analysis. Neither maps of the area nor plans of the temples are provided. In addition, the book was printed in India, on low grade paper, with typography and illustrations of poor resolution. At least a third of the photographs are out of focus, although the printer may not always have been to blame. For a study so full of recondite terms, it is upsetting that no glossary has been included. A sample description of the first Osian temple will give some idea of the difficulties for the nonspecialist:

The main temple has only a *garbhagrha* and an *antarala*. . . . The *antarala* pillars are decorated with bells and vase and foliage designs. This temple might have had a *man-*



RELIEF, GOPINATHA TEMPLE, LOADA, MIDNAPORE (NORTH) DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL, 1805. FROM MICHELL, *BRICK TEMPLES OF BENGAL*.

dapa like the other existing bigger temples. Its *adhisthana* portion is simple and plain; but the *jangha* portion is decorated with figures of the Asta-Dikpalas. . . . At the top of the *jangha*, where the *sikara* starts, there are running friezes. . . . The *sikara* is crowned with an *amalaka*, and over it a discus or a *chakra* is carved.

By way of contrast, the *Encyclopedia of Indian Temple Architecture, South India, Lower Dravidadesa*, edited by Michael W. Meister and coordinated by M. A. Dhaky, makes the best recent scholarship on the southern peninsula of India available to the reader. The two volumes (one for text, the other for plates) deal with the architecture of the regions of Tamilnadu, Karnata, Andhra, and Kerala from 200 B.C. to 1324 A.D., with major emphasis on the period from the 7th century onward. Information about the various dynasties and on the founding of temples is cursory, the main focus being on the stylistic content and the development of architectural form, with brief mention of the iconography of the major temples. The essays are accompanied by maps, temple plans (generally after earlier ones published by the Archaeological Survey of India) and a brief but satisfactory glossary. There are no footnotes, but each chapter is followed by a list of major references on that

area. The volume of plates contains over 400 photographs, of generally good quality, many of temples known previously only through the ASI, or from difficult to obtain Indian publications. The overall quality of the book, which was also printed in India, is on a par with that of North American publications.

With so broad an area and lengthy a time span, some dynasties, like that of the Colas, are not covered in as much depth here as they are in existing monographs. It is nevertheless extremely useful to have all this material on South India available in a unified format. This publication may be too dry and technical for art historians outside the field, but it will be invaluable to specialists.

Finally, *Brick Temples of Bengal*, edited by George Michell, is a survey of Hindu temples in Bengal dating from the 16th through the 19th centuries, the period of Islamic rule. David McCutcheon, a teacher in Calcutta, in his spare time documented the numerous temples from the period of the local Hindu revival, which started in the 16th century. Previously, study of the Hindu temples of North India had not been carried beyond the period of the Islamic conquest of that area. McCutcheon published many articles on these temples for Indian publications as well as a monograph. After his death in 1972 at the age of 42, his notes and photographs came to the Victoria and Albert Museum, and George Michell was urged to turn them into a major study. Michell visited many of the sites between 1978-80, prepared plans and maps, and added his own chapters on historical background, style, iconography, and related art forms. To McCutcheon's monograph on the origins and development of these structures and the classification of types, two brief chapters have been added, one on architects and builders, by Tarapada San-

tra, and the other on literary sources, by Zukela Haque. Although the quality of the more than 800 photographs is generally very good, many of the overall views are too small to make out in any detail, while a few others are poorly exposed; there are, however, many welcome illustrations of details.

These Bengali temples represent an interesting late development, the blending of older Hindu forms and motifs with Islamic forms and details, and even at times European motifs and neo-classical style. Michell's background on the history and his discussions of style and iconography are particularly illuminating. The volume includes a good bibliography, but no glossary. The use of Indian terms, however, has been kept to a minimum and confined to the discussions of style and temple type, so that even though the book is written for scholars, it has considerable appeal for a wider audience.

A new survey of Indian art and architecture, *The Art of Ancient India*, by Susan L. Huntington, is soon to be published and is certainly needed. However, the art and architecture of India encompass such a vast area and such a lengthy time span that the field can only benefit from these more circumscribed studies.

Elephanta: The Cave of Shiva, Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, George Michell, and Carmel Berkson (photographs by Carmel Berkson), Princeton, 1983, 148 pp., illus., cloth \$35.00; paper \$18.50.

The Art of Osian Temples, Asha Kalia, Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1983, 179 pp., illus., \$42.50.

Encyclopedia of Indian Temple Architecture: South India, Lower Dravidadesa, Michael W. Meister, editor, coordinated by M. A. Dhaky, American Institute of Indian Studies, India, and the University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983, 361 pages of text, illus., \$75.00.

Brick Temples of Bengal: From the Archives of David McCutcheon, George Michell, editor, Princeton, 1983, 254 pp., illus., \$75.00.

Zeynep Celik:

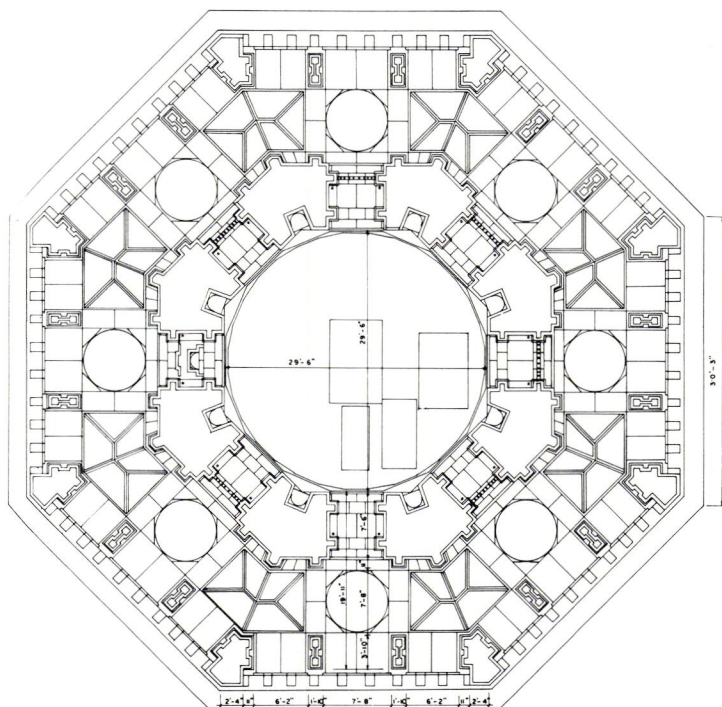
MUQARNAS

Calling for a deeper awareness of the value of Islamic architecture, in 1978 Aga Khan invited the leading names in the field to a conference to discuss how to promote and improve current architectural practice in Islamic countries. This was the first step in the formation of the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture. The generously endowed program has grown ever since, issuing awards for outstanding buildings, holding seminars for professionals, and developing an educational program at Harvard and MIT geared to the needs of Islamic countries. Paralleling these practical issues, the program sponsors scholarly research on Islamic art and architecture of the past.

Muqarnas is a product of this effort, a yearly magazine that welcomes articles written in the classic art-historical manner, as well as works in progress,

theoretical essays that shed light on the present by analyzing the past, and critical observations on contemporary issues. Its intentions, as summed up by the editors, are to act as a vehicle for scholarly essays on Islamic art and architecture, to foster debates and discussions, and to make knowledge as widely available as possible, "especially in Muslim countries." Realistic enough goals, except for the last. One seriously doubts that this costly and inadequately distributed publication, written in English, will make it to all the "Muslim countries" and stimulate the discussion it professes to seek among the scholars of the Islamic world.

Oleg Grabar, the editor-in-chief, contributed the introductory essay to the first issue, "Reflections on the Study of Islamic Art." This brilliant survey of past and present trends in the field reformulates the controversial question, "What is Islamic art?" or even, "Is there such a thing as Islamic art?" Grabar reminds us that in this still



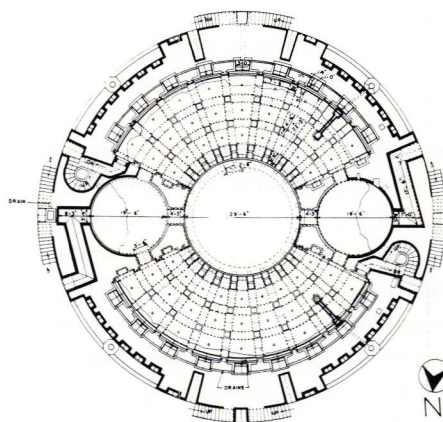
GROUND PLAN, TOMB OF KHÂN-I JAHÂN MAQBÛL TILANGÂNÎ, INDIA, CIRCA 1368. FROM WELCH AND CRANE, "THE TUGHLUQS: MASTER BUILDERS OF THE DELHI SULTANATE" IN GRABAR, *MUQARNAS*.

young field there are neither established methodologies nor easy answers. "The artistic experience of the Muslim world in over 1,400 years is too rich, too varied, and too complex to lend itself to a single message, a single voice, or a single explanation"—hence the need to "pursue something beyond traditional and restricted scholarship." Grabar expects *Muqarnas* to serve the functions of scholarly accomplishment as well as imaginative discussion.

The remaining nine articles exhibit the scholarship he speaks of, but not the imaginative and non-traditional discussion and methodology. *Muqarnas*, at least for now, is a classical art history journal, and the essays, although well researched, documentative, and tightly defined, follow the well-established presentation formats closely.

R. A. Katzenstein and G. D. Lowry analyze the Christian themes in 13th-century Islamic metalwork, focusing on the very interesting deviations from standard Christian uses. These "errors" seem to be traceable to some of the consistent traits of Islamic iconography and to the selective acceptance of Christian ideas and themes. Walter Denny's piece dates classical Ottoman court drawings in the *saz* style. His descriptions are detailed and sometimes unnecessarily tedious, while he leaves some crucial issues unexplored. I, for one, would like to know more about the organization of the Court Painting Atelier (the *nakkashane*), which seems to have played a major role in the creation of the styles.

Five articles are monographs on buildings. J. Bloom gives a detailed analysis of the formal characteristics of the Al-Hakim Mosque in Cairo. His main contribution to the scholarship on this well-known monument is his functional explanation of the spaces and forms. The specific characteristics of the Al-Hakim Mosque are the result of the new rituals and ceremonies estab-



PLAN OF BAOLI, FĪRŪZĀBĀD CITADEL, INDIA, CIRCA 1354. FROM WELCH AND CRANE, "THE TUGHLUQS: MASTER BUILDERS OF THE DELHI SULTANATE" IN GRABAR, *MUQARNAS*.

lished by the Fatamids in order to create an imperial setting in the city and a stage for imperial pageants. C. Williams looks at the decorative scheme of another Cairene mosque, that of Al-Aqmar, and, arguing that the exact purpose of the building is still unknown, hypothesizes that it could be a tomb. S. Blair interprets the Octagonal Pavilion at Natanz, an early example of Muslim architecture in Iran, as a mausoleum—not a mosque, as has been previously suggested. L. Golombek, writing on the Friday Mosque in Herat, misleads the reader by suggesting at the outset that she will analyze the relationship between the city and the mosque. Her analysis is disappointingly technical, long on detail and short on contextual discussion.

W. Begley describes four 17th-century caravanserais, but does not duly explore their economic importance, their placement in the overall road network, or their relationship to the urban and rural settlements—the very issues which make this building type particularly worth studying.

A. Welch and H. Crane's article on the 14th-century Tughluqs, "the Master Builders of the Delhi Sultanate," is the first comprehensive study on the topic, and an excellent one. It fills in

the socio-political background, analyzes the building types clearly, and convinces the reader of the universal importance and originality of the Tughluq architecture.

The last article, by W. J. R. Curtis, on the type and variation in Berber collective buildings in the northwestern Sahara, is one of the most interesting pieces in the collection, and perhaps the only one that makes a direct bridge between the past and present—a major goal of the program. Curtis investigates the congeries of issues underlying the emergence of these dwelling complexes, and analyzes them according to a hierarchy in scale that moves from the regional setting to the town, to the single structure, and finally the building materials. His critical and non-deterministic approach to vernacular architecture is refreshing; he is realistic about the impending extinction of the type (because of rapidly changing socioeconomic factors), and does not mourn, but tries to extract the maximum of information for the modern designer.

As these brief reviews indicate, the articles in *Muqarnas* cover different areas of Islamic art and architecture, but their common denominator remains obscure. How does one make the logical connection between, for example, the *saz* style court painting in Istanbul and the Berber collective housing patterns in the Sahara? This brings back a theme from Grabar's introductory essay: does an Islamic art and architecture exist, except as a practical categorization? The discussions will undoubtedly continue, creating, one hopes, better defined areas under the umbrella term "Islamic." A great amount of groundwork still needs to be done; *Muqarnas*, to its credit, provides a good medium for it.

Dana Cuff:

THE MEANING OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

AMOS RAPOPORT

Seven or eight years ago a lot of us were worried because we didn't know the difference between signs and symbols, signifiers and signified, semantics and syntactics. We tried Barthes (after someone said "Oh, *Elements*¹ is really easy reading") and Eco²; then thought maybe Broadbent³ or Jencks⁴ could set us straight—one designer-type to another. For those who still wonder about the meaning of meaning, and whether architecture could be a language, Amos Rapoport's recent book almost makes one feel those years were spent in vain. *The Meaning of the Built Environment* tells us that reading the environment should be no more complicated than understanding a wink. For those of us who (like Geertz⁵) still consider a wink no simple matter, it does leave some questions unanswered.

Rapoport's is surely one of the clearest voices speaking from the environment-behavior camp, and his *House, Form and Culture* (Prentice-Hall, 1969) remains the seminal work relating culture to physical form. In this new text, he deploys his vast cross-cultural knowledge in the search for a common key to the meaning of environments, be they vernacular, popular, or high-style. Innumerable examples reinforce his argument, from present-day Milwaukee to 17th-century Isphahan to the Dogomba of West Africa.

In the first half of the book Rapoport lays the groundwork for the study of meaning in architectural and urban form, taking as a theme his own subtitle, "A Nonverbal Communication Approach." He contends that research on nonverbal communication—gestures, facial expressions, and body pos-

tures—is a model for understanding environmental meaning. The built environment, in this view, provides cues for behavior and judgments; since the cues are often ambiguous, redundancy, clarity, and context are important factors in environmental communication.

In a concise comparison with semiotic and symbolic approaches, he suggests that the virtue of a nonverbal communication approach is that it deemphasizes problematic questions of linguistic structure, focusing on the more relevant issues of meaning. Moreover, the author assures the reader, this approach is both straightforward and useful: the everyman's guide to meaning. We enact it each time we walk into a restaurant and turn back because we feel underdressed, or decide to rent an apartment because the neighborhood looks safe for our children. The basic method is this: look directly at the environment, observe the cues, and identify the meanings those cues have for behavior and judgment. Somehow this seems a bit like explaining reading as looking at the book, seeing the black marks, and deciding what words they represent. While this may offer confidence to the insecure but capable reader (of environments or books), it does not address how we understand what something means.

Some aspects of the environment, we are advised, deserve special attention. Certain cues to significance, Rapoport notes, appear to be universal (or almost universal): for example, height, centrality, orientation, and color. All buildings may be white except the church, or the church may be the only white building. It is not the specific color but the unique instance that is significant. Establishing distinctive differences in the environment is therefore a principal way to embed meaning for others to discover. This can occur in three realms: fixed features (walls, streets); semi-fixed features (plantings,

window display), and non-fixed features (human activity).

Rapoport's application of Edward T. Hall's categories leads him to some interesting observations. To take one example, he contends that we read the most about others in the domain of semi-fixed features, because these are the cues that individuals control in their ready-made environments. He goes on to suggest that the dwellers may be more interested in this realm, and that user participation in architectural design reflects a professional bias for the immutable elements rather than the real concerns of the inhabitants. A corollary is that the environmental aspects which architects control are not terribly meaningful to anyone but other architects.

We learn in the first half of the book, that, as actors in a world of nonverbal cues, we are continually identifying the differences between environments and making inferences on that basis. In the second half, the author shows us the extent of these inferences through small-scale and urban-scale applications of the nonverbal approach to environmental meaning. Environments communicate not only appropriate behavior, but also social status, roles, personal identity, and ethnic identity. For instance, we can determine the basic features of a culture's criminal justice system by examining an empty courtroom, in particular the spatial relations between the seats of the key actors. Data on the actors themselves and their activities will then support and augment our interpretation. Diagrams of four courtrooms from different cultures, like other illustrations sprinkled through the text, clarify the author's point. In the urban-scale applications, Rapoport describes the cues we use to read the cultural landscape as a "sagging" area, a high-density city, or a suburb.

Here the lurking doubt in the reader's mind begins to surface. We may

agree to assume a nonverbal approach to environmental meaning, but the question remains, is this a descriptive or a prescriptive stance? We do observe and interpret the things around us quickly and straightforwardly, but should we accept this as a reliable method? Rapoport implies that we both do and should, although he does not overlook the concomitant problems; he describes, in one case, how architects' preconceptions led them to judge a "well-maintained and greatly improved" neighborhood as a slum, with all the slurs on the inhabitants that implies. The fact that this happens all too frequently and with deleterious consequences is only partially assuaged by Rapoport's assurance that "In the cases being discussed here, a wider range of cues, fixed, semi-fixed, and non-fixed features, are being used to judge areas, and through them, the character of groups." If we are merely describing how people typically interpret the world, attending to more cues may, in fact, challenge our assumptions as the author suggests. But if we are learning to interpret the world more rigorously, more astutely, and trying to avoid preconceptions, then just to gather more data seems an insufficient directive.

Rapoport attributes the problem—one person's neighborhood being another's slum—in part to the diversity of our culture, and the resulting lack of shared symbols. Traditional cultures have wide agreement on symbols, but in America today McDonald's and Howard Johnson's are our only dependable environments. These easy-to-read locales, where we know what to expect and how to behave, are among what Rapoport calls "successful settings," which are "precisely those that reduce the variance [of possible interpretations] by clear cues and consistent use, which increase their predictability." This is in fact an underlying premise

of the book, and certainly contradicts the architectural ideals of innovation, surprise, and delight.

Anyone who wants pat answers about environmental meaning will not find them in *The Meaning of the Built Environment*; at the other extreme, the book will also frustrate Barthes and Eco enthusiasts. By comparison, Rapoport's probing of environmental interpretation is limited, since he is concerned with pragmatics rather than syntactics or semantics. If we do not explore the underlying structure of the system or the way signs carry meaning, we are left with a positivist position, that observable behavior in the environment provides true meaning. Nevertheless this book fills a significant gap: it introduces the notion of environmental meaning so clearly that no reader will doubt the basic premise that the environment holds meaning as part of a cultural system of symbols, and influences our actions and our determinations of social order. Redundancy, clarity, and example—the same devices the author recommends for gathering meaning in the built environment—serve to elucidate this fundamental idea.

1. Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, Hill and Wang, 1968 (first French edition, 1964).

2. See for example Umberto Eco, "A Componential Analysis of the Architectural Sign/Column," *Semiotica*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1972, pp. 97-117.

3. See for example Geoffrey Broadbent, "Meaning into Architecture," in *Meaning in Architecture*, eds. Charles Jencks and George Baird, Braziller, 1969.

4. See for example Charles Jencks, "Semiology and Architecture," in *Meaning in Architecture*.

5. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Basic Books, 1973.

The Meaning of the Built Environment: A Nonverbal Communication Approach, Amos Rapoport, Sage, 1982, 224 pp., cloth \$25.00; paper \$12.50.

Joan Ockman:

LITERARY ARCHITECTURE

ELLEN EVE FRANK

The title of Ellen Eve Frank's book, *Literary Architecture*, is somewhat misleading. Her subject is architectural imagery in the literature of four writers: Walter Pater, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Marcel Proust, Henry James. Her thesis is that these writers of the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th choose architecture, above any of the other arts, to express their central thematic and artistic concerns. The architectural metaphor takes on the largest possible meaning in their writings, becoming an objective-correlative for consciousness, for memory, for the body, as well as for the construction and textuality of the literary work. Architecture thus enters the domain of literature in its double conceptual mode, as both physical-historical object and artistic-constructive process. The four extended chapters devoted to each of the writers contain much practical criticism, and provide suggestive reading not only for those in the field of literature but for those involved in architecture. It is especially the influence of Ruskin, which Frank traces in all four writers, that unifies this literary tradition and determines the specific analogy between literature and architecture pursued by each writer.

For Walter Pater, from whom Frank takes her title,

literary architecture, if it is to be rich and expressive, involves not only foresight of the end in the beginning, but also development or growth of design, in the process of execution, with many irregularities,

surprises, and afterthoughts; the contingent as well as the necessary being subsumed under the unity of the whole.

Clearly it is Gothic architecture that Pater has in mind here as a model for literary form, as Frank points out; unfortunately, she does not relate this frame of reference to Pater's view of classicism as expressed in his most important art-historical work, *The Renaissance* (1917). Pater, following Ruskin, and like Proust after him, views architecture as the great "conqueror of forgetfulness," harking back to the *ars memoria* tradition of the symbolic association between architectural objects and remembrance. Likewise the French Enlightenment notion of *architecture parlante*, which Frank does not mention, informs Pater's idea of architecture—as it informs this entire literary tradition—as "something which speaks."

In the case of Hopkins, Frank adduces 19th-century architectural dictionary definitions, as well as entries and sketches from Hopkins's diaries, to establish that terms like "stress," "instress," "inscape," "sprung," "pitch," and "centre-hung" were strongly determined by Hopkins's amateur interest in architecture. Again, it is the idiosyncrasy and intricacy of Pointed architecture, particularly that of William Butterfield, whom Hopkins much admired, which becomes a self-acknowledged metaphor for the poet's "queer" and "distinctive" literary style.

The treatment of the theme of space-time in Proust is more familiar in the critical literature, as is the study of the analogy to the visual arts in James. However, Frank provides some fresh insights of her own. Her interpretation of a speech of Albertine's about the eating (and destroying) of ices molded in the shapes of architectural monu-

ments—a kind of negative counterpart to Marcel's eating of the madeleine—is especially striking, as are her observations, largely inspired by Frances Yates's book, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago, 1966), on the mnemonic theme in Proust. Proust's ambition, as he tells through his narrator Marcel, was to construct the whole of *A la recherche du temps perdu* "like a cathedral"; at one time he contemplated giving each section of the work a title derived from some part of the Gothic cathedral, "so as to defend myself in advance against the sort of stupid criticism which has been made to the effect that my books lack construction."

Finally, in Henry James's "house of fiction" Frank finds the culminating refinement of the tradition, begun with Pater, of architecture as a metaphor for literary craftsmanship and authorial consciousness. Unfortunately, Frank chooses to deal almost exclusively with James's theory as it is expressed in his prefaces to the novels (which were written retrospectively) rather than in the novels themselves. The reproduction of several photographs that James himself selected as the "optical symbols" of his fiction for the New York Edition of *The Novels and Tales* (1907-1909) provides an interesting gloss on his words.

Throughout, Frank's copious use of quotations and her original (although often impressionistic) manner of inserting architectural photographs to illuminate literary epigraphs enrich the book. Unfortunately, her writing style is burdened by a forced or deliberately odd form of expression; the "creative" fantasy which opens the book, for example, and is meant to serve as a metaphor for her critical enterprise, is inappropriate. She also has a habit of treating nouns like "story" and "image" as verbs, an archaic usage, as well as a taste for hyphenated amalgams like "being-in-void" and "being-in-weather." For these last she is obviously

in debt to philosophical language, especially that of Heidegger, as she is for her etymological analysis, which recalls that used in Heidegger's essay "Building Dwelling Thinking," although she does not acknowledge this debt quite fully enough.

Frank names in passing a rather far-flung range of predecessors for her tradition, including Aristotle, Augustine, and George Herbert, but surely some mention of Thomas Hardy would also have been apt, since Hardy was trained and worked as an architect before embracing writing as a primary vocation, and among his major protagonists figure stonemasons, builders, and architects. Hardy's architectural notebook, published in 1966, furnishes much interesting information on this subject.¹ His reading of Ruskin also had an important influence on his fiction.² What is noteworthy about Hardy, significantly in contrast to the four writers on whom Frank chooses to focus, is his less romanticized vision of architecture and its relationship to the modern world.

More problematic, even if admirable in its ambition, is Frank's attempt in her introduction and conclusion, which serve as a bracket for the four chapters devoted to the writers, to extrapolate well beyond the tradition internal to literature with which she has been concerned, and to lay claim to an interdisciplinary critical method. In her theory of *ut architectura poesis*, the same lack of clarity appears as in her title concerning the reciprocity of the two arts: her subject is not how architecture is like poetry, but how poetry is like architecture. Thus the citation in the last chapter of sources like Vitruvius and John Summerson, to attest to the tradition of architecture as language seems gratuitous, since her book has little to do with why or how architecture looks to language as an analogical model; obviously it does so for

different reasons than literature looks to architecture.

Second, her own (not just her authors') conception of architecture is a relatively static and conservative one, which takes a Ruskinian, 19th-century perspective of architectural meanings and values as normative. Thus she writes,

To writers more and more fearful of disappearance not only of the temporal past but of familiar concepts of identity (and such are those writing toward the close of the nineteenth century and on into the first decades of the twentieth), architecture provides a means of preserving and memorializing the past, and identity.

While the tradition of literature is seen as in dynamic flux, that of architecture is taken as a purely positive value, a repository of history and memory, capable of healing and resuscitating literature's increasingly alienated view of the present.

Frank does not name the heirs to the tradition she is describing, because there really are none (Beckett, to whom she alludes, never deals with architecture as such). James and Proust represent the end of the "positive" tradition of the architectural analogy in literature; after them, the privileged literary *topos* shifts, with architecture itself, from the Gothic cathedral and its values to the complexly fragmented modern city of Eliot, Joyce, Biely, Döblin—which was already fully anticipated in Dickens, Balzac, and Baudelaire—and to the "negative" places of modern consciousness that one finds in writers such as Kafka and Beckett.

This is not to suggest a *Zeitgeist* interpretation of architecture and literature. While constantly subject to the influence of external disciplines, each art form follows its own internal evolution. Precisely because disciplines are "semi-autonomous" in this sense,

it is crucial to distinguish between the history of a discipline seen from inside or from a general perspective, and the possibly distorted or romanticized view of it as seen from within another discipline.

A further problem concerns the limits of Frank's methodological approach. In her introduction she describes her critical method as twofold:

first, the noticing of internal architectural structures, those within the literary work, a James or Proust novel, or even this book. These internal structures may be, for instance, cathedrals which symbolize character, temples which organize memory, or dwelling-houses which are settings for action. The second task would be a looking-up from the book to notice the same or similar structures outside, in the physical, external world.

We shall return to the second intention in a moment. In terms of the first, although Frank is careful to uphold the distinction proclaimed by Lessing in his *Laocoön*—that literature is intrinsically a temporal art form and architecture a spatial one and the genres should not be confused—she is less careful about distinguishing between (a metaphorical) architectural content in literature and (a metaphorical) architectural structure or technique. Since we visualize the cathedral, temple, or house being described, or simply because an architectural idea is named, it seems logical to Frank to assert that the writing is in some way analogous to architecture. But spatial visualization may be effected by an essentially conservative descriptive technique, which bears no resemblance to the technique of building or architecture. The formal problem of how verbal imagery overcomes the limitations of a temporal form to suggest spatial effects or, conversely, how the spatial form of archi-

tecture is translated into the temporal form of language is rarely focused on as such (even though it is relevant in the case of Hopkins, Proust, and James), and thus the analogy to Gothic, or any other, architecture remains symbolic or thematic rather than structuring.

In this context, far more suggestive in terms of a working theory of interrelations between literature and architecture, it seems to me, is the concept of spatial form set out by Joseph Frank (no relation to Ellen Frank) in an essay first published in 1945 under the title "Spatial Form in Modern Literature," and subsequently amplified and developed by a whole body of critical literature in this country.³ Parallel to this is the theory of literary spatiality explored in France by a number of structuralist literary critics, especially Gérard Genette, whose latest book is titled *Introduction à l'architexte*.⁴ For these writers, spatial form designates the techniques by which the novelist subverts the chronological sequence that is inherent to narrative. This type of analysis, even though developed in the specific context of 20th-century literature, provides a concrete basis for investigating such narrative concepts as perspective, distance, point of view, narrative time, and so forth. It also suggests an inverse—and altogether original—formula for architectural analysis: namely, that of temporal form, which would be the techniques by which the architect subverts spatial simultaneity to achieve a temporal order; presumably it would focus on preferred sequences of spaces, circulation patterns, axial relations and layering techniques, openness and closure, the revelation of design process in the object, the process of aging, and many other things.

But this is going afield. To return to Ellen Frank's second intention, that of a more philosophical reflection on the correspondence between the metaphor

of architecture and "structures of consciousness, conventions of perception, systems of belief, as well as activities of thought and feeling," it seems that her approach has some affinity with what Gaston Bachelard undertakes in *The Poetics of Space*, wherein a "phenomenology of the imagination" gives rise to an interpretation of places: the house is seen as "the abode of the soul," deeply bound up with memory, and the dialectics of inside and outside "govern all thoughts of positive and negative." In fact, it would be interesting to try to insert the *topos* of architecture, as represented by this particular literary tradition, into the Bachelardian inventory of "felicitous space."

Frank's book is provocative and rich in many ways, as may be seen, and indicates much promising territory to be explored from both sides of the disciplinary boundary separating the two arts. While interarts studies must always proceed cautiously, beginning from a clear understanding of the differences between the arts being compared, and of what is internal and what is external to each discipline, it is apparent that the meanings and methods intrinsic to one art form may have an illuminating and vivifying effect on another. This is true from the perspective of the artist as well as from that of the critic.

1. *The Architectural Notebook of Thomas Hardy*, foreword by Sir John Summerson, intro. by C. J. P. Beatty (Dorchester: Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society, 1966).

2. See Joseph Kestner's analysis of *Jude the Obscure* in *The Spatiality of the Novel* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1978), pp. 125-33.

3. Frank's article is found, in expanded form, in Joseph Frank, *The Widening Gyre: Crisis and Mastery in Modern Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), pp. 3-62. For a recent synthesis and anthology of the critical literature of spatial form, see Jeffrey R. Smitten and Ann Daghistany, eds., *Spatial Form in Narrative* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press,

1981). See also *Critical Inquiry* 4 (Winter 1977), issue devoted to spatial form; Joseph Kestner, op. cit.; William Spanos, "Modern Literary Criticism and the Spatialization of Time," in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 29 (1970); Sharon Spencer, *Space, Time and Structure in the Modern Novel* (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1971).

4. Two of Genette's books have been translated into English: *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1980); and *Figures of Literary Discourse*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1982). See also, among others, Michel Butor, "L'Espace du roman," in *Essais sur le roman* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964); Maurice Blanchot, *L'Espace littéraire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1955); Tzvetan Todorov, *Introduction to Poetics*, trans. Richard Howard (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1981).

Literary Architecture: Essays Toward a Tradition, Ellen Eve Frank, University of California Press, 1980, 312 pp., illus., cloth \$15.95; paper \$8.95.

Pierre-Alain Croset:

L'ARMONIA E I CONFLITTI

ANTONIO FOSCARI
and MANFREDO TAFURI

In each successive publication, architectural critic and historian Manfredo Tafuri has further refined the definition of his "historical project." Stated most concisely in his *La sfera e il labirinto* (The Sphere and the Labyrinth [1980]), such a "project" ignores disciplinary separations and refuses to be limited to a single historical context. The range of topics treated by Tafuri has consequently been vast, yet certain problems and contexts return upon the historian's desk for repeated investigations, to create a sort of "ideal scan-sion" of the historiographic journey.

Such is the case with 16th-century Venice, reexamined by Tafuri and coau-

thor Antonio Foscari in a new book with the impressive title, *L'armonia e i conflitti: la chiesa di San Francesco della Vigna nella Venezia del cinquecento* (Harmony and Conflicts: the Church of San Francesco della Vigna in Sixteenth-Century Venice). As in previous works in this area, Jacopo Sansovino and Andrea Palladio, with their respective clients, are called upon to serve as the protagonists. On this occasion their professional rivalry is charted in the history of the church of San Francesco della Vigna.

Although the history of this Venetian church and its tortuous design development is the apparent subject, this book can by no means be considered a simple monograph. Rather, the authors are responding to a precise historiographic necessity in which attention to the particular allows the "historical project" to have a place. This place, Tafuri and Foscari explain, is revealed as "that left as a remaining gap—at times infinitesimal—in the philological analysis, where consequently one is permitted to 'construct' since the documents and descriptions of the period under investigation do not address this gap." Their procedure is to exhaust the philological analysis in order to construct verifiable histories, while at the same time cautioning that "as an art that uses both 'hypotheses' and 'remnants,' the 'historical project' can only be that if it does not renounce the rigor of this method and continually produces its own self-verification."

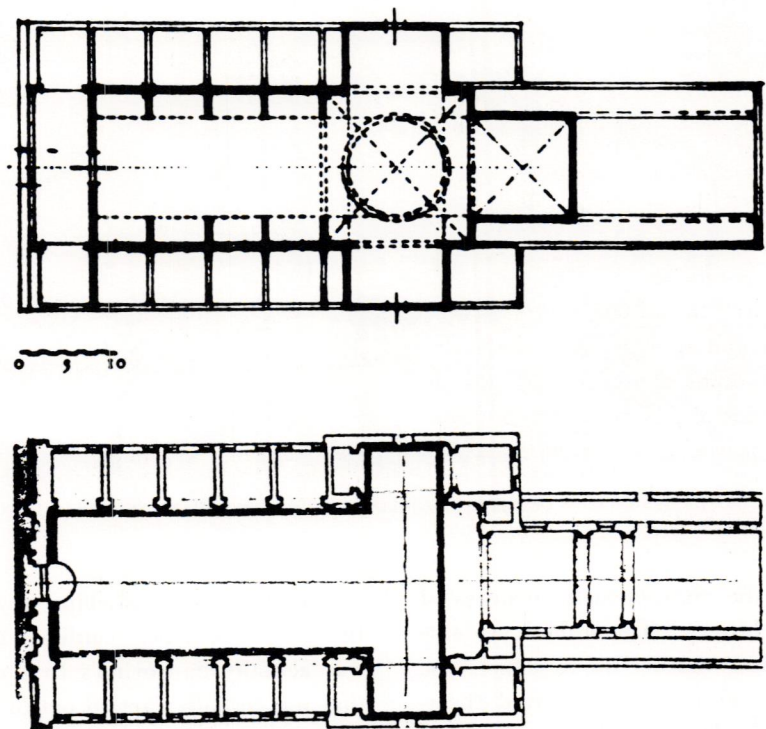
The authors do not attempt to repeat or add to what has already been said about 16th-century Venice and Renaissance architecture. Instead, they produce something entirely different, more like a detective story in which many stories—based on clues that would have remained incomprehensible if they had not been deciphered through a scrupulous inquiry—have been intertwined. Well-known protagonists and

facts succeed here in telling us something new; the authors' insistence upon the importance of "presumptive" research leads to the reevaluation of a micro-history.

At this point it is almost obligatory to mention the work of historian Carlo Ginzburg, who, in his book on Piero della Francesca, warned against "the risks of constructing circular interpretive chains, based entirely on conjectures. The links of the chain mutually defer between themselves, yet the last link hovers in empty space. As often occurs in iconological research, the work ends up becoming a pretext for a series of free associations, based generally on a presumed symbolic deciphering."¹ Tafuri and Foscari respond in sympathy with Ginzburg's attack on "savage iconology" by resolutely establishing a "difficult and fatiguing" method, defined by Ginzburg as the "analytical reconstruction of the intricate net of microscopic relations that every artistic product, even the most elementary, presupposes."²

The church of San Francesco della Vigna was the fruit of a particularly complex process. At the macroscopic level, the façade by Palladio polemically detaches itself from the architectural body by Sansovino: this formal opposition represents the changes both in the clients' programs and in the ideal principles of the architects. At the microscopic level, however, one cannot summarize the same investigation, one can only verify it through the interlacing of partial interpretations of the clues.

A central and exemplary episode in the book deals with the reassessment of the well-known "memorial" written by the neo-Platonist philosopher, Francesco Zorzi (or Giorgi) on April 25, 1535. Rudolf Wittkower understood this document to be a judgment and criticism of the proportions of Sansovino's design:



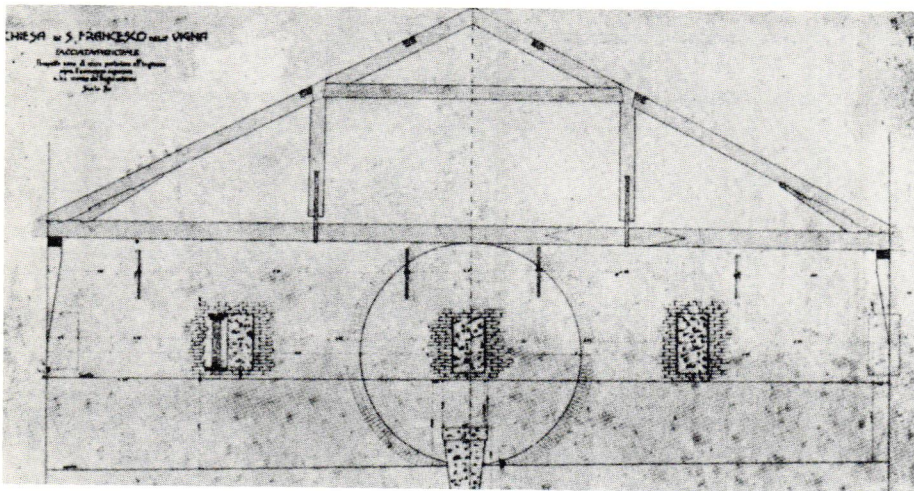
Top, OVERLAPPING OF JACOPO SANSOVINO'S FIRST SCHEME FOR THE CHURCH OF SAN FRANCESCO DELLA VIGNA WITH THE PLAN OF THE CONSTRUCTED CHURCH, VENICE. Bottom, ANTONIO VISENTINI'S SURVEY OF THE 16TH-CENTURY CHURCH OF SAN FRANCESCO DELLA VIGNA, VENICE, DESIGNED BY JACOPO SANSOVINO.

The structure was begun in accordance with Jacopo Sansovino's design. But differences of opinion soon arose about the proportions of his plan, and the Doge commissioned Francesco Giorgi, a Franciscan monk from the monastery attached to that church, to write a memorandum about Sansovino's model.

This interpretation has been canonically accepted by later historians as a sanction for a variation in the program of the church with "the introduction of Mosaic and Solomonic 'truths' translated into very strict musical and proportional laws."³ Tafuri and Foscari fully repudiate this thesis and reestablish the role that was truly carried out by Sansovino. The "memorial," they explain, does "not contest Sansovino's design but truly justifies

and defends a new design already drawn up by Jacopo [Sansovino] with Zorzi's consent." The new design corresponds fully to the constructed edifice; the justifications are understandable only in the light of a series of facts that immediately preceded the "memorial," such as the definitive re-leasing of the adjacent land for the purpose of enlarging the church. These facts combine to explain the reasons behind the alteration, not imposed but rather justified by Zorzi's memorial. Even if rich with intertwining meanings, the document in the end appears eminently "ideological," intended to "silenc[e] polemics and criticisms which evidently accumulated around the project."

More than any other fact in the case, Zorzi's "memorial" crystallizes a series of questions and puts into motion a network of parallel investigations accord-



DRAWING FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE SANSOVINIAN CHURCH OF SAN FRANCESCO DELLA VIGNA, VENICE, IN 1905-1906.

ing to the characteristic process of “micro-history.” The authors are able to conclude that for the first time “the *techné* and the *episteme* find themselves joined together thanks to a widely confirmed document.” Such a conclusion would not have been possible without a precise reconstruction of the successive designs for the church, which in turn revealed the specific and autonomous role of Sansovino as architect: “that of a specialist above all in languages, and naturally also of technologies.”

The exploration of Sansovino’s design experiences as a specialist reveal his exceptional capacity for reorganization, recycling, and modification of the preexisting. In the absence of graphic documents by Sansovino himself, the typological reconstruction of the original design develops through indirection, and by the careful interpretation of even the smallest clue. The only direct evidence is, in fact, furnished by the commemorative medal for the laying of the cornerstone in 1534, which depicts “a Latin cross model which combines the typologies of a single nave church and a centrally planned church that rotates around the axis of the dome.” The “memorial,” by stating that the variation of the model must be

executed “without altering anything that has been done,” confirms that it was actually Sansovino’s first design that was initially carried out in 1534. It is then possible to reconstruct the plan of the first design by inscribing the typological scheme inferred by the Spinelli medal into the plan of the completed edifice. The overlapping of the two plans shows how the church was enlarged in both length and width, and also demonstrates that, after the abandonment of the dome (envisioned for the first plan but found to be statically unfeasible), the characteristic novelty of the church was transmitted by the single nave as a “unified space, enlarged and harmonically controlled.”

The same processes of assemblage and reorganization observed at San Francesco della Vigna can be found simultaneously guiding Sansovino’s intervention in the design of Piazza San Marco. In fact, the history of the church would not be intelligible unless it were considered in relation to the politics of urban renovation undertaken by Doge Gritti. Since San Francesco della Vigna and Piazza San Marco were “most likely placed symbolically in relation to each other,” the restructuring of the urban context around the church can be interpreted as one of the most

important in 16th-century Venice. This particular urbanization process occurred without any plan, “based on objectives which involved legal, economic, religious, and even urban adornment problems, which do not presuppose a single protagonist, but rather an interlacing of interests—sometimes in harmony, and at other times in competition with one another.” The authors thus lead one to several previously unpublished conclusions about the praxis of so-called Renaissance urban design.

We have attempted in this review to bring to one’s attention the method of micro-history, which proceeds according to a two-fold process: always getting nearer to the particular historical fact through multiple contextualized interpretations, while at the same time shifting focus from the original fact in order to open parallel investigations and to establish new questions. This is a particularly effective means of shedding light upon the plurality of contexts, utilizing “special floodlights,” in the authors’ poetic terms, “which from the point of view of art history create problems, but can, in some cases, illuminate—or rather stimulate to the point of illumination through specific analyses—areas left unexplored by other historiographic fields.”

—translated by T. Barton Thurber; an abridged version of an article published in *Casabella*, n. 494, September 1983.

1. Carlo Ginzburg, *Indagini su Piero*, Turin, 1981, p. xix.

2. *Ibid.*, p. xx.

3. Rudolph Wittkower, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*, Norton, 1971, p. 4.

L'armonia e i conflitti: la chiesa di San Francesco della Vigna nella Venezia del cinquecento (Harmony and Conflicts: the Church of San Francesco della Vigna in Sixteenth-Century Venice), Antonio Foscari and Manfredo Tafuri, G. Einaudi, Turin, 1983, 217 pp., illus., L. 35,000.

Michael Sorkin:

SKIDMORE, OWINGS AND MERRILL

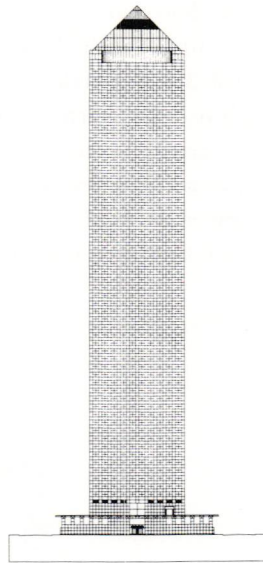
ALBERT BUSH-BROWN

Some years ago, I had a job which put me in the position to dispense a certain amount of minor league architectural largesse. As a result I often found myself at lunch with architects looking to do the small jobs I had under my control. On one of these occasions, my luncheon partner was a man who, in his previous life, had worked at Skidmore, Owings and Merrill in New York, where, among other things, he had been job captain on the Beineke Rare Book Library at Yale.

If you recall, Beineke is the one designed by Gordon Bunshaft, where the translucent marble panels of the exterior walls produce a fairly astonishing lighting effect. Well, according to the story related by my supplicant of the day, it was not originally intended to be thus: Gordo wanted onyx. The problem was, very few onyx quarries existed rich enough to yield sufficient material in the dimensions required. So, as the tale went, my friend the job captain was dispatched to scour the globe for a suitable source of the precious mineral. After a long and frustrating journey, met with many disappointments, he heard about an Algerian quarry that sounded unusually promising. Only trouble was, the civil war was in full heat and battles were raging in the vicinity. What to do? SOM's emissary cabled New York for instructions. I put my coffee cup down in anticipation of the denouement of this tale, and it was well that I did. Gordo's cabled reply had been terse: "Arrange truce."

Apocryphal or not, this anecdote has always meant Skids to me. The point isn't the architecture, it's the power. My sense of the historic ampli-

tude and potency of the organization was recently affirmed by the delivery into my hands of a publication of the syndicate's work for the years 1973-1983. For starters, the tome weighs a ton, and reproduces an aggregate square footage of built projects comparable to the land area of Sierra Leone, never mind a collective budget greater than the GNPs of the entire Third World. The text, written by Albert Bush-Brown with the astute emptiness befitting a corporate brochure, treats the firm less as an architectural practice than as a national entity (multinational, in fact) which responds not to artistic developments but to shifts in the social and political milieu. In tone,



SKIDMORE, OWINGS & MERRILL, ELEVATION,
FOUR HOUSTON CENTER

it aspires to *Foreign Affairs* rather than *Artforum*. This is appropriate: SOM is one of the first architectural operations to have its own foreign policy. Reinforcing this global reading is the presence of a parallel text in German, the other preeminent language of fully rationalized Western corporatism.

The book is divided by region, a format apparently dictated by marketing rather than aesthetic concerns: the

work itself is completely indistinguishable. Each of these sections is heralded by a two-page cityscape (San Francisco, New York, Jidda), bearing a somewhat overweening if not entirely unjustified implication of proprietorship. About the work there is little to say that you don't already know. Perhaps the real secret of Skids' success is in entirely insulating their clients from the unexpected. In detail and in part, the same projects appear over and over again. The most successful of these, as ever, impress by either simplicity (the woodsy Weyerhaeuser in Tacoma) or magnitude (the Haj Terminal in Saudi). The only newish development revealed by the catalogue is a certain ad agency facility at mild variations of image, yielding a vague if distinguishable Arabism, Classicism, Baraganism, as required, as well as a somewhat faster uptake on appropriating and recombining elements gleaned from the work of other firms—although it may finally be pointless to try to assign authorship to the chamfer, echelon plan, or greenhouse lobby.

Obviously, this is not a book that's really meant to be bought, not at fifty bucks a pop. But at one copy to each of the firm's clients, there should be many printings. The book about Skidmore, Owings and Merrill that I'd actually like to buy is the one without any photographs (except maybe that of the partner caught *in flagrante*), the one that tells how they did it and how they keep it up, the one with purloined memos and unbelievable gossip. God may be in a mullion but the real story of SOM's power lies in another kind of detail.

SOM: Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, *Architecture and Urbanism 1973-1983*, introduction and regional prefaces by Albert Bush-Brown, translated by Oswald W. Grube, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1984, 393 pp., illus., \$50.50.

Michael Mostoller:

PASANELLA + KLEIN

ALESSANDRA LATOUR, editor

This admirable pictorial presentation of the work of the firm Pasanella + Klein provides a strategic vantage point from which to confront the changes in architecture since 1970. The *oeuvre* is presented in its variety and detail, in drawing, model, working drawing, and photos of the completed work. Each project is carefully and adequately introduced and notated, and Alessandra Latour's excellent analysis places the work in the relevant political, social, and economic setting, while also confronting the formal language. Vincent Scully's preface properly lauds Pasanella, but rhetoric wins out over analysis in this brief "bravo." As a starting point, Ms. Latour's comment that "These schemes, while differing in their overall versions, are linked by their common conception as urban solutions," reveals what is most remarkable and praiseworthy in the work, but also points to a serious contradiction. In 1970 the work of Pasanella, particularly a key project like Twin Parks West, was seen as an urban solution, but it would not be considered so today.

The book, one of a series conceived by the coordinator, Fabio Mariano, as a reconnection of drawing and built work, is part of a laudable effort to rescue architecture from the recent fashion for architectural drawings. Any critique, therefore, should properly begin with the drawings and their relation to the finished buildings and places. Immediately several problems emerge.

In the Twin Parks West project, an examination of the elevation drawings lays bare the problem of scale. The facade is strongly gridded into a two-window-wide by one-floor-high framework, yet this grid and the concomitant lay-

ering of surfaces in the framework are barely visible even in close-up photos. In the detail drawing this layering is described by the different drawing of the wall block pattern in the two layers (p. 58). What the drawings indicate is a desire for the development of the block, the layer, and the grid to provide a highly modulated perception of scale, but the finished buildings lack this quality almost entirely. While I have always admired this attempt, the massive and theatrical volumetrics of these buildings seem domineering and overwhelming.

Another problem, that of architectural development, emerges in the comparison of the Twin Parks West drawings with those for Twin Parks East, where the taut horizontal lines do seem related to the final result. However, in their different drawing style they seem not so much a development of the artistic and constructive concepts of Twin Parks West as a step sideways into another building style. Both works, East and West, are therefore reduced to a

stylistic and rhetorical status which is the bane of American architectural development.

Examining the works themselves as "conceptions of an urban solution," one observes that in Twin Parks West the buildings on the four different parts of the "site" attempt to relate to each other in mass, surface, and contour, and to create a new unity out of the existing partialities of the place. While these excellent goals are almost too successfully achieved, we are again beset by contradictions: would anyone, viewing the plans and elevations on the fold-out, believe that this project is not "massive and disruptive" urban renewal, but "small-scale" vest-pocket housing meant to fit quietly into a neighborhood? And can the new work be said to bear any visible relation to the neighborhood's existing building types and dwelling forms, or its mass, surface, and contour?

I fear that in each case the answer is no. In the first place, architects at this time were using building types and

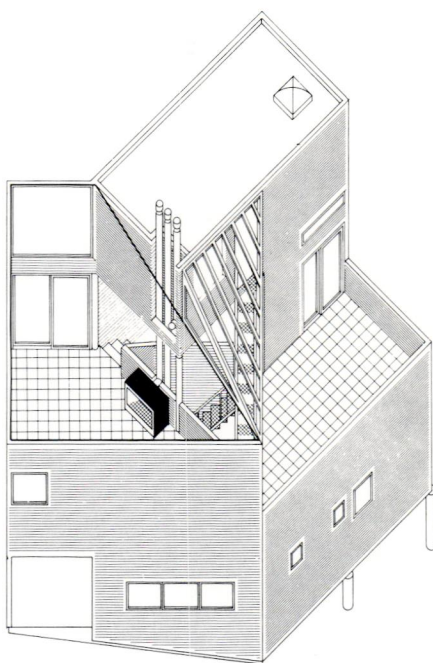


PASANELLA + KLEIN, TWIN PARKS SOUTHWEST HOUSING, THE BRONX, NEW YORK. (PHOTOGRAPH: H. BERNSTEIN AND ASSOCIATES, COURTESY OF PASANELLA + KLEIN, ARCHITECTS)

elements derived from the last housing works of Le Corbusier, after he had abandoned his city of streets and squares of the 1920s Villa Block for the 1950s Unité granite slabs in the open spaces of the suburbs of Marseilles. Second, architects were simultaneously dismissing the validity of the existing building types. Third, the apartment count created by the project sponsors here was unquestionably too high. Fourth, a visual language of exposed elevator cores and stairs, strong horizontal lines, and staggered masses was placed in a texture of façades and windows, vertical lines and an even roof line. And last, the language of open spaces—pilotis and grass—replaced the language of the city—stoops and streets.

Pasanella's use of this vocabulary was common to the times—1960 to 1970. I myself designed a building group built during those years that possesses all of these faults. In the search for "urban solutions" we were simply not aware of the folly of abandoning existing building types in favor of new inventions, or of dismissing a city of streets and squares, blocks and buildings, in favor of (in Pasanella's own words) "open spaces and patterns of movement."

The tragedy of architectural thought from 1930 to 1970 was the misunderstanding of the nature of "urban solutions." A series of fantasies was created to delineate city life: "patterns of development" instead of buildings, "streets in the air" instead of streets, "pedestrian decks" instead of courtyards, "green space" instead of parks, "cores" instead of squares, "vertical links" instead of stairs. To Pasanella's credit, he abandoned these "modernities" in the Little Italy project of the later 1970s. There he used a street-block-court concept, a common typology in New York City; too bad that the building itself is not more lively.



PASANELLA + KLEIN, RESIDENCE FOR MR. AND MRS. CHARLES DUNBAR, WINHALL, VERMONT. (COURTESY OF PASANELLA + KLEIN)

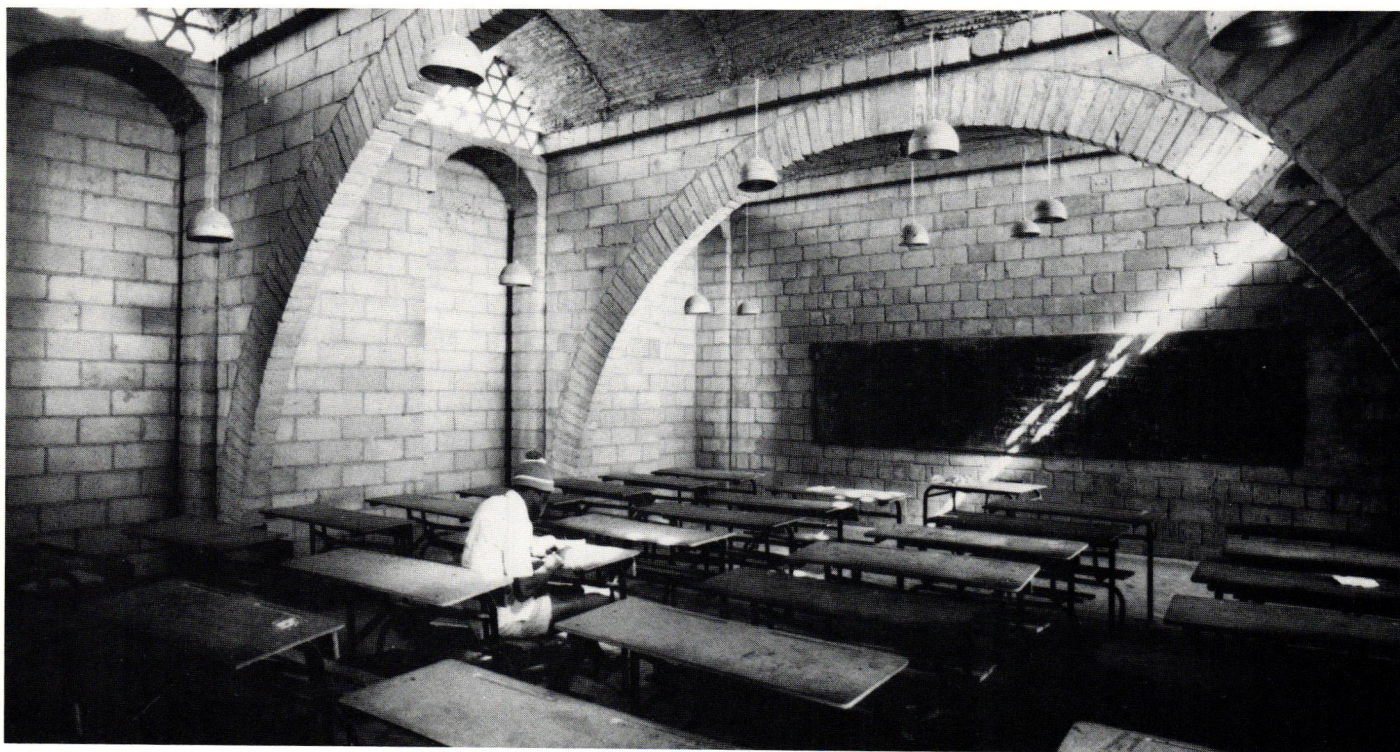
Concurrent with these studies in the urban solution, parallel studies of the urban apartment and the free-standing country house were underway. Intuitive research for the urban apartment focused on the split-level unit for the great slabs of the Bronx—a solution of great merit, which creates a sense both of spaciousness and of privacy. However, it eludes me what the attempt to model this on the split-level ranch house signifies, except a slide into another "modernity," or a bow to Venturi-ism. Sub-urbanity in the home does not necessarily favor a more meaningful "dwelling," either in 1970 or 1984, particularly in the Bronx.

The second study at the unit scale was the detached dwelling. Pasanella + Klein's early "vertical" houses are ingenious and taut manipulations of space and light. The theme that generates them is the geometrical impli-

cation of interlocking squares. However, in these exercises I have always felt that the statement never rises above the theme. Geometrical implications are geometrical implications and little more, and they lend to these works an abstracted melancholy. I prefer Dunbar House II, where geometry and the architectural element merge into a synthesis at once simpler and more complex—a rare domesti-city. The development of Pasanella's work in this arena matches that in the Little Italy Project, where street and city replaced the abstractions of the "modernities."

This is the story of a challenging *oeuvre*, a correctly executed publication in a well-conceived series. These works, with their special concern for place, urban texture, space, and geometry, help create a better understanding of public architecture. They begin to speak to the real meaning of city life: security in dwelling, a vibrant neighborhood, and an expansive urbanity. That these works were constructed in difficult situations and sites, with very low budgets and the highest of expectations, for the common person, seems incredible in New York City today, where the greatest housing effort is reserved for the truly rich. The upper middle classes meanwhile contend with \$150,000 studios in Post-Modernized towers to be constructed on the Battery Park landfill. Several thousand middle-income families will spend \$60,000 each on houses with rentable apartments on some abandoned sites in Brooklyn, and, in the South Bronx, ninety families will move into real single-family ranch houses on the abandoned lots of Charlotte Street. Not much is trickling down.

Pasanella + Klein: *Public and Private Interventions in the Residential Field*, edited by Alessandra Latour, preface by Vincent Scully, Edizioni Kappa, Rome (available in U.S. bookstores), 1983, 154 pp., illus., \$20.00 pb.



MAIN CLASSROOM, AGRICULTURAL TRAINING CENTER, NIANING, SENEGAL, COMPLETED JULY 1977. ARCHITECTS: UNESCO/BREDA, KAMAL EL-JACK, PIERRE BUSSAT, OSWALD DELLICOUR, SJOERD NIENHUIS, CHRISTOPHORUS POSMA, PAUL DE WALICK; MASTER MASON: D'IALLO. FROM HOLOD, *ARCHITECTURE AND COMMUNITY*. (PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTOPHER LITTLE, COURTESY OF DARL RASTORFER).

Al Costa:

ARCHITECTURE AND COMMUNITY

RENATA HOLOD, and
DARL RASTORFER, editors

COMMUNITY AND UNITY

BASIL AL-BAYATI

Although many fine books on Islamic architecture have appeared in the last few years, the contemporary architecture of Islamic countries remains almost unknown. One reason is that the opulent works in the richer countries, where the majority of projects are built, can seldom match buildings of the vernacular tradition for architectural excellence. Except for an occasional work of the caliber of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill's Haj Terminal in

Jidda, Saudi Arabia, most new projects opt either for the picturesque, as exemplified by the appalling excesses of Taliesen in Iran, or for slick, high-rise, high-tech development, divorced from the social and environmental context. That other solutions exist we know from the work of Hassan Fathy in Egypt and Kamran Diba in Iran, not to mention the still intact vernacular traditions of Morocco and North Yemen.

Two books published in 1983 explore some of the directions of contemporary Islamic architecture. The first, *Architecture and Community*, is a catalogue of winners of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. Inevitably the jury and contributing writers are a cross-cultural mix of luminaries with diverse professional backgrounds. Among the names one recognizes are Kenzo Tange, Oleg Gragar, Giancarlo de Carlo, Charles Correa, and Hassan Fathy. The tone, as set by the foreword and introduction, is formal, professional,

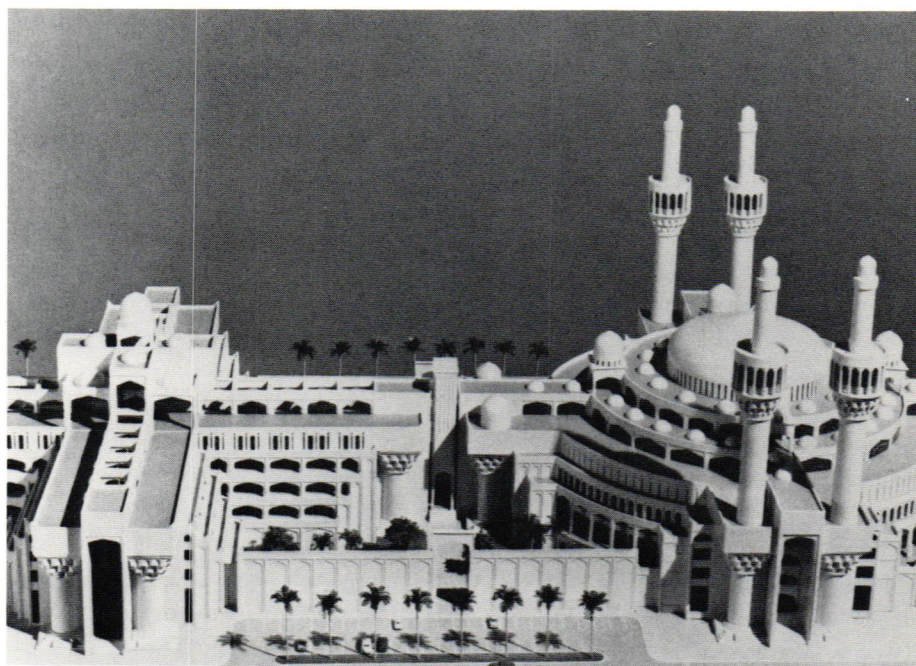
comprehensive, but also pious and well-intentioned. Significantly, the Aga Khan himself admits Islamic contemporary building to have faults—among them the temptation to Western imagery.

There are ten essays, varying considerably in quality and relevance. The first, by Muhsin S. Mahdi, on the connection between Islamic philosophy and the fine arts, fails to reach any significant conclusion except that there is little or no connection. Similarly, Oleg Grabar's rambling piece on symbols and signs in Islamic architecture concludes only that they are not very important. Grabar does, however, point out that "Islam . . . is prescriptive in behavior, not in form," a fact most designers in the Islamic world seem all too easily to forget. Doğan Kuban's essay, appropriately entitled "Conservation of the historic environment for cultural survival," blames the influence of Western capitalism for the decline of the Islamic city. But his pleas for total

conservation at all costs will find few sympathizers in rapidly developing countries. Yasmeen and Suhail Lari, in an essay on recreational and tourist facilities, likewise blame Western influence. They admit, however, that in their native Pakistan a return to Islamic fundamentalism has not been accompanied by a revival of Islamic architectural principles.

Mohammed Arkoun's essay on urbanism blames the inadequacy of new Arab settlements on the inherent tendency of Islam to resort to evasion in the face of a dilemma. He then proceeds to evade the issue himself by failing to provide any suggestions beyond a plea for "pragmatism." Ismail Serageldin's essay on educational facilities also manages to steer clear of such important issues as the confrontation between traditional Islamic education and modern fields of learning. How such vital disciplines as electronics and modern medicine are to be physically accommodated is only hinted at in his suggestion that designers avoid large-scale geometrical patterns for planning. Nader Ardalan's essay on mosque architecture is a vague discussion of typology and regional variations. After identifying eight "generic forms" that comprise the mosque type, he gives us data on the frequency of their occurrence. Thus we learn that 83 percent of all mosques have domes, while 100 percent have mihrabs. But we gain no insight into the problems of designing contemporary mosques, except that they should be "beautiful."

Fortunately for the reader, the written part of the book is redeemed by three excellent essays. In one of them, Mahbub Ul-Haq (whom we discover to be the Pakistani Minister for Development and Manpower) deals with the relationship of design to the poor, who make up two-thirds of Islam. He pleads for an architecture that reflects the spirit of Islam—equality, accessibility,



BASIL AL-BAYATI, MODEL OF MOSQUE, PART OF A PROPOSAL FOR A NEW RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL COMPLEX FOR ABU DHABI. FROM AL-BAYATI, *COMMUNITY AND UNITY*.

mass participation, and cost-effectiveness—and calls for the training of indigenous architects. As he remarks, "It is a sad commentary on their own intellectual colonialism that many governments are still reluctant to recognize the talents of their own nationals, even when they are seeking a revival of national pride and culture."

Charles Correa, in "Urban Housing in the Third World—the Role of the Architect," discusses the inadequacy of "official" high-rise models. He points out that for the very poor proximity to employment in city centers is far more important than "adequate" housing, a lesson he has learned as an urban planner in India. As an alternative to high-rise housing, with its specialized labor, imported technology, inflexibility, and indifference to users, he suggests low-rise/high-density models which rely on local labor and materials, vernacular solutions, great flexibility, and community involvement. As for the architect, he is advised to "bring to bear . . . neither the prima donna performance nor the Red Cross bit."

Finally, in "Changing Roles and Procedures in the Design of Public Buildings," Mona Serageldin and François Vigier analyze clearly and directly the decline of traditional Islamic societies based on networks of community organizations. They are not in the least evasive or apologetic, but confront the problems of Islamic cultural decadence head-on. Identifying economic and colonial imperialism as the initial cause, they outline the typical response of Muslim societies—the transfer of responsibility from the community to the state sector. The decline of the building guilds and their replacement by Western-type contractor and bid systems has had a calamitous effect, lowering the status of craftsmen laborers, distancing them from clients, making traditional building skills and building prototypes obsolete. The authors propose two sober solutions: revival of community participation, and development of an indigenous architectural profession.

Appropriately, a special Chairman's Award is given to Hassan Fathy, and a

separate section on him concludes the book. It is, not surprisingly, one of the most interesting parts.

The committee ensured that the 15 prize winners represent many of the same issues covered by the essays. They are drawn from the widest possible range of projects, from an agricultural training center in Senegal to a luxury hotel in India, and from a small house on the Nile delta to a vast slum improvement program in Indonesia. Conspicuously absent are high-rises, urban planning schemes, and, oddly enough, mosques. Only projects completed between 1950 and 1977 are included, which explains the absence of such obvious choices as the Haj Terminal and Kamran Diba's Shushtar New Town in Iran.

Some projects are problematic: Why was the Agricultural Training Center in Senegal, sponsored and built for CARITAS, a Catholic social welfare organization, given a prize? And the Mughal Sheraton in Agra, near the Taj Mahal, although it draws inspiration from nearby Mughal (Islamic) monuments, and responds appropriately to its climate, is neither located in an Islamic country, nor built by or for Muslims. The opulence of the Mecca Intercontinental Hotel is also questionable, given the strong notion of equality of all Muslims during the Mecca pilgrimage.

That this book should have been published at all is interesting, although its flaws are numerous. For a discussion of Third World issues, the coffee table format seems inappropriate. The illustrations are inferior, although the chapter on Fathy includes good color reproductions of his evocative gouaches. The essayists could have been more carefully chosen, for their abilities rather than their positions. The book seems addressed to Westerners; no Arabic edition is mentioned. Furthermore, it carefully avoids direct discussion of the responses of architecture to emerg-

ing Islamic fundamentalism. Nowhere does it discuss what makes a good Islamic building, or propose to remedy the appalling ignorance of Islamic architecture on the part of most Muslims. Perhaps the money used to fly the awards panel to Shalimar and Geneva should have been diverted instead to setting up chairs of Islamic architecture in the major universities of the Islamic world.

As if in response to the issues raised in *Architecture and Community*, *Community and Unity* confronts us with what its author, Basil Al-Bayati, claims to be an Islamic city designed in accordance with divine law. Lest we mistrust his intentions, a quote from the Quran reassures us: "This is a declaration for mankind, a guidance and instruction to those who fear God."

The design is Al-Bayati's entry for a competition sponsored by the Department of Social Services and Commercial Buildings Administration of an unspecified Arab country. The theme is a multi-functional center for an Arab city, also unspecified. After describing how his entry satisfies all the requirements of the competition, the author presents it, with explanations of his intent backed up by some rather astonishing quotes from Islamic sources. His basic philosophy, in brief, is that Islamic architecture derives not from formal, technical, symbolic, or philosophical sources but from man's concern for divine law. On the opposite page his purpose is set forth:

During the twentieth century the Islamic Arab city has lost some of its original character. This is because of the introduction of foreign values and foreign architectural ideas. It is our responsibility at the present time to try and prevent this from continuing.

He goes on to analyze two approaches to urban design, "The Right"

and "The Wrong"; he of course takes the former. Every conceivable aspect of urban design is addressed, in the most evasive and naïve way. His misunderstanding of the subject is profound: the city center is split in two to achieve "unity," functions separated to achieve "coherence," and housing units raised high in the air to achieve "closeness to the earth." Most of his quotes are irrelevant or misplaced; some are downright threatening, if you differ from the author's lofty views. On page 39 we read that "God is forgiving and merciful and He is severe in His punishment." This follows the chapter on "The Wrong" approach to planning. At times the quotes make no sense at all, for example, the verses from Rusafi on page 26: "Your beauty, O face of the space is wonderful/ And your chest is so fast as to challenge limitation." We can only assume that the translation is at fault. Two other quotes are in Arabic only.

The project itself combines some of the most nightmarish, outdated aspects of Western planning with an "Arabian" architectural imagery of startling vulgarity. The design is for a double row of round and cross-shaped buildings linked by covered walks, arranged on either side of a vast boulevard—a version of those car-oriented spine schemes popular twenty or thirty years ago. In the buildings, every Islamic motif is exploited and trivialized—columns are blown up in scale to serve as circulation cores à la Bofill, minarets bunched up like asparagus to form circular hotels; domes of all sizes crop up everywhere, and pointed arches are applied gratuitously to wall surfaces.

If my reaction seems to reflect Western aesthetic biases, we need only glance at the building plans to grasp the full extent of Mr. Al-Bayati's misunderstanding. He has proposed the inconceivable in Islamic architecture—a circular mosque with no mihrab, and certainly no qibla wall for orientation

to Mecca! Al-Bayati's good intentions and boundless enthusiasm, exacerbated by his religious fervor, must have got the better of his judgment.

The illustrations are crude at best, and at worst they are masterpieces of banality. Besides contradicting the author's intentions, and all common sense about urbanism, this book completely avoids the crucial issues of building for Islamic societies today. It is an exercise in religious and aesthetic escapism.

Architecture and Community: Building in the Islamic World Today, Renata Holod, editor, Aperture, 1983, 255 pp., illus., \$40.00.

Community and Unity, Basil Al-Bayati, St. Martin's, 1983, 142 pp., illus., \$35.00.

John Woodbridge:

TRADITION BECOMES INNOVATION

BARTLETT HAYES

This book is a catalogue of contemporary church and temple design, directed at a lay (non-designer) audience, presumably of clergy and committee members about to build or remodel. Like so much of modern institutional religion, it is full of good intentions but misses the point. The book is organized by "component parts," and implies that the way to build a church is to select a bunch of good examples—an entrance

here, an altar there, an exterior form here, a structural system there—put them all together, blend lightly, and *presto*, instant religious architecture. That is, in fact, the way most contemporary churches appear to have been designed, and this book offers at least as many bad examples as good ones. They are bad not in the sense of bad taste as against good taste, but in the lack of an organizing, informing conviction about what a church is. This scattershot book is more of a hindrance than a help. Far better to ignore it, and read Rudolph Schwarz's *Church Incarnate*,* probably the greatest statement by a contemporary architect of what designing a religious building is all about. Unlike *Tradition Becomes Innovation*, it demands that you think about what it all means.

Besides this fundamental gripe, I have a few petty ones. Details, like the names of churches and architects, are listed only in the back of the book—on the assumption, I suppose, that titles and authors are less important than the object illustrated; but anyone interested in who, what, where, and why is bound to be infuriated. And the impossibly coy grading of headings from bold to light in the same typeface is the kind of thing designers should get out of their systems in Type Design I.

It is always sad to see good intentions go as seriously astray as they do in this book, but I believe the problem lies more with the religious institutions than with the designers.

*Rudolph Schwarz, *The Church Incarnate, The Sacred Function of Christian Architecture*, Henry Regnery Company, Chicago, 1958 (first published in German as *Vom Bau Der Kirche* (1938).

Tradition Becomes Innovation, Modern Religious Architecture in America, Bartlett Hayes, foreword by Howard E. Spraggs, Pilgrim, 1982, 176 pp., illus., cloth \$27.50; paper \$12.95.



ERTAN ÇAKIRLAR, ARCHITECT FOR RENOVATION, SHOP FRONT, RUSTEM PASHA CARAVANSERAI, EDİRNE, TURKEY, COMPLETED AUGUST 1972. FROM HOLOD, *ARCHITECTURE AND COMMUNITY*. (PHOTOGRAPH: MUSTAFA PEHLIVANOĞLU)

Thomas L. Schumacher:

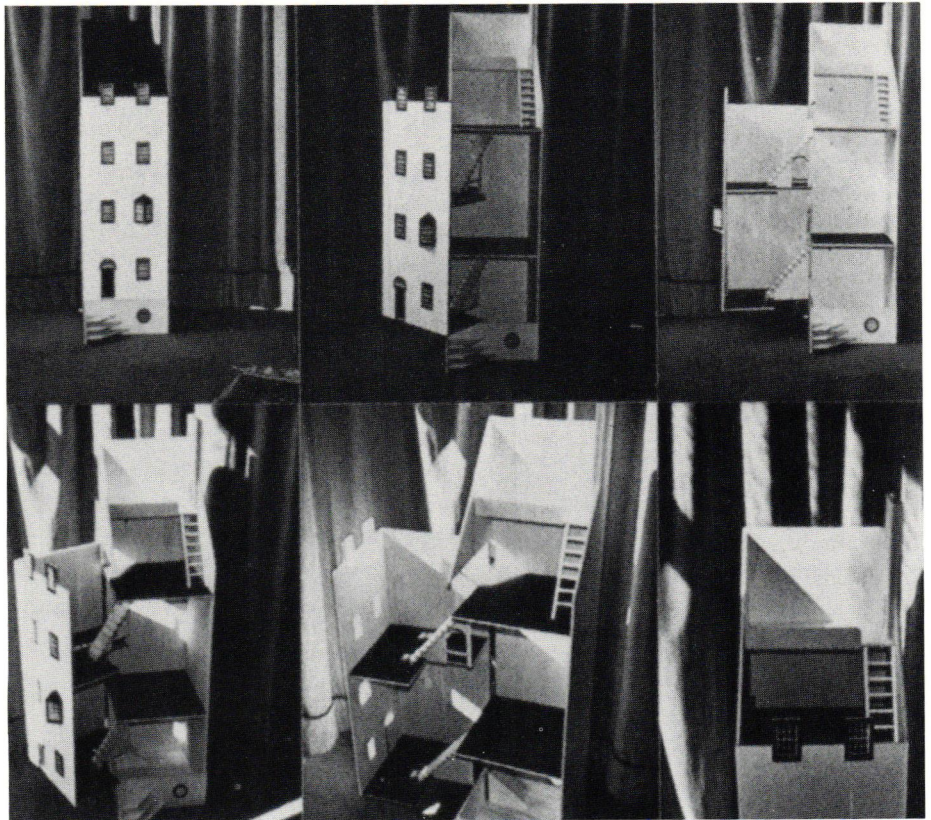
DOLLS' HOUSES

ANDREAS PAPADAKIS, editor

Dr. Andreas Papadakis has a daughter. He wanted to buy her a dolls' house but could find none to his liking so he did what any contemporary architectural publisher might do: he capitalized on the egos and the lack of work among architects worldwide and staged an international competition. The results of this competition are published in A.D. Profile 46, *Dolls' Houses*.

The judges for this contest were James Gowan, Robert Maxwell, Vincent Scully, Bruno Zevi, and Papadakis. The judging was accomplished by absentee ballot, and the report includes some comments by each juror about the schemes and about the difficulty of judging such a contest from scant information received through the mail. Prizes and honorable mentions were awarded, although I am unable to discern what the winners won, save a chance to be published in the profile. Since the volume presents the entries in a random order (for reasons opaque to this reader), we are left to ferret through a few pages of white-on-black text to discover how the winners were ranked. Is there a hidden agenda?

The projects seem to acknowledge a persistent problem facing the designer of children's toys: that of balance between abstract, generalized form and miniaturization of adult-sized objects. (The problem posed by Gombrich's hobby horse, for example, which presented great difficulty for American toy manufacturers in the early seventies.) The schemes are clearly split on whether this object ought to be: 1) a traditional girl's dolls' house, 2) a traditional boy's building-block set, 3) a traditional modern architect's metaphysics kit, or 4) all of the above. (I do not mean to



PHILIP S. BLACK, DOLLS' HOUSE OF BIRCH PLYWOOD

imply in any way that the right answer is 4.)

There are, to be sure, a number of interesting and elegant projects (including first prize) presenting all of these themes and more. There are some fun dolls' houses, many of them supported by theoretical outpourings that reach far beyond the realm of a simple dolls' house to embrace that great macrocosm of architectural theory from Laugier to Le Corbusier (and further). I can tell this from Mr. Zevi's reaction. He was able to draw up a friends and enemies list right away, distinguishing between "progressive" and "reactionary" schemes with dispatch, as if poor little Alexandra would be inexorably jaded by the wrong dolls' house.

I liked one project that nobody on the jury seemed to care about. It was by Phillip S. Black, a modest, useful, sufficiently specific, reasonably abstract, identifiable, fun dolls' house.

I would recommend this volume to professionals who have waiting rooms, such as suburban pediatricians.

Dolls' Houses (A.D. Profile 46), Andreas Papadakis, editor, St. Martin's, 1983, 136 pp., \$19.95 pb.

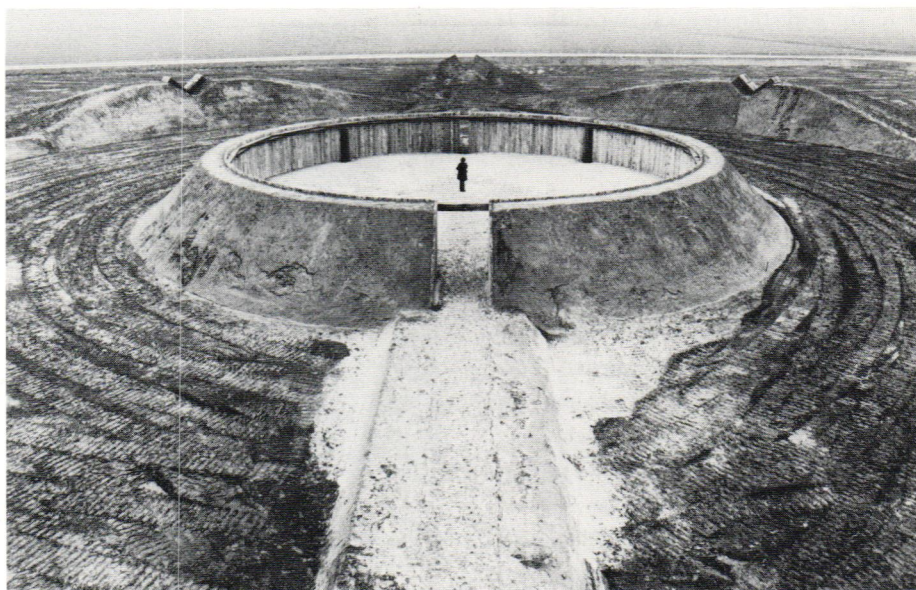
Mark Rakatansky:

OVERLAY

LUCY R. LIPPARD

In the face of the current stylistic overload, it is not surprising to find architects turning their attention toward archaic forms in their search for meaningful imagery. The notion of the primitive as a device for catharsis, whenever our lives and designs become too clever or too clean, has been a recurring phenomenon in our culture, particularly in the arts. "I am attracted to the prehistoric sites and artifacts because I imagine that they were not separated from their social context," writes Lucy Lippard in *Overlay*; "Primal Art is integrated with daily life and modern art is set totally outside daily life." Lippard seeks the reintegration and revitalization of contemporary art, "the restoration of symbolic possibility" through the exploration of our "primal" relationships to the natural world, our bodies, and the collective life.

To this end, she has amassed countless examples from prehistoric sites and rituals, and from contemporary sculpture, performance, and environmental art. For many of these contemporary artists, the use of archaic imagery was in reaction to the reduction of content in Minimalism, even though it was the similarity of simple form between the two that allowed this rapid and widespread adoption. Among the works cited are: the celestial observatories of Robert Morris, Nancy Holt, and Charles Ross; the tombs, labyrinths, and miniature dwellings of Alice Aycock and Charles Simonds; the elemental use of earth, stones, water, and fire by Judy Varga, Richard Long, and Robert Smithson; and the ritualized performances of Mary Beth Edelson and Nigel Rolfe.



ROBERT MORRIS, "OBSERVATORY," 1971-1977, VIEW 1. OOSTELIJK FLEVOLAND, HOLLAND. EARTH, WOOD, AND GRANITE. (COURTESY OF LEO CASTELLI GALLERY)

Although the chapters in *Overlay* are organized thematically ("Feminism and Prehistory," "The Form of Time: Earth and Sky, Words and Numbers," "Houses and Graves and Gardens"), the examples tend to follow one another in rapid succession without a discernible direction or conclusion. The resulting plethora of information makes *Overlay* both stimulating and frustrating, and thus it functions better as a sourcebook than a synthetic work. Lippard has warned us of this in her introduction, claiming that the book is "an exercise in breaking away from conventional ways of looking at the visual arts," and that her "internal method is that of collage. . . . I have tried to weave together the ideas and images of very different cultures by making one a metaphor for the other, and vice versa."

From the start, there is an essential weakness in Lippard's argument—she assumes our current alienation to be the result of a break with an idyllic past. In support of this view she cites Otto Rank who, characterizing this post-Edenic period, "attributes the driving motive behind the human need

to understand nature to a need to control and dominate nature"; yet she goes on to emphasize the remarkable accuracy of prehistoric observatories. Our distance from the world might not appear as dire as Rank and Lippard imply, if we came to realize the continuity of our relationship with the world from the archaic to the contemporary, as suggested by R. F. Thompson in his discussion of the Yoruba, a West African tribe, in "Yoruba Artistic Criticism":

Since antiquity, Yoruba have adorned their cheeks with line. They associate line with civilization. 'This country has been civilized' literally means in Yoruba 'This earth has lines upon its face.' . . . In fact, the basic verb to cicatrize (lá) has the multiple association of imposing human pattern on the disorder of nature: chunks of wood, the human face, and the forest are all 'opened,' like the human eye, allowing the inner quality of the substance to shine forth.*

The reintegration Lippard seeks is only possible if it is, in fact, not our rela-

tionship with the natural world that is unsuitable, but the degree to which we move out of balance with it.

Lippard is aware of the pitfalls of "starry-eyed idealization," but nevertheless continually gets caught up in the romance of it all. Wisely, she excludes much of the sixties and seventies sculpture that had the appearance of prehistoric or tribal art, in order to avoid those artists who, in her words, "borrow the form and drain the content from his or her source in a mood of scholarly tourism—handouts on the Golden Boughery." Yet many of the performance works in her "Ritual" chapter seem, however sincere the attempt and moving for the participant, like weak imitations of traditional ritual acts. To comprehend our daily life enough for our art to be integrated with it, Lippard needs to include artists (like Laurie Anderson) who succeed in illuminating contemporary "rituals," our everyday acts performed without higher intention toward any deity but with an obsessive repetitiveness that matches that of the natural world itself. The creation of rituals, fetish objects, and buildings in the mold of ancient and tribal cultures stimulates us to think about what the corresponding rituals, objects, and architecture might (and could) be in our culture—that is both their potency and their limit.

In architecture, the advantages of appropriating archaic forms are readily apparent, as they seem to confer an archetypal authority beyond the flux of historical styles, allowing an anchor in a past that has fewer of the negative political associations of more recent historical styles, such as Neoclassicism. While this can also be achieved by the application of a "vernacular" style, the use of archaic forms allows a monumentality impossible with the vernacular, as in some of Louis Kahn's work or James Stirling's recent projects. The dangers of stylistic simulation are



THE RING OF BRODGAR, ORKNEY, SCOTLAND, CIRCA 2100 B.C. (ALSO DATED 1560 B.C.). (PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS JENNINGS)

equally apparent: from Kahn's battered (inclined) walls to Stirling's cavetto cornices, degenerating further to the cut-out lotus "capitals" of ACE Architects, we now have almost all the elements necessary for a repeat Egyptian Revival. This sort of watering down can also be seen in the increasingly frequent use of the "primitive hut" motif, which appears for many architects to be interchangeable with any other currently fashionable image.

The role of ritual in architecture as a way of rendering meaning is also a current topic.** Aldo Rossi, in *A Scientific Autobiography*, wisely speaks of "the bitterness and comfort of the ritual," and, in reference to his "Project for a Villa with Interior," states: "Of course, whether it is a corridor or a room, it is inevitably a place in which someone will say sooner or later, 'Must we talk about all this?' or 'See how things have changed!' and other things that seem to be taken from some screenplay or drama." This ineluctability has led Rossi to a silent architecture, to the creation of vessels that exist as backdrops to "private acts, unforeseeable occasions, love affairs, and repent-

ances." Other architects attempt to deal with the ritualistic aspects of life and architecture in a more directive way, including: Luis Barragán and Emilio Ambasz with their highly charged processions, linked with sky and water; Walter Pichler with his ritualized assemblage of buildings and sculptures; and Lars Lerup and (in his own house) David Ireland in their more critical designs that "expose the mechanics" and mechanistic qualities of our daily acts. Like the best artists in *Overlay*, these architects manage to balance the contemporary, the vernacular and/or the archaic without succumbing to pastiche.

Early in her book, Lippard states that "One of art's functions is to recall that which is absent." *Overlay* functions in a similar manner, both in what it does and doesn't provide—recalling our archaic past, while underlining the difficulties of addressing the present in light of the past. This seems to be the essential dilemma of our postmodern era, and Lucy Lippard's noble efforts help illuminate these problems. But if the archaic is to act as a cathartic, then it needs to be used like a knife to cut through the layers of our conceits, not as a means of exchanging one conceit for another.

*R. F. Thompson, "Yoruba Artistic Criticism" in W. C. d'Azaredo, ed. *The Traditional Artist in African Societies* (Indiana University Press, 1973).

**The first issue (1983) of *The Princeton Journal* was dedicated to the theme of ritual in architecture. Despite the careful addressing of the subject by some of the participants in the opening discussion, there was a tendency among some of the contributors to perceive ritual significance in their designs merely because they will be inhabited, or because they are celebratory or (as in the case of one reception desk) decorative.

Alan Hess:

EXTERIOR DECORATION

JOHN CHASE

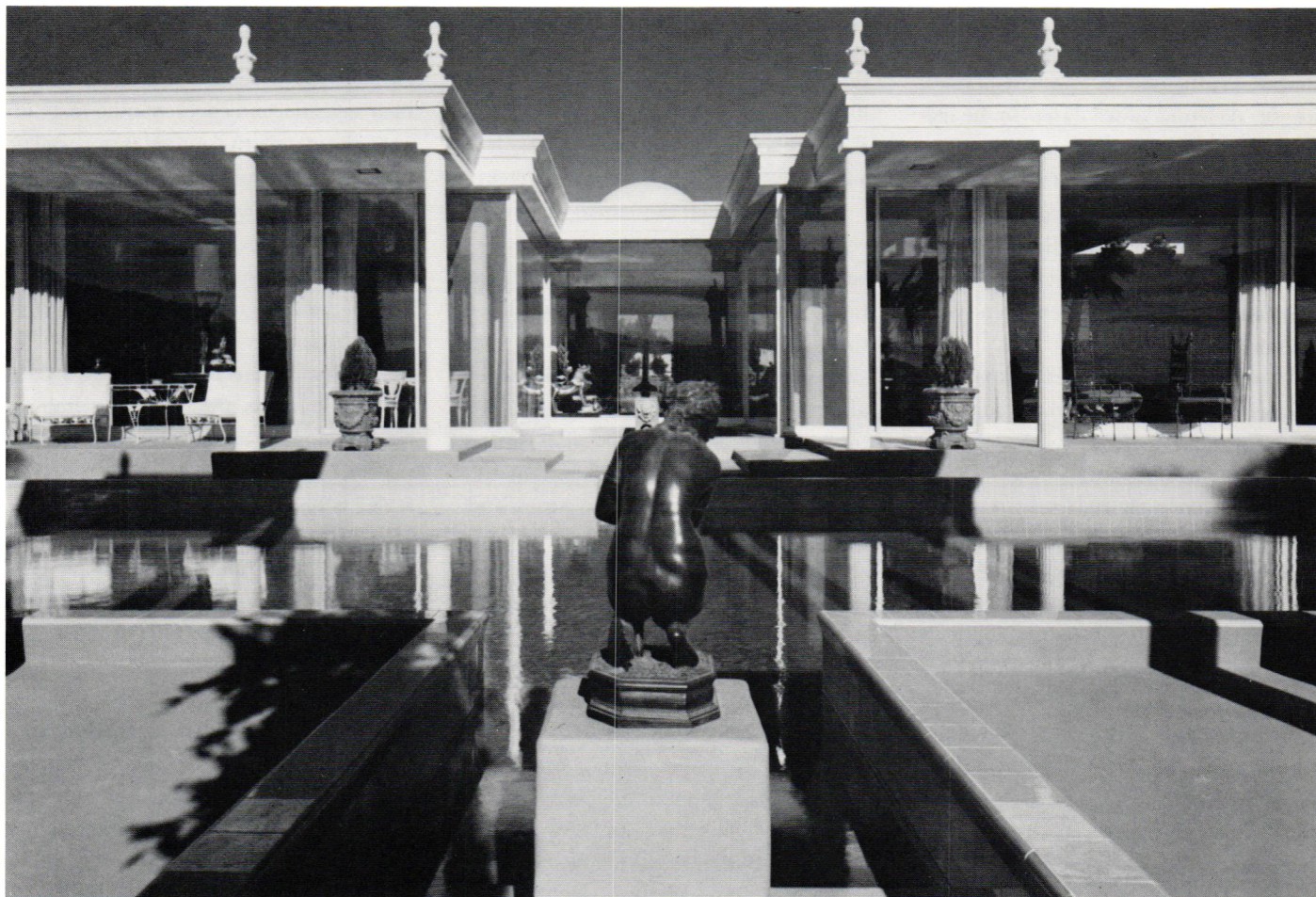
The remodeled bungalows of West Hollywood are the sort of buildings we are usually warned away from. Similarly inclined buildings of today would be labeled Post-Modern, but interior decorators and amateur remodelers began to transmogrify Hollywood's working-class vernacular cottages into flimsy-Regency, pseudo-Second Empire pretenders as early as the 1950s. The original bungalows had been undistinguished, but at least knew their place; the remodelers seemed intent on prov-

ing that a little historical knowledge can be a dangerous thing.

John Chase, however, has the conviction of one too aware of the high and low art splendors of Los Angeles to dismiss any building type as too humble or too garish. The region's most outlandish designs are likely to be the condominiums, shopping malls, and roadside stands spread across all of North America next year, or even the inspiration of an R. M. Schindler or Charles Moore. The impulse to turn a bungalow into a Parisian *palais* is worth exploring in its very audacity, to learn how our cities came to look the way they do.

The appeal of these buildings on the level of kitsch has been noted before; Angelenos can drive their London or New York visitors past a selection,

packed conveniently into a few square blocks, on the way from the Sunset Strip to a final stop at the Polo Lounge. Earlier books, such as Charles Jencks's *Daydream Houses of Los Angeles*, have been useful in documenting examples of the style. (Jencks acknowledges his debt to Chase for bringing them to his attention.) But after the spate of recent picture books on unusual vernacular and roadside buildings, Chase's is a welcome second-generation book. It considers the implications of these previously ignored buildings in greater depth and documentation, and culls from the unpromising material rich lessons in how architecture—any architecture—is twisted and pulled and molded by multiple influences: shifting populations,



JAMES MCNAUGHTON, HARRY MORRILL HOUSE, PALM SPRINGS. (PHOTOGRAPH: MAX ECKERT, COURTESY OF JOHN CHASE)

geographic proximities, economics, the personalities of individual designers, the power of symbolism and taste, the models of history.

Chase is aware of the inherent absurdities of these remodels, but he also sees in them liberating lessons in how to manipulate an architectural vocabulary with an economy of means. The ambiguous balance is summed up by Susan Sontag, whom he quotes: "To name a sensibility, to draw its contours and to recount its history, requires a deep sympathy modified by revulsion." Irony alone is not enough.

The style is defined within a fairly small precinct, wedged between Beverly Hills, the Pacific Design Center (on the former Pacific Railway yards), and the Sunset Strip. These influential presences over the years shaped the West Hollywood remodel as we know it. Railway workers were the market for the simple Craftsman or Spanish houses, whose skeletons were later to be reclothed in smarter fictitious styles. The Strip offered the models of wealth, stylish prestige, and glamor for which the remodelers strove, and Beverly Hills had the clients to support the decorators who settled conveniently in West Hollywood.

Bureaucratic boundaries often influence architecture as much as aesthetics does; West Hollywood's location in county jurisdiction, where law enforcement was somewhat lax, appealed to a growing gay population, who added to but were not entirely responsible for the new style. Within this social and geographic context, Chase traces a style which can roughly be described as Hollywood Regency. An amalgam of French, English, and American colonial vocabularies, it took hold in the houses, shops, and offices of the 1930s designed for movie stars and moguls by Paul R. Williams, Douglas Honnold, George Vernon Russell, Roland Coate, Sr., S. Charles Lee, and other prominent Los

Angeles architects. Whatever prestige the style originally had was enhanced by the association with Hollywood.

Though professional magazines documented the houses by the well-known architects, the remodels themselves went for the most part unnoted. The distinctive vocabulary of the style was spread and developed by less prominent architects, interior decorators, and, ultimately, amateur remodelers. Chase's remarkable detective work resurrects the lost chronology of the style through building permits, interviews, and first-hand observation.

His expositions on the mansard roof and on architect John Woolf's Pullman door (the aristocratically slender and imperiously tall entry meant as much to exclude as to welcome) as hallmarks of the style show how an everchanging architectural vocabulary can be stretched by resourceful designers to fit the use of the moment, and still echo its origins. These designers got English Regency wrong, but in the process they got the West Hollywood Remodel right.

Chase achieved these insights not by researching publications but by canvassing the city itself. Magazines filter the full range of an era's buildings through the editors' bias; only the streets record the entire catalogue of an era's architectural products—the taxonomy of styles, eras, and influences. He also interviews some of the remodelers themselves. Benjamin and Betty Heiman added a single brick wall across the façade of their Spanish stucco box, fixed some columns, a truncated pediment, and carriage lamps to it, and created with the most economical means new privacy and dignity. As designers untrained in conventional schools of architecture (or rather trained in the unconventional school of the vernacular), the Heimans were free to project their symbols of dignity with breathtaking directness. The results might be called crude. The possibility that unexpected

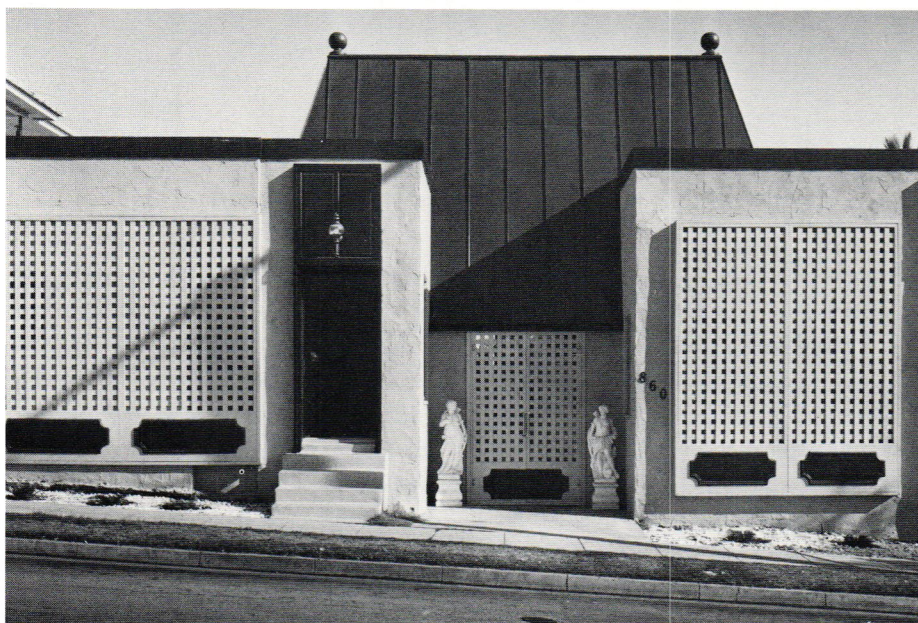
juxtapositions, unplanned symbolism, abrupt lines, or funereal symmetry were unintentional is not really the point; no designer is ever totally in control of the viewer's perception of his design. All that matters is that the product be capable—as many of these remodels are—of rewarding an open-minded observer.

Another remodeler, Tony Duquette, is the ultimate interior decorator. Friend of stars, and of premier American decorator Elsie de Wolfe (Lady Mendl), he enlists the profession's flimsy materials, stock status symbols and beloved gingerbread curlicues in the service of a dramatic, ethereal sense of place—showing that the standard materials and icons of interior decoration can transcend class-consciousness.

Stereotypes alone cannot explain the range of sensibilities and backgrounds which impelled these designs; their architectural inventiveness is endless; their eclecticism represents the taste of a segment of the population unimpressed by the purist Good Taste that restrained Modern architecture. They are free to see ornament as jewelry, shrubs as structure, façades as billboards, and interior decoration as public architecture.

Despite material which will strike some as bizarre, this book has important lessons for architects. It shows the expressive flexibility of an overlooked style, whose hallmarks were economy of means and the reinventing of design grammar. Symbolic and historic references can, apparently, still create effective spaces, no matter how vestigial or how tenuously tied to their original source.

In marked contrast to the haphazard documentation of similar books, Chase carefully identifies each building example by address. The abundant black-and-white photographs are clear and descriptive; the many plans and before-and-after shots are useful to ex-



SPANISH COLONIAL REVIVAL BUNGALOW COURT BEFORE AND AFTER REGENCY STYLE REMODELING BY LAWRENCE LIMOTTI, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CIRCA 1962. (PHOTOGRAPH: HAROLD DAVIS, COURTESY OF JOHN CHASE)

plain the houses' startling transformations. The writing is highly readable yet sober—which helps, when the subject is an architecture not known for its sobriety.

This book is the second in a series on California architecture published by Hennessey and Ingalls and edited by David Gebhard, who provides an excellent foreword here. The series, which

began with Robert Winter's book, *The California Bungalow*, is promising; California's supply of surprising buildings seems inexhaustible.

Exterior Decoration: Hollywood's Inside-Out Houses, California Architecture and Architects, No. II, John Chase, Hennessey and Ingalls (1254 Santa Monica Mall, Santa Monica, CA 90401), 1982, 125 pp., illus., 19.95 pb.

Marc Treib:

TRADITIONAL JAPANESE HOUSES

YUKIO FUTAGAWA
and TEIJI ITOH

The snow is melting. The roof's thatch emerges from its white cover, as the dark fascia board rejoins its structural support. The roof slope mimics the profile of the mountains behind it, mountains sheathed in a sparse, leafless tree-cover that recalls the wiry hair of an elephant's forehead. The structural triangulation of the gable ensures a feeling of stability and permanence that rivals the mountain backdrop. The air is dull; the light is heavy; and the cloudy ambience of the photograph, like the mimesis of building and landscape, roots this dwelling to its site as if by an anchor dropped miles into the ground.

This image is a singular selection: the Wada house from west central Japan. While singular, it is also typical of the Japanese *minka* represented in *Traditional Japanese Houses*, and the rapport that exists between the photographer Yukio Futagawa and the dwellings photographed. These are extraordinary structures, the sort of buildings that evoke maudlin adjectives like "noble," "dignified," "appropriate," and, of course, "beautiful." They have elicited the respect of their inhabitants from the time of their construction, and similar responses from the foreign visitors who came to Japan from the time of its opening in the mid-nineteenth century. Edward S. Morse, a scientist who came to study mollusks, was intrigued by the native dwellings, and eventually wrote the first classic on the subject, *Japanese Homes and Their Surroundings* (first published in 1886 and currently available in a Dover reprint [1961]). Morse was unbiased in

the best scientific tradition, his description complete. At certain points his objectivity wanes and his admiration shows translucently through, almost as an embarrassment. "In the manner of building," Morse posits, "one recognizes the propriety of the constructive art as being in better taste [than that of the West]; and in a Japanese house one sees this principle carried out to perfection."

The German architect Bruno Taut drifted toward the Far East on his quest for himself and architecture, finding, in place of his glass architecture of light, an architecture of shadows. Though insightful and critical, his praise was undiminished:

Passing it [the farmhouse] in traveling or strolling through small villages or towns is a joy to the eye and a pleasure to the feelings. . . . They are like the primary element of art, the unbroken artistic faculties of a young and childlike people and yet imbued with the wisdom of age.¹

This is an architecture of shadows, light defined through its modulation and absence; brilliance rendered through contrast and omission. In the West we have sought an architecture of light, an architecture that can be traced back to Solomon's Temple. Today, our American bathrooms must be tiled, impervious—and light. Light is knowledge; light is truth. But also in the shadows can truth be uncovered, as novelist Junichiro Tanizaki reveals in his compact *In Praise of Shadows*:²

It always stands apart from the main building, at the end of a corridor; in a grove fragrant with leaves and moss. No words can describe that sensation as one sits in the dim light, basking in the faint glow reflected from the shoji, lost in meditation or gazing out at the garden.

A tea house? A meditation pavilion? On



A-FRAME WADA HOUSE, CHŪBU REGION, JAPAN. (PHOTOGRAPH: YUKIO FUTAGAWA)

the contrary, that space delegated to our most mundane bodily functions.

"A Japanese room," the novelist continues, "might be likened to an ink-wash painting, the paper-paneled shoji being the expanse where the ink is thinnest, and the alcove where it is darkest. Whenever I see the alcove of a tastefully built Japanese room, I marvel at our comprehension of the secrets of shadows, our sensitive use of shadow and light." Perhaps all architecture is an architecture of shadow and light, but in Japanese hands—and Japanese minds—this is building of incredible subtlety and gradation. Rarely do we find a condition of either/or. Construction, on the contrary, resolves complex conditions, embedding sets of light values, sets of spaces, and sets of social uses into one another.

Looking through *Traditional Japanese Houses*, one finds page after page of soft, striking images. Rarely are they

photographed in the perfect, sparkling sunlight so characteristic of Western architectural photography. Futagawa is the modern master, a photographer who shares Tanizaki's praise and love of shadows—and tone. Overcast skies prevail, an ambient light that allows detail to emerge from the mass. Composition may be simple but never dry; even in symmetrical images, the structures or spaces retain their lives, and reveal their story. Interiors—in all but those houses now saved as museums—provide signs of living and clues of the inhabitants and the inhabitation. In village shots, villagers appear. The buildings wear their patina like a soldier his campaign ribbons; and the years of polishing that have brought a life to the wood are witnessed in that characteristic dull shine. Sometimes it is retained: "When I first visited the Yoshijima house in 1956," Itoh remembers with a trace of disappointment,

all of the wooden surfaces gleamed from years of daily buffing. The zelkova boards of the verandah shone like travertine, reflecting the *shōji* panels on one side, and the trees on the other. Once though, someone used a chemically treated cloth, and with the dirt disappeared the old and beautiful luster of the wood.

Futagawa has captured this presence of patina, the cracks in the wood that move us like the wrinkles in a venerable face. These images, unlike the glossy tradition of Western architectural photography, record not an object but a moment.

One is left with the impression that the Japanese is a dwelling manner of which Heidegger would have approved; certainly there is little surprise in recalling that Ralph Adams Cram approved of this tradition as he did the High Gothic,³ and Walter Gropius as he did the Modern.⁴ For each Westerner, Japanese architecture has reflected back an image of our own traditions; not literally of course, but with the same sense of truth that characterizes our greatest buildings.

Looking through this book we find roofs and posts. The Japanese house is essentially a roof, a massive surface of thatch or wood or tile that shelters its inhabitants and keeps out the rain or the sun or the snow, but never the wind or the cold. The structure supports the roof and the living platform; structures square in section, deriving their rigidity more from dead weight than fixed joining. From the excavated pit dwellings of the era before the Christian, through those first structures to remove themselves from the earth's surface, to the polish and softness of the thick grass mat, the Japanese house has persisted in its own perfecting. The folk dwelling today retains vestigial characteristics of each of these periods; in each house we also find one earthen

area and a wooden platform, and the culmination in the true tatami. The house retains and remains a compressed memory of its own architectural development.

This book records an architectural ménage à trois, shared by the photographer and the historian Teiji Itoh in their mutual love of the minka. The affair began in the mid-fifties when Itoh sought an understanding of his nation's architecture through its vernacular roots. At the time Japan, rebuilding after its first military defeat, was set on the future and not the past, almost a literal reenacting of the cultural drift during the period of modernization at the end of the 19th century. Itoh researched and wrote; Futagawa recorded.

Together they published. In English, *Roots of Japanese Architecture* appeared in 1963, followed by *The Essential Japanese House* in 1967 (Harper & Row). Futagawa moved on to photograph architecture worldwide, founding the Global Architecture network as his vehicle. Itoh, perhaps the foremost spokesman for historical Japanese architecture, has written on a full range of traditional architectural subjects, including another book on the subject of minka in the Heibonsha Survey of Japanese Art series, *Traditional Domestic Architecture of Japan* (1972), and the standard work on the ubiquitous storehouse, *Kura: Design and Tradition of the Japanese Storehouse* (Kodansha, 1973). The reader will find in *Traditional Japanese Houses* no comprehensive essay in the Western rational tradition, no text outlining a linear history of the building type, its construction, siting, and use; this is not the typical Japanese style of discourse. One finds, in its place, vignettes about the houses: fragments of history; slices of lives; stories of the places; descriptions of architecture; and, possibly, insights to the component parts.

One reads, for example, of one district outside of Tokyo where the reeds once grew so high that a man on horseback with bow upraised could not be seen. The reeds passed with time and development, but the high winds that plagued the area remained undiminished. The architecture, in response, dug into the earth, retreating from the aerial forces. Emerging in this century from its subterranean refuge, the house planted windbreaks of trees to the north and west, taking advantage of the fashioned calm and the solar oasis that the vegetation provided. Thus we learn about the place, its architecture, the reasons for its form; but, more important, we acquire a sense of its inhabitation.

The book is organized geographically, with six major chapters that follow Itoh's recollection serving as the introduction. Memory and fact mingle. The author notes that the Japanese term minka has been purposely left untranslated. He feels that no English term—"farmhouse," "vernacular house," or "folk house"—is accurate in the strictest sense, nor would it render the feeling and poetic association belonging to the native word.

Tōhoku, in the north, opens the presentation: roofs taken as full buildings, roofs cut to a vocabulary of forms that defy precise description ("sculptural" is pathetically inadequate). Moving south, Itoh next discusses the urban tradition of village structure of Kantō, Kōshū, and Shinshū. Tōkai and Hokuriku come next, followed by the ancient capital of Kyoto and the urban townhouse type. In this chapter appear the magnificent houses of Hida-Takayama, both the epitome and the swan song of the minka tradition. Built early in this century, when the restrictions on building materials were finally lifted, and commoners could construct as they liked, these houses with their piled wooden structures lucidly illus-



EARTHEN-FLOORED ROOM, YOSHIJIMA HOUSE, Gifu Prefecture, Tokai District. (Photograph: Yukio Futagawa)

trate the economic power that had come to rest in the hands of the merchant class. The western districts of Chūgoku and Shikoku introduce building in a milder climate, culminating in the final chapter on the architecture of tropical Kyūshū and Okinawa.

The geographical coverage is nearly complete (Hokkaido remains mysteriously absent), but the selections are just that: selections. They are representative of the genre; or, perhaps one should say, leaders of their class. Their presentation is straightforward, simple, mostly in black-and-white photographs, soft yet richly printed, nearly

always filling the page. Plans and finely rendered elevations and sections complete the graphic package.

There is more than a touch of nostalgia to Itoh's praise. The text is as much a remembrance of the demise of the *minka* as it is the story of its making. As Itoh tells of his first visit to various places, one understands that this man suffers a profound sense of loss at the destruction of these dwellings. With the demise of the architecture a way of life is passing, and an attitude toward the creation of environmental quality that was the joint product of the pride of the client and

of the craftsman. On the other hand, Itoh does not bemoan their fate, but accepts the disappearance of this "essential" Japanese house as a part of the passing of time:

In the past the client and the craftsman worked closely. The *minka* was built to the owner's taste, at times the carpenter even made the necessary tools and they took pride in the whole process.

This match or suitability or fit characterized domestic architecture in the past, creating an architecture appropriate to craft, person, and place. Not so today:

Modern design is in great need of the knowledge that the finished work—especially a house—must inevitably be the result of the combined effort of the designer's production techniques and the user's dwelling habits.

Later in his discussion, Itoh notes: "It is ironic that the Japanese, who have mastered western architectural and planning technologies, have been powerless to protect our ancient folk dwellings and towns." Even in Japan, where age is venerated and history persists in contemporary culture, time and change take their toll. *Traditional Japanese Houses* is less a book to read or view than a book to ponder.

1. *Houses and People of Japan*, Sanseido Press, 1937 (second edition, 1958).
2. English translation: Leete's Island Books, 1977.
3. See *Impressions of Japanese Architecture and Allied Arts*, 1930 (Dover, 1966).
4. See his introduction to Kenzo Tange's *Katsura: Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture*, Yale, 1960.

Traditional Japanese Houses, edited and photographed by Yukio Futagawa, text by Teiji Itoh, Rizzoli, 1983, 356 pp., illus., \$75.00.



PHARMACY SIGN FOR RHEUMATISM REMEDY, SAGE KANBAN, MEIJI PERIOD. FROM LEVY ET AL., *KANBAN, SHOP SIGNS OF JAPAN*. (COLLECTION: HERBERT HEMPHILL, JR.)

Frances Butler:

KANBAN, SHOP SIGNS OF JAPAN

DANA LEVY, LEA SNEIDER
and FRANK GIBNEY

PROCESS ARCHITECTURE 42: JAPANESE SIGNS

OSAMI SAKANO, editor

These books on the signs of Japan, old and new, straddle the current methodological division in the discussion of signs between those who describe the material properties of the signs themselves, and those who attempt to address their communicative properties as language in the landscape. Their publication is yet further evidence of the longing to discern and to codify symbolic significance in material

forms. Statements to the effect that “Form affects Meaning, absolutely and without argument” dominate the programs of visual designers of every ilk. Graphic designers can still be found explaining to business clients and students that sans-serif monoline typefaces like Univers are appropriate in an age dominated by the desire for speed of comprehension, contending that the stripped-down surfaces take less time to read, and that even if they do not, they look as if they do, and are thus symbolic indicators of efficient time use. This quality of symbolic legibility has also produced an endless number of company identity-kits that stress the repetition of elements with reduced representational content: logos (trademarks), uniform colors and proportions, and consistent use of typeface and layout. Despite the revival of interest in a wider range of typefaces over the last ten years, the belief that a program of reduced options leads to rapid

comprehension still dominates the layout of both print graphics and sign design. And indeed, repetition of some elements, like color or typeface or even placement, does help the urban pilgrim to locate needed services in the alphabetic cannibalism of our streets. The pattern of repetition is more crucial for comprehension than the shape repeated, and, while any kind of repeated form would be effective, designers tend to stress discretion, insisting that large, bright signs do “violence” to the street. But here, too, theories of communicative effectiveness are based on the visual ideology of a rather small social group, the members of the design profession. In practice, the models of excellence in public signage—like the incised Transitional typeface used for street names throughout Bath—while harmonious with the buildings and exhibiting the consistency so delightful to designers, are not as visible to the stranger as larger and more lurid signs

which clash with their surroundings.¹ A recently arrived student in the United States noted that in Berkeley the bus stop sign, at one-hundredth the size of a McDonald's sign, is barely visible, and that the real secret is to understand the "divine order of the grid: one bus stop at each street corner" (Aydan Keskin, U.C. Berkeley). Now obviously the shape of signs at any particular time does indicate visual fashion, and the range of preferences will indicate the kinds of visual organization then considered useful, by designers at least.

We are left with the questions of how much information is given to the reader by the form of the signboard, whether it be the outline of a gourd or an orange neon OK, and of what value this information is to him. John Sparrow concludes, in *Visible Words, a Study of Inscriptions in and as Books and Works of Art* (Cambridge, 1969), that, while the reader may be affected in the very act of appreciating the meaning of a sequence of words in their visual form, the added value is slight. The extra visual information is very much limited by the context of the reader's specific ignorance—that, for example, of people who do not read popular magazines or watch television. As graphic designers constantly rediscover, the visual formats they assume to be universally understood are frequently unknown. However, the conclusion that the impact of letter form or sign format on the word content is slight is based on the responses of the users of the Latin alphabet, which is now difficult to identify with any one culture, being dispersed around the world through many different languages, and principally visible, for the last five hundred years, in the relatively homogeneous and therefore hardly memorable forms of typefaces.

The assumption of *Kanban, Shop Signs of Japan*, is that the Japanese pictographic characters—which were



PHARMACY SIGN FOR STOMACH MEDICINE, SHŌKEI KANBAN, EDO PERIOD. FROM LEVY ET AL., *KANBAN, SHOP SIGNS OF JAPAN*. (COLLECTION: PEABODY MUSEUM OF SALEM)

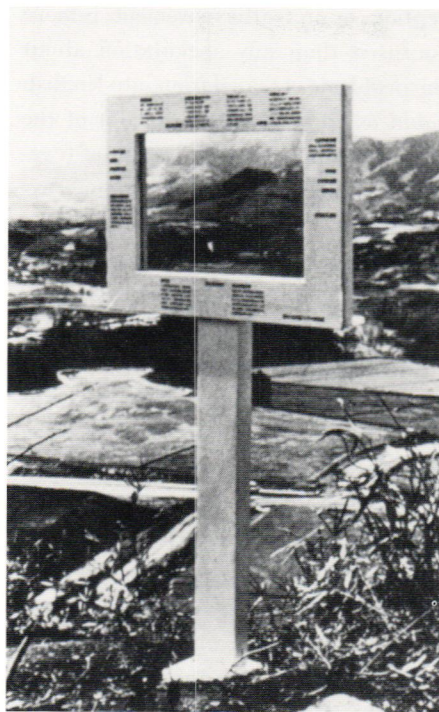
not cast as type until the 19th century, are still often rendered calligraphically, and are used in a very tightly structured society—have been so much more uniformly employed in their various stylistic configurations that a closely woven net of formal, nonverbal interpretations is legible across all of Japan. Certainly, the Japanese have said that their identification of the meaning of the word with the form of the pictogram is more intense and discerning than the level of attention to the interaction of letter form and word meaning attained by users of the Latin alphabet. They ascribe the relative neutrality of Latin letter forms to the fact that letters are interchangeable within words, and therefore anonymous. But here, too, one should apply Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty: the scale of these generalizations about legibility of form

(as opposed to word) may make for useful probable averages, at the scale of information now considered adequate for visual designers, but it is likely that they break down at the scale of individual response, where reactions become unpredictable.

In 19th-century Europe the question of how to use the storehouse of the Art of the past for the enrichment of the present moment was a crucial one. Theorists from Semper to Wölfflin busily constructed different models of human understanding and social usage to allow for the accommodation of past forms into the imagination of the present. Late 20th-century Western visual ideologues ignore this gap, and, unconcerned with audience grasp of past context (which requires more than the quick reading we have become accustomed to through the cinema, print graphics, and television), happily abduct the past for present variety. *Kanban, Shop Signs of Japan*, is an example of this type of book—although it does give a brief overview of the economic underpinnings of *kanban*, fitting them into the history of the merchant class, the *chonin*, during the Tokugawa Shogunate. The forms of the signs are related to the economic fortunes of the *chonin*—early design simplicity being superseded by the elaboration of the Genroku period and then by eventual replacement of many *kanban* by the materials and styles of Western signage. The *kanban* was used as a crest in the manner of the samurai family *monshō*, and the contemporary use of the *kanban* in some company initiation services is seen as evidence of the continued influence of the conservative economic policies of the traditional merchant class on the Japanese business community today, even though leadership in the development of modern business passed to the sons of samurai families during the Meiji era. The commentaries on individual signs are

the most valuable material in the book. Filled with interesting details about the social history of Japan, of tobacco use, or changes in the production of paper after the Meiji Restoration, they provide tidbits instead of a feast, but they do make the book worth buying.

The book format expresses the main structural weakness of the contents—the separation of the images from either the context of their usage or the textual explanation of their past. The introduction, with its outline of the history of the merchant class, is followed by the main body of the book—a portfolio of silhouette halftone photographs of kanban, only two of which show the sign in use. This is followed by a section of commentaries, which is followed, in turn, by a glossary of terms used to categorize the signs by the type of relationship to the information they present: e.g., *Mokey* kanban, signs in the shape of the object sold, or *Yoki* kanban, signs in the shape of the container of the object sold. Further information about the type of script used, like the *hige-moji*, or whiskered script, in which each stylized brush stroke is visible, is not given. The isolation of these signs on the page is due, in part, to their being from private collections, and to some being very old; but their isolation from the text can only be explained as luxury packaging of the kind used to sell high-income consumer magazines. As Norbert Elias demonstrated in *The Civilizing Process* (1939; Pantheon, 1982), the more civilized a group becomes, the more it subsumes emotional responses to human interaction into the possession and symbolic manipulation of objects; and the more objects are made the expression of civilization, the more they are separated from human use. Magazines like *Progressive Architecture* or *Architectural Digest*, which stress the making or ritual use of objects, have few human beings littering their pictured spaces.



"MOUNTED CONCRETE VIEWING FRAME IN FRONT OF THE PROPERLY SCENIC SECTION OF LANDSCAPE." FROM SAKANO, *PROCESS ARCHITECTURE 42: JAPANESE SIGNS*.

Even the humans in the advertisements of such magazines are frequently shown full height—that is, rather too distant for full articulation of facial expression—and in formulaic positions such as ballet stances. Meanwhile the humans in the advertisements of magazines dominated by Love and Food, the ladies' home-economy magazines for example, are close to the picture plane, often overflowing its edges, and writhing with expressive gesture. The context of human gesture, however, is not considered appropriate when something which the editor says is "not a traditional art form" is presented as Art. So these kanban float past, separated from all but plate and page numbers, having to be rather awkwardly redeemed by forays into the explanatory matter at the back of the book. This annoying procedure, which elevates tasteful image presentation above access to what information the book is prepared to give, ignores the fact that

for the non-Japanese audience these images are not self-explanatory, the uses of their past are not immediately accessible to us, and that separating the signs from their explanations reduces the level of our response to the lowest common denominator of visual *frisson*.

While *Kanban, Shop Signs of Japan*, does contain a written description of the four major calligraphic styles of characters, and some further use-specific scripts, such as those for *sumo*, none of these are illustrated. *Ji, Signs and Symbols of Japan*,² provides a much more helpful description of the script forms used for the kanban and for several other kinds of popular signage: lanterns, *kura* (storehouses), banners, and *noren* (store entry curtains). Furthermore, *Ji* at least addresses the question of culture-wide recognition of the formal qualities of the scripts, noting the Japanese belief that they can identify the form and the meaning of their characters more intensely than can users of the alphabet, and the fact that literacy is so thoroughly engrained in the people that they have formalized the use of the four main scripts. The *Reisho* style, developed in China before the Han dynasty, is for historicizing purposes, while *Kaisho* script, being the most widespread, is not thought para-typographically informative. *Gyosho* and *Sosho*, so much more calligraphically free that *Sosho* is too difficult for even many Japanese to read, are considered arcane but elegant scripts of the literati. The book is now quite ugly, each page disfigured by an extended bold sans-serif typeface repeating the name of the section. It is ugly because it is unfashionable, a reflection of that period, just past, when designers found the tense, asymmetric balance of squared-off halftone photographs, contrasted with the flash of bold type, to be the most arresting format for visual information. *Kanban, Shop Signs of Japan*,

designed by Dana Levy, reflects the current historicizing preference for symmetry, tall pages, thin text blocks, light serif typefaces, and extended marginalia.

This brief discussion of page format is intended only as an example of the type of formal description that might have given the reader access to the traces of the visual past represented by the kanban, and to the sophisticated level of verbal-visual pun encouraged by what eventually became a highly literate population. This level of visual description is only one facet of the research into form that will be necessary before the promulgation of environmental semiotic theories attempted by the second of these two books on Japanese signage can be useful to anyone. Issue 42 of *Process Architecture* is devoted to the reconsideration of Japanese signs, with especial attention to the role of traditional signs in the social memory bank that determines communication. The discussion begins with the now obligatory etymological research into the Japanese words for sign, symbol, and writing, touches briefly on the economic history of traditional signs, and continues with a portfolio of old and contemporary sign design, from fascia to airport systems, interrupted by comments on topics like lighting or traffic movement. The main text is an (edited?) transcript of a conference of noted designers discussing the relationship of architecture and signage, and the role of building and space as "soft" signs. A portfolio of the projects and commentary from individuals or design firms completes the survey, capped by Tokuzo Shigi's statement, "No Sign," in which he laments the reduction of all experience to visual sign, and notes the curious absence of signs for nuclear warheads and their targets.

The discussion of the use of language in the landscape and the impact of the shapes of signs on environmental per-

ception, or on traffic movement, is more confused than any speculation about the problems of translation into English could explain. Both the format of the magazine and its juxtaposition of fragments of different kinds of designer experience with readings in semiotic theory are typical of Japanese publication design and Japanese language syntax, while the curiosities of its text (later . . . they aroused a fresh wind) can be attributed to that language called Japanese English. In any case, the text gives an overview of yet another group of designers trying to assimilate the terminology of semiotics without dealing with the awe-inspiring level of research into individual response that is *still* necessary to make any theory of sign reception more than the projection of the ideas of a few articulate individuals. This magazine is not especially well printed, the images are very like those available in many other sources, and the price is too high to justify buying it only for the one photograph of the mounted concrete viewing frame in front of the properly scenic section of landscape. Finally, as a record of a new cultural fashion for environmental taxonomy (the naming of visual form as though it were verbal sign), this conference is so late into the field that it strains the boundaries of Fashion, whose nature is (as Dell Upton neatly defines it) to be a Question, not an Answer.

1. See *Words and Buildings: The Art and Practice of Architectural Graphics*, Jock Kinneir, Watson-Guptill, 1981.

2. *Ji. Signs and Symbols of Japan*, Mana Maeda et al., Kodansha, 1975.

Kanban, Shop Signs of Japan, Dana Levy, Lea Sneider and Frank Gibney, Weatherhill, 1983, 168 pp., illus., \$29.95.

Process Architecture, Issue 42: Japanese Signs, Osami Sakano, editor, distributed by Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1983, 164 pp., illus., \$19.95 pb.

Philip B. Meggs:

TOP GRAPHIC DESIGN

FKH HENRION

ART AND GRAPHICS

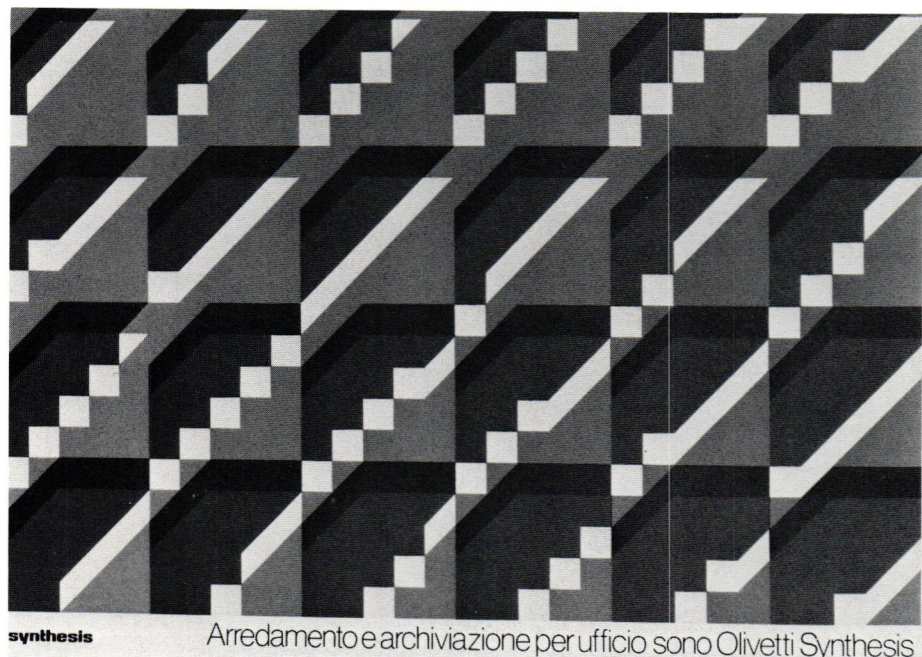
WILLY ROTZLER

with JACQUES N. GARAMOND

Graphic design compendiums, annuals, and anthologies abound. A recent circular from *Print* magazine listed about three dozen design and illustration annuals published in the last year alone. The annual receiving the most entries, the *Communication Arts Annual*, was inundated with over 21,000 submissions in 1982. Only one out of every fifty entries was selected, and in 1983 this annual had to be split into two 200-page segments, instead of one huge book, due to the difficulty of perfect binding such a large volume. Truly, graphic artists have refined the process of competition, exhibition, and "recognition" to a high art and spectator sport.

This vast outpouring raises a major question: what are the criteria for selection in a visual discipline which has no body of criticism, no well-developed tradition of historical research, and no agreed upon standard of excellence? When the issue is addressed at all, the professional judgment of the jurors is usually cited as the criterion.

The two books reviewed here are exercises in selection and portfolio presentation. *Top Graphic Design* by FKH Henrion and *Art and Graphics* by Willy Rotzler, in collaboration with Jacques N. Garamond, approach the status of twins—fraternal, not identical. Each is a compendium of portfolios by outstanding graphic designers: *Top Graphic Design* presents 18 designers (or groups) from 11 countries, and *Art and Graphics* contains the work of 16 designers from 10 countries. Seven



WALTER BALLMER, POSTER, 1981. FROM ROTZLER, *ART AND GRAPHICS*.

countries—England, France, Germany, Holland, Israel, Switzerland, and the United States—are represented in both books. *Top Graphic Design* includes designers from Japan, Iran, Belgium, and Poland. *Art and Graphics* adds Italy, Greece, and Spain.

The physical formats are remarkably similar. Each book is 10¼ inches wide by 10⅙ inches high. The subjects are arranged in alphabetical order, and each segment opens with a photograph of the designer accompanied by his or her name in nine-point Univers 75 type. A brief chronological statement, a short interpretive essay, and terse picture captions accompany each portfolio, in a manner reminiscent of the preeminent Swiss-published design magazine, *Graphis*. English, German, and French texts cohabit upon a rigorous three-column grid. Both books have exquisite “Swiss” typography, again using Adrian Frutiger’s Univers. Nine-point running text is set flush left, ragged right, with seven-point picture captions. These amazing similarities come as no surprise, since both were pub-

lished by ABC Verlag of Zurich, produced under the direction of Konrad Baumann, and designed by Hans Rudolf Ziegler.

The books are vastly different, however, in their selection process. Roman Cieslewicz, the Polish expatriate who has worked in France since 1963, is the only designer selected for both. *Top Graphic Design* is composed of the admittedly subjective choices of the anthologist, the eminent English graphic designer FHK Henrion, who shows “the point of view of one who has worked for 45 years in a field.” One can find little fault with Henrion’s selection, either of designers or of specific examples. The range includes American Jacqueline S. Casey’s refined Modernism, the perceptual magic of Japan’s Shigeo Fukada, the iconographic and surreal photographic illustrations of Germany’s Günther Kieser, and the playful geometry and typographic gymnastics of Switzerland’s Odermatt & Tissi.¹ Henrion’s compendium is unerring; there is not a dud in the book. His statements about the designers are

personal and enthusiastic, brimming with precise knowledge of his subjects and a broad grasp of the field of graphic arts.

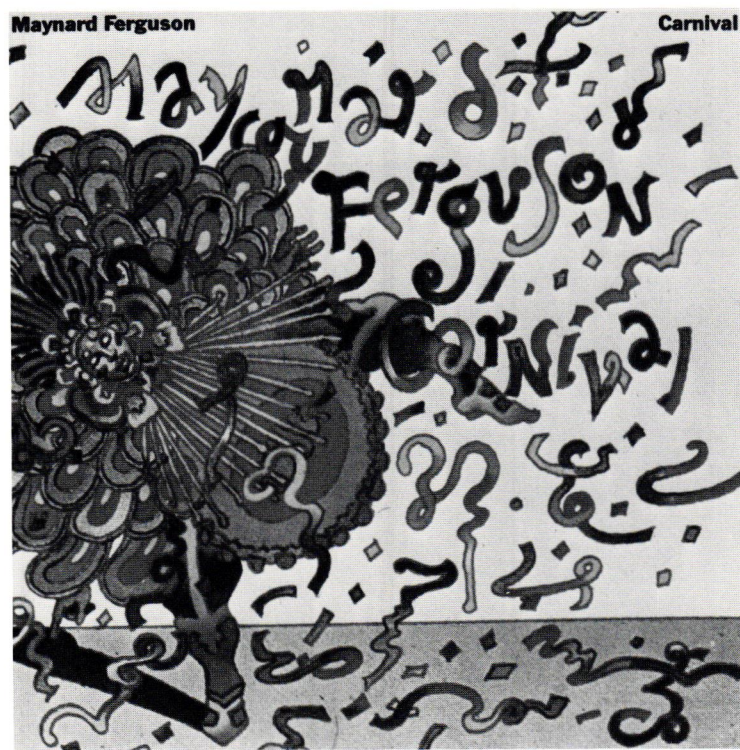
Art and Graphics purports to address one of the dilemmas of contemporary aesthetics, the relationship between applied graphics and fine art. Its methodology is the case study, for the 16 participants are either visual communicators who make fine art, fine artists who accept graphic assignments, or individuals who split their time somewhat equally between art and graphics. This dual involvement is the only discernible link justifying the anthology, for the participants cover a broad range: Walter Ballmer’s mathematically constructed “art concrete”; André François’s whimsical *New Yorker* covers and casually painted studio and backyard paintings; David Gentleman’s English gentillesse, expressed in naturalistic illustrations and watercolor paintings; and Roman Cieslewicz’s disjunctive photomontages. Upon close examination, however, two distinct tendencies emerge. Seven of the participants are geometric constructivists of varying degree, and seven are painterly, figurative, and illustrative.² The oeuvre of octogenarian Herbert Bayer—whose section includes work from seven decades, from the *Bauhaus* magazine of the 1920s to abstract paintings of the 1980s—is too complex for this simple duality, and Cieslewicz’s photomontages stand alone. But, these exceptions aside, the polarity raises an interesting issue: Do these two directions lend themselves to expression in both visual communication and fine art, thereby dictating the nature of *Art and Graphics*? Or do they echo the anthologists’ interests?

A statement by each artist addresses the relationship between art and graphics, but instead of building a consensus, they begin to cancel one another out, creating a semantic short-circuit. Wal-

ter Ballmer believes that with "close observation, one cannot find this distinction (between design and autonomous drawing) in either the 'communication graphics' work of free artists or in the 'art works' of most graphic artists. In my case, I believe that I can assert that the distinction has been eliminated." By contrast, André François says that, when asked "whether it is possible to practice free art and commercial art side by side, my answer is: no. . . . To express oneself and obey only the impulse from within requires a long period of reeducation. It is impossible to work for an advertiser in the morning and be a painter in the afternoon."

Hans Erni asks: "Is not Picasso's *Guernica* also a monumental poster against the horrors of war? It appears to follow that every work in which statement and form are artistically mastered to the same extent is a work of free art." By contrast, Milton Glaser believes that the fundamental intention illuminating each activity is different: "Fine art metaphysically transforms man. The commercial graphic arts convey information of a specific kind that motivates the viewer toward action." Herbert Bayer calls for "Totality, not duality!" From his Bauhaus experience Bayer "learned to understand that art and design must be looked at as a totality and as a unity."

This divergence of opinion is not surprising; although painting and graphics have similar formal vocabularies, fundamental differences exist between the task of solving specific communications problems and the creation of self-directed visual art. The variety of responses merely indicates the widely varying attitudes toward the dichotomy. For David Gentleman, whose parents were both painters, and whose father earned his living as a designer and illustrator, viewing art and graphic design as separate but parallel activities



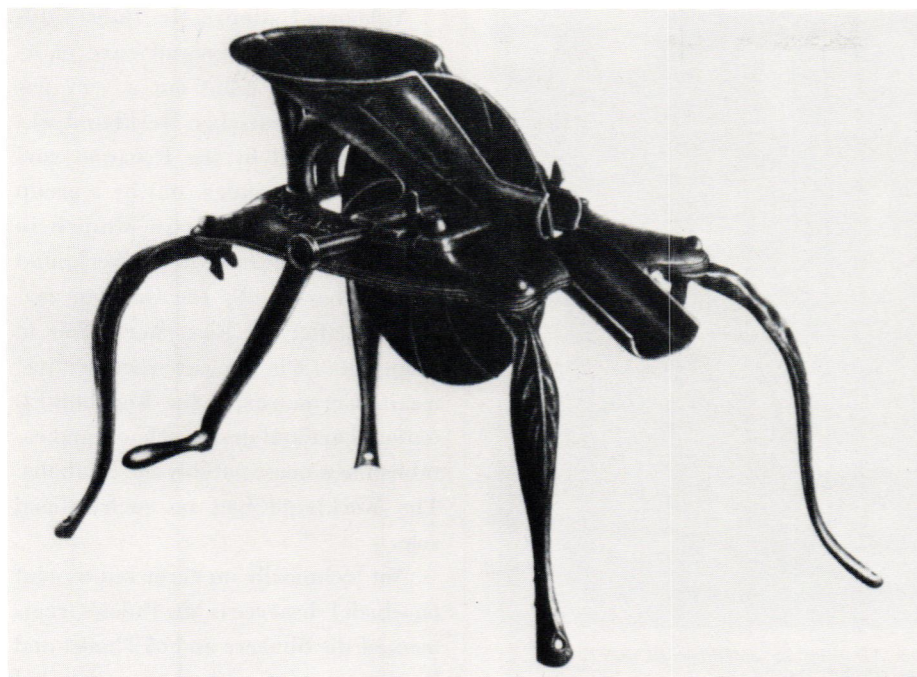
MILTON GLASER, "MAYNARD FERGUSON," ALBUM FOR CBS RECORDS. FROM ROTZLER, *ART AND GRAPHICS*.

extends back to childhood. But Jacques N. Garamond sees art and commerce as a permanently divorced pair which he is constantly, with varying success, trying to reconcile.

Ultimately, the immiscibility of art and design springs from the irreconcilable difference in their purposes. To pretend that they are identical, or even compatible activities one must ignore this difference. The Bauhaus call for unity did not ignore it; rather, Walter Gropius believed that "The gifted student must regain a feeling for the interwoven strands of practical and formal work. . . . Modern painting, breaking through old conventions, has released countless suggestions which are still waiting to be used by the practical world."³ The interwoven strands run in opposite directions, and the appearance of an idea in modern painting precedes its assimilation into the practical world.

The primary value of both these

books is in their exceptionally well-reproduced illustrations, which reveal major designers' accomplishments. The two books resist quantitative comparison, for the book with more pages (*Art and Graphics*' 185 > *Top Graphic Design*'s 159) has fewer illustrations (*Art and Graphics*' 254 < *Top Graphic Design*'s 342). Which is superior, should their thumping \$72.50 price tags prohibit acquiring both? In my judgment, *Top Graphic Design* gains an edge from its diversity, the selection of excellent designs which have not been widely reproduced, and Henrion's insightful commentary. However, those fascinated by that ancient "Chinese puzzle," art vs. design, may find *Art and Graphics* more engaging. Both books celebrate the vitality and creativity of contemporary graphic design, and, in the excellence of their design, typography, and production, achieve a level of quality rarely found in modern bookmaking.



CAST-IRON CHERRY PITTER, PATENTED 1863. FROM PULOS, *AMERICAN DESIGN ETHIC*. (COLLECTION: INDEX OF AMERICAN DESIGN, NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART)

1. Other participants are Otl Aicher, Gert Dumbar, Tom Eckersley, Alan Fletcher, Grapus, Rudolf de Harak, Morteza Momayez, Bruno Monuzzi, the group Rambow, Lienemeyer and van de Sand, Dan Reisinger, Jacques Richez, Henryk Tomaszewski, and Wolfgang Weingart.

2. Constructivists are Walter Ballmer, Jacques N. Garamond, Franco Grignani, Michalis Katourakis, Almir Mavignier, Anton Stankowski, and Shizuko Yoshikawa. Figurative, painterly participants are Jean David, Dick Elffers, Hans Erni, André François, David Gentleman, Milton Glaser, and José Pla-Narbona.

3. Walter Gropius, "Theory and Organization of the Bauhaus." In *Bauhaus 1919-1928*, by Herbert Bayer, Walter Gropius, and Ise Gropius, 28-29. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1938.

Top Graphic Design, FHK Henrion, ABC Verlag, Zurich, 1983 (distributed in U.S. by Hastings House), text in English, French, and German, 159 pp., illus., \$72.50.

Art and Graphic: Reciprocal Relations Between Contemporary Art and Graphics, fifth edition, Willy Rotzler with Jacques N. Garamond, ABC Verlag, Zurich, 1983 (distributed in U.S. by Hastings House), text in English, French, and German, 185 pp., illus., \$72.50.

Herwin Schaefer:

AMERICAN DESIGN ETHIC

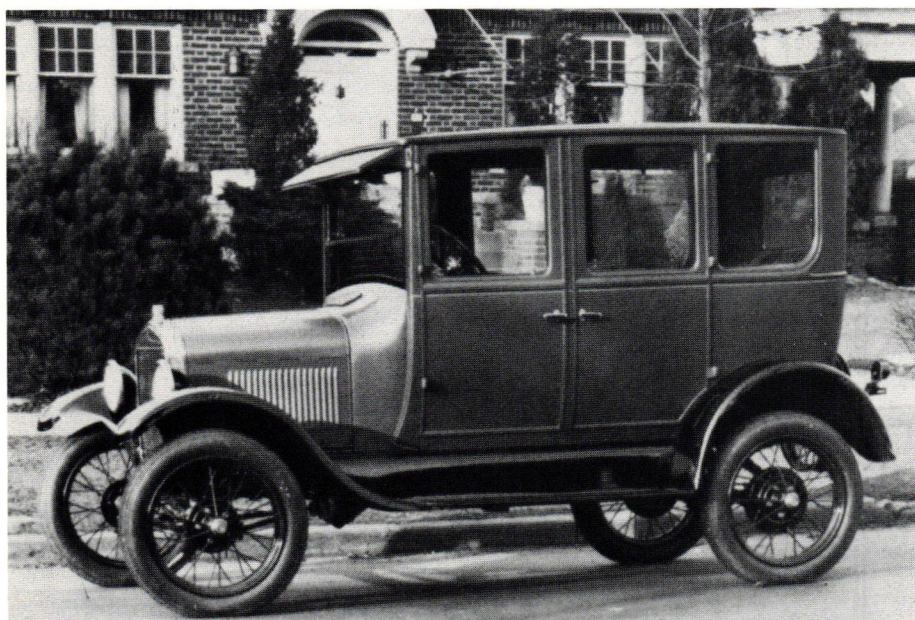
ARTHUR J. PULOS

This is a remarkable book on the history and meaning of American design, remarkable in its completeness, its accuracy, and its searching philosophical vision. It reaches from colonial times to the Second World War, preserving a sense of meaning and completeness by avoiding the tumultuous developments of the post-war period, which led to so much disillusionment and, in the most recent decades, to the reversal of so many of our values and forms. That is quite another story, and Mr. Pulos has wisely stayed away from it.

The opening chapter, which reads like a general history of colonial America, is really a subtle and very perceptive introduction, for it brings out the motivations and attitudes, conditions

and necessities that become the determinants for his entire story. Sections which follow recount the history of inventions and the progress of technology in America, or focus on institutions (museums, schools, exhibitions, World Fairs) and organizations (governmental and professional societies) that have played an important role in the design story. There is throughout the book a very intelligent reference to architecture as design and as it relates pertinently in its various phases to design in other fields. And there is a very valuable section with thumbnail sketches of the first pioneer generation of American designers, men like Raymond Loewy, Russel Wright, Donald Deskey, John Vassos, Henry Dreyfuss, Norman Bel Geddes, Lurelle Guild, Gilbert Rohde, Joseph Urban, and Kem Weber. These names, which will mean little to most people today, are here given their due place; this minimal record, one hopes, will spur further investigation and research (such as David Gebhard has already begun to do for Kem Weber; and a recent exhibition circulated by the Gallery Association of New York State, and accompanied by a monograph by William J. Hennessey, has done for Russel Wright*), so that the work and careers of these pioneers of American design will not be forgotten or lost.

Having been involved in design history almost my entire adult life, I am tremendously impressed by the scope and thoroughness of Mr. Pulos's work. He gives the reader, by word and picture, an overview of American design history—not a skimming, easily read journalistic story, but a work based on an enormous amount of accumulated knowledge, and permeated with sensitivity, thought, and judgment. The book is taut and clear, without being at all doctrinaire or one-sided. Earlier books, which Mr. Pulos obviously knows and from which he has undoubt-



THE "FORDOR" SEDAN (LAST OF THE MODEL T FORDS), 1927. FROM PULOS, *AMERICAN DESIGN ETHIC*. (COLLECTION: FORD ARCHIVES, HENRY FORD MUSEUM, DEARBORN, MICHIGAN)

edly benefited—the classic works by Kouwenhove, Giedion, Mumford, Banham, and my own on 19th-century design—all had a more particular point of view, and were in that sense narrower. Pulos perceives and discusses a greater range because he is after the whole picture, yet he avoids a non-judgmental acceptance of anything and everything. He is always guided by his idea of the American ethic in design, which he interprets as founded on democracy and technology, with responsibility for making the best possible available to the greatest number at the most economic price. He gives many illuminating quotes, from Alexis de Tocqueville, James Fenimore Cooper, Henry Ford, and others known and unknown to the average reader. These are not only fascinating comments or strictures on design over a span of about 200 years, but act as references for his own observations, which, in turn, throw light on the comments of earlier generations.

He does not write about design in the abstract, or see it only as a matter of development of forms, but always in

the context of the conditions of the time, social and technological. He is therefore not unduly censorious of the "horrors" of 19th- and 20th-century design, but sees them as a natural and understandable part of the story, though one is never in doubt about his own ultimate sympathies.

Mr. Pulos, it should be said, does not tell a chauvinistically American story. He rightfully gives honor of place to the indigenous forces that have shaped American design, but he is also sensitively aware of the influences and models from abroad that have guided, contributed to, and sometimes led astray American developments: from the men and books that arrived in the colonies from Europe; to the books of Ruskin and Morris and the whole Arts and Crafts movement; to the foreign influences, such as the Japanese that came through exhibitions like the Centennial in Philadelphia, or the French through the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels* in Paris in 1925; and, of course, the Bauhaus and the dispersal of its teachings and its staff and students.

Although I admire Mr. Pulos's diligence, perspicacity and care enormously, I must point out a very few errors. The Deutscher Werkbund was not established by the Prussian government, as he states, but by a group of private individuals in Munich in Bavaria in 1907; nor was the Werkbund later authorized by the German government after the First World War to reopen its (it is unclear whether "its" means Germany's or the Werkbund's) national art and design schools and establish new ones, notably the Bauhaus. The Werkbund had no such official role.

Not technically an error but a point on which I disagree is Mr. Pulos's treatment of the Shakers and of Thonet and his bentwood furniture as part and parcel of the Arts and Crafts movement. There are profound differences both between Shaker and Thonet furniture, and between both of them and the products of the true Arts and Crafts practitioners like Morris himself or the Americans Hubbard and Stickley.

And a last very minor but irritating point (one of my pet peeves): when an umlaut is called for in German, why is it so often carelessly omitted in otherwise carefully produced American books? It is *Wiener Werkstätte*—or, as an alternative, *Werkstaette*—but not *Werkstatte*; and it is *Künste*, or *Kuenste*, not *Kunste*.

Let me emphasize, these last complaints are minor in the great achievement of this work, which shows erudition and exemplary care. I recommend it enthusiastically to anyone interested in design, be he layman, student, or professional.

*Russel Wright, *American Designer*, Gallery Association of New York State and MIT Press, 1983.

American Design Ethic: A History of Industrial Design to 1940, Arthur J. Pulos, MIT, 1983, 441 pp., illus., \$50.00.

Bruce Burdick:

A HISTORY OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

EDWARD LUCIE-SMITH

DESIGN SINCE 1945

KATHRYN B. HIESINGER and
GEORGE H. MARCUS, editors

Even today the ideas of Modernism are commonly thought to be specific to the 20th century. In *A History of Industrial Design* Edward Lucie-Smith reminds us of their origins at the beginning of the previous century. He cites the declaration of the Neoclassical architect Sir John Soane that "It is in simplicity that all decoration can be found," and notes that Soane's German colleague, Friedrich Weinbrenner, wrote a textbook on architecture (published in two parts in 1810 and 1819) "suggesting that ideas about perfect

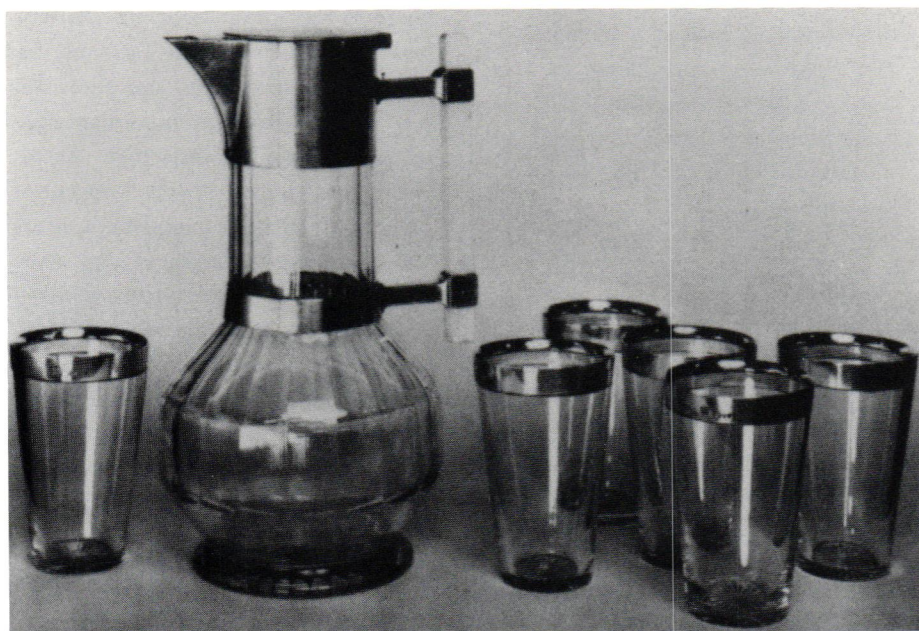
and beautiful form should be gleaned from the utilitarian objects nearest at hand—things such as drinking-glasses and other domestic utensils." John Ruskin expressed another concern of Modernism when he "turned bad design, and particularly the imitation of one material by another which was either cheaper, easier to work with, or perhaps both, into a sin."

As Barbara Tuchman observed, "One reads history to gain perspective on ideas of the present." It is worth discovering the ideas in Lucie-Smith's book, or at least remembering their source; unfortunately, they are buried too deeply within a general history of industrial design to be easily accessible. Lucie-Smith also fails to develop coherently the question of their impact. Between 1945 and 1980 the historic ideas of Modernism reached realization in mass production, and were experienced in buildings, in offices, in the street, and in our hands. Yet *A History*

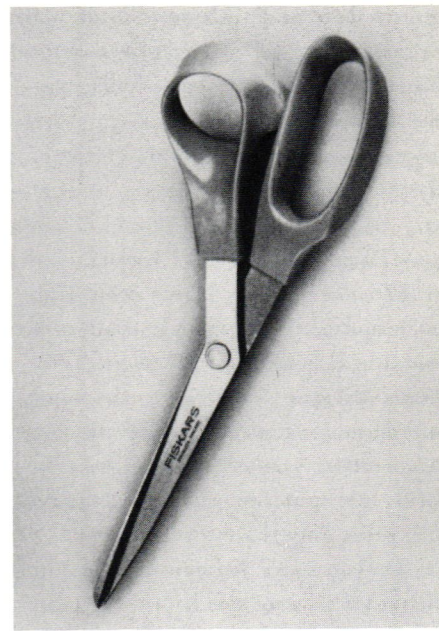
of *Industrial Design* has little to say about this period.

To bring recent design work to its closest viewing point, one should turn to *Design Since 1945*, edited by Kathryn B. Hiesinger and George H. Marcus, which covers and expands upon the 1983 exhibit at the Philadelphia Museum of Modern Art organized by Ms. Hiesinger. Reading this book is as interesting as viewing it. Articles by Max Bill, Ettore Sottsass, Niels Diffrient, and George Nelson, among others, give an added dimension to the forms displayed. Another contributor, sociologist Herbert Gans, points to the reason I find for collecting these products inside a book as well as within a museum of art: aesthetics, "the conscious pursuit of aesthetics is significant in upper-middle culture generally, and even utilitarian goods are expected to serve artistic functions."

Few designs escape the gravity of the style of their time. While many in this



CHRISTOPHER DRESSER, CLARET JUG AND GLASSES, GLASS MOUNTED IN SILVER, 1882. MANUFACTURER: HUKIN & HEATH, BIRMINGHAM. FROM LUCIE-SMITH, *A HISTORY OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN*. (COLLECTION: VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM).



OLOF BÄCKSTRÖM, SCISSORS, STAINLESS STEEL AND PLASTIC, 1963. MANUFACTURER: FRISKARS. FROM HIESINGER AND MARCUS, *DESIGN SINCE 1945*. (COLLECTION: PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART)



PAOLO DEGANELLO, "TORSO" LOUNGE CHAIR, STEEL, WOOD, AND UPHOLSTERED FOAM AND POLYESTER, 1982. MANUFACTURER: CASSINA. FROM HIESINGER AND MARCUS, *DESIGN SINCE 1945*. (COLLECTION: ATELIER INTERNATIONAL, LTD.)

book do not, those that do are worth looking at again, and perhaps putting to daily use: a pair of stainless steel and plastic scissors by Olof Bäckström (ca. 1963), a Tupperware container by Earl Tupper (ca. 1956), a lounge chair by Charles Eames (1956), and Hermann Bongard's plywood and teak salad servers (1957). Bringing together function in a form that gives pleasure—the act of design—is also an act of balance; when one predominates, a certain tension is lost. In such pieces as Richard Sapper's espresso pot (1978-79) and Paolo Deganello's "Torso" chair (1982), the balance teeters delightfully back and forth, dynamic to both mind and eye. By contrast, the glass and ceramic designs selected for the book, with functional problems for the most part solved (sometimes centuries before), are photographed as exquisite still lifes; only the eye is engaged.

Ms. Hiesinger, keen in selection and observation, provides in her introduction a concise historical perspective for viewing the last 38 years of design. She also comes to grip with the diminution of the ideas that shaped them:

Functionalism led the way of progressive design for over a century and, as formed by the Bauhaus, shaped this century's conception of modernity. Those who found it a criterion too restrictive to address the richness, the symbolism, and the accelerating technology of the post-war world have pushed design in a variety of different directions without achieving the influence that functionalism could claim. The loss of a dominant universal concept has left a vacuum, and in 1983 one is left to ponder how the ground between the poles as they now exist will be filled.

Here history and the present form a question which can engage us. Is the "vacuum" that Ms. Hiesinger sees universal to all activities of design or, by degrees, specific to architecture? Perhaps it is the latter, for in recent years much points to a decoupling of architectural and industrial design theory.

The "universal concept" formed by the Bauhaus was part of the historical coming to terms with the phenomena of

mass production. Its influence on architecture was great; however, buildings, unlike products, are not mass-produced. Although the concepts of the Bauhaus could find application in products, in architectural terms they formed only a facade—one that is now coming apart. The concept of the Bauhaus could not, after all, be "universal." And yet, while the "richness, the symbolism, and the accelerating technology of the post-war world" identified by Ms. Hiesinger may have been too restrictive and not readily transferable to architecture, these same forces combined into an experiential language seen in the design of many of the products in *Design Since 1945*.

The Sony Walkman and the Porsche have imbedded within their forms a linguistic code more widely understood than do many pieces of past and present architecture. While Venturi and Rossi, among others, seek a better language for their architecture, a language for products has also been evolving rapidly—a language perhaps more popularly shared (from the United States to Japan to Europe) than architecture or any other art form. The rationale for the internal structures and the technologies of products mutates more rapidly than that of architecture. Architecture was charmed by the concept of the Bauhaus; but for products the ideas came, were applied to the design, were modified and mutated. The richness of that mutation, as well as the core ideas of two centuries of design, is today apparent in an object so small (and significant) as the "[iXi:Z] Individually Basic" mechanical pencil.

A History of Industrial Design, Edward Lucie-Smith, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1983, 240 pp., illus., \$45.00.

Design Since 1945, Kathryn B. Hiesinger and George H. Marcus, editors, Philadelphia Museum of Art and Rizzoli, 1983, 251 pp., illus., \$40.00.

Nancy J. Troy:

THE FOURTH DIMENSION AND NON-EUCLIDEAN GEOMETRY IN MODERN ART

LINDA DALRYMPLE HENDERSON

The fourth dimension and non-Euclidean geometry have generally been dismissed by art historians as "the scourge of every history of modern painting."* Edward Fry, for example, complained in *Cubism* (1966) that these mathematical terms "served only to obscure the understanding of cubism with a pseudo-scientific mysticism." He further discounted the significance of Gleizes and Metzinger's reference to non-Euclidean geometry in their 1912 essay, *Du Cubisme*, on the grounds that the authors "knew hardly anything at all" about the subject. He would have been closer to the truth, however, if he had assigned the ignorance to modern scholars, for it is now abundantly clear that Gleizes and Metzinger, like many of their contemporaries, had a good command of the "new geometries."

Linda Henderson, in her monumental study of this issue, has traced the subsequent misunderstanding to a confusion between the non-Euclidean and n-dimensional geometries that had existed since the first half of the 19th century, and Einstein's Theory of Relativity, formulated in an initial "special" version in 1905, and in a "general" version in 1916. While the earlier geometries led to the suggestion of higher dimensions of space and eventually to the idea of a spatial fourth dimension, Einstein reinterpreted the fourth dimension in temporal terms, ultimately bringing an end to the "early twentieth-century vision of the fourth dimension as a spatial phenomenon en-

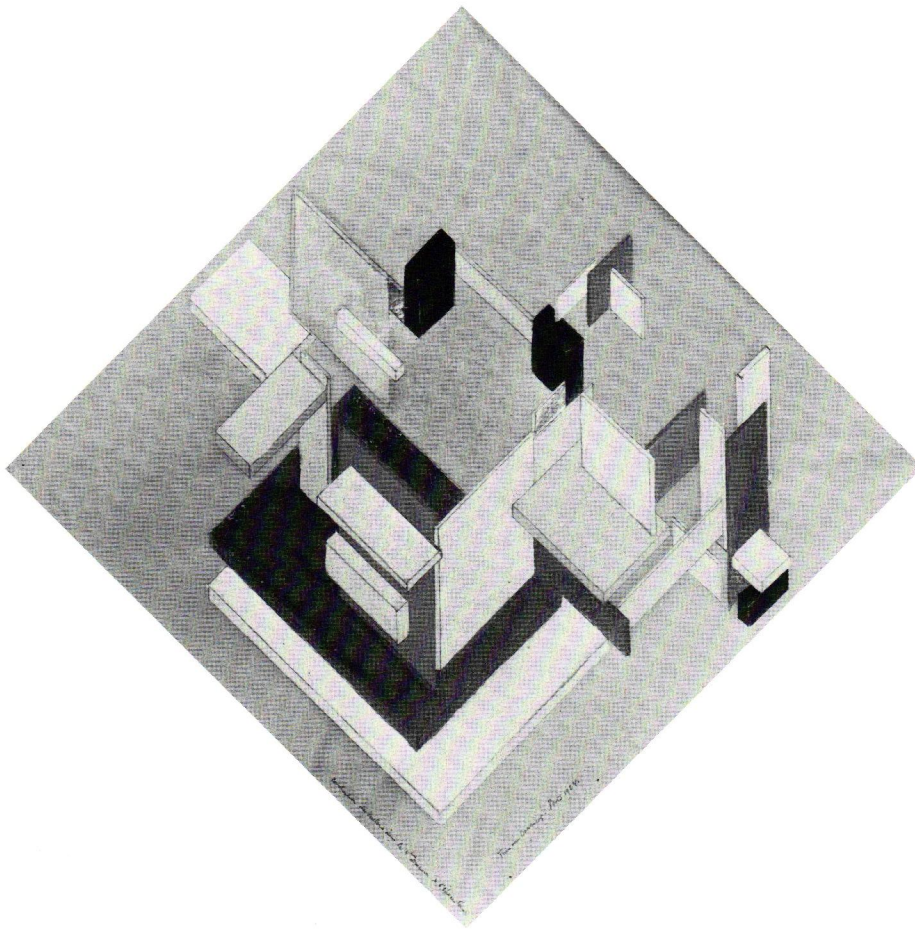
dowed with philosophical and at times mystical properties." Henderson demonstrates that knowledge of Einstein's work remained largely confined to the relatively narrow circle of professional scientists until after the experimental confirmation of General Relativity in 1919. Conversely, non-Euclidean, n-dimensional geometries, and, in particular, the fourth dimension, were widely discussed not only by mathematicians but also by theosophists and writers of popular philosophy and science fiction. Before the turn of the century, the notion of the fourth dimension as an idealized space was put forward by such diverse critics of positivism as the theosophist C. W. Leadbetter, the physicist-cum-spiritualist J. C. F. Zöllner, and author H. G. Wells. By 1911, when Analytic Cubism began to be discussed in terms of "new geometries," there was a well-established, popular tradition in France of what Henderson refers to as "hyperspace philosophy."

Marshaling a vast amount of material culled from an impressive variety of disciplines (philosophy, literature, physics, and mathematics, as well as art history), Henderson proves that a number of painters and critics associated with cubism—including not only Gleizes and Metzinger, but also Gris, Kupka, Mercereau, Apollinaire, and possibly Picasso—were concerned with the notion of the fourth dimension of space as revealed in the writings of Henri Poincaré and E. Jouffret, among others. Far from being unversed in this subject, these artists and their supporters evidently made a concerted effort to assimilate the new literature on non-Euclidean and n-dimensional geometries in which they could find "visual parallels and the theoretical justification" for the spatial properties they sought to develop in their own work. That Einstein's Theory of Relativity eventually undermined the validity of the fourth dimension of space

as it was widely conceived before the First World War should have no bearing on our appreciation of the impact that the "new geometries" had on cubism, as well as on other art movements such as Futurism, Dada, Suprematism, Constructivism, and De Stijl.

Although the "new geometries" were well known in England and Germany, they appear to have had little or no impact on artists in those countries, and consequently neither Vorticism nor Expressionism figure in Henderson's otherwise comprehensive study of early 20th-century modernism. Her discussion of cubism contains a section on Boccioni's dynamic notion of the fourth dimension which emphasizes time and motion, as opposed to the cubists' concentration on space. This is followed by a chapter on Duchamp, whose interest in the fourth dimension and non-Euclidean curvature is traced from his 1912 *Nude Descending a Staircase* through its embodiment as the Bride in *The Large Glass* to its final, erotic expression in his later works.

From Duchamp's presence in America during World War I, the discussion proceeds to the importance of the fourth dimension for Morton Schamberg, Edgar Varèse, and John Covert, who, with Duchamp, were included in the circle of artists, writers, and musicians that met in the New York apartment of Walter Arensberg. Henderson, however, identifies the real harbinger of the "new geometries" in America as Max Weber's 1910 essay, "The Fourth Dimension from a Plastic Point of View," which appeared in *Camera Work*. This was the first published discussion of the issue by an artist; though it reflects ideas Weber encountered during his stay in Paris (1905-1908), it also became "a source for certain of Apollinaire's later statements." In 1913 *Camera Work*, which was published by Alfred Stieglitz, also printed discussions of the fourth dimension in relation



THEO VAN DOESBURG, *COLOR CONSTRUCTION IN THE FOURTH DIMENSION OF SPACE TIME*, GOUACHE ON TRACING PAPER, 1924. (COLLECTION: STEDELIJK MUSEUM, AMSTERDAM, COURTESY OF NANCY TROY)

to Gertrude Stein's writings. The relevance of the fourth dimension for architecture and stage design was posited by Claude Bragdon, who was interested in its decorative application in a new style of ornament; in this context his friendship with Louis Sullivan deserves note. Bragdon's books on the subject were read by Buckminster Fuller, who incorporated the fourth dimension into his design theory in the 1920s.

In Russia, the hyperspace philosophy of P. D. Ouspensky was largely responsible for the mystical overtones that were attached to the idea of the fourth dimension by Larinov, Malevich, and their contemporaries. Their Symbolist background, however, is shown to have influenced the Russians to adjust

the fundamentally geometric conception of the fourth dimension, inherited from Gleizes and Metzinger, to suit their own more idealistic inclinations. Henderson thus demonstrates that, while numerous artists were appealing to the fourth dimension during the teens, the ways in which they sought to visualize it were affected not only by the literature available, but by the environment in which their aesthetic attitudes were shaped.

The popularization of Einstein's General Theory of Relativity after 1919 was accompanied by a gradual re-orientation toward the notion of time as the fourth dimension. For example, the architectural theories of van Doesburg, developed with the help of van Eesteren in the mid-1920s, still incorporated as-

pects of a fourth spatial dimension in the Elementarist conception of a relativized space-time continuum. Lissitzky, on the other hand, abandoned the earlier tradition of a spatial fourth dimension by 1924, favoring a theory of dynamic motion in time as more appropriate to Einstein's space-time world. The idea of a spatial fourth dimension continued to interest a number of surrealists and later artists, but was no longer supported by mathematical theory or by the body of literature that had opened such rich possibilities for previous artists.

The greatest strength of Henderson's book, but also its single weakness, is the almost exclusive concentration on the literature of the fourth dimension. Although it reveals the historical context of artistic interest in the matter, and clarifies the varying aims of those who appealed to the "new geometries" in their work, the art works themselves receive less attention than the theoretical constructs that inspired them. This is doubtless a consequence of the complexity of the ideas at stake, and scarcely detracts from what must be acknowledged as the definitive treatment of the subject.

*William Rubin, quoted by Henderson on page xx.

The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art, Linda Dalrymple Henderson, Princeton, 1983, 453 pp. + plates, cloth \$60.00; paper \$18.50.

Clare Cooper Marcus:

HOME-PSYCH

JOAN KRON

Joan Kron, a journalist in the field of interior decoration and home furnishings, has many articles to her credit in the *New York Times Magazine*, *House and Garden*, *Esquire*, and other prestigious magazines. She is also coauthor of *Hi-Tech*. In *Home-Psych* she has written a book about the social, psychological, and status meanings of interior decoration and furnishing styles, covering such topics as the definition of home; differences in taste and decorating style between "old" and "new" money; class differences and the living room; sex-roles and decorating; and the meaning of home and of decorating styles at different stages in the life cycle.

Ms. Kron draws on the fascinating contemporary work in the area of house, home, and symbolic meanings, and presents it in a form that will be palatable and interesting to some people. Yet ultimately this book was, for me, a disappointment. First, it deals almost exclusively with the taste and preferences of those who can, and do, employ interior designers—at times resembling a thinly veiled commercial for the profession. As quote followed witty quote from *Bride's* magazine, *Esquire*, and *Architectural Digest*, I wanted to scream, "What about the poor, the middle class, transients, students, even Berkeley academics . . .?"

Second, though purporting to draw on "never before assembled or publicly known research in the social and behavioral sciences," Kron does so in a rather flip, *Time* magazine style, tolerable in a Sunday supplement, but tedious after 263 pages. One wishes too that she were more discriminating in her quotes: how many more times will Edward Hall's unfounded assertion be

repeated, that the English are reserved because they all had to share bedrooms as children?

Ms. Kron is certainly well informed in her subject matter; indeed, her footnotes and sources, listed unobtrusively at the end of the book, are voluminous and up-to-date. It is her *style* of presentation that I personally found so irritating. Not only does she coin dreadful new verbs, like "to antique," and "to accessorize," but her chapters are divided into sections with cute titles ("Who Me? I'm Not Materialistic";

"Part of the problem is the image the author wants to create of herself—informed, witty, well read, but not stuffy: Another part is the audience I imagine she wants to appeal to—the trendy, upwardly mobile consumers of interior design."

"Ph.D. Phone Home"; "Please, Mother, She'd Rather Do It Herself"; "Decorating Interruptus"), presumably so we won't get bored. Considering that this book is aimed at those interested in design and the physical environment, it is surprising that it has no illustrations. Kron's pithy phrasing—so irritating at times in the text—is well suited to picture captions.

Joan Kron is an intelligent thinker about homes and houses, and a good journalist. She has read widely, and talked to virtually everyone in the U.S.

who is currently doing research on the meaning of home, furnishings, and possessions—besides conducting interviews with "dozens of homemakers." Hence it is particularly disappointing to have to write such a negative review.

Home-Psych is more a potpourri of intriguing quotes, anecdotes, and research "snippets" than an attempt to digest and analyze what is currently known on the subject, and present it with new and provocative insights. Part of the problem is the image the author evidently wants to create of herself—informed, witty, well read, but definitely not "stuffy." Another part of the problem is the audience I imagine she wants to appeal to, the trendy, upwardly mobile consumers of interior design who will appreciate the "in" jokes, and feel they are learning some "home-psych" without tears. Even so, she cannot avoid at times telling us how we ought to behave. Referring to people who don't entertain for fear their decor will be judged, she reminds us that:

the decision to forgo entertaining should not be made hastily. Social networks must be maintained—and nothing cements relationships better than offering hospitality. . . . Unimpeachable decorating excuses are illness, death, acts of God, and national disasters. . . . Having recently moved guarantees a two-year moratorium as long as one announces intentions to furnish. . . . Saying the furniture ordered in Europe has been tied up in a dock strike also shows intentionality and is quite believable since there is always a dock strike in one country or another.

At times I found it hard to take this book seriously!

Home-Psych: The Social Psychology of Home and Decoration, Joan Kron, Clarkson Potter (distributed by Crown), 1983, 240 pp., \$14.95.

Dana Cuff:

A GRAPHIC SURVEY OF PERCEPTION AND BEHAVIOR FOR THE DESIGN PROFESSIONS

FORREST WILSON

Forrest Wilson has devoted a large part of his efforts to making things easier for people. Anyone who frequents the architectural sections of bookstores will remember his anthropomorphic diagrams of structural principles (rams as buttresses, squished man as key-stone), one of many topics he has tamed for grown-ups and children alike. He has now turned his avid attention to environmental psychology, and, after wading through some of the vast literature of art theory, person-environment relations, and perceptual psychology, has produced the encyclopedic *Graphic Survey of Perception and Behavior for the Design Professions*. It is intended as a source of reference for designers, or, as Wilson puts it, "a miniature *Whole Earth Catalog*—'advertisements' for the 'counter culture' of behavioral science in the design profession."

This surely has a dated ring, but, on reflection, that counter-culture-gone-establishment never produced for designers such an extensive survey of human activity. *A Graphic Survey* is more direct and covers more ground (albeit in brief) than Ching's *Architecture: Form, Space and Order* (Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1979), Dondis's *Primer of Visual Literacy* (MIT, 1973), or the basic person-environment textbooks. This is partly because *A Graphic Survey* is really two books: one on visual perception, the other on human spatial behavior.

Book 1 gives us a Gestalt, experimental, Bauhausian, Wilsonian view of visual perception. Other authors may

limit themselves to five visual principles, or nine; Wilson gives us twenty-eight (or forty-seven, depending on how you count), including balance, closure, figure-ground, and movement. Alongside these standards, some unusual topics appear: directing attention, meaningfulness of forms, and measured man. All are organized alphabetically with little cross-reference between them. In each section, a brief verbal introduction (often just a quotation from another text) is followed by diagrams and photographs that are generally capable of communicating the idea on their own. The strongest chapters, in which both words and images make the point, are the two longer pieces: "The Perception of Structure" and "The Effects of Scale." With these exceptions, part 1 is a straightforward but uninspiring compendium of perceptual issues relevant to design.

Part 2 is an effort to bring "commodity" back into the triadic fold. In this section, Wilson surveys spatial behavior research aimed at making buildings more humane. In the introduction he states that "Shaping the building is the occupant's not the building's decision. People in prison and animals in cages are not shaped by their surroundings; they escape by going out of their minds instead." If this represents his point of view, it is sadly buried in behavioral studies and slightly dated psychological research.

Cultural and social perspectives are rare in this text. The twenty-three chapters (or seventy-four, again a matter of how you count) address specific design-related topics such as noise, the thermal environment, crowding, and personal space. The text is varied, some sections being more coherent than others. For the most part it repeats a series of vaguely related studies without critical analysis or conclusions.

Suppose, for example, a young architect designing a school were to turn to *A Graphic Survey* for help. Several

chapters are relevant, but "Furniture Arrangement—Classroom Design" stands out. Blow by blow, paragraph by paragraph, he would find that: different general activity patterns exist in open and closed plan schools (we're not told about those patterns) but it's not clear that they affect learning; children perform a simple task better when the environment is less complex (complexity is not defined); E. T. Hall has distinguished fixed and semi-fixed features of environments, the latter being more susceptible to user modification; a study has determined the space necessary for a door to open freely (we don't learn what it is). Perhaps for a hard-working reader such a loosely structured report will provide some kind of overview. Wilson admits that definitive findings are rare, but the lack of coherence here stems primarily from his unwillingness to state a point of view. Only the photographs (mostly from Wilson's own collection) show how the author interprets the research. Reversing the emphasis of part 1 and allowing the text to dominate was a regrettable decision.

Wilson's book restates familiar material without offering a new approach or a critical perspective. It has two virtues: an extensive coverage of basic perceptual and behavioral topics, and an explanatory illustration program. As a reference, it will not always be easy to use, except by those designers who really don't read.

A Graphic Survey of Perception and Behavior for the Design Professions, Forrest Wilson, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1984, 298 pp., illus., \$27.00.

Lois Wagner Green: CORPORATE DESIGN

ROGER YEE
and KAREN GUSTAFSON

In retrospect it's not hard to see why modern interior design reached its highest levels of sophistication in the corporate office plants designed from the early 1950s until the end of the 1970s. In those decades, as the work force moved from the assembly line to the desk at an astonishing rate, there was a genuine interest (on the part of a few leaders, at least) in exploring the means to a humanistic and ergonomically sound office environment—an interest underscored by the need for new components to meet rapidly changing and expanding operations. And in no time at all, the opportunity to create or reinforce image through office amenities and decor engaged the corporate ego to the point where drop-dead design became a gratifying means of business one-upmanship.

But such halcyon days appear to have run out for the design community. Today the enormous actuality and the boggling possibilities of electronic capabilities in corporate operation are working to radically rearrange priorities. Technological and organizational urgencies have displaced the niceties of employee fitness facilities and corporate art galleries as business imperatives.

All this contributes to a sense of bemusement with the triviality of the book, *Corporate Design*, written by the editor and senior editor of the magazine of the same name. Rather than confronting this apocalyptic moment in office planning, or documenting the seminal solutions of the recent past, they serve up a sort of decorating book for business, broken into a familiar format of discrete sections for different areas of the interior. Only, instead of

living rooms, bedrooms, and kitchens we have here the likes of conference rooms, executive baths (including a highly publicized residential model room from a recent Kips Bay show-house), executive, middle management, and general offices, and various provisions for recreation. Even circulation has its own section, as authors Roger Yee and Karen Gustafson go their way, apparently oblivious to the basic corporate design tenet of continuity—a rationale that flows from the space plan to the detailing of the secretarial stations.

Nor do any of their individual sections offer a glimmer of enlightenment that might justify a format chosen, it seems, in spite of the subject matter. Take the section on the executive office (at 18 pages one of the longest): its three-paragraph text is typical of the tone and substance throughout, in which complex subject matter and the givens of corporate design are consistently reduced to the vapid. As architect Yee and interior designer Gustafson see it:

For strength, the most important component in the executive office is the desk itself and the objects related to it, such as the chair, the storage unit and accessories. The deeper the desk, the more formal the conversation across it will be. The higher and plusher the chair, the more throne-like it seems. Some executives put their visitors in chairs with lower seats (denoting lower status?), or seats that are uncomfortable, or difficult to move or get up from, while the executive tilts and swivels and controls in comfort.

Now for some examples of powerful desks and subservient seats. Sixty-six pages are devoted to corporate furnishings, in which the organization by categories (desks, tables, flooring, etc.) does not obscure the fact that the se-

lections reflect no perceptible criteria or viewpoint—unless, perhaps, it is to work in every advertiser or prospect of *Corporate Design* magazine and its sister publication, *Interior Design*. One page in the seating section, showing nine chairs, runs a ludicrous gamut from Queen Anne highback reproduction to Mies's Brno and an Eames plywood, all in an even-handed 1¾" x 2" size. Pride of place on this page goes to a 3½" x 5" plate of a Chippendale corner chair reproduction.

Systems furniture, the most important single element in corporate furnishings, is covered in four pages: one for an installation photograph, one for text, and two pages in which 22 different systems are presented in a stamp album layout of 1¾" x 2¼" plates, identified only by the systems names and manufacturers. The text offers nothing to amplify these visually useless miniatures, but instead warns that, "With the great variety of systems on the market today, choosing one can prove difficult unless a company has defined its needs." The authors' checklist of axioms appropriate to the systems shopper includes: "Acoustical surfaces and sound masking systems are used to block sound or make it unintelligible" and "Glare-free surfaces prevent light from reflecting directly into the eyes."

Then at last!—four pages, including two paragraphs of text, labeled Technology. "Since modern technology is strictly utilitarian," the authors commence, "the question for corporations is how to relate the needs of the machine to those of the organization." They conclude their overview of the electronic office some hundred words later with, "Even now, there is a growing need for executive office furniture that will accommodate the new technology. In this transition period, as information technology makes its way into the office, some corporations will choose to con-

ceal their machines while others will proudly display them."

So Roger Yee and Karen Gustafson careen from the simplistic to the inane. One wonders what the powers that be at Whitney Communications Corporation hoped to achieve with this display of ineptitude, besides a recycling of existing color plates from *Interior Design* and *Corporate Design* magazines.

Corporate Design: The Interior Design and Architecture of Corporate America, Roger Yee and Karen Gustafson, Watson-Guptill, 1983, 240 pp., illus., \$40.50.

John F. Pile:

INTERIOR DESIGN FUNDAMENTALS

DON HEPLER, CECIL JENSEN,
and PAUL WALLACH

This book is described in the preface as a "basal text designed to be used in a fundamental course in interior design"; neither the title nor the preface reveals the further fact that it is devoted to *residential* interior design, and at the lowest common denominator of American taste. There is nothing wrong with being elementary, and nothing wrong with a focus on residential problems, but this book is based on assumptions that range from strange to distressing.

Planning is dealt with at some length, but the only plan type studied is that of the single-family, one-story suburban sort that characterizes the most dreary "tract house" developments. Indeed the examples all come from such sources as Home Planners, Inc., and Scholz Homes. Not a single example of the work of any known architect or interior designer finds its way

into the many hundreds of illustrations; these professions simply do not exist in the world this book conjures up. William Morris, Art Nouveau, Bauhaus, Wright, and Neutra are totally ignored—although Thomas Jefferson rates a mention. Furniture styles include "ranch" Louis XV, Italian Provincial, Mediterranean, and "Adams Brothers"—the last mysteriously pluralized so that we don't forget that James and Robert Adam add up to two Adams. There is one illustration of a Saarinen chair (not credited) and one view of the famous Eames lounge chair, credited erroneously as an "Ames chair."

While examples are heavily biased toward the "traditional," history itself is reduced to the news that "homes" come in three styles: "modern" (a sort of ranch house, slant-roof version), "colonial," and "Elizabethan" (also labeled "traditional" in some places, and characterized by fake half-timber work).

In all justice I cannot deny that this book has a considerable amount of solid information and how-to instruction. But it also abounds in sentences like: "Materials are the raw substances with which interior designers create decors." They set the tone for the illustrations, which carry the real message—photographs of the type that accompany press releases on the merits of prefinished wall panels, pseudo-provincial kitchen cabinets, and sunken bathtubs, from such familiar sources as American Standard, PPG Industries, Armstrong Cork, and U.S. Plywood. The vast majority fall into a category one might call mid-American high kitsch—with a special award in this class going to the Egyptian-tomb style bathroom (courtesy of Kohler) complete with bidet, sunken tub, Egyptian columns and sarcophagus (wall-hung). Each chapter ends with some review questions, such as: "For your scrapbook, find examples of floor plans

and interior elevations." There is a glossary, but no bibliography.

Any book in this field has a chance to perform a much needed educational service, to spread awareness of what good interior design is—or, for that matter, good design of any kind. The National Council for Interior Design Qualifications and other professional organizations have tried to establish design quality standards, but in vain, as far as this book is concerned. It promotes instead the norms of the commercially available indifferent to disastrous, all too familiar from the sets of soap operas and sit-coms. This is the American dream at its worst.

Interior Design Fundamentals, Don Hepler, Cecil Jensen and Paul Wallach, McGraw-Hill, 1983, 374 pp., illus., \$21.95.



BROOKLYN BRIDGE PROMENADE, 1892. (PHOTOGRAPH: GEORGE P. HALL; COLLECTION: THE NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY)

Earl Fendelman:

THE GREAT EAST RIVER BRIDGE, 1883–1983

THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM

The idea of a bridge across the East River between Brooklyn and Manhattan has always attracted more than its share of moonshine. The Brooklyn waterfront sported a “Bridge Street” a quarter of a century before a single plan was approved or a site chosen. And one of the first proposals for a bridge—Thomas Pope’s in 1811—culminated in a visionary poem of 105 heroic couplets.

Pope—carpenter and shipbuilder, friend of the architect Benjamin Latrobe—stirred the imagination of his contemporaries without quite arousing their support. He had expressed an enchanting wish for a bridge that few believed could be built. Robert Fulton himself, developer of the first steamboat, voiced the generally mixed feelings about Pope’s scheme. The two men had been standing at the rail of one of Fulton’s new steam ferries as it rounded the tip of the Battery heading north. Suddenly a rainbow appeared, pied and beautiful, arching the river. “See, there’s your bridge, Pope,” Fulton said (or words to that effect). “Heaven favors you.” Was he mocking or supporting the dreamy Pope? The tone of the remark is lost, but Pope’s bridge never became more solid than a rainbow, evanescent and fantastic.

By the time the real Brooklyn Bridge opened to the public in May, 1883, it already partook of this atmosphere of wonder. A major accomplishment of *The Great East River Bridge*—the dazzling catalogue of a centennial exhibition mounted last year by the Brooklyn Museum—is to sustain for us a historically correct breathlessness as we contemplate the Roeblings’ masterpiece. Can there be in North America, or the world, another structure that occupied so much attention during its construction, has continued to be the subject of so many paintings, poems, films, or occasioned so much general good will? Not likely. *The Great East River Bridge* shows us the magnitude of both the effort to build it and the response to its presence.

Appropriately for a museum catalogue, the book’s strongest appeal is visual. Here are the great Weber, Stella, Marin, and O’Keeffe paintings reproduced lavishly in one place, to reveal the impact of the bridge on several generations of artists. Here is a rich selection of working plans and drawings for the bridge itself, culled from New York’s Municipal Archives and showing that Al Smith was correct when he said that the Brooklyn Bridge was made by hand. Here, perhaps most surprising of all, are wallpaper samples, trade cards,



VINCENT A. SVOBODA, *WATCHING THE PROGRESS OF THE WORK THROUGH A SPYGLASS*, CHARCOAL ON PAPER, DRAWING OF WASHINGTON A. ROEBLING PUBLISHED IN THE *BROOKLYN DAILY NEWS* IN 1948. (COLLECTION: JAMES A. KELLY HISTORICAL STUDIES INSTITUTE, ST. FRANCIS COLLEGE, NEW YORK)

chromolithograph fans, and porcelain tumblers adorned with images of the bridge that seem never to become cloying or jejune no matter how distorted. The book, like the exhibit it reflects, is marvelously open to every incarnation of the bridge.

Between the pictures, brief essays introduce the reader to the Roeblings and their times. The writing, by many hands, is at its best direct, concise, informative. We follow in summary steps the political controversy surrounding the bridge, the physical hardships of its builders, the courage of the Roeblings in the face of pain, death, and the threat of public dishonor. We receive a very helpful guide to the earlier alternative plans for crossing the river from the curator of the exhibit herself.

Yet the Brooklyn Bridge may be more important for our time than even the extensive hoopla of last year's anniversary could suggest. Since the United States has never been entirely comfortable with the idea of "public works"—whether because of regional conflicts in the age of Jackson or general distrust of government at almost any time—the story of the Brooklyn Bridge raises important questions about the relation of public to private enterprise. Here we have a project chartered by the state, financed almost entirely with city funds, controlled by a group of local businessmen answering officially to no one, subjected to constant press scrutiny and criticism, yet in design and construction the undoubted vision of John and Washington Roebling alone. Could such a combination ever be duplicated? How does it compare to the strategies for building those other 19th-century New York marvels, Central and Prospect Parks? Did the tolls collected on the bridge in its early years adequately cover its upkeep, or perhaps even turn a profit? (A particularly interesting

issue today when there is widespread discussion of "user fees" as a way to promote the common good.)

Certainly, the Hegelian idealism of John Roebling added an unduplicable element of iron will to the mix of forces advancing the bridge project. Yet Roebling was a businessman whose utopian side seems not to have embraced much conviction about the perfectibility of man. He would not have argued, as Olmsted did about his parks, that the vices of urban life could be tamed by the presence of his beautiful bridge.

He argued instead from practical utility. No doubt he had learned from his earlier bridge projects important lessons about how to deal with intrusive politicians and civic leaders. They could be fickle. Statistics and visions of profit kept them in their place more effectively than his conviction, expressed in a moment of exuberance when he first set forth his plans for spanning the East River in 1867, that the bridge towers would "serve as landmarks to the adjoining cities and . . . be entitled to be ranked as national monuments." Yet Roebling never thought of himself as an artist hampered by the crass commercial spirit of his age. Canals and railroads seemed the best of monuments to him because they served man's needs and did not glorify war, as so many other, earlier monuments had done.

Roebling, the architect, insisted on calling himself an engineer. No public discussion of how the bridge should look ever took place, general concern focusing instead on whether it would stand up, whether the passage of ships under it would proceed unhindered, whether Boss Tweed and his cronies would abscond with the funds. The most extensive and detailed accounts of the bridge's progress appeared in *Scientific American*, which balanced a fascination with innovative building techniques against an artist's aesthetic standards. It was *Scientific American* that condemned the Williamsburg Bridge, constructed twenty years later, because it expressed no "controlling motive . . . other than bald utility." In building Brooklyn Bridge the usual champions of art, science, and commerce appear to have silently shifted roles, creating an ecumenical moment rare indeed in the history of public building.

The Great East River Bridge might have revealed a stronger sense of what the bridge signifies if it had paid more attention to the rich literature to which it gave rise. Certainly the paintings and photographs, so extensively presented, seem somewhat isolated when divorced from the poetry that expressed the same themes at about the same time. The poets writing about the bridge have had an uncanny tendency to repeat the vocabulary and formulations employed in the public oratory, newspaper articles, and planning reports that flowed in a steady stream during the fourteen years of its

construction. When Hart Crane, always consciously esoteric, wrote of Roebling's cables:

Oh harp and altar of the fury fused,
(How could mere toil align thy choiring strings!)

was he recalling the remarks made by the Reverend Richard Salter Storrs at the opening day ceremonies? Storrs had compared the bridge to the Arch of Triumph and the Brandenburg Gate. The arc of cables, he continued—reaching for a way to describe the most eye-catching aspect of the new structure—would emit “when the wind surges or plays through its network that aerial music of which it is the mighty harp . . . and from whose mightier chords shall rise the living and unmatched harmonies of continental praise.” Crane made little effort to please a mass audience, but he had no trouble repeating ideas and images about the bridge that a mass audience had long ago accepted. As with so many other of its admirers, the Brooklyn Bridge forced out of him qualities he may never have known he possessed.

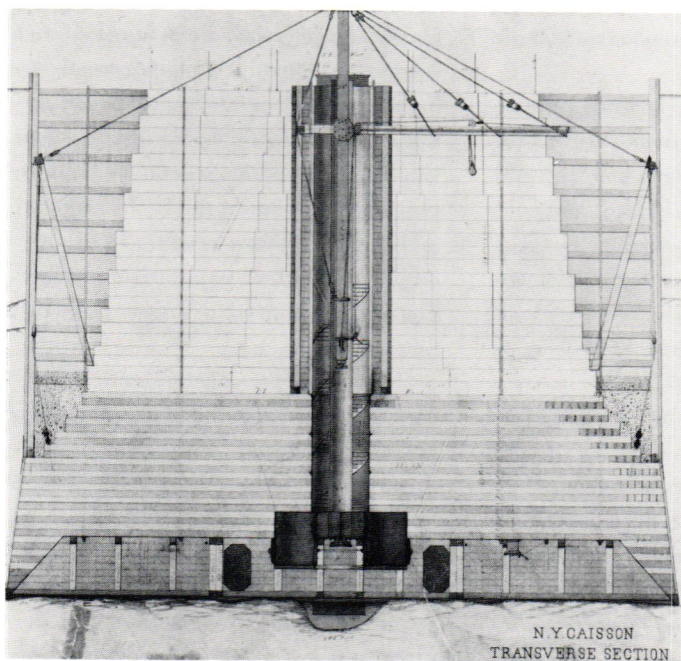
Bridges, of course, have a powerful symbolic resonance, as each successor of St. Peter acknowledges when he describes himself as the Pontifex Maximus. Brooklyn Bridge is not alone in exercising this special magic. In a Whitney Museum show a few years back covering the art of the twenties, an entire section was devoted to paintings of bridges. Yet none has been more widely and consistently acclaimed as an emblem of shared values than the Brooklyn Bridge. The difficulty of

defining these values makes the need for an emblem all the more urgent. Frank Sinatra probably said it best in the film *It Happened in Brooklyn*:

When your heart's a rover
Journey's end lies over
The Brooklyn Bridge.

That's no more precise nor less compelling than the pot of gold somewhere over a rainbow—Thomas Pope's rainbow, no doubt.

The Great East River Bridge, 1883-1983, photo-essay by Deborah Nevins, essays by David McCullough, Albert Fein, Lewis Kachur, Barbara Head Millstein, and Steven S. Ross, The Brooklyn Museum and Abrams, 1983, 180 pp., illus., \$35.00.



WILHELM HILDENBRAND, NEW YORK CAISSON, TRANSVERSE SECTION THROUGH THE AIRLOCKS, BROOKLYN BRIDGE, DATE UNKNOWN. (COLLECTION: MUNICIPAL ARCHIVES OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK)

Tony Schuman:

AMERICA'S HOUSING CRISIS

CHESTER HARTMAN, editor

The U.S. Housing Act of 1949 committed the nation to "the realization as soon as feasible of the goal of a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family." This commitment was reaffirmed in 1968 with the establishment of a ten-year National Housing Goal of 26 million new and rehabilitated units. Despite the failure to meet this goal, including a shortfall of over 50 percent in the projected 6 million subsidized units, the President's Commission on Housing concluded in 1982 that "Americans today are the best-housed people in history."

America's Housing Crisis, a collection of essays by nine of our foremost progressive housing analysts—Emily Achtenberg, John Atlas, Paul Davidoff, Cushing Dolbeare, Peter Dreier, editor Chester Hartman, Peter Marcuse, Florence Roisman, and Michael Stone—takes sharp issue with the commission's complacent findings. While acknowledging an improvement in the physical quality of our housing—achieved largely through the rapid increase in homeownership in the three decades following World War II—these essays argue that the housing of millions of Americans is still inadequate in terms of affordability, availability, and security of tenure. Against a statistical documentation of housing need and a structural analysis of the commodity nature of housing production, finance, and distribution, they offer policy recommendations aimed at fulfilling the promise made in 1949.

While breaking no new ground in statistical information (indeed, several of the essays have previously been published elsewhere), the collection does

While breaking no new ground in statistical information (indeed, several of the essays have previously been published elsewhere), the collection does assemble in one volume a thoughtful and well-documented analysis of our present housing needs. From the editor's handy "housing crisis in brief" to Stone's elaboration of his "shelter poverty" concept, a statistical portrait emerges of the harassed tenant and the threatened homeowner.

The crisis starts with the escalation in housing costs. From 1970 to 1980, median rents rose twice as fast as median incomes, with the result that over one-third of the nation's 26.5 million renter households now pay 35 percent or more of their income for housing. Despite an increase of 25 percent in the number of occupied units during the decade, housing availability is still a problem for low-income renters, as Dolbeare demonstrates: while the number of low-income renter households (those with incomes under \$3,000 a year) dropped from 5.8 million to 2.7 million, the number of units they could afford (paying 30 percent of income for rent) dropped even more sharply, from 5 million to 1.5 million.

Parallel to this deteriorating picture for tenants is the ominous future that awaits homeowners, for whom the gild is off the lily. Inflation in land and construction costs plus soaring mortgage interest rates have put new homeownership beyond the reach of 90 percent of American households. Moreover, as Stone explains, the explosion in residential mortgage debt, which grew three times as fast as the GNP and disposable personal income from 1946 to 1965, makes homeownership particularly vulnerable to downturns in the national economy—as evidenced by the high level of mortgage arrears and foreclosures.

The root of the problem lies in a housing system based on profit rather

than need. Several of the authors, notably Stone and Atlas/Dreier, focus on the contradiction between the housing market, with its inherent pressure to increase the cost of housing, and the labor market, whose inherent drive to hold down wages is increasingly threatened by the rising cost of housing. Achtenberg/Marcuse argue that the role of government in housing has been to mediate this conflict by aiding the process of capital accumulation while legitimizing the dominant economic and social order with just enough concessionary policy measures to preserve the social peace and maintain the status quo.

This economic and political analysis of federal housing policy is among the book's most valuable aspects. Our publicly assisted housing programs have been based on facilitating private market hegemony over housing production and finance—from the mortgage insurance and secondary mortgage market bail-out programs of the 1930s to the current proposed voucher system to help tenants pay market rents in existing housing. Direct public outlays for housing have always been minimal and subject to constant Congressional debate and scrutiny. By comparison, national budgeting for housing in western European countries is from two to five times higher than in the U.S.; England and West Germany accommodate over 30 percent of their population in public housing, compared with less than two percent here.

This history is particularly significant in reference to the high proportion of homeownership in the U.S., frequently held up both as evidence of the "magic" of the private market and as a concrete symbol of the American dream itself. While the Reagan administration slashes the federal budget for direct outlays, data assembled by Dolbeare and the National Coalition for Low Income Housing demonstrate that

the lion's share of housing subsidies has always gone to homeowners through income tax deductions for mortgage interest and property taxes. "Benefits from the federal housing program are so skewed," Dolbeare states, "that the total of all the assisted housing payments ever made under all HUD-assisted housing programs, from the inception of public housing in 1937 through 1980, was less than the cost to the federal government of housing-related tax expenditures in 1980 alone." The broader implications of this circumstance are emphasized in the Atlas/Dreier essay: "The society-wide desire for homeownership is not simply a matter of cultural preference. It is built into the tax code."

The book's ultimate aim is announced in the subtitle, "What is to be Done?" The purpose of the essays, as Davidoff explains, is to provide a framework for a progressive housing program which might be used by a new national administration committed to a more equitable society. Because the authors locate the source of the present crisis in the commodity nature of the housing market and the general maldistribution of income in the U.S., it is not surprising that the book contains few specific recommendations. The most concrete of these, Dolbeare's proposal for replacing homeowner tax deductions with a restricted tax credit, is already under discussion in congressional circles. On the level of federal policy, Stone's "shelter poverty" concept is an important contribution to the discussion of methods for determining levels of rental assistance based on ability to pay—which, Stone argues, should be calculated after all non-housing necessities are first deducted from disposable income.

For the short run, several essays offer practical accounts of the use of the court system and tenant organizing to achieve housing goals: Roisman reviews

decisions which offer protection of the existing publicly assisted housing stock, and Davidoff discusses the Mount Laurel decision on inclusionary zoning; Atlas and Dreier catalog tenant organizing successes on such issues as rent control, condominium conversions, and arson prevention. The general thrust, however, is best characterized in the concluding article, by Achtenberg and Marcuse: they propose a radical restructuring of our housing system based on a set of "general principles" which includes social ownership and production by public or not-for-profit entities, neighborhood control, and affirmative action. All of the authors echo these themes (producing both useful cross-referencing and a certain redundancy of argument and statistics): the right (or entitlement) to housing that is affordable, of decent quality, secure in tenure, in a neighborhood of choice, with particular responsiveness to the needs of beleaguered groups like minority and female-headed households. The consensus call is for the de-commodification of housing by the transfer of responsibility from the private market to the public and not-for-profit sectors.

For an architectural audience, *America's Housing Crisis* has its limitations. Little attention is given to housing design beyond mention of the poor public image of federally assisted projects. No specifics about state-sponsored housing in other Western industrialized democracies are given, although we are referred via footnote to the forthcoming *Planners' Network Housing Reader* for essays on alternative housing systems. Architects will have to fill in these gaps with books like Gwendolyn Wright's *Building the Dream* (Random House, 1983), "a social history of housing in America," and *The Scope of Social Architecture* (Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1984), edited by C. Richard Hatch, a collection of

case studies and critiques of a broad sampling of international housing and community development projects. But *America's Housing Crisis* is a useful introduction to the complexities of national housing policy; it is clearly written, generous in spirit and documentation, and remarkably free of technical jargon, legalese, and agency alphabet soup.

Why should architects be interested in a book about housing policy? For both educational and professional reasons—low-cost multiple-dwelling housing projects have been a design studio staple in schools of architecture for some time, yet very few instructors have a grasp of the political and economic determinants of our housing system. We are, moreover, constantly obliged to refer to examples from other countries in presenting case studies of well-designed subsidized housing. As practitioners, we are marginal to national debates over housing policy. To be sure, American architects never achieved the levels of influence enjoyed by colleagues like Bruno Taut, Walter Gropius, and Ernst May under the sponsorship of German social democratic governments, but we have our traditions nonetheless. Clarence Stein, Henry Wright, and Frederick Ackerman joined with housing activists Catherine Bauer and Edith Elmer Wood to lay the basis for the Greenbelt towns of the 1930s and the federal housing legislation of the period. Today, unsung architects like John Sharratt in Boston and Michael Pyatok in Oakland struggle in isolation to address community housing needs. They need our help.

America's Housing Crisis: What is to be Done? Chester Hartman, editor, Routledge & Kegan Paul and the Institute for Policy Studies, 1983, 249 pp., cloth \$18.95; paper \$9.95.

Richard Ingersoll:

PUBLIC LIFE IN URBAN PLACES

SUZANNE CROWHURST LENNARD
and HENRY L. LENNARD

Such a portentous title, *Public Life in Urban Places*, suits a large volume, rich in sociological and anthropological insights. It promises both the formulation of a theory and tools for analysis, and most of all it would apparently provide conclusions for the design world, which has, since Jane Jacobs's critique of the quality of urban life (*The Death and Life of Great American Cities* [Random House, 1961]), been eager to learn more. Alas, the Lennards' book is a mere shadow of its title, weighing in at a scant 67 pages, and containing little theory and even fewer conclusions. It is for the most part a series of descriptions of some of the best-known European squares, such as Piazza del Campo in Siena, accompanied by a few snapshots. The optimistic prose reads like the diary of a tourist who has not yet been stricken by the "turista," and while there is some attempt to convey the diversity, accessibility, and exchange found in these places, it could have all been, as the Kodak corporation has been urging us for years, said in pictures.

The topic of what makes good public space requires some minimal acknowledgment of what is "good" and conversely what is "bad," in order to give the investigation a sense of purpose. The lack of such essential positions makes it hard to even consider the Lennards' book and inspires one to imagine how an appropriate text for such a worthy title might have been constructed. First, there should be an identification of a problem to justify the need for such a study; the anomie that haunts modern society and its spatial

relationships might perhaps be seen as this overriding problem. Already in the work of Jane Jacobs and others there is a generic solution to revitalize the city through social planning, following the battle cry of "mixed use." The complexity of the city and its current inhabitants does not accept simple solutions, however, and further analysis, using the work of urban sociologists such as Herbert Gans or Richard Sennett, is necessary in order to trace the various tangents of the problem: the historical development of the individual in industrialized culture, the relationship of space to psychology, the demands that are fulfilled by public life, and also the techniques that have replaced it. Once the issues have been staked out, then a variety of urban situations might be studied to illustrate the positive and negative sides of the problem. Case studies might be produced, involving not only descriptions of space and actions, but also "thick description," in anthropologist Clifford Geertz's terms, in which the structure of human relations is revealed through the analysis of ritual and behavior. The Lennards extol the virtues of the newly declared pedestrian zones of old European cities as if this were a universally desired situation by the citizens, yet in cities such as Florence the planning of these zones is still hotly contested by the merchants—the situation and the relations of the citizens are more complex than appears on the surface. The ethnography of these case studies should rely on surveys, maps, and interviews, as well as participant observation, taking care to make evident the ethnographer's point of view. The Lennards, for example, are particularly inconsiderate of how much their own values influence their perception, and they fail to acknowledge that the observation of a phenomenon automatically alters it. This has allowed them to misread many spaces. If, for

instance, they had stayed a while longer in Piazza delle Erbe in Verona, they might have noted that it has indeed been preserved as the city's ancient market place, yet it caters more to tourists than to its own citizens—how public is public life when it is dominated by non-residents is a question that their own status has not allowed them to ask.

Somewhere in this imagined book there should be a survey of modern urban design theory as it relates to the current issues of public space, beginning with Beaux-Arts planning of the last century and theorists such as Camillo Sitte (who in fact is the only theorist the Lennards choose to mention—one suspects because of their mutual enthusiasm for enclosed outdoor spaces). More recent theories, such as those of Aldo Rossi and Kevin Lynch, should be polemicized on their formal issues, while polemics on the political nature of urban life might be sought in works such as Manuel Castells's *The City and the Grassroots* (University of California, 1984), and with other observers of the ideological use of space.

Out of the analysis of data and critique of theory some general principles about space, form, and behavior can be expected to emerge and to reinforce the observations in the case studies. The Lennards seem to have isolated two principles, theatricality and exchange, which could in fact be quite valid, but are lacking sufficient empirical and theoretical treatment to be taken seriously. In the introduction, they have promised to produce a companion volume with the reshuffled title, *Urban Places, Public Life*, which will supposedly be a more in-depth and theoretical study. In the meantime we are left to guess whether they have any conclusions about how to achieve good public space. By limiting their enquiry to the beloved European square (avoiding completely, by the way, the public life of thoroughfares), their unstated conclusion is that

these places should be emulated. Yet authentic public life cannot be generated by imitation—St. Mark's Square would not have the same effect if it were put in Las Vegas. This is a fact that even the die-hard romantic Sitte recognized when he stated that each epoch must reach into its own values to produce its own environment. Perhaps the most rewarding conclusion that can be reached after reading this little book is about the value of having time to enjoy public spaces, more than likely while being on vacation.

Public Life in Urban Places, Suzanne Crowhurst Lennard and Henry L. Lennard, Gondolier Press (Box QQQ, Southampton, NY 11968), 67 pp., illus., \$8.95 pb. (plus \$1.00 postage).

Carol Herselle Krinsky:

NEW YORK/ACCESS

RICHARD SAUL WURMAN

"Less is more," said Mies. "More is better," to Richard Saul Wurman, who has loaded his book with information on sleeping, eating, shopping, touring, and being entertained in all five boroughs of New York City and a few choice parts of New Jersey. The first things to be said about this guide are that it's current, compact, and good.

Someone, perhaps the publisher, had the helpful idea of using different colors of type for different subjects. Historical material and advice about museums are printed in black. Passages in blue deal with buildings; green appropriately describes parks and open spaces. Hungry visitors should turn to the reliable remarks in red which tell about restaurants both chic and cheap, describing the quality of the food and the welcome that strangers can

expect. Given the local cost of luxury, royal purple and violet seem right for accounts of hotels and shops. Thin black type is used for occasional inserts—the designer suffers from *horror vacui*—which include everything from philosophical ruminations by one Ralph Caplan to the numbers to call for TV broadcast tickets. This guide will lead you to the city's best pickles, to the art galleries and performance spaces in SoHo and Tribeca, to two bookshops devoted to mysteries, to the Brooklyn Museum where you've always meant to go, and to the Fire Department Museum whose existence you may never have suspected. There are especially good summaries of the United Nations complex, Citicorp Center, the Brooklyn Children's Museum, and the surprising heart of Paterson, New Jersey. For most buildings, Wurman gives dates and architects' names. A few pages are devoted to the subjects of Art Deco and skyscrapers, four outstanding ones discuss transportation, and the author leads you to the organizations devoted to architecture and urban amenity which have offices at the Urban Center. Michael Winkleman contributes a two-page tour of Broadway for theater buffs, and M. Paul Friedberg's list of "Buried Treasures" is so good you might be tempted to buy the book for that alone.

The problem is that you'll have trouble finding it on page 188 because the index is inadequate, and that's a major failing in a guidebook. Readers have to come by accident upon the handy table giving dates of parades (p. 15). The index does refer to names of people who have listed their favorite places and things, but not everyone will have heard of some of the contributors. These lists and a few other passages gave me the unpleasant feeling of having intruded into a party of clever people who didn't always care how I used the book, as long as they had fun producing it. How

else to explain pages 4 and 5 with their illegible subway maps and directions, with ramblings on cartography by Massimo Vignelli, whose own pretty but hard-to-decipher map had to be scrapped by the transit authorities?

There are other irritants, too. The busy pages are as full as overstuffed pastrami sandwiches. Color-coding is most helpful when it's consistent: Why is the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel described in red and blue instead of purple? It looks as if someone cared more about the idea of visual variety than about design for utility and long-term pleasure. The sideward shopping diagram on pages 90-91, and the World Trade Center elevator chart are useless, and the cartoons aren't memorable—but these things break up the columns of text, and that seems to be what counted. The prose tries to be as lively as the page layout, but glitzy and plush are shopworn adjectives, and it's not clear that the author knows when to use some of his favorite words, such as singular, quintessential, and wondrous. You'll notice an apparently favorable reference to "unctuous" pigs' feet on page 118. "Eating Chinese" and "eating Italian" are offensive expressions, even if some New Yorkers still use them.

The author's strong point is not history; he applies such vague phrases as "lacks meaning" occasionally even to new buildings, which are usually handled succinctly and well. Foreign names and words give him trouble, and the proofreader is incompetent. These flaws are noticeable to readers accustomed to the high standards of the classic 1939 *WPA Guide to New York City* (reissued by Pantheon in 1982). A reader who has been sufficiently annoyed will get crotchety and wonder why bocce is not discussed near neighborhoods where you're likely to see it played, and whether the Cloisters is "rewarding if you have the time" (p. 154) or "an absolute must" (p. 181).

All the same, my critical toothgnashing should not stop you from spending \$11.95 on this guide. If you follow Wurman's leads to Orchard Street's shops and to 47th Street Photo you'll save several times that much. With your leftover funds you'll be able to afford the very, very cheap Indian restaurants on East 6th Street, or maybe Lutèce—so much nicer than snacking in your hotel room on yogurt and a big apple.

New York/Access, Richard Saul Wurman, Access Press, 1983, 247 pp., illus., \$11.95 pb.

Ellen Beasley:

LEARNING FROM GALVESTON

GIANNI LONGO, JEAN TATGE,
and LOIS FISHMAN

Climate, a location on the Gulf of Mexico, and a natural harbor have shaped the history of Galveston. Incorporated in 1838, it quickly became the major regional port for commerce and immigration, a position that brought economic and ethnic diversity to the city. By the end of the 19th century, Galveston's importance as a financial and cultural center could be seen in its extraordinary collection of public and private buildings. Devastated by a hurricane in September 1900, and suffering from the competition of Houston as a port and railroad hub, Galveston experienced a gradual decline in the 20th century. Resort and gambling activities, plus the presence of several financial institutions and the University of Texas Medical Branch, carried it through the fifties.

During the last decade, Galveston has regained national attention through

its preservation program, which began, like so many others, in reaction to the accelerating loss of its architectural and historical legacy. *Learning from Galveston*, the third book in the What Makes Cities Livable? series from the Institute for Environmental Action, offers a broad overview of an ambitious and highly successful effort. By the end of this short book, the reader is acquainted with the city's main physical and architectural features: the Strand, the commercial historic district; the residential historic districts; individual sites such as Ashton Villa and the 1894 Grand Opera House; and the Elissa, a restored square-rigged sailing vessel. The reader also has some sense of how these projects developed, particularly the imaginative use of a revolving fund for properties on the Strand, and the role played by key organizations, especially the Galveston Historical Foundation, the Moody Foundation (which has been the primary funding source), and the city itself. There is a short historical summary, and a good choice of photographs, many taken by Gianni Longo.

The purpose of the What Makes Cities Livable series is to provide models that might help people "understand *what* makes a project more successful than another and *why*," and to illustrate the need for public and private cooperation, as well as "the importance of factors such as art, culture, and the quality of the physical environment" in dealing with city issues. Unfortunately, *Learning from Galveston* is too brief to achieve that goal. It is fragmented, in part because of its format of short chapters and subchapters, and reads as though it were written quickly and with a very limited number of sources. Enough details are just slightly incorrect or incomplete to worry readers familiar with the story. The "what" and "why" of the residential programs are so condensed one feels the same space

could more usefully have been devoted to additional information about the Strand, which is the emphasis of the book anyway.

Although Galveston has many unique physical and cultural qualities, its preservation program—at least portions of it—is adaptable to other communities. Case studies like this could render an invaluable service if they did more than describe the first wave of a success story. Most communities considering or even launching a preservation program have no concept of the enormous commitment necessary, in both money and time—especially time, in terms of the phasing of projects and the actual time required of the workers. Although *Learning from Galveston* alludes to difficulties along the way, it makes the Galveston experience appear far easier than it has been.

Communities need encouragement, but they also need source materials that offer more than a superficial analysis—an opportunity missed in *Learning from Galveston*. By the time the book was written, the Galveston County Cultural Arts Council—which, along with the historical foundation, initiated the program in Galveston—had undergone major reorganization and redirection. Some elaboration of the circumstances that made the shift necessary would have been useful to other communities. And, subsequent to the publication of the book, the Galveston Historical Foundation has had to reassess its own role, which has meant in this case learning how to cope with success.

Learning from Galveston, Gianni Longo, Jean Tatge, and Lois Fishman, Institute for Environmental Action (*Learning from the U.S.A.: What Makes Cities Livable* #3), 530 West 25 St., New York, NY 10001, 1983, \$6.95 pb. (plus \$1.00 postage).

Albert Fein:

FLO

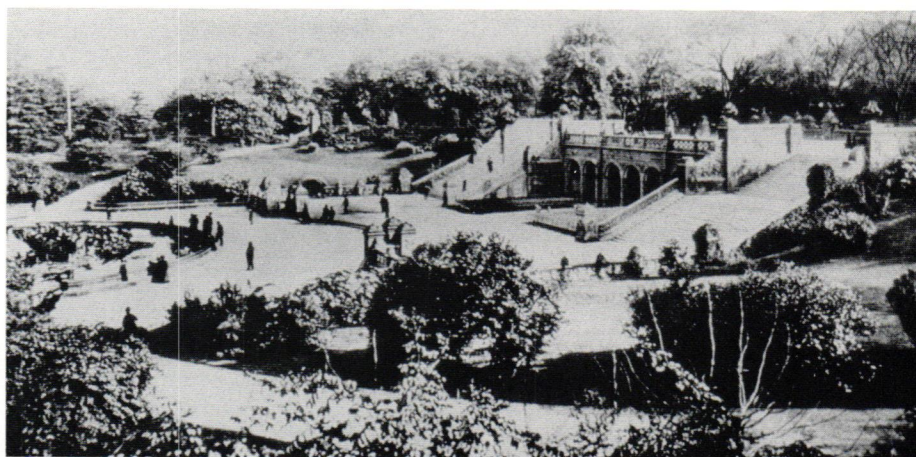
LAURA WOOD ROPER

CREATING CENTRAL PARK

CHARLES E. BEVERIDGE
and DAVID SCHUYLER, editors

A number of years ago, I was discussing the life and work of Frederick Law Olmsted with an art-historian friend of mine, who lives near Central Park, when my friend suddenly exclaimed, with a passion I had not heard him exhibit on any other subject, painting included: "I love Olmsted!" Although this seemed to me an aberration at the time, it has since become apparent—from the many exhibits, meetings, and organizations that have formed around Olmsted's work and name—that the feeling is fairly widespread nationally. The emotion helps to explain the social context out of which emerged a cartoon published in the influential *New Yorker* in August, 1983—a picture of "everyman" enjoying Central Park, entitled "Hail To Thee, Frederick Law Olmsted!"

The fact that the cartoon was not of the designer but of the park, designed in collaboration with Calvert Vaux, explains in part the feeling for Olmsted. People are more aware today that the public parkland that adds so much to the quality of their lives had to be planned, preserved, and maintained through governmental action, and that much of this achievement in open-space planning and design flowed from his efforts. In New York, Boston, Buffalo, and Louisville, substantial efforts are being made to restore and preserve Olmsted parks. The State of Massachusetts recently passed a law mandating an inventory of parks planned by Olmsted and/or his sons, who suc-



FREDERICK LAW OLNSTED AND CALVERT VAUX, BETHESDA TERRACE, CENTRAL PARK, NEW YORK, CIRCA 1844. (COURTESY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ART, STANFORD UNIVERSITY)

ceeded him in practice; similar legislation encompassing the works of other landscape architects as well has been introduced in both houses of Congress.

Over the long haul, nothing has contributed so much to an appreciation of Olmsted's work as the publications that have documented the diversity of his talent—if not genius. Serious research has been essential because the range of Olmsted's achievements is hard to understand in the absence of sound documentation and thoughtful interpretation. The significance of these contributions remains amazingly alive: as an author and journalist, Olmsted wrote controversial accounts of the antebellum South that remain central to our understanding of the institution of slavery; as a landscape architect, he planned parks and communities still of critical importance because of their location and use, now that preservation has become an important dimension of public policy and professional practice. His practice of unified management for large urban parks is currently followed in Central Park, as well as in Brooklyn's Prospect Park and Boston's Franklin Park. And his record as administrator of Central Park was so impressive that he was proposed as a presidential candidate by at least one writer of newspaper editorials.

The person most responsible for setting out the various dimensions of Frederick Law Olmsted's life is Laura W. Roper. In several pathbreaking articles in the 1950s, as well as in her publication of Olmsted's suppressed and long-lost "radical" document, "The Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Big Trees: A Preliminary Report" (which set out in prophetic terms the basic philosophy for a modern national park system), Mrs. Roper framed Olmsted's career in broad strokes. She was also most generous in encouraging and assisting others, including Dr. Charles McLaughlin, the senior editor of *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted*, and myself. Her splendid work, *FLO: A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted*, with its careful documentation, balanced discussion of each major phase of Olmsted's life, and sensible interpretation of his career, will long be the seminal document for all further scholarship. It is good to have it available once more.

While *FLO* is a general, scholarly work, meant for a popular audience, *Central Park*, volume 3 of *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted*, edited by Charles E. Beveridge and David Schuyler, represents a more specialized effort, the work of several scholars, concentrating on a specific period and as-

pect of Olmsted's life in which the documents are the central—but not the exclusive—focus of attention. These two volumes, when used in conjunction with other publications covering the same period and topics but exhibiting different nuances of treatment and interpretation, provide a much better understanding of the history of Olmsted's contributions to Central Park, and will undoubtedly stimulate further research on this topic, as well as on others pertaining to his long career as a landscape architect.

Central Park is a significant addition to the unfolding Olmsted legacy. The documents reproduced are important and representative of the man and his work. The editors provide a good deal of useful information, particularly in the footnotes identifying people, places, and events. However, the "nature" of the book—the fact that it is more of an interpretive volume than the all-inclusive editions of the papers of other eminent Americans, such as Thomas Jefferson and John Adams—raises some questions as to the editors' point of view.

The orientation of this volume is evident in its thematic organization: an introductory essay by Beveridge, a biographical directory of four persons, six chapters of documents—letters, reports, and articles—each with its own brief preface. There are two appendices, the first an interpretive "Pictorial Essay of Central Park," mostly the work of Beveridge, and the second a chronology of Olmsted during the years covered by this volume, 1857-1861. There is an index. Missing, however, is a bibliography noting the many other publications about the man and the subject.

In their efforts to make this a book of interpretation as well as of documents, the editors have produced a work that is much less definitive than suggestive, much more of an introduc-



FREDERICK LAW OLNSTED AND CALVERT VAUX, THE RAMBLE, CENTRAL PARK, NEW YORK, 1858.
(COURTESY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ART, STANFORD UNIVERSITY)

tion to the subject than the final word. Those interested in the many topics broached by these documents may wonder what material from the 60,000-item collection housed in the Library of Congress (available on microfilm) has been left out. Much other essential information is to be found in collateral sources such as park reports and newspapers.

One especially interesting interpretive aspect of this volume is the introduction of illustrations as sources of evidence, both in the pictorial essay and throughout the work itself. The guide to the planned views of Central Park designated on a map (pp. 134-148) is important, although many of the reproductions are very faint, owing no doubt to the original condition of the material. Illustrations help to clarify the design, intent of landscape architecture, as differentiated from architecture, with which it is still often confused. It should be noted, however, that the use of illustrations in *Central Park* follows a precedent established in other publications about this park, such as *Central Park: A History and Guide*,

by Henry Hope Reed and Sophia Duckworth (Potter, 1967); *Frederick Law Olmsted's New York*, by Elizabeth Barlow and William Alex (Praeger, 1972); and *The Art of the Olmsted Landscape*, by Bruce Kelly et al. (Landmarks Preservation Commission, New York, 1981).

In spite of the good intentions, the selection of the visual materials and their interpretation is unbalanced in two respects. First, there is an almost total emphasis on the pictorial aspects as opposed to the design components of engineering and construction. Both are essential to an understanding of the park's history, and provide the documentation required for the current massive reconstruction of essential water, drainage, and road systems as well as the reconstitution of the visual elements of the original design. Second, the emphasis on Olmsted's aesthetic interest in "subtropical" plant material is at variance with his constant concern that plant materials meet the ecological conditions of a site. Olmsted was undoubtedly influenced by what he had seen in his trip through the Isthmus of

Panama in 1863 (undertaken subsequent to the years covered in this volume) and he did call a section of the Greensward Plan "Memorandum for Pseudo-Tropical Planting," but he was referring to a visual effect for a limited area of the park, such as around the edges of the Lake. The larger perspective, surely, is Olmsted and Vaux's principal aesthetic concern with creating an American-style landscape. What makes this concept so modern is that Olmsted defined "American" in terms of an enlightened internationalism, which included plant materials from all nations, as long as they met local conditions of soil and climate, within an aesthetic composition that captured scenes of American landscape.

The limitations of the biographical directory and the lack of attention paid to the social origins of Olmsted's planning are other interpretive aspects warranting discussion. The purpose of the directory, one assumes, is to provide more information about persons who intersected with Olmsted's life and work during the early history of Central Park. It logically includes Andrew H. Green, the Democratic politician most responsible for the park's administration; Mary Perkins Olmsted, Olmsted's brother's widow, whom Olmsted married in 1859; Calvert Vaux, Olmsted's partner in the park's design; and Egbert L. Viele, the chief engineer of the park when Olmsted was hired as superintendent of construction in 1857.

However, one of Olmsted's achievements in the Central Park project was his ability to work cooperatively with persons of stature in allied fields. It is therefore unfortunate that the biographical directory does not at least include entries on George Waring, Jr., the agricultural/sanitary engineer who planned the park's system of drainage, and William H. Grant, the civil engineer who supervised the construction of the park's internationally acclaimed

road system. While both men are cited in the footnotes, more detailed biographical information would bring into better perspective the social context within which the cooperative work took place.

Insufficient emphasis on the times and on the commonality of the enterprise diminishes the level of public service this project represented in the life of New York City, and our appreciation of the park's durability despite long periods of neglect. The sources of Olmsted's intellectual strength deserve greater prominence.

The editors correctly draw attention to the "prophetic" quality of some of Olmsted's recommendations. As an example, they reprint his letter of April 2, 1860, to Fernando Wood, mayor of New York, suggesting that steamboats be used on the rivers surrounding Manhattan Island to enable a greater number of citizens from the lower—and poorer—part of the city to use the park. Piers and avenues connecting the park and the rivers would have to be constructed to accommodate these boats. In the same letter he recommends greater public use of the city's rivers by providing "bathing places for people at suitable points," a policy adopted at a later date in the form of sunken swimming pools. Both recommendations have a modern ring to them; ferries have recently been discussed as ways to avoid "gridlock" of wheeled traffic, and greater public use of the Hudson River north from the Battery is being planned.

Given this orientation, it is regrettable that the editors make no reference to the fact that some part of Olmsted's sense of social purpose derived from the utopian thought influential in New York City's intellectual circles during the 1850s and 1860s. They include Olmsted's letter of August 1, 1858, to Parke Godwin, describing Central Park as "the first real park made in

this country—a democratic development of the highest significance and on the success of which, in my opinion much of the progress of art and esthetic culture in this country is dependent." But the fact that Godwin, Olmsted's close friend, was one of the foremost American proponents of the utopian thought formulated by the French theorist Charles Fourier is not mentioned. Nor is it noted that George Ripley and Charles A. Dana, the two editors who commissioned Olmsted's article "Park" (chapter 6 of this volume), had been members of the utopian community of Brook Farm in the 1840s, and remained loyal to the reform aspects of its ideology.

Utopian thought on cooperation and planning was part of the social context within which Central Park was conceived and built; it provides a perspective for understanding Olmsted's commitment to reforming American cities, New York in particular. At the heart of that thought was a concern with the modern urban condition and with the need for, among other things, recreational spaces graced by trees and grass. It is thus understandable that a popular feeling of affection has developed for Olmsted as there has been more widespread recognition of his role in the creation of such environments as Central Park, and in planning for a distinctive quality of metropolitan life for all Americans—for today and tomorrow.

FLO: A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted, Laura Wood Roper, Johns Hopkins, 1983, 573 pp., illus., cloth \$24.00; paper \$9.95.

The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume III: Creating Central Park, 1857-1861, Charles Capen McLaughlin, editor-in-chief, Charles E. Beveridge, editor, and David Schuyler, associate editor, Johns Hopkins, 1983, 470 pp., illus., \$28.50.

Laurie Olin:

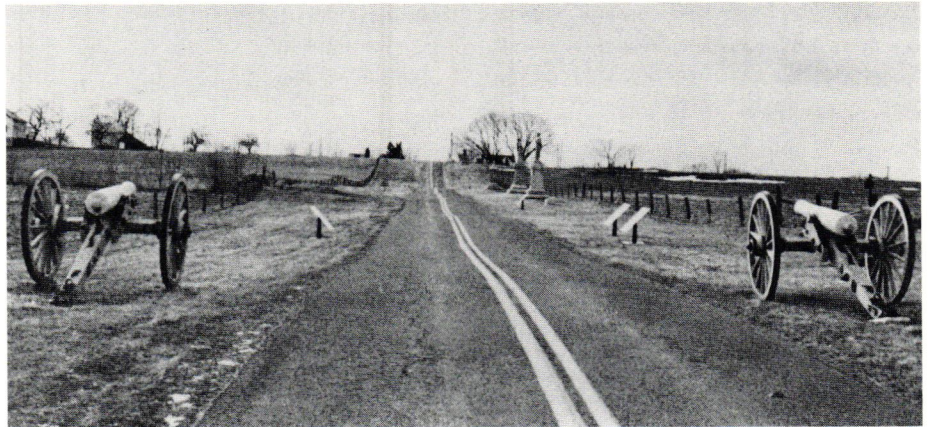
THE YEARBOOK OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE, HISTORIC PRESERVATION

RICHARD L. AUSTIN, THOMAS J. KANE, ROBERT Z. MELNICK, and SUZANNE TURNER, editors

It is encouraging to note that the mood of Americans has changed considerably since Henry Ford delivered his famous canard, "History is bunk!" Progress, a peculiarly 19th-century notion, was what mattered. Old places and old buildings, no matter how beautiful or famous, were impedimenta. As for landscapes, they were raw material. Most started out wild, were cleared for agriculture or towns, were worn out, and discarded, only to be claimed by new people, who would change the look if possible.

Since the Korean War what might be called the mental climate in which landscape architects practice has changed dramatically. The civil rights movement, urban renewal, the federal interstate highway system, the Vietnam War, and environmentalism—tumultuous and seemingly disparate events—have fostered in the education of young designers a self-awareness which owes a great deal to history. The 1983 *Yearbook of Landscape Architecture* documents, although it does not directly discuss, this remarkable shift in sensibility, surveying the range of concerns and projects underway today. Although not encyclopedic, it is not unduly narrow either.

In the first eleven essays various authors address the theoretical issues raised by the attempt to restore, preserve, or manage a landscape. The following nine present case studies of particular projects either in the planning



ANTIETAM NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD, MARYLAND. AN EXAMPLE OF BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION IN WHICH ONLY THE ROAD AND ITS SHOULDERS TO THE FENCE ARE FEDERALLY OWNED. (PHOTOGRAPH: REUBEN M. RAINEY)

stage or recently executed. Despite the unevenness of quality of both sections, there are several excellent articles, recommended to anyone about to embark on a preservation project, or contemplating the issues involved. Although this is not a "how-to book," it includes careful and useful guidelines and work programs developed for particular projects. One of the best is the Kane and Carruth study of the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, a project that caused a stir in the design community when it became clear, during the Request for Proposal, that the National Park Service was hoping to establish a prototypical process for future restoration projects. They were fortunate in the consultant they chose, whose careful response is described here.

The love of unique landscapes and relics of the past is not new. Since the Renaissance, fragments of ruins have been features of design projects. The Grand Tour was thoroughly established as a must for the cultivated person as early as 1640, by which time Inigo Jones and John Evelyn had made their pilgrimages to the ruins of Rome. Thomas Jefferson pioneered the preservation of unique landscape features in America, beginning with a natural stone bridge he admired. Olmsted like-

wise became involved in the struggle to preserve both Niagara Falls and Yosemite Valley. Even "Capability" Brown, famous for demolishing the great baroque gardens of Britain to create his vast rolling meadows with their clumps of trees, tried to save and partially restore the ruins of the ancient manor house of Woodstock, as a visual *memento mori* in the principal view across the lake at Blenheim.

What is new in the recent wave of interest in preservation is the shift of focus from unique or unusual features to those that are typical or representative. Another shift has been from curiosity-seeking to what James Marston Fitch terms, in his book on the subject, *The Curatorial Management of the Built Environment*.

Questions of what to preserve or restore, in what manner, and to which period, or, even more perplexing, how to approach the restoration of dynamic phenomena, and how to arrest the natural changes in plants, soil, and water, all raise thorny problems, addressed in the more thoughtful and provocative of these essays. Catherine Howett gives an excellent review of the contending opinions provoked by the very attempt to preserve a landscape; Anne Marston outlines the considerations involved in the interpretation of a site; Reuben Rai-

ney, in a sanguine review of the past 120 years of building and alteration of Civil War battlefield monuments, meditates upon the ways in which a landscape can embody meaning. (This last essay deserves a wider audience than it will probably receive in this format.) Of the several articles which address the environment as information to be interpreted, the most helpful is by Anne Marston, who seems aware of the potential problems.

The larger sites with agriculture and living populations are among the most problematic. Joe Volpe's North West Park seems to be an excellent park and, like all successful large-scale landscape projects, makes sympathetic use of existing features, but only in the broadest sense can it be considered "historic" preservation. The presentation of projects like the Back Bay Fens, by Carol Johnson's office, would have profited if the authors had shown what had become of the several earlier schemes. The reader could then appreciate their achievement, which was considerable until brought to a halt by local politics—which brings up a very important dilemma facing landscape planners today. The preservation of one group's past is often seen as an obstacle to another's future; here the *Yearbook*, like much of the literature on restoration and preservation, does not come to grips with the politics of the environment.

The relationship between historic preservation and deep national social problems is underscored by two case studies, however: one of the physical rehabilitation of a Detroit neighborhood, once elegant and tree-studded; the other of a series of communities built by freed slaves in the South and Southwest in the years immediately following the Civil War.

Much in this collection is good, but some of the tenets—demands to "interpret the past," for instance—are highly

questionable, and like many current fashions may not age gracefully. To rescue a site from decline or destruction seems commendable, but what to do next is frequently not so clear. The active inclusion of time, real time, has to be faced in each project. We cannot freeze sites, or turn back the clock, except in literature or the theater, which is precisely what "living history sites" have become—performances often in the same class as Disneyland, only with different tales to tell, and frequently not as well done.

We know that, for a person, loss of memory produces a life without feeling or meaning, and that a nation which does not carry meaningful portions of its past forward suffers the same deprivation. Fortunately, landscapes and buildings cannot be packed off to libraries or museums. On the other hand, they can be vandalized, stripped of their context and rendered meaningless, or they can die. Two assumptions of this book are that knowledge of the landscape of the past is a source of cultural nourishment, and that each period was authentically modern in its time; would that these were better understood beyond the circle of professionals and devotees engaged in this work.

This particular collection is valuable for those trying to save our heritage, but I must fault the publishers for having produced a decidedly unattractive book. Brand-new, it looks like a remaindered reprint, and the brown ink gives it a musty-fusty air, reminiscent of nothing so much as a fake Irish pub—which seems in direct contradiction to the intent of the editors.

The *Yearbook of Landscape Architecture, Historic Preservation*, Richard L. Austin, Thomas J. Kane, Robert Z. Melnick, and Suzanne Turner, editors, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1983, 192 pp., illus., \$30.45.

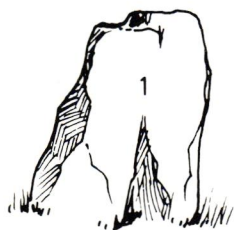
Patrick Chassé:

THE ART OF ZEN GARDENS

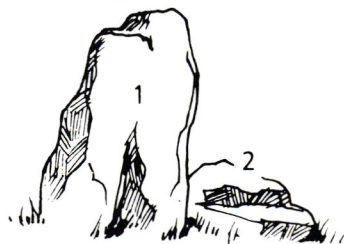
A. K. DAVIDSON

The gardens of Japan today command a degree of attention and fascination in the West they have not enjoyed since the turn of the century, when a boom in gardening, combined with a new interest in the Far East, inspired a number of publications on the subject, as well as the creation of "Japanese" gardens in America and Europe. In the intervening years, modern life and the ravages of war have taken a toll. The classic gardens that can still be viewed in Japan are subject to the wear and distraction of thousands of visitors every year; the peace and tranquility so much a goal of Zen garden design are, ironically, destroyed by homage paid in such numbers. The new wave of interest in Japanese gardens, and the many recent books on their origins, meaning, and construction, hold out hope for the conservation of classic gardens and the perpetuation of their design principles.

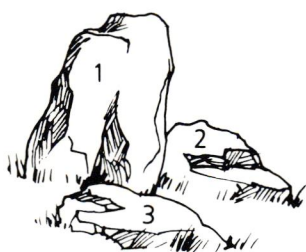
Davidson's *Art of Zen Gardens* is a how-to manual that goes back to the roots of Zen to show the reader how to achieve the spiritual design goals and the beauty of form that distinguish these gardens. Davidson traces the evolution of Japanese garden aesthetics and techniques from the beginnings of Buddhism to the influence of the great tea-masters. Succeeding chapters provide a typology of standard garden features and elaborate on principles of garden design and construction materials and techniques. (A more detailed case study of the construction of a waterfall, and a list of suitable plant materials are given in appendices.) Profuse line illustrations and a few photographs accompany the text, and the margins are liberally sprinkled with



a. Tall, thin stone.



b. Short, squat stone added.



c. Flat stone placed in front.



d. Arched stone added on the left.



e. Group filled out with additional bulk on left.

CONSTRUCTION OF A ROCK FEATURE

classic haiku and Zen or Zen-like writings to help capture the spirit of these gardens.

The historical background and design analysis are a great aid to the comprehension of Japanese principles of garden design, and their transposition to gardens in the West. Davidson's obvious appreciation of Zen Buddhism, however, may have led him to understate the importance of other influences, such as the Chinese garden tradition, the indigenous Shinto faith, and geomancy.

The typological and design segments of the books provide, in simple direct language, a comprehensive overview of garden structures, features, and ornaments, and their proper use or place. Descriptions of the why as well as the how of design add an insight, for both amateur and professional, that illustrations alone do not adequately convey. The numerous line drawings do not match the elegance of the principles illustrated or the Zen spirit evoked by the haiku in the margins—perhaps because uniform lines from a technical

pen cannot match the character of traditional brush strokes. The reduction of many drawings to postage-stamp scale may also prove a hindrance to effective graphic communication. The photographs, segregated near the end of the book, come as somewhat of a surprise, and are generally redundant of earlier line illustrations. The case study of the waterfall construction and cursory list of plant materials ought to have been further developed, or sacrificed entirely, as they do not match the quality of the historical, typological, or design sections. A glossary of Japanese garden terms (transliterated) might logically have been included, to refresh the vocabulary used throughout the text.

Even with these drawbacks—which are problems of editing, not content—the principal message is valuable, and the approach a refreshing break from glossy picture books on garden design. Enlightenment, in Zen, comes through understanding what one really is, and one path to it was contemplation of the gardens that evolved in and around Zen monasteries. Mr. Davidson believes that the peace and beauty of the Zen garden—and the contemplation it elicits—still have a place in our society, and he strives to teach us the “Way” to achieve them:

Resemblance reproduces the formal aspect of objects,

but neglects their spirit.

Truth shows the spirit and the substance in like perfection.

He who tries to transmit the spirit by means of the formal aspect and ends by merely obtaining the outward appearance will produce a dead thing.

[—*Ching Hao*]

The Art of Zen Gardens: A Guide to their Creation and Enjoyment, A. K. Davidson, J. P. Tarcher (distributed by Houghton Mifflin), 1983, 152 pp., illus., cloth \$15.95; paper \$9.95.

Hideo Sasaki:

GREENSTREETS

URBAN TREES DESIGN GROUP

In 1978-79 the City of Oakland commissioned a joint venture by Keoseyan, Seyfarth & Associates, Mai Arbegast, and Arbegast, Newton & Griffith, to prepare a tree planting program called *Greenstreets*. The study, funded by a Community Development Block Grant from HUD, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the California Department of Forestry, was meant to "initiate, guide, and coordinate the selection and planting of appropriate street trees for Oakland."

One of the by-products was a handsome spiral-bound book, *Greenstreets*, designed and produced by Fern Tiger Associates of Oakland. The major sections, on soil and climate considerations, administrative procedures, tree types and recommendations for specific neighborhoods and streets, instructions for planting, management, and maintenance, are concise and well illustrated. A special reference section tabulates information on tree size, shape, rate of growth, and best location and use.

One of the goals of the street planting program was to elicit citizen participation. Accordingly, a center called *Greenstreets*, staffed by the Park Service Department, has been set up to organize neighborhood groups, disseminate

information on the new program, coordinate various city agencies, and otherwise expedite the program.

This book, although handsome and easy to use, will be of more use to those involved in the actual tree planting program in Oakland than those interested in a general discussion of street tree planting. Other cities (especially in California) considering similar programs will find in it an extremely useful model of how to effectively disseminate information to the public.

Greenstreets: The Street Tree Plan for Oakland, Urban Trees Design Group, City of Oakland (Park Services Dept., 7101 Edgewater Drive, Rm. 405, Oakland, CA, 94621), 1983, unpaginated, illus., \$35.00 (\$37.14 in California).

Barbara Meacham:

SITE GRAPHICS

RICHARD L. AUSTIN

Site Graphics by Richard Austin is an entirely pictorial compendium of graphic techniques meant to assist the graphically inadequate in communicating with clients. The six chapters reproduce chronologically the accepted design sequence: analysis graphics, concept graphics, and site plans are followed by computer graphics, support graphics, and special graphics.

Since graphic plagiarism must be the point of this publication, those who lack graphic savvy should perhaps study each page for techniques to practice and perfect. However, they may be frustrated in their attempts to duplicate the renderings here illustrated, and wonder how exactly to go about doing a perspective or a composite drawing/

photograph, as there is no instruction whatsoever.

The dust jacket claims that "this invaluable guide shows you how to improve communication between you and your clients," but an equally important means of communication between designers and their clients may well be verbal. The drawings in this book lack verbal embellishment, where a restrained use of words would improve communication between author and reader significantly. In fact what they most clearly express is the need for verbal companionship.

There are several books available in this genre which include a greater range of drawing styles and are more clearly printed. It is disappointing to see yet another mediocre book in this vein when new approaches to graphic presentation exist which are far more expressive. Graphic communication has styles, like other things, and current

tastes are for those architectural graphics on display in museums and for sale in galleries. Many of them are evocative, communicating a feeling as well as an image. The graphic styles presented in *Site Graphics* may be solid and straightforward, but they are also dated. Styles have connotations, and these drawings represent a conservative predictable point of graphic view which suggests the same sort of designs residing in them.

This book claims to illustrate "proven methods for supporting the quality of your design program," but the adoption of these proven methods is an improbable route to creativity. We need graphic conventions, but we need experimentation just as much. In *Site Graphics* we find the conventional not useless, but sadly uninspired.

Site Graphics, Richard L. Austin, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1984, illus., \$18.95.

Roger Montgomery:

PROFESSIONALS AND URBAN FORM

JUDITH R. BLAU,
MARK E. LAGORY,
and JOHN S. PIPKIN, editors

REMAKING THE CITY

JOHN S. PIPKIN,
MARK E. LAGORY,
and JUDITH R. BLAU, editors

This pair of books by a committee of sociologists, unpromising though such authorship seems, contains several engrossing and informed pieces of writing about architects. Those patient enough to dig through the less-than-interesting layers of review articles, reprints, and academic fluff will find some gems, mostly concentrated in the *Professionals and Urban Form* volume.

These books were obviously intended to work together as an exposition of current themes in American urban design, as seen by an informed group of sociologists. The *Remaking* volume groups its series of social science papers under three broad headings. The first treats cognition with respect to urban design—at a very abstract level, as such discussions are wont to be. (It also contains a wonderful typo for the cognoscenti: the caption for Spoerri's Port Grimaud got interchanged with Moore's Piazza d'Italia. Do you suppose a sociologist could tell which was which?) The second section deals with social-spatial relations rather than psychological ones, again very abstractly. The final section, often even less concrete than the first two, deals with the consequences for urban design of relationships and activities in the various social science realms. Harry Richardson, for instance, contributes a 25-page summary of contemporary notions about the economic

forces behind the economist's idealization of urban form; and political scientist Norton Long offers once more what must be the most widely reprinted think-piece in all of urbanology, his venerable "The Local Community as an Ecology of Games." While *Remaking the City* contains good material, it hews too narrowly to the social science line to be of much interest to designers. For example, next to David Harvey's justifiably renowned analysis of rent, housing finance, and neighborhood change in Baltimore, one finds a short, original, and tough-minded essay interpreting recent trends of urbanization in northern New Jersey with respect to social justice and class interests. Under the somewhat daunting title, "Dialectics in Cement: Rational Planning in a Nonrational System," two relatively unknown urbanologists from the Newark campus of Rutgers University, geographer George Carey and lawyer-political scientist Martin Bierbaum, seek to explain the process by which the outer suburbs export their costs to the central areas while jealously guarding the benefits they reap from public action, at the same time forcing the central areas to internalize costs and export benefits back to the suburbs. The idea isn't really so new, but the way Carey and Bierbaum put it makes it fresh and instructive.

Though a few of the pieces in this last section boast the toughness noted in the Carey-Bierbaum paper (and tough-mindedness about project implementation is a quality devoutly to be cultivated), designers can safely neglect *Remaking the City*. The other volume demands serious attention, however.

Professionals and Urban Form contains four first-rate sociological papers (at least one of them truly stellar) on architects, as opposed to architecture. Old friend Robert Gutman, the Rutgers-Princeton architectural sociologist, produced one of the four good

pieces, a version of his case study of residential stock plan services and similar "plan shop" practices that increase productivity and decrease the cost of tract house design. A second worthwhile paper is from Judith Blau, another sociologist who has written about architects, and chief editor of this volume. With Katharyn Lieben, she reports on a study framed formally according to the scientific method, with models, dependent and independent variables, quantified survey data, and statistical analysis. Titled, "Growth, Decline, and Death: A Panel Study of Architectural Firms," this investigation tried to ascertain the causes, or, more accurately, the assumed "independent variables" associated with the rise and fall of New York City architectural firms during the devastating 1974-75 recession and subsequent fiscal crisis. Besides finding change itself associated with change, their results were pretty inconclusive. Some truisms did emerge: "quality" correlated inversely with profits. (Actually, since to statistically specify design quality may seem impossible to most architects, even this commonplace finding is called into question.) The paper is especially interesting because it continues the panel study of a set of New York architectural firms that Blau began in her doctoral dissertation. Its best moment is perhaps at the very end, when she quotes the Yiddish proverb, "Az es vert nit besser, vert mimeyle erger" ("If things don't get better, they can only get worse").

The real treasures of the *Professionals* volume are in the two papers by Temple University sociologist Magali Sarfatti Larson. The first of these, "The Professional Supply of Design: A Descriptive Study of Architectural Firms" (authored with the help of two of her students, George Leon and Jay Bolick), attempts just what its title suggests. Using a variety of methods and

data, including an ambitious sample survey of the architectural firms represented in the 1978 AIA *Profile of Architectural Firms*, this study provides a wealth of interesting insights into contemporary practice. Much of it confirms our worst suspicions: for instance, Sarfatti Larson and her associates verify in their national survey what Blau had discovered in her dissertation about New York firms—the large ones emphasize cost, profits, and efficiency, while the smaller ones put more weight on user satisfaction and aesthetic values. Perhaps the most important finding of the study concerns the relative importance of two architectural firm types that do not fit the image of the mainstream firm, and do not show up in AIA surveys at representative rates. These are, at one end of the scale, what Sarfatti Larson calls the “economic leaders,” firms which have lots of principals and employees and do lots of projects, many of them very large; and, at the other end, the “struggling entrepreneurial firms, with one principal, few, if any employees, and mostly small-scale projects.” The study reports that these two “marginal” types of firms “design most of what architects design.” As a pioneering study, this paper should join Robert Gutman’s seminal short piece in *Progressive Architecture* (May 1977), “Architecture, the Entrepreneurial Profession,” as one of the extremely rare attempts to socially define the profession, as distinct from its production.

Sarfatti Larson’s other paper, “Emblem and Exception: The Historical Definition of the Architect’s Professional Role,” takes off in a very different direction, with spectacular results. Working historically through Western architecture from ancient Mesopotamia to Post-Modern America, using texts we all know from Vitruvius to Le Corbusier, and including secondary materials from Durand and Ruskin to Kostof and

Catherine Bauer Wurster, Sarfatti Larson examines the changing nature of design practice. No sociologist this reviewer has ever encountered or ever expects to encounter demonstrates such a sure knowledge of our texts! But she goes far beyond them, embedding her brief history of architectural practice in a richly layered understanding of human society and its political economic base. This is sociology in the tradition of Marx and Weber, applied to our world of architecture.

Sarfatti Larson concludes that “architecture is an exceptional profession,” different from the other major professions in its inability to establish a monopoly. It cannot establish and hold a turf “against either professional competitors” from other disciplines “or lay resistance.” Only in the artistic component of its practice is it unexceptional; that is, its only monopoly is in the aesthetics of building. Architecture can establish and defend an artistic monopoly, but not a technical or a functional one. And even here, exceptionalism creeps in:

in the cultural situation of our time it is simply easier to resist and challenge [an artistic base] than a demonstrably scientific base, such as medicine or engineering can claim, or an expertise ultimately based on the state’s coercive powers, such as possessed by lawyers. In all cases, expertise is established and justified by ideological persuasion and the ritualization of uncertainty. What distinguishes architecture, therefore, is that cultural plurality is permissible in the arts, but not in science or the law.

While Sarfatti Larson pushes on to conclude, a bit portentously, that professionalization in advanced capitalist economies is “a complex, though *subordinate* and *transient* phenomenon” (her emphasis), the fascinating parts of

the argument lie along the way to these conclusions. Such questions as the shift in the nature of practice between medieval and Renaissance periods, the rise of the academy in France, and its failure to rise in Britain, the awakening of modern professionalism in the late 19th century, and many other topics are situated in their historic, political, and economic contexts. Her discussion of more current developments, such as the origin, nature, and elaboration of the Modern Movement, will be more useful to architects. Here she delineates the ideological role of architects and their work, especially through monumental buildings which carry “the dialectic of charisma”; the role of writing in architecture and, by implication, the drawn as opposed to the constructed project; and, most important, the complex interrelations among patron or commissioner, architect, and constructor (the author uses the awkward term “executant” for those who actually build). Most of Sarfatti Larson’s remarkable insights into these and other phenomena are telegraphed in a sentence or two, only to be fully apprehended in context, and upon reflection. In discussing the modern period, she theorizes:

The anonymous looks of mass-produced materials abolished even the symbolic traces of the executants’ work: indeed, all the architectural object signified was the dominant conception of the formgiver. It was, in this sense, a perfect ideological expression of monopolized practice.

Purists in architectural history may balk at some of Sarfatti Larson’s sources—Giedion, for instance, and Banham. This should not blind them or us to the overall power of her arguments. Nor should the solid and more traditional sociology of “The Professional Supply of Design” obscure the more ambitious and unprecedented

achievements of "Emblem and Exception." Magali Sarfatti Larson has scored a first, perhaps an only—(although rumor has it that a sequel, on Post-Modernism, is to come). The eight-hundred pages of these two volumes will have been well spent if they bring the work of this remarkable scholar into present architectural discourse. Reciprocally, this reviewer prays that they will reinforce Sarfatti Larson's commitment to attend from time to time to our world, architecture.

Remaking the City: Social Perspectives on Urban Design, John S. Pipkin, Mark E. LaGory, and Judith R. Blau, editors, State University of New York at Albany, 1983, xi + 409 pp., cloth \$49.50; paper \$14.95.

Professionals and Urban Form, Judith R. Blau, Mark E. LaGory, and John S. Pipkin, editors, State University of New York at Albany, xi + 367 pp., cloth \$44.50; paper \$12.95.

Max Jacobson:

MODERN ORIELS ON ROOFS AND FAÇADES

KLAUS PRACHT

When you pick up this large format book for the first time and begin to thumb through it, you get a nice sense from it—mainly of photographs of elegant glass and metal protrusions crawling seductively over equally elegant buildings of masonry or concrete. Are we about to see a new humanism in Big Architecture? Can we begin to relax our guard, and find something here to enjoy? And most important, can we learn something new about buildings from this book, something we had somehow overlooked, a new insight? I don't think so. But let me explain why.

Certainly the organization of the book seems sensible enough. Pracht gives us a theme, describes his intended reader (architects, builders, and developers), and gives a preview of his presentation in a well-organized series of clear sketches. All this in the first 15 pages. The bulk of the book consists of photographs to illustrate his points, accompanied by little paragraphs which underscore his meaning. A good first impression. O.K., let's look at this more closely.

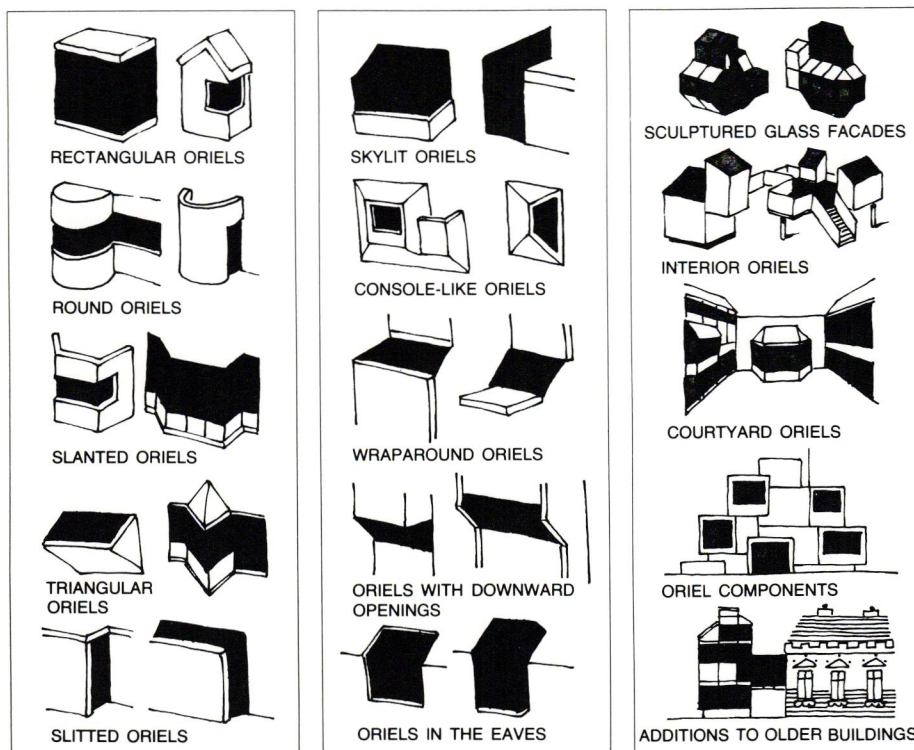
What the hell are "oriel" anyway? "Oriel are façade extensions that can be placed on building fronts and corners in a variety of ways. The decision to employ oriel depends on the type of building to be built and the particular functions intended of it." A little confused, I turn to Webster: "Oriel: A large window built out from a wall and resting on a bracket or a corbel; a large bay window." Oh. I return to Pracht:

Oriel can be arranged on gables, on side walls, on corners, or under eaves, singly or in groups, and can be successively, horizontally, or vertically coupled, or recessed. It is also possible to juxtapose different sizes and types, or to combine dormers and balconies.

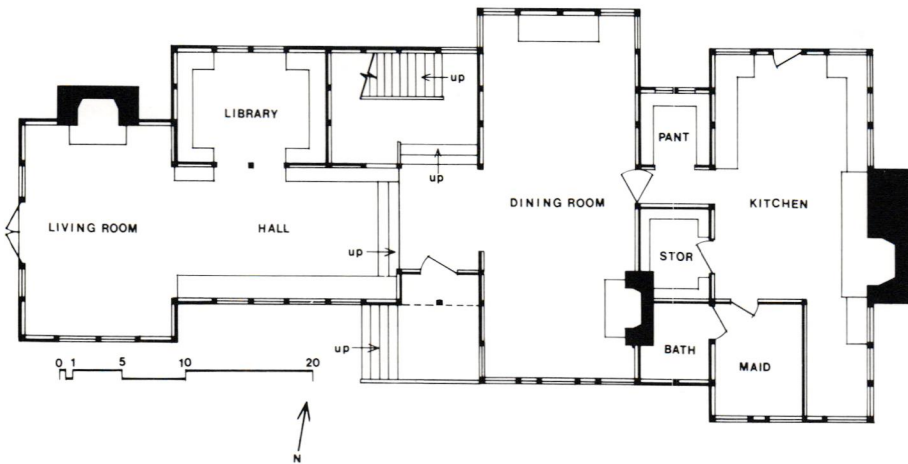
Oriel can be at ground level, on the façade, or hung from the eaves; they can be recessed, free-hanging, or structurally supported. Oriel located on the roof are called dormers, and are treated as a separate category in this book.

It is neither possible nor necessary to categorize oriel precisely; borderline constructions must be taken into consideration.

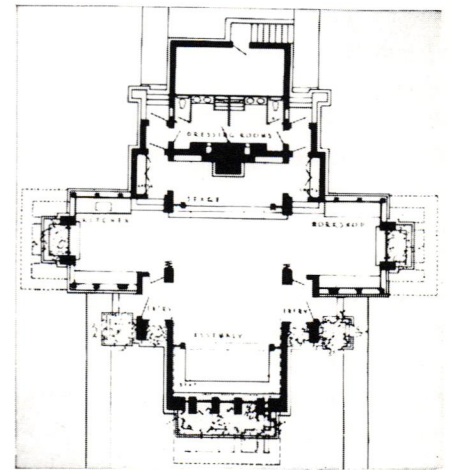
Corner windows, whether rectangular, sloped, or round, allow much better viewing outlets than normal windows, and lead us further in our study of oriel.



TYPES OF ORIEL CONSTRUCTION. FROM PRACHT, *MODERN ORIELS ON ROOFS AND FAÇADES*.



BERNARD MAYBECK, RECONSTRUCTION OF ORIGINAL PLAN OF THE CHARLES KEELER HOUSE, BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA, 1894-1895, DRAWN BY KIM SPURGEON FLY. FROM RICHARD LONGSTRETH, *ON THE EDGE OF THE WORLD* (ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY FOUNDATION AND MIT, 1983).



FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT, PLAN, COONLEY PLAYHOUSE, RIVERSIDE, ILLINOIS, 1912. FROM VINCENT SCULLY, *FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT* (BRAZILLER, 1960).

Balconies are sometimes so built up and enclosed that they virtually become winter conservatories. In such cases, it is difficult to distinguish them from oriels. Display windows and show windows also seem to fall into the category of oriels.

Finally we can use the term oriel in connection with buildings whose façades are so built out or built up with stepped-back extensions that it is difficult to distinguish which portions are extended and which recessed.

It seems that anything goes here. What I think Pracht wants to deal with in this book is what we call "pooches" in our office—admittedly a vague term, *not* found in Webster, referring to a minor protrusion of any kind upon the main body of the building; a term our clients understand immediately. So we have a book about "pooches," which should be interesting. But, as the lengthy passages above indicate, the

writing is very bad; since I don't know German I don't know whether to blame Pracht or the translator. In addition, and more important, *no ideas are being expressed*. Pracht organizes, demonstrates, even discusses, but never *explains*. This is outrageous, inexcusable—I must put this book aside and have a drink.

I need to calm down. While I'm an academic snob, I realize, I have lots of picture books that give me enormous pleasure even though they are written in Japanese, not one word of which I recognize. I take the book up again.

Pracht gives us images of current German architecture, a sprinkling of historical precedents, and a very few examples from outside the country. We do learn something—the sun never shines in Germany. Without exception, the photographs are very low contrast, devoid of defining shadow, some apparently taken from moving automobiles. My mood darkens correspondingly. I begin to take wicked delight in the

absurdity of sophisticated book layout that eliminates the "clutter" of pagination, references to the building, location, and architect next to the photograph in question, and places this extraneous information "neatly" at the back of the book, making identification so irritating that you soon give up trying. I need to refresh my drink.

I need to reflect. My disturbance with the book is deeper than can be explained simply by language, photography, or book design. What, after all, do we have here? Simply a collection of minor elements, most but not all of glass, attached in every conceivable way to underlying concrete boxes. At worst, isn't it just a scrapbook of architects' honest attempts to brighten and cheer up tough-minded "rational" buildings? Do I feel any worse than when I incur indigestion from *Sunset's* diet of tacked-on greenhouse additions? Isn't cutesified brutalism a step in the right direction?

After a while, slouching in my chair,

reflecting thus, I come to my senses. To be honest, I am an architect as well as an academic, and what really disturbs me about this book is that it's not going to help me make a good building. Consulting the volumes on my beloved Exemplar Architects—Richardson, Wright, Polk, Coxhead, and Maybeck (what a firm they would have made!)—I ask a simple and obvious question: In all these buildings I love and try to understand, what is the attitude toward “pooches” (or “oriels,” as I shall now have to learn to call them)? In what manner does such a protrusion occur, and by what process of design does it emerge? The answer is inescapable: they are simply never tacked on. In fact, they don't actually exist as isolated elements. What we do see is something quite different, a plan composed of well-proportioned rooms, large and small, arranged to relate functionally to each other internally, and at the same time to give each room adequate exposure to the outside light, air, and view, typically on two full sides, and sometimes on three. These exemplar buildings are obviously designed from the inside and the outside simultaneously. As a result, tacked-on pooches are not required. Each major room has already been conceived as a bulging out of space, maintaining intimate contact with its related spaces on the interior, while at the same time it billows out toward the outdoors. Those interested in modern German architecture will surely want to look at this book by Pracht. Personally, I found it stimulating because it forced me to define what I found so disturbing about these images of attached exposure to the outdoors.

Modern Oriels on Roofs and Façades—Planning and Design, Klaus Pracht, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1984 (originally published by Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart, 1980, as *Moderne Erker an Fassade und Dach in Planung und Gestaltung*), 160 pp., illus., \$35.00.

Edward Allen:

MASONRY IN ARCHITECTURE

LOUIS G. REDSTONE

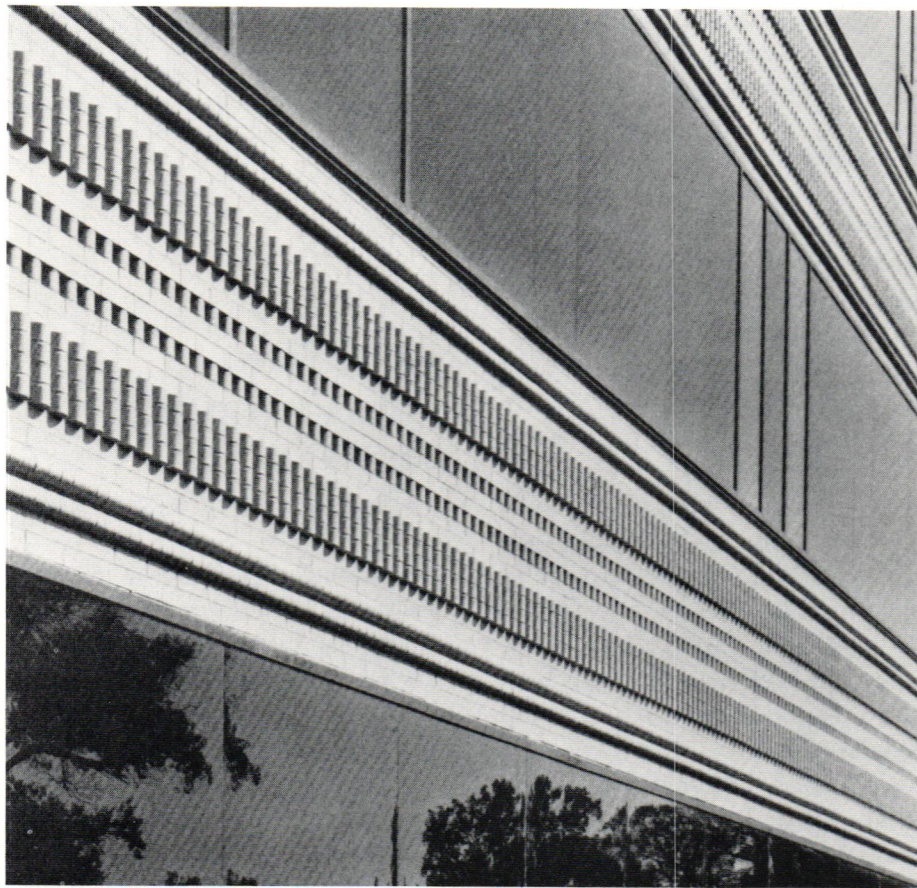
Architect-author Louis Redstone, who began his long love affair with masonry by spending three years in the Mideast learning the craft from an Egyptian master mason, presents in this book a diverse assortment of photographic images of contemporary masonry buildings. His purpose is to focus the reader's attention on innovative uses of brick and concrete unit masonry. After an initial historical summary, he devotes two chapters to photographic spreads (one to three pages each) of selected masonry buildings of recent construction in North America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. The fourth chapter is concerned with masonry as an art form, and shows stunning sculp-

tural work in brick by André Bloc, Pekka Kontio, and Mara Smith, among others. The fifth and concluding chapter is a knowledgeable review of some important technical and managerial aspects of designing and constructing masonry buildings.

Redstone's photographs are ample evidence that, after more than five thousand years of use and experimentation, masonry is still a vital, contemporary medium for the architect. Especially relevant and exciting are the three modern examples from the Islamic world—one based strongly on traditional forms of masonry building, the other two on traditional modes of construction used to produce nontraditional forms; all three are refreshing visions to readers who have already seen many of the American examples in the architectural magazines. But new surprises also lurk among the local entries: an elegant and imaginative McDonald's hamburger restaurant, a



JULIO LAFUENTE, INTERIOR, SANCTUARY OF COLLEVALENZA, TODI, ITALY, 1968. (PHOTOGRAPH: T. OKAMURA)



HOWARD NEEDLES TAMMEN & BERGENDOFF, CLOSE-UP OF BRICKWORK, ST. LOUIS ART MUSEUM, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI. (PHOTOGRAPH: GREG HURSLEY, HURSLEY & LARK)

deftly sculpted Oak Park Civic Center, a playful reinterpretation of the serpentine garden wall.

One wishes for more than the handful of randomly provided detail drawings, and for color photographs—virtually a necessity to communicate the full impact of masonry buildings, and which might well have been provided in a book that sells for nearly half a dollar per sheet of paper.

Some of the selections tell us nothing new about masonry: a conspicuous example is a plain-vanilla U.S. Post Office by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill that could as well have been clad in blank walls of stucco or porcelain-enamel panels. All of the photographs are reproduced in sparkle-less shades of off-set gray. The typography is curiously unsympathetic to the subject matter—

perhaps the extra-bold titles and heavy black rules are too severe and monolithic for so finely textured a material as brick. To finish the list of complaints, the dust jacket hype bears little relationship to what is inside: the book is neither the “first” nor the “complete” guide to the craft of masonry. It does not give “step-by-step procedures for masonry construction.” It does not have “A special section featuring the Aga Khan Award winners.” And it has no bibliography at all, let alone “A complete bibliography.” The need for a periodic pictorial review of the uses of masonry in architecture is sufficiently strong that a book such as this need not be misrepresented so shamelessly.

Masonry in Architecture, Louis G. Redstone, McGraw-Hill, 1984, 179 pp., illus., \$39.95.

*John Lund Kriken
and Navin Amin:*

DEVELOPMENTS IN TALL BUILDINGS 1983

LYNN S. BEEDLE, editor

It is fitting that a book devoted to tall building design be dedicated to Fazlur R. Khan, who was a partner at Skidmore, Owings and Merrill and president of the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat when he died in 1982. While Fazlur was a great structural engineer whose skills made possible some of the tallest buildings in the world, perhaps his greatest gift was his tireless interest and participation in all aspects of human settlement. The book conveys some of this broad and comprehensive commitment.

The purpose of the book is to present the newest information available from around the world on tall buildings. It is huge—880 pages, composed of 76 separate papers by developers, sociologists, urban designers, architects, and engineers. They are arranged by subject, with roughly 30 percent geared toward development, planning, and architecture, and 70 percent toward engineering. The sheer volume and range of the book make it a little like an encyclopedia, or perhaps a scrapbook on everything you wanted to know about tall buildings. Illustrated with black-and-white photographs and drawings, its look, inside and out, is that of a very thick college textbook. Despite these few qualifications, the book is intriguing and informative.

The varying experiences of different countries with the same building type communicate from an unusual point of view some of the world's cultural and economic diversity. T. Arciszewski and G. U. Ojiako's paper, “Tall Buildings in Nigeria,” for example, describes the

first high-rise on Lagos Island built in 1960:

This 23-story giant was to be a prestigious symbol of a great nation attaining independence from a colonial master—hence the name “Independence Building.” These new high-rises . . . would enable the Lagos Development Authority to achieve its ambitious aim of turning the island into the “New York” of Nigeria by the year 2000.

In contrast to this unqualified enthusiasm, several American authors caution us on the negative impacts of unplanned tall building development.

Similar comparisons between cultures are to be found in the technical sections of the book. A paper by Kahn and Mahjoub M. El Vimeriri describes the compatibility of structural systems to the separate uses of a mixed-use high-rise building. Simplistically stated, the engineering need for smaller column spacing on lower floors and wider spacing on upper floors is at odds with the preferred use and rentability of housing on upper floors and office/commercial space on lower floors. Several resolutions are described, in beautiful step-by-step logic, and exemplified by Chicago’s 100-story John Hancock Center.

Another paper, by Parambir S. Gujral and Raymond J. Clark, compares the energy efficiency of a “low-rise” 28-story atrium building with that of a 45-story, typical high-rise containing the same net leasable areas. Based on comprehensive analysis, “the low-rise configuration was superior because the largest reduction in mechanical equipment capacity and annual energy savings is attained by designing an efficient envelope”—minimum exterior surface area.

The American struggle for design efficiency presents a sharp contrast in scale to high-rise housing in Shanghai,

as discussed by Ya-xin Zhu. In Shanghai, twelve- to sixteen-story reinforced concrete structures have not proven as satisfactory for mass construction as the traditional wall-bearing five- to six-story walk-up apartments. Even with these latter there have been problems. With the rapid growth of the population and the subsequent shortage of land, the distance between buildings has decreased from 1.1 to 1 times the height of the buildings. “The relatively narrow spaces in between the tall 6-story houses were mostly cast with abominable shadows where plants could scarcely survive.” The solution was step-type construction, set back for the upper two floors on the north side of the building, to permit adequate sunlight to reach the space between houses. The creation of this new six-story Chinese prototype for mass housing seems as significant in its cultural setting as the solutions to the problems associated with very tall buildings in America.

The engineering technical sections include the most current information on building design criteria, both mechanical and electrical, as well as wind, earthquake, fire, and temperature loading on structural systems. Tall buildings are examined in terms that go well beyond most architects’ technical understanding, to the frontier of engineering knowledge—for example, the concept of “plastic shear hinge and its behavior in the Eccentric Bracing systems for resisting seismic loads” or “the secondary effects on frame design, technically known as P- Δ effect.”

Finally, the book has an excellent combined reference and bibliography section, as well as many comparative tables, including the hundred tallest buildings in the world. Eighty-two out of the hundred are in the United States, but you might sense from this book that our lead will not last forever.

Developments in Tall Buildings 1983, sponsored by the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, Lynn S. Beedle, editor, Hutchinson Ross, distributed by Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1983, 880 pp., illus., \$75.00.

Jeffrey Milet:

CONTEMPORARY THEATER

CHRISTOS G. ATHANASOPOULOS

A combination of sociological and physical factors has influenced the evolution of contemporary theater architecture. The court theater form of the Renaissance, for example, had one perfect viewing position in relation to the perspective scene on the stage. This was more the result of the societal structure of 16th- and 17th-century Europe than of literary, scenic, or lighting factors. This desire to articulate the class structure of the audience continued to dominate the form of theaters, culminating in the tiered balcony design of the baroque opera house.

The design of Wagner’s fan-shaped auditorium at Bayreuth, built in 1876, was a point of departure in the development of theater architecture. Its form was generated by analysis of the physical laws that govern seeing and hearing, and, at Wagner’s insistence, sight lines were used to determine the design of the interior. This proto-functionalist attitude was compounded by the great composer’s desire to return to classical Greco-Roman theater form.

The precedence given to physical rather than social functions makes Bayreuth a milestone in the development of contemporary theater. Attention to the science of sight and sound, added to the pressures of economics, led logically to the modern multi-use theater, where

the ability to vary sight lines, acoustics, and functions by means of adjustable architectural and acoustical volumes makes it possible to accommodate concerts, opera, and theater in the same space.

Christos Athanopoulos, in *Contemporary Theater: Evolution and Design*, narrates the entire controversy between the subjectively derived baroque theater and the objectively designed fan-shaped configuration. George Izenour reminds us in the preface that "theater is two planks and passion." In his admirable text, Athanopoulos pursues the story of the development of those planks and passion with a style and grace that makes his book read more like a novel than a technical work. His goal is "to trace the evolutionary path of theater . . . considering the influence of social trends on the evolution of its form, what caused the form to change, and how the theater building was affected throughout the centuries by a succession of styles and concepts." To accomplish this he draws on both his background as an architect and his sensitive theatrical insight. The book is the kind of scholarly work this reviewer welcomes; it provides both general knowledge and particular information, and will serve a wide audience in a narrow field.

The first section deals with the design and problems of theaters as they developed up to the end of the 19th century. This is followed by a section on theater in the 20th century, and how it was influenced by various social upheavals and the advent of World War I. The third section analyzes new theater forms which emerged from the exploratory activity between the wars. In the final section, Athanopoulos assesses the trends in the evolution of contemporary theater. He "defines the components that shape the theater forms" in a style that conveys to the reader the theater's multi-faceted nature, taking

into account the form and structure of both theater architecture and theatrical events. His recognition that buildings and their use are inseparable adds immeasurably to the work; he clearly understands and communicates the necessary interplay of architecture, theater, and technology.

The book flows naturally from the outdoor amphitheaters of the ancient Greeks to the sophisticated technology of the modern multi-use facility, and Athanopoulos handles both ends of the spectrum with equal competence. I do object to some points, however. First, his emphasis on the theater of the Bauhaus, which was perhaps admirably motivated, but contributed little to the state of the art and practice of theater from a practical point of view. One must always bear in mind when evaluating a theater that theatrical function and architectural aesthetics need not be considered in the same light nor judged by the same criteria. A theater is in essence a form within a structure, and the form can be (though it doesn't necessarily have to be) completely separate from the structure. The author's treatment of the theater of the Bauhaus is an understandable architect's indulgence. I would also argue with his choice to begin the book with Egypt rather than Greece. Western theater history, it is generally acknowledged, begins with the Greeks, and whatever small part is owed to the Egyptians has little bearing on theater form. Neither of these two misgivings, however, greatly detracts from the general excellence of the work, which will join the small handful of volumes worth reading on theater design. For the general reader, it is an excellent comprehensive study and will no doubt be required reading for all students of both theater technology and architecture. It makes the perfect introduction and complement to George Izenour's *Theater Design* (McGraw-Hill, 1977), a more specifi-

cally technical and detailed analysis of the topic.

Contemporary Theater: Evolution and Design, Christos G. Athanopoulos, translated by Loucas Delmouzos, Wiley, 1983, 341 pp., illus., \$60.00.

Edgar Powers, Jr.:

SYSTEMS GRAPHICS

FRED A. STITT

Each year an increasing percentage of architects and engineers face the prospect of automating their practices in order to meet production schedules, reduce overhead, improve quality control, remain competitive. A profession whose traditional tools of production have been the pencil and T-square cannot be expected to automate spontaneously; architects must first prepare themselves and their staffs to think in the "layers" required for automated production systems. *Systems Graphics* is, like Stitt's earlier *Systems Drafting*, a timely primer, and introduces a logical sequence of events to precede automation in the drafting room.

Fred A. Stitt is a recognized architect, writer, publisher, and authority on systems drafting and computer-aided drafting and design. His writings and lectures have made a major impression on the architectural/engineering profession, identifying ways to change the slow, mundane, and costly methods that prevail in most drafting rooms. Firms that followed Mr. Stitt's earlier programs for systemization of production have been able to automate comparatively free of disruption.

Some of the material in *Systems Graphics* is repeated from *Systems Drafting*; however, while *Systems Drafting* dealt mostly in the generalities of establishing a systems program, *Systems Graphics*

addresses the specifics of applying systems drafting techniques, and employs photography to support the text. The photographs will give novice draftsmen and practitioners a clearer perception of these techniques, which involve photo, composite, and sticky-back materials.

The book deals, in five parts, with the latest trends in reprographics and computerization. "Advanced In-House Reprographics" describes the present status of systems drafting and presents a logical sequence for educating a firm's principals and staff. The "five-stage organizing principle" for a smooth transition to systems is repeated here from *Systems Drafting*. Endemic horror stories of poor systems management are retold, as well as more heartening stories of firms which have successfully implemented systems programs, and the dividends they now reap.

Mr. Stitt also reviews, for the skeptic, the benefits of overlay drafting. Approximately seventy-five percent of the architects and engineers in America

have been exposed to this technique, but, according to recent surveys, only a small percentage use it. The author makes a good case, reviewing uses and phases of overlay work, and illustrating his argument. As Stitt observes,

Planning is everything with overlay, but the steps of planning an overlay project have seemed arcane and so mysterious that many architects and engineers won't do it or won't do it adequately.

Part 3 reviews the actual process of computerizing the practice, laying to rest employees' most frequently asked question, Will the computer take my job? The computer, like any other tool, changes work, augments it, and increases its value by allowing employees to do more in less time—as Stitt demonstrates by tracing the evolution of various job roles.

A detailed checklist for researching a computer is provided, which, if followed, will considerably improve your chances of finding the appropriate system for your firm. The task is further simplified by photographs illustrating the uses of various parts of the computer, and explanations of CADD jargon.

Part 4 includes excellent guidelines to develop and implement an effective quality-control program. The importance of quality control is acknowledged by every architect and engineer, but in practice few give it a high priority. Checklists, for example, are universally recognized as excellent quality-control tools, but very few professionals insist that their staff use them. *Systems Graphics* relays once again the excellent reasons for developing a quality control system, and provides a checklist ready-made for the staff's use.

The book concludes with the essentials of a detail system, including how to use a master detail system, and checklists to create construction de-

tails; in the appendices one finds Mr. Stitt's detail file index and his working drawing production checklists for large and small construction. Those seeking a comprehensive reference and guide along the road to automation will find it here.

Systems Graphics: Breakthroughs in Drawing Production and Project Management, Fred A. Stitt, McGraw-Hill, 1984, 261 pp., illus., \$34.95.

Thomas Stokes Page:

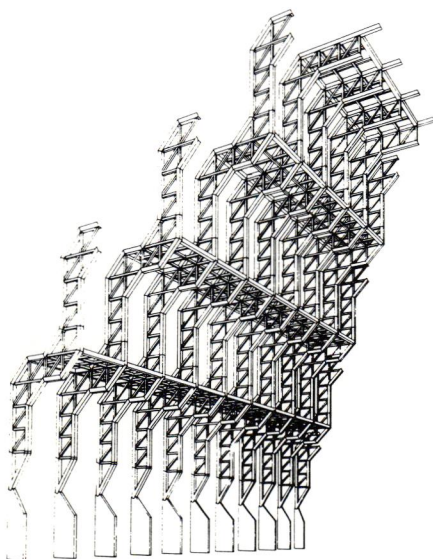
A/E MARKETING HANDBOOK

SANDY D'ELIA, JIM RICERETO and MARGARET SPAULDING

Marketing and mining have much in common. Both activities are supervised from company headquarters, which may be remotely located, the company's owners being given to riding the super-fast descent and ascent elevators to the mine itself. The labyrinth of tunnels and working galleries may be brightly lit, dim, or forbidding in the deep pitch of their blackness. And each mine has its own road map (written, or, more likely, existing only in the intuitive judgment of the mine superintendent) aimed at working the existing lodes more efficiently, and possibly tapping rich new ones. An elaborate system of informal communications connects everyone.

For all marketing mine workers, *The A/E Marketing Handbook—A User's Manual* is an extraordinarily useful survivor's kit. It tells you exactly how to set up a mine, which kind of elevators to use, how to light your galleries, how to wire up your networks, and how to tap-tap your way to new treasures.

Written by marketing veterans for newcomers to the field, the book is a



STRUCTURAL SECTIONS USED IN DESIGN STUDIES BY SOM, CHICAGO. (COLLECTION: SKIDMORE, OWINGS & MERRILL, CHICAGO)

basic primer of what you should do, why you do it, and what should happen when you do it. Its 250-odd pages contain almost everything you need to know about marketing, beginning with organizing your own office and ending with how to survive the internal politics of the firm for which you work.

Oddly enough, the book is of equal value to the marketing professional and to the principal supervising a marketing program on behalf of his firm. It will give him an insight into what should happen, what is happening, and what probably has already happened in the operation of the marketing mine. A good rule of thumb for marketing people would be not to take a new job unless they can be assured that the owner(s) have read and understood the contents of *The A/E Marketing Handbook*. Much time could thereby be saved, much grief avoided.

Chapters on such mundane subjects as how to organize your files and how to arrange a collection of slides are gems of total understanding and lucid exposition. Those on developing a marketing plan and preparing marketing budgets provide an arsenal of information for use in beating off the efficiency experts, the MBA's, and all other connoisseurs of administrative necrophilia.

The main fault of the book—and my reaction may well be subjective—is its tendency to debase the language through such Orwellian concepts as a “profession” of marketing—distinct from “sales”—which does not partake in the humdrum business of sales survival, but floats majestically above the storm. Marketing people believe that the professionals with whom they work look down on them as an evil of dubious necessity. They respond by building up a position—with words—from which they hope to look down, or at least across, at the professionals. These semantic games do not mollify the profes-

sionals, and they certainly confuse the marketing people. For perpetuating these illusions articulately and forcefully, I do fault the authors.

On every other count, I must praise them. Their work is a true labor of love which deserves a place of honor in any marketer's library. As for myself, I cannot help but think of a cartoon which appeared some years ago, of two Indians in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of New Mexico, who had built a small fire over which they were holding a blanket to send smoke signals. They are watching in the far distance the enormous mushrooming cloud of a nuclear blast; one Indian is saying to the other, “Gee, I wish we had said that.”

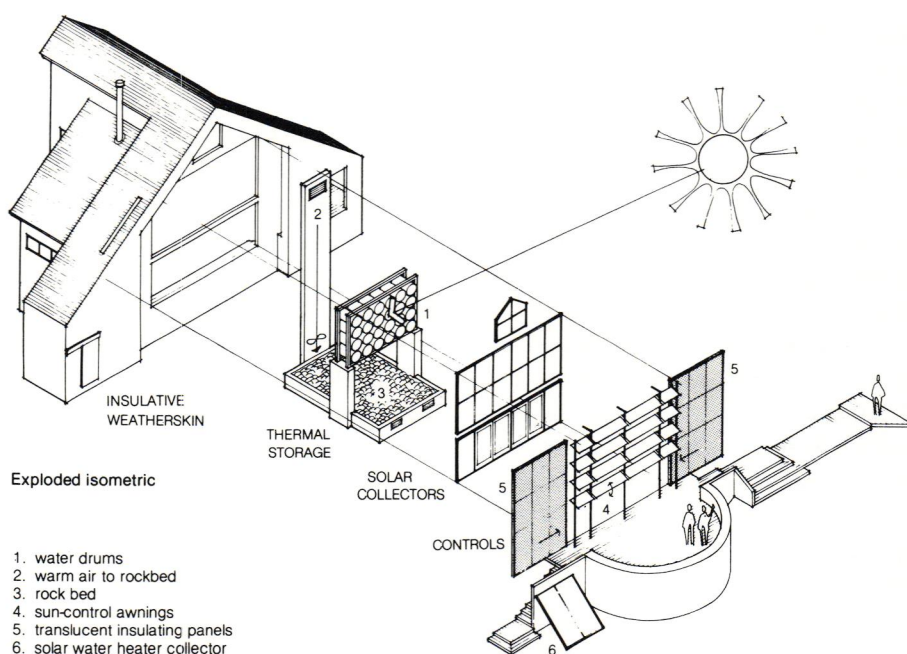
A/E Marketing Handbook: A User's Manual, Sandy D'Elia, Jim Ricereto, and Margaret Spaulding, MRH Associates, Inc. (P.O. Box 11316, Newington, CN 06111), 1983, 249 pp., \$49.50 (plus \$3.50 postage).

Ed Dean:

ENERGY BOOKS

In a recently televised exchange between a nuclear power lobbyist and an economic consultant for public utilities, the lobbyist tossed off a comment about nuclear power as a source of energy being equally viable with “coal and conservation.” I realized then that we had made it: finally everyone agrees on the potential of energy conservation—although you would have to be pretty intransigent to think that the “oil glut,” the leveling of oil prices, and the collapse of OPEC were due to anything else.

A significant part of this success story has been the construction of better buildings and energy retrofitting world-wide. Although it took years for the general public to understand the



JOHN ALT AND SCARLETT BREEDING, EXPLODED ISOMETRIC, PARHAM RESIDENCE, RANDELMANN, NORTH CAROLINA. FROM WRIGHT AND ANDREJKO, *PASSIVE SOLAR ARCHITECTURE: LOGIC & BEAUTY*.

claims of energy conservation advocates, and for government programs to apply them, most people now have a basic idea of what can be done to save energy and money. New products will continue to appear from time to time, and increased efficiencies of some building components will change priority lists, but the bulk of theory and information about energy and buildings is well established—"build well first, add gadgets later" seems to be the universally accepted notion.

What does this imply for publishing? Since the forecast is that the storm is over, when it is more likely the eye of the hurricane, the urgency to publish energy books is gone. Many readers are not looking for anything, but this lack of vigilance, though human, is probably unwise. With no immediate pressure to publish basic information and design examples, now is the ideal time to consider how energy-conscious buildings actually perform—which features are worthwhile, which concepts can be generally applied, and which are of interest only as curiosities.

Instead one finds the familiar potpourri of disjointed topics, far-out recipes for energy wonders, and regurgitation of the well-known one-of-a-kind designs. There are some interesting exceptions, books with the thoroughness and insight needed right now, but others appear to have been several years in the pipeline and have arrived after their time on a very different scene.

One of the nice things about the current phase of energy publishing is that illustrators have had the time to prepare thoughtful, informative, and even entertaining illustrations to accompany equally thorough texts. Charlie Wing's *House Warming*, based on the NET television series of the same name, is that rare blend, a technically competent and complete book, done with warmth and sometimes humor. Mary McCarthy's illustrations give the book its light,

folksy character, and convey the technical points well.

The subject is neither architecture nor new buildings, but the rehabilitation and "energy retrofit" of an old New England farmhouse. Under this pretext the author discusses energy and its principles as applied to buildings in some detail, while also relating the entire process of evaluating options during a remodel. This is a fairly complete course in energy and residential building, rivaling most of the serious books of the last ten years on the subject.

Jeffrey Cook's *Award-Winning Passive Solar House Designs* and his *Award-Winning Passive Solar Designs*, Professional Edition are identical, except for a 15-page addendum on non-residential buildings in the "professional edition." They present a collection of designs for passive solar buildings from the First Passive Solar Design Awards Competition, sponsored by the Passive Systems Division of the American Solar Energy Society. A major problem with these books is that Jeffrey Cook presents everything as it was submitted, including all the unchecked technical claims and hyperbole of the architects. There is no attempt at an independent evaluation of energy performance; the only control is to compare the solutions of the different teams, who were required to submit data for the same set of variables and outputs. One is left with a fairly useless collection of BTU figures and solar energy percentages, and no information on their sources or on possible alternative measures. This may have been acceptable in the mid-1970s when energy was a new hot issue, but today one yearns for some real journalism.

While some projects from the competition (which was judged in October 1980) are unbuilt conceptual designs, several of the houses had already been published even then. Most of them follow the one-of-a-kind design response

typical of the "solar architecture" of the late 1970s, and some are so peculiar that they inspire only astonishment. A few can actually be discussed as consciously good architecture. Most of the 15 non-residential projects in the "professional edition" are convincing, technically correct, and remarkably good—perhaps due to the tempering effect of the constraints in large projects. This makes the professional edition, which has exactly the same coverage of domestic buildings, the better buy.

Passive Solar Architecture: Logic and Beauty, by David Wright and Dennis Andrejke, belongs to the same genre of project catalogue, following the familiar format of drawings and data. It has, however, one remarkable and welcome improvement: each project has been evaluated by the CALPAS3 computer program. Some comparisons of energy performance are thereby possible, although in most cases the climatic differences tend to make them meaningless. Another welcome innovation is the inclusion of comments from both the designer and the inhabitant. The inhabitant's point of view is in many cases quite interesting, and shows how non-energy factors can shape a design. Remodels and additions—some very practical and obviously cost-conscious—are included in this collection, as are the predictable extremist "solar designs." Several of the designs, which those knowledgeable in the field will recognize, have already been published numerous times. They date the book, but some interest is recouped by the second-party energy analysis applied to them.

Practical Passive Solar Design—A Guide to Homebuilding and Land Development, by John S. Crowley and L. Zaurie Zimmerman, is straight, practical stuff, making no pretense of dealing with architectural issues. Crowley, who served as architectural

engineer for the National Association of Home Builders, has had close contact with the house construction industry; the book is aimed at developers and builders, and for them it succeeds quite well. The middle section presents house designs and case studies clearly oriented toward the builder who is used to working without an architect. The houses are simple modifications of conventional builder designs and offer nothing to anyone beyond this audience. Much attention is given to solar access in site planning (based on somewhat limited case studies).

The only section that might be of interest to a more sophisticated reader is the short presentation of wood-frame construction details that are practical, presumably cost-effective, yet advanced beyond what one finds at the typical site. To appreciate the differences, however, the reader must be familiar with standard techniques; Charlie Wing's book is a better basic source on the subject.

Much of the information in this book has been published previously, or is at least available in most good undergraduate courses in energy management. Only the homebuilder interested in establishing a reputation with solar homes will find this book useful, but real interest from this sector may have evaporated in the last two years along with the influence of OPEC.

Super-Solar Houses—Saunders's 100%-Solar, Low-Cost Designs is very hard to review. One either accepts its premise and recommends it to everyone immediately, or dismisses it as interesting but basically impractical—even if all the claims are true. The book presents one solar design realized in three experimental structures, one an actual residence. The concept, in a nutshell, is to have two large storage masses, one in the attic that is allowed to reach quite high temperatures, and one in the basement that is recharged

regularly by the super-charged mass in the attic. All space tempering is done with the moderate basement mass. The idea was developed by a Massachusetts engineer, and is being promoted by Shurcliff as the ultimate solution to the problems with passive solar houses. Although the author has difficulty getting to the point, it is certainly worth reading about. My skepticism arises primarily from the style in which the system concept is presented (which contains an incredible amount of hype) and the unlikely prospect of a single engineer on the outskirts of Boston working out all our problems with solar houses. The book's discussion of the real drawbacks of the various passive solar systems is entirely correct and should give eager solar architects something to ponder. This is the perfect book for those who relish late-night bull sessions about extreme passive solar design concepts, but not for those of us who prefer to remain in the realm of the livable.

If you are looking for 200 pages of pitched-roof overhang diagrams, showing sun angles for every latitude between the northern tropics, then Ron Sibson's *Solar Angle Reference Manual* is for you. What else can I say?

Survey of European Passive Solar Buildings was prepared by the Solar Energy Laboratory of the French National Center for Scientific Research. It purports to "survey" European passive solar buildings, but is unfortunately a typical product of government efforts in the area of passive solar design review. The work was apparently dominated by researchers outside of the building and design community and has virtually nothing of value for anyone involved in design and construction. A representative plan and section, and the briefest energy data, insufficient for any performance analysis, describe each house. Construction information is limited to window areas and U-val-

ues, and discussion of costs, performance, or general experience is cursory. (A performance assessment such as "thermally self-sufficient in good weather" neither enlightens nor impresses.)

The title is totally misleading: 79 of the 104 examples are located in France—hardly a "survey" of European solar buildings, unless Europe has moved to France. There is as much interesting work in Europe as there is in this country and we rarely get a chance to see and evaluate it. This book does not remedy the situation.

House Warming with Charlie Wing, Charles Wing (Drawings by Mary McCarthy), Little, Brown, 1983, 204 pp., illus., cloth \$24.95; paper 16.95.

Award-Winning Passive Solar House Designs, Jeffrey Cook, Garden Way, 1984, 173 pp., illus., \$14.95 pb.

Award-Winning Passive Solar Designs, Expanded Professional Edition, Jeffrey Cook, McGraw-Hill, 1984, 284 pp., illus., \$29.95.

Passive Solar Architecture: Logic and Beauty, David Wright and Dennis A. Andrejko, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1982, 254 pp., illus., \$16.95 pb.

Practical Passive Solar Design—A Guide to Homebuilding and Land Development, John S. Crowley and L. Zaurie Zimmerman, McGraw-Hill, 1983, 250 pp., illus., \$34.95.

Super-Solar Houses: Saunders's 100%-Solar, Low-Cost Designs, William A. Shurcliff, Brick House (Andover, MA 01810), 1983, cloth edition distributed by Wiley, 192 pp., illus., cloth \$23.95; paper \$12.95.

Solar Angle Reference Manual, Ron Sibson, Wiley, 1983, 188 pp., \$19.95.

Survey of European Passive Solar Buildings, Jean-François Robert, Roger Camous, and Franz Schneider, Solar Energy Research Institute (available from the U.S. Government Printing Office), 1982, 220 pp., illus., \$15.00 pb.

Sally B. Woodbridge:

TEN COLLEGIATE JOURNALS

Collegiate journals of architecture are typically ephemeral. Born of high hopes, they expire with a sigh of regret that the reservoir of ideas in academe will again go untapped. But no one is really surprised; the reservoir of money predictably dries up first. This situation is poignantly expressed by Jaquelin Robertson in his preface to the 1982 issue of *Modulus*, the University of Virginia School of Architecture Review: "like disadvantaged children they [student architectural magazines] depend for their life on outside sources and can never claim the health of a secure life. Perhaps this is why they are often more mature and more dear than their better fed commercial counterparts; also more interesting."

There are more collegiate journals now than ever before. And they are particularly interesting because, as Robertson goes on to say, "they are a blatant and exciting record of the ways that the ever-wandering architectural attention continues to shift about its much less mobile subject matter." Six of the journals reviewed in this issue were published in 1983: *Perspecta* (Yale), *Precis IV* (Columbia), *Threshold* (University of Illinois at Chicago), *Via 6* (University of Pennsylvania), *Mass* (University of New Mexico), and *The Princeton Journal*. For *Mass* and *The Princeton Journal*, this is the first issue. Two others, *The Cornell Journal of Architecture* and *Modulus* (University of Virginia), appeared in 1982.

Regularity is not a trait of these journals. Still, if a lapse of one or two years does not signify the end, it does strain credulity. Subscriptions are, perforce, mostly based on faith and loyalty to the cause or to alma mater. How to find these publications is another puzzle. Of those discussed here, only *Perspecta* is listed in the *Art Index*. *Precis*, *Threshold*, and *The Cornell Journal of Architecture* are distributed by Rizzoli; *Via*, *Perspecta*, and *The Harvard Architecture Review* by the MIT Press. Others can be found in campus libraries and occasionally in those rare bookstores devoted to architecture.

Who is the audience? Certainly those on the home base for whom the publication, despite its relative invisibility, means status in the collegiate league. There is also the hope of reaching a wider professional audience through alumni and the intercollegiate network. Just how wide depends on location; the Northeast has more schools, practitioners, and arbiters of taste in form and theory—hence more readers and more oracles whose pronouncements make waves across the country. Whether these journals are interesting to architecture enthusiasts outside the professional circles is another question. Like Joan Didion, who claims that she writes

in order to find out what she is going to say, those architects who teach and write often do so to clarify their approach to design. Architecture schools are, therefore, intellectual centers where theories which eventually influence the course of practice are spawned. Whether this is of concern to the general public is dubious. As Peter Eisenman observes in an interview in *Threshold*, it is not clear why our mass consumer society needs architecture, let alone the often esoteric ruminations on its nature. Not that the lack of a mass audience has ever or should ever deter the publication of ideas. That the journals' publishers recognize the special nature of their audience is clear from such titles as *Perspecta*, *Precis*, *Via*, or *Threshold*, which signify architecture only to the cognoscenti.

Though their funding sources may be fickle, some of the journals are far from undernourished in respect to size and format. Of those reviewed here only *Mass*—another enigmatic title—conveys a modest impression. The rest are slick and robust. Their formats vary; Cornell's second issue, for example, reflects its status as a belated catalogue for the 1980 exhibition of the work from Colin Rowe's Studio of Urban Design.

Though the annuals under review pursue a stated theme, they are all concerned with the role of historic precedents, particularly as inspiration for present work both in and outside of the academic studio. Virtually no one misses a chance to trounce the Modern Movement. The stridency of this message recalls the tone of those who—not so long ago—rushed to stand up and be counted against historicism. Regionalism, an issue of continuing interest in Post-Modern times, is addressed in *Mass*, *Precis IV*, and *Threshold*. *Mass* is devoted to the regional riches of the southwest locale around Albuquerque and Santa Fe, exemplified in the work of John Gaw Meem (1920s-1950s) and continued in the contemporary work of such local practitioners as Antoine Predock. *Threshold* (in this issue subtitled *America*) takes on the whole country. An editorial statement, pretentiously titled "The Hope of This World," concludes: "We stand before a threshold, a new American frontier. If we would step across, we must first renew our faith in dreams." The weight and vagueness of this challenge infuses the whole issue with a failure of tone. Who are *we*, anyway? Toward the end Peter Eisenman takes his student interviewer to task for choosing a theme which, he says, "suggests a return to something less than architecture." Despite a catchall quality, the issue has rewarding articles: the Eisenman interview; "The Tall Building Urbanistically Reconsidered," by Stuart Cohen; "The American Continental Grid: Form and Meaning," by Steven W. Hurtt; and "Skidmore and Owings: The Early Days," by Ambrose Richardson.

Columbia, now the home of the Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture, takes a proprietary

interest in this country's architectural traditions. *Precis IV* opens with a faculty forum in which Alan Colquhoun, Kenneth Frampton, Mary McLeod, and Robert A. M. Stern discuss "Promising Directions in American Architecture." The discussion is inconclusive, perhaps intentionally so. The tone is intimate; the panelists' statements do not so much help to answer the questions of whether and how traditions can be appropriated and referred to, as they serve to tune us in to the continuing dialogue at the top of the world. Articles on aspects of tradition in American architecture follow, and the balance of the issue—about half—is devoted to work from the studios. The projects cover the range of interests of the school programs, from the design of urban housing in the single-room occupancy hotel to that of museums, to historic preservation and urban design.

Of all the articles devoted to history in *Modulus* (described by Dean Robertson as "indicative of an interest in the recovery of process and technique rather than in incident and detail"), only one, "Paul Cret and the Pan American Union Competition," by Elizabeth Grossman, has an American subject. The rest illuminate corners of European architectural history: for example, the interesting exchange of letters about the new University City of Rome, translated by Laura Neri and entitled "Arches and Columns, the Debate between Piacentini and Ojetti, 1933"; and the scholarly examination of the unraveling of the origins of Rome's Pantheon by William Loerke, "Georges Chédanne and the Pantheon: A Beaux-Arts Contribution to the History of Roman Architecture."

Modulus 16, subtitled *We Have an Urbanism Still*, appeared in 1984. Editor Robert Claiborne writes of "the magnificent history that began in earnest with Graeco-Roman civilization" and found its way to these shores through the efforts of "our most direct pathfinder between then and now," Thomas Jefferson. The rather disparate set of articles that follow is led off by a long, discursive statement from Jaquelin T. Robertson on American urbanism, or the lack of it, titled "In Search of an American Urban Order, Part I: The Nagasaki Syndrome." Two articles deal with Jefferson's ideas: "Roses for the Rotunda," by William Mullen, an interpretation and analysis of the design of the University of Virginia Rotunda and original campus, and "Excursus Americanus," by Michael Dennis, which discusses Jefferson's influence on two American contributions to urbanism, the American college campus and the small-town residential streetscape of the 19th century. Diane Ghirardo's article, "New Deal, New City," on the Depression communities established by New Deal agencies such as the Division of Subsistence Homesteads and the Resettlements Administration, extends the boundaries of architectural history as good scholarship should. On the other hand, Leon Krier's elaborate presentation of his reconstruc-

tion of Pliny's Laurentian villa, while graphically dazzling, seems more a gratuitous attack on contemporary archaeology. "The Boston Plan," by Fred Koetter and Susie Kim, presents that city as a text for urbanistic study devoted to ways of reconstituting the public structure of our fragmented cities. Kurt Forster's article, "Schinkel's Panoramic Planning of Central Berlin," shows how the great man addressed urbanistic issues in pre-cinemascope days. Finally, Carroll W. Westfall contributes thoughts on moral issues in urban preservation.

As mentioned above, issue two of *The Cornell Journal of Architecture* catalogs the work of Colin Rowe's Graduate Urban Design Studio from 1963-1982. The foreword by Leon Krier is followed by an assessment of the project by Rowe himself. Two other articles of interest are "The Street in the Twentieth Century" by Grahame Shane, and "The Figure/Grounds" by Wayne W. Cooper. Steven Hurtt introduces the studio projects with an article on the methods and theories of the studio, "Conjectures on Urban Form/Studio Projects." Covering as it does contextualism, Collision City, and Collage City, major architectural-urbanistic theories of the last decade, the issue is a valuable contribution to the field of education and practice.

Volume 1 of *The Princeton Journal, Thematic Studies in Architecture*, is titled *Ritual*, a subject keyed to the work and interests of faculty member Michael Graves. In the wake of what the editors perceive as the "proliferation of mute form," the architect desires to engage the participant on a primary level—once more into the breach. Since ritual form is distinguished by use, it appears that a study of ritual will assist a transformation of the old functional imperative and validate it in terms of the past. A large part of the issue is devoted to student projects which relate in varying degrees to ritual practices, beginning with a twelve-hour *esquisse* or sketch competition sponsored by the journal's editors, "An Alimentary Exercise in Ritual." Comments follow by the faculty jurors—Alan Colquhoun, Steven Harris, Alan Plattus, Michael Graves, and Judith Wolin. The article permits the reader to stand in the wings, as it were, and observe the tone of the school. Interspersed with other student work are articles by Fernando Montes, Bernard Tschumi, Michael Graves, James Fernandez, Robert Maxwell, Alan Plattus, Anthony Vidler, and Peter Carl which elaborate the theme and lift the issue out of its exposition context. An interview with Tadao Ando by Toshio Okumura is also good grist for the mill.

Neither *Perspecta 20* nor *Via 6* includes student work. As the oldest of the collegiate journals, *Perspecta* has the most status and probably the most readers. As mentioned above, it is indexed, which means that it is considered a serious, not

ephemeral, publication. To judge by the quotation on the introductory page, from Lionel Trilling's essay, "Sincerity and Authenticity," these are the concerns of the articles that follow. The 215 pages of criticism, analysis, and theory manage to sustain the lofty tone and the reader's interest. Much of the subject matter is predictable: the work of Carlo Scarpa, Mario Botta, Gunnar Asplund, Louis Kahn, and Le Corbusier. The last two each appear in two articles (making them doubly sincere?) while Japan has two candidates for authenticity, Kazuo Shinohara and Tadao Ando. Kenneth Frampton's article, "Prospects for a Critical Regionalism," not only narrows the definition, but displaces the concept of regionalism to a more rarified plane, which will doubtless provoke some useful discussion, if only one knew where to look for it.

"Architecture and Visual Perception" is the theme of *Via* 6. It is coherently, not coyly, presented in editor Alice Gray Read's introduction, and sustained through a variety of authoritative articles by Rudolph Arnheim, Wolfgang M. Zucker, Julian Hochberg, Anne Griswold Tyng, Gilbert Cass, Anatole Senkevitch, Jr., Hamilton Hazelhurst, and Gerald Allen and Mark Hewitt. The writings deal with the known aspects of perception and range from current concerns to those of the past, such as the Soviet architecture of the 1920s, the gardens of La Nostre, and the design of Biltmore by F. L. Olmsted and R. M. Hunt.

Volume 3 of *The Harvard Architecture Review*, Winter 1984, is titled "Autonomous Architecture." The issue takes its theme from an exhibition of the same name, subtitled "The Work of Eight Contemporary Architects," held at the Fogg Art Museum (December 1980 to January 1981). Participants were: Aldo Rossi, O M Ungers, Rodolfo Machado and Jorge Silvetti, Diane Agrest and Mario Gandelsonas, Mario Botta, and Peter Eisenman.

Although its concerns are kin to those expressed in volume 1, *Beyond the Modern Movement*, this issue is a more focused and balanced presentation of its subject. But beyond the explicit subject matter, the contents are a fascinating revelation of the effects of the anxiety of meaninglessness on architectural culture.

To begin with, autonomous architecture is not easy to define. The editors' conscientious attempts to clarify its nature do not escape the net of mystification, as in their statement that "Autonomous architecture exists as both a concrete reality and an abstraction." The essays on different conceptions or subthemes of autonomy in architecture begin with Mark Mack's "Other Architecture: Or, the Need for Serious Post-Modernism." Mack believes the central problem to be that architecture, through the fragmentation induced by specialization and experimentation, has become powerless in the struggle for a reasonable environment. Instead of acknowl-

edging that fragmentation is pervasive in our culture or that our predicament is existential and collective, Mack affirms the architect's moral responsibility to effect change. (Who said Modernism was dead?) Yet, the available means that the author chooses to explore, the use of familiar forms backed by the authority of history, seems hardly adequate for the task.

Two other articles illuminate the subject matter in less familiar ways. The first, "The Question of Autonomy in Architecture," by Liane Lefaivre and Alexander Tzonis, is in some ways a continuation of their article in volume 1, "The Narcissist Phase in Architecture." In their historical inquiry the authors find the inception of autonomy in architecture in Vitruvius. The subsequent development is traced, slowly at first, through Alberti and Serlio to Caramuel de Lobkowitz, whose theories form one focus of the essay. The authors then hurry on to the functionalists, lumping together unceremoniously Viollet-le-Duc, Gaudí, Horta, Aalto, and Scharoun. Then, gulping great drafts of time, they proceed, in the same paragraph, to the 1960s, where they resume the theme of narcissism from their earlier article. The discussion should be read in its admittedly brief entirety. At its core is the proposition that, historically, the concern for endowing form with autonomy recurs under certain conditions—namely, a weakening of the operation of the market. In times of economic instability, architects cast about for ways to make their work transcendent. The role of graphics in these periodic campaigns to restore charisma to architecture is one of the interesting aspects of this hastily concluded article.

A less cynical, more eschatological view of autonomy in architectural form is presented by Peter Eisenman in his article, "The Futility of Objects: Decomposition and the Processes of Difference." Eisenman begins with conciliatory statements about Classicism and Modernism. Both, he says, contain the idea of original perfection. Two constants maintain Classicism and Modernism as inherent parts of architecture: the capacity of meaning to inhere in form and the grounding of the processes of composition or transformation in the concept of type. Both constants depend on the validity of a linear process of history in which the past informs present and future possibilities. Yet both posit an "other" or negative of themselves which is outside of canonical history. As T. S. Eliot put it (in *Burnt Norton*), "If all time is eternally present/ then all time is unredeemable." In this time frame, the object has no ideal past and no future possibility; it is therefore ineffectual or futile. Similarly, the process of decomposition which suspends relationships rather than cementing them is anomalous to the method of Classical composition. Much of the article is devoted to demonstrations of decomposition and the analysis of buildings which refute the laws of Classical composition and type. These are the Palazzi Minelli and

Surian in Venice, the Fabbrica Fino in Bergamo, and Terragni's Giuliani Frigerio Apartment Block in Como. Eisenman concludes with the portentous statement: "The futile object and the process of decomposition are no longer arbitrary objects and anomalous processes, nor a mutation of classicism. In this new time they may have become, albeit accidentally, the destiny of architecture today." The catalogue for the exhibition concludes the issue.

After such heady concerns, it is refreshing to turn to *Cite*, the only quarterly reviewed this time. *Cite* was established to serve the Rice Design Alliance by expanding its forum for the consideration of the problems of creating a humane environment. Four issues have appeared since the first in August 1982; all focus on design concerns in or related to the Houston area. Development and preservation issues are balanced with thorough critiques of new projects and timely interviews. *Cite* clearly aims to become a must for those who want to know in depth what's going on *right now* in Greater Houston. This watchdog attitude does not mean that those outside Texas needn't bother. What happens in Houston has parallels across the country. Besides, it is inspiring to find a local publication that takes seriously its role of informing the public about the built environment. The backing of a strong local organization ensures a responsive readership with a voice in the community outside the academic citadel. More publications like *Cite* would help to bridge the moat.

(*This is the first in a series on design journals; future articles will include The Journal of Architectural Education, Places, and Landscape.*)

Cite, Rice Design Alliance, Rice University, P.O. Box 1892, Houston, Texas 77251, \$2.00.

The Cornell Journal of Architecture, Department of Architecture, Cornell University, distributed by Rizzoli, \$20.00.

The Harvard Architecture Review, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University, distributed by MIT, \$25.00.

Mass, School of Architecture and Planning, University of New Mexico, free upon request to School of Architecture and Planning, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131.

Modulus, The University of Virginia School of Architecture Review, School of Architecture, University of Virginia, distributed by Rizzoli, \$16.00.

Perspecta: The Yale Architectural Journal, School of Architecture, Yale University, distributed by MIT, \$25.00.

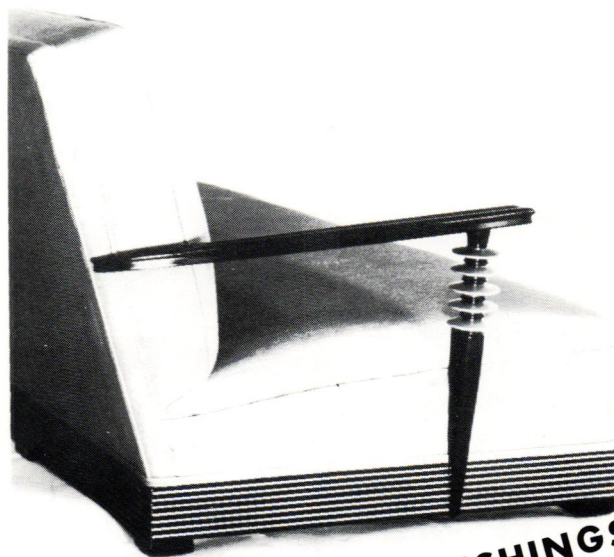
Precis, Graduate School of Architecture and Planning, Columbia University, distributed by Rizzoli, \$15.00.

The Princeton Journal, Thematic Studies in Architecture, School of Architecture, Princeton University, distributed by the Princeton Architectural Press, \$15.00.

Threshold, School of Architecture, University of Illinois at Chicago, distributed by Rizzoli, \$15.00.

Via, Graduate School of Fine Arts, University of Pennsylvania, distributed by MIT, \$25.00

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ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Robert L. Alexander teaches the history of art at the University of Iowa, and is the author of *The Architecture of Maximilian Godefroy* (Johns Hopkins, 1974).

Edward Allen has an architectural practice in South Natick, Massachusetts. His books include *Teach Yourself to Build* (MIT, 1979), *How Buildings Work* (Oxford, 1980), and the forthcoming textbook *Fundamentals of Building Construction: Materials and Methods*.

Navin Amin is an associate partner at Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, directing structural engineering for the San Francisco office.

Ellen Beasley is a preservation consultant based in Galveston, Texas. She is a 1983-1984 Loeb Fellow in the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Barry Bergdoll is completing his doctoral dissertation on the 19th-century architect, Léon Vaudoyer, at Columbia University.

François Bucher has taught at Yale, Princeton, and the State University of New York. He is the author of numerous books, most recently *Architector, Volume I* (Abaris Books, 1980)—an account of medieval architects' sketchbooks—and is presently preparing volume 2.

Bruce Burdick, an industrial designer in San Francisco, is currently designing furniture for Herman-Miller, and an exhibit for the Primate Center at the San Francisco Zoo.

Frances Butler teaches design at the University of California, Davis. She is also a partner in the printing and publishing firm, Poltroon Press.

Patrick Chassé is a student at the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University, and has a landscape design practice on Mt. Desert Island, Maine. He also leads study tours of gardens in Asia.

Zeynep Celik is teaching design at the University of California, Berkeley.

Al Costa has worked as a designer in the San Francisco Bay area, and was project designer for a community center in Jubail, Saudia Arabia. Currently, he is a visiting critic in the Department of Architecture at Cornell University.

Pierre-Alain Croset is an editor and assistant to the director of *Casabella* in Milan.

Dana Cuff teaches architecture and social issues in design at Rice University, Houston. Her published works focus upon communication and negotiation in architectural practice.

William J. R. Curtis has written many books and articles on architecture, most notably *Modern Architecture Since 1900* (Prentice-Hall, 1983), *Le Corbusier at Work, the Genesis of the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts* (Harvard, 1978), and *Fragments of Invention: The Sketchbooks of Le Corbusier* (Architectural History Foundation and MIT, 1981). He received the Founders Award of the Society of Architectural Historians for 1982.

Wim de Wit is curator of Architectural Collections at the Chicago Historical Society. He recently organized an exhibition at the Cooper-Hewitt, "The Amsterdam School: Dutch Expressionist Architecture, 1915-1930," and edited the attendant catalogue (Cooper-Hewitt and MIT, 1983).

Ed Dean has been a member of the Architecture Department at the University of California, Berkeley. He is currently a partner at Shelley Dean and Fuller, Architects, in Oakland, California.

Albert Fein teaches history and urban studies at the Brooklyn Center of Long Island University, where he serves as Chairperson of the Department of Urban Studies. Among other publications, he edited *Landscape into Cityscape: Frederick Law Olmsted's Plan*

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for a Greater New York City (Cornell, 1968) and wrote *Frederick Law Olmsted and the American Environmental Tradition* (Braziller, 1972).

Earl Fendelman is an associate professor of English at Lehman College, City University of New York, where he has taught a course on the iconography of the city.

Samuel Berkman Frank teaches history and design at the Rhode Island School of Design, is working on a dissertation at MIT on 19th-century American architectural writing, and occasionally practices architecture in Boston.

David Gebhard teaches architectural history at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and is author of *Santa Barbara: The Creation of a New Spain in America* (University Art Museum, Santa Barbara, 1982).

Lois Wagner Green, a Berkeley-based design journalist, has been managing editor and West Coast editor of *Interiors*, California editor of *Interior Design*, and a writer for a variety of publications, including *Architectural Digest*.

Alan Hess's book on the 1950s Coffee Shop Modern architecture of Los Angeles will be published next year by Chronicle Books.

Richard Ingersoll is a doctoral student in architectural history at the University of California, Berkeley, and an editor at *DBR*.

Max Jacobson is a practicing architect in the Berkeley firm of Jacobson-Silverstein-Winslow. He has taught architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, and was coauthor of *A Pattern Language* (Oxford, 1977). In April 1984, he presented the work of his firm as the Ekdahl Lecturer at Kansas State University.

Virginia Jansen teaches art history at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She has written numerous articles on medieval architecture and is currently working on a book about 13th-century English Gothic architecture and patronage during the reign of Henry III.

Spiro Kostof, who teaches architectural history at the University of California, Berkeley, has just completed a general history of architecture to be published by Oxford University Press next spring.

John Lund Kriken is a partner at Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, directing urban design and planning for the San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Houston offices.

Carol Herselle Krinsky is a professor of fine arts at New York University.

William L. MacDonald, a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, has taught at Smith College, Yale, Harvard, MIT, and the University of California, Berkeley. He is the author of numerous books and essays, including *The Pantheon: Design, Meaning,*

and Progeny (Harvard, 1976) and *The Architecture of the Roman Empire* (Yale, 1982). His book on Roman cities and towns will appear next year.

Clare Cooper Marcus teaches architecture and landscape architecture at the University of California, Berkeley. She is the author of *Easter Hill Village: Some Social Implications of Design* (The Free Press, 1975) and coauthor with Wendy Sarkissian of *Housing as if People Mattered: Site Design Guidelines for Low Rise-High Density Family Housing* (California, 1985).

Barbara Meacham is a partner in the San Francisco firm, Meacham-O'Brien, Landscape Architects.

Philip B. Meggs is chairman of the Department of Communication Arts and Design at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. He is author of *A History of Graphic Design* (Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1983).

Robin Middleton is coordinator of General Studies at the Architectural Association in London and librarian of the Faculty of Architecture and the History of Fine Arts at Cambridge University. He edited *The Beaux-Arts and Nineteenth-Century French Architecture* (MIT, 1982).

Jeffrey Milet heads the Division of Speech and Theater at Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, where he teaches set design, lighting and technical production. He is currently working with computer graphics in theater design.

Roger Montgomery teaches city planning and architecture at the University of California, Berkeley. A former practitioner, he was contributing editor of *Architectural Forum* from 1967 to 1974, and a member of the working editorial board of the social science journal *Trans-action*, 1966 to 1969.

Michael Mostoller is an architect practicing in New York and has taught at Rensselaer, Harvard, and Columbia.

Joan Ockman is an architectural editor and writer, with degrees in both literature and architecture.

Laurie Olin is a landscape architect and chairman of the Department of Landscape Architecture at Harvard University. He is a founding partner of Hanna/Olin Ltd., Environmental Planning and Design, in Philadelphia.

Thomas Stokes Page is Director of Marketing at RTKL Associates, Inc., an architectural and engineering firm, with offices in Baltimore, Maryland; Dallas, Texas; and Washington, D.C.

Judith Patt teaches in the Department of History in Art at the University of Victoria, British Columbia.

John Pile, an independent design consultant and writer, teaches design at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. He is the author of numerous articles and books including *Design, Purpose, Form and Meaning*

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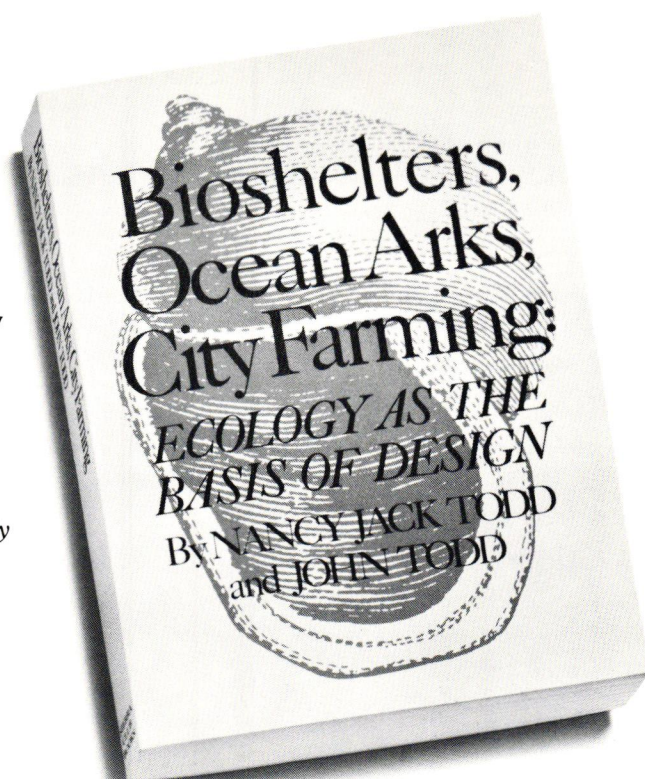
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(University of Massachusetts Press, 1979) and, with coauthors Friedmann and Wilson, the textbook *Interior Design* (Elsevier, 1982).

Edgar Powers, Jr., is an associate at Gresham, Smith and Partners in Nashville, Tennessee. He is the author of two manuals on systems drafting and, most recently, *UNIGRAFS—Unique Graphics for Architectural and Engineering Firms* (Gresham, Smith and Partners, 1981).

Andrew Rabeneck is director of the San Francisco office of The Ehrenkrantz Group, architects. He was a consulting editor with *Architectural Design*, London, from 1973 to 1977.

Mark Rakatansky curated and exhibited in "14 Proposals for Battery Hill 129," site-specific sculpture for an abandoned military bunker in the Marin Headlands, California, which was presented in conjunction with the Twelfth International Sculpture Conference 1982. He is an editor of *DBR*.

Hideo Sasaki is principal and chairman of the board emeritus of Sasaki Associates, Inc., in Berkeley. He was chairman of the Department of Landscape Architecture at Harvard University from 1958 to 1968.

Herwin Schaefer is professor emeritus of the Architecture Department at the University of California, Berkeley, where he taught the history of design from 1956 to 1979.

Thomas Schumacher teaches architecture at the University of Virginia at Charlottesville.

Tony Schuman teaches architecture at the New Jersey Institute

of Technology. He is on the national steering committee of the Planners Network.

Norris Kelly Smith is professor emeritus of art history at Washington University, and the author of *Frank Lloyd Wright: A Study in Architectural Content* (Prentice-Hall, 1976).

Michael Sorkin is a freelance writer and practicing architect based in New York. He also teaches design at Yale University.

Marc Treib teaches architecture at the University of California, Berkeley. A practicing graphic designer, he is coauthor of *A Guide to the Gardens of Kyoto* (Shufunotomo, 1980).

Nancy J. Troy teaches in the Department of Art History at Northwestern University. She is author of *The De Stijl Environment* (MIT, 1983).

Gene Waddell has been director of the South Carolina Historical Society since 1976 and was director of the Florence Museum from 1969 to 1975.

John Woodbridge is an architect and planning consultant in San Francisco.

Sally Woodbridge is the author of several guidebooks, and, recently, coauthor of *Architecture San Francisco* (101 Productions, 1983). She is also the West Coast correspondent for *Progressive Architecture*.

John Zukowsky is curator of Architecture at the Art Institute of Chicago.

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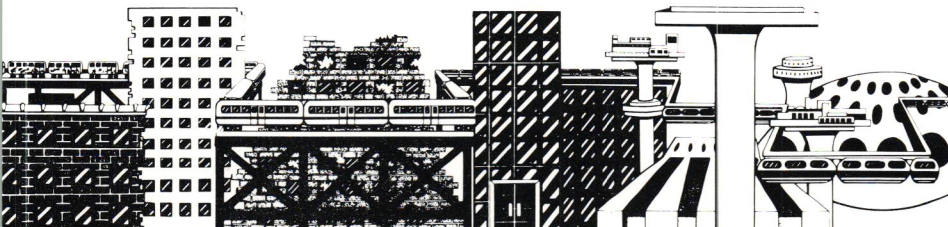
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