# ESIGN BOOK REVIEW

MANFREDO TAFURI: Fhere is no Criticism, only History

REYNER BANHAM: The Evolution of James Stirling

HERBERT MUSCHAMP: The Use of Critics

MICHAEL SORKIN: The Charlottesville Tapes

ANDREW\_RABENECK: There'll Always be an England

LARS LERUP: Frank Gehry, American Architect

ALAN J. PLATTUS: The Territory of the Architectural Historian

Spring 1986 \$4.50

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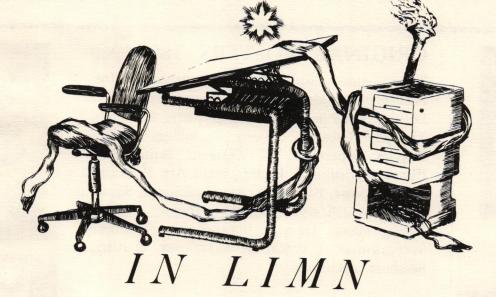
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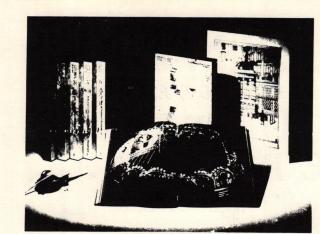
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## DESIGN BOOK REVIEW

#### SPRING 1986

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COVER: TEXTILE DESIGNS AFTER MEMPHIS.

#### THE UNBEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF BUILDING

With apologies to Milan Kundera, this issue of Design Book Review seems betrothed to his conceit of the "unbearable lightness of being." Heaviness in his scheme is the resignation to the eternal return, while lightness is the conviction that life is unrehearsed and unique: the one always pulls at the other. Architecture is constitutionally heavy and earthbound, yet we continue to appreciate it as a potential source of poetry, a shelter that will also offer transcendence. Our exchanges with Herbert Muschamp and Manfredo Tafuri, who should not be seen as sparring partners since they are boxing in separate rings, will inevitably be understood as a contrasted debate. Tafuri despairs of critics as "truffle dogs" for the new while Muschamp thinks truffles are pretty good. Yet each of them for widely different reasons sees criticism as a means of attaining lightness.

Criticism, as Reyner Banham reminds us in his insider's view of James Stirling, has become an important factor in design-the myth, image, and reputation, all sustained by criticism and photography, are vital to the production process, and allow poetic intimations to prevail over the leaky reality. Criticism provides even more shelter for Stirling's ex-associate Leon Krier, who, as Lars Lerup so deftly shows, has no more need for constructed reality but can survive in the paper utopias of architectural propaganda. If Krier in his manic advocacy of preindustrial production represents the heavy "return," Lerup's other subject, Frank Gehry, is light, though taken too lightly, Lerup maintains, by others. Gehry's disassembling method of placing boxes within boxes and houses within houses is indicative of the self-consciousness arrived at through criticism. This subjective design method is also analyzed by Laurie Haycock when she considers the furniture of Memphis and "new design"; designed objects have rejected the

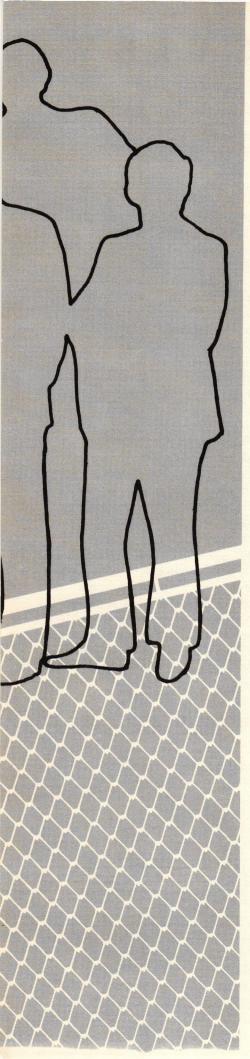
universal project in favor of being fickle, and, like foreign films, need subtitles, but unfortunately are rather rude in their quest for levity.

Tafuri points to nostalgia as the heaviest aspect of contemporary design, one that seeks to restore a past that never was. This anxiety-ridden search for security is recapitulated by Andrew Rabeneck in his survey of the conservative trend toward Englishness in interiors; and touched on by Camille Wells in her perception of the vicarious pleasure of possession inherent in the coffee-table genre. While Muschamp argues that the critic serves as a catalyst to creativity, Tafuri insists that his solitary role is to create awareness through history. History as he sees it is not about objects but about people, which is indeed the problem addressed by Alan Plattus in his critique of Spiro Kostof's ground-breaking history, one which tries to grasp the totality of the environment rather than its prominent monuments. Finally Michael Sorkin has tried to banish the heaviness of the return to oldboyism through his dyspeptic verses, some of the language of which passed the censors in the interest of poetic license.

**Richard Ingersoll** 

#### CORRECTION

Dana Cuff was the author of the review of Architects and Firms in DBR 8 ("The Trouble with the World's Second Oldest Profession"). We apologize for inadvertently dropping her by-line.



#### **Special Feature: The Place of Criticism**

Manfredo Tafuri declares that there is no criticism, only history; Herbert Muschamp describes the necessity of critics, and Richard Ingersoll modestly offers a mandate for architectural critics.

John	Beach:	In	Memoriam
0			THE CARLOR ROUTER

#### The Territory of the Architectural Historian 24

Two new books on architectural history attempt radical rearrangements of our ideas. Reviewed by Alan J. Plattus.

Military	Architecture
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A neglected field, traditionally left to old soldiers, now addressed by Martin H. Brice's *Stronghold* and Jonathan Coad's *Historic Architecture of the Royal Navy*. Reviewed by Horst de la Croix.

#### The Epiphany of Failed Avant-Gardes

The evolution of James Stirling, "from allegedly semi-literate provincial tough guy to erudite superstar of international architecture." Reviewed by Reyner Banham.

#### The Three PPP (A Parody)

What they said on The Charlottesville Tapes. Verse by Michael Sorkin.

#### Frank Gehry, American Architect

Arnell and Bickford try to locate Frank Gehry in the canon of American art-architects. Reviewed by Lars Lerup.

#### There'll Always be an England

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Four new books on the quintessential English look in interiors cast light on an old inferiority complex. Reviewed by Andrew Rabeneck.

#### **Commercial Paper**

Why posters evolved from untidy narratives of human exchange to today's carefully composed abstractions. Three new books reviewed by Frances Butler. 8

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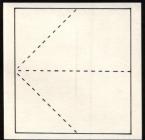
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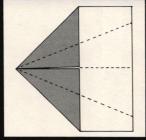
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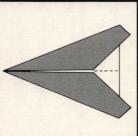
An optional third week, 24-31 August, continues to the classical beauty of Leningrad and then to Moscow's monumental civic landscape. Historic meetings with Soviet designers are planned to provide the basis of ongoing relationships and new opportunities for American and Soviet creative colleagues.

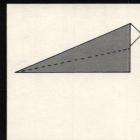
For complete details, contact Travel By Design, 2260 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94114, telephone 415-864-6604. Or to request information sent by mail call toll-free at 800-428-7824, Ext. 61 in California and nationwide 800-428-7825, Ext. 61. Registration deadline is June 25.

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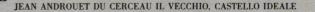




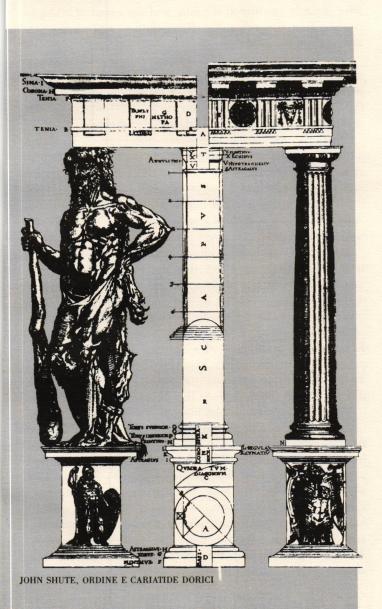


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# There is no criticism,



# only history MANFREDO TAFURI



Manfredo Tafuri, born in Rome, 1935, is the director of the Institute of Architectural History at the University of Venice. He is a prolific author on a wide variety of subjects ranging from 16th-century Venice (L'armonia e i conflitti, coauthored with Antonio Foscari, Turin, 1983, reviewed in DBR 5) to more alien topics such as The American City (coauthored with Giorgio Ciucci and Francesco Dal Co, 1983, reviewed in DBR 4). Each of his works serves as a platform for questioning the methods of architectural history, which, as he so emphatically states below, is not to be distinguished from criticism. In Theories and History of Architecture (1968, translated 1980) he identified a major problem of "operative criticism," endemic to architects who write about architecture. His suggestion to counteract this tendency to impose contemporary standards on the past was to shift the discourse away from the protagonists and individual monuments and consider architecture as an institution. His most widely read book in America, Architecture and Utopia (1969, translated 1976), advances this position, proposing an ideological analysis of architecture. His disconcerting message for those who had hopes of a "progressive" architecture was that there can be no class architecture with which to revolutionize society, but only a class analysis of architecture. In his most recent theoretical work, La sfera e il labirinto (1980, translation to appear in 1986), he has outlined a method of history called the progetto storico. This historical project, which is indebted to Michel Foucault's "archaeologies of knowledge" and Carlo Ginzburg's "micro-histories," seeks to study the "totality" of a work, disassembling it in terms of iconology, political economy, philosophy, science, and folklore. His goal is to penetrate the language of architecture through non-linguistic means. At the core he still finds the problem of "the historic role of ideology." The job of the Tafurian critic-historian is to

"reconstruct lucidly the course followed by intellectual labor through modern history and in so doing to recognize the contingent tasks that call for a new organization of labor."

In November, 1985, we interviewed Professor Tafuri on the subject of criticism:

There is no such thing as criticism, there is only history. What usually is passed off as criticism, the things you find in architecture magazines, is produced by architects, who frankly are bad historians. As for your concern for what should be the subject of criticism, let me propose that history is not about objects, but instead is about men, about human civilization. What should interest the historian are the cycles of architectural activity and the problem of how a work of architecture fits in its own time. To do otherwise is to impose one's own way of seeing on architectural history.

What is essential to understanding architecture is the mentality, the mental structure of any given period. The historian's task is to recreate the intellectual context of a work. Take for instance a sanctuary dedicated to the cult of the Madonna, built sometime in the Renaissance. What amazes us is how consistently these buildings have a central plan and usually an octagonal shape. The form cannot be explained without a knowledge of the religious attitudes of the period and a familiarity with the inheritance from antiquity-a reproposal of the temple form devoted to female divinities. Or take the case of Pope Alexander VII, whose interest in Gothic architecture at the cathedral of Siena [mid-seventeenth century] compared to his patronage of Bernini in Rome can only be explained through a knowledge of the Sienese environment and traditions. The historian must evaluate all the elements that surround a work, all of its margins of involvement; only then can he start to discover the margins of freedom, or creativity, that were possible for either the architect or the sponsor.

The problem is the same for comprehending current work. You ask how the historian might gain the distance from a new work to apply historical methods. Distance is fundamental to history; the historian examining current work must create artificial distance. This cannot be done without a profound knowledge of other times-through the differences we can better understand the present. I'll give you a simple example: you can tell me with precision the day and year of your birth, and probably the hour. A man of the 16th century would only be able to tell you that he was born about 53 years ago. There is a fundamental difference in the conception of time in our own era: we have the products of mass media that give us instantaneous access to all the information surrounding our lives. Four centuries ago it took a month to learn of the outcome of a battle. An artist in the 15th century had a completely different reference to space-time; every time he moved to a new city (which was very rarely) he would make out his

will. In earlier centuries time was not *calculated* but was considered a gift from God. Knowledge was also considered to be God-given and thus teachers in the Middle Ages could not be paid; only later was their payment justified as a compensation for time. These factors belong to the mental web of another era. The way for us to gain distance from our own times, and thus perspective, is to confront its differences from the past.

One of the greatest problems of our own times is dealing with the uncontrollable acceleration of time, a process that began with 19th-century industrializations; it keeps continually disposing of things in expectation of the future, of the next thing. All avant-garde movements were in fact based on the continual destruction of preceding works in order to go on to something new. Implicit in this is the murder of the future. The program of the "modern" artist was always to *anticipate* the next thing. It's just like when you see a "coming attraction" ad for a film, essentially you have already consumed the film and the event of going to see the film is predictably disappointing and makes you anxious for something new.

This anxiety for the future represents a secularization of the Book of the Apocalypse—things only have meaning in relation to the eschatology of their final goal. This is the basic parameter. This continual destruction of the present contributes to the nihilism of our times.

What you would call an "architectural critic" serves as a truffle dog looking for the new to get rid of the old. Scully is a good example, when he first discovers Louis Kahn and then dumps him to go on to Venturi. For this sort of critic, truly profound work, such as that of Mies, remains "unread" because it does not fit into the scheme of continual destruction.

As to how to select buildings that are worthy of history, it is the *problem* and not the *object* that concerns the historian. The works selected are irrelevant on their own and only have meaning in the way they relate to the problem. If you look back to the fifties you'd see that two of the most published architects were Oscar Niemeyer and Kenzo Tange, architects who have not enjoyed continued prominence in successive histories. They were swept up in the news in an ephemeral notoriety, but this exposure did not ensure them a place in history.

The historian has to abandon his prejudices about the quality of a work in order to deal with the problem behind it. The work of Eisenman and Hejduk was much more interesting ten years ago than it is today because it showed a curious problem of Americans looking to Europe, and what they chose to look at was an "Americanized" Europe—Eisenman's Terragni is an architecture without human history. Using the theoretical precepts of Chomsky and Lévi-Strauss (rather than the more characteristic American pragmatism), they succeeded in emptying their historic sources of the human subject. As to the problem of architecture, it is more interesting to note cycles—series of things—rather than individual works of architects. The historic cycle tells us more than stylistic taxonomies. In the U.S., for instance, the attitudes toward public housing that emerged during the Progressive era under Theodore Roosevelt were regenerated during the New Deal and present a significant cycle for the historian to analyze.

The greatest confusion in the "criticism" of architecture is in fact due to the magazines attached to the profession: architects should do architecture and historians should do history. Can you imagine what would happen if I built a house? Or do you think that Reagan took a copy of Machiavelli (or even something more contemporary like Schlesinger) to Geneva-impossible, he just acts, and this is also what the architect should do. The study of history has indirect ways of influencing action. If an architect needs to read to understand where he is, he is without a doubt a bad architect! I frankly don't see the importance of pushing theory into practice; instead, to me, it is the conflict of things that is important, that is productive. I don't see it as being prophetic, but what I was saying fifteen years ago in Architecture and Utopia has become a fairly standard analysis: there are no more utopias, the architecture of commitment, which tried to engage us politically and socially, is finished, and what is left to pursue is empty architecture. Thus an architect today is forced to either be great or be a nonentity. I really don't see this as the "failure of Modern architecture"; we must look instead at what an architect could do when certain things were not possible, and what he could do when they were possible. This is why I insist on the late work of Le Corbusier, which had no longer any message to impose on humanity. And as I have been trying to make clear in talking about historical context: no one can determine the future.

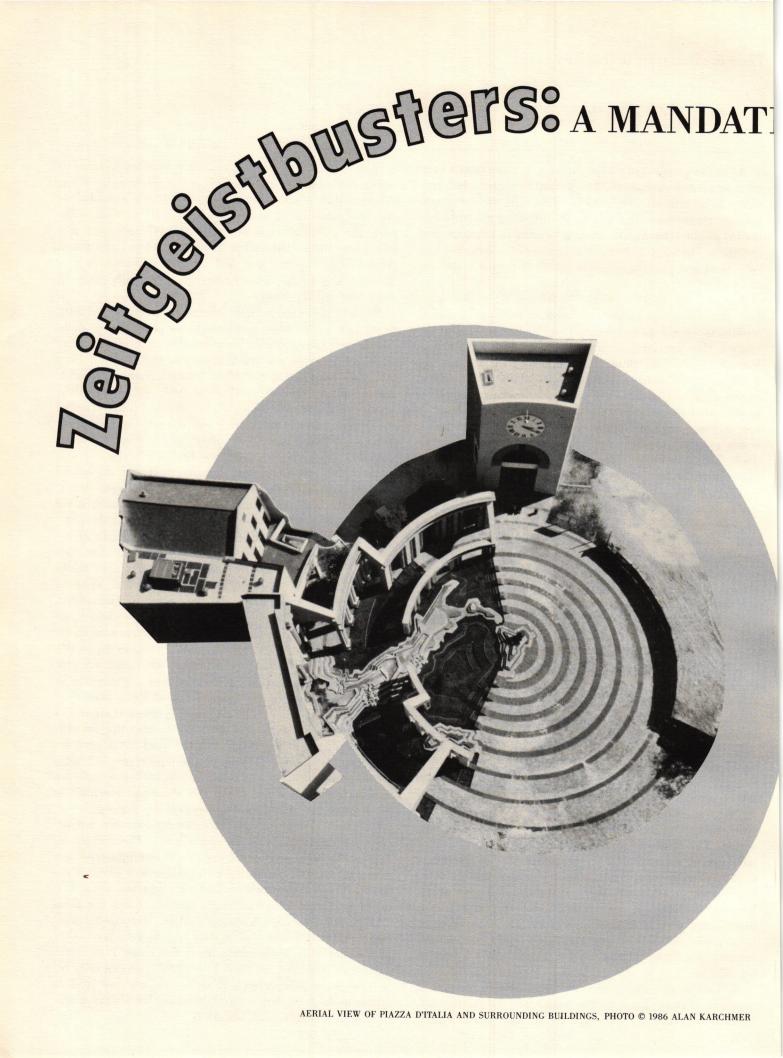
Until recently history had been conceived of as Universal History, which had a finite sequence from beginning to end. There was always a goal to history, inherited from millenarian thought, and this remained with historians as they moved from hermeneutic history based on the interpretation of sacred texts to a history based on human action. The desire to understand life according to a final outcome necessarily led to a causal way of thinking, evident even in someone as modern as Benedetto Croce, who considered history as the history of freedom. If we look at it, however, as the continual exposure to the unexpected instead of seeking causes, we get a different history, one that presents concatenations rather than causes. Instead of a linear history, we get a history with a hole in the middle.

To live in the world of today is to live in a state of constant anxiety. Look at the minor architects, the unfamous ones who a decade ago would have been content putting up curtain-walled boxes. They now feel obliged to inject symbolism into their work: a pseudo-temple on top and an Italian piazza below—thanks to Jencks's and Portoghesi's "recovery of history." All of this is being done from the point of view of publicity and exercised just like advertising. History has been reduced to fashion and is understood in the way Walt Disney understands it— Venturi, who thinks he is being ironic, actually ends up more like Mickey Mouse.

But let's step outside these judgments on matters of taste to examine the problem underneath, the sense of insecurity so common in our world. Gone are the certitudes. Just as a child discovers the truth about Santa Claus, we find ourselves confronting the great "truths" about the world, and uncertainty prevails. Phillipe Ariès in his excellent history of death (The Hour of Our Death, 1982, reviewed in DBR 5) shows the change in attitude toward death during the late Middle Ages after the invention of Purgatory. The certainty of leaving one life for a better one was suddenly thrown into crisis, and from that time on we can observe humanity's hopeless struggle to eliminate death. Along with this uncertainty comes a nostalgic search for a center, thus in our times we see the return of the pope in Italy and the triumph of Reagan in America. In architecture, we might see Graves like Vignola in the 16th century, not having the talent or the courage to really design. But even the work of a good architect, such as Stirling, shows this problem of the search for the center.

The mass of architects shouldn't worry, they should just do architecture. If we take two theorists who are currently enjoying a revival, Loos and Tessenow, the latter especially advised never to insist on invention but rather on production. One should refine a few elements to perfection as a good craftsman. In our times, Richard Meier does this, he is a good craftsman. The avant-garde oriented architects are infused with some sort of mysticism awaiting an ultimate epiphany, a final word—but the word already exists, they just are unable to hear it. Contemporary architects are heirs to an enormous effort of liberation, yet it often appears that they would prefer that the liberation had not yet occurred so that they might repeat the process.

The time of connections (collegamenti) is over. Knowledge seen as analogy is no longer valid. The correspondences that were considered capable of linking microcosm to macrocosm (i.e., treating the headache as a storm in the head), this system of concordia-discors gave way because it could no longer alleviate man's anxiety. Even our great 19th-century minds—Nietzsche, Marx, Freud—retained some millenial thinking when they proposed the possibility of a better time by bringing us to the limits of our own existence. Building on their knowledge, we can only try to live more completely—if we really are resolved to eliminate anxiety, then we would realize that history serves to dispell nostalgia, not inspire it.



## FOR ARCHITECTURAL CRITICS

By Richard Ingersoll



PIAZZA D'ITALIA, PHOTO © 1986 ALAN KARCHMER

The Critical Edge: Controversy in Recent American Architecture, Tod A. Marder, editor, MIT, 1985, 200 pp., illus., \$25.00.

On the Rise: Architecture in a Postmodern Age, Paul Goldberger, Penguin, 1985, 340 pp., illus., \$8.95 pb.

Would architecture survive without critics? There are those who believe that they could do quite well without them, while others argue that architectural critics have not even begun to be critical. Take for instance a line from the invitation to the crypto-Masonic conference of architects that resulted in The Charlottesville Tapes: "Architecture, at present, is being driven by historians, critics, and journalists who not only tell architects what they have done but more importantly they counsel architects on what they should do." This slightly paranoid analysis might be tempered with the claims of powerlessness offered by Paul Goldberger, the architectural critic for the New York Times, who confesses that he has "no direct and dramatic power." A third opinion, from Martin Filler, an editor of House and Garden, argues that critics lack influence because they are simply not good critics.

Two recent books provide a good sampling of the scope of conventional architectural criticism in America today. The first, *The Critical Edge*, edited by Tod Marder, is a review of the critical reactions to twelve of the most "controversial" buildings of the last fifteen years. The other, *On the Rise*, is a collection of Paul Goldberger's reviews for the New York Times, written during the last ten years. It displays the range of investigation and interpretation in the work of a single critic. Neither book is exciting reading, but they nonetheless cover essential content and are signposts of trends in architecture and its criticism.

While architectural publishing has noticeably increased in recent years, it is not clear whether the discourse has significantly improved. A symposium on criticism held at Rice in 1984 reiterated the common complaints that architectural criticism is not critical, that it does not have clearly defined criteria, nor is its definition of architecture certain. The decision at Parsons School of Design to open a program in architectural criticism, organized by Herbert Muschamp, is one step toward establishing a more rigorous discipline-it also indicates the expanding market for architectural writers.

Architectural criticism differs from that of the other arts because its subject is so deeply ensconced in social processes. Martin Filler, in his Critical Edge essay, attempts to explain why such criticism is so ineffectual in this country. He first outlines the tradition (or as he explains, "lack of"), focusing on the figure of Lewis Mumford, who for thirty years was a singularly critical conscience in architecture and urbanism, using the New Yorker as his platform. His brand of socially responsible criticism is traced back to Montgomery Schuyler, and projected forward to Ada Louise Huxtable, who as the first regular architectural critic for the New York Times, appointed in

1963, attempted to continue Mumford's approach. Filler notes that any serious criticism in America, however, does not originate in editorial policy but instead depends on the initiative of the critic. Architecture, although it probably affects people's lives more directly than the other arts, is not part of the general curriculum. Denouncing the vacuity of the architectural press, he blames the critical attrition on both lack of preparation and lack of competition-the three major architecture magazines have a guaranteed public of 55,000 architects and designers, and need only to please their advertisers. Architecture in the professional magazines is presented as a fait accompli; their policies do not encourage investigation into the program, client, details. context, or execution of the buildings. Instead, they tend to publish what amount to little more than press releases, accompanied by glamorous photographs. This blissfully affirmative version of the field is perhaps most useful to future historians, who will be trying to decide on the nature of our zeitgeist, but does not do much for contemporaries who are striving for awareness.

Filler also points out the consequences of contradicting the affirmative editorial policies that prevail. The case of John Pastier, fired from the Los Angeles Times for making critiques that went counter to his employer's investments, or that of Carter B. Horsley, demoted at the New York Times for his real estate exposés, remind us of how expendable a critic's opinion can be. The only areas where Filler finds there is lately some critical impact are historic preservation. ecology, and zoning. In spite of this, the prevailing attitude is "acceptance rather than questioning."

By concluding his generally insightful piece with the suggestion that critics should strive for "moral teaching," he unfortunately opens a door that will probably slam in his face. Historians, both left and right, find



THE CHRYSLER BUILDING, STEINBERG, 1966

morality a problematic basis for argument. David Watkin, in Morality and Architecture (1979), has made a study of the historicist fallacy of pro-Modernist historians (in particular Giedion and Pevsner), who out of a sense of moral conviction directed historical data to appear as the logical progenitors of the architecture that most concurred with their own ideologies. Manfredo Tafuri, in History and Theory (1968), makes nearly the same observation using a different terminology. He defines the historian's ideology-bound role as "operative criticism," which "plans history by projecting it towards the future." Both sides propose a more objective means for selecting information in order to take the emphasis from moral criteria.

This does not mean that critics should stop being moralists, but only that their morals be kept separate from their methodologies. It seems obvious that criticism has a duty to present the details of a project as completely and objectively as possible so that the quality of the architecture

can be judged. If we take the use of photography, however, we find that the potentially most objective tool of description is actually the most mystifying. Architecture is presented as a photogenic utopia in which the forces of nature and society are not allowed fair representation. A project is reduced to a "canonical" (as Tod Marder calls it) cliché. If the conventions of verbal and visual presentation could be critically transformed to accurately reconstruct the particulars. the next step would be to polemicize the intrinsic values of a work-to uncover the way it relates to the structures of knowledge and power. Every building belongs to expressive and technical systems and fits into a larger strategy for the environment. In theorizing about the deeper reasons behind style and form, the critic becomes a zeitgeistbuster, stimulating a type of awareness that surpasses mere style-consciousness.

The work of architectural critics today as displayed in the Critical Edge seems more of a veiling than an unveiling of the Spirit of the Age. The book serves as a catalogue for an exhibit shown already at Rutgers and Newport Beach, and to be shown in the future at the University of North Carolina; Berkeley, California, and Kansas City, Missouri. The exhibit is an unsuccessful attempt to put criticism on display, and does little more than add to the media exposure of already famous projects. The visual materials only rarely illustrate the issues of the controversies, the written panels give too much to read but not enough to judge with, and the only interesting items are the five or six presentation models. The photographs are all of the "canonical" sort that the organizers supposedly find inadequate. One thing that might have made the show more animated would have been headphones with tapes of the contrasting opinions for each project.

Neither the exhibit nor the catalogue challenge the current practice of architectural criticism, but the catalogue is quite revealing of its limits. The project grew out of Marder's graduate seminar at Rutgers, and thus the papers have a slightly musty feel to them. The writing is, however, surprisingly clear and even for all twelve papers, and the breadth of content is obliging to the program, design history, and critical response to each project. As with the exhibit, the visual materials are not used in a critical or investigative way (and are in fact redundant), but the bibliographic effort will be a useful resource for the historians of the architecture of the post-Vietnam era.

Reviewing the criticism of the twelve projects makes it clear that no definite criteria exist for judging architecture; if anything criticism seems issueoriented, each project setting its own terms for evaluation. For instance, the issue surrounding Richard Meier's Bronx Development Center, designed as a mental health facility, is generally reduced to the suitability of the form to function. Ultimately the critique reverts to those responsible for the program, since it is found to be good architecture, but not appropriate for the users. This social criterion, however, is not extended to the criticism of the AT&T Building, the whitecollar drones of which are not given the same compassion as retarded children. The working environment is never an issue in the discussion of skyscrapers, and, while the building's public spaces are an issue, the major issue is the style and the personality of the architect. The Vietnam Veteran's Memorial is a case of a project universally liked by the critics but polemicized by the constituents who felt excluded from the artistic ideas. The issue surrounding Best's Indeterminate Wall by SITE was whether or not it qualified as architecture.

Each of the other projects—the Portland Building, Eisenman's House VI, the East Wing of the National Gallery, Albany Plaza, Piazza d'Italia, and the Getty Museum—likewise had its own terrain of controversy. In almost every case the issues have been situated far beyond the control of the architect. Only in a small-scale project such as Frank Gehry's house, where the details are so serendipitous, was the issue of what an architect does (design with materials, joinery, details) made polemical. It may come as no surprise that the major issues of mainstream criticism are program and style, but behind the "controversies" is the message that clients and the public are more responsible for the design process than architects.

Thus the tendency of criticism that goes beyond description is to address and mobilize the consumer, and the inadequacy of specialized arenas for criticism only encourages the flight of the discourse from the architect. From one end of the bestseller list the Tom Wolfes are speculating on the antiintellectual bias of consumers, while at the other end the Charles Jenckses are preparing glib taxonomies to assist a trumped-up architectural identity crisis. When all else fails a critic will resort to advocacy, foregoing issues of design, to gratify the public's concern for comfort and safety.

This same sense of fluctuating issues, pandering, and uncritical affirmations of the profession can all be found in Paul Goldberger's On the *Rise.* It seems unfair that he is getting paid twice for the same lackluster articles, and picking up a Pulitzer Prize as well, but this success is all the more reason to find a lesson in his work. He has made a career out of playing it safe, and by hedging and avoiding issues has become that most cherished media anomaly: a pundit without an opinion. Michael Sorkin, in the Village Voice, has regularly and openly accused him of being a stooge for P. J. and holding totally contradictory positions on major projects such as the Whitney, the Times Square Redevelopment, and the Trump Tower. Goldberger would try to absorb this in the safety of his self-proclaimed "pluralism." He can have his opinions about overcrowding and still focus on the style of skyscrapers without ever acknowledging density. Like the leaders of our age he is good at critical static, making sensible but directionless statements such as:

even the mediocre building takes on a certain acceptability over time not because it is good, but because it becomes part of an established city, part of the world we become used to and expect to see. It becomes a source of stability.

His contribution to the critical lexicon includes "compositionalism," to explain the use of historical elements in the AT&T Building—a term that will doubtlessly survive to muffle clarity. He occasionally asks good questions: in reference to Piazza d'Italia: "What differentiates something like this from the cheap classical columns in front of a place like Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas?" But rather than leave it as a reasonable rhetorical question, he timidly suggests artistic "intent" as an answer. His greatest strength, not much exhibited in the book, is his attention to the architectural patrimony of New York City and the surrounding areas. The focus on the early work of Emery Roth and on Lower East Side synagogues is a service more suited to his skills. One could hardly call him a preservationist, however, considering his frequent waffling on Times Square and other issues. One of his statements (taken out of context) perhaps best summarizes his own work and the state of architectural criticism:

For now, in all fields of culture as well as architecture, the temper is romantic and conservative; form is what seems to matter most, not content, whereas a decade ago content seemed to be everything. It is a mood that is at best introspective and at worst self-indulgent.

But rather than confront this intimation of the zeitgeist he has acquiesced, leaving the task to others.

# THE NECESSITY OF

Herbert Muschamp, 36, is director of the nation's first degree program in architecture and design criticism, which will begin admitting students this fall under the joint auspices of the New School for Social Research and Parsons School of Design. Muschamp was educated at the University of Pennsylvania, Parsons, and the Architectural Association. He is the author of File Under Architecture (1974), Man About Town (1983), Act II (1985), and the forthcoming Narrative Architecture (1986), and was formerly senior editor of Express. His articles have appeared in Skyline, House & Garden, Express, Art & Antiques, Industrial Design, Casa Vogue and other publications. He currently writes a monthly column on architecture for Artforum and is working on a history of Battery Park City.

DBR: The critic is a peculiar sort of cultural parasite who attempts to analyze the creative output of others. Parsons has recently opened a program in architectural criticism under your tutelage, and so it is clear that you think it is an itch worth scratching. Let's discuss the territory of the architectural critic. In the U.S. there are two major provinces: the popular press (e.g., Paul Goldberger in the New York Times) and the professional press (e.g., PA, Architectural Record, and Architecture). A third area might be called "philosophically inclined" publications such as Perspecta or Oppositions, but this is a fairly limited area. Where do you see the possibilities for the critic to dig deeper, and what structures might generate more valid criticism?

HM: It's hard to define "the territory of the architecture critic" without a bit of historical background. Art criticism as such did not become a significant cultural force until the 18th-century Enlightenment; it is integral to the emerging idea of a democratic culture, to the project of realizing a culture whose values are shaped by individuals, not merely by centralized social institutions. Previously, we had art theory, in which the efforts to locate more or less fixed, absolute, universal, or eternal artistic principles tended to reflect and support the authority of social institutions. "Criticism"—reflections on art by those who do not necessarily practice it—reflects and supports the belief



INDETERMINATE FAÇADE DESIGNED BY SITE, HOUSTON

# CRITICS A DIALOGUE WITH HERBERT MUSCHAMP

that the independent mind possesses a power to shape cultural values equal to the power of church or state. Therefore the territory of the architecture critic is fundamentally the environment of democratic culture; criticism does not merely inhabit this environment passively, it serves to renew and nourish it.

We've now arrived at this paradoxical situation in which "the media" have become, collectively, the authoritarian institution of contemporary culture; so the critic's cultural position becomes exceedingly complex since he is a part of that institution. We are all-artists, architects, writers—in a sense parasites feeding off this monstrous power the media exercise over our perceptions of ourselves and our environment. "Find your world in the New York Times," the ads say; but what if you don't? We're increasingly oriented toward the production of information as a commodity, and in the past ten years an increasing amount of this commodity comes with the label "architecture and design" attached to it: professional publications, exhibitions and exhibition catalogues, newspaper criticism, university magazines, books, lectures and conferences, home decorating magazines, television specials. Many people have the sense that this has been catastrophic. Some feel the effort must be made to tame the beast; a lot of the concern currently voiced about the state of architectural criticism really represents an attempt to get some kind of hold on the media. Others feel it's best just to ignore it, that it's dangerous or in some way ignoble for architects to give it any thought whatever. Critics don't have that luxury, however; we are part of it as a matter of course, and in a sense the most vulnerable part. There is not a great deal of support for critical thinking in the media, and a certain amount of pressure-from advertisers, from architects, from readers who complain about the opacity of critical writing-to restrain it.

When we began planning our graduate program in criticism two years ago, we faced a certain amount of pressure to call it a "journalism" rather than a "criticism" program; we do aim to equip writers with journalistic as well as critical skills. But beyond this, we hope to create a support system for critical activity. I believe that even critics who are out there now will benefit from the emphasis we intend to place on exchange among writers, architects and their audiences outside the existing editorial structures. One way to empower critics to "dig deeper" is to facilitate communication between them; this actually did happen for a period of time at the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies. Peter Eisenman seemed to have recognized that architects should confront the media, just as Gropius recognized that they should confront industrial technology.

You mention the existing outlets. I suspect that powerful criticism can create its own audience over a period of time. I read art and literary criticism even though I don't often visit galleries or read fiction; I'm just part of a free-floating audience that benefits from watching the play of a lively mind. I presume some of our graduates will want to work within the existing outlets; some will want to try setting up their own publications; some will freelance or take to the lecture circuit; some will make hideously overqualified PR reps for designers. I hope we can contribute to a climate in which the critic will be appreciated as a catalyst and torchbearer, not dismissed as a parasite. By the way, do you think Cezanne was a parasite of the farmer who grew the apples he painted?

DBR: You are obviously directly concerned with the preparation of the architectural critic. Many critics migrate from art history and have a generally passive, formalistic approach to the phenomena. Others are architects, who need to be partisan and, among other things, have a notoriously bad record as writers. Do architects make good critics? What do you think is the proper background for understanding architecture?

HM: Our curriculum will draw on the strengths of the two institutions that are jointly administering the program. The Graduate Faculty of the New School has a high degree of involvement with critical theory, with the sociology of art and the cultural conflicts provoked by industrial technology, the market economy and modern urbanization. Since 1983, I've taught a course on criticism which emphasizes the relationship between architecture and social power and the role of the critic in empowering the architect toward a greater degree of artistic autonomy. All art tends to reflect social power, but the ties between architecture and established social institutions have been particularly close-binding, and I think critics should be familiar with this aspect of history, since criticism has played an active role in it for 200 years.

Our situation in a design school will offer us some advantages over training programs in art history. I find that architectural criticism tends to focus too much on the effects and not enough on the causes of architecture-I mean the causes architects themselves are making, not just the economic or sociological factors that obviously influence their work. We want students to experience architecture as a dialectical process of thinking, making and acting, not just as a series of completed products. Critics and designers are both involved in the process of extending lines between themselves and their environments; we want critics to be more aware of this commonality. There will be considerable involvement of young architects currently on the faculty at Parsons, in courses ranging from engineering to visual analysis. We're going to place a good deal of emphasis on studio visits to architects who are just starting out, and there will be a lot of discussion on the way architects are currently being educated. There will be some exposure to media and

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communications theory; Doug Davis is encouraging us to introduce electronic media production, which we'd certainly like to do if we get the funding for it, although I personally think that many critics thrive on the kind of "traveling light" philosophy made possible by freedom from heavy technical equipment. We want some exposure to the psychology of perception, both to enhance the critic's interpretive skills and also because of the role critics play in the perception-shaping function of the media.

Students with little prior training in the history of architecture will be "strongly encouraged," as they say, to take electives in this area; our literature of criticism and visual analysis courses will be historically grounded. The thrust of the first term will be chiefly toward history and theory, that of the second toward the idea of the contemporary. The top priority in each course is writing and rewriting; we will use a workshop format for the main, "criticism" course.

Yes, there has been a lot of brilliant criticism by architects, and even bad writing by architects has a documentary value. Your question raises a problem, however, because many architects seem to feel that only they can write about architecture in an informed way. I was at a conference two weeks ago where strong objections were raised to the amount of criticism written by "non-architects." To me this is as absurd as to object that there are so many buildings designed by non-critics. The advantages of a critic's knowing about such factors as engineering, zoning laws, and client demands are obvious, and we will have two instructors to advise in the methodologies of research in these areas. But we also hope that being in a design school will enable us to lessen the mystique professions tend to construct around themselves. In art, there is a long tradition of the critic who educates himself in public, so to speak; in the 18th century, these writers were referred to, affectionately, as the "ignorarts"; their perspective was valued precisely because it was innocent of professional concerns.

Writing is itself an exploratory process; I would encourage critics to be tough on themselves during that process rather than insist that they have a thorough understanding before they begin to write. We hope that students will graduate with a good understanding of how much they don't know, how to dig up information, and how to push themselves, the way a good editor would, toward a deeper understanding.

DBR: The language of criticism is perhaps the most controversial matter. While one might be able to describe the architectural elements with some accuracy, the qualities of design and space are less accessible to translation. The linguistic paradigm seemed at one point to be the solution to interpretation, but on closer inspection architecture proved to be different from language because the meanings of forms are particularly transitory—intentions and significance are too easily separated. Do you perceive a critical strategy for comprehending the formal intentions of design and structure while allowing for those more mobile factors of context and use?

HM: The language of criticism is likely to remain controversial so long as critics are doing their job. There are those who view critics as a sort of sadistic, manipulative, or fraudulent bunch who are ruthlessly engaged in changing the linguistic locks so that just when people think they've found "the key"—to truth, to contemporary culture, etc.—it gets changed on them so they can't get in. And there's some truth to this. Certain "key" words do go in and out of fashion and to many people this process seems to have little purpose other than to validate the idea of an artistic avant-garde.

But there's often a deeper reason for this process. Certain words—on the simplest level, words like genius, creation, essence, formal—tend to get invested with a heavy load of authority over time, and if you accept, as I do, that one of criticism's functions is to challenge the authority of these little gods, then you have to be careful about language. This is not to say that the quality of "genius," for instance, doesn't exist in the world, but the use of such terms carries dangers critics and readers should be aware of.

One of the strategies that's been going on in criticism for a while is the withdrawal of our investment in eternalism-the authority of the "classic" past and the utopian future-in order to increase our sense of responsibility for the present. This strategy is causing a lot of difficulty for those reluctant to give up that investment. We hear that it's irresponsible to discredit lingering futurism and ignorant to discount the lessons of history, that this divestiture process is nothing but a surrender to fashion and caprice or to the media's insatiable appetite for novelty. But I think this strategy is opening up a lot of interesting territory. Another strategy that I've been involved with for some time is concerned with bringing out the narrative content of buildings; this also frightens people because narrative is one of those things we were supposed to have left behind in the 19th century, but that idea strikes me as an article of Modernist dogma that has tended to impoverish architectural form. I've already suggested a third strategy, which is to talk more about the dynamic of architectural cause and effect instead of restricting oneself to critical appraisals of the effects. Our negative view of the Modern legacy, for instance, is largely based upon our reaction to its effects; a lot of the younger architects who aren't picking up on Post-Modern historicism seem to be renewing some of the energy associated with the causes of early Modernism, and I'm finding this an extremely interesting thing to watch.

I tend to be skeptical about efforts to locate a single paradigm or a standardized vocabulary that can be used as a basis for critical inquiry; theorists often construct these little temples where you're supposed to work your way to the inner sanctum, where the truth stands revealed. But does truth stand that still? It's an exciting project for a critic to develop a vocabulary and a theoretical structure that enables him to discover meaning and value in contemporary work; but then the danger inevitably rises that this framework will prevent him from recognizing the value of work that comes along and doesn't fit the theory, or intentionally subverts it. I favor the idea that these structures are at best provisional; one paradigm I am comfortable with is that of discovery, an element of the Modern project which I think is still vital.

DBR: The first question alluded to the distinction of two audiences for architectural criticism: the consumer and the professional. This is perhaps not a casual separation but the result of the endemic split between art and life evident in industrialized societies. Is there some way to bridge this gap, or should architectural criticism indeed become more specialized?

HM: My sense is that writers, artists, architects, philosophers, scientists, other specialists, and just plain folks can choose to contribute to the mutual enterprise of creating a cultural environment in which it is possible for ideas to occur and flourish. Splits and gaps can be useful; they can let in light and air; they can leave space for the new voice to state a message we haven't heard before. They seem to be an inevitable consequence of the deconstruction of absolute authority.

The particular split you refer to may be a strength of democratic culture rather than a weakness of industrialization. We've inherited a notion that architecture ought to somehow fuse aesthetic and social values-art and life, as it were-into an enduring, stable unity. I think our architecture speaks more eloquently of the difference between these values, which explains in part our fascination with urban vitality. The aristocratic fusion depended upon a consensus culture which we can no longer rely on and for which I feel no particular nostalgia. The critic who can articulate the advantages of this split may be performing a useful function because for many people it's harder or more anxiety-provoking, at least, to live without the hope of that consensus. I keep coming back to John Summerson's idea that "the most a critic can do-and it is a not wholly unimportant job-is to sort out those ageing ideas which get encrusted round past creative achievement and clog the proper exercise of the imagination in changing times."

DBR: The critic can influence both ideas and practice. Consider, for instance, how paranoid architectural firms are about advance publication of their projects—resistance of any type could result in very expensive consequences. The critic can serve as muckraker; Alan Temko for example was able to influence the design process of Levi Plaza through his crusading articles in the San Francisco Chronicle. But is this "democratizing" function really desirable in a consumer democracy? There are important issues at the level of the program that preclude the work of the architect and have great social urgency—in particular, the environmental consequences of any building. What then should be the political role of the critic? Is the critic more effective in waging advocacy attacks in the name of ecology, historic preservation, or even good design, or rather in developing a deeper architectural consciousness that supposedly would illuminate both designers and those responsible for the program?

HM: Critics should write about whatever seems to have the greatest personal urgency to them. They should approach page one of the first draft as the entrance to a white, squarish space in which they are going to engage in the activity of criticism for the benefit of a reader. Into that space they will take the memory of some images; some of these images will be of architecture forms and of walking through them, some of photographs or drawings, some of historical or documentary events or facts, some of conversations, some of verbal constructs of ideas, some of childhood experiences, and so forth. Then they will try to form these images into a picture. In the process of doing so, some of these images may end up rendered as opinions or positions, some as temper tantrums, some as appraisals, evaluations, appreciations, or elements of analysis. For me, these positions, opinions, and so on are valid only in that particular space, in the particular context in which they are stated. The picture will have a point of view, sometimes more than one. I'm very sympathetic to Ruskin's belief that he had never covered a subject fully until he had contradicted himself at least six times. It seems to me that the "democratizing" function of criticism depends not just on one or two writers advocating what they take to be "democratic" forms of design (for after all this can range from the reproduction Parthenon to the empty, windswept plaza); it depends on encouraging more people to exercise their critical faculties.

My point is that while I respect writers who adopt or become spokesmen for a particular cause—preservation, ecology—criticism is itself a cause. It's not a cause that's easily understood because it seems to be a psychological process involving some inner dialectic between personal conviction and what Keats called the "negative capability," a faculty he viewed as a wholly positive way of strengthening the intellect by refraining from absolute doctrinal utterance. You work on the ideas your convictions give you access to; then you start pushing the ideas around to see which ones can take it. There's an exciting moment that can occur when the preconceptions you've taken into your space begin to collapse and you find after considerable panic that you've given yourself the gift of a fresh insight. That's the moment you've been writing for. н

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"Noted authority" is a vague title, but it was the nearest anyone ever came to describing John Beach. That identification appeared in the acknowledgments for the Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California, one of a list of publications, including DBR, to which he contributed his clarifying and often astonishing insights. Beach, who died November 21, never fit into the standard categories: he was an architect with a historian's memory, a historian with the eye of an architect, a preservationist concerned as much with the monuments of the future as of the past. He straddled contradictions and relished unlikely juxtapositions. He never completed his architecture degree, he never finished his monograph on Bay Area architect Ernest Coxhead (whose buildings, playing havoc with scale and space, were the perfect vehicle for Beach's view of architecture), but his lectures, tours, and conversations left such startling verbal and visual images that one's eyes were never the same afterward.

Beach had a rule for touring cities: never pull a U-turn, always go around the block. There was bound to be some-

thing new to be considered around the corner: a streamline market, an abandoned car wash, a Moorish Methodist mortuary, a Palladian window done in aluminum sliders. They were things most of us found easy to ignore: the work of a has-been architect, in an unfashionable style, mistakenly remodeled in materials that had long since passed their warranty date. He had rejected the smooth (and false) unity of conventional high art aesthetics, but in the disjointed fragments of the real landscape Beach found a vision of an entire architecture, wondrous, entertaining, unconstrained and pluralist. Where some people gain access to the popular aesthetic via camp. Beach had entered via Virginia Woolf, Gustav Mahler and Bruce Goff (his first exposure to architecture as a boy came in talking with Goff at the University of Oklahoma in his native Norman; for years that's what he thought architecture was supposed to look like).

Beach took the buildings of the vernacular landscape very seriously indeed, no matter how uproarious his lectures were. In them he explored what he had seen on the streets, and he generously took his students at UCLA's

architecture school and his audiences at professional and public groups along for the ride. When he did stop the tour long enough to compose this stream of visual delights into an article, a gem formed under the pressure of a deadline. He took great care and effort to make the sound of the words produce the surprise and delight he felt in discovering the building in the first place. It wasn't easy, and he probably would have preferred moving on to look for his next favorite building.

Н

This excerpt from the original manuscript of an article written for Fine Homebuilding shows John Beach's extraordinary perception of the ordinary landscape. It doesn't touch on all his interests-the Moderne, Lloyd Wright, the giant derbies and hot dogs of Los Angeles, vernacular gravel gardens. He often found common ground amid the discrepancies of California culture-north and south, high art and popular, redwood and stucco, the accidental and the planned. With a keen sense of time and culture as dimensions of architecture, he helped explain the jumble of the landscape as we all find it. He found it all worth looking at.

-Alan Hess



THE JOHN BEACH HOUSE, LIVING ROOM, PHOTOGRAPH BY LARRY HARREL

Although it has been confused by casual passersby with a power station, a museum of Aztec art, and the temple of one of those exotic religious cults which seemed to flourish in the benign climate of southern California, it is, has always been, and was designed to be a single-family residence. The confusion, however, is perhaps understandable. The Sowden House, designed in 1926 by Frank Lloyd Wright's eldest son Lloyd, presents an exotic image even for Southern California. Both Llovd and his father had been interested in the idea that a new architecture for southern California should evoke the desert, that it should somehow have visual and psychological overtones of the Southwest and a pre-Columbian America without aping any specific styles or individual buildings. The Sowden House is mysterious, startling, and powerful. In plan and in the realities of its construction it is a collection of ideas whose time may have come again. Lloyd's conception of the California house, which is totally protected from visual or actual trespass from the outside world and yet encloses some court or garden where the sunshine and the idealized southern California lifestyle can be enjoyed in open privacy—a space to which the rooms can open so that distinction between indoors and out dissolves with the sliding back of light screen walls-seems a perfect vision of those two seemingly incompatible concerns of the paranoid second half of the 20th century: openness and security.

S

In the Sowden House this open inner core is a rectangular courtyard with the long access running north and south. Major living spaces at front and rear and the bedroom and service facilities of the side wings open to this courtyard through sliding doors of wood and glass and copper. The labyrinthine entrance sequence creates a further sense of isolation of the house from the outside world. The house, which is essentially one story, sits just at the edge of the hill and the rise is just enough to provide an entrance one story below the level of the house itself. Passing through elaborate metal gates designed by Lloyd, a dark and somewhat uterine tunnel leads to a skylit stair which takes one up to the level of the house. The concrete blocks, designed by Lloyd for this specific project, are grouped in great crystalline clusters and create a protective cave-like quality to the entrance. These blocks are used as points of focus in the composition of the building. Once these blocks were assembled in a wall or a cluster they created a surface which became alive in the sharply contrasting sun and shadow of pre-smog California. The boxes in which these blocks were poured and set were built on the site, the concrete mixed and poured into them. Frequently straight lines are not exactly straight, square corners are not exactly square. Thus the blocks have a certain homemade quality which diminishes the austere precision which many people associate unpleasantly with concrete construction.

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In the Sowden House Lloyd had the opportunity to do what most architects hope to do but are all too seldom given the opportunity. He designed not only the house, but many of the fittings and pieces of furniture which went inside it. Mr. Sowden, the client, was apparently himself a designer and he probably collaborated with Lloyd on some of the furniture. Most of this furniture has, unfortunately, disappeared. Early photographs of the interior show it to have been almost barbarically opulent. In one bedroom the furniture was carved into or assembled from literally hundreds of small faceted surfaces which appear in black-and-white photographs to have a metallic finish, perhaps gold leaf. The beds and the living room sofa were placed on platforms like a dais or a tiny stage. It is this combination of the technologically advanced and the decoratively ornamental, the austere and the opulent,

which gives Lloyd's work its enduring and many-leveled appeal.

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Frank Lloyd Wright's concrete block buildings in Los Angeles were frequently exorbitantly expensive; at least one client mentioned as part of his house-building experience going bankrupt because of cost overruns. Wright was never known for going out of his way to accommodate the real world. He was the architect and his ideas should be executed down to the slightest detail; the budget was the client's problem. Lloyd frequently operated in a different, and, many would say, a more reasonable and humane manner. In the Sowden House the concrete block is used not as in his father's buildings for the entire structure, but is concentrated for maximum visual return. These outbursts of ornament and exoticism are contrasted in Lloyd's work by large, uninterrupted pastel plains of stucco. Beneath that stucco is every builder's friend, the ordinary stud wall. Despite the exotic and even other-worldly appearance of the Sowden House and of Lloyd's other similar buildings of the middle and late 1920s they are structurally standard dwelling house construction. This commitment to vernacular rather than specialized technology is delightfully symbolized in a photograph showing the first steps of construction: the lot is being gradedby mule. Various photographs of the construction process show the interface between the standard wood stud construction and the specialized areas which were embellished with the concrete block ornament. While the specifics of the Sowden House (e.g., the specially designed and handmade patterned concrete block) may not be reasonable to reproduce in the 1980s, it seems that in a time of ever rising labor and material costs Lloyd's lesson of concentrating the non-standard to evoke the maximum visual and architectural expression is a lesson which urgently needs to be relearned.

Before John Beach began designing his own house in Berkeley, an architect friend asked him, as a design exercise, to write a program for his ideal house. Informally written, this excerpt displays the welter of his interests and the clockwork balance of his likes and dislikes.—Alan Hess

I must admit to a wide and rather unfocused group of enthusiasms. I hate the formal and the symmetrical; on the other hand I like that which is massively substantial; on the other hand I like the flimsy and makeshift; on the other hand I like fine craftsmanship; on the other hand I hate the finicky and cluttered detail and the compulsive quality that such enthusiasm frequently engenders; on yet another hand I live in a personal environment which is cluttered and could be considered compulsive.

So.

Let us approach this in another way:

I like the mysterious and encrusted quality of Lloyd Wright's work of the twenties; the inventiveness and unexpected imagery of Bruce Goff; the objectness and the surface richness of the zig-zag moderne; Mr. Chuckmoore's [sic] sense of drama: successive enclosure; conflict which is the result of alteration through time: the freedom w/ which R. M. Schindler handled and transformed the imagery of modernism; the careful proportioning of Irving Gill, particularly his ability to place an element in the carefully calculated *exactly* wrong place. While I am also fond of many 19th-century designers-Butterfield's polychromy, Maybeck's visual drama, Coxhead's adroit mishandling of the expected and his perverse use of scale, and (20th century) the elegance and simplicity of non-Greene-bros craftsman interiors (the Greenes make me itch w/ their compulsiveness), and the quality of fragmentation and reintegration in the work of John Hudson Thomas-despite all that I am interested personally in a 20th-century image, specifically a modern movement image. That does not necessarily mean a party line Neutra Modernist image, you understand, note for instance in his later work how Bruce Goff has been able to have his archaic and eat it too, combining 1950s Modernist imagery with overtones of John Wellborn Root and the Japanesque bungalow. I like the visual extension of FLW's spaces, and the complex vertical variations to be found there, light from unexpected sources. In fact, I am fond of unexpected anything; like a child I am easily bored and love to be surprised.

I like high, brightly lit open rooms and dark low cavelike ones—it is important to me that the interior allow for both kinds of spaces. I like the work of Jerry Kotas, Floyd Campbell, Jay Turnbull, David Weingarten, Wm Coburn & Thomas Smith (especially the earlier stuff) and Ira Kurlander....

I dislike: the Colonial revival, by and large; handsplit cedar shakes; doctrinaire Modernism; neo-Corbusianism; eye-ease green; rooms whose only focus is a view; grids in plan; uniformly 8-foot ceilings; being called a Post-Modernist; one-idea buildings; having to get up to turn out the light after reading in bed; not having places to put things; Disneyland.

I like (cont'd) David Gebhard's



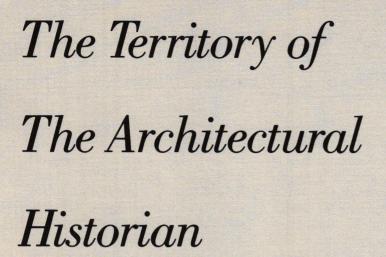
THE JOHN BEACH HOUSE, STUDY, PHOTOGRAPH BY LARRY HARREL

house (I could be very happy there. I would want, of course, to remodel it slightly). Frank Gehry's work; Roland Coate's work; Herb Greene's work. The multiplicity of LA. The automobile. Wildwood, the Winchester House, the Mission Inn. MLTW's first Sea Ranch condominium (this doesn't mean the building should be barnsy or woodsy necessarily—what I admire most is its power, its rightness—the strongest image in American architecture since the Robie House).

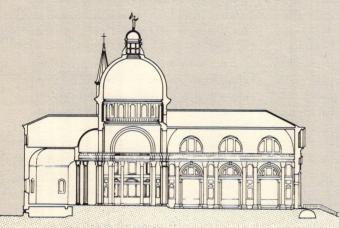
Well, that should be enough for you to play with. Perhaps you can whittle away what is extraneous and pick out what is useful for me as a client and/or for you as a designer. I suppose that is why one hires an architect.

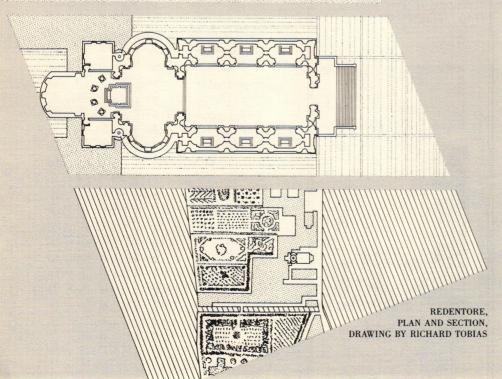
One also risks having one's tastes challenged by an architect; also I am susceptible to other people's enthusiasms: my friends and my students have much to answer for in the corruption of my tastes. Thus if you have very strong feelings about, say, handsplit cedar shakes, I could probably be brought round, just in the spirit of experiment; but you would have to be very persuasive and if I give in on a point such as this I had better grow to appreciate it, because if I don't after a trial period of, say, two years, I will have the item in question altered at your expense....

Sleep is important.... I enjoy being awakened by morning light.... I also have, from time to time, problems with insomnia: I will get up in the middle of the night to pace or ... to address the envelope of a letter written two months ago ... so I would like the studio portion of the house to communicate easily w/ the sleeping room-but not directly, i.e., not through a single door in the bedroom wall. The psychological separation of the parts of my day is important to me. I don't want unfinished projects lurking just beyond a thin door. It might be nice to be able to pace in the garden on those fragrant, skinwarm southern California nights....



By Alan J. Plattus





A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals, Spiro Kostof, Oxford, 1985, 788 pp., illus., \$45.00.

A History of Architecture: Stonehenge to Skyscrapers, Dora Crouch, McGraw-Hill, 1985, 374 pp., illus., \$27.95 cloth; \$19.95 paper.

The central historiographic problem posed by Spiro Kostof's new History of Architecture is, interestingly enough, a figure-ground problem. With entirely characteristic acuity, Kostof recognizes -indeed confesses-this problem in the very first paragraph of his preface. "This book," he writes, "is something of a compromise. It is a general survey of architectural history that tries to reconcile the traditional grand canon of monuments with a broader, more embracing view of the built environment." Or, to put it another way, Kostof seems to propose a picture of the history of architecture in which the "figure" of the familiar monument and the "ground" of its context coexist, or even occasionally change places, in something like the state of perceptual oscillation exhibited by such wellknown Gestalt psychology demonstrations as the vase framed by two profiles. This "reconciliation" turns out to be much more difficult-and much more of a compromise-than one would initially expect, given our recent interest in, and taste for, the figureground phenomenon. Might it turn out to be the case that for the architectural historian and critic, not to mention the architect, the limitation revealed by the Gestalt experiments applies: that the reading of one figure is made only at the expense of the other? In Kostof's terms, can we bring the entire "built environment" into the foreground without necessarilyand quite literally-eclipsing the individual monument?

It is not mere coincidence that questions of this kind should emerge front and center simultaneously in both the writing of architectural history and the making of architecture. In spite of the tendency (related to the academic professionalization of art history since the 19th century) for architectural historians to set their own agenda quite apart from the preoccupations of contemporary architects, there has been a significant countervailing tendency of which Kostof is well aware, and to which he seems at least partially sympathetic. The leading exemplar of this second tendency is probably Sigfried Giedion, whose embodiment of an enormously productive and influential alliance between academic art history and hot-off-thepress architectural polemics has recently been both damned and, somewhat tentatively, rehabilitated by younger historians.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore interesting to note that a number of the concerns and interests identified by Kostof, which we might be inclined to identify with a recent generation of architects and historians, were explicitly-and in some cases, originallyidentified by Giedion and his architect colleagues. The concern with the whole man-made environment, the interest in vernacular and non-Western architecture and culture, were characteristic subjects for Giedion and sources for his friends. However, the crucial point-often overlooked by revisionists-was that for Giedion and CIAM a concern with the whole environment meant, in practice, a desire to remake it, often from scratch; while the vernacular they valued was not the ordinary stuff of which cities were made. Here is where Kostof would seem to align himself with his own generation of architects and critics, absorbing Giedion's holistic vision and ecumenicism, but attempting to fill in the gaps between the monumental figures (both buildings and architects) standing free in Space and Time.

While we know that "filling in the gaps" can produce a significantly different image of the city than that sponsored by the modern movements, there is some question as to whether it will produce an alternative history. The original question of whether one has sharpened the delineation of the hitherto amorphous ground to the point where it can at times become figure seems to suggest quite a different approach than that of leaving the figures intact and in place while brushing in-however vigorously-a background. It suggests, in fact, that the meaning of the original figures and their relationships to each other must be reconsidered: that the fundamental "order" of history may be disturbed. Indeed similar figure-ground reversals in areas of history other than the history of architecture have had such far-reaching and radical effects. One need only think of the impact and implications of works such as Fernand Braudel's in social and economic history, where the figures of the history of "events" have been displaced by the ground of la longue durée; or Michel Foucault's, where the ground of "discourse" has supplanted the heroic figures of conventional intellectual history. It is not at all clear that Kostof is prepared to entertain the sort of substantive rearrangement of architectural history that the potentially radical heterogeneity of his investigation may suggest. On the contrary, it seems to be in the nature of the compromise he embraces that the overall historical structure provided -and dominated-by the "traditional grand canon of monuments" should, as we shall see, remain basically status quo.

In fairness to Kostof, and others who have approached the same task, it must be admitted that the work of simply filling in the contextual ground around the familiar monuments is itself no small undertaking. In spite of Kostof's suggestion, in a review article for this journal of recent histories of architecture,<sup>2</sup> that the time is ripe for a "new" history responding to the wide field of reference and catholic tastes of contemporary architecture, and synthesizing important new specialist studies that speak to these emergent interests, there really is very little in the way of systematic disciplinary support. There is certainly nothing along the lines of the two generations of rigorous work by the Annales school that stands behind Braudel's recent synthetic surveys. With still all-too-rare exceptions, most specialist studies in art and architectural history continue the monographic conventions that have for so long controlled most work in the field. One is also absolutely in agreement and, in this context, sympathy with Kostof's generally negative evaluation of his competition in the aforementioned article. (In fact, one can only assume that he is as tolerant as he is in the light of his own struggles with the same task.) All of this is by way of acknowledging Kostof's extraordinary achievement in beginning to redress the figure-ground imbalance, hitherto so dramatically biased in favor of the individual monument and architect. That he has been able to do so much with so little to use, and so much to rethink, is a tribute to his energy and range.

But as Kostof himself has recognized, energy and range-ambition and erudition-are not enough to sustain and ultimately to organize an endeavor on this scale. Nor is the simple correction of the mistakes, reaction against the prejudices, or balancing of the oversimplifications of one's predecessors sufficient. (That sort of thing can be done by pesky reviewers.) It requires a positive, perhaps even polemical, purpose to control, much less justify, the rewriting of the whole long story from "beginning" to "end." Kostof seems to acknowledge that requirement at the end of his dreary roll-call of recent histories when he poses the only partially rhetorical question of whether "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 Lescaux to Bofill." (Presumably Kostof's own contribution was already at the publisher's when he wrote these wordsending as it so curiously does with an image of Bofill's work at Marne-la-Vallée in the lower righthand corner of the last page.) His answer outlines two available historiographic strategies: "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."<sup>3</sup>

My guess is that Kostof thinks he has chosen the latter strategy for his own book. The somewhat disarming naiveté of "telling the reader really why they are the way they are," which sounds a lot like Leopold von Ranke's modest ambition to tell what actually happened in history (wie es eigentlich gewesen), is presumably more "objective" than any monothematic approach insofar as it explores its objects "fully from all angles." But again there is in the choice of the via media the inevitable compromise. In factand this will seem a harsher criticism than I mean it to be-Kostof really follows neither of his two proposed strategies. The determination to play all the angles means that no one theme emerges to focus or unify the discussion for very long, not even those which Kostof seems to prefer, context and use (or, as they are called in the subtitle, setting and ritual). Occasionally, and at odd moments such as the account of Le Nôtre's gardens, the generally admirably "thick description" degenerates into familiar, and basically monothematic, formalist history, seasoned with a bit of the zeitgeist. One knows that this is not what Kostof intends and not normally what he does, but it is very difficult, especially in the absence of appropriate secondary studies, to sustain the level of polythematic coverage to which the book aspires. However energetic he may be, Kostof cannot do it all by himself, and, like the rest of us, he falls back on that theme he knows best, which is for him-as he points out in the preface-"architectural style." This is especially true when he wanders from his intention "to confine [himself] to a relatively small number of sites and buildings in order to be able to look at them in some detail." One can only assume that what Kostof calls a "relative handful" is more capacious measure than the language suggests. If anything, Kostof's thoroughly welcome interest in non-Western and vernacular architecture leads him to add far more material than might be accounted for by his minimal deletions from the traditional canon. Once again the figure-ground problems: the figures still tracing a virtually residual structure based upon criteria that are all but overwhelmed by the new density of the ground.

Undoubtedly the best chapters in Kostof's book, and as good as anything of their kind, are those in which he allows the elaboration of a particular theme and/or place to absorb, even to overwhelm, the usual round-up of monumental suspects. He is superb on Rome-ancient, medieval, Renaissance and modern-where his detailed appreciation of the context and its transformations, and an equally concrete awareness of the public behavior which animated that context. makes the usual discussions of Michelangelo versus Sangallo, or Borromini versus Bernini, seem somewhat irrelevant. Here one might almost imagine an "art history without names," but for very different reasons than those proposed by Wölfflin. Indeed, where names and monuments are scarce, as in his excellent chapter on "The Urbanization of Europe, 1100-1300," Kostof is guite content to write urban history with considerable interest and enthusiasm. One wonders why then London after the Great Fire consists mainly of Wren's churches and the stylistic distinction between Hawksmoor and Archer, with a brief mention in the next chapter of estate development. Or why, for that matter, the cultural history of ancien régime France resolves itself in the sort of clichés

Kostof so quickly condemns in others —and usually eschews himself—when the opportunities for an in-depth treatment of the institutions of cultural control and reproduction, as well as the ceremonies of public and private life, are perhaps richer here than in any other period. One is not accusing Kostof of neglect. There are very few themes of significance which are not at least touched upon. The question, raised by Kostof himself, is one of depth and emphasis.

In this respect an unabashedly urban and social history, such as Mark Girouard's recent Cities and People. has certain advantages. For better or worse, the architectural development of the Louvre is not much of an issue for Girouard, but the development of parks and boulevards, such as the Cours la Reine, and what went on there is. Girouard gives an account of the gates and walls of 17th-century Paris and their relation to urban space, but nothing on the stylistic development of Parisian church facades in relation to Roman precedent. The issue is precisely one of emphasis, or, more bluntly, of allocation of resources. Kostof does not tell us enough about church façades to be of much use, and it is not at all clear that the church facades tell us what Kostof claims about the chastity and reason of French culture as opposed to Roman Baroque "fervor." In fact the façades in question are quite grand and rhetorical in the context of 17th-century Paris. One only wishes that context were as well set (and illustrated) in this case as it is in most of the rest of Kostof's book. (How, for example, can one dream of illustrating the ground plans of two Parisian hôtels as if they were freestanding buildings?) The Parisian ground is in many cases. like the Roman or medieval urban ground, more interesting than its individual figures.

Having mentioned Girouard's book, and raised a perhaps unfair comparison between an encyclopedic text and a more limited essay, one might venture to suggest that in many ways the two volumes complement each other. With their far more lavish (and imaginative) use of illustrations, Girouard and his publisher are able to show what Kostof can only describe: that cities and architecture are best understood in relation to the ordinary and ritualistic use people make of them. Here again, Girouard has the singlemindedness-and the budget-to push one of Kostof's most significant methodological principles to a more convincing level of development. Kostof's interest in "purpose" as a significant dimension of architectural history, especially when it is raised to the level of ritual, has significant precedents in, for example, Frank Brown's approach to Roman architecture, and ultimately in Paul Frankl's addition of "purposive intention" to his categories of formal analysis; but as Kostof has noted elsewhere, this theme has never been fully developed in a comprehensive survey of architectural history. Kostof's contribution to this enterprise is among his most impressive achievements. Like the theme of context, it could easily have sustained and organized the entire survey, even if it would have excluded certain material-or put it more decisively in place.

Of course at a practical level, Kostof's book, for all its inclusive pluralism, presents the same problem as any survey: that of selection and the criteria employed. At a stylistic and even a "theoretical" level that same problem reemerges, once the selection has been made, as the question of whether the author seeks to create an illusion of completeness. It is a difficult temptation for a historian to resist, but an almost impossible one to sustain. In reviewing a work of this scope and ambition it would be petty and pretentious to simply list omissions and mistakes, especially since any such list would inevitably be partial and biased in its own right. A few significant silences, however, seem symptomatic of larger issues and problems. Several of these occur in the third and final section of the book where, for quite important but not explicitly discussed reasons, the placeoriented (or more specifically, cityoriented) approach begins to break down. For example, the treatment of early Modernism is, in some respects, surprisingly Pevsnerian: personality and building-oriented. Thus it is remarkable that neither Charles Rennie Macintosh and the Glasgow School of Art nor Josef Maria Olbrich and the Secession Gallery are mentioned. These individual omissions are telling because, unlike some other specific items in the catalogue of figures, they could-and should-form the basis for a treatment of Glasgow and Vienna as parallel, and related, "capital" cities of early modern culture, along the lines of Kostof's account of Florence and Venice as centers of Renaissance culture. One might be prepared to argue the case that by the early 20th-century neither cities nor culture have the coherence associated with Renaissance urban culture, and that historiography must respond to these conditions. It would, however, be a stronger move for Kostof to stick to his very formidable guns right up to and including the Post-Modern present.

If, finally, it seems that Kostof's book, for all its claims to represent a fresh point of view (which it does), and to cover new and significant ground (which it also does), is a fundamentally traditional history of architecture in its overall structure and method, then it is no mean feat to be king of that particular hill and of the brilliant landscape it surveys. The dangers of structural innovation are all too well illustrated by Dora Crouch's book of similar title and ambition, which leaves one yearning for a good, solid traditional history. It is not simply that there is so much of the sort of facile generalization that has given cultural history a bad name in some circles, but that the mix-and-match method of pairing buildings and themes in apparently arbitrary shotgun weddings makes nonsense of the logic of both items on the agenda: history and architecture. Both the language and the level of investigation in this book seem to be aimed at high-school students, who would—like the rest of us—be better off struggling with Kostof's book, which is genuinely one to grow with.

It is not perhaps inappropriate to conclude a review of the books of this kind with a word about illustrations and format. Neither book is exemplary. The general quality of the illustrations in Crouch is indicated by the cover photos, one of which is out of focus and all of which are oddly cropped. More problematic in a book based on case studies is the lack of thorough documentation of each of the cases. Information about context is nonexistent. Kostof's book is certainly much better, especially in terms of context, which is what one would expect given its emphasis. And vet one is still much too aware at certain points in the discussion of a need for a nearby reference shelf, well-stocked with guidebooks and perhaps Leonardo Benevolo's History of the City (weak on text, but strong on urban maps and views). For a book that clearly aspires to be-and I think will become-a standard work of reference, one would be willing to pay a bit more for a better standard of reproduction, higher quality paper, and more of what's good about Richard Tobias's drawings. It is particularly alarming that in a book so sensitive to contextual analysis, to issues of figure and ground, and to Rome, the greatest monument to those traditions should find no place: the Nolli plan is an absent presence.

2. Kostof, "The Treadmill of History," *DBR 5*, pp. 6-11.

3. Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>1.</sup> Including Kostof: "Architecture, You and Him: The Mark of Sigfried Giedion," *Daedalus*, Winter, 1976, pp. 189-204.

# **Military** Architecture

by Horst de la Croix

Stronghold: A History of Military Architecture, Martin H. Brice, Schocken, 1985, 192 pp., illus., \$29.95.

Historic Architecture of the Royal Navy, Jonathan Coad, David and Charles, 1984, 160 pp., illus., \$32.00.

Traditionally the history of military architecture has been the domain of retired soldiers; only fairly recently have architectural historians shown sporadic interest in the subject. Such interest is well deserved, since fortification, purely functional and utilitarian, has consumed more of humanity's economic and intellectual resources than any other type of construction (including religious).

The two studies under consideration were written neither by military men nor architectural historians, but by men actively engaged in the study and preservation of historical military structures, ordnance, and artifacts. Mr. Brice is a staff member of the British Imperial War Museum, and Mr. Coad is Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments and a member of the Navy Records Society and the Society for Nautical Research.

Stronghold is a sweeping, at times somewhat hasty, survey of military architecture from prehistoric times to the nuclear present, a field so widely staked out that 180-odd pages hardly suffice to do it justice. Written for the layman in easy to understand, straightforward language, the book takes the reader into some rarely visited corners of the world, as well as to many familiar sites and monuments. From conjectural reconstructions of prehis-

toric hill forts, the study takes us over Mesopotamia to ancient Greece and Rome, which, unfortunately, are dealt with rather sketchily. Weapons and equipment seem to be of greater interest to the author than architecture. and the omission of the Hellenistic defenses of Selinus and Miletus leaves a noticeable gap. Instead the reader is rewarded with anecdotal accounts of sieges and detailed descriptions of Roman ordnance and field fortifications. The latter lead to the limes Britannicus (e.g., Hadrian's Wall), which appears to have been closely studied by the author. This passage, as well as others later in the book. would have benefited from a location map, as even British readers may be unfamiliar with the sites mentioned in the text.

Considerably more time is spent with medieval castles which, after all, have greater popular appeal, particularly since the monuments described are still standing, a fact reflected by the generally good illustrations. From the crusaders' castles in the Near East to Carcassonne in France and Conway Castle in England, the fortifications are explained as answers to contemporary siege methods.

The twin inventions of gunpowder and cannon and the development of artillery are again subjects of special interest to the author, who deals with them effectively and provides interesting sidelights into the difficulties faced by early gunners before the invention of corned gunpowder. The development of bastioned defenses in answer to the threat of the cannon, on the other hand, is treated rather summarily.

This is the weakest part of the study. While the author, in passing, acknowledges the Italian contribution to the design of a defensive system that proved effective against artillery fire until the 19th century, he neglects to point out the revolutionary aspects of the Italian system. Instead, his insular viewpoint is focused on the building program of the Tudors, whose style was old-fashioned when measured against contemporary continental standards. Henry VIII's reliance on the Bohemian military architect Stephan von Haschenperg resulted in the unique and fascinating design of Deal Castle, the plan of which has often been compared to a Tudor rose. But by 1540, when it was built, round bastions had been almost universally replaced on the mainland by the more efficient Italian triangular or arrowhead bastion, and Deal Castle, handsome as it is, was already an anachronism. The British adopted the Italian system only around mid-century.

In the following chapter, at least Vauban is given his due, although his record as siege engineer is emphasized over his more permanent achievements as the military architect who fortified the frontiers of Louis XIV's France. After a brief excursion to the exotic frontiers of the British Empire-from a stockade in Virginia and the Elmina Castle on the Gold Coast (modern Ghana) to the piquets of India (forerunners of the fire-bases laid out by American forces in Vietnam) and Shargai Fort on the Khyber Pass-we are brought back to 19th-century Europe and the Industrial Revolution. Here the author is back with his favorite

subject, ordnance. The improvement and growing power of artillery, the increasing complexity of equipment and communications, and finally mass production, which permitted the build up of national military forces of unprecedented size and power and which led up to the "battles of materiel" of World War I-all are outlined in a convincing manner. Finally, the Maginot Line and Germany's Atlantic Wall of World War II are suitably mentioned and, more or less as a postscript, there is a brief reference to MX silos. Unlike all earlier fortifications, which were intended to protect humans, these silos are designed to protect the weapons with which to strike a counterblow.

The book would profit from more maps and diagrams, which would permit the reader to orient himself and to locate some of the monuments shown in the photographs. But despite its flaws, *Stronghold* is a very readable book whose occasional lapses into pathos are more than balanced by bits of whimsy that make even the grimmest statistics digestible. It is to be greeted as a welcome addition to the still relatively sparse literature on an undeservedly obscure field.

What Stronghold lacked is amply provided by Historic Architecture of the Royal Navy, which is liberally illustrated not only with photographs, but with enough maps, diagrams, plans, and elevations to satisfy even hard-to-please architectural historians. This carefully researched study deals with a subject that has been largely overshadowed by the well-known exploits of the British Royal Navy which, though often challenged, ruled supreme during the 18th and 19th centuries. Mr. Coad reminds us that, without the complex organization of the supporting dockyards needed to build, outfit, and arm the ships, the great fleet would have been paralyzed and utterly incapable of operating.

The author systematically describes the bewildering variety of often highly specialized building types which composed a dockyard of the sailship era. There were the spinning and laying houses of the roperies with their dependencies, the hemp, yarn, and tarring houses; the mold and sail lofts, mast and boat houses. There were smithies, sawmills, carpenter shops, lead mills, paint mills, and, of course, warehouses. Adjacent to some of the larger dockvards were the victualing yards containing slaughterhouses, mills, bakeries, breweries, and cooperages, in addition to the dwellings for the brewer, the victualing officer, and other senior staff members. Many still extant buildings of these types are illustrated not only with photographs, but with plans, sections, and elevations. And all this descriptive material is interspersed with fascinating statistics. Did you know that a medium-sized 18th-century warship required 100.000 feet of cordage of varying circumference? Or that the buildings needed for the laying and twisting of rope measured up to 1,200 feet in length (that's almost a quarter of a mile!)?

In the last chapter, which deals with naval hospitals, the statistics become rather grim. It is difficult, if not impossible, for the modern reader to imagine the hardships experienced by the seamen who manned an 18thcentury man-of-war. Cramped and unsanitary conditions aboard ship and monotonous, often nutritionally deficient food combined to cause diseases like typhus, yellow fever, and scurvy, which exacted a far greater toll than actual battles. An uneventful expedition of the fleet into the Mediterranean in 1703 saw the death of some 1,500 men due to disease. And on a single ship only about half of a crew of 700 survived a two-year cruise. Such conditions made the building of hospitals imperative, to care for the seamen's health at least when they were ashore. During the first half of the 18th century, hospitals were built in England and in overseas bases like Gibraltar and on the island of Minorca. The hospital on Minorca was expanded to

a capacity of 1,200 beds in the second half of the century, and, in England, 1,500 and 1,800 bed hospitals were built near the naval bases of Portsmouth and Plymouth.

Most of the dockyard buildings were unpretentious brick structures which, here and there, sported a pediment as decoration or to break up long, monotonous façades. These were purely utilitarian buildings which efficiently fulfilled their purpose and were built in accordance with the latest structural and fireproofing technology. Some originally timber-roofed buildings, such as sail and mold lofts. which required wide, unobstructed floorspaces, had clearspans of up to 60 feet. In order to make such buildings as fireproof as possible, timber supports were replaced by cast-iron posts carrying metal roofs as soon as the production of these new materials permitted it.

Which brings us to the most intriguing and perhaps most important aspect of the study. Constant efforts to improve and rationalize production methods led to the development and introduction of machinery to convert these dockyards into huge, preindustrial manufacturing plants in which many new inventions received their first practical tests. By the late 1790s steam engines drove sawmills and drydock draining pumps. The first fireproof building using cast-iron columns probably dated back to the same decade and, by 1818, cast-iron pillars, iron beams, and metal roofs were used widely. Most striking, perhaps, was the mechanization of the production of ships' blocks. Begun in 1802, this process led to the first use of machine tools for mass production; by 1808, 130,000 blocks were turned out annually by the block mill of Portsmouth dockyard on what has been called the "first assembly line."

After reading Jonathan Coad's book, one is left with the distinct impression that it was indeed here, in the dockyards of the Royal British Navy, that the Industrial Revolution had its origin. Т

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James Stirling: Buildings and Projects, James Stirling, Michael Wilford and Associates, introduction by Colin Rowe, Rizzoli, 1985, 350 pp., illus., \$45.00 cloth; \$29.95 paper.

#### Preamble

"I wouldn't do that, sir," said this student-looking person as I prepared to photograph the growing mess of desperate patching on the north side of James Stirling's celebrated but accident-prone History Faculty Building in Cambridge. "I wouldn't do that, sir-it's most unfair to the architect." I almost dropped my camera in astonishment. For almost two decades now no one in Cambridge seemed to have had the slightest qualms about being unfair to Stirling, even before the building was known to have any physical problems. Just to look at, it was always more than the delicate web of Cambridge opinion could support. protected as it had been by provincial isolation from the metropolitan onslaughts of Brutalism and Late Modernism. But Cambridge is also provincial enough to be impressed by national and international fame (how the dons had fought to get on TV chat-shows!), and perhaps a reputation that now included a Pritzker Prize and a Roval Gold Medal for Architecture had finally begun to impinge on the academic consciousness? It had; and you could put a price tag on it-about a month after the incident with the student, the university

announced that it would not demolish the building after all (a consummation that had been deeply desired in some quarters) but would spend a million and a half pounds to repair it a polite euphemism for "building it to standards that it should have been built to originally."

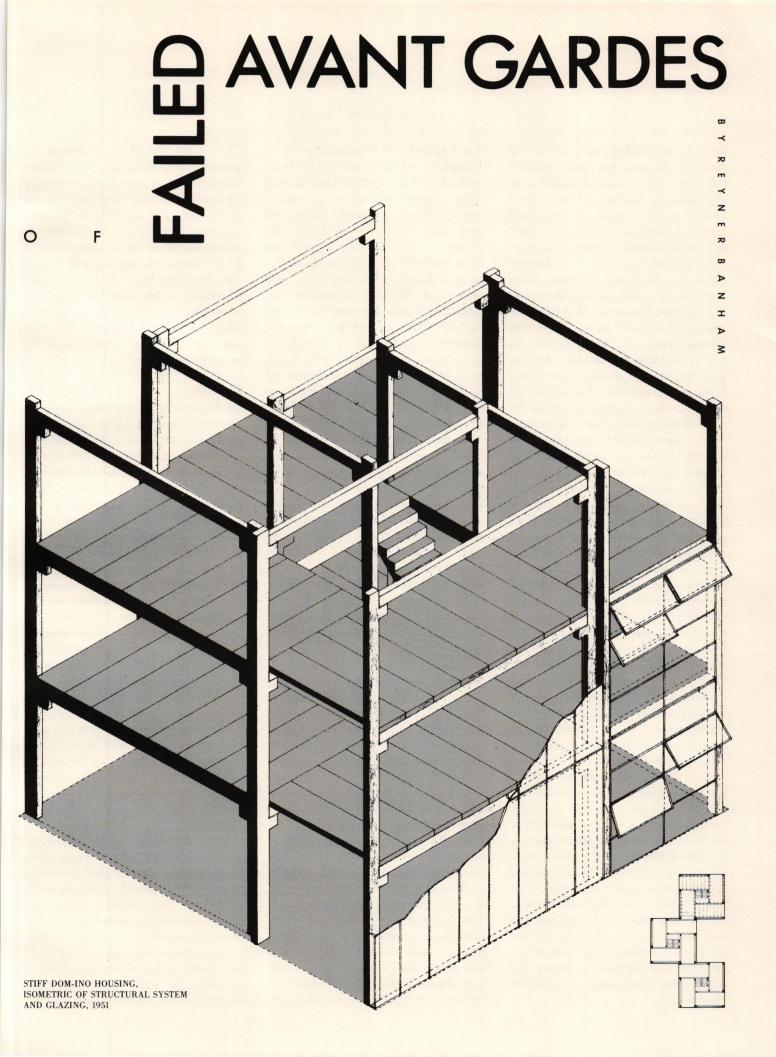
#### The Reputation

And yet ... Stirling already had a reputation-an international reputation -even before the History Faculty was commissioned. He almost had a reputation before he had built anything at all-the earliest built work in James Stirling: Buildings and Projects, the Ham Common flats done in partnership with James Gowan, was immediately (within a little over a year) published in five English periodicals and then in Dutch, French, Italian, and German magazines. Not bad for a thirty-unit subdivision by two "unknown" architects who had just set up practice. Except that they can't have been that unknown; Stirling, at least, had been an audible and visible member of the world of architecture in London, and in the international scene as well, having been promoted and introduced by the likes of Colin Rowe and "Sam" Stevens, invited to submit projects for CIAM/Team X, and taken up by the editors of the Architectural Review, alongside such other promising talents as Alison and Peter Smithson.

By the time the Leicester University Engineering Building was finished

in 1963, and even before it had received the Reynolds Award, its reputation was so vast and international that when I made a joke in print about people coming even from Patagonia to visit, someone wrote from Patagonia to say that was exactly what they were about to do. And speaking, modestly, of writings about Leicester, it is striking to see, from the bibliography in James Stirling: Buildings and Projects, exactly who, besides myself, did write about it in the first few months-Robert Maxwell, Kenneth Frampton, John Jacobus, Joseph Rykwert. The shape and nature of the founding fan club, long before the Jenckses, Eisenmans, Tafuris and Kriers clambered on the rolling bandwagon, reveals, I think, a basic ingredient in Stirling's appeal; his work is open to a particularly English style of art-historical (or quasi-art-historical) critical explication.

The other basic ingredient, obviously, was a highly articulated style of design which not only photographed well, but also was legible to intelligent and well-disposed laypersons—such as Cambridge University's own faculty representatives on the jury that assessed the limited competition for the History Building, who were also fully acquainted with the English mode of art-historical discourse, given that Nikolaus Pevsner at one extreme, and Colin Rowe at the other, were so much around the place. Cambridge, it is now clear, was buying a reputation as



well as a building, and since few things evoke such envy and vitriol in the hearts and minds of British academics as the success of others, Cambridge was inevitably buying itself a sort of perceptual problem as well. For the reputation continued to grow beyond Cambridge itself. Oxford struck back with the Florey Building, Scotland joined in with the dormitories at St. Andrews University, Big Business got into the act with commissions from Dorman Long and Siemens, and an actual building for Olivetti. An English new town, Runcorn, acquired two housing schemes from Stirling, while Mayor Lindsay sought a design for the rehabilitation of New York's West Side. The architects Cambridge likes have strictly Cambridge reputations, and should, by preference, be alumni.

The reputation did not actually rest on a vast body of work, nor were the buildings themselves of particularly great size, nor unusual (nor of inherent importance) in type. They were, however, striking in aspect, open to learned discussion, and their architect was media promotable. (In his own weird way, which is summed up by the excruciating sequence in that BBC movie where he discourses on the wonders of technology, while behind him two cursing construction workers with pinch-bars and two-byfours try to force into place the plastic cladding-panel of the Olivetti building; it was as good as anything in "Monty Python!")

In all this promotion and commotion, the actual quality of the designs was hardly an issue. Though Stirling's detractors have always made much of his buildings' technical shortcomings, his actual disaster rate is about average for an architect of his generation in the current period of history. The issues have nearly always been style, critical discourse, and personality and never more so than in the sequence of German projects that begins with the competition project for the Siemens headquarters complex in Munich. Ein Englischer Schinkelschuler

It has been widely noted that Siemens is the first job on which Leon Krier's name appears among the assistants, but less often noted that he disappears very soon again, after the Derby city center scheme. Stirling himself has been publicly skeptical of the influence of Krier on his own work, and vice versa. My own observation has been that it was the other Krier who had the influence, and that it was not directly architectural. For Rob Krier spent quite a few months in the basement of the office putting together all the material that finally appeared as John Jacobus's book James Stirling: Buildings and Projects 1950-1974. The effect on Stirling himself was not initially too agreeable-it gave him a swelled head at a time when what he really needed was work. But it also, in the end, gave him a better sense of himself, and of his capacities and intentions as an architect, and when the "main sequence" of German competition projects begins, in 1975 with the Nordrhein-Westfalia scheme in Düsseldorf, it is a different Stirling who appears. Not at first a better Stirling in my view—the rather prissy Anglo-Palladian ordering of the St. Andrews Art Center project has been replaced by a mixture of blocky neoclassical symmetries which travesty Schinkel's Altes Museum, and loose curves that repeat the geometrical sloppiness of the unbuilt 1971 Olivetti project in Milton Keynes.

As the German sequence continues —and it has to be seen as including nonmuseum projects like the Meineckestrasse housing (complete with its heavy-handed joke about the building forming the "hinge" of the neighborhood), as well as the Dresdner Bank in Marburg—the bits and pieces of his Germanizing manner begin to come together in a fusion that maintains the disparate nature of the parts and yet pulls together old jokes and new inventions, classical quotes and mechanistic loans, into a stunning yet unified consummation at Stuttgart. This is not the place to repeat my previous raves about the Neue Staatsgalerie, but it has been generally recognized as the best Stirling for years, the only building so far that sums up the ambitions of the eighties as effectively as Centre Pompidou did for the seventies, and the only design that has any hope of forcing later historians to treat Post-Modernism as a movement to be taken seriously which is a laugh because Stirling's own view of the movement, as such, is anything but serious!

#### The Book

Stirling's evolution from allegedly semiliterate provincial tough guy to the erudite superstar of international architecture who emerged definitively at Stuttgart is all neatly laid out in this generously proportioned booka little too neatly perhaps, for the standardized three-column layout with centered headings tends to reduce everything to a gutless Po-Mo prettiness that is wildly at variance with the raw physical impact of many of the works when encountered on the site and in real life. Even the dust jacket, for starters, is illustrated by the only view of the only part of the Stuttgart gallery that can make it look like a work of routine Post-Modernism.

It's all laid out in tidy order, but not very usefully explained. The quotes from contemporary criticism that garland the presentation of each scheme do something to help, but the text to which everyone will turn for enlightenment, the introduction by none less than Stirling's old mentor, the great Colin Rowe, is a sad disappointment indeed. It refers, as it should, to the architectural culture of Liverpool when Stirling was at the university there, it animadverts (the mot juste, I fear) to some crucial texts and personalities who affected everybody's thinking in that milieu, but it also contains more than one example of the "overlong digression on an unconsidered topic" which has increasingly come to mark Rowe's work, and in

It gives me no pleasure to say this-my own debt to Colin Rowe is probably greater than Stirling'sbut I have seen enough of Stirling's career in close-up, and saw enough of at least the end of the golden age of the Liverpool University School of Architecture, to know that this is parlously thin stuff. Sure, it contains one or two very sharp observations, and some very smart cracks at the likes of Jencks and Portoghesi and Mario Botta-but can it really be the case, for instance, that Rowe is the only member of the Stirling circle who cannot now remember how he and Alan Cordingley divided up the work on their Sheffield University competition entry in 1953, or is so unobservant that, as far as he knows, Stirling has never used one-point perspective. All this, and more like it, I had gloomily observed even before I discovered that in a single footnote reference to myself Rowe had made three mistakes of scholarship in four lines of text!

#### Crucial Cases

It is not easy to write honorific introductory essays to collected works, I know, but what is peculiarly unsettling about this one is its studied superficiality, both "literal and phenomenal," to steal one of Rowe's own best phrases. By this I mean not only the steady drizzle of intellectual namedropping which is offered as a characterization of life in Liverpool in the forties, but—more importantly— Rowe's virtual refusal ever to discuss the interiors of the buildings.

In the case of the extensions to the Architecture School at Rice University, this seems particularly perverse. Here, even at the level of literal superficiality, Rowe's analysis fails because he has not seen the work at first hand, and therefore cannot appreciate how subtly Stirling's brick detailing subverts that of the earlier work it appears to copy. The whole point of Rice, however, is that the grafting of new onto old goes literally deeper than the apparent "keeping in keeping" of exterior surfaces, but includes a whole monumental sequence of interior spaces that not only tie old and new together functionally and at a higher aesthetic level, but also do this in a manner that is in itself a commentary on the nature and aspirations of architecture schools. The clue is in the actual studios which. whatever floor level they occur on, are contrived to look like the kind of converted attics which many architecture school folks regard as some sort of ideal.

When this is understood, one can begin to entertain a more constructive kind of thought about the apparently "conventional" gallery spaces at Stuttgart and the exact level at which the central rotunda refers to that of Schinkel's Altes Museum—whereas all that Rowe can come up with on the topic is a complaint that "the building remains an Altes Museum without a façade."

But if he is so hot on facades-"the existential interface between eye and idea" (neat phrase, but does it mean anything worth meaning?)-then why has he nothing to say about the most existential of all Stirling's recent interfaces, the rudely striped and snub-cornered exterior of the extension to the Fogg Museum at Harvard? Its assertive defiance of all the other buildings which share its immediate environment is the polar opposite to the apparent deference of the Rice extension, a gesture that exceeds the History Building's defiance of the other Cambridge by a whole order of magnitude ... and then some!

When, and if, the bridge connecting the extension back to the original Fogg over Broadway is built, it will provide a *promenade architecturale* between two culturally important institutions that will extend the defiance by implication to the Carpenter Center as well, where Le Corbusier's ramped promenade from nowhere to nowhere has recently begun to attract the epithet of "pointless" with increasing frequency. If Stirling's calculatedly graceless elevations are indeed intended to imply that the adjoining buildings are such a load of pretentious crap that they deserve no visual respect, it is a proposal that deserves our serious attention. It is the sort of inversion of Ken Frampton's "Critical Regionalism" that requires some courage in these timid times, but after the different kinds of deference to the preexisting environment shown at Rice and Stuttgart, this kind of "Critical Cosmopolitanism" can hardly be accidental. (The inside joke, which none of our nit-picking influencespotters has noted yet, is that the source of the Fogg's window-concealing façade stripes, as well as the snubbed corner, appears to be a rather boring office building about ten blocks back up the Konrad-Adenauer-Weg from the gallery in Stuttgart!)

Rice and Fogg are the crucial cases of recent Stirling work, the extremes of how far he is prepared to go in his relations with his surroundings, extremes that Stuttgart falls neatly between, without being in any sense a compromise. Between them he has shown an extraordinary range and flexibility, not approached by any of the other Pritzker laureates (not even Hollein, let alone Johnson). It can only whet our appetites for whatever he will now come up with for the "Mansion House Square" site in the City of London, a site from which a very late Mies van der Rohe design has recently been banished by a peculiar alliance of institutional conservatism, bureaucratic inertia, and rabid anti-Modernism. Many of the anti-Modernists involved have track records as Stirling baiters that extend back to the original uproar at Cambridge, so the outcome of all this could be very interesting, and could make a new edition of this book necessary even sooner than expected.

## A BUNCH OF WHITE GUYS (AND THREE JAPANESE) SITTING AROUND TALKING or THE THREE PPP (A PARODY)

#### BY MICHAEL SORKIN



#### Prologue:

P. Eisenman:

I've an idea to make an impression I'll get all the boys to come to a session The Whites and the Greys (but no women or blacks) Just the usual stars (and the usual hacks) But how shall I name it? Of course! After me! Let's have a conference and call it P. 3! You'll note I've deployed deft conceptual notation A 3's just an E awaiting rotation. Plus P connotes mystery, fascist, Masonic What a marvelous joke, never mind it's moronic.

First (and only) scene: Twenty-six men are seated around a table. Twenty-five of them are architects. They show slides. The twenty-sixth holds a tape recorder. From time to time there is a knock at the door. The twenty-six pay no attention to this. As the scene begins, an old man rises to speak.

Philip:

Bonjour, I'm a whore.

The Others:

Bonjour! Bonjour!

Philip:

Here's a new building that should make a buck.

The Others:

It's ugly as sin!

Philip:

I don't give a fuck!

Rem K. (from the side):

This work is pathetic Creatively bare And all you can say Is that you don't care?

Philip:

I yam what I yam I build what must be I don't give a damn Don't you all envy me!

#### Leon:

At least this guy's honest, For the rest, go to hell! You've totally missed What we Kriers know so well. Build like the ancients Divvy towns into quarters! Or I'll have you lot shot For not following orders And to teach you a lesson I'm not going to smile Nor will I build (at least for a while) And now I'll sit down.

Rob:

Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!

### Stern:

What this man says Has a lot of attraction Death to the modern! Death to abstraction! We need columns and lintels I always employ 'em I copy the past Just the same as these goyim!

#### Isozaki:

Well done little Bob You make a nice palace But I prefer buildings That look like a phallus.

#### **Tigerman**:

Very droll Iso I love it to pieces Look what I've done for Knoll— It's just like one of Mies's!

Ungers:

And here's one of mine That's totally gridded It's also enormous No missing I did it.

#### Leon:

Better you'd hid it It's nothing but kitsch.

#### **Ungers:**

Shut up you puerile son of a bitch!

#### Robertson (moderating, as usual):

Calm yourselves, boys, No need for alarm Look at this building I built on a farm!

#### Roche:

Rot! Humbug and Bah! Why didn't you say Na, Na, Na to the Shah?

Aymonino:

The imperial mode! That's one I feel at home in What say we vote To rebuild all that is Roman.

Half the Gathering:

What a splendid idea!

The Other Half:

Completely hare-brained!

Harry Cobb (sotto voce):

Would anyone know if I quietly abstained?

The 26th Man:

It will not escape note I've taped everything wholly: Do you mind if I vote? I'm the man from Rizzoli.

#### All:

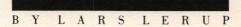
The man from Rizzoli has got it all down! Who here was pithy and who was a clown. Vote with us please (history won't blame us) If this man weren't here, we wouldn't be famous! Let's give three cheers for all we hold holy The first for ourselves, number two for Rizzoli And a third for the thing that unites all our nations Our outstanding sense of public relations So let's meet anon (excluding the rest) To prove once again that we are the best And no one will care how many buildings we flub They'll know we're important 'cause we belong to the club.

The Charlottesville Tapes, Rizzoli, 1985, 224 pp., illus., \$25.00 pb.

# FRANK O. GEHRY



FRANK GEHRY HOUSE



Frank O. Gehry: Buildings and Projects, Peter Arnell and Ted Bickford, editors, essay by Germano Celant, Rizzoli, 1985, 304 pp., illus., \$45.00 cloth; \$29.95 paper.

Frank Gehry's architectural work has, despite its acknowledged quality, been relegated to the margins of the mainstream under the rubrics of "eccentric" and "artsy." I think there is a deep-seated reason for this, but first let me speak about the book on Gehry's work recently published by Rizzoli.

The book seems more like a catalogue of an imaginary exhibition than a book proper. It is consciously left open-ended, since, as the editors Arnell and Bickford suggest, this is just the beginning—a curious notion, because Gehry has a large body of work that is extremely coherent and finite. The editors' decision sets a tone of almost frivolity that underscores Gehry's marginality, and does him a great disservice.

The book contains a complete list of works, an interview with Gehry by Arnell, a "critical" essay by Italian critic Germano Celant, and a collection of projects with texts by Mason Andrews. The format is big and floppy. Unfortunately, in order to see the projects properly, the reader has to turn the book ninety degrees, which unconsciously suggests that we should look at the projects as if they were pinups. The interview is pretty good, although the atmosphere established in the name of the "working-document" is a bit too chummy—the "takes," as Arnell refers to his and Gehry's positions vis-à-vis the work, have that false talk-show atmosphere of intimacy that makes real intimacy impossible (even if desirable). Here is a sample "cut" (about fish):

PA: Did you love her? [Grandma] FG: Yes PA: How long did you play with the carp? FG: Every Thursday

Although amusing, these tactics tend to divert Gehry when he begins to reveal something about his work. The attempt to create pseudo-closeness between the reader and the "hero" is blatantly commercial in light of the Carsons, the Cavetts, and the *Interview* magazines. It may lead to instant fame but hardly to an understanding of the work, and Gehry is too good for such a fate. Still, when Arnell stays away from the personal and the flippant, the discussion does reveal some important aspects of Gehry's architecture.

The tone set in the interview makes the essay by Germano Celant problematic. The reader is abruptly transported from the talk show to the upper eschelons of post-structuralist criticism. Celant uses the whole arsenal of concepts available to this particular criticism with such enthusiastic verbosity that his real insights are obscured by conceptual debris, ranging from Barthe's "writing degree-zero" to "architecture as the mise-en-scène" via Proust, Foucault, and Baudrillard. Gehry's work ends up being everything from a commentary on the city to the representation of earthquakes, leaving the reader breathless. Since Celant argues that these are conscious moves on Gehry's part, they become particularly hard to match with the interview, which suggests that ol' Frank is a middle-class guy who loves his kids and wife and shops at Brooks Brothers. A guy who, even if he did play with carp and hang out with a bunch of weird painters, is really no more than an American architect, which clearly excludes the farfetched behaviors-and thoughts-of a poststructuralist. Nevertheless, with a bit of editing, Celant comes through and to the point:



FRANK GEHRY, AEROSPACE MUSEUM

Like sharp-pointed beaks, his buildings pierce through the thick, blind atmosphere of architecture and its empty simplemindedness, upsetting perception with creations that set the imaginary and the real on the same level.

These comments lead me to the projects, and the relevance of Gehry's work. Out of some one hundred and sixty projects, sixty are more or less described, giving the reader an excellent overview—which compensates somewhat for the skimpy illustrations of some of the highlights. Each project is preceded by a short, often very insightful text by Mason Andrews. Since the projects and their associated texts are the major part of the book, it becomes a great resource that every American architect ought to have at his or her elbow.

A recurrent complaint about Gehry's work is that it is more about art than about architecture. I shall argue later that this contention is wrong and, although much of his inspiration may come from art, or fish as it may be, when brought forth as work it is always within the domain of architecture leaving aside all other externalities.

Greatly simplified, Gehry's work seems to be about three things: the simple box (aka the dumb box), wood framing, and the covering material (plywood, corrugated metal, asphalt shingles, etc.). Each of these three elements also belongs in three architectural categories: figure, structure, and surface, separate systems worthy of their own separate investigation. Yet all three are of necessity integrated and dependent—the figure of the box is always made up of structure and surface. Incidentally, the separation of covering system and structural system has obvious Modernist roots in Corbu's separation of the same elements. What is interesting about Gehry's separation is that it is only visual—thus turning Corbu on his head, while still remaining didactic and Modernistic.

The interrogation of the box has been an ongoing preoccupation in Gehry's work. The first time it appears, in the Faith Plating Company of 1964, its independence as a conceptual and actual figure is established. Gehry sees clearly the significance of "the plain plastered cube" (Banham) in California building traditions when he writes:

Very large areas of Los Angeles are made out of just these kind of elementary cubes—they nestle among the foothills and line the straight avenues of the plains. They are economically, structurally, and—given the sunshine—architecturally, the local norm and vernacular.

Anyone who begins to understand Los Angeles visually has to accept, even celebrate, their normative standing....

The importance of the box is established through its prevalence and repetition, but its status as an architectonic object is established by sunshine which, through the privilege of shadow and glow, celebrates the box, giving it detail and material presence.

The acknowledgment of the box, its presence, figure, and role as shelter and fundament, is established through the work, beginning with Faith Plating, via the Danziger Studio and Residence of 1964 and the American School of Dance of 1968. The first real warping of the box seems to occur in the O'Neill Hay Barn of 1968. The most glorious moment of the warped box is the Ron Davis House of 1972. Taut and stretched, the surface of the racked box is almost ripped apartnot at the windows (they seem still to be within the confines of their figurative limits), but at the edges-the

framing as werewolf is ripping at the seams of the dumb box. In fact, the box is no longer dumb but dangerous.

The acknowledgment of this danger is not just this writer's textual ploy; the danger is real, since it threatens the very center of architectural enterprise. This danger, and its later full expression, lead critics and laymen alike to call Gehry an artist or to remain silent, thereby removing him from center-stage, confining him to the margins of the architectural project. It is not only incorrect to do so, but, in a theoretical sense, a real disaster.

The roots of these exclusionary tactics run deep in Western culture. Kant in his fundamental work on aesthetics revealed this bias by making a distinction between the ergon (the work) and the parergon (the by-work) or the decoration. But as the French philosopher Derrida has shown, there is no way we can exclude the draping of the nude from the nude itself, nor can we similarly exclude the warped box from the domain of the dumb box. even if the warp turns into rupture and disintegration, as it does in Gehry's own residence of 1978. Just as the draping is in some sense both a reflection of the nude and not (because it is also cloth), the warped box contains the form of the dumb box while simultaneously opening the door to a whole domain of boxiness that speaks more about the idea of the box than its simple form. Staying within the confines of the dumb box allows the orthodox critic or viewer to get on with more pressing agendas, such as function, context, or climate, leaving the realm of the poetics of the box behind in the dust.

Indeed, the poetics of the box is not easy to deal with, since both words and concepts have their own limitations and the boxiness lives within the work itself, limiting its appreciation to the senses of touch, smell, and vision. Attempts to capture this elusive reality may force the viewer to employ vague, yet clumsy words and concepts to allow the reader to see through the screen of language.

The Ron Davis House remains for most Gehry fans the acid test of his genius. Fortunately, the project is also one of the best documented in the book. Like a giant playpen, the warped box contains smaller boxes within, connected by gangways and stairs that allow the gaze to interrogate the world of the box as in its own landscape. One of the perplexing things about the box, it strikes the viewer, is that it can never be entered. Once "inside" the large warped box, it becomes the backdrop—the landscape itself, horizon and all-while the new ramble of boxes comes into focus. Aside from revealing the hermetic nature of the box, the Davis House also reveals the didactic nature of the wood structure in Gehry's work. The architectural promenade, described and marked by the almost-grid of two-by-fours, becomes the measure by which distances, heights, and widths can be established. The covered surface remains unmeasurable and abstract, until it is made to gape and reveal the underlying structure which, through its familiarity and internal logical clarity, allows all of us to measure things. Consequently, when the framing seems to run amok in Gehry's house, the internal nature of the framing system remains conservative and logical (otherwise it couldn't be built). Yet critics shy away, mumbling that the work is either about painting or sculpture, refusing to see that the venture out of the margins of the orthodox center is a conscious search for new space, and, since the instruments are the very stuff of building, the search is very much about architecture and its unknown possibilities.

Frankly, I couldn't care less if Gehry's Wagner House of 1978 or his own house of the same year or the Familian House are the representation of buildings in an earthquake zone. (If they are, it seems silly, if not a bit sinister.) Far more importantly, the houses can be seen as a vigorous exploration of architecture and its relation to a concerned dweller. Architecturally, the box, its wood structure and skin, is molded, exposed, and stretched so as to give the dweller an architectural promenade that is far more athletic, erratic, and questioning than was ever imagined by Le Corbusier. Yet the core of the house is still left intact. This is particularly evident in Gehry's own house, where the "dumb little house" sits intact behind fragments of a larger "dangerous" box. Once the initial break with the established figures of the house are accepted, Gehry's search seems modest, measured, and tactful, since it retains the kernel of the singlefamily house.

Yet Gehry is a hero, because he turns down some of the big real estate dealers, and pressures his upper middle-class clientele to rethink their domestic existence in favor of the search itself. The Benson House and the house for a filmmaker, both built in 1981, demonstrate this. Here the very binding substance of the singlefamily house is attacked, resulting in a series of independent boxes scattered recklessly in the landscape. We are, by some shrewd sleight of hand, brought back full circle to the Davis House; it is just that the outer box has been removed. Or has it? There is still a box made up of lot lines and zoning regulations, creating an invisible but all-powerful box that not even the break-out master himself can crack.

There is obviously much more to say about his houses (and the public work, which I have not dealt with at all), but to conclude my argument that everything Gehry does has its place within the confines of architecture, it suffices to end with a comment on Gehry's fish.

Gehry has lately done several lamps in the shape of a fish or a snake, and, as suggested in the quote from the interview, his interest in this motif may have something to do with child-



FRANK GEHRY, NORTON RESIDENCE

hood and gefilte fish. Architecturally, "scales" showed up early in Gehry's work, first simply as shingles on the roof, but after that scales in the sky, as in the acoustic canopy of the Merriweather Post Pavilion of Music in 1967, and much later on the roof of the World Expo Amphitheater of 1982, and always on the wallfor example, the scalloped asphalt shingles on the Benson House (resulting here in a true "essay of the surface"). The step from the surface to the fish itself may seem radical, but not in light of his concern for the box, and particularly for the box-asfigure. Gehry's work is not about a Venturi decorated shed, but about boxiness itself-much closer to Kahn's search for decoration within the object and its joints. The fish and its otherthe snake-is simply the box disguised in a figure external to architecture itself. Note, however, how through construction and scale in Folly: the Prison of 1983, Gehry forces both fish and snake back into the fold of architecture - at least for the moment.

The fish-as-house, the house-aschimney or as-bay-window or as-stair (in the Indiana Avenue Houses of 1981) are consequently part of the interrogation of the figure in architecture. At the other end of the spectrum, Peter Eisenman struggles with form without figure; whether both pursuits will prove cul-de-sacs, it is too early to tell. Clearly, a strategy of exasperating the architectural object is dangerous, since it propels the practitioner toward the margins of what is considered acceptable. On the other hand, we can expect no less from American Heroes.

In the meantime, buy the book, fish and all.



"DAVID HICKS AT BREAKFAST IN HIS ALBANY CHAMBERS, A COMPLEX OF ROOMS UNIFIED WITH MANY SHADES OF RED."

The English Room, Derry Moore and Michael Pick, Harmony Books (distributed by Crown), 1985, 144 pp., illus., \$19.95.

English Style, Suzanne Slesin and Stafford Cliff, Crown, 1984, 288 pp., illus., \$35.00.

The Englishwoman's Bedroom, Elizabeth Dickson, editor, Salem House, 1985, 160 pp., illus., \$26.95.

English Elegance, Judy Brittain and Patrick Kinmonth, Holt Rinehart & Winston, 160 pp., illus., \$19.95.

Never has there been such a rich kaleidoscope of imagery, nor such intense interest in decoration among an affluent youngish generation of homemakers.

The publishing of books and magazines on interior decoration has reached astonishing proportions. Efficient presses in Japan and Italy, even in England, issue an endless flood of large format \$20-\$50 books vivid with hundreds of color photographs. For less than \$5 a month the greatly improved *House and Garden* and its gaudier rival *Architectural Digest* can, between them, bring you 400-500 pages of example and enticement!

Antique hunting, fabric selection, and the decorative crafts have become consuming passions for many. A major industry as never before, interior decoration grasps the imagination of an ever wider public, fueled by books, magazines, and publicity. Cultural impulses tapped by this industry surely include the general recalling of modernism as eclecticism, license to approve of and mimic past styles, related desire to collect evidence of the past, and a broader general sensibility of conservation and preservation of heritage.

These impulses seem to be part of a quest for security in an increasingly insecure world. To pick over the heaps of history, to make personal judgments about one's surroundings, to accept or reject models, these are marks of taste and of maturity in today's society. Anyone may become a connoisseur, even a patron, of the decorative arts. What was once the preserve of the very rich is now within the grasp of the aspiring, for the most part nuclear households lacking a home full of heirlooms to get them started. Fueling their urges are today's tastemakers, the journalists, stylists, and design editors.

These teach repudiation of "department store decoration," the pursuit of quality, the sanctity of originality (or at least the original). Furthermore they tell you where to buy the stuff. The example for their method is the fashion industry, which still sets par in the packaging of gestalt, and Ralph Lauren and Terence Conran are their patron saints. Decoration has always had its fashions but now it may have become part of fashion, which is new.

Successful creation of the market

depends on stimulation of desire through indoctrination, and today's publishing blizzard is a wonderful instrument in this respect, suited to the huge growth in scale of the market and the relationship between the ideal model and its practical emulation through merchandising. The models, as always, are European. In fact the very concepts of modern interior decoration stem from the history of America's relationship with Europe. This is not hard to understand. The reasons were elucidated as early as 1840 by Edgar Allen Poe in a highly sarcastic essay "Philosophy of Furniture."\* Poe spoke of the "aristocracy of dollars" and the pathetic equation of cost with value he saw in contemporary American decoration. He extolled English decoration as supreme, going so far as to mock American ostentation by reference to the relative independence of means from taste as a mark of Englishness.

Lack of confidence in matters of taste, and consequent reliance on cost as a gauge of value, resulted naturally from a lack of aristocratic models in the young republic. American Chippendale, complete with its often charming malapropisms of composition and proportion, created the beginnings of a national style prior to independence. After 1776, noble models were unwelcome and the moral tone of providence and self-sufficiency dominated at the expense of an aesthetic of domestic comfort and con-

# be an England By Andrew Robeneck



ELVEDEN HALL, THE INDIAN HALL

sumption. These years produced the promising American Federal style of Duncan Phyfe and the American Empire of Charles-Honoré Lannuier. But these were quickly eclipsed by the advent of Thonet, Eastlake, patent furniture, and the babel of neo-styles of the late 19th century, serving the aspirations of a population growing rapidly in wealth and number.

The absence of local aristocratic models, the profusion of styles, and the remoteness of Europe combined to create a demand in America for tastemakers who would be surrogate aristocrats, to guide the eyes and pocketbooks of the newly wealthy. Lord Duveen's husbandry of Henry Clay Frick's art collection provides the best-known example, but by the 1920s Elsie de Wolfe was on the scene as the first modern decorator, "introducing new American money to old French furniture," making up the rules, and creating singlehandedly among the rich the lasting fashion for French 18th-century decoration which dominated America until 1940. Not literal French 18th-century decoration, of course, but her appropriation of it into a distinctive style of her own, a style she could propagate among her clientele (including the Fricks) and through her bestseller, The House in Good Taste.

To inspire postwar American decoration in the same way came Nancy Lancaster, whose influence in marrying Colonial and English styles has been inestimable. But the most interesting thing about Mrs. Lancaster, in the context of this discussion, is that her influence has been largely indirect, exercised from England rather than from America. This was made possible by the advent of color photography in the decorating magazines. What Mrs. Lancaster and her protégé John Fowler were doing in England (mostly to her own houses) could be pored over in Virginia and on Park Avenue as soon as the ink was dry. Ironically, the photographs seldom captured the essence of what endeared Mrs. Lancaster to her English admirers. It is an irony best expressed in her own words:

I have one talent. I can feel a house like most people feel another's personality. The character of the house should stand out, not someone's taste. There's nothing original about me, I'm a percolator. And the thing about decoration is that I'm agin it. It has sterilized homes in every country. In England people have had houses where things have accumulated for ages. There's a feeling of continuity in these houses. The mania now for getting everything so pretty and perfect, it's rubbing the gloss off that. It's a racket, like puffed sleeves. Now all the houses look alike.

Mrs. Lancaster may be disappointed that her innate grasp of Englishness did not travel well, or suffered at the hands of lesser talents, but in terms of the decorating industry's needs she and her firm, Colefax Fowler, have been largely responsible for the burgeoning commerce in English antiques, bibelots, fabrics, pictures, and paraphernalia.

Interestingly, at about the time Mrs. Lancaster's influence gained hold in American decorating, that other emigré and entomologist of zeitgeist, Nikolaus Pevsner, was trying to catch and mount The Englishness of English Art (his BBC Reith Lectures for 1955), inflaming the sensibilities of a generation of English historians in the process. Pevsner's often interesting but just as frequently silly assertions on the subject boil down to a limp essence of "picturesque informality." It was as easy for an Englishman to mock his essay as it was difficult for Pevsner to characterize the eccentricities and elusive oxymorons of true Englishness, which Mrs. Lancaster understood so well: the grand squalor, the ancient novelty, the quaint formality, the quotidian exotica, and the strangely familiar. These are attitudes of atmosphere rather than of style, and atmosphere is hard to capture, particularly when it's largely unselfconscious and experienced at second hand, through photographs.

The unselfconsciousness of English decoration makes it appealing, of course, so different from French or Italian decoration, and so difficult to emulate—like the noble savage, whose virtues we may admire but never

share. Indeed, if the task of the American decorator has been no more than to provide an idealized picture of his client's circumstances, then the books under review will be of little use to decorators. At best they may point the way to a new American eclecticism, one that values the livedin look, that welcomes foreign ingredients, that is tolerant and comfortable, and acknowledges the wear and tear of constant use. That would represent, for this reviewer, progress and maturity in American decoration. At worst, these books will simply fuel next year's decorating fashion, borne high on the "Treasure Houses of Britain" exhibition, to Mrs. Lancaster's chagrin.

To summarize the major premise, Americans have created the art of interior decoration as we know it through a historical relationship with Europe. A strong tributary of the flood of recent books on decoration is made up of attempts to capture the essence of English interiors. Evidence shows us that some Americans have succeeded in capturing Englishness to the admiration of the English. The minor premise is that many talented Americans, professional decorators and amateurs alike, will pore over these books. The conclusion of the syllogism should be that these talented Americans will or will not succeed in capturing the essence of Englishness as a result of looking at these books. Of course, as an Englishman, my conceit is that they cannot succeed. But the reader must judge.

The English Room is the most satisfactory of the selection for this reviewer. The book was photographed by Derry Moore, a London correspondent for Architectural Digest (and coconspirator with Brendan Gill of the best forgotten Dream Comes True: Great Houses of Los Angeles), and very well printed in Italy (the quality of printing is important in this genre). Moore's photographs are exceptional for their soft color, and he is a master of natural lighting. He sometimes resorts to "Architectural Digest lighting" -concealed floods and strident infill flash-and the results ring false, but such lapses are few among the 48 houses shown. The book benefits from inclusion of old favorites (Loseley, Hatfield, Sissinghurst, Kedleston Hall) and famous idiosyncrasies, including the "Indian" Elvedon Hall, the "Moorish" Sledmere, and Vanessa Bell's Charleston Manor. Most interesting, though, are T. E. Lawrence's austere Clouds' Hill, G. B. Shaw's cozy Shaw's Corner, and Margaret Duchess of Argyll's house by Syrie Maugham on Upper Grosvenor Street, a premier example of her famous "white" style, untouched since 1936. The collection does not ignore lesser-known homes that illustrate Englishness graphically. Moore's camera lingers lovingly on the ruined leather upholstery of Holker Hall and the awesome taxidermy of Thorp Perrow and Callaly Castle.

One reason I liked this book is that its text is genuinely informative. We shall see how the other publishers have tackled the problem of putting words between the pictures, but this text does not disgrace Derry Moore's photographs. The author is Michael Pick, a Cambridge historian who offers facts about owners and designers, anecdotes, and relevant history. Pick is squarely in the camp of England's "new fogey" school of art historians about whom I wrote in DBR 7 ("Rehabilitating the English 30s"), and his selection of houses is accordingly eclectic, to the reader's benefit. They are not presented as models for emulation and there are no decorating hints. The presentation is elegant and the book a good value at under \$20.

English Style is the latest collaboration between Suzanne Slesin and Stafford Cliff. Ms. Slesin, assistant editor of the New York Times Home Section, has been the tireless propagator in the U.S.A. of Terence Conran's concept of decorating books, several of which were designed by Mr. Cliff. Her hugely successful High Tech (with Joan Kron) was followed by the more atmospheric French Style.

High Tech was an excited popularization of the use of industrial products in domestic settings, something that had been going on since the 1920s in architectural and interior design circles. Using good photography to help readers make decisions about their own homes, it did not move far from Conran in style. Its point, valuable for the not-yet-rich, was that industrial products can be chic as well as inexpensive.

If High Tech marked the end of the "helpful hints" era of decorating publishing, it also ushered in tastemaking by the book, as prefigured in Conran's House Book, and exemplified by Slesin's French Style, or Pierre Deux's French Country. These newer books are honed instruments of the soft sell, offering rhapsodic visual appeals to common snobberies in the manner of advertising. The houses, the settings, and the objects shown are intended to symbolize social cachet in much the same way as are BMW's and Rolex watches.

Such an approach worked well for *French Style* because of the essential homogeneity of French taste, and the willingness of the French to be taken for cultural models (that Paris should remain the fashion capital of the world is no accident). Here was a clear set of harmonious models, carefully edited for consistency of both presentation and consumption. Commerce in French stuff burgeoned.

English Style, in contrast, mirrors well the broad diversity of tastes found in England, each example clearly a product of its creator's sensibilities, whether grand or modest, forward or backward looking, formal or informal. What they share is a romantic, even nostalgic outlook. The book is divided into topics such as "English Classics," "Conversions," "Country Houses," "Houses in Town," "Flats and Apartments." Each section includes the work of professional decorators, but the majority shown are the homes of designers, painters, architects, writers, and amateurs. A handful of obsessively pure or minimalist examples stand in stark contrast to the predominant blend of old and new of varying quality. The *rus in urbe* commercialism of Conran or Laura Ashley is frequently evident but never dominant, just another resource. Furniture, pictures, and objects occupy places in their owners' affections rather than in some idealized composition. Kitchens, in particular, speak of convivial hospitality rather than of prettiness or, worse, the laboratory.

This book is a rich compendium of personalities, each expressed in a very English way, yet not amounting to an English style; certainly not a style coherent enough to be copied or marketed, more a bountiful flea market stall to be picked over, or simply enjoyed. Perhaps as a caveat, the book ends with a section on "English Style Abroad," featuring the stylish but stagey apartment of American decorator Mario Buatta, known for his "interpretations" of English style. His effort, for all its judicious mix of periods and piles of books, remains self-conscious. Among these examples, only Keith Irvine's upstate New York farmhouse convinces, but then he used to work for the late John Fowler. The text, such as it is, is sparing and less sappy than French Style. Fiona McCarthy contributes a perceptive and worthwhile introduction. English Style is rounded out with the usual catalogue of sources, all American, which may be good but will be no substitute for taste and judgment.

The Englishwoman's Bedroom was photographed by Lucinda Lambton and edited by Elizabeth Dickson, another Architectural Digest correspondent and coauthor of the Laura Ashley Book of Home Decorating (reviewed in DBR 6). This glimpse of the boudoir is charming, in that 26 fashionable ladies describe their bedrooms in the first person. They range from Viscountess Astor to Zandra Rhodes, from aristocratic to zany. It is slight material to make a book, but, taken together with that other first person narrative The Englishwoman's House (reviewed in DBR 7), represents the best current guide for foreigners who would tap the psyche of English style. The importance of childhood memory, of nostalgia, of husbands, lovers, and children, family furniture and pictures, is evident in these accounts. Although few resort to professional decorators, most are articulate about light, color, and proportion. Many of these ladies confess to the hoarding instinct, to untidyness, to a penchant for the ad hoc, and an acceptance of the less than perfect. Yet the results are mostly pleasing, and distinctly English. The bedroom is a haven and a refuge from life, whether lace-laden dream cavern or new-wave-teen in style. There is nothing here for the prurient, nor is this a style book, yet it succeeds in providing genuine insight on Englishness.

English Elegance is the least satisfactory of these books, yet it is by turns amusing. Edited by English Vogue's Living Section editor Judy Brittain, with a text cobbled together by breathless Vogue feature writer Patrick Kinmonth, it also features the work of eleven photographers. In England it was published as Living in Vogue, a collection of Vogue rewrites, which explains some anomalous content under its new title, including Pierre Loti's wonderful house near La Rochelle, Erté's chateau in Paris, and a curious introduction featuring two fine photographs of Palladio's Villa Poiana! English elegance?

The book is in two parts. The first presents efforts of professional decorators such as John Stefanidis, Christopher Gibbs, David Hicks, David Mlinaric, Tom Parr, Nicholas Haslam, the late Geoffrey Bennison, and Bernard Nevill (whose Philip Webb house figures also in *The English Room* and in *English Style*). These examples are interesting in revealing the legacy of John Fowler and Sibyl Colefax, yet the houses are mostly too primped up for the photographer to be convincing. The veil of marketing hangs over them. One must turn to the second, "amateur" part of the book, and particularly a shot of the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth in his sitting room ("sitting room not study because I sit here"), to capture the essence proclaimed by the book's title. Tables groan beneath letters, bills and books, trays of drinks, and, incongruously, a portable radio (ca. 1965). Grand yet somehow shabby, this interior epitomizes the contradictions of English style, as do the Duke's comments, which leave one in no doubt that he sees himself as the mere custodian of something very wonderful begun 400 years ago and never to be complete.

Other examples in this section of the book show fashionable folk at home: David Hockney, Teddy Millington-Drake, Angus McBean, Duncan Grant, and others. For all their trendiness these examples convey well the essential point that the best interiors are not arranged with others in mind, or to impress, but as mirrors on the souls who inhabit them. In his introduction to this part of the book Kinmonth quotes from a 1925 Vogue article "A Revolt Against Some Kinds of Excellence": "We shall find any interior that does not flow from our own instincts a cold unconvincing background for ourselves," a sentiment as true today as at any time before.

Of course the mystique of Englishness depends as much on snobbery as on a revered innate sense of continuity. Having so much, whether of tradition, ancestors, pictures, or stuffed trout, makes it easy to despise the attempts of imitators on either side of the Atlantic (or the Channel). Only the quality of unselfconsciousness redeems this snobbery and lends to English decoration its sense of timelessness so ardently craved in the New World.

\*Gentleman's Magazine, May 1840, reprinted in House and Garden, November 1983.

# COMMERCIAL



BERTALL, POSTER FOR A GASTRONOMICAL SERIES, 1845



BEGGARSTAFF BROTHERS, POSTER FOR THE LONDON PRESENTATION OF THE PLAY, A TRIP TO CHINATOWN, 1895

The Poster: A Worldwide Survey and History, Alain Weill, G. K. Hall, 1985, 424 pp., illus., \$35.00.

The 20th-Century Poster: Design of the Avant-Garde, Dawn Ades, Robert Brown, Mildred Friedman, Armin Hoffmann and Alma Law, Walker Art Center and Abbeville, 1984, 208 pp., illus., \$45.00 cloth; \$24.95 paper.

100 Texas Posters, Donald L. Pierce, Jr., Graphic Design Press, 1985, 106 pp., illus., \$25.00 pb.

Posters are signs of their times: their images give the ephemeral but immediately recognizable look of their period, their spatial systems indicate the cognitive preferences of the moment. Their texts are significant through the lean, hungry, and quickly learned codes of language. Posters give entry into the active and passive stores of visual memory that cannot be reduced to language. Since their images escape codes, they can be used to make new comparisons and combinations with old and new experiences, or new sense out of old non-sense. Thus the poster was a useful social tool to invent and express the changed concept of the market necessitated by the expanding colonial and industrial economy of the 19th century.

At first, the poster preserved the illusion of the traditional marketplace for the exchange of goods, the public street. (Mid-century streets even had to be protected from posters by limiting the number of places for them, and the number of bill-posters.) The juxtaposition of the posted images of a dream world of goods and happiness and the counterclaims of the real life of the street provided continual irony in the still unsegregated 19th-century pedestrian city, where the laborers who made the goods mixed with the wealthy whose capital financed them.

These new economic and social ironies jostled sharply with the humor of the early posters themselves. These were at first typographic, but by the 1840s included images centered on a marketplace humor that continued an ancient folklore of exchange. This humor turned on the body and reversals around and through it, moving from the inside and outside of the body itself (in eating, elimination, sex, birth, and death) to overturned

# PAPER BYFRANCES BUTLER



JULES CHÉRET, JOB CIGARETTE PAPER, 1895



WALTER HERDEG, ST. MORITZ, 1936

conventions of gender and power, on into the abstractions of verbal and visual puns. This market-exchange humor had survived the puritanical 17th century in folk art and in some marginal literature, especially in the later tall tales of the American frontier, and in the melodramas of the popular urban theater. Market humor, with its shifting extremes of size, miniaturization and giganticism, puns with words, things, and parts of the body, and sly reversals and elisions of social role, also survived in the urban poster. The humor was transformed from broad jokes about fornication, reproduction, and elimination into discrete images of the mouth and eating, or conversely, sexuality and reproduction, located in images of enormous female hindquarters, which served as a generic locus for many kinds of bodily exchange.

As yet the writers of histories of the poster have not investigated this tradition of market-exchange humor. Only one inept book exists on the pun in advertising, and that merely points out that the pun is frequently encountered.<sup>1</sup> In the three books under review-The Poster: A Worldwide Survey and History, The 20th-Century Poster, and 100 Texas Posters-the analysis of the imagery remains locked in an outdated mode of "find the reference" stylistic iconography. Weill's book, The Poster, is typical; it illustrates an early poster showing a giant cook straddling Paris, tossing the ingredients of a casserole, including sheep and babies, and sloshing cooking liquids into the Seine, recalling Rabelais's theory that Paris was so named because Gargantua once drowned it in piss (par ris). This poster is a good example of the hyperbole of market humor and of the body metaphors of early advertising. Weill simply dismisses this and all other posters before those of Jules Cheret in the 1860s with the statement: "towns were covered with posters that had one point in common: an absolute lack of artistic value." At issue rather is the reinvestigation of the unquestioned assumptions of the nature of this value. Weill's definition of artistic value repeats the unquestioned longing for the marks of "individual creativity" or "self-expression" which

provides popular-culture ideologues with their definition of art. Weill does dilute this belief in the primacy of self-expression with some recognition of the impact of technical processes on the nature of the images, citing, for example, ink developments and the changes in the structure of the printing industry, but he does not address the relevant social factors at work, especially as they represent the ideological clothing of power. The other typical critical stance is a transferral to the poster of the Greenbergian formalist aesthetic used to evaluate the modern painting. Dawn Ades, in Posters: The 20th-Century Design of the Avant-Garde, does mention that in order to concentrate on the formalist abstract tradition in the 20th-century poster, she must leave out ninety-five percent of the printed posters made in the period, but the apology does not change the fact that the text is still a (careful) re-run of the Pioneers of Modern Whatever story originally constructed by Niklaus Pevsner and MOMA's Albert Barr. The social longings which generated the ideological connection between abstraction and high museum culture are not explored. What makes cluttered pictures of humans and objects inferior? Whose interests are served by the abstraction of people and things into the "flat, almost geometric forms" lauded by Albert Barr? The interaction of ideologies of power and types of human representation are now being questioned in other fields studying the image; art critic Thomas McEvilly reemphasized the connection between these longings and the longings for an intellectual caste system based on training. This dream has survived since the time of the Neoplatonic "priestly trick" (noted by Aristotle), which placed the highest value on invisible pure forms.<sup>2</sup> Merrill Berman, collector of most of the posters in the Ades book, enunciates this program perfectly: "Through a com-

bination of study and developing one's

eye . . . one's taste is gradually refined."

These books on posters do not investigate the interaction of imagery and value, but blindly reinforce its assumptions and are still trying to get public commercial paper assessed as "art," believing that "art" has some value outside its social uses. The interview with collector Merrill Berman is a parody of the way products are renamed and reevaluated in the culture marketing system. In fact, his essay amalgamates both the "trained eye" of the Neoplatonic elite and the class-based process of recycling trash into durable value (represented by the museum collection). This process of making value by continual negotiation undermines the approach to human practices implicit in the modern critic's (1900-1970) preference for seeing structuralism rather than materialism as the underlying source of human cognitive practices. But the question of why poster images moved from primarily showing humans involved in negotiations about life and death to showing the relationships of abstracted objects to their spatial frames is not raised. Since these are books about the social use of images to make and sell value, why do they obscure the very subject their authors say that they address?

Posters also reflect the changing use of space in the market. The development of manufacture and its accelerated commerce affected the spatial practices of exchange, as barter and negotiation gave way to posted, nonnegotiable prices-a market where objects are viewed, judged, and simply bought or not bought. This is just one example of the increasing insulation of humans from direct interaction, an isolation that took many forms, but reflected governing bodies' fear of massed humanity. By the late 19th century, governments everywhere viewed street crowds with alarm. seeing them as drunk, crazed, or spurred on by females to revolt. Urban life still took place in groups and in public, especially the street, and was so shown in posters and illustrated

newspapers. Urban images were still concocted of visual puns, a type of exchange which was considered, in America at least, to be identified with male humor:

More than one woman has actually been heard to announce, when confronted by some floundering male attempt to amuse, such as making believe his shoe is a telephone and trying to contact the Coast on it, "I just don't think that's funny."

But the location of the visual pun, which in the late 19th century was often set in or on crowds (the caricaturist Grandville transformed a sea of males into single popped-open eyes, rotated to stare at one long-lashed female eye, and the poster artist for Pipes Aristophanes turned common clay pipe into the heads and feet of a dancing crowd) moved from the human group to the object, or isolated parts of the body. Furthermore, as the mode of street life gradually changed from interaction to visual categorization and evaluation, representation of exchange was replaced by representation of the fixed moment, oneway visual observation and judgment. the domain of the flaneur. Commodity marketing moved from goods exchange, best handled in the daylight. to the selling of illusions, a process best done very quickly, in the highglare blink of the eye that produces the silhouetted image, or, on the other hand, in the dark. Posters changed from untidy narratives of humans using objects to images of the carefully chosen visual moment, the image of desire, as desire itself became the marketed object. Frequently the poster image became a silhouette. Those of the English Beggarstaff brothers inspired a generation of German poster designers, from Lucien Bernhard to Ludwig Hollwein. Furthermore, goods exchange was moved indoors, into department stores, which relied heavily for their marketing effects on illusions carried out in semidarkness. The avant garde, the artists working for La revue

*blanche*, led the way from reveling in the visual and social contrasts that made up the spectacle of the street to the subordination of those contrasts to abstracted compositional values. Bonnard's cover poster for the magazine is typical. It did indeed juxtapose a squat street urchin and an elegantly elongated female, but only in the context of the compositional exoticism of the second wave of Japonism.

The poster's evolution from depicting direct human narratives to abstract spatial relationships reflects the changes in clients and makers for the poster. At first the design of the poster was largely ad hoc, carried on by many people ranging from the owner of the company to the printer of the poster, and the areas of assumed appeal were equally diverse. Religious beliefs, national loyalties, political ideologies, racial prejudices, all received quite explicit and equal time with sex appeal and security. With the "professionalization" of the trade, including the separation of design from production and the development of "Market Research" teams who divined or invented the motivations that activated purchasers, the more the range of appeals shrank to sex and security, and finally to the longing for what power does still exist for the individual in corporate society. Posters no longer reflected the explicit level of audience prejudices, or even their longings, although of course the marketing researchers believed that they did. They reflected instead the interests, expectations and prejudices of their makers, a group which was and has remained largely white and male. The advertising industry has now separated itself from the graphic design trade, and the posters by graphic designers are more often for cultural events than for commercial products, but the gender and racial mix of the postermakers has remained the same. The imagery of the fixed moment, a controlled instant, is still predominant over images of inter- or intra-human exchange.

One of many books recently marketed by groups of graphic design firms as advertising for themselves, 100 Texas Posters provides a test case. All of the designers are white males. The posters are mainly in the abstract compositional mode, and advertise culture, an extremely conservative product. The real mode of human value assignment, negotiation, is still swamped by the mode of control, the abstract composition which has nothing to say and therefore nothing to be argued with. Curiously, twentynine of the 100 posters are in the shaky-lined art deco style associated with Milton Glaser and Seymour Chwast, and the Pushpin Studio in the 1960s. Catalogues of this sort are of interest only if the nature of the clients, the time, and the place are also made clear, but since the book has virtually no text, one can only speculate about the reasons Texas clients prefer imagery generated twenty-five years ago. But again, there is nothing to argue with because nothing has been said.

Finally, in looking at the spatial practices of the contemporary poster, one can note that the relationship of the parts of the poster have changed as the place of viewing has changed. Posters, originally developed for the perambulatory city, were designed under the assumption that they would be seen from a gradually shortening distance, but one that ended on a wall, not hand-held, and the scale of both type and imagery was appropriate for this changing viewing distance. Now that posters have been largely driven from the streets, and mass advertising on television and in magazines has taken the advertisement inside, the place for viewing the poster has shifted from walking the streets to opening the mail. The poster has incorporated the blocks of small book texts appropriate for interior reading, and now requires a support system in the form of furniture for horizontal text reading, being too big to be hand-held, as is its model, the book.

Image formats and spatial location continually migrate from one scale to another. Handwriting, for example, blown-up and made three-dimensional, was used for fascia lettering in the 19th century. Such shifts in the spatial practices attending image use are still happening, as the poster formats in these recent books show, but their part of the story is ignored in the ongoing textual redundancy.

1. Eli Kince, Visual Puns in Design: The Pun Used as a Communications Tool, Watson Guptill, 1982.

2. Thomas McEvilley describes the history of the incorporation of this Platonistic "priestly trick" into the art world. *Artforum*, Summer, 1984, pp. 61-62:

"Two thousand five hundred years ago the form-content relationship was a heated philosophical question. Plato thought that content didn't matter at all; form, he said, really exists by itself, triumphant in its isolation, crystalline as a dawn light that will never be stained by the heat of a morning.... Aristotle ... still had a nagging suspicion that the doctrine of pure Form was a priestly trick of some kind. It is said that Aristotle ... would forgo the quest for pure Form and have his students crawling around in the dirt of the garden, classifying types of cabbages ... the cabbage-brained Aristotle wanted to know: How do you see pure Form? If it is really without content then it must be transparent, which is to say, invisible.... And the master's answer is ... We see pure Form with the Eye of the Soul! Aristotle, like Descartes later, wondered: Where is that Eye? ... By the 18th century Plato was finally on the run; the Soul was a laughingstock.... The doctrine of the Soul had always been an argument for unchanging totalitarian statehood, from Old Kingdom Egypt to the aristocrat Plato to the doctrine of the divine right of Kings.... [now] Soul was routed, and the dynasties of Europe fell.... Soulism did not simply disappear; it crept into art theory and hid there. From the Cambridge Platonists to the Earl of Shaftesbury to Immanuel Kant to Clement Greenberg, it would now be called: The Faculty of Taste. The Eye of the Soul simply sees contentless Quality as the Eye of Horus sees the Things of Heaven. But only, as Plato pointed out, for one who has specially cleansed that orb, which in most of us remains filthy and dim. And how do you know that someone's eye is clean? There's no way to check it."

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# HISTORY

# Herbert Muschamp: FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT AND LE CORBUSIER THOMAS DOREMUS

This book is animated by an estimable passion, evidently born of a strong personal need. Trained at the Yale School of Architecture at a time when the influence of Le Corbusier was still all-pervasive. Doremus began to question his education and the values it instilled when his "one or two attempts in the studio at Wright revival invariably raised academic evebrows to the hairline level." In time, Doremus came to see himself, and indeed all of us, as victims of Modernism's calculated disregard for all history, including its own, and he has written this book to repair the damages caused by that neglect. His intention is not just or even primarily to shed new light on the work of Wright and Corb; it is also "an effort to proceed toward a more comprehensive theory of Modernism in architecture by adopting an inclusive vision" which would eliminate the impulse to choose between Wright and Corb as exemplars of formal or philosophical right and wrong.

As an act of personal healing, this thoughtful book was worth writing and deserves to be read by those who consider their perception of modern architecture to be similarly distorted by the lingering ideologies of the International Style. Unfortunately, the exclusivity of vision to which Doremus objects so strongly is echoed here by his own failure to take into account the efforts of other writers who have been proceeding toward similar aims for more than two decades. Perhaps a writer who can interpret 20th-century architecture's biggest stand-off as a "great dialogue" is unable to recognize his own isolation from the major streams of contemporary critical theory.

I began to sense trouble ahead when, in the first chapter, Doremus asserts that "the proper method" (the method? in a project that seeks to transcend exclusivity?) for a reappraisal of Wright and Corb is "to analyze their works side by side, seeking out similarities of any sort." This announcement is certain to have a dulling Pavlovian effect on any student who has dozed through countless double-Carousel lectures on the history of art and architecture. And by the time we reach the author's conclusions on "Modernism Defined" (for all time?), we may begin to feel that he, too, has fallen into a kind of slumber, a rapture of the deep of profound thoughts.

Since Doremus is going for the larger picture, it is regrettable that he gives such short shrift to the epic canvases these two architects painted for themselves: the urban utopias in which Wright and Corb tried to depict explicit connections between their individual projects and the culture that nourished their larger ambitions. These projects hold a key to understanding why a polarity developed between the two in the first place: their anti-urbanism seems symptomatic of their inability to communicate with each other-there was no room in Wright's Broadacre City for Corb's Ville Radieuse, and vice versa; but Doremus displays the identical symptom in his own intellectual tabula rasa. Isn't the search for a "comprehensive theory" partly what led Wright and Corb to pursue one vision to the exclusion of others? As each side-by-side comparison is flashed on the screen of Doremus's text, we look in vain for some sign of the common cultural roots from which the differences as well as the similarities arose. We get no glimpse of 20th-century urbanization, of automobile production, of intellectual currents in painting and literature, of developments in popular culture and home decoration, of the American challenge to European cultural hegemony.

As Spiro Kostof wrote not long ago

in these pages, "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 substance from architects and architectural historians, if only we would search for a wider circle of knowledge." For someone who accepted the impress of the Corbusian mold, discovering Wright may indeed represent a sizable widening of formal and critical reference, but the attempt to erect a theory of Modernism upon the formal resemblances between the work of these two architects may leave the rest of us feeling left out of the great dialogue. "Why was it so necessary to choose between Wright and Le Corbusier?" Doremus asks in his preface. Why indeed? But Doremus has also made a choice-to restrict his discussion to an analysis of architectural form-which some readers may find imposes a similar distortion upon our view of modern architecture.

Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier: The Great Dialogue, Thomas Doremus, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1985, 192 pp., illus., \$35.00.

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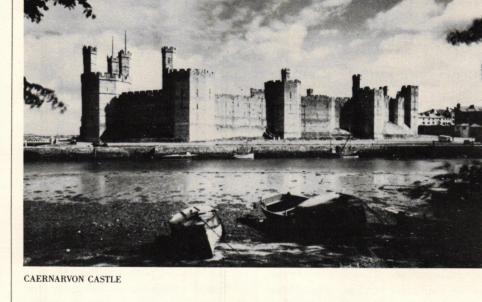
FROM LE CORBUSIER SKETCHBOOKS: 4 1957-1964, (MIT PRESS, 1982)

#### Virginia Jansen:

# THE ARCHITECTURE OF CASTLES R. ALLEN BROWN

Less scholarly than his earlier English Castles (Chancellor Press, 1970), R. Allen Brown's Architecture of Castles: A Visual Guide is a good general introduction to the topic. Not content with a merely descriptive survey, he discusses architectural design, site, and documentary evidence, as well as military, social, political, and symbolic functions. The book, therefore, should appeal to any general reader interested in castles or the Middle Ages: equally it can serve as a serious introduction for the professional unversed in the subject. A well-known historian and authority on castles, Brown makes his points with clarity and skill and generalizes without oversimplification; from medieval sources he supplies apt detail and lively quotation to bring the subject to life. Only occasionally does he discuss obscure historical material or use undefined technical vocabulary, although the lack of a glossary can be bothersome.

The author sets out his topic clearly from the start: "the castle was always a residence as well as a fortress ... its residential role [was] at least as fundamental as the military and at least 50 per cent of its purpose." As "the fortified residence of a lord," a castle had extensive domestic apartments; it was not simply barracks for bands of knights and soldiers, although the military function differentiated castles from other sumptuous dwellings. Brown thus not only explains what castles are, but distinguishes them from fortifications without residence, fortified communities such as walled cities and camps, and fortified manors-those residences which had some fortified aspects but were never meant to withstand serious, concerted military attack. On the other hand, Brown's own stress on the residential aspect (which is at odds



with the proportion of verbiage spent on it) and his constant mention of the great hall and lord's chamber raise questions, not taken up, about how these rooms were used. At the same time, he continually emphasizes the social and political context. Castles are "symbols as well as the substance of new lordship." They were large and impressively built not only for military purposes, but also as the locus of control and highly visible sign of lordship. As Brown reminds us, government in the Middle Ages was much more personal than now; medieval lords were constantly itinerant, moving from one castle to another. the castle served as a center of administration and of collection of rent and taxes. The author also discusses feudalism succinctly and intelligently (although occasionally with such optimistic phrases as the "capture of the truth"). But, except for a few pages at the end, even the author's awareness of the social and political realities of castles comes through as little more than repeated brief mention of ideas.

The bulk of Brown's book describes the military aspects of the castle and its design. According to the author, "defense accounts for 90 per cent of its design at any period, ... but the fundamental military purpose of that

stronghold is offensive rather than defensive, to control the surrounding countryside by means of the mounted men within it." Brown emphasizes how few men were required to garrison a castle from which they were able to maintain control of the country. The string of castles erected by the Conqueror and his lords just after the Conquest of England not only served as military shelter in an alien land. but also useful points of control from which fighting men were sent out, as well as strong reminders that conquest had taken place and new lordships had been established.

In addition, Brown discusses the development of the forms of castles. rightly emphasizing that many developments were present in the first century of castle building (the eleventh) although less common then than later. Thus, after a general introduction to the Middle Ages, he examines the earliest castles known, Doué-la-Fontaine (ca. 950, Maine-et-Loire) and Langeais (ca. 1000, Indre-et-Loire), both in France; with few exceptions the history of English castles begins after 1066. Although the book emphasizes English castles, Brown refers frequently to related examples on the Continent, particularly in France, and only on page 78 is it stated that this is "a

book on English castles." Brown then discusses such topics as motte-andbailey castles, timber and masonry construction, tower keeps (donjons), shell keeps, curtain walls and mural towers, gateways, garderobes (i.e., toilets-amusingly contrasted with the more primitive chamberpots of Versailles), barbicans, machiolations, sally-ports, pigeon holes, gardens, water supply, weapons such as the trebuchet and mangonel, and the only two really effective means of resisting determined attack-building on the living rock and incorporating wide water surrounds. Both were meant to prevent undermining, the most successful means of taking a castle, dramatically described in the final chapter on famous sieges (Rochester, Dover, and Bedford). Throughout, Brown keeps a nice balance between a general discussion of types and changes and the mention of specific examples, although this method causes some repetition between the section on "development" and that on individual buildings, of which Rochester and Caernaryon stand out as particularly interesting. Along the way, the author convincingly refutes some commonly held misconceptions. The decline of the castle is related to the decline of feudalism, not to the invention of gunpowder; timber and earth construction is not simply an earlier stage of masonry building, nor are rectangular keeps wholly superseded by cylindrical ones; concentric ideas in fortification pre-date the supreme late 13th-century castles of Edward I in North Wales; the value of the tower keep did not disappear around 1200, and so on.

A few other rather minor criticisms could be raised. First, this book is subtitled, "A Visual Guide" for no apparent reason. It is not arranged by site; it is not a collection of discussion on individual monuments; there is no map (which would have been useful); the size is too large for the field, although it could fit into the pleated door pocket of a car. Although the illustrations are extensive, the captions very informative, and the plans and elevations good, the black-andwhite photographs are small and printed in a generally drab gray; hence, "visual" loses its impact. A good editing job could have streamlined the organization and reduced some of the repetitions. Although most terms are defined somewhere in the text, a glossary of words special to "castellogy" would help most readers. There is little mention of construction and building. Gateways have a longer, more important history than Brown describes, and this reviewer at least would have welcomed a more extensive discussion. The author's explanation of castle in some medieval documents is inexact (page 99): licenses to crenellate are also applied to fortified manor houses, as Brown himself mentions on the following page. Any criticism, however, should not discredit the usefulness of this book.

Compared to Colin Platt's The Castle in Medieval England and Wales (Scribner, 1982, \$25.00), Architecture of Castles seems a bit expensive, and Platt's illustrations are essentially comparable-in some cases identical-to Brown's. Platt's longer text (210 pages compared to Brown's 120) with footnotes has a more scholarly tone and more historical and political detail. Platt's book gives a more complicated discussion of knotty problems, but is less informative on a basic level and altogether harder to get through. Brown's treatment has an uncompromising clarity and reflects his years as an authority on the subject. Both books are good; the individual reader must decide which treatment is more agreeable. For its length, R. Allen Brown's book is a valuable introduction to the subject, initiating the reader smoothly into the complications of a study of castles in the Middle Ages.

### Elizabeth Byrne:

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT: A RESEARCH GUIDE TO ARCHIVAL SOURCES PATRICK J. MEEHAN

# ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

LAWRENCE WODEHOUSE

# LUDWIG KARL HILBERSEIMER: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DAVID SPAETH

What do Ada Louise Huxtable, Frank Lloyd Wright and Ludwig Karl Hilberseimer have in common? They are the subjects of the first three of Garland Publishing Company's outstanding Garland Bibliographies in Architecture and Planning series, part of the Garland Reference Library of the Humanities.

While not exactly bedtime reading, these bibliographies are important new tools for the researcher and provide concise yet thorough views of the productivity of these influential figures in the history of architecture and city planning.

Of the three books, perhaps the most important is *Frank Lloyd Wright: A Research Guide to Archival Sources* by architect Patrick J. Meehan. A working guide to Wright archival material, it identifies, lists by location, and describes drawings, letters, original manuscripts, documents, furniture, building fragments, and the like, both in the United States and in foreign collections generally accessible to the scholarly researcher. The existence of many items listed in this

The Architecture of Castles: A Visual Guide, R. Allen Brown, Facts on File, 1984, 120 pp., illus., \$21.95.

681-page volume has been previously unknown, or at least unverified and unpublicized until now.

The first part of the guide presents a general description of the archival institution and a chronological listing of each collection, followed by detailed descriptions of each object. The second part of the book is a chronological survey of the original manuscripts of Frank Lloyd Wright. Its seven chapters correspond to what the author calls the "seven different time periods corresponding to significant stages of Wright's lengthy architectural career." Concluding with a three-page chart/timetable which logs the number of executed designs and projects by year from 1885 to 1978. the guide also lists chronologically the projects and designs, as well as an index of buildings, designs, projects, and places; an index of names. titles, and topics; an index of correspondents; and an index of archives and collections.

While the author himself clearly states that his compilation is by no means a complete listing of Wright archival materials (since it does not attempt to include the more than 19,000 mostly uncatalogued items in the most extensive archive known, the Frank Lloyd Wright Memorial Foundation), it is by far the most complete, thorough, and well-organized such list available, and will certainly enhance scholarship and general study of this great American master architect.

Lawrence Wodehouse, respected architect, city planner, architectural historian, and author of several other architectural reference works, has produced an excellent annotated bibliography of the works of the famous American architectural critic, Ada Louise Huxtable.

Huxtable, the first full-time architectural critic employed by a U.S. newspaper, and a Pulitzer Prize winner, is an astute, charming, and influential critic whose writings provide knowledgeable insights into the styles, trends, and theories of recent architecture and urban design in general, and of New York City in particular.

In the process of documenting Huxtable's prolific writings, Wodehouse corrected several errors of omission and dating in the New York Times Index citations of Huxtable's articles. as well as in Huxtable's own scrapbook of her writings. From 1953 to 1979, articles from the New York Times (not including her editorials). articles by Huxtable in other publications, books by Huxtable, and articles about Huxtable, all covering a wide variety of topics related to architecture, design, and city planning are cited and annotated. Title, subject, and author indexes are included. Except for the rambling introduction, which lends little to the appreciation or background of Huxtable, the book provides useful access to the voluminous writings of one of America's foremost architectural critics. It is hoped that supplements to update the bibliography will be forthcoming.

Known as the bibliographer of Mies van der Rohe, David Spaeth has compiled another important bibliography, this one a list of works by and about Ludwig Karl Hilberseimer (1885-1967), German-born architect, city planner, and friend and collaborator of Mies van der Rohe. A Dadaist architect, critic, and theoretician of modern city planning, Hilberseimer served as director of the city planning department of the Bauhaus, and through Mies came to the Illinois Institute of Technology after fleeing Nazi Germany. One of the few writers of this subject and period who was also a practicing architect and city planner, as well as friend of the major architects and city planners of the era, Hilberseimer is perhaps best known for his books: The New City (Theobald, 1944), The New Regional Pattern (Theobald, 1949), The Nature of Cities (Theobald, 1955), and Contemporary Architecture: Its Roots and Trends (Theobald, 1964).

Spaeth's slim volume briefly describes the nature of Hilberseimer's accomplishments and documents chronologically, then alphabetically, articles both by and about Hilberseimer. A chronology of Hilberseimer's life, reproductions of his work, and indexes of article titles and of authors are also presented.

In all, these three volumes represent a significant contribution to research in architecture and city planning, providing ready and accurate access to important writings and archival materials heretofore uncompiled. Garland Publishing Company is to be commended.

Frank Lloyd Wright: A Research Guide to Archival Sources, Patrick J. Meehan, Garland, 1983, 681 pp., illus., \$100.00.

Ada Louise Huxtable: An Annotated Bibliography, Lawrence Wodehouse, Garland, 1981, 276 pp., illus., \$33.00.

Ludwig Karl Hilberseimer: An Annotated Bibliography, David Spaeth, Garland, 1981, 92 pp., illus., \$22.00.

# Marc Treib: FINLAND: URBAN DOCUMENTATION

While Finnish modern architecture is well known in Europe and the United States-mostly through the work of Modernists such as Alvar Aalto, Kaija and Heikki Siren, Viljo Rewell, and Aarne Ervi-much of the older Finnish architecture remains mute. Recent publications on turn-of-thecentury figures such as Lars Sonck and Eliel Saarinen and his partners have begun to balance the score, but beyond the 19th century little is known other than cursory treatment in general surveys such as Nils Erik Wickberg's Finnish Architecture (Otava, 1959) and J. M. Richards's 800 Years of Finnish Architecture (David and Charles, 1978). The three books under review offer useful material on Finnish architecture and urbanism.

The most elaborate—and expensive—of the group is Vanhojen Karttojen Suomi (Finland in Old Maps), a book that traces the recording of the country in documents from the Finnish National Archive, the Royal Swedish Library, and the Royal Swedish Military Archive in Stockholm. Although these are maps in the broadest sense of the word, many of the early plates double as site plans that establish the positions of all the existing structures as well as their geographic location.

The introductory essay outlines the appearance of Finland on European maps, tracing the first instance to a 1482 map by Claudio Ptolemaios, in which the country appears as a slight protuberance in the land of the Eastern Goths. By 1585, Finland fills a relatively accurate area on Gerard Mercator's map of Sweden, Norway, and surrounding lands. A compendium of historical maps—all reproduced in color—fills the bulk of the book. Opening the first section are sketch maps appended to legal docu-



SENAATINTORIN ETELÄSIVU

ments, most of which are drawn in a charming steel point hand that plots both sites and building outlines. The maps that close the book issue from well into this century. One notes that over time the amount of information and its precision increases, though the pictorial quality of the maps diminishes, and, to a degree, their visual appeal.

The selection balances large-scale views of Finland within the whole of Scandinavia with depictions of most of the major cities. These include Turku, Oulu, Jyväskyä, and Tampere, as well as the urbanistically interesting smaller towns such as the fortress of Hamina and the extant wooden towns of riverbank Porvoo, and the gridded Ussi Kaupunki. Naturally, Helsinki receives its due-in eight maps-not only in the Ehrensvärd plan, rendered by Anders Kocke in 1820, but also as recent a scheme as Eliel Saarinen's Greater Helsinki Plan of 1918. In addition to the topographic or survey maps, the portfolio includes other diverse subjects ranging from plans for regularizing watercourses, to sailing charts, to a fine plan of the Saimaa Canal, and even a flattened view of the 1788 sea battle between the Swedish and Russian squadrons off Höglan. In all, the book provides an indicative selection of 130 maps that balance cartographic type, chronology, and geographical location.

In many instances the authors and publishers have included, to their credit, an enlarged detail of each map allowing us further insight into the quality and scrutiny of the cartographer's work. Each page is necessarily packed to accommodate the required information, a trait which undermines the attractiveness of some of the page spreads. Unfortunately the text appears only in Finnish, with the exception of the titles of the map. which had been originally executed in Swedish. An English summary concludes the volume, but it is more a description of the book than a summary of the information it contains. English captions run at the bottom of each page, but these describe only the category of map and nothing more. One wishes that at least an English translation of the title or subject of the map had been included, if not the full entry description.

The quality of reproduction throughout is satisfactory, but could have been higher. In general, there is a blue or green tint to most of the color reproductions that somewhat mutes their brilliance. Particularly at the end of the book, where newer maps are reproduced, sharpness is lacking and several of the images are fuzzy. For a luxury book of this scope, packaged in a handsome, stamped box, finer printing would have been justified. On the whole, however, this is an excellent collection of maps, and a critical volume for understanding the history and planning of Finnish cities and vernacular siting.

Seppo Heiskanen's Kuvia Helsingistä (Views of Helsinki) is a small book concerning a series of twelve lithographic views of Helsinki executed in 1837–1838, when the German architect Carl Ludwig Engel's work was well underway. "Vuer af Helsingors," only the second of such suites published in Finland, was originally published by the Fredrik Tengström lithographic printing house.

The last two of the views are signed by Magnus von Wright, one of the brothers who in time became a noted artist of woodland subjects. The maker of the ten remaining images has still not been ascertained. Heiskanen suggests that they may have been the work of the Swedish-born Frans Oskar Liewendal, who was in the firm's employ at the time, or possibly based on Tengström's own sketches.

The series includes five views of the buildings encircling Engel's Senate Square, many of which have not changed much during the intervening century and a half. The most noticeable difference is the addition of the great flight of stairs to the Nikolai Church, now Cathedral, which replaced the guard house shown in the views of the Nya Lutherska Kyrkan och Biblioteket (New Lutheran Church and Library) and Universitetshuset (The University Building). The subjects of the remaining images include the South Harbor, the Esplanade, the Officers' Barracks, the North Harbor and Elizabeth Square, the Botanical Garden, and the Old Lutheran Church.

The accompanying essay outlines the history of the lithograph project, offers capsule biographies of its makers, and discusses the development of Engel's plans for Helsinki. The series is reproduced adequately in black and white only, and details are enlarged for clarity to overcome the small format of the book.

While the buildings may have been

sketched from life, Tengström took certain liberties in their portrayal. For example, though they appear to be completed in the picture, structures such as the library and church were still under construction at the time. The military costume and the clothing of the promenaders are all apparently borrowed directly from works such as *Magazin för Konst*, *Nyheter och Moder* (The Magazine for Art, News, and Fashion) and printed images of military uniforms.

In all, these views constitute one of the key contemporary records of Neo-Classicism in Finland, and the work of Carl Ludwig Engel in Helsinki. Remarkably little has been written about this protégé of Friedrich Gilly, who not only gave Helsinki its monumental quarter, but dotted the towns of Finland with town halls, churches, and other more utilitarian structures. The definitive treatment of the subject remains Nils-Erik Wickberg's Senaatintori (The Senate Square), which appeared in 1981 (Anders Nyborg, Rungsted Kyst, Denmark), with numerous color illustrations and a text in Finnish, Swedish, English, and German. While we can wish that the Heiskanen book were also in English (there is a reasonable Swedish summary), the book's value is in its pictures.

Helsinki ilmakuvina (Helsinki in Aerial Views) by Marja-Liisa Lampinen, Olli Uukusulainen, and Viggo Karlsson, is an extremely disappointing book. Having found some excellent prototypes in the Above San Francisco, Above London series, one wishes that the quality standard of these earlier volumes could have been met. The small format—about  $8\frac{5}{8} \times$ 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>"-limits the size and detail of the photographs, but this is a minor problem compared to the quality of the color reproduction, which ranges from acceptable to poor. Given the sophisticated state of the Finnish printing industry, the color images in this book are an embarrassment.

The text, which appears in Finnish

only, provides direct and concise biographies of the districts of the city. Each photograph has a description of the particular district, the number of inhabitants, and, curiously, the number of workplaces. Paired with each of the contemporary photographs is a historical black-and-white image from the Helsinki City Museum collection.

In the introduction the authors note that almost every publication on Helsinki includes photographs of the Market Square, the Railroad Station, the main artery Mannerheimintie, and other noted places. Those on the periphery, or even the districts slightly beyond the center are ignored. Their inclusion would be most welcome *if* the current volume had also added the more standard selections. We instead find a book that has parts but no center, and no way of structuring the various images.

One senses that the text preceded the photographs, which were added later as illustrations. Not only is the color reproduction only marginally acceptable but the framing of the photographs displays little understanding of what is being photographed. The reader gets the feeling that any photograph taken of the given district would suffice. The view of Munkkiniemi, for example, fills almost half of its frame with an open park, and gives us little sense of the district. Kallio clips the top off Lars Sonck's noted church, a mixed-use block by the same architect, and the KOP Bank by Kaija and Keikki Siren, only to focus on a street intersection. There is little relation between the various images and the effect is disorienting. A panoramic photograph of the entire city or a map would have provided a structure, as would some of the more important of the city's areas such as the Töölöo inlet, the Esplanade, the Market Square, and the Railroad Station. As an informational source, the book is simply organized and useful; as a visual aid it is hardly worth the cost.

These three volumes, then, add

considerably to the published material on urban architectural history in Finland, making available documents and images that were either previously unavailable or buried in archives. One might also note two poster maps by Jussi Jäppinen which trace the development of the central Finland city of Jyväskylä. Jäppinen has completed two of the projected three map series that redraw period maps, while projecting their structures from plan into three-dimensional axonometric views. Already available are views from 1842 and 1888 illustrating the drastic growth from town to city occasioned by industrialization. The third map, Jyväskylä of today, should be ready late this year.

Vanhojen Karttojen Suomi: Historiallisen Kartografian Vertaileva Tarkastelu (Finland in Old Maps: A Comparative Examination of Historical Cartography), Harri Rosberg and Jussi Jäppinen, Jyväskylä: Gummerus, 1982, 790 Fmks.

Kuvia Helsingistä (Views of Helsinki), Seppo Heiskanen, Helsinki: Otava Publishing, 1983, 115 Fmks.

Helsinki ilmakuvina (Helsinki in Aerial Views), Marja-Liisa Lampinen, Olli Uukusalainen and Viggo Karlsson, Helsinki: Otava Publishing, 1983, 148 Fmks.

# Neal I. Payton: PRECEDENTS IN ARCHITECTURE

ROGER H. CLARK and MICHAEL PAUSE

Ten or so years ago the problem of integrating history into the design curriculum was much discussed among faculty of schools of architecture. One response to this dilemma was an analytic one in which students were asked to document particular buildings or spaces using a series of rudimentary diagrams. Thus, it was correctly argued, one could penetrate the veils of style and technique and arrive at an understanding of the more "essential," formal properties of any building; a student might easily speak in the same terms of a Renaissance villa and a Modernist library complex in Finland.

The diagrams associated with this technique usually consist of simple line drawings of plans, sections, and elevations, with one or more lines differentiated by darkening, crosshatching, and so forth. In this way, one can illustrate a structure's formal characteristics, such as its symmetry or balance, proportions, and use of repeated elements. Often an instructor will compile the various studies done by his or her students into a little booklet, reproduce it, and distribute the product to the participating students for reference.

Roger H. Clark and Michael Pause in Precedents in Architecture (a revised and expanded version of their 1979 book, Analysis of Precedent), have published the results of these analyses in a somewhat more marketable format, which offers "factual, graphic information on sixty-four buildings" (albeit in postage-stamp size) and purports to allow an "understanding of basic architectural ideas which are recognizable as formative patterns." In this way, the authors suggest one might allow "for theory which transcends the moment and reveals an architectural idea." In fact, if these diagrams allowed for such an understanding, one would applaud this publication. Unfortunately, they fall short.

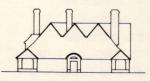
The intention of the authors is to codify an esoteric, formal language, but they are trapped in a catch-22. Those who understand what these diagrams are about are already aware of the analytical process involved. They have, in a sense, already been converted. The remaining audience, one suspects, will be thoroughly confused by these hieroglyphics.

The study, one assumes, is meant to be used as a textbook, though it is more properly a virtual *Cliff's Notes* of architectural history. The student referred to a particular building for investigation might be able to supplement his research with the handy little diagrams found here. The problem, however, is that unless the student performs these analytical acts himself, little insight is gained. Moreover, as in *Cliff's Notes*, much of the interpretive material reveals little in the way of ideas or the processes employed by the work's creator.

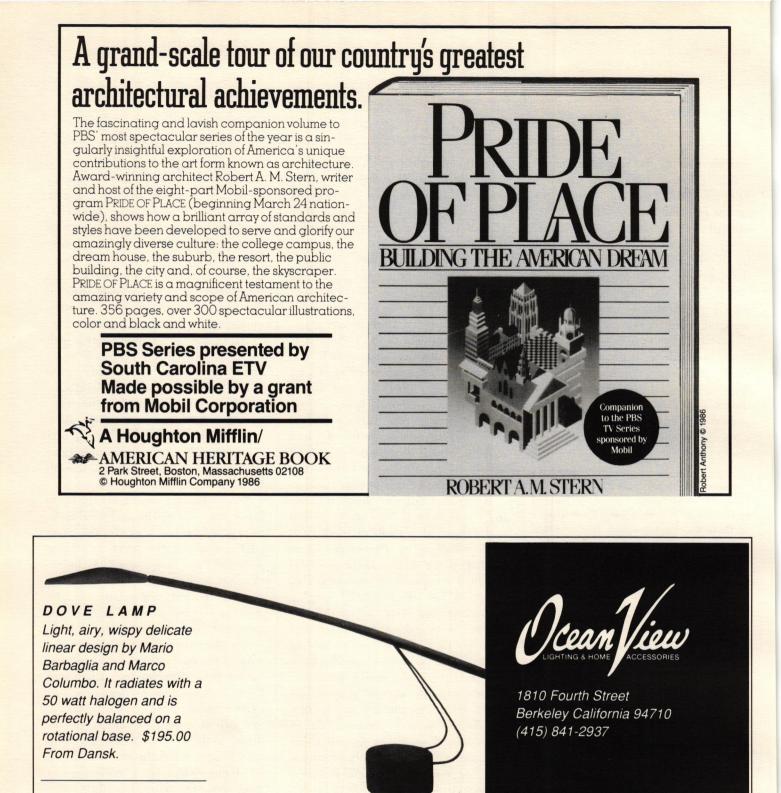
All of this is not to suggest a lack of sympathy with the academic exercises represented in this study; quite the opposite. Messrs. Clark and Pause are absolutely correct when they suggest that the "domain of design ideas lies within the formal and spatial realm of architecture," and that these formal characteristics "can [and should] be diagramed."

As pedagogy, one finds little to guibble with here. The analytical techniques suggested are, for the most part, sound. If this work had been presented five years ago at a conference of architecture faculty, or appeared (edited somewhat), in the Journal of Architectural Education, it would, one suspects, have been received sympathetically-not for the sake of the examples themselves, but for the process advocated. Clark and Pause suggest that as designers, architects must learn to "use" history, and-performing their role as educators admirably-present the reader with a technique for doing so. But, taken by themselves, as a collection of diagrams, the buildings they offer remain shrouded in obscurity.

Precedents in Architecture, Roger H. Clark and Michael Pause, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1985, 224 pp., illus., \$19.95 pb.



HOMEWOOD, EDWIN LUTYENS, 1901



Hours:

Sunday 10-2

Monday-Saturday 10-5:30

#### ALESSI KETTLE

Designed by architect Michael Graves, this two quart kettle with little bird-shaped whistle is made by Alessi of 18/10 stainless steel. \$70.00

# Alice Jurow:

# OPERA COMIQUE: TWO BOXES FROM THE AA

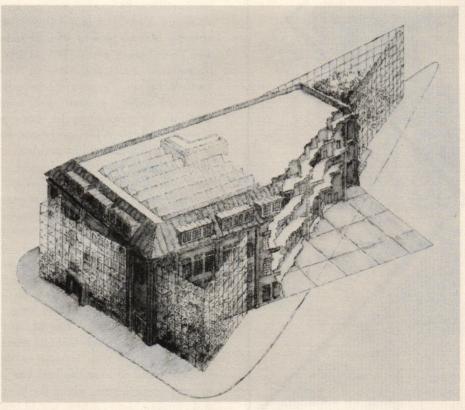
Folio VII, from London's Architectural Association, comes in a handsomely silk-screened black box, identical in size to a DGG recording of *Fidelio*. Inside are 18 duotone plates, which reproduce James Wines's ink and wash drawings for the Frankfurt Museum of Modern Art competition. They are wrapped with a gray ribbon not quite long enough to tie (a deliberate frustration?) and accompanied by a 16page brochure.

The whole point of SITE's approach to architecture as art, from the first severed corner, has been to take ideas which would look too absurdly implausible if presented as drawings and to bring them forth as built actuality. Here, however, we have a fullblown presentation of an unbuilt project. Not surprisingly, James Wines's introduction takes pains to dissociate the firm's work from the tradition of paper architecture and also to apologize for losing a competition. Only AA, Wines tells us, with its British affection for the underdog and its parental kindness to struggling architects, has kept these drawings out of the wastebasket. Surely only the British could invent the legitimizing euphemism "unpremiated" for "non-winning."

The competition for Frankfurt's Museum of Modern Art was judged in May, 1983; a solid, fairly traditional scheme by Hans Hollein won. SITE's entry, however, has received almost as much critical attention as Hollein's. The SITE approach, in case you've missed it, concerns the problem of not putting a flatiron building on a triangular site—"violating" the triangular site with a rectangular building on a different axis. A glass spaceframe following the site's perimeter intersects the brick structure (based on German 19th-century industrial vernacular) at several points, slicing through interiors and walling the "leftover" outdoor spaces. On the south side, where the site's shape doesn't allow the rectangular form to be completed, walls are broken off roughly and the spaces between them are glassed to provide a full-scale "cutaway." The violence of this elevation, while creating a very immediate inside/ outside interface and providing apt areas for advertising, inevitably evokes the destruction of 90 percent of Frankfurt during World War II and proved unacceptably controversial to a German audience. The SITE scheme was, however, given a special citation for "artistic and conceptual distinction."

Folio VII "celebrates a loser" by providing detailed documentation of the Frankfurt proposal. The plates include perspective views from all directions, close-up views of the cutaway, and sketch details of glass penetrations and partition systems. The booklet also contains formal plans, elevations and axonometrics, conceptual sketches and site photos. James Wines's description of the design's evolution and his "Philosophical Notes" are relatively clear and readable and occasionally vivid, as in his account of an all-night charrette during which it began to seem "intriguing and perverse" for the site to be violated by the intrusion of a functional building." (Oh God, Alison, it would be so intriguing and perverse! Let's do it!)

The literature is rounded out by Herbert Muschamp's marvelously witty essay, "Act II: A Synopsis," which places SITE's work and the Frankfurt project in particular in the broader contexts of modern art, pop art, and comedy. The comic spirit, which Muschamp sees, like George Meredith, as the "ultimate civilizer" and, like Joseph Meeker (The Comedy of Survival), as a mode of environmental survival, is differentiated from the "party clothes" of Post-Modernism; it has more to do with the thought that "no idea is so serious that the thinker cannot enjoy the discovery of thinking



FRANKFURT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, GENERAL OVERVIEW



it, or ... wish to share the enjoyment as well as the idea."

As shared enjoyment and as documentation of a project which was a self-proclaimed turning point in SITE's work, this Folio succeeds well for admirers of this firm's always stimulating work. The casual student and non-fan should refer instead to back issues of Architectural Record and AD. But, for about the cost of a new digital recording, the serious (or seriously frivolous) SITE buff should consider making room between Der Rosenkavalier and Tosca.

Light Box was published by the AA to coincide with an exhibition (Heavy Box) of work by Daniel Weil, a designer of objects. Like the SITE folio, Light Box came out in the spring of 1985 and is the size of a London recording of The Magic Flute.

Literature inside Light Box lists the "contents" as follows: "Sketchbook" (sketches by Weil of ordinary household artifacts in somewhat suggestive attitudes, as well as some of his other objects, photographs of Weil objects, and assemblages and verbal sketches by assorted critics and friends); "One Yard of Fabric" (a yard of raw silk, about 10" wide, printed with some of Weil's sketches; can be worn as a scarf); "6 × A4" (six plates reproducing ink-and-color drawings of other enigmatic objects-radios, etc.); "PCB, Tin Copper" (Printed Circuitry Boards-these are two pieces of plastic, about  $3'' \times 6''$ , etched respectively in copper and tin in the way that circuitry might be etched but with sketches of people, animals, and machines. Each one is partly encased in two little removable plastic envelopes, clear on one side and brightcolored on the other); "Chessboard" (black-and-white cardboard and somewhat difficult to use because of the hardware affixed over the first row of squares on each side, where the kings and queens and rooks would go. A copper-colored knob or button is

fixed in each corner; these are connected by two parallel metal rods embellished with odd bits of gadgetry, sort of clips or holders and a set of antenna-like projections. The chessboard is difficult to remove from the box).

Weil, who has designed for the Memphis group, mentions Vermeer, Duchamp, Breton, and Cornell among his influences. John Thackera, in the "Sketchbook," says "Weil has consistently tried to explore alternatives to designing with color and form alone; he has always wanted to ... examine the interaction of people and technology."

J. Christopher Jones says: "These objects are not just utensils, they are sacred presences, as are all phenomena, as are we ourselves. But quite light-hearted, thank goodness."

Nigel Coates says: "Product design and architecture are by now indistinguishable-both make the most of old buildings, both are about processes, pictures, jokes and decoys." He also says, "Instructions elsewhere in this box show you how to comb the high street for the bizarre-in-theirbanality objects/switches/ironmongery that constitute the pieces." This is actually not true; perhaps it's a joke or decoy. There are no instructions, though there are pictures. The contents of *Light Box*: is art and objects; you have to interact with it to make it work, which it may or may not do.

Attention Baby Boomers: Light Box provides a reasonably safe, quite engrossing, and possibly educational activity for toddlers  $1\frac{1}{2}$  years +.

Folio VII: Museum of Modern Art, Frankfurt, Drawings and Introduction by James Wines, Essay by Herbert Muschamp, Unpremiated Competition Submission by SITE, the Architectural Association, 1985, 16 pp. catalogue, 28 boxed plates, £21.00.

**Box I: Light Box**, Daniel Weil, the Architectural Association, 1985, 32 pp., illus., sketchbook and objects, £36.00.

# Lucia Howard: THE JERSEY DEVIL MICHAEL J. CROSBIE

The most remarkable thing about the Jersey Devil is its survival. A traveling band of "architects, artists, craftsmen, and inventors" named for a mythical beast wrongfully accused of designing the group's first house, the Jersey Devil has reached 1986 without giving up the sixties. In his Jersey Devil: Design/Build Book, Michael Crosbie introduces the group's remarkable work and history.

Crosbie's book begins as a lengthy interview with the four architects. Their story begins in the Princeton School of Architecture in the late sixties. To begin one's career by moving onto a wooded site, designing, and then building a house shaped like a snail wrapped around stacked manhole covers used for thermal mass would have seemed right to lots of young architects in the early seventies. But the Devil is still doing it, all over the country.

In the course of the interview, they cite many of the architectural credos of the sixties and early seventiese.g., design is a process, the site demands a certain design. Off-theshelf materials are used out of context, energy is conserved, an unusual structural system generates the form, alternative technologies are explored, things are handmade. The ideas are familiar, but their implementation is usually associated with a series of marginally habitable experiments. Members of the Devil are unique in having fashioned successful careers from these idealistic notions.

Following the interview, Crosbie presents the Devil's work in tantalizingly brief descriptions, illustrated with both finish and "process" photographs. They approach each project, particularly houses, as an opportunity to invent a new form of shelter. Wonderful, strange, sometimes verging on



STEVE BEDANES OF THE JERSEY DEVIL GROUP

the awful, the Devil's work is packed with ideas, experiments, creative energy, and surprising connections to the clients.

Crosbie does not pursue the group's symbolic naming of their houses, nor does he give much information about their relations with clients. If the Silo House was made of round rooms because the clients subconsciously recalled the round huts of Tanzania, and the Airplane House was designed for private pilots to be viewed from a UFO, what's going on in the Football House? Devil John Ringel says of their current project, the Hoagie House, "Either it looks like a hoagie or it doesn't, and that image develops from the give and take argument." This sounds interesting, but the reader hears no more.

One intangible benefit of the Devil's design/build career has been a certain isolation. Safely out of the mainstream, they have been happily building what interests and excites them, "forever out of style" (Devil Steve Badanes).

Crosbie's book arouses in me both gratitude and embarrassment-grati-

tude that so "out of style" a group has been brought to our attention, and embarrassment at the sixties lingo. Yet the Devil's work has a power that makes us embarrassed instead for the absence of idealism in the current lingo.

The interview, though valuable for setting the philosophical context, is far less captivating than the architecture. The folksiness of the four architects talking serves as something of a foil for the outrageousness of the work. Yet the work may reveal these architects' philosophy more fully, or at least more evocatively, than their words. In this respect they fit squarely into the tradition of architecture. Inclusive, energetic, optimistic, the architecture is linked to the clients and to the times in an intriguing, revealing way. Crosbie's book leaves one more curious about the work, hoping the next sighting of the Jersey Devil will happen soon.

The Jersey Devil: Design/Build Book, Michael J. Crosbie, Peregrine Smith, 1985, 96 pp., illus., \$19.95 pb.

### Lars Lerup:

# LEON KRIER: HOUSES, PALACES, CITIES

## DEMETRI PORPHYRIOS, editor

A new book on Leon Krier's work will probably tug mildly at the jaded reader's gaze. Yet, as Colin Rowe remarks in an introductory essay, Krier attempts to attract our attention by "the exercise of a relentless simplification" and a message that is "direct and elementary"... "little more than a caricature of logical argument." We have seen both the message and most of the drawings before; what seems new is the "packaging" of the Krier Project: the layers of apologies by some of the best-known members of the Eastern bloc of the architectural establishment. What becomes most interesting to me is how the project is delivered to us, its essential underpinnings-social, political, and to a certain extent, economic. And, finally, what may lay hidden behind Rowe's prophetic statement ... that Krier promises to become almost the Le Corbusier of our day." In other words, this review is less about the content of Krier's message and more about the anatomy of architectural propaganda.

The book is an Architectural Design Profile published by Dr. Andreas Papadakis and guest-edited by Demetri Porphyrios, with texts by Professor Colin Rowe and Dean Jaquelin Robertson. Krier is thus preceded by (what turns out to be) a series of elaborate defense lines that carefully spin a cocoon around the master. Krier is curiously referred to as "Leon" while the others retain their full name and title. After a while the reader understands that there is a subtle purpose for this: the profile is a courtly declaration which establishes the rank of the participants: "Prince" Leon at its center, Professor Rowe as the "minister of Kultur," Dean Robertson as "spokesman for the gentry," and Porphyrios as the "resident historian."

The result is a rhetorical fortification replete with texts, houses, palaces, and a city this reader can only enter via its lacunae or backdoors.

Professor Rowe forewarns the reader that the reaction of someone like myself to this bastion of words and things will probably be both "dismissive" and "patronizing," due to the "impregnability" of my own "scarcely equipped intellectual Bastille." So beware my forked tongue, since I shall try to be as patronizing as he suggests, and as he is.

As implied above, Rowe's text supplies the reader with a ready-made critique and point of view. Embar-



CELIA SCOTT SCULPSIT

rassed and disarmed, the reader is led on, saying glumly to himself: "All right, I'll listen." By now, Professor Rowe admits that he too has had trouble with Leon: his manners, his audacity and arrogance. But suddenly the professor throws you a curveballthe enfant terrible sits down with Jorge Silvetti to play some Schubert duets. And the guy is good, even to the professor's "uninstructed ears," and confirmed by Silvetti, who was an infant piano prodigy. Krier may be rude and arrogant but he plays classical-back to "Biedermeier Vienna of the age of Metternich"!

For us on the outside this may

appear mystifying, but if you think of it as akin to the catcher giving handsignals to the pitcher, carefully hiding them from both batter and the second baseman, Krier's nimble fingers sent off some secret signals to the professor -in Schubert-code; the only difference is class. (What Rowe may not know is that Krier played duets with a wolf in a Brooks Brothers suit. because Jorge is also a fantastic tango dancer; and even if tango has made it into high society, it is clear that Schubert and, for example, Carlos Gardel [the father of Argentinian tango] played from opposite sides of the tracks. But this is probably unimportant, as Silvetti is just an innocent bystander.)

From here on the professor and Leon get on famously, especially since it is clear that the work "has obvious socialist content"—another signal that we are dealing with the true high bourgeois ethos. Rowe with his usual erudition proceeds to mend fences and build bridges to the correct past, leaving the reader with a hermetic Krier Stadt—as he writes, not "unlike Thomas Jefferson's University of Virginia," which in turn leads us surreptitiously to the next apologist, Dean Robertson.

Under the title "The Empire Strikes Back," the dean frolics in even more voluptuous shrieks of class solidarity. Rightly so, since he speaks from the secular position, where a tinge of Professor Rowe's "historian's objectivity" is unneccesary. Robertson makes one observation that I would like to dwell on. He writes:

[Krier's] Wagnerian promise is of rebirth and transfiguration. His directives are like commandments and his ideograms unambiguous. He is optimistic not nihilistic.

At first this sounds quite convincing: here is a marvelous draftsman, astute critic, eloquent provider of an alternative, handing us his Krier Stadt on a platter. But is it optimism?

In order to answer this question I

shall end the doublespeak and leave the world of "catty injury and insult" behind. Let us look at Krier himself and his all-too-mythical genealogy. The name Leon Krier shares by some curious twist of fate the same initials as both Louis Kahn and Le Corbusier (the "C" being exchanged for a "K" in good Germanic tradition). Like both his illustrious predecessors Leon Krier is an immigrant from a small country, Luxembourg-much like Lithuania and Switzerland, the respective home countries of Kahn and Corbu. All three countries are lilliputian, too small for their respective geniuses. Kahn left for America and Corbu for France, but Krier went to England, not exactly a country bustling with the development energy of Corbu's France or Kahn's U.S.A. In fact, the chance to build in England today seems almost nil. I have a suspicion that this is part of Krier's agenda. He seems to delight in being barred from building as well as from acceptance and understanding. On the inside cover Krier writes:

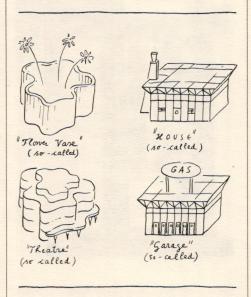
Because They cannot imagine it They do not want it

Because They cannot imagine it possible They do everything to make it impossible Because of all this

They will hate you for making it possible.

And he has always refused to build (although there are some rumors that he will build his own house in Florida!), as if, in his own mind, the ideas are already rejected. Following, not quite in the footsteps of father-Corbu, but in his strategic imprints, occasionally turning the father on his head by promoting perimeter blocks instead of towers-in-the-park, Krier is essentially repeating the father's avantgardist moves. And since there is no real difference between a utopia of the future and of the past, Krier fulfills Corbu's destiny. However, there is an ironic twist that Krier must know about: "[Sometimes] history repeats itself first as tragedy and then as farce." As for the prediction, Krier's project has become a nihilistic tragedy —not yet a farce (although the gyrations of his three apologists threaten to shift the balance). Inside the walls of the Krier Stadt, Leon commits mock suicide, prefigured by Corbu's premature drowning. The book is filled with signs of the ritualistic death of the Architect, the City, and the Project.

The back cover shows a bronze bust of Krier—the kind that a mourning populace raises after the untimely death of their emperor. (Unfortunately, the bust shares the page with both the price and the ISBN number in computer script, and the name of the



sculptress followed by "who did it" in Latin. The last page of the city has become the gate to farce.)

To argue, as I will, that as the medium for these funeral rites is not only the logical but the essential choice can be seen as a critical device that allows me both to applaud and deplore the choice of medium. Yet I do it in all sincerity. The world, where architects are architects, and happy workers are back to doing something that they can be proud of, can no longer be cast in Modernism's white boxes. Therefore Krier must cast his utopia in the past (with a nuclear war on the horizon, there can be no hope for the future) and in a classical world, because he believes sincerely that it was better then. Since he refuses to build, we are left with a city of hope that is already dead. The Krier Stadt as it appears in his text and drawings is a Disneyland for the bourgeoisie—a fixed smile, kept suspended by layers of rules and regulations. As in the populist Disneyland in Los Angeles, the spectator must remain behind the fence—at the perimeter of the enterprise, since real life would crack it open, and reveal its real workings, and test its premises.

The search for additional evidence of the presence of death in the Stadt could be continued, but it suffices to end on one deathwish delivered by Professor Rowe, who writes:

But, at a period when adulteration of all achievement is extremely rapid, should we not also be thinking about those lines from Pope's *Epistle to Lord Burlington?* "Yet shall, my lord, your just, your noble rules, / Fill half the land with imitating fools."

The door on the mausoleum is slammed shut—lord and all are safely buried, saved from the desecrators. Almost saved, I should say, since we can still look in over the walls, and some "imitators" (notably architects such as Mark Mack and Duany & Plater-Zyberk) have absorbed useful things from the Krier Stadt.

Whether workers and dwellers are happier in their projects time will tell. What seems urgently important is that the orthodoxy of the architectural project is again celebrated, allowing us to calibrate our instruments as to whether we are late Modernists or classicists, while throwing a critical light on the façade-ism of the commercial Post-Modernists. In this sense, the Krier Project has not been in vain, despite the vigorous attempts by himself and his friends to bury it.

Leon Krier: Houses, Palaces, Cities, Demetri Porphyrios, editor, *Architectural Design* Profile, distributed by St. Martin's Press, 1984, 128 pp., illus., \$14.95 pb.

# Peter Bosselmann:

# THE PRODUCTION OF HOUSES

#### CHRISTOPHER ALEXANDER with HOWARD DAVIS, JULIA MARTINEZ, and DON CORNER

The Production of Houses is the fifth volume in a series dedicated to the theory and work of Christopher Alexander. The subject in this case is a housing project in Mexicali, a Mexican border town of 600,000 people, south of San Diego. A decade ago, having been invited by the local university to lecture on his seminal treatise, A Pattern Language, Alexander dared to turn the occasion into a chance to build. The government of the state of Baja California eventually approved his project, and Alexander arrived with three associates, several volunteers, such as myself, and students from Berkeley; eventually the ranks were closed with students from the Mexican university.

Mexicali in the seventies was suffocating under an influx of workers migrating to the border region and in urgent need of cheap housing. New neighborhoods (colonias) were sprouting all around the city and Alexander's team was allowed to experiment in one of these, building homes at a cost of \$4000 each. The contract negotiated between the Mexican authorities and Alexander's Center for Environmental Structure specified that the houses measure approximately 60 square meters each, be earthquakeproof, and adhere to simple health and safety standards. The government also expressed interest in the development of reinforced block walls, thermally sound in Mexicali's desert climate. The contract read more like an engineering brief than a set of design specifications. It is not clear what kind of result the Mexican authorities expected, but it certainly was not the radical and fundamentally

new approach to environmental design they received.

At the time of the Mexicali project, A Pattern Language was just going into print and The Timeless Way of Building was in its final stage of composition. Except for The Oregon Experiment, little had been written about this new design process that seeks to empower people through the production of buildings coherent with their own needs and values. In The Production of Houses, Alexander as-



serts categorically that neither tract homes nor apartment blocks of the type built by redevelopment agencies in this country, Europe, and the USSR can be made more human merely by improving their design, as long as the underlying system of production remains unchanged. In both types of housing, decisions are made by individuals who are far removed from the consequences.

The system proposed by Alexander follows seven principles. He calls first for a new understanding of the design professional as an architectbuilder, one who can communicate with a family on the design of their future home without recourse to abstract drawings. He is responsible for

the entire project, eliminating the need for a third party to carry out construction. Second, the architectbuilder works with others in the "builder's yard." This yard is an integral part of a community, where the building system resides-part office, part workshop, part meeting hall. Here the various details of construction are clearly exhibited to both builders and families, and space is available for experiment and the manufacture of specialized parts. The spaces of the builder's vard are made according to the pattern language, so that families can observe and discuss the patterns firsthand. After the completion of construction the yard will remain either a center for the community or take on other appropriate functions. The third principle proposes that families be responsible for laying out the land between their future homes. The common land between their homes should not be the product of some abstract, mechanical design imposed upon them by the city or by a developer. Fourth, Alexander insists on the fundamental right of the family to lay out its own house. Fifth is the step-by-step process of construction accomplished not through the interpretation of standard drawings but through a sequence of shared operations, freely applied to each plan. Sixth are cost controls which guarantee that both material and labor are paid for in a way that parallels the system of operations. The cost of construction is based on a unit price, which in spite of changes during the process of construction is always known. Finally, the last principle demands that building itself exist as a human process with a human rhythm and not be reduced to a mechanical process of assembling a preconceived design. Spirit, humor, and emotion are considered integral to construction and should enter the fabric as parts of the rhythm of production.

Although the book ends with the completion of the cluster of houses built with five families, the story of the Mexicali project is by no means over. Today, after nine years, the project is altered almost beyond recognition. Some of the principles have proved to be difficult to live with. Foremost among the problems are the matters of security and privacy. Four of the unit entrances, which were originally planned to face a communal area and thus facilitate social interaction, have been moved to face the street. The ownership of the common land was ambiguous, and now the new



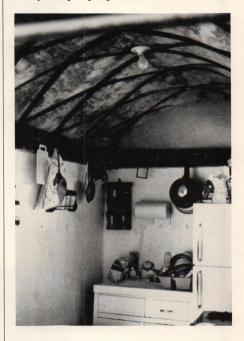
entrances give each family a sense of privacy. The builder's yard now stands empty, partly because the original cluster was too small to support it, and partly because its continuation required a level of idealism that was difficult for the Mexican students to sustain without the continued support of the government or the university. Although community development diminished, individual autonomy grew. The original five families have all remained in their homes and have made significant changes to satisfy their physical needs. While the occupants are content, the project does not really satisfy the government's interest in quick and simple housing solutions.

What remains as confusing today as it was ten years ago is the question: why Mexicali? Of the town's limited building activity, very little falls into the two categories of tract development and government housing projects to which Alexander is reacting. The majority of housing activity is in site and service neighborhoods, where families are designing, building, adding on to, and redesigning their homes over long periods of time -a process that depends on family income and changing family size. In one form or another, most of Alexander's principles were already in operation in Mexicali and have continued on their own.

The local families that decide to build are usually their own designers and builders. If they have enough resources they will hire an albanile to do the labor for them. While they do not have a neighborhood builder's yard, they do have access to secondhand markets where virtually everything from used lumber to bathtubs can be purchased. Most homes begin as simple temporary structures that over time are changed and made permanent. The families in Mexicali generally have more control over design and construction than those in American cities and there are fewer government controls and standards.<sup>1</sup>

In situations where families have little more than their own will to rely on, astonishing results can be achieved if they are able to keep control of production in their own hands. Ironically, the Alexander project, which was concerned with empowering people through the building process, actually deprived them of power, since the materials, construction method, pace of construction, and cost control were determined by the Center for Environmental Structure.

The goal is nonetheless valid, and Alexander is one of the few architects today who does not accept the existing modern system of construction. He believes in the value of a new system of production and has tried to test it under extremely adverse circumstances. To develop a new building system, conduct endless experiments with earth-cement blocks, explain to banks and governments that the buildings would be built without a single drawing, create a community where none had been, and make windows and doors out of lumber from Oregon's humid climate in a desert where it would do anything but stay straight all this and much more provide a story of epic proportions that is worth-



while reading. The book is beautifully produced with many color photographs that draw the reader into the narrative like a film.

Why expend such great effort on experiments such as the Mexicali project? Because there must be a way to make things of beauty that express one's life directly and simply. The experience proves that it does not come easily.

1. For further details of the post-occupancy of the Mexicali project, see Fromm and Bosselmann, "Mexicali Revisited," in *Places*, 4/1984, MIT Press.

The Production of Houses, Christopher Alexander with Howard Davis, Julia Martinez, and Don Corner, Oxford, 1985, 381 pp., illus., \$39.95.



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# Camille Wells: WHAT COFFEE-TABLE BOOKS REALLY SAY

Only occasionally do professional and scholarly journals devote attention to those handsomely bound, large-format assemblages of slick photographs and laudatory prose known as coffee-table books. When they are reviewed, the criteria for evaluation are more tolerant than those applied to serious publications. Stiffer criticism seems churlish because the books are perfectly straightforward and cheerful about their intention to entertain an interested but untrained audience. But the assumptions and methods common to popular treatments of architecture deserve more careful attention, for they are not harmless. A closer look at several recently published volumes can offer some insights.

The content of Anne M. Faulconer's The Virginia House: A Home for Three Hundred Years, described in the short, direct introduction as a "full survey of Tidewater Virginia Homes," was condensed into a presentation of fortyfour small historic houses. Actually, the book contains an unsystematic collection of antebellum houses arranged geographically by region and by county. A brief statement about each house accompanies two or more pages of photographs taken by the author. Although most of these pictures are reasonably crisp, one or two are badly backlit, a few are distorted by the use of a wide-angle lens, and a quantity of interior views are marred by deep shadows and hot spots. Captions are occasionally a problem: one picture of a Federal mantel is labeled "library bookcases," and an exterior view of a plantation house is obscurely identified as "courtyard effect." At the end of The Virginia House is a kind of appendix of measured drawings taken from the collection of the Historic American Buildings Survey. A substantial number of Faulconer's forty-four houses have been measured and drawn for HABS, but only seven are represented by random sheets of drawings. Faulconer does not indicate how her selections were made, nor does she specifically credit HABS for the work.

Stanley Schuler wrote Mississippi Valley Architecture: Houses of the Lower Mississippi Valley because, he says, "I know the area well and love it." His presentation of buildings is acknowledged to be arbitrary, based on a relaxed attempt to assemble a "flavorful sampling" of 18th- and 19th-century architecture. A ten-page introduction provides a historical outline and some notion of ethnic diversity, but these matters are ranked below topography and climate as architectural determinants. The bulk of Mississippi Valley Architecture is devoted to photographs of individual houses arranged loosely by state and locality. Most of Schuler's photography is good, although he includes several blurred, murky, and poorly framed shots. A handful of Schuler's houses are illustrated with small plans. These provide welcome information and they are competently drawn, but most of them have no scales, and Schuler offers no explanation as to why he includes so few drawings. There are layout problems as well: some interior and exterior photographs are mismatched and numerous captions cannot be placed readily with the appropriate pictures.

During his tour of the lower Mississippi Valley, Schuler also took pictures of outbuildings, which he combined with examples collected from other regions of the country to produce *American Barns: In a Class by Themselves.* This volume duplicates the approach and format of the Mississippi Valley book. An introduction of several pages provides remarks about the history, general characteristics, and attractions of "one of America's most beloved types of buildings," and captioned photographs of some two hundred forty barns fill out the publication. As it is framed by building type rather than by geographic region, Schuler organizes this book according to categories of barns—bank barns, cribs, New England barns, Dutch barns, masonry barns, stables, carriage houses, polygonal barns, specialpurpose, one-of-a-kind, and "just" barns. Despite a number of sloppy images, the author's substantial collection of photographs taken in many parts of the country give American Barns strength.

In their large, bright, and numerous illustrations, all three of these publications have the most obvious asset of coffee-table books. They also contain glaring and instructive examples of the faults common to popular architectural history. The most prominent of these are the unanalytical methods of selection and organization. Images of buildings are assembled within the most general and superficial of parameters. The authors devote no thought to identifying the features that best characterize or connect their selections. Thus, Schuler feels free to include a tiny new gambrel-roofed tool shed in American Barns, and Faulconer adds several of the largest and grandest of the colonial Tidewater mansions to her presentation of "Virginia's small dwellings."

When pressed by the demands of bookmaking to sort buildings and justify selections, the authors' amateurish collecting results in the most mindless of typologies and taxonomies. Schuler's categories of barns are based on various and unexclusive elements of form, structure, function, ethnic association, geographic origin, construction material, and simple visual interest. In The Virginia House, Faulconer resorts to emphasizing her chosen examples with strained and inaccurate superlatives. For her, houses are notable as the "last original saltbox house in Essex County," or the "oldest three-story house in Virginia that can prove its date."

Just as the important components of form and function are ignored, so

too are the elements that differentiate architectural styles. In Mississippi Valley Architecture, houses are assigned styles—or relegated to the no-style "vernacular bin"-according to undefined criteria that vary from page to page. In several cases, Colonial Revival porches added to mid-19thcentury houses go unrecognized. One structure in American Barns is said to have been built in the Territorial Style. With the same ineptitude, Faulconer does not distinguish a dwelling's 19th- and 20th-century additions from its colonial core. Both authors frequently fail to recognize differences between Federal and Greek Revival motifs.

A closer look at the texts of the three books reveals related inadequacies. Because they are unfamilar with architectural terminology, Faulconer and Schuler make embarrassing mistakes: a barn's clipped gable roof is called "snub-nosed," hood molds are described as "hat-like architraves," joists are identified as rafters. Such faulty grasp of the appropriate vocabulary also creates problems for the authors when they want to write about what they see. A particularly tortured example appears in Faulconer's book:

Each [side of the house] is perfectly balanced; the river front has a row of five windows at second floor level balancing a row of two windows, porch, and two windows on the first floor, while the land front has three windows on the second floor and one window, porch and the other window on the first floor.

The authors are no more skilled in dealing with the historical contexts of their subjects. They paraphrase original sources, fail to identify them, or ignore them altogether. Historical statements are often based only on the authors' general impressions or presentist notions. Schuler asserts, for example, that early American barns were big because there was so much space, while Faulconer is confident that even the humblest Virginia farmer had an "aspiration toward refinement."

Although Faulconer is more committed to "fascinating pieces of information" gathered from owners and residents, both authors uncritically accept the historical accuracy of oral testimony. As a result, Faulconer revives the discredited belief that many of Virginia's surviving colonial structures were built in the 17th century. Other quaint or dramatic fantasies are given the dignity of print. Closets were rare among Mississippi Valley houses because they were taxed as rooms. Six-panel doors were designed piously to symbolize a cross and an open Bible. A diagonal-batten door was constructed to resist Indian arrows and hatchets. Hipped roofs were preferred over gable roofs in antebellum Louisiana because they shed water faster.

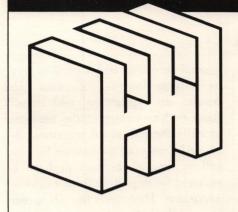
As a result of all this misclassification and misunderstanding, the authors' collected buildings float vaguely in space, unjustified by and unanchored to their technological, formal, social, or economic contexts. Faulconer and Schuler must confront-if not recognize-this poverty when they struggle to flesh out the texts of their books. Faulconer fills the gaps with "sweeping staircases," "breathtaking views," and "symphonies in symmetry." Schuler, by contrast, relies on the most colorless sort of church-basement travelogue blather: "The Maine carriage house is massive, although not so massive as the house (unseen to the left)."

But what is the purpose of criticizing these books in such detail? As their slang name implies, coffee-table books are not meant to be read concertedly. They are intended to be displayed, leafed through, perused. Their ample photographs—many of formerly unpublished buildings—might be considered sufficient excuse for the worthless prose. Certainly there is a place in architectural history for the serendipitous celebration of interesting buildings; most designers, critics, and historians were first attracted to their professions because architecture can be so intriguing and seductive.

It is important to recognize that writers like Faulconer and Schuler are not addressing their audience's desire to know about architecture. They are fostering or reinforcing their audience's impulse to possess architecture. In his remarks about a Mississippi Valley house, Schuler encourages his readers to "stop and wish you could call it your own." Faulconer is more direct, claiming to have included only those old Virginia houses that are "small enough to be affordable." The few readers who actually do have the resources to buy one of these substantial old structures can be enticed further by Faulconer's observations about how closets might be added. gardens developed, and outbuildings transformed into poolside shelters. Readers with upper middle-class sensibilities but slightly restricted means are invited to use Faulconer's photographs and ripped-off HABS drawings to build or renovate their own house in a way that will "project a genteel Virginia image."

The underlying point of all this is that old buildings are really only important to the extent that their antique qualities can be used to enhance their owners' prestige, distinguishing them from neighbors, colleagues, and subordinates. In light of this proposition, the authors' incompetence with architectural and historical information becomes a sly asset. Their treatments trivialize the structures they discuss, making them seem superficial. romantic, quaint. The buildings' fine materials, handcrafted details, distinctive forms, and substantial age are all acknowledged or even magnified, but not as elements of their inherent integrity as historical artifacts. They are merely attributes that increase the buildings' value. Thus, porches can be torn off, chimneys rebuilt, walls punched through-all without concern that anything worth knowing will be lost in the process.

No one who regards architecture as source material for research, analysis,



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or instruction can countenance this notion or dismiss it as harmless verbiage for popular consumption. Authors who produce these kinds of publications should be challenged—or better still, superseded. It is possible to write learned, competent architectural history that both does justice to its subject and is accessible to readers of many sorts. A fourth recent coffeetable book defies the condescending and sexist implications of its title to provide a heartening example.

Grand Old Ladies: North Carolina Architecture During the Victorian Era is the result of a collaboration. Marguerite Schumann planned the book, selecting or commissioning good-quality architectural photographs by JoAnn Sieburg-Baker. Schumann's purpose is to stimulate interest in North Carolina's Victorian past and to encourage the preservation of 19th-century structures. The body of the book is taken up with illustrations of a wide variety of public and domestic buildings that date from the 1830s to 1900. Statements and captions have been entirely replaced by passages taken from the writings of North Carolina authors. This means that the book is short on facts about individual buildings, but it is also free of space-filling claptrap. Most of the quotations are descriptions of turn-of-the-century scenes, and these have a pleasant way of acknowledging—without exploiting or solidifying—the romantic, nostalgic sensations that readers often bring to coffee-table books.

A more substantial grounding for Grand Old Ladies is provided by Sterling Boyd's long introduction, a difficult task that is handled with skill. He explains the parameters of the Victorian era, summarizes major 19th-century political events and economic trends, and mentions contemporary accomplishments in painting, music, and literature. He then launches into a description of 19thcentury architectural traditions, securing the narrative to North Carolina with frequent references to the buildings pictured in the book.

Boyd writes mainstream architectural history, emphasizing architectural styles and the individuals and trends that made them popular. In discussing specific buildings, he picks apart the visible stylistic influences and evaluates them according to their adherence to or deviation from architectural ideals. This march-of-styles approach has the usual weaknesses. Aesthetics and ornamentation never explain everything, so gaps must be plugged with digressions about the careers of architects or the principles of structural systems. Other weaknesses in Boyd's writing result from the strain of trying to mention every building in the book.

Nevertheless, the introductory essay is a genuine achievement—good architectural history written for a wide audience. Not all of what Boyd says is generally accepted, but is real information conveyed in a comprehensible manner. Architectural terms are freely used, but always with a subordinate clause that manages to provide a definition without condescension. He also discusses such slippery topics as proportions and scale in a competent way that any interested reader can understand.

1254 THIRD STREET MALL SANTA MONICA, CA 90401 (213) 458-9074 In several passages, Boyd does falter into careless, flip explanations. The architect of one church "took the idea of unequal towers and ran with it." A Richardson Romanesque church has "a few Gothic pointed-arch windows thrown in for effect." In other instances, he abandons his popular audience with highfalutin sentences filled with words like "recall" and "reminiscent." But these shortcomings only demonstrate how clearly Boyd saw his difficult responsibility and how careful he was, for the most part, to discharge it.

It is reasonable to suspect the motives of reviewers who denounce trivial and unlearned coffee-table publications. Perhaps they are just sourly patrolling the borders of their field, implying that architecture cannot be understood without the benefit of degrees, licenses, and titles. Professionalism can be a conceit as elitist and meanspirited as any other. Moreover, it would be foolish to claim that only professionals can write good architectural history-or that professionals always do write good architectural history. Still, it is important to acknowledge a duty: people who spend most of their time studying and examining architecture need to evaluate popular architectural treatments and to demand that they be worthwhile. Good buildings deserve respectful treatment. Interested readers deserve responsible prose.

The Virginia House: A Home for Three Hundred Years, Anne M. Faulconer, Schiffer, 1984, 160 pp., illus., \$25.00 pb.

Mississippi Valley Architecture: Houses of the Lower Mississippi Valley, Stanley Schuler, Schiffer, 1984, 231 pp., illus., \$30.00 pb.

American Barns: In a Class by Themselves, Stanley Schuler, Schiffer, 1984, 224 pp., illus., \$29.95 pb.

Grand Old Ladies: North Carolina Architecture During the Victorian Era, Marguerite Schumann, Sterling Boyd, and JoAnn Sieburg-Baker, Fast and McMillan Publishers, 1984, 128 pp., illus., \$19.95 pb. Randolph Langenbach: THE IMPECUNIOUS HOUSE RESTORER

JOHN T. KIRK

# A GUIDE TO THE MAINTENANCE, REPAIR, AND ALTERATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS FREDERICK A. STAHL

# HANDBOOK OF BUILDING CRAFTS IN CONSERVATION

JACK BOWYER, editor

# MOISTURE PROBLEMS IN HISTORIC MASONRY WALLS BAIRD M. SMITH

The books reviewed here are only a sampling of the growing number being published on the repair and restoration of buildings. Now that the preservation movement has come into its own, we are confronted more and more with rehabilitation work that has damaged the integrity and character of the buildings it was meant to preserve. It is encouraging to see the expanding market for books that take a professional approach to conservation and rehabilitation.

Of the four books, only *The Impecunious House Restorer*, by John T. Kirk, is aimed at a general audience of those interested in restoring their own houses. It is, nevertheless, a very specialized book. Rather than try to formulate universal caveats for conservation methodology, Kirk gives a very personal view of the goals and objectives of his restoration work, and then shapes his recommendations to fit. Kirk is one of New England's eminent furniture experts, and his book describes his restorations of several New England houses to serve as settings for his collection. The results are captivating, and show a deep understanding of the aesthetic of early New England interiors. Because he restored the houses for himself to live in, he can perhaps be excused for departing from a rigorous accuracy. However, the departure goes a little far when he "restores" a former chicken house into a convincing replica of an 18th-century kitchen. As a "restoration," this harks back to the theories of Viollet-le-Duc and the 19th-century romantics.

Despite the liberties taken at the conceptual level, Kirk's attention to the details of restoration crafts is very good. The book does show, in its personal way, that an aesthetic result of real quality may best be achieved through a deep understanding of the fabric of a historic structure and the crafts that went into it.

While The Impecunious House Restorer serves the popular as well as the professional audience, two other books seem deliberately misnamed in order to tap the popular market. A Guide to the Maintenance, Repair, and Alteration of Historic Buildings. by Frederick A. Stahl, is a curious book to come from a commercial publisher. Although published in 1984. it is, in fact, a report prepared by Stahl's firm in 1978 under contract to the General Services Administration. Like many such reports, it was never distributed. It is, however, valuable as a comprehensive outline of building conservation crafts and technology required both for minor maintenance and major restoration. However, as an unedited reprint of the GSA report, its scope is far more limited than the title suggests.

The buildings under the GSA's care are generally courthouses and office buildings, and many of these guidelines are inappropriate for other structures. There is also no mention of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, first published in 1979, and now used as a guide for all rehab work to be certified for tax credits. This report refers the reader instead to the "Regional Preservation Officer" for further guidance. For the general reader, it would have been preferable to reorganize and edit the document to relate to the *Secretary's Standards*, and include a bibliography.

In addition, certain technical and procedural recommendations should have been updated. Since 1978, for example, the use of blown-in plastic foam insulation is no longer recommended, and pentachlorophenol has been removed from the retail market because of its toxicity. The book also suffers from a shortage of illustrations and a cumbersome organization. On the other hand, its concise description of the causes of deterioration in different metals, and methods of maintenance and repair, is brief but to the point, and its emphasis on maintenance-an often underrated subject-is another strength.

After one gets by the misleading title of the Handbook of Building Crafts in Conservation one discovers it is actually a reprint of an 1823 English builder's manual with new commentary. This manual, The New Practical Builder and Workman's Companion, by Peter Nicholson, is a marvelous description of the crafts involved in the creation of a late 18th- or early 19th-century English house. The original manual gives a valuable look at traditional building techniques, an area not often covered in present-day architectural curricula. The modern commentary is useful, not only because practices have changed over time, but because the 1823 descriptions assume a knowledge that the 20th-century reader probably lacks. Sometimes the words have changed even when the practices have not. One such change is the word for the plasterer's float called a "darby" in Stahl's Guide to Maintenance; it was originally a "derby" in the 1823 manual. During the intervening one hundred and fifty years, the Americans have adopted the word by spelling it

the way the English pronounce it.

Certain sections of the 1823 manual cast light on how knowledge has changed—for example, the description of Roman cements in the section on mortars. Nicholson thought the strength of the Roman cement walls was the result of the "perfection" of the crystallization of the lime mortar:

That the crystallization may be the more perfect, a large quantity of water should be used, the ingredients be perfectly mixed together, and the drying be as slow as possible. An attention to these particulars would make the building of the moderns equally durable with those of the antients [sic].

This description was written before it was understood that the Romans used a mortar which took a hydraulic set because of the use of volcanic ash (Pozzolan) in the mix. Nicholson believed, erroneously, that "the great thicknesses of the Roman walls necessarily required a vast length of time to dry." In addition, his recommendation of a "large quantity of water" would weaken rather than strengthen the cement. Conversely, the use of "brick dust," which he says would weaken lime mortar, is actually likely to strengthen it by causing it to take a hydraulic set. Unfortunately, the book neglects to explain this historical change in the understanding of the setting process of cement.

The pages of the original manual are printed side by side with the modern commentary, but it is sometimes difficult to perceive a direct relationship, as the commentary often describes tangential material rather than commenting directly on the text. It would have been more effective to intersperse the original material with a modern text to explain each point. More elaborate descriptions of modern restoration procedures could then have been relegated to a separate section.

The National Park Service (and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation

Service before it) has provided a remarkably comprehensive and professionally sophisticated series of publications on the proper rehabilitation of buildings. All of these documents provide the technical information to back up the Secretary's Standards, which the Park Service administers. One such work, Moisture Problems in Historic Masonry Walls, by Baird Smith, is a pamphlet, but provides a denser and more complete technical explanation of a particular problem than any of the other books reviewed here. Unlike Stahl's book, it possesses both a clear explanatory style and an extensive bibliography. Well illustrated with both drawings and photographs-unusual for a government publication-the pamphlet is based on a dissertation written for the conservation program at York, England, and, while addressing the problems in the American context, encompasses practices more common in England and Europe.

The Handbook of Building Crafts and Moisture Problems should be on architectural school reading lists, and not just for students interested in preservation. The Handbook provides a unique insight into building technology, not just of the early 19th century but today as well; and the National Park Service pamphlet shows the kind of research which lies behind understanding a simple construction problem, one not unheard of even in new buildings.

The Impecunious House Restorer: Personal Vision and Historical Accuracy, John T. Kirk, Knopf, 1984, 206 pp., illus., \$15.00 pb.

A Guide to the Maintenance, Repair, and Alteration of Historic Buildings, Frederick A. Stahl, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1984, 185 pp., illus., \$24.95.

Handbook of Building Crafts in Conservation, Jack Bowyer, editor, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1984, 375 pp., illus., \$46.00.

Moisture Problems in Historic Masonry Walls: Diagnosis and Treatment, Baird M. Smith, National Park Service Preservation Assistance Division, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1985, 48 pp., illus., \$2.25.

# Elizabeth Cromley: LIVING IT UP

THOMAS E. NORTON and JERRY E. PATTERSON

Living It Up is an indulgently titled guidebook to Manhattan's named apartment houses from about 1870 to the early 1980s. The book has many small black-and-white illustrations both historical and modern photographs—and includes several apartment building plans.

The introductory chapter gives an overview of the history of apartment buildings, beginning with Manhattan's overcrowding in the mid-19th century and the architect Calvert Vaux's call for the introduction of apartments to New York. European middle-class apartment houses of the mid-19th century provided models, and the "first New York apartment house by most reckoning" followed: R. M. Hunt's Stuyvesant, opened in 1870. The authors trace the shifting forms of apartments (bachelor flats, apartmenthotels, studios, housekeeping units). and the influence of technologies (urban mass transportation systems, elevators, gas and electric light) on the location and ultimate success of apartments. This history ends with some characteristic conversions of the 1970s and 1980s: New Yorkers living in "former police stations, fire halls, schools, synagogues, and churches" as they continue to hunt for the perfect apartment.

The main body of the book is an alphabetically arranged inventory of nearly two thousand of the named buildings of New York (by which they mean Manhattan). Some entries include several substantial paragraphs on the building's history, others only a line. At the end are short chapters on named "residential enclaves" like Amster Yard, named demolished buildings of note, and five walking tours of apartment house districts.

One of the authors' aims is to account in some way for the names that apartments have, although they recognize that naming buildings was always more a gimmick for realtors than an essential part of the address. Sometimes their account yields useful information: the Dunbar Apartments, which aided in revitalizing 1920s Harlem, were named after a major black poet. Other information remains unconnected: in the entry for Devon Residence we learn that "Devon is an English county," but the authors do not tell us how and why this building got linked up with that name. They sometimes reveal the futility of this accounting themselves, as in their entry for The Howard: "either the British noble family or the real estate developer's brother-in-law." (Patterson and Norton have a sense of humor too.)

The buildings included were built for various social classes, and house diverse classes now. Many entries are for named buildings that we would be comfortable calling tenements, the least generous and lowest rent apartment houses. There are as many buildings at the very highest rents, the costliest co-ops and condominiums. It is admirable that the authors have included this array of social levels, establishing the breadth of apartment design. The book's index is by street name, street number—that is, it is not indexed by architect. This is a good choice for a guidebook index, although it may frustrate those who look for architect's names, many of which are given in individual entries.

Who would want to buy this book has puzzled me. It has the familiar tall, narrow guidebook format, but is hardbound and too heavy for a walker's jacket pocket. And if one did take it out walking, it's not clear what one would learn: named buildings mostly have their names on their facades to be read by anyone. Nor is the authors' dating of buildings very informative (e.g., "early twentieth century", "turn of the century", "nineteenth century"), although they do sometimes give exact dates and the names of the architects, developers, and occasionally even well-known tenants. But, while I don't find it so useful as a guidebook, I can imagine another market for it: if all the tenants of the buildings listed were to purchase the book, Norton and Patterson would have a bestseller.

Living It Up: A Guide to the Named Apartment Houses of New York, Thomas E. Norton and Jerry E. Patterson, Atheneum, 1984, 451 pp., illus., \$25.00.



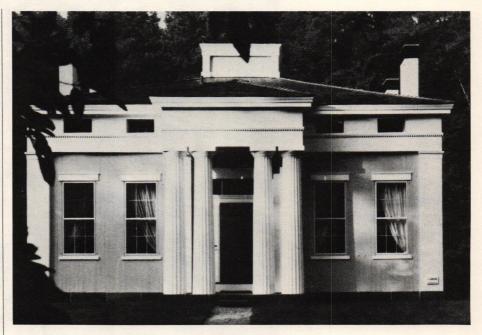
## Claire W. Dempsey: HOUSES OF NEW ENGLAND PETER T. MALLARY OLD NEW ENGLAND HOMES

#### STANLEY SCHULER

Houses of New England and Old New England Houses are large format, abundantly illustrated introductions to the region's historic architecture. Aimed at a general audience, they demonstrate the potential of the genre as well as its pitfalls.

Houses of New England, by Peter T. Mallary, with photographs by Grandon Woods, presents case studies of twenty-four of the region's bestknown houses. Examples are included from each New England state, from rural and urban areas, and, with but one exception, are evenly distributed chronologically over the period prior to 1850. Nearly all the houses are open to the public as museums, assuring well-researched and accessible examples.

Mallary's introduction outlines his goal for the volume, to combine a consideration of the houses' architectural features and furnishings with a social history of their various inhabitants. A brief summary of conventional architectural styles follows. Essays on the houses-the bulk of the bookare arranged in chronological order by date of initial construction. Here considerations of design, construction, decorative arts, and owner biographies are combined in distinctive portraits, stressing the continued use of the houses. Photographs are of both interiors and exteriors, in color and black and white, and are clearly captioned. The reader can distinguish original elements from later modifications, survivals from restorationsdistinctions commonly missing from popular style books and tour guides.



DESIGNED FOR CHARLES DANIELS, CHESTER CONNECTICUT, 1826

The author's enthusiasm for the individual stories he tells carries the reader easily through each essay, and from house to house.

While flaws can be noted, they do not significantly compromise the value of the book. Occasionally glare and shadow mar photographs but most are helpful and attractive views of the buildings. The inclusion of the Elms, a "cottage" built in Newport in 1901, is the single exception to the focus on the region's pre-industrial past. The decision to use historic house museums serves the author well, for the presentation is sufficiently detailed to be both entertaining and useful to the general reader in search of an attractive volume on the region.

Stanley Schuler's thirteen-page introduction outlines six architectural "styles" in *Old New England Homes:* Jacobean, Colonial, Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, and Victorian. The volume is then divided into chapters on each, with the author's focus clearly on the Georgian and Federal group. Primarily of building exteriors, the photographs include both black and white and color shots, and number over five hundred.

Schuler has clearly come to know the region well and the reader will be exposed to many examples and images of New England's historic buildings. Problems, however, can be found in both text and photographs. Schuler's information is useful for the beginner (Victorian is "many different styles"), but his statements are sometimes confusing (it "requires no explanation"). In his attempt at a popular, engaging tone, he too often employs intrusive colloquialisms. Occasional factual inaccuracies and eccentric interpretations combine to call into question the instructive function of such a volume. Many photographs are blurred and poorly composed, and some are unexplained in the text. These shortcomings attest to the difficulty of presenting technical material to a general audience in a form that is both accurate and entertaining.

Houses of New England, Peter T. Mallary, Thames and Hudson, 1984, 208 pp., illus., \$35.00.

Old New England Homes, Stanley Schuler, Schiffer, 1984, 224 pp., illus., \$35.00.

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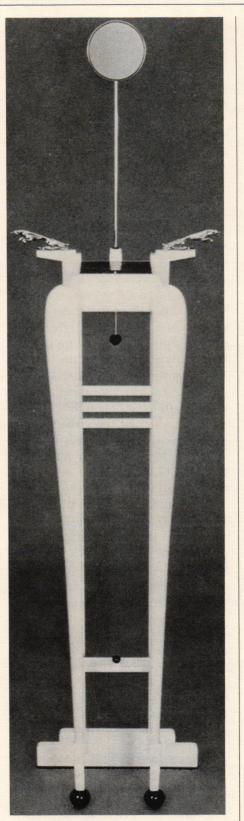
## **INTERIOR DESIGN AND DECORATIVE ARTS**

## Laurie Haycock: BORN TO BE SOLD

New Design is the kind of graduation exercise we get from a class that has learned too well how a visual ideano matter how vain or small-can be made famous by critical rationale. The smallest fracture of form is thus invariably connected to the biggest possible future. If rumor is an unconfirmed statement in general circulation, then New Design is a rumor attempting to be confirmed with the publication of three books on the subject. Memphis places the activities of Ettore Sottsass and others at the center of Italian New Wave Design. The Hot House places Italian New Wave Design at the center of New Design. And Phoenix is the exhibition catalogue that gives New Design a name. Myth-inspired metaphor is, after all, part of the daily life of New Design.

The invention of Memphis, the movement's loudest representative, entailed a proliferation of exhibitions, critical promotion, reviews, books, and book reviews. Memphis, the book, is the movement's most narcissistic creation. Barbara Radice, a writer and the only non-architect/designer member of Memphis, describes the beginning of Memphis in Milan as vividly as she might the birth of her own child. She describes three consecutive meetings in 1980 at a pizzeria, where the Bob Dylan refrain, "stuck inside of Mobile with the Memphis blues again" inspired the name, and the lyric "She knows what you need, but I know what you want" inspired the attitude. Two months later the first drawings of New Design were reviewed:

The next seven months before the opening, set for 18 September [1981] were hectic, but somehow (no one knows how) long enough to do everything in time. Everything meant: to make the technical drawings of the



TRENT R. WHITINGTON, LEAPING CATS, 1984

furniture, produce the furniture, find a lamp manufacturer, produce the fabrics, communicate with foreign architects and designers behind schedule with their drawings, photograph the furniture, invent the graphics because there was no money to pay a studio, design two posters, an invitation, a catalogue, a press package, letterhead paper and envelopes, do a book, design the display, and write to journalists and the press. All this without funds and everyone with another full-time job. At the opening on September 18 there were thirty-one pieces of furniture, three clocks, ten lamps, eleven ceramics, and twenty-five hundred people.

Essentially, in less than one year, energetic rumor and self-promotion elected Memphis as the New Design long before it had been nominated. Andrea Branzi, designer and author, expresses concern: "Many experiments of the Italian New Design are still in progress, and no one is interested in a premature attempt to find a place in history for them." Maybe not Branzi, whose work is in the name of research, and whose book *The Hot House* demonstrates an intelligent foresightedness concerning the last 20 years of Italian avant-garde design.

Radice, on the other hand, seems to be working for commission and against deadline, rushing to save Memphis a seat in history before the marketplace fills. "We are all sure that Memphis furniture will go out of style," says Radice in the inaugural 1981 Memphis exhibition catalogue. But not before she invokes a sense of purpose:

Memphis, I told myself, is not just a cultural event, it is an erotic event, an erotic-consumer rite that absorbs anxieties and recycles energies; it is a lubricating essence, a fine tuning of metabolism, a focusing of perspectives.

Do we chant back "I believe"? *I* believe these object were born to be sold.

Phoenix is probably the most reliable document of New Design, with essays by and interviews with a range of personalities including Fredric Jameson, Victor Margolin, Barbara Goldstein, Charles Jencks, and Max Protetch, as well as Barbara Radice and Andrea Branzi, the authors of Memphis and The Hot House. In this catalogue the verbal statements by individual designers seem essential to the presentation and understanding of New Design. The collaging of essay onto interview, photography onto verbal statement, expresses the struggle of New Design to be many things. The articulation of motives indicates that it is indeed no mere fad, but bound to this culture's past and future; it also attests to the difficulties in defining a movement of so many contradictions, and a certain amount of megalomania.

The gift of Bauhaus ideology to the material environment-a belief in simplicity and order-created expectations of visual harmony. The dogma of functionalism suppressed the object's expressive capabilities through the rational translation of function into form. The attempt of New Design, however, is to devalue function and harmony in favor of what Walter Gropius deliberately excised at Weimar-metaphorical expression by the maker, which may disturb overall unity and upset otherwise predictable relationships. The problems of design no longer involve the universals of Bauhaus ideology, but those of subjectivity, disparity, multiplicity, and derailed hierarchies. Such a chameleon movement is bound to frustrate those who must write about it; negative criticism of New Design, mine included, may be a reaction to the notorious difficulty of evaluating research efforts. Picasso said, on the subject: "When I paint my objective is to show what I have found, not what I am looking for."

Compare the intention that formed a Mies chair to those of Howard Meister, whose goal it is "to create home furnishings with symbolic and narrative content which can more truly reflect and fulfill psychological desires."

The chair cannot be defined by existing criteria of "good design" because its priorities are exploratory symbolism rather than function. However, symbolism, in the case of New Design, is often mistaken for decoration and appliqué. By necessity, Branzi distinguishes the expressive desires of New Design from mere decoration, which he describes as the vulgarization of graphic symbols in repetition. Personal expression in design is not reprehensible-just the opposite-but eclectic expression can be as vulgar as the decoration Branzi rejects. Loaded with the expression of agitation, many of the pieces reproduced in these books are like the loud party-goer, dancing to his own beat. A gross display of self-expression often lands the drunk, along with the multi-patterned, brightly-colored, every-directioned bookshelf, in a corner, all alone. The egocentric and anxiety-ridden aesthetic of Ettore Sottsass's Carlton, for instance, would be very difficult to live with.

So what, beyond ambition, is New Design? Stack up all the descriptive words for it and try building a design department, buildings and all, with these vocabulary bricks: extravagant, abstract, disparate, decorative, ambiguous, ironic, funny, deconstructive, colorful, trendy, cartoonish, eclectic, radical, assymmetric, immoral, postmodern, metaphorical, conceptual, different. Playskool but not childproof.

The real artifacts of New Design may be not objects, but photography of objects. Consider the obnoxious introduction to *Memphis* by Sottsass:

And now there's a book, a nice, big book. The young calm photographers have taken their precious pictures, Barbara Radice has provoked the decisions and written the text, Nathalie du Pasquier has designed the cover, Christoph Radl and the publisher's art directors have pasted it up ... students may not be able to buy it because it'll cost a lot, but ... they'll be able to look at it somehow.... And for a while here and there on the planet people will talk about the book and then the book will go onto the shelves of elegant bookcases, between the *History of Art Nouveau* and *Japanese Packaging* perhaps....

As an amalgam of image and text, a book is New Design's best opportunity to present itself. However, Memphis, The Hot House, and Phoenix are all conventional examples of inexpressive, grid-dependent book design. Didn't Branzi or MIT Press, Radice or Rizzoli, or the Canadian curators of Phoenix know any graphic designers who experiment with the critical methods compatible with New Design? The typography is without humor, radicalism, or conceptual direction. and the opportunity for book as object as metaphor is wholly unperceived. Hear the herald of "new vision"-hear how much it sounds like "new and improved"-and consider why the language of vanguard graphic design did not collaborate in the promotion of New Design. It may indicate the superficiality of the movement; or it may mean that the New Design is too experimental to assist in the more conventional tasks of its own publicity.

The Hot House: Italian New Wave Design, Andrea Branzi, MIT, 1984, 156 pp., illus., \$25.00.

Memphis: Research, Experiences, Results, Failures and Successes of New Design, Barbara Radice, Rizzoli, 1985, 208 pp., illus., \$35.00.

Phoenix: New Attitudes in Design, edited by Christina Ritchie and Loris Calzolari, catalogue of an exhibition held at the Queen's Quay Terminal Building, Toronto, November 1-30, 1984, 128 pp., illus., \$18.00 pb.

## Robert F. Trent: CHICAGO FURNITURE SHARON DARLING

Most studies of American furniture restrict their compass to a brief stylistic episode or tight geographical area. Many, regrettably, are limited to what is deemed to be "high-style" or "artistic" furniture. Treatments of industrialism and the furniture trade after 1840 often take the form of apologies for mediocrity or statistical studies, or, at worst, Ruskinian discussions of the impact of industrialism on handicrafts.

Sharon Darling's extremely ambitious and sumptuously produced study of the Chicago furniture industry from its beginnings to the present seeks to avoid all these trivialities and abuses, and in a large measure it succeeds. The study embraces every available resource—artifactual, pictorial, statistical—in an attempt to suggest the very broadest meaning of the production and consumption of furniture in the Greater Chicago area. The first monograph so sweeping in scope to be published in this country, its strengths far outweigh its several weaknesses.

The speed with which the furniture trade mushroomed into a highly articulated industry employing thousands of operatives in heavily capitalized businesses is the most astounding story the book has to offer. Barely thirty years after Chicago was effectively settled, steam-powered machinery and the mass marketing of cheap products engulfed the bench-made or custom level of furniture production and commissioning. The principal factors involved appear to have been the convenient location of Chicago at a central railroad terminus, easy access to lumber, and the exploding population base.

Not unnaturally, the industry responded by branching off into specialty firms that, rather than try to satisfy all kinds and levels of demands, sought niches within the market. A major portion of the book is thus devoted to the production of cheap furniture: parlor suites, patent or "gimmick" furniture, bedroom suites, chairs, commercial or office furniture, and cabinetwares (or "case goods," as they were called).

Distinct from industrial production for the masses was "art furniture," produced by custom firms that continued to design, rough out, embellish, and sell their own furniture. Custom house design firms of this period between the Civil War and World War I differed from their predecessors in the range of styles at their disposal, the extraordinary wealth of their clienteles, the availability of improved tooling and machinery, and the intensive division of tasks among highly trained specialists. This was, in fact, the period at which the technical skills utilized by custom houses were at their highest pitch, a reflection of the great custom houses in European capitals that competed for royal and haut bougeois patronage at international competitions where styles were promulgated. The Chicago custom firms and designers have all received prior recognition in exhibitions and monographs-notably Isaac E. Scott, Frederick W. Krause, Peter B. Wight, Cudell & Lehmann, Tobey Furniture Company, George W. Maher, and Frank Lloyd Wright-and the treatment of them is the most traditional part of Chicago Furniture.

The last section of the book, dealing with 1918 to the present, treats the decline of the mass production industry as custom firms fled to the South to obtain cheaper labor. It also addresses Modernism and new technologies like metal and thermoplastic. This discussion is perhaps the most spotty, although it does point to significant trends such as the proliferation of small custom firms in the 1920s and the role of major architectdesigners.

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of the book for the furniture historian METAL FOLDING CHAIR WITH TAPESTRY

METAL FOLDING CHAIR WITH TAPESTRY UPHOLSTERY, ROYAL METAL MANUFACTURING COMPANY, ca. 1920

is its attention to questions of management and labor, mechanization, and marketing in the 1873–1917 era. Sharon Darling's intensive conceptual and documentary emphasis on this difficult period is quite impressive. Undoubtedly her interest in this period reflects the huge amount of documentary and illustrative material the mass-marketing and trade journals provide.

Across the board, a basic criticism of the book is that its chronological treatment, which reflects basic changes within the industry, often runs afoul of sharply focused material, forcing the reader to adjust his or her perspective and to shift back and forth from sweeping economic and social issues to specific detail. However, the book is undoubtedly the first in the decorative arts field to successfully set the development of a single city within the context of national and international production, marketing, and design trends. In view of Chicago's importance in all these fields, the book cannot help but serve as a model for both future regional studies and national surveys.

Chicago Furniture: Art, Craft and Industry, 1833-1983, Sharon Darling, Chicago Historical Society with W. W. Norton, 1984, 416 pp., illus., \$50.00.

## Jeffrey L. Meikle: DICTIONARY OF DESIGNERS AND DESIGN

SIMON JERVIS

This solid but sometimes polemical reference work by Simon Jervis has stirred considerable controversy among design historians in Great Britain. A curator of furniture at the Victoria and Albert Museum, Jervis maintains in his introduction that design history, as taught to future practitioners attending British technical universities, has wrongly emphasized industrialization and modernism to the exclusion of earlier periods. He intends this dictionary to restore a sense of balance and thus provide students who are sympathetic to the postmodern revival of ornament with earlier, more complex, and, to him, more satisfying historical examples than Art Nouveau, Arts and Crafts, or Art Deco. Whether Americans find Jervis's work useful will depend on their particular research interests; however, they are not likely to feel threatened by the book's opening statements, as do some British design historians.

Jervis's definition of design may not be everybody's. He clearly states that his dictionary concentrates on ceramics, furniture, glass, interiors, metalwork, ornament, and textiles, with far less coverage of graphics, "consumer durables," and typography, and little or no mention of design for heavy industry, the theater, or fashion. Dismissing as romantic myths both the creativity of the traditional craftsman and the role of the industrial designer as consumer culture hero, Jervis admits a prejudice for the artfully contrived design of unique or at least deluxe artifacts. In other words, the focus is on the decorative arts as traditionally understood.

Within these limits, the work appears to be carefully researched,

accurately written, and useful as a reference tool to the scholar as well as the student. Most of its alphabetical entries are short biographies, but Jervis also includes thoughtful essays on general topics (Modernism, Neoclassicism, perspective, rococo), as well as shorter entries on museum and trade exhibitions, on schools and institutions, and on periodicals significant in the history of design. Potential users of the dictionary should be aware of a few problems with its organization and selection, however. Because the subject is design, the biographies sometimes do not reveal the full range or focus of an individual's career. (Botticelli, an extreme case, appears as an obscure designer of embroidery and mosaics; the extensive coverage granted to Mies van der Rohe as a furniture designer rather than an architect makes his entry problematic for the unwary student with little knowledge of the field.) More important, as Jervis chooses to emphasize the period before 1850. including even the most obscure 16thcentury engravers of portfolios of designs (Camillo Graffico), some of his later inclusions seem arbitrary. (For example, such Americans as Gilbert Rohde and George Nelson have generous entries, but their equally significant contemporaries Russel Wright and Eliot Noyes are ignored; Richard Sapper appears only in the entry for his sometime collaborator Marco Zanuso.) Nonbiographical entries also reveal Jervis's bias toward the less recent past. (He includes separate entries on the international expositions of Philadelphia, 1876, and Chicago, 1893, but relegates New York, 1939, a crucial event in the evolution of American commercial design, to a few casual remarks in various biographical entries.) Finally, American readers should be warned that European developments take precedence. (England's Architectural Design and Architectural Review are indeed excellent sources of information on design history, as is Italy's Casabella, but so

are Architectural Forum, Architectural Record, and Pencil Points, journals of equivalent role and status in the U.S., none of which is included.)

The above caveats are only that. Once a reader is aware of what Jervis does and does not include, his dictionary is an adequate desk reference. In the areas of his declared interest, he presents his material with a completeness and sense of mastery that suggest solid factual correctness. My own expertise as a design historian. which begins about 1850, enables me to conclude that Jervis is also factually accurate (as well as perceptive, sometimes even witty) on the major institutions and individuals of 20th-century design. However, the entries on American commercial industrial designers not only appear haphazard, they include many minor errors: Norman Bel Geddes designed an interior for the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency not in 1932 but in 1929; Henry Dreyfuss's work for the New York Central Railroad began not in 1941 but at least three years earlier; Raymond Loewy exhibited the S-1 locomotive at the New York World's Fair of 1939, not 1937; Walter Dorwin Teague designed day coaches, not Pullman cars, for the New Haven Railroad; and Frank Del Giudice, not "de Giudice," was one of Teague's associates. Such errors normally destroy the credibility and usefulness of a reference work, but in this case they merely expose ignorance of an area in which Jervis has already declared his disinterest. One might wish that he had not attempted, presumably for the sake of completeness, a sketchy presentation of American commercial design. His clear, readable, often lively dictionary would have been less flawed and no less useful had he limited it to the extensive areas of his expertise and interest.

The Facts on File Dictionary of Design and Designers, Simon Jervis, Facts on File, 1984, 533 pp., \$24.95 (available in paperback as *The Penguin Dictionary of Design and Designers*, Penguin, 1984, \$7.95).

## Alastair Johnston: ARTISTS' BOOKS & LIVRES D'ARTISTES

Artists' books and livres d'artistes are two fields of book activity separated by the social gulf implied in the courtly use of French. The livre d'artiste came first, not entirely as the crude appeal to snobbery that it is today, but as a way to have highquality illustrations in a book by employing some of the craft skills no longer in use in the late 19th century. The introduction of photography and the halftone dot quickly superseded wood engraving and lithography, but, in terms of the scarcity theory of value, the readily available halftone technique was too productive. After the introduction of photography, wood engraving still predominated, as the engravers were so skilled as to be able to render photographs realistically after they were exposed on the woodblock. That the everyday engravings executed after Winslow Homer and Howard Pyle are now sought out and excised from the popular magazines in which they appeared at the turn of the century is a measure of the increased appreciation for this genre.

The Victoria and Albert Museum exhibition catalogue From Manet to Hockney is a survey of the last hundred years of limited edition books by well-known artists working in the book-related fields of lithography and woodcut. For these artists the book is a secondary form of expression-most are well-known painters and sculptors who have been brought in to illustrate a text, generally a reprint of an established work, for the sake of their name and its appeal to the customers who cannot afford an original oneof-a-kind painting or sculpture. Occasionally books are illustrated posthumously-this is accomplished by simply publishing a suite of lithos to accompany a text, or with entirely unrelated work. The 1907 *Dialogue* of Greek Courtesans, for example, which annexed 15 lithographs of Gustav Klimt, is chiefly a record of the artist's work. Only rarely in this catalogue do we see the mise-en-page of the original book, as if to underline how little the artwork needs the context of the words. Where the type is shown in juxtaposition with the imagery, it is blurry and indistinct. Clearly, the V & A catalogue tells us, in the the livre d'artiste the text only gets in the way.

There is no shortage of images here, only the usual biases and omissions, and a few rather forced inclusions. Several magazine or periodical appearances are the excuse to squeeze in Franz Marc, Wyndham Lewis, Douanier Rousseau, and Rodchenko. And while it is grand to see Malevich included, this is another bogus entry. His cover for Punin's Crash Course for Drawing Teachers was executed without the artist's involvement—the surprisingly lyrical pastel colors were "corrected" by the printer who reproduced the cover from zinc plates, and no other Malevich illustrations occur in Punin's book.

The cataloguers also perpetuate some errors. In the brief bibliographical description of Verlaine's *Parallelement* (in the famous edition illustrated by Bonnard), they state "text set in Garamond, first cut in 1540." The type may be called Garamond, but it is actually the work of Jannon from the 17th century.

The omissions are more disturbing. None of the early books of Max Jacob (which were illustrated by his friends Braque and Picasso) are included. Perhaps they are so rare as to be unknown to the Victoria and Albert; perhaps they are still dangerously original works of art. The introduction refers to the exhibit as examples of "decorative art" (!), an insensitivity perhaps sanctioned by the trend of reprinting old chestnuts illustrated by a (any?) big name artist, so that we have Beckett incongruously decorated by Jasper Johns, and the projected Motherwell edition of Joyce's *Ulysses*.

The greatest examples of books as unabashed "decorative" art were the amazing art deco flood pouring from France between the wars. But the magnificent pochoired books of Schmied, Seguy, Edy Legrand, and Sonia Delaunay are somehow curiously missing from this work. And, if national chauvinism is behind the odd criteria for inclusion, where are Charles Rickett, Aubrev Beardsley, and Claude Lovat Fraser? Rockwell Kent and Leonard Baskin, Hermann Paul, John Farleigh, and Joan Hassall-all important to the history of the art of the book in the 20th century—are missing; their exclusion is a value judgment against their medium, wood engraving. Here again the prejudice is deep-rooted; none of these artists, with the possible exception of Kent, were famous painters, but as engravers their work is far more accomplished than the work of Raoul Dufy, Gordon Craig, or Jim Dine, whose cruder attempts at wood cutting are included.

Let us turn to the more egalitarian form of the artist's book, an area with neither the pretensions nor the grandiosity of its Frenchified namesake. No one, least of all the creators, is quite sure what an artist's book is. The book form becomes a vehicle for a total artwork experienced through time as a sequence of openings. Often the concept is good and the execution weak, or vice versa; or the illustration overpowers the textual content, or vice versa. Occasionally we find a sublime mix of all these facets. The blurb written by Frances Butler on the back cover of Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook tells us,

"The Artist's book is a new form of reading, incorporating unexpected interactions between language and tactile and visual forms. Its investigations of the interplay of communication modes have enlarged the definition of the nature and function of the book, and of reading itself." So here the artist is using the book as a primary means of expression, and we quite often find the answer to the question, "When is a book not a book?" is "When it's an artist's book."

The various essays in this useful compendium give an up-to-the-minute, if somewhat puzzling and indistinct picture of the state of book arts today. Susi Bloch's piece, "The Book Stripped Bare" covers the same ground as the V & A catalogue. There is a strong East Coast bias throughout the book, and essays such as the nebulous piece by Shelley Rice blow up insignificant work to gigantic proportions. Rather than a critical view, we are given each author's parlor tour of pet bookworks. Favorites emerge (mostly the latest thing, so we can see Keith Smith and Kevin Osborne riding prominently at the front of the field). The category becomes so broad that anything sequentially viewed or vaguely resembling a book can be included. How about a wallpaper sample book? It has minimal and abstract text, and varied and interesting printing techniques. If the trend here is toward a deemphasis on text, surely comic books would be high in the ranks of artists' books? From Windsor MacKay on, comic artists have shown a very sophisticated approach to the page, incorporating a cinematic interaction between viewpoint and storyline. Dave Stevens's Rocketeer is not considered an artist's book because it is mass-produced, therefore accessible, and, above all, popular and easy to follow. On the other hand, a more difficult comic, such as Gary Panter's Okupant X may well be an artist's book, though it's not included here. But then Panter and many other comic artists, like Sue Coe, are political and attempt to disturb the status quo; they are therefore not a safe bet for our nation's librarians to promulgate. So we have come full circle. As exemplified in Artists' Books, the list of current prejudices reflecting the book arts movement shows it to be already antiquated (the difference between the artist's

book and the livre d'artiste being simply that the latter is a rerun of older modes—old texts and "valued" techniques—while the younger version uses esoteric texts and unsanctioned techniques). Both forms wallow in formalism, favoring the fancy package, the glossy appearance. The art tends toward abstract expressionism, which has no discernible message: no political content disturbs the bourgeois values placed on the book.

The difference between the artist's book and the livre d'artiste is simply that the livre d'artiste is a rerun of older modes, while the younger version uses esoteric texts and unsanctioned techniques.

In the introduction to her piece, "The Artist's Book Goes Public," Lucy Lippard calls for "harsher criticism and deeper knowledge of the genre." The book, however, presents a mishmash of uncategorized work and a lot of ego-frottage by the writers. Lippard, like Rice and Philpott, states that the artist's book emerged in the 1960s. They miss the importance of William Blake (pointed out by Betsy Davids and Jim Petrillo in their essay) and such later practitioners as Andrew W. Tuer and H. N. Werkman. While the movement became visible in the 1960s (and Ed Ruscha with his Twenty-Six Gasoline Stations is a favorite Ur-figure), it is discouraging to see the major contributions of Ian Hamilton Finlay at Wild Hawthorn Press in Scotland, and Zephyrus Image (the press of Holbrook Teter and Michael Myers) in California continually ignored.

More traditional presses, such as

White Rabbit, who occasionally played jokes on the book, are also excluded. Their works worthy of note in a survey or anthology of this type include Joe Dunn & Jess's Better Dream House, Jack Thibeau's Open Letter to Che Guevara, and Richard Brautigan's Please Plant This Book, a series of poems printed on seed packets and given away free. Walter Hamady's series of "Gabberjabbs" from the Perishable Press in Wisconsin are among the wittiest and certainly the most well-made artists' books around. Wallace Berman and Ray Johnson receive brief mention in Barbara Moore and John Hendricks' essay, "The Page as Alternative Space, 1950 to 1969." As a first stab at the field, however, this anthology is useful and should help book collectors overcome their fear of the genre.

Both books in fact will readily find their market as they spring to the hand of those seeking the instant gratification of a quick visual fix. Conditioned by magazines, this pervasive picture-book mentality would seem to point the way to the future of the book. The designer's job is now to guide the reader quickly through the important information, indicating the secondary matter through placement and type style, emphasis and pacing. The artist's book has taken over this mode of presentation, abandoning the more conventional juxtapositions of text and illustration. The nonstandard treatments and unusual formats are tactile as well as visual, and though much of the work falls into the "So-what" category, it is clearly somewhere in the arena. As a movement, the artist's book is spreading rapidly and will no doubt define itself further as it goes on.

From Manet to Hockney: Modern Artists' Illustrated Books, Carol Hogben and Rowan Watson, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1985, 378 pp., illus., \$24.95 pb.

Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook, Joan Lyons, editor, Peregrine Smith, 1985, 269 pp., illus., \$19.95.

### Roger M. Downs:

## THE VISUAL DISPLAY OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

#### EDWARD R. TUFTE

## SEMIOLOGY OF GRAPHICS JACQUES BERTIN

As a field, graphics is undergoing dramatic change, driven at a headstrong pace by whatever is latest in computer technology. As computer graphics systems become more available and accessible, we are seeing greater use and misuse of graphics. The medium is becoming more pervasive-and, in a sense, more persuasive-but the push for computer literacy carries with it an as yet unappreciated need for graphic literacy. To meet this need, a new theory and practice of graphics must be brought into existence-one which will be as revolutionary as the new technology.

Graphics is still largely a craftbased skill, taught by precept, apprenticeship, and trial-and-error. How can the skilled eye, the sensitivity to design, the touch and flair of the graphic designer be converted into hardware and software? The answer is, with great difficulty, given our current state of knowledge. Yet the technology which is revolutionizing graphics ought to be built on an analytic understanding of its principles. In this area theory has lagged far behind practice. The last few years have witnessed several attempts to redress the balance, culminating in these books by Edward Tufte and Jacques Bertin.

Tufte is best known for his work on the graphical presentation of statistical data, particularly in the area of social and political science. He has been responsible for some interesting innovations in the design of graphs. Bertin's work is, for the most part,



known only in fragments in America, where citations of his work and reproductions of figures have appeared sporadically. His work on map projections and cartography is the bestknown part of a monumental output (a cliché which is in this instance appropriate). Two translations of Bertin's work are now available, *Graphics* and *Graphic Information Processing* (1981), and *The Semiology of Graphics*, the more important of the two.

Both Bertin's and Tufte's books offer a theory of graphics, both consider the analysis and presentation functions of graphics, both are written by acknowledged experts in the field, and both have as their goal the fostering of excellence in graphics. Beyond this, they have surprisingly little in common.

In The Visual Display of Quantitative Data, Tufte is forceful in his opinions and language: we are invited to rejoice in the excellent, and to condemn lapses and lost opportunities in graphical presentation. Tufte's injunctions are bold and prescriptive: anything even faintly resembling decoration is to be cast aside with disdain. Bertin is more detached and businesslike; his work has a down-toearth practicality. In contrast to Tufte's bold, sweeping assertions, Bertin is always clarifying, asking how and why something works, and always qualifying his answers. The results are thoughtful guides rather than prescriptions.

Color also separates the two. For Tufte, color "often generates graphical puzzles" and leads to "unfriendly" graphics which suggest the designer did not have the viewer in mind while constructing the image. Bertin, however, believes that color can lead to "friendly data graphics." He sees it as one of the eight basic properties of the graphic system, and develops elaborate rules for its use.

Tufte formed his own press, Graphics Press, and acted as author, codesigner, and publisher. The result is a highly successful one-man show.

His basic layout is balanced and effective; each page is divided vertically into thirds, the left and center sections given over to text and illustrations, the right carrying notes and bibliographic references. Tufte obviously believes in space: there are a large number of illustrations, but no sense of crowding. Most of the illustrations reproduced well, although in a few instances gray tones bleed and fade into the surroundings (as in the map of galaxies on page 27), and the cross-hatching disappears in the Playfair bar chart (page 33). These minor flaws aside, this is a handsome volume that encourages the reader to leaf through it before delving into the arguments.

The Bertin book, an elegant and striking tome, was also clearly a labor of love. The project was funded by the National Science Foundation, and translated by William Berg. Translating a graphics text is no simple task. Often the graphics must be redrafted, although in this case the results are superb, except for the inevitable inconsistencies between original and redrafted lettering styles. Some double-page spreads have at least thirty small illustrations, with text, yet the reader can readily follow the sequence of the argument. Occasional "interference" from the next page leads to some unintentionally fascinating moiré effects. (Moiré effects are rightfully one of Tufte's pet peeves.) Some color screens are strangely incomplete. But this is carping, the result of expecting the height of excellence throughout the entire 415-page volume. Try as I might, I could not find a single typographical error in either volume.

It is fitting that graphics texts be of the highest quality in appearance, but what can be said about the content of these two volumes? Tufte's book, the simpler one in many ways, is "a celebration of data graphics," their power, subtlety, economy, and persuasiveness. The object is to ensure that viewers and makers of data graphics

"will never view or create statistical graphics in the same way again." Tufte follows two lines of argument. Part 1. the most original and provocative part of the book, explores current and past graphical practice. Chapter 1 offers examples of "graphical glories" in the pursuit of "graphical excellence," with many superb examples: Marey's graphical depiction of the 1880s Paris-Lyon train schedule; Minard's space-time narrative showing the decimation of Napoleon's army as it invaded Russia in 1812; and the 1980 time-series portrayal of New York City's weather. Chapter 2 is a rogue's gallery of graphical failures: distortions. mistakes, and outright lies. At issue is failure to maintain "graphical integrity," or to tell the truth about the data. Chapter 3, the conclusion to part 1, is a brief disguisition on the causes of graphical ineptitude, a condition that Tufte ascribes largely to the lack of skills and sophistication among many people who design and edit statistical graphics.

Part 2 provides both a language for discussing graphics and a practical theory of data graphics. In a series of six chapters, Tufte tries to establish canons of graphical design, based on the following simple guidelines: (1) minimize non-data ink and maximize data ink; (2) avoid decoration; (3) edit (and re-edit); (4) strive for powerful graphics. The idea of power is central to Tufte's work, because "the special power of graphics comes in the display of large data sets." Thus he is concerned with maximizing the amount of information in a graphic, while at the same time stripping away all superfluous ink and adornment. In the pursuit of these maxi-min goals, Tufte introduces some wonderful jargon: chart-junk, data-ink, lie factors. He tries to quantify key relationships (e.g., the data-ink ratio). He generates such principles as "(e)rase nondata-ink, within reason," and the Shrunk Principle: "Graphics can be shrunk way down." All of this is achieved through interesting examples

and a witty, sometimes cutting style.

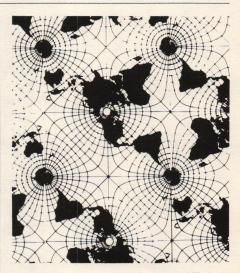
How convincing is all this? Many of the principles are commonplace variants of the basic idea of editing anything, text or graphics. The power argument is plausible but perhaps overstated. Some of the most powerful graphics Tufte presents, such as the depiction of the thermal conductivity of copper, are too complex to be readable, perhaps in part because of an over-exuberant application of the Shrunk Principle. One could make a similar argument about both the maximization of data-ink and the eschewadornment principles. Carried to extremes, these can lead to ugly and unappealing graphics. Most of Tufte's argument is acceptable, but he carries it too far.

Bertin also sets himself a major task: to systematize and standardize the entire graphic design process. Despite the book's title, the idea of semiology plays a relatively (and I might add mercifully) minor role. The key criterion for Bertin is intelligibility, not aesthetics. Design is a response to understanding what you want to communicate (the message) and the range of possible ways to communicate it (the medium). These are obvious questions: the measure of Bertin's achievement is how far beyond the normally accepted answers he forces us to go. He is constantly concerned with understanding why a particular technique is the best way to communicate a certain aspect of information.

His method is simple: in a ruthlessly logical procedure, Bertin builds a theory of data graphics that allows one to make rational choices that lead to effective graphics. The first step involves separating the content (the information) from the container (the properties of the graphic sign system). Bertin insists that we separate the invariant and the variable portions of the information, and that, in turn, we understand the relationships between the variables. The second step defines those properties of the graphic sign system that can be manipulated. These are the two planar dimensions which fix the location of the mark and the variable properties of the mark: size, value, texture, color, orientation, and shape. The third step identifies the properties of the three basic graphic forms: diagrams, networks, and maps. The final step is to specify a criterion: efficiency. The graphic construction requiring the shortest period of perception is the most efficient. That criterion is converted into a set of rules which controls the graphic construction process and ensures the legibility of the final product.

In some ways, a summary like this does not begin to do justice to the scope and ingenuity of Bertin's theory. Admittedly, his desire for comprehensiveness leads him to state the obvious at times. On the other hand, the scholarship and careful thought that underpin the work are impressive. His theory has withstood testing and use in a wide range of contexts, which comes through strongly in the second part of the book, where Bertin applies the theory to the three basic graphic forms. While the network discussion is somewhat short and perfunctory, the discussion of maps is brilliant, the best capsule statement of the principles of cartography I have ever seen.

I found the interplay between these two books fascinating. Tufte, for example, presents an excellent discussion of the history of graphics-a dimension missing from Bertin. It provokes one to ask, why have data graphics been such a recent invention? Why were Playfair and Minard so successful? Why, for that matter, has France been at the center of the theory and practice of graphics? Both systems of formalization-Bertin's sequence of diagrams, networks and maps, and Tufte's sequence of data maps, time-series, space-time narrative designs, and relational graphics-are useful ways to organize the range of graphic forms. Bertin's insistence on the importance of precise labeling



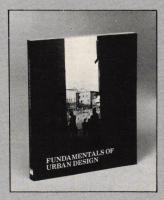
causes one to question some of Tufte's examples. Two of Tufte's classics, the graphs on cigarette consumption and the employment-inflation rate relationships, are poorly labeled according to Bertin's principles. Tufte's work takes a broad field, including popular and journalistic media, whereas Bertin's is restricted to scholarly media.

If pushed to make a final comparison, I would prefer Bertin's book because of its depth and intricacy. Tufte has a simple message, quickly learned and easy to apply—in itself no mean achievement. Bertin's book excels through its power of argument and breadth of scholarship.

The best is to make no choice. These two books have a synergistic effect and together offer a most incisive statement on graphic theory. Profound enough to require and reward many readings and also handsome enough to serve as intellectual coffeetable books, they will not be soon superseded. Tufte and Bertin have narrowed the gap between graphic practice and graphic theory and have done so in ways that are both provocative and entertaining.

The Visual Display of Quantitative Data, Edward R. Tufte, Graphics Press, 1983, 200 pp., illus., \$32.00.

Semiology of Graphics: Diagrams, Networks, Maps, Jacques Bertin, translated by William Berg, University of Wisconsin Press, 1983, 415 pp., illus., \$75.00. "A lucid text and excellent illustrations explaining wby architecture often makes a mess of our cities' fabric. For untrained architecture buffs, it offers a new set of eyes with which to view the skyline." —Chicago Tribune, December 1, 1985



Fundamentals of Urban Design

By Richard Hedman

Richard Hedman-leader of the team that produced San Francisco's new urban design plan-shows how to use design principles to achieve a more cohesive and satisfying urban environment. He explains what to look for, the questions to ask, and the criteria to consider when evaluating development proposals. This important and lively new book illustrates the important basic components of urban design, using over 100 photographs to support its arguments. 1985. 146 pp. Oversize  $(8\frac{1}{2} \times 10^{"}); 128 \text{ photos and}$ illustrations; paperback. (APA Planners Press.) \$28.95.

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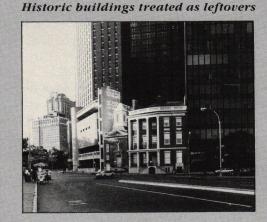
# "Every architect should be held at gunpoint and made to read it."

-Paul Gapp, Chicago Tribune Architecture Critic

Couldn't the architect of the building on the left see the fine old bank building on the right?



Somebody's Kleenex collection: Unreadable and unsightly





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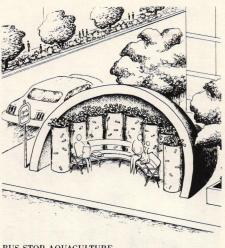
## **BIOSHELTERS, OCEAN ARKS, CITY FARMING**

#### NANCY JACK TODD and JOHN TODD

Bioshelters, Ocean Arks, City Farming is based on the work of the New Alchemy Institute, best known through their bioshelter environments ("Arks") on Cape Cod and on Prince Edward Island. These well-known experiments with an architecture that integrates renewable energies and growing areas for plants and fish are more completely covered in the Todds' earlier publications, The Book of the New Alchemists, Tomorrow is our Permanent Address, and The New Alchemy Quarterly. Bioshelters is wider in scope than the others, the product of a new challenge. Margaret Mead, after reviewing their work, sent them a message: the creation of the bioshelters was "a good piece of work," but of limited significance if it remained at the level of the private structure or single-family house. This book speculates about the extension of the Ark as an ecological model for community design and for agriculture.

The Todds' line of thinking centers on nine "Emerging Precepts of Biological Design" and, in later chapters, on "Redesigning Communities" and "The Surrounding Landscape" (i.e., agriculture, animal husbandry, and forest/wilderness management). Each of the nine precepts is discussed in relation to a project, either from New Alchemy or others: Lindisfarne, Arcosanti, and plans for a bioshelter for the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in Manhattan. The treatment of these topics is general and conversational, the best parts describing the projects themselves. The section about the ocean ark, "a sort of sail-powered greenhouse, a 'Biological Hope Ship'," is valuable because it is about discovery and about design decisions.

Less convincing and less rigorous



BUS STOP AQUACULTURE

is the presentation of the nine precepts themselves. Most are imprecisely stated ("The Living World is the Matrix for All Design") and therefore indistinguishable from each other. The project chosen to illustrate one precept could often illustrate another just as well. Here and elsewhere in the book, rigor has been avoided, perhaps to favor a wider audience, and the section is not memorable. Moreover, readers not already committed to ecological design may be put off by the "in-group" quality of the Todds' prose, as in "We have been reluctant to acknowledge the superb intelligence of these ancient peoples." Here "we" obviously means "you" or, possibly, "they." The more committed reader will be frustrated by the apparent casualness of the authors or the publisher as evidenced by typographical errors and the cavalier handling of footnotes (which in more than a dozen cases do not correspond with numbers in the text).

The Todds' simplistic application of their ecological ideas to the design of cities is more problematic; design professionals will probably be more appalled than intrigued by the naive illustrations of urban agriculture and aquaculture. These drawings, while they may seem refreshing to some, reveal a certain single-mindedness. The illustration for "bus stop aquaculture" might be subtitled: Find ten things wrong with this picture. It is clearly the Todds' intention to grow fish, but few other considerations of urban bus stops are acknowledged.

However, to judge this book by its naiveté is to miss the compelling idea behind it. Insertion of intensive agriculture and aquaculture into the fabric of existing cities could significantly enrich the lives of citizens and, the Todds argue, ensure their very survival. Unfortunately, this book is not very effective propaganda for the idea. As the anthropologist H. G. Barnett points out in his classic book, Innovation: the Basis of Cultural Change, innovation most readily occurs where it is perceived to rest upon the foundations of a culture not opposed to it. The Todds' prose relies too much on the old sixties litany of how Western Culture went bad. Their case would be stronger if they tied it to Western and American belief systems, economic mechanisms, and the technological advances necessary for their scenario to come to pass. Fast food was a "natural" because people had cars, mothers were working, and mass advertising, purchasing, and distribution systems were in place, not because the history of the West had conspired to create meals that took too long to prepare and serve.

Urban agriculture may well be a "natural" too; the imaginative reader will certainly hope so. The monitoring and control systems necessary for intensive, indoor agriculture and aquaculture owe much to the New Alchemists, and one remains grateful that the Todds and their colleagues have committed themselves to this endeavor.

The book's problems would not in fact be so significant were its ideas not so vital. The shame is Bioshelters, Ocean Arks, City Farming is a sixties book in polemic and style, but there is an eighties audience for its vision.

Bioshelters, Ocean Arks, City Farming: Ecology as the Basis of Design, Nancy Jack Todd and John Todd, Sierra Club Books, 1984, 210 pp., illus., \$25.00 cloth; \$10.95 paper.

## Norma Evenson: CITIES AND PEOPLE MARK GIROUARD

Those who have read Jane Jacobs's book The Death and Life of Great American Cities may remember "the daily ballet of Hudson Street," the author's account of the street life of Greenwich Village as seen from her window. Mark Girouard's book, Cities and People: A Social and Architectural *History*, closes with a similar sequence of pedestrian activity witnessed from his window in the Notting Hill district of London. It establishes, in presentday terms, Girouard's ideological correctness, assuring us of his predilection for the variety and amenity of the traditional city.

The city is a tempting subject for historical writers; one is free to range widely over such areas as economics, politics, sociology, and architecture. The city can be deemed a microcosm of society, and as a subject can be tailored to accommodate a variety of philosophical viewpoints. Generally, however, Cities and People is nonjudgmental in its treatment of the subject, and advocates no specific approach to the planning and development of cities. The author states in his preface that he is "not conscious of having any particular message or theory."

Mr. Girouard's previous works have focused on Britain, with emphasis on the 19th century. Although they have dealt with architecture, the focus has been primarily on the social aspects of building. It is the social emphasis that has assured his work a far wider public than that normally attracted to studies of architectural history. As Mr. Girouard does not have a permanent academic connection, he has been free of the compulsion to write what are conventionally considered scholarly books aimed at a specialized readership. His books are directed toward a general audience, and, al-



MOULIN ROUGE, PARIS, ca. 1880

though they are soundly researched, the reader is never overwhelmed with exhaustive documentation or belabored with complex historical interpretation.

Cities and People represents a departure from Mr. Girouard's previous work in that he does not limit his analysis to Britain, but attempts a broad survey of cities in the Western world, beginning with medieval Constantinople and concluding with Los Angeles. In any such survey, there is always danger that the text will comprise no more than commonplace generalizations, for if everything important is to be included, little can be considered in depth. Selectivity is essential, and Mr. Girouard announces his intention of dealing with cities that "were recognized at the time as having star quality, and were visited or imitated accordingly." This means essentially that the subject matter of the book is limited to cities already well known and extensively considered in urban history and urban geography.

The author's intent, it appears, is

not to uncover and present new information, but rather to repackage what is already available in other works. The book lacks, therefore, the originality of some of Mr. Girouard's earlier studies, but within the framework established by the author, Cities and People succeeds admirably. Mr. Girouard writes with unusual grace, and the text is well organized and informative. Strong emphasis is placed on the economic life of cities. This is reasonable enough; economic wellbeing is essential to urban life, and a strong determinant of urban form. A reader whose background includes conventional study of architectural history will find the book a valuable supplement to his understanding of the built environment. It does not deal with architecture in terms of building types. According to the author, his aim was "to start with the functions which have drawn people to cities, and to work outwards from them to the spaces and buildings which grew up to cater for them."

The book is organized in three sections. The first deals essentially with the revival of economic life in medieval Europe, with emphasis on Bruges and Venice. The second section considers the great Renaissance cities of Rome, Amsterdam, and Paris, and includes discussion of the adaptation of European urbanism in the new world. Asia is considered briefly with regard to the Westernization of Tokyo and the colonial city of Calcutta. The final portion of the book deals with the evolution of the industrial age metropolis, and includes analyses of Manchester, London, Paris, New York. Chicago, and Los Angeles. In selecting his subject matter, Mr. Girouard notes that "inevitably, many beautiful or interesting cities are dealt with summarily, if at all." He has not attempted to trace the overall development of the cities selected, but rather to describe the moment in which he believes the city achieved its greatest importance.

In terms of production, the book is

a joy to behold. The format is large, and it is skillfully designed and lavishly illustrated, with abundant use of color. It is one of the oddities of publishing that many books that require good illustrations to be effective do not get them. In this instance, a book that would have been comprehensible with no pictures at all has been almost excessively illustrated. The pictures are not keyed to specific portions of the text, and are not subservient to it. Rather they provide a visual counterpart almost as important as the text itself.

Although the publisher is a university press, *Cities and People* represents a trend among such organizations to move into the trade book market. It has already been adopted by popular book clubs; the price, moreover, makes it an excellent buy. Considered in its own terms, as a work of highminded and informative entertainment, the book is a model of its kind.

Cities and People: A Social and Architectural History, Mark Girouard, Yale, 1985, 416 pp., illus., \$29.95.

## Richard Longstreth: THE PHILADELPHIA STORY

No metropolitan area possesses an architectural legacy of greater richness and breadth than Philadelphia. Except for Newport, Rhode Island, it is the only major city to retain much of its Colonial fabric, and its 19thand early 20th-century inheritance is enormous. The imprint of the modern era may be of less consequence, but remember that one of the most ambitious urban renewal programs in the United States took place here, one which, in contrast to most, built upon more than destroyed the existing physical matrix. Architects of the first rank have practiced in Philadelphia for almost two hundred years (although one is tempted to believe that since the 1960s a conspiracy has existed to avoid commissioning the city's most creative practitioners).

Philadelphia offers an encyclopedic array of middle- and working-class rowhouses, suburban dwellings, industrial structures, churches, institutional complexes, commercial blocks, and public buildings, to name but the most obvious types. Beyond Center City-that section occupying the land surveyed in Thomas Holme's famous 1682 plan-remarkably little has been destroyed. And much remains intact even in that core, so that thousands of residences still exist within walking distance of the commercial center. Philadelphia offers an incomparable textbook, showing many aspects of the architectural development of the past three hundred and fifty years.

Those unfamiliar with the place can only sense the extent of this patrimony from the available literature. George Tatum's Penn's Great Town (1961) provides an overview of major works that was exemplary for its time and is still a basic reference. Richard Webster's Philadelphia Preserved (1976) is among the most informative of the site catalogues from the Historic American Buildings Survey. Catalogues have also been produced on the work of Frank Furness (1973) and John Notman (1979), as have monographs on Louis Kahn (1962) and George Howe (1975). Earlier studies exist on 18th-century buildings in the city proper (Historic Philadelphia, 1953) and Germantown nearby (Historic Germantown, 1955), and on the architects Latrobe (1955). Mills (1935), and Strickland (1950). Tatum's Philadelphia Georgian (1976) gives a meticulous account of one of the nation's great Colonial urban residences. There is an excellent and all too little known anthology of essays on the 19th-century city, Divided Metropolis (1980), and of course Sam Bass Warner's Private City (1968). One may add to this list a scattering of contributions in scholarly journals and writings on tangential subjects. But the bulk of source material awaits further attention. Under the circumstances, the appearance of three new books on Philadelphia architecture might be greeted with enthusiasm, were the collective results not so meager.

By far the best of these is Historic Rittenhouse, which was conceived as a layperson's preservation handbook and emerged as a commendable study of one of the city's most significant precincts. About half the pages retain a preservation focus. Two chapters by Trina Vaux are devoted to "Methods" (legislative and organizational frameworks) and "Procedures" (how-to). The material is well known to preservationists, but a much broader audience of property owners and other concerned citizens will find it a convenient reference. Clear and concise, the text is a model for communities that need to disseminate such information. For the same reasons, Hugh McCauley's chapter on "Maintenance" is equally worthwhile. Much of it is general in nature and applicable to many locales, but McCauley has also taken pains to tailor his essay to the particularities of houses in the district.

The rest of the book focuses on history—a laudable balance, for practical preservation guides too often give it short shrift. *Historic Rittenhouse* ranks among the most conscientious attempts to enhance public understanding both of the past and of the means to maintain it. Bobbye Burke's chapter on the district's development is a key contribution, mining a broad spectrum of primary sources to document the area's complex morphological growth. Like any good urban history, it resists easy explanations.

The principal flaw in Burke's section, and one that applies to the book as a whole, is a discrepancy between the stated geographic boundaries and the subject matter. Traditionally "Rittenhouse" or "Rittenhouse Square" has connoted an area around the open space delineated in the southwest quadrant of Home's plan, an area whose identity has first and foremost been residential. But, for reasons that remain unclear, the authors claim the entire quadrant. These boundaries encompass one of Philadelphia's primary retail districts, part of the financial center, blocks long occupied by major institutions and hotels, a never fully developed theater enclave (now almost entirely gone), and, along the Schuylkill River, a stretch of land which until recent decades was a thriving industrial zone. Some of these facets are noted, but generally only in passing. Houses and, to a lesser extent, apartment buildings are the concern here, and the authors would have done better to define their focus unequivocally.

Otto Sperr's chapter on architecture is, alas, the weak link in the chain. The section is not really about history at all; it is rather an incantation of the commonly misunderstood and misapplied concept of style. The lexicon begins with the bogus assumption that vernacular buildings are styleless, then proceeds to enumerate stylistic categories derived more from motifs than from salient qualities of form and expression. We are given such needlessly divisive titles as "Classical Revival" and "Greek Revival," "Second Empire Revival" (revival?) and "Neo-Gréc Second Empire." The examples reveal what Sperr presumably considers to be pure "style," a concept which excludes large numbers of the district's buildings. There is no discussion of plans, interiors, service buildings, architects, contractors, clients, or anything else that would explain more than the embellishment of some façades.

Had Burke expanded her essay to include more detailed architectural analysis, and had the text been supplemented by a sizable inventory of important singular and representative examples, *Historic Rittenhouse* could have been outstanding.

In discussing Philadelphia Archi-

tecture: A Guide to the City, I must admit prejudice, having coauthored its predecessor, Architecture in Philadelphia: A Guide (1974). The earlier book had shortcomings: production costs precluded illustrating each entry, and about one-third of the manuscript, covering eight surrounding counties, had to be cut. Had that project been undertaken a few years later, I would have advocated including more buildings and districts, and giving more depth to each entry.



MANNING STREET, FROM UHLFELDER, CENTER CITY PHILADELPHIA

On the last score, the new guide is a decided improvement. The photographs and design are excellent. However, the coverage is narrower-275 entries as opposed to almost 400. The suburbs are still untouched, with the exception of Frank Lloyd Wright's Beth Shalom synagogue (a building as uncharacteristic of the region as one could find) and five "places of interest" noted at the end. Buildings are arranged in strict chronological order, so that using the book as a guide demands constant cross-referencing between the whole text and a quasiappendix of tour maps. The tours are planned on the questionable assumption that readers will want to see everything in a given area. Extensive note-taking seems the best way to adapt the book to its intended function.

At a time when interest in architecture is growing, and the scope of buildings people find interesting is broadening, the anonymous authors of this book have curiously chosen to limit the range of their examples. Most entries are devoted to major works (including a few which the earlier guide should have cited but did not), but a large corpus of individually significant buildings and of representative examples are ignored. The book will be of little use to those curious about the city's unmatched heritage of rowhouses, or its extraordinarily sophisticated suburban architecture from the early 20th century. Despite Philadelphia's importance as a manufacturing center, few industrial buildings are noted. Vernacular architecture constructed after the early 19th century is deemed unworthy of mention, as are bridges and landscape schemes. One could go on, but the point is obvious. Philadelphia Architecture turns the historiographic clock back twenty years.

Compared to guides written about New York, Boston, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Baltimore, Buffalo, and New Haven—to cite a few— *Philadelphia Architecture* does not stand up very well. The region still begs thorough coverage of its architecture, landscape design, and urban structure. (I shall be happy to turn over material not used in the earlier guide to anyone willing and capable of undertaking the task.)

Pick up a copy of Eric Uhlfelder's *Center City Philadelphia*. Flip through the illustrations. Scan the text. You will probably put it down again. At the onset the author states his purpose: "Instead of focusing on the landmark architecture that defines Center City's heritage, this study looks at the more common pieces of the streetscape to reveal that character of a very special place." Fair enough. Uhlfelder is hardly the first to examine the aggregate of urban form, but his book is different. One cannot tell

whether he accepts or rejects (or is even aware of) the approaches to this topic taken by Kevin Lynch, Gordon Cullen, and others, but he does seem determined to avoid any sort of structured analysis. Instead we are given his impressions, grouped under such amorphous and elusive headings as "Discovery" and "Warmth." "Discovery" begins: "I did not expect to find what I did in Center City; the appeal of her streets is as much in finding an understated image as in their actual beauty"; as for "Warmth": "Whether felt from the sun, a park, or a small street tucked away from the activity of the city, warmth has a soothing quality; it is the essence of Center City's appeal." Stabs at specificity do not help. Concerning the near-twin Philadelphia Library and Family Court Building on Logan Circle, one learns that "because of the strong allusion to the Place de la Concorde, the setting has a grander feel than if the buildings had been designed or arranged differently."

This mercifully short text could be excused were the photographs, the bulk of the book, of high calibre. Uhlfelder's images are competent, sometimes even interesting, but far from exceptional, either artistically or as documents. Arranged, it seems, at random, they leave one to guess at their intent. This book has nothing particularly appealing about it to induce someone who is not already interested in the subject to use it, and nothing informative for a more knowledgeable audience.

Historic Rittenhouse: A Philadelphia Neighborhood, Bobbye Burke, Otto Sperr, Hugh J. McCauley, and Trina Vaux, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985, 159 pp., illus., \$22.50 cloth; \$14.95 paper.

Philadelphia Architecture: A Guide to the City, Group for Environmental Education for the Foundation for Architecture, MIT, 1984, 176 pp., illus., \$12.95 pb.

Center City Philadelphia: The Elements of Style, Eric Uhlfelder, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984, 103 pp., illus., \$19.95 pb.

#### Norma Evenson:

ARCHITECTURE AND CITY PLANNING VITTORIO MAGNAGO LAMPUGNANI

The title of this work is rather misleading. It is by no means a comprehensive history of architecture and city planning, but an introductory survey of the Modern Movement in architecture from about 1910, with occasional brief references to urban design. It was originally published in German in 1980. In his preface Mr. Lampugnani observes that "it is a risky undertaking to reprint a historical work years after its first publication. This is more so if its subject is the twentieth century, because the topical linkage with the immediate present is necessarily broken by the advance of time, especially because in our century the guiding images have been replaced at a previously unknown breathless and frenzied rate."

It is, of course, disquieting to those of us who write modern history to contemplate the probability that in five years our work may have roughly the value of yesterday's newspaper. Paradoxically, the historian who struggles to be topical is the one most likely to see his work becoming rapidly obsolete. The final chapter of any history of modern architecture is often a repository of some rather desperate guesswork as to the longevity of current fashions, and there is always a chance that the guess may be wrong. Clearly there is no way in which any historical work can replace the contemporary press. Still, up-to-dateness has its values, especially in books that have the potential for classroom use.

Although he does not explicitly say so, Mr. Lampugnani's book seems designed as a textbook. He describes it as "a conscientious collection of basic information.... It is intended as a primary and simplified overview to lead the way to a deeper exploration of the diverse, here only sketchily presented topics and problems." The overall intent is thus a modest one. This is no revisionist work attempting to redefine Modernism or broaden its scope; it contains no new synthesis or reinterpretation. Rather, it is a thoroughly conventional retelling of the history of the Modern Movement. Everything one would expect to find has been included, and there is nothing new.

The book is so unpretentious, and its limitations so obvious, that one feels reluctant to be overly critical. While it focuses on a highly restricted view of 20th-century architecture, the focus is a convenient one. The Modernist vocabulary, its theories, and the works of certain commonly acknowledged masters now form part of the common culture of architects. The scope of the book is further restricted by its geographical limitations; it focuses entirely on Europe and North America. As the book was written in Europe, it has a slightly European bias, but in general the presentation is balanced. It is the author's disarming contention that "this small book may not be quite useless. It does indeed present the events and accompanying considerations and leaves, as far as possible, the observations and conclusions to the reader."

The directness and clarity of the writing make this a useful book both for the student and general reader. It presents nothing, however, that is not already available in other publications, and it is difficult to understand why the publisher was convinced of the need to translate this work. Essentially the same material is covered in Kenneth Frampton's Modern Architecture (Rizzoli, 1984) and in William Curtis's Modern Architecture Since 1900 (Prentice-Hall, 1983). The price of the book, moreover, seems excessive. A paperback edition would have been more appropriate.

Architecture and City Planning in the Twentieth Century, Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1985, 256 pp., \$28.00.



KING OLIVER'S CREOLE JAZZ BAND, 1922

Paul Glassman: LOST CHICAGO DAVID LOWE

## ARCHITECTURAL ORNAMENTATION IN CHICAGO

WILLIAM A. ROONEY

Although *Lost Chicago* eulogizes in words and images the results of the Windy City's lapses in preservation vigilance, David Lowe has selected more than early views of now-demolished buildings; he includes views of interiors altered beyond recognition, views of temporary construction (the world's fairs), and views of buildings lost to the great fire of 1871.

Each of the ten chapters discusses an aspect of Chicago's architectural and economic growth, and is followed by a portfolio of about twenty generously captioned photographs. The scope is impressive: *Lost Chicago* begins with the early exploration of the marshy site that was soon to erupt with industry, commerce, and tall buildings. Lowe's discussion is organized intelligently; rather than defer to chronology, he discusses building types and related genres across periods. For example, railroad depots, railroad cars from the Panama Limited to the Twentieth Century, and George Pullman's utopian industrial town appear together. Additionally, Lowe includes the world's fairs, views shortly after the great fire of 1871, and even documentation of the effects of dramatic nighttime lighting, now switched off. He ends with a complete list of illustration sources—the Chicago Historical Society being by far the largest —and a relatively complete index.

The 1985 edition of *Lost Chicago*, reprinted by the American Legacy Press, is in most respects a facsimile of the original Houghton Mifflin edition of 1975, with equal low resolution in the halftones, except that the endpapers, cited at the close of chapter 2 as illustrating "a bird's-eye view from Lake Michigan ... executed in 1853," are disappointingly blank.

Lost Chicago is a personal and very affectionate tribute to the city in which the author spent his youth. By his own admission, Lowe has sought to convey some of his memories of magical moments in the Windy City, with the result that his prose at times is closer in style to the literature of boosterism —the travel guides and promotional brochures of 19th-century boomtowns —than that of contemporary architectural commentary.

William A. Rooney, on the other

hand, has produced not a verbal analysis of images, but a book of pictures. Aside from brief and rather chatty introductions to each chapter, *Architectural Ornamentation in Chicago* is an encyclopedic selection of photographs of exterior decoration on buildings in Chicago, most of them in the Loop.

The author clearly delights in classifying his photographs, and does so with an amusing, if at times dubious, set of descriptors: "Big Game Hunting" for lions, "Barnyard and Ranch" for pigs and goats, the rather silly "Vasery" for urns and vases, and the excessively alliterative "Flora, Fauna and Festoonery" and "Pediments, Panoramas and Potpourri."

This volume, a virtual flipbook of architectural reliefs and profiles, will be indispensable to students of sculpture as well as of architecture. Indeed, the author's comprehensiveness has its rewards; for example, the sculptural grouping around the clock of Holabird and Root's Chicago Board of Trade, typically obscure to the camera because of its elevation and position in perpetual shadow, is clearly observable here.

The lack of an index to buildings is lamentable, but not surprising in view of the consistently low graphic quality of the book. The halftone illustrations exhibit an overall flatness of tones and low resolution, and the layout is less than thoughtful, with illustrations bleeding unnecessarily into the gutters. The table of contents is difficult to use because only the first page of each chapter is numbered.

Both Lowe and Rooney present rare and fascinating documentation of Chicago's built heritage, but both books would have been enhanced had their publishers invested more in graphic quality.

Lost Chicago, David Lowe, American Legacy Press, 1985, 241 pp., illus., \$9.98.

Architectural Ornamentation in Chicago, William A. Rooney, Chicago Review Press, 1984, 149 pp., \$22.95.

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## John Dixon Hunt: GEORGIAN GARDENS DAVID JACQUES

Georgian Gardens is one of a multivolume history of English gardens planned by a British publisher after the Garden Exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1979. It should be possible, therefore, to look to this ambitious project for a real sense of what constitutes garden history, of how it is conducted, of what readers it wishes to address. In David Jacques, a landscape planner and a member of the council of the British Garden History Society, we should have, by all accounts, an ideal garden historian.

The study of history *tout pur*, before it splintered into innumerable specialties, was the subject of great disputes. Should it be concerned with institutions or with people—if with people, then at what level, the visible, great ones, or the mass of undifferentiated humanity with all its multifarious activities? Garden history has not yet begun to ask itself these questions, which are vital to the future of the study.

Is the history of gardens a narrative of major examples—those in the vanguard of (say) taste—or a survey of minor examples? What should historians study—the formal layout of a garden, its design, style, planting, usage? If taste, what determines it? At what point does garden history have to become the history of a larger landscape—parks, estates, plantations and why?

David Jacques does not address these problems directly, but meets them by the very nature of his topic, which is the development or (as it was called at the time) the "progress" of gardening. The book actually starts by dodging a major problem: Jacques begins in 1733, because "in that year the Natural Style was first tried out by William Kent in small and more



DOCTOR SYNTAX IN SEARCH OF THE PICTURESQUE

private parts of patrons' gardens." (The years before 1733 have been allotted to John Harris, whose volume on "regular gardens" has yet to appear.) But Kent is a crucial transitional figure, and the origins and parameters of his "sudden" dedication to the "Natural" style cannot be ignored. Above all, a consideration of Kent's career involves a sophisticated sense of 18th-century theories of art and nature, of history (especially cultural history and what French historians have taught us to call mentalité). Here, Jacques is, sadly, an inadequate guide. Though he provides a clear and fair exposition of the rather futile picturesque quarrels at the end of the 18th century between Uvedale Price, Richard Payne Knight, and Humphrey Repton, he is weak on matters of aesthetic and political history (essential ingredients of a gardening history of this period), and the history of taste. To identify, for example, George I's reign as a time when it "became highly fashionable to be interested in paintings" or to say that in 1718 the "fraternity of the arts was gaining in popularity" is to be hopelessly ignorant of neoclassical theory. In literary matters, too, he is often wrong; nor does he achieve much by the extensive quotation that makes parts of his book read like an anthology *manqué*. These problems inevitably flaw a history of the rise and fall of the English landscape garden, especially when the book's preface explains that is is "about matters of taste and design, and not a history of gardening."

In the light of that remark, it is perhaps ironic that Jacques's strengths as a historian center upon his intuition that garden design is intimately connected to planting techniques, fashions, and availability (it remains an intuition: the case for such a theory is not developed). He has a good section on the relationship of early landscape gardening to husbandry; he is especially useful when it comes to charting the reintroduction of flowers into the gardens of the late 18th and early 19th centuries (he ends his assignment at 1825); he often illuminates garden history by focusing upon the larger landscape and the landowner's wider interests. In this area he enlivens his subject with references to dozens of what he calls "minor improvers," so we do not simply get a history of the famous names -Kent, Brown, Repton, Loudon.

Another question arises which Jacques does not really face: if history does not focus exclusively upon "ma-

jor practitioners," who presumably set patterns and determine taste ahead of the field, for what reason does it invoke the minor ones? Their work will often, as Jacques himself notes, only echo the work of major figures; of course, it may show skill and imagination, but it does not pioneer. At such a juncture, garden history becomes (excitingly, I think) a form of social, cultural, and intellectual history; through the derivation and diffusion of garden styles emerging patterns of social preference and habit can be tracked. The garden, in short, can become one of the prime lenses through which to study mentalité.

Jacques constantly hints at this strategy, especially when, toward the end, he traces the growth of smaller, villa-style gardens, the preferred and feasible mode for middle-class families; or when he charts the entry into town planning by Loudon and Repton. But never is the connection explicitly made between the evolution of cultural patterns and the garden history of many obscure and private improvers.

The text is illustrated well, although it would be useful if plans could be glossed more extensively in captions so that the uninitiated know what they are looking at, and why. Jacques's bibliography is patchy in its coverage, which is a mistake if the books in this series are supposed to become "standard," and no places of publication. let alone publishers, are given, which is most unscholarly. The style of writing is frequently jerky, with awkward transitions from topic to topic and from one kind of exposition to another. It is hard to believe that this volume will come to be the standard history of English garden design between Kent and Loudon; it fills a vacuum adequately for a while, but more importantly, it suggests methods and problems for subsequent historians.

#### ORCA AT BOMARZO. COURTESY OF MARK S. WEIL

### **Richard Ingersoll:**

## IL SACRO **BOSCO DI BOMARZO**

MARGARETTA J. DARNELL and MARK S. WEIL

An hour's drive north of Rome, in the lush headlands of the Tiber, is the tiny hilltown of Bomarzo. During the mid-16th century, the world-weary patron Vicino Orsini retired from his military obligations and devoted his energy to creating a landscape of giants and monsters carved from the live rock. For nearly thirty years he supervised the sculpting of one of the most bizarre collections of literary and moral emblems in garden history.

The monograph by Margaretta Darnell and Mark Weil (published as the January/March 1984 issue of The Journal of Garden History) seeks to decode the enigmatic private world of Orsini's

garden. Stepping over the unsolved attribution questions, the authors analyze Bomarzo's complex iconography, explaining that "with the exception of the temple every monument in the garden has a double meaning that amuses and at times shocks the visitor while teaching him a lesson." Like the other great villa gardens of the 16th century (Villa d'Este at Tivoli and Villa Lante at Bagnaia), Bomarzo was designed according to a narrative scenario of literary, mythological, and historical conceits. The authors interpret Bomarzo as a renaissance "love garden," and find the key to its meaning in the Petrarchan progression from profane to divine love; from the world of beasts and mutants to the ideal perfection of the small temple at the garden's highest point. The guiding imagery of the patron's "personal psychomachia" comes from Ariosto's Orlando Furioso, in particular, the protagonist's evolution from the violence of lust-induced madness to the dignity



Georgian Gardens: The Reign of Nature, David Jacques, Timber Press, 1984, 240 pp., illus., \$39.95.

of restored sanity and moral purpose. The imagery of orcs, winged horses, giants, and damsels chained to rocks is accompanied by cryptic inscriptions that relate back to the chivalric legend. The authors have located many convincing literary correlations and made some fresh interpretations of the mysteries, especially their reading of the "Plateau of Vases" as the lunar landscape where all things lost on earth (including Orlando's sanity) are kept in vases. The famous Mouth of Hell doesn't quite fit into the story of Orlando, but it is obvious that the patron's literary fantasies were allowed to freely associate, shifting from Dante to Ariosto much as one would in one's own library.

Of the sculpted events, the most interesting comment on architecture is the two-story "Leaning House," which was built purposely askew to defy perspective vision. While they make a credible analysis of the house as an *impresa*, or heraldic device, it seems to me to be a more literal reference to the enchanted house of the magician Atlante where many of the characters of Ariosto's poem convene but, owing to deceptions in the architecture, are unable to see each other.

The illustrations in the book are uniformly poor, but the inclusion of a scaled, detailed map is an original and very helpful contribution. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Bomarzo, in my opinion, is the crudeness of its execution (the statues were originally painted in bright colors) and apparently casual composition of its spaces. Darnell and Weil's monograph is the first comprehensive exegesis of the iconography, but leaves other important issues for a later chapter.

Il Sacro Bosco di Bomarzo; Its 16th-Century Literary and Antiquarian Context, Margaretta J. Darnell and Mark S. Weil, *The Journal of Garden History*, Jan./March issue (Vol. 4, #1), Taylor & Frances, St. Louis Art Museum, 94 pp., illus., \$16.00.

## William Coburn: THE HOUSE OF BOUGHS ELIZABETH WILKINSON and MARJORIE HENDERSON, editors

In the days before Modernism, garden designers typically sought inspiration from picture books of appropriate garden prototypes. When modern landscape design brought about a sorely needed theoretical and formal overhaul, both of the conceptual design process and the ultimate form, this use of sourcebooks was abandoned. It took several more generations for designers to learn to dissociate the theoretical ideas of the Modern Movement from its forms and imagery. The House of Boughs offers a refresher course in the use of pictorial sourcebooks, with their varieties of picturesque and decorative garden construction. Paradoxically, the succession of photographs of beautiful gardens the world over are both rigorous and curiously limited. Although the selection is cross-cultural, the images represent a bounded aesthetic vision from the designer's eye in our own Western world. Every gazebo, arbor, garden house, and garden chair is in what can only be described as "very good taste," and therefore speaks less of the range of experience in other times and places than of what is considered acceptable today in the marketplace of forms. Personally, I am as interested in why the author's pictures are attractive to the reader today as in using them as design inspiration. For this kind of inquiry perhaps nothing short of a historian of material culture would be needed. The reader of this book, however, is less apt to be a student of material culture than a designer or enthusiast, and should be amply satisfied by the seductive array of gardens and garden structures.

Such garden elements as orangeries, topiary, porticoes, bridges, dipping wells, and terraces are alphabetically arranged and presented much as chapters would be, each with an anecdotal narrative. These vignettes offer at best summary histories of the artifact, or fragments of information. The best of them, the discussion of dovecots, is actually a succinct design history from Roman times to the 19th century.

The brief history of garden design at the beginning might be useful for the uninitiated, but the lack of a proper table of contents or index subordinates the written material to the pictures. The selection of topics is so personal that one cannot really use the book—as it seems to have been intended—as a sort of encyclopedia of garden design.

A book of this type always threatens to degenerate into a kind of Sears catalogue from which garden objects can be bought, plucked from their original context, and set down on foreign soil, thus producing the consumerbased eclecticism visible in American gardens for years. One hopes, however, the images might instead be used as indirect inspiration, to be tailored to a particular cultural and ecological niche.

I can't help but disagree with the author's prefatory remarks, that gardens are "an escape from reality ... and a release from cares." Gardens are their own reality and embody complete and poetic visions of a culture's views, usually with subtle artifice supported by elaborate and continual effort. However, the authors go on to say they will consider the book a success if it provides "a glimpse of the play of human invention in the shaping of the garden," and by this criterion it does succeed.

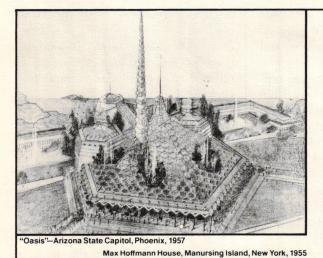
The House of Boughs: A Sourcebook of Garden Designs, Structures, and Suppliers, Elizabeth Wilkinson and Marjorie Henderson, Yolla Bolly Press (distributed by Viking-Penguin), 1985, 226 pp., illus., \$35.00.

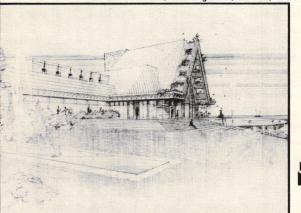
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## John Ellis:

## MULTI-USE BUILDINGS IN AN URBAN CONTEXT EBERHARD H. ZEIDLER

Eberhard Zeidler's architectural practice has become famous for the urban multi-use building, and his book is primarily an apologia for this building type, taking as the most significant examples those that Zeidler's own firm has built.

The book begins with a historical analysis of precedents for multi-use buildings and why they fell into disfavor during the International Style era of the Modern Movement. A collection of examples follow, of multi-use buildings built or designed in the last 10 to 15 years in various parts of the world, and, lastly, the author discusses the future of this building type.

The multi-use building was revived in reaction to the strict single-use zoning and separation of functions that characterized the Modernist era. CIAM's vision of the future as outlined in the Athens Charter in 1928 led to a generation of urban designs that rejected the traditional city. The results, in Brasilia, Albany, New York, or Milton Keynes in England are now recognized for their sterility, social as well as architectural. In existing cities, rigid land use zoning has created single-use districts that have none of the interest and vitality of pre-modern cities. Streets without shops, pedestrians, night life, cafes, or without residences above soon die and become no more than vehicle corridors.

The revival of the multi-use building also owes much to the conservation movement of the 1970s, when existing buildings were renovated for new uses. Freed from the need to express the internal function of the building, the outer shell could be in dramatic stylistic contrast to the interior.

Most multi-use buildings are designed to recapture some of the complexity and urbanity of the traditional city. Housing above shops and offices ensures that there will be some life after 6:00 p.m. It can also make practical sense in terms of the overlapping parking requirements of different uses, as well as reducing the transport needs of those who can live and work in the same neighborhood.

The most interesting multi-use buildings are those that maintain or repair the surrounding urban fabric, holding the line of the street walls, respecting the context of the surrounding buildings, and encouraging sidewalk activity, with windows on the upper floors that overlook the streets.

Unfortunately, this does not describe many of the examples shown here. The Place Bonaventure in Montreal, for example, which contains a hotel over a multi-level merchandise mart above a railroad terminal, presents blank fortresslike walls to the city streets and has none of the grace or presence of some of the great Victorian railway terminals with their trainsheds, hotels, and concourses. (St. Pancras Station in London contains all the same functions as Place Bonaventure but has a splendid presence in Euston Road.)

Other examples are also questionable: the Credit Lyonnais Tower in Lyons, France, consists of a cylindrical tower containing a hotel above offices above a podium-level lobby. Next to the tower is a pie-shaped auditorium and a separate parking garage. Pedestrian activity, if it ever occurs, is all at the second level, on raised walkways above the surrounding streets and access ramps, and the whole complex is isolated from the city. The spaces between the buildings are residual and meaningless in both shape and function.

The same criticisms apply to the Peachtree Center in Atlanta, also illustrated in the book. Spectacular as the Portman trademark can be—the giant atrium with its glass elevators there is no substitute for the loss of contact with the surrounding streets and sidewalk. Self-referenced, internally oriented buildings like these are essentially anti-urban.

James Stirling's Derby Civic Center Competition, designed with Leon Krier in 1972, is of interest because it was Stirling's first contextual building, a "space making object" rather than an "object in space." Compared to the Leicester Engineering Building or the History Library in Cambridge, it is a radical departure. The Derby competition design consists of a horseshoeshaped building which creates a large new urban plaza/amphitheatre in which stand a number of monuments. A curving, barrel-vaulted, glass-roofed arcade within the building provides access to all the different functionsshops, auditoriums, offices, an art gallery, meeting halls. In contrast to Leicester or Cambridge, none of these internal functions finds any external expression, although the same taut glass skin is proposed over the whole building. Stirling here not only revived the grand urban plaza, but also that great invention of the 19th century, the glass-roofed arcade.

The glass roof is used to great effect in Zeidler's own Eaton Center Shopping Mall in Toronto, recalling the beautiful Cleveland, Ohio, arcade or the Milan Galleria. The form of the barrel-vaulted roof along the entire length of the galleria, together with its white color and elegant structure, overcomes the somewhat chaotic layout of bridges, diagonal escalators, and angled entrances below.

The upper floors of the arcade above the two levels of shops contain parking levels, their blank façades in contrast to the windows of offices or residences that occurred in the traditional arcade. However, even though the galleria runs parallel mid-block between two existing streets, these streets still have retail activities facing their sidewalks and thus the center does not turn its back on the surrounding city.

Two elegant arcades illustrated in the book are the Calwer Strasse passage in Stuttgart by Hans Kammerer, and Diamond & Meyer's Housing Union Building for the University of Edmonton campus in Alberta. The Housing Union Building consists of a quarter-mile-long pedestrian street with a glazed truss roof and student apartments above shops and cafes on either side. It provides all the qualities of a traditional pedestrian street, with the added amenity of protection from the Canadian winter.

Some examples are puzzling. TAC's Josiah Quincy School in Boston, according to the accompanying chart, has only 2 percent of its space devoted to noneducational uses. Hardly multiuse! And why was the Water Tower Place in Chicago chosen over the architecturally superior Hancock Tower by SOM, right next door?

The quality of the illustrations varies enormously throughout the book, depending, it appears, on who submitted them. Thus we have excellence from Richard Meier—for his unbuilt Alamo Plaza in Colorado Springs, 1978—as well as Jim Stirling at Derby. But the drawings and diagrams for the Kaufmannshaus in Hamburg by Graaf and Schweger and the Kirchenforum at Bochum are quite unintelligible.

Better organization would have helped—perhaps by function or type. Thus we could have had several examples of say, low-rise housing above shops and offices, followed by galleria types, atrium types, and a section on conversions of existing buildings. Coordinated drawings to the same scale would have made comparisons more enlightening. Cost data on a square foot as well as square meter basis related to a specific date would also have been beneficial.

Multi-Use Buildings in an Urban Context, Eberhard H. Zeidler, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1985, 158 pp., illus., \$35.00. Douglas Mahone:

SMALL OFFICE BUILDING HANDBOOK

BURT HILL KOSAR RITTELMANN ASSOCIATES

It used to be that all the detailed energy design information was related to residential buildings. Now the research focus has shifted to nonresidential building types, and more information is becoming available on ways to make them more efficient. *The Small Office Building Handbook* summarizes the results of the biggest DOE-funded study on the subject to date.

The problem of energy efficiency is not as simple in office buildings as it is in residences. The building envelope, including the insulation in walls, windows, roofs, and floors, has less impact on overall energy performance than does the lighting system or the mechanical system. This handbook does not even recommend adding insulation to small office buildings beyond the modest levels indicated by current good practice; the authors instead stress choosing the correct HVAC system and controls, and designing an efficient lighting system.

The reader is shown how to determine the cost-effectiveness of each combination of recommendations. The outcome will be heavily influenced by utility costs, especially for electricity. Commercial utility rates can be a great deal more complicated than simple, residential rates, and often include separate demand charges based on the maximum period of electricity demand in a month or season; they can also vary with different rates for off-peak and on-peak, summer and winter; and fuel adjustments.

The handbook tries to present a streamlined and simple method to deal with these issues, with a minimum of technical detail and calculation. It accomplishes this without abandoning technical rigor or resorting to vague, schematic advice. The recommendations are solidly based on an astonishing quantity of computergenerated building energy simulations. The book is, in essence, a smart index to a comprehensive data library of computer runs.

A checklist of current good practice in energy design, stressing insulation levels, HVAC system features, and internal gains, is the starting point. Next, based on your choices for glazing area, HVAC system type, and heating fuel, you are guided to a set of energy use numbers in the data library. With these, you calculate energy costs based on local utility rates. Finally, you add in estimates of construction costs for the conservation measures and work out the payback periods. Armed with this information, you can make informed design decisions for your project.

The final phase of the analysis process includes a customized shopping list of such advanced conservation measures as are practical for your project (the detailed evaluation of these is left to you or your consultants). The handbook also provides a useful checklist for making sure that each member of the building team follows through during design, construction, and operation to make the building as efficient as it was designed to be.

The authors have made heroic efforts to retain the technical thoroughness of their voluminous computer runs, while sparing the reader the details. They have also taken a very conservative, hard-nosed approach to energy design. You will find very little in the way of marginal or untested recommendations; in fact, they provide an appendix explaining why they threw out all those conservation possibilities. As a result, the recommendations they do give seem rather obvious and mundane. One has the feeling that they used a lot of analytical horsepower to pull out some rather

# Blueprints for success from the Whitney Library of Design

#### Just published

**NATURAL HOME STYLE** M. Mejetta and S. Spada. A book of design ideas that shows how natural materials may be used both inside and outside the home. Also shown is how nature can be used by the homeowner and designer to create attractive, colorful, stylistically original and energy-efficient dwellings. Filled with examples from both the United States and overseas that show the effects that can be achieved, this book is a practical source of original design concepts for those who want to create a home and lifestyle that are closer to nature. 128 pages. 9  $\times$  12. 220 color plates. Index. 8230-7387-4. \$32.50



**DESIGNING PLACES FOR PEOPLE** C. M. Deasy, FAIA. In collaboration with Thomas E. Lasswell, Ph.D. A fascinating collaboration between an architect and a sociologist, this handbook provides a practical source of information for designing every type of setting where people interact. It describes the behavioral elements people expect from architectural space, and translates personal concerns into practical guidelines for architects. 144 pages.  $8\frac{1}{4} \times 11$ . 90 b&w illustrations. Bibliography. Index. 8230-7152-9. \$27.50

#### SKETCHING INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE

Norman Dickman and John Pile. This volume covers the techniques and uses of the freehand, rough, and developed sketch in the interior design practice. Instructions are provided on concept; personal, design, field and presentation sketching; drawing plans, elevations, sections, and furniture; and sketch models. Several completed projects of various types are shown. 176 pages.  $8\frac{1}{4} \times 10$ . 16 color plates. 136 b&w illustrations. Index. 8230-7450-1. \$32.50



**NEGOTIATING HIGHER DESIGN FEES** Frank Stasiowski. Provides all designers who need to run their business profitably with all the know-how, planning advice, and negotiating tactics necessary to successfully obtain the type of contract professional talents deserve. Concise information on getting ready to negotiate, what to do while negotiating, and how to deal with special problems is included, along with case studies and sample forms. 224 pages. 6 × 9. 28 b&w illustrations. Index. 8230-7383-1. \$22.50

**HOTEL PLANNING AND DESIGN** Walter Rutes, FAIA, and Richard Penner. An exhaustive guide to the rapidly changing and expanding hotel/motel/resort industry, this book offers all the practical planning and design data needed to produce an effective and profitable facility. All of the new and emerging trends in the field are systematically explored. "One of the most assiduous and hard driving books on hotel design to date."—*Restaurant and Hotel Design*. 256 pages. 8¼ × 11. 20 color plates. 240 b&w illustrations. Index. Selected bibliography. 8230-7274-6. \$45.00



#### PERSPECTIVE FOR INTERIOR DESIGNERS

John Pile. This compact instruction manual covers both basic geometric layout and freehand drawing. It demonstrates the basic method in fourteen step-by-step stages and teaches how to draw special objects and situations. The author also explains how to use a camera for a better understanding of perspective, the potential of computer-aided perspective, and solutions to special problems. Numerous demonstrations, analyses of constructed layouts, and illustrations of completed work make this a concise and accurate guidebook. 160 pages.  $9 \times 9$ . 135 b&w illustrations. Bibliography. Index 8230-7420-X. \$24.95



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**ARCHITECTURAL SKETCHING AND RENDERING** edited by Stephen Kliment. An unparalleled instruction book to developing a stronger grasp of rendering in both pencil and pen and ink. "A prestigious, ingenious and instructive work . . . a tour de force."—Peter Probyn. 192 pp.  $8\frac{1}{4} \times 11.325$  b&w illustrations. Bibliography. Index. 8230-7052-2 \$27.50

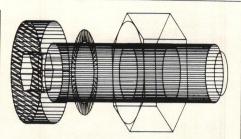
A GUIDE TO BUSINESS PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES FOR INTE-RIOR DESIGNERS Revised edition Harry Siegel with Alan Siegel. A complete guide to establishing and maintaining an interior design business. "A valuable source of advice . . . covers all the subjects you never learned in design school."—Interiors 208 pp. 9  $\times$  12. 50 b&w illustrations. 8230-7252-2. \$25.00 underwhelming conclusions. Most of the emphasis is on high-efficiency lamp ballasts and more efficient HVAC system features; the only controversial recommendations deal with the use of automatic daylight dimming controls to turn off lights.

The authors' objective was to provide sober, defensible advice to architects, engineers, and building owners —an admirable goal set against the background of earlier energy books, which tended toward boosterish enthusiasm for interesting but often unproven conservation technologies. The results of this handbook will probably be conservation efforts that are solid, widespread, and successful.

The format of the handbook is quite graphic with lots of flow charts and process arrows to lead you through the analysis. Beneath this apparent simplicity, however, lies a wealth of detailed, carefully defined engineering assumptions and analyses. The authors have chosen their multitudinous assumptions carefully, but it is those assumptions that will ultimately date the work, or render it inapplicable to specific projects. For the present, however, the handbook is valuable and useful to anyone designing a small (less than 50,000 square feet) office building. It will keep you on the right track to energy efficiency, help you to avoid major mistakes, and to quantify and support the energy efficiency recommendations you make. In most small office buildings, it will eliminate the need for special computer analysis to achieve a good level of energy efficiency.

The handbook will not, however, satisfy the designer who wants to stretch the state of the art or use unconventional solutions. Those guys are always on their own.

Small Office Building Handbook: Design for Reducing First Costs and Utility Costs, Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann Associates, Architects, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1985, 286 pp., plus appendices, illus., \$40.00.



## Thomas Kvan: AE/CADD AUTODESK

The development and introduction of microcomputer-based drawing packages continues unabated. Since the review of six CADD packages in DBR 6 ("Designing, Drafting, and Diagraming on Computers"), several new packages have appeared (and others disappeared). Established vendors have announced enhancements to their products, some of which provide the design professions with significantly improved capability. The most significant of these, AE/CADD, comes from Autodesk, who, with their AutoCAD system, dominate the microbased CADD market.

AE/CADD is one of many packages available based upon AutoCAD, but it is the only system specifically for architects available directly from Autodesk. The package was produced independently by an architectural practice in San Francisco, and was subsequently chosen for distribution by Autodesk.

Packages like this are an increasingly important resource for users of general drawing systems who need to apply these tools in a particular discipline. Such applications packages provide users with libraries of symbols and functionality specific to their trade. AE/CADD offers the architect symbols for, among other things, plumbing fixtures, windows, doors, stairs, and furniture. There are capabilities to make the dimensioning of drawings easier, as well as more specialized features for such tedious tasks as cleaning up drawings of wall junctions.

AE/CADD comes with a user manual and a digitizer menu. The software itself arrives on nine floppy disks! The system requires over three megabytes of hard disk storage, forming a significant overhead for your personal computer.

While AE/CADD has many useful features, it also has limitations which contribute to the frustrations of using a PC-based drawing system. Many of these have arisen because the base upon which the authors worked was not robust enough to carry such extensions. The AutoCAD macro language is not the best environment to build many of the capabilities offered here. Consequently, some features are useful only in the most controlled situations. For example, the feature to clean up wall intersections works only when the walls being intersected are of the same size.

The documentation delivered with AE/CADD thoroughly covers all the features in the package but is inadequate in explaining the operation of the system, particularly if one already has difficulty using the system as intended. Explanations of template functions have been limited to stepby-step listings of actions as they should happen, with no discussion of possible errors and steps to correct them. The documentation provided with AutoCAD itself is substantially better than that with AE/CADD.

With developments in computer technology—more specifically, with advances in AutoCAD—applicationspecific packages will be built on more solid bases than now possible. Systems will become easier to use and more immediately rewarding, and users will avail themselves more frequently of more powerful tools tailored specifically to their profession. Until such time, however, systems like AE/CADD remain adequate but frustrating tools.

AE/CADD, Autodesk (2320 Marinship Way, Sausalito, CA 94965), 1985, \$1,000.00.



THE CALIFORNIA COASTLINE

## Bonnie Fisher and Boris Dramov:

#### THE URBAN EDGE

JOSEPH PETRILLO and PETER GRENELL, editors

Since the 1960s, changes in transportation technology, recreational preferences, and increased environmental awareness have made the urban waterfront the focus of public concern and development opportunity. The renaissance of interest in the urban waterfront has resulted in major new publications, beginning in the late 1970s when the National Research Council published its Urban Waterfront Lands, a compendium of essays resulting from the symposium sponsored on the topic at MIT. Since then we have had the Conservation Foundation's Small Seaports, which focused on the problems of authenticity, maritime activity, and tourism in New England's coastal towns, and the now-defunct Heritage Conservation and Development Service's Practical Guide to Improving the Waterfront, which discussed many of the regulatory, permit, and funding considerations preliminary to development. Further, the Urban Land Institute in 1983 published Urban Waterfront Development, which explored development opportunities

on the waterfront and illustrated them through case studies drawn from cities across the country. Now the California Coastal Conservancy has published The Urban Edge, a series of articles which reflect both the thinking of the Coastal Conservancy and the experience of the Coastal Commission and San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission in regulating coastal development. It adds the broader public (not necessarily governmental) perspective and presents the case that the waterfront is by right a public place, no matter how it is used, developed, or managed. The articles primarily revolve around public access: how it has been successfully incorporated in past projects and how it can be achieved in the future in light of design, regulation, and financing considerations.

As in any essay collection, some articles are more persuasive and involving than others. "The Edges of the World: An International Tour by the Shore" is a beautifully written chapter by Charles Moore which develops many interesting ideas about coastal physiographic form and the elements which make memorable places. Similarly, the chapter by David Gebhard, "A View from the Past: The Shifting Images of Coastal California" provides an excellent overview of California coastal history, and sets the stage for future change. Peter Epstein's article on "Making the Numbers Work: Financing Waterfront Restoration in an Age of Austerity" succinctly spells out the possible sources of financing and funding available for making creative change and improvements to the waterfront.

The aim of the book is to educate the public about basic issues which need to be considered in coastal development. Part 1 reviews historic and present contexts of coastal design; part 2 describes some significant attempts to generate environmentally compatible design through regulation; and part 3 discusses the economic advantages of compatible coastal design, and various ways to bring good design within economic reach. while the emphasis of the book is on making change (part 2), no one chapter or part is elaborated in great depth; the book has a "magazine style" which makes it easy to read and allows the editors to touch on a broad range of considerations and issues. Overall the book is well conceived, and recommended not only for California coast enthusiasts, but for anyone genuinely concerned with waterfronts and their improved use and management.

The Urban Edge: Where the City Meets the Sea, Joseph Petrillo and Peter Grenell, editors, William Kaufmann, 1985, 108 pp., illus., \$14.95 pb.

#### Maryanne Heyserman:

## ACCESS FOR THE HANDICAPPED

PETER S. HOPF

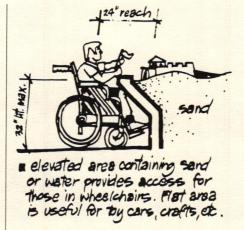
## BARRIER-FREE EXTERIOR DESIGN

GARY O. ROBINETTE, editor

One in four Americans, it is estimated, has some form of disability, and anyone can incur a temporary or permanent disability at any time. Everyone, not just disabled people, benefits from access, but disabled persons have had to make the general public, as well as the design professional, aware of their specific needs in order to ensure that physical access is designed appropriately.

Design professionals should first of all know and understand the accepted standards for barrier-free design. Federal and state standards govern architectural design for all public and privately funded buildings, and require that all buildings, either remodeled or newly constructed, be accessible to physically disabled persons. Most regulations incorporate the standards of the American National Institute Specifications (ANSI A117.1-1980) for Making Buildings and Facilities Accessible and Usable by Physically Handicapped People. These standards not only cover interior spaces but the exterior landscape as well. To the design professional, this is just one more set of regulations that the design must incorporate.

Access for the Handicapped: The Barrier-Free Regulations for Design and Construction in All 50 States, by Peter S. Hopf and John A. Raeber, tries to take the mystique out of the access regulations. The authors' purpose is to present a reference manual that shows the application of state regulations on handicapped access. Their book is divided into three sections. The first explains terminol-



FROM ROBINETTE, BARRIER FREE EXTERIOR DESIGN

ogy and the existing standards on disability, which are incorporated into the book. The state-by-state interpretation of the regulations is the authors' own; for up-to-date information, each state will still have to be contacted.

The second section, the most important, lists all 50 states in alphabetical order and describes what accessibility codes are used by each. This section is an overview of the laws as they pertain to the state regulations, followed by information on where to write for more in-depth information on the state handicapped code.

Finally, the last section describes the codes as they relate to the 50 states, using graphic diagrams to guide the reader. Here the authors would have done better to give general information on design criteria instead of relating each diagram to 50 state codes. This could have been supplemented with information on where to write for a copy of the codes in each state.

Barrier-Free Exterior Design: Anyone Can Go Anywhere, edited by Gary O. Robinette, provides specifications for designing the exterior landscape for people with all types of disabilities, visual, hearing, and mobility impairments, as well as for children and pregnant women. Written as an update of earlier works (Barrier-Free Design and Access to the Environment), it incorporates the ANSI standards. It must be cautioned, however, that some states, such as California, have their own handicapped regulations.

Although the book presents some excellent ideas and is graphically well executed, it is full of misconceptions: a wheelchair is described as "a chair on wheels normally propelled by the occupant by means of handrims attached to the two side wheels. Wheelchairs may also be motorized or propelled by an attendant." A wheelchair is not merely "a chair on wheels." nor is it "normally propelled by the occupant." The type of wheelchair depends on the individual's disability and where he lives. In certain locations, a "normal" wheelchair would be motorized. In several places, the term "wheelchair bound" is used; however, no one is bound to his or her wheelchair. A disabled person may use a wheelchair, but is able to get out of it, either independently or with assistance.

Again, it is very important to understand existing state codes and how they relate to exterior designs. California codes, for instance, cover exterior design such as pathways, curb ramps, entrances, and parking, but do not cover specific design issues such as camping areas and children's play areas.

The book presents many unique and interesting ideas on specific design issues, for example, children's play areas with raised sandboxes for disabled children to play in. These ideas are presented in a clear graphic style that is easy to read and understand. Unfortunately, they are outweighed by a hazy interpretation of existing terminology and codes.

Access for the Handicapped: The Barrier-Free Regulations for Design and Construction in All 50 States, Peter S. Hopf and John A. Raeber, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1984, 701 pp., illus., \$56.50.

Barrier-Free Exterior Design: Anyone Can Go Anywhere, Gary O. Robinette, editor, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1985, 129 pp., illus., \$20.00.

## Louis E. Gelwicks: SITE PLANNING AND DESIGN FOR THE ELDERLY

DIANE CARSTENS

Although the price may deter students, and the introduction turn away the private developer, both groups could profit from reading Site Planning and Design for the Elderly. Obviously a labor of love, it is also a practical resource for planners, architects, developers, administrators, and educators, for Diane Carstens brings to it a keen awareness of older persons and a high degree of professional expertise. It is a comprehensive and practical resource for the design of outdoor spaces to complement planned housing developments for relatively independent older adults.

The well-designed format, direct language, and excellent graphics make the book very easy to read. Among the several thousand facts are some pearls of wisdom—although the reader must work at digesting statements such as, "Social spaces that provide a natural reason for being there are ideal."

The initial 20 pages are devoted to the issues of low- and high-rise housing for older people, the aging process, designing for the elderly, and the formulation of design objectives. For each subject area—for example, visual and physical access to outdoor space —the author states the objective, identifies the rationale and applies a concise list of recommendations or examples, clarifying the whole process with graphic illustrations.

The second section treats site development patterns, the surrounding neighborhood, and on-site conditions. Difficult areas such as the intermixing of competency levels are handled simply and well. The major site planning elements (i.e., the main entry or parking) are described by location, special characteristics, amenities, and detailing.

The third section covers the site design elements for recreation and pleasure. Topics include social interaction, health and exercise, shared patios and terraces, unit patios and balconies, gardens and nature areas. In the final section the summary and conclusions make a well-organized checklist, and detailed design illustrations throughout the book, including window placement and outdoor signs, are uncluttered and easy to read.

If the book has a weakness in today's marketplace, it is the obvious concern for the improvement of the quality of life for older people. This concern has led more than one author to dwell on the "needs" of older people as defined by experts, rather than their demands, which is usually what sells. Ms. Carstens has been strongly influenced by a group of social scientists and environmental researchers whose efforts over the past 25 years have been directed primarily to low or moderate income housing, but the income levels of retired persons have risen significantly in the past ten years. A variety of outdoor amenities that appeal to this more affluent consumer group, including fountains, spas, and swimming pools, are not within the scope of this excellent book.

Nevertheless, a high standard has been set for the thoughtful design of quality outdoor spaces. Of particular importance, and often overlooked, as the author states, is "the dynamic interaction between design, management, and activity programming."

The book's research base and orientation is soundly based on "function." One aspect of the quality of life which has not been addressed is the contribution of beauty and excellent design. The elderly today are better educated, more affluent, more mobile, and more selective than previous generations. They are placing new demands on planners, developers, and architects. Neglect or poor design of outdoor space is one of the major reasons for slow rent-up and project failure of retirement communities.

Architects and developers will do well to measure their existing, as well as their future, outdoor spaces for the elderly by the standards established in this publication.

Site Planning and Design for the Elderly: Issues, Guidelines, and Alternatives, Diane Carstens, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1985, 170 pp., illus., \$39.95.

## Corry Arnold: REPORT GRAPHICS RICHARD L. AUSTIN

Richard Austin's Report Graphics: A Handbook for Writing the Design Report attempts to provide comprehensive guidelines for writing and producing design reports. Every phase of the process is touched on, from the initial conception of the report's audience to the advantages and disadvantages of different types of bindings, yet this breadth of subject matter is the book's downfall. Writing anything of importance or interest is no simple matter, and if writing can be effectively improved by a handbook, more space must be devoted to the actual writing process than the 30 pages Austin allots.

Over two-thirds of Report Graphics's 160 pages are illustrations-mostly examples from actual design reports. This leaves precious little space to discuss writing, particularly considering the appendices on different types of binding, basic formats for tables and graphs, and so on. Austin presents his writing tips in checklist form, and neither writing instructors nor good writers would have significant objections to most of it. Nevertheless, good advice has to be helpful, not merely correct. It's fine to insist, for example, that a paragraph should "maintain a logical order," but a prospective writer who can maintain a logical order in a paragraph doesn't need the advice, and one who has trouble maintaining a logical order will not solve his or her problem by being merely advised to do so.

Furthermore, Austin's checklist approach can be misleading in itself. Nearly half of the section on writing style is taken up with a list of commonly misused words (accept/except, etc.). Leaving aside some reservations about Austin's simplistic approach to style, the biggest failing of the "Style" section is the implicit suggestion that correctly using accept and except or affect and effect is an essential component of style.

Ironically, the book's limitation is also its saving grace. Because of the plethora of illustrations—mostly from design reports—Austin's writing is kept to a minimum. However, the illustrations are instructive and revealing about writing style, graphic presentation, page composition, structure, and other facets of design reports. Even browsing is instructive, and a student or novice with a specific problem could probably find a solution among the examples.

The writing handbook is a deceptively simple form—a few sound words of advice to make a budding writer flower. Yet, as Austin makes clear in his introduction, design reports serve a wide variety of functions, and are directed at many different audiences. To write a design report competently, much less brilliantly, is as difficult as to write anything else of importance. The students and professionals that Austin proclaims as his audience would do better to turn to a more traditional writing handbook.

Report Graphics: A Handbook for Writing the Design Report, Richard L. Austin, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1984, 159 pp., illus., \$25.95.

#### Tom Craveiro:

## SHELTER IN SAUDI ARABIA KAISER TALIB

This book on housing in Saudi Arabia is part of a small but growing bibliography on local or vernacular approaches to building in developing countries. The author, who teaches and practices architecture in Saudi Arabia, uses his analysis of traditional architecture, local climate, and current building practices to produce design guidelines for housing better suited to the environment. He sets out to prove that not only can traditional techniques have a role in modern urban development, they can also produce better architecture.

Each of the main chapters describes one of the climatic zones in Saudi Arabia and its indigenous housing traditions. The housing types are presented in photos, sketches, and measured drawings, and meteorological data is given for each of the zones. Each chapter concludes with recommendations for modern applications of the traditional solutions. The final chapter introduces some of the new housing types of the region, such as suburban villas, camps for foreign workers, and the apartment block. Also included is a glossary of Arabic architectural terms.

Shelter in Saudi Arabia certainly contributes to our awareness of a fairly isolated building tradition. It is not, however, a detailed architectural history, and much of the material on the relation of local housing and environment is familiar from architectural ethnographies previously done on countries such as Egypt, Yemen, and Iran. For those who have already investigated wind chimneys, shading devices, thermal lag, and the rest, there is nothing new here; in fact these areas are covered in more useful detail in passive solar design sources. What is most disappointing, despite

the author's thesis, is the lack of insight into the strengths and weaknesses of a vernacular approach to housing in the modern urban context.

In the most enlightening chapter, "Changing Patterns of Housing in Saudi Arabia," we get a sense of the choices that builders are currently making. Among them are reinforced concrete apartment blocks and suburban villas done up in a style that might be called modern standard Arabic. Interior courtyards have been closed in, passive ventilation supplanted by air conditioning, the colors and textures of local materials replaced by imported products. These threats to traditional techniques are the result of strong social and economic factors which must be better understood if the architectural choices are to be altered. The author tries to bridge the gap between current building practices and traditional notions of housing, but what remains unclear for the reader is whether such an approach is likely to be viable in the current technological and cultural environment. The challenge is still to help builders make the jump from theory to practice.

Shelter in Saudi Arabia, Kaiser Talib, Academy Editions, distributed by St. Martin's, 1984, 144 pp., illus., \$19.50 pb.

## Natalie Shivers: HOUSE TRACY KIDDER

I am confident that the sentiment for home ownership is so embedded in the American heart that the millions of people who dwell in tenements, apartments, and rented rows of solid brick have the aspiration for wider opportunity in ownership of their own homes. To possess one's own home is the hope and ambition of almost every individual in our country ... Those immortal ballads, "Home Sweet Home," "My Old Kentucky Home," and "Little Gray Home in the West," were not written about tenements or apartments (Herbert Hoover, President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, 1932).

Thomas Jefferson's National Survey of 1785, which gridded up rural land into independent homesteads, prophesied that individual fulfillment would forever be linked with property rights in America. Our national creed had traditionally held that everyone could and should own their own homesingle-family, detached, on an individual plot of land. Best of all, they should build it themselves, accommodating their personal needs and aspirations with a custom fit. This ideal scenario is treated to a thorough, if nostalgic, depiction by author Tracy Kidder in his recently published book House. Kidder lovingly and methodically traces the construction of one family's house (the Souweines of Amherst, Massachusetts) from conception through design, contract negotiations, and construction-stud by stud, cubic foot by cubic foot. En route, he relates much about the history of house-building in general and these specific home builders in particular. Simplifying the process without being simplistic, Kidder's examination of the multiple dimensions of a house—historical, emotional, physical—will benefit laymen and professionals alike, while almost everyone will be gratified by one family's successful realization of the American Dream.

Kidder aspires to portray a common experience, but House is rather a microscopic examination of a situation more typical of the 19th than the 20th century. However, once you accept the hothouse nature of this investigation, the book can be quite compelling. Winner of a Pulitzer Prize for his similarly exhaustive account of a mini-computer, The Soul of a New Machine, Kidder dissects the house/ home-building process with a journalist's zeal for accuracy and detail and an author's love of the supra-cultural implications of every act. The involvement of each participant (all recognizable American prototypes) is chronicled from his or her own perspective-the owners of the house, upstanding and prosperous New Englanders, he a lawyer, she an educator. and their two children; the lawyer/ graphic artist-turned-architect, inaugurating his own practice with this commission; the contractors, four young entrepreneurs who prefer working with their hands to administering their small business.

Kidder also provides a running commentary on the ritualistic significance of every aspect of the houseraising process, from ground-breaking to tree-topping. Even the day-to-day negotiations, considered here to be the stuff of which dreams are made, are treated with reverence. The house is described as both the embodiment of age-old cultural rites and as the product of specific personalities and circumstances, as well as the sum of its parts. We are told in exhaustive detail how many feet of aluminum drip edge and rolls of compound felt are used, as well as how four-fifths of an acre of Maine woods becomes lumber for this 3,000-square-foot house. Kidder enriches the discussion with discourses on such topics as the history of the balloon-frame structure, the origins of the 16-penny nail, and Post-Modernism. The house thus described is of iconographic proportions, its foundations resting firmly in our national mythos. Its generic quality is further enhanced by the lack of specific graphic documentation—two plans on the book's endpapers and a few sketches of details.

*House* is ultimately reactionary in scope and nostalgic in subject matter. It appeals to our innate political and social conservatism, our characteristically American sentimentality for the sacred hut in the wilderness, and it resonates with popular conviction.

The image of America is pristine: the Souweines do not have to deal with the urban hazards of crime, poverty, racism, unemployment, pollution, or exploitation by unscrupulous landlords. Nor, living on the outskirts of a town described as "the kind of place with a fine public school system and a foreign policy," do they have to contend with the ills of suburbia cultural and social uniformity, developer's constrictions, lack of community life.

The situation presented here, however, is becoming anachronistic for all but a small elite. As such recent studies as Dolores Hayden's Redesigning the American Dream: The Future of Housing, Work and Family Life (W. W. Norton, 1984) and Gwendolyn Wright's Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America (Pantheon, 1981) have asserted, the possibility of owning one's own home (much less custom-building it) is becoming increasingly remote to Americans. In 1983, the median purchase price for a house was \$90,100, more than twice the 1976 average of \$43,340. According to the president of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), only 8 percent of all potential buyers had sufficient income in 1980 to buy a home. Not only that, but the near-universal validity of the single-family detached house has dimished due to the effects of energy shortages, land shortages, and the changing composition of American households. The clients for whom the house was best suited, nuclear families (i.e. working father, homemaking mother, two or more children) currently represent only 5.7 percent of America's households. By 1990, households made up of unattached individuals are expected to equal the number of those with married couples. Working or single parents, single adults, childless couples, and the elderly form a growing constituency for whom the traditional house is less than ideal. Alternative housing types and situations are proliferating to accommodate a changing market.

Furthermore, a handcrafted house built by a carpenter-craftsman is becoming even more of an anomaly. One third of all dwelling units are said to include major prefabricated parts (roof trusses, partitions, ceiling panels, etc.), while entire factory-made units account for 15-20 percent of all singlefamily housing currently produced. Manufacturers and merchant builders (i.e., speculative builders)-not small business contractors like those depicted in House-are responsible for the production of 80 percent of America's housing units. According to a NAHB survey in 1976, there are several thousand homebuilders who construct more than 100 units a year and at least a dozen who construct more than 10,000 units a year. A 1983 NAHB survey showed that only 12 percent of all housing units were being provided by small volume builders (i.e., 1-25 units per year). In other words, most people who are able to buy a house now deal with a speculative builder rather than a custom house builder.

Even people whose homes are custom built often use mass-marketed stock plans rather than custom designs by architects. The architect of *House* is exceptional—not only in his ability to control the design of the product from conception through con-

struction, but also in the conduct of his practice. As one observer has pointed out, the image of the architect popular in the Renaissance-an autonomous, self-employed artist who not only was allowed, but was called upon, to express his own creative ideas in commissions (not unlike Rawn in this book)-is outdated. The industrialization of the building process has been steadily undermining this role since the early 19th century. The power of clients and builders has forced architects to concede that, for the most part, it is the buyer's market. That has meant far less autonomy for architects in matters of design and building and a different way of practicing. Architectural offices have become less like artists' ateliers and more like the businesses of their clients and contractors. Solo practices like Rawn's account for less than 10 percent of the total architectural market, while large firms that provide a range of services or firms specializing in a specific phase or building type are becoming increasingly prevalent.

This portrait of a house-building is thus tinged with elitism as well as nostalgia for a social order and building process that are no longer dominant. The house profiled here is the prototype for many more dream than real houses in America today. Nevertheless, it is an enduring dream, a national icon. As such, it is worthy of recording as reverently as Kidder has done. Indeed, in a world where we are daily confronted with situations of mind-boggling technological complexity, we can take pleasure in comprehending the whole of something, beginning to end, inside and out, and it seems fitting that the thing should be a home.

House, Tracy Kidder, Houghton Mifflin, 1985, 314 pp., \$17.95.

## Jacqueline C. Vischer: SOCIAL DESIGN ROBERT SOMMER

Dr. Sommer's book is reassuring proof that not only is "social design" being practiced widely and successfully, but that it represents a legitimate world view for designers, occupants, and researchers. He does not define social design, but contrasts it to formalistic design, which is more concerned with aesthetics than with user responsiveness. Each of the chapters reveals a different way of implementing a social design process, such as User Needs Analysis (UNA) or direct participation by occupants in the design process, and real world examples of user or behavioral researcher involvement are sprinkled throughout.

Unfortunately, Sommer skims over the critical question of whether buildings that have had user involvement in design are materially better than buildings that have been designed formalistically. He does, however, address the "pay-offs," giving proof for such claims as that better work environments increase worker productivity.

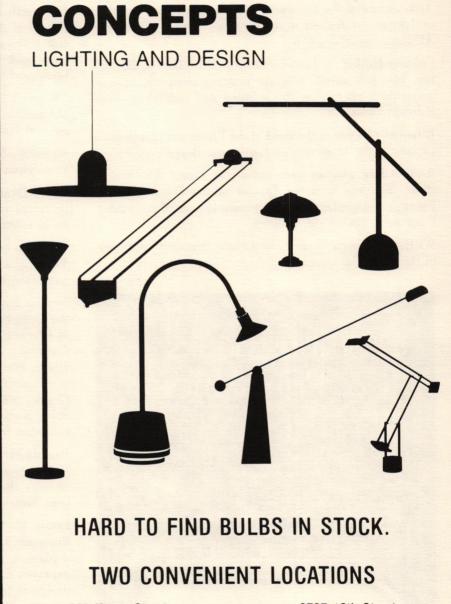
The possible role of social scientists in design is indicated in his "theory of loose parts":

User participation rests on the assumption that the environment is composed of small pieces or units that can be planned separately, but must fit together into a larger meaningful whole.

The coordinating role in the design process is all important in this theory. Sommer neglects to add, however, that not many architects are capable of providing the strong coordinating and conceptual leadership that a participatory planning/design process demands. Nor does he acknowledge that many capable social scientists are excluded from this role by the conventions of the building industry and the constraints of legal liabilities. His discussion of Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) underlines the greatest problem with these studies—securing the funding. He argues that firms should spend some of the budget usually alloted to promotion on smallscale POEs that will contribute to the firm's knowledge base as well as the general awareness of how buildings affect people.

Throughout, he invokes the consumer movement in America as the social/political context in which social design finds its identity. He draws analogies between social design and the grass-roots "community art" movement on one hand, and the large-scale consumer rejection of recent food technologies on the other. However, consumer advocacy is a natural role model for social design; the analogy is as close as Sommer comes to a call-toarms to the users of buildings to stand up for the humanization of buildings.

Social Design: Creating Buildings with People in Mind, Robert Sommer, Prentice-Hall, 1983, 198 pp., illus., \$7.95 pb.



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#### ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

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Reyner Banham teaches architectural history at the University of California at Santa Cruz. His book, A Concrete Atlantis: U.S. Industrial Building and European Modern Architecture, will be published by MIT Press this spring.

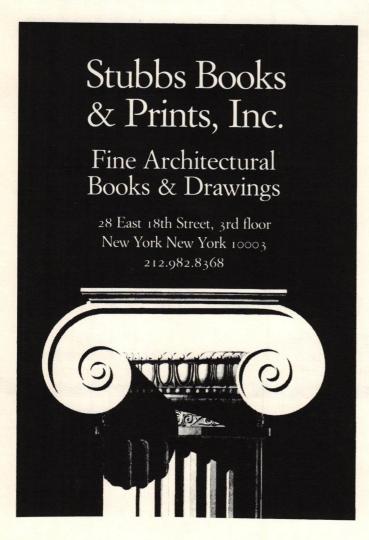
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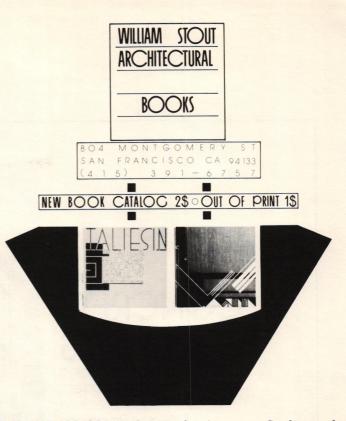
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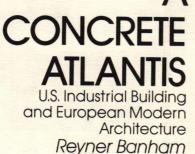
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Camille Wells teaches history at the College of William and Mary and is editor of *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*.





"Let us listen to the counsels of American engineers. But let us beware of American architects!" declared Le Corbusier, who like other European architects of the early twentieth century believed that he saw in the work of American industrial builders a model of the way architecture should develop. In a book that suggests how good Modern was before it went wrong, Banham details the European discovery of the daylight factory and the grain elevator. He examines a number of strik-

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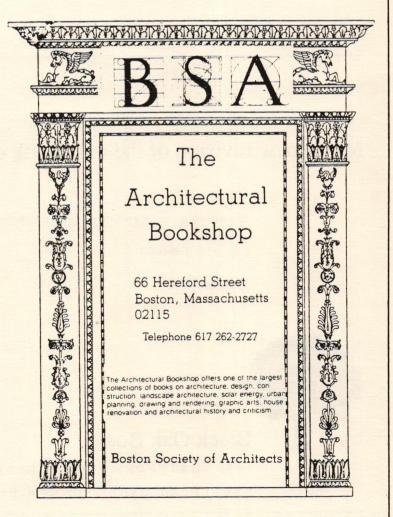
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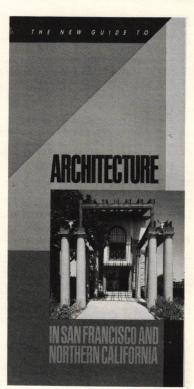
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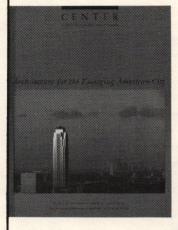
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CENTER, Vol. 2, "Ah Mediterranean! Twentieth Century Classicism in America." Edited by Charles W. Moore and Wayne Attoe. Contributors: David Gebhard, Charles Jencks, Batey & Mack, TAFT Architects. 128 pp.

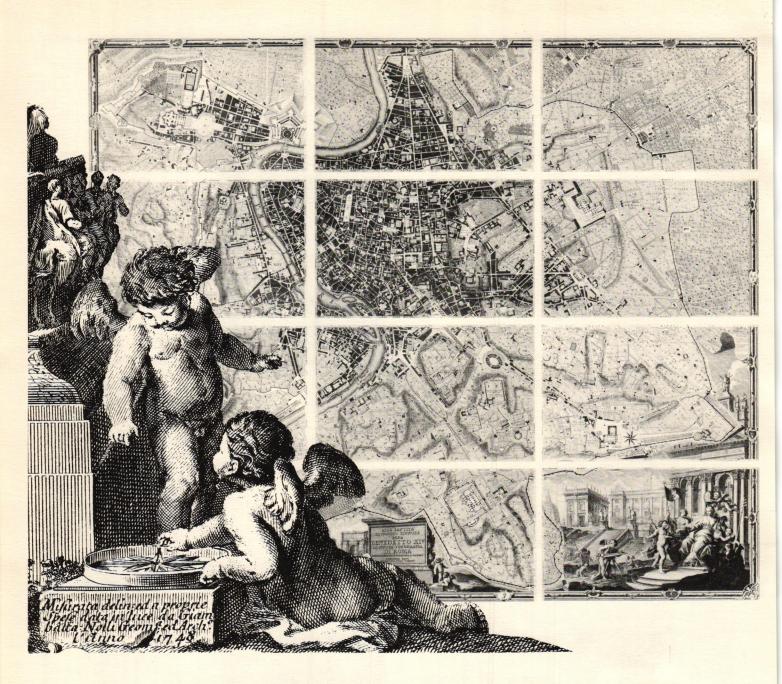


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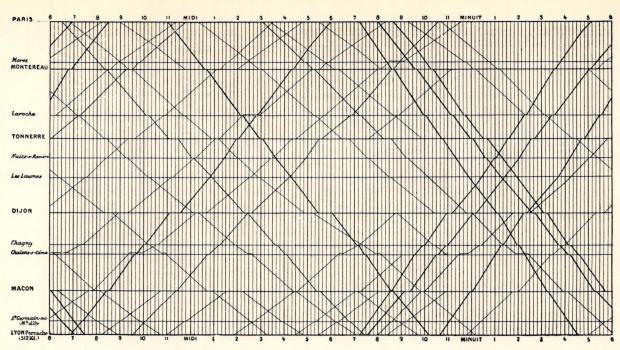
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This remarkable graphical train schedule, drawn in 1885 by the French scientist E. J. Marey, shows the trains running between Paris and Lyon, with intermediate stops. For example, the first train of the day leaves Paris at 6:30 am (upper left corner) and arrives in Lyon 13 hours later. (The modern high-speed train now makes the journey in 3 hours.) The diagonals moving from upper left to lower right show all trains going from Paris down to Lyon.

Trains going from Lyon to Paris are indicated by diagonals running from the lower left to the upper right. Steeper lines indicate faster trains. When a train stops at a station, the line is horizontal during the time of the stop. When two trains pass one another, the lines on the graphical train schedule cross. Graphical schedules are currently used in Japan for managing the day-to-day operations of the *Shinkansen* (the bullet train) and by New Jersey Transit.

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