

DESIGN BOOK REVIEW



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FALL 1988

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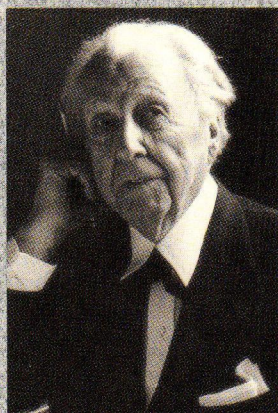


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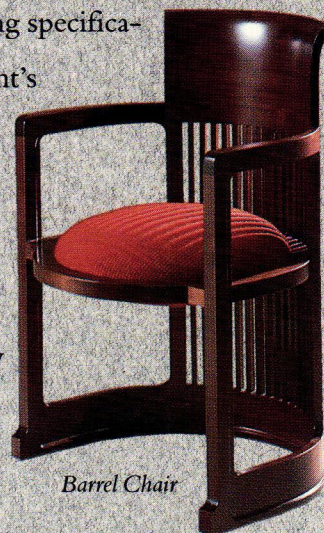
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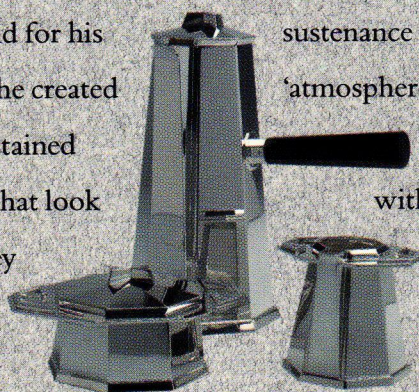
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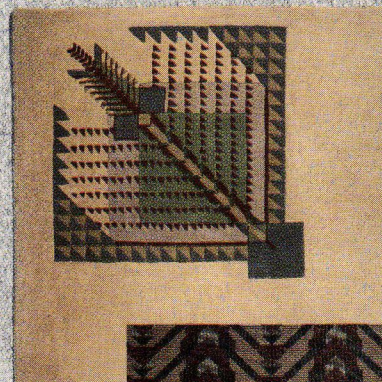


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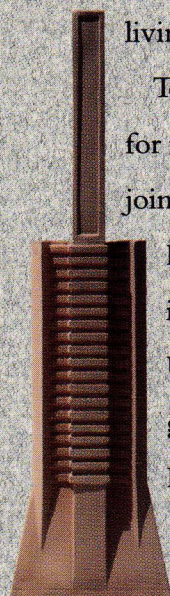
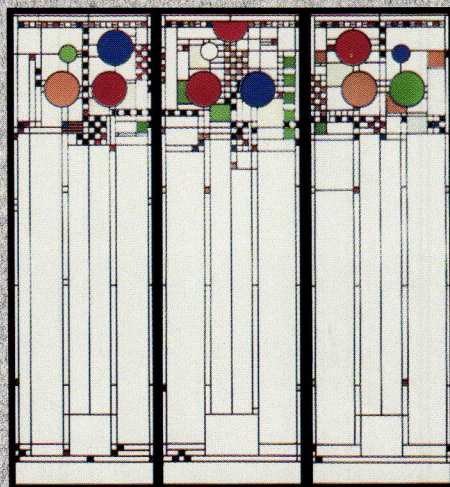
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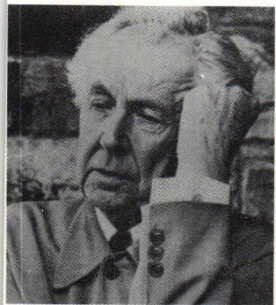
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Director, Chicago Institute for
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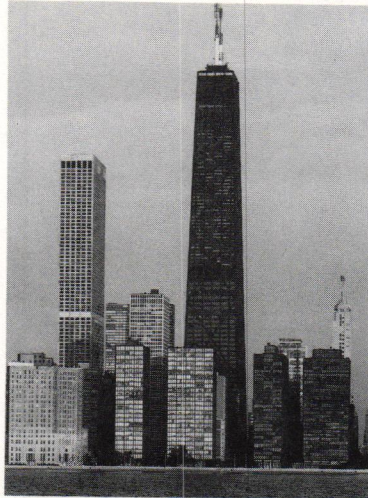
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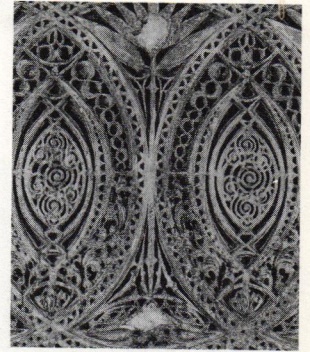
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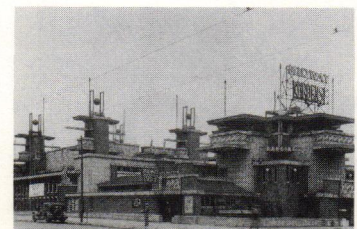
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C O D Y • S



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—The Oakland Tribune

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—San Francisco Chronicle

JULIA MORGAN: ARCHITECT

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De-Con Kills Rats and Most Pomos Too!

In this election year, among the intertextual sublimations of *DBR*'s "Chicago" issue is the reminder of that fateful convention twenty years ago. At that point, the Hancock Center, subject of "After Architecture," and the other Miesian boxes of the windy city seemed like ominous fences hemming in the rebellious generation being herded through the streets by stampeding cops. Today these straightforward steel and glass structures seem less threatening, refreshingly mute in the chatty new age of *architecture parlante*. Their quietness approximates the current political wisdom of our anti-charismatic presidential candidates, who might envy the technocratic certitude of Bruce Graham when he claims in our interview: "You can't argue against this building on pragmatic terms!"

Architecture, as Thomas Bender notes in his essay, "Architecture and the Journalism of Ideas," was once so heavily imbricated in American politics and culture as to be a major source of intellectual activity. That he locates the decline of its discourse in the specialization and fashion consciousness bred by the Museum of Modern Art's 1932 "Modern Architecture" exhibit has a special irony in light of that institution's recent "Deconstructivist Architecture" exhibit, which has proven to be the architectural media event of the year, and also has proven just how few bricks are left in the wall. As Raymond Gastil reports, the apotheosis of De-Con has not only squelched the stylistic competition of its rationalist and historicist postmodern rivals, but in the reluctant union of its participants, its self-avowed misnomer has offed itself! Such mental onanism is a poor substitute for the intercourse between buildings and power of the sort once practiced in Chicago. In our "Dialogue," the new director of the SOM Foundation's Chicago Institute for Architecture and Urbanism, John Whiteman, outlines a program for research that will encourage reflection about what can be accomplished in the "grip" of that power.

That very same power eventually lost its patience with Chicago's two greatest innovators: Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright. Their subsequent re-vindication by historians has more than compensated their local reputations, resulting in a form of hero worship usually reserved for baseball players. Hagiography and modernist biases have long characterized the treatment of Wright and Sullivan, but there are signs of intelligent revisions, indicated in Norris Kelly Smith's judgments on the recent Wright biographies, Anthony Alofsin's assessment of the monographs on the Larkin and Johnson Wax buildings, and Terrance Goode's review of the current interest in Sullivan's ornamentalism.

If there is such a thing as "deconstruction" in architecture, surely it will be found more among the narrative paradoxes in the projects of Lars Lerup, whose book *Planned Assaults* is reviewed from two points of view, or in the hermeneutic escapades of Philippe Duboy's *Lequeu*, than it will in the revival or supposed violation of Constructivism.

On another note, we are proud to announce that *DBR* has been awarded an NEA grant to pursue "After Architecture" and the "Dialogues." The grant comes to us through the auspices of the Pacific Center for the Book Arts. The money will help us to defray some of the costs associated with these special projects. Frances Butler, a member of our editorial board, was particularly helpful in arranging for the Pacific Center's sponsorship. We owe this recognition both to the loyalty of our readers and to the commitment of our writers, to whom we are ever grateful.

Richard Ingersoll

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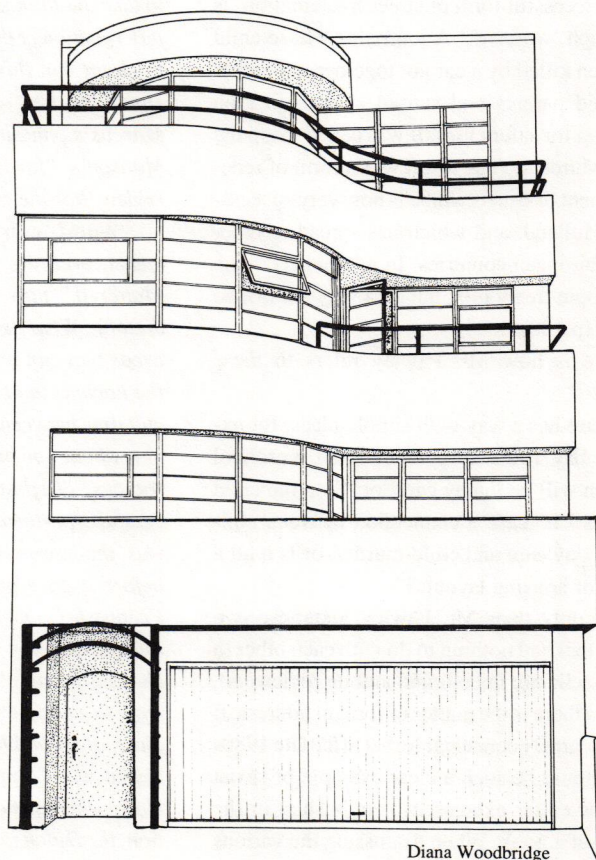
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LETTERS

●
To the Editors:

I am writing in regard to Martin Pawley's Fall 1987 review of *Sustainable Communities* (Sim Van der Ryn and Peter Calthorpe, editors). In it, he makes some snide remarks about a chapter I contributed to this book and juxtaposes two quotes out of context, which prompts me to write this letter.

In an early section of this chapter, I discuss the increasing need for child care: "... it's predicted that by 1990 eighty percent of all preschool children will be in day care which means not only more provisions for day care, but more work opportunities in or close to residential neighborhoods for both men and women, more possibilities of part-time and flex-time work, and greater accessibility to public transport." (p. 122) Six pages later, in a section on attempts to create safer and more livable cities, I describe the Dutch experiments with "Woonerf": "Another successful form of street 'reclamation' is the Dutch 'woonerf.' A journalist whose child had been killed by a car got together with other bereaved parents and started an organization lobbying for safer cities. It was called 'Stop the Child Murders.' The result was a form of redevelopment of streets which is now very successful in Holland, and which has spread to other West European countries. In a 'woonerf,' cars and people freely mix, but on a very controlled basis." (p.128)

Here is how Mr. Pawley refers to these quotes:

"Clare has a way with simple ideas: for example, 'By 1990, 80 percent of all preschool children will be in day care' or 'Stop the child murders.' Is there a connection between children in day care and child murder, or is it all a matter of housing layouts?"

Not only does Mr. Pawley juxtapose two quotes that had nothing to do with each other (a cheap tactic not uncommon among reviewers), but then there is the matter of form of address. It seems scarcely conceivable that in the late 1980s there should be such a clear example of sexist attitudes either expressed or published in the review of a book. When discussing the various authors represented in this book, Pawley consistently employs either the full name or (subsequent to first mention) the surname of each author. Except, that is, for myself—the only

female contributor—whom after initial identification is referred to several times merely as Clare.

I find this condescending and sexist attitude quite unacceptable. Considering the world-weary, seen-it-all tone of Mr. Pawley's review, perhaps he should better spend his time educating himself in non-sexist vocabulary and forms of address.

Clare Cooper Marcus
Professor of Architecture and
Landscape Architecture
University of California, Berkeley

■
Professor Cooper Marcus is quite right to object to my familiarity in referring to her by her Christian name in my review of Sustainable Communities, while using the surnames of the male contributors to the anthology. I can now see that this was offensive and I unreservedly apologize.

However, if it is a cheap tactic of reviewers to take quotations out of context, so is it a knee-jerk reaction of those who speak or write rashly to claim that this has been done. I might with equal justice object to Professor Cooper Marcus's omission of my reference to Charles Manson's "family" in the passage from the review that she quotes.

"World weary" or not, I found the arguments, even the title of "Design as if People Mattered," naive, self-validating, and contradictory. What is the point of providing play areas that can be supervised from the home, if the home is unoccupied during the "very difficult time between 2:00 and 6:00 p.m."? What is new about communal kitchens and shared entrances? The first has been the subject of unsuccessful experimentation for 80 years; the second was the norm in 19th-century housing long before it gave public housing a bad name. Is Professor Cooper Marcus actually saying anything at all when she claims that 4-6 households sharing an entry "can work," while 10-12 "may lead to conflict"? Should she endorse, especially at second hand, a claim that any housing layout will "Stop the Child Murders"—especially when it is clear that, in the case in question, the Dutch journalist's child was not "murdered," but killed by accident?

The most important thing the housing layouts Professor Cooper Marcus describes have in common is that they are all isolated examples

that run counter to the long-term multifold trend toward social fragmentation that is reflected in decreasing household size and increasing household formation in all Western countries. This, plus the economic opportunity attendant upon massive demand, explains all the "waiting lists" to which she refers, without the need to drag in and glorify minor design variations.

Martin Pawley

●
To the Editors:

Nezar AlSayyad's 2,000 word essay ["Arab Muslim Cities," *DBR* 14] attempts to discuss seven books, including my *Arabic-Islamic Cities: Building and Planning Principles* (1986). The reviewer allocates 40 percent of the article to it, presumably because it is in his words "the most controversial and most ambitious of all the new books." He poses a number of questions and issues which require my response.

The reviewer starts with a preconception that the literature on this topic should be categorized into distinct ideological camps according to the approach inherent in the work. This attitude is unfortunate and biased, as it predetermines appreciation and understanding. In fact, the thrust of my work was to achieve the opposite of what he contends. (Compare, for instance, the reaction of Janet Abu-Lughod in her short review of the book in *MESA Bulletin* [21/87], and the recent review by Amos Rapoport in *Journal of Architectural Education* [41/2, Winter 1988].) With respect to specific issues raised:

- The reasons for the title of the book and the categorization of "Arabic-Islamic Cities" is explained adequately in the Introduction.

- The time period from which sources were obtained for Tunis is from the early twelfth to the late nineteenth centuries, as indicated in the book.

- Regarding treatment of the city in a formalist and static manner, information on change and growth was difficult to assemble; however, when data was available it was incorporated, as in fig. 16, p. 73.

- The quantitative data on Tunis was in fact used to compare with other cities, as indicated on pp. 114-117.

- AlSayyad argues that I have not adequately substantiated my contention that traditional cities in the Arab and Muslim world are similar to Tunis in that they share an Islamic identity that

could be directly linked to the application of Muslim law. Since 1984, however, I have accumulated adequate data to prove without any doubt that this is so. I hope to publish this evidence in the future.

- As to my finding that climate was not a major factor in determining the shape of Muslim cities, I have assumed that the reader is familiar with the abundant literature about this interpretation and felt it was unnecessary to refute that in the book.

- Regarding AlSayyad's questioning of dates of completion and publication, I completed writing the book in July 1979, but it was not published until 1986. This was due to: (a) the generally slow process involved in finding a suitable publisher, (b) a number of moves and other personal circumstances which prevented me from accelerating the process, and (c) the manuscript remaining with the publisher for two-and-one-half years before it was published.

Yes, it was published essentially as it was when I completed it in mid-1979, primarily because I felt that no new material had appeared in the interim that would have justified revision of the work. As for Al-Hathloul's Ph.D. dissertation, which the reviewer mentions, I was fully aware of it. I believe my work influenced him and others who followed. This was mainly due to two visits I made to MIT. The first was in April 1977 when I shared my findings with some faculty at MIT and Harvard and was asked to discuss their ramifications with a number of graduate students, including Al-Hathloul. I also made them aware of the significance of Ibn al-Rami's 14th-century manuscript, "*Kitab al-l'an bi-Ahkam al-Bunyan*" ("The Book for Communicating Building Solutions"). (This is one of the most important sources I have found. Although mentioned earlier by Robert Brunschvig in his article "Urbanisme Medieval et Droit Musulman," *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* [Vol. XV, 1947], I believe I was the first after him to use it extensively.) The second visit was in February 1981, when I presented my completed findings through numerous seminars and a public lecture. Since then I have continued to lecture and publish a number of articles on this topic. (The most comprehensive and recent article, which in a way supplements what I have in the book, is published in Vol. 3 of the *Encyclopedia of Architecture* [Wiley, 1988].)

Besim Hakim, AIA, AICP
King Faisal University

■
I started my review by mentioning that Hakim's book was an important addition to the literature and I ended it by saying that its publication was a sign that scholarly research on Muslim urbanism is witnessing a healthy revival. I believe that no scholarly work on a cultural subject, like the Muslim city, could be free of an inherent ideology. It is naive to think otherwise. Most contemporary authors recognize this and some would even attempt to identify their ideological positions or state their scholarly biases at the outset. An author who does not do so leaves it up to the readers to interpret or classify the work, and should not complain when they do just that.

I indicated that we need a better explanation of the category "Arabic-Islamic Cities" because the one that Hakim offers (that Islam emerged in Arabia and that Arabic was the language of the Quran) is too simplistic. Yet he insists that the reasons for the title were adequately explained in his introduction. Even if this is the case, how can a author justify calling the book "Arabic-Islamic Cities" when it is only a case study of Tunis?

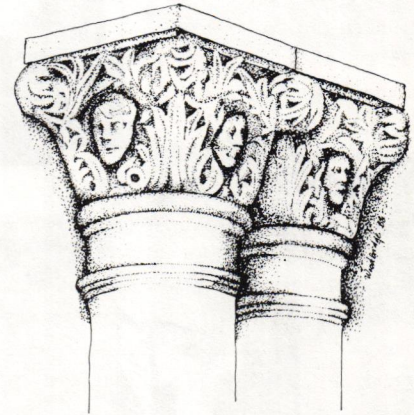
Although Hakim acknowledges that issues of change and growth were difficult to incorporate, he nevertheless refers us to fig. 16, which primarily illustrates the "development(al) sequence of Khutba mosques in Tunis." Does a small map showing the location and chronology of a few mosques adequately address the complex process of urban formation? I don't think so.

By his own confession, the contention that the traditional cities of the Arab Muslim world are similar to Tunis is not substantiated in the book. The issue of climate is not addressed at all. Why then does Hakim refer us to his unpublished work or private data, which he claims will "prove without any doubt" his theories? And where do we find this "abundant literature" which supports his "finding" that climate was not a major factor in determining the shape of Muslim cities? If this is true, then he should have elaborated on the sources of his "interpretation."

With regard to the discrepancy between the dates of completion and publication of the book, I do understand the problems involved in publishing a work on the history of Muslim cities. But to say that no new material in the interim could have changed matters reflects Hakim's disregard for many of his colleagues, including the editors and authors of the other books which were included in my review.

I still have faith in and regard for Hakim's scholarship, and he was very brave to have undertaken such an endeavor. My review, however, was not about him but about his book.

Nezar AlSayyad, Ph.D.
Adjunct Professor & Research Associate
University of California, Berkeley



Diana Woodbridge

REPARATION

Dell Upton's "Where the Heart Is" (*DBR* 14, pp. 69-76) suffered from some unfortunate errors in editing for which *DBR* would like to apologize. In particular, on page 74 in the concluding sentences of the second paragraph, the quotation marks were deleted from a passage of James Gowans's *The Comfortable House*, making it appear to be Upton's rather than Gowans's point of view. The paragraph should read as follows:

"Certainly some of the poor others were trying to become middle class, but many middle-class people were trying hard to keep them out. The others' disturbing lifeways were the threat against which the comfortable house asserted 'security in the sense of defense against the world; roots in the past, especially a colonial and English past; and virtue in the sense of family stability,' and against them stood the suburbs that Gowans loves: 'Unfortunately, from a doctrinaire ideological standpoint, these suburbs worked as humane and livable environments on principles of enlightened self-interest, that wicked old Adam Smithish doctrine. In sum, post-Victorian suburbs were altogether too individualistic, too egalitarian, for architectural opinion in the 1960s. But for the decades from 1890 to 1930, they were perfect—perfectly comfortable.'"

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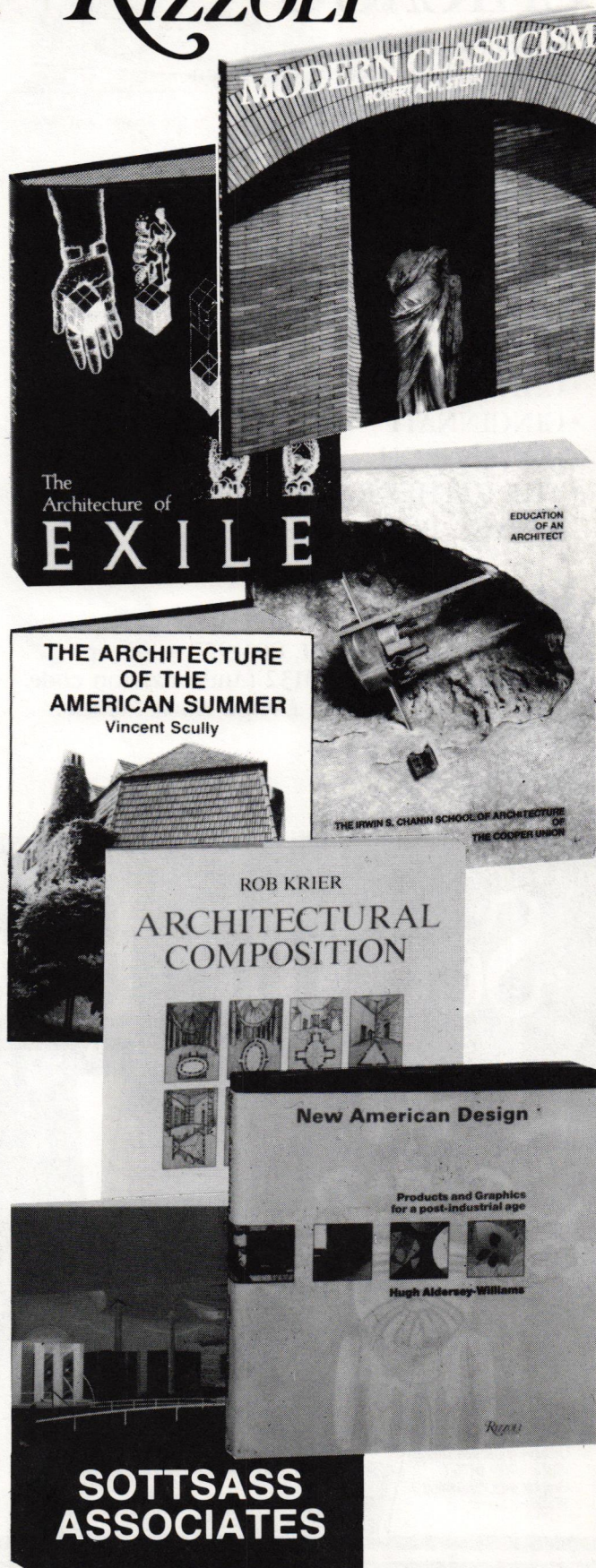
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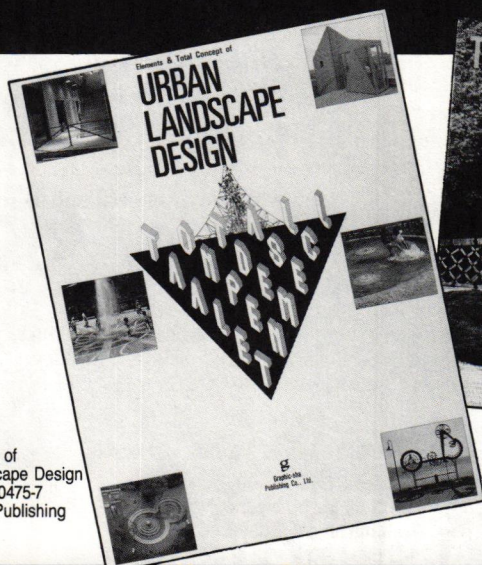
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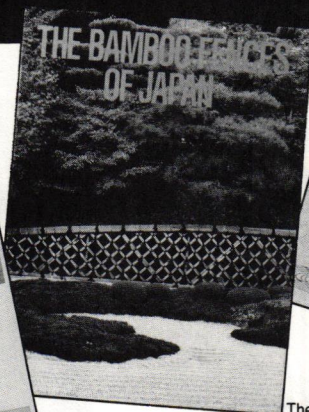
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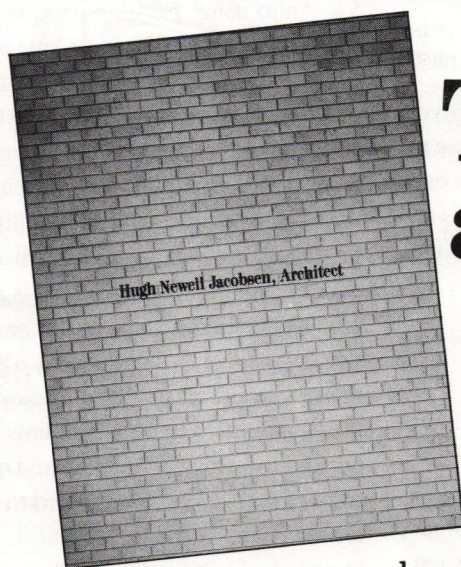
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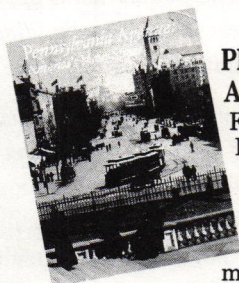
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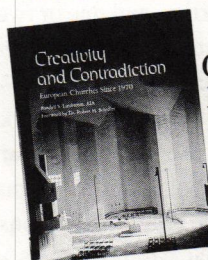


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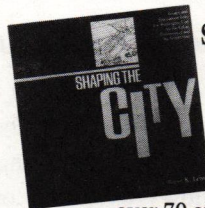
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DIALOGUE: JOHN WHITEMAN

John Whiteman is the new director of the SOM Foundation's Chicago Institute for Architecture and Urbanism. Born in Manchester, England, in 1954, he attended Cambridge, Bristol, and Harvard universities, and has degrees in architecture and philosophy. As an architect, he was active in community design projects in several countries, including a project in London's East End called "The Planning Bus." The Chicago Institute is located in the recently renovated Charnley House, where it will host several research fellows for limited terms. *DBR* interviewed Whiteman in April in Chicago.

DBR: You were preceded as director by Leon Krier, who lasted only a short time. What will you do differently?



JW: The institute is currently a vacuum, and it needs to be run with the idea of architectural research rather than architectural pronouncement. It has sometimes been compared to the Brookings Institute as an ambition. I find that incorrect because Brookings already has a kind of legitimacy from which it can make statements. True, it is based on research, but one of its major functions is to make statements about the way economic policy should or should not be done. There is no possibility of having that kind of institute for architecture where you could do the proper amount of social or artistic research to be able to say what is the right thing to be done.

DBR: The Chicago Institute has models, though, like the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies, which created a cultural spearhead that seceded from official and academic architecture to produce some of the most original and vital discussions in the field.

JW: I think that our institute in Chicago will always be seen in that shadow, and that is not necessarily a bad thing. It will be a place where a new generation of people working

in architecture will gather and try out their ideas. Since it is outside both the university and the corporation, it becomes peripheral almost by definition.

DBR: How much autonomy do you have?

JW: I have almost complete autonomy over the programs I run. The only thing I have to do is report to the board twice a year. In one sense, you might look at the institute as an exercise in widening the franchise and the debate, bringing in new voices.

DBR: Can you give some examples of what you are planning?

JW: I am going to set up a series of fellowships, mainly for those individuals, whether in practice or on the fringes of the university, who are on the brink of doing something and have a project they want to bring to Chicago to complete. The project can be written, drawn, or constructed. The first fellowships will be given this fall. There will be three or four junior fellows, in their thirties, and one or two senior fellows. The institute will put together an archive of materials and discussions produced here and also of the work of people that we decide to exhibit. There will be very small, ad hoc exhibits, perhaps one project at a time. Our publications will simply display what we have done—and reflect the two kinds of activity I hope to sustain: drawings and construction, and theory, self-conscious theory.

DBR What will you get out of all this?

JW: Initially, I will be swamped with organizational tasks, but I eventually plan to stick by a fairly monastic schedule that will allow me to do my own writing and drawing. Paradoxically, I find the university to be an uncongenial place for architectural research. The university has never been able to take the arts seriously as a form of sense-making, of cultural activity and production. It ties itself to a definition of rationalism that I find too narrow. Architectural research is much more difficult in practice, obviously, because the seductions of architecture are on the business side. Yet, if you look at the architects you like,

you find that they ran their offices and their lives as a continuous course of inquiry: Le Corbusier painting every morning, or Alvar Aalto using painting as a form of research. The type of research I mean is what Aalto was actually doing when he made those abstract paintings: exposing his problems to another medium, working on it in paint, and linking it back to architectural drawing. The university finds it difficult to give credence to an activity which would call itself a form of reason, but is not rule-bound and repetitious in the sense of being generalizable. In a painting or in a building, though, it seems that what you know through that painting or by that building you can only know in that medium. It is an intensive form of knowledge, as opposed to one that is extensive ("if I can't repeat it, it is not knowledge"). A work of art does not function like that—it is intensive. To misuse Wittgenstein's phrase, it is knowledge "in the case of one."

DBR: That seems diametrically opposed to SOM's interest in making buildings that can be done anywhere at any time.

JW: That is probably true, and the same could be said about Mies van der Rohe. When you go to his buildings, though, you realize that they are individually conceived—they never quite repeat, although outwardly they look very similar. The curious thing about SOM's history is their lifting some of Mies's technology, ideas, and principles and missing a rather vital point, which is that when Mies finally put a building down, that's where it is. It couldn't be anywhere else because he has done very subtle things with dimensions, the placements of window mullions, or the orientation of interior and urban spaces. I've always been struck by the individuality of his buildings rather than their generality, so I find it ironic that SOM has for the most part produced generalized buildings. There are exceptions. Inland Steel, for example, is a remarkably American, specifically Chicagoan building, and very successful. But much of SOM's work flounders on the distinction between administrative techniques that demand a repetitive knowledge,

and others that require knowledge of a more singular and intensive form.

DBR: SOM succeeded in applying the corporate model to the architect's office, and this similarity to their clients perhaps explains their tremendous success. Is that model of organization now in crisis? In setting up the institute, are they saying that they've missed something?

JW: The institute does not exist solely for SOM—that is the open and declared policy of Bruce Graham, who set it up. It really doesn't exist as a child of the firm, and if it turns out to behave like that, I would regard it as a gross failure. SOM's royalties from designed works, chairs and things like that, go to the foundation, and much of the current funding comes from that. We will be seeking support from others, so the institute will not have to rely on a single source. This will take several years.

DBR: In the past you've been involved with projects that have promoted the politicization process. Do you think this political approach will thrive in Chicago?

JW: The way the question is often posed—"can architecture actually perform any reformist or revolutionary activity?"—seems trapped and in a way misunderstands architectural history. The way that architecture transforms sensibilities, if it transforms them, is by becoming a small locus of a new way of feeling. I don't think that anybody can provide the necessary defenses. Architecture can be appropriated by the bourgeoisie, as in the U.S., or just allowed to spread and produce a new kind of sensibility. In my view, architecture can never produce reform, but it can introduce more equal and just sensibilities into the world, and will do so in very localized and rather painful instances. These instances give rise to others that are then appropriated or bred into a new style to be copied by the bourgeoisie. Architecture is entirely vulnerable to that process, and that is the most realistic thing we could hope for it.

My grandest hopes for the institute are to make people realize just how difficult archi-

itecture really is, and to produce descriptions and perhaps a few examples of that difficulty. I want to make the work of good architects more difficult, and yet to make that difficulty the locus of their operation. I want to find a form of persuasion that says "this is the task of architecture," and urges architects to work on their intuitions by locating them in difficulties.

Contrast that with the sixties belief that architecture could achieve some reform by making its social tasks clear: "If we can ask the right sociological questions, we can come up with the right architectural drawings to fit them." Although I am sympathetic to its political and social ambitions, that conception of the architectural task leads to buildings that are mere illustrations of the theory that gave rise to them—illustrations, not buildings. The thoughts that are guiding the design are not rooted in material practice. It collapses the project that is actually the most interesting for any radical intelligence in architecture at the moment: how to deal with the material of architecture.

Architects will always be in the grip of power. The question is how the power is distributed and what one can do in its grip. How can you produce a form of intelligence that deals on the one hand with the extreme difficulties of making material forms, and on the other with a form of morality that surrounds architecture and allows it to operate in the grip of power? When I talk about difficulties, I don't mean that we can consciously choose to be good guys or bad—that doesn't happen. The question is whether, while in the grip of power, we can make a building according to "their" expectations, but then do something different. One way I like to read buildings is to see that they are hostage to and yet at the same time not limited by the power that beckons them into being.

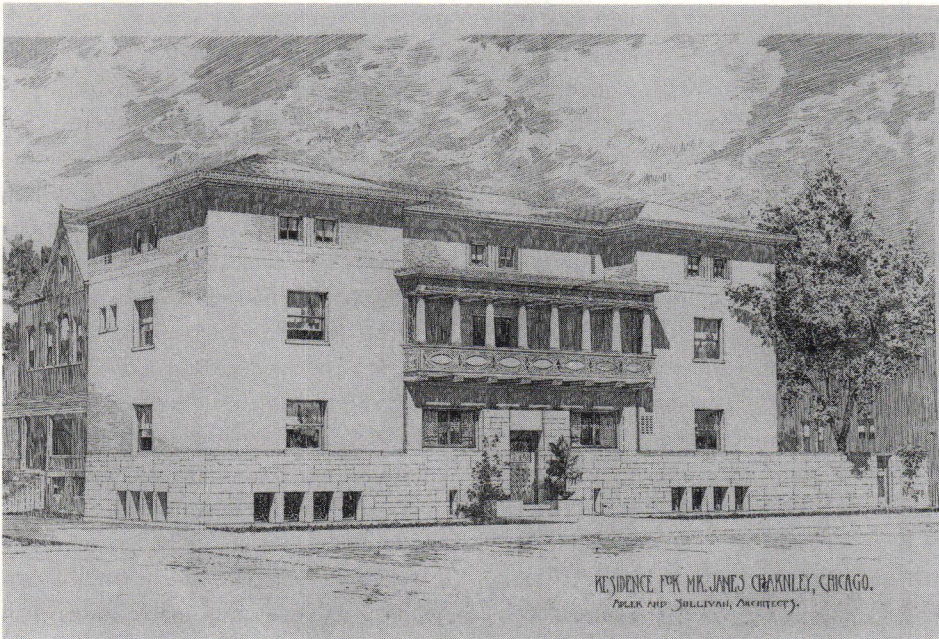
Why is it that money needs to build a building that almost illustrates its own financial calculation? This is one of the difficulties behind the office building, for example. Yet, as a philosophical device, money is actually a substitute, a thing through which value transmutes itself from

material quantities into money and back again. No form of reference between the material artifact and the money is necessary, so, logically speaking, there is no reason why a building needs to illustrate the financial power that gave rise to it. Within the business community, however, there is a desire "to see what you get"—very much like Weber's protestants' and capitalists' desire to see their own virtue reflected. Still, it is not a necessary condition, although nothing seems less obvious now in a world that has surrendered itself to those kinds of desires, the fantasies of capital.

As to whether architecture is a response to people's needs, my fears are about the difficulty of describing them, and of producing forms that are capable rather than responsive. We cannot produce a sociological description of needs and then know what to build. The idea that this might be possible is itself quite an astonishing ambition. I think the architectural task is in some ways both simpler and more difficult: simpler in that there is no need to undertake such a grand description, to search endlessly for the right formula; more difficult in that it is extremely hard to recognize when an art form has actually settled on an abstract form of experience that is worth having. We use the tight argument of satisfying needs to excuse ourselves from this difficulty, to avoid dealing with the relationship of buildings and bodies, for example, or with the way that buildings construct human experience.

On the other hand, there is the denying of social response. Architecture, it is argued, because of its duration beyond ideological systems, becomes an ideological and historical innocent, an indifferent shell. I'm not convinced of that. This strikes me as the extreme opposite of the functionalist goal of having a description of human needs to which the building must be completely accountable. It is much more difficult to negate both of these positions and form some understanding of the very fragile relationship between buildings and people—a relationship which is quite intimate, yet perpetuating and consolidating over time.

Aldo Rossi's acolytes in Italy, who ob-



The renovated Chamley House, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in the offices of Adler & Sullivan (1891), now houses the Chicago Institute.

viously don't understand him, make outrageous statements like, "There is no invention necessary," and giggle when you try to deal with the relationship of buildings and people. But buildings do participate in the construction of ordinary experience. The conditions of their participation are largely based on a logic that has been excluded from the university because it lacks that linear, sequential flow of argument that lets you say "I know what I'm doing."

Most art forms work indirectly—they take issue with the dominant senses that are around them. This is different from the positions argued by Rossi and also by his enemies, the naive functionalists. Both the construction of architecture and the living of it is a kind of performance. It is clear that Rossi understands this when you see him dealing with the theatrical metaphor. It doesn't appear much in his writing, but it is certainly something he draws about: the idea that architecture contains a theatrical metaphor, and is a way of considering space as a political entity.

DBR: How might this sensibility affect the institute?

JW: The principles by which I want to run the institute will be the production and testing of architectural propositions. I am

currently negotiating with the city of Chicago to get hold of peripheral spaces in the city for experimental structures. I am interested in the notion of translation from one medium to another. One way to understand the problems of the 1960s sociological descriptions is their inability to make architectural sense. The difficulty of translating between words and buildings was never admitted. A statement might be true in the realm of words, but translating it into a building is another matter. The biggest problem I find in the production of architectural theory is exactly this: what is the relationship between words and forms in the constructional sense? Particularly in the schools, this problem has gone unexplored.

DBR: Who will come to the institute?

JW: We start a fellowship by correspondence. They write to me. I write back, and we keep writing to each other until we are both happy with the subject matter and the conditions. I am concerned with both their relation to the institute as a community and more especially with their interests as individuals. We want the time spent at the institute to be very constructive for the individual, and at the same time good for the construction of the community. This review process is less cumbersome than

going through tons of applications because it is more direct. It allows us to be more precise about certain issues.

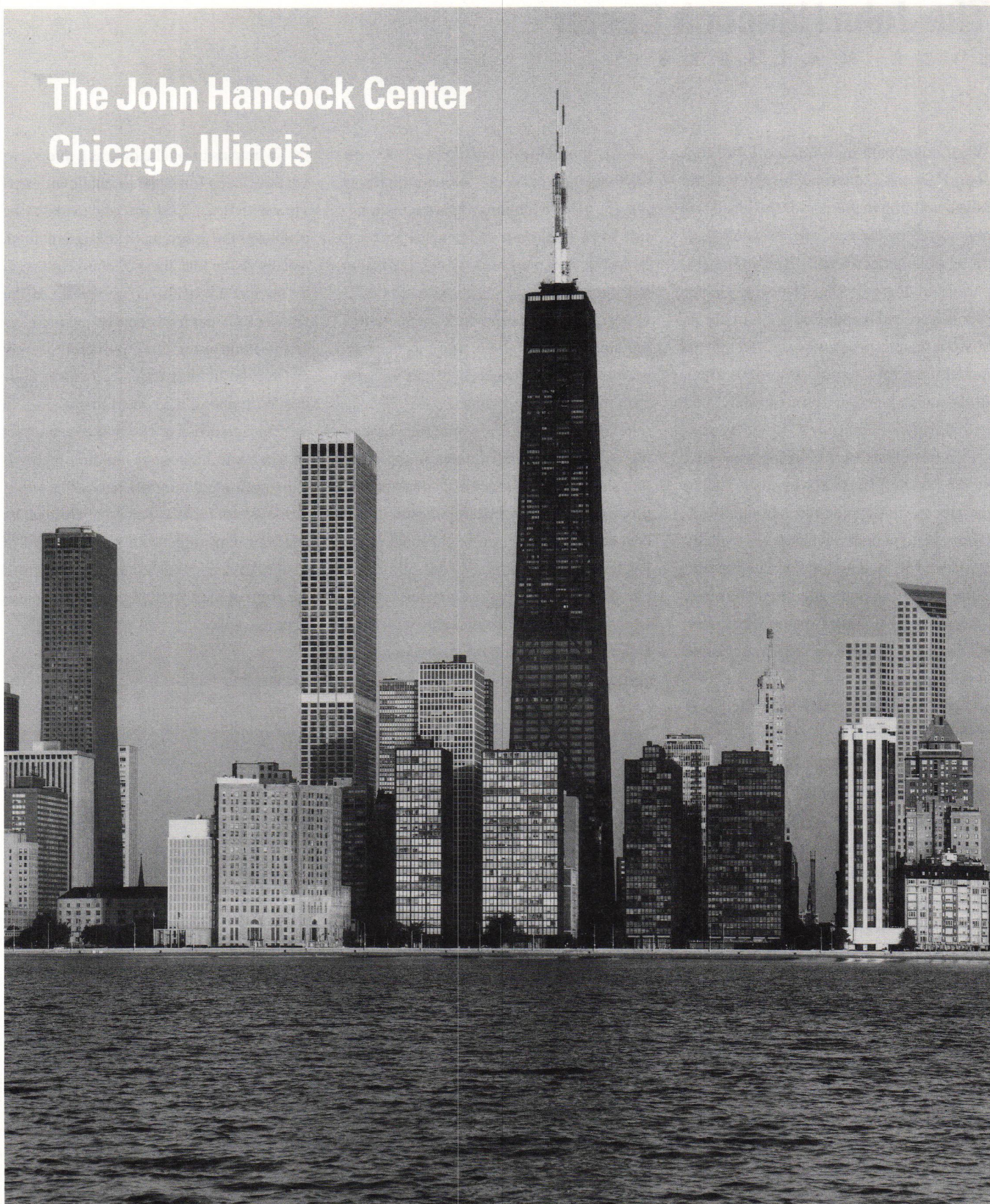
DBR: Might this process of selection result in a pretty closed circle? I could see you being attacked for elitism.

JW: Whether the institute will be accused of elitism will have to do with whether it can produce anything that seriously affects the culture. The fact that it is going to be a small, select group of people is not necessarily an indictment of its activities. It is actually necessary to pull together people who are already out of certain issues and into others, who can form a community and yet are not pushing those issues in ways that are cliquish or clubbish. I'm looking for people who are at least willing to entertain the correspondences, if not necessarily able to translate between architecture and what they know in their own discipline. Given that criterion, the institute is bound to attract only a small number of people. I don't find a problem in that. It would be a problem only if I couldn't explain the basis of each choice, and then validate it in terms of the work produced.

DBR: Doesn't this put you in the position of a father who has selected his own children?

JW: No, and I find that description repugnant because it implies a kind of control over development and moralistic positions that I find difficult to defend. The director has some power in choices, undoubtedly, but if the daily life of discussions and production at the institute is in some way hostage to what I think, I would regard myself as having failed. Nor would most of the people coming here take kindly to something that was structured like that. I see myself as a catalyst. The director has the power of choice, with a little money behind it. How that power is exercised is the real issue.

The John Hancock Center Chicago, Illinois



The John Hancock Center

S I Z E M A T T E R S

When completed in 1968, the 1,105-foot John Hancock Center in Chicago was the tallest building in the world. Designed and engineered by the Chicago office of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (Bruce Graham, partner-in-charge), the Hancock Center merits a critical reappraisal not only for its obvious iconic potency as an overblown modernist object, but for its curious urban fit, its unconventional programming, and its innovative engineering. In the aggressive atmosphere of the skyscraper city, where phallic supremacy continues to be the subconscious objective, it is wholly appropriate to wonder whether size really matters. The quality of the interior and exterior environments is ultimately much more important than the image of the tower, but has rarely been discussed in the critique of tall buildings.

Located in the Streeterville district north of the downtown Loop, the Hancock Center occupies 50 percent of an entire Chicago block. The rest of the space is taken up by broad sidewalks, a large sunken plaza, a driveway at the rear that separates it from the two-story Casino Club, and a six-story spiral ramp to the garage.

The black, steel-framed structure tapers so that the floor print at the top is two-thirds the size of the bottom floor. The diagonal bracing forms an exterior tube, allowing a free-span between the elevator core and the exterior walls. The Hancock's 100 stories are stratified according to function: commercial space on the below-grade concourse and levels 1, 4, and 5; the major public lobby in the double height second floor; parking for 1,200 cars on floors 6–12; 812,000 square feet of office space on floors

13–41; mechanicals on floors 42–43; the skylobby and residents' services on floors 44–45; 703 condominium apartments, ranging from one-room efficiencies to four-bedroom flats, on floors 46–92; television and radio transmitting stations on floors 93 and 97; an observation deck, bar, and restaurant on floors 94–96; and mechanicals on the top three levels. It is capped with twin transmitting antennae.

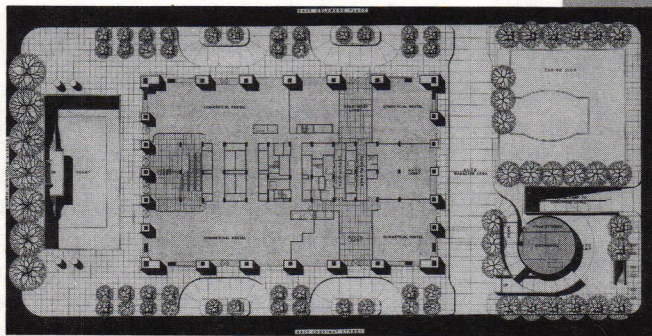
The sunken plaza and travertine base of the building have been much in the news this past year after a series of controversial proposals for their redesign. Some of the best ammunition for critics of modernism has been the lack of clarity for egress and circulation. Whether the Hancock Center, which exemplifies these faults, will stand as an inviolable modernist monument is currently being challenged.

To help us bring the building into view, we have been fortunate to obtain an interview with Bruce Graham, who explains the origins of the program, the design method, and his vision for Chicago. This is followed by an account of the urban impact of the Hancock Center by Robert Bruegmann, an architectural historian who writes frequently on Chicago architecture and urbanism. Gordon Wittenberg, who spent many years in the Chicago office of Harry Weese and has an academic interest in building technology, discusses the significance of its structural system. Finally, Roberta Feldman, an educator concerned with social factors in design, has analyzed the building both from the point of view of marketing and the use of public space.

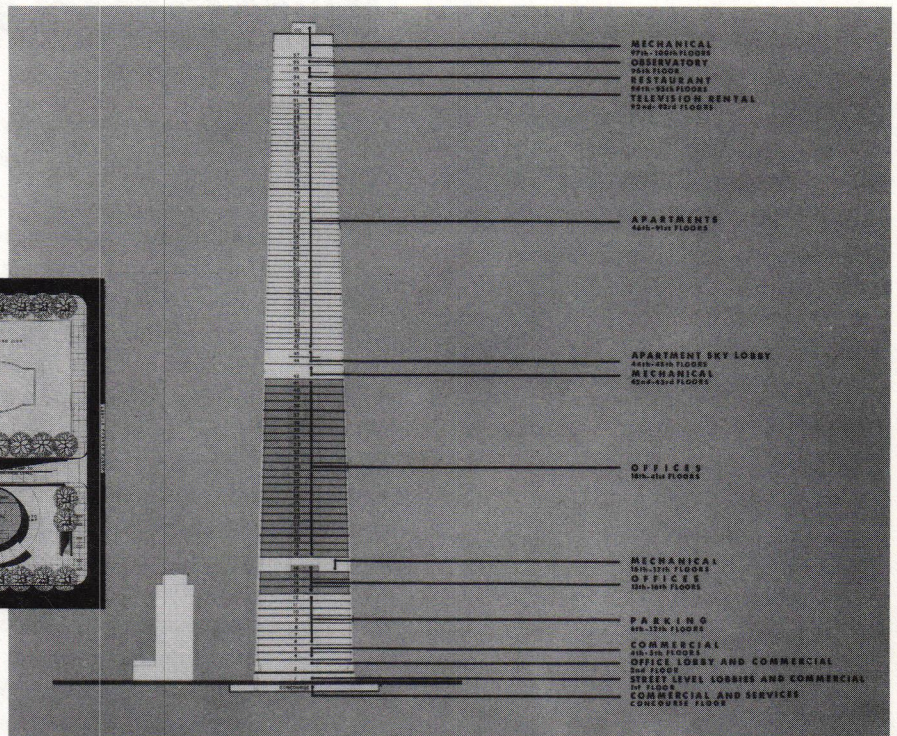
Richard Ingersoll



The Hancock Center under construction. (Chicago Aerial Survey, photographer.)



Hancock Center, plaza plan. (Courtesy of SOM/Chicago.)



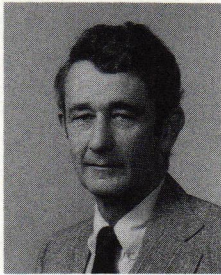
Space allocation in the building. (Courtesy of SOM/Chicago.)



The Hancock Center's location in Chicago. (Courtesy of SOM/Chicago.)

Bruce Graham and "Big John"

Bruce Graham is currently the principal partner of the Chicago office of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. He was the partner in charge of the Hancock Center. The following are extracts from an interview conducted by Richard Ingersoll and Robert Bruegmann in Chicago on April 6, 1987.



DBR: You've been interviewed many times about the Hancock Center. Is there anything you haven't said?

BG: It's more like what they haven't printed, in particular about mixed-use. It starts from a very early conviction in my life that the heart of American cities was in trouble—blocked arteries and that sort of thing. If you look at city after city, it was absolutely obvious that these cities were destroying themselves. When I was a young revolutionary 27-year-old architect in 1950, I could see the downfall of American cities; a lot had been written about it but nothing done about it. The idea of downtown being insulated by pieces that have functions: financial center, shopping center, etc.—it's ridiculous, it's evil, and it's wrong. We've destroyed Detroit, Cleveland, Houston, Dallas. There's only one city that still remains livable: Chicago. Look at Atlanta (everybody praises Atlanta), you don't dare walk on the street; there's no way the Ritz Hotel, with all its service, will ever be a viable hotel because you can't walk outside the front door. If the city is to be livable, you need housing downtown—housing not just for the rich, but for everybody. The Hancock Center brought people to live in a very strong, highly concentrated residential area of Chicago—all high-rise. Whatever people say of high-rises, in the plains the tall building is a great theme. People love to go to the top of a very tall building and look out. They love it. They're isolated, and then they feel free. That's not true in New York, nor hardly anywhere else, but it's true in Chicago. So you can build very tall buildings with people highly concentrated in what we call "Streeterville." Chicago has the densest population of housing in America, and that's what makes it viable.

DBR: What about the bigness? Did it have to be so large?

BG: Bigness? I don't understand Americans. America is huge, it's enormous! Nevada is big! Chicago is big, the lake is big! Man's works on the earth are big; the China Wall is big. The monkeys can't think that way, but man can. If we have growing

populations, the only solution is "large" to cope with the population. The scale of the Hancock Center relative to the city of Chicago is peanuts. This huge city out there—if you look at Ferriss's views of New York, the idea he had of these towers with plains in between—that was the way a city should be built. The tower is not an evil symbol; man has been pursuing the tower for centuries; they are symbols of man's achievement. It is the location of those buildings and how they integrate with the whole that is wrong. Granted that I could not replan the center of Chicago to locate the center and to design the whole thing the way I thought it should be—but that doesn't mean that a tall building is not an elegant experience. Even Frank Lloyd Wright thought so for Chicago—he had a mile-high building in his goddamn city—he's God, right? So in Chicago, unlike Dallas, unlike Houston, unlike anywhere else, these towers do arise. They are symbols and you do perceive them this way as you enter the city from the airport. There is a very locational importance to Michigan Avenue. I'm not saying that we couldn't design it better if the great architects got together; unfortunately, we're not that civilized.

DBR: So you take responsibility for the idea of bigness in the program?

BG: Absolutely! There's nothing wrong with the program, there are only 1,000 apartments. The amount of traffic the building generates around it is zero. There are no cars parked in front of it.

DBR: At the time they said it might generate 20 percent more traffic.

BG: And it was baloney—the people inside the Hancock Center sold their cars—only 40 percent of the Hancock dwellers own a car; the problem has been how to fill the garage. There are more cars in Water Tower Place. Why? Because you have a hotel. That's the real world. The real world is that the Hancock Center has not affected the traffic at all—if anything it's lessened it. By putting many residential buildings on Michigan Avenue you reduce the traffic. The hotel across the street (which nobody no-

tices) parks in the Hancock. The traffic is coming from the hotel. I'm not saying the hotel shouldn't have been expanded, because I think a place in which there isn't a traffic jam must have financial problems.

DBR: You had done other buildings for John Hancock, did they come to you for the Boston tower?

BG: No, they thought they were going to lose money in Chicago and make it in Boston, but, as it turns out, the reverse was true.

DBR: Did Jerry Wolman (the developer) have an idea, a shape in mind? Did you know Mr. Wolman before you did the project?

BG: No, he just walked in out of the blue. He wanted to build two buildings, one apartment and one office, mostly the latter. He was aware that the market was going strong for apartment buildings, but what that would do for Chicago was also wrong. Every city has a psyche. In Chicago you don't really start making money in apartment buildings until you reach the 20th floor. Those below that are not really very exciting. We don't have any cliffs or mountains, and being on the 20th floor gives the idea. If you put an apartment building and office tower facing each other, the first floors looking at other buildings would not rent very well. So, then we suggested to Jerry that a single building would get the apartments where you want them and the offices where you want them; office workers don't care what they look at, and the same thing with shopping and parking. So the idea of a single building occurred very early on.

DBR: It's often explained that the tapered shape was to cut down the sail factor of the wind. Were there other reasons for the shape?

BG: Certainly. There were various coincidences, all related to one another. If the program is apartments, offices, parking, and then commercial, and they're stacked that way, you would end up with a ziggurat because each one of those uses normally

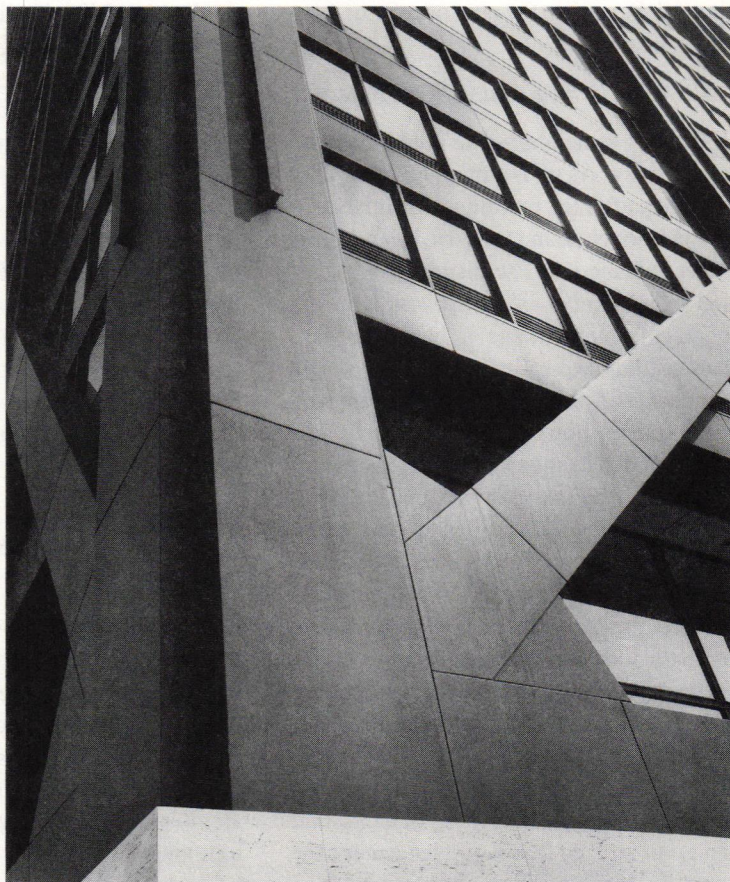
has a different depth from the core. That happens to be attractive to the engineer, because the higher a building has to go, the thinner it has to be so that you get less sail, particularly in our winds. It is not true that apartments should be a vertical shaft: there's a difference between efficiencies and three bedrooms. There is also a marketability factor to put the larger on the top because they command more rent per square foot. If you consider all of that, your building should be a ziggurat because the efficiencies need the biggest footprint all lined up on one strip. The structural problem with this ziggurat is that there was a discontinuity of the structure. What you're trying to do in a very tall building is put as much load on the outside of the building as possible. With the ziggurat you have the least load on the outside of the building and the tower ends up being in the core. You want the building to have its feet spread so that you're not having an over-turning moment. That's when Faz [Fazlur Khan] said, "Why don't we make it a single line and see how that works?"

DBR: So really it was an engineering decision that fit the program?

BG: No, it's a program decision that then inspired an engineering solution.

DBR: There was no preconceived aesthetic?

BG: That's something neither Faz nor I ever had a priori, be it for a building of one story or a hundred.



The steel cross-braces meet the travertine base. (©Ezra Stoller, photographer; courtesy of ESTO Photographics.)

DBR: What about the efficiency of floor ratio?

BG: It's a highly efficient building. It has one of the first express elevator systems, where the apartment elevator bypasses all the others, going to a separate lobby. This frees the bigger floor plate for the offices and makes it very efficient. There are very few buildings being built today that are that efficient, certainly none by Philip Johnson or Kohn-Pederson-Fox. You're talking about a building that is 92 percent efficient on the office building with the elevators going up. You can't argue against this building on pragmatic terms!

DBR: I guess that's what SOM is famous for.

BG: What other case could you use to evaluate it?

DBR: Well, critics might go after issues of the context, aesthetics, or social concerns.

BG: But don't you think critics are a little temporal? They use one architect, spit him

up until they get to the next one. So of what value are critics?

DBR: Who did you deal with at Hancock?

BG: Can't remember—we could dig it up fairly easily. As to Wolman, he made a lot of money after the building was finished—he sued Hancock and won. He had to sue us to get to Hancock. The insurance was carried by a number of companies who got together (which is illegal as hell), and Wolman sued us, we had to sue Hancock, and Hancock had to settle. Wolman received about five million dollars net profit, which he proceeded to spend and go broke again! He bought the taxi company in Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Eagles football team, and a lot of housing in Houston. He used to bring his barber and his football coach to the meetings here! He wasn't exactly wrong about the idea for Michigan Avenue, as has been proven. Hancock is still rented, but the office part has never made a lot of money. In Water Tower next door they took out the offices and rented it to more shopping because there aren't that many tenants that can go to an area that's not that accessible to public transportation. Some can, such as advertising companies.

DBR: Were the Hancock people happy with the image for them?

BG: Oh yes, they still are; they like the shape. By and large the Chicagoans do too—whatever they say in Dallas or New York. We have a nickname for it, "Big John," and they like it. It is a Chicago building and I wouldn't even think of putting it in Dallas, New York, or San Francisco.

DBR: What's the essence of a Chicago building?

BG: A lot of power and structure . . . a way of seeing how the building is built, to understand it. These buildings that are shaped and formed and decorated are not Chicago and are not understood by Chicagoans. All glass buildings, all mirror-glass buildings are hated in Chicago.

DBR: What about the color? At the time I imagine that the Mies buildings on Lakeshore Drive had already gone up, but there probably weren't any black buildings to be seen in the Loop proper before that.

BG: No, of course it was a recall to Mies. I

don't think Mies is all wrong about black buildings in this city, fitting in with the history and traditions and emotions of Chicago. There is still a love here for industry, for steel mills, and for farms. These things are still part of our psyche, thank God. This city is not abstract, it's a very real city. The bankers know of our farmers, and of the steel industry. Steel is important to the city. That's why you can come as an architect here and become important. Architects are important people in this town—I know of no other city where that is true. And we talk to one another here; we argue, but we talk.

DBR: It's interesting that your other buildings, such as Inland Steel, are in lighter colors, but the two big ones are in black.

BG: We wanted to do Inland in black—black with stainless-steel trim—but I lost. I was 29 years old at the time. For this city, black is a powerful color. Not for Los Angeles, not for Dallas. And now you can prove that for this climate dark buildings are 40 percent more energy efficient than light buildings. That's a fact.

DBR: Did the diagonals come first and then the floors made to accommodate them?

BG: You have to get the diagonals to meet the columns because they're carrying vertical loads. That meant adjusting certain floor heights in the apartment building. Some are 14 feet, and now those floors rent out at a premium.

DBR: The ceilings seem low.

BG: They're huge by apartment standards in Chicago. The beams are at 8 feet, which is normal ceiling height in Chicago, but the free span area is 9' 6", which is much higher than usual. The office building is 8' 9"—a New York height. The reason is that I never thought the tenants here would ever pay high rent; they should have only put in 200,000 square feet; they should have built a hotel. I talked them out of 2.2 million!

DBR: And the light band on the top?

BG: That was because Hancock wanted to put a sign on the building, and I had to kill it and that was the only thing I could think of at the time. We could have just continued a glass skin; I hate these signs—in New York they don't look so bad, but in Chicago

they do. I don't necessarily oppose graphics, it's just this neighborhood is not that kind of neighborhood; it's very residential. It's very easy for our young people to find an apartment downtown and walk to work—it's not like New York.

DBR: Did you have any problems with city planning? The building is like putting a little city within the city.

BG: No, we didn't then, and we wouldn't now. I think the city and state take the architect seriously here—not enough to change the zoning ordinances, which is what I'd like, because then we'd have low-rise areas and high-rise areas. Right now in Chicago you can build a building twice that height on the site—it's ridiculous. It's land ownership and greed and speculation; as architects there's nothing we can do about it—that's one of my campaigns. You can build on the air rights property over the railroad of the whole Loop; you can get zoning up to a 44-floor area ratio easy.

DBR: You'd be against overbuilding?

BG: Chicago was never overbuilt; it's not overbuilt now. It's very conservative. I don't think zoning should allow that much to be left to the will of money. We should have corridors that are open, and towers should be mandated at certain places where they become symbols of the city and not placed willy-nilly everywhere.

DBR: So you're pretty happy about the Sears/Hancock pair?

BG: Sears, Standard Oil, Hancock, it's a good thing, and maybe one on the south side. That makes sense architecturally. I'm not sure they're in the right place: maybe Standard Oil is in the right place, perhaps better a block west. The Hancock probably should have been on the opposite side of the street where the end of the Michigan Avenue corridor is. Then you'd have a marker for the near north side, where the old Illinois Central station was, and one on the west, probably where the post office is. They would be markers for a city, an old architectural idea, like Ferriss's. Chicago is very close to doing that. Burnham planned it that way, but we're not there yet.

Robert Brueggemann

The Colossus of North Michigan Avenue: Urban Implications

In the literature that greeted the completion of the John Hancock Center perhaps the most succinct description of the relationship of the building to the urban fabric was penned by curator and critic Katherine Kuh. "Like a fist in the face," she wrote in the *Saturday Review* (Dec. 28, 1968) "the John Hancock Center attacks Chicago's skyline, proclaiming its supremacy despite

a backdrop of extraordinary virility."¹

In this single sentence Kuh managed to convey a complex and deeply rooted ambivalence about the building and its city. She suggests the problems such a large structure might pose for the city and the building's neighbors. But her larger theme, and the reason she began an article entitled "Homage to Chicago" with the Hancock Center, is also suggested several paragraphs later:

Splendid buildings, deplorable ones, spacious, sleek, refined, brutal, decaying, heroic ones are jumbled together in soaring madness. If reason,

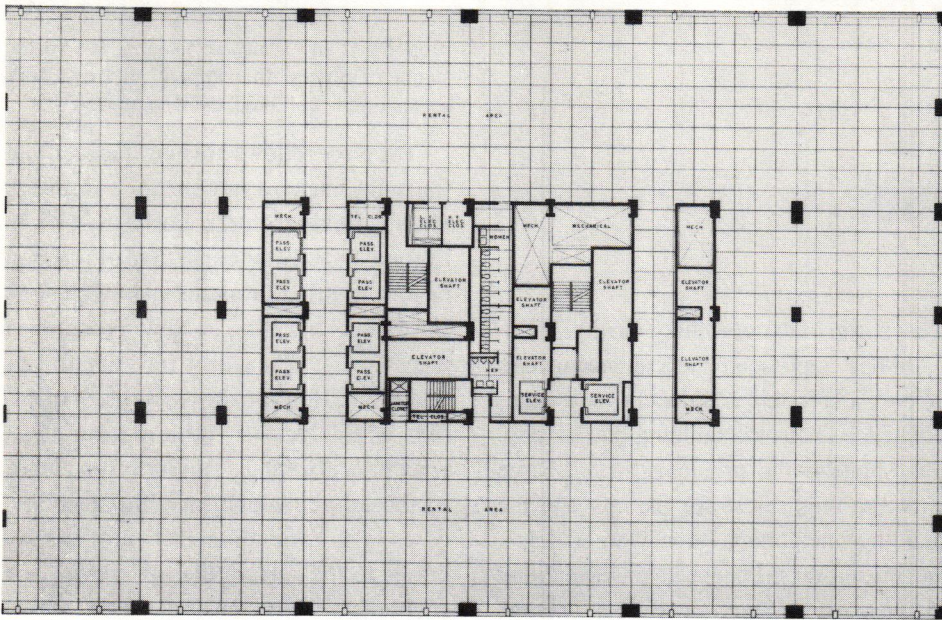
proportion, and scale are lacking, not so the stamp of power. In comparison, New York seems timid, well bred, even somewhat inert.

The piece follows in a long tradition that finds in Chicago a raw energy and savage vitality lacking on the East Coast or in Europe. Exactly the same kind of reaction has occurred to Europeans visiting Boston, Bostonians traveling to New York, or, in recent years, Chicagoans traveling to Los Angeles or Houston. In every case it represents an ambivalence (in the modern Western world, at least the Anglo-Saxon part of it) about the development of the large city. Often it is a building that most clearly brings to the surface these powerful and contradictory emotions.

The Hancock Center is one of only a handful of buildings that evokes this kind of response, and not merely because of size. While demonstrating to the world the possibility of constructing buildings much



"Like a fist in the face." (©Ezra Stoller, photographer; courtesy of ESTO Photographics.)



Intermediate rise office floor plan (26th thru 33rd floor). (Courtesy of SOM/Chicago.)

taller than anything seen previously, it did not itself create as dramatic a break from surrounding buildings as the Eiffel Tower, for example, or the Empire State Building, and its unveiling was followed soon after by the completion of the slightly taller World Trade Center and Sears Tower. Nor is its distinction based entirely on the novelty of its cross-braced tapering form. Many other buildings call attention to themselves in a more insistent manner. But the John Hancock Center has a certain direct, no-nonsense quality that seems completely appropriate for Chicago.

Architect Bruce Graham has stated that the building was intended to project the "gutsy, masculine, industrial tradition of Chicago where structure is of the essence."² Art historian Franz Schulze has explained this quality of the city as well as anyone. He wrote:

Chicago is a rough crossroads giant of the machine age which believes in what it sees, what it can figure out and what it can get done. It is pagan, materialistic, bourgeois and pragmatic, and it likes the stock report and the steam hammer a lot more than it cares for poetry—unless the poet is himself willing to celebrate such a hierarchy of values. . . . it understands commerce and technology and it reveres them, and it happily raises temples to these contemporary deities, attaining its most admirable creative momentum in the process.³

The Hancock is such a temple. It looms large in Chicagoans' image of the skyline, and it is a genuinely popular icon of the city. Why this is so makes for an interesting study in the urban implications of very large buildings in the cityscape.⁴

In the more functional roles it plays in the cityscape, the Hancock Center undoubtedly succeeds—so well, in fact, that one hardly remembers what a gamble the building represented, or the fears it unleashed when it was announced. The original developer, the Washington, D.C. based Jerry Wolman, was then in his 30s and best known for buying the Philadelphia Eagles a few years before. Wolman initially intended to build office space on the site, most of which was occupied by a grade-level parking lot.⁵ New to Chicago and unfamiliar with such large-scale developments, Wolman relied primarily on the architects at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM), headed by Bruce Graham, for development of program and design. Graham suggested that North Michigan Avenue was not ideal for an office building, since it was primarily a retail street with residential uses immediately adjacent. The architects recommended a mixed-use development.

The initial proposal was for a set of two buildings, one a 45-story office tower, the other a 70-story residential building. Be-

cause of the need for higher ceilings in the office portion to accommodate mechanical equipment, the two structures would have been about the same height. The problems of spacing the two tall structures on the site, while retaining sunlight and view for each, led to a decision to place the residential portion over the office block.⁶ Theoretically, this made a great deal of sense, as the building would cover only a portion of the site, allowing maximum sunlight and views to all floors. The residential portion would obtain the ideal location, far above the noise and dirt of the city, and the siting would create what was at that time considered a prime urban amenity, an outdoor plaza, along Michigan Avenue.

The idea of mixed-use was not new. The planning for any number of great metropolitan railroad stations of the late 19th century, for example, with their transportation facilities, offices, restaurants, and hotels, was as complex as anything built since then. But in the 20th century, as land in the city became more segregated by use, the idea had gone into decline. It was only in the late 1950s and early 1960s that mixed-use in large downtown buildings started to make a strong comeback.⁷ Large-scale projects such as the Prudential Center in Boston, the Mile High Center in Denver, the Charles Center in Baltimore, or, in Chicago, Marina City, all demonstrated that a variety of uses could be effectively combined in one site.⁸ The Hancock Center represented a significant advance on all of the previous experiments. For one thing, the mix of uses in a single structure was considerably richer. In addition to residential and office space, the building would also have retail areas and parking. For another, the scale of the building dwarfed all previous mixed-use efforts. The engineering concepts, worked out by SOM engineer Fazlur Kahn, made possible a new kind of building.

The Hancock Center represented a gamble. There was no precedent on which to judge whether affluent people would rent apartments 90 floors up, above shops and offices.⁹ It was also unclear whether the adjoining streets, especially already-jammed

Michigan Avenue, could carry the additional traffic generated by the thousands of daily users of the new building. Beyond these considerations loomed a much more basic concern. The late 1960s were years in which the fate of America's large cities seemed to be hanging in the balance. Many experts confidently predicted their demise. After decades of relative quiet, Chicago's downtown area had witnessed a building boom starting in the late 1950s, but the city was losing population and jobs at an alarming rate. The gesture of the Hancock was intimately bound up with the question of the future of Chicago.¹⁰

After setbacks that wiped out Wolman and threatened the project itself, the building was finally finished by the John Hancock Company. It is a measure of the success of the building in its urban functions that all of the uncertainties have faded from view. The building was leased successfully, and has always been considered a prime address for working and living. As the architects and the city's engineers predicted, the building did not overwhelm the traffic system. Experience proved the architects correct in their assertion that the mixed-use nature of the building meant that it would generate less traffic at any given moment than many smaller buildings nearby. What additional congestion the building did generate was alleviated by some alterations in traffic patterns.¹¹ Many residents found the building so convenient they gave up their cars.

The Hancock Center undoubtedly has brought on functional problems that are unique to very high buildings. For one, it certainly contributes to the wind currents that plague North Michigan Avenue. Despite all assurances, what might happen in certain kinds of emergencies is worrisome. But none of these potential problems has dulled the luster of the building's success. So successful has it been, in fact, that it has spawned a new generation of mixed-use buildings in the immediate vicinity, including Water Tower Place, immediately to the south, an enormous new mixed-use building under construction at 900 North Michigan Avenue, a block north of the Hancock.



Example of apartment group floor plan (77th floor). (Courtesy of SOM/Chicago.)

New development even threatens the Fourth Presbyterian Church, the Hancock's venerable neighbor directly across Michigan Avenue. Demolition of this complex would destroy not only a welcome oasis of green on the Avenue, and one of Chicago's most distinguished pieces of architecture, but an excellent foil to the Hancock Center itself.¹² Eventually new buildings may succeed in strangling the street, as doomsayers predicted the Hancock would do, but, despite continual increases in traffic and congestion, developers are still lining up to build on the avenue.

What about the way the building contributes to the appearance of Michigan Avenue and the city? Here the issues are more complex. Consider first its tapering form. This shape was, according to the architects, dictated by the programmatic requirements of mixed use. Every article on the building carried their explanation that once the decision to build one large building rather than two smaller ones was made, the shape was the logical answer to the need for offices with larger floor areas than the apartments.

This ingenuous explanation is not convincing. The tapering form was not, of course, the only alternative.¹³ There was clearly no need for each floor to be slightly smaller than the one below it; this was not only unnecessary but somewhat inconven-

ient from the point of view of leasing and interior layouts. A block containing large apartments on top of a block with small apartments above an office block and a retail block, each with their own optimal floor area, would have yielded a more strictly functional form, and would have more accurately expressed the different functions within. At the Sears Tower, for example, the bundling of structural tubes meant that parts of the floor plan could be subtracted as the building rose. But, paradoxically, the Sears Tower, which has setbacks, is devoted wholly to offices, while the Hancock, which incorporates mixed-use, is unitary in form.

The architects chose to minimize the distinctions in programs, creating instead a massively simple monolith, whose unity they further emphasized by a nearly uniform black metal cladding. In these choices the architects, far from following the dictates of program, were following the aesthetic lead of Mies van der Rohe, who, starting at the famous 860-880 Lake Shore Drive (early 1950s), explored the consequences of elevating the expression of a unitary structural system over functional divisions. Mies's apartments, however, were relatively low structures of conventional engineering, fairly simple in program. To SOM, C. F. Murphy Associates, and a few other Chicago architects fell the

task of applying the lessons of Mies on a larger scale. In certain of their buildings, notably the Hancock and the Daley Center, these architects succeeded better than Mies himself in giving form to really convincing tall buildings.

Once the decision was made that structural expression and minimalism of form would sweep aside all other factors, the major challenges involved the resolution of the problems created when pieces of the program could not be fit neatly into the envelope. The parking ramps provided one such problem. Here the architects rose brilliantly to the occasion, creating a free-standing spiral ramp structure behind the tower, linked dramatically to it by an improbably thin concrete bridge. Not only did this solve the parking access problem, but it served as a piece of sculpture in a much more convincing fashion than the often perfunctory pieces of aggressive metalwork and other "public sculpture" placed on plazas during this era. Where the sculpture usually ended up looking puny and doing little to enhance the building behind it, the Hancock parking ramp provided a dramatic counterpoint to the tower, underscoring its enormous scale and economy of means.

Another challenge involved the way the

building addressed Michigan Avenue. Here the solution was not as successful. In fact, the treatment of the base is the Hancock's Achilles' heel, the one really weak point in the composition. The plaza in front of the building has never worked as planned. The idea of setting buildings back from the street to create open plazas was considered by many planners of the 1960s to be the best way to bring light and air and public spaces to the downtown, and it was encouraged by zoning bonuses. The model for the Hancock, it appears, was one of the earliest and most successful of all of these plazas, the sunken court in front of the RCA Building at Rockefeller Center in New York. In Chicago the sunken plaza—which, like the one at Rockefeller Center, originally had an ice skating rink at its center—was to have been the focal point of a branch of Bergdorf Goodman's, which would have lined the area around the rink with boutique windows.¹⁴ The arrangement with Bergdorf's fell through, however, and Bonwit Teller subsequently took the lower floors of the tower. The plaza level was given over to various retailers and airline ticket agencies. The ice refused to stay frozen in the skating rink,¹⁵ and the skating rink was then turned into a pool, but eddies of wind and flying

litter made occupation so uncomfortable that the plaza was eventually replanned with benches and flower beds.¹⁶

The greatest challenge came with the problem of the retail space. Mies had also wrestled with this problem. His response at Toronto's Dominion Center and elsewhere was to place the retail underground, but this was far from ideal from the point of view of the retailers. So the architects raised the office lobby floor one level above the street, making it a kind of *piano nobile* accessible by escalators, then slipped in a grade-level retail area below. Additional retail areas were contained in the sunken court and on floors three and four above the lobby. The result was a split retail zone separated by the elevator lobby. The architects managed to overcome some of the circulation problems among these levels by a clever use of elevators and escalators, but other problems remained. The most unfortunate result of putting the office lobby above grade-level was that it robbed it of its major function: providing a front door for the building. Instead, the lobby was reduced to funneling office workers from an escalator to the office floor elevators, obviating any real need for the splendid glass-walled space in front of the elevators looking out over Michigan Avenue.

Raising the office lobby to the second floor also created a major visual problem on the building's exterior. It is at the lobby floor where the most critical event of the whole building, the point where the great cross-brace system stops, might have been expected. But because the lobby is raised, this event instead occurs some 12 feet above grade level. The architects were faced with the problem of treating visually a one-story base choked with steel members tying the superstructure at an awkward angle. The architects responded by making the cladding of the plinth largely solid. According to Graham, the original intention was to clad this plinth with a dark reddish granite, which would have created a greater continuity with the handsome dark pavers of the plaza and might have created a base that appeared to rise out of the ground itself.

The clients, however, wanted the store



Hancock's Achilles' heel: the sunken plaza in front of the building. (©Ezra Stoller, photographer; courtesy of ESTO Photographics.)

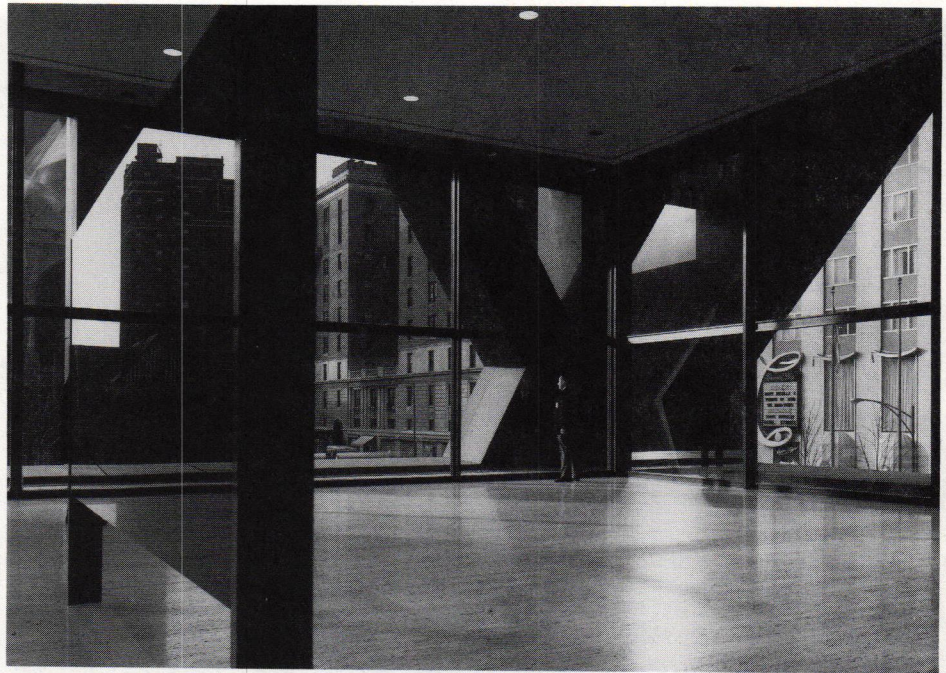
to have a distinct treatment and, according to Graham, demanded a travertine cladding they considered more elegant than the granite.¹⁷ In addition to the entrances necessary for the building, the retailers felt they needed show windows. Because of the tangle of steel at grade level, some of these had to be placed in front of the steel members. All of the openings inserted into the lower level further weakened visually a base that already was too low and too light in color for a 100-story building.¹⁸

But what of the building in its relationship to the city? Since the first skyscrapers started to rise in the late 19th century, many have argued that no building this big should go up in any city. In every generation since, critics have claimed that there is an absolute limit to density, which, according to them, the city had just about reached.

But height and density have continued to rise in desirable neighborhoods. In Chicago, almost every central area site is fair game, since zoning is so loose that, according to a local saying that is almost literally accurate, you could build a Sears Tower on every block. Newspapers reported that the Hancock Center could have gone another forty stories higher according to zoning laws, and was prevented only by FAA regulations.¹⁹

The effects of density are not easy to gauge, however. On the one hand, accepting for a moment the proposition that density is bad, one could argue that Chicago's density is extremely light compared to that of New York or London, not to mention Tokyo. On the other hand, some of the densest parts of the world are the most desirable—witness midtown Manhattan, or in Chicago, the Streeterville neighborhood adjoining the Hancock Center itself.

Many people have argued it is not the height or size of the Hancock Center but its location that is at fault, that the building was the principal catalyst in the transformation of what was once an elegant tree-lined boulevard into a high-rise canyon with an expressway running through it. Certainly something of what used to be the street's special quality has been lost in recent years, but Michigan Avenue was



View from the piano nobile. (©Ezra Stoller, photographer; courtesy of ESTO Photographics.)

never a homogeneous boulevard on the European model. In the 1920s, for example, smart new limestone-fronted shops coexisted with the blank walls of old buildings partly demolished to create the boulevard and with high-rises such as the Allerton Hotel and the Palmolive (now, Playboy) Building. The Wrigley Building was planned even before the street was finished.

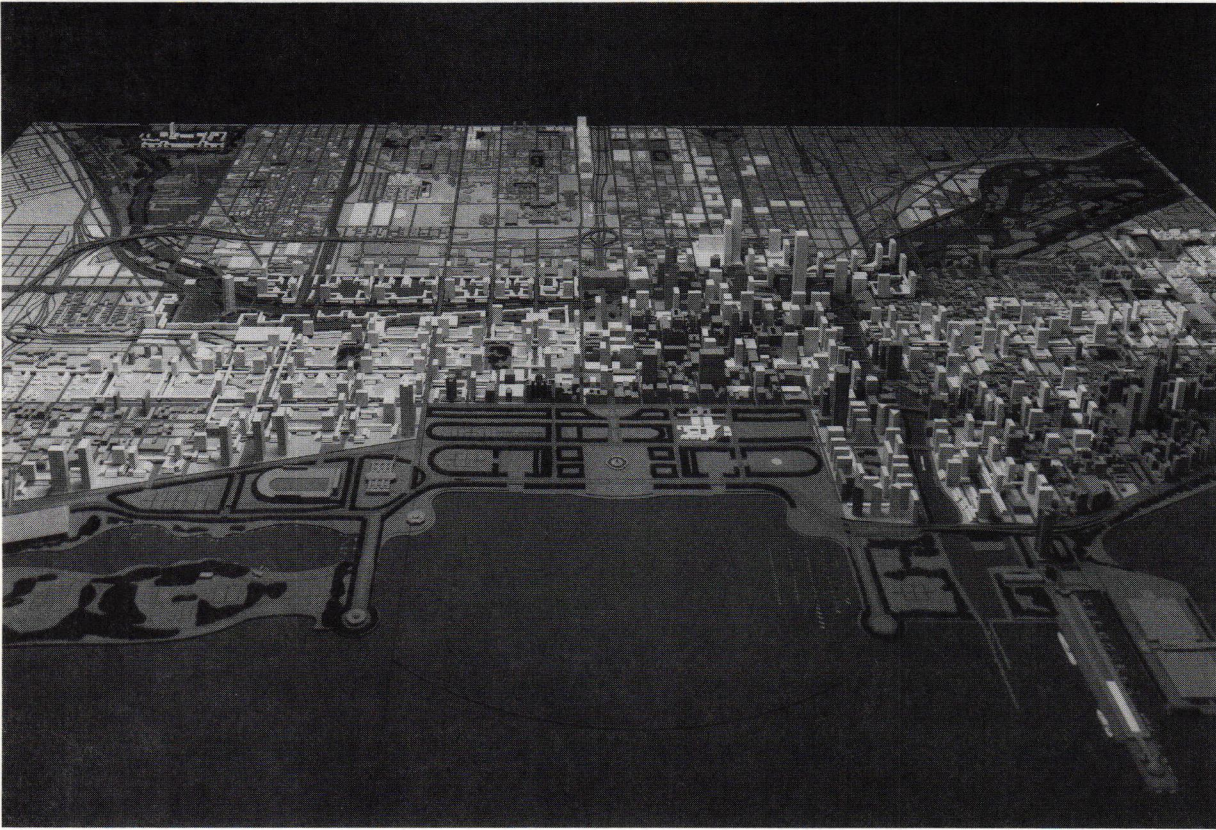
Also frequently heard is the assertion that Chicago's traditionally laissez-faire attitude toward business and the relatively minor role the city planning commission has historically played means that buildings like the Hancock end up where they are and looking as they do simply because of the dictates of the real estate market. Writing for *Architectural Forum*, John Morris Dixon issued a standard version of this kind of criticism:

Looking down from the observatory is like looking down from an airship at Chicago as it was before John Hancock went up. Nothing out there has any visible relationship to the tower ... John Hancock looks like an isolated monument, almost accidentally placed. As the symbol of Chicago this tower is superbly expressive. But shouldn't the tallest landmark in a metropolis be part of the larger plan? In a typically, tragically American way, John Hancock Center is not.²⁰

This criticism does not appear to ac-

count for several important aspects of the question. In fact the Hancock seems almost to echo on a much larger scale the setback massing of the Playboy Building (Holabird & Root, 1928-29), while the Playboy Building itself creates a kind of towerlike cap to the Drake Hotel (Marshall and Fox, 1921) immediately to its north. From the north the three buildings seem to telescope upward from the Oak Street Beach in a pyramidal form. This is a quintessentially Chicago view, one made possible by the fact that its very high buildings are not piled on top of one another but widely spaced, creating a distinct urban skyline very different from the dense thicket of lower Manhattan and midtown, for example, or the clusters and linear spines of buildings in Los Angeles.

To what extent have conscious planning ideas guided the Chicago skyline? Very little, if by this one means the tight land use laws and powerful public planning department of a city like San Francisco. In Chicago, private enterprise has been primarily responsible for the look of the cityscape. But this does not mean that it has lacked planning. Chicago has had a long tradition of privately produced plans, starting with the Burnham plan of 1909, and one could argue that a kind of consensus among busi-



Model of the Chicago 21 Plan for the central area communities. (Harr, Hedrich-Blessing, photographer; courtesy of Hedrich-Blessing.)

ness and government leaders has operated all along. The document that perhaps best explains the urban intentions of the Hancock Center is the Chicago 21 Plan, published in 1973 by a private organization (the Central Area Committee) and executed in the offices of SOM.

In the plan a model illustrates how the city might look in the 21st century. Most of the unused city land around the Loop was to be filled in, with relatively low, asymmetrically disposed structures placed at the periphery of superblocks and connected by what appears to be an aerial walkway system. Towers rise in the Loop and a few other places, notably along the Chicago River to the west of the Loop and along the lakefront south of Grant Park. The tallest of these occur at strategic points—the fork in the Chicago River, for example, or directly opposite the Standard Oil Building on the point of land that projects farthest into Grant Park. The highest of them loom well above the Sears Tower.

At first glance this plan might be dis-

missed as another offshoot of typical modernist city planning projects such as those of Le Corbusier or Hilberseimer. It is, however, totally different in both appearance and in fundamental concept. The mixture of old and new, short and high, the local symmetries and gateways are all different from Le Corbusier's more regimented schemes, and, unlike these schemes, which would have to be imposed on a city, the Chicago 21 Plan proposed a free-enterprise vision, one that could only be built with the consensus of private enterprise and the public sector. In this it recalls more the drawings done by Hugh Ferriss in the 1920s than the schemes of European modernists. In any case, the Chicago 21 Plan actually represents, as did the Burnham plan or the Ferriss drawings, the kind of construction the major architects were already building. Because SOM, along with three or four other firms, controlled much of the major building in the Loop in the 1960s, and because some consensus existed among these architects, their clients, and City Hall,

they were able to reshape the downtown area dramatically, giving the skyline the main features that it has, by and large, retained to this day.²¹ The 21 Plan represented a projection of this status quo development into the future.

Perhaps the most extensive commentary on how the Chicago of the future might have functioned comes, surprisingly enough, from articles in engineering journals by Fazlur Kahn. A gentle and thoughtful man, deeply concerned with the problems of the city, Kahn was interested in the possibility of creating 150- and 200-story buildings not merely for structural reasons. For him, as for Bruce Graham, density was not a problem but a potential asset. Echoing the vision of Chicago 21, he called for cities higher and denser than current ones. Following the logic of post war planning, he advocated urban development on a much larger scale than the existing city, with new projects designed as Planned Unit Developments on superblocks bounded by considerably widened roads.

Unlike many modernist planners, he relied on no simple, unitary solutions. He did not believe that smoother vehicular traffic was the only solution for transportation problems. He proposed, for example, a system of horizontal transport based on the principle of the elevator, which he characterized as a massive, privately owned system provided free of charge by building owners. Nor was his ideal city center a vibrant high-rise district filled with large mixed-use buildings, meant to be the only place to live and work in the metropolis. He did not denigrate the suburbs or suggest that everyone would want to live in the center of the city, only that it should be an attractive alternative and that its attraction should come from being even more the way it already was, even denser and more diverse.²²

In many ways the thinking represented in the Chicago 21 plan and in the writings of Kahn now seems out of date. Enthusiasm for superblocks and 200-story buildings has waned, to say the least. Other planning goals, such as the preservation of historic buildings, contextualism, and an interest in formal boulevards and public squares have come to the fore. By all rights, the Hancock Center should also seem a product of an era past. It should look too large, too unrelated to surrounding buildings on Michigan Avenue, too insistent on a single image based on a powerful structural system.

Most Chicagoans do not see the Hancock Center as a period piece, however. Many, in fact, find it hard to imagine the city without it. Glimpsed above the roofs of a neighborhood far inland or from an airplane on its approach to O'Hare, the Hancock, looming on the horizon with its upper reaches obscured by banks of fog rolling off the lake, seems more like a part of the landscape than a human creation. The visual problems at street level are forgotten. The mighty black shaft with the luminous band at its summit signals the presence of North Michigan Avenue and the city in a way the Palmolive with its now-extinguished beacon used to do. The Hancock, even more than the Palmolive, has become an icon. Like the Eiffel Tower, the Chrysler

or the Empire State buildings, and only a handful of other buildings elsewhere in the world, it functions as a symbol—not only appropriate but somehow almost inevitable—of the dense, congested metropolis lying at its feet.

NOTES

1. Katherine Kuh, "Homage to Chicago," *Saturday Review* (Dec. 28, 1968, pp. 40-42).

2. *AIA Journal* (Oct. 1980, pp. 69-73).

3. Franz Schulze, "The New Chicago Architecture," *Art in America* (May 1968).

4. Probably the best general account of the building and its impact on the city can be found in Clifford Terry, "The Hancock-Lovers, Leapers, Gawkers, and all," *Chicago Tribune Magazine* (Nov. 2, 1980).

5. Jerry Wolman was a highly conspicuous figure in real-estate development in the 1960s. He made a fortune developing apartment buildings in the Washington area, bought the Philadelphia Eagles football team, and created a real-estate empire. According to Wolman, who is still in the development business with an office in Rockville, Maryland (interview with author, July 1988), he first saw the property on the way to the office of a friend in the First National Bank Building. He inquired about availability and was told the owner wanted \$5 million with a half million dollar cash deposit. Wolman states that he sent for his attorney, who brought a check and set a closing for 90 days later. To build the building, by far his biggest real-estate venture, he obtained a loan of nearly \$10,000,000, the largest of its kind in Chicago history, from the John Hancock Life Insurance Co. and four banks. See *Chicago Daily News* (May 4, 1968). In part because of problems with the Hancock Center foundations, Wolman's empire collapsed and he went into bankruptcy. *Time* (Nov. 24, 1967), *Newsweek* (Nov. 27, 1967).

6. According to Graham, the suggestion came from the architects. Wolman believes he had the idea. According to him it came during a lunch with Graham and SOM partner Nathaniel Owings in Washington, D.C., when Wolman took a salt and pepper shaker and put one on top of the other asking if that wasn't the way the building could be designed.

7. SOM themselves had created the Terrace-Plaza Hotel in Cincinnati.

8. See *Face of the Metropolis*, Martin Meyerson et al. (1963).

9. According to Wolman (interview, July 1988), no one was initially sure whether or not residents in upper floors would be able to see down into the windows of apartments below, because of the slope of the glass, and it cost \$15,000 to determine that this was not going to happen.

10. Wolman states that he took a model of the building to the office of Mayor Daley to get the mayor's blessing. Daley, Wolman remembers, walked around it for a minute and said "I want you to do it." When Wolman asked why, Daley replied, "Because it would

be good for the city of Chicago." (interview, July 1988) At the installation of the skystone, Mayor Daley also said that the Hancock was a symbol of a society of expanding opportunities and would be a magnet for people who wished to leave the conformity of the suburbs to return to the city center. *Chicago Tribune* (May 7, 1968).

11. The streets north and south of the building were made one-way and a computerized signal was installed at Michigan Avenue. Vehicular traffic would have been further reduced if the construction of a long-projected and badly needed new rapid-transit line from the Loop up North Michigan Avenue had been completed.

12. Efforts to designate the church as a landmark have, to date, failed. When proposed as a city landmark, designation was opposed by the Planning Department. The City's Planning Director stated that it was out of place in a dense commercial district.

13. Newspapers reported that the architects had also explored an X-shaped solution. *Chicago Daily News* (March 25, 1965).

14. *Business Week* (April 2, 1966, pp. 37-38). According to the article, Edwin Andrew Goodman of Bergdorf's planned to run the store and to live in a duplex apartment on one of the upper levels.

15. This was due to an insufficient chilling plant or the disposition of the rink so that it was in the direct noontime sun, depending on whom you ask.

16. *Chicago Tribune* (Nov. 1, 1980).

17. Interview with Bruce Graham (April 26, 1987).

18. This problem was often commented on by critics. It led to a snub by the jury of the Chicago Chapter AIA Awards, who declined to give the building a Distinguished Building Award in 1970. *Chicago Tribune* (April 17, 1970). Remarkably, it was even harshly criticized in the book SOM published on its own work in 1974. In the introduction Arthur Drexler wrote that approaching the Hancock at ground level "introduces a rude shock: this gigantic construction stands on a one-story travertine pedestal, as if it were a paperweight. All striving to express the dynamics of a maximally efficient structure ends abruptly some twelve feet above ground level. . . . In the John Hancock Center, where engineering ends it is improvisation, not architecture, that takes over." *The Architecture of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1963-1973* (London, 1974).

19. *Chicago Daily News* (June 14, 1968).

20. *Architectural Forum* (July/August 1970, p. 44).

21. Graham has repeatedly spoken of the need to rebuild America's cities as the major task facing architects in this country. See for example, *Architectural Record* (April 1967, p. 144).

22. On Kahn's interest in extremely high buildings, see his articles, "The Future of Highrise Structures," in *Progressive Architecture* (October 1972), and "Changing the Scale of the Cities" in *Consulting Engineer* (April 1974, pp. 69-73).

Gordon Wittenberg

John Hancock Center Technology

The John Hancock Center was a major technical achievement. To fully appreciate the extent of this achievement, it is useful to review the context in which the project was developed. The program called for over 2,800,000 square feet of space, roughly divided between residential, office, and parking/commercial uses. When completed, it was the tallest building in the world. Yet despite its size and complexity, the building achieved remarkable structural economy, demonstrated the use of a new engineering concept for tall buildings, set an internationally recognized example for the application of computers to structural design problems, and provided the impetus for the development of new foundation drilling techniques and high-speed elevators.

In terms of the technical evolution of tall building design, the project's most noteworthy achievement was its utilization, in a pure form, of the "tube" concept in a steel structure. While this system has now become the predominant high-rise building design concept, it had been used in only two structures when work began on the John Hancock Center in 1963 (IBM Building, Pittsburgh, Curtis & Davis, 1963; Chesnut-Dewitt Apartments, Chicago, SOM, 1963). The IBM Building, closest to the Hancock in concept, was only 14 stories.

The structural design team for the Hancock Center was headed by the late Fazlur Kahn of SOM/Chicago. A number of other engineers and institutions (including the University of Illinois, Purdue, and MIT) also provided independent confirmation of SOM's work. Although the overall concept of utilizing exterior bracing on a tall building had been proposed in at least two thesis projects at the Illinois Institute of Technol-

ogy (Myron Goldsmith, 1953, and Miko Sasaki, 1962), it had never been subjected to an exhaustive engineering analysis. SOM deserves the credit for this novel solution.

The history of wind-bracing in high-rise construction has been well documented by the Chicago architectural historian, Carl Condit. As he explained in an article in *Scientific American* (January 1984), the state of the art at the time work started on the Hancock project was exemplified by the 70-story Chase Manhattan Building (New York, SOM, 1957). In this case, a system of K-braces and portal frames was used throughout the structure. The basic theory behind this approach was developed in the latter part of the 19th century. In concept, a building was designed first as a gravity structure (a grid of columns carrying floor loads). Certain key parts of the frame were then braced to resist the stresses induced by horizontal wind loads. This system was adequate for many high-rise structures, but resulted in unacceptably high steel costs in very tall buildings. In contrast, the structural bracing of the Hancock Center had a dramatic impact on the cost of the structure. It used 29.7 pounds of steel per square foot of building area, or about the same amount as was used at that time in a typical 30-story building.

Elementary engineering theory suggested that a more theoretically efficient system would result from concentrating the structural members in the exterior wall of the building. This approach places the maximum amount of material at the periphery of the section, like a smokestack, and thus closely approximates an optimum tower or column form. To realize this approach in practice, the Hancock Center introduced



The Hancock Center under construction. (Chicago Aerial Survey, photographer.)

two innovations that are now standard engineering practice. First, the floor system was designed to span from the elevator core to the exterior wall, with no intermediate columns. This concentrates a high proportion of loads and structure at the exterior wall. Second, the exterior wall was designed to function as a plate or diaphragm, which resists the stresses generated by gravity loads and horizontal wind forces.

Projects with exterior bracing can be found even in the 19th century, but the Hancock Center was one of the first high-rises to combine a braced wall with a columnless interior, and hence is one of the first true "tube" structures. This concept has since been applied to concrete as well as steel structural systems, and a number of different methods have been developed to brace the exterior wall.

The Hancock Center is actually an example of the "braced tube," in which a diagonal system of members forms a large-scale truss that carries both wind and grav-

ity loads and becomes a prominent feature of the building exterior. Determining the exact geometry of the members and their joints was one of the most significant and creative parts of the engineering design process. The large-scale truss concept was chosen for a variety of reasons, including architectural aesthetics, predictability, and ease of fabrication. Accurate models existed for predicting the performance of trusses and space frames. The pattern chosen had several advantages: the diagonals actually function as inclined columns, carrying significant gravity loads and eliminating the need for costly tension connections; by using a traditional truss geometry, in which all elements are in pure tension or compression, the pattern also eliminates the need for moment connections.

While this geometry resulted in a very efficient building structure, it caused the windows of a number of offices and apartments to be interrupted by diagonal columns. Many subsequent tall buildings, also utilizing the "tube" concept, have therefore adopted a different exterior wall geometry. The World Trade Center (New York, Yamasaki, 1963) and the Exxon Building (Chicago, Edward Durrell Stone, 1970) both achieve stiffness in the exterior wall by creating a matrix of vierendeel trusses around individual window openings, so that the wall functions like a plate or slab with holes punched in it. Although these are both steel structures, their exterior walls were assembled using T-shaped elements joined at the extremities. This system allowed a more conventional window pattern, but also reduced structural efficiency and increased the cost. Despite these drawbacks, the vierendeel truss version of the "tube" has enjoyed widespread application.

Many of the most important developments in windbracing since the completion of the Hancock Center can be found in the work of William LeMessurier, the Boston engineer. In a series of high-rise projects that begin with Citicorp Center (New York, Hugh Stubbins, 1975), he has progressively approached the tube structure's theoretical optimum by placing the entire building

structure in the exterior wall plane, where it can most effectively resist the stresses induced by wind loads. The Republic Bank Building (Dallas, Jarvis-Putty-Jarvis, 1984) is the latest in the series. Its elevator cores are actually suspended from the floor structure, which is supported by the exterior columns.

The other major area of innovation in tall building structural systems relates to the stresses created by the periodic movement caused by the wind. The most notorious example of this problem is the other Hancock Center (Boston, I. M. Pei, 1968), in which periodic buffeting by constantly shifting winds caused exterior glazing to break out of its anchoring system and crash to the pavement below. All structures have a degree of flexibility that is integral to their ability to withstand loading: this flexibility allows a rhythmic movement to develop in response to wind loads. In any slender structure, such as a very tall building, a rhythmic "push and pull" will be created due to the formation of a lee side vortex, even at relatively modest wind velocities of 30–40 miles per hour. When this movement coincides with the building's inherent periodicity, tremendous stresses are generated, a phenomenon that was first observed in smokestacks in the 19th century. Until the Citicorp project, the problem was addressed by increasing the stiffness of the gravity and windbracing structures, a solution that became more and more difficult as buildings approached the theoretical optimums of their structures. In Citicorp, LeMessurier overcame this limitation by installing the first dynamic load response mechanism, the "tuned mass damper" system, which consists of a large mass of concrete placed on a lubricated planar surface at the top of the building. The concrete mass can be allowed to move and thereby dampen the wind-induced movement at the top of the building, where it is most pronounced. A second strategy, the placement of voids or "holes" through the building to interrupt the vortex, proved effective in wind-tunnel testing of a proposed 130-story building for the north side of Chicago, also designed by SOM's Fazlur Kahn.

Like many large engineering projects, the Hancock Center stimulated the development of new tools in the design process. It was one of the first large-scale building projects to fully utilize computer-aided structural design, a practical necessity given that the interdependent nature of the structural solution could only be analyzed economically by computer. The innovative nature of the structure required outside verification using alternative analytical techniques: the building was first designed as a series of trusses, then modeled as a series of space frames for confirmation. A relatively powerful computer was required for the final analysis. Because the team did not have access to such a computer at the beginning of the project, they subdivided the analysis into smaller parts that would run on smaller computers. In the end, however, a larger computer performed the final analysis. When its results correlated well with those of the smaller computers, an important precedent was set for the use of microcomputers in structural design.

The Hancock Center is a logical extension of the European-derived architectural aesthetic predominant in Chicago and much of the United States at the time the project was started. The Miesian version of this aesthetic, characterized by exposed steel framing, direct glazing, and a strong and repetitive geometric order, was very much the norm in the 1950s. The Hancock Center shares some of these characteristics, but to the degree that it varies from this aesthetic, it also marks the beginning of the end of its dominance.

In the buildings of Mies van der Rohe, one can always detect his overriding aesthetic concern for proportion and geometry. The tapering form, exuberant structure, and ad hoc proportions of the Hancock Center celebrate something more dynamic and plastic. The Hancock Center's beauty derives from its internal logic and uncompromising fitness to purpose and economy, and in this sense, it resembles the Eiffel Tower, the Firth of Forth Bridge, and other examples of engineering (as opposed to architectural) achievement.

Roberta Feldman

A "Landmark for Living": The Making of an Urban Icon

The blunt, black obelisk of John Hancock Center, rising more than 1,100 ft. above Lake Michigan, changes the whole image of Chicago. Or perhaps it just brings out a latent image; somehow it seems inevitable for Chicago—where the first steel framed building went up—to have one climatic skyscraper symbolizing the city's faith in technology and commercial development.¹

The John Hancock Center became "Chicago's most identifiable skyline structure"² even before it was occupied. The building is commonly featured in tourist paraphernalia and serves as the centerpiece of skyline views and media images of the city. It is a compelling physical expression of a prevailing theme in the popular imagery of Chicago: "a great midwestern industrial and commercial center . . . great in size and aspiration, and in attainment and fame."³ And indeed, the Hancock is a sizable technological and commercial accomplishment. Affectionately called "Big John," it has so ingratiated itself to Chicagoans as to receive greeting cards on holidays and friendly letters that note visible alterations and additions. By some standards, however, the Hancock Building achieved the pinnacle of popular fame when it inspired the subject matter for the movie *The Towering Inferno*.

The John Hancock Center's distinctiveness of form in the skyline clearly brings the building its greatest public notoriety. It sports virtually all of those visible properties that contribute to high public recognizability.⁴ Set apart from its neighbors by the intensity and singularity of its form, the Hancock is the tallest structure in the vicinity, and projects massive scale. This "black obelisk" with tapering glass walls and exposed steel cross braces is in sharp contrast to the form, color, and materials of surrounding buildings, and the ring of lights at its top is a unique sign in the skyline.



The Hancock Center has been likened to "a glassed in oil derrick."
(©Timothy Hursley, photographer; courtesy of Timothy Hursley/The Arkansas Office and SOM/Chicago.)

Furthermore, the structure is the prominent marker of the most prestigious Chicago neighborhood, readily visible from multiple vantage points and main arteries serving the city.

This is not to suggest that because the form of the Hancock Center is highly recognizable, it is universally appealing. To the contrary, the building has been likened to a "glassed in oil derrick"; a "packing crate with a thyroid condition"; and a "funereal," "very evil," and ominous structure.⁵ Although the Hancock Center has generated its own unique brand of negative imagery, it shares common expressions of America's ambivalence to tall buildings. Reported concerns about the Hancock's dwarfing scale, blocked views, obstruction of light and air, vehicular and pedestrian congestion, parking problems, and overpopulation⁶ have likewise been levied at large-scale high-rise building developments in other North American cities.⁷

The possibility and advantages of creating a landmark appear to have been well understood by the architects, the developer, and the John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company. A highly recognizable identity obviously is a market-wise strategy for a commercial venture. The client was quick to see the public-relations potential of the proposed form, and even when the financially troubled developer, Jerry Wolman, withdrew from the project, the company maintained its financial commitment because the project "conveyed an image that put Hancock on the map—architecturally and nationally."⁸

Cynics and detractors have attributed the motivations for the project's big size and notoriety to big egos. Wolman, prior to and after his involvement in the Hancock project, had a proclivity for large-scale, highly visible business ventures.⁹ And the design by architect Bruce Graham, of Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill, was deemed by some as media-conscious architecture. "Graham was motivated primarily by: 'Will it publish well?' The taller it is the more publicity it gets."¹⁰ According to Graham, however, the building's height was grounded in the "old architectural idea" of

the tower as "a marker for the city."¹¹

There is no doubt that those involved with the project took full advantage of the distinctive status of the building. In addition to its obviously visible profile in the Chicago skyline, the Hancock Center's promoters assured a highly visible presence in the media. Every increment in the construction process and occupancy of the building was reported in the press with appropriate touches of human interest vignettes. Perhaps the most clever publicity ploy was the substitution of a "skystone" instead of a cornerstone to commemorate the building. The skystone, a time capsule containing mementos of the era, was placed at the top of the tower along with an American flag and a half-ton beam from the Eiffel Tower. The desired association with an icon of this stature was reinforced by celebrating the occasion on the 79th birthday of the official opening of the Eiffel Tower. The event was attended by city and state officials as well as those parties involved in the project. The then Mayor of Chicago, Richard Daley, true opportunist that he was, took full advantage of the occasion to boost the public image of the city. He declared the Hancock Center an example of the revitalization of Chicago: "It will serve as a magnet for people to leave the conformity of the suburbs to return to the city."¹²

The marketing strategy adopted by the rental agents, Sudler and Company, similarly focused on the unique qualities and contributions of the John Hancock Center. The original brochure begins:

TOMORROW'S CITY TODAY. Unique in design, exciting in concept, Chicago's John Hancock Center dramatizes the growth of a great city in our urban society. It has been designed to stimulate the heartbeat of cities and people. A bold revitalization in urban planning, the 100-story John Hancock Center incorporates under one roof all the amenities of modern living, working and recreation.

Several years later, when the residential rental units were converted to condominium ownership, the landmark status that the building had earned was used to its full extent. The first phrase of the marketing brochure was, "Above All Others," followed by a testimony to those aspects that

purportedly contribute to the Hancock Center's landmark status as well as assurances that the building would maintain this status for "years to come." To leave no doubt, the potential buyer is told, "You now have the opportunity to own a condominium home in this landmark for living." Thus it was through broad strokes of exterior form, scale, and height, and the insistent marketing of an image with touches of contrived folklore that the John Hancock Center achieved landmark status.

Yet it is the very strength of its highly recognizable image that has obscured what lies behind the facade. Details of design and patterns of life within the building all too often do not match the extraordinary expectations of the building viewed from a distance.

While the John Hancock Center has been particularly noteworthy for the diversity and complexity of its functions, little attention has been given to how poorly it provides for them. The building has received criticism from members of the architectural community for the "insistent unity" of its exterior form,¹³ but minimal attention has been directed to the similar lack of differentiation of the building's interior. Since over ten thousand people use the building daily, and its residential population of over one thousand is large enough to form its own voting precinct, the patterns of use in this "city within the city" is hardly a negligible matter. Among the greater problems is the ground-level entry to the public spaces—including the observatory, commercial and office spaces—which gives no clue of the spatial distribution of the uses short of understated signage. The discrete lobbies for the apartments, the bank, and the 94th- and 95th-floor bar and restaurant are identical in design, and the corridors serving the office and residential floors are nondescript and anonymous. To quote Bruce Graham, the interior is "not very special. Everything is very simple and understated."¹⁴ Yet simplicity and understatement should not preclude the identification of component parts. The consequences for the uninitiated building user are confusion and disorientation. Moreover, occupants



Design of interior space is disappointingly conventional. (©Ezra Stoller, photographer; courtesy of ESTO Photographics.)

find it difficult to establish a clear territorial identity. Residents of the condominiums are “always looking for ways to establish their own identity,” including future plans to redesign the condominium lobby to distinguish their entrance.¹⁵

In the private confines of the Hancock, the design of interior space is disappointingly conventional; it is prototypic of high-rise structures of this generation in Chicago. With the exception of praise for the “exceptional views,” typical residents’ comments about their apartment units are “plain,” “bare,” “quasi-institutional,” “really pedestrian,” and “like any other apartment.”¹⁶ It is only in the services—the receiving and loading docks and mechanical spaces of this “vertical city”; the circulation systems required to transport people, freight, and garbage 100 floors; and the mechanical, electrical, and communication systems—that the complexity of the

building’s functions become apparent.

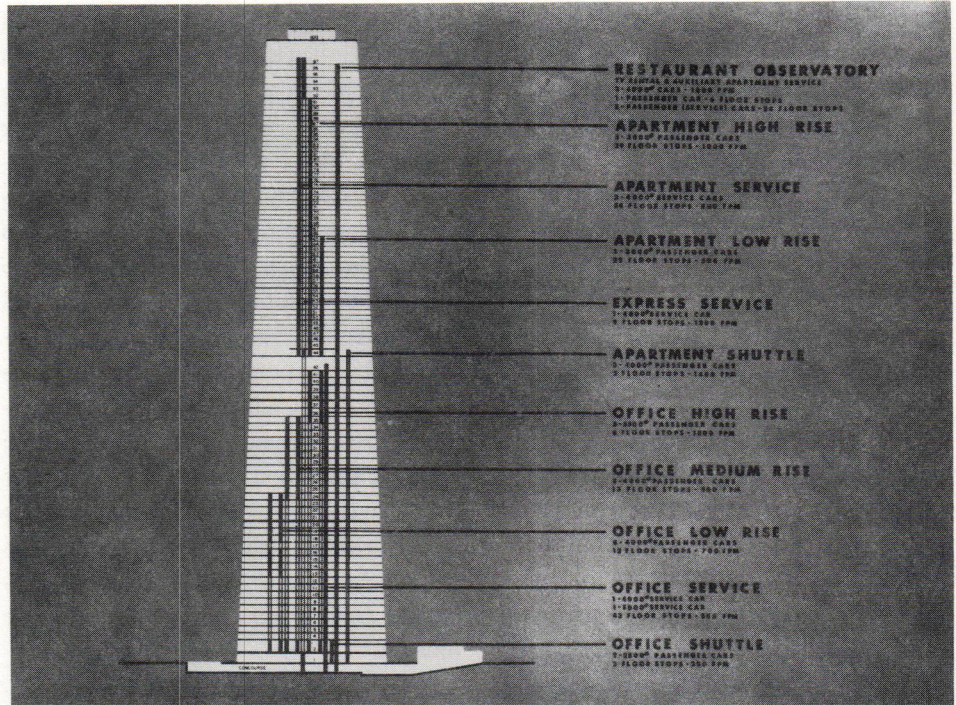
The city within the city concept did portend and was marketed to afford considerable interchange between functional parts of the building. Despite its mixed-use program, however, the building is in effect a vertical layering of functionally discrete zones with minimal or difficult interchange. Few users take full advantage of the potential for satisfying all of life’s daily needs within the confines of the building. Only a small number of people both live and work in the Hancock Center—estimates range from ten to thirty people. Most users cross paths only in the lobby and concourse and are immediately sorted into separate circulation patterns serving the functional areas. Condominium residents have their own street lobby as well as private services and amenities on the 44th-floor “Skylobby.” If one chooses to use more than one building function, there are considerable barriers to

traverse. For example, two routes are available for the resident who wants to go from his or her apartment to the retail concourse. The first begins with the residential elevators to the 44th-floor Skylobby, another elevator to the first-floor condominium lobby, through two security doors, then outside or through a department store and into the Hancock Center lobby, and finally down an escalator. The second, a shorter but less aesthetic route, begins with the freight elevator at the garbage disposal dock, then through the receiving area and the secured door to the concourse.

This is not to suggest that the services and amenities provided in the Hancock Center are unimportant or unused. They are an essential attraction of the building.¹⁷ The market for downtown office and residential development demands accessibility, if not on the premises, then within the immediate locale, to conveniences such as those pro-

vided in the Hancock. On the 44th-floor, residents have for their private use an ample commissary, laundry and dry-cleaning service, mail room, party rooms, swimming pool, exercise room, and formerly, a restaurant. It is not unusual for a residential development of this size to house these types of amenities and services and although some of them are not heavily used, as with other luxury residential developments, "God forbid you should get rid of them."¹⁸

One also might have expected that the types of tenants and residents attracted to working and living in a landmark building would in some way be atypical, but they are not appreciably different from those who live and work in other luxury high-rise buildings in the surrounding neighborhood. The office occupancy—primarily advertising, creative arts, and institutional tenants—is the same, and the residents are similar to downtown high-rise dwellers in Chicago and other major American cities—affluent singles, dual career couples, empty nesters, and retirees. Households with children, as expected, are few, and the majority of people are middle-aged and older. They apparently are drawn to downtown high-rise living for common reasons: the glamour and convenience of a downtown luxury building in a fashionable neighborhood,

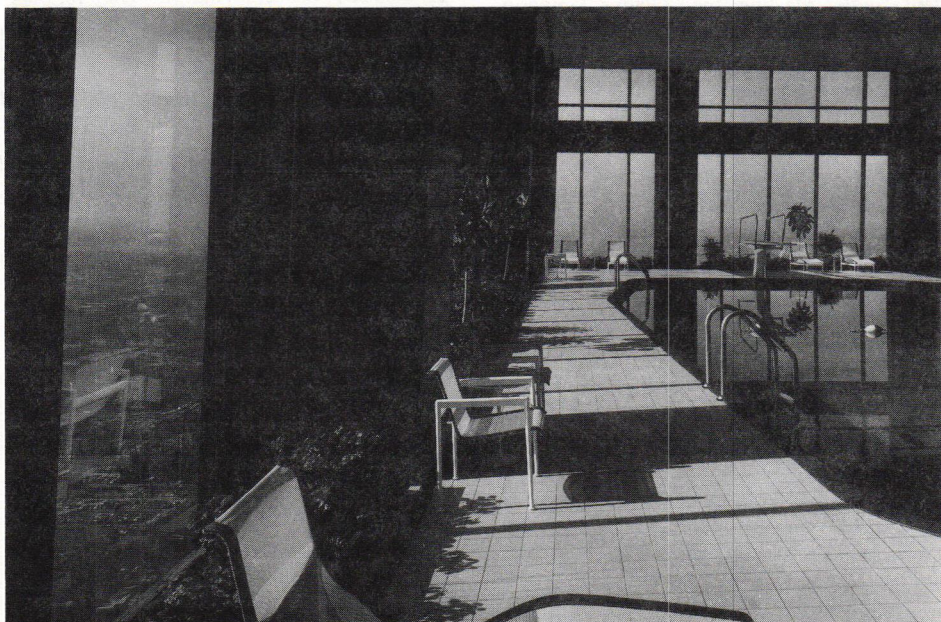


The complex elevator system is one of the considerable barriers that must be traversed in order to take advantage of Hancock's mixed-use program. (William & Meyer, photographers; courtesy of SOM/Chicago.)

accessibility to work, services, and facilities needed for daily life as well as those that fit the most current standards of the "good life."¹⁹ They also seek the protection of the immediate surroundings and an elaborate security system that separates residents from the less desirable disorder of the city—"isolated, tidy, and tranquil, floating above

the noises, social disharmonies, human drama and discourse of everyday life."²⁰ The residents' concerns and complaints about living in the Hancock also are similar to other high-rise dwellers: noise from neighbors and wind whipping through vertical shafts, occasional creaking of the building when it sways, complex, if not harrowing, moving procedures, and parking problems. Unlike other high-rise dwellers, however, Hancock residents are reported to have few complaints about perceptible sway (the building was designed for a minimal sway at the top of only three inches), and the elevator service is apparently adequate.²¹

Despite the John Hancock Center's less than distinctive interior architecture and normative tenant and resident populations, the symbolic importance of living and working in this landmark building should not be underestimated. The John Hancock Center is not simply a grand architectural gesture that demonstrates the power and ingenuity of its creators; it too is a tangible expression of the identity of those who choose to live and work there. Tenants and condominium residents share in the public presentation of a unique, exclusive iden-



Condominium residents have private use of a swimming pool on the 44th-floor Skylobby. (©Ezra Stoller, photographer; courtesy of ESTO Photographics.)

tity. Office tenants are drawn to the building in part because it is "different" and "it has world renown status."²² Residents are "sky people" living "above all others."²³

According to Bruce Graham, "The tower is not an evil symbol; man has been pursuing the tower for centuries. They are symbols of man's achievement."²⁴ The landmark status of the John Hancock Center appears to support his claim. The building serves as a potent symbol of privilege for its creators and its occupants. Yet the form of the tower is neither an inherently good nor evil symbol. The creation of, and dwelling within, a publicly memorable, highly publicized high-rise building does not automatically impart desirable status. To illustrate, there are two high-rise complexes, also great in size and fame, near the downtown Loop. They are Cabrini-Green and Robert Taylor Homes, Chicago Public Housing developments that share media attention and public recognizability. They too serve as Chicago landmarks, as identifiers of the city, although they represent an aspect of city life that many Chicagoans would prefer remained hidden. Cabrini-Green, when completed, was the largest public housing development in Chicago, to be exceeded by Robert Taylor Homes, a single complex totaling more than forty four hundred units on a 95-acre site. Robert Taylor Homes, the largest subsidized housing development in the world, is also the most famous, and indeed infamous, project in Chicago. Its "very name has become synonymous with the stereotypes of high-rise public housing."²⁵

Unlike the desired landmark status of the John Hancock Center, Robert Taylor Homes and Cabrini-Green are inadvertent landmarks, inhabited by tenants who have little choice but to bear what has become the stigma of residence in subsidized housing projects:

High-rise projects stand like monuments to failure. They rise up from Chicago's poor, inner city black communities like giant medieval fortresses. They have been called warehouses and concentration camps for the poor. These very names—Cabrini Green, Robert Taylor—have come to evoke loathing, fear or feelings of hopelessness.²⁶

Towers in the city may gain the status of powerful urban icons, but are they eloquent symbols of the city's achievement, or do they depict its demise? As the evidence suggests, they represent both. The meanings they convey are social constructions that are developed, sustained, and altered in the public arena. Their value cannot be understood apart from the congruencies and disparities between the meanings intended by their creators and those understood by their occupants and observers.

In 1964, Chicago was shaken by race riots. Construction of the Hancock Center began in 1965. With these multiple realities of urban life, it is hardly surprising that such a pronounced symbol of the metropolis would conjure up complex and diverse images.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Because of the security and privacy norms in the building, it was impossible to be a participant observer in all but the public spaces in the John Hancock Center. Interviews with informed observers provided information on occupants' attitudes about and use of the building that otherwise would have been unattainable. My thanks to Charles F. Clarke, Jr., Executive Vice President, Sudler Marling, Inc.; Gladys Timperio, Manager, 175 E. Delaware Place Condominiums; and Eugene Arthur Monaco, Manager, Operations, John Hancock Center, for sharing their informed experiences with me, as well as the numerous Chicago real-estate agents that wished to remain anonymous.

NOTES

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15. Gladys Timperio, interview (July 7, 1987).
16. *Chicago Tribune* (November 2, 1980); *Chicago Sun Times* (October 5, 1969).
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23. The sales brochure for "THE CONDOMINIUM at John Hancock Center."
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Terrance Goode

CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE, 1872–1922

EDITED BY JOHN ZUKOWSKY

LOUIS SULLIVAN: THE FUNCTION OF ORNAMENT

EDITED BY WIM DE WIT

LOUIS H. SULLIVAN: THE BANKS

LAUREN S. WEINGARDEN

The general spirit of revisionism that has characterized architectural discourse over the last two decades has led to a reassessment of a number of architects and events whose prominence was influenced by Modernist historiography. As in the rewriting of political history by successive regimes in the People's Republic of China or the Soviet Union, previous heroes have been vilified, former villains rehabilitated, and occasionally a broader insight gained into a previously misunderstood or underestimated individual.

This seems to be the case with the reevaluation of the major 19th-century American architect Louis Henri Sullivan (1856–1924). Sullivan scholarship had long been influenced by the sort of Modernist historiography exemplified by Sigfried Giedion's *Space, Time, and Architecture*, which misunderstood Sullivan as an architect solely concerned with the rigorous expression of a building's structural skeleton. This extremely simplistic interpretation of his idea of functional expression has been corrected by more recent investigations, which locate the architect within the context of 19th-century intellectual culture, particularly literary Transcendentalism. Two new books, *Louis H. Sullivan: The Banks* and *Louis Sullivan: The Function of Ornament*, share this critical sensibility, addressing aspects of Sullivan's work



View of Chicago looking north, showing Michigan Avenue and bridge, c. 1928. (From *Chicago Architecture*)

previously seen as secondary. By focusing respectively on the geometrical/botanical forms that animate the terra-cotta surfaces of Sullivan's buildings and the series of eight small midwestern banks designed at the end of his career, the two books broaden an understanding of Sullivan beyond that as a "prophet of Modern architecture."

Chicago Architecture 1872–1922: Birth

of a Metropolis also opens a new perspective on architecture and urbanism in Chicago by examining the exchange of ideas between Europe and Chicago during the period from 1872, immediately after the Great Fire, to 1922, the year of the Chicago Tribune Tower competition. This implicitly challenges another assumption of Modernist historiography, because previous critical wisdom had held the significance of this period to be the contribution of the Chicago School to the birth of Modern architecture, and that the importation of European traditions was *retardataire* and unworthy of investigation.

The book was published by the Art Institute of Chicago in collaboration with the Reunion des Musées Nationaux and the Deutsches Architekturmuseum, to accompany an exhibition that traveled from Paris to Frankfurt, Chicago and San Francisco. It is a well-designed book of substantial length with essays by widely recognized scholars. While it contains an annotated catalogue of the exhibition, *Chicago Architecture* can clearly stand on its own. The text is accompanied by black-and-white photographs and architectural drawings, and there is a separate section of plates, reproduced in splendid color and sepia duotones.

The 20 essays are arranged in six thematically independent sections framed by a



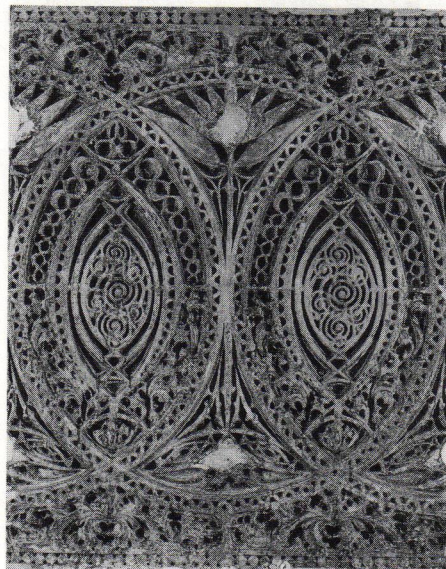
Corner of State and Madison streets following the Chicago fire of 1871. (From *Chicago Architecture*)

prologue and an epilogue. The majority of the essays concentrate on the importation of ideas from France and England into Chicago, while others examine aspects of Chicago architecture and urbanism independently of European influence. Surprisingly, given the prominent roles played by immigrants like Adolph Cudell and Dankmar Adler, only Roula M. Geraniotis's essay deals with German influence, especially that of Karl Friedrich Schinkel and the Berlin School of Neoclassicism as transmitted through the work of several of the city's German architects. Geraniotis's essay is located inappropriately in a section entitled "The Sky's the Limit: Highrises and Commercial Buildings." More appropriate to this section is Gerald R. Larson's essay on concurrent developments in the technology of structural iron framing in the United States, France, and England.

French influence is better served by the four essays in the section happily titled "Paris on the Prairie." These essays are thematically related by the subtext of bourgeois consumer culture; Joan E. Draper examines the 1909 Plan for Chicago by Daniel Burnham and Edward Bennett as a marketing tool, a set of seductive images for public consumption based on Parisian paradigms. Henri Loyrette deals with the reactions of French critics to the Chicago of 1893 at the Columbian Exposition, Adler and Sullivan's Auditorium Building, and the stockyards. Meredith L. Clausen examines the Rookery (1885–1888) by Burnham and Root as a transformation of the glass and iron courts of the great Parisian department stores, which Root visited in 1886. A fourth essay in the section, by Neil Harris, deals with consumer culture in Chicago by investigating various types of retail architecture and institutions, but is less clearly related to the main theme of French influence.

English influence is described in a section of three essays unhelpfully entitled "The European Connection." If the subtext of the section on French influence is the culture of consumption, that of the section on English influence is the relationship between craft and morality. The essay by

Thomas J. Schlereth examines the influence of enlightened factory-town planning in England on Solon S. Beman's progressive plan for Pullman, Illinois, a community planned for the railroad car magnate George Pullman. Elaine Harrington's essay on H. H. Richardson's Glessner house emphasizes the influence of William Morris in interior furnishings and decoration, and Richard Guy Wilson discusses the influence of the English Arts and Crafts movement on the Prairie Style and related



Plaster ornament from banquet hall in the Schiller theatre, Chicago, Louis Sullivan (1891). (From *The Function of Ornament*; courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society and the St. Louis Art Museum.)

design movements in Chicago and other parts of the Midwest.

The section devoted to Louis Sullivan is misleadingly titled "Beyond Europe: Louis Sullivan and the Search for an American Style." The two essays here actually perform the valuable task of demonstrating both English and French influences within Sullivan's architectural theory and ornament. Lauren Weingarden deals with the influence of John Ruskin, and Martha Pollak makes some intriguing connections between the comparative anatomy of Geoffroy and Cuvier and Sullivan's use of Classical form. She also discusses the physiognomic theory of Lavater in regard to Sullivan's interest in architectural expression. This aspect of Pollak's investigation is neatly supplemented by David van

Zanten's excellent essay in *The Function of Ornament*. Additionally, Chicago's grain elevators, warehouses, hotels, and apartment buildings are examined in two separate essays by Carrol W. Westfall. Two landmarks, the Wrigley Building and the Tribune Tower, are the subjects of essays by Sally Chappell and Robert Brueggemann, respectively.

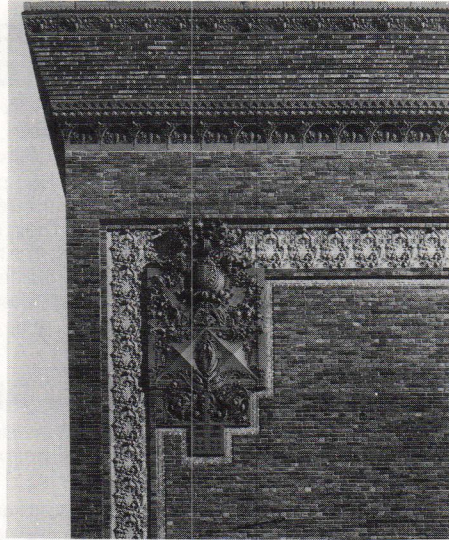
Taken individually, the majority of the essays are excellent. However, the themes of the six sections do not always reinforce the stated objective of the book, and several sections contain anomalous essays that suffer from their isolation. While John Zukowsky's introductory essay in the prologue provides a useful history of Chicago, and a larger context in which to locate the essays of the text, the epilogue, consisting of a single essay by Stanley Tigerman—the designer of the exhibition's installation at the Art Institute and the only practicing design professional to contribute to the book—is at best tangentially related to the purpose of the book. While Tigerman deals with a most Chicagoan theme, the hero, his heroes are the holy trinity of Modernist Chicago—Sullivan, Wright, and Mies.

Louis Sullivan: The Function of Ornament was also published in conjunction with an exhibition, organized by the Chicago Historical Society and the St. Louis Art Museum for venues in Chicago, New York, and St. Louis—three cities graced by outstanding examples of Sullivan's work. Like *Chicago Architecture*, it is much more than an exhibition catalogue. The book is a survey of Sullivan's entire career as a practicing architect, and of the critical reception of his work. It contains four essays on different aspects of his career, a chronology of his life, and a list of major architectural designs. Well designed, and profusely illustrated with architectural drawings and black-and-white photographs, the book also features Cervin Robinson's excellent color photographs taken especially for the exhibition. It unfortunately suffers from an excessive number of typographical errors and omissions—not what one expects from a book so carefully composed.

Unlike the essays in *Chicago Architec-*

ture, those in *The Function of Ornament* are clearly related to each other by chronological sequence and a common investigative strategy—each deals with a specific issue present in Sullivan's work and the building type most clearly associated with that issue. David van Zanten traces Sullivan's early career from his education at MIT and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, until 1890, emphasizing the influence of the Neo-Grec movement (fashionable at the Ecole in the 1860s and 1870s) on the series of theaters designed by Sullivan and Adler. William Jordy examines Sullivan's career from 1890 to 1904 and attempts to postulate a typology of formal themes in his tall buildings. Wim de Wit focuses on Sullivan's banks in the Midwest designed between 1906 and 1919 in the context of the progressive ideas in midwestern banking that transformed the industry between the 1890s and the 1920s. Rochelle Berger Elstein examines the critical response to Sullivan's architecture, concentrating on the period after Sullivan's death in 1924 to the present day; she uses the changing critical response to the Carson-Pirie-Scott Building as a sort of barometer. The chronology and project list, which terminate the text, are by Robert Twombly.

The organization of the book as a sequence of independent essays raises a historiographic dilemma. This approach fragments Sullivan's career and emphasizes the discontinuities rather than the continuities within his work. For instance, David van Zanten's demonstration that Sullivan's theory of functional expression began with his early assimilation of the Neo-Grec has profound implications for the later development of his ideas in regard both to tall buildings and banks. William Jordy, in another instance, makes some reference to the development of Sullivan's theory of architectural expression, but the subject is almost completely ignored in Wim de Wit's discussion of the larger social context influencing his design of the banks. This dilemma could have been avoided by a single essay examining the transformation of Sullivan's architectural theory over his entire professional life, as he became famil-



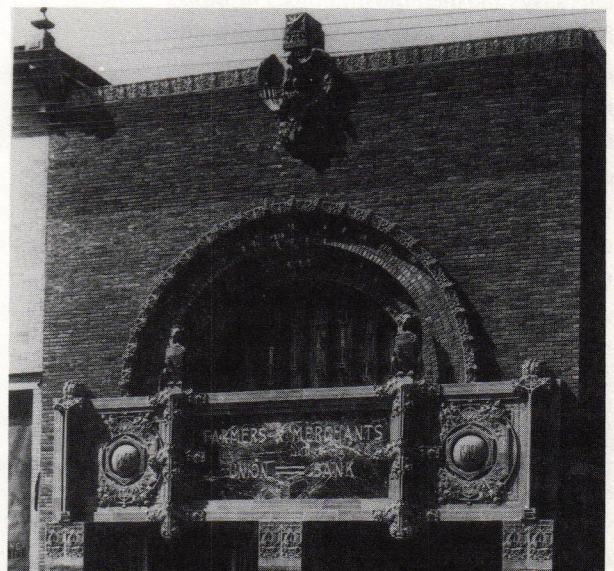
Detail of entrance, Merchant's National Bank, Grinnell, IA, Louis Sullivan (1913-15). (From *The Banks*)

iar first with German idealist philosophy and later with the poetry and prose of Walt Whitman.

Louis H. Sullivan: The Banks is the shortest of the three books reviewed here, but is clearest in its intent. Lauren Weingarten reassesses the significance of Sullivan's work between 1906 and 1919: eight small midwestern bank buildings designed during what has generally been regarded as Sullivan's period of personal and professional decline. She accomplishes this through three primary propositions. First, that the previously accepted unfavorable critical interpretation of the banks was a result of functional and technological determinism in the dogma of early Modernist architectural theory. Second, that the photographic reproduction of the banks in black and white, as opposed to color, prevented a true understanding of Sullivan's use of polychrome, or multicolored surfaces, or his mastery of natural and artificial light. Third, Weingarten argues the banks are an expression of ideas that Sullivan developed both in his architecture and in his prolific theoretical writings. She demonstrates how the banks represent a shift from the Tran-

scendentalist Idealism of Sullivan's earlier skyscrapers to the Pragmatist Realism of the banks, influenced by the Chicago School of John Dewey at the University of Chicago. As a result, she is able to conclude that rather than representing his decline, the banks represent a cogent statement of Sullivan's conception of an American architecture and its functional and symbolic roles within a progressive democratic culture.

The first part of the book contains Weingarten's exegesis of Sullivan's banks, progressing from specific theoretical issues, such as the role of polychrome, to their material expression in the banks. The second part of the book is a portfolio of contemporary color photographs of several of the buildings. Though central to Weingarten's arguments, this is unfortunately the weakest section, especially when compared to Cervin Robinson's superb color photographs in *The Function of Ornament*. While some of the photographs are outstanding—for example, the image of the rose window of the Merchants National Bank in Grinnell, Iowa—others are little better than snapshots, suffering from distorted perspective and a lack of compositional control. The final section of the book is a catalogue of the eight banks, with a history of each, relevant architectural drawings (many in Sullivan's own hand), and black-and-white archival photographs taken



National Farmers Bank, Owatonna, MN, Louis Sullivan (1908). (From *The Function of Ornament*; courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society and the St. Louis Art Museum.)

shortly after construction was completed.

Weingarden uses an interdisciplinary approach to Sullivan's architecture, comprising literature, philosophy, and the visual arts. Through an examination of Sullivan's writings, she is able to reveal Sullivan as a Romantic thinker and trace the role of Transcendentalist metaphysics in his architectural theory. This allows her to challenge a more conventionally accepted "functionalist" interpretation of Sullivan's work. Her discussion of Sullivan's debt to Impressionist color theory appears to break new ground in Sullivan scholarship. While Weingarden emphasizes the role of the banks within Sullivan's architectural production, Wim de Wit (in *The Function of Ornament*) demonstrated how progressive ideas in midwestern banking shaped Sullivan's work. In fact, the strengths of Weingarden's investigation are the weaknesses of de Wit's and vice versa; his essay is an excellent complement to her book.

Despite their individual shortcomings, these three books succeed in presenting a more international Chicago and a more complex Louis Sullivan than have previously been appreciated. The weaknesses of *Chicago Architecture* and *The Function of Ornament* stem from their organization as collections of independent essays which do not form a cohesive argument; their strengths stem from the quality of individual essays and their illustrations. *The Banks* benefits from a single critical sensibility and is far more successful on its own terms, if somewhat less visually inspiring. As a tool of revisionist historiography, the interdisciplinary breadth of Weingarden's investigation is almost as significant as her discussion of the banks themselves. Unfortunately, the other two books do not make similar contributions with any consistency.

CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE, 1872-1922: BIRTH OF A METROPOLIS, John Zukowsky, editor, Prestel-Verlag, 1987, 480 pp., illus., \$60.00.

LOUIS SULLIVAN: THE FUNCTION OF ORNAMENT, Wim de Wit, editor, W.W. Norton and Co., 1986, 224 pp., illus., \$35.00.

LOUIS H. SULLIVAN: THE BANKS, Lauren S. Weingarden, MIT Press, 1987, 144 pp., illus., \$25.00.

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BRENDAN GILL

TRUTH AGAINST THE WORLD

EDITED BY PATRICK J. MEEHAN

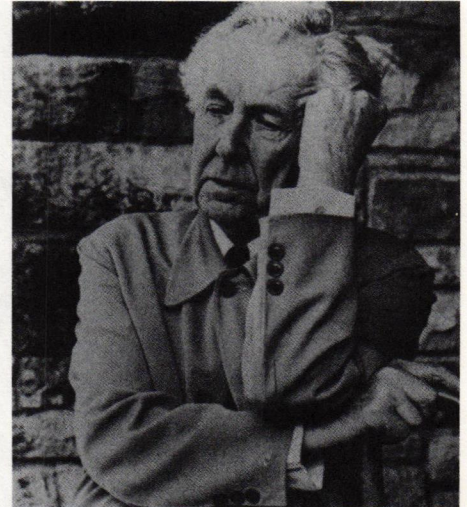
For how long the words “legend” and “legendary” have been associated with Frank Lloyd Wright I do not know, but two things are evident: first, that Wright himself lived, and fully intended to live, a “legendary” or mythopoeic existence, and second, that it is in the nature of legends and myths that they must be told and retold and told again with embellishments, so that eventually the distinction between legend and myth (if one exists) becomes blurred. It is unfortunate that two full-length biographies of Wright should have been published at so nearly the same time, for that is probably more retelling than the market can bear in one season; but such is the fascination we have with the story of Wright’s life.

Neither Einbinder nor Gill is an architect or an ex-Taliesin Fellow. Both men are professional writers who have found in Wright’s life a promising theme for a book—but that is as far as the similarity goes. Einbinder’s version, the shorter of the two, is based mainly upon diligent researching of public records, newspaper files, magazine articles, Wright’s writings, etc. While he has adduced a number of facts with which I, at least, was unacquainted, and while he has enlivened his account with many passages of direct dialogue (which the author admits may not be wholly authentic, but no matter), Einbinder brings no fresh insight into the nature of either Wright or his architecture. His book contains no illustrations, and verbal descriptions of only a limited number of buildings. The story he tells is a good one, of course, especially at those points (as in his recounting of the

Miriam Noel episode) where the human-interest factor is unusually charged. As a biography, however, Einbinder’s hardly matches such earlier versions as Robert Twombly’s.

Many Masks is another matter altogether. It is profusely illustrated with pictures of both buildings and people; more importantly, it is enriched with an extraordinary number of vignettes of persons who were involved with the architect’s personal and professional life (if there was a distinction between the two), together with extensive quotations from the immense number of letters that Wright wrote and received. While for good reason Wright had no great fondness for journalists, he cultivated a close friendship with Gill during the last dozen or so years of his life—so close that they called one another “Brendan” and “Frank,” somewhat to Gill’s astonishment. In comparison to Einbinder, Gill reveals a vastly greater concern for Wright’s *personhood* (however deviously masked), and for the architect’s infinitely complex relationships with other persons—parents, colleagues, wives, children, mistresses, clients, apprentices, etc. Gill explores at length the nature of the household in which Wright grew up. He reveals that his father, William Cary Wright, was a charming and accomplished man whom his son Frank in many ways resembled, and makes it plain that his mother, Anna Lloyd Jones, was a shrewish termagant who made life hell for her husband and her stepchildren, while lavishing her affection and attention upon her one son. Gill’s account of the relation between Wright and Louis Sullivan is particularly illuminating, as is his exploration of the architect’s relation to his Buffalo patrons in the 1900s and afterward.

More than any earlier writer, Gill deals just as frankly with the unattractive aspects of Wright’s character as he does with the attractive ones. He does not attempt to disguise the man’s insufferable arrogance, his towering egotism, his blatant mendacity, his profligate self-indulgence, his utter irresponsibility in matters financial—yet at the same time he manages to convey what it was about Wright that caused so many



Wright seated at home in Taliesin III near Spring Green, WI (c. late 1940s–early 1950s). (From *Truth Against the World*; courtesy of *The Capital Times*, Madison, WI.)

grievously wounded people to forgive him his offenses and to accord him an affectionate and awed esteem so extravagant as to border upon the idolatrous. For those who, like both Wright and Gill, have neither religious convictions nor a firm commitment to the ethical perspectives of our ancestors and of ancestral architects, Wright’s claim to possessing, and being thought to possess, quasi-divine status will seem legitimately mythic aspects of a truly mythic figure—probably the last such figure we shall see for decades or centuries to come. Surely Wright would have been the first to say that it is not only our recent pack of presidential candidates who have seemed dwarfish; modernity, including modern architecture, has diminished us all, making it harder and harder for anyone to play his part (if he even thinks he has one to play) in so grand a manner as Wright’s.

Einbinder devotes a short chapter to what he calls “The Eloquent Architect”—to Wright the public speaker—while Gill, too, professes to find wisdom in the ideas Wright so often expressed before audiences. This is the subject of our third book, Patrick J. Meehan’s collection of 29 of Wright’s speeches, plus one interview, each introduced by prefatory paragraphs by the editor. According to the publisher’s blurb, “Wright emerges as a polished, seasoned, and dynamic orator whose comments seem as pertinent now as they were then,” but the text hardly fulfills that inflated promise.



Frank Lloyd Wright and apprentices, c. 1930s. (From Jonathan Lipman, *Frank Lloyd Wright and the Johnson Wax Buildings*, Rizzoli, 1986; photo ©Bill Hedrich/Hedrich-Blessing.)

Only one of the speeches was delivered from a prepared manuscript. The rest were extemporaneous improvisations and tend to be rambling, unorganized, and digressive, repeatedly addressing the same few ideas regardless of the nature of his audience. (When he spoke before a convention of hospital administrators, for instance, he had nothing whatever to say about hospital design, other than that hospitals should be made “joyous” places by means of organic architecture—no examples given, since Wright had never designed a hospital, joyous or otherwise.)

The ideas expressed in these speeches have to do with a few basic themes: the need to develop an “organic” architecture, the nature of which is so poorly explicated that one has to conclude that “organic” means “Wright’s own,” all else being “inorganic”; the relation of civilization to culture and our never having achieved a “culture of our own” (wherein it turns out that what Wright meant by civilization was “a way of life” and by “culture,” the beautification of that way of life—a notion that reminds us of Wright’s enormous debt to the aestheticism of the late 19th century); the iniquity of our

having mimicked European architecture (though not of his having derived forms from Mayan buildings, since they were the product of “an indigenous American culture,” never mind the fact that the Mayans, with their penchant for cruel and bloody human sacrifice, have no conceivable relationship to the civilization of the United States at any point whatsoever); “democracy,” a word Wright defined in a way that has nothing to do with its etymological or political meaning, but that is taken to designate “the apotheosis of the individual”; and the near-total depravity of American life, which waits to be saved and redeemed by organic architecture; and so on.

In four of the speeches Wright brought forth once more his notion that the poet Lao-tze had made him see that the reality of a building lies in “the space within” rather than in its solid forms. It seems never to have occurred to Wright that that statement should be understood in relation to the ancient and traditional Chinese house, which, like our textbook example of the Roman house, consisted of rooms opening off a walled courtyard but with no distinctive or meaningfully public exterior form.

(A Roman house like that of the Vetii, for instance, had no visible exterior at all.) The “reality” of Wright’s buildings was self-evidently a matter of exterior shape—witness the fact that Mr. Meehan’s book is illustrated with 146 photographs of the exteriors of Wright’s structures (mostly irrelevant to the texts among which they are interspersed) but of only 44 interior views—and in these 44 one looks at the shapes rather than the spaces between the shapes. Like other architects, Wright was a designer of forms, of patterns—in fact, of more all-encompassing patterns than most architects have even dreamed of designing. In his desire to determine all the

shapes, including furniture, rugs, draperies, lighting fixtures, and, if given a chance, even clothing for his clients, thereby leaving no choices for his clients to make upon moving into their work of *gesamtkunst*, Wright revealed a *modus operandi* to which the word “democratic” could not conceivably have been applied. (Perhaps it was more than a matter of personal taste that caused him to be so deeply enamored with the cultures of “old Germany” and “old Japan,” both of which had so little to do with, and eventually became adversaries of, the ideals of American democracy.) Wright recognized clearly enough that there had underlain the great architecture of the past some kind of religious or religio-political significance, but in one of his speeches he dismisses Christianity and the whole body of Christian art as “sentimentality” and urges that his hearers should put first “Your ideal! Now that is what organic architecture sees. That innate faith in the self-god is the core of it.”

Meehan is himself an architect, a former Taliesin Fellow, and the author of an earlier book, *The Master Architect: Conversations with Frank Lloyd Wright*. It is not surpris-

ing that he should write *à parti pris*. That the publication of this collection of speeches will do much to advance the cause to which Wright devoted his life seems highly unlikely, for it will convince only those who are already convinced.

All three of our writers, Einbinder, Gill, and Meehan, find occasion to speak of Wright as having been a "great man," the "greatest American architect"—or as Wright himself would have expressed it, "the greatest architect since Imhotep." Undoubtedly he had an immense gift for three-dimensional design, and he was one of the most remarkable characters (that is, one of the most colorful eccentrics) our world has seen. But a "great man?" After reading the three books under review, I am persuaded that they should be read along with a fourth book, Richard Sennett's *The Fall of Public Man*, which traces the steady

retreat into privacy that has occurred since the 18th century and the heyday of "public man"—the man the Greeks called *polites*, the responsible citizen, in contrast to *idiotes*. The latter was not idiotic in our modern sense of the word; he was simply a "private man," a nonparticipant. One can hardly say "private person," for the word "person" designates (or at least used to designate) someone who plays a part, who wears the *persona* or mask of an identifiable character in a play. While using the title *Many Masks*, Brendan Gill never discusses the relation of masks to personhood. Had he done so, he might have realized that Wright actively sought to build houses for *idiotai*—"natural houses" for "natural men" who would be content to live as far away as possible from the city and its civilizing institutions. His clients were never statesmen. The acid test is this: if the White

House had been destroyed by enemy action in World War I or World War II, as it had been during the War of 1812, would anyone in the country have wanted Frank Lloyd Wright to design a new one? Certainly not—for whoever lives in *that* house is required to be a Public Man.

AN AMERICAN GENIUS: FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT, Harvey Einbinder, Philosophical Library, 1986, 446 pp., \$17.95.

MANY MASKS: A LIFE OF FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT, Brendan Gill, Putnam, 1987, 576 pp., illus., \$22.95.

TRUTH AGAINST THE WORLD: FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT SPEAKS FOR AN ORGANIC ARCHITECTURE, Patrick J. Meehan, editor, Wiley, 1987, 474 pp., illus., \$39.95.

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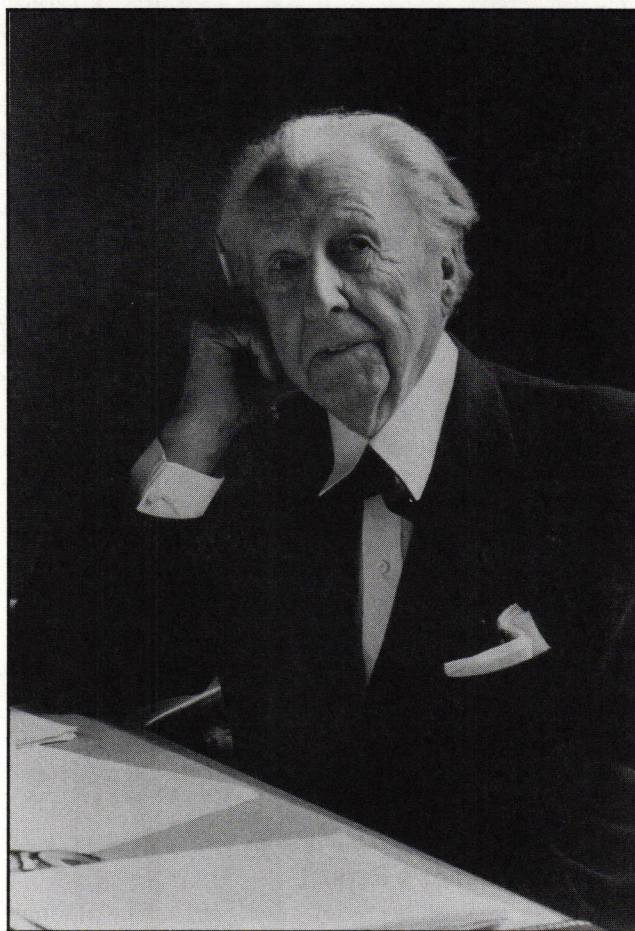
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CONTENTS OF THE VOLUMES

VOLUMES 1 & 2

Main Entry

This chronological listing presents all of the information available in the six indexes described below. All indexes refer to this main entry for complete information about a letter. The listing is especially useful in establishing the complicated relationships and negotiations between clients, such as Dr. Alexander Chandler, Solomon R. Guggenheim, and Edgar Kaufmann, for whom Wright prepared various schemes over several years. It also shows Wright's activities on a given day as he wrote to numerous correspondents.

VOLUME 3

Author Index

Organized alphabetically by correspondent. When a correspondent has written more than one letter, the citations are presented in chronological order. It can be determined at a glance whether or not Wright received any letters from a given individual and, if so, how many and over what time period.

VOLUME 4

Addressee Index

Organized alphabetically by recipient of letter. When a person is the recipient of more than one letter, the citations are presented in chronological order. One can learn instantly whether or not Wright wrote to a given individual.

VOLUME 5

Affiliation Index

Organized alphabetically and chronologically by correspondent's organization. Did Wright ever correspond with anyone at the Museum of Modern Art or with anyone at the School of Design at Harvard? Did Harper and Row ever offer to publish Wright's books? The answers are here.

General Subject Index

This index categorizes each letter into one or more of 22 general subject categories, arranged chronologically. Among these categories are: exhibitions, family, lectures, philosophy, publications, students, and technology. This section allows the user to see, for example, the correspondence Wright had between 1935 and 1940 about lecturing.

Proper Name Index

This is a more specific subject index that locates names mentioned in a letter.

Project Number Index

The Taliesin Archive has compiled an exhaustive list of Wright's projects assigning a number to each project. This list is published for the first time in this set. The project number index cites each mention of a project in the correspondence. One can find, for example, a complete list of all letters discussing the Price Tower.

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FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT'S LARKIN ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

JACK QUINAN

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT AND THE JOHNSON WAX BUILDINGS

JONATHAN LIPMAN

Two recent books on the work of Frank Lloyd Wright benefit from previously unavailable archival material and form part of an expansion in scholarship that is enriching our knowledge of Wright's work. Jack Quinan's *Frank Lloyd Wright's Larkin Administration Building* and Jonathan Lipman's *Frank Lloyd Wright and the Johnson Wax Buildings* show how rigorous scholarship and considered judgment can elucidate major architectural works that appear long-established in the canon of modernism. Quinan's book is a triumphant revision of myths of the Larkin Building, while Lipman's book on the Johnson Wax Buildings is less substantial.

The first myth that Quinan confronts is Grant Manson's brief version of how Wright obtained the Larkin commission. Manson's description in his *Frank Lloyd Wright to 1910*, probably based on a retrospective account by Wright, is corrected by Quinan's close study of the diaries and letters of Darwin Martin, secretary of the Larkin Company. Although Martin was largely responsible for the new building, the client consisted of two factions within the Larkin Company: people responsible for manufacturing soap and people responsible for mail-order merchandising (whose success was largely due to Martin). The varying ambitions of the clients raised the question of whether the building would be a symbol to the business as a whole, a goad to increase the division between the operational units, or a monument to the individuality of Darwin D. Martin.

The nature of the client-architect rela-

tionship is established by Quinan's judicious quotes from the Martin papers. Quinan relies more on Martin's prose than on Wright's words to relate the story of the commission. Within the discussion of the myth of the commission, Quinan takes on a more complex issue: Wright's mythologizing of his own experience. Quinan clearly shows that Wright overemphasized his role in the design of major commercial buildings while at the office of Sullivan and Adler, and denied his role as a designer of the office's domestic buildings, a role that Wright later contradicted in his *Autobiography*. Not only did Wright want the commission so badly he twisted the truth, but he also engaged in a practice that would later characterize other major projects in his career: he developed the design to impress and to engage his clients before officially receiving approval for the commission. Quinan, however, focuses on the Larkin Building and does not point to these practices as lifelong tendencies on Wright's part.

After discussing the details of the commission, Quinan provides a history of the Larkin Company, but there is no transition between the two. The reader learns that an understanding of the company's history is critical to understanding the building. The success of the company rested on selling soap by mail order and by offering premiums to its clients, business ventures based on an ethos that selling and buying occurred among members of a big, happy family. Business as a family concern became the credo of the Larkin Company. This discussion would have been enriched by illustrations of the Larkin merchandise, and the chapter includes some material that is repeated later in the book.

With the facts of the commission and the



View of light court, looking north from second-floor balcony, Larkin Building (1906). (From *Frank Lloyd Wright's Larkin Building*; courtesy of Daniel I. Larkin.)

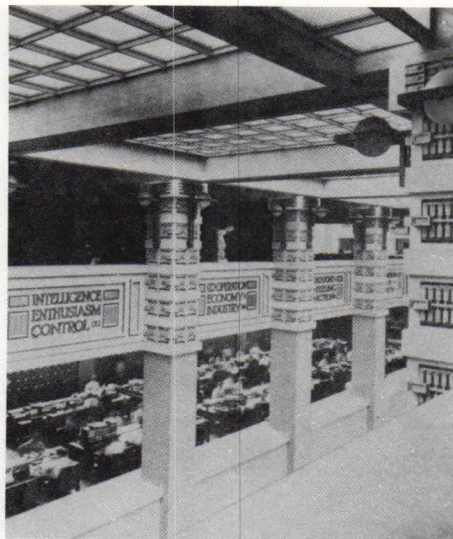
history of the company established, Quinan returns to a myth central to the building's history: Wright's account of the "flash" of inspiration that led to the articulation of the corner stair towers of the building. The development of the stair towers is critical because they are key elements in the formal expression of the building, and their placement at the perimeter of the building allowed the unencumbered opening of the inner light court. They fundamentally affected the perception of the Larkin Building and Wright's own perception of the functional expression of architecture. Quinan draws on his superb grasp both of documents and archival drawings to clarify that Wright's effort was no "flash" but a gradual struggle for a solution.

If the design was not a sudden response to an outburst of inspiration, it also did not exist outside history or beyond the influence of other sources. Quinan discusses

briefly some historical precedents of the form of the building and comments on Wright's attitudes toward history, beginning with a speculation that Wright was embarrassed by his historicizing designs of the 1890s and by Sullivan's admiration for the work of H. H. Richardson. The origins of the light court are briefly traced to Roman insulae, but the role of precedent appears to end with Quinan's claim that Wright invented the organization of the bi-nuclear plan as a means of connecting the main building to the annex. Quinan focuses much more convincingly (and appropriately) on 19th-century precedents and points to the grain elevators, those icons of modern architecture, as an unacknowledged source. Another unacknowledged source appears to be Darwin Martin's invention of a card catalogue of customers. In the terms of a brilliant metaphor, the balconied interior of the Larkin Building became itself a built-in file cabinet with the records of commerce available at each level. Sitting at the very center on the main floor of this file cabinet were the Larkin Company's two prime movers, Darwin Martin and William Heath, the office manager. This organization of architecture and executives signified that the mail-order business superceded soap selling in importance.

The myth of mechanical function and the formal abstraction of the massing have provided the conventional meaning of the Larkin Building. In his discussion of the operation of the building and its mechanical systems, Quinan refutes another myth: Reyner Banham's assertion that the building was not technically air-conditioned until 1909. New evidence shows that air-conditioning was conceived as early as 1903.

Beyond the questions of how the building functioned and its imposing mass are its other meanings. In perhaps his most important contribution, Quinan elucidates these by showing the convergence of architectural sculpture, hortatory inscriptions, and building program. Wright's architectural sculpture in particular has been almost totally neglected in the literature, but was important in his domestic buildings before 1909 and became increasingly important in



View across light court, fifth-floor level. (From *Frank Lloyd Wright's Larkin Building*; courtesy of Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society.)

his major buildings—including the Midway Gardens and the Imperial Hotel—immediately after his return from Europe in 1910. A close view reveals the complexity of issues involved in the analysis of sculptural form. For example, on the exterior, Wright and sculptor Richard Bock's pier sculptures on the main facades show kneeling, wingless putti holding a globe on their shoulders, implying the global aspirations of the Larkin Company. The sculptural group relies on a debased version of the Atlas myth as historical precedent. It also shows clearly that Wright did not appropriate the image from the gilded sphere of laurel leaves, designed by Joseph Olbrich, that marked the entry to the Secession Building in Vienna.¹ The incised exhortations to altruism, sacrifice, and virtuous work were a basic part in a building program devised by clients who believed that increasing workers' harmony augmented the moral value of production. Taken together, the interior organization, the beneficence of the interior space and light, the sculpture, and the espousal of virtuous work reveal that the Larkin Building was a monument to Emersonian transcendentalism, progressivism, and Protestant ethics.

Quinan also thoroughly discusses the critical reception of the building, another area of investigation often absent from current historiography. The author relies on the conventional assumption that

Wright's famous German publications, *Ausgeführte Bauten und Entwürfe* and *Frank Lloyd Wright: Ausgeführte Bauten* of 1910–11 brought Wright's work, including the Larkin Building, fully to the European architectural community. However, in light of my recent research on the checked publishing history of the Wasmuth publications and their limited distribution in Europe, it appears that H. P. Berlage's role was probably more important than has been assumed in disseminating the Larkin Building to a European audience. Nevertheless, it does appear that there was far more appreciation of the building in Europe than in America; Russell Sturgis's negative review, based on photographs of the building, seems to have tarnished critical reception of the building for decades.

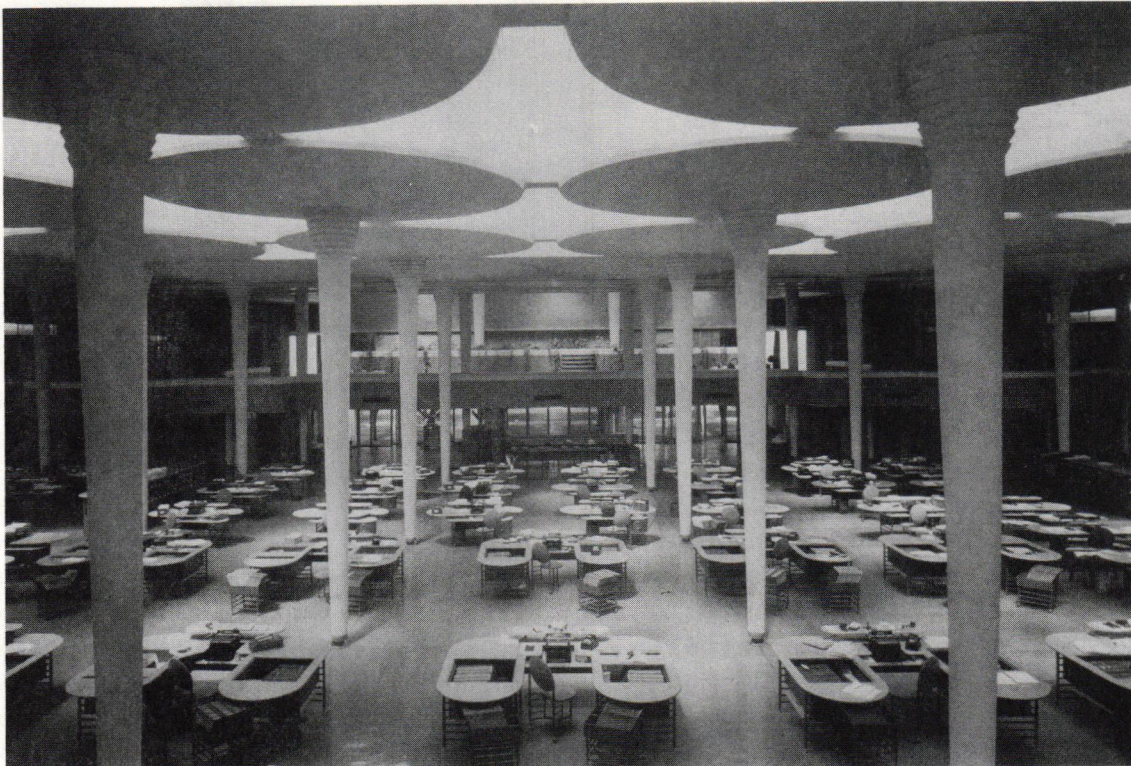
The Larkin Building's reputation never assumed its proper stature in America, and the full grasp of its significance prevented the guarding of this monument for posterity. Quinan relates with *sangfroid* the tragic destruction in 1950 of this unique amalgamation of program and form, matter and spirit. His book helps compensate for that loss by re-creating the context and meaning of the Larkin Building. Edited by a skillful, hidden hand and handsomely produced, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Larkin Administration Building* is the satisfying and definitive treatment on the subject.

When we move from the house that soap built to the house that wax built, the surface becomes more slippery.

Jonathan Lipman's straightforward history of Frank Lloyd Wright's buildings for the Johnson Wax Company is the most complete discussion to date of one of Wright's most monumental ensembles. Written during the preparation of a long-running exhibition on the Johnson Wax Buildings (a complex consisting of the administration building built in 1936 and a research tower built in 1944), Lipman's book also typifies a recent trend in architectural historiography: it is neither an exhibition catalogue—no reference is made to how the book relates to the exhibition—nor is it a comprehensive monographic treatment that proposes a formal and critical

interpretation. Instead, it is a beautifully cloaked excursus that provides the foundation for a serious analysis of a landmark of modern architecture.

The visual documentation is the best part of Lipman's book. Beautiful illustrations, many of which are from the archives of the Johnson Wax Company, provide previously unseen glimpses of the buildings under construction and in daily use. There are views of the Great Workroom, emptied of people for its photographic canonization and lit by a gossamer web of Pyrex tubing, and views of the building filled with activity, such as in the illustration of Herbert



The Great Workroom viewed from south mezzanine, Johnson Administration Building, 1939.
(From *Frank Lloyd Wright and the Johnson Wax Buildings*)

Johnson addressing his employees during the Christmas profit-sharing meeting of 1939. Numerous unpublished drawings from the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation complement the photographs, but the diagrams are less successful: a "Choisy" drawing of the Great Workroom is over-rendered, and a group of analytical drawings provides little significant information and seems out of place in the context of Wright's free and delicate sketches. Color illustrations of the buildings and ample views of the furniture designed especially for the building compensate for these lapses.

The text, however, leaves the reader unsatisfied. Although Lipman has skillfully assembled a building history from numerous interviews and documents, his text is adumbrated: it occupies only approximately 68 pages, about one-third of the book. We learn the facts of the building, the debates, and the arguments; relevant correspondence is carefully assembled from archival sources. But the text and illustrations are often unintegrated, and the reader feels obligated to read the book twice, once for the text and once for the extensive captions of the illustrations. The lack of depth in the

existing text is exemplified by the embarrassingly perfunctory treatment in an appendix of *Wingspread* (the house Wright designed for Herbert Johnson) and related commissions. While the extent of Lipman's research is impressive, his specific sources are at times unclear. The shortage of dates and footnotes, the absence of accession numbers for the numerous drawings, and the omission of a simple chronology are deficiencies for the scholar, who may want to scrutinize details, but not for popular readership.

More fundamental than the brevity of the text are the issues that remain untouched: the reception of the administration building by the public and the architectural community; the effect of the buildings on Wright's career; an extensive examination of its formal language in the context of Wright's oeuvre; and the social impact of this "Corporate Cathedral," as it was described in the title of the traveling exhibition of the building. Only in Kenneth Frampton's introduction is there the beginning of a critical appraisal: Frampton states the Johnson Wax Building is arguably "not only the greatest piece of twentieth-century architecture

realized in the United States to date, but also, possibly, the most profound work of art that America has ever produced." Lipman provides a chronicle of a building history in a handsome book, but the Johnson Wax Building merits a more profound treatment that goes beyond visual delight to the roots of its cultural meanings.

1. Liberty with sculptural representation is also apparent in the relief panel, entitled "Aurora." The figure resembles far less the personification of Dawn than a Nike, a winged victory similar to the small models of the *Victory of Samothrace* that were found throughout the Larkin Building and in Wright's other buildings.

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT'S LARKIN ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, Jack Quinan, Architectural History Foundation/ MIT Press, 1987, 350 pp., illus., \$30.00.

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT AND THE JOHNSON WAX BUILDINGS, Jonathan Lipman, Rizzoli, 1986, 192 pp., illus., \$35.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

Thomas Bender

ARCHITECTURE AND THE JOURNALISM OF IDEAS

Any marked development in the professional self-consciousness of a field invites historical and critical investigation. Just such tendencies are evident today in regard to architectural writing, both scholarly and journalistic. The founding of *Design Book Review* provides one example. The Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture at Columbia University, which held a conference on "The Building and the Book" in the spring of 1986, provides another. In addition, several architectural and journalism schools have established or are considering the establishment of sub-programs dealing with architectural writing.

Fortunately, the historical record is full enough to sustain such critical and historical inquiry. New York can boast a long and distinguished tradition of architectural journalism, a sequence of fine critics punctuated by a trio of genuinely great ones: Montgomery Schuyler, Lewis Mumford, and Ada Louise Huxtable. The history of that lineage deserves to be written, but my purposes here are somewhat different. Rather than examining the internal history of architectural journalism, I intend to explore the place of architecture within the larger intellectual culture of New York in the 20th century.

How does the subject of architecture relate to the broader history of intellectual journalism in New York City? What intrigues me is the way architecture has moved in and out of the central discourse of New York's intellectuals during the first half of the 20th century. It is striking how frequently intellectuals who were not architects found in architecture a cluster of issues and to some extent even a language for discussing more general political and cultural problems. At other times, writers firmly rooted in the design professions have reached out to address public issues in illuminating and significant ways.

It is worth looking at the intersection of

architectural and general cultural and political discourse right now, in part because of the heightened self-consciousness of the critical enterprise in the field. But I am drawn to this theme also because significant architectural thinking and writing is not occurring now in the popular culture. I am not referring to the internal discourse of architecture—criticism written principally for a professional architectural audience—but to architectural writing for the public in general circulation magazines and newspapers.

At a time when much of the public recognizes that architectural issues contain a cluster of deeply important political and cultural issues, there is no critic to illuminate or address them with the rich humanistic learning and political insight that Lewis Mumford brought to the *New Yorker's* "Skyline" column. Instead the magazine gives us Brendan Gill's pleasant but unhelpful banter. Daily journalism offers no more. It is discouraging even to begin to assess how much the culture and polity suffer from the declension marked by the succession of critics at the *New York Times*, from Ada Louise Huxtable to Paul Goldberger.

When we want, perhaps desperately need, an architectural discourse that advances political philosophy and cultural understanding, major general publications offer us, in varying combinations, the romance of architecture and puffery of the sort that was common to literary criticism in New York before Edgar Allen Poe. Occasionally we get innocent and rather stiff objection to overbuilding that declines to inquire into the political and cultural issues that are crucial both as causes and results. With such a vacuum, it is surprising that no major intellectual today has incorporated architecture, as Lewis Mumford once did, into his or her critical terrain.

Our current circumstance is all the more remarkable because the emergence of a "journalism of ideas" in America is so much associated with two men—Fredrick Law Olmsted and Herbert Croly—prominent in the pantheon of American architectural practice and criticism. Olmsted was

one of the editors of *Putnam's Monthly* in the 1850s and was a founder of *The Nation* in the 1860s, two magazines that may fairly be said to have given initial definition to intellectual journalism in this country. While architectural historians honor Olmsted as a brilliant urban designer, intellectual historians are as likely to stress his significance as a major intellectual, a key writer and influence in the literary and political culture of New York City. In Olmsted's writing, architectural and general cultural and political issues converge. Indeed, Olmsted's purposes and career as a designer cannot be understood apart from his purposes and career as a writer—and vice versa.

Herbert Croly provides an equally interesting, if less well-known, case. The phrase "journalism of ideas" was first used by Lewis Mumford to describe the serious writing for the public that he read (and later wrote) in the *New Republic*, founded in 1914 by Croly, who until then had been the editor of the *Architectural Record*. Those who know Croly as an architectural critic seldom realize that he was also the author of a classic work of political philosophy, a work surpassed in American political thought only by the *Federalist Papers*. And those who know Croly as the author of *The Promise of American Life* (1909) and founding editor of the *New Republic* rarely know about his earlier career as an architectural journalist. It was a pair of architectural problems that initiated his work in political philosophy. Croly was concerned both about locating an American "tradition" for architectural practice and with the problem of making art in a commercial society.

To grossly oversimplify a long and complex book, he proposed in *The Promise of American Life* that Americans avoid choosing between an irrelevant European tradition and an inchoate indigenous culture by committing themselves to a creed, a democratic promise to be defined by intellectuals. All of this, of course, would take time. Immediately, he urged professionals, architects among them, to do good work, to seek excellence, and, more importantly, to pass up no opportunity to connect their own disciplinary concerns to larger public con-

cerns. He assured his readers that such a strategy would work, and for Croly it did. Overnight, he became the most influential intellectual in America. After reading his book, Dorothy and Willard Straight offered to fund a magazine where that democratic creed—in politics and culture—might be developed.

The Promise of American Life was prompted by Croly's reading of a third-rate novel about the travail of an idealistic architect. Disturbed by the fate of genuine "individual intellectual effort" in America, Croly set out "to justify the specialized contemporary intellectual discipline and purposes." Though the book is a political classic, it is not political in a conventional sense. Its concluding chapter does not offer a political program; rather it is a discussion of the role of intellectuals in establishing the national purpose and the ideals that must precede and surround any political movement.

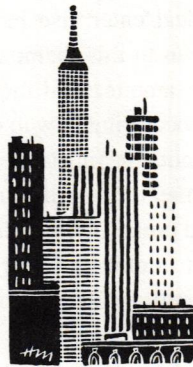
The interests of the creative intellect and the public were one, according to Croly, but the excess of private and commercial interests stunted them both. The intellectual (and architect) could save the public by saving himself or herself. If artists and intellectuals needed a moral and intellectual atmosphere that respected "disinterested achievement"—and Croly was certain they did—they must themselves take responsibility for bringing about such conditions. In their pursuit of excellence and popularity, artists and intellectuals would give birth to a progressive and public ideal. Croly particularly criticized those intellectuals and artists hesitant to engage the public realm. They were too quick, he thought, to blame a philistine public, when in fact the artist and intellectual had not tried hard enough. He accused architects and intellectuals of wanting to be "immediately taken" at their "own valuation and loaded with awards and opportunities." Should not the intellectual and artist, he asked, be obligated to make themselves "interesting to the public?" Indeed, he insisted the architect or intellectual must make the first move. "The fact that he is obliged to make a public instead of finding one ready made" is not so

THE SKY LINE

bad, Croly assured his readers, for it "will in the long run tend to keep his work vital and human." The critic, Croly believed, was responsible for advancing this process of tacking between the particular discipline and the developing public creed. Croly hoped that the *New Republic* would allow him to do that.

One of the first writers Croly hired for the magazine was Randolph Bourne, recently graduated from Columbia (in 1912) and already, through his articles in the *Atlantic*, established as the brilliant leader of the prewar "Young Intellectuals," the Greenwich Village writers whom the still younger Mumford early embraced as his mentors. Croly's letter to Bourne interestingly reveals his continuing sense of the relations of architecture to the task of the general intellectual. He asked Bourne to join the magazine's staff as a writer on literature, education, and town planning, especially housing. Bourne, for his part, was completely comfortable with this combination of journalistic responsibilities, writing on architectural topics ranging from Frank Lloyd Wright's neighborhood plan of 1913 to the destruction of Fifth Avenue. To read Bourne's infrequent but penetrating essays on these topics is to realize that for him and for his generation, cultural, political, social, and economic issues converged in architecture and urban design.

Architecture on its own terms did not interest Bourne, any more than poetry on its own terms interested him. Writing in the avant-garde *Poetry* magazine in 1918, the year of his early and tragic death in the influenza epidemic, Bourne allowed that you can discuss poetry as "a fine art, shut up in its own world, subject to its own rules



and values; or you can examine it in relation to the larger movement of ideas and social movements." He preferred the latter, and he warned that to "treat poetry entirely in terms of itself is the surest way to drive it into futility and empty verbalism." It is easy to imagine how he might have translated that thought from poetry to architecture.

After the war, intellectual life in New York was terribly fragmented. Except for the literary communism of the *Liberator* and the *New Masses*, which made art an extension of politics, art and politics went their separate ways. Croly, disillusioned by the war, worried that politics had corrupted culture. He turned to religion and, significantly, began writing again on architecture. During the twenties he regularly wrote about housing in the *Architectural Record*, advocating state-subsidized housing and trying to win the architectural profession as well as the public to that idea. It was again an example of addressing general social problems through the medium of architecture. But neither architects nor intellectuals generally paid much attention, save for Lewis Mumford, who had begun to write for Croly's *New Republic*.

Mumford's career in the 1920s suggests the distance between the world of architecture and the world of intellectuals. In reading his autobiography, *Sketches From Life* (1982), we realize that during the 1920s he belonged to two distinct circles; one, tightly literary, included Van Wyck Brooks, Elsie Clews Parsons, Harold Stearns, Paul Rosenfeld, and Waldo Franks. The other, with Clarence Stein and Henry Wright, was a world of architecture and urban planning. The two circles never intersected; in the autobiography he discusses them in separate chapters. Neither in life nor in autobiography was he able to pull the two together.

Lewis Mumford's great achievement during the 1930s was to find a way of synthesizing these two worlds, while at the same time incorporating the political concerns of the 1930s. The result was a man of letters who no longer wrote about writers but rather about the world. The vocabulary and issues of modern architecture were

central to this writing from the early 1930s to the early 1960s, when he published *The City in History* (1961) and, two years later, resigned from the *New Yorker*.

But Mumford went against the grain of general intellectual life. Contrast Edmund Wilson, Mumford's exact contemporary and the model for the literary intellectuals associated with the *Partisan Review*, those who came to be known after the war as the "New York Intellectuals." Early in his career, Wilson had shown great interest in architecture and the city—and some talent for writing about both. During the 1920s, he was managing editor of *Vanity Fair* (1920–21) and the *New Republic* (for the remainder of the decade). During this period, Wilson frequently focused upon an architectural issue, most often a single building—old St. John's Chapel, the apartment tower at 1 Fifth Avenue (which had, he thought, a "crushing" effect on Washington Square), or Joseph Urban's modern building for the New School for Social Research—to establish a critical position on larger issues in American culture and politics.

In one of the essays Wilson collected in *American Jitters* (1932), his survey of the state of the nation in the second year of the Depression, the New School provided an occasion for apt comments about both modern architecture and the relation of learning and capitalism. A committed literary modernist, Wilson appreciated the architecture of modernism as well, with its frank acknowledgment of technology and commercialism. But as a master of the study of symbols, Wilson knew that symbolism had not been stripped from architecture by modernism, and wondered whether it was appropriate for a university to be housed in an architecture symbolizing the very social values against which it must, if it is to respect its humanistic ideals, take an adversarial position. This allowed him to ask whether there might not be an essential contradiction between university ideals and the structural relation of the university to the social order. After about 1932 Wilson stopped writing this way, however, and architecture and the city dissolve in his

writing and even in his diaries and letters.

During the 1930s there was a great schism in the intellectual culture of New York. And here I do not refer to the well-known battles between Stalinists and Trotskyites, but rather to the split between the *Partisan Review* intellectuals, those whose recent autobiographies have placed them in the center of our historical sense of the intellectual life of the city in the 1930s and 1940s, and another group, characterized by the composer Virgil Thomson, who was one of them, as "the eye people and the ear people."

If the *Partisan Review* barely noticed the arts of the eye and ear, publishing little on music, nothing on dance, and only two articles on architecture in the 1930s and 1940s, the Thomson group, with MOMA and the *Herald Tribune* cultural pages as their base of operations, orchestrated New York's postwar achievements in these fields. Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock, associated with the group since Harvard undergraduate days, staged the most successful educational and polemical museum exhibit in American history—their "Modern Architecture" show, and the book they wrote in connection with it, *The International Style* (1932).

With that show and that book we have, I think, come to one of the roots of the problem that prompts this essay: on the one hand, intellectuals unable to engage architecture as a vehicle for general intellectual discourse and, on the other, an architectural criticism that cannot get beyond itself to engage and illuminate more general political and cultural issues. The book, in particular, bears responsibility here. It made great claims for architecture, even while drastically reducing the content and meaning of the architecture it celebrated. Along with Sigfried Giedion's *Space, Time and Architecture* (1941), which is subject to the same criticism, it came to define the movement, all the more because of the absence of much building in an era of depression and war. Both books, but *The International Style* first and most drastically, tightened the discourse of architecture, making it essentially self-referential, a quality that persists in the field to the present, even in

Kenneth Frampton's ostensibly radical *Modern Architecture* (1980, 1985). Indeed, *The International Style*'s text rather transparently distorted and narrowed not only the "movement" it proposed to identify, but also the show it accompanied. First, of course, it deleted Mumford's essay on social architecture—at the show itself his exhibit on housing was exiled by Johnson to another space, away from the "main" exhibit. If the show had been relatively inclusive and diverse, even allowing in both Frank Lloyd Wright and Raymond Hood, the book evolved into an almost purely Miesian and exclusionary prescription for the International Style. The whole movement was reduced from a political, economic, and social, as well as aesthetic one, to, in William Jordy's phrase, a "mere 'look.'"

Before we congratulate ourselves for getting beyond such modernism, it is worth asking whether, in fact, postmodernism has yet escaped the trap of Johnson's constricting definition of modernism. Mumford's valedictory "Case Against 'Modern Architecture,'" published in 1962, remains provocative today precisely because so much of it could be directed against postmodernism. Mumford quit writing on architecture at the *New Yorker* because architecture had ceased to be a fruitful place to explore the larger cultural and political issues.

If today our culture and politics, especially in our great cities, are impoverished to the degree that intellectuals (journalists of ideas) cannot incorporate architecture into their criticism, nor architectural writers extend the territory of their own discourse, we must ask for movement from both sides. Intellectuals, so deeply committed to the word, must overcome their fear of the seductiveness of the image—they must overcome their instinctive feeling that visual culture is by comparison less worthy or unable to sustain serious thought. On the other hand, I hope that architectural writers and journalists will remember their great predecessor, Herbert Croly, who found his way to the center of the culture by acknowledging the limits of his discipline and by recognizing that it was part of, not superior to, the culture of us all.

ON JULIA MORGAN: AN INTERVIEW WITH MRS. LILLIAN FORNEY

Mrs. Lillian Forney was Julia Morgan's secretary for 33 years. This is the first interview she has ever given about her longtime employer and friend. *Design Book Review* is grateful to her and to her daughter, Lynn Forney Stone, for this opportunity to shed new light on the life and career of this country's greatest woman architect. The interview was conducted in Berkeley by Sally B. Woodbridge, July 15, 1988.

SW: *As Julia Morgan's secretary from 1924 until her death in 1957, you managed most of the business of her office as well as her appointments, travel plans, and so forth. Misunderstandings and conflicting stories about Miss Morgan's life and career persist. Can you comment on some of these?*

LF: Miss Morgan was a very private person, very shy. There were some early news pieces that commented on what she wore and looked like instead of what she did, and for someone like Miss Morgan, who was very serious about her work, it was like a red flag. Everyone quotes her statement about her buildings speaking for her, and that was the way she wanted it. She was a very busy person and her time was totally organized, but she never refused to talk to anyone who asked for information about Mr. Maybeck, for example. She wanted information to be correct, but she didn't want to talk about herself.

SW: *Did this personal reserve extend to her employees and family?*

LF: Oh, no. Those who worked for her for a long time—Thaddeus Joy and James LeFeaver, for example—were family too, although I don't know where the idea came from that she shared the office profits every year. Perhaps she did that for a few big years early on, but not in the years I was with her. She gave people things on special occasions and was most thoughtful of emergency needs. For instance, she gave Thaddeus Joy a new house on Derby Street for a dollar because his house had burned down and he had a large family and nowhere to go. But when people gave her gifts, she returned them. Her family was

very important to her, but her work was the most important thing of all. Everyone makes a lot out of her always being called Miss Morgan, but those were the times. She wasn't always formal, but she was businesslike. I remember that there was a delivery boy who used to leave drawings and say, "These are for Julia." We never told her about it of course, but one day it came out, and she said, "Oh, yes, I know that." But she never said anything to him.

SW: *What was the office like when you were there? Walter Steilberg told me that in the early years, when he worked as her draftsman, she checked everything. Did she continue to do that even when the amount of work increased?*

LF: Yes, she always checked all the work, but quite often at night. She spent very little time in the office during the day. I remember she would arrive in a hurry and check the day's work and then leave. She spent most of her day visiting sites, talking with contractors, and so on. That's why her staff was so important to her. If someone didn't work out, they soon left.

SW: *What was her attitude toward getting work?*

LF: She accepted what jobs came her way, which of course grew to be quite a lot because of her many family and school connections and her excellent reputation. She didn't turn commissions away because, as I said, she valued her staff and didn't want to lose them. She had to keep a certain amount of work in the office, and she was concerned about that. She used to tell us that she didn't know how long the work at San Simeon would last. She had many more small commissions before San Simeon came along, but she still had a lot of other jobs in the office besides the work for Mr. Hearst.

SW: *Regarding that project, since she didn't delegate authority for projects to her staff, how did she keep up with everything? Working all week and then spending weekends at San Simeon, as Sara Boutelle reports in her book, must have been a terrible strain.*

LF: From 1924 on, when I was in the office, she never spent weekends at San Simeon or

had a room there. The one time that I remember her spending Saturday night was a fluke, and Marion Davies had to lend her a nightgown! No, she took the night train to San Luis Obispo, where she would be met with a car or taxi and driven to San Simeon. She worked all Saturday there and then took the night train back to San Francisco or to one of her jobs in the south. After the mastoid operation she had in the early thirties, one side of her face was paralyzed and her balance was affected. She looked like she had had a stroke, but that was not the case. This condition went on for several years. At first she talked about retiring, but then she kept on working and just limited her social contacts. She didn't join Mr. Hearst for meals at the big table in those years because she didn't want people to see her or pity her. Then, an amazing thing happened. She was walking on an old mining flume up a mountainside near Wyntoon and fell off into a tree. She injured herself and had to wait until someone came to find her. Somehow, after that her face was all right and so was her balance. It was mysterious, but she never went to a doctor and so never knew what happened.

SW: *A lot of confusion surrounds Julia Morgan's retirement.*

LF: When the war came in the early 1940s, Miss Morgan gave up her big drafting rooms in the Merchants Exchange Building and moved into two rooms on the same floor. But she didn't give up her work, and it is not true that she was depressed about the new trends in architecture or thought the world was passing her by. I know she had opportunities for work because I handled the office affairs. But she really wanted to travel, and, after all, she was nearly 70! She sorted out the office papers and marked what she thought was important and unimportant. We still have a bundle of photographs of her work that she marked as unimportant, but we brought them home anyway. While she traveled around the world on freighters—we have letters from her dated as late as 1949—my husband and I were in charge of the office. We sent notices to clients to come and pick up their drawings. She took care of her business and correspondence between trips. We had

stored duplicate papers and blueprints made from the linen drawings in the basement of the Merchants Exchange Building, and those were destroyed. But the linen drawings and primary records were saved. When she closed the small office in 1951, my husband and I took everything home, including the drawings that clients had not picked up, and stored it all in our basement along with a number of tiles and other memorabilia. Miss Morgan had already taken home the drawings and papers she felt belonged to history.

SW: *So very little was really lost?*

LF: Nothing was lost from the office side of things. My daughter, Lynn Stone, recently arranged to give 400 drawings to the documents collection in Wurster Hall [College of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley]. She is checking the job records here against their lists because all the lists are so inaccurate in so many ways. Lynn is also visiting all the sites and hopes to publish an updated record soon. We want very much to respect Miss Morgan's standards. Not that she's been haunting us, but it's high time!

I do want to clear up one last misconception. Miss Morgan did not die alone and a recluse. She was ill and would *never* see a doctor, so I don't know if medical treatments would have improved her condition. But I remember that she told me in 1955, "This condition does not get better, it gets worse. Will you stay by me?" Of course I said I would, and I took her mail to her when she was no longer strong enough to leave the house. But she was interested in mail and in hearing about things. My teenaged daughter visited her and remembers her sitting up in bed and giving her things to do. Her family kept up their visits, although her sister Emma was also sick, and old friends like Lucy Hale and Elizabeth McClave continued to visit. The nurses moved her bed down to the living room, which wasn't a very good situation for visitors except for family and old friends. It's only reasonable that there were days when she wasn't up to visiting, but the idea that her last years were so gloomy is distressing to me because it's not true. She just was not the sort to despair—life had been too good to her!

Sally B. Woodbridge

JULIA MORGAN

SARA HOLMES BOUTELLE

After some fourteen years of research and preparation, Sara Holmes Boutelle's monograph on Julia Morgan (1872–1957) appeared this spring in a handsome volume. Boutelle has given an eager audience a reference work that reveals, at last, much about the life and work of this country's greatest woman architect to date. The text is well illustrated with an assortment of original drawings and photographs, old and new. Richard Barnes's color photography, commissioned for the book, effectively communicates Morgan's sensitive use of color and pattern. Even those much-photographed subjects, the Neptune and Roman pools at San Simeon, gain new dimensions of enchantment.

Over the years of scant publication and mounting interest in Julia Morgan, speculation has focused on the salient features of her life and career: her triumph over many obstacles in gaining admission to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1898—she was the first woman admitted in architecture; the subsequent success of what remains the longest-lived woman-run architectural firm in the country; her work for Phoebe Apperson and William Randolph Hearst (1919–1950s), which in terms of numbers of domestic commissions and magnitude of cost, exceeded even that of Richard Morris Hunt for the Vanderbilts; and her reluctance to talk about herself and her architecture. "My buildings speak; I do not speak," she is reported to have said.

Boutelle's account of Morgan's early life, her trials in gaining admission to the Ecole and her experience there, and her early years of practice in San Francisco (beginning in 1904) is lively and engaging. The chapter on "The Women's Network" describes the social context of women's organizations and movements that benefited Morgan and other women with professional aspirations. The discussion enlarges upon the theme of women in architecture previously addressed by Boutelle and others in a

1977 book titled, *Women in Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary Perspective*, edited by Susana Torre. The book, which accompanied an exhibition of the same title, covers a wide range of topics and includes articles on architects Marion Mahoney Griffin, Eleanor Raymond, and Lilian Rice, all Morgan's contemporaries.

As for the buildings themselves, despite many lengthy descriptions, they remain mute. The dearth of floor plans, for one thing, makes comparison difficult. The omission is particularly frustrating because, as Boutelle affirms, for Morgan, the plan expressed her primary intent. True to her training, she almost exclusively used the central hall plan to organize spaces and circulation. An axial alignment of rooms with elements symmetrically disposed within them is also typical of her work. This use of standard plans produces a certain predictability, without monotony. Within her chosen format Morgan produced a rich variation of character by means of subtle changes in size, scale, and materials.

If the lack of plans makes it difficult to appreciate Morgan's subtly worked variations, the lack of any final floor plans of her most ambitious work, the Casa Grande at San Simeon, makes it impossible to see how strikingly this work departs from the norm—not only of Morgan's work but of grand country houses in general. The circa 1923 sketch plan of the building with William Randolph Hearst's annotations is reproduced so small that the writing is illegible. Boutelle provides a great deal of historical background for the Casa Grande, but no comparative analysis to give readers an understanding of its special qualities.

By contrast, Thomas Aidala's interpretation of the Casa Grande in *Hearst Castle, San Simeon* (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1981), proceeds from a sensitive reading of its plans. Observing that the Main Building departed radically from the prevailing ideas about large-scale residential design, Aidala writes that

The rooms and floors of the building are disposed not unlike that of a hotel, which is, after all, how the building functioned most of the time. . . . But one of the things that makes Casa



Front entrance, house for the Harold McCormicks, Lake Forest, IL, Charles A. Platt (1908). (From *Monograph of the Work of Charles A. Platt*, The Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1919)

Grande very different . . . is that there is no apparent physical or spatial connection between the ground floor and those above. . . . Casa Grande has no main stair or foyer. Each of the floors is visually, spatially, and experientially a separate entity . . . there are six stair towers in the public part of the Main Building and only after some time does the user become familiar enough with the circulation patterns to avoid disorientation. . . . Each room is a complete visual experience in itself, having no sense of spatial participation with adjacent rooms.

Drawing on the origin of the building's design in the Spanish cathedral at Ronda, Aida Iida then compares the ground floor plan to that of a large church in which the spatial sequence is reversed so that the entrance occurs in what would properly have been the apse end. This kind of insight helps buildings speak to us.

Although Hearst participated fully in the design process of San Simeon, Boutelle points out in many examples that he deferred to his architect in important decisions. Thus the Casa Grande is significant in Morgan's work not only for its complexity and scale, but also for what it reveals of her flexibility as a designer, a trait not so easily seen in her other works.

For this reviewer, one of the book's shortcomings is Boutelle's failure to complement her fine exploration of the social context of Morgan's career with a discussion of its professional context. Boutelle is careful to show that Morgan's esteem for Bernard Maybeck, her teacher and sometime collaborator, did not extend to imitation. (Maybeck was generally considered inimitable.) Boutelle also acknowledges Morgan's admiration for Charles A. Platt, and states that his houses were "English in origin and straightforward in design." This description does not reveal that both architects designed in the same range of styles.

According to Walter Steilberg, Morgan so admired Platt's work that she collected publications of it and recommended them to her staff and clients for study. Platt's only West Coast work was a 1910 house for Robert D. Merrill in Seattle, which has a stylistic kinship with some of Morgan's houses. A more arresting example of the affinity between Morgan's and Platt's work can be seen in his 1908 house for the Harold McCormicks in Lake Forest, Illinois. The comparison sheds further light on Morgan's stance toward current design because Platt

won this commission away from Frank Lloyd Wright, for whom its loss was a bitter disappointment. Wright's published buildings in architectural magazines often provided the occasion for what we would now call "Wright-bashing" in Morgan's office. Considered too egotistical, flamboyant, and extravagant, Wright's work—inseparable from his personality—was credited by Morgan with genius, but of the wrong sort. Whether or not this attitude toward Wright was shared by her colleagues is not so important as the indication that local practitioners were no more isolated from national currents then than they are now.

In contrast to her compatriots, who, we are told, preserved little or none of their student work at the Ecole, Morgan deliberately kept enough of hers to give us an idea of what she learned. In light of this respect for her education, some discussion of her subsequent work as an application of the Ecole's principles and methods would also have helped readers to understand the buildings. Moreover, Morgan's work testifies to the profound influence the Ecole had on 20th-century architecture in the burgeoning western part of the country. There is



Front entrance, Williams House, Berkeley, CA, Julia Morgan (1928). (From *Julia Morgan*; photo by Richard Barnes.)

ample evidence of this academic influence in the Bay Area works of Maybeck, John Galen Howard, Lewis P. Hobart, George W. Kelham, John Bakewell, Jr., Arthur Brown, Jr., and George A. Applegarth, who also attended the Ecole. Had Boutelle explored this context, Morgan's professional standing would have been clearer and more grounded.

The organization of Morgan's oeuvre into chapters devoted to building types makes it difficult to comprehend the state of her ideas and practice at important stages of her career. By her own admission, Boutelle's attempt to organize a year-by-year list of Morgan's works is tentative and incomplete. Lynn Forney, who has been researching Morgan's work in the job records preserved by her parents, has found so many errors in dates, names of clients, addresses, and physical state of the buildings that the usefulness of the book's list is questionable.

Substantial disparities also exist between the accounts of Morgan's life and career as given by Boutelle in the book and as stated in a recent interview with Morgan's secretary and friend of 33 years, Lillian Forney

(see above). Among the statements in the book disputed by Forney are those concerning Morgan's practice of sharing the office profits with her employees, her habit of spending weekends in a room provided for her at San Simeon, and the loneliness and sadness of her last years which, Boutelle states, "were spent as a recluse who no longer cared to live after her working life had come to a close." The report, long a part of the Morgan myth, that she saw to it that her files, blueprints, and most of the office records were burned, is also revealed as a misinterpretation based on a fragmented account of the process of closing the office.

These discrepancies raise questions about the reliability of oral history as a research tool. Having conducted the interviews with Walter Steilberg that appear in the two-volume oral history on Julia Morgan in the Bancroft Library at the University of California, I am sensitive to how personal statements and memories can affect one's understanding of facts. Boutelle's reliance on these oral histories and other interviews for factual information about Morgan is understandable. Yet, a reading of the two volumes reveals so many contra-

dictory statements by people now deceased that, in many cases, it is impossible to establish what is fact and what isn't.

Have Julia Morgan's worst fears about the results of publishing her life and work been confirmed? I think not. Morgan belongs to history, and in one way or another she has escaped its dustbin. As she foresaw, the buildings speak out loud and clear. But it is not for the numbers of commissions (western architects of her generation often had astonishing volumes of work because of boom times and little competition), for the wild card that fate dealt her in the opportunity to work for the Hearsts, or even for her gender that she commands our close attention today. Rather it is for her straightforward solutions to the problems of designing community buildings and houses for an educated middle-class clientele—a building type currently much in demand—that she continues to be an inspiration. We are fortunate to have access to so much of her eloquent work in Sara Boutelle's well-produced monograph.

JULIA MORGAN: ARCHITECT, Sara Holmes Boutelle, Abbeville, 1988, 272 pp., illus., \$55.00.

Liane Lefaivre

LEQUEU: AN ARCHITECTURAL ENIGMA

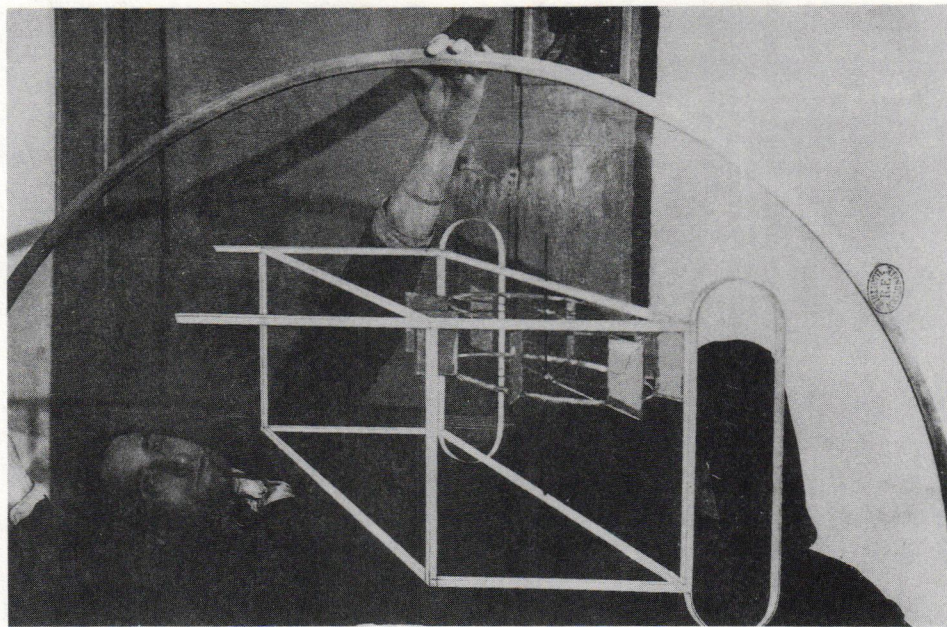
PHILIPPE DUBOY

Nearly forty years ago, in his groundbreaking study of late 18th-century architecture, Emil Kaufmann drew attention to Jean Jacques Lequeu (1757–1825?), a master draftsman who used his extravagant architectural designs for expressive purposes, in particular, to vent his disillusionment with the French Revolution. Philippe Duboy, in publishing an unprecedentedly large part of the Lequeu Archive from the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (including *Architecture Civile*, *Nouvelle Méthode*, *Figures Lascives*, and *Figures et Architecture*), lends new insights and nuances to this interpretation—quite unintentionally, as we shall see.

In earlier less well-produced and less extensive presentations, Lequeu's designs were blurry, postage-stamp size images. The printing quality and size of this edition brings out one aspect of his work that has been totally ignored: obscenity. This emerges in the evenly spaced, long, drooping breasts used to cover the dado of a column in his Dairy, a motif that is then picked up on a neighboring wall to serve as a bracket at the base of a series of engaged columns. A bust of Priapus has a phallus for the nose. On his Pont des Philosophes, Demosthenes and Cato are erected on a "pedestal honorable" in the form of, what else. . .

The theme of architectural obscenity is reinforced by Duboy's inclusion of Lequeu's *Lewd Drawings*. Among things depicted are a woman with menstrual blood smeared on the inside of her thighs, or a man whose penis looks like it is tied in a knot.

At the time of the French Revolution, obscenity was widely used as a vehicle for criticism. As Barthes has pointed out, de Sade—republican, *contestataire*—made it the guiding principle of his negative utopian microcosm of *l'ancien régime*, where peasant victims submitted passively to their



"Marcel Duchamp and the glider containing a water mill in neighbouring metals," M. Duchamp (1913-15). (From *Lequeu*.)

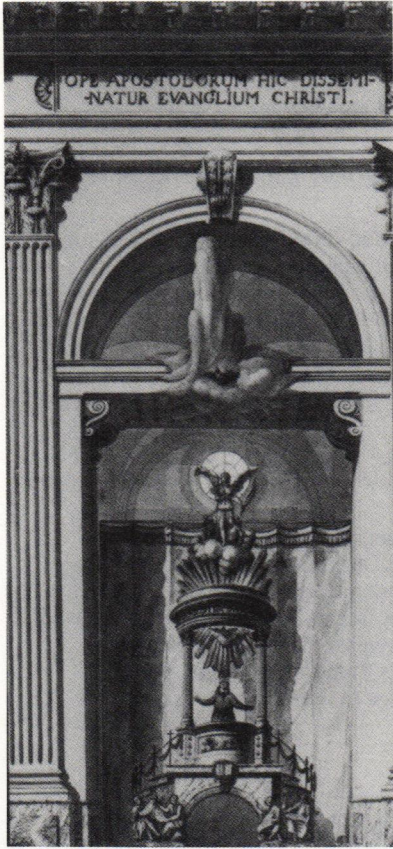
masters' will, and where the exercise of power was sheer joy. With Lequeu, however, the target of criticism is the republic, and the register is one of ribald rather than tragic irony. In his *Monument destiné à l'exercice de la souveraineté du peuple en assemblés primaires*, he has placed three vomitoria which "can be re-used," each holding 120 of the people's representatives. In his *Arc du peuple*, he represents the republic in the form of a monstrously disproportionate Hercules, the traditional symbol of princely power. His *Monument des braves citoyens morts pour la patrie* takes the form of a pyramid, the symbol of pharaonic power, which he has dwarfed.

Lequeu also uses architectural obscenity to caricature the obscenity of *l'ancien régime* and the Church. His rustic huts in the style of Marie-Antoinette's hamlet are covered with suggestive slits. In the boudoir of the courtesan in his *Temple de Venus Terrestre*, a band on the columns is covered with an embossed vulva pattern which Lequeu refers to as "the virginity belt." His proposal for the Cathedral of the Sulpicians depicts a phallic-shaped vapor that rises to an inscription referring to the dissemination of Christ's teaching.

In his polymorphic way, Lequeu even takes *architecture parlante*, the dominant trend of *fin de siècle* France, to task. An ear

carved above the door of the "Grotto where Oracles are to be heard"; a smiling cow's head capital on the columns of his Dairy; a munched apple surmounting a temple dedicated to bucolic delights; soup and salad bowls, plates, and dishes piled on top of the windows of his Small Country Tavern, its cornerstones in the shape of wine bottles and the imitation cheese that serves as its base: all can be read as travesties of Ledoux, Boullée, Desprez, Vien, and Barbier. Lequeu turns the conventions of *architecture parlante* against themselves in order to ridicule them.

Duboy argues that Lequeu's designs are examples of the kind of "topological displacement" that Foucault saw as characteristic of the surrealist trope. The particularity of this trope, as Foucault observed, is to displace the sign in relation to the signified to destroy the link between word and thing and thus to undermine meaning itself. Lequeu's designs are obviously tropes, and anatomico-architectural dislocations dominate in his work. But they seem to be exercises in irony rather than rejections of architectural "sign-ness," or negations of the possibility of architectural representation. What he did was to break down the conventions of straightness that had previously constrained the architectural sign. Through his cross-fertilization of architec-



"Elevation of pulpit for Saint-Sulpice," Lequeu.
(From *Lequeu*.)

ture and pornography, he increased architecture's potentials for representation, argumentation, and criticism.

To leaf through these pages is to find oneself in an architectural world which has been pulled, stretched, and pressed to an almost unparalleled extent into the service of autobiographical, social, and political commentary. Whatever one might feel about the tenor of his commentary, Duboy has been a Kaufmannian *malgré lui* by helping to show this.

Duboy himself is perhaps more convincing as a surrealist, and in this role, argues—if that is the right word—that Lequeu was invented by Marcel Duchamp. Or is it that Lequeu is responsible for Duchamp's *Grand Verre*? One cannot be too sure. The few assertions to this effect that one runs into in his text tend to go like this: "Esoteric and enigmatic, this kind of connection serves to link Lequeu's work indissolubly with that of Duchamp." Duboy also spells out his methodological debt to the writer Raymond Roussel, who was the

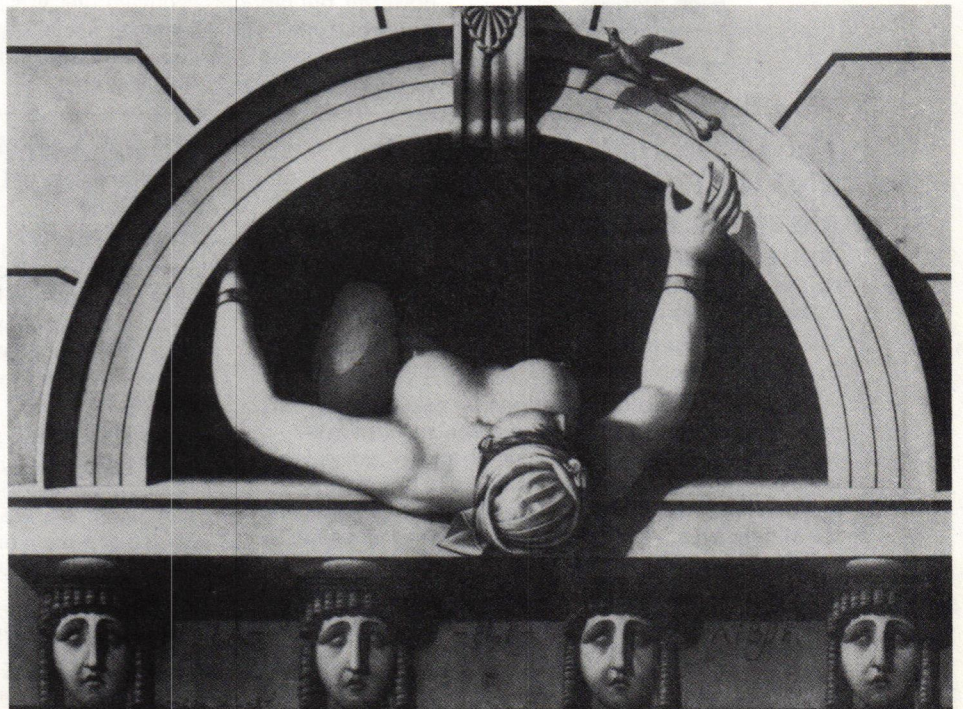
great influence on Duchamp, and borrows the use of visual and verbal punning, of the joke, as a structuring device for composing a text. It amounts to a game of hermeneutic tiddlywinks, played with scarce and slender pieces of evidence.

Actually it is less a hermeneutics than a pataphysics, and like a true surrealist, Duboy sets up units of meaning, plays them off against one another, and presents the resulting abstruse associations as proofs of that "indissoluble link" between Lequeu and Duchamp. These "proofs" include: one photograph of Duchamp under a curved metal bar and one painting by Lequeu of a woman under a curved pediment (putative connection: the two curved forms); Duchamp's drawing *Nous nous cajolions* and a fragment of Lequeu's painting of a lion's cage on which is written *Lion d'af*, short for *Lion d'Afrique* (putative connection: the *cage au lion* contained in the Duchamp title as "cajolions" and the lion's cage in the Lequeu painting); a painting by Lequeu of *A Black Slave Negro who presents the Ring to he who tilts at it* and a Raymond Roussel poster of an African (putative connection: both figures are on wheels); and a photograph of the Olivetti

typewriter cover of Duchamp's *Pliant de Voyage* and Lequeu's painting of *Le Beglierbejs de Rumélie* (putative connection: the outlines of the typewriter cover and outline of the painting of the Beglierbejs are supposed to correspond; in fact, they do not, which may explain why the two illustrations are 63 pages apart). On the basis of similarly surrealist evidence, Duboy concludes that Duchamp's *Grand Verre* is intended as the antithesis of Le Corbusier's *Ville Radieuse*: its initials, V.R., rhyme with "verre." Other equally indissoluble proofs await the reader.

Can one seriously question such findings? Of course not. Duboy's exegesis of the *Grand Verre*, and indeed the method of his book, are one more tribute to Marcel Duchamp's supreme mastery of hermeneutic indeterminacy.

LEQUEU: AN ARCHITECTURAL ENIGMA, Philippe Duboy, MIT Press, 1986, 368 pp., illus., \$65.00.



"He is free," Lequeu (1798-99). (From *Lequeu*.)



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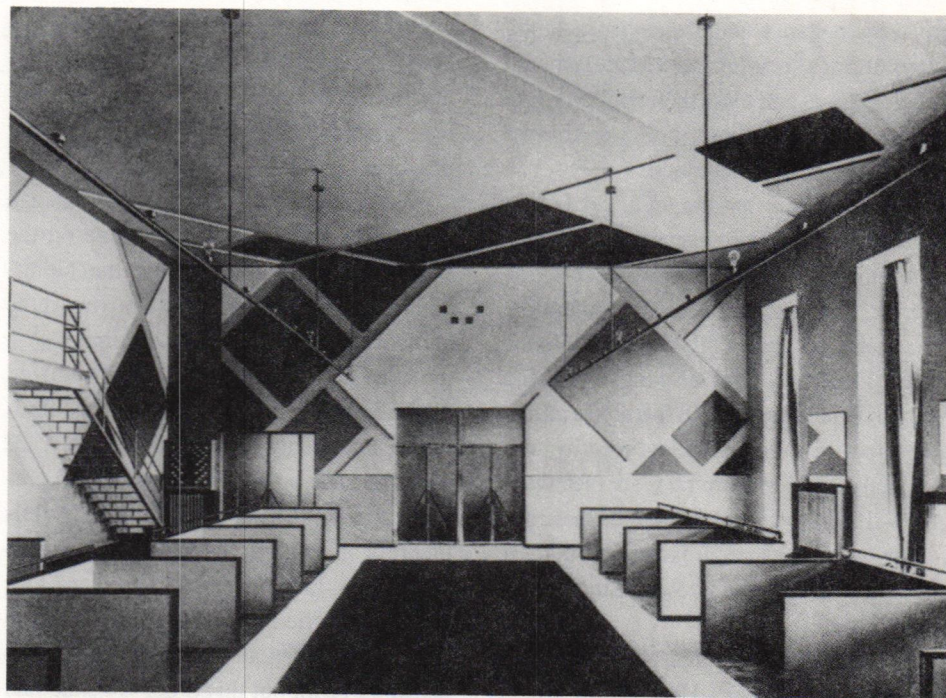
Mark Stankard

DE STIJL, LE STYLE, DER STIL, THE STYLE

De Stijl has been perceived as a collective organization that transformed art through formal aesthetics. Is this a valid assessment of the actual situation, or does it propagate an unfounded myth? The traditional treatment of De Stijl as a unified group faces revision in three recent publications which focus upon its individuals. Although many European artists and architects contributed to the periodical *De Stijl* (1917–1927 and 1932), it had a generally consistent core. We cannot understand De Stijl without referring to these significant individuals, nor can we understand each personality outside the context of the group. Concentrating on the influential figures of the movement, these three books also contribute to a wider understanding of the group as a whole.

The periodical *De Stijl*, founded and edited by Theo van Doesburg (1883–1931), provided a focus for the De Stijl group. First published in Holland, *De Stijl* branched out internationally in the early 1920s, as exemplified by a logo that included the French, German, and English translations of the title. For the most part, the early members of the De Stijl group shared an ideological and formal strategy of articulated relationships aimed primarily at clarifying the new, the modern, The Style. *De Stijl*'s main contributors, Theo van Doesburg and Piet Mondrian (1872–1944), consistently reinforced the theoretical doctrine of unity through the tension of opposites: spirit-nature, objective-subjective, internal-external, universal-individual. The application of this doctrine, it was felt, would reveal an aesthetic harmony leading to the renewal of life. Understanding the interrelation of polarities therefore becomes the most valuable way to study this movement.

Previous studies on De Stijl by H. L. C. Jaffé (1970), Mildred Friedman, et al. (1982), and Reyner Banham's chapter on De Stijl in *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* remain valuable for under-



Grand room of the Cafe Aubette, van Doesburg (1927). (From *Theo van Doesburg*.)

standing the overall aspects of the group. Nancy Troy's *De Stijl Environment* (1983) challenges the standard perception of a unified group while continuing to recognize the collaborative activity that existed. These three most recent books on De Stijl are a welcome complement, balancing the dialogue between individual and group.

De Stijl: The Formative Years contains nine essays examining the work of individual artists carried out between the early years of De Stijl and the dispersion of most of its founding members in 1922. Carel Blotkamp, editor of the collection and author of the essay on van Doesburg, asserts in the introduction that it is incorrect to refer to De Stijl as a group since the nine artists had no strong ties to each other, held no major meetings, organized no collective exhibitions, and were geographically isolated from one another. Moreover, his "Editor's note" reveals a difficulty with even naming the movement, insisting that *De Stijl* refers to the periodical while De Stijl "signifies the group of artists connected with the periodical."

The book's other essays adopt a different point of view from this extreme assessment, referring to De Stijl as a group and admitting interaction between its members.

The majority of the essays provide new information on the group's more obscure artists, describing their early careers, their particular contributions to De Stijl, and their common references to Theo van Doesburg.

Blotkamp's essay on van Doesburg, the group's most consistent figure and strongest promoter, stands out as the only one intent on undermining its subject. For example, Blotkamp questions the dates van Doesburg assigned to his own paintings, without supplying evidence to back his assertions. He condemns van Doesburg's early use of the curved line, used before his aesthetic system of perpendicular lines and color planes. He implies that van Doesburg copied many ideas from other artists, and criticizes him for "digressions from the norm."

In contrast, the other essays provide new biographical information and fresh analyses of the artistic contributions of the lesser known figures of De Stijl. One is Vilmos Huszár (1884–1960), who designed the early cover for *De Stijl*, as well as an advertising layout for Bruynzeel's parquet flooring. Another is the painter Bart van der Leek (1876–1958), who transformed natural imagery into geometric abstraction. He

typically began a painting with a study from nature (a horse, skaters, a face) painted in red, yellow, and blue, then applied white paint over the image until only rectilinear fragments of color remained.

We also learn that the architect J. J. P. Oud (1890–1963), after several unsuccessful attempts to work with van Doesburg on interior and exterior color application, remained aloof from collaboration with the De Stijl painters. Oud's Spangen housing block in Rotterdam (1920) featured a model apartment with color selections by van Doesburg and furniture by Gerrit Rietveld (1888–1964). Oud later discovered that most of the tenants were unhappy with their colorful walls and had covered them with wallpaper.

Eveline Vermeulen's essay on the Dutch architect Robert van't Hoff (1887–1979) portrays his conflict between architecture and communism. He studied in England where he associated with Wyndham Lewis and was influenced by the social utopian ideas of H. P. G. Quack. Van't Hoff traveled to the United States in 1914 to meet Frank Lloyd Wright and in turn introduced Wright's work to Oud, Jan Wils, and other European architects. Between 1914 and 1919 van't Hoff experimented with concrete house construction in Holland. Always trying to reconcile art and life, he designed and built a houseboat for himself and his wife in Breukelen; the postal address was "houseboat De Stijl." After 1919, he joined the Communist party to design "mass-production buildings—no more private villas" and changed his name to "Robert Van, ex-architect."

Although it concentrates on the unique nature of individuals like van't Hoff, *De Stijl: The Formative Years* tells the reader more about commonalities within the group: their desire to practice in all the arts, their movement toward planar abstraction, the influences of Frank Lloyd Wright and Heinrich Berlage, and the reciprocal relations with Theo van Doesburg.

Allan Doig's *Theo van Doesburg* offers a detailed account of van Doesburg's continuous program to disseminate De Stijl principles, fluctuating from short-lived

victories to ongoing frustrations. While van Doesburg produced a sizable body of theory for the development of modern architecture, he failed to carry it into significant practice.

Van Doesburg attempted to change society by placing a greater value on the role of art. Realigning the Hegelian hierarchy of philosophy and religion over art, he contended that art should dominate as a guideline to life. Van Doesburg scrutinized the historical development of art as culminating "inevitably" in De Stijl: THE STYLE to synthesize, and therefore annul, all previous styles into a homogeneous purity. His theoretical construct, looking simultaneously back into history and forward to a new art, codified polar opposites to create beauty in tension and synthesis. His manner of carrying out this process demanded collective work (an unfulfilled desire) in all the arts.

Allan Doig presents van Doesburg both within De Stijl and as an individual, greatly increasing our understanding of the artist's intentions, personality, and projects. As the subtitle suggests, the relationships of theory and practice were a major theme throughout van Doesburg's life. Doig unfortunately avoids defining these key words as they applied to van Doesburg's work. Between the written word and realized architecture lies van Doesburg's most important contribution: his architectural projects from the early 1920s, existing simultaneously in theory and practice.

The book is based on archival research and a close reading of formal themes. It is arranged in two parts, interspersed with translations of van Doesburg's letters to friends and associates. The letters speak directly to the reader, providing insights that are both earnest and playful. A letter to Cornelis de Boer, for example, closes with, "I wish you all a plastic New Year with □ greetings."

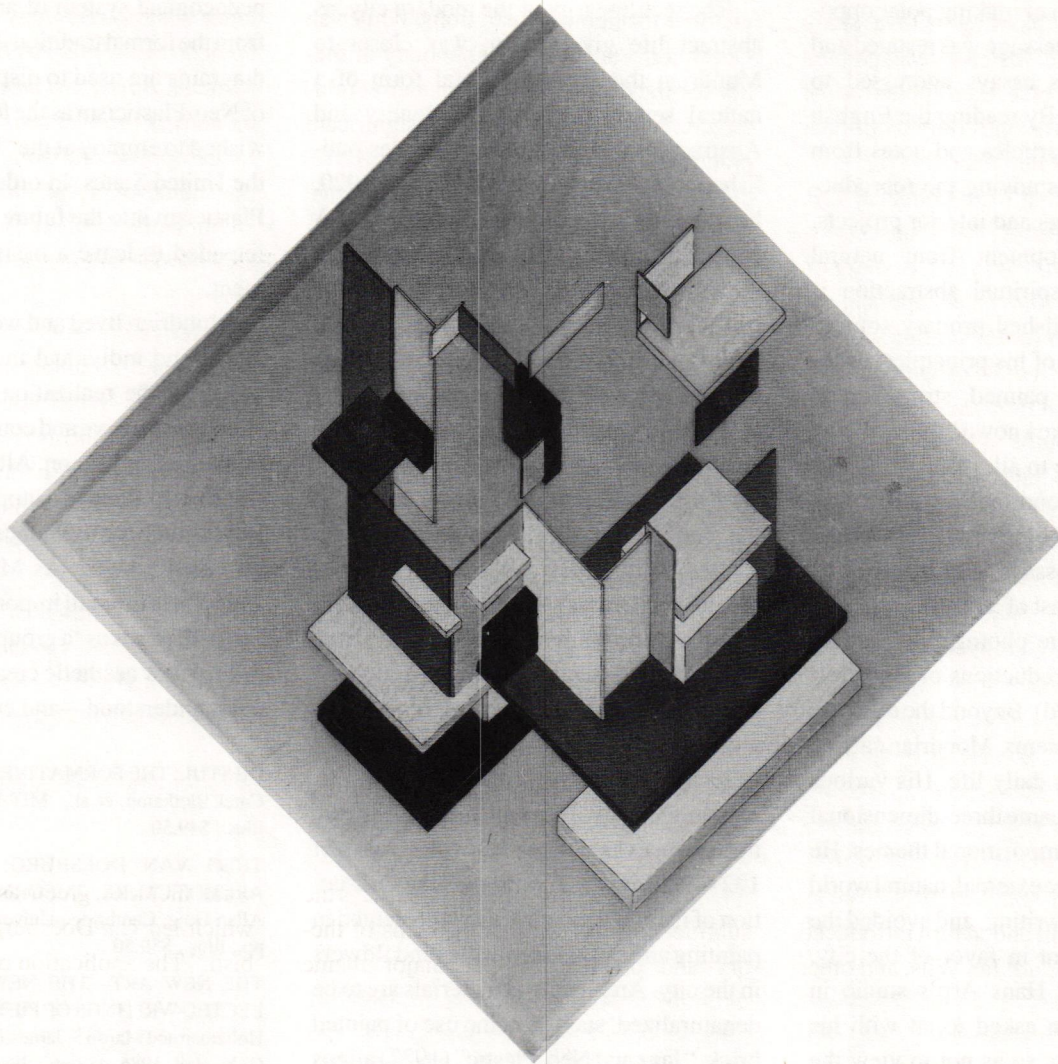
Part one traces the influence on van Doesburg of Hegel, G. J. P. J. Bolland (a Dutch Hegelian), Wilhelm Worringer, George Simmel, Heinrich Berlage, M. H. J. Schoenmaekers, and Heinrich Wölfflin. Van Doesburg appears to have adopted

much of the terminology of Wölfflin's 1915 book, *Principles of Art History*, in his own *Klassiek-Barok-Modern*, which defines modern as the synthesis of classic and baroque opposition. Doig, in turn, develops the theme of a "painterly conception of architecture," culled from both Wölfflin and van Doesburg. He sometimes misapplies this notion, describing van Doesburg's literal development from painting to architecture and simultaneously using "painterly" in its Wölfflinian sense as visual perception in fluid motion—the opposite of linear classical order. "Architecture derived from painting" and "painterly architecture," however, carry potentially divergent meanings.

Color in painting and architecture was a major concern of van Doesburg and the De Stijl group as a whole. Doig documents van Doesburg's loyalty to the primary positive colors red, yellow, and blue (in contrast to the negative colors black, grey, and white) with an annotation found in his copy of Wilhelm Ostwald's *Die Farbenlehre*. Ostwald includes green as a primary color, which led van Doesburg to scribble "rubbish." The application of color as material allowed van Doesburg both to reinforce the order of architecture and to liberate form in a destructive manner. Color could architectonically clarify a room or work counter to its order, creating a new overall composition.

Part two addresses van Doesburg's stained-glass compositions, his architectural projects, and his two major constructed works. In 1922–23 he organized an exhibition of De Stijl architecture at the Galerie L'Effort Moderne in Paris. He and Cornelis van Eesteren (1897–1988) collaborated on three projects for the exhibition, intended to promote their group and lead to future commissions. Little was built, but the influence on European architecture was vast. Doig unfortunately concerns himself more with their attribution than with how theory might relate to practice in these transitional works, how axonometric drawing was used, or how the diagonal was introduced.

Van Doesburg realized his first major work of interior architecture at the Cafe



Contre-construction; axonometric drawing with color for the Maison Particulière, van Doesburg (1923).

Aubette in Strasbourg. Here he created two “opposing” rooms: one harmonizing architecture and color in horizontal-vertical relationships, the other employing diagonal color fields in tension with the spatial enclosure. Doig characterizes van Doesburg’s system of opposition as “slipping back into a dualistic view of the world,” but a more probable intention was to provide a stage set for the viewer to reassemble the composition in a new unity. Van Doesburg allowed both to exist simultaneously in the practical development of his earlier ideas as a positive synthesis.

Only one building designed by van Doesburg was actually constructed, a house for himself and his wife Nelly in Meudon, France, but he died in 1931 before its completion. Although he continued to

develop new ideas in painting and urbanism, his last years were marked by financial difficulty and anxiety from his failure to build. His frustrations are conveyed in a letter to Bart de Ligt written in 1929. Commenting on Robert van’t Hoff, now “occupied with humanism, the moral life, and practical communism,” van Doesburg writes, “It’s too bad, he could have been a good meat-eating architect. I never eat meat, because I ... just don’t have the money.”

Despite Doig’s impressive archival research, the book fails to apply the information creatively, and several important issues remain neglected. The architectural projects instigated in van Doesburg’s 1922 “counter-course” outside of the Bauhaus should have been included to give a better sense of his later architectural work. Closer

attention to van Doesburg’s meaning of the word “style” would have clarified his transition from theory to practice. Most importantly, a deeper investigation of his ongoing work in Dada (under the pseudonyms I. K. Bonset and Aldo Camini) as an activity in opposition to his own principles would have isolated a self-critical theme essential to understanding his work in De Stijl. Doig nonetheless enriches our understanding of De Stijl with valuable source material and a convincing overview of van Doesburg’s role in the growth of modern architecture.

If van Doesburg was the main propagator of De Stijl, Piet Mondrian was its spiritual leader. The theory and practice of Mondrian’s work coalesce in *The New Art—The New Life*. Mondrian consistently pursued harmonic reconciliation in art and life

by enacting his idea of making polar opposites visible. This message was restated and transformed in his essays addressed to various audiences. By reading the English translations of his articles and notes from 1917 to 1944 and studying the reproductions of his paintings and interior projects, Mondrian's development from natural representation to spiritual abstraction is revealed. The published primary sources attest to the clarity of his principles. Mondrian wrote as he painted, struggling to understand and make known "the new" and render it accessible to all.

In addition to Mondrian's own writings, the book provides biographical information in two short essays, a chronology of Mondrian's life, a list of reference sources, and black-and-white photographs (unfortunately, color reproductions of the paintings are not included). Beyond the exploration of aesthetic systems, Mondrian carried out his ideas in his daily life. His various painting studios became three-dimensional canvases for his compositional themes. He turned away from the external, natural world in his painting and writing, and avoided the natural environment in favor of the city. During a lunch at Hans Arp's studio in Meudon, Mondrian asked to sit with his back to the window so as not to view the green natural landscape. He wrote about jazz and Neo-Plasticism, painted the rhythms of jazz music, and danced to the music of American jazz bands. On hearing that the Charleston was to be legally banned in Holland because of its sensuality, Mondrian wrote from Paris, "If the ban on the Charleston is enforced, it will be a reason for me never to return."

Mondrian stated that his theory "always came later" than his paintings. He patiently developed his art toward greater (and final) abstraction, with a consistently stated written theory following close behind. The early essays define his conceptions of Neo-Plasticism and style. He believed in a single, timeless, universal style as the goal of many transitory styles throughout history. Beyond styles veiled in nature lay the eternal expression of style that "makes style STYLE."

The rectilinearity of the modern city, as abstract life given form, was closer to Mondrian than the accidental form of a natural setting. In "Natural Reality and Abstract Reality," a series of articles published in *De Stijl* between 1919 and 1920, he presents a "trialogue" among "X, A Naturalistic Painter; Y, A Layman; and Z, An Abstract Painter." In seven scenes the trio journeys through landscapes of trees, plains, a beach, a windmill, a garden with clipped hedges, a church facade, and finally to Z's (Mondrian's) studio. X contests the teachings of Z while Y acts as moderator. As their conversation reaches a climax in the rectilinear studio, the coordinates of X, Y, and Z intersect at the zero point of renewal. Their views are synthesized with Z as the controlling factor. The majority of Mondrian's essays after this "trialogue" attempt to reach the layperson through interpretive artistic principles branching out to social, political, and religious ideas.

Future renewal through present destruction surfaces as a theme in several essays of 1924–38. Mondrian promotes the destruction of natural appearance as represented in painting and as existing in trees and flowers in the city. Architectural materials are to be denaturalized, such as in the use of painted brick. "Jazz and Neo-Plastic" (1927) aligns the two art forms as extreme destructive-constructive activities producing a new order. Mondrian suggests the setting for this occurrence: the jazz bar, where "bottles and glasses on the shelves stand still, yet they move in color and sound and light. Are they less beautiful than candles on the altar?" The later essays retain an optimistic outlook, despite the growing turmoil in Europe in the mid-1930s. For Mondrian, capitalism, international politics, religion, and morality reinforced art to achieve pure relationships in a world of unity.

The articles dating from his move to London in 1938 to his final years in New York from 1940 to 1944, written in his new English language, reflect the tragedy of the imminent war, and go so far as to relate Nazi evils with the extreme, individual, natural aspects of his aesthetic system of opposites. In this period he also proposed a

pedagogical system of art instruction free from the formal tradition. Words and simple diagrams are used to display the evolution of Neo-Plasticism as the teaching device he wished to employ at the "New Bauhaus" in the United States. In order to project Neo-Plasticism into the future world, Mondrian intended to leave a basis for its development.

Mondrian lived and worked both in universal and individual modes. His life focused on the realization of synthesis between destructive and constructive systems of thought and action. Although extreme in its effort to achieve a utopian end, his ideological and formal conception of modern art is still valued. As Mondrian stated in 1926: "It is of small importance whether *De Stijl* still exists as 'a group,' a new style was born, a new aesthetic created; it needs only to be understood—and cultivated."

DE STIJL: THE FORMATIVE YEARS, 1917–1922, Carel Blotkamp, et al., MIT Press, 1982, 284 pp., illus., \$49.50

THEO VAN DOESBURG: PAINTING INTO ARCHITECTURE, THEORY INTO PRACTICE, Allan Doig, Cambridge University Press, 1986, 260 pp., illus., \$59.50

THE NEW ART—THE NEW LIFE: THE COLLECTED WRITINGS OF PIET MONDRIAN, Harry Holtzman and Martin S. James, editors and translators, G. K. Hall, 1986, 488 pp., illus., \$60.00.

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Liane Lefaivre and Alexander Tzonis

PLANNED ASSAULTS

LARS LERUP

There was a time when architecture was silenced by functionalist modernism. Then one day it was freed, allowed to speak out. The art of poetics was allowed to return to the bosom of architecture alongside mechanics. This happy event occurred, some historians of architecture say, in the mid-sixties, with the emergence of architects like Venturi and Moore.

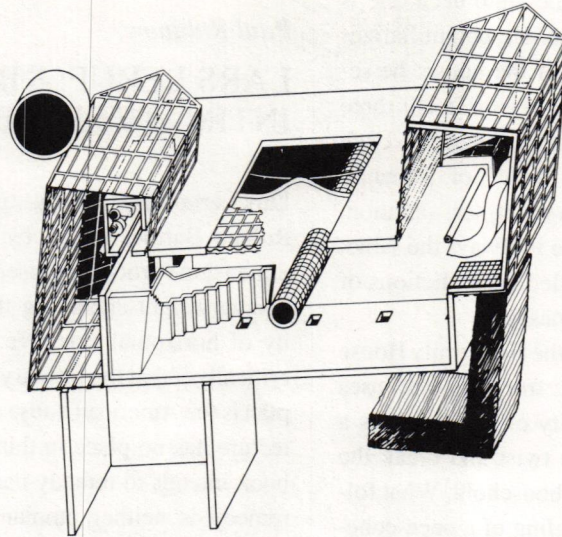
Little more than a decade later, it appeared that architecture was losing its newly acquired rights, and now was at the mercy not so much of totalitarian, functionalist censors as of the very friends of freedom. Architecture should not make assertions about the world, it was argued, because to assert something about the world is to make claims to truth, and to make claims to truth is to exclude other claims to truth, and thus is tantamount to a totalitarian, "logocentric" use of force. Conversely, it was declared that not to speak was a condition for freedom.

This version of architecture's recent past contains at least two dubious presuppositions. The first is that functionalist architecture was by nature mute. Of course, it might not say things one approves of. It might support an exclusively operationalist, utilitarian point of view, and even do so under the pretense of silence. But communication is not measured by the yard, and the lack of verbosity implies neither muteness, as the example of Mies illustrates, nor succinctness, as the recent example of Lloyd's offices in London makes clear.

The second presupposition is that architectural language, like language in general, is representation alone, that the only kinds of statements it makes about the world are mimetic, and that it relates to the world in what Jane Austen referred to as that privileged way called being true or false. But buildings are actually performatives or "speech acts." In concert with other acts they bring about a *lebensform*, to quote Wittgenstein: a way of life, a mesh of social

relations. It follows that the debates about their truth value and the censorship of their utterances are equally irrelevant. Buildings should be judged in terms of their felicitousness, conventionality, or legitimacy, rather than their truth or falseness.

This is not to say that buildings have no mimetic function. Different buildings are to varying extents mimetic representations of the world. Columns in a classical building, for instance, represent the tectonic forces at work in the building. Buildings can be mirrors or maps of reality, faithful or distorting. Like statements in physics they can describe the world. But, as Wittgenstein might say, the mimetic function is only a "suburb" of architectural language. If buildings appear to be pictures of reality, this is only as part of a strategy within a complex act of world making. Some architects use this strategy to create "as if," make-believe worlds. This is what we might call conformist or coercive or co-opting architecture. There is another strategy that aims to distance the viewer from the established order of things by disturbing it, restructuring it, roughening it up. This strategy takes elements from "reality" and recombines them in a way that makes those quotation marks become apparent and a matter for reflection and active change (or non-change). This we might call critical architecture.



"Nofamily House: View from Down Under," Lerup. (Courtesy of Lars Lerup.)

Critical architecture goes back to the first appearance of modern, "hot" societies—societies characterized by change and the process of emancipation. The hotter the society, the faster and more tumultuous the change—and the more intense, disturbing, and painful the critical acts of architecture. This is the context of Lars Lerup's *Planned Assaults*. Although the object of his critical examination is a narrowly circumscribed area of architecture, it is a particularly "hot" one: the single-family house, locus of the violent mutations that have affected the traditional bourgeois family.

The relation between men and women in the bourgeois family has been approached in a critical way by various artists and architects. Next to the works of Flaubert, Tolstoy, Ibsen, and Strindberg, we can place those of Loos, Ginsburg, Chareau, and Le Corbusier. Every generation has its own problems and redefines its own critical outlook in accordance with them. This is why the critique of Ingemar Bergman and Jean-Luc Godard differs from that of their predecessors. What distinguishes Lerup from his predecessors is not only the timeliness of his problems, but also the special "architecturalness" of his "assaults."

A house is not merely a collection of architectural elements. It is a narrative that seduces, coerces, and controls. No element is innocent. In Lerup's assaulted houses,

the perversion that goes into each one is brought to the surface. He defamiliarizes the ordinary context of the house: he semantically overloads and jams it. His three "assaults" can be read as allegories. Each plot "reshuffles the deck" of semantic dualities attending to character, situation, and plot. The outcome is always the same: domestic order is pulled apart; fictions of domestic order are smashed.

In the first assault, the No-Family House disrupts the symbolic free plan, and uses the symbolic centrality of the hearth as a fulcrum on which to twist and break the ordinary order of the household. What follows is a slow unraveling of a once-cohesive whole and the freeing of its constituent parts.

In the second assault, *Love/House*, the domestic order is tighter, and its subsequent violation, through an interstice of the house, is more fierce and cruel. That one blow sets the house asunder. Without the fiction of order, it loses its reason for being. The structure disintegrates.

In *Texas-Zero*, the assault has already occurred when the narrative begins. What follows is a Foucauldian bricolage of fragments, disassociated from their old meanings and reassembled according to a new set of rules.

Rather than dealing superficially with the so-called problems of style, accepting or rejecting "classical" or "modernist" conventions, Lerup uses his narrative to defamiliarize architectural routine. In the process, he reaches the very heart of the rhetoric of architecture. He shows how this rhetoric interweaves with a particular exercise of power. Using tripartition, symmetry, rotation, repetition, parallelism, analogy, "splitting" (aposiopesis, as the classical canon would put it), and two new exploratory operations, erasure and "shadowing," he lays bare the "new wilderness" that has taken the place of the home, that obscure object of desire.

PLANNED ASSAULTS, Lars Lerup, MIT Press, 1987, 106 pp., illus., \$35.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

Paul Rabinow

LARS LERUP: KING OF INTIMATE SPACE

Lars Lerup has style. By style I mean what Roland Barthes meant by it, that bodily dimension vertical to prose, that individual counterweight anchoring the impersonality of horizontal narrative. Lerup says—critically—that the primary territory of the plan is the American house and that "architecture has no place in this formula." His book intends to remedy the situation. The remedy is neither utopian nor practical. Rather, Lerup proposes to substitute desire—an oneiric freedom from the mortgage, plumbing, and the life-plan we Americans never seem to tire of inventing and imposing on each other—as a means of imagining other lives, other intimacies. These intimacies, these differences, these spaces, remain on a bodily scale: Lerup is a miniaturist and always personal, hence the haunting familiarity of these rooms we have never known. Let the rest—stairs leading nowhere, courtyards upon courtyards, intimate functions misplaced and exposed—lead us where they will.

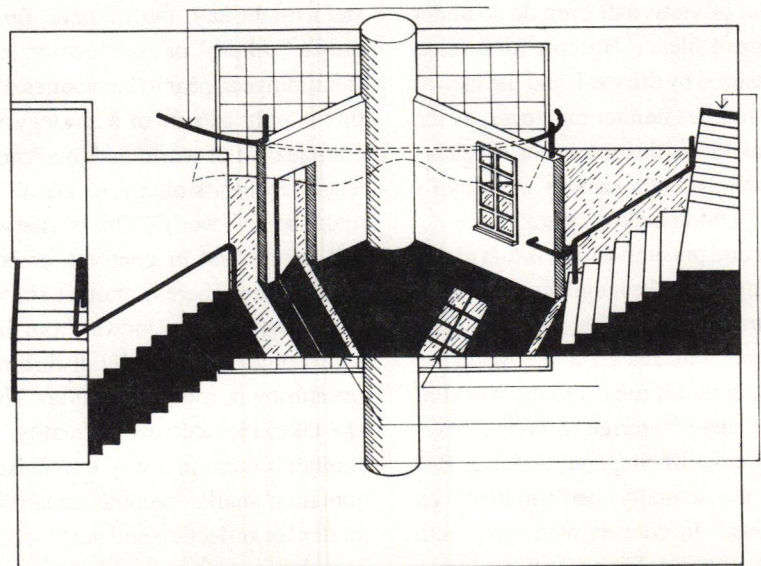
The result: "the family is relieved, or

momentarily relieved, of its task as ultimate referent." Momentarily, ultimate. Lerup opens up a space, a pause. He defers things just enough for a wonderful displacement to take place. In between the more frightening fleshy drippings of Francis Bacon and the colder Princeton structural variations, Lerup animates architecture through his own style.

The in-between is the stylized technology that transforms the elements of the building into architecture. "The dream is complete. The scaffold of waiting." Both execution and expectation—the scaffold of death and of history, which modernism ignored, only to build it in time and time again.

Lerup's drawings are not freed (entirely) from reference, nor do they turn against ordinary functions, like the Duchamp trebuchet. They are hinged ever so slightly to a function, or yearn to be so, but the world doesn't exist for them yet—only Lerup's word. His houses dissolve into a future, one we (or people slightly different from us) might inhabit one day.

Change the forms and change the norms: change the norms and change the forms. Waiting: "The body's gesture caught in action."



"Nofamily House: The Liberated Handrail, The Useless Door, The Fresh Window and The Stair That Leads Nowhere," Lerup. (Courtesy of Lars Lerup.)

Raymond W. Gastil

"FUNCTION FOLLOWS DEFORMATION"

Architects turned out in force for both the Deconstructivist Architecture opening and related symposium at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Nevertheless, many have condemned the show—not the work of Peter Eisenman, Frank O. Gehry, Zaha M. Hadid, Rem Koolhaas, Daniel Libeskind, Bernard Tschumi, and the firm of Coop Himmelblau, but the hubris of presenting them as a group and giving them a name. There were obvious questions. Do the seven architects belong in one room? Are they really related to Constructivism? Are they really related to Deconstruction? Isn't the neologism "Deconstructivist" just a marketing label? Plus the presumably philistine questions—why should architects consciously try to provoke feelings of insecurity and alienation? Aren't they supposed to make life better?

Philip Johnson, curator of the exhibition, and Mark Wigley, associate curator, have, for the most part, answered these questions well. In the catalogue's preface, Johnson establishes what Deconstructivist architecture is not: "However delicious it would be to declare again a new style [as he and Henry-Russell Hitchcock had 56 years before at MOMA's "International Style" exhibit] Deconstructivist architecture is not a new style." If not an "ism," what is it? The seven architects belong in the same room, according to Johnson and Wigley, because in all of their work the most potent belief of the modernist movement—"the dream of pure form . . . has been contaminated." Wigley continues:

The deconstructivist architect puts the pure forms of the architectural tradition on the couch and identifies the symptoms of a repressed impurity. The impurity is drawn to the surface by a combination of gentle coaxing and violent tortures: the form is interrogated.

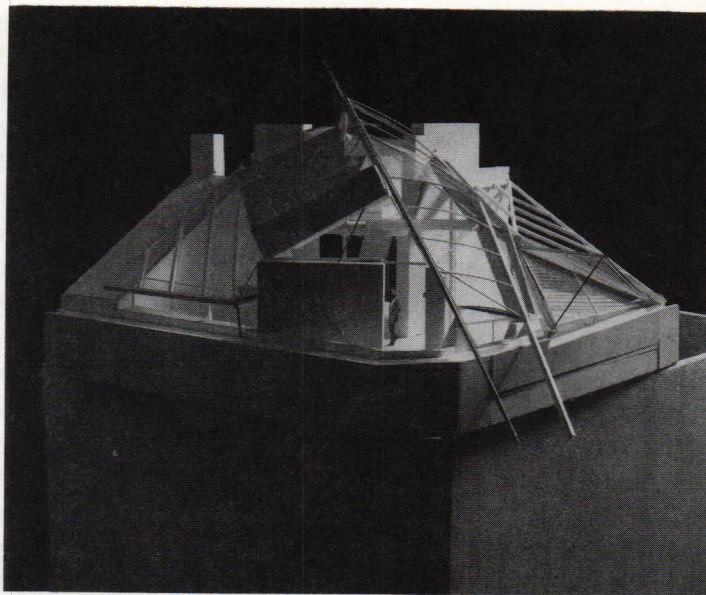
Wigley's language—"threat," "contamination," "scar," "wound," "nightmare," "violent torture," "interrogated," "reopened wounds," "suppressed alien"—may seem

more suited to a news account of an outbreak of the plague in a police state than to an architecture exhibition supported by Gerald D. Hines Interests. Yet this pileup of semantic casualties is apt. Those looking at the exhibition, noting the flying beams and trusses, the daring cantilevers, the showers of glass, and the absence of any histori-

cal references earlier than the 20th century, may mistake this for the triumphant return of modernism. Not true. That august entity takes a bloody beating here.

How, then, does it relate to Constructivism, the Russian movement of the teens and twenties, one of the defining moments of modernism? Walking through the exhibit, and leafing through the illustrated catalogue, there are obvious formal relationships to the Constructivist past—warped planes, skewed axes, diagonals, etc.—which the exhibition, by placing an antegallery of Constructivist drawings and paintings, allows the viewer to see unhampered by explanation. In his essay Wigley explains the "de" in front of "constructivist": most Constructivist architecture actually seeks balance and unity in a "dynamic relationship between forms," but there was a brief moment in which, say, Aleksandr Rodchenko "transformed dynamism into instability," as in his *Experimental Design for a Radio Station* (1920). "De-Constructivism," as Wigley sees it, takes up the torch from this brief moment, extending the aberration in the Constructivist project, and "de"-ing the bulk of it.

And "Deconstruction?" At the symposium Wigley bristled that this architecture is not the application of post-structuralist philosophy, but rather one of "objects which pose a threat" to all theory, which "chal-



Rooftop remodeling, Vienna, Coop Himmelblau (1985).
(Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, ©1988; photo by Gerald Zugmann.)

lenge the platitudes." Nonetheless, Wigley, whose doctoral dissertation is entitled "The Deconstructive Possibilities of Architectural Discourse," does consider this work as a manifestation of serious issues in contemporary philosophy, which for convenience fit well in the category of Deconstruction, usually thought of as a movement led by comparative literature professors at Yale, especially Jacques Derrida, who now teaches in Paris and California. Whether the architects have read or have any interest in recent literary-philosophical theory is moot, because, according to Wigley, deconstruction is "a structural condition" inherent in the work.

Several of the architects *are* interested in contemporary philosophy, especially Eisenman and Tschumi. Much of the work is grounded in a single principle of modernist culture: that the Enlightenment (of which modernist architecture was the final symptom—rational and pure) is dead, and has got to be replaced by a culture (and an architecture) that accepts "contamination" as part of its lifeblood. From the divine wreckage of Coop Himmelblau to Gehry's tumbling dice window boxes, this work has somehow reckoned with the demon within, and at some point has been darkened by the long shadow of Nietzsche, however lightened by Derrida. Anyone who wonders why Philip Johnson is involved with a show

so seemingly at odds with once modernist and then postmodernist convictions, and supposes that it is only the result of a passion for fashionability would do well to recall that Johnson, while pursuing an undergraduate degree in philosophy, stayed awake during the lectures on Nietzsche.

At the symposium, Anthony Vidler summed up opposition to the show's title, making a "plea for the absent architects, architects who are absent even from the models," and saying that while the show might satisfy the "jaded palate," it was really just another example of how culture has lost "the art of reading the difference between a column and a column." "Deconstructivist," he argued, had become a "label for marketing a concept of architecture." Wigley agreed, yet argued that just because "Deconstructivism" was a magazine editor's catch phrase for varied work, it did not undermine the seriousness of the work itself.

Which brings us to the work on view. Vidler's comment about the models was particularly apt. For some reason, the models, many of them produced for the show, had an oddly dull effect, despite their size and handicraft. Coop Himmelblau's cardboard models had the vigor of sharp minds at work, Gehry's told the story well enough, and much better than the stiff, strange ink drawing he produced, but most of the others were awkward set pieces. Libeskind's had been worried too much, and too many assistants had wrapped everything in shellacked paper; Tschumi's large piece lacked the dignity of his exquisite little ones. There were definite curatorial decisions here to unify the various oeuvres—large models, similarly formatted line drawings, no photographs to show which projects had and had not been built, and no information on the projects themselves. These are all defensible (but occasionally regrettable) decisions. Eisenman sans text is a hamburger without a patty, or at least without ketchup, especially when he is chiefly represented by a finicky model. Wigley's comments on the projects in the catalogue are good, and might have been valuable in the exhibition itself. It shows an

admirable deference not to have them mounted on the wall.

Regarding the charge of "marketing," not necessarily a wild comment about a show dominated by the personality of Philip Johnson, one has to feel that if this is marketing, the salesperson is likely to go hungry. The lack of color photographs is striking. There have been much glossier shows, and much glossier books.

At the symposium, the most compelling question was whether the architecture really presented a "threat," as Wigley claimed. Rosalind Krauss, scholar and editor of *October*, challenged the work as offering little or no critique of the political and economic realities of the architect's pathetic position in late capitalism. These were simply baubles of art, cast up to distract the public from the speculative business at hand. To make her point she cited Gordon Matta-Clark's "Threshole" (1973), seeing his act of cutting into an abandoned Bronx tenement building as directing us to an understanding of late capitalism's architecture of waste, in which the homeostasis of human consumption and evacuation has been blocked.

Vidler argued that the work did offer some threat, in that it showed the "slippage" of modernist confidence in the relationship between body and experience. Krauss was unconvinced. "What is decentered about the projects in the show?" she asked. "Hadid's project is just Le Corbusier's Carpenter Center done over by Buck Rogers. I don't get this special post-structuralist twist."

Wigley spoke up for threat and slippage: "the claim made by the show is that formal maneuvers *are* political maneuvers, ... that architectural discourse is by definition political and economic." "Threshole," he implied, did not take into account the "changed figure" of postmodern culture, and was still an incident in which "the subject acted upon the object." The work in the show was different because in it "we are not sure what the subject has done. It appears that the subject has lost control." Krauss still seemed unconvinced, and the evening turned into a debate between her, a

self-described "innocent abroad" on architecture, and the five men, for whom architectural criticism is a stock-in-trade. Krauss noted that Coop Himmelblau's work was interesting as sculpture, while Libeskind's model was "completely boring." The others quickly responded that the models, which Jeffrey Kipnis described as "theoretical objects," *should* be boring, apparently to show their worth as architecture. Vidler noted that something that "on the surface looked much dumber," might actually be more important in terms of "destabilizing architectural codes." Kipnis added that because of their quality of "repetition," architectural models are often boring. This is a good thing, he indicated, because it shows that these architects realize that architecture "sets the stage, is in a secondary position."

These comments finally provoked a reaction from the audience. A few complained that the show was socially irrelevant because it dealt with clubs for rich people (Zaha Hadid's design for a Hong Kong nightclub was the punching bag of the evening). Wigley answered that when you reduce architecture to morality, you "turn your back on culture."

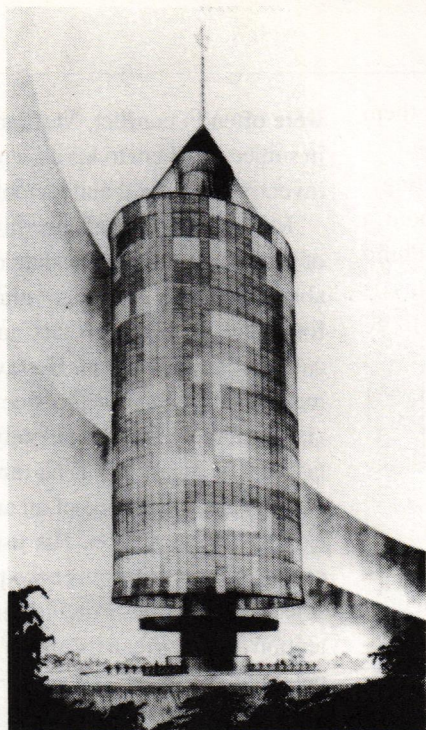
And then it was over, almost. Where did the absent architects, a few of whom were actually in the audience, care to stand on this ever-shifting ground? Apparently neither they nor their interpreter cared to stand by the word "Deconstructivist." Wigley ended the evening by noting that they had at least achieved one of the purposes of the show and the symposium: "to kill the word off."

DECONSTRUCTIVIST ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION, Museum of Modern Art, New York, June 23–August 30, 1988, Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley, curators

DECONSTRUCTIVIST ARCHITECTURE EXHIBIT CATALOGUE, Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley, Museum of Modern Art, 1988, 104 pp., illus., \$17.95 paper.

DECONSTRUCTIVIST ARCHITECTURE SYMPOSIUM, Museum of Modern Art, New York, June 30, 1988.

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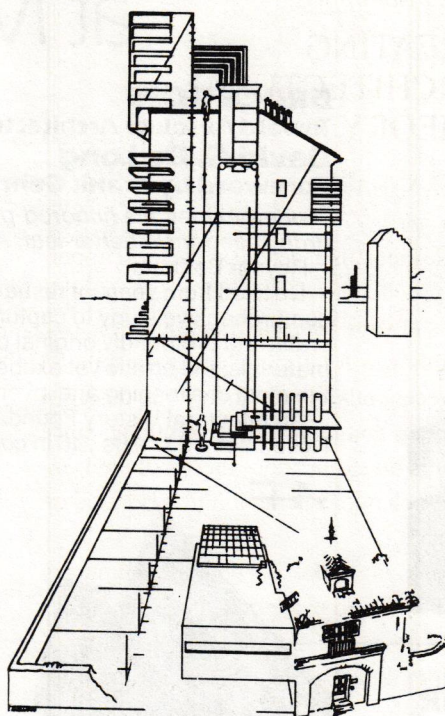
CARLO MOLLINO

GIOVANNI BRINO

The furniture and interior designs of the Turin architect Carlo Mollino (1905–1973) are perhaps the most intriguing of the diverse work produced in Italy in the late 40s and early 50s. Despite a feverish rise in the value of Mollino's furniture, his architectural work remains largely unknown. Although his career as an architect was somewhat sporadic, Mollino did produce several notable buildings and projects that are important to understanding modern architecture in postwar Italy.

Mollino's obscurity as an architect is due both to the current disdain for the modern architecture of that period, and to the lack of any history of the 20th-century architecture of Turin, Mollino's birthplace and setting for most of his work. As Roberto Gabetti, another Turin architect has said, "Turin is not part of the culture market." While the modern architecture of Milan and Como is widely known outside of Italy, Turin's is usually summarized by two buildings: Giacomo Matte Trucco's Lingotto factory for Fiat (1915–1923), and Nervi's Exposition Pavilion (1950). If architects visit the city at all, it is to see the baroque work of Guarini and perhaps of Juvarra. Turin's second city status perhaps also explains the cultural isolation of Mollino, who worked there from the 30s until his death in 1973, briefly with his father, Eugenio Mollino, and then on his own.

Mollino seldom worked with others, preferring to oversee and control as much of the design process as possible. He was similarly disengaged from the city itself, as can be seen in his promotion of his version of the myth of the bachelor, his designs for private interiors, and his interest in rural, suburban, and alpine buildings. This consistently anti-urban bias is remarkable given Turin's evocative urban settings. Turin is after all the same city that so profoundly affected Nietzsche, and which seems inseparable from De Chirico's metaphysical urban landscapes.



Architect's house, Mollino (1940). (From *Carlo Mollino*.)

It was Turin's monuments rather than its urban structure that interested Mollino. He particularly admired the Mole Antonelliana (1862–1889) for its structural virtuosity. (This Turin landmark also intrigued Aldo Rossi, who published an essay about Antonelli's tower in 1957.) Many of his designs for Turin were towers that look out beyond the city to the distant alpine landscape. His Chamber of Commerce Building (1964), one of two remaining public buildings by Mollino in Turin, is an assertive, sculptural building which, with the possible exception of its elevated parking garage, has little or no connection with the city.

Mollino saw his work as a transgression from orthodox modernism. His antagonistic attitude toward the modern aesthetic and its functional determinism, together with his appropriations from art nouveau, futurism, surrealism, and other movements in art and culture, provide the most intriguing and problematic aspect of his work. He borrowed from other sources as well, including vernacular architecture and his parallel careers as a designer and a photographer. While these influences and sources

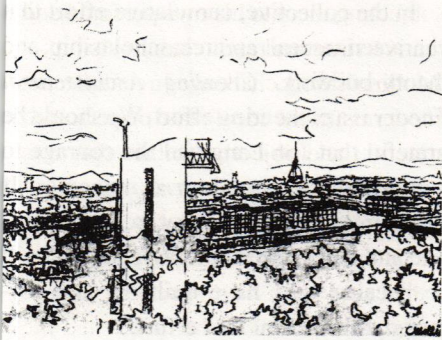
were often in conflict, Mollino succeeded in subjecting them to his own personal and inventive structural and tectonic vision.

Mollino's work challenged a central tenet of modernism: the ideal state of perfected abstraction and objective values that was for many of its supporters an unequivocal moral distinction. He saw this as no more than a technique that one could learn and then apply indiscriminately. By intentionally disregarding it, he threatened the established boundaries of an autonomous, exclusivist expression. His use of kitsch, eroticism, and disturbing baroque excesses acted as disruptive irritants, similar in intention to the surrealists' use of archaic and natural elements.

The publication of this first monograph on Mollino coincides with a reevaluation of postwar Italian design, particularly furniture. The book's subtitle, *Architecture as Autobiography*, is somewhat misleading. Brino deals primarily with Mollino's furniture and interiors, and more accurately describes the book in the text as a "catalogue of furnishings and designs" in which "articles of furniture are presented chronologically, in the setting of the interiors to which they belong, as chapters in a sort of autobiographical novel that stretches from the bedroom for a villa on Capri in 1928 to the last *garconnieres* of the sixties and seventies." While it is admirable of Brino to try to present Mollino's furniture and interiors in context, this emphasis forces him to discuss many of the architectural works solely in terms of their interiors and furnishings. There is some justification for this, since Mollino's greatest successes were clearly his furniture and interior designs, but the cursory attention paid to his buildings is the book's major disappointment.

Many of Mollino's architectural projects are mentioned in the text, and several are illustrated, but only six include plan drawings—an unfortunate omission. Brino considers Mollino's sled-lift lodge at Lago Nero to be one of his two masterworks, for example, yet there is no plan. Several buildings are illustrated by a perspective sketch, when in fact they are realized projects.

Brino does present many previously



House on a Hill, Turin, Mollino (1943).
From Carlo Mollino.)

unpublished buildings, and provides an extensive bibliography, a brief biography of Mollino, and anecdotal commentary. But unfortunately the book falls short of being a serious analysis and presentation of the work.

Roberto Gabetti, in a brief preface to the book, raises some of the issues that Brino ignores or deals with superficially. Gabetti conveys Mollino's personal isolation, his intransigence, his energy, and his relationship to Turin and to the debates about modern architecture at that time in Italy.

With the exception of an exhibition catalogue published in Turin in 1985 by Galleria Fulvio Ferrari, Brino's is the only book available on Mollino's diverse work. Until a more comprehensive monograph on Mollino as architect is published, the curious reader can make use of Brino's exhaustive bibliography to locate Mollino's remarkable architectural projects (and his essays on a wide range of subjects) in their original publications.

CARLO MOLLINO: ARCHITECTURE AS AUTOBIOGRAPHY, Giovanni Brino, Rizzoli, 1987, 160 pp., illus., \$40.00.

Amos Rapoport:

CREATING ARCHITECTURAL THEORY

JON LANG

While theory is accepted as the most important product of science, in the design fields it has always been marginal and for long periods was totally neglected. Despite all the recent talk about "theory" in design, I maintain that there is no such thing, since there is no explanatory theory of environment-behavior interaction that is based on research.

Jon Lang addresses both these points in what is the first explicit, book-length attempt to make the case for a theory of environmental design based on environment-behavior research. The book has four parts. In the short first section, Lang examines the relation between the Modern Movement, architectural theory, and the behavioral sciences. He divides theory into procedural, concerned with the practice of design, and substantive, concerned with the nature of the phenomena addressed by design. These are further subdivided into positive theory—concerned with understanding what is, and normative theory—concerned with what should be.

In part two (by far the longest), Lang examines positive architectural theory, both procedural (design methods) and substantive (various aspects of environment-behavior interaction). The third part addresses normative theory, while the fourth presents conclusions about the role of the behavioral sciences in environmental design theory.

Not only is this important book the first of its kind, it is also very ambitious in its coverage—possibly too ambitious; by trying to do too much, it is sometimes spread too thin. While the range of topics covered is impressive, it also means that some topics are covered only superficially (including creativity, problem solving, the nature of design problems, perceptions, and models of human behavior). This shortcoming is compounded by a literature re-

view that sometimes neglects relevant fields and more recent work. To give just one example: in the area of the nature of science, it is unacceptable to quote Kuhn 1965 as the sole reference on objectivity in science, given the large literature on the subject since then.

Another result of trying to do too much is that important topics are underemphasized. Theory as such is neglected, as is the nature of explanatory theory, science, and research. The focus is on the content of theory, substantive findings, and specifics rather than the role, nature, and structure of theory and its construction. Consequently, one drowns in a mass of findings, some of which may be problematic while others are unclear or in need of qualification. Among its other uses, theory makes it unnecessary to remember masses of data. Exhaustive sets of findings have no place in a work such as this; findings change, and theory must be able to accommodate these changes. Here the lack of recent work becomes critical. In particular, the material on cognition, schemata, images, meaning, and so on is modified significantly by recent work in cognitive science and related areas. A book on theory must avoid excessive specificity, except in examples. The issue is the role of knowledge in theory, not of specific pieces of knowledge; the knowledge of topic areas, for example, perception or cognition, not specific findings about those.

The organization of the book's findings also presents problems. The schema adopted—fundamental concepts of environment-behavior relations, activity patterns and the built environment, and aesthetic values and the built environment—seems arbitrary, leaves out far too much, and is not hierarchically organized. Moreover, any organization or structure should relate to the structure of theory generally, which, in any case, is not discussed adequately.

The procedural theory section also has several problems. The necessarily brief treatment of a largely distinct literature is distracting, although it does imply the importance of linking environment-behavior research with work in design methods.

More serious, this section is far too uncritical of the way designers work. I would argue that accepting current values, approaches, and practices makes real theory impossible and dooms the enterprise before it begins. There needs to be a fundamental analysis of how design should be done, given an explanatory theory based on environment-behavior research. Lang implicitly assumes that the purpose of such research (wrongly called "environmental psychology") is to improve the knowledge base for design as it now exists. In my view, such research should aim to build a theory of environment-behavior interaction that will change design totally. Even the order of subsections in the book compounds the problem: any design practice should be

informed by substantive theory, rather than constrain theory development.

These comments are a sample of those which fill my copy of the book and the first very long draft of this review. My strong reaction may be partly due to my deep involvement with the topic for many years, but it also demonstrates the book's importance. Lang clearly sets out the importance of environmental design theory based on environment-behavior research, and this should be welcomed by everyone concerned by the lack of any worthwhile theory in the design professions. Any future work will need to begin with this book, building on its positive insights, of which there are many, and developing others in reaction to more questionable matters, of which there are

also many.

In the collective, cumulative effort that characterizes real research, scholarship, and theory-building, *Creating Architectural Theory* is a pioneering effort. We should be grateful that Jon Lang had the courage to venture into a virtual *terra incognita*. If future maps of this territory are more accurate and more useful for navigation, it will be because they have built on, and corrected, this crucial first effort.

CREATING ARCHITECTURAL THEORY: THE ROLE OF THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES IN ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN, Jon Lang, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1987, 278 pp., illus., \$36.95 paper.

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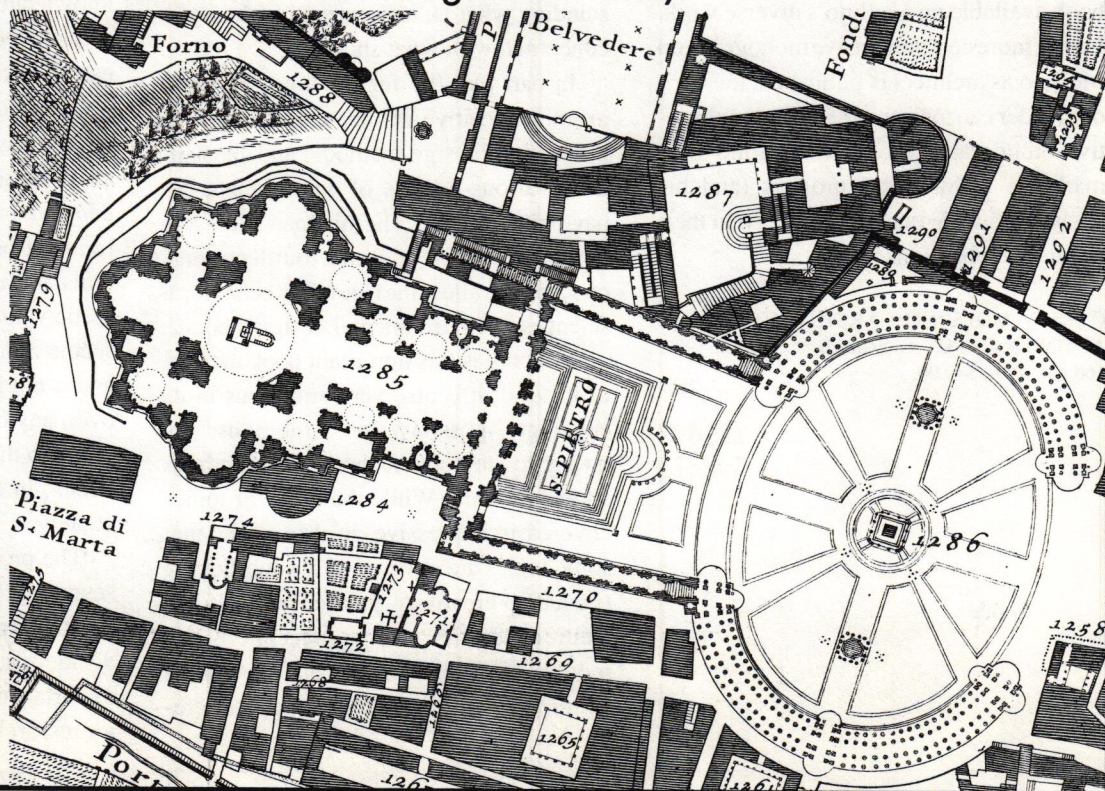
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TOWARD A SOCIAL ARCHITECTURE

ANDREW SAINT

As architecture students in the 1930s, many young Britons were stirred by Gropius's vision of architecture and industry working hand in hand. As army officers in the 1940s, these young architects were given the opportunity to put these ideals into practice. As design professionals in the years after the war, many of them flocked to the offices of county councils to test their practical idealism in the service of reconstruction. When the Blitz, the baby boom, and the Butler Act of 1944 (which guaranteed a secondary education to all) conspired to make school building a top priority, the result was an unprecedented number of schools built in the spirit of prewar European modernism.

In the days when the superiority of modernism went unquestioned, these schools were largely ignored by architectural historians. Henry-Russell Hitchcock did include one postwar English school in *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, but it was one of the few designed in the private sector. The vast majority of schools, built by the hundreds to the designs of state-employed architects, lacked the glamour that usually attracts scholarly attention. Now that neither the social idealism nor the architectural forms of modernism are in vogue, scholars are even more reluctant to study these schools. Andrew Saint is a welcome exception.

As Saint points out, his book is not a history of all English school building in the postwar era. Rather it traces the rise and spread of an approach pioneered in the architectural office of the Hertfordshire County Council. "The Herts ideal," as the author calls it, was aimed at nothing less than a reform of the design process to make architecture more responsive to society at large. Under the leadership of Stirrat Johnson-Marshall (whose death in 1981 prompted his colleagues to commission the



Wing of Derwent College under construction. With the roof deck on at an early stage, the contractors can proceed with cladding and other tasks unimpeded by bad weather. (From *Toward a Social Architecture*; photo by Sir Andrew Derbyshire.)

book), the Herts architects sought to transform architecture from an elite activity to one in which users, manufacturers, and policymakers would all have a say in how society's scarce resources would be allocated. The informally planned, prefabricated primary schools that resulted were a direct response both to the acute labor shortage that threatened all areas of reconstruction and to the demands of progressive educators, who felt conventional schools interfered with child-oriented education.

With Johnson-Marshall's move to the Ministry of Education in 1948, the Herts ideal reached national prominence. He not only extended the Herts approach to structurally and functionally complex secondary schools, but also developed five separate prefabricated systems, each of which was demonstrated in a ministry-built secondary school.

Ironically, the advent of better times marked the beginning of the end for the Herts ideal. In 1954, ministry-imposed building controls were lifted as the atmosphere of crisis dissipated. Johnson-Marshall left the Ministry in 1956 to preach the Herts gospel to architects in the private sector. Although he was never wholly successful in this mission, he did manage to bring the Herts approach into that bastion of elitism, the English university. Indeed, Saint re-

serves his discussion of Johnson-Marshall's design for York University for the book's final substantive chapter, providing his story with a triumphal ending.

Without the Ministry to undertake the costly job of systems development, county councils found prefabrication an expensive alternative. Local authorities were forced to band together into consortia to take advantage of the economies of scale demanded by industrial production. The social ideals of the Herts approach were lost in the search for a cost-effective system of prefabrication.

The return of Labour to power in 1964 temporarily revived innovative school building. By the mid-1970s, however, various factors combined to undercut the governmental support that school building had so long enjoyed, including a reaction to prefabrication, the rediscovered strength of the private-sector architect, inflation, and above all what Saint calls "the illusion of affluence and peace."

While the faces that peer out of the many period photographs are undeniably British, the message is nonetheless universal—Saint's ability to see the wider implications of this subject makes his book much better than Stuart Maclure's *Educational Development and School Building* (1984). Saint hopes that policymakers, architects, and

users of buildings will see in his narrative a positive model for cooperation. Confident that prefabrication can lead to a modern "industrial vernacular" and that architects can practice their profession with a social conscience, he urges us to apply the Herts ideal in our own time.

The self-effacing and humorous recollections of the architects involved are surprisingly free of modernist jargon. Woven together with Saint's thorough and scholarly examination of the documents, these snatches of oral history bring to life the day-in and day-out workings of these public-sector offices. By allowing us to look through the eyes of the participants, the author shows us just how successful these men and women were (at least for a time) at translating their ideals into reality.

Saint's book is a wonderful demonstration of how architectural history can be more than the story of buildings and their

architects. The reader who criticizes Saint for relegating formal analysis and biography to secondary positions has missed the point. For Saint, these schools are not just exercises in the machine aesthetic, they are evidence of their society's priorities, the physical result of governmental policies, educational innovation, and reconstruction economics.

This is a part of the history of modern architecture that has yet to be explored adequately. Saint deserves full marks for bringing this complex story to light, while keeping intact its richness and humanity. This book deserves a wide audience and a long life on the shelves of readers interested in both the future and the history of architecture.

TOWARD A SOCIAL ARCHITECTURE: THE ROLE OF SCHOOL BUILDING IN POST-WAR ENGLAND, Andrew Saint, Yale, 1987, 267 pp., illus., \$40.00.

Stephen Fox

LEWIS EDMUND CROOK, JR., ARCHITECT, 1898–1967

WILLIAM ROBERT MITCHELL, JR.

WALLACE NEFF: ARCHITECT OF CALIFORNIA'S GOLDEN AGE

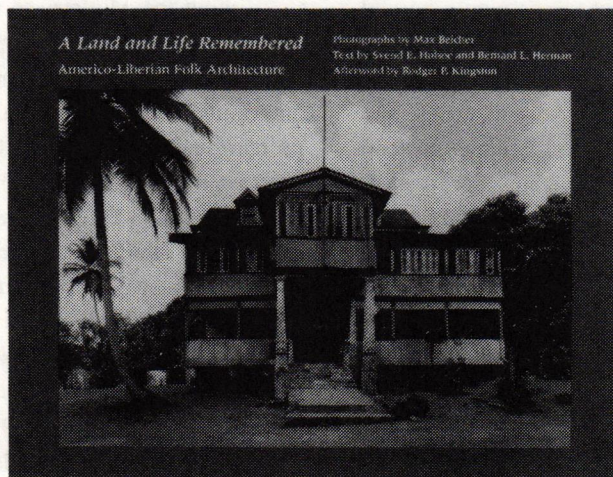
ALSON CLARK

THE WORK OF WILLIAM LAWRENCE BOTTOMLEY

WILLIAM B. O'NEAL AND
CHRISTOPHER WEEKS

The generation of American architects whose practices spanned the period from the 1910s to the 1950s was the last to work in the academic tradition handed down from Richard M. Hunt, McKim, Mead & White, and D. H. Burnham. Although grounded in the discipline of classical architecture, the work of this last generation was eclectic, subject to both an insistence on clarity, proportion, and order propounded by 19th-century classicists, and an attentiveness to materials, craftsmanship, situation, and propriety that was the legacy of the Arts and Crafts movement. The first generation sought civic grandeur; the last turned from public glory to the cultivation of private charm. It is an irony of history that this charm has proved so resilient and enduring. The "country house," the preferred term for large suburban houses of the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s, remains the most sought-after house in the garden suburbs of many U.S. cities, an enviable record of real-estate viability.

The best country houses managed an exquisite accommodation between practicality and ceremoniousness. Architecturally, they embody an implied ritual conduct of domestic life without actually imposing on their occupants the burdens of extravagant size, ostentatious decor, or excessive



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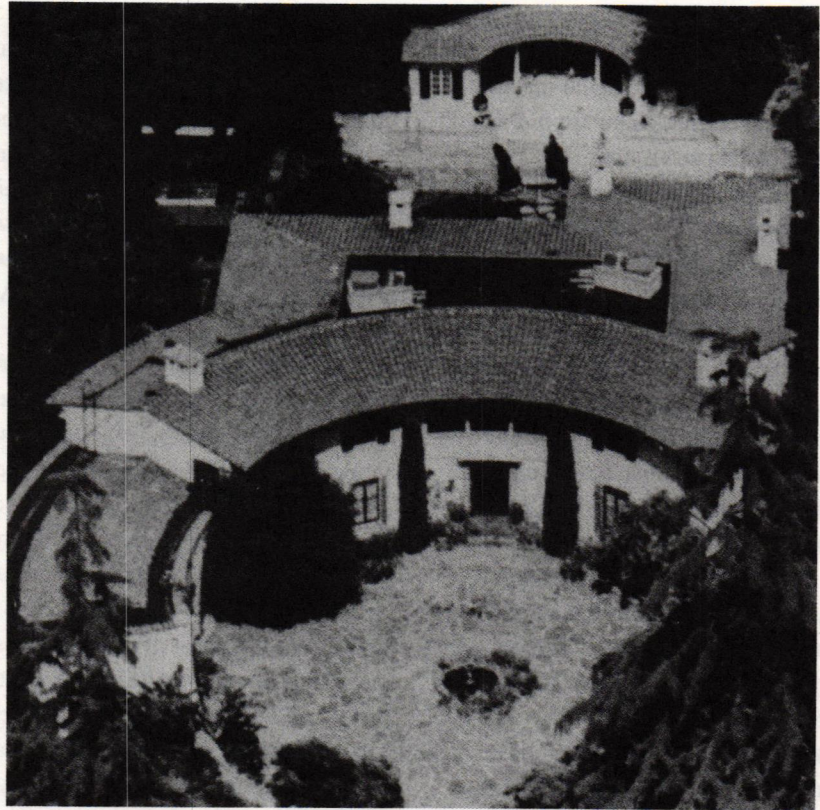
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formality. The critical terminology of the 1910s and 1920s—charm, livability, graciousness, style—is maddeningly vague by contemporary standards, yet accurately describes the qualities with which the best of these houses resonate.

The loyalty still commanded by this generation of country house architects is seen in the monographs on individual architects that have been commissioned or subsidized by clients, descendants of clients, and present-day house owners. The first were Richard Pratt's book on the Chicago architect David Adler (1970) and James Grady's on the Atlanta architect Neal Reid (1973). Three recent books of this genre are on the work of the Pasadena (eventually Hollywood) architect Wallace Neff (1895–1982), the domestic work in Richmond, Virginia, of the New York architect William Lawrence Bottomley (1883–1951), and the Atlanta architect Lewis Edmund Crook, Jr. (1898–1967). Such partisan accounts may seem to historians to compromise critical autonomy. But if these books exhibit shortcomings, it is not due to enforced adulation. Rather it is the lack of an adequate structure that might facilitate critical reflection and authoritative evaluation.

Lewis Edmund Crook, Jr., Architect, 1898–1967: A Twentieth-Century Traditionalist in the Deep South is seriously flawed, although for reasons other than its commissioning by the architect's daughter, Lois Crook Crossley. In this 147-page book, there are a mere 26 pages of text, replete with tiresome repetitions, yet lacking any sustained analysis of the production of the firm of Ivey & Crook. Although Crook's work does not exhibit the bravura scale and detailing of his contemporary Philip Trammell Shutze, it does display his dexterity and tact in adapting 18th-century English and 18th- and early 19th-century American (especially Southern) precedents to suburban houses, school and university buildings, small public buildings, and churches. To its credit, the book contains good contemporary photographs of Ivey & Crook's buildings by Van Jones Martin and a chronological listing of the firm's work. Drawings



Sidney C. Berg House, Pasadena, CA, Neff (1927). (From *Wallace Neff*, photo by Louis Bruhnke.)

are included, but they function more as graphic decoration than supporting documentation.

Filial devotion also motivated the production of *Wallace Neff, Architect of California's Golden Age*, compiled by Wallace Neff, Jr., with text by Alson Clark. Wallace Neff's career was exceptionally long-lived. His first house was built in 1919, his last in 1975. His reputation as a country house architect was made with the Bourne House in San Marino (1925), one of the most frequently published California houses of the 1920s, a neo-vernacular mansion that demonstrated Neff's virtuosity in massing, composition, and texture, which David Gebhard aptly describes in a brief foreword as "painterly." It was with the piquant appeal of a landscape painter that Neff re-created architectural vignettes of rural Andalusia, Lombardy, and Mexico along the manicured streets of Pasadena and San Marino and on the precipitous slopes above Beverly Hills and Bel-Air.

Unlike the Crook monograph, this is a work of scholarship. Alson Clark is at his best in the introductory essay, which clearly

details Neff's family background, his childhood in Pasadena and Europe, his training and apprenticeship, and his swift rise to professional recognition after beginning practice in 1922. In the notes of the 66 catalogue entries that follow, Clark's sense of direction falters, facilitated by the curious arrangement of entries in neither chronological nor any other determinable sequence. Clark does identify many of Neff's characteristic architectural attributes, but never focuses these observations to produce a critical perspective in which Neff's work might be evaluated, nor does he outline the consistent patterns that marked Neff's buildings. As a result, minor digressions assume annoying prominence. One is left to speculate about the extent to which family devotion resulted in the inclusion of so much material about movie star clients, AIA-chapter design awards, and instances of publication in place of the critical analysis and evaluation that Neff's work merits, a process that Clark begins but does not bring to a satisfactory conclusion. The book contains an alphabetical listing by client of Neff's buildings and a listing of published

references to his work. The quality of photo reproduction varies. Plan, section, and elevation drawings are illustrated in many of the catalogue entries, although one would have welcomed even more.

William B. O'Neal and Christopher Weeks organized *The Work of William Lawrence Bottomley in Richmond* along the same lines as the book on Wallace Neff: a foreword by Jaquelin T. Robertson, whose parents built one of Bottomley's Richmond houses, an introductory essay by the authors on Bottomley's career, and catalogue entries on 15 houses, one residential addition, and one apartment building, followed by notes on four non-residential or unexecuted projects, a listing of Bottomley's other work in Virginia, and a listing of Bottomley's pattern books. Interspersed among the catalogue entries are several short essays, including two on the residential districts where Bottomley's houses are concentrated, the semi-urban Monument Avenue corridor and the garden suburb of Windsor Farms.

Bottomley worked in Richmond between 1915 and 1941. Most of these houses were built during the 1920s and early 1930s and represent the architect at the peak of his career. O'Neal and Weeks precisely describe the houses, their planning, formal and spatial composition, material detailing, and often original interior decoration and garden designs. This analytical specificity is aided by retraced floor plans (although almost always of the first floor only), site plans, and superlative color photographs by Richard Cheek. It would be difficult to overstate how much Cheek's photographs aid the reader not only in appreciating, but in interpreting, Bottomley's houses. These communicate with amazing clarity the subtleties of detail, texture, and color of which the best American eclectic architects were masters, but which most architectural photography fails to relay. Unfortunately, they also reveal the blunted tastes of many present-day occupants, which are blander, more conventional, and less discriminating than were those of the original occupants. Only the spatial sensations that Bottomley's beautifully proportioned interiors provide

escape Cheek's view.

What eludes O'Neal and Weeks are the stylistic fluency and scholarly assurance that Bottomley's works exude. And as keen as the authors are to Bottomley's houses, their historic sources (often Virginian in origin), and their clients, they acknowledge but do not quite come to grips with the prevailing attitudes and practices of American country house architects in the 1910s and 1920s. Bottomley is described as a compound of gentleman and Bohemian, charmer and flatterer, exacting designer, demanding supervisor, and disciplined professional, yet O'Neal and Weeks do not conclude that this was the personality type of the eclectic master (to which, by Clark's account, Wallace Neff must also have conformed). In terms of architectural analysis, Bottomley's predilection for intricate spatial and visual sequences is described, but no notice is taken of his quirky plans (he repeatedly jammed rooms into building shells in the most diagrammatically expedient ways) and the extent to which he achieved perceptual interest at the expense of conceptual clarity.

Because exploration of this episode in American architectural history has largely proceeded through monographs on individual architects, the shortcomings noted in both the Neff and Bottomley books may in part be attributed to the lack of a definitive study of the entire period. Mark A. Hewitt's forthcoming book on the American country house should provide future authors with a broader understanding of the presently ill-defined and still somewhat mysterious conceptual universe in which early 20th-century American eclectic architects worked.

LEWIS EDMUND CROOK, JR., ARCHITECT, 1898-1967: A TWENTIETH-CENTURY TRADITIONALIST IN THE DEEP SOUTH, William Robert Mitchell, Jr., The History Business, Inc., 1984, 147 pp., illus., \$40.00.

WALLACE NEFF: ARCHITECT OF CALIFORNIA'S GOLDEN AGE, Alson Clark, Capra Press, 1987, 240 pp., illus., \$50.00.

THE WORK OF WILLIAM LAWRENCE BOTTOMLEY IN RICHMOND, William B. O'Neal and Christopher Weeks, University Press of Virginia, 286 pp., illus., \$35.00.

Margaretta Darnall

THE ENGLISH GARDEN IN OUR TIME

JANE BROWN

LANNING ROPER AND HIS GARDENS

JANE BROWN

In these two recent books, Jane Brown discusses the English garden since 1897. *The English Garden in Our Time* surveys the entire period, and *Lanning Roper and His Gardens* focuses on one important designer. Landscape architecture has undergone drastic changes in England in the last century, but the private garden remains its most interesting product.

Subtitled *From Gertrude Jekyll to Geoffrey Jellicoe*, *The English Garden in Our Time* begins with an analysis of Miss Jekyll's own garden at Munstead Wood. Chapters on the gardens of the Arts and Crafts movement, including work by Jekyll and by the architect Edwin Lutyens, follow. The all-too-brief description of the Italian influence in the 20th century is followed by a lengthier discussion of the Modern Movement. Brown then turns to Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson's Sissinghurst Castle, the preservation movement after World War II, the "New Georgian" gardens, and the social dilemma of landscape architecture in the 20th century. She concludes with two chapters on Geoffrey Jellicoe.

Brown argues that "too many history books have taught us that the English landscape style was our finest hour." She favors the intimate, personal scale of the Edwardian gardeners over the broad, sweeping landscapes of the 18th century, and traces the evolution of Jekyll and Lutyens's ideas, drawing heavily on her earlier books, *Gardens of a Golden Afternoon* and *Vita's Other World*. There is material on popular designers of the early 20th century, such as Reginald Blomfield, Thomas Mawson, Percy Cane, Harold Peto, Clough Williams-

Ellis, and others whose names are nearly forgotten now. In the chapter on the Modern Movement, she shows the 1930s work of Christopher Tunnard, who was influenced by modern European architects before he came to the United States and a distinguished academic career at Harvard and Yale. Other outside influences on the English garden include the American designer Beatrix Farrand's work at Dartington Hall in Devon in the 1930s and the publications of the Brazilian Roberto Burle Marx and the Californian Thomas Church in the 1950s.

Geoffrey Jellicoe is unquestionably England's most important 20th-century landscape architect. His long and productive career began in the 1920s, when after completing his courses at the Architectural Association, he went to Italy with John Shepherd and produced the magnificent *Italian Gardens of the Renaissance*. A prolific writer and designer, his major commissions in the 1980s include the Moody Gardens in Galveston, Texas; parks for Brescia and Modena in Italy; and an amazing request to design a garden of the past, the present, and the future at Sutton Place, a 16th-century manor house, formerly the home of Paul Getty. This review of Jellicoe's work is worthwhile for his exquisite drawings alone.

Brown herself is partial to those private gardens which, in the manner of Jekyll and Lutyens, are divided into a series of rooms, each with a different theme and which remain "a peaceful refuge" or a place for "solace and refreshment of the spirit." But much has happened to the English garden socially and stylistically in the 20th century, and the book as a whole does not explain these changes. Brown ignores the work of English designers in France and Italy before World War II, as well as the functional, low-maintenance gardens, both public and private, which have been necessary in the postwar era. Even so, *The English Garden in Our Time* is an excellent review of the highlights and lesser known treasures of the Edwardian tradition, which is enjoying renewed popularity in England and elsewhere.

In another recent book, Brown focuses on Lanning Roper (1912–1983), a singular character in modern British gardening. Although not a landscape architect, he was a better designer than most, so it would be unfair to classify him as simply a horticulturist. Roper called himself a "garden consultant" and designed on the site more often than on paper.

An American, educated at Harvard, with a year of architecture at Princeton, Roper made England his home after World War II, where he studied horticulture at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew and Edinburgh. Roper was known both as a writer (for the *Royal Horticultural Society Journal*, *Country Life*, and the *Sunday Times*) and as a

designer; his most productive years were between 1965 and 1980. As a designer he was equally adept at restoring and adapting historic gardens or designing a landscape to harmonize with contemporary buildings by leading architects.

In the 18th century, Horace Walpole said that Capability Brown's best work would be the least remembered, for it would be mistaken for nature. The same could be said of Lanning Roper in the 20th century. In the restoration of 18th-century gardens for the National Trust, in the adaptation for the public of Winston Churchill's undistinguished garden at Chartwell, or the landscape surrounding Foster Associates' hangar-like Sainsbury Centre for the Visual



Farnsworth House, Plano, IL, where Roper worked at least one week a year on the setting, so that the house "should render up its secrets gradually by a series of tantalizing glimpses." (Mies van der Rohe, architect) (From *Lanning Roper*.)

Arts in Norwich, Roper's intervention was never mannered or self-conscious. He was always able to enhance the buildings and their sites without calling attention to his work.

One of Roper's most photographed but least recognized commissions was the landscaping of Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House in Plano, Illinois for the present owner. Here Roper was responsible for laying out the entrance road, opening up the area around the famous glass house, and judiciously placing trees in the clearing to shade the house and focus the views to the Fox River.

More biography than monograph, *Lanning Roper and His Gardens* traces Roper's family history, his early years in New Jersey, and his life in England. Other chapters

are devoted to the garden he made with his wife, Primrose, at Park House in London, the gardens he worked on in Ireland, his restoration of historic gardens, his work with contemporary architects, and his work for the royal families of Great Britain and Iran. Brown falters occasionally when discussing the American connections, but she always manages to convey his personal charm and sensitivity to each particular situation.

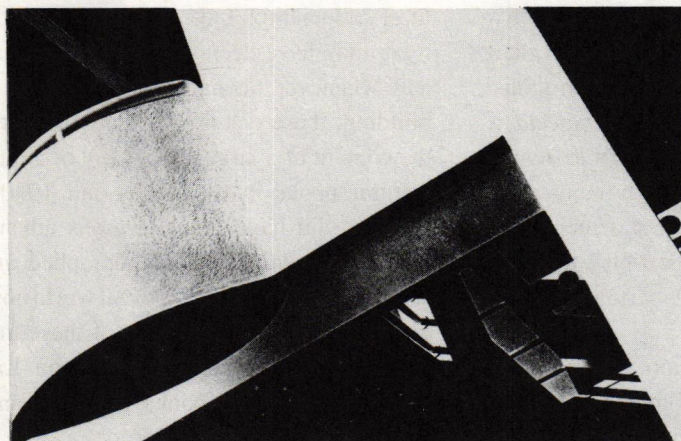
The book's most serious fault is the lack of a bibliography of Roper's writings. Passages quoted in the text are identified in Brown's notes, but this is not a complete list. Altogether, however, the book is an excellent assessment of Roper's life and work. Roper either took the photographs himself or they were made under his supervision, so they convey his composition,

views, and sense of space.

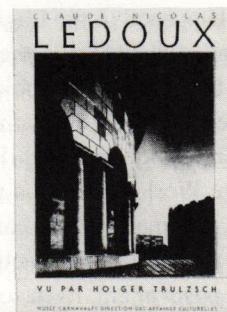
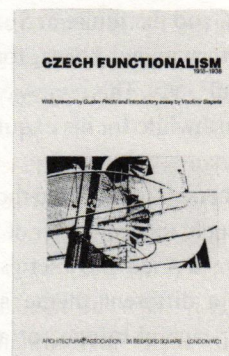
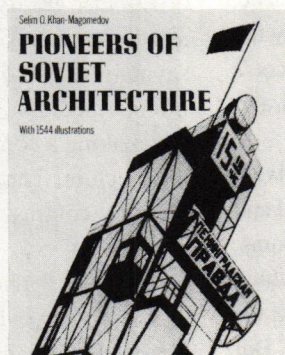
These two books, one general and the other specific, portray the evolution of English garden design since Gertrude Jekyll. Although Brown is not sympathetic to modern architecture, her critical eye is acute when it comes to landscape design, and she explains clearly the nuances and differences among modern practitioners. Both books will interest garden enthusiasts and professional designers alike.

THE ENGLISH GARDEN IN OUR TIME: FROM GERTRUDE JEKYLL TO GEOFFREY JELICOE, Jane Brown, Antique Collectors Club, 1986, 250 pp., illus., \$39.50.

LANNING ROPER AND HIS GARDENS, Jane Brown, Rizzoli, 1987, 224 pp., illus., \$37.50.



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THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF ARCHITECTURE

AKIKO BUSCH

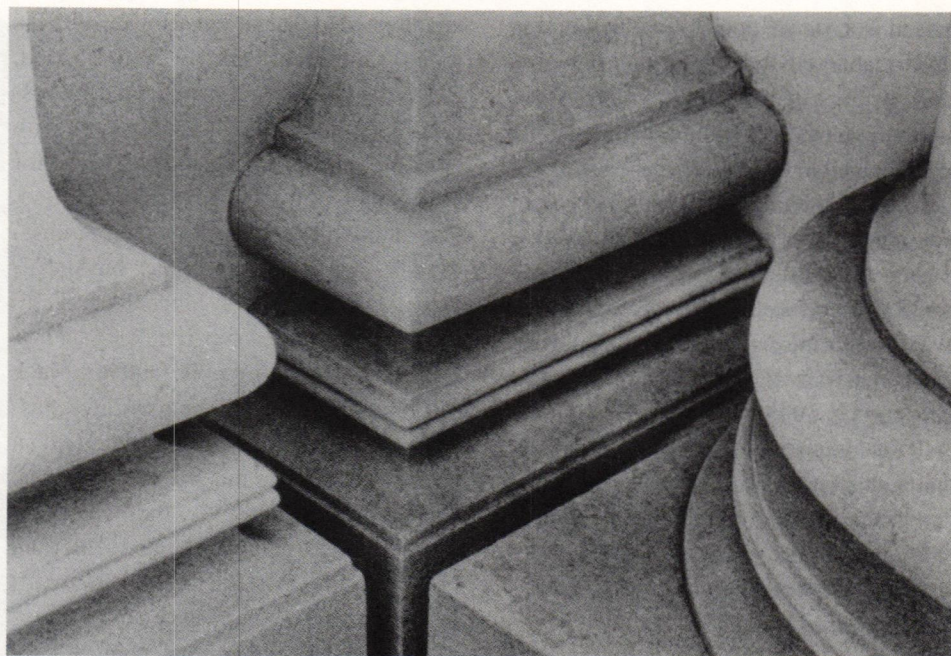
FRANK YERBURY: ITINERANT CAMERAMAN

FOREWORD BY ALVIN BOYARSKY,
TEXT BY ANDREW HIGGOTT AND
IAN JEFFREY

"Most [architectural photographers] . . . work with such profound respect for the buildings they photograph and the architects who designed them, that the idea that their photographs might confer their own legitimacy [on buildings] is almost laughable," writes Akiko Busch. "It is with almost surprising modesty that most of these photographers work."

Ms. Busch should have noticed that photographers work repeatedly for the same architects or magazine editors and cannot bite the hand that feeds them. They not only are fans of architecture, they believe in photographing buildings in certain especially desirable ways. And so the photographs in this book (reproduced in ink-starved, single-impression offset, at least one of them upside down) can contradict their takers good intentions. For example, Wolfgang Hoyt says he means to show buildings in their environment, unlike "[Ezra] Stoller [who], for the most part, photographed modern architecture . . . which didn't really pay attention to its context . . . [and] had to be photographed in a vacuum." Yet Stoller's pictures in this book generally do show building in their contexts, whereas Hoyt's, most of which are of modern buildings, generally do not.

The work of the twelve photographers described in *The Photography of Architecture* represents the different approaches of several generations of photographers. The degree of forelock tugging varies with each generation. Three of the twelve, Julius Shulman, Bill Hedrich (of Hedrich-Bless-



"Columns. New York, New York, 1979," Judith Turner. (From *Photography of Architecture*.)

ing), and Ezra Stoller, started their careers in the 1930s and are now in their seventies; two, Nick Merrick and Paul Warchol, are still in their thirties. The sly oldsters come across as the most admiring of architects and the most modest (with the exception of Shulman, whose stated goal is "not to glamorize, but to glorify"). Stoller is even quoted, as he was some years ago in *Perspecta*, as saying that photography is "an extremely limited medium." Imagine a major architect making a comparable statement about architecture! The youngest photographers seem by contrast overly serious and self-absorbed.

The twelfth photographer in the book is Judith Turner, who photographs bits and pieces of buildings. Although architects do not hire her to document their newly completed buildings, they are often flattered to have her photographs framed on their walls, apparently with the thought that images that are so low in documentary value must be high in artistry. Indeed, many of the photographers in the book seem to think that artistry can conflict with documentation. Photographs, it seems, should be artistic, but not too artistic.

Francis Rowland Yerbury, whose work is the subject of *Frank Yerbury: Itinerant Cameraman*, was another sort of architectural photographer entirely. Busch's pho-

tographers are paid to photograph newly completed (or even not quite completed) buildings at the right instant under the most articulate light. In contrast, Yerbury, a longtime secretary of London's Architectural Association, took pictures for which there may have been no compelling need and whenever he happened to get to a building; these pictures thereafter formed the content of a large miscellany of architectural books in the 1920s and 1930s. Yerbury did have one enormous advantage: the buildings he photographed are seen in use; fragments of the real world now give a breath of life to many of these images. The Villa Stein and the Maison La Roche are filled with books, paintings, and furniture; hand baggage appears against a parapet in the Stuttgart railway station; and the inclusion of period motor cars and clothing anchors photographs firmly in the 1920s.

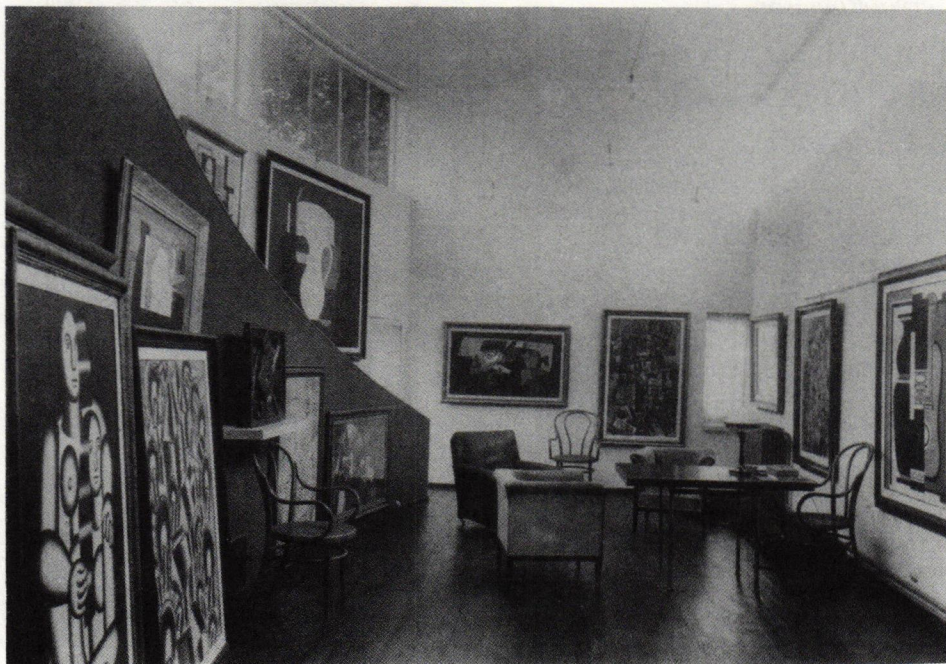
But, as a reference tool, the Yerbury book—the catalogue to an AA exhibition—is not reliable. For instance, the Hotel Statler (plate 43) that is identified as on 7th Avenue in New York City, by McKim, Mead and White, dated 1918, is actually on Niagara Square in Buffalo, by George B. Post and Sons, and of about 1922. The book also contains two silly essays. Andrew Higgott, AA's slide librarian, anguishes over the evident fact that Yerbury did not have the

orthodox taste of British modernists, but liked embarrassingly traditional things as well. In spite of this, Yerbury was instrumental in introducing modern architecture to England. Ian Jeffrey fills his essay space claiming that Yerbury could have been of the same caliber as Eugene Atget, Walker Evans, and Paul Strand, which he clearly could not have been. Oddly, Jeffrey uses as evidence not the plates in this catalogue but those in a book of Yerbury's photographs published in 1935.

If the lesson of the first of these books is that architectural photographers should be more independent of the architects whose buildings they take, the lesson of the second is that the modest noninvolvement of a Yerbury is not enough.

THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF ARCHITECTURE: TWELVE VIEWS, Akiko Busch, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1986, 232 pp., illus., \$39.95.

FRANK YERBURY: ITINERANT CAMERAMAN, ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHS 1920-35, foreword by Alvin Boyarsky, text by Andrew Higgott and Ian Jeffrey, Architectural Association, 1987, 144 pp., illus., £27.00.



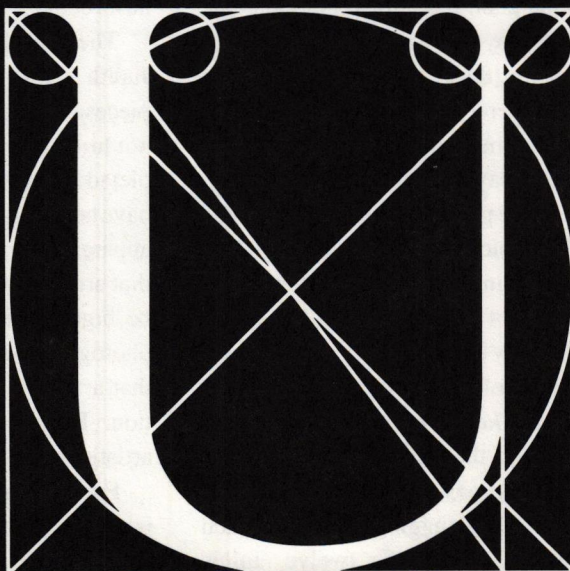
"Maison La Roche, Paris, Studio," Frank Yerbury (1923); Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, architects. (From *Frank Yerbury*.)

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Alastair Johnston

THE LIBERATED PAGE

EDITED BY HERBERT SPENCER

Design books, like Horace's *Maecenas*, often have the air of "promising much," but prove to be the same collection of title pages and famous illustrations, slightly rearranged to confuse the prospective purchaser. *The Liberated Page* is yet another of this genre, intended for the neophyte or dabbler with a general interest in typography and design. Small, bite-sized chunks of information are wrapped in profuse illustrations for effortless digestion. Selected from the new series of *Typographica* published 25 years ago, these articles were important when first published, but today their information has been superceded.

In the interim, major monographs have come out on the work of most of the typographic practitioners covered here. David Elliott's dark and grainy *Rodchenko and the Arts of Revolutionary Russia* (New York, 1979), the catalogue of an exhibition at Oxford, was followed by *Rodchenko: The Complete Work* by S. O. Khan-Magomedov in 1986. John Heartfield's work was commemorated in an eponymous Berlin publication issued by the Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst, in his brother Wieland Herzfelde's three-volume *Leben und Werk* (Dresden, 1971), in *Photomontages of the Nazi Period* (New York, 1977, more accessible in this country), and in a critical study in English, *John Heartfield: Art and Mass Media* by Douglas Kahn (New York, 1985). Herbert Bayer: *Visual Communication, Architecture, Painting* (New York & London, 1967) was followed inevitably by the *Complete Work*, edited by Arthur Cohen (MIT Press, 1984). Piet Zwart has still not become the subject of a major study, but three smaller publications show different aspects of his creative output: a typographic survey issued by Arthur Niggli in Switzerland (1966); a catalogue from the Haags Gemeentemuseum (early 1970s), which shows his furniture, architecture, industrial art, and other design; and *Piet Zwart Retro-*

spektive Fotografie (Düsseldorf, 1981). Soviet Constructivism has become the subject of considerable discussion and reappraisal in the last decade. The British Library catalogue, *The World Backwards: Russian Futurist Books, 1912-1916* by Susan Compton (1978), was followed by Christina Lodder's *Russian Constructivism* (Yale, 1983) and *Soviet Commercial Design of the Twenties* by M. Amkst (New York, 1987). There have also been catalogues of the major shows of Russian and Polish Constructivism, including the "New

interested readers would do well to check out some of the other books just mentioned.

A major omission is Hendrik Nicolaas Werkman (1882-1945), the Dutch typographic printmaker who used the tools of the printer, usually used to produce identical multiples, to create monoprints and small runs that showed the potential for variation within a theme. His technique of "Hot Printing" parallels the innovations by exponents of "le Jazz Hot" in Europe at the same time. He was the direct inspiration for Joshua Reichert, whose monotonous work

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ANGLI  CISMES

IGNORANCE

PAN DEVANT PAR BERRIERE

le côté subjectif



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Headings from *Exercices de Style*, designed by Robert Massin (c. 1960s). (From *The Liberated Page*.)

Perspectives" show on the Russian avant-garde at the Los Angeles County Museum in 1980.

The illustrations in *The Liberated Page* often duplicate those in Herbert Spencer's similar work, *Pioneers of Modern Typography*, but the layout is not as logical. Heartfield, Rodchenko, and the Polish Constructivists produced many interesting works, but the same old chestnuts invariably crop up as illustrations in this book. Henryk Berlewi's "Mechano-faktura" construction of 1922 and the inevitable covers for *Novyi Lef* and *Pro Eto* by Rodchenko give the impression that there were only a couple of Constructivist "masterpieces";

gets 15 pages to itself in *The Liberated Page*. Werkman examined the possibilities of relief printing from every angle—using the brayer directly on the paper, stenciling, frisketing, and even putting the paper on the floor and pressing inked objects, such as a door lock or a rubber cash-register mat, into it. His influence is only now making an impact on book arts.

I would also welcome some new light on the career of Robert Massin, whose *Bald Soprano* designs were revolutionary at the time, although they have since lost their shock value through overexposure. His teacher, Pierre Faucheux, deserves more than a one-line mention. It's through

neglect rather than modesty that Faucheux's typography for J. J. Pauvert's *Libertés* series is often uncredited in design books that show them (e.g., John Lewis, *The Twentieth Century Book*).

Among the worthwhile pieces in *The Liberated Page* are the article on Paul van Ostaïjen, a Belgian visual poet, and another one by Anatol Stern, "Avant-Garde Graphics in Poland Between the Two World Wars" (he was there and a part of the movement). Stefan Themerson's "Kurt Schwitters on a Time Chart" is good, as is his study of lyric ideograms.

The book demonstrates the primacy accorded to photography by graphic designers in the 1920s. In the work of Piet Zwart, Paul Schuitema, and Aleksandr Rodchenko, we find that each took up photography in order to exert more control over the finished design of their works. (In Zwart's case, he was also often the copywriter.) The increased spatial dynamics accorded the typographer who breaks through the static gray plane of pure type was explored by these great artists, along with El Lissitzky, Jan Tschichold, Ladislav Sutnar, and later practitioners. The "pioneers" preplanned the planes and the angles, often posing themselves for the required effect and to exert minute control over their compositions in which the full gray range of photography blends with the starker scale of type and white space.

Glancing through the two runs of the original magazine, one recognizes its importance in the century-long tradition of typographic journals. *Typographica* followed on the heels of the modest *Printing and Graphic Arts*, published in Vermont from 1953 to 1965, and Robert Harling's *Alphabet and Image* (1946 to 1948), the successor to *Typographica*, both printed by the Shenval Press in London. These and such journals as *Imprint*, *Dolphin*, *Fleurbaey*, and *Colophon* varied in content but had one prime focus.

Typographica started out with practical articles by John Tarr, Geoffrey Dowding, W. J. H. B. Sandberg, Paul Rand, and Max Bill on printing history, letterspacing, and poster design. The new series featured more

whimsical, albeit instructive, articles on a wealth of graphic-arts subjects. From the first series, I would certainly have included the piece on Werkman which appeared in #11, Patricia Davey's piece on "Locomotive Lettering," and the sapid study of Dutch chocolate lettering by G. H. Ovink. The selection included in *The Liberated Page* overlooks the catholicity of topics covered, from the pictorial essays such as "Emphatic Fist, Informative Arrow," by Edward Wright; "The Emergence of the Printer's Stock Block," by Charles Hasler; "The Compass Rose," by W.

E. May; to "Street Level" by Robert Brownjohn and "Chance" by folklorist Barbara Jones with Spencer's photos. The original magazine also printed Donald Bell's thorough study of forms of printing for the blind, "Reading by Touch," and James Mosley's insightful history of the sans serif letter, "The Nymph and the Grot."

In other respects, the weaknesses of the book outweigh its merits. The article on BCG (Brownjohn, Chermayeff and Geismar) is totally out of place—there's enough deadly corporate crap in the glossy design monthlies. The article on Ian Hamilton Finlay and concrete poetry by Dom Sylvester Houédard would have been a good substitution. Dieter Rot's work is presented murkily, since the reproduction is bad and there are inking problems, which spoils an otherwise interesting study of his "Boks."

The book's title begs the question: from what is the page liberated? The predictable



"Montage," Kurt Schwitters (1920). (From *The Liberated Page*.)

answer, from the narrow formalism of 19th-century typography, is belied by the work of the "artistic printer" of the 1880s. Yet there is no indication of these precursors of the modern movements in this or any other book on the major 20th-century designers. Also, why is there a rehash of material that is generally available? The audience for books on typographic design is ready for more sophisticated material. Lacking an intelligent introduction to tie together its disparate threads, the book is too narrowly focused to be considered even as a student textbook. For whatever commercial or shortsighted reasons, this repetitious compendium diminishes the appeal of its subject and deprives its audience of a potential feast.

THE LIBERATED PAGE: A *TYPOGRAPHICA* ANTHOLOGY, Herbert Spencer, editor, Bedford Press, 1987, 243 pp., illus., \$39.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

Dean Morris

THE GRAPHIC LANGUAGE OF NEVILLE BRODY

JON WOZENCROFT

To Americans *The Graphic Language of Neville Brody* may look like another graphic designer's career capsule, but in Britain it is part of a media event. Last April, at age 31, Neville Brody also opened a ten-year retrospective of his work at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and was discussed in the English financial press and on Italian television. In the book, which appeared at the same time, Brody explains the ideas and experiences involved in creating his distinctive typographic experiments on record jackets, logos, and magazines—most notably, *The Face*, a seminal and influential British style magazine of the early 1980s.

To the British design community Brody is important as a stylish innovator whose work mirrors their time. To the V & A, the British business community, and the press, Brody's work clearly depicts the British economic principle of the early 1980s: Youth + Style = Marketability. This principle is exemplified by the "merger" of the 1980s economic boom with late 1970s punk culture, although Brody might have called this a "hostile takeover" rather than a "merger." Brody and author Jon Wozencroft are feisty about the whole matter. For them, the big issues shift between Brody's manipulation of type and culture's manipulation of Brody—or rather of his style and ideas. Their ultimate, yet inadvertent, message may be "exploit culture first," on the grounds that if culture exploits you first then you can't turn it around the way Brody did. Wozencroft complains that

Brody's graphic work has been widely imitated with scant regard for his original intentions. . . . This book sets out to restate these intentions, whilst staying conscious of both the advantages and pitfalls of hindsight. . . . When style rather than content is the driving force of the culture, as it is today, it requires a keen eye to differentiate the original from its countless simulations.

So reads the introduction, but even Brody

admits that the typography of PR-phobic Barney Bubbles and Malcolm Garret prefigure his. If the author's purpose is to delineate what Brody has done and what his imitators have not, or to take a defensive position about design and greed—and I hope these are not the main purposes—then their frequent scolding of parasitic designers and of steamrolling capitalists smacks of self-flattery, but don't mind it. The book satisfies on enough other levels, such as design theory, cultural time capsule, style source, and as a diary of creative independence.

Brody has generally avoided mainstream American clients, staying with what he knows best—his town, his generation—which explains why American graphic design didn't feel the impact of Brody's work in the early 1980s to the degree that Britain felt it. Brody's record jackets vied for attention on American record store shelves, but British jackets were occasionally redesigned for American audiences, and some American jacket designs in fact imitated and diluted his style before he could become widely known here. *The Face* magazine, too, has only a small readership in the United States, so we missed any month-to-month immediacy and anticipation. The tradeoff is a volume of largely unfamiliar recent work that strikes us as fresh and provocative.

American typography in the early 1980s continued to derive space and formal vocabulary from architecture—classical, constructivist, modernist, postmodernist. American design schools continued to stew in Swiss methodology and computers, and Japanese design occupied the rest of our attention. Amazingly, Brody's typography wriggles past such architectural dogma. He also avoids any influence from American designer Bob Gill or the British design firm Pentagram, which energized British design and advertising in the 1950s and 1960s, drawing on Madison Avenue's bold, stark, and funny approach. But Brody's work isn't about funny. Nor is it about love, sex, color, or even beauty. It is about message, form, texture, drama, music, death, consumerism. And something resembling

passion—but for what? For Americans, the look of Brody's work—so clunky yet charming, like your first encounter with Venturi or Gehry, so energetic, so *odd*—is worth close study by anyone remotely interested in typography, communication theory, or promotion for music, fashion, or magazines.

All of which Brody managed to touch on early, beginning with his generally frustrated time at the London School of Printing. There, as an illustrator, he sought the most rigorous technical graphic-design curriculum, as an anti-Bauhaus, anti-commercial act, to learn enough about it to rebel against it more effectively (Brody rationalizes everything). He then immersed himself in design for independent record companies, but soon became disenchanted as they restricted his creative freedom in an attempt to expand their market. Brody made his mark at *The Face*; redesigned the London entertainment guide *City Limits*; was briefly at *Tatler* magazine; at *The New Socialist*; and spent two months in New York attempting a facelift for *Mademoiselle*. He currently art directs the British men's magazine *Arena* and runs his own studio.

Brody was fortunate to have that small window in time between the 1970s and 1980s when British youth culture's music, fashion, and design escaped to the attic, to dress up, dance, and talk loudly before the grownups and the littlest kids came up the stairs to see what all the racket was about. The rowdies were soon brought down to the living room, in front of the guests, and told to create and entertain, which of course stopped them from doing exactly that, out of self-consciousness.

These social and creative struggles in Brody's work are set off by, but also embalmed by, the book's conventional cover and page layout. Still, the pages are chock-full but never crowded, and are nicely printed. Informative captions offer technical descriptions of the work, even social contexts, and at times Brody suggests improvements. Brody's inventive condensed letterforms—"EXPO," "LATINA," "PARIS"—shine most brightly in simply composed pages with open letterspacing,



Neville Brody's cover designs for *The Face* (1984-86).
(From *The Graphic Language of Neville Brody*.)

where they aren't also trying to invent composition. His typographic innovations go beyond letterforms, easily integrating symbols as visual clues to enhance or mask meaning. For *The Face* he sometimes challenged the traditional story by beginning with a symbol rather than a capital letter. In headlines, he challenged conventional reading patterns, rotating letters and words like a compass, or using "+" as a "t" in "contents," as an odd motif over Warhol's "o," or to keep company with a few rules and circles. In one instance, Brody stole his own "M" from a Madonna story and used it the next month, upside down, for Warhol's "W," including a line of type and part of Madonna's picture, also upside down. "The girl can't help it," the line begins, which becomes a campy jab at Warhol. In another instance we're shown how, over several months, the "Contents" and "Style" headings slowly disintegrated into an illegible but striking abstraction.

Brody's treatment of body text and photography is rather straightforward and aloof from his typography, but that's understandable given his intriguing description of a production week for *The Face*:

In one building there's a typesetter, a small editorial office, an artwork department, and all the film organization for the printing plates. It was a well worked out system, but it needed to be: I had only 1 1/2 hours to design a four page feature [explains Brody]. I didn't have to paste up the artwork myself because [I used] layout grids, but this had the drawback that I would never see exactly how the photographs would work with the type until the magazine was printed. I'd probably have to draw up headline typefaces which would be photocopied and lined up very quickly.

The space and formal vocabulary of Brody's work is theatrical rather than architectural or sculptural. When Brody designs an alphabet or lays out a page, he casts a play, costumes characters, and places them among props, furniture, and scenery to perform, conflict, and perhaps resolve situations—as much through dialogue as through an interaction of forms. His graphic gestures are also musical and painterly in their rhythm and contrast, with the cleverness of Marcel Duchamp, Stewart Davis,

and Richard Artschwager but without their humor. Brody's hand-derived detail and ornament is strongly heraldic, Celtic, like the Book of Kells. Brody's rare weaknesses seem to be with color, with magazine text pages that follow a boffo opening spread, and oddly, posters. Everything about Brody's work points to him as today's preeminent poster designer. Either he wasn't getting the commissions or the right solutions weren't coming to him.

In early 1987, for the third issue of *Arena*, Brody once again shifted gears, choosing to compose Helvetica type in a restrained manner, "rather than creating a design that could easily become 'the new thing.' . . . I thought it was time to stop, to take stock. . . . Some of the hysteria should be taken out of contemporary design."

As early as 1985, in *Blueprint*, Brody said of style pickpockets,

At the root of it, graphic design is a complete language, like French, and some people are born to it and understand it fluently, can talk slang if necessary, and there are those who just use phrase books. They don't understand the words they're saying but the phrase book solves their questions. At the moment, *The Face* is the perfect phrase book to a lot of designers.

Brody began work on the museum show and this book after his stylistic about-face, which may explain the book's bitter tone. Does this renunciation weaken his ability to comment on his early work? Brody has been consistent at least in his flexible attitude to problem solving. From his standpoint, constant change could also be stagnation.

A Victoria & Albert retrospective and this mildly belligerent book might signal the end of the "Brody style" for Britain and for Brody, but it also indicates his attempt to enter the American mainstream. By the time his influence reaches our investment brochures, insurance logos, and television sports graphics, we'll have found the next career capsule to swallow.

THE GRAPHIC LANGUAGE OF NEVILLE BRODY, Jon Wozencroft, Rizzoli, 1988, 160 pp., illus., \$40.00.

Lance Hidy

HERMANN ZAPF AND HIS DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

HERMANN ZAPF

Hermann Zapf rose to prominence in the world of letterforms after the appearances of his two best-known typefaces, Palatino (1948–51) and Optima (1952–55). This book was compiled by Zapf himself, and presents the highlights of his life's work (he was born in 1918) in the form he wants the world to see. Zapf's tone throughout is modest, for he subordinates himself to the traditions, and often gives credit to his teachers and colleagues. As we would expect from a typographic genius, the book itself is a masterpiece of design and production.

The text begins with an elegant, four-page introduction by Carl Zahn, a designer with the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The twenty essays by Zapf are primarily about type, with four on calligraphy, and one on "Public Lettering and Visual Pollution," addressed primarily to architects, city planners, and others involved with environmental graphics. The essays on type are of considerable historical importance because they document two technological revolutions that occurred during his career: photocomposition and digital type.

Zapf's youthful ambition to be an electrical engineer served him well in later years as type technology migrated from mechanical systems to computers. He was always among the first to try to get the best quality out of new technology. As early as 1964, he spoke publicly about the emerging role of computers, and fully half of the essays here deal with electronic type. His positive attitude toward technological change has definitely attracted other calligraphers to high technology, helping to bridge older traditions and the cutting edge.

Three former Zapf students have become leading pioneers in digital type design in the United States. Chuck Bigelow and Kris Holmes took Zapf's summer workshop at Rochester Institute of Technology. Bigelow later received a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship for his work in

digital type generation, and their firm, Bigelow & Holmes, has become prominent for its work in digital type design. Sumner Stone, now type director at Adobe Systems, briefly worked at Hallmark cards to be near Zapf, who was their advisor and lettering tutor.

Bigelow, Holmes, and Stone got their start as calligraphers in Lloyd Reynolds's classes at Reed College in Portland, Oregon, where Stone remembers seeing the film, *The Art of Hermann Zapf*, produced by Hallmark. This led to a closer study of Zapf's calligraphy and type design, ultimately leading to digital type design. Although Bigelow, Holmes, and Stone may all have come to the new technology without Zapf's leadership, it is important to remember that his espousal of computers was not a popular view. The normal response to the arrival of phototype and then digital type was mistrust and a longing for the good old days. We can see from these essays that Zapf had the wisdom to take the long view, knowing that any new technology needed to mature, and the first clumsy steps were a necessary stage. He also knew that if skilled letter-artists did not step in, the engineers could make costly mistakes, which might delay the arrival of quality typesetting. Zapf helped to legitimize the technological future for calligraphers and typographers who were often spellbound by the past.

His role in calligraphy deserves further mention. I believe that there is no one alive who surpasses Zapf's virtuosity with the pen, and his work speaks for itself through the book's many plates. The four opening essays on calligraphy total only seven pages, but he makes it clear that calligraphy is the foundation for his work in type

design. Calligraphy is

the critical confrontation with historic forms of a great tradition, a tradition that, if it is to survive, must be carried on within the conditions of our time. The many great inspirations of the past must serve as a starting point for practical applications in today's society. . . .

Freedom and discipline are the black and white counterparts in calligraphy, and it is in the hands of the calligrapher, matured by years of experience and training, to unite this freedom and discipline into harmony.

Zapf's "dance of the pen," rather than his more formal type design, is easiest to appreciate. His calligraphy expresses, through its gestures alone, a joy and mastery that thrills much as hearing a virtuoso musician or seeing a great dancer.

The masterpieces of the book, in my opinion, are five of the color calligraphy plates (done between 1969 and 1971) in sgraffito oil and tempera technique on prepared panels (plates 148–9, 161–2, 168). They each contain a geometric drawing plus calligraphy or lettering, rendered against mottled backgrounds in rich, subtle

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colors, roughly two feet high. The words are from diverse sources: Lao-tzu, Goethe, Plato, Josef Albers, and the American calligrapher, Paul Standard. Each of these panels is a distillation of Zapf's best, demonstrating his unequaled ability to "unite freedom and discipline into harmony."

Many of the typefaces Zapf has designed are very calligraphic, including the little-known proprietary alphabets for Hallmark Cards: Firenze, Uncial, Winchester, Charlemagne, Stratford, and Scriptura, all displayed in the book's "Complete List of Type Designs." A special surprise for me was Linofilm Venture, based partly on Zapf's own informal handwriting and first sketched with a Japanese felt pen. While most of Zapf's cursive types are dressed up as if for a dinner party, Venture is in blue jeans and sneakers. Its informality stands out strongly against Zapf's usual elegance.

A more substantial typeface, shown here for the first time, is Zapf Renaissance Roman and Italic (plus Bold and Light versions.) The italic has many swash variants and ligatures, rivaling Jan Van Krimpen's Cancelleresca Bastarda for variety. This is a virtuoso design. The delicate serifs and thin strokes indicate that it was not intended as a utilitarian textface, but rather for display or short texts in larger sizes.

A recurring theme in Zapf's essays is the lack of copyright protection for typeface designs. Except for Germany and France, international copyright law does not cover typefaces. As a result, piracy is legal, depriving designers not only of income but also of control against unauthorized changes in the designs. Zapf laments that his efforts and those of his colleagues to influence copyright law have failed in the United States. One explanation that I hear from time to time is that Congress feared that allowing individuals to copyright alphabets could endanger freedom of the press. The logic of that is as faulty as the copyright law.

Zapf may have inadvertently hurt the cause by citing three lawsuits where the courts ruled in favor of the pirates: American Type Founders against Damon & Peets for making electrotype copies of ATF

Zapf Renaissance Italic TABVLA ABCDARIAE

a a b c d d e e e f f f g g g g h i j k k

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N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

♪ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 ♪ \$ 1 2 , 3 4 5 , 6 7 8 . 9 0 ¢

"Zapf Renaissance Italic," Zapf. (From *Hermann Zapf*.)

Cheltenham in 1905; Keystone Type Foundry against Portland Publishing Company; and in 1917, Frederick W. Goudy, then America's most prominent type designer, against a copyist named Hansen. In one decision, Zapf tells us unhappily, the court wrote, "Type has no other characteristics except utility." No legal precedent is cited in support of Zapf's position.

Zapf praises the International Typeface Corporation (ITC) for devising methods of trade that encourage legitimate licensing of their typefaces to other vendors. As a result, ITC has been largely successful in preventing unauthorized copying of its typefaces, including ITC Zapf Chancery, ITC Zapf Book, and ITC Zapf International.

Subsequent to the publication of this book, Zapf has lent his support to the new

Typeface Design Coalition. The TDC is supporting the Industrial Innovation and Technology Act (S. 791 and H.R. 379), which provides some protection for designs of "useful articles," including typefaces.

There have been other developments in the past few years, again not cited in the book, which demonstrate a trend within the type industry to act in accord with Zapf's ideas. In the absence of legal protection, segments of the industry have been self-regulating—believing ethical guidelines to be good business.

A key dispute has been whether typefaces should be licensed as a standard practice, or whether licenses should be granted selectively at the discretion of the typeface company. Zapf is a spokesman for the de-

signers who want the licenses to be sold to any firm willing to meet the standard terms (they are willing to grant a two-year period of exclusivity to allow the company to recover its development costs).

This stand has brought Zapf into conflict with Linotype, the owner of three of Zapf's best typefaces: Palatino, Optima, and Melior. It has been suggested that Linotype, by refusing licenses to several companies, may have inadvertently encouraged design piracy. When denied a license for popular designs like Zapf's, some vendors have taken the last resort (legal nevertheless) of making unauthorized copies and giving them new names.

In response to this disagreement, the Association Typographique Internationale (ATyPI) proposed a moral code regarding the copying of typefaces, with interesting results for Zapf. The code stated that any company denied a license could ethically copy the design of typefaces at least 15 years old. The 15 years was later softened to "an appropriate space of time."

The ironic consequence for Zapf was that when Bitstream, a digital type company in Massachusetts, was denied licenses to Linotype Palatino, Melior, and Optima (all more than thirty years old), Zapf worked as a paid consultant to Bitstream, personally supervising the copying of these faces. Renamed Zapf Calligraphic, Zapf Elliptical, and Zapf Humanist, each received significant minor design adjustments. Bitstream reports that Zapf now prefers his unlicensed, digital versions to the original metal designs he made for Linotype.

Matthew Carter, the creative director at Bitstream and a superb type designer himself, is very sensitive to the ethical issues surrounding typeface copying. Perhaps Bitstream's alliance with Zapf will help to free up the licensing process, or else encourage companies to work directly with the designers when making typeface copies under the ATypI ethical guidelines.

Zapf's ideas on typeface licensing have also had considerable influence on Adobe Systems of Mountain View, California. Adobe is the largest vendor of digital typefaces for use with desktop computers, and

its type division, like Bitstream, is under the creative direction of a leading type designer: Sumner Stone.

Consistent with Zapf's advice, Stone has voluntarily brought Adobe into licensing arrangements with ITC, Linotype, and other major type companies. As a result, designers and vendors have received their fair share of the sales, and have been reassured about the integrity of the designs. Stone in turn has earned the trust of the type designers with whom he is now working to develop totally new typefaces.

At Bitstream, Carter too has earned the confidence of his colleagues, and is bringing out a series of new typefaces, including Bitstream Carmina, designed by Zapf's wife, Gudrun Zapf von Hesse, and Bitstream Amerigo, by the Dutch designer Gerard Unger.

This story of design protection demonstrates that these essays by Zapf have had an enormous impact on their audience, and have helped to shape business practice during these times of rapid change. Although he has yet to see true copyright protection, Zapf has helped the industry find other forms of protection, and has clarified the issues so that we can discuss them more productively.

In Zapf's closing essay, "Public Lettering and Visual Pollution," he contemplates the jungle of signs and advertisements in public places, where

everything is too large and brutal looking; bad letterforms predominate. . . . Unfortunately, it seems everything that increases business disturbs the good image of a city.

Zapf proposes restrictions, such as limiting certain colors for use only in traffic signs, and praises Dayton, Ohio; Kansas City, Missouri; and Rothenburg and Dinkelsbühl, West Germany, for successfully regulating street signs.

He then entreats architects to improve the quality of letters on buildings. "Some architects think that if they use a sans serif typeface everything will look modern." Since very little about the history of letterforms is taught in schools of architecture, Zapf suggests that the architect find a graphic

designer to choose the lettering for the building. He mentions the excellent letterforms created by John E. Benson of Newport, Rhode Island, for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Benson, who carves letters in stone, has done many important commissions, including the East Wing of the National Gallery and the Boston Public Library. In San Francisco, Christopher Stinehour is emerging as another master carver of letters for buildings.

Zapf also examines subway lettering, praising Edward Johnston's 1916 alphabets for the London Underground, and deploing Milan's use of tightly spaced capitals, which are hard to read from a moving train. Not one to make idle complaints, Zapf is full of suggestions, and even refers us to organizations (ICOGRADA, AIGA, and AGI) that offer advice to architects and public planners.

In addition to the plates and essays, this wonderful book lists the publications, films, and articles by Zapf, his complete type designs (including illustrations and annotations), and extensive comments on the plates. Zapf's brilliance with letterforms, his thoughtfulness, and his enthusiasm for grappling with the challenges of technology and commerce are well documented here. This is, in my opinion, a book deserving careful study by anyone who works with letterforms, or who just wants to feast his or her eyes on sublime designs.

HERMANN ZAPF AND HIS DESIGN PHILOSOPHY: SELECTED ARTICLES AND LECTURES ON CALLIGRAPHY AND CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS IN TYPE DESIGN, Hermann Zapf, introduction by Carl Zahn, Society of Typographic Arts, 1987, 254 pp., illus., \$50.00.

LETTER FROM ARGENTINA

Maria Zulema Amadei, the editor of *Revista del Taller*, is an architect and educator living in Rosario, Argentina.

We have an expression here: "Do you know where I'm talking from?" and perhaps the best way for me to begin is to explain that Rosario is 298 kilometers upstream from Buenos Aires, on the Rio Paraná. With nine hundred thousand residents it is the country's second largest city (though Córdoba claims to be larger). Rosario is often called the "Chicago of Argentina," both for its importance as the distribution center to the interior and its position as the home of the mafia. It is the city of several important historical figures (Lisandro de la Torre and Che Guevarra), and of merchants, musicians, prostitutes, and smugglers. It is the seat both of the Legion of Decency and the foulest graffiti believable; disheveled but calm, austere but disorganized, Rosario sits on the river but denies this through the siting of her buildings.

Rosario's School of Architecture was founded in 1925 and has approximately seventeen hundred students. In general, Argentine universities are distinguished by their "universalist" attitude, and the curriculum of the school demands extensive reading and encourages bookworms. When they graduate, the students enter a profession that has been profoundly affected by the turmoil our country has endured for over fifteen years. Few architects have been able to practice independently; most work for the state or for large offices; those who desire a different destiny emigrate. As a result, the potential audience for publications on architectural design and criticism has dramatically diminished. Argentine architects "were" great readers and consumers of professional literature; they "used to be" faithful subscribers to magazines—all of this is in the past tense.

Not all booksellers will explain it in the same way. Some believe that the low income of professionals is the only factor in



The city of Rosario, on the Rio Paraná (to the right in the above photo).

the decline of sales. Others, however, feel there are strictly personal factors, and insist that those who read continue to do so in spite of other more urgent expenses. But they all agree on one thing: books are not selling. On my trips to Buenos Aires, and in long conversations with friends or distributors of my magazine, I hear the same thing: there is excellent potential in the readers who languidly browse through the bookstores (in Buenos Aires they stay open all night long), and who, as melancholic as the tango itself, pine for better times gone by. It is not that architects have become "bad," but that they are too busy earning a living and their salaries prevent them from buying the latest material. A relatively good salary for an architect is approximately \$400 a month. A magazine costs \$40, and a book \$80 or more. One visible consequence of this is what in educational circles is called "the age of the photocopy." In spite of being against the law, everything absolutely needed for research gets photocopied because the difference in price is substantial.

Rosario receives five national publications from Buenos Aires and La Plata: *Summa*, *Trama*, *Dos Puntos*, *Ambiente*, and

Casas. There is also a locally published magazine, *Revista del Taller*, which I have edited for the past five years, and which sells no more than ten copies per issue in each of the two specialized bookstores in the city. It would be optimistic to think that three hundred copies are sold nationally. Of the foreign magazines, we receive *Global Architecture*, *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, *A&V* (from Spain), and *Architectural Record*. Half the copies received are sold. Currently *Architectural Record* sells the most copies because of its special promotion. Its organization by subject makes it useful for immediate research. The local publications cover the work of a few important architects, mainly from Buenos Aires. Several notable Argentinian publishers (Espacio, Infinito, Tecnica, Nueva Vision) put out books on architecture, criticism, and design, and some foreign publishers (Blume, Gilli, Limusa) bring the new trends to Argentina quickly and with very good translations.

In the last few years a great influence has been exercised by the designers and critics from the "peninsula of the renaissance" (Tafuri, Rossi, Quaroni, Portoghesi, Botta)

Rosario's location in Argentina.

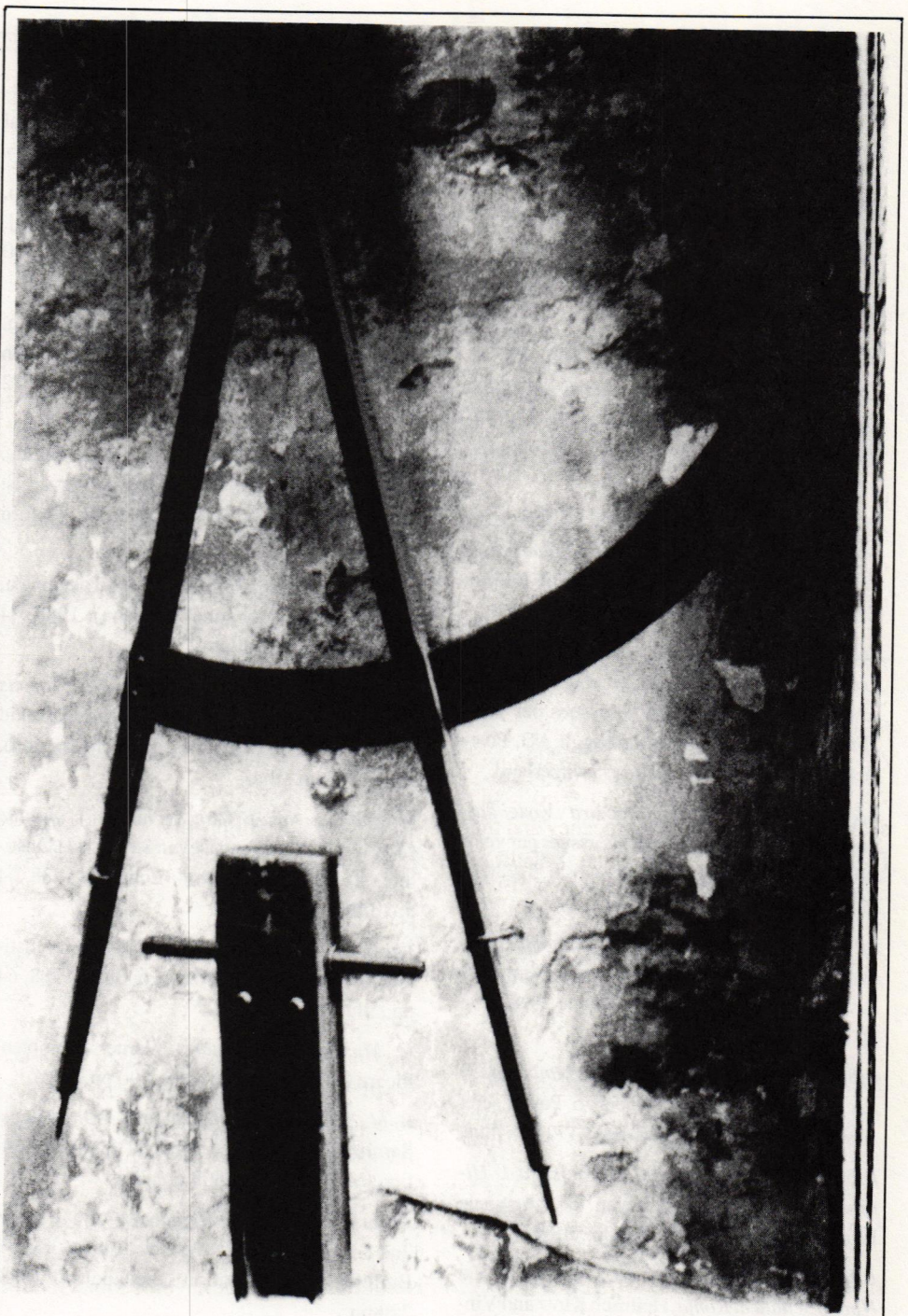


and from Spain (Bohigas, Bofill, Xust, Pinon, etc.). The United States is represented by publications on Venturi, Moore, the Five, and I. M. Pei.

Evidently image counts more than words. Soccer cards sell more than critical essays. The appearance in print (even though little is being built) of forms derived from the multiple pos modern tendencies (the avant-garde of the crab?) is quite common. This work ignores the local vernacular, such as the *casa chorizo*, the Argentinian equivalent of the railroad flat. This type of house comprises a series of rooms lined up with a lateral patio, and was common at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Rather than being an expression of cultural dependency, it evolved from the styles brought to Rosario from the place of origin of the builder or the inhabitant, and soon acquired its own identity. In contrast, the plain emulation of foreign styles and forms now seen in magazines and books makes a notable cultural dependency all too evident. This is not to say that I believe that local ideas are good and foreign ones are not; but for an architect in Rosario to use forms indiscriminately from the work of, say, Aldo Rossi, and on top of that to use them on a parking lot replacing one of the city's few historical relics, is both formally ridiculous and conceptually sad. I believe we need an attitude toward work that allows us to understand and choose or reject ideas instead of borrowing forms.

The situation in the rest of the country is not much different. Argentina has always felt like a piece of Europe, but it is not. Its notorious economic dependency on the United States and its French educational tradition collide in a way that makes the present situation highly dramatic. Countries are categorized as developed and those on their way. I would add another category to which Argentina belongs: those countries on their way to underdevelopment. This classification does not yet exist in sociology or in economic politics, only in reality.

Translated from Spanish by Claudia Merzario.



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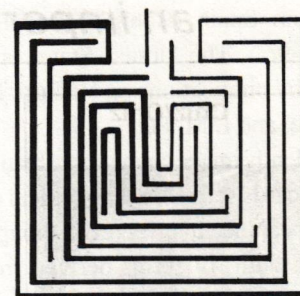
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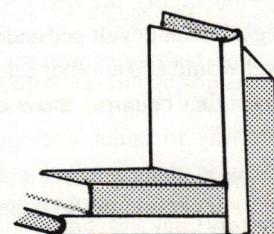
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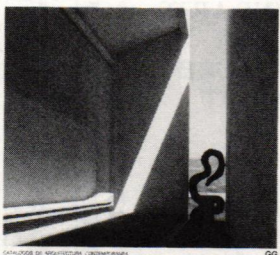
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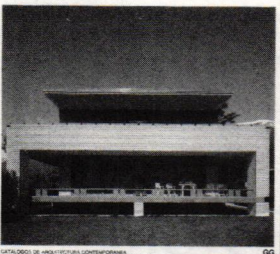
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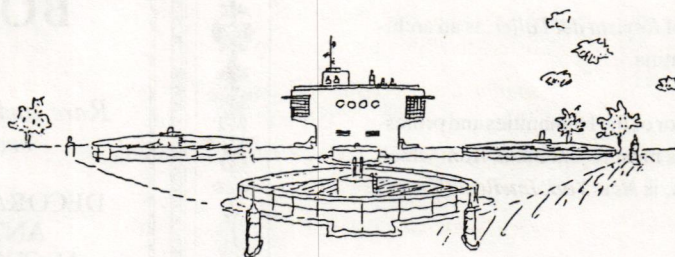
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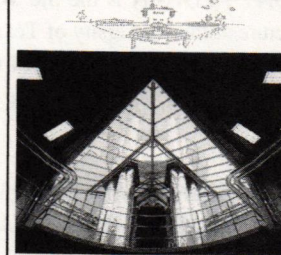


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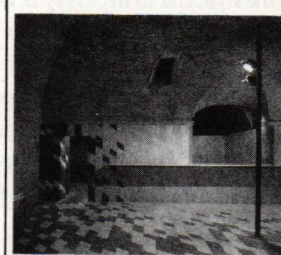


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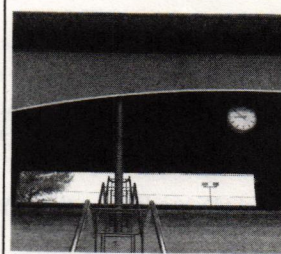
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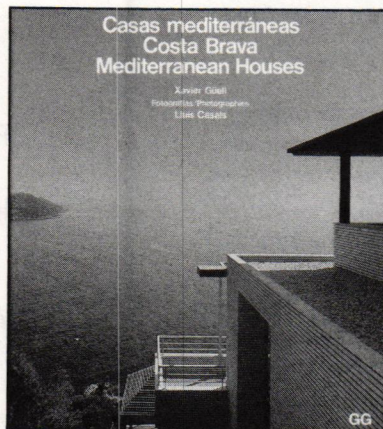
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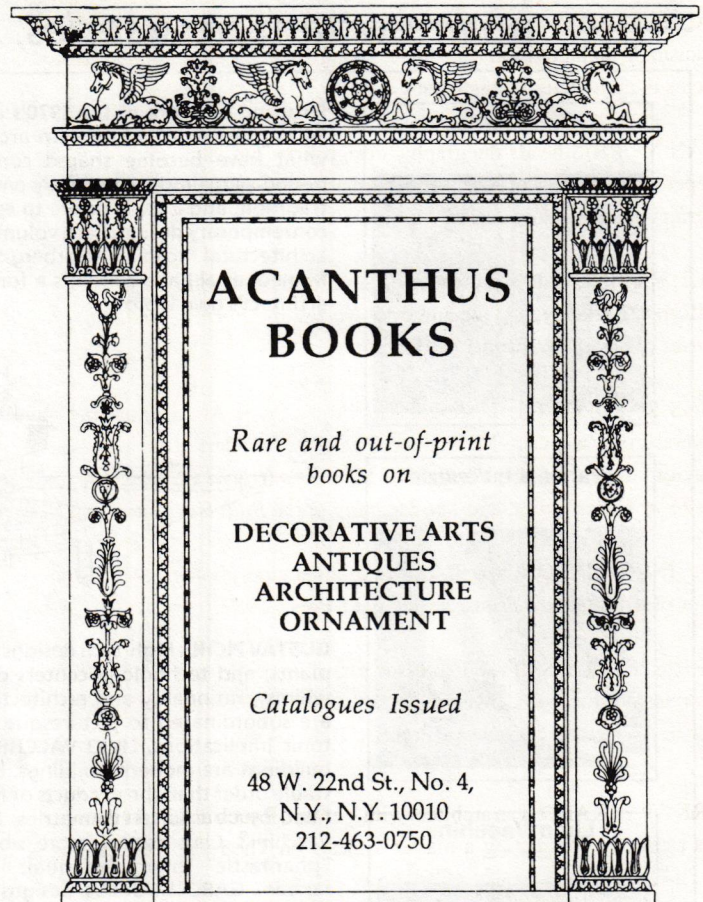
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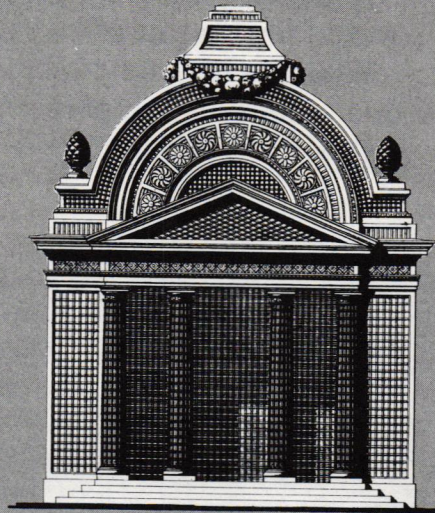
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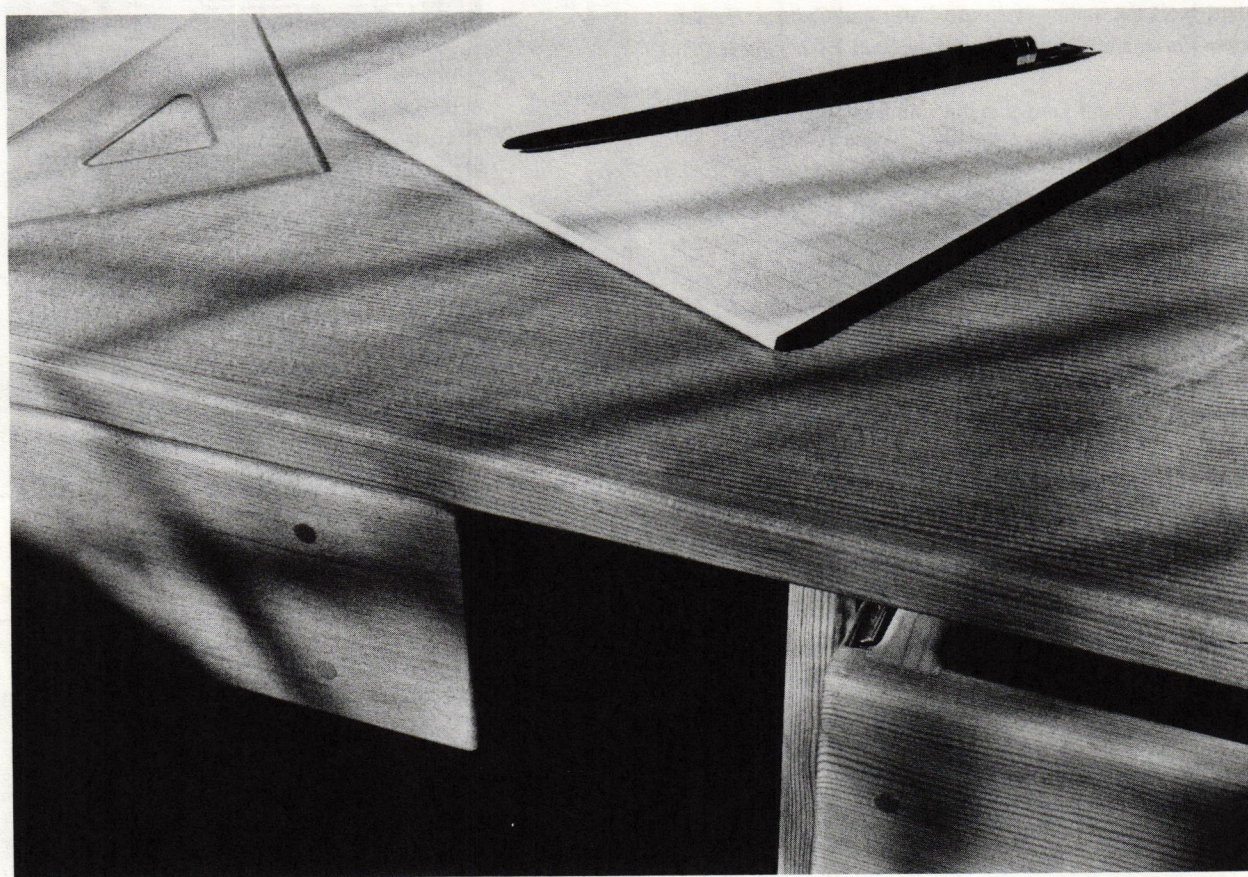
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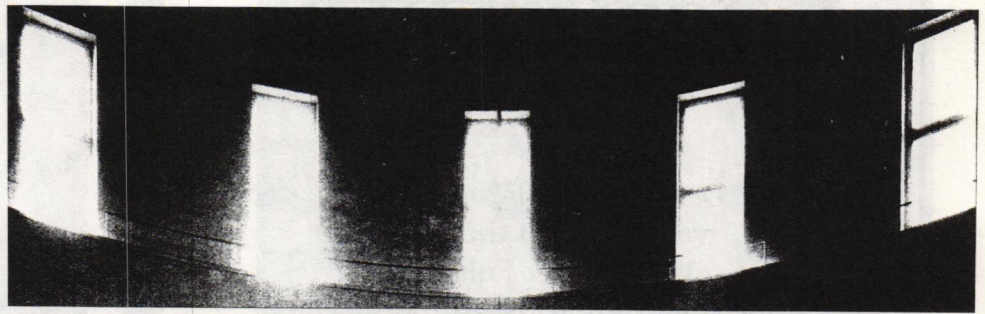
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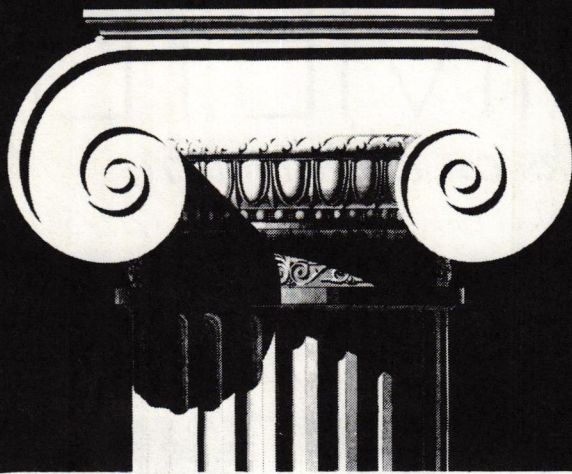
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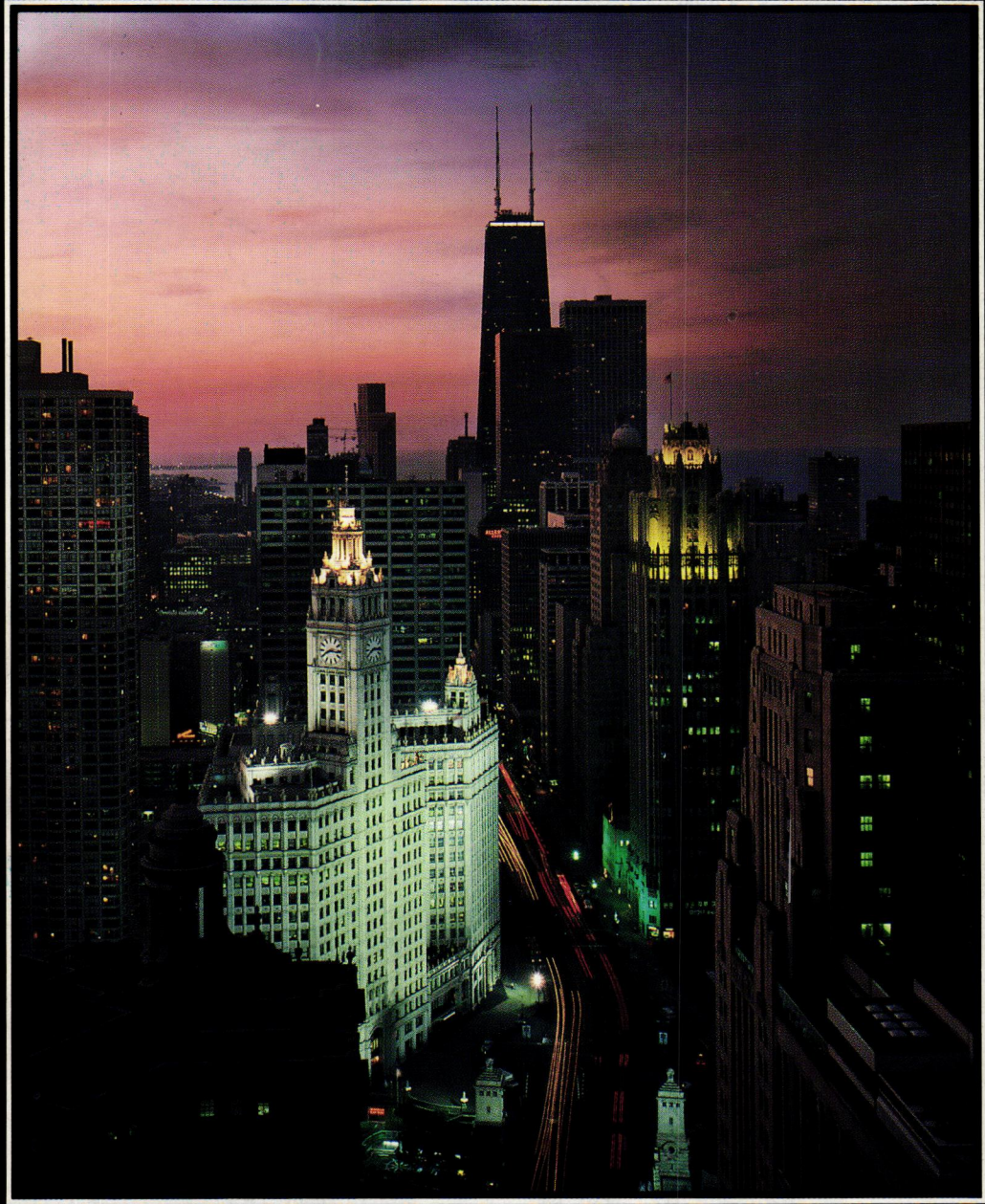
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