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ArchitectureBoston

Spring 2002 Preservation

We are defined by our acronyms. Today's NIMBYs stake their turf, arms crossed over their chests, in a peculiar form of passive defiance of any change in their backyards. They are the sniveling descendants of yesterday's LOLITS — the brave Little Old Ladies In Tennis Shoes who were among the pioneers of the preservation movement, routinely (if metaphorically) thwacking politicians and developers across the shoulders with their umbrellas, demanding to be heard. But the world has changed since then. Questions of sexism, ageism, and heightism aside, today's preservationists have upgraded their footwear to cross-trainers.

The great irony of preservation is that the movement itself has undergone continuous renewal, changing its focus from the lifestyles of the rich and dead to include the workstyles of the poor and dead. Preservation of landmarks expanded to include preservation of landscapes. And perhaps most surprising, preservationists began to talk less about old buildings and more about new buildings. In a field increasingly focused on development policy and politics, a genteel interest in art history is no longer enough. Today's preservationists are often tough negotiators who are equally skilled in the fields of finance, construction, law, and advocacy — as well as architecture, planning, and urban design. They were cross-training while everyone else was still going for the burn.

Now change seems to be in the air once again. There is a restlessness afoot, grumbles of discontent. In some quarters, respect for historic context turned to reverence and then proceeded, as Paul Byard notes, straight to righteousness. And there is nothing like righteousness to make Americans (New England skeptics, at least) wary, maybe even a little rebellious. Designers are frustrated by naysaying review boards. Critics worry that that we're building historical stagesets. But even some preservationists — some of whom appear in these pages — are also beginning to wonder if our veneration of history and context is stunting our ability to create vigorous, vibrant work that reflects our own era. Maybe, like vitamin A, too much contextualism can be bad for you.

Signs of change can also be seen in our language: "Historicist" is the latest term of disdain, best delivered with a sniff. The sudden appearance of the phrase "vintage Modern" (mercifully, Gropius did not live to hear it), suggests that the style train may be chugging on to the next stop — the '60s.

Which might not be a bad thing for either preservation or architecture. The 1960s and early 1970s represented an era when we allowed designers free rein with old buildings. One of the best examples is Harvard's Boylston Hall, originally built in 1857 and renovated in 1959 by Ben Thompson FAIA for TAC, its new undivided glass openings revealing the power of the granite structure. The Cambridge Historical Commission recently had the wisdom to endorse the proposal by Rob Olson AIA to continue Thompson's vocabulary in the latest renovations. Now 40 years later, Boylston Hall is teaching us another lesson: Old buildings, like LOLITS, aren't as frail as they might seem.

Elizabeth S. Padjen FAIA Editor

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cover: fragment of photo by Steve Rosenthal

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ArchitectureBoston explores the ways that architecture influences and is influenced by our society. We hope to expand professional and public understanding of the changing world of architecture by drawing on the rich intellectual, professional, and visionary resources of our region.

We invite story ideas that connect architecture to social, cultural, political, economic, or business trends. Editorial guidelines are posted at: www.architects.org



I would like to expand on several issues raised in your excellent roundtable, "Dramatic Devices: Entertainment and Spectacle in Architecture" [Winter 2001]. The subtext of debates on this subject seems always to revolve around authenticity and a concern that entertainment values corrupt the making of architecture. The more compelling issue should be one of relevance, and the ability of design to communicate the ideas and emotions of our time. "Entertainment" is simply code for an attitude that challenges us to integrate narrative, information, and other forms of content into our design vocabulary. This concept threatens because it says that form alone is not enough - in buildings, automobiles, or civic spaces - and that our culture now expects richer messages from its interaction with the designed environment.

The great lesson of entertainment design, culled from 150 years of world's fairs, guest attractions, and the theatrical arts, is that storytelling creates places. Modern architecture led us to believe that buildings shaped our perception of this illusive quality, and that its language gave environments meaning. The emerging practice of "experience architecture" uses techniques including narrative structure and media technology to promote a new conversation between buildings and people. In projects such as the Rose Center, Volkswagen's Autostadt, and Nike's retail flagships, the "entertainment idea" is raising architecture back to its status as a beacon of communication.

This is not to suggest that every building needs a plot. It is clear, however, that our citizen-guests seek to consume experiences, not forms, and that now is the chance for architects to reassert their role as environmental content providers.

Gregory Beck AIA Architecture + Experience Design New York City I have always enjoyed ArchitectureBoston but I was especially interested in the Win 2001 issue, which featured articles and the roundtable discussion about the power inherent in architecture and the experience of theater.

For the last decade, I have led the fastestgrowing opera company in North America It has grown from 64th in budget size to in a field of 115 professional companies. That growth has occurred despite the fact Boston still does not have a "real" opera h - having razed the only theater actually built for opera. Since opera audiences ten feel that opera is the ultimate "experience we've had to create an environment and product that compensates for the lack of 'grand" opera house. We are fortunate to producing our mainstage season in the beautifully renovated Shubert Theatre, wh has the intimacy seldom found in the the in which most American companies perfo This compensates, in part, for our lack of real opera house, which we will build one

Over the last decade, Boston Lyric Opera been researching and tracking other theate projects in this country as well as in other parts of the world. The size and scope hav varied significantly. But in almost every instance, be it renovation or new construction, the desire for a building and site that help attract audiences has been a priority. We have come to recognize that the experience of theater can and should begin before we even enter a venue.

Joe Pine and Jim Gilmore, authors of *The Experience Economy* (Harvard Business Sch Press), state that "...every business is a stagand therefore work is theater." As a society we are seeking complete, transforming experiences that transport us for a period of time. Research on travel and tourism and from the entertainment industry demonstrated.

ur most prized commodity is now time, herefore we look for life-enhancing ences to fill our few leisure and learning tunities. We are attracted to a wide of experiences, from the natural, like the I Canyon and Yosemite Park, to the d, like Disney World and Las Vegas, more frequently, to designed ones like Gehry's Guggenheim Museum Bilbao ne Glyndebourne Festival Opera's new er and pastoral grounds.

rience architecture" does serve to help iverse society find a common ground. spawned a new generation raised on media multi-stimulation. It's no wonder 8- to 24- year-olds, the smallest graphic group in the country, are the t growth segment of opera's fast ding audience. They've grown up in a where everything exciting embodies a than-life quality.

tecture has the power to transform, to e stage, to do what art should do—
feelings and intellectual discussion. If elieves that we are, in fact, living in an rience Economy, then architecture, ially those environments designed for ts, should seek to enhance the experience citing the senses and mind.

e Mancini Del Sesto ral Director on Lyric Opera Vernon Woodworth's "Ritual, Theater, and the City" [Winter 2001] has captured a central aspect of urban life that many of us subliminally acknowledge but do not articulate. Woodworth argues that we need to pay greater heed to factors that lend our cities vitality and, I would add, meaning: "theater, public ritual and...dramatic space."

In fact, Boston has done quite a good job of creating dramatic spaces that support drama and ritual, Copley Square being a prime example. Copley Square remains a space defined by some of Boston (and America's) "best" buildings. H.H. Richardson's Trinity Church narthex on one side and McKim, Meade and White's "People's Palace" (the Boston Public Library) on the other side of the Square offer theatrical backdrops as well as places to sit or get out of the weather. In the Square's park, users range from baggy-panted teenagers skateboarding between Boylston Street and the fountain to sedate, formally attired funeral-attendees waiting to enter Trinity. (On a warm October weekday, I saw both groups being watched by sunbathers sprawled on the lawn.) At a larger scale, Copley Square also serves many pedestrians disgorged by trains, subways, and buses all around the Square. Many of the transitriding workers converge at the Square at rush hour.

Copley Square has the kind of characteristics Neo-Traditionalists and Smart Growthers admire. But the place evolved over a century, straddles quite diverse neighborhoods, and depends on a nexus of transit lines. And, perhaps most important, enormous care has been expended on its creation and development over the years. Are there lessons for more mundane spaces?

From my own experience as a planner, I know people want spatial centers. They want an authentic, distinct place where they can go for an ice cream, see people they know walking the dog every morning, or practice more formal rituals. The shapes these places assume differ radically, formed by history and community context. Of the spaces I know, Union Square Park (between 14th and 17th Streets in Manhattan) most vividly dramatizes Woodworth's observation that "the release of communitas energy is the goal of the ritual process." For weeks after 9/11, New Yorkers and visitors alike converged there creating a "participatory shrine" of candles, flowers, poems, and sculpture around George Washington's equestrian statue. Graffiti on the bronze horse read: "We need to grieve." On October 7th, Union Square Park became the staging area for New York's first peace

demonstration (swelling to 10,000 marchers) during the current war. It is not accidental that Union Square was in the 1930s and 1940s the center for America's political left. Thus, I would argue that Americans need significant urban spaces for both our psyches and our polity.

Jeanne Van Orman AICP Arlington, Massachusetts

I was pleased to read Vernon Woodworth's article on communitas energy. It prompted me to recollect a trenchant mid-century analysis by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in which he compared the strengths and weaknesses of democratic capitalism with fascism and communism. In it, he suggested that the capitalist economic assumption that a free market efficiently allocates economic resources inclines its members to consider the fair pursuit of personal self-interest to be sufficient to being a good citizen. Eventually this results in loss of the understanding that sacrifice for the common good is a spiritual and ethical necessity for individual moral development, as well as good citizenship. The outcome is privatization of essential aspects of community, social atomization, destabilization, and the impoverishment of our public realm.

As Woodworth characterizes it, communitas energy is the return-on-investment made through this sacrifice for the common good. Perhaps one of the positive things that can come out of the tragedies of September 11 will be recognition that public participation as well as private consumption are a requisite for a healthy and strong society. Architects certainly have the potential and perhaps the responsibility to increase our stores of communitas energy. Doing so can only advance our profession's value as well as its authority.

Russel Feldman AIA Newton, Massachusetts

Correction:

Jerold S. Kayden, whose book *Privately Owned Public Space* was reviewed in our Fall 2001 issue,
was identified incorrectly. He is an associate
professor of urban planning at the Harvard Graduate
School of Design.

We want to hear from you. Letters may be e-mailed to: epadjen@architects.org or sent to: ArchitectureBoston, 52 Broad Street, Boston, MA 02109. Letters may be edited for clarity and length and must include your name, address, and daytime telephone number. Length should not exceed 300 words.



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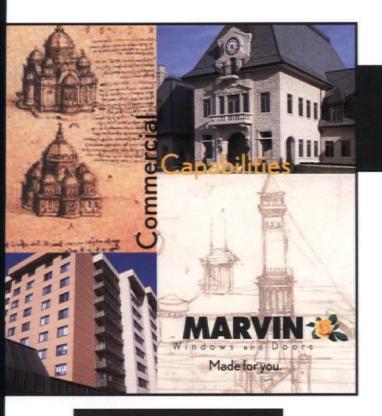




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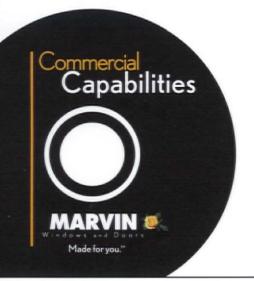
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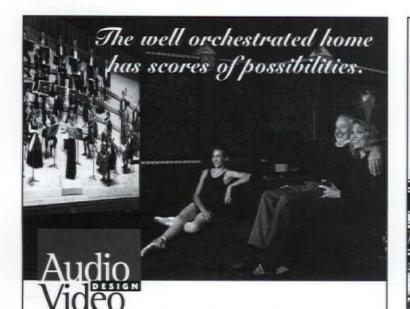
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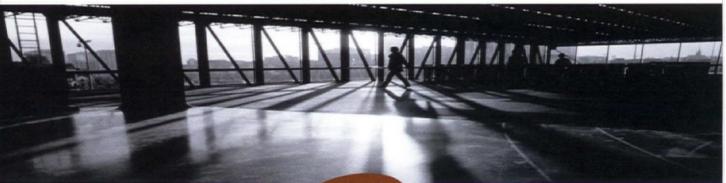


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Moving Forward: The Future of History

We know about context, we know about history. But do we know when enough is enough?



Canadian Centre for Architecture Montreal, Quebec

Architect: The Office of Peter Rose Cambridge, Massachusetts

Elizabeth Padjen: Let's start with an overvi of the evolution of preservation in Boston, startir in the '60s. How have our attitudes about histori buildings changed?

Albert Rex: Boston established its first histor district, on Beacon Hill, in the 1950s, but it was until the 1970s that we started to see real grassro preservation activity. The City Conservation Leag which doesn't exist anymore, was formed in the late 1960s and was concerned with issues affecting the downtown. A good early example was the

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les Sullivan is the executive director of the pridge Historical Commission.

ge Thrush AIA is the chair of the department chitecture at Northeastern University.

an Marsh controversy in the early 1970s.

an Marsh decided to replace its downtown artment store, and suddenly we had people ing up Jordan Marsh cards and standing in the tellines to protest the loss of that building. I k that may have been the first real step toward grassroots activism we know today. It was nalized in Boston with the establishment of the dmarks Commission in 1976, which provided a nding board for preservation discussions. Then grassroots organizations that had sprung up ded together to form the Boston Preservation

Alliance in 1978. Of course, other groups had been around for a while, like Historic Boston, which was formed to save the Globe Corner Bookstore back in the '60s. But most preservation prior to the '70s had happened on a neighborhood scale as civic associations or historical societies tried to save individual structures. With each battle, the groups became more effective and more professional. At the same time, we started to see a growth in preservation programs; today, there are approximately 20 graduate-level preservation programs in the country. Most preservation organizations today are staffed by people who went to school to become professional preservationists.

Pamela Hawkes: The Jordan Marsh controversy was also significant because it was one of the first times that people didn't associate a building's importance with a particular person or historic event. Boston has an incredible legacy of preservation dating to the 19th century, but its focus until recently was on the landmarks, the buildings where something famous happened or someone famous lived. Jordan Marsh was the beginning of an understanding that the real importance can be the context — that important buildings are not necessarily architectural markers but sometimes are part of a heritage that represents everyday life and everyday people.

Charles Sullivan: That was a major cultural shift. The demolition of the West End in 1959 generated a huge amount of anger. But it was anger in the neighborhoods. It wasn't anger in the preservation community, because there wasn't such a thing as a preservationist in the 1950s. As an avocation, maybe, but not as a profession. The old-line preservation groups were simply not interested in the Jordan Marsh issue. SPNEA [Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities] and the Bostonian Society were focused on the famous men and events of the 17th and 18th centuries. It took the City Conservation League — which was brand new and, for that time, a very radical and obnoxious community group — to get people mobilized.

Pamela Hawkes: And now we see preservation as a critical component of economic development, instead of viewing old buildings as discouraging economic development, which is what the demolition of the West End was all about.

George Thrush: We've also seen an evolution from the preservation of a single building to the preservation of a street to the preservation of entire districts or communities where the historical character seems to be central to the value of the whole place. We need to recognize that preservation has really served as one of the few restraints on the free market in urban

Boston Public Library, Allston Branch Architect: Machado and Silvetti Associates, Inc.

real estate. The only limitations on the developm of cities come from the preservation movement the environmentalist movement. They're the onl shared non-market values that we seem to have codified. Preservation and historical authenticity have emerged as the default expressions of share meaning, because we don't have any focused crit for evaluating newer buildings, other than to say they're too tall or too big or too shiny.

Albert Rex: That didn't happen until relative recently. When the Boston Preservation Alliance formed in the 1970s, our mission was very clear: we focused on the buildings that were being lost



We began to realize that the old buildings were actually better built than anything we were building; the materials and craftsmanship were better. I think that the preservation movement owes as much to the quality of the building fabric as it does to urban-design issues or the idea of heritage.

Tim Love AIA

We didn't really think about the impacts of newe construction. It wasn't until later, when people started looking for sites for very large new building that we started to think more broadly. We made deliberate change and said we can't look only at saving the old; we have to understand the impac of the new on the old.

Pamela Hawkes: It's also interesting to trace parallel development and look at what the architectural profession was doing. In the 19th centur architects were totally involved in preservation, which they saw as a tremendous resource for desi When Modernism came in, things changed. The last thing architects wanted to do was something that related to the past. If anything has happened the last 20 years, it is that once more it's OK to consider that the historic context might contribu to your design.

Love: The transformation of the preservation ement from the famous-men-and-events phase to neral interest in preserving almost anything old is mportant cultural watershed that also reflects on profession in other ways. Those old buildings had aterial quality that suddenly was worth saving. By, 1973, we began to realize that the old buildings actually better built than anything we were ding; the materials and craftsmanship were better. little bit like the problem with the American car stry in the '70s, when everybody in the know ght foreign cars because the Buicks in 1973 were nny. I think that the preservation movement owes such to the quality of the building fabric as it does rban-design issues or the idea of heritage. With a exceptions — maybe a couple of Lou Kahn and don Bunshaft buildings — most American war buildings are pretty dismal affairs. And the erican consumer is actually very perceptive about es of material quality. Look at architects nselves. If you're an architect, unless you're very , you live in an old house and restore it. You don't gn a house for yourself, because you can't achieve same level of gravitas and luxury as you can living n old house. It has to do with the perceived ity of things as much as ideology and reverence the past.

tabeth Padjen: You're getting back to an idea George introduced earlier: values. We've seen nging values on the part of both the public and profession over the last 40 years. I recently heard NPR interview with a Middle Eastern ambassador said, "We want to be seen as tolerant and gressive." The interviewer responded with the ropriate positive murmurings. Tolerant and gressive. If you think about it, those are the zwords for our cultural values right now. And that assador was smart enough to recognize that. One ts to be tolerant and progressive. A century ago, be one wanted to be honorable and chaste, I don't w. But we are obviously seeing shifts. I wonder if are seeing something in the built environment that cts broader cultural values that permeate other cts of our society.

arles Sullivan: I think that's exactly right. It of the move toward preservation in the '70s and was a reaction to the Corbusian movement that an in the 1920s, when fascism was taking root. Corbusier was really, in his concept of isolated ers surrounded by green spaces, as much of a al engineer as the fascists were. We now see that as ry anti-human value, as our thinking about cities nged following Jane Jacobs' lead in the 1960s.

Like anything, architecture and planning follow cycles. American cities in the postwar period were desperate for investment. All the growth was taking place elsewhere, outside the cities. Federally subsidized urban renewal programs came along, and the Corbusian approach to planning was what was available. So we ended up with the West End and Government Center, where the Boston Redevelopment Authority took out all the urban fabric, just shaved it right down, and started fresh. But that's a very conscious sort of social engineering. It generated a tremendous reaction, and Jane Jacobs was the least of it. Planners and designers eventually followed the public's lead and moved away from comprehensive redevelopment and toward the idea of working with an existing urban context and character. But I think the cycle is starting to shift again and the design professions are trying to move away from contextualism.

Tim Love: I think most of the battles today are fought on a different level: new building versus old building. Not new urban design versus old urban design, because that isn't a battle any more. We're beyond that, because 99 percent of the architects practicing today, across the ideological spectrum, understand how cities work, understand that streets are important, and understand that we need buildings that are active at the street level. The battles now are more specifically around languages and ideology, and around this question of quality and value of the old relative to the new. The Hans Hollein proposal for Harvard Square [see page 13] is a good example — that's the kind of battle we will see more of.

Charles Sullivan: I'm delighted the Hollein project did not get approved, but I'm horrified that that is the one that's going to become the poster child for anti-preservationists. Harvard University finally put forward a Modern building, and unfortunately that was the one that they presented. To those of us who look at these issues every day and care about them, it created a preposterous and maddening situation. People hated it or loved it; you were automatically a Modernist or an anti-Modernist, and there could be no middle ground.

Tim Love: I agree with you. We've just finished the Allston library, which is maybe two miles from the Hollein site. It was a very lengthy, difficult, consensus-building approval process, working with a building committee appointed by the mayor. The day we first walked in, they said, "We want a red-brick building with a gable end and green shutters." We said, "Can we try something else? Give us a chance." So we worked with that group, which included a

schoolteacher, a church volunteer, and community leaders, to understand why they wished that the library could be an old building. We discovered it had more to do with quality than with age or specific style. Through this long therapy process, which probably went on much too long, we got at the root problems they had with Modern architecture, which had to do with the quality of the construction and the level of planning. We took them on a field trip to similar libraries, and they were right - there are some really bad contemporary libraries around Boston. But we also visited buildings that were considered appropriate and contextual that were actually horrible places. We took them to three examples with red brick and symmetrical gable ends that had bad acoustic ceilings, cheap vinyl floors, and rickety aluminum shopfronts. And that reverse argument was very successful with this committee. We were able to convince the community that we could do a contemporary building and pay careful attention to the way the building was crafted. It came down to the quality of things, not to heritage or style.

Elizabeth Padjen: That story also represents a fundamental shift in the way the public looks at old buildings, and consequently, the way architects design for them. That building committee, like the public in general, was looking at old buildings as objects of quality that they would aspire to. There was a time when attitudes were completely different get rid of that old stuff, because we deserve something new and shiny. Now we see that attitude in developing countries and, perhaps condescendingly, despair of such backward thinking. But we didn't blow out the West End for no reason.

Pamela Hawkes: It's not an attitude that has completely died. We have neighborhoods with historic buildings and residents who say, "Listen, these things have been sitting around for years with bums hanging out in them. Get them out of our neighborhood." They don't see the possibilities, that these buildings could be wonderful housing. They want to demolish them because they feel they deserve something new and better.

Charles Sullivan: But don't you think what we all have to do is what Tim did with his building committee? People in general don't have any sense of architectural values. We certainly see this in Harvard Square, where developers learned in the 1970s that all they had to do to satisfy the community was to put in red brick - better still, Kane Gonic red brick — and it would fly. And that's in a sophisticated community.

Pamela Hawkes: What I think we need is: television program called "This New House," the talks about the craft of modern construction.

George Thrush: I totally agree. Most people take for granted the advances in building techno that are now part of our normal lives. We expect lot, but we don't know how to articulate our crite We need to define public values other than simp preservation.

Albert Rex: But it's also a question of who's making the design decisions. Architects come in see us all the time with their proposals. We tell them, "We want to see something that people wi want to preserve in future years." And they say, "Well, the developer wants to expend 'x' number dollars, so we're only allowed to do 'y,' and the B is telling us this but the community says that, an now you folks are telling us something else." We end up with this design-by-committee process wi a constant struggle over who really has the most influential voice.

Elizabeth Padjen: So is it even possible to s that maybe-mythic structure that we all have in mind when we say we want a fabulous new build in Boston?

Albert Rex: I don't think we even know how first answer the question, What is a great buildin

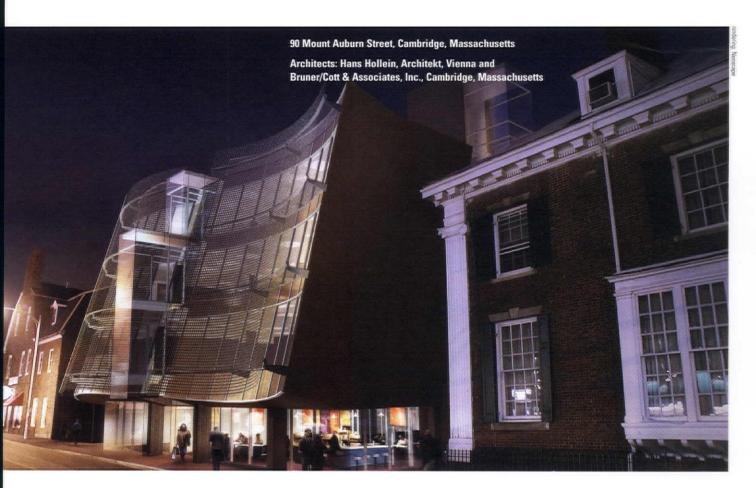
Tim Love: What Boston doesn't need is a Bilb Boston needs good background buildings that are a quality that equals the good background buildi that the preservation movement is concerned wit saving. The maybe-mythic buildings that you're talking about are the famous-men-and-events kin of buildings. Maybe the new ICA [Institute of Contemporary Art] will be one of those. Or the addition to the Museum of Fine Arts.

Pamela Hawkes: They happen to be sited i places that can take them.

Elizabeth Padjen: It's interesting to conside where we allow those kinds of experiments to occ college campuses, museums, the cultural icons. [Boston Globe architecture critic] Bob Campbell made the point that the Hollein proposal was for office building, that there was a mismatch between the energy of the façade and the fairly banal inter functions. If the proposed use had been something else, would we have thought of it differently?

Planners and designers moved toward
the idea of working with an existing urban
context and character. But I think
the cycle is starting to shift again and
the design professions are trying to
move away from that kind of contextualism.

Charles Sullivan



arles Sullivan: Hollein is one of a number European architects who seem to have moved away in contextualism in a very radical way. Harvard, her President Rudenstine, had the idea that roard should once again find cutting-edge archisto do radical and uncompromising buildings that all advance the state of the art. One of them is chado and Silvetti's dormitory in Allston, which is her construction; Hollein's project was another one ertainly was an extreme exercise, as anti-contextual to could be. And it's the context, I think, that did it

in, not the design. It was very hard to understand the impact of the building because the design caught your eye and distracted you from all the other issues. But once we figured out that this was a 65-foot building on a block where nothing else was more than 40 feet, in a series of six blocks all of which had low-rise, residential-scale buildings, we realized that this was literally a blockbuster because of its scale. That's why the Cambridge Historical Commission turned it down. I've told Harvard that a design that's in scale with its surroundings could be as extreme as Hollein's

to try to weave the old

Peter Rose

with the new.

and still be approved, because one of the commission's goals in Harvard Square is to support contemporary architecture when it's appropriate.

Albert Rex: Scale and mass make a huge difference, both in the preservation community and with the public, in how people accept buildings. You can do all kinds of things with materials if you respect the scale.

Tim Love: That building had a responsibility to the street that it wasn't respecting at all.

Peter Rose: Hollein was probably just the wrong choice for this project. This whole episode points to the fact that architecture is very hard to understand, whether you're a public activist, someone running a company, or someone on a municipal review board. We don't support architecture as a culture. We don't teach it to kids in schools. Our museums don't have architecture exhibitions.

There are all kinds of things that affect the decision-making process. One is the fear of making a mistake — and architecture sets you up big time for a big mistake, because you can know almost nothing from the drawings and the models unless you're fairly sophisticated, and laypeople usually find out how bad or brilliant it is after it's built and in use. And the other is the fear of the unknown. The reason that historicist buildings are so easy to sell is that they are familiar. This is not a culture that embraces the unknown. And there is no ingrained history of doing well by taking risks. So it's a very complex cultural, psychological, and educational problem, made worse by the fact that there is no public support of architecture here. The important public projects are always shunted into the private domain. A developer then builds these projects on a for-profit basis with the often modest requirement of providing some public amenity, such as housing or a park.

George Thrush: At some level, it grieves me to hear Charlie say that the commission has made the decision to endorse Modern architecture. Don't get me wrong; I'm glad of it. But it grieves me that the decision based simply on historical versus Modern rhetoric must be made at all. I saw a model of the Hollein proposal and I completely agree with your decision. But we should have had a better way of making qualitative judgments about it. I don't think that simply lowering the

bulk would have solved the problem. The prob was architectural. It was not even a question of appearing more Modern than the neighbors. Tl building failed on more straightforward compositional terms.

Peter Rose: I agree that the notion that Modern buildings are going to be supported by the commission is an encouraging one. The downside is that it's actually even more difficult understand what constitutes a good Modern building than it is to understand what constitut a good restoration.

Tim Love: As a citizen, I would rather have mediocre background building on those sites th a bad try at an exuberant Modern building.

Peter Rose: Maybe the issue is not Modern versus historicist but, rather, the degree to which a building should be part of the background or on certain rare occasions, be more strident and part of the foreground. There are some fabulou Modern buildings that know when to pull back and be an integral part of a larger ensemble.

Charles Sullivan: You can start with urban design criteria. The story in Harvard Square go on with the proposal we received recently for a that's not far from the Hollein site. The propon wanted to build an office building in the form perfect Second Empire, two-story house with a mansard roof, much more elaborately detailed than any Second Empire house you ever saw in Cambridge. It would put San Francisco to shan Perfectly historically correct in a place where nothing like that ever appeared. The Historical Commission's reaction was, "Wouldn't this be easier if this were a contemporary design? Then we'd have something to say about it." But how you criticize a perfect historicist exercise in 19th century architecture? Once again, context is the most important factor.

George Thrush: The problem is that if we use historic authenticity as the only criterion for approval, this kind of Frankenstein becomes not only possible, but likely.

Tim Love: This raises a very interesting issue though, because if it were inappropriate urbanistically, then you'd have a great case against it. We're doing a project at the University of Virgin which is like working on Beacon Hill. And the best new buildings there are actually precise

oductions of 1930s Georgian architecture. There's d contemporary architecture — a Todd Williams is Tsien building — and then there are some very d Hartman-Cox buildings that are right out of 1932 playbook. The worst are the half-traditional modern buildings, with their cheap mullions, ap aluminum awnings, and cheap Aldo Rossi dows that look like they're drawn on with white urtpak tape. They're the sleaziest-looking buildings

struction and its relationship to existing fabric,
I have to say that my job still focuses a lot on
ng existing buildings — battles over demolition.
at's going to go up once a building is demolished
ne of the issues. But should it come down in
first place?

orge Thrush: What are some of the criteria you use to make a decision like that?

other examples of similar buildings, you can at t compare their individual value. Sometimes you i't have that context or it's changed. The Hillel is at Northeastern University was recently nolished to create greenspace for the campus. It a pretty, Georgian-style building, and it repreted the last piece of the former neighborhood. It not landmark quality. But the neighbors felt very ongly about it. They felt it added context. The core hat debate was whether to save that building ause it's the last representation of the neighborhood that had been there, or to demolish it to allow site to be part of a whole new neighborhood.

mela Hawkes: The Landmarks Commission a similar discussion about Connolly's, which had n a jazz club. We sat for two hours one night and rd people talk about their childhoods, going with ir dads to hear jazz for the first time, performing re. It was incredibly emotional. But the existing lding had no relation to that history. It's that kind ntangible quality that's very hard to deal with. The ficulty I see these days with preservation is that ve already dealt with all the easy projects — the ldings that are unquestionable landmarks, because the context, their quality, their history. It's the igh ones that are left. And those buildings get ght up in a lot of other things that have more to with people's sense of powerlessness - issues that hitectural preservation can't resolve.

George Thrush: That's so true. Preservation has become a stand-in for politics, a way of addressing the economic forces at work. I live in Cambridgeport, where my sense is that most folks' ideal date is something like 1977. That's the moment at which many of my neighbors wish the world had stopped evolving, the time that best represents the community they bought into. I am familiar with the Hillel building at Northeastern — it was a nice building, but tearing it down was the right decision. That neighborhood had changed, and in any case it was never a very coherent one. Choosing not to save it shouldn't have been very difficult; especially considering the much more coherent vision that has replaced it. Preserving an existing neighborhood is much trickier. The neighbors resist change at the same time that they lack a voice in the larger interests of the city and metro area.

Pamela Hawkes: Someone once said that preservation is really about managing change. Not about forbidding it entirely, but letting it happen in ways that we can all feel comfortable with. And I think our comfort level with whatever scale of change is very much dependent on the scale of the building. If you have a two-story house and you change the door, people notice. But if you have a huge factory building, you can do something pretty radical, and the overall sense of that building remains the same.

George Thrush: But that still reflects a fear of change and the desirability of things remaining the same.

Albert Rex: Is preservation becoming a substitute for planning? Unfortunately, we have seen that happen in Boston.

Tim Love: Zoning in Boston has no teeth. Everything's nonconforming, everything's special. Maybe the problem from a policy standpoint is that zoning and preservation have been separated into two different policymaking approaches, when they're actually looking at the same issues. It proves that zoning is not a very effective vehicle in Boston for evaluating projects — because of the politics, but also because of the physical context itself. Boston is not a grid like Manhattan where an FAR [floor-area ratio] approach can almost guarantee a predictable massing. But because of the idiosyncrasy of the parcels in Boston, an FAR approach means that it is impossible to predict the success of a building's massing. Boston needs a new paradigm that combines preservation and urban design and a single set of guidelines.

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Architect: Ann Beha Architects



The difficulty these days with preservation is that we've already dealt with all the easy projects. It's the tough ones that are left. And those buildings get caught up in a lot of other things that have more to do with people's sense of powerlessness — issues that architectural preservation can't resolve.

Pamela Hawkes AIA

George Thrush: Visual guidelines would jib better with historical contexts. What if, in addition to preservation and environmentalism, we had so word like "legibility" or "imageability"?

Tim Love: But that's already happened in the marketplace. Every new large project uses that ki of language - they all talk about creating a "real city," and providing a pedestrian scale.

Albert Rex: You can see the change in marketing materials. In the 1980s, they showed y brochures with pictures of the building. Now, if go to Millennium Place, they'll show you picture of the Common and Back Bay.

Peter Rose: I think the issue of scale points t one of the differences between European cities ar American cities — that is the way the American business ethos percolates into architecture and planning. No CEO worth his or her salt can run company without growing it by some percent a y typically by making and selling more product, or acquiring other companies. The business culture almost always focused on making things bigger. There's hardly a building in most major European cities, Rome for example, that hasn't been renovamultiple times, gutted even. They are rebuilt, generation by generation — nobody thinks that y need to knock them down. People love the way the streets work, the way the public domain works. B that model doesn't serve us, because we eagerly ta buildings down, hoping to put much larger structures in their place.

Elizabeth Padjen: Let's talk about that. Wit the sudden influx of European designers practicin in our midst, there is a sense afoot that the European use of history is far more sophisticated than our own. Is that true? Does their experience transfer to this place? And can it transfer to largescale American cities as well as to individual building?

George Thrush: There are some fundamenta differences between Europe and the US. Their cit represent entire cultures, as much as any commerce purpose. I love all the conversations decrying the fact that in Germany or France the expenditures of the arts or on you-name-the-public-issue are 10 times what they are here. Yes, of course that's true But to imagine that it's a management error that makes Berlin different from New York, or Atlanta different from Paris, misses the fact those cities are stewarded differently. Because it's understood that they represent a national culture.

bert Rex: We're a country built on the concept Manifest Destiny. We had lots of land, and we just t moving out. We've always been a culture based the idea of growing bigger.

mela Hawkes: Europeans have a legacy of e — they do something once, knowing that 30 s later they will do it again. We don't have their rs of history, and we haven't embraced their way eusing things. Albert is right — our culture is ch more about moving on to better pastures when ve used up the resources at home. And so we tear n rather than recycle.

zabeth Padjen: But I sense that we were once ch more inventive about reusing old buildings n we are now. Look back to the 1960s when Carl h started turning old warehouses on the erfront into housing. It was a brave thing. And I ht be one of the last lonely defenders of Graham nd's ICA building because I remember what it was ts time. It was extraordinary because it showed ple what they could do with old buildings, and it published everywhere. Sure, we all went to nings and got squeezed by that little corner in the um. But it was a landmark that made people think ut possibilities. Similarly, I think Quincy Market ld not be done today because of a much more servative approach to the way we think about servation. It was a time when the possibilities ned greater. So what has happened? Should we me the process, the layers of regulation? Or have changed as a people?

pert Rex: Cultures change. Our minds change. office is in Old City Hall. Would we do a rehab Old City Hall today, where they totally gutted entire interior and added floors to make it work incially? We probably wouldn't be terribly portive.

zabeth Padjen: And yet that's a great building. bert Rex: It is a great building. It's a great place work.

mela Hawkes: It's probably only still there ause the developers were allowed to do that.

orge Thrush: And that goes back to the fact t we depend on the private sector to provide wardship. When we look at European examples, re looking at places where the government spends ch more money on many, many buildings. But if hitects in Boston went to Chicago half as many es as they do to Europe, they would at least ance their point of view. Because Chicago is a city that is among the most American of places. It tears things down and rebuilds. Chicagoans have a much more forward-looking attitude than Bostonians do. They've always viewed the best use of the Loop as the one that's coming. That doesn't mean they don't mess up from time to time. They do. But it offers an alternative model of a place in the United States that operates under the same economic and social framework, that shares the fact that we don't have the same cultural or aesthetic agenda that Paris and Berlin have.

Albert Rex: But cities like Chicago are much bigger than Boston. Boston does have more of a European sense; we share the sense of containment, of physical boundaries. We don't have city walls, but we have a river and a harbor. We had to create land in order to develop as a city.

George Thrush: But even if Boston isn't physically as big, it is comparable on other levels. Boston generates enormous financial energy. It produces the fourth largest metropolitan domestic product, after Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles.

Peter Rose: There is at least one thing that we can learn from Europe. The distinction between "preservation architects" and "contemporary architects" doesn't exist there. European architects do not even imagine that they're going to build a brand new building without considering the landscape, the weather, the context — they understand the notion that these things are all interconnected. They typically try to weave in old pieces to make something that's contemporary at the same time. We have these categories, these distinctions, which hurt us. We should not decide either to preserve something perfectly or to knock it down. It is part of the memory of a place, which, when erased, is gone forever. It is much better to try to weave the old with the new. It's the layers that make life richer and more interesting and more poetic.

Tim Love: I share the suspicion that the current architectural debate in Boston is starting to create an ideological divide between people who "design in brick" and people who don't - between contemporary architecture and architecture that is contextual. That's ultimately an unhealthy debate. Our firm has no problem designing in red brick if it's appropriate for the project. Even so, I find the level of debate and the architectural climate in Boston much more invigorating than elsewhere because so many issues are at stake. People deal with these issues seriously on an intellectual level. It's not like other places that

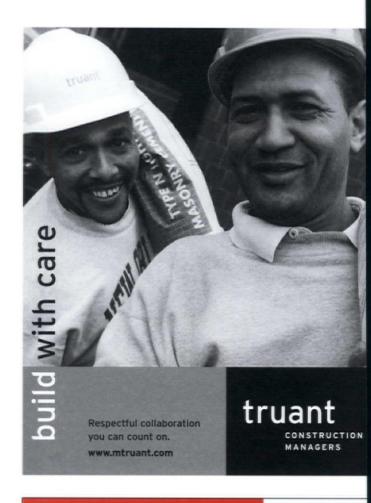
might let you do whatever you want. You have to persuade people, very intelligent people, to your viewpoint in a very complex setting. And everybody's very smart here — even the people who think that new buildings should look like old buildings. When you work on these things through an intellectual process, everybody ends up at a slightly different place from what you imagined when you started. So I've placed my bets on Boston. In the long run, say over the next 10 years, Boston is going to be a much more vital architectural community than New York or any other American city.

Peter Rose: You may be more hopeful than I am.

Tim Love: I'll admit that there is a problem in the architectural culture in Boston — which is the decision of some very good architects to drop out and not get their hands dirty, to work only within the culture of the *avant garde*. They aren't optimistic or maybe aren't confident that they can wade into the pool successfully. And so they find clients outside the city or teach or look for other ways to get recognition.

Peter Rose: But this is not a place that is easy to break into. Most developers work with firms that are in effect house architects. And let's face it, developers drive the market and they end up driving the architecture. The experience that stunned me more than anything in my travels was going to the most intact city in Europe, which is Venice, and seeing the work of Carlo Scarpa. Scarpa was conservative in his own way, but seeing those buildings, which did not look a bit like anything against which they were placed, was extraordinary. You didn't need to know how to read them to know intuitively that they were fabulous. But we can't mandate that kind of work. It happens only by nurturing architecture and supporting architects who are serious, good designers.

Tim Love: Scarpa is a reminder that the best relationship between old and new is a subtle one, the quiet voice. The Austrian architect Hermann Czech, whom I worked for, is another such voice, a highly respected architect before Coop Himmelbau took over Vienna. He has done very contemporary work that subtly draws from Adolf Loos and Otto Wagner. Alvaro Siza in Portugal in another. They are all examples of contemporary architects who take the context and history and culture of a place very seriously. I don't think that American culture can support architecture like that. Except maybe in Boston. It's the only place.



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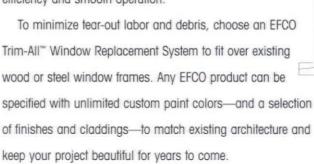
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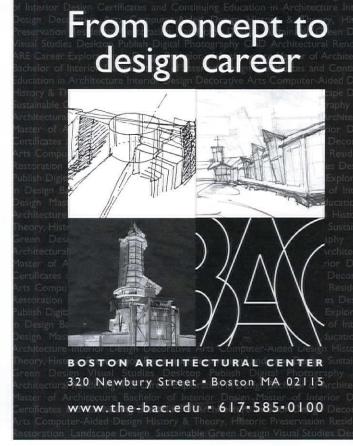




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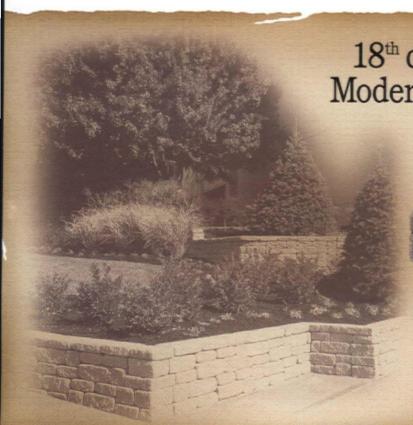
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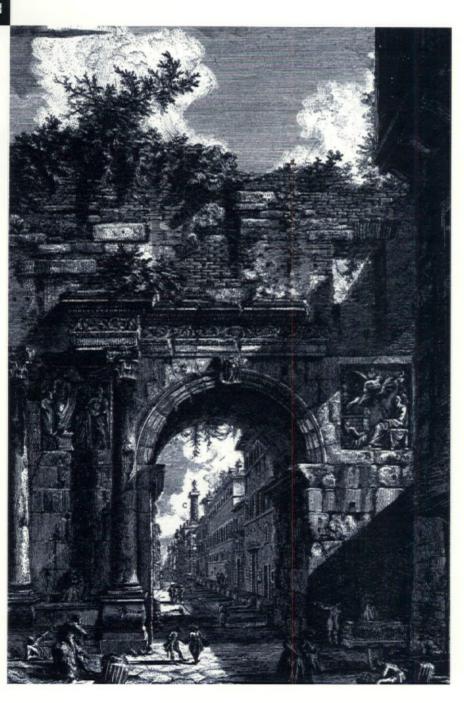
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Drawing from Piranesi: Age, History, and the Narcotic of Nostalgia

by Wellington Reiter AIA



Maybe it is the word: preservation. It sounds like worthy cause without a downside. Yet I would gut that nine out of ten architects instinctively tune of any conversation on the topic just as they would lecture on standard accounting practices. They're for it, but the work seems best left to a different personality type. Preservation, by its very definition is passive, an approach to the built environment that is peripheral to the concerns of most designed.

Preservation and design. Past and future.

Maintenance and invention. Many architects view preservation as a measured and deliberate enterprededicated to the past, and design as some sort of heroic attempt to see into the future. It's a flawed analysis, but it may explain why preservation—even though it addresses the essential dignity of the building enterprise—comes up in discussion in schools of architecture even less frequently than the topic of vapor barriers. The value of preserving the past is an easy sell in theory but hard to defin as other than a technical project at both the academic and professional levels.

Yet everyone associated with place-making is sympathetic to the preservationist argument. The gravity with which stone was once laid upon ston or with which wood was painstakingly crafted for both structure and ornament satisfies in a way that the thinness of the contemporary idiom never will. What architect doesn't look at the sidewalks old Main Street or a beautifully detailed brick warehouse and envision a vibrant urban landscape brimming with life? What urban designer doesn't instinctively conduct an inventory of historical structures upon arrival in an unfamiliar city, belie ing that these are somehow the vital signs of community? But when the idea of preservation is applied to a specific structure, the argument can be so narrowly focused that it is dismissed by the very constituency that should find it most appealing.

Accordingly, what should be a cohesive building community splinters into factions such as the "preservation community" and the "design community" whenever high-profile projects emerge th seem to demand a "you are with us or against us" kind of pledge. A prime example in the city of Boston is the debate surrounding the Old Northe Avenue Bridge. When well-meaning bridge preservationists lead with the motto, "A society is measured by the way it treats its oldest members," it is clear that allegiance to the cause, and not ope discussion about the consequences or alternative

tegies, is demanded on the part of the faithful. However, tmus test on a matter not easily reduced to sloganeering the unintended consequence of alienating many of the y professionals and educators who care most about bridges, ldings, cities, and civic life. Preservation can, at times, ear to be a cause unto itself. But if each campaign to save a acture is fought with the "slippery slope" argument, there o room for a broader contextual analysis. In the case of the l Northern Avenue Bridge, keeping the structure has great rit, but it also precludes some extraordinary options that, ent the bridge, could contribute to an even more potent on of a grand civic realm in an area that is likely to become heart of the city in the 21st century.

is is precisely the kind of question that seems to provoke greatest conflict between those apparently driven by stalgia and those charged with building for the future. The servation of landmark structures, a laudable goal worthy support by all, has a potential side-effect: a desire for the rounding city to assume an historicist character in order to sympathetic to the original structures. In the cases of nerican cities with distinct architectural heritages — Boston, w Orleans, San Francisco — the worthy impulse to pre ve a legacy can slide into a Disneyesque marketing camgn. How else does one explain the decision to finish off one the great achievements of 21st-century engineering and an paralleled civic design opportunity — the depression of the ntral Artery in Boston— with stage-set urbanism featuring ck sidewalks and double-acorn street lamps? The root of h manufactured history could be the well-intentioned ire to conserve and reinforce the modest ancestral legacy t our relatively youthful nation enjoys. It's not a bad pulse, if applied in moderation. However, preservation is t the same as urbanism, nor is it urban design. Used as h, preservation can become a kind of over-prescribed pressant that perpetuates its own addictive qualities because present, never given full voice, is doomed to mediocrity.

yone with even a peripheral interest in architectural history amiliar with the work of the great documenter of ancient me, Giovanni Battista Piranesi. Without question, Piranesi's tire worldview was shaped by a nearly religious zeal for the st. His archeological investigations and spectacular renders of the monuments of the city, recently on view at the useum of Fine Arts in Boston, raised the status of the man builders to mythical proportions. And yet Piranesi ver depicted a building as either physically or conceptually ed, nor did he condone such a view. In his drawings, erything from a block of stone to a city plan is perpetually a state of "becoming." His reverence for the past translated o a belief that history is alive, not in need of preservation, t instead to be used as the raw material for new works d ideas. Piranesi believed that only projects of the most alted status were worthy of preservation — just enough

breadcrumbs to mark the path through history, but with plenty of space left in between to be explored by future generations.

Comparable to Piranesi is a 1928 essay, "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin," by the historian Alois Riegl. Riegl acknowledges the "historical value" of certain structures and both the desire and need to keep them fully intact, if possible, as if time had been suspended. But he also suggests that the picture is considerably more complex if one responds to the concept of "age value," of which "historical value" is but a part. Age-value pertains to the universal appeal of nature and its registration, particularly on the surface of man-made structures. The essential qualities of age-value were brought home to an American audience by J.B. Jackson, in his classic text The Necessity for Ruins. Riegl states, "From the standpoint of age-value, one need not worry about the eternal preservation of monuments, but rather one should be concerned with the constant representation of the cycle of creation, and this purpose is fulfilled even when future monuments have supplanted those of today." In other words, change in all its guises should be acknowledged as essential to the maturation of cities. Like Piranesi, Riegl favored a complex reading of the built environment that included an appeal both to the intellect (historical value) and to emotion (age-value), even if the latter "contributes to its own demise." Strong medicine for strict preservationists. But what, after all, is the goal of preservation? Bricks and mortar — or the "representation of the cycle of creation" that Riegl speaks of? And how much of the former does one need to produce the latter?

These are, of course, the grand questions that planners of all persuasions confront daily. Unfortunately, history has shown us that both preservationists and designers are susceptible to inflated claims of virtue and foresight. Yet as we draw various maps to the future, we will need them both, assuming that neither enters into the debate with the unyielding conviction of being on the side of the greater good. Preservation has the enviable position of arguing for that which is known and of certifiable quality. Design, on the other hand, is a calculated risk. But success for each is measured by the same yardstick the quality and complexity of life that is supported by the resulting environment. In the end, what matters is not the number of bread crumbs that are left on the trail, but that the path forward is legible, compelling, and provocative as we retrace it time and time again.

Wellington Reiter AIA is a principal of Urban Instruments in Boston and an associate professor at MIT. He recently delivered a series of lectures on Piranesi at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

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Preserving the Spirit: Photographs by Kenro Izu

by Elizabeth Padjen FAIA



The photographs of Kenro Izu offer the viewer a remarkable experience. At first glance, they appear to be old 19th-century expedition photos, the sort taken by intrepid British explorers traveling the empire with a teapot tucked in with the camera. It is the second glance that will captivate you.

Izu's images capture some of the world's most sacred places — temples, pyramids, ancient monasteries — by capturing their transcendent spirit. Many of these structures are in a state of deterioration, but it is impossible to imagine restoring them to their original condition. Painted up, bright and shiny, they could never have the eloquence they do now, as their stonework becomes part of the landscape.

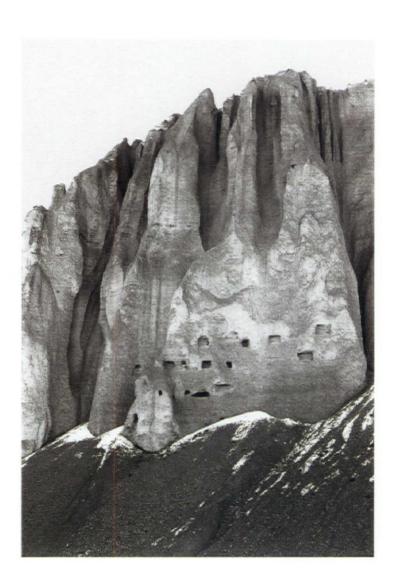
Kenro Izu was born in Japan in 1949 and settled in New York City in the early 1970s. Over the last two decades, he has documented the world's spiritual architecture under exacting conditions. He works with a 300-pound camera, producing 14 x 20 inch negatives, which he prints on hand-coated papers using the platinum palladium process, each taking three days to print. A three-week trip typically produces only 20 to 35 negatives.

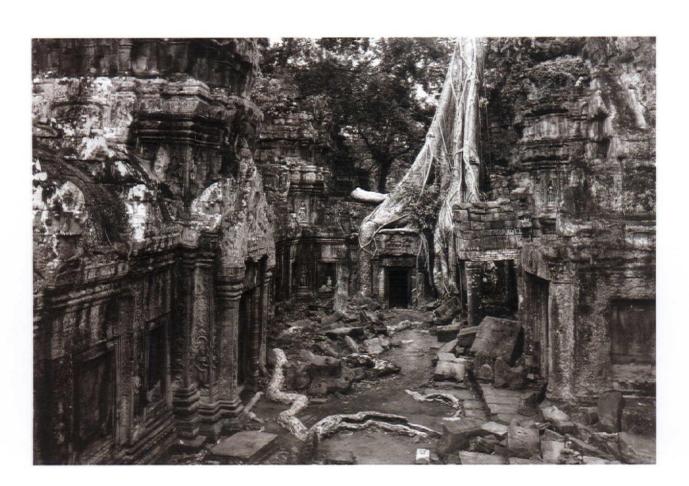
But the physical aspects of creating these photograhs may not be as demanding as the process of capturing the image itself, of the spiritual resonance between the photographer and the place. As Izu himself has described it:

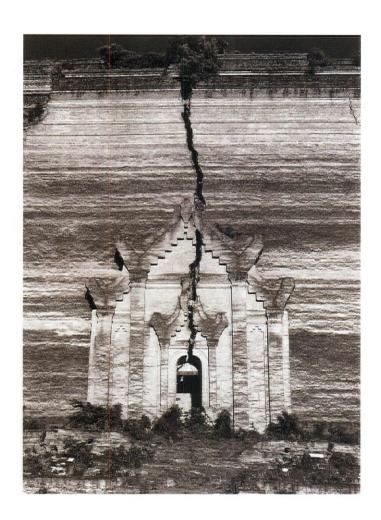
"I try to face a monument, blank my thinking, and see if it vibrates to my heart. I am documenting the site. The only thing I choose is when and where I document it. I can sense it — the place and the moment. That is what matters. If I don't feel it, I don't take the picture, because it's completely meaningless.... I try to use my basic instincts, like an animal sensing danger. I want to be as pure, as empty as possible and just try to document the spirituality of the place."

The first comprehensive museum exhibition devoted to the work of this extraordinary photographer is on view at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, through March 17, 2002.

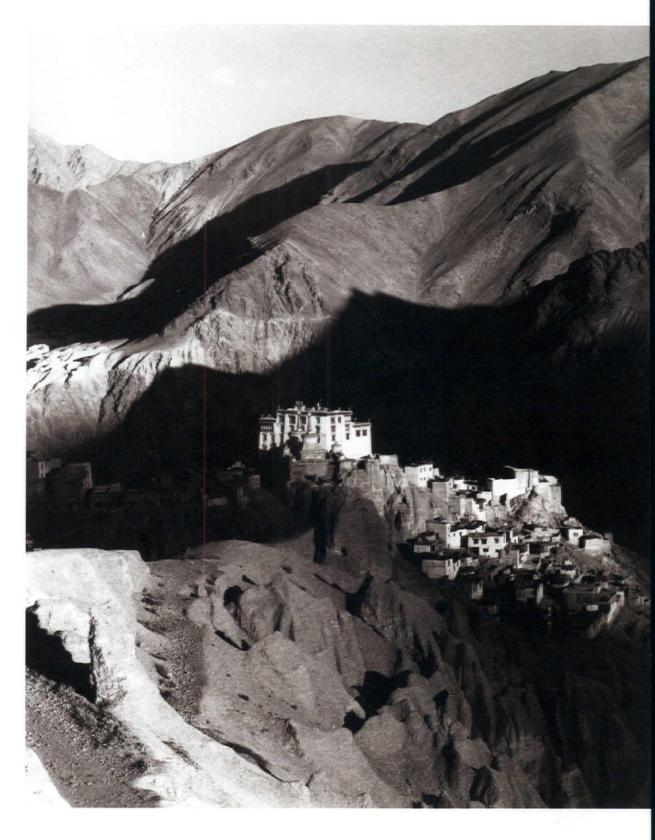
Elizabeth Padjen FAIA is the editor of *ArchitectureBoston*. She is an overseer of the Peabody Essex Muesum in Salem.



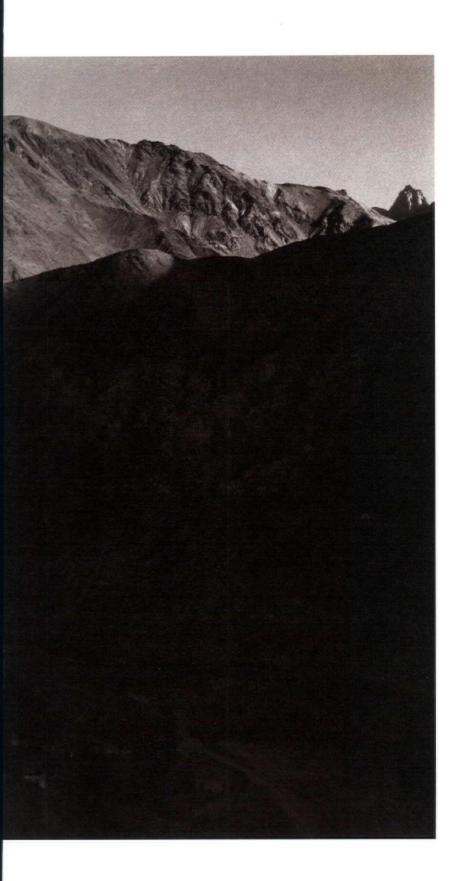








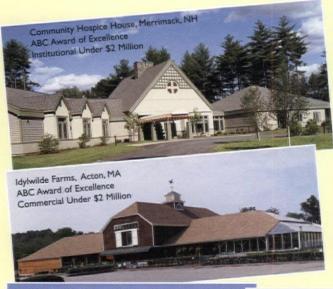
Ladakh #49, Ramayuru Gompa, In



Editor's note: For more information, including additional images, a text interview, and video trailers, go to: www.pem.org. A catalogue, Kenro Izu: Sacred Places, with text by exhibition curator Clark Worswick, is available from Arena Editions.

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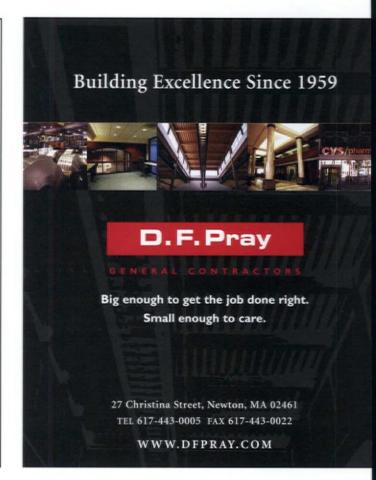
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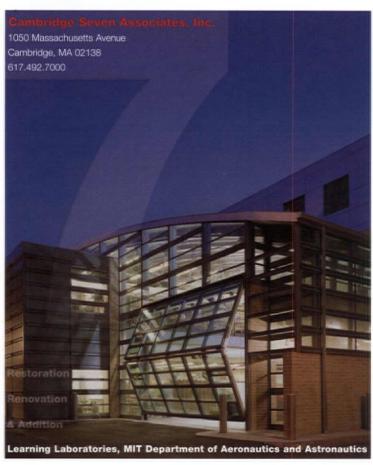
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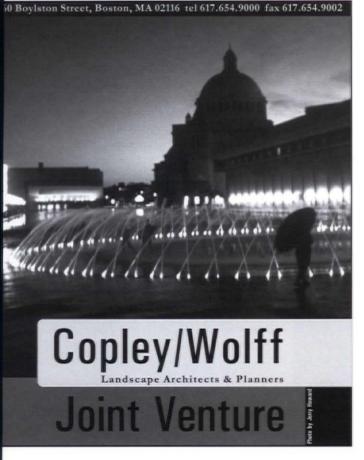
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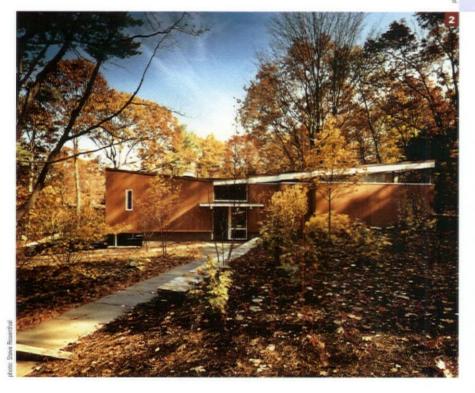
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The Modern House in New England

by David Fixler AIA





Over the course of the last decade, there has beer growing interest in the culture and architecture of mid-century Modernism. This interest often manifests itself as nostalgia for an era of enthusias about the future and a modern way of life. But lately, it has also come to represent, at least in respect to the Modern house, a longing for a return to a clean, simple, and often more environmentall friendly mode of living. Fortunately, this growth i awareness is also spawning an interest in the preservation of these houses, and a consequent reevaluation of the philosophy that influences the technical and aesthetic approaches to their preservation.

An impressive collection of these houses can be found in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and its suburban cultural hinterland; together, they represent an evolutionary phase in the regional adaptation of inter-war High Modernism. They were commissioned and designed by a group of people who understood and believed in progress and in the potential of research and technology to elevate the human condition. Many of the clients

these houses were the academics and professionals ely responsible for the birth and flowering of the t-industrial information revolution, and there rowing historical evidence that the Modern house both a symbol and a key component of the style aspirations of many in this group.

h the architects and the patrons of these houses eved that their designs constituted an appropriate onse to the question of how to lead a contempolife — a life fully cognizant and respectful he unique history, character and environment of w England — without denying the proper place heir homes as a reflection of the United States at d-century. The first of these houses were not, as viously assumed, simply a reaction to the coming Walter Gropius to Harvard in 1937; in fact, the ision of Gropius and the Storrow family (his ron) to build his house in Lincoln was probably forced by the existence of a culture in the western urbs of Boston that was receptive to these ideas. e first Modern house in New England had already n designed and built in Belmont by Eleanor mond in 1932, and in 1934, Edwin (Ned) odell, an MIT-trained architect recently converted he cause of European Modernism, designed a ise for a law professor and an art historian in ghboring Weston (a recent preservation cause



célèbre). Even in Lincoln itself, architect Henry Hoover had built his own Modern house around 1934, the first of some 60 highly site-sensitive houses that he would author in the region over the next 50 years.

The period of World War II saw both the creation of a significant demand for housing and the solidification of the cultural changes necessary to create the desire for a modern way of life. In 1940, Carl Koch began the Snake Hill development of Modern homes in Belmont, and by 1948, the young partners of The Architects Collaborative (TAC) developed residences for themselves and a few friends at Six Moon Hill in Lexington, one of the most significant planned neighborhoods of the Modern Movement in the US. Espousing Bauhaus rhetoric softened to reflect the new realities of building in a progressive and prosperous corner of the world, this community represents a successful augmentation of the American pastoral ideal with some common amenities and a common governing purpose that continues to serve as a model for high-quality, low-density suburban development.

Why attach this significance to the single-family house? American social and architectural theorists, from Jefferson to Wright, have repeatedly championed the idea of community based upon the singlefamily homestead rooted in the land, a very different notion from that commonly accepted in post-Enlightenment Europe. Therefore, while many of the iconic symbols of Modernism in Europe are social housing projects such as the Siedlungen of Frankfurt and Stuttgart, some of its most important manifestations in this country are to be found in the suburban single-family house.

Much has been written, starting with Siegfried Giedion in the 1940s, about the Modern house in the Northeast as a regionalist response to the principles and the iconic forms of European Modernism. But it is misleading to assume that these architects were seeking merely to develop a contemporary interpretation of the traditional New England saltbox. In a profound cultural shift, nature, traditionally regarded as an adversary in our harsh northern climate, was now something that could be embraced as a result of the tempering effects of modern building technology. The seductive notion of "the machine in the garden"that is, an artifact co-existing with but independent of nature - reached its residential apotheosis with Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House of 1948-51; in New England it became softened and delicately attuned to the local environment. Even Philip

Field House, 1934 Weston, Massachusetts Architect: Edwin (Ned) Goodell

Addition, 1978 Architect: Stanford Anderson

Taft-Yale residence, 1949 Lexington, Massachusetts Architect: TAC

Renovations and additions. 1988, 1998, 1999 Architect: **Hickox Williams Architects**

Solar House, 1938 Lincoln, Massachusetts Architect **Henry Hoover**

Johnson's canonical Glass House of 1949 (clearly the result of a careful study of Mies) was a step in this direction, with its stout brick hearth and plinth rooted firmly in the American earth. However, the early houses of Marcel Breuer (who co-authored the Gropius House) offer even stronger examples, with their use of natural fieldstone, vertical board siding, and the occasional low-sloped pitched roof. New England began the conscious embrace of the alternative, regionally sensitive Modernism that began with architects such as Alvar Aalto in Europe and William Wurster in California before the war.



The layout and material palette of these houses showcased a relaxed efficiency, an integral accommodation of contemporary technology, an appreciation of transparency to foster a sympathetic dialogue with nature, and the visual and tactile qualities of natural materials. They were site-specific, carefully oriented to sun and topography, and generally disturbed little of their surroundings — their informality welcoming a more natural and less manicured setting. Far from being cold, hard-edged temples of glass and steel, most of the Modern houses in New England are still warm and wonderful places to live. The best tend to be at once spacious and intimate, and even the most luxurious understate their elegance, without ever indulging in the soulless excess so unfortunately evident in the ubiquitous "mansions" of the new suburban landscape. In addition, their open-plan layouts anticipated many of the requisite amenities of today's houses, making them easily adaptable for 21st-century use.

This flexibility and ease of adaptation renders the Modern house a prime candidate for preservation and adaptive re-use. The houses of Six Moon Hill admirably showcase this flexibility. Each of the original houses has been enlarged and renovated at least once, sometimes substantially increasing the original size. In all cases however, the character of the original spatial relations and material ideas continue to glow through the alterations, and the houses remain as unmistakably Modern today as they were in 1948. Intelligent preservation should always foster a holistic vision that is based upon enhancing the character-defining features of the structure rather than focusing upon slavish restoration or replication of original materials and details. In addressing the architecture of the Modern Movement in particular, preservation should foster fidelity to the treatment of the social, technical and aesthetic idea embodied in the work as much as (if not more than) to the physical fabric of a building. The Modern Movement, after all, was never intended to be a style. It was a way of building - a way that still has relevance today.



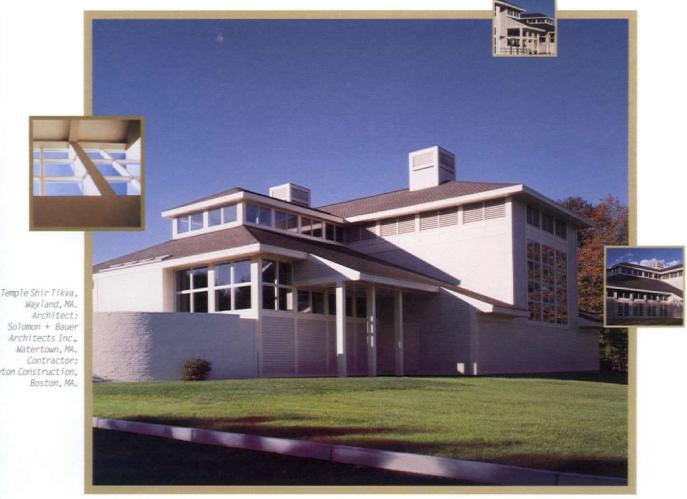
House at Six Moon Hill, 19 Lexington, Massachusetts Architect: TAC



David Fixler AIA is a principal at Einhorn Yaffee Prescott Architecture and Engineerin PC in Boston. A director of the New England chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians, he is an active member of DOCOMOMO Inte national (Documentation and Conservation of the Modern Movement) as a member of its Special Committee for Registers and as a co-found of DOCOMOMO/US New England.

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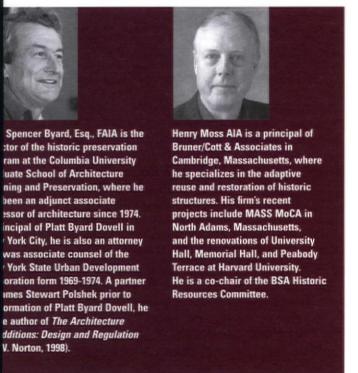
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PSS: You are the director of the historic preservation program Columbia University and a partner of Platt Byard Dovell, ch has recently won a number of awards for the 42nd Street dios, a wonderful, cutting-edge building in Times Square. The people might view those roles as contradictory. What is a rense of the increasing polarization that we see between the hitects for old buildings and architects for new buildings?

ard: To me the future of preservation depends on one thing: oracing architecture. Architecture is a terrific art, one of the ef public supports we have for understanding and living our s. That's what old buildings offer us, their understandings of it times and their illustrations of our differences. It's the reason have the legal right to protect old buildings. But under all the er agendas that are hung on preservation, architecture is often eezed out, indeed a terror of architecture takes hold, to a ree that could kill the golden goose. When protesters dance

around saying, "You have to be so careful about the old buildings," they're actually demeaning the old buildings. Most of them have plenty of gumption to stand up to and be part of the human condition, and they don't have to be set apart, out of the real to contribute in combination with new works of architecture.

Moss: I believe in that robustness, too. I came down on the train. It was a very beautiful ride, part dawn and part fog, and I looked again through your book, *The Architecture of Additions*. The clarity of your case studies kept colliding with what I saw out the window. The heterogeneity, the collisions, the stylistic overlays of real life seemed to make a mockery of our discussions of various kinds of purity and deference.

Byard: That of course is the accident of real life. But what we do as architects working with old buildings is, ideally, directed at that complexity. What matters most is not what the building looks like, but what it *means* — what it tells you, what you can learn from it. Then you build upon that meaning to make the new building, so there's an inherent coherence between two things that may look entirely different. But the point is that they are dealing with the same issue; in the apparent incongruity, there's a profound harmony.

Moss: I recently looked back at *Collage City*, by Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, which talks about that kind of incongruity. One of the wonderful ideas they discussed was in the phrase, "managing iconoclasm." And it occurred to me that one of the valuable aspects of the phenomenon of "signature architects" is that the public trusts that the star architects can manage the iconoclastic component of the city; the public doesn't have that same trust in an unknown or local architect.

Byard: Rowe and Koetter were writing in the '70s, just when people were beginning to throw stones at the prevailing iconic view of Modernism. It came at the beginning of a great social failure of nerve that took away our public purposes and left us as a relatively aimless crowd of individuals with a few lucky ones singled out for celebrity. The celebrity architect today enjoys a certain freedom; the ordinary worker in the vineyard, *i.e.* Moss or Byard, has a much tougher time because we don't have the same

free pass. Aldo Rossi was a great architect, but one could say that the Aldo Rossi building on Broadway in New York is deeply undistinguished. Among other things, it is backward: the façade that belongs on Broadway is on Mercer Street, and the façade that is on Broadway is clunky and heavy-handed. But the fact is that it's Mr. Rossi's work and that makes it fine. I don't mean to overemphasize that, but it is a symptom of our times. A celebrity is above question and — happy person! — above abuse.

Moss: You have used a phrase in talking about the early '70s that I've always liked: "the shock and waste of demolition." That was the matrix from which so much of the preservation movement evolved. But it didn't take long for people to use preservation in a different way, to try to protect what they felt was familiar and pleasant about their everyday surroundings. And now nobody knows how to put one thing next to another, because nobody knows how to address jumps in height, scale, bulk, or use.

Byard: Exactly. So what we have done is to say, "Oh goodness, we won't deal with that." We've chickened out of the process of reconciling problems of quantity. We've basically eliminated height and bulk as components of architectural form and said they're off the table when dealing with old buildings: "We'll tell you what the bulk and height should be, then you can decorate the surface." But we can't just ignore the contemporary condition. Of course, we can try - we live in a time that is devoted to righteousness and denial, and much popular preservation is deep into righteousness and denial. But we have to find a way to lift ourselves out of that.

The 1970s were extraordinarily important for just that reason people talked about managing the problem of change. Preservation was born as part of a self-reforming Modernism, which said, "Look, we messed up last time, now we have to get these things to work together." But we've lost that reforming thread. There's a kind of dead hand at work at the moment that obscures what architecture does for us. Architecture doesn't just make things prettier. It tells us things about the human condition that we need to come to terms with.

Moss: One difference today is the presence of a public design control infrastructure. Do you sense that the agencies that are involved with design control now are becoming a little mo defensive? They often seem very confused when they have to deal with anything that's not two-dimensional.

Byard: That's a serious problem. There is too rarely an unde standing of architecture as a three-dimensional, formal art tha supposed to produce things that you've never seen before. The have great difficulty dealing with anything that isn't a picture.

Moss: And it hinders their ability to deal with new challeng perhaps most obviously the preservation of Modern buildings People are saying, "We don't really understand those Modern buildings because we grew up learning why they were destructive." They want to know if there is something they should read. But the character-defining elements in a lot of th buildings are spatial and have to do with transparency — all elements falling outside the vocabulary of orthodox preservati

Byard: One of the things I've tried to do at Columbia is to students to understand those buildings. You bring them to a Modern building, and because they have been taught to hate they're turned off. But after an hour or two, they say, "You know, that's terrific!" And that conversion is one of the great moments in contemporary pedagogy, because they were broug up to think that reform, social progress, and public action we all fundamentally bad things, and they suddenly realize what they've lost.

What I'd love to do next is a book about architecture and soci policy, which would examine the buildings of the 20th centur as expressions not of architectural history but of the history of the revelation in architecture of social policy. We need to be more broadly informed. You can't preserve a building simply because you think it's beautiful; you preserve it because of what you learn from it. For example, you would save Peter Eisenma Wexner Center, impossible as it is, because it represents a moment in the history of the 20th century where there was a flight from usefulness, a loss of confidence in our ability to sol human problems, and an amazing willingness to demonstrate



by building an impossible building. So we would save it its place in our intellectual history, as a demonstration of the de we got ourselves into.

ss: How does that thinking fit into your agenda for the gram at Columbia?

ard: I am very keen to represent current concerns in old texts. Columbia — indeed, all preservation — has suffered n a tremendous division that goes back to the origins of ervation when the founders — James Marston Fitch and ers who were all architects — were reacting against orthodox dernism. They were reformists and they rejected that kind of blished architecture. And that division has continued. A big of my agenda has been to put them back together. One mple is our Chandigarh Studio — we invented a joint design lio for the third-year advanced architectural design students the second-year preservationists. It gave the designers an ortunity to work with additions to old buildings, and it gave preservationists the opportunity to participate in the process lesign. Each had to understand the meaning of the old ding and how the new design supports the old. No one could no to anything. The judgments had to grow out of the

process. I have to say the results were terrific. The architects understood finally that everything they were doing was an argument. The preservationists had to find a way of explaining the meaning of Chandigarh and the meaning of the addition and of judging them together. And we tried to get everybody to understand the importance of metaphor as the chief verbal device for explaining, for moving from facts to understanding. If I succeed in this modest revolution, everyone will be able to understand and work with the meaning of existing architecture.

Moss: I don't think that question ever arose when I was a student, except in tangential ways. When you look at nomination forms for historic buildings, the one question that people have the most trouble responding to is the one about "significance." They just don't know what to do with that.

Byard: You're so right. We're very good at writing history, but then the hard question is, What do you get from the building itself? If you can write a book about it, you don't need the building. Tell me what you can read only in the building. Let's take Chandigarh, for example. Le Corbusier designs the new capital city for the Punjab in the 1950s, right at the foot of the Himalayas, to represent the future of India. He stakes out a

colossal, seemingly infinite, ground plane — the Modernist dream — and on it he places buildings like completely strange but very beautiful concrete lumps. They're all concrete — there's no glass. They're all about resistance - they're standing up to the universe and, more particularly, they're standing up to the Bomb. And how are they doing it? Well, they're organized around Corbusier's Le Modulor — essentially a system based on the proportions of a guy. And the guy is this long, healthy Swiss who's supposed to be the universal man, and the new Indian man and the buildings are all organized around him — it's an extraordinary representation of an existential view of modern man after the war, under the shadow of the Bomb. It comes straight from 1950. You've got Corbusier with a cigarette. You've got James Dean with a cigarette. You've got Camus with a cigarette.

Moss: And no one with an Internet.

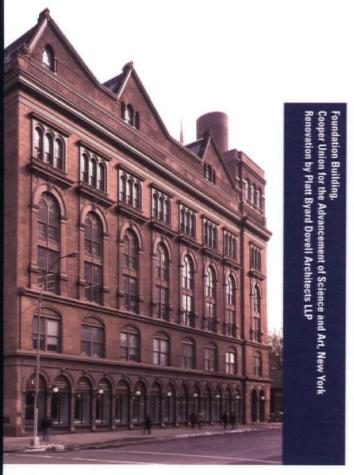
Byard: And no one with an Internet. These are buildings that are trying to be existentially brave. The point is to help everyone get to the point where they can see this. For the architects, the opportunity to deal with the problem of the old buildings brought them back down from a very remote world of ideas, where everything is possible, to one where there are connections to be made, and where they will be judged by the quality of those connections. The Chandigarh capitol today is an undervalued resource, beloved but doing far less than it could. The buildings are powerful things, useful things. They don't need to be coddled. They need to be exploited, given a chance to do what they can do - the trick being to do so without impairing the extraordinary power of their meaning. I guess that's part of my current hobby horse.

Moss: I used to work for Sir Bernard Feilden, who said that architects should not begin to work with historic buildings until they are already accomplished architects. So I think it's probably very healthy that you've got people who are at a fairly advanced level in school starting over again, so to speak. Bernard's point was that you need to learn not to imitate, but to be able to make value judgments within stylistic systems.

Byard: That's right. My firm just finished the renovation of the national landmark Cooper Union Foundation Building, which is a purely technical restoration, but a good example of your point. The central problem of that building was the expression of the ashlar brownstone. Brownstone is a maligne material; architects today say Cooper and Peterson didn't kno what they were doing with it. But they knew exactly what the were doing. It was very flat, and it gave you a surface that was really like drawing on paper — an expression that was relevan to what they were trying to say. And just as you said, we tried to understand the meaning of the stone in 1858, not because there's something precious about it, but because it was the po of the building. We wanted to get that flatness, but we couldr given the abuse of the stone in the interim. So we worked out equivalent, evocative condition, smooth-ish and old, by handtooling the entire building. You can't achieve precisely what the were trying to achieve, nor should you try to, but you do hav make the building make sense again. We're here, today, and w have a different set of problems. So then the question become How can my understanding of this old building contribute to what we need to understand today? And that's where the jo comes, even in a technical restoration.

Moss: I wonder if you are deliberately avoiding the word "intention." I see design intent as something quite different fr the meaning of a building.

Byard: That's very important. I don't give a damn what Le Corbusier thought he was doing. What matters is what he did And that's the difference between intent and meaning. What does the building say? And that's another jump for everyone working with old buildings. Students keep trying to get architects to tell them what their designs mean. I tell them the the architects don't know any better than they do. When Aard Copland delivered the Norton lectures at Harvard in the '50s. he asked, "Who am I writing for?" And he answered, "I'm writing for the gifted listener." As architects and preservationic we're supposing an audience of "gifted listeners." And of cour we must first be gifted listeners ourselves.



ss: Then how do you answer the criticism of preservation in people who say, "Well, this is just elitist nonsense"? I admit it's never been clear to me why working with old buildings is the elitist than creating something new.

has been attached to it. After the collapse of the public sector has been attached to it. After the collapse of the public sector he 1970s, gentrification and the degree to which preservation efitted the middle and upper-middle class brought with them notion that preservation is elitist. But that's all the more on for saying we need to get at the meanings of the buildings. It would we want to save this building? Tarring preservation is elitism is just as bad as tarring Modernism with destruction. It is a bad polemics.

ss: It's flawed analysis.

Byard: Exactly. The core activity is still valuable. You're saving energy, you're saving materials, you're saving space. You've saving identity. You're doing all sorts of wonderful things that have nothing to do with elitism.

Moss: You started your career as a lawyer and participated in the arguments on which a lot of preservation regulation was based. Only later did you begin to practice architecture. Is anybody from the early years calling you an apostate? Has there been an evolution here which you're aware of?

Byard: No. I think I'm in the happy position of being a latecomer, moving from the law to architecture. It's a bit like being a convert to a religion; you become more zealous than the originals. My critical transitional moment was with Ed Logue at the Urban Development Corporation, where we were part of the last wave of self-reforming Modernism. Nixon turned off the subsidies in 1974, and that was the end. But I was brought to this through that extraordinary experience with Logue, who was an amazing man; we were all embarked on a process of continuing reform. And preservation was a piece of it. But 1974 was the beginning of the end of public interest and public investment. I left the UDC that year, when we knew the handwriting was on the wall, and I said to myself, "What the hell do you do now? Do you go back to Wall Street and close mortgages and take care of balance sheets? Or do you go to architecture school?" So I kept on practicing law to pay for it, and went to architecture school. I see my path as one of continuity.

Moss: One of my responses to reading the *Architecture of Additions* is to think back over various landmarks commission discussions and realize how clumsy the arguments have been, perhaps, in fairness, because they grew out of embattled situations. I wish that the commissions themselves were reading this book. It's very clearly argued, but there's a lot of passion — it has a very optimistic view. But I don't believe that people in the street think in these terms; I still don't think they care very much about history. They are more apt to think, "I know this building, I've walked past it 400,000 times, my mother once worked there, and I hate to imagine what's going to be there instead."



rd: Yes. We've talked about the meaning of buildings, but other level of meaning is tied to place-making, where it mes a constituent of identity. We all build our identities nd physical places. It's an environmental issue. It's visceral. it's something we don't quite know how to deal with. The marks law at the moment doesn't address it. The law is still sed on historic preservation.

ss: Which in many cases forces people to attach values to dings that the architecture and true history don't support, use what they really want to do is stop the construction of hing larger.

trd: Exactly. It's become a tool for prevention. Geoffrey to the first chairman of the New York Landmarks amission, said that the landmarks law exists to manage age, not to prevent it. And that's what we were doing in the Os. But we are now in a more authoritarian era, and facts become the source of control. For example, Bob Stern, who ally an extraordinary person, has promoted the preservation Columbus Circle — the former Huntington Hartford eum — because it was designed by Edward Durell Stone. If fect he's saying, "I know that Edward Durell Stone is ortant, therefore you should save the building." It's an oritarian view based on superior knowledge. I would love to away from that. I want everyone to see preservation as a gn discipline. You don't have to have superior knowledge. that's typical of our time.

ss: It is to a certain degree because we've developed a em whereby preservation staffs rely on survey reports to nd embattled buildings.

ard: And we need that.

ss: On the other hand, the people who are making the sions are politicized. And they're under tremendous pressure a the proponents as well as from local people who say, for apple, "We don't want this on the waterfront — we want a quil waterfront."

Byard: But if you had a public policy that said it should remain tranquil, you would find that it could be tranquil in a lot of different ways. And that would become apparent if we get back to architecture that deals with form, if, for example, we let height back in as a regular old architectural problem to be managed by careful massing and by the understanding of slenderness as a valuable tool. We say something is too tall, so we cut it off arbitrarily and wind up with buildings that look like a bunch of mushrooms. It's really bad for old buildings to live with a lot of mushrooms.

Moss: We're building those as a matter of course in Boston — we take 20 stories off a building but maintain its gigantic parcel so we end up with a squat block. I've always loved the fact that it's so hard to assemble large parcels in Manhattan that you're less likely to do that.

Byard: And slenderness is the thing that makes you love old skyscrapers. We need not be afraid of form. I hope that by the process of education and advocacy we can gradually get beyond that. But we're suffering from the absence of the public sector. There is no public pressure to do good architecture. There's a complete absence of public leadership that understands the importance of good architecture and demands it.

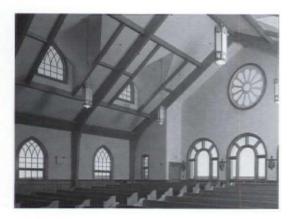
Moss: Everyone's afraid that the next person who tries could turn out to be a Robert Moses.

Byard: Sure. There are lots of things that might go wrong. But the leadership will come when our society begins to demand it. It's going to have to start with those of us who are educated enough to gradually turn around our game, and say we want architecture to help us deal with our problems.

Moss: Our arguments are going to have to get better.

Byard: And our arguments must get better. We have to become much more convincing about the power of architecture. We need to embrace it!

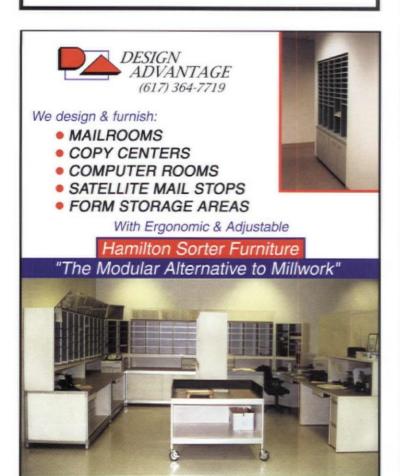
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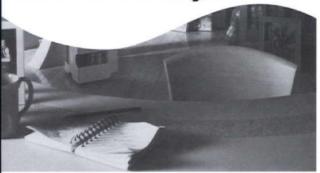
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service that streamlines your project while preserving your sanity, make the call today to Integrated Builders. Peter Forbes FAIA moved his practice from Boston to Florence in 1999. He also maintains an office in Seal Harbor, Maine. It probably isn't fair to compare many other cities to Florence for sheer constructed force, or, for that matter, for the physical beauty of its inhabitants, the savor of its native cuisine, the grace of its setting in the landscape, or the elegance of its fashion. The art museums aren't too shabby, either.

Florence had the good sense to hire the best architects available at the moment of the city's greatest economic power — and its economic power in the 14th and 15th centuries was very substantial indeed. At that moment, which we glibly refer to as the Renaissance, a remarkable group of designers were constantly at work: Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, Alberti, Michelozzo, Leonardo, Michelangelo, Vasari. Both private citizens and the *comune* had the cash to build well and the vision to give a remarkably free hand to their architects. Those of us fortunate enough to live here today are the beneficiaries of that vision.

And yet this city, home to more icons of the Renaissance than any other, locus of eight of the "top ten" cultural landmarks in Italy, refuses to be a fly trapped in amber. Certainly Florentine architects, especially younger ones, chafe under the tedious permitting procedures. Yet, to one who has observed — and railed against — the mediocre pastiches and meager imitations of past styles as championed by Boston's multitude of design review boards and supinely accepted by Boston's architects, Florence — both its citizens and its architecture — has a refreshing capacity to accommodate radical change.

Over the past two decades, in times of economic boom sufficient to sustain genuine experiment, architecture in Boston has steadfastly imitated hist styles, wrapping new functions in a thin veneer of brick or stone lest the ghosts of Bulfinch and Fane be disturbed. Even the recent attempts at somethir more "contemporary" have the uncomfortable self-consciousness of a teenager defying the dress code. the same period Florence, operating within a much less secure economy, deftly, elegantly, and ruthlessl continues to reinvent itself.

Via Tournabuoni, for example, is one of the most historically important streets in the city, lined with 14th- to 16th-century palazzi. For over a hundred years it has been a venue for expensive pastry shop bookstores, leather and fabric merchants. Today it rapidly and unsentimentally reinventing itself as Fashion Way, a change that involves prominent an intensely modern changes to buildings that we all studied in architectural history classes. In the first block from the Santa Trinita bridge over the Arno, Audrey Hepburn's favorite bootmaker, Ferragamo, newly redesigned its showrooms juxtaposing frame glazing, stainless-steel hardware, 15th-century fresc and 14th-century rusticated masonry. In the next block one of the many Medici palaces will have a r Giorgio Armani store designed by minimalist par excellence Claudio Silvestrin. Diagonally across the street, fashion enfant terrible Roberto Cavalli's new flagship store — a paean to Modernist excess is flanked by coolly elegant Gucci and Max Mara, three in late 17th-century buildings. Would such stridently Modern architectural exercises be tolerate let alone encouraged in an historic district in Bosto

uple blocks away from Via Tournabuoni is a ding that offers an object lesson in the difference reen the two cities. Alberti's Loggia dei Rucellai, in 1466, is a comparatively small but important pric structure. Within the last 20 years it has converted to exhibition space by inserting a glass ain wall behind the 15th-century arcade. The glass boldly constructed of enormous lights of glass held a elegantly minimal steel frame, reveals the historic ture while unabashedly reveling in its own lernist brayura.

trast this solution of "adaptive reuse" with that of Architects Building in downtown Boston, home of Boston Society of Architects. In 1989, the Society ired a handsome, if historically undistinguished, e building for its offices, meeting spaces and, it was sioned, public exhibition space on the ground floor. vever, when the BSA proposed that a glass curtain be constructed behind the arcade on the ground to reveal the original structure and enclose the e for contemporary use, a furor arose. Introduce ething modern into an "historic" building in oric downtown Boston? Horrors. The solution cated by the governing historic commission championed by the BSA's representative on that d — was to fill in the arches with little panes of ; a bizarre intellectual construct which imagines the ntion of an historically correct curtain wall in midcentury Boston. That there hadn't been such a and that what was proposed revealed the original cture was of no interest. The theme of "Historic on" was of greater importance than its reality. mately a generic storefront system, clumsily fitted in the arches, was approved — a monument to iomic expedience, tepid and uncontroversial, nongn preferable to design.

v does this happen? What causes this difference, difference between the historic and the historicist, ween the exuberant reality of a living city and lifeless façades of tourist "destination" theme-park mity? What causes one community to revel in witty, brilliant transformation of the historic and other to shrink from the slightest semblance of ation?

There appear to be two coincident explanations. One, of course, is the incredible architectural and experiential phenomenon that is Florence. Given the potency of that armature, little apart from massive high-rise development — which the present economy of Florence cannot support — could fundamentally alter the whole. It can be argued that within such an overarching context one has greater freedom to experiment at the subordinate scale. Still one must ask, given that dominant architectural whole, why are the experiments so bold? Why don't Florentines want to copy and "preserve" that which is so famous and so seductive to tourists?

The answer is the second phenomenon: sublime self-confidence. Italians in general and Florentines in particular unquestioningly believe that they can design anything and it will be more beautiful than anything that anyone else in the world could achieve.

The genesis of this self-confidence was brought home to me when I noticed a school group of ten-year-olds following their young teacher through the Uffizi Gallery. While they waited to enter there was the inevitable pushing and yelling, but once in the galleries, the children listened intently to what their teacher was telling them about the art. What gripped these kids who moments before had been no more orderly than their counterparts all over the world? What magic spell had this Florentine teacher spun? I sidled over to eavesdrop on her lecture.

"This drawing is by Girlandaio. He was born here in Florence and lived over near San Lorenzo..." The students' heads nodded. They knew the neighborhood. Girlandaio was their guy. "This drawing is by Michelangelo who studied with Girlandaio. He was from near Arezzo, but moved to Firenze as a boy and lived on Via Bentaccordi." Again the heads nodded. OK, so he wasn't born here, but he's our guy, too. And so on through room after room: Botticelli, Rafaelo, Leonardo, Cellini. These were their people, Florentines by birth or choice, and they could make anything more beautiful than anyone else. So, by extension, can all Florentines. That is what one does in Florence. It is logical then that a change to the fabric of this beautiful city by a Florentine, or even someone chosen by a Florentine, could be expected to be beautiful. And in fact, this is Florence's design criterion: Design what you want in the manner you wish, as long as it is as good as everything around it.

Now *there* is a design review process one can live with! ■■■

It's all too evident that sprawling subdivisions are replacing Massachusetts' treasured landscapes and wildlife habitats. Unchecked stormwater caused by poor site planning and infrastructure design, and runoff from acres of lawns, driveways and parking lots contaminate rivers, streams, and coastal waters. Keeping those huge lawns green requires enormous quantities of water, pushing already stressed rivers, well fields, and aquifers to the brink of collapse.

Our home-building habits also exact enormous civic and economic costs. Planning boards and conservation commissions feel besieged by the steady stream of builders and developers seeking subdivision permits. The builders and developers are frustrated by a slow, expensive, and implacable permitting process. In short, no one is satisfied, and the erosion of the Commonwealth's finest features continues.

The reality is that most local zoning actually encourages the kind of land-consumptive subdivisions that creep across our landscapes. Increasing lot size does little to ameliorate these problems and often adds a new one: excluding middle-income home-buyers.

But a new solution can be found in Randall Arendt's "Conservation Subdivision Design" (CSD) model, which can ease the planning, permitting, and open-space protection impasse. The four-step CSD process turns conventional subdivision planning upside down by reversing the sequence of the typical process:

- 1 Identify conservation areas, ideally as much as 50 percent of the total parcel in addition to the wetlands and other areas constrained by regulation;
- 2 Locate house sites;
- 3 Align streets and trails;
- 4 Then draw lot lines.

In 1998, a group of people on Boston's North Shore with seemingly antagonistic attitudes and conflicting backgrounds - conservation, open-space protection, planning, development, and real estate explored our common interests and how to remove barriers that keep us from achieving those goals. We all want to preserve open space, landscapes, water quality, wildlife habitat, and community character. We want to provide interesting, livable, high-quality housing. The development and real estate communities need to achieve financial goals, and developers and planning boards want a flexible and unambiguous permitting process. Preserving high-quality open space and reducing the environmental burden borne by natural habitats are important to the conservation community. "The

Two View

Natural Landscapes

by Kathy Leahy

Green Neighborhoods Alliance" was born when agreed that CSD could help us all.

Thanks to the Alliance, Massachusetts municipalities now have two brand-new model bylaws can help them preserve critical wildlife habitat, beloved landscapes, treasured vistas, important wetland buffer zones and other valued open space while simultaneously accommodating new housi development. The Alliance has developed princip of Open Space Residential Design (OSRD) base on CSD, but tailored for Massachusetts commun ties. Alliance members are fanning out across the state giving presentations and providing technical assistance to promote OSRD. Four towns (Newbury, Sharon, West Newbury, and Wilmington) have adopted OSRD-style bylaws a several more are moving in that direction.

Can developers build and market Green Neighbo hoods? Can realtors sell homes in Green Neighborhoods? hoods? Will residents enjoy living in a Green Neighborhood and then sell their home at a prof Surveys and statistics from other parts of the stat and country encourage us with an emphatic "Yes But this is our next challenge, and home design play a significant role in meeting this challenge. Well-designed homes that fit into the landscape, provide views and access to the open space, and maintain privacy in what is typically a more dens developed neighborhood, will be a key factor in achieving success. A Green Neighborhood must be restricted to an up-scale clientele; municipalit can incorporate OSRD principles in every reside tial zoning district, and every housing market from affordable to "out-of-sight." The reward is a high-quality subdivision and preservation of valued open space features for all - a truly Green Neighborhood.

reserving e Land

Designed Landscapes

by Ethan Carr

preservation of the cultural landscapes of what metimes called the "recent past" has incited of the most revealing design debates in years. tably — and predictably — many preservationave their hackles up as some of the monuments stwar American design — including urban s, corporate parks, sprawling subdivisions, nal park "visitor centers," and even interstate ways — are now considered "historic," often an eye to securing some kind of listing in National Register of Historic Places. After all, National Register itself is a creature of the Historic Preservation Act — an act in which gress responded to the widely held public ion that the "slum clearance" and heroic "red" projects of the era had done irreparable harm e cultural fabric of society. For many preservasts, there is an intolerable irony in seeing the isions of the Historic Preservation Act applied e very products of Modernist-era planning design that they feel necessitated the legislation e first place.

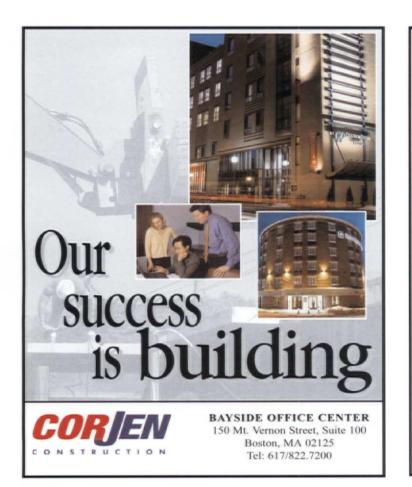
rly, the management of post-World War II scapes as "historic resources" will differ from the rvation of the not-so-recent past. While some e work of the era's most important landscape tects (Thomas Church, Dan Kiley, Lawrence orin, for example) has begun to be recognized, rast majority of postwar landscapes remain udied and even unnoticed, prompting Peter ter and Melanie Simo to characterize them as sible gardens." Nevertheless, the sheer volume ndscape development over the last 50 years ably exceeds the total for all earlier periods of rican history combined. But without adequate extual research, even identifying historically

significant landscapes will be impossible. How will we determine which housing tracts or shopping centers, for example, are actually important parts of our history, and not just more sprawl or blight?

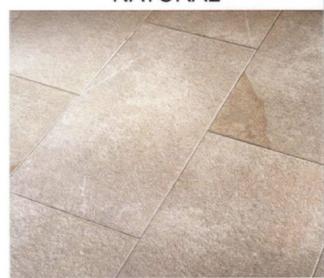
The successful preservation of Modernist-era landscapes will also require an examination of the theoretical framework of preservation as it is practiced today. The word "preservation" suggests a resistance to change, yet the practice has always involved an inventive transformation of a place, as well as an imaginative structuring of its past. But the idea that preserving landscapes could be indeed had to be - a kind of creative transformation became more problematic after World War II. Postwar preservation defined itself through its opposition to the excesses of Modernist-era planning and public works. Not only historic preservation, but also what was once called "scenic preservation," were changed by a wave of legislation, most notably the Wilderness Act (1964), the Historic Preservation Act (1966), the National Environmental Policy Act (1969), and dozens of similar pieces of state and local law. The pace and scale of postwar modernization had forced preservation into new roles; many of those roles have since become far too easily characterized merely as opposition, not as strategies for creative change or instruments of "progress."

Many of us are involved today in assessing the historical significance of the designed landscapes of the very period that produced the institutional and theoretical context in which we are practicing. But the "recent past" only becomes "historic" as we all come to realize that the works of that period represent an era that has ended, which is distinguishable from our current situation. And so as we consign the postwar world to the past, we are trying to do so within a theoretical framework that remains very much a part of that past. It remains to be seen how successful this effort will be without developing new preservation theory and practice that will be more the product of our own, postmodern cultural context. The practical and theoretical difficulties raised by the preservation of the "recent past" should stimulate practitioners to assimilate more contemporary theory and devise fresh meanings and processes for the preservation of postwar landscapes.

Ethan Carr is an assistant professor in the department of landscape architecture and regional planning at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He has previously worked for the National Park Service, New York City Parks and Recreation, and private design offices. His book, Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service received an ASLA honor award in 1998.



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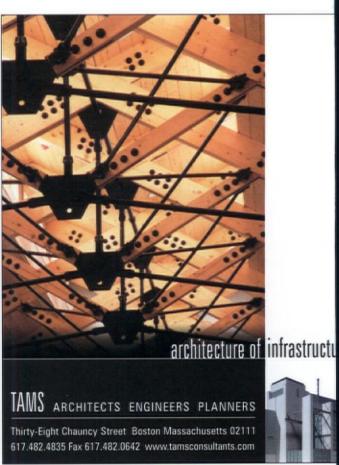
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Covering the Issues

Periodical roundup

by Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA

chen Schneider, c. AIA, teaches the itecture studios at h College and ntains a practice in

Annus horribilis...In this year of years, in the piles of year-end lists and reflections, noticeably absent is any mention of the built environment. Specific buildings were targeted and New York's urban fabric was inexorably changed, but the citations in the general media thus far center (understandably) on politics, the economy, and war or the entertainments that help us forget. One notable exception comes from novelist Anna Quindlen ("Weren't We All So

Young Then?" Newsweek, December 31, 2001). In this intimate, eloquent essay, she relates personal reactions to the physical presence and absence of the Twin Towers. "Too much blue sky, and beneath it, just nothing. Who knew open space could be so terribly sad?"

Can't keep a good town down...One of the most straightforward, comprehensive discussions of current building in New York is Jonathan Mahler's "Gotham Rising," in the December/January issue of Talk. His argument: Before our eyes, a new skyline is under construction. Mahler focuses not on the World Trade Center site, but on the two dozen (!) other significant projects now underway in Manhattan. In doing so, he addresses issues near and dear to Boston, too, including the import of starchitects, a troubled Modern legacy and the recent rebirth of cutting-edge design, the negative and positive effects of a complicated city approvals process, and the ability of buildings to catalyze development and culture. Maybe the recently deceased Talk wouldn't have lost \$50 million in two years if it had spent less money on parties and more on features like this.

Have you hugged your client today?...They weather the blame but rarely share the credit for bringing great projects into being, suggests Karen E. Steen in "Great Design Clients" (Metropolis, January 2002). In this string of articles celebrating clients ranging from the Walker Art Center to the movie-mogul Coen brothers, ten writers emphasize what makes great clients so great: communication, financial and political skills, and the ability to summon the best from their architects and designers. A well-deserved accolade.

Talk about clients!..."Wynton Marsalis Builds His Dream House" proclaims the cover of the December 24 issue of New York magazine. It's not what you think; this "house" will be open to the world: Lincoln Center is constructing "the world's first performing-arts facility built specifically for jazz" on the former site of the New York Coliseum at Columbus Circle. As artistic director of jazz at Lincoln Center, Marsalis is working with designer Rafael Viñoly, who also knows a thing or two about music (he considered a career as a pianist before opting for architecture). With directives like "We want all 100,000 square feet to dance and sing, to be syncopated and unpredictable but not eccentric," both client and architect provide interesting musings on what it means to translate jazz into building.



Books

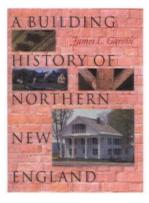
A Building History of Northern New England by James L. Garvin

University Press of New England, 2001

Reviewed by Robert Adam

There are many titles available on the preservation book list, but The History of Building in Northern New England, by noted New Hampshire architectural historian Jim Garvin, fills a void that has plagued the preservation community for many years. Most "old house" books offer photo essays rather than substantive information about the construction of historic buildings. Garvin, however, has crafted a comprehensive primer of substantial sophistication about the evolution of the historic materials, styles, and details of domestic architecture. Although its title is regional, the information is applicable for much of the Northeast and beyond.

The book has been organized into three main chapters that explain the evolution of building technology and materials, stylistic development, and determining building age. Garvin begins by describing major materials beginning with the 17th century and, within each section, chronologically relates how advances in material technology, availability, and production have helped to shape building forms and practices up through the 20th century. He also chronicles how changes in tastes and social development combine to further shape building practices, especially in the 19th century. In the last chapter, he discusses the evolution of common features such as moldings, doors, and sash and how to date these features. Garvin is perhaps known best for his 18thand early-19th-century scholarship, but he has also provided the history of construction up to the 20th century and includes welcome tidbits such as the history of precut and kit houses in New England.



Garvin's style is easy to read, and the organization of topics is clear and deliberate. His discussions are concise and accurate, although they occasionally feel as if he were holding back, a perception that is balanced by an extensive bibliography that is topically sectioned and indexed. Illustrations and photographs from contemporary as well as archival collections enhance the text. The drawings by the author are excellent and add significant detail to the text through clear and accurate exploded views of many types of joinery and comparisons of evolving features such as moldings, sash profiles, doors, and hardware.

The process of preserving buildings takes many forms. Sometimes we are blinded by our new purpose of adaptive uses and reluctant to see features beyond those of our immediate interest. This is true for the kitchen remodeling as well as the complete "restoration." All too often that zeal leads to the loss of significant historic fabric in the name of preservation, simply because we don't know what is valuable. While Garvin's book does not seek to make those judgments, it arms the reader with the primary information about materials and style that can lead to better decisions and more sophisticated understanding of the meaning and value of historic buildings.

Robert Adam is the director of the preservation carpentry program at the North Bennet Street School in Boston (www.nbss.org).

The Same Ax, Twice: Restoration and Renewal in a Throwaway Age by Howard Mansfield

University Press of New England, 2000

Reviewed by William Morgan

The Same Ax, Twice is one of those quiet books that foments revolution. Although identified as merely "journalist and author" (and by implication, non-scholar?), Howard Mansfield has just the right combination of erudition and humor to challenge conventionally held ideas about historic preservation. Like In the Memory House, his wise 1993 exploration of the New Englander's defining relationship with the past, The Same Ax, Twice ought to be on your bookshelf along with Wendell Berry and Noel Perrin.

Mansfield uses the metaphor of the farmer who "has had the same ax his whole life - he has only changed the handle three times and the head two times" as a credo for restoration. A tool divorced from its usefulness and placed in a museum becomes a lifeless object, while a "repaired ax is a living tradition." He crafts this into a philosophy about old-house renovations, museum villages, and the design of the landscape, arguing that our disconnected society needs less mummification and more renewal.

The New Hampshire-based writer turns his Swiftian eye on the let'splay-nostalgia world of Deerfield ("a brilliant misreading of Colonial history"), house museums ("We stand behind the velvet rope, across an abyss, uncomprehending"), and even Hancock Shaker Village (where historically accurate Shaker meals, prepared only to adorn the tables, are fed to the pigs). Often sanitizing history, most restorations are predicated on stopping time, for Americans do not want to deal with decay, oxidization, and ruin. "Everything ever created will rot eventually: the Mona Lisa, the Brooklyn Bridge...most of life is not showing up, as Woody Allen said, but maintenance."

How do we curate our patrimo yet keep it vibrant? How do we avoid cynicism when faced wit "Frosty Acres," the junkyard of Robert Frost's New Hampshire farm, or the unbearable twee-nof Nantucket? The quest takes less bittersweet tone as Mansfel hooks up with people instead obuildings: Civil War re-enactor Old Home Day returnees, and of New England advocacy ground Restoration is part of the searce "better community" undertake a disconnected America.

We cannot legislate the blessed of the ideal New England villar nevertheless Mansfield offers so restoration principles and pleas Tools need to be repaired, not enshrined. Buildings must be a — a "grain mill without grain not a mill." He pleads for no n festival markets (we cannot "sh our way back to the past") and more fake San Francisco trolley

"Restoration is renewal—an effort to mend the world." The The Same Ax, Twice is a timely book about mending. "Good restoration is a prayer, an offeri It's praise, attention paid; it rev in the glory and spirit of this li

William Morgan is a professor of and Wheaton College; he has a degree in restoration and preservation of historarchitecture from Columbia University



lution of Forms: Cuba's otten Art Schools

hn Loomis

eton Architectural Press,

wed by Lee Cott FAIA



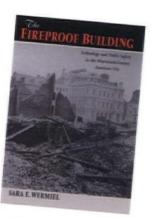
tion of Forms documents a e and tragic architectural In 1961, Fidel Castro and Guevara envisioned five new s of art — teaching music, rn dance, ballet, plastic arts, ramatic arts — to symbolize ealism of the Cuban ution and to give it new ectural form. To carry out the of the National Schools of astro choose Ricardo Porro, ng Cuban architect who d around-the-clock with two colleagues, Roberto Gottardi ictorio Garatti, to create the most significant Cuban ectural work of the era. But the project stands neglected, in by the jungle, and lized by the local population. such an inspired complex of ngs was imagined, created, lly constructed and occupied, bruptly abandoned, dited, and "forgotten" is the t of this insightful narrative.

Loomis understands how little of us know about Cuba and ganized his book accordingly. s a group of the author's iful color photographs of the ls today and a brilliant ord by the Cuban art critic do Mosquera, describing the political circumstances inding the eventual dation of the National ols of Art. Loomis introduces bject matter with an

explanation of Cuba's cultural environment since the late 19th century, emphasizing the matter of Cuban identity - Cubanidad in writing, painting, and finally in architecture. A discussion of the leading architects of the 1940s and '50s who adapted the International Style to Cuban context and climate concludes with an account of Ricardo Porro's personal search for an appropriate expression of the Afro-Cuban culture. Loomis sets the stage for his tale with a delightful series of anecdotes including an account of a round of golf in January 1961 between Fidel Castro and Che Guevara at the Havana Country Club when they decided the acreage could be used more effectively as the campus of the National Schools of Art. (It must have been difficult for Fidel and Che to imagine golf as the sport of the Cuban Revolution!) The main body of the book contains detailed accounts of the five schools, beautifully illustrated with drawings and photographs of the buildings when the project was abandoned in 1965. Loomis' excellent photographs, taken in the 1990s, poetically and hauntingly demonstrate the ravages of time and neglect. The remaining text discusses the degradation and abandonment of the schools and an account of the possible future rehabilitation of the entire complex.

After visiting the National Schools of Art many times in the last few years, I now regard them as indicative of where Modern architecture was headed in revolutionary Cuba — had the Soviet presence not stifled artistic expression. This is a tragic story told beautifully in which the double entendre of the title is finally made clear.

Lee Cott FAIA is a founding principal of Bruner/Cott & Associates in Cambridge, Massachusetts and adjunct professor of urban design at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, where he is currently teaching design studios using sites in Havana, Cuba. He was the 1996 president of the Boston Society of Architects.



The Fireproof Building: Technology and Public Safety in the Nineteenth-Century **American City** by Sara E. Wermiel

The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000

Reviewed by A. Vernon Woodworth AIA

Architectural history is typically presented as a succession of styles, where form reflects evolving cultural values and aspirations. But style, from a practical point of view, is merely the frosting on the cake. Architectural history is fundamentally a history of building technology, that is, the story of structural problem-solving. Brunelleschi's design for the dome of the Florence cathedral is an example of a brilliant solution to a previously unsolved structural dilemma, providing a bold new form that came to embody the pride and power of an entire city.

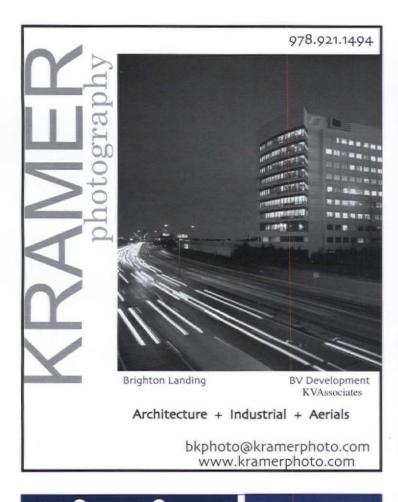
Sara Wermiel has adopted the problem-solving perspective as her narrative thread in this remarkable history of the development of fireresistant construction in the 19th century. This was the age of urbanization, and as cities grew, so did the incidence of conflagrations, with devastating social and economic consequences. While the problem was a social one, the absence of building codes left the solution to individual builders and building owners. Wermiel thoroughly documents these efforts - including the attendant personalities and power struggles - as they evolved from early attempts to build noncombustible buildings (which proved to be too expensive and structurally unwieldy for general application), through the development of iron and brick construction, mill fire protection, and high-rise construction.

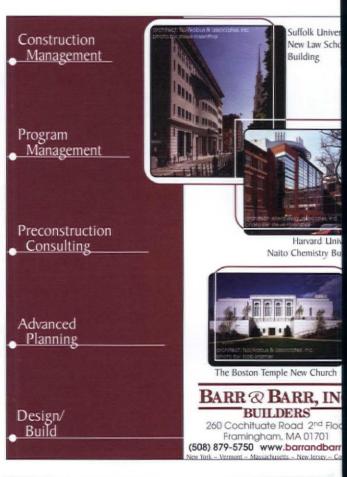
One chapter tells the story of the origins of so-called "slow-burning construction" advocated by the innovative factory mutual insurance companies in New England in the second half of the 19th century. These companies were largely responsible for the development of construction practices still used today, from the principle of compartmentalization (limiting a fire to a given area within a building) to isolation of exit stairs and provision of fire-fighting and suppression technology.

It is at this point in Wermiel's story that architects become peripheral to the evolution of fire-safe construction. Architects continued to serve as innovators of construction systems, such as in the development of skeleton construction for high-rise buildings, but the performance of a building and the behavior of its occupants under fire conditions became the focus of a new profession: fire-protection engineering. This new field ultimately generated our modern building codes, which today govern virtually all aspects of construction. Architects now find themselves in the position of following rules written by others, often based on principles and past lessons they don't understand.

The Fireproof Building is a wellwritten and comprehensive account that sheds light on the design and construction of 19th-century buildings, many of which are now undergoing adaptive re-use under the requirements of modern building and fire codes. With the advent of new building codes from both the International Code Council and the National Fire Protection Association, and with the increasing acceptance of performance-based design, Wermiel's book provides a valuable object lesson to architects that the pursuit of economical and safe construction is fundamental to the enterprise of building; we leave it to others at the peril of the profession.

A. Vernon Woodworth AIA is an architect and code consultant with the Sullivan Code Group in Boston and is chair of the BSA Codes Committee.







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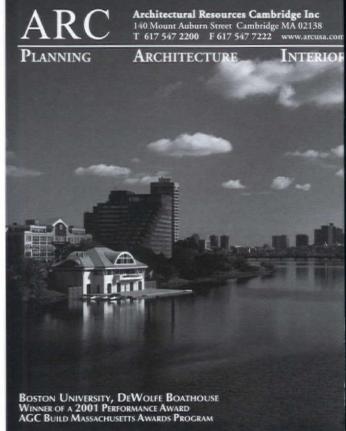
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Marc Truant and Associates, Inc. www.mtruant.com	18
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Wrenn www.wrenn.com	22

Site Work

Web sites of note

Building Materials Resource Center (BMRC) www.bostonbmrc.org

The BMRC is a nonprofit building-materials re-use project. Donate new and used building materials, and the BMRC will distribute them to low- and moderate-income homeowners and nonprofits. You do good; they do good.

Architext

www.morrisqc.com/architext

An omniumgatherum of architecture links and resources.

BSA Historic Resources Committee

www.architects.org/hrc

We don't often recommend online committee minutes, but the HRC turns out monthly notes that are witty, intelligent, and a delight to read. Not a bad way to keep up with what's really happening in the field.

Free Downloadable William Morris Desktop Wallpaper www.lbwf.gov.uk/wmg/free.htm

Choose from the Daisy pattern, Wandle chintz, Marigolds, or Brother Rabbit. Willie didn't know the full implications of designing for the ages.

The Prince of Wales:

Speeches and Articles on Architecture

www.princeofwales.gov.uk/speeches/speeches_index_2.html Delight your friends and colleagues with the exact quote from the famous "monstrous carbuncle" speech.

Recent Past Preservation Network

www.recentpast.org

OK, so the notion that your childhood and adolescence qualify for preservation protection gives you the heebiejeebies. Get over it, and check out this promising new site.

Preservation Online

www.preservationonline.org

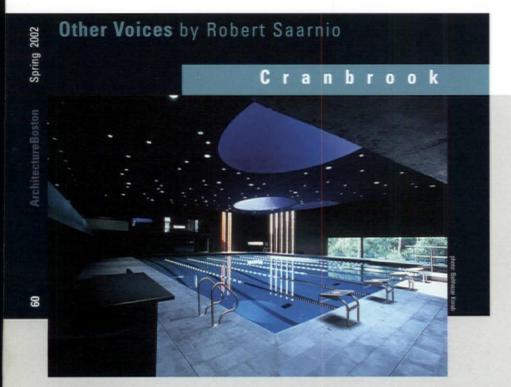
The National Trust for Historic Preservation's new online magazine. Almost-daily updates, clean design — and a chance to while away your lunch hour perusing historichouse sales listings.

Katarxis

http://luciensteil.tripod.com/katarxis

A new webzine "dedicated exclusively to classical and traditional architecture and urbanism." Katarxis wears its historicism proudly and unapologetically, filling its pages with great photos and provocative quotes. Go ahead and peek — we won't tell.

We're always looking for intriguing Web sites, however perplexing the connection to architecture. Send your candidates to: epadjen@architects.org



My departure from New England in 1999 was a challenging decision, but the power of the stunning Midwestern community that drew me away is as compelling as its story. Having relocated from Boston's North Shore to the Detroit area to assume a curatorial position at Cranbrook, I now have more than two years of experience in this unique environment that has inspired a near-evangelical eagerness to share Cranbrook with my fellow New Englanders. What you find may surprise you....

Paul Goldberger has described Cranbrook as "a collection of buildings that are only now achieving the recognition they deserve as comprising [sic] one of the greatest campuses ever created in the world." The site includes 315 acres of rolling woodlands within the community of Bloomfield Hills, a Greenwich-esque suburb 18 miles north of Detroit with the highest per-acre real estate values in Michigan. Originally developed by George Bough Booth and his wife Ellen Scripps Booth as a country estate beginning in 1904, the property evolved into the academic community we know today after 1925.

"We were unwilling to go through life with our aims centered mainly in the pursuit of wealth and with a devotion wholly to the ordinary opportunity for social satisfaction..." stated Mr. Booth in 1927. This deep commitment by the founders to spiritual development, community service, and personal growth through educational opportunity resulted in the creation of six enduring institutions: Christ Church Cranbrook; Brookside School (pre-K to 5th grade); Cranbrook Kingswood Middle School; Cranbrook Kingswood Upper School; Cranbrook Academy of Art & Museum; and the Cranbrook Institute of Science.

The Booths' decision in 1925 to hire Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen as campus architect was to have profound aesthetic and pedagogical implications for their new community. Over the next 25 years, Saarinen left his mark, not only in his design of campus buildings, but also as the first director of the Cranbrook Academy of Art, which attracted talents such as Charles and Ray Eames, Carl Milles, Harry Bertoia, and Florence Knoll — all similarly drawn to the excitement of artistic collaboration.

After the deaths of the Booths in the late 1940s and Saarinen in 1950, the community's art, scientific, and educational divisions continued to thrive, but architectural distinction was slow to follow. It was not until the early 1990s that the community began to embrace its tradition of architectural excellence, following completion of a new masterplan. A walk across Cranbrook today reveals new buildings that expand the meaning of "respectful addition."

An addition to the Brookside School by Peter Rose. Steven Holl's extension of Saarinen's original Cranbrook Institute of Science. A natatorium for Cranbrook Schools by Tod Williams Billie Tsien. And, currently under construction, a studio building designed by Rafael Moneo for the graduate students of the Academy of Art. Each architect has found a vocabulary of form, materials, and color that fundamentally acknowledges the Finnish master, but which also extends the Cranbrook traditions of handcraft and artisanship, of profound response to the site, and of collaboration with local industry.

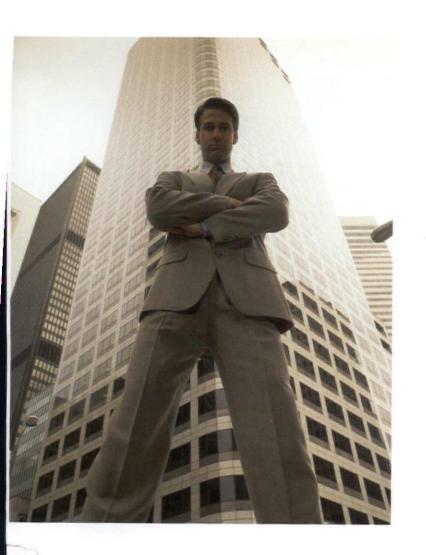
Why has this occurred at Cranbrook, and he might Cranbrook serve as a model for successadditions to historic contexts? Certainly Cranbrook selected designers particularly surmaking well-crafted buildings that are at one referential, richly nuanced, and strongly persolarinen himself built here in different mod reinventing his vocabulary across the campucreating an architectural environment that is far from stylistically monolithic. Perhaps the something about his work that is idiosyncratunique, and varied enough to elicit inspired responses — something perhaps not as readiachieved in more familiar or unitary historic New England building contexts.

Two buildings - one old, one new favorites. The captivating Saarinen House, designed by Eliel Saarinen in 1930 for his or family, exhibits one of the great Art Deco domestic interiors in the nation, though De with a strong Finnish accent. And the Willia Tsien natatorium is an ethereal place, a swin pool stretched under a cobalt-blue ceiling punctuated by a constellation of lights of va diameters and by two hemispherical oculi th open to the sky. Vertical mahogany louvers i wall, powered hydraulically, admit views and breezes. Boldly addressing Saarinen's campus by literally bending itself around the cross-c axis, the building is permeable, lavish in cold and certain to redefine the meaning of swim the backstroke.

There is so much more to Cranbrook: the as science museums; graduate programs in ten design disciplines; the manor house designed Albert Kahn for the Booths; even the vast or roof on Saarinen's Kingswood School, a state the-art case study in restoration. I encourage visit to Cranbrook: a welcoming New Engla émigré stands ready to examine with you ho community has faced the challenge of reinte ing its craft traditions and of responding to modern master.

Robert Saarnio is the curator and collections mana cultural properties at Cranbrook Educational Comm in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. He was previously the curator of architecture at the Peabody Essex Muse in Salem, Massachusetts. He can be reached at: rsaarnio@cranbrook.edu

Editor's note: For more information about Cranbrook go to: www.cranbrook.edu



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