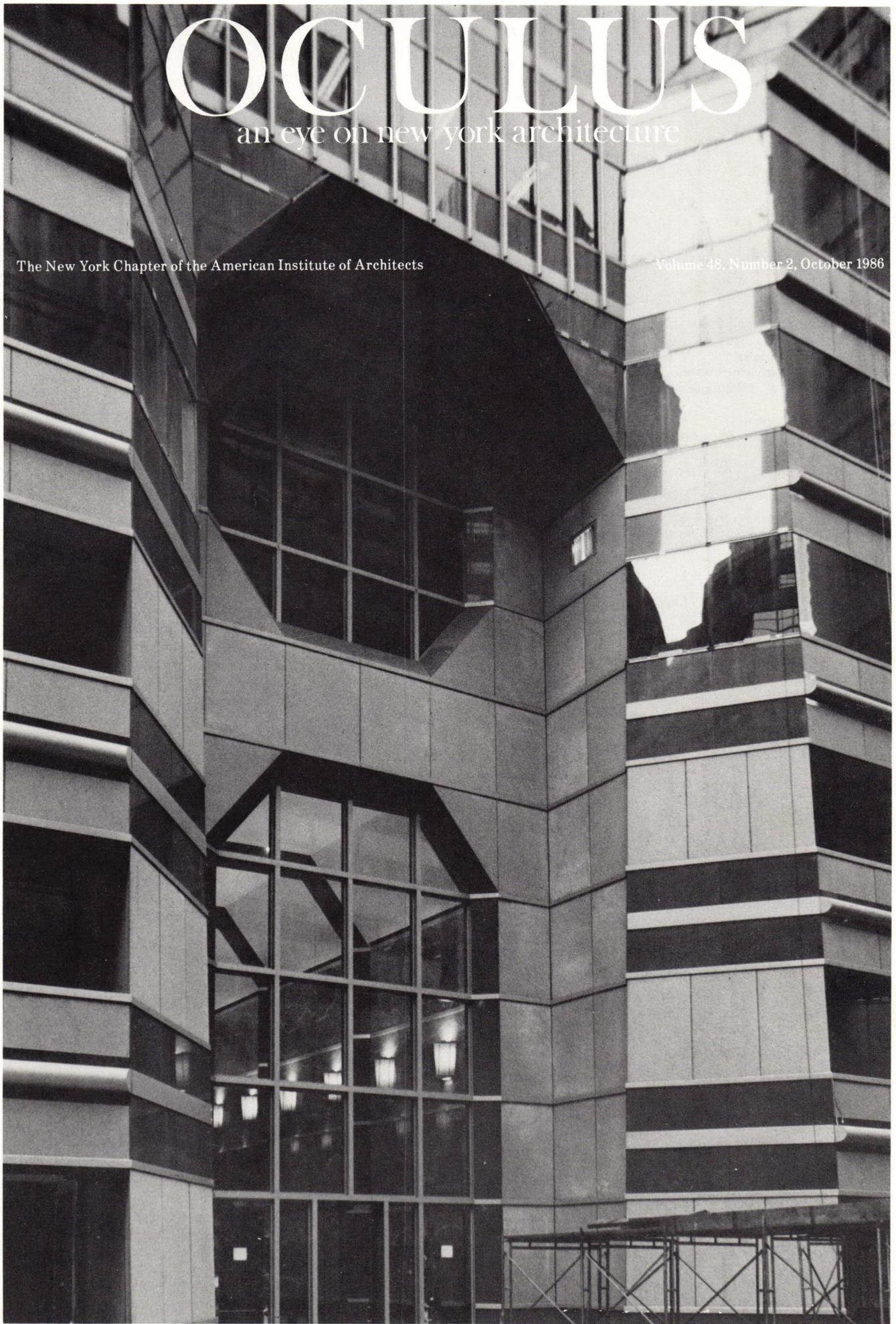


# OCULUS

an eye on new york architecture

The New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects

Volume 48, Number 2, October 1986



*Park Avenue Tower: Murphy Jahn Architects.*

*Photo: Stan Ries*

# OCULUS

## The President's Roundtable

Volume 48, Number 2, October 1986

### Oculus

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 Printing: The Nugent Organization, Inc.

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*Many important Chapter issues constitute an on-going dialogue that spans both a number of years and the terms of several Presidents. The purpose of the President's Roundtable is to develop more of an overview of these issues. Through membership response, we hope to gain a stronger consensus on appropriate action by the Chapter.*

*Each month the President will address one of these subjects and invite a number of Past Presidents to participate in the Roundtable.*

**Randolph R. Croxton:** Nothing at the start of this new Chapter year can equal membership interest and concern about the City of New York. A number of actions by the City have raised both hopes and fears about the future of work with the City of New York and the City's long-term commitment to the quality of the built environment.

Before taking a closer look at the current situation, how have the City's priorities on the role of Urban Design, Architectural and Planning Services evolved over the last ten to fifteen years?

**Terrance R. Williams:** A high point was clearly the late sixties and early seventies, when the five Mayor's Offices of Development were in place and City Planning had the Urban Design Group under Jonathan Barnett. Architects and Planners world-wide wanted to work with the City of New York. Government planning and action was consistently ahead of development.

**RRC:** The fiscal crisis must have played a major role in dismantling this system.

**TRW:** Not really. There was a progressive restructuring and dismantling that took place during both the Beame and Koch Administrations. The five Offices of Development were re-structured and passed out of existence, followed most recently by the remainder of the Urban Design Group.

**RRC:** Nevertheless, in the 'post fiscal crisis' environment these support points of Planning and Design apparently came to be viewed as extravagant or elitist, not of concern to the average citizen of New York.

**Paul Segal:** This is close to the central point I addressed to Mayor Koch in my letter of June 26, 1986 as follows:

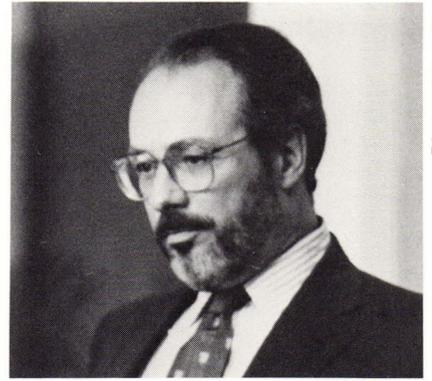
The greatest concern I have, and the primary reason I write to you, is the apparent lack of genuine interest and concern (beyond our own members' largely unheeded efforts) for creating a built environment based on lasting values and real, enduring quality. I speak of quality not as extravagance or wasteful use of valuable resources, but as creating works that are carefully thought out, well-crafted, and built to last and give joy to the human spirit for generations to come.

True quality architecture is not about building ego monuments to those who created or commissioned them. It is really about honoring those who use our buildings. This is what our forefathers gave to their fellow citizens, which we still enjoy, and it is what we — you as a leader, we as architects — owe our community today. It is not at all elitist — it is the truest form of populism.

**RRC:** When one draws a historic parallel, as Paul has done in this letter, the first question that comes to my mind is whether that heritage could come about in the New York of our day. Would McKim, Mead & White, architects of the Municipal Building, even be numbered among the firms doing work for the City of New York? It is widely known that there are a significant number of firms of national and international standing who choose not to pursue work with the City of New York.

Two major projects currently reaching completion here in the City have achieved a high quality of design and planning: the Convention Center and Battery Park City. They are not administered through the City's system, however. They benefit from

Randolph R. Croxton, 1986-87  
Paul Segal, 1985-86  
Terrance R. Williams, 1984-85



Photos: Stan Ries

funding through UDC and therefore have more realistic fees and contractual possibilities. Mitchell-Lama Housing and numerous other examples past and present confirm that the appropriate cost/benefit ratio can be struck to achieve architecture of lasting value by a public agency in our day.

**TRW:** The bottom line is that quality of life in New York is no longer considered to be an important issue of City Government concern.

**RRC:** I would disagree to the extent that there are numerous allies and supporters of the goals we've discussed active in City Government. Deputy Mayor Bob Esnard, Charley Smith at the Building Department, Bronson Binger at the Department of General Services, Bob Lemieux at the Mayor's Office of Construction, and many others have, on occasion, been effective advocates of the broader view we've discussed. I admit that they do not constitute the decision-making authority. The Mayor, Comptroller, President of the City Council, and Borough Presidents (when the decision goes to the Board of Estimate) have that power.

**PS:** That is not the only problem for the head of a group within city government, for instance, Kiley and Gunn at the Transit Authority may be very forthcoming and really desire improvements in the TA's relations with the profession; however, there is an entrenched business-as-usual middle level that continues to undermine efforts for change. AIA Presidents come and go, heads of Departments come and go, but there is little movement or even opportunity for change at the middle level.

We have been pursuing improvements in the TA's contract for years, but the pattern is one of initial assurances followed by delay and, from the middle level, no movement.

**TRW:** The time has come for us to be much stronger in our objections and to take a more visible and public stand in opposition to the City on those policies

that are undermining the quality of life in New York City.

**RRC:** Well, on that note, let me bring us up to date on three items of current interest:

The City has taken a harsh, and we feel, unrealistic position on architects' responsibility for asbestos uncovered in the progress of a job (incidental asbestos). On a number of projects in-progress the City was withholding payment and threatening legal action unless the architects accepted liability for asbestos removal even though this work is currently excluded by the architect's liability carriers.

A case-by-case review of a number of these instances has been undertaken by the City. However, we await the final reading of the results.

Of even greater potential damage is the City's position on future contracts. The City is insisting that architects undertake the work without professional liability insurance on this item if they wish to do the work. The City feels that since there are still architects who are willing to undertake this work, their position is justified.

A second and continuing area of interest is the on-going advocacy of competitive bidding for architectural and engineering services within City Government. This is an old argument that has gained new currency in the environment following the instances of corruption in City Government.

The Spiro Agnew Corruption Scandal in Maryland ushered in a selection and award system of technical proposals with fee as a "component" of selection. An analysis over the seven year history of this system shows that it evolved into essentially a "low bid" system.

A comprehensive study by National AIA comparing the Maryland "fee biased" system and the Florida "merit-based" system has been placed in the hands of each member of the Board of Estimate by the Chapter.

The Maryland legislature voted out the system in the realization that its superficial appearance of cost savings and fairness was a fallacy . . . It was a waste of taxpayers' money in the total picture of project costs as well as undercutting the quality of the finished product.

We are currently pursuing a meeting with Harrison J. Goldin, Comptroller, to review the essential implications of such action.

The third and final point, I am happy to say, offers the potential for a positive step in the entire area of selection, award, and compensation for Architectural and Engineering Fees. The Board of Estimate has commissioned Arthur Young to pursue a comprehensive review of the City's procedures and policies in this area. Initial indications are that wide participation is being sought throughout the architectural community and we look forward to recommendations for the better.

All in all we are at an important threshold with the City of New York. It is not difficult to extend a number of the current actions and positions of the City forward to a very negative conclusion. However, positive possibilities are always at hand in a climate of change. We must spare no effort at this point to bring this case to our members, fellow professionals, and most importantly, to the Citizens of New York City.

## The Aesthetic Movement

*Wilson Eyre, Architect: House for Charles A. Potter, Chestnut Hills, PA. From Artistic Country Seats by G. W. Sheldon (1886).*

*Below are excerpts from the essay "American Architecture" by James D. Kornwolf. The essay appears in In Pursuit of Beauty, published in conjunction with the exhibition "In Pursuit of Beauty: Americans and the Aesthetic Movement" on view at the Metropolitan Museum of Art from October 23 to January 11.*

The Aesthetic movement exerted a strong influence on American architecture, landscape, and town planning in the period 1870-90. The movement helped to direct architecture away from solely medieval, or Gothic, sources and drew anew from classical inheritance, as well as from selected exotic traditions, especially the Japanese. The result was a thoroughly eclectic but very original architecture in which a number of diverse sources were subtly mixed.

Architects associated with the Aesthetic movement in England and America were in basic agreement about the directions their art ought to go. Domestic architecture was clearly the focal point of their efforts, yet the changes they wrought were felt . . . in other building types as well. The most influential and enduring change—the particular achievement of the American movement from the late 1870s onward—was a new kind of open planning and a new way of massing volumes. Central to the Aesthetic movement in England and America was a closer relationship between architecture and ornament, between architecture and furniture, and between the fine and the applied arts in general.

The British and American movements

*James D. Kornwolf is Professor of Fine Arts at the College of William and Mary. He has written articles and books on nineteenth-century British and American architecture. He is currently completing a study of American and Canadian Colonial architecture, to be published by Cambridge University Press.*



Photo: David Altison

also shared a newfound respect for vernacular and indigenous architecture, which was appreciated for its relative simplicity and lack of pretension. In the United States the vernacular and indigenous were found not only in the early and widespread adaptation of the British Queen Anne mode but also in an important first look at Colonial architecture and a response to the highly individual designs of the American architect H.H. Richardson. These combined sources produced an architecture that was to have a great influence on the next generation, in Europe as well as in the United States.

The preservation and conservation movements in architecture and landscape were also an intrinsic part of aestheticism in America and in England, and significant changes in attitudes toward landscape design and town planning during this period gave rise to the first "garden suburbs" and "art cities."

### Sources and Nature of the New American Architecture

. . . The Aesthetic movement had the same taproot as the Arts and Crafts—in William Morris, John Ruskin . . . and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood . . . The eclectic nature of the Aesthetic movement, however, was in sharp contrast to the dominant

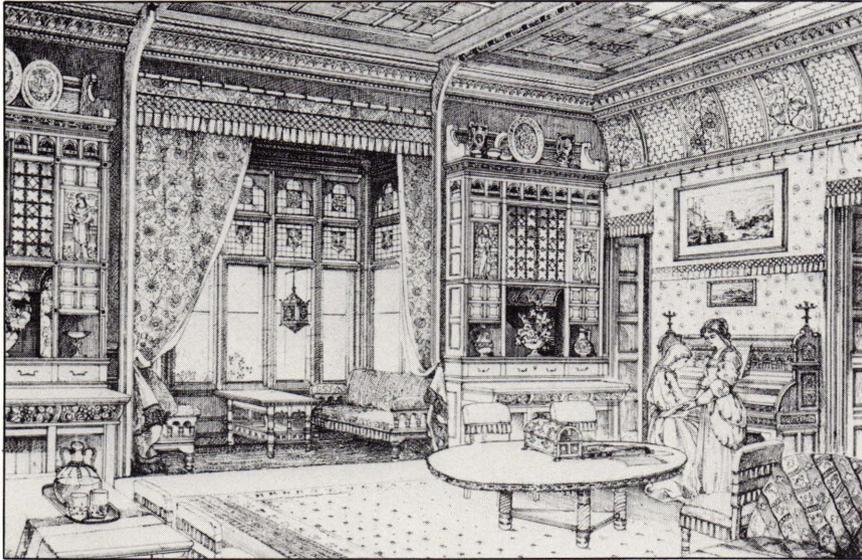
premises of the Arts and Crafts movement, whose proponents reinvigorated the vernacular and indigenous building traditions of the later Middle Ages . . .

In the decade following America's centennial, Queen Anne, aestheticism, and "art" dominated architectural discussion in the United States . . . Unsuccessful efforts to define Queen Anne filled the pages of the *American Architect* from 1876 until at least 1884, when the Queen Anne mode was already regarded as "old fashioned." . . .

The Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876 had drawn the attention of Americans not only to the Queen Anne but to their own cultural heritage and its roots in the Colonial period. The disruptions caused by the Civil War and an increasingly rampant process of urbanization and industrialization reinforced an interest in the simpler vernacular and indigenous traditions of the country's origins . . .

In their search for creative approaches to design, British and American architects also looked beyond their own borders. To the already rich and varied mix of sources were added exotic elements from other traditions: Byzantine, Islamic, and, in particular, Japanese. From the

Bruce J. Talbert: *Study of decorating and furniture in London. From The Architect (July 24, 1869). Courtesy The New York Public Library.*



start the *American Architect* carried articles and reviews on the art and architecture of Japan: an article on Japanese houses appeared in the inaugural issue in January 1876. The Japanese exhibition buildings and garden (the first Japanese garden in the United States) at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia received considerable attention. C.F.A. Voysey . . . in Britain and Wright in America both began to design houses in the late 1880s with simple rectangular forms and hipped roofs reminiscent of the main Japanese building at the Centennial fair and hardly typical of the Queen Anne or the Shingle style . . .

The art and architecture of Japan, long isolated from other cultures, embodied many of the qualities the leaders of the Aesthetic movement wished to recapture in Western society. Vernacular and indigenous crafts and the decorative arts were inextricably linked to the fine, or "higher" arts in Japan, and Japanese art had a unity, consistency, and simplicity that had long since vanished in European and American culture.

The negative impact [that] industrialization and urbanization were exacting on the environment and the arts in England and America accounts for the period's virtual

obsession with art and with the Aesthetic movement itself . . .

Having reached the level of an environmental movement with Bedford Park [the aesthetic middle-class suburb built between 1876 and 1881 outside London], aestheticism received its first clear polemic in landscape design in 1883, when William Robinson published *The English Flower Garden*, a vigorous rejection of the formalism of mid-Victorian gardens associated with Joseph Paxton . . . the book helped to produce a wholly new school of landscape design based on the Picturesque. In the United States, Frederick Law Olmsted . . . worked and wrote with increasing vigor during the Aesthetic era on behalf of public parks, parklike development in urban and suburban spaces, and an aesthetic attitude toward landscape . . .

Stimulated by the outpouring of books and periodicals, the Aesthetic movement gathered momentum in England and the United States during the 1870s and 1880s . . .

#### Theory and Design of the New American Architecture

During the last three decades of the nineteenth century architects in the United States created a sophisticated

style that remains one of the most original and American ever developed . . . This period also saw the birth of the conservation and preservation movements in architecture, landscape, and town planning, as well as the first signs of a conscious move toward aesthetic landscapes and towns.

#### A new planning and massing of volumes

The most original contributions of American architecture of the Aesthetic era, seen especially well in the house, were a new open planning and a new way of massing volumes, the latter in part a consequence of the former. This change in the treatment of space and mass was what most greatly distinguished American from the British movement, and its enormous effect on subsequent architecture is still felt. It is also the characteristic of late nineteenth-century American architecture most difficult to account for. Open planning was certainly inspired by the English return to the medieval great hall in the 1860s, just as it was prompted by the relative openness of American seventeenth-century houses with the hall-parlor plan. Perhaps the immediate stimuli were the houses Richardson began to design in the early 1870s, the open plan of the Chinese (Fat Fau's house) illustrated by French architect Eugene Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc . . . and reproduced in the *American Architect* in 1876, and the open spaces of the Japanese and English buildings at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. The Froebelian building blocks that Wright's mother acquired for him at the Centennial when he was a child supposedly provided the initial inspiration for the abstract qualities of his buildings. It is fitting that they came from the event that helped American architects discover the mode of planning and composing volumes without which Wright's architecture would have been inconceivable . . .

The new planning and massing of volumes eventually caused architects to think in terms of varying room heights and of levels rather than

## The Aesthetic Movement

*"Mr. Vanderbilt's Library," from Artistic Houses (New York 1883-84). The library table is in the exhibition. Courtesy Thomas J. Watson Library, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.*

floors, areas rather than rooms, and movable partitions rather than walls. In addition, a new interrelationship between indoor and outdoor living spaces, enhanced by the use of exterior materials and features indoors, made a literal Colonial or Queen Anne revival impossible. Many of these characteristics are typical of Japanese houses and gardens, which must have influenced this development, possibly in part through the medium of the print. The generally complex volumes and masses produced by this open, free planning by area and level are not Japanese, but the horizontality the designs stressed—so different from the vertical emphasis of the High Victorian Gothic—might be. Rooms projected over porches; walls and roofs interlocked in amazing ways. Forms very much began to follow functions, and a variety of forms were used: circular, octagonal, and even irregular spaces joined more conventional squares and rectangles. One building might sport a combination of roof types, whether hipped, gable, or gambrel.

The architect who introduced these innovations in planning and massing, as well as other features of aestheticism in American architecture was H.H. Richardson. The house Richardson designed for William Watts Sherman at Newport, Rhode Island, in 1874 . . . is well recognized as the first clear indication of a quite new American style owing much to the British Queen Anne as well as to Stanford White, who was Richardson's assistant at the time and is credited with much of the interior design of the house . . .

By the 1870s the Aesthetic movement had matured in America. Charles Follen McKim . . . , William Rutherford Mead . . . , and Stanford White reveal this more clearly than any other architects of the period . . . White came to Richardson's firm in 1872 . . . and he may merit as much credit as Richardson for introducing Queen Anne in America. In . . . 1879 the firm of McKim, Mead and White was established . . .



These American architects had truly attained an "absence of style." McKim, Mead and White's dashing Newport Casino, built between 1879 and 1881 . . . shows that American architects had not only caught up with the British but overtaken them . . . None of their contemporaries could match McKim, Mead and White's innovative employment of Queen Anne, Colonial, and Richardsonian features . . .

Daniel H. Burnham . . . , John Wellborn Root . . . , and Louis Sullivan affirmed through their work that aesthetic impulses were not limited to architects practicing in the eastern United States . . .

Though Sullivan embraced the new manner later than any other architect so far discussed, this possibly permitted him to take it farther, especially with regard to ornament, interior design, and furniture.

### Domestic, Vernacular, and Indigenous Architecture and the Birth of the Preservation Movement

. . . Seeking the commonplace and the unpretentious, Americans began to look, for the first time, at their earlier architecture, and it was in their Colonial inheritance that they found the requisite attributes . . . it was the only American architecture there was before the revivals of romanticism that began in the late eighteenth century . . .

### Aesthetic Landscapes and Towns

. . . Olmsted's association with Harvard University professor and author Charles Eliot Norton . . . and with Richardson helped to establish landscape architecture as a profession and as a college discipline in the United States. The arts of landscaping and architecture coalesced in influential and forceful ways when

Olmsted and Richardson worked together on the F.L. Ames estate at North Easton, Massachusetts, between 1878 and 1886 . . .

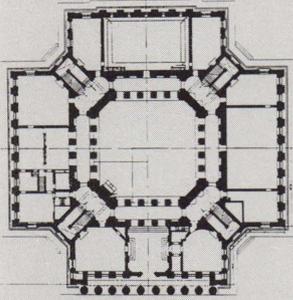
The first American town of the industrial era to fully incorporate the principle of the village nucleus used at Bedford Park was Tuxedo Park, New York . . .

### The Aftermath

The story of the impact of the Aesthetic movement on American architecture could end with no one better than Frank Lloyd Wright . . . In the house Mr. and Mrs. Francis W. Little commissioned Wright to design in 1912 on Lake Minnetonka in Wayzata, Minnesota, he created a superb arts and crafts living room . . . In the warm, low space, Wright deftly integrated the horizontal and vertical elements of posts and lintels, which give only a hint of their aesthetic origins in the houses of [Richard Norman] Shaw and Richardson . . .

The living room Wright crafted in 1914 for Taliesin, his home in Spring Green, Wisconsin, redeems the novelty of [Stanford] White's Kingscote dining room. Yet the Taliesin room is also entirely revealing of Wright's mature mode, a testimony to his strong perception of Japanese understatement and sense of proportion and to his unparalleled ability to fuse architecture, furniture, and artfully arranged objects and ornament in a unified design based on abstract principles . . . The room is not only one hundred percent Wright but also a hefty percent of what was to emerge as modernism after World War I. Like the Little room, the living room at Taliesin is an accurate measure of the Aesthetic movement's bequest to American architects.

## Around the Chapter



by Lenore Lucey

- Sustaining member firms recently received President Randy Croxton's request for assistance in the Chapter's dealings with the City on the subject of procurement of A/E services and current policy concerning asbestos removal. If you have not already done so, please reply. We will be meeting soon with the Arthur Young & Company project manager and with City representatives. Your responses will aid us in our presentations to the city regarding architects' concerns about procurement of services and architects' current responsibility for asbestos removal, for which there is no liability coverage.

- In May 1988 the New York Chapter will Host the National Convention to be held in the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center. Over ten thousand people are expected to attend. This will be the first convention in New York in 21 years, and with your help we will make it the biggest and best yet. John H. Winkler of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) has been designated Host Chapter Convention Committee Chair, and is presently meeting with National AIA staff members and preparing his organization plan. Future issues of *Oculus* will cover the Chapter's plans and responsibilities in more detail. Also watch for the Convention Survey, which will be soliciting your thoughts about various aspects of the program.

- Invitations will be in the mail shortly for this year's Fall Event—the Architectural Heritage Ball—in celebration of architectural heritage, preservation, and scholarship. A feature of the gala will be the auction of mounted museum-quality enlargements of original McKim, Mead and White drawings rendered and signed by invited architects. The location is the rotunda of the Low Library; the date is November 8, 1986.

- Please see elsewhere in this issue for the dates of the Intern Architects Training Course. Sustaining member firms are encouraged to identify and support the enrollment of qualifying employees in this valuable series. An announcement will be mailed soon outlining the subjects and speakers.

## Names and News

*Anne and Patrick Poirier with M. Paul Friedberg: Model for sculpture at TransPotomac Canal Center, Alexandria, Virginia.*



Steven Holl is among the invited speakers at a conference on Decorative Metalwork in Architecture (Nov. 12-14) co-sponsored by the University of Minnesota School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture and the Minnesota Society/American Institute of Architects . . . R.M. Kliment & Frances Halsband Architects have announced that Richard L. McElhiney and Mark Wright have been named associates of the firm . . . James Stewart Polshek and Partners were architects for the renovation of The Drawing Center's new home opening on October 4 at 35 Wooster Street. Graphics and signage for the space were designed by Vignelli Associates. The Center is located on the ground floor of a five-story Beaux Arts building designed by Samuel Curtis, Jr. Both Polshek and Vignelli donated their services . . . The work of Walter F. Chatham and 1100 Architects was shown in an exhibition at the ZB Gallery in Frankfurt, West Germany last month . . . Haines Lundberg Wähler have announced that Stuart K. Pertz, Partner and Director of Design, will assume the responsibility for coordinating design and planning policies office-wide. The firm also announced the appointment of Benedetto Puccio, a senior associate, as Director of Architectural Design. He will be responsible for the operations and creative direction of the Architecture Design Group and the Landscape Architecture Department . . . Richard Rosan, former president of the Real Estate Board of New York, will moderate a symposium on "Builders with Vision: Developers in New York City" sponsored by Cooper-Hewitt Museum on November 19 . . . At the Nyack Library last month, Steven Papadatos discussed his design for the Church of Saint Nicholas now under construction in Babylon, Long Island. He also presented a videotape documenting his 19-day fact-finding trip to study the Basilica of Saint Nicholas in Myra, Turkey, where the 4th century bishop served, and the Catholic Church in Bari, Italy, where the saint's relics are enshrined, both of which served as inspiration for his Long Island project

. . . James Marston Fitch is teaching a professional development course at Harvard Graduate School of Design on Developing Historic Buildings . . . The Ehrenkrantz Group and Stanton Eckstut have merged to form The Ehrenkrantz Group and Eckstut . . . Alexander Cooper announced that his firm will practice architecture and urban design under the name of Alexander Cooper + Partners . . . Historic Albany Foundation, the City of Albany, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation are sponsoring "Rehab Fair Northeast," November 8-9, in Albany—a weekend of films, seminars, and juried exhibits of rehab products and services . . . Columbia University has selected Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum as the designer of a new \$36 million high-technology Research Center at the University's Center for Telecommunications Research . . . The New York Chapter of Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility are presenting a panel discussion on "Beyond the Cold War: The Economy After Disarmament—What's Possible?" at the Great Hall of the Cooper Union on November 6 . . . Edgar Tafel has been retained by Steelcase/Strafor, Ltd., subsidiary of Steelcase Inc. of Grand Rapids, to lecture on "The Frank Lloyd Wright I Knew" in England, Scotland, and Ireland beginning in mid-October . . . Videotaped proceedings of "Design and Development of Continuing Care Facilities," a symposium conducted by the American Institute of Architects Committee on Architecture for Health, are available for purchase or rental from the AIA: Michelle Jones, 202-626-7495 . . . Mario LaGuardia is a new associate with Brennan Beer Gorman/Architects . . . Beyer Blinder Belle are at work on the restoration of the Main Building of Ellis Island as a museum of immigration, which they hope to complete by July 4, 1987 . . . The Prestressed Concrete Institute/New England Region is sponsoring a one-day seminar on "Design of Connections" for precast concrete structures on November 5 in New York. For more information: Alvin C. Ericson 617-456-8299 . . . M. Paul  
*cont'd. p. 10*

# OCULUS NYC/AIA OCT 86

## CONTINUING EVENTS

Oculus welcomes information for the calendar pertaining to public events about architecture and the other design professions. It is due in writing by the 5th of the month for the following issue.

Because of the time lag between information received and printed, final details of events are likely to change. It is recommended that events be checked with sponsoring institutions before attending.

Send Oculus Calendar information to:  
New York Chapter/AIA, 457 Madison Avenue, N.Y. 10022.

### EXHIBITION

In Support of Liberty: European Paintings of the 1883 Pedestal Fund Art Loan Exhibition. National Academy of Design, 1083 Fifth Ave. 369-4880. Closes Nov. 30.

### EXHIBITION

"Feather Triptych" by Tim Prentice. Saint Peter's Church, 619 Lexington Ave. 935-2200. Closes Dec. 31.

## MONDAY 6

### NFPA SEMINAR OCT. 6-8

"How to Interpret and Apply the 1985 Life Safety Code," 3-day seminar sponsored by the Broome County Office of Risk Management. Holiday Inn-SUNY, Vestal Parkway East, Binghamton, N.Y. 607-772-2302.

### EXHIBITION

Ricardo Boffill's drawings. Max Protetch, 37 W. 57 St. 838-7436. Closes Oct. 4

### ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

Exhibition of 18th-19th century engravings. Beyer Blinder Belle, 41 E. 11 St. 987-8368. Closes Oct. 7.

### BUILDING BUILDINGS

A participatory exhibition for children about architecture and the built environment. Staten Island Children's Museum, 940 Richmond Terrace. 718-273-2060. Closes June 1987.

## TUESDAY 7

### PLAN EXAMINER TRAINING SESSIONS

3-4 Article 4 Building Limitations (1-11 am); 3-19 Zoning Commercial Districts (11-1 pm), Oct. 7, 8 & 9. Department of Buildings, 210 Joralemon St., Room 816 Brooklyn. For more information: Commissioner Charles M. Smith Jr. 248-8811.

### EXHIBITION

Benjamin Henry Latrobe's Views of Jeffersonian America. The Library Company of Philadelphia, 1314 Locust St. 215-546-3181. Closes Oct. 17.

### EXHIBITION

Vienna 1900: Art, Architecture, and Design. The Museum of Modern Art. 708-9400. Closes Oct. 22.

## WEDNESDAY 1

### LECTURE

Architectural historian Barry Lewis on Beaux-Arts America: The City 1890-1915 in 92nd Street Y's 10-lecture series. 6 pm. Central Synagogue, 123 E. 55 St. 996-1100.

## WEDNESDAY 8

### SEMINAR

"Is it a Reproduction, a Copy, an Original?" featuring the Frank Lloyd Wright Collection with speakers Martin Filler, House & Garden, and Craig Miller, Metropolitan Museum. 4 pm. Center Two. IDCNY. 718-937-7474 or 593-3450.

### LECTURE

Barry Lewis on Chicago Alternatives to the New York Skyscraper 1885-1915 in 92nd Street Y's 10-lecture series. 6 pm. Central Synagogue, 123 E. 55 St. 996-1100.

### EXHIBITION

Ornamental Architecture Reborn: A New Terra Cotta Vocabulary. National Building Museum, Washington, D.C. 202-272-2448. Closes Oct. 31.

### EXHIBITION

Viennese Design and the Wiener Werkstatte. All media, from furniture to textiles. Galeria St. Etienne, 24 W. 57 St. 245-6734. Closes Nov. 8.

## THURSDAY 2

### LECTURE

"The Discreet Charms of the Viennese: Art and the Culture of Persistence" by James Shedel in conjunction with the exhibition, Vienna 1900: Art, Architecture & Design. 8:30 pm. The Museum of Modern Art. 708-9400.

### FORUM, OCT. 2-3

ASCA Chicago Forum on architectural issues. The Graham Foundation, Chicago. 202-785-2324.

## THURSDAY 9

### MICHAEL GRAVES RECOGNITION DINNER AND EXHIBITION

Sponsored by the Central Chapter/ New Jersey Society of Architects in Jersey City's restored Ferry Terminal. Graves and Stern will speak. For tickets (\$40): Central Chapter Denis J. Kowall AIA, 201-231-0040.

### MARIO BOTTA

Discussing his work. Center Two Atrium, IDCNY 718-937-7474 or 539-3450.

### NYC/AIA EXHIBITION

Alessandro Anselmi; G.R.A.U. Members Gallery. Closes Nov. 15.

### EXHIBITION

Built for the People of the United States of America: Fifty Years of TVA Architecture. National Building Museum, Washington, D.C. 202-272-2448. Closes Nov. 29.

## FRIDAY 3

### OPENING ON SAT. OCT. 4

The Drawing Center opens its new home at 35 Wooster Street with wall drawings designed by Sol LeWitt for the Center's exhibition space. 219-2166.

## FRIDAY 10

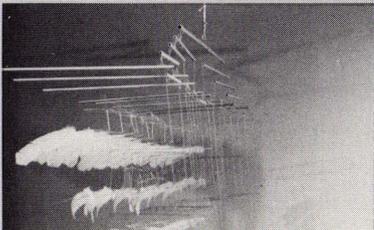
### EXHIBITION

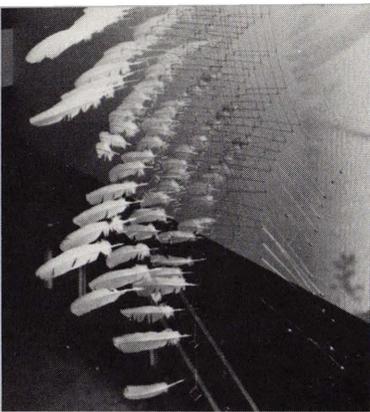
"Drawing Toward Building: Philadelphia Architectural Graphics 1732-1986. Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia. Kirby F. Smith: 215-972-7642.

### 40 UNDER 40

Exhibition of the work of "the fabulous 40," curated by Andrew MacNair with Philip Johnson and Robert A.M. Stern. 6-8 pm. IDCNY. 718-937-7474 or 593-3450.

DESIGNER'S SATURDAY ON OCT. 11  
IDCNY 718-937-7474 or 593-3450.





*"Feather Triptych" by Tim Prentice.*

## MONDAY 20

### CONFERENCE (OCT. 20-22)

"The Statue of Liberty - Today for Tomorrow" will examine the restoration history of the Statue. Co-sponsored by the National Association of Corrosion Engineers, National Park Service, and National Trust. The Doral Inn, NYC. Dale Miller, NACA: 713-492-0535.

### PHILIP JOHNSON

First in series of 5 lectures moderated by Paul Goldberger on The Shape of the City. 8:15 pm. 92nd Street Y. 996-1100.

## MONDAY 27

### EXHIBITION

"Craft Today: Poetry of the Physical," the American Craft Museum's inaugural exhibition in its new headquarters. 40 W. 53 St., 869-9425. Closes March 22.

### RICARDO BOFILL

Second in series of 5 lectures moderated by Paul Goldberger on The Shape of the City. 8:15 pm. 92nd Street Y. 996-1100.

## TUESDAY 14

### SAH DOMESTIC TOUR

Southern Indiana 215-735-0224.

### LECTURE SERIES

Architecture in the Service of Faith, first of 5-Tuesday lectures. 6:15 pm. Cooper-Hewitt Museum. For more information: Program Dept. 860-6868.

## TUESDAY 21

### PLAN EXAMINER TRAINING SESSIONS

3-5 Article 5 Fire Protection (1-11 am); 3-20 Zoning Parking (11-1 pm) on Oct. 21, 22, 23. Department of Buildings, 210 Joralemon St., Room 816, Brooklyn. For more information: Commissioner Charles M. Smith Jr. 248-8811.

## TUESDAY 28

### PLAN EXAMINER TRAINING SESSIONS

3-6 Article 6 Egress (9-11 am); 3-21 Zoning Manufacturing District (11-1 pm) on Oct. 28, 29 & 30. Department of Buildings, 210 Joralemon St., Room 816, Brooklyn. For more information: Commissioner Charles M. Smith Jr., 248-8811.

## WEDNESDAY 15

### NATIONAL PRESERVATION CONFERENCE (Oct. 15-19)

Marks the 20th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act. Kansas City, Missouri 202-673-4100.

### LECTURE

Barry Lewis on California Alternatives to the New York Mansion: 1900-1915. 6 pm. Central Synagogue, 123 E. 55 St. 996-1100.

### BARD AWARDS

The annual presentation of the City Club of New York's Bard Awards for Excellence in Architecture and Urban Design. 6-8 pm. AT&T Headquarters. 921-9870.

## WEDNESDAY 22

### LECTURE

Barry Lewis on Art Deco: The European Roots 1900-1910 in the 92nd Street Y's 10-lecture series on The City Transformed. 6 pm. Central Synagogue, 123 E. 55 St. 996-1100.

## WEDNESDAY 29

### INTERN ARCHITECTS PROGRAM

Opening session in NYC/AIA's 6-Wednesday pilot course for Intern Architects. 6 pm. NIAE, 30 W. 22 St. 838-9670.

### LECTURE

Barry Lewis on Art Deco: The European Roots 1910-1925 in the 92nd Street Y's 10-lecture series on The City Transformed. 6 pm. Central Synagogue, 123 E. 55 St. 996-1100.

## THURSDAY 16

### TAKEFUMI AIDA

Exhibition. John Nichols Printmakers, 83 Grand St. 226-1243. Closes Nov. 22.

## THURSDAY 23

### EXHIBITION

In Pursuit of Beauty: Americans and the Aesthetic Movement will explore the role of the artist, architect, decorator, and patron in that context. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 879-5500. Closes Jan. 11.

### STUDENT DESIGN CHARRETTE

"Mies & More," a 48-hour design charrette sponsored by the AIA, the American Institute of Architecture Students, and the Association of Collegiate School of Architecture. Oct. 23-25, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Newark. Maurice Payne: 202-626-7364.

## THURSDAY 30

### CONFERENCE (OCT. 30-NOV. 11)

"Form One: Design Diversity" called the "first major conference to feature those creative artists, architects, designers who are crossing the boundaries of traditional disciplines to give new vitality to a wide range of functional objects from chairs to skyscrapers." Form One, 15 W. 44 St., NYC 10036. 944-2180.

## FRIDAY 17

### EXHIBITION

The Machine Age in America 1918-1941. The Brooklyn Museum. 718-638-5000. Closes Feb. 16.

**ART DECO WALK ON SAT. OCT. 18**  
42nd Street - East to West. 2:30 pm. starting at Daily News Building, 220 E. 42 St. \$8. Art Deco Society of NY 529-1940.

## FRIDAY 24

**ART DECO WALK ON SAT., OCT 25**  
The Fabulous Fifties. 2:30 pm. Starting at the General Electric Building, 51st & Lexington. \$8. Art Deco Society of NY: 529-1940.

### NEW AMERICAN CRAFT MUSEUM OPENS ON SUN. OCT. 26

Official opening of the Fox & Fowle designed museum at 40 W. 53 St. 869-9425.

## FRIDAY 31

### WORKSHOP ON SAT. NOV 1

Historic Facades: Restoration & Local Law 10" sponsored by the New York Landmarks Conservancy and the Friends of Terra Cotta/New York State. 1-5 pm. Fourth Universalist Society, 4 W. 76 St. 736-7575 or 228-8265.

### SEMINAR ON SAT NOV. 1

Focusing on Peter Behrens' seminal contributions to the fields of product design, industrial architecture, graphic design and corporate identity. 9-noon. Cooper-Hewitt Museum. Program Director: 860-6868.

## Names and News

*Skidmore, Owings & Merrill: Office building for 461 Fifth Avenue, overlooking the New York Public Library.*

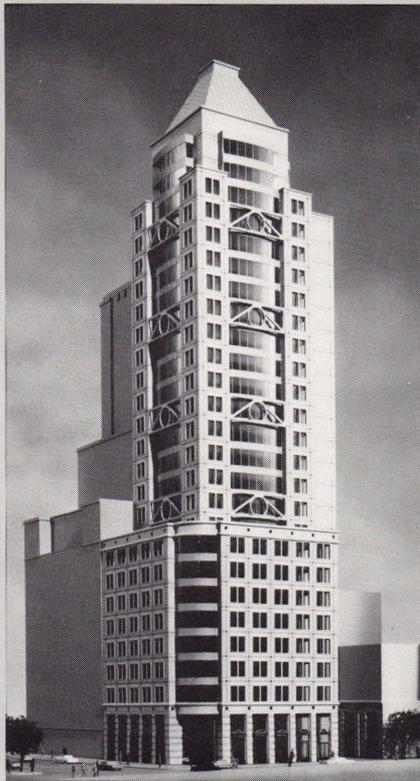
*cont'd. from p. 7*

Friedberg collaborated with French artists Anne and Patrick Poirier on a monumental outdoor sculpture installation set within a landscaped garden, which is scheduled to be unveiled late this month . . .

Architect Alan M. Hantman has joined Rockefeller Center Management Corporation as a director of design, and engineering . . . The New York Landmarks Conservancy is directing a study of unused and underutilized armories. A survey of the 15 armories that survive in New York City and yet face uncertain futures will be included in the compilation of case studies illustrating successful re-use programs drawn from a national sample. The study is being conducted by the Boston-based architectural firm of Ann Beha Associates, specialists in planning and design for landmark buildings . . . The student/faculty committee of ADPSR is sponsoring a student design project for the coming semester. "We have developed," writes Herbert B. Oppenheimer, "a program and supporting drawings for the design of a center for the study of peace to be located at the beautiful and highly visible waterfront site at Stapleton, Staten Island. We recognize that the Department of Defense would instead like to locate a vast but secret naval base at this location. We expect to have teachers and students from nine metropolitan schools involved in the project as well as the many other professional members of ADPSR." There will be an orientation and site visit on Sunday, September 21, which will begin at 1 pm. and then move to Sailor's Snug Harbor for a meeting and picnic . . . The Chapter regrets the death of Megan Lawrence at 40 on April 14th. She was, writes Leslie Armstrong of Armstrong-Cumming Architects, "my partner and Roger Cumming's wife. She was a fine architect and even greater teacher. I had the pleasure of serving on design juries with her and her students, and marveling at what she could draw from students of diverse backgrounds and levels of education and sophistication."

### Competitions

**The Ruby Bruner Award for Excellence**



*Photo: Jim Horner*

in the Urban Environment is a new national awards program sponsored by the Bruner Foundation. To be presented every two years, the award will stress the importance of collaboration in good urban design. Says Simeon Bruner, Vice-President of the Foundation, "The Rudy Bruner Award will be unique in asking applicants to tell how they did what they did and what trade-offs proved necessary in making a significant urban place." Completed urban projects of all kinds will be eligible and any major participant, including government representatives, developers, design and planning professionals, community groups, and educational institutions, can initiate an application. Theodore Liebman is a member of the selection committee, which will select five finalists. February 1, 1987 is the deadline for applications. For more information: Rudy Bruner Award, Bruner Foundation, 132 W. 43 St., New York 10036 . . .

### Book Notes

Elliot Willensky, Vice-Chairman of the Landmarks Preservation Commission is the author of *When Brooklyn Was the World 1920-1957* published by Harmony Books . . . The American Institute of Architects' new publication, *The Search for Shelter*, offers architects numerous strategies and design solutions for providing housing for America's growing homeless population . . . *Guide to Quality Control for Design Professionals* edited by David Kent Ballast, author of *The Architect's Handbook*, has been published by

## Intern Architects Program for this Fall

by Denis Glen Kuhn

In the fall of 1985 and the spring of this year the New York Chapter/AIA ran two pilot courses for Intern Architects. Approximately 50 students attended each course and 15 different Chapter members volunteered to serve as teachers. The NIAE donated its facility.

The Chapter plans to continue with the courses this season. The first class of the fall session will be on Wednesday, 29 October 1986 at the NIAE, 30 West 22nd Street, New York, New York starting at 6:00 p.m. There will be 6 classes. A fee will be charged. A more detailed announcement will be distributed in the near future.

The first course this fall is directed to Intern Architects who are just out of school. It is a course primarily directed toward orienting these new members of the profession to practice as it is generally conducted by New York architecture offices.

The second course is for individuals who are three or four years out of school. This course deals with contracts, project management, marketing, and other practice issues.

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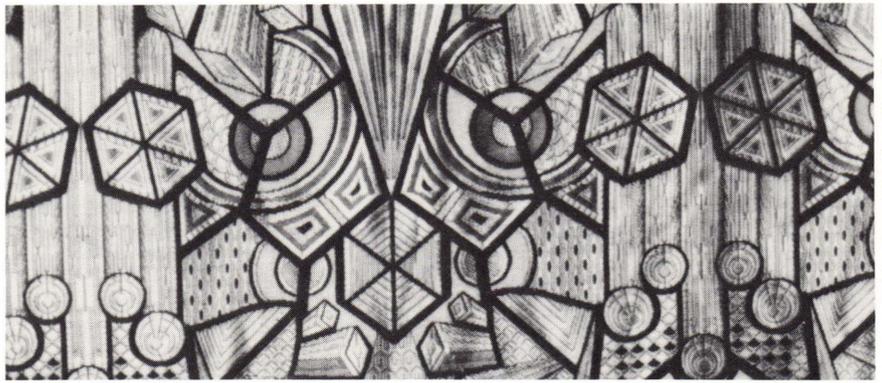
Practice Management Associates, Ltd. . . . The New York Landmarks Conservancy has published the 1986 edition of *The Restoration Directory: A Listing of Services in the New York City area.*

### New Addresses

Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates have moved to 902 Broadway . . . The RESTORE/Restoration Skills Training Program has relocated its offices to 160 South Street . . . Richard Meier & Partners have moved to 475 Tenth Avenue, 6th floor . . . James Simon Architects have relocated their offices to New Haven.

## The Machine Age

A "Decorative Geometry" fabric from an evening wrap of silk and mink, ca. 1928. Collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Courtesy The Brooklyn Museum

The Brooklyn Museum will mount an exhibition on "The Machine Age in America 1918-1941," from October 17 to February 16. The book of the same title accompanying the exhibition was written by Robert Guy Wilson, Dianne H. Pilgrim, and Dickran L. Tashjian. Excerpts follow:

That the machine had a powerful impact on American and European culture in the early twentieth century is hardly a new idea. Monographs are plentiful on cubism, futurism, de Stijl, the Bauhaus, and American precisionism, and there are important recent discussions of industrial design and Art Deco. However, the fact that the machine was the major motivating force behind them has not been generally recognized. The significance of America's contribution to world culture during this period has likewise been insufficiently explored.

This is the first book and exhibition to examine within their social and cultural context the full range of American art and artifacts of this period . . .

### America and the Machine Age

. . . The machine age in America refers to the dominance of the machine in all areas of American life and culture and the creation of that special sensibility informing modernism. No age is completely homogeneous: several themes and concerns can be recognized in America during the period between the two world wars, 1918 to 1941. Although the two decades have different orientations—business and boom in the 1920s, depression and social concern in the 1930s—many Americans could see a unified period of science and industry, resulting in fast communications and new products. For many people the period marked a new age, brought into being by the machine. Machines were everywhere; their impact went beyond the fact of their physical existence to challenge perceptions of both the self and the world. This new consciousness implied a whole new culture that could be built as readily as the machine; history seemed irrelevant, traditional styles and

pieties outmoded. The machine in all its manifestations—as an object, a process, and ultimately a symbol—became the fundamental fact of modernism.

. . . A great number of different-appearing "modern" styles were created, but at bottom they all contained a family resemblance: all were based upon the machine. Avant-garde painters and sculptors first grasped the possibilities of the machine in the 1910s and early 1920. In succeeding years the other arts began to recognize the machine as a source of beauty. Some furniture designers and architects in the late 1920s began to cast off the traditional styles and search for a machine expression. Although the Depression of the 1930s raised doubts about the future of an industrial civilization, for many the machine retained its social promise. Business, its back to the wall, retooled and restyled its products, helping to create a new artist-hero of the machine age, the industrial designer. The world of machine art encompassed not simply the traditional arts, but electric clocks, pencil sharpeners, and new streamlined cars and trains. For the creative individual the machine age offered the chance to invent a singularly American art, one that ranged from products for the home to the great building enterprises of the day . . .

. . . The machine age encompassed the vast new skyscraper city, with its transportation system compacted one on top of the other, and the new horizontal city composed of filling stations, drive-ins, and superhighways. Even human beings were viewed as machines in the scientific management and time-motion studies of Frederick Taylor and his disciples, Frank and Lillian Gilbreth . . .

The physical and social transformation of America begun in the nineteenth century reached a new tempo and range in the 1920s and 1930s. Electricity, while not new, came to be widely applied. Electrification of

American homes rose from 24 percent in 1917 to nearly 90 percent by 1940. New, individually controlled machines such as coffee pots, vacuum cleaners, and washing machines added a new dimension to daily life. There were only 65,000 mechanical refrigerators in 1924, as opposed to 7 million ten years later. Wider availability of electricity made possible microphones at political rallies and the telephone linking people across town, across the country, and across the ocean. In 1900 about 1 million phones existed, by 1920 7.5 million, and by 1930 over 20 million. The first radio station, KDKA of Pittsburgh, appeared in 1920, and by 1925 there were 571 stations and over 2.75 million receivers . . .

Certainly not every American felt the creation of a machine age art and culture to be a high priority. A traditional academic viewpoint dominated many art and architecture schools . . .

An inspection of almost any house from the late 1920s and 1930s shows a dichotomy between the historical facade and period furnishings and the new, machine-made service areas. Writing about the traditionalist, Palladian-inspired A. Everett Austin, Jr., House in Hartford, Connecticut, Philip Goodwin (later an associate architect on the new Museum of Modern Art in New York) noted, "Modernism is creeping right into the fabric of the whole house—kitchen, pantry, laundry, bedrooms and bath, have all capitulated to the machine; only the exterior, the dining-room and living rooms are holding out, and the dining-room is quite ready to be converted."

The agenda for the machine age not only included the traditional arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture, but also envisioned a total transformation. Everything needed to be redesigned, claimed Norman Bel Geddes; as Walter Dorwin Teague remarked, "we are not building big and little gadgets—we are building an environment." . . .

. . . The different attitudes to the

## The Machine Age

machine expressed in the 1920s and 1930s show one of two reactions: exaltation or rejection. Rejection implied a dislike of the machine and a tendency to disguise it, for example by covering electrical appliances with Louis XVI patterns, or treating automobiles as coaches and homes as eighteenth-century colonial mansions. Exaltation meant recognition of the primacy of the machine for the new age and the attempt to make it into art. Exaltation could also imply disguise of the object, since artists and designers tended to emphasize certain aspects, such as the angular geometry of gears, simple chrome shells covering complex electrical appliances, or chairs contoured out of molded plywood. These different positive responses may be called machine aesthetics—the belief that a machine beauty exists that can be enhanced by an artist or a designer.

Four stylistic interpretations emerge out of machine aesthetics of the 1920s and 1930s: moderne, machine purity, streamline, and biomorphic. Each style involves a fundamentally different response to the machine and chooses different prime objects or images as its primary design inspiration. The power of an image both realistically and abstractly conceived has many ramifications: a powerful, dominant image can generate a family of like forms for very different purposes and products. For example, the setback skyscraper gave form to interior furnishings and decor, kitchen appliances, and two-dimensional advertising design.

**Moderne—or Decorative Geometry**  
Machine-styled art and design of the 1920s appear to have been influenced by the perception of the machine as a combination of parts—gears, cams, axles—or of factory complexes involving many buildings and multiple smokestacks . . . The moderne (or “modernistic,” or more recently “Art Deco”) style took as its primary clue the multiple geometrical elements of machines arranged in a decorative pattern.

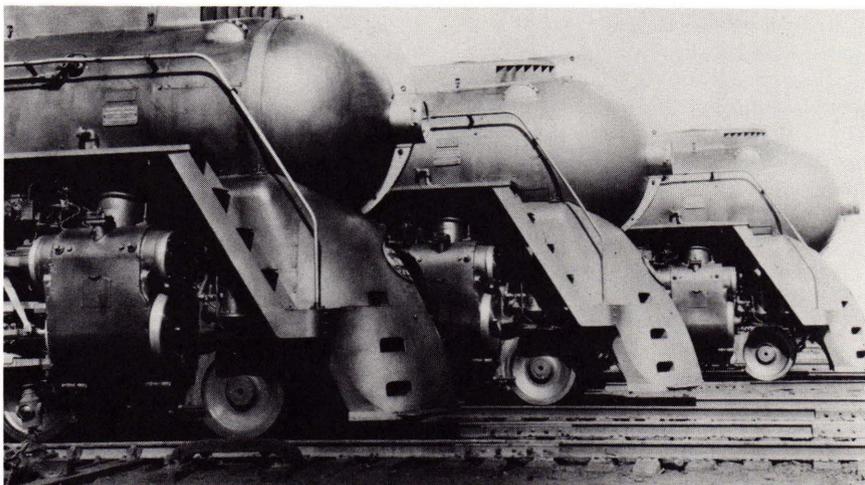
. . . American architects such as Frank

### Streamline

*Raymond Loewy: Pencil sharpener (1933).  
Courtesy Brooklyn Museum.*

*William Van Alen: The Chrysler Building (1929). Photo: Margaret Bourke-White.  
Courtesy Brooklyn Museum.*

*Henry Dreyfuss: New York Central 20th Century Limited locomotives (1938).  
Courtesy Brooklyn Museum.*



Lloyd Wright and Bertram Goodhue had created a native American moderne or Art Deco, which emphasized interrelated flat and angular geometrical patterns.

### Machine Purity

A purified style of machine aesthetics began to replace the decorative modernistic in the late 1920s, and by the early 1930s assumed an almost canonical position. Its preeminence in America was due in part to increasing knowledge of the avant-garde European design—the German Bauhaus, Dutch de Stijl, and French purism—and an American equivalent, the objectivist photographers and painters Paul Strand, Charles Sheeler, and Charles Demuth. A two-way street of interest and influence existed, however, as many Europeans sought inspiration in American factories, grain elevators, and machines.

. . . Ralph Walker, whose New York Telephone Building had appeared as a

frontispiece in Le Corbusier's book implying a sympathy of interests, described such geometric reductivism as fit only for a “robot.” . . .

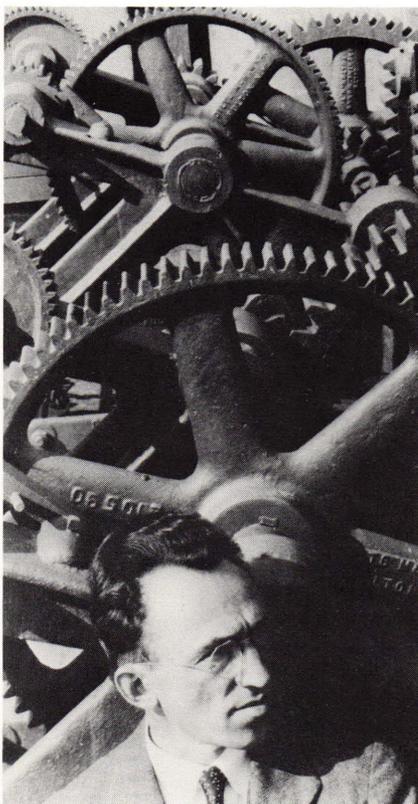
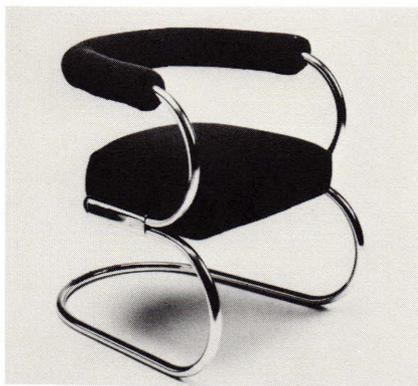
The aesthetic of machine purity received major American academic imprimatur with the Museum of Modern Art's major exhibitions of the 1930s, the International Exhibition of Modern Architecture of 1932 and the Machine Art show of 1934 . . .

To this canonical view of machine purity, several caveats must be noted. A striking discrepancy can occur between concepts on paper and real objects. Many of the designs of Teague, Dreyfuss, Frankl, and others have little to do with their printed words. Also many of the terms used—for example, “simplicity,” “function,” and “cleanliness”—were also used with the more ornamental modernistic, streamlined, and biomorphic, but with obviously different interpretations. While the machine purists proclaimed the principles of simplicity, function,

### Machine Purity

Nathan George Horwitt: *Beta Chair* (1930).  
Courtesy Brooklyn Museum.

Ralph Steiner: *Portrait of Louis Lozowick*  
(ca. 1930). Courtesy Brooklyn Museum.



and cleanliness, some of them could see that machines were complex, imperfect, and messy. Ultimately such conflicts were resolved by aesthetic feelings, or as Frankl described, deciding what one was going to express and doing it in a clear, simple, and pure manner.

### Streamline

Streamlining began to appear around 1930, and was in time applied to a great range of designs, from transportation machines to architecture, home appliances to advertising. Heavily promoted by Norman Bel Geddes in *Horizons* (1932), streamlining gave the appearance of efficiency and speed. Unlike the ideals of machine purity and modernism, the streamlined object had few parts and was not a geometrical form; rather, it was aerodynamically contoured, with the ultimate shape resembling a teardrop. The concept of machine motion changed from an almost primitive rhythm of watch gears turning to a

new, smooth, constantly accelerating motion.

... and the possibility of air travel for everyone increased public interest in the airplane, the main source of the aesthetic was the appearance of several new streamlined planes in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The Lockheed *Sirius*, 1929, and the Douglas *DC-1*, 2, and 3, developed between 1931 and 1935, were the most successful; they provided a totally new image with their bright, shiny, sheer surfaces, their rounded noses, contoured bodies, tapered wings, smooth engine cowls, and parabolic tails. Designers recognized a new prime object had been born . . .

Technological change also made possible the appearance of the rounded, contoured, streamlined shape. New body die-pressing machines capable of creating more complex and modeled automobiles and appliances, and new materials such as shiny stainless steel and polished flatsheet aluminum came on the market in the mid-1920s. Bakelite and other plastics offered the possibility of molded, self-supporting shells that could be contoured to the streamlined image.

For many designers the work of the German architect Erich Mendelsohn offered a source for streamlined objects expressing speed. Through publications, exhibitions, and visits, Mendelsohn was far better known in America than either Walter Gropius or Mies van der Rohe, and until the rise of the Nazis he was the most successful modern architect in Germany. He had been shown at the *Contemporanea Exposition* in New York in 1929, and his work was widely praised by Wright, Ferriss, Cheney, and Bel Geddes. In both sketches, which stretched as far back as 1915, and completed works Mendelsohn showed building designs with long, low, horizontal lines, closely spaced; horizontal, finlike projections; rounded corners; curving windows; and machine-like projections—all of which suggested speed . . .

Mendelsohn introduced a new ornament to machine age America: closely spaced horizontal lines called "speedlines." . . .

### Biomorphic

The biomorphic machine aesthetic—in which chairs, instead of resembling setback skyscrapers or rectilinear chrome tubes or sweepback-winged planes, accepted the undulations of the body—was an attempt to humanize the machine. The biomorphic aesthetic interpreted the machine as capable of creating forms more in sympathy with nature, the human body, and psychology. The machine was no longer the prime object; instead the new source was nature or organic forms such as the amoeba.

"Organic," a word frequently applied to the art and products of biomorphism, can be a synonym for "biomorphic," but to many of the mechanicophile theorists, organicism implied only a relationship between form and function. Eliot Noyes, the curator for The Museum of Modern Art's 1941 *Organic Design* exhibition and competition, claimed, "A design may be called organic when there is an harmonious organization of the parts within the whole, according to structure, material, and purpose . . .

Machine aesthetics was a controversial subject in the 1920s and 1930s. Americans, while responding to European ideas and examples, came up with a wide variety of stylistic expressions that were *uniquely* American. On one level, machine aesthetics and the various styles involved were a sectarian argument among a small group of artists, designers, and critics; yet, from the larger perspective of the capitalistic culture, the various ideas of machine aesthetics succeeded in changing the face of America. America became modern, and simultaneously the way was paved for post-World War II developments, when American art and design, from the work of abstract expressionists to thin-legged aluminum and plastic furniture, dominated the world.

## Design Credits An Editorial

Whether it is merely the contemporary syndrome of bad news being the only attention getter, or something else, one of the constant bugaboos and complaints received by architecture editors is about design credits.

Nobody says thanks or congratulations when a publication gets the credits right, but just let one be incorrect—or, heaven forbid, be omitted—and the realm of letter writing suddenly seems to open up.

It was ever thus: Ozymandias, forgotten in the desert; the “mute inglorious Miltons” of Thomas Gray; and Sir Thomas Browne’s wrenching plaint, “Who can but pity the founder of the pyramids?” (before much was known in answer). What must those architects have written on papyrus to their local scribes about credits?

Architects say they want complete credits.

Yet editors see another picture: Architects were long happy with a single credit to the firm in articles in our major newspapers, since in the real estate pages, they are lucky to get credit at all. In addition, architects, as a group are fairly inconsistent about giving credit to their own office associates—project architects, project designers, project managers, and the like. Often editors get complaints from such associate designers when their names have been omitted.

Furthermore, editors are often provided with the credits as settled by the original commission—often before full teams—including associate architects—have been developed. And there is the matter of architects not always being careful proofreaders of the information they supply to editors. How else can editors get the right spellings?

The same situation obtains with regard to changes in firm names. Isn’t it likely that people will go on using the old name if someone doesn’t send out an announcement of a new one? This happens to editors from time to time.

How can editors know this information if the principals do not provide it?

How can they know about an associate architect, a project designer, an interiors consultant if the leading architect on the team does not mention it, or if the public relations department does not suggest it?

The editor “should” know, but is it likely that he or she *will*? It cannot come from good investigative research, for legal considerations that are unknown to editors may preclude such credit. Still, the project architects complain. Editors must send them back to complain to their principals.

Each case and each architecture project need individual attention and individual procedures in disseminating the news about credits. Many architects are notoriously disinterested in the public information procedure, scoffing with upturned noses that “Lou Kahn would never have had a public relations firm” and implying that there was therefore no need to tell their news correctly. Until the news is wrongly reported, that is.

But the subject is broader than publications (and editors). *Oculus* determined to ask a number of people for other views on this subject—especially how things could be better done to insure proper and complete credits from all points of view. We hope the discussion will address the critical importance of proper design credits to architects, what constitutes proper credit, who is responsible for verifying such information, and any other related aspect of the subject. Extract of answers are reported below:

Dear Editor:

Proper credit for an architect’s efforts and talents is important both to the world outside the office and to those within a firm who work on projects. To reduce the possibility of misunderstandings and to protect our interests, we include provisions in our Owner/Architect agreements covering rights to publicity and requirements for credits. To correctly reflect the

fact that our work is the creative effort of a group, we take care that all publications include credit to the correct participants of each project. Recognition for work well done is deserved, and helps personal satisfaction and staff stability.

Paul Segal

Paul Segal Associates

Dear Editor:

The issue of giving appropriate credits has been a thorn in the side of all architects from the beginning of time.

The enormous hoopla these days regarding publicity, and the competition for achieving “Center Stage” in the profession has become, in my opinion, unhealthy . . . As the firms seek credit, so too it is natural for their staffs to want recognition. However, who on the team should be recognized and is the democratic way the best? . . . i.e., everyone who has worked on the project. Abe Geller has been overly generous in giving recognition to anyone who had anything to do with a project. When a team of us were finalists in the F.D.R. Memorial Competition in 1960, credits went to anyone who spent time working, including girlfriends who brought in food during the charrette.

Others take an opposite point of view, not giving anyone credit since it invariably causes conflict within the firm especially when it is not fully clear who did what. Years ago, after working in Hugh Stubbin’s office on the design of a school as project designer for an entire year, the project won several awards and was published. I received no credit and Stubbin’s explanation was that it was his policy not to give credits when staff no longer work in the office (I had left several months earlier). We had words about this; however, we remain good friends despite the difference.

The real sticky issues come up as to who gets “design credit.” It is simpler these days to mention the design team and put down a whole bunch of names. In the selection process for AIA

Fellowship, it is necessary to distinguish between "solely responsible, largely responsible, and directed the design of" — subtle differences that are meaningful to the jury and require real introspection on the part of the candidates as well as written verification by others familiar with the circumstances.

In our office, we have a policy of giving credit whenever possible. It is mostly limited, however, to the more senior people on the project — those with both management and design responsibilities and those others who made significant contributions . . . which in the case of competitions can sometimes be an entire team.

Good luck on your issue — it is a very important subject.

**Peter Samton**  
Gruzen Samton Steinglass

Dear Editor:

Our firm's policy is to credit as many people who have worked on a project as is in keeping with the scale of the project, the effort and scale of the work with regard to the rest of the piece, article, or whatever.

There are no great rewards to being a young architect. Certainly no financial rewards. But receiving credit in the form of printed recognition for one's contribution, not just to finished work, but to presented work (drawings, models, etc.), is one reward that is easily given and gratefully received. It does not detract from the glory due the principals. And it contributes to the morale and overall health of a firm, however large or small.

**Leslie Armstrong**  
Armstrong Cumming Architects

Dear Editor:

Some time ago *The New York Times* ran a 14-column-inch article on the proposed tower behind Saks Fifth Avenue. The reporter wrote at length about the news conference Mayor Koch held with the developer and

banker to announce the project, and furnished a plethora of facts and figures including floor area, cost, and anticipated number of jobs to be generated. One fact, however, was conspicuously missing from the coverage: the name of the architect.

As if this omission were not enough, a *New York Times* photographer received credit for a photograph of a model of the tower while the building's creator remained anonymous in the caption.

Though I have not verified that an architect was indeed involved with the project, this is unimportant. The point is that *someone* designed the building, and yet this simple fact was not even acknowledged by the reporter.

As a basis for comparison, imagine a news story covering the commissioning of a public sculpture that failed to name the sculptor. It would be an unthinkable omission, even from the lead paragraph.

If the failure to credit architects in news stories is infrequent, that it happens at all is indicative of a certain attitude (or lack of one) toward design that should provoke a barrage of upbraiding letters from the architectural community.

The crediting of a photographer for a picture of an architect's work in the absence of a design credit is one of our profession's little ironies. It occurs most frequently, in my experience, when a company uses a photograph of a building in an advertising campaign and is required under copyright laws to credit the photographer but not the architect. To the extent that this is a legal question, I leave it to the experts to make suggestions. But we should bear in mind that the livelihood of the architectural photographer (not to mention the architectural advertiser) depends in large measure on our profession; the relationship is at least symbiotic. Perhaps, then, a dual-credit clause could be incorporated into the agreement between photographer and architect, whereby the photographer would agree that when he sells a

photo, it is with the understanding that the architect also receives credit.

**Christopher March**  
Architect

Dear Editor:

The subject of Design Credits to be discussed in *Oculus* should be of particular interest to Staff Architects who represent the Client, in the corporate and public sector, since they are normally excluded.

While some Staff Architects are responsible for design accomplishment inhouse, most are involved with the accomplishment of projects using outside design effort. Their involvement begins before the "Design Firm" is engaged, and includes many tasks critical to the process: To initiate and justify the project; site and building selection; to establish scope objectives; to retain outside design firms and consultants; to negotiate fees and contracts; to prepare project budgets and schedules; to convey User needs to the designers; to translate the Designer's needs to Management; to coordinate, monitor, and review the design effort; to obtain or expedite government approvals; to catch design errors before they become problems; to propose alternatives and solutions to keep the project on track; to do battle with the contractors and suppliers when the Designer does not; to procure, to maintain, to attend, and to care for the project long after its "Architect" has gone onto bigger and better things.

Acknowledgement of the contributions of the Staff Architect to a successful project is not only fair, but also good politic.

**Peter El Gindi**  
Chair, NYC/Corporate Architects  
Committee

*To be continued*

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