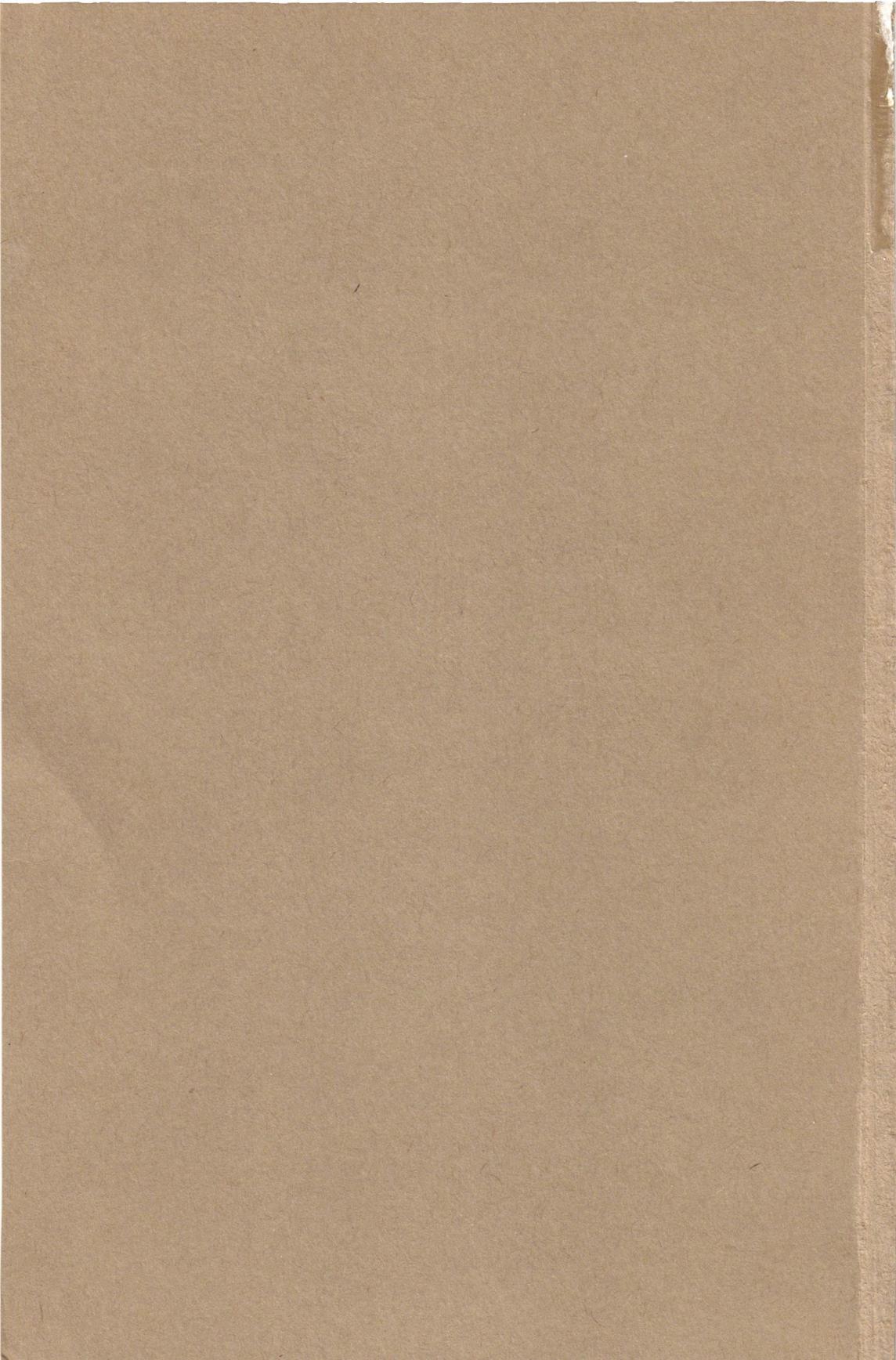


A R C H I T E C T U R E
CALIFORNIA





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From the Editor

Is there such a thing as “California architecture”? In an effort to know ourselves better, this is a worthwhile question to ask and it seems only natural that this journal would assume the task. The impression generated by the national media’s love affair with a few very talented practitioners is perhaps the best known characterization of the current California condition. *Architecture California* 12:1 discussed communities’ definitions of appropriate architecture. But does our current understanding of what we are match with reality? This collection of essays explores some alternative roads and takes advantage of “insider” perspectives to examine the landscape of the California we drive by as well as the protagonists that helped shape it.

It can be said that architecture arises from a basic preoccupation with the relationship of inside to outside and thus with the implied definition of edges. This can be seen as the physical manifestation of the human urge to make the world manageable through the creation of boundaries. Native Californians once defined tribal boundaries and fighting grounds very precisely. Today, the very existence of this journal is due to a belief in the benefits of regional organization.

Looking for fresh approaches to the idea of a California architecture, this issue revisits the larger ideas of region and regionalism. The results reflect a fascinating complexity in the place where we have chosen to live and give us clues for appropriate architectural responses.

Interestingly enough, issues discussed in our August 1990 issue are present here again: community visions have become regional visions of suitable architecture for ideal lifestyles; exclusion and segregation may again lie behind

seemingly benign images of domesticated landscapes; community fences have become regional borders. As we will discover, our strength may lie in resources yet largely untapped, in a reality and a notion of place that is as novel to the world as the visions that created California.

In this issue, I would like to extend some very special thanks to John Allebrand, who has generously taken time from his established professional writing career to volunteer his expert review of our work. I would also like to thank Michael Segal, my husband, for his ongoing support in this enterprise.

I have now reached the end of my commitment as editor of *Architecture California*. With a very difficult budget and large amounts of effort, we have created and produced a publication that, from a regional perspective, fills a void in the national arena of professional media. I would like to thank our contributors for their interest and cooperation. In particular, I want to acknowledge those that created and made possible this concept: Joseph Esherick, FAIA, Barton Phelps, AIA and William Turnbull, FAIA. It has been an honor to be a member of such an enlightened team.

Last, but not least, many thanks to you, our readers. Your letters of support (that continue to find their way to my desk from as far away as Australia) have helped secure a 1991 budget that will allow for an even better product. I invite you to continue this dialogue and to share your ideas on the journal’s format and content. Relax and enjoy reading this collection of provocative essays – very much ours and very alive – and join us in this exploration of region and architecture.

Alicia Rosenthal, AIA

From Our Readers

I am intrigued by the August 1990 issue of your magazine. I don't recall much about what its predecessors were but it is clear to me that this new format must be a radical departure. It reminds me of the scholarly journals typical of other professions. However, it is far more accessible than most such journals. I think the breadth of your articles and the fact that they are generally substantive and readable is encouraging. I think you've done a fascinating job and I congratulate you.

Richard Fitzgerald
Executive Director
The Boston Society of Architects

You have produced a meaningful publication that for once does not stack up and then throw away but reads and saves! If there was ever a professional "literary" magazine, this has to be it. Taking the subject matter addressed in this issue, it is timely. Taking the historical aspects of this issue, it is educational. I am anxiously waiting for the next issue.

Edward J. Levitch, AIA
Levitch Associates, Berkeley

Super August 1990 issue. How did you ever pull it off? It's the best thing since John Entenza and *Arts & Architecture* and Don Canty and *Architecture*. It will soon be an out-of-print classic.

Whitney R. Smith, FAIA
Whitney R. Smith, Architect,
Sonoma

Architecture California is very impressive as a journal from a State group – congratulations to the editor and the editorial board. Issues about aesthetic control and urban design are indeed

contentious here and I have not found elsewhere a comparable collection of arguments, ideas and case studies. I think such regional journals are very important if they can maintain a sufficient intellectual standard which links scholarship to the concerns of practice.

Professor Anthony Radford
Head, Department of
Architecture
University of Adelaide, Australia

Architecture California looks splendid: meaty and well designed. My congratulations! I hope you can maintain this level of quality in future issues.

Cesar Pelli, FAIA
Cesar Pelli and Associates
New Haven, Connecticut

No doubt by now you have had a few comments from architects complaining about *Architecture California* – small size, no color, too much writing, and a recycled plain brown wrapper cover.

I just thought you would like to know that I thought the magazine was excellent, and an extremely clever response to the budget problems engineered by the previous attempt to be a traditional glossy. I like very much the semi-academic tone of the magazine – it is appropriate for a professional body. I just hope there are enough members who enjoy reading that will also appreciate what you are doing.

Christopher Arnold, FAIA
BSD Building Systems
Development, Inc., San Mateo

Your publication arrived at a very propitious moment in our town's concern with

the concept of design review. As a planning commissioner participating in the writing of our zoning ordinances which include the procedures and guidelines for design review I have become very cynical as to just what positive results can ensue for the whole review procedure. Seventeen architects in Marin have come out in protest to the many architecturally constraining issues in the zoning ordinances and are particularly against design review process and guidelines.

Your current edition on the subject does fairly review the issues but it seems to me a more positive positioning of the AIA for greater design freedom is most urgently needed.

Warren Callister
Callister Gately Heckmann &
Bischoff, Tiburon

For the first time in my 35 years as a member of the AIA, I feel proud about **Architecture California**. This is what it is all about: careful, thoughtful review and analysis of various viewpoints on issues that affect our profession to such a large degree, and not to make light of this responsibility.

I look forward to future issues and I am paying my CCAIA fees with more conviction, knowing that a part of it will go towards this fine publication, which presents such a mature and adult face of the California architects to the public at large and yes, the politicians as well.

Kurt Meyer, FAIA
Meyer & Allen Associates,
Los Angeles

The August issue is refreshing, stimulating and useful. It's refreshing because it concentrates on a single key issue – design review – that is redefining how California's built environment is being shaped; stimulating, because it gives the reader a wide variety of points of view from knowledgeable professionals in the field; and useful, because it presents

information that, to my knowledge, is available from no other single source.

By promoting the independent, educated discourse of ideas you are offering a window on architectural thinking in California and, by extension, setting a very high standard of professionalism. Well done.

Daniel Gregory
Associate Editor
Sunset magazine, Menlo Park

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the new format of **Architecture California**. I was extremely pleased to see the format has been converted to what appears to be a journal with real substance, not only for architecture professionals, but also individuals involved in architectural academic communities throughout California. I found each of the articles included in this volume to be well written and to the point in providing meaningful information to the reader.

W. Mike Martin, Ph. D., AIA
Head, Architecture Department
California Polytechnic State
University, San Luis Obispo

Your August, 1990 issue is regarded in my opinion as the best thing the CCAIA has ever produced. It is worthwhile to read, is full of useful information and was written by architects about architecture which is most refreshing. It was a brilliant idea with great potential to tap the tremendous resource of experience, concepts and ideas of architects that did not have a forum before and were never asked.

Lyman Ennis, AIA
Lyman Ennis, Architect, AIA,
Pasadena

Architectural Californialism

Betsey Olenick Dougherty, FAIA

This journey into the topic of California regionalism is intended to be one of conceptual fancy. You and I share the same rich passion for architecture, or you would not have found yourself here, buried in a journal dedicated to the subject. I caution you not to look to me for academic study or researched references, but rather to join with me in reflection.

California is one of this world's most special places. We are truly residents of God's country. I find myself fiercely patriotic when traveling from the southern California beaches to the Big Sur coast, from the quiet of the desert and the Sierra Nevada, to the hustle and bustle of our vibrant cities. What other state can boast of the natural beauty of Yosemite Valley, Lake Tahoe, Sequoia/King's Canyon, Mammoth Lakes, Death Valley, and the central valley? Our cities are as beautiful and diverse as San Francisco, Monterey and Carmel, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, Newport and Laguna Beach and San Diego. We are blessed with a mild climate and a strong economy. Our riches abound. O.K. – so we are not doing such a great job of taking care of this precious land and its resources, or ourselves for that matter. We battle traffic congestion and smog, record-breaking growth and the high cost of living in our urban business centers. We are accused of materialism and insensitivity, a general lack of heritage and culture, and a declining success rate in the education of our youth. Everyone and every place shares these woes, you say. True enough. You and I share this consciousness of the environment, of our place in the overall

scheme of things because we care; and because architecture “brings it all together,” we can individually and collectively “make a difference.” California conjures up a variety of images to those on the outside. Nationally and worldwide, we are equated with bikini-clad roller-skaters on Venice beach, with a red convertible weaving its way up Highway 1 on the Big Sur coast, with towering redwood forests, and with San Francisco cablecars merrily clanking between rows of Victorian facades. To others we represent freedom, progressive thought, and a dependable livelihood. So, what is the truth? And how is our built environment a stylistic reflection of our values and our society?

Here is what I submit to you as that truth. California is a land of opportunity, as trite as that statement might seem. We are a population of hardworking individuals, striving to be successful in business while creating a nurturing and secure home for our families. We want to take advantage of what life has to offer, but we also want desperately to do right and to give something back. Yes, we are in perpetual pursuit of the American Dream and its associated quality of life. Our state economy rivals most countries, and our vitality challenges not only our personal stamina, but our socio-political system. Underneath that stereotypical “California Crazy” image is a good measure of national and international respect mixed well with a little dash of envy. This is our shared regionalism. And within this region are truly unique subregions that make California the beautiful mosaic that we know and love.

California architectural regionalism has probably been given the greatest media boost by the contemporary architectural “deconstructive” experimentation affectionately attributed to West L.A. Thankfully Los Angeles is finally known for significant art and architecture, and not just for poor air quality. Our more traditional and historic imagery belongs to the Bay Area brown shingle style, and to the lovely San Francisco Victorians of the shipbuilders art. The true referential and contextual architecture of California belongs to the legacy of the California missions. If we are regionally unique, it is our Spanish and Mexican history that makes us so. Not one of us can take exception to the grace and caring so evident in the cities of Santa Barbara and Monterey. But design review boards and building moratoriums challenge the architect and the community to “do the right thing” in the name of preservation, sensitivity and the common good.

I would like to think that all Californians have a sense of who we are, where we have been and where we are going. We are akin in our diversity, in our commitment and drive, and in our regional pride. We may take life for granted one day, and push the edges of our respective envelopes the next. We are consistently inconsistent, frustrating and endearing. Is our built environment a reflection of our society, of regionalism? Is there such a thing? From this Californian’s perspective, I am surprised to admit, maybe so!