Skyline

An Interview with Michel Foucault

Skyline

We'll Miss You Ada Louise

Ada Louise Huxtable Retires from The New York Times

Space, Knowledge, and Power Discussed; Meier's Seminary, Reagan's White House, <u>The Culture of Consent</u> criticized

Plus: Adam, Barthes, Kallmann reviewed

"All the News That's Fit to Print"

York Times

LATE CITY E

Weather: Chance of clearing tonight. Sun Temperature range:

VOL.CXXXI.... No. 45,204

MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 1982

FLAGGING ECON
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Soviet Publishes Scathing Attack On Italian Party

Accuses Leaders to Imperialism

ARCHBISHOF POLES HAV TO GET T

SERMON HEAT

Skyline

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Notes on Contributors

Eleni Constantine, former associate editor of *Progressive Architecture* and *Architectural Record*, is pursuing a degree in law and urban design at Harvard.
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Martin Filler, an architecture and design critic, writes for a number of publications. His critique on the design of the public rooms at the White House appeared in *The New York Times Magazine,* November 3, 1980.
Diane Ghirardo, an historian teaching at Stanford University, is an editor of *Archetype.*
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Lawrence Kutnicki, an architect in New York, teaches environmental design at Parsons; he is a fellow of the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies.
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Abigail Solomon-Godeau is a freelance photography critic who has written for *Art in America* and *Arts* magazine.
Gwendolyn Wright, an architectural historian living in Berkeley, is the author of *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America.*

To the Editor:

This is in reply to Elaine Hochman's hopelessly muddled letter in your January 1982 issue. Ms. Hochman discusses many people, events, and issues that as far as I can see have little to do with an evaluation of Albert Speer, either as an architect or as a political figure. Most of the questions she raises are dealt with at some length in my *Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918–1945* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968). But I do feel compelled to reiterate a few points from that book in connection with Ms. Hochman's bewildering comparison of Gropius, Mies, and Speer.

During the first year of the Nazi regime, when official cultural policy still was—or at least appeared to be—in the process of evolution, Walter Gropius, Martin Wagner, and many others tried to bring Goebbels and Wendland around to their way of thinking—to sponsorship of the Modern Movement. They were not "seeking commissions"; they were trying to influence an entire policy. When they failed, they left. To equate their brief and dangerous effort, however misguided it may appear in retrospect, with Speer's lasting and ardent devotion to Hitler, is, to say the least, bizarre. As to Mies, I don't know why he remained in Germany three years longer than Gropius did, and Ms. Hochman hasn't enlightened me, here or elsewhere. To equate Mies' willingness to stay a little longer (or inability to leave?) with Speer's eager exercise of unique power in the Nazi war effort is, at best, illogical. I guess Ms. Hochman must be right—historians haven't yet succeeded in setting the record straight about these matters. But at least we keep trying.

Barbara Miller Lane

To the Editor:

The inherent ironies in Ms. Miller Lane's article on Albert Speer (*Skyline*, December '81) demand a response. *Skyline's* smart juxtaposition of this article with one on Albert Mayer is useful. When Ms. Lane implies that the selling of the architect's own "soul . . . for the commission to do a great building" is simply the practice of a Nazi architect, we just have to turn our head to the right-hand page and read that a "quality" architect like Mayer designed "luxury apartment buildings" on Central Park South, colonialist schemes for Chandigarh, or nuclear, family-oriented "greenbelt towns," obviously drawn with his "principles of humane architecture."

Furthermore, if by association we are led to believe that the characteristics of Nazi (and other) architecture of "extreme axiality and centrality, exaggerated emphasis on the apparent thickness of the walls" are signs of evil, do we have to make parallel conclusions when confronted with current trends, documented elsewhere in *Skyline*, that use similar principles?

It might be useful to hear from Ms. Lane on the different stand on class conflicts and the shortcomings of the system expressed by contemporary architects, who I am sure are found busy at the picket lines, demonstrations, canvasses, or denouncing injustice wherever found. Or does she propose that refusal to cooperate with a system comes magically, only in widely publicized war exterminations?

Ms. Lane should have offered new insights on the stereotypical composition of the victims of the Holocaust, an event that was for so long monopolized as a totally Jewish plight. As we know today, the victims of the Nazi concentration camps included religious and political dissidents (communists in particular); gypsies and vagrants; the so-called criminal elements (prostitutes among them); and *homosexuals*. Ms. Lane's omission proves once more that the conspiracy of silence and the callous indifference to injustice attributed to Albert Speer are still alive today. David Fernbach, in his book *The Men With The Pink Triangle,* referring to the Nazi homophobic persecution, states that "The contempt to our fellow humans, and social discrimination, is the same as it was 30 or 50 years ago."

Amerigo Marras
International Union of Gay Architects

Times Without Huxtable

Ada Louise Huxtable in Perspective

Suzanne Stephens

Three significant figures emerged in the relatively unacknowledged field of architecture criticism between the years 1890 and 1980: Montgomery Schuyler (1843–1914), Lewis Mumford (born 1895), and Ada Louise Huxtable (born 1921). Montgomery Schuyler published regularly in *Architectural Record* from its inception in 1891 to his death in 1914. Lewis Mumford wrote the "Skyline" columns for *The New Yorker* between 1931 and 1963. Ada Louise Huxtable is known as the "first" full-time critic of architecture to be hired by a newspaper, *The New York Times,* where she wrote extensively on the subject from 1963 to her retirement in January 1982.

By the values and attitudes they espoused, by the modes of critical analysis they employed, and by their own personal writing "style," they were to consolidate the position of the architecture critic in their particular mediums. Concomitant with this stature was a "power" they had, one that owed a great deal to the various audiences for its impact, but that depended much more on their special contributions for its "weight." Ada Louise Huxtable's power base at *The Times* cannot be denied; however, much of her power was strengthened because of the way she judiciously and courageously used it. A look at her prodigious output at *The Times* since 1957, the year she began writing for the newspaper on a freelance basis, impresses one by its sheer quantity. As now summarized in *Ada Louise Huxtable: An Annotated Bibliography,* edited by Lawrence Wodehouse (Garland Publishing, Inc., 1981), that number ranged between 33 and 61 articles a year.

As critics, Huxtable, Schuyler, and Mumford functioned as commentators close to the architectural phenomena they observed. Since they all were linked to monthly, weekly, and daily publications, and to the commercial world instead of the academic one, they had less of the advantage enjoyed by architectural historians and theoreticians — the perspective, or critical distance, and sense of reflection that added time allows. Furthermore, none of these commentators came to the field as practicing architects who saw the world in the terms of a formulated architectural orientation.

Yet, while two had a strong literary background (Schuyler and Mumford) and the third (Huxtable) was an art historian, none of the three criticized architecture primarily from literary or aesthetic points of view. If anything, their writings were distinctive due to their inclusion of technical and functional concerns in their discussions. Huxtable, like Mumford, made social concerns a part of her purview. Her philosophical roots, pragmatically based and positivist in orientation, are important: Her insistence on judging a building only after becoming thoroughly acquainted with the legal, economic, and political constraints that shaped its form as much as the architect's pencil, has placed her writing in a special category.

Because of her strong urban orientation, she has helped promulgate the recognition of architecture as a part of the surrounding physical context. The time in which she was writing made this perspective particularly meaningful: Urban development had torn apart entire sections of downtowns in the name of modernism, replacing a fragile architectural heritage with deadening monolithic hulks. Historians and theorists were publishing treatises on the need for architects to design "contextually" at the same time Huxtable was stimulating the growth of a body of opinion in the public realm that would be receptive to those ideas.

In the same sense her many articles on preservation — not just historic buildings, but the urban ensembles that give a city its character — were to promote a sensibility to the character and quality of urban places. When architects began to call for "historically allusive" new architecture, their arguments would mesh quite well with the values implicit in her own writing. Huxtable's constant vigilance about the weaknesses of zoning legislation in maintaining the beneficial characteristics of the urban setting has been crucial in her writing as it has been singular in architectural criticism.

A critic working on the staff of a periodical or newspaper cannot avoid the problem of subject matter. The critic must cover what is "topical," and the content of the

critique — even when addressing larger concerns — can be limited by "content" of the architectural work. Buildings that embody in a nutshell all the great issues of the moment don't come along every day. Nor are there awful but important buildings available for dissection all the time. Huxtable's "tell-it-like-it-is" way of panning a building or development was extraordinarily incisive. Thus Huxtable's lethally epigrammatic phrasing about the Kennedy Center (1971) — "It is a cross between a concrete candy box and a marble sarcophagus in which the art of architecture lies buried" — would leave the readers impatient for more.

Similarly, "The Trashing of Fifth Avenue" (1976) excoriated the "mutilation" of the street caused by the Olympic Tower. "The Pathetic Fallacy" (1979) lambasted new apartment house schemes on Fifth Avenue by Ulrich Franzen & Associates and Philip Johnson and John Burgee Architects for "believing in the principle that if you are going to put an out-of-scale, out-of-context, discordant structure into a setting where it will be damaging or destructive, you can make it less so by 'recalling' or 'extracting' the essence of details of the surrounding older architecture." Yet such writing by Huxtable seems to have occured with less frequency in the last seven or eight years and a mellower outlook has permeated her recent criticism.

Ada Louise Huxtable and Wallace Harrison at the opening of a show of his work, the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies, December, 1979. (photo: Dorothy Alexander)

A fondness for strongly geometrical, structurally expressive modernist design that Ada Louise Huxtable has always shown allowed her to "go soft" on some buildings that her faithful (and ever judgmental) readers expected her to take apart. In fact, during the latter part of the 1970s, Huxtable seemed to be *liking* more of the buildings and urban design projects she was reviewing. Her endorsements of Eli Attia's projected design for 101 Park Avenue (1979) and Der Scutt's scheme for the Trump Tower at 57th and Fifth (1979) were two rude surprises, since the projects promised to violate the ideals regarding context, scale, and design quality that Huxtable had been vehemently defending.

Huxtable's enthusiasms and antipathies have been well argued — and unpredictable enough — to keep the audience interested in her opinion. One major exception to this unpredictability, of course, has been her reviews of I.M. Pei's work. Almost every building by I.M. Pei & Partners published in *The Times* has received praise from Huxtable, from the Everson Museum (1968) to the White Museum (1973); the Dallas City Hall (1976), to the East Wing of the National Gallery (1978), and the Kennedy Library (1979).

But, while the embracing of the most accomplished efforts of modernism was understandable in the late 1960s and early '70s, it has been less so in the last part of the '70s. As architects have begun to question the espousal of abstracted a-scalar surfaces and planes, of structure and technique as determinants of form, and the emphasis on plan and circulation at the sacrifice of the elevation, clearly a new system of values is in the air. Their contextual and historicist values and attitudes have been reinforced, if not shaped, by Huxtable's own earlier attention to the value of urban settings, places, and past architectural endeavors.

Huxtable's cautionary tone regarding the newer efforts and her insistence that modern architecture is not dead cannot be argued. Her clarification of issues affecting architects at a time of confusion, ambiguity, and change is necessary. But her hesitation to take hold of the newly emerging values and attitudes and see how they should affect her own critical approach vis-à-vis ongoing modernist (and "post-modernist") efforts leaves one disappointed.

How should a critic be judged? One paradoxical answer is to say that the critic is liked according to how well she or he hates, and disliked according to how badly he or she likes. This simplified statement of course is not altogether true.

In assessing Montgomery Schuyler, William Jordy and Ralph Coe (*American Architecture and Other Writings*, Atheneum, 1961) say that the "creative" critic must "possess an esthetic philosophy relevant to the production of his world," a philosophy that leads him to the most "creative production" of this world. But they also bring up the question that is "crucial at revolutionary moments in the arts": "Can his philosophy embrace the new vision" and transform itself accordingly? They feel that Schuyler's ultimately could not, and this appraisal might prove true of Ada Louise Huxtable's judgment as well.

Time will tell. You don't stop reading a good critic because he or she differs in opinion from your own bias. You read the critic for his or her range and depth of perceptions and for being able to articulate the insights you were coming to yourself (or thought you were). You read a critic for the principles he or she discerns and how he or she applies those principles to particular cases. You read a critic for the reservoir of ideas stored up that allows him to frame an argument to judge and evaluate an architectural work. You also read a critic for the way the argument is presented and, of course, for the style in which it is written. This is why we have read Huxtable.

But inevitably the critic will be judged on the architecture he or she likes and dislikes — immediately and over time. The evaluation of the specific situation tests whether a critic's efforts can change, improve, or strengthen various efforts and effect reality.

Clearly Huxtable's assessments of urban design issues, preservation problems, and blockbuster overbuilding have had a serious effect in changing the environment. Her mode of analysis, emphasizing the many difficult constraints, cultural and social forces affecting the art of architecture has been equally significant. The principles, values, and attitudes Huxtable espoused, and the courageous and straightforward way she went about it made her presence on *The Times* immensely valuable. Without the interest she has generated about architecture and the example her writing has set, the full range of publications, such as *Skyline*, would not exist. Her absence will be seriously felt. The architecture critic for *The Times*, Paul Goldberger, a critic with different enthusiasms, has much expected of him. When the question "Can he be 'another Ada Louise Huxtable'?" is asked, there is more to the question than it sounds: She has established a standard of criticism — and created a myth, so to speak — that made it hard for even Ada Louise to live up to. Now Goldberger has to try.

Controversies

Downtown Pains in Los Angeles

Welton Becket Associates. O'Melveny Meyer Building, Los Angeles. Rendering of project.

Joseph Giovannini
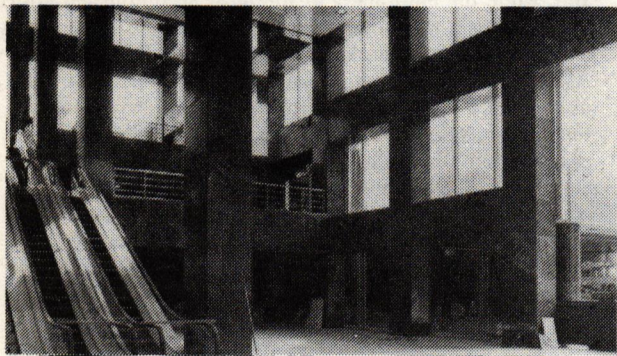
A.C. Martin and Associates. Wells Fargo Building, Los Angeles; 1982. Lobby atrium. (photo: Philip Kirkley)

Architects lament buildings—the great buildings that have been torn down; those that were never built. Some architects still cannot look at Hood and Howells' *Chicago Tribune* Tower without regretting Eliel Saarinen's second-place entry in that landmark 1922 competition. In Los Angeles, many architects cannot hear about progress on the $1.2-billion, mixed-use Bunker Hill project—won by a design team headed by Canadian architect Arthur Erickson—without missing the second-place Maguire Partners entry, designed by Cesar Pelli, Charles Moore, Lawrence Halprin, Frank Gehry, Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer, Ricardo Legorreta, Barton Myers, Deborah Sussman, and notable others.

The Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), who called the competition for the development of a prime 11.2-billion acre downtown site in 1979, chose the Erickson scheme two summers ago. The CRA conceded in the choosing that the Maguire proposal was a close second—well ahead of the three other proposals. But it was financially weaker than the Erickson scheme, which was backed by a strong consortium of developers, including Cadillac Fairview of Canada.

After the decision there were occasional rumors that negotiations between the hard-driving developers and the CRA were rocky, and that negotiations might collapse. Indeed, talks lasted nearly a year longer than anticipated, but the union between the L.A. City Council and Bunker Hill Associates was consummated this January. Construction of the project will proceed in three phases, to last the rest of the decade.

The document itself—reputed to be one of the most complex in real estate history—gives the developers leaseholds on city-owned land for a project as monumental as New York's Rockefeller Center. There will be 3.5 million s.f. of retail space; five acres of plaza, including a 200-foot-diameter amphitheater; a cineplex of 12 movie theaters, and more. As a condition of the original competition, all developers agreed to build a 100,000-s.-f. museum of contemporary art (gratis to the city: $20,000,000 to the developers). In a collateral selection of architects, Japanese architect Arata Isozaki was chosen to design the museum; his scheme will be presented in late March.

Despite the agreement and the grandness of the scale, rumors persist: the cautious are not bullish on spec office space coming onto the market in late 1985 or '86—especially if that space does not have the advance commitment of a major tenant. Erickson's California Plaza, as it is called, does not. Those who are pessimistic about the whole project are necessarily pessimistic about completion of the museum. Certainly the target date of the 1984 Olympics, given the delays so far, is already dubious. Nonetheless, the January signing commits the project to an optimistic start. In late March Erickson's L.A. office will present a refined version of the original scheme.
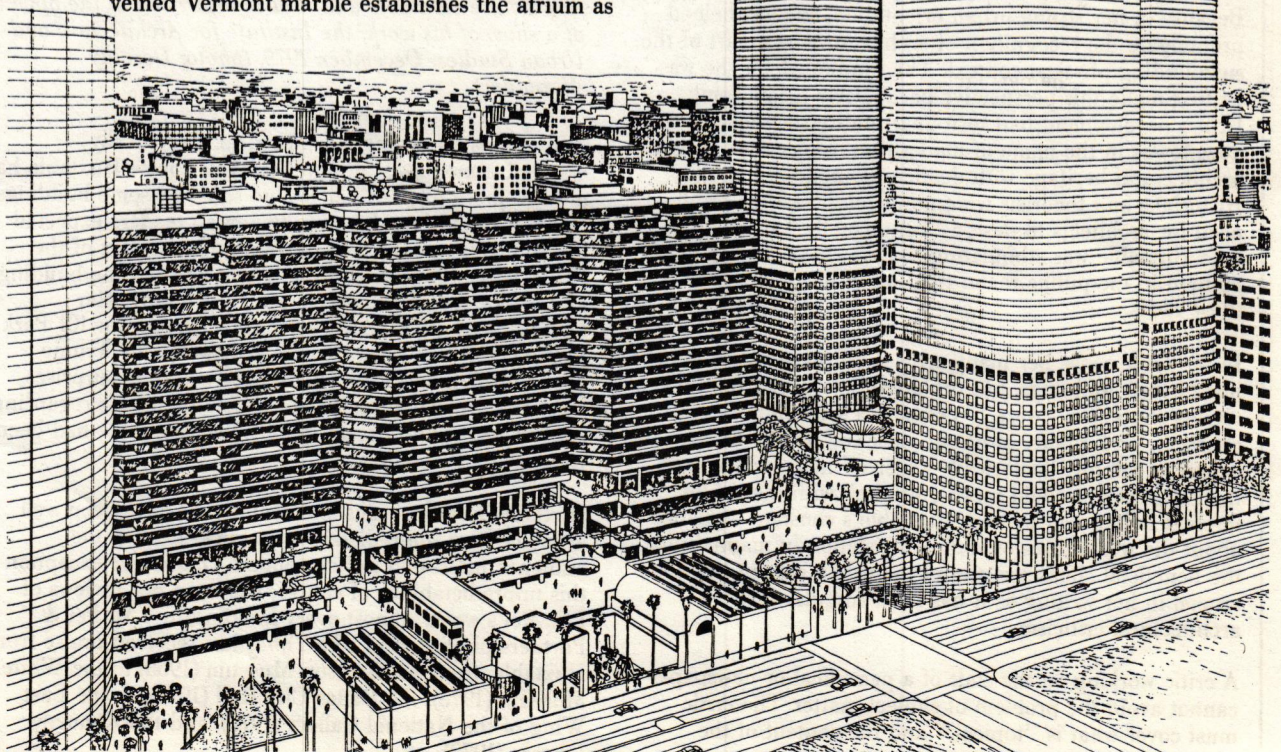
One hardly wants to break the goodwill and honeymoon cheer necessary for the success of such an ambitious project—and one pivotal for downtown L.A.—but certain features of the plans present some cause for sobriety. Arguments about what makes a city a city are perennial, and Los Angeles, with its casual sprawl, has always raised the question of whether or not a city lacking urbanity is truly urban. California Plaza seems to be like Los Angeles in its forthright ambiguity. The five acres of plaza, left over by the highrise "footprints," wash through the project with only a vague relationship to the existing street

A.C. Martin and Associates. Wells Fargo Building, Los Angeles; 1982. (photo: Philip Kirkley)

grid. The project sits on an L-shaped site of three consolidated downtown blocks, and lines one major avenue (Olive) with a hard-edge of condominiums, softly programmed at the street with lobbies. On Grand Avenue, open plazas alternate with blank museum walls or bank lobbies, none of which can sustain a pedestrian's interest down the avenue (a sunken sculpture court is the only real "place"). At a larger scale, however, the project does give a center to L.A. by its critical mass alone. Its tower will be the keystone of the new L.A. skyline.

That critical mass is complemented by even more development in adjacent or nearby projects. The same Maguire Partners who lost the Bunker Hill competition has under construction, across the street from California Plaza, a restaurant pavilion and a two-tower (54- and 44-story) office complex, by the San Francisco office of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. Next door, Welton Becket Associates has designed another (27-story) tower that, like the two Crocker Center towers, is faced in granite and has acutely angled corners; together, the three towers form a visual unit. Down the street, A.C. Martin Associates has finished a gleaming, stainless-steel, 48-story Wells Fargo tower with a heroically scaled, marble-plated open atrium at its base. The atrium takes pedestrians on escalators to the top of Bunker Hill—a steep transition. The dark-green, deeply veined Vermont marble establishes the atrium as

A.C. Martin Associates. 515 S. Figuroa Street, Los Angeles. Project rendering

the highrise's base, and gives the insubstantial tower the detail, decoration, color, and weight inherent in the marble. The almost pharaonic hall is certainly one of the best of L.A.'s few urban spaces.

The Wells Fargo atrium and the Crocker Center restaurant pavilion, fronted with shops, do give this newest section of downtown L.A some direct street support. But with 7 to 9 million s.f. (depending on which buildings are counted) underway or imminent, there will only be a total of twenty-five stores facing directly on the street. Much of the remaining commercial space is street-shy, on the far side of a plaza. Criticizing plazas in L.A. is tantamount to doubting palm trees, but they will be redundant on Bunker Hill, and especially unshaped around the point-tower highrise. With one or two exceptions, the new crop of Bunker Hill buildings will be weak at the street, though they will certainly merge with the existing highrise, to form a skyline profile particularly impressive from the freeway. L.A. will be Manhattanized yet—at least at the skyline, if not at the avenue.

California Plaza. A preliminary sketch perspective from Grand Avenue showing the hotel (left), three residential buildings (center), and office towers (right); in the foreground are the museum (MoCA) and pedestrian promenades.

Large-scale developments in L.A. and
N.Y.C. and no development in Cambridge
are all causing debate, discussion, and
dissent.

Fogg Off in Cambridge

Axonometric.

*James Stirling, Michael Wilford & Associates. Project for
the Fogg Museum, Harvard University, 1981.*

Perspective rendering.

James Stirling and Michael Wilford (photo: Jim Caldwell)
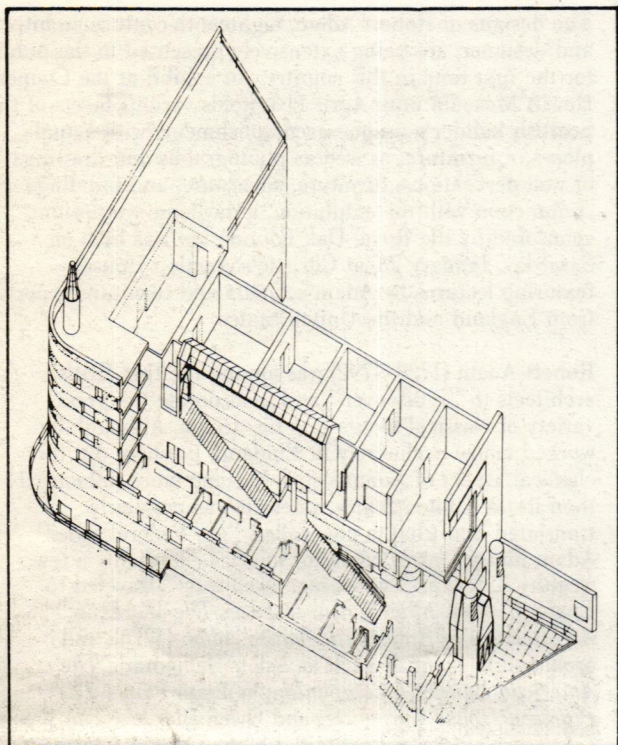
Eleni Constantine

Harvard University President Derek Bok threw the art
world into an uproar by canceling construction of a long-
planned $16.5-million addition to the University's Fogg
Museum, which functions both as Harvard's fine arts
department and a public museum. Architecture lost big as
well: the addition was designed by British architects James
Stirling, Michael Wilford & Associates, in association with
Perry, Dean, Stahl & Rogers. Indeed, an immediate and
unanimous outcry against the administration's action from
longtime supporters of the arts at Harvard, as well as
scholars and museum officials around the country, has
made clear that Harvard has lost not only a major work of
architecture and a much-needed teaching and museum
facility, but a great deal of credibility as well. Many think
it will undercut Harvard's future fundraising efforts and its
traditional preeminence in the fine arts field.

The decision made Bok and the University's governing
Corporation was unanimously condemned by the Harvard
Overseers' Visiting Committee to the Fogg, a distinguished
group of some thirty-five museum officials and benefactors
with major responsibility for the direction and planning of
the Fogg.

According to the Visiting Committee, millions of dollars
pledged to the addition have already been withdrawn
following Bok's decision; the Fogg claims that $11 million
in contributions will have to be returned to donors who
earmarked it for the new facility. Furthermore, Harvard's
main capital fund drive stands to lose substantial
contributions from patrons outraged by the sudden
cancellation. The Visiting Committee's denunciation of
Bok's action as economically unsound and culturally
insensitive certainly seems justified in light of the puzzling
and inadequate justifications offered for the decision. On
February 2, Bok explained that although almost the entire
sum needed to build and maintain the new wing had been
pledged, the University's governing Corporation feared
cost overruns during construction and questioned the
adequacy of the funds allocated for maintaining the
addition in the near future.

The administration's attitude seems incomprehensible: the
Committee, the Fogg staff, the Fine Arts Department, and
Stirling proceeded with great deliberation in order to
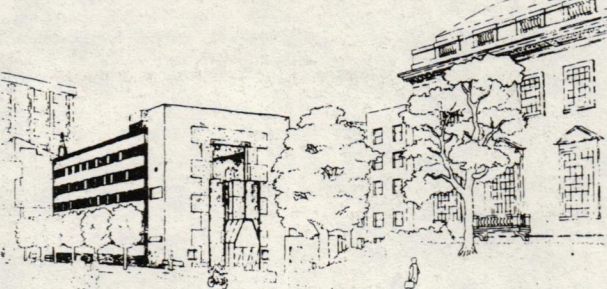
minimize these risks. As Bok admits, financial support is
not a problem at present; the project has been generously
supported by such art patrons as Arthur Sackler (who
reportedly gave $7.9 million); the Kresge, Kress, and
Lehman foundations; and Committee members. Why
cancel such a well-planned and generously funded project
at the last minute on the basis of such vague threats? The
Corporation's claimed fear of repeating its mistakes in the
recent building of a Medical Area Total Energy Plant
(MATEP), which exceeded original cost estimates of $50
million by about $180 million and aroused steadfast
opposition from the Cambridge community.

Furthermore, earlier this year, the Corporation pressed on
the Fogg the idea of a limited, one-time sale of Fogg art
works to finance the maintenance costs of the addition.
The suggestion, adopted by the Fogg with the utmost
reluctance, was decried by the New York-based Association
of Art and Museum Directors. Bok now cites the
Association's disapproval of this particular fundraising
maneuver to show that fundraising for the addition cannot
proceed at all. Compared with the medical plant, relatively
miniscule and uncertain cost increases are cited by the
Corporation as determinants—a possible rise in brick
costs, a request by Stirling for some $100,000 more in fees.

In the wake of Bok's decision, it became clear to most
observers that the administration has no faith in Stirling,
or in the committee that selected him after a one-year
search on the basis of his extensive track record with
university buildings in the U.K. and the U.S. George
Putnam, Corporation treasurer, attacked Stirling's
"general attitude," stating that the administration did not
feel Stirling could complete the project within the budget.
Supporters of the Fogg expansion feel this finding is
particularly outrageous, considering the consistent and
relatively successful efforts of the architect and Fogg
representatives to meet the increasingly restrictive
budgetary demands of the administration during the two
years since the project was initially approved. Almost as
outrageous are the administration's statements that some
"more practical" addition to the Fogg will be built within
the next few years. Planned by whom? With what funds?

Once bitten, twice shy—it's doubtful that the Fogg or the
Visiting Committee will be willing to put their own
prestige and credibility on the line to plan and fundraise
again.

Fogg rolls in again: As this issue went to press the *latest*
word is that Harvard University president Derek Bok may
reinstate plans to build the Fogg museum addition.
Harvard is currently talking to donors who will cover costs
of building as well as projected deficits. —**Ed.**

N.Y.C. Update

Portman Still Pending

On Thursday, February 11, Federal District Court Judge
Kevin T. Duffy came down on the side of the big wheels.
He dismissed the preservationist lawyers' accusations that
the Portman forces had used political influence in
obtaining a quick-as-a-wink Memorandum of Agreement
(MOA) for the Morosco Theater. Judge Duffy rejected the
arguments and said that they were based on "unfounded
speculation." The November 1981 decision of the Advisory
Council on Historic Preservation, the Judge ruled, "was
not tainted by White House pressure."

Judge Duffy, it would seem, used a very broad sweep of
the hand to dismiss these preservationist allegations. The
National Resources Defense Council lawyers had sworn
affidavits from several members and employees of the
Council, which stated clearly that Lyn Nofziger and James
Watt made telephone calls to Council members and said,
in as many words, that "either the Council rolls over on
the Portman or it is out of business tomorrow." If that
isn't pressure, what is?

Demolition was stayed under Judge Duffy's ruling pending
appeal. On Thursday, February 18—as this issue went to
press—Federal Appeals Court in Manhattan agreed to
hear the preservationist case for a new injunction on
Tuesday, February 23. "We have serious charges," said
Bruce Terris, the lawyer who has headed the theaters'
defense, "and they are being considered seriously by the
court." It appears likely that demolition of the theaters
would be forestalled until at least the end of February;
another action was issued in State Court that also blocked
demolition.

Other news relating to the Portman: Ken Halpern,
New York City's longtime director of Midtown Planning,
who did much to shepherd the Portman Project through
the city bureaucracy, has a new job: he'll be project
manager for a new hotel in Hong Kong—a hotel that is
being built by the Portman Organization. . . . The Portman
has the largest Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG)
ever awarded: $22.5 million. HUD recently announced that
the Action Grants program will be continued through fiscal
year 1983, after which time the $440-million program will
disappear into an urban development block grant as part
of the President's New Federalism. HUD also announced
that it would try to strengthen UDAG in the last year of its
existence by making sure that grants were not awarded to
projects that could have been funded completely by private
capital. One wonders whether a 50-story, 2020-room
convention hotel on Broadway between 45th and 46th
Streets would be funded under the new HUD regs.
—**Hugh Cosman**

St. Bart's Approval

Bishop Paul Moore, Jr., of the Episcopalian Diocese of
New York has approved the leasing of land
for construction of the St. Bart's tower that will supplant
its community house (see *Skyline*, November 1981, p. 6;
December, p. 3; and February 1982, p. 4). Since Bishop
Moore has the last word on behalf of the clients,
presumably St. Bartholomew's Church will now take the
Edward Durell Stone Associates design to the New York
City Landmarks Preservation Commission for a Certificate
of Appropriateness. There are indications that the
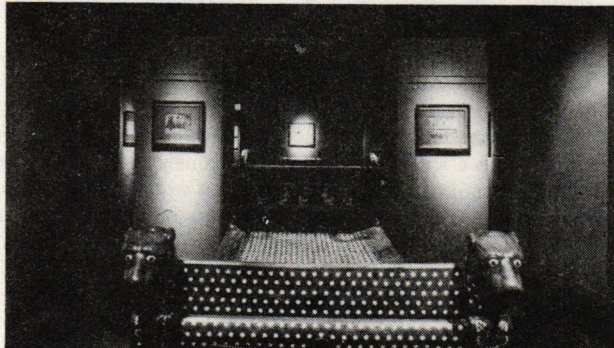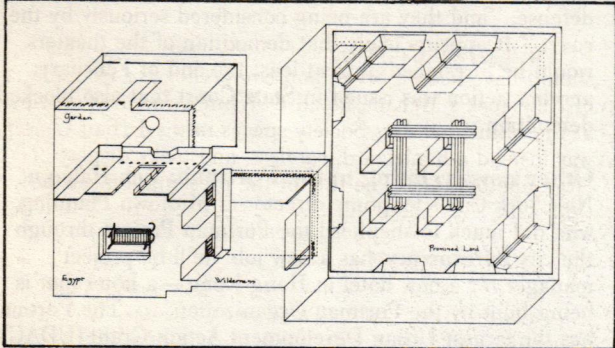certificate will be denied, but the hearings will be hot and
heavy.

Galleries/Symposia

Victorian/Egyptian Installation at Jewish

Lawrence Kutnicki

J. James Tissot: Biblical Paintings. *Installation at the Jewish Museum by Lynne Breslin, David Zung, and Dale Furman; 1982. (photo: Lawrence Kutnicki and Lynne Breslin)*

The day bed here is one of the few pieces of furniture not by Bugatti—attribution is unestablished.

The handsome installation at the Jewish Museum of 160 biblical illustrations by J. James Tissot completed between 1885 and 1902 raises serious questions about the nature of exhibition design, especially in our so-called post-modern, historicist climate. The exhibition's curator is Norman L. Kleeblatt; the installation is by architects Lynne Breslin, Dale Furman, and David Zung.

The Tissot installation is organized *en suite,* referring to the narrative and geography of the Hebrew Bible. One enters, beneath a cantilevered trellis, into the first room, which represents the Garden of Eden and the pre-Egypt period. The major wall of this deep-forest-green room is an imposing three-dimensional abstraction of an Egyptian temple facade that forms the entry into the second room, where the Bondage in the Land of Egypt is depicted in a series of paintings.

To the left, two formidable square columns form a gateway into the third room, which deals with the Children of Israel's passage through the Red Sea and their forty years of wandering in the Wilderness. Both the second and third rooms are painted a stone ochre. At the far end of this room—which is, appropriately, more of a large corridor—one passes to either side of a wall into a fourth, earthen-red, large, square room, in which paintings illustrating the Promised Land are displayed. In the center of this final room, portrayals of the Prophets are hung on the four sides of each of four square columns supporting a square pergola. This form becomes the spatial—and perhaps also the spiritual—center of the exhibition, referring architecturally to the expository activity of the Prophets. Finally, furthering the allusion to a boudoir or a salon, wonderfully evocative "Egyptoid" furniture, most of it by Carlo Bugatti (1856-1940), has been carefully placed in the center of each of the middle rooms and along the periphery of the last. Most of this late Victorian furniture was designed and built in Italy during the same period that Tissot completed these illustrations. The installation reflects a critical stance that is serious, yet distinctly satirical. The underlying criticism in the design

concerns the "proper" place for the 160 narrative paintings, in light of Tissot's view of the Near East through a Victorian lens. Illustrating a consciousness about the use and reuse of historical images and motifs, the placement of an exhibition in a "landscape" of Victorian salons, gardens, and ancient Egyptian architecture makes the point. At the same time, history is relegated to a cartoon-like recollection of abstracted tableaus. Perhaps Tissot performed these same transformations less consciously in creating his biblical illustrations. The pseudo-Egyptian furniture, beautiful as it is, becomes an unfortunate metaphor for a superficial infatuation, both with Egyptians and with the Victorian period.

All of the layers of commentary implied in the installation subtly point to Tissot's less-than-prominent position in late nineteenth-century art. The installation further suggests that Tissot's scholarship—in spite of his adventurous tour of the then-primarily unexcavated Near East—remains somewhat imperfect, if not wholly interpretive. Thus the installation, often delightful and playful, presents an uneasy synthesis of intent: it is evocative of a Victorian vernacular while presenting anecdotal information incidental to the illustrations; yet it implicitly criticizes Tissot's reductive borrowing of imagery belonging to an epoch and place removed from his own nineteenth-century European experience.

The designers of the "mise-en-scène" installation, through the caricaturizing rendering of Victorian settings and imagery of the ancient Near East, reinforce a simplified perception of these periods. This has generated a highly stylized setting for the art that provides an appropriate analogue to Tissot's methodology and narrative reincarnations: Here present-day designers are viewing the late-nineteenth-century European observer's views of ancient biblical times through his own nineteenth-century perspective of the Near East. In the end, the problem of the exhibition is the strength of the installation—for it diverts our attention away from the works themselves—which are rich in allusions—to the manner in which the artifacts are shown.

Adam at Cooper-Hewitt

Peter L. Donhauser

The designs of Robert Adam, eighteenth-century architect and designer, are being extensively presented to the public for the first time in this country. An exhibit at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum until April 11 unfolds various facets of this Scottish builder's unique accomplishments with actual pieces of furniture, as well as photographs and drawings of wall decorations, furniture, silverware, and buildings. In conjunction with the exhibition, a day-long symposium sponsored by the Royal Oak Foundation was held on Saturday, January 23, at Christie's Auction House, featuring lectures by Adam scholars and furniture experts from England and the United States.

Robert Adam (1728-1792) was among the first British architects to "rediscover" and incorporate the great variety of classical motifs into his design. Although he worked amost exclusively in England, nowhere did the classical aspect of Adam's style become more influential than in the United States, where it was popularly translated into what is now called "the Federal style." Adam himself never came to America—and only a few wealthy American "gentlemen architects" traveled to England—but Adam's own treatise, *The Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam* (1773), and architecture manuals such as Asher Benjamin's *The American Builder's Companion*; William Pain's *The Practical House Carpenter*; and Owen Biddle's *The Young Carpenter's Assistant* exhibited his designs and forms to American builders who then adapted Adam's details to their own particular needs. There was one notable exception in their knowledge of Adam's work: color. William Pierson, the architectural historian, postulates that because most Adam designs were made known to Americans through books and manuals, all the American architects saw were the linear contours of decorations, which lacked the proper color scheme.

Thus Adam-style buildings in America became notable for exteriors of two-dimensional linearity and geometric simplicity, such as Samuel McIntire Gardner's Pingree House of 1805 in Salem, Massachusetts. In England, however, Adam's style was distinguished by the adventurous synthesis—in the interior—of colors, shapes, and various motifs from antiquity and the Renaissance. Adam's neoclassical exteriors were not entirely new, relying in part on earlier examples by Colin Campbell, Lord Burlington and William Kent, who also had borrowed from Palladian motifs. Adam's interiors, however, were freer of a rigid dependence on tradition. With creative candor, Adam experimented in both the decorative and planning aspects of building, but he kept the language of classicism itself—that is, the orders and the proportions. Adam reinterpreted and expanded on the meaning of classicism.

The show at the Cooper-Hewitt, curated by Elaine Evans Dee and David Revere McFadden, portrays how Adam went about this. Pilasters embellished with nontraditional scrolled patterns frame bookcases. A coffered, Pantheon-inspired half-dome crowns a hall chimney piece. In addition, Adam infused many of his designs with Renaissance grotesquerie and mythological figures, such as sphinxes, unicorns, griffins, and centaurs. His ceiling drawings for Mamhead House in Devonshire, which he submitted from 1769 until the 1780s, but which were never realized, are particularly stunning in their combination of these motifs within a colored geometrical framework.

Beyond the decoration itself, Adam considered the character of the room in relation to its application. For example, he believed that statues were appropriate for dining rooms and halls, yet he adorned private rooms with tapestries. This notion of coordinating the design of a room with its function also extended to Adam's planning. The proper placement and disposition of rooms in a house had been a particular concern of French architects and theoreticians in the 1750s and may, in fact, have influenced Adam's thinking. In any case, his willingness to experiment with room shapes marked another departure from the more rigid symmetry of his Palladian predecessors.

James Adam was primarily a draftsman, and played a secondary role in the execution of his brother's designs. Robert Adam's father, William Adam, was an architect of some note who introduced the younger Adam to the profession between 1743 and 1748, when the elder Adam
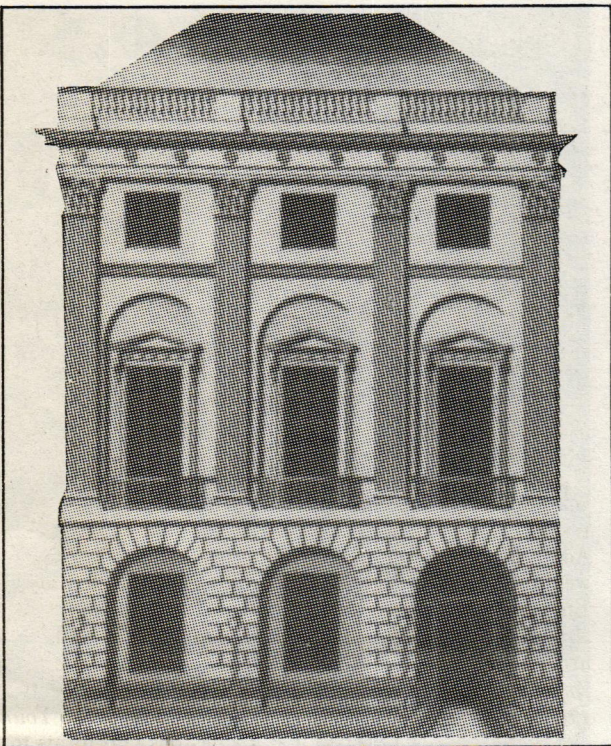
Robert Adam. Osterley Park, Middlesex; c. 1775.

Robert Adam. Elevation of the Principle Front, Sir Watkin Williams, Wynn House. Plate from The Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam.

McKim, Mead & White in New York

Peter L. Donhauser

McKim, Mead & White. Morgan Library, New York; 1902 (photo: Ezra Stoller/ESTO)

McKim, Mead & White. The New York Herald Building; 1894.

McKim, Mead & White. Rendering of the Morgan Library, New York; 1902.

died. However, Robert Adam's stay in Italy between 1755 and 1758 had an equally strong influence on his later work. Under the tutelage of Charles-Louis Clerisseau and Giovanni Battista Piranesi, Adam explored Renaissance models of classicism as well as the Roman ruins and the beautiful landscape surrounding them. Even in the realm of interior design, Piranesi seems to have exerted an influence on Adam. Many of Adam's chimney-piece drawings closely resemble those pictured in Piranesi's treatise, *Diverse Manners of Ornamenting Chimney Pieces* (1779).

The drawings at the Cooper-Hewitt clearly represent a man endowed with much more than a simple desire to rework the classical vocabulary. Supplementing his classicism, the theme of the picturesque became for Adam—particularly as he grew older—a Romantic ideal in building and nature. One sees this, for example, in a series of river landscapes that he drew between 1777 and 1787: the views are often looking upwards at a fictitious castle with uneven turrets that mirror the undulating cliffs around it. All the elements of the work appear to shine with a sort of misty pastel light. Ironically, in contrast to Adam's popularly recognized neoclassic designs, such moody scenes as these preoccupied him in the final years of his life, and were reflected in many of his later renderings for castles, both fictitious and real. The full range of Robert Adam's talents in design—the ability to depict everything from a Gothic tower to Etruscan wall motifs—is represented in the Cooper–Hewitt exhibit in one way or another.

At the January 23 symposium sponsored by the Royal Oak Foundation, University of Delaware historian Damie Stillman explored Adam's early work by tracing the development of the "new classical" interests in England. This style, whose main proponents were J. Stuart, William Chambers, and Adam, manifested itself—according to Stillman—more readily in garden architecture and interior decoration, since these aspects of design were both less expensive and less visible. On the exterior of a country manor or a townhouse, deviations in taste and style were not good gambles for the patron either financially or socially.

William Pierson, professor Emeritus at Williams College, pointed to the essentially visual rather than structural nature of Adam's design. The play of line and the balance of horizontals and verticals added "delicacy, grace, and gaiety" to the designs (in Adam's words), which, Pierson postulated, create an interesting parallel with the ordered rhythms of the music of the period. Playing a piece by Haydn, Pierson compared the music's phrasing with the segmented yet unified rhythm of Adam's decorative panels. The tribute seemed fitting.

The number of completed buildings in the United States by the firm of McKim, Mead & White is immense, even by today's standards—close to one thousand in all. For many other architects practicing at the turn of the century, such prolific success was unheard of. Some of this work was the subject of two recent exhibitions, one at the Pierpont Morgan Library, the other at the Municipal Arts Society.

Though more limited in scope, by far the better of the two was the exhibit commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Morgan. The curator of the exhibit, William Voelke, presented an impressive set of studies for the original Library building and for the various decorative murals and sculptures of mythological figures adorning the interior. Unfortunately, the number of architectural drawings presented was small, owing, first of all, to Voelke's desire to limit the exhibit to those drawings that elucidated stages in the building process, rather than to include numerous technical drawings. In addition, the Morgan actually owns few drawings by the firm, and many of the architectural drawings exhibited were loaned by the New-York Historical Society. Finally, the space available at the Morgan for the exhibition was small.

However, the show did feature a large plaster model, measuring about three by five feet, of the building's facade, as well as many documents that indicated Morgan's own interest and role in the building's conception, such as the letter from J.P. Morgan to Charles McKim specifically requesting the use of "Habirshaw Red Core wiring and no other" for the Library. Morgan commissioned the building in 1902 to accommodate his ever-growing collection of rare and valuable books (the number of books in his original collection is not known, but the collection has not grown enormously since 1902, and at present the number of books is 150,000). The large brownstone adjacent to the Library site, in which Morgan lived (and which was later torn down for an expansion of the Library), simply wouldn't do.

Although Morgan rejected earlier designs—one by Whitney Warren, and a Palladian villa by Charles McKim, both of which were shown in this exhibit—he finally settled on McKim's severe High Renaissance structure, which promised to be almost as solid and secure as Morgan's financial empire. Based on the design of a Roman villa building in 1548 by Annibale Lippi, the rich interiors, as indicated in the exhibit, also borrowed from high-minded sources: the floor pattern for the entrance rotunda came from the floors of the Villa Pia in the Vatican, and the design for the side vaults of the rotunda's ceiling owe much to Raphael's "Stanza della Segnatura," also in the Vatican.
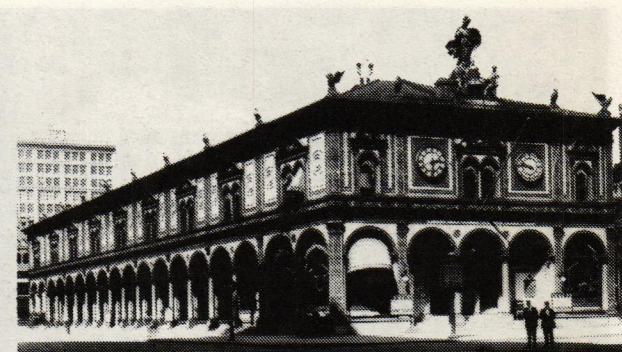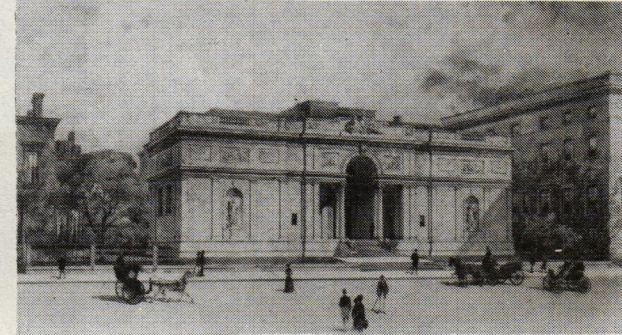
In contrast to the precision of the Morgan show, what should have been a broad and comprehensive examination of New York's McKim, Mead & White structures on view at the Municipal Arts Society spaces in the Urban Center was instead a haphazard, careless, and tacky display of large photographs. The title of the presentation set the tone with the somewhat awkward proclamation: "McKim, Mead & White ... There!" But after this, the first photograph with which the visitor was presented was that of a lamppost in front of Low Memorial Library at Columbia University. The label below the photo read "low Memorial Library." There was no mention—let alone a drawing or a photo—of the great planning and design scheme the firm had undertaken for the university. Of course, the introductory text of the exhibit warned us about such disappointments: "If we missed your favorite building, don't cry, go visit." Fine. But is it not a reasonable assumption to expect a show like this to bring together at least some photographs of the architects' major works? Perhaps it would have been better if the organizers of the exhibit had limited themselves to drawings and photos of important works that have been destroyed or greatly altered.

The exhibit, which was directed by Michael George and sponsored by Classical America, did present some buildings that have been lost. The most notable were Stanford White's zestful part-North-Italian-Gothic, part-Spanish, 1891 Madison Square Garden; the *New York Herald* Building of 1892-95; and, of course, the original Pennsylvania Station of 1909-10, modeled on the Baths of Caracalla in Rome. But even these presentations were hampered by a careless, arbitrary organization. On one wall, for example, were two photos of the *Herald* Building; two more photos of the same building were across the room on another wall.

McKim, Mead & White were undoubtedly the greatest practitioners of conscious eclecticism in both civic and private realms of building. This reputation still does not excuse one silly photograph in the exhibit: The portraits of McKim Mead & White were superimposed on the torsos of Lincoln, Washington and Roosevelt at Mt. Rushmore, so that the three architects, the "greatest turn-of-the-20th-century interpreters of classicism" could now join Thomas Jefferson, the "greatest turn-of-the-19th-century interpreter of classicism."

McKim, Mead & White helped establish how New York City was perceived in the eyes of the world by creating an architecture that was no longer provincial or picturesque, but powerful and provocative in the noblest historical sense. In the Morgan show, one at least got a distilled sense of this process.

Notes & Comment

Quiz: Do You Know Your Skyscrapers?

A

B

C
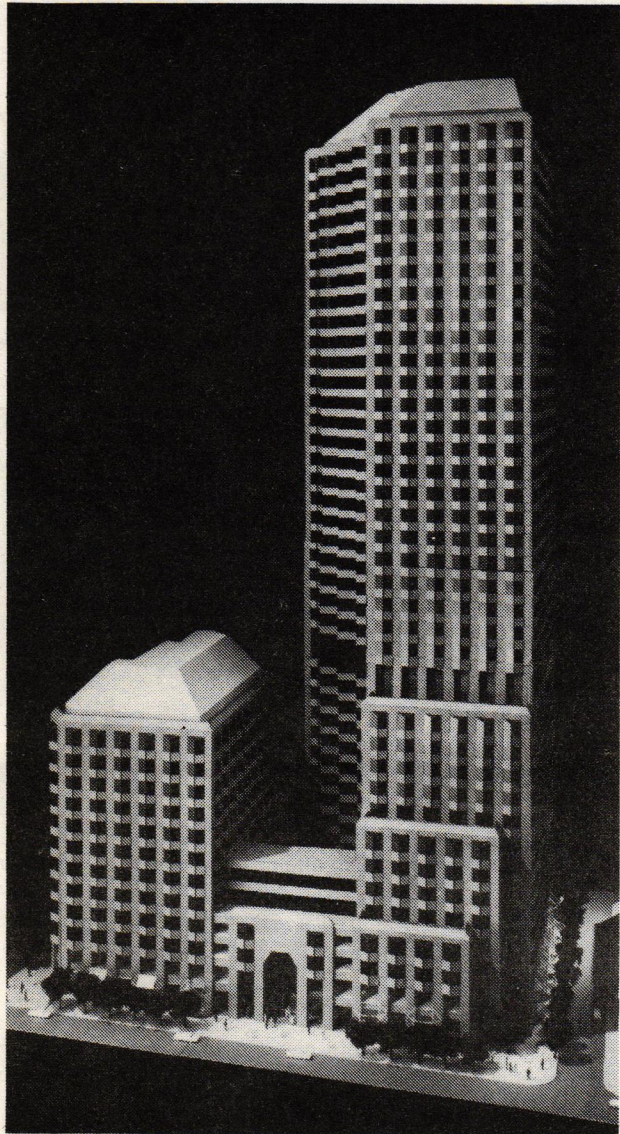
Midtown Zoning Progress

The Midtown zoning revisions (discussed in *Skyline*, October 1981, pp. 5–7) are presently making their way through the city planning procedures: Community boards have now debated their points; and the City Planning Commission hearings are taking place.

Most of the criticism leveled at the new zoning scheme at a recent city hearing focused on specific issues regarding mandated street-wall heights and specific urban design components, such as plazas. Concern was also expressed about the boundaries: The Clinton community is understandably worried about what the West Side F.A.R. of 21.6 will do to its district.

The "controversial" two-tier scheme for establishing bulk and configurations of towers is not meeting much resistance so far. The City Planning Department, meanwhile, has contracted Kwartler/Jones—who, along with Davis Brody, consulted initially on the new bulk regulations—to execute the computer program and scoring of the second-tier regulations. The computer setup will make it easier for developers and architects to determine how much daylight and sky a proposed tower shape will block.

Although some developers and architects have questioned whether the 21.6 F.A.R. proposed for west midtown will be high enough to lure the office and hotel market from the East Side, it looks as if interest on the West is going full steam ahead. The Equitable Insurance Company at 51st Street and Seventh Avenue has finished assembling about two-thirds of its block, and, with a long-range expansion plan in mind, is reportedly investigating the new zoning allowances with its architect, Edward Larrabee Barnes.
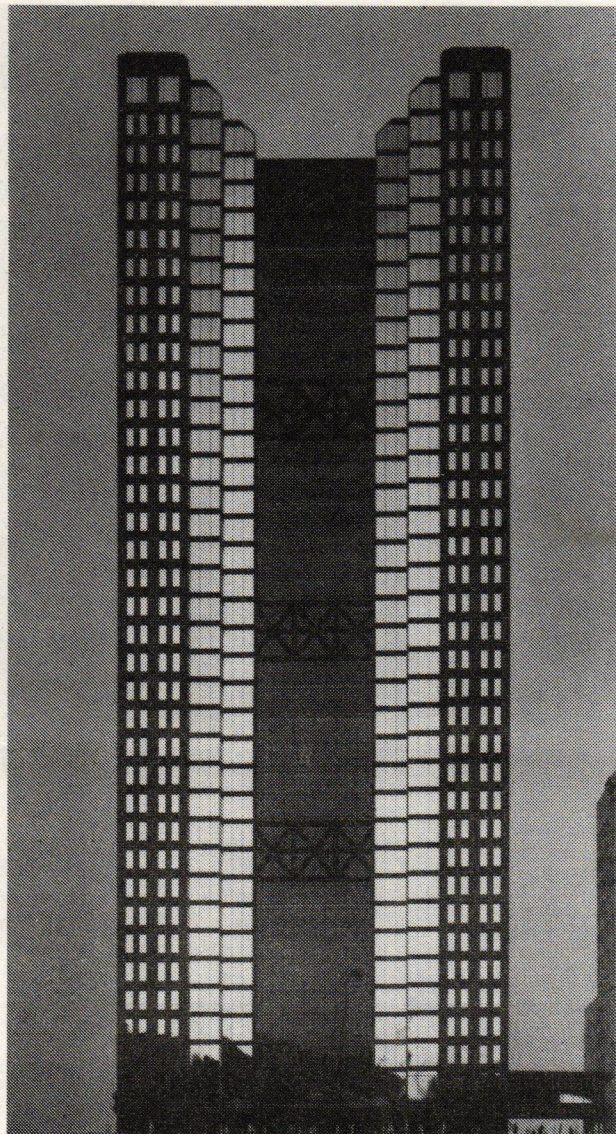
Prix de Rome

Skyline would like to congratulate the recipients of this year's **Prix de Rome** for independent study at the American Academy in Rome. Three awards were made to younger architects for one year's study. These went to **Celia Ledbetter** of Atlanta; to **James Timberlake**, who works for Venturi, Rauch & Scott Brown in Philadelphia; and—the Steedman Award, sponsored by Washington University—to **John McDonald** of SOM in San Francisco. Four mid-career fellowship awards for six months' study were made as well. Three of these, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, were given to **Stanley Abercrombie, Eugene Kupper,** and **Barbara Stauffacher Solomon.** The fourth, sponsored by the Graham Foundation, was awarded to **Tod Williams.**

Dancing Sets

One of the most talked-about theater sets of the season is on view in the Broadway production of *Dreamgirls*. The set, executed by scenic designer **Robin Wagner**—who did *A Chorus Line, On The Twentieth Century,* and, most
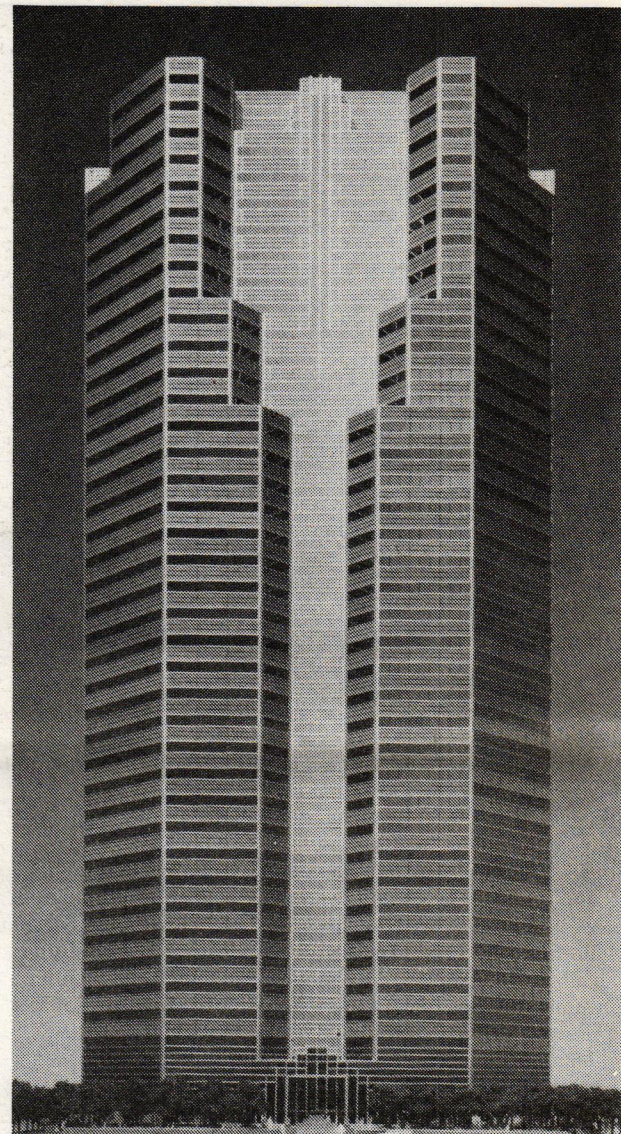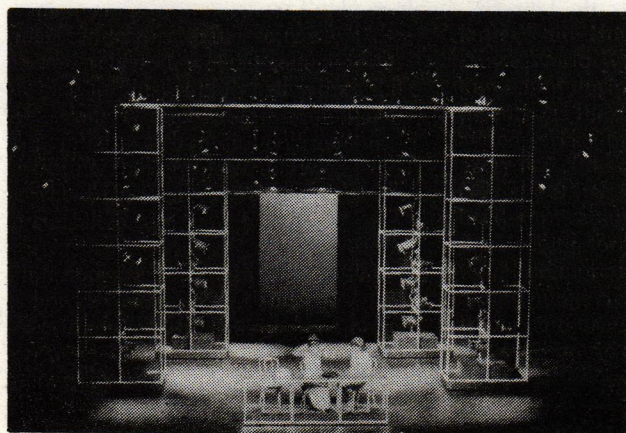
recently, the Metropolitan Opera's production of *The Barber of Seville*—is continually twirling, moving, flashing, and blinking across the stage as it shapes and molds the different spaces for each "number." Yet the set, which Wagner "choreographed" with lighting designer Tharon Musser and the director/choreographer Michael Bennett, uses only basic, portable rock show equipment: four light towers holding spotlights, two moving catwalks, and some automated winches. The moving towers and catwalks, along with the computerized lighting, through which the performers dance and sing, has made this "architecture" the show-stopper. In fact, some of us think it is the best thing about the show.

Sounding Off and On at Lincoln Center

Neither **I.M. Pei** nor **Cyril Harris** has any comment about *The New York Times* report of their "dispute" over the design of the Vivian Beaumont Theater renovation that is currently delaying construction. According to latest reports, they are "working out their differences" and the theater will open early 1983.

Meanwhile across the plaza, Harris is also working with **Philip Johnson and John Burgee** on the acoustical improvement of the New York State Theater. Renovation is going on as the New York City Opera season continues. A thin membrane of plaster will soon be poured over a ceiling grid to replace the mesh one that allows sound to get lost instead of being deflected to the audience. Wall diffusers are also to be installed over the original concave surfaces to spread the sound more evenly. Meanwhile, the State Theater will be closed in July and August of 1982 so that the orchestra pit may be expanded and a new proscenium with petal-like sound diffusers constructed. If all this sounds complicated, it is evidently nothing compared to the Beaumont renovation, which involves the entire restructuring of everything except the rear wall and balcony.

Dreamgirls set by Robin Wagner, lighting by Tharon Musser. (photo: Martha Swope)

Do you know your architects? and who *is* that man in the middle?
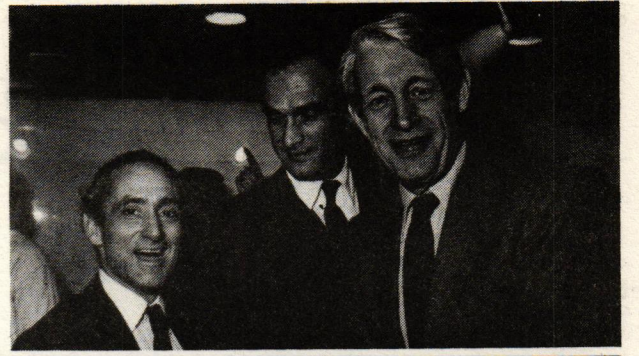
Sic Transit Gloria Urbani?

Scanning the spring 1982 collections, you will discover that building design appears in all sorts of shapes today, but in one size only—tall. Some of the latest creations to come off the boards of a number of firms will take the unsuspecting observer by surprise.

Below (from left to right) you will notice a few of the tall buildings now planned, under construction, or even just completed. We would like the perceptive reader to identify the architect/firm and location of all six before publication of the next issue (letters should be postmarked before April 1). The first respondent to identify them correctly will win an autographed copy of Paul Goldberger's *The Skyscraper*. [Hint: None is by Philip Johnson and John Burgee.]

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In the People's Eye

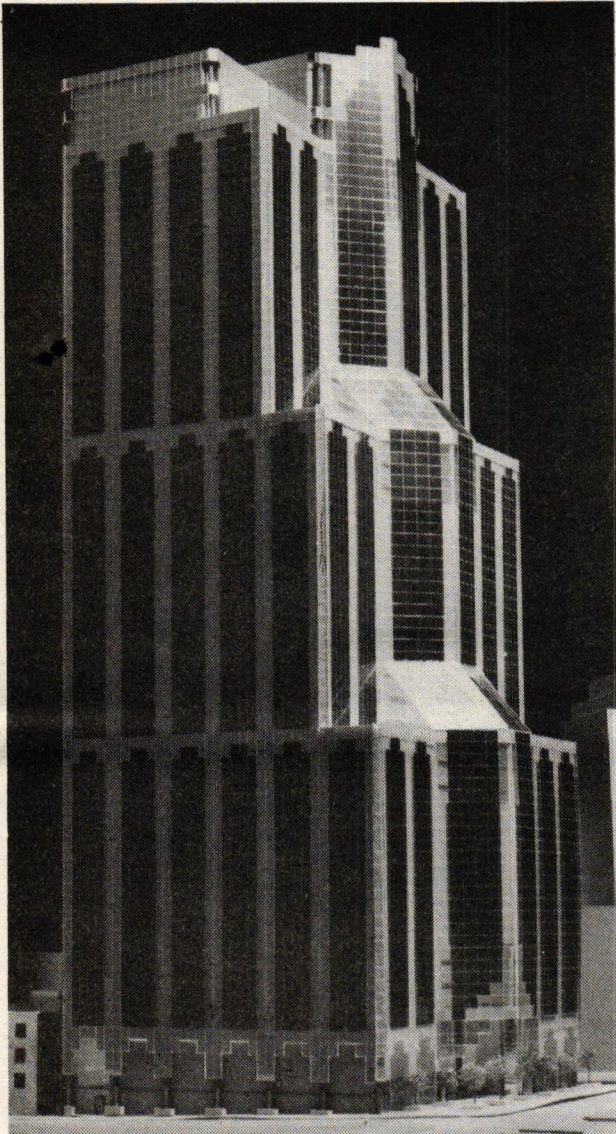Having planned it for about a year, *People* magazine finally ran their piece on **Michael Graves** in their February 8 issue. Not only did they say all the usual nice things about the 47-year-old architect and Princeton professor, they also had the first picture we've seen of his **Portland** building.

In a photo that makes Graves look for all the world like a cement contractor (knee-level shot aimed up a roll of drawings, but no hard hat) stands the cube with character


Michael Graves and his Portland Building as seen in People, *February 8, 1982.*
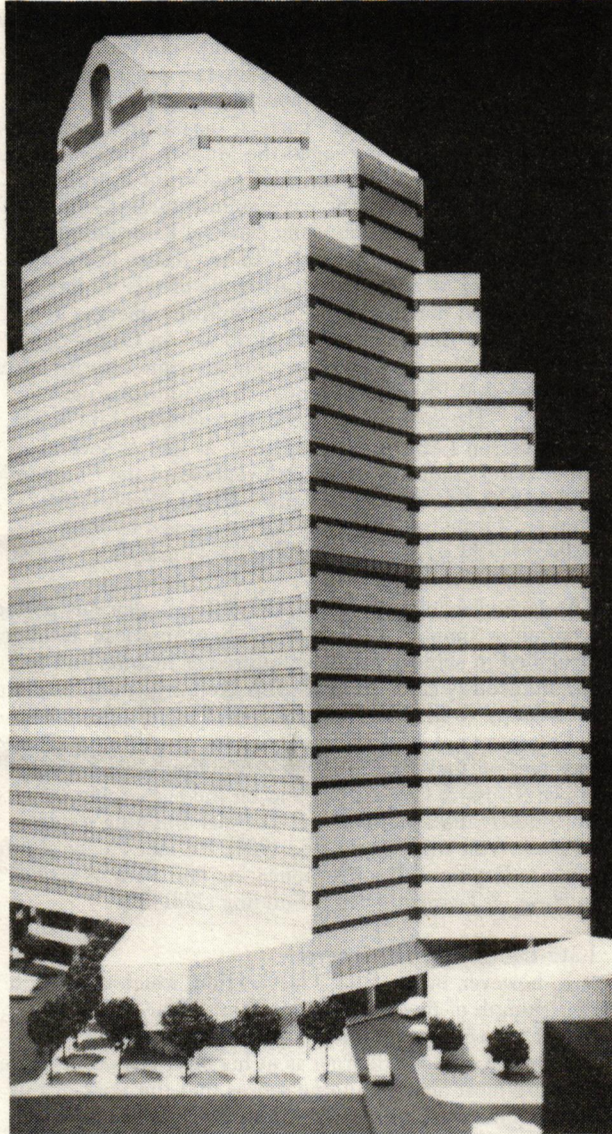
—as yet *sans* most windows, "Portlandia," rooftop temples, and paint. Beyond that, *People,* did not really do justice to the debate surrounding the building: It published quotes of local architect John Storrs ("This is a dog of a building, a turkey!"), and former MIT Dean Pietro Belluschi (". . . oversized Christmas package. . . . perhaps in Atlantic City or Las Vegas, but not in Portland.") as the lights of the opposition, along with seeming support from Paul Goldberger ("If there is any building of our time that appears to speak with a firm self-assurance, it is this one.") Meanwhile, *Skyline* heard that Colin Rowe called Graves to say how much better *he* thought the building looked without all that color. It will get painted anyway, when it stops raining in the Northwest.

. . . . other Gravesiana: the Ploczek ("keystone") house is almost finished—evidently *Architectural Digest* has the exclusive—and the wildlife study center in Liberty State Park began construction last week.

People in the News

At *Casabella,* **Vittorio Gregotti** has taken over as editor from **Tomas Maldonado** starting with the February issue. Gregotti intends to turn *Casabella* back into a magazine about buildings. . . . Another showroom to scan at NEOCON this year will be the one for Hauserman. This will be **Arata Isozaki**'s first completed project in this country. (His design for the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art is expected to be released by the end of March.) A Hauserman exec said only that it was "pure Isozaki"; the design is not yet complete. . . . Construction begins this month on Columbia University's new Computer Science Complex by **Kliment & Halsband**. The two-story building will sit on the Engineering Terrace on the University campus at 119th Street and Amsterdam Avenue . . . Entering the decorator battlefield: **Robert A.M. Stern** was asked by *House & Garden* magazine to do a studio room for them using a new line of Baker furniture;
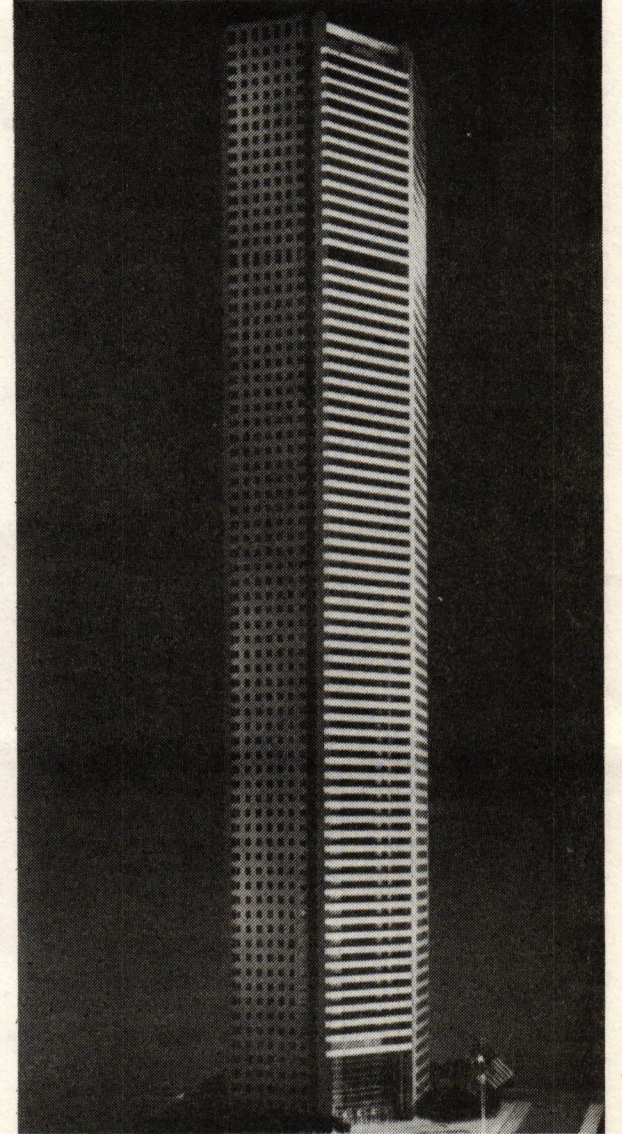
it will appear in *H&G*'s May issue. . . **Edward Larrabee Barnes,** of Madison Avenue fame, was presented with a Mayor's Award for Arts and Culture by Ed Koch and the Commission for Cultural Affairs of the City of New York . . . Architect and industrial designer **George Nelson** has been named chairman of the 39th International Conference of Design at Aspen. The theme of this year's ICDA—in Aspen from June 13 to 18—is "The Prepared Professional."

Rockefeller Anniversary Off

Canceled: The 50th Anniversary Exhibit of Rockefeller Center scheduled for the Urban Center from March 22 to April 14. No one knows the reason, but Rockefeller Center pulled the show after it found out that the exhibit would follow on the heels of the Municipal Art Society exhibit "Landmarks That Aren't" (on view through March 11). One photograph of Rock Center is in the current show and it seems that Rockefeller Center did not want to focus too much attention on its non-Landmark status—and, of course, its eligibility. The show, to have been mounted by MAS, would have included the original color renderings by John Wenrich for the Center and an original scale model of the RCA building. In its place, the MAS, spearheading resistance to the proposed St. Bart's tower, is installing a show on that scheme.

Arrivals on the Book Lists

Raymond Hood. . . . Essay by Robert A.M. Stern with Thomas P. Catalano. Published by The Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies and Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., New York, March 1982. 128 pages, 240 illustrations, 8 pages in color. $18.50, soft-cover.

The Enchanted Garden. Bryan Holme. Oxford University Press, New York, March 1982. 96 pages, illustrated. $14.95.

More Than Form

On Paul Goldberger's The Skyscraper

Michael Parley

To understand man-made phenomena, we need a special kind of history, perhaps one unfamiliar to us throughout our schooling. Take the following example: a person walking to work one morning strolls by the corner drygoods shop, on which a sign has been tacked that reads "Lost Our Lease—Building Coming Down." Soon all the windows are tinned, the wreckers appear, and, two years later, in place of several four-, five- and six-story buildings, there is a 50-story, 900,000-s.-f. tower with a peak pedestrian flow of 4000 per hour. Why does this happen? How does it happen?

The building process is born of economics; it begins when a developer figures out that the potential rental revenues of a new building will cover property acquisition, financing and construction costs, and still leave an amount that exceeds the revenue potential of competing investment opportunities. This overly glib encapsulization makes the process simple, but, of course, it is not. And it is in discovering which factors or combination of factors tip the balance of the build/no-build equation that certain information becomes the most interesting. Some of these factors might be: the state of the national and regional economies; the nature of the local transportation system; the conditions of local market supply-and-demand; the relationship to desirable local geographic features or elements, such as proximity to a park; the perceived or actual quality of building services and image; and the economies of new construction techniques that reduce building costs or enhance efficiency—all of which are factors that cannot be seen simply by looking at the building's skin. But they are absolutely essential to the understanding of highrise buildings.

Brief Pleasures

This brings us to the subject of this discussion: Paul Goldberger's new book, The Skyscraper. Those who read the architectural criticism and commentary in The New York Times will not be surprised to hear that the book is a pleasure to read; they will also quickly discern that it is very handsome, and lavishly illustrated. Here Goldberger has focused his talents on a concise dissertation on the skyscraper. It is not the definitive work on the subject, but in spite of its brevity, the book does not fail to be interesting or delightful.

Despite its considerable virtues, however, The Skyscraper is not the book it could—and should—have been. When a good writer also researches and interprets history, the potential exists to achieve profound results, as Robert Caro did with The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York (Knopf, 1974). Of course, Mr. Goldberger did not intend to prepare the authoritative or interpretive history of the skyscraper, and, in fact, he specifically states in his introduction that the book "is a history and commentary on the skyscraper," but that "it is commentary more than it is history." Fair enough. The commentary-above-history disclaimer, however, expiates only certain sins; the errors and omissions here cannot be overlooked if the word "history" is to be applied at all seriously to this book by concerned readers. And if the text is commentary, certainly we could expect a thorough interpretation from Goldberger, who is—at least as we have come to know him—a skilled journalist and perceptive critic. But we do not get enough of either straight or interpretive history.

In The Skyscraper, Goldberger describes and analyzes the changes and conflicts in architectural styling of skyscrapers in three periods of skyscraper development: the formative years prior to World War I; the "golden" years between the wars; and the modern, post–World War II era.

Early Highrises Reconsidered

In the first section, after an opening chapter—one of the more interesting chapters—in which he describes how early highrise buildings around the turn of the century

strained the prevalent professional and public perceptions of buildings and city space, Goldberger discusses the differences in highrise design in the two preeminent centers of the earliest skyscraper construction: first, Chicago's philosophically "correct" aesthetic expression of tall buildings, which presaged the Modern Movement; and second, New York's "theatrical," exuberant historicism. Goldberger penetrates the era's architectural discourse: To ornament or not? To adopt the classical base-shaft-capital separation, or the Gothic style? To emphasize horizontal expression of facade or vertical? Some of this we have heard before; much we have not. Sullivan emerges a favorite, and Burnham and Root do well in Goldberger's evaluation. New York stylings undergo some scrutiny when he states that "historicist tendencies achieved a new extreme." He then refers to the Metropolitan Life Tower by Napoleon LeBrun & Sons (1909), as well as several other towers that were oversized replicas of the Campanile of Saint Mark's Square in Venice. Frank Woolworth's Gothic "Cathedral of Commerce" designed by Cass Gilbert (1913) receives deservedly ample praise.

The second section deals with the difficult, glorious period from approximately 1920 to 1941, when American architects struggled to achieve greater and greater heights and to simultaneously come to grips with the burgeoning Modern Movement. Goldberger's discussion of the designs of some of our more notable tall neighbors are great fun, such as passages on the General Electric Building's radio wave crown (Cross & Cross, 1931) and on the early schemes (fortunately discarded) for the Chrysler Building's spire (William Van Alen, completed 1930). He takes us on dutiful visits to Raymond Hood's pioneering late work as well as to Howe & Lescaze's PSFS Building (1931–32).

Late-Blooming Highrises

It is, however, in the book's last section, which deals with the triumph of modernism after World War II and its recent transformation (including buildings not yet completed), that Goldberger is at his best. His observations here are most acute, and one senses that the work of this period motivated him to write The Skyscraper.

In the last three chapters comprising this section, he recounts the assimilation of the International Style into highrise design, only to be abandoned when the appeal of abstraction dazzled the architectural profession. He also examines the painful process by which the designers learned to handle the open or public spaces accompanying their buildings (although not before many streetscapes were ruined by useless and banal plazas).

Many of the individual landmark towers of the last thirty years that we love or loathe are given fresh analysis. Particular attention is paid to the work of Johnson/Burgee, I.M. Pei, Roche/Dinkeloo, and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. In the last chapter Goldberger takes aim at the "new kids": Eli Attia; Der Scutt; Kohn, Pederson, Fox; Cesar Pelli; Michael Graves; and, again, the ever-surprising, delightful, and infuriating Philip Johnson. Of them he says, "The architects of the new group of sculpted towers have not, ironically, expanded their interests as much beyond those of the International Style as they might wish the public to think. They are still largely preoccupied with the effects of manipulating form; what has changed is that they have come to consider the boxes of a previous generation dull and have sought something more enlivening." There is, to be fair, generally more concern with contextual relationships, but this concern is not always primary—it often serves as an excuse for more sculpting of the box." The last chapter alone has provided points for debate within the pages of Skyline (see Paul Goldberger interview, Jan. 1982, pp. 6-9, and Philip Johnson interview, Feb. 1982, pp. 14-18) It is, therefore, the strengths of the first and last chapters that ultimately heighten our disappointment with the book—not because of what is there, but because of what is not. Regarding The Skyscraper as any form of historical document, one sees that, in the author's realization of the otherwise laudable objective of succinctness, much valuable information must have been lost; there can only be enough room for synoptic history. In the first two-thirds of the book, where we must rely on Goldberger as historian,
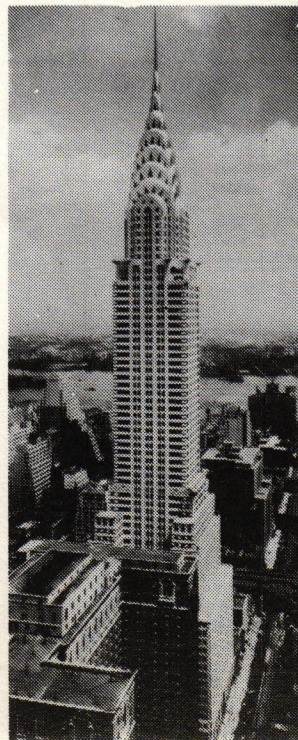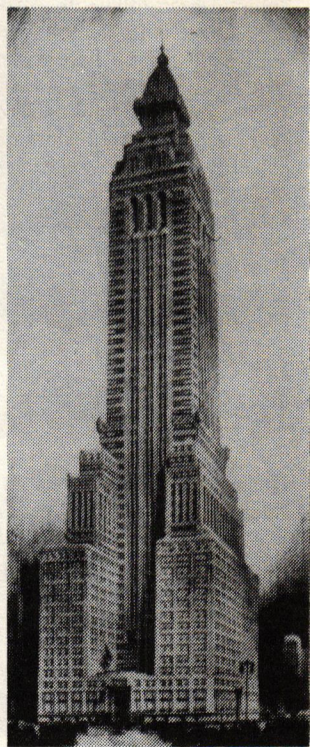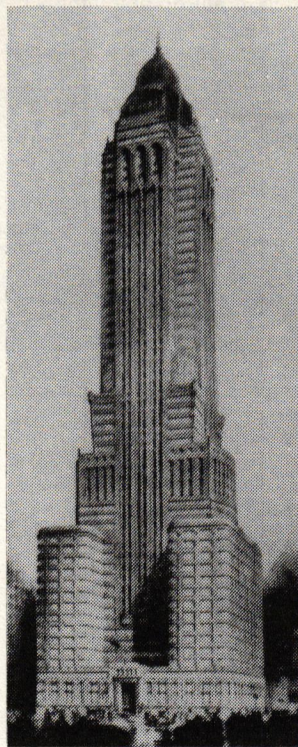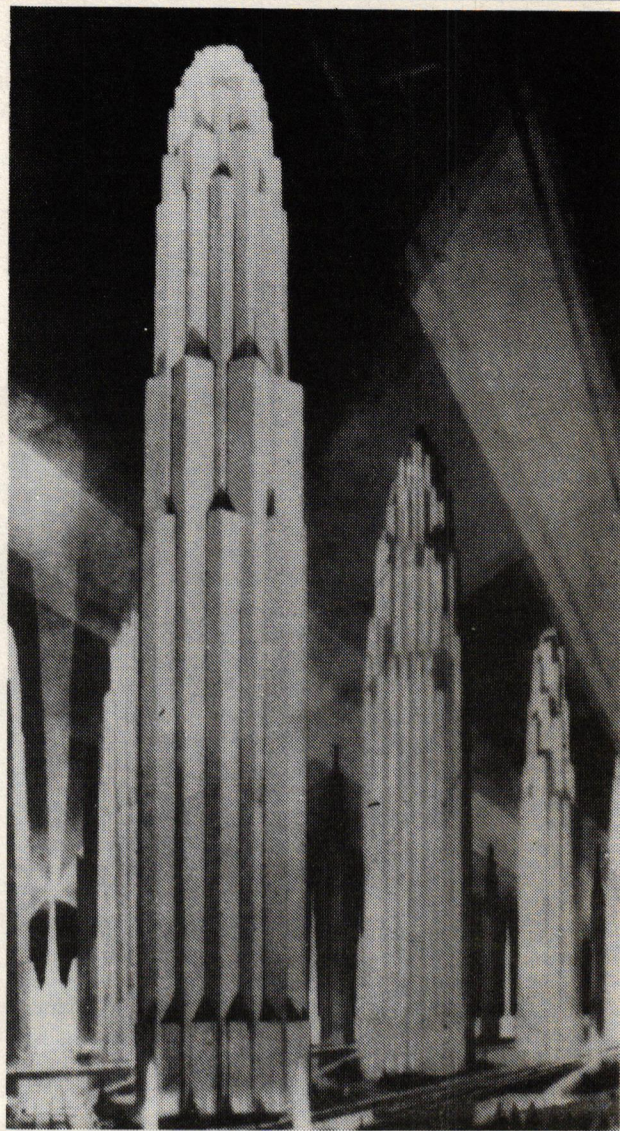
"It is, therefore, the strengths of the first and last chapters that ultimately heighten our disappointment —not because of what is there, but what is not."

The Skyscraper. Paul Goldberger. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1981. 180 pages, 217 illustrations, 8 in color./$25.00.
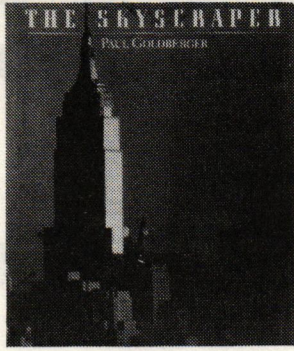
many events seem to occur in no particular economic or technological context. Important transitions and advances are left unexplained. Suddenly, he declares, the heights of buildings double from three hundred to six hundred feet. Why? and how? We are not told. Goldberger tells us that New York City's 1916 zoning code affected building shapes by necessitating the "sculpting" of forms. But why? How? This also is not explained. He comments that were it not for the steel frame, truly high buildings could not exist, because the thickness of self-supporting masonry walls would not support a building of major height. But, how thick is "thick," and what were the limits on the height? Also absent are the important First and Second Leiter Buildings by William LeBaron Jenney, which Sigfried Giedion considered key buildings in the story of the skyscraper.

The Inner Core Not Revealed
In one of the more telling passages, Goldberger informs us that "the steel frame did not appear all of a piece in Chicago's Home Insurance Building; it developed slowly, derived in part from the prefabricated cast iron fronts which were popular in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, facades that were true frames almost like twentieth-century curtain-walls, and that were given up later, only because they were not fireproof. Moreover, the other elements defining a skyscraper—the use of elevators and the expression of height—occur frequently in buildings which precede the steel skeleton and even in many which follow its introduction but do not employ it ... There is no neat answer, then, to the question of what building was the first skyscraper." This is, alas, virtually the entire interpretation of more than forty years of the skyscraper's technological evolution, which, when fully explored, is the real story of the early skyscraper. Yes, Mr. Goldberger is correct, there is no neat answer; but the fun lies in elaborating the complexity of it, not in stating merely that the steel skeleton developed slowly. The whys and hows—of genuine interest—are missing from this book.

Compounding the problems of this incomplete interpretation of skyscraper development, the author relies on the term "steel frame" to denote the characteristic which, he apparently thinks, "true" skyscrapers possess, as opposed to all other tall buildings, which, he says, were composed of "solid masonry." What Goldberger really means by "steel frame" is "iron or steel skeletal" construction, where the exterior walls are supported by the frame. When he uses the term "steel frame," it is deceiving, because virtually all large buildings erected from 1870 on—and many before that date—had a frame construction (cast-iron columns, wrought-iron beams) supporting almost all of the interior floor loads, and exterior masonry bearing-walls supporting themselves and a portion of the outermost floor load. Sometimes there were occasional interior masonry piers. Francisco Mujica, in his *History of the Skyscraper* (1929), called this kind of framing "cage" construction. But no tall buildings were ever of "solid masonry"—whatever that expression conveys.

Goldberger's generalities lead to trouble. When he says, for instance, that George B. Post's Western Union Building, and Burnham and Root's Monadnock Building had no "steel frame," he is literally correct, because they contained no steel, but the buildings were framed extensively with *iron.* While their outer walls were masonry bearing, to assert they were solid masonry misinforms the reader. The Monadnock, to examine one such structure, had an advance iron frame which was, according to Carl Condit, the first instance of portal windbracing in a framed structure. On the other hand, some bearing-wall buildings, such as Post's Pulitzer and Havemeyer

Left from top to bottom: "Verticals on Wide Avenues," Hugh Ferriss; 1929. William Van Alen, first (left) and second schemes for the Chrysler Building, New York; William Van Alen at the Architect's Ball, 1931; William Van Alen, The Chrysler Building, New York, 1930. (photo: Wurts)

Buildings, had sophisticated combination iron/steel frames, but were not skeletal; and some skeletal buildings, like the one Mr. Goldberger says is the first steel-framed building in New York—Bradford Gilbert's Tower Building—contained no steel at all. Even Home Insurance's skeleton was primarily iron.

Goldberger uses the term "skeleton" only twice in the book, it seems, but he never explains that in a skeletal building, the walls are mere enclosures, and are supported entirely by the frame. This is important information for the lay reader. The oversimplified, unexplained use of the term "steel frame" can only confuse readers hoping to understand skyscraper development. People whose knowledge of skyscrapers is derived from this might be surprised when subsequently informed that the Monadnock Building contained advanced iron framing.

Economic Aspects for Further Consideration
In the last third of the book, where we would expect the author's expert interpretation of events and forces shaping buildings, we find that Goldberger's first chapter describing the problems and controversies of early highrise buildings is curiously lacking any accompanying analysis of Manhattan's current dilemma of skyscraper over-building, which we know from reading our morning newspaper is a subject that he understands as well as anybody. Zoning, generally an insidious and potent shaper of buildings, is never adequately explained.

To use a city-planning acronym, the way things get done in city government is by the PEST System. This is not a series of nuisances, but Political, Economical, Social, and Technical forces. In that order. Aesthetics, in city planning terms, has been considered a part of Technical.

Although the PEST system is a concept thought to characterize the public sector's motivational and decision-making process, if we were to apply the same concept to the private sector development of skyscrapers, we would observe that much of the political, social, and technical forces that played—and still play—roles in the skyscraper's history really have been disguised economic concerns. For instance, when attempts to control skyscraper heights entered the political arena with the debate that culminated in New York's 1916 zoning code, height restrictions came with the support—no, the urging—of the real estate community. Why? Because they thought tall buildings to be a Crime Against God and Nature? No; because the shadows cast by the turn-of-the-century skyscraper *devalued* too many adjoining properties, and there were fears that, unless restricted, continued construction of high buildings would strangle lower Manhattan, to the detriment of all the area's *property holders.* To the real estate interests, it was primarily an economic question. And when skeletal construction permitted the standard height of office structures to rise from about 10 to just over 20 stories, it was not an extraordinary technical breakthrough: the technique had been known for years, and 200-to-250-foot-high buildings were being regularly constructed without it. The real significance of skeletal construction was economic because it allowed the *efficient exploitation* of sites through the additional height. The same holds for air-conditioning and fluorescent lighting; not only did they increase the comfort level of office environments, they also had a strong effect on the sizes and shapes of highrise buildings and development patterns after World War II, allowing the efficient utilization of deeper sites and buildings for the first time. While the architectural community's interest in the glass (and metal) box after World War II was rooted in the ascendency of the International Style and hence, its aesthetics, the fact that a glass curtain-wall was far cheaper than one of stone solidified its appeal to the developers, who threw up all those aesthetically impoverished knock-offs of Lever House and the United Nations Secretariat. One could, I think, write a narrowly focused *Economic History of the Skyscraper* and hardly miss one important step in the development of the building type. All of this is not to say that highrise buildings should be assessed historically from the bottom of a ledger, but that there is more here than meets the eye, and that there is a richness to the story of the skyscraper that unfolds when it is carefully examined from each of the complex of forces that shaped its development.

Zoning Considerations
The skyscraper has also been looked at from another perspective—that of land-use planning and zoning. In the late 1960s, Mayor John Lindsay brought urban designers into city government for the first time: Jonathan Barnett, Jaquelin Robertson, Richard Weinstein—the erstwhile Urban Design Group. One of the things this trio observed was that New York's revised 1961 zoning code was fostering the creation of barren plazas, owing to the fact that it contained a floor area bonus incentive for the provision of plazas. The original theory behind the zoning bonus was that it was a *voluntary* incentive for plazas, but this was actually a fiction. Developers assembling parcels were forced to pay for the land on the basis of the *maximum* floor-area-ratio possible, including any bonus floor area available. This meant that the land was conveyed at a price reflecting the seller's conviction and insistence that since a plaza bonus was possible, it represented part of the inherent development potential of the site. Thus, the voluntary plaza became necessary; the buyer had already paid for the floor area (The Economic Context of Plazas). Yet the zoning code offered no description of or standards for what a "plaza" was to be, resulting in forlorn expanses of unadorned concrete and stone.

Well, the city's urban designers realized that New York was going to be awash in the damned things unless something was done about it. Therefore they devised alternatives to the plaza bonus. Noting New York's frequently inhospitable environment, they recommended enclosed or covered spaces, galleries, and malls—mixing bowls of pedestrian space to humanize the skyscrapers—as substitutes for the plazas they knew would otherwise be required of every office development. Over the years some of the built results of their efforts were encouraging, but some other new spaces did not work out quite the way the urban designers had envisioned (they bore the burden of being pioneers), and now the city, in its Midtown Zoning Proposal, is backing off from offering these spaces.

New York's urban designers noted another unfortunate characteristic of the zoning then in effect: traditional zoning geographically separated differing land-uses, thereby discouraging the mix of uses on a site. This was bad for New York, for it destroyed the city's richness and diversity, and created single-use areas that were completely uninhabited at night. This was not an efficient use of land. Having assimilated the common sense preached by Jane Jacobs (90 per cent of good urban design and planning is common sense), planners promoted mixed-use zoning for skyscrapers, encouraging the inclusion of both residential and commercial uses on the same lot. They were correct in the theory that a mixed-use building is less burdensome to the city's infrastructure than an equally-sized single-use structure, since residential tenants occupy the site at different times of day than commercial office tenants.

Numerous skyscrapers in New York have resulted from all these land-use and zoning principles: from incentive zoning, Citicorp Center, A.T.&T., I.B.M., and Philip Morris, among others; and from both mixed-use and the incentive bonus provisions, Olympic Tower, The Galleria, Trump Tower, and United Nations Plaza. One can argue (and many have) about the aesthetic merits and massing of these buildings, but few dispute the wisdom of attempting to humanize highrise buildings. I mention these planning theories because the "humanistic skyscraper" is a theme Mr. Goldberger touches on—primarily in connection with the IDS Center in Minneapolis—but does not develop, much to our loss.

On the whole, although no author should be bound by the claims of his publisher, if only *The Skyscraper* contained more of "the people, events and forces that have shaped the skyscraper;...the technological advances, building codes and economic pressures," that the jacket flap promises, our participation in the sense of the book and our understanding of these buildings would be much greater.

Natural Overlay

Kallmann, McKinnell & Wood at the Crossroads: The Academy of Arts and Sciences

Eleni Constantine

After Boston City Hall in 1969, a lot of observers felt that if *that* was what Kallmann, McKinnell & Wood meant by the "language of build" then, no, thanks, they would prefer the building of design. Sir Nikolaus Pevsner expressed displeasure with the architecture, Jane Jacobs panned the building's relation to the urban context, and the man in the street said it was "ugly." In sharp contrast, the firm's most recent work, the headquarters for the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in Cambridge, Massachusetts, has been greeted with general murmurs of approval (usually prefaced with "Who would have thought. . . ."). Ada Louise Huxtable called the building "post-modern" and meant it as a compliment.

Clearly, the Academy does exemplify two of the firm's strengths: their sense of planar composition (including composing on a very detailed level) and their ability to deploy an extensive historical knowledge in their design. And in both these senses Huxtable's adjective is apt praise.

But a closer look reveals distinct resemblances between the Academy and City Hall, resemblances that go beyond the structural expressionism that typifies Kallmann, McKinnell & Wood's work. These formal and theoretical echoes are significant because they highlight persistent design weaknesses of the firm — overly abstract notions of spatial organization and a certain insensitivity to the urban context. Ironically, Kallmann himself was among the first to take the early modernists to task for similar failings in his architectural criticism of the mid-1950s. Indeed, the Academy's shortcomings seem to be caused *not* by a lack of awareness of these issues, but by a degree of ineptness in achieving their physical resolution.

The siting of the structure illustrates these awkwardnesses. The Academy is located adjacent to Harvard University where a wooded lot slopes upward, cresting at its northeast corner. The building is placed tightly into this corner, sitting rather heavily atop the cleared knoll. This location effectively separates the Academy from the lower, wooded slopes to the south and west traversed by public footpaths. The architects have made the building into an artificial rendition of the local topography; the pitched roof lifted into three tiers is read as one great slope — echoing the shape of the hill.

At first glance the building's location and form indicate respect for and attention to the natural landscape. But in crowning Shady Hill with their own built hill, Kallmann, McKinnell & Wood attempt to do the hill one better. Frank Lloyd Wright, the greatest American architectural interpreter of the natural landscape, condemned such topographical takeovers as arrogant and simplistic. Wright left the crown of the hill alone, allowing the natural landscape to speak through his design.

The urban topography is dealt with awkwardly as well. The rough trapezoid of the plot is formed from the intersection of Cambridge's two street grids, one running north–south (defined by Harvard Yard and the alignment of its buildings, and predominating to the south of Harvard Square), and the other skewed some fifteen degrees west (defined by the old road and rail line to Concord, and governing north of Harvard Square).

All major buildings in the Harvard area have to deal with this crank in the city, and one indication of the degree of an architect's talent is the way he chooses to approach this problem. H.H. Richardson, for example, chose between the grids and chose right each time, placing Sever Hall in Harvard Yard on the north–south axis, but turning Austin Hall, a few hundred feet to the north, fifteen degrees west. Gropius expressed the dilemma in his Graduate Center by sweeping out the fifteen-degree arc in the complex itself; but the resulting segment of space sends one searching for the missing focus of his compass. Jose Luis Sert tried to ignore the crank in his design for the Science Center and ended up with a rectangular building minus one corner, with all its doors in the wrong place.

The clear expression of the two alternative grids in the streets bounding the Academy's site intensifies the issue, and imposes an additional obligation on Kallmann, McKinnell & Wood to address it. Indeed, the question is

Kallmann, McKinnell & Wood. American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Cambridge, Mass.; 1981. View toward entry.

further complicated by the fact that Beacon Street, which forms the northwest boundary, expresses the cranked grid in somewhat exaggerated fashion, being more than fifteen degrees askew.

Kallmann, McKinnell & Wood have placed the Academy squarely on the north–south grid, but have jammed its northwest corner against Beacon Street. The sharp juxtaposition of the grids is accentuated by the placement of the entrance on this side, and made awkward by the lack of attention to the axial shift. The curving driveway and parking lot that fill the leftover space do not adequately modulate the transition. Despite the fact that the front door is here, all the siting signals tell one that this is the back of the building, the disfavored side.

The Academy's problems with topography and context are remarkably similar to those of City Hall. The latter building was plunked at the low point of a piazza modeled after the Piazza del Pubblico in Siena, but an understanding of urban poché in the case of City Hall or the lie of the land in the example of the Academy are absent.

A comparison of the plans of the Academy and City Hall is perhaps an even better illustration of the "space problem" in Kallmann, McKinnell & Wood's work. The Academy is, in a sense, the missing center of City Hall. The Academy's two levels of meeting space below, and office space above, correspond to the meeting and office levels of the earlier building. The design of City Hall set these two private administrative floors apart from the public areas — private areas built in concrete atop the public ones, which appear to be an extension of the brick plaza.

The program for the Academy, a private and rather ceremonial building — used solely for conferences with a minimum of daily business operations — relieved the architects of responsibility for those functions with which City Hall appeared least comfortable: public services. The Academy design is thus a reworking of the architect's notions for the layout of the upper levels of City Hall, in a more elite version.

In both buildings, the play is controlled by a strict structural grid, expressed more simply on the office level, and more freely interpreted below. In both, the upper tier regulates the more expressive double-height lower tier; the office floor provides an overlay grid against which the "meeting" floor can be easily read. The larger meeting rooms on the lower floor are expressed in the plans as protrusions from a dominant rectangular form, but their dimensions and placement are strictly controlled by the established grid.

In the Academy and City Hall, the meeting rooms are placed on the edge of the rectangular center, forming an exterior ring; between this ring and the central space are concentric layers of interstitial space. But if City Hall operates off of its interstitial layers, leaving the center an untouched, empty void, the Academy attempts to use the center space to pull together the spaces surrounding it. In terms of prototypical layouts, where City Hall is a monastery, the Academy is a manse. The central atrium is intended to function like the great hall of Shingle Style manors — as an area into and out of which all movement flows. The Academy design attempts to create the centripetal force necessary by injecting a poché suite (library, study, and sitting area) into the City Hall doughnut layout. It doesn't work: the two spatial notions remain disparate and the suite diffuses rather than pulls together the whole.

The perceptible lack of cohesion, despite the carefully elaborated idea of layered concentric zones, and the attempt to recapture the loose centrality of the Shingle Style, seem due to the design's failure to utilize the movement of people through space as an ordering device. The Academy's plan lacks a sequential spatial ordering that shapes and responds to patterns of human movement. The building sends conflicting spatial messages — it is unclear whether the space is to be read as an interlocking group of closed volumes or as an open grid. Both ideas are expressed, but neither is developed to provide a clear ordering system. In their attempt to use the forms of both notions of space, Kallmann, McKinnell & Wood activate the philosophical underpinnings of neither. On the second

View toward lecture hall (south elevation).

Project: The American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
Architects: Kallmann, McKinnell & Wood. Hans Huber, job captain; Peter Bacot, Emily Kuo, Kevin Triplett, project team.
Interiors: Kallmann, McKinnell & Wood in association with Louis Beal and Joe Rosen of ISD.
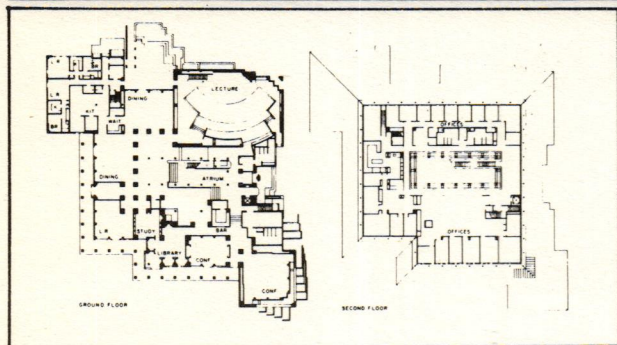**Landscaping:** Carol Johnson & Associates.
Size: 40,000 square feet.
Program: A headquarters building to include reception, dining and conference rooms, a lecture hall, offices, and service spaces.

Structure: Steel frame with columns varying 10 ft. to 20 ft. apart; the columns around the atrium are at a 10 ft. spacing.
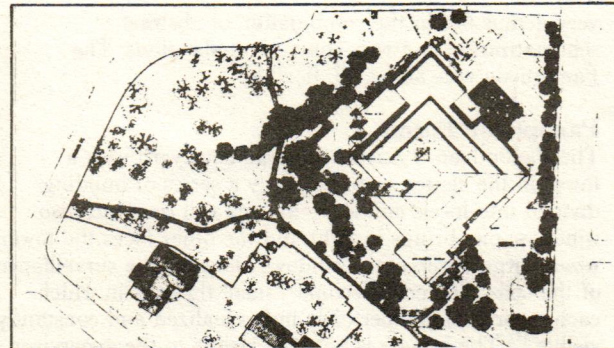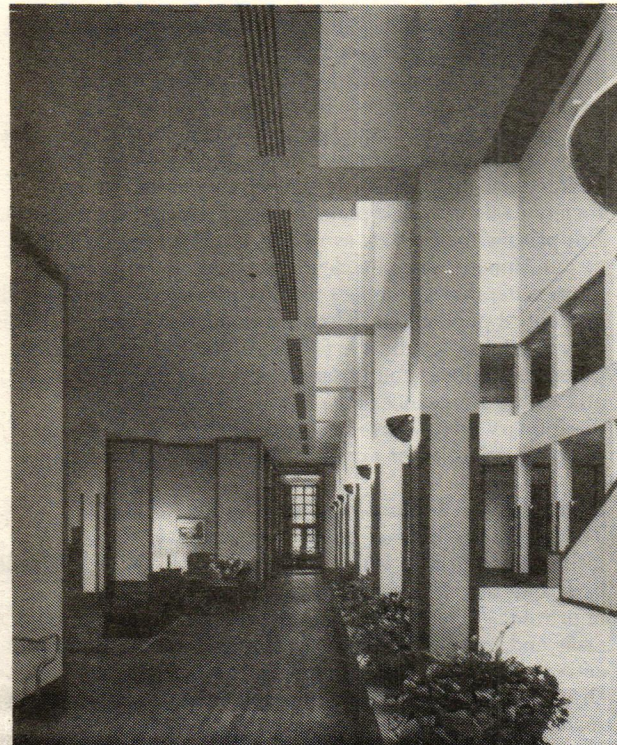**Materials:** Red brick with red granite trim; copper roof.

Ground floor plan. Second floor plan.
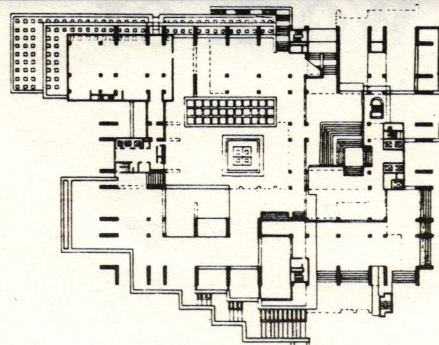
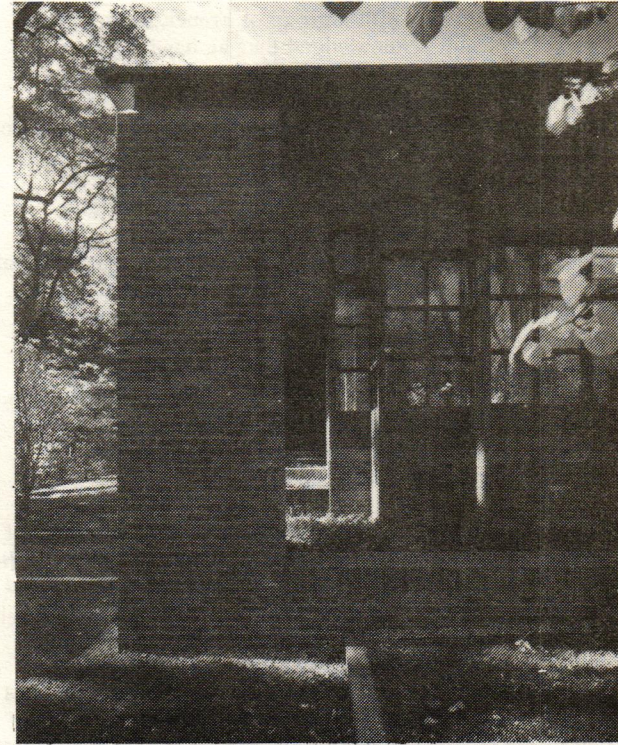*Boston City Hall; 1969.   Entry level plan.*

Entry Foyer. (photo: Jaime Ardiles-Arce)

AAAS Site plan

Library. (photo: Jaime Ardiles-Arce)

Corner of conference room.

floor, where the full-height atrium creates a central void, the plan reverts to the City Hall doughnut; the atrium space is ringed by a U-shaped corridor, off of which open secretarial pools, edged by a ring of individual offices. Simple, functional, and hierarchical it is, but not particularly imaginative; nor can one help feeling it somewhat unjust that those who have to spend the most time in the building should be relegated to the worst space. Moreover, the second floor seems vastly removed from the first; the narrow, steep, long flight of stairs rising through the double-height atrium on the upper level appears as insuperable as the stairs ascending from the public lobby to the executive meeting floor of City Hall. Vertical hierarchies have their price.

The Academy's plan is similar to that of City Hall in one other (similarly problematic) respect: the treatment of the edge. In both structures a separate layer of space, outlined by piers, bounds the lower floors. In City Hall this zone is clearly a buffer; concrete piers split it into segmented pockets of dead space, whose only function is the addition of sculptural depth and shadow to the facade. In the Academy the buffer zone has been interpreted in light of more residential and functional prototypes. In the rear, brick piers supporting the heavy eaves are set away from the building to create an arcade; while in the front corner the thick brick wall is broken away to reveal an inner glass skin, with a walk indicated between the two.

But the relation of these edge spaces to the interior remains tenuous. The arcade does not signal the building's entrance, but wraps around the back, butting up against blank brick walls at its ends. Nor does it appear easily accessible from within: although French doors give onto this colonnade, the only functioning doors to it appear to be those tucked in its corridors' corners, off extensions of the corridor. Despite the architects' efforts to activate this zone, the Academy's edge, like the center, remains as empty as those of City Hall.

Perhaps it is necessary to analyze the design's spatial shortcomings in such detail because the building is so seductive, both visually and intellectually. Each elevation is a beautifully balanced modular composition, framed by the great sloping roof, strictly governed by the same Cartesian grid that rules the plan, yet responsive to the particular function of that side of the building. The entry front is relatively closed: a brick wall steps back toward the central entry as the great roof steps up correspondingly. Square-paned glass panels are set into the thick wall, as though portions of the brick shell had been stripped away to reveal a gridded glass skin beneath. On the south and west facades, opening onto the woods, the roof steps back to reveal the double-height arcade, while it reaches down over the two square corner protrusions (a conference room and the service block) that terminate the arcade. The square

brick piers of the colonnade establish a strong vertical counterpoint to the three horizontal tiers of the roof against the background grid of the two-story French doors. On the north, the service side, the roof extends almost down to the ground, save where a square cutaway to one side of the center axis marks a walled brick patio. Above the wall, in the cutaway, the French doors reestablish the omnipresent grid.

The same careful modular composition and the themes of the square grid and triple setbacks run through the interior elevations. Walls are broken into modular panels by wooden moldings and windows are sized proportionally. Although some of the details, such as the pink granite fireplaces with zigzag setbacks, are reminiscent of Art Deco motifs, the proportions of the elements are distinctly modernistic; the square grid never concedes to the vertical by elongation. The elevations, like the plan, are acutely conscious that each piece is an exact multiple of its neighbor.

The strict composition is saved from starkness by the rich materials used throughout. The great roof is copper, going rapidly sea-green; the French doors are framed in mahogany; the red waterstruck brick is blended to suggest the patina of age; the steps and column capitals are polished pink granite. The mahogany and pink granite continue on the interior as well, not only as frames and steps but also as moldings and fireplaces—both elegantly detailed in patterns echoing the grid. Oak flooring is covered by antique rugs; walls are painted a natural linen color or are linen-covered; cove lighting is set into padded ceiling recesses. Smaller details are simple but exquisite: brass "acorn" lamps hang in the study; carved wood panels top the fireplaces. (The building's cost has not been made public.) It's easy to fall in love with a building so rich in details and materials, craftsmanship and composition.

And the Academy is intellectual as well as lovely. The design is replete with historical allusion and imagery. Romantic allusions to a past order are implicit in the eroded roofscape, the giant-order brick piers of the arcade,

the crumbled brick wall of the entry facade. The external timber trusses supporting the top two tiers of the green pitched roof evoke not only Shingle Style porches, but conjure up the famous "primitive hut" drawing used as the frontispiece for Abbé Laugier's treatise *Essai Sur L'Architecture* (1775). The overall pavilion image recalls the nineteenth-century's fascination with the Orient; the "Citizen Kane" effects of the interior recall the early twentieth century's intrigue with a somewhat nearer East. The design's use of the vocabulary of the Arts and Crafts movement allows the full exploitation of the rich material.

In short, Kallmann, McKinnell & Wood have a feel for ornament that they do not for space. In terming their talent "post-modern," Huxtable put her finger on their shortcomings as well as their achievements. Ornament, even when executed in gorgeous materials and painstaking detail, even when enriched with historical allusions, can only decorate a shed. Some architects identified with the post-modern movement affirm this limit (notably Robert Venturi); others (like Michael Graves) seem to be striving to overcome it. Kallmann, McKinnell & Wood appear to join these latter.

To succeed, it seems necessary to integrate the architectural vocabulary of ornament with a syntax developed from a world-view of the nature of space. Judging from results to date, the vocabulary appears to be relatively easy to develop to a refined level in an academic setting; the syntax seems harder. Architecture may still be showing the effects of a generation of talent deprived of the opportunity to construct. Kallmann is not insensitive to the problem; indeed, in a recent interview he described the present difficulty as a lack of an architectural language "commensurate with the demanding nature of the resuscitated layout of the late Baroque and Neoclassical periods." The design of the Academy, however, does not articulate that language: the building remains a well-modulated composition of elegant decorative elements laid over a facile and weak spatial construct.
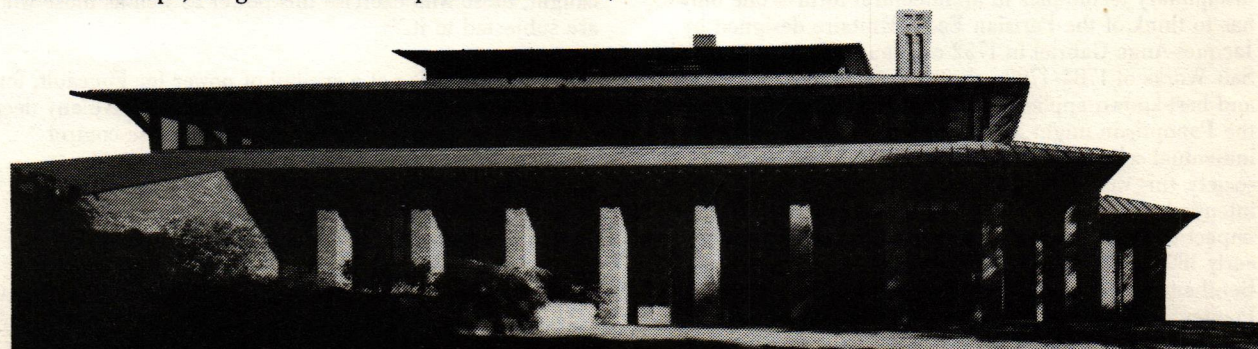
View of living and dining room (east) elevation. (exterior photos: Steve Rosenthal)

Spatialization of Power

A Discussion of the Work of Michel Foucault

Gwendolyn Wright and Paul Rabinow

In a 1976 interview with a group of French geographers, Michel Foucault acknowledged that he has long been preoccupied with space. "People have often reproached me for these spatial obsessions, which have indeed been obsessions for me. But I think through them I did come to what I had basically been looking for: the relations that are possible between power and knowledge."[1] So, for Foucault, space is where discourses about power and knowledge are transformed into actual relations of power. Here the knowledge is in the forefront that is of aesthetics, of an architectural profession, of a science of planning. But, for Foucault at least, architecture and its concomitant theory never constitute an isolated field to be analyzed in minute detail; they are only of interest when one looks to see how they mesh with economics, politics, or institutions. Then both architecture and urban planning, both designs and ordinary buildings, offer privileged instances for understanding how power operates.

Foucault is not setting out to construct a general theory of power.[2] Nor is he implying a general theory of space. He is certainly not maintaining — as has sometimes been alleged — that architectural form by itself can have an inherent political significance or function. He claims only that spatial localizations, especially certain architectural projects, have played important parts in political strategies at certain historical junctures. "Architecture begins at the end of the eighteenth century to become involved in problems of population, health, and the urban question. . . . [It] becomes a question of using the disposition of space for economico-political ends."[3]

When Foucault mentions the problems of population, health, and cities, it is clear that he is referring to our modern form of power, what he calls "bio-power." Of course, architecture was involved in the machinations of power long before the eighteenth century, but in different ways. Under earlier monarchs, for instance, the visibility of monuments and sites of rituals such as public squares was extremely calculated. Under regimes of "bio-power," political intervention takes place at the level of the species as a natural population to be known and controlled. This manipulation is exercised through an ever-expanding complex of social institutions, and thereby in a widening number of building types: hospitals, prisons, workplaces, schools, street plans, housing, and so forth. Although power cannot be reduced to these institutions, the relationships are more than pasted-on, incidental ornament. For example, the school is something more than its disciplinary function; the content of Euclid's geometry is not changed by the architecture of the building. However, many other aspects of school life are changed by the introduction of such spatial disciplinary technologies as separation of pupils, ranking, surveillance of sexuality, and special examination spaces. It is in this sense that the architecture functions as a crucial part of a modern technology of power.

The Panopticon, Jeremy Bentham's proposal for radially planned institutional buildings, is by now the most famous instance of a concretization of power applied through architecture. Foucault came upon Bentham's 1787 plan while studying reforms in eighteenth-century hospital and prison architecture, and took it as the paradigmatic example of the interworkings of space, power, and knowledge in disciplinary society. The Panopticon is not the essence of power, as some have taken it to be, but a startlingly explicit demonstration of how a particular form of power operates. It is "the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form."[4]

Bentham's design was by no means the first instance of disciplinary techniques in architectural form — one only has to think of the Parisian Ecole Militaire designed by Jacques-Ange Gabriel in 1752 or Claude-Nicolas Ledoux's Salt Works of 1784–1787 — but it was the most perfected and best-known application of such techniques. Although the Panopticon might appear to be simply a minor individual scheme or a utopian proposal for a perfect society, this would not be quite accurate either, for it was intended to be used in precise circumstances and it had an impact on many kinds of structures. In America in the early 1800s, for example, prisons borrowed from the Bentham model: one of the best known, the Illinois State Penitentiary near Joliet, with its interior Panopticon cellhouse, was built as late as 1915–24. The Panopticon's

very genius lies in the combination of abstract schematization and very concrete applications. The Panopticon was, above all, flexible.

Panopticon Forms
The Panopticon consists of a large courtyard with a tower in the center surrounded by a series of buildings divided into levels and cells. In each cell there are two windows: one brings in light and the other faces the tower, where large observatory windows allow for the surveillance of the cells. The cells become "small theatres in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible."[5] The inmate is not only visible to the supervisor, he is visible to the supervisor alone; cut off from any contact. This new power is continuous, disciplinary, and anonymous. Anyone could operate the architectural mechanism, as long as he was in the correct position, and anyone could be subjected to it. The design is multipurpose. The surveillant could as easily be observing a criminal, a madman, a worker, a schoolboy, or a wife. (Bentham suggested that the Panopticon would be an extremely effective arrangement for a harem, since it would cut down the number of eunuchs necessary to watch the women in the cells.) If the Panopticon functioned correctly, almost all internal violence would be eliminated. The inmate cannot see whether or not the guardian is in the tower, so he must behave as if surveillance is perpetual and total. The architectural perfection is such that even if there is no guardian present, the apparatus of power still
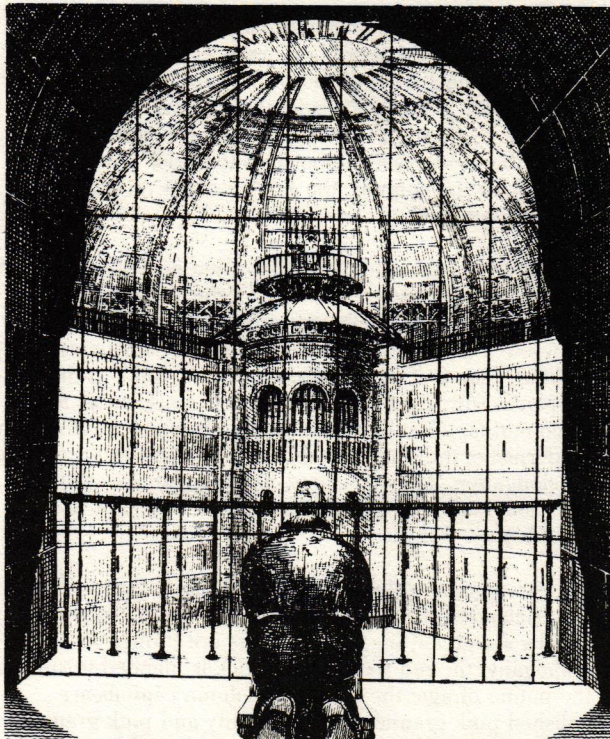
N. Harou-Romain. Project for a penitentiary, 1840. A detainee prays before the central surveillance tower.

operates effectively. If the prisoner is never sure when he is being observed, he becomes his own guardian.
As the final step in the architectural refinement, the Panopticon includes a system for observing and controlling the controllers. Those who occupy the central position in the Panopticon are themselves thoroughly enmeshed in a localization and ordering of their behavior. Then the grid is perhaps the most diabolical aspect of the idea and of all the applications it brought about. In this form of management, power is not totally entrusted to someone who would exercise it alone, over others, in an absolute fashion; rather, this machine is one in which everyone is caught, those who exercise this power as well as those who are subjected to it.[6]

The Panopticon is not a symbol of power for Foucault, for it doesn't refer to anything else. Nor does it have any deep or hidden meaning. Its function is to increase control wherever it is put into operation. Its very form, its materiality, all of its aspects, down to the smallest detail (here Bentham is totally explicit, carrying on for many pages about minute aspects of construction in "The Inspection-House"), yields the interpretation of what it does. The architecture itself is neutral, and, in its own way, universal. It is therefore a perfect technology. When the Panopticon "invests" and influences other institutions —

notably prisons, schools, hospitals, and insane asylums, this architectural technology takes on its own momentum. Just as the Panopticon is not the essence of disciplinary technology, so prisons are by no means the only example of an actual rather than representational exercising of this form of power. Nevertheless, they are obviously the most characteristic expression of the ways in which Western society deals with discipline, punishment, and surveillance. But prisons themselves, as well as tracts on the ideal form of punishment, are only clearly articulated examples of more generalized practices for disciplining both individuals and entire populations. They are important partly because they expose so vividly the practices that remain hidden in other institutions. For, throughout the eighteenth century and with a vengeance since the nineteenth, these disciplinary tactics have been extended to other sectors of the population, other administrations, and other settings.

Disciplinary Technology and Space
The aim of disciplinary technology, whatever the institutional form in which it operates, is to forge a "docile body that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved."[7] This is done in several related ways: through drills and training of the body; through standardization of actions over time; and through the control of space. Discipline proceeds from an organization of individuals in space, and it therefore requires a specific enclosure of space. Once established, this grid permits the sure distribution of the individuals who are to be disciplined and supervised. In a factory the procedure facilitates productivity; in a school it assures orderly behavior; in a town it reduces the risk of dangerous crowds, wandering vagabonds, or epidemic diseases.

In disciplinary technology the internal organization of space depends first on the principle of elementary partitioning into regular units. This space is based on a system of presences and absences. "Each individual has a place and each place has its individual."[8] With an impressive economy of means, individuals can be placed, known, transformed, and observed. In this simple coding, each slot in the grid is assigned a value that facilitates the even application of disciplinary techniques. One cannot help remark that this description of spatial organization is an almost perfect analogy to the definitions of elements, transformations and order that French structuralist thinkers take as universal principles. Here the success of disciplinary space depends on the coding of a decidedly "structural" organization.

Foucault gives several architectural examples of a "structuralist" organization of space. The military hospital at Rochefort, designed in 1782 by P. Toufaire, served as one of the earliest such experiments, even before the refinement of disciplinary techniques in the Panopticon. It was a particularly appropriate locale, since the port city of Rochefort provided a fascinating, if frightening, mixing of bodies: sailors, deserters, thieves, vagabonds, and persons afflicted with all sorts of diseases. The task of the hospital was to regularize and control these dangerous interminglings. Within its walls and somewhat later in the town itself, rigorous partitioning of space was carried out in an effort to accomplish simultaneously a number of objectives. Contagious diseases could be quarantined; deserters could be captured; commodities could be watched. The order of the hospital operated first on control of things through medications. Then the grid extended to identify the patients and keep them under analytic observation. The separation of the patients into categories based on age and disease was soon fixed by particular architectural elements such as wards, corridors, and pavilions. Eventually the hospital administrators would carry out reforms in the port city itself, gathering information on the inhabitants and attempting to alter the environmental conditions of each district.

Space in the Workplace
In factories at the end of the eighteenth century, the organization of space and operations was equally complex. Here it was a question not only of controlling a population, but of linking this control to production. Foucault's example is the Oberkampf manufacturing plant at Jouy. The factory was divided into a series of specialized workshops separated by function (printers, handlers, colorists, and engravers in different buildings). The largest structure, which was erected in 1791, was enormous: it was
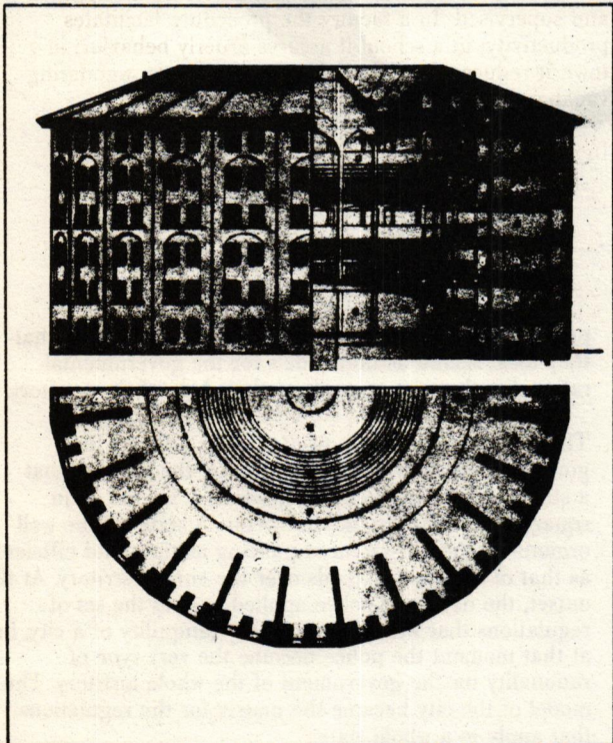
> *"Although Foucault focuses on space as a major aspect of the exercise of power, he is not obsessed with buildings per se, as much as he is with cities and how they operate."*
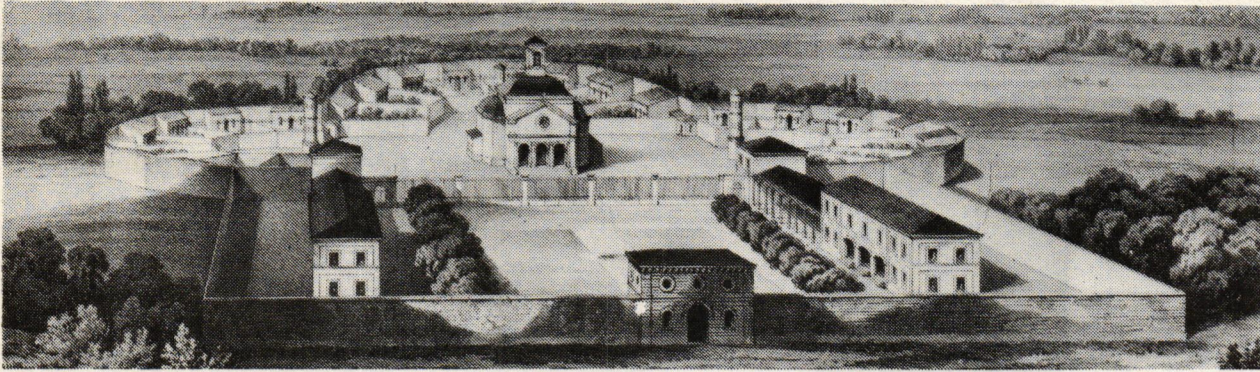
Alexandre Thierry. Plan for a reform school; 1807. (photo: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

Interior, Illinois State Penetentiary, near Joliet; 1916–24.

110 meters long and three stories high. On its ground floor were 132 tables arranged in two rows. Each printer worked at a table with his assistant, and the finished products were carefully stacked at the end of the tables. Supervision was continual as the foreman walked up the central aisle between the two rows, watching the entire operation and the specific production of each pair of workers. More than a hundred years before "Taylorism", the early twentieth-century efficiency techniques developed by Frederick Taylor, elementary operations were defined, each variable of force — strength, promptness, constancy of skills — was observed, compared, and assigned a particular weight. The factory architecture centralized production, separated stages, facilitated supervision, and encouraged an ever greater precision.

Hierarchical observation was a key element in the factory, and even more so in the hospital. Surveillance thus became an integral part of production and control in both instances. In the case of the hospital, the very form of the building changed to facilitate the doctor's rounds and his examinations. As Foucault analyzed so cogently in *The Birth of the Clinic* (Random House, tr. 1973), the well-organized hospital became the architectural counterpart of medical discipline. The control of bodies depended on an optics of power, and architecture refined this lens. Increased visibility became a general problematic for the architect, whether he was setting out to design a hospital, a school, a utopian settlement, or a housing project.

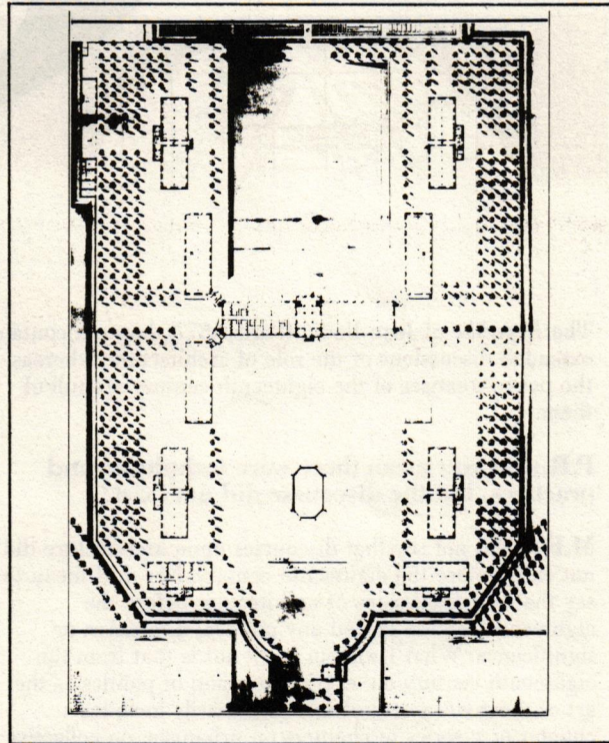*Jeremy Bentham. Panopticon plan; 1790.*

An important distinction must be repeated here: These are not so much architectural models that represent or embody power, but rather the means for the operation of power in space. It is the techniques for the use of these various structures, more than the architecture itself, that allow for an efficient expansion of power. Clearly, there are other dimensions of the architecture that are not disciplinary, and dimensions of discipline that are not architectural.

In fact, although Foucault definitely focuses on space as a major aspect of the exercise of power, he is not obsessed with buildings per se, as much as he is with cities and how they operate. Some of his spatial examples describe tactics that were not entirely successful; others were only temporary actions at the time of crisis. Yet through these experiments certain points about how power operates through space became quite evident.

Space and Disease
A digression to two early examples of planned environments may help clarify the point about *space,* rather than architecture, as a means for the exercising of particular forms of power. Beginning in the Middle Ages, Europeans used the quarantined city as a method of plague control: for the duration of the quarantine, all space was controlled by the officials, and all movement through space was regulated by them. Under penalty of

death, no one was allowed in the streets — with the exception of doctors and officials in their special antiplague clothing and the wretches who carried away the bodies. Due to the special circumstances, the officials even had the right to appropriate private property, for procedures of purification after a death consisted of the evacuation of the contaminated house, followed by its fumigation and sometimes its demolition. This was a disciplinary mechanism carried out in space, but it generally did not involve the design and construction of particular buildings (although there were instances of special enclosures for dying plague victims constructed outside the town walls). The quarantine, however, did entail the analysis of a geographical area; the supervision of the inhabitants; a suspension of legal rights pertaining to private property and freedom of movement; a hierarchy of information and decision-making, including the regulation of the smallest details of everyday life.
The leper colony offers the counterimage of population control through spatial enforcement of power. The leper was excluded from society, separated out, and stigmatized. Yet the lepresarium was not simply a catch-all. Surgeon-judges examined potential cases and sometimes, as in Roule, restricted entry on the basis of certain criteria such as membership in a guild. The authority to locate and exile lepers into these separate communities, where they were then required to live and die, was an act of "massive, binary division between one set of people and another."[9]
The point here is the authority's right to exclude lepers

from one space and restrict them to another: one vision of "a pure community," which Foucault links to a set of rigid entry restrictions, followed by promiscuous intermingling within the closed boundaries. Again, none of the spaces Foucault cites are intended to evoke a "spirit of the age" in which every dimension of the architecture or the activity is unified. Foucault selects a single dimension — sometimes a minor aspect — of these spaces and their use in order to analyze that aspect. In this sense his theories are different from those of Wolfflin, on the one hand, and of Marx.

Space and Class
For instance, the seventeenth-century French town of Richelieu, which Foucault discussed in a 1978 lecture at the Collège de France, is used to make a definite point about space and class. Power, for Foucault, is not restricted to class domination. It cannot be reduced to upper-class ploys to control the working classes (although Foucault certainly does not deny the use of such tactics). At Richelieu, disciplinary ordering of space formed the basis for the plan of an entire town, not just the basis for temporary restrictions. This ordering was applied primarily to the fixing and surveillance of the nobility under conditions of luxury and privilege. The planned town of 1631 was built next to the Cardinal's own chateau, and his architect, Jacques Lemercier, designed everything from the market square to the most lavish dwellings, following

Pierre Toufaire. Plan for the hospital at Rochefort; 1782.
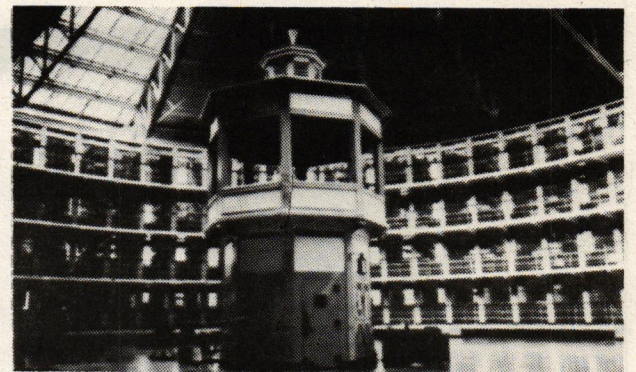
Richelieu's orders. Within the self-enclosed space a hierarchical, visible, and functional order could be established and maintained. Dwellings on the smaller, peripheral streets were to be inhabited by families in commerce and those who were artisans, but first the larger, more imposing houses on the main axis (a sort of linear Place des Vosges) were assigned to aspiring courtiers. Richelieu shows how a technology of power — in this case, one based on urban design — operates not simply as a device for class domination and exploitation, but also as a formative process in which everyone is enmeshed, and observed.

As the particular architectural forms of disciplinary society were extended into most Western cities and towns in the nineteenth century, what Foucault has labeled "bio-power" began to operate. Environments and populations underwent a continual, ongoing analysis and manipulation. Making provisions for the future — for the expansion of a city, the health of the people (as a species, as a race, as different classes), the development of a local economy — clearly required new forms of knowledge. Hence there came into being a modern science of urbanism affiliated with other social and sanitary sciences to coordinate the planning of European and American cities, and colonies.

For planners and architects, as well as for the hygienists, industrialists, and politicians who employed them, the problem had shifted from the correct ordering of static space to the regulation of a larger, constantly changing social milieu. Although particular architectural forms continued to play important roles in that regulation, the principal focus was on the way buildings and city plans would affect a given society — and its many subgroups — over time. Although Foucault has up to this point limited himself to a few provocative statements about how bio-power operates, it clearly involves a modern synthesis of space, power, and knowledge. This interrelationship provides insights into many nineteenth-century architectural phenomena, such as workers' housing (in which the plan emphasized separation by function, and, where possible, by sex, while the facade provided readable signs of upward mobility), or houses of prostitution (French *maisons closes* were organized under police supervision in special districts in 1823, in order to facilitate medical examinations of prostitutes and surveillance of their clients). It is also a key to understanding the emergence of the planning profession and the numerous permutations in architectural theory since the late eighteenth century, with their embittered battles about the past and the future, art and society, order and creativity.

The centrality of space under modern forms of power, although no longer so neatly representational as it was in the eighteenth century, is perhaps even more critical for all members of a society. "A whole history remains to be written of *spaces* — which would at the same time be the history of *powers* (both of these terms in the plural) — from the great strategies of geo-politics to the little tactics of the habitat; institutional architecture from the classroom to the design of hospitals, passing via economic and political installations."[10] If an obsession with space can blur an awareness of power for some people, for Foucault it is a way to focus clearly on the specific operations of power in any society.

1. "Questions on Geography," from *Herodote* 1 (1976), reprinted in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings by Michel Foucault, 1972–1977,* ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), p. 69.
2. See Foucault's clearest statement on this, "How Is Power Exercised?," published as an afterword in Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow's *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).
3. "The Eye of Power," published as a preface to Jeremy Bentham, *Le Panoptique* (Paris, 1977), reprinted in Gordon, *Power/Knowledge,* p. 148.
4. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,* tr. A. Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979). p. 205.
5. Ibid., p. 200.
6. "The Eye of Power," p. 156.
7. *Discipline and Punish,* p. 198.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., p. 136.
10. "The Eye of Power," p. 149.

Interview : Michel Foucault

Noted French philosopher Michel Foucault talks with anthropologist Paul Rabinow about architecture and its role in political organization and social relationships.

P.R.: In your interview with geographers at *Herodote,* you said that architecture becomes political at the end of the eighteenth century [see article on Foucault, p. 14]. Obviously, it was political in earlier periods, too, such as during the Roman Empire. What is particular about the eighteenth century?

M.F.: My statement was awkward in that form. Of course I did not mean to say that architecture was not political before, becoming so only at that time. I only meant to say that in the eighteenth century one sees the development of reflection upon architecture as a function of the aims and techniques of the government of societies. One begins to see a form of political literature that addresses what the order of a society should be, what a city should be, given the requirements of the maintenance of order; given that one should avoid epidemics, avoid revolts, permit a decent and moral family life, and so on. In terms of these objectives, how is one to conceive of both the organization of a city and the construction of a collective infrastructure? And how should houses be built? I am not saying that this sort of reflection appears only in the eighteenth century, but only that in the eighteenth century a very broad and general reflection on these questions takes place. If one opens a police report of the times—the treatises that are devoted to the techniques of government—one finds that architecture and urbanism occupy a place of considerable importance. That is what I meant to say.

P.R.: Among the Ancients, in Rome or Greece, what was the difference?

M.F.: In discussing Rome one sees that the problem revolves around Vitruvius. Vitruvius was reinterpreted from the sixteenth century on, but one can find in the sixteenth century—and no doubt in the Middle Ages as well—many considerations of the same order as Vitruvius; if you consider them as *reflections upon.* The treatises on politics, on the art of government, on the manner of good government, did not generally include chapters or analyses devoted to the organization of cities or to architecture.

The *Republic* of Jean Bodin (Paris, 1577) does not contain extended discussions of the role of architecture, whereas the police treatises of the eighteenth century are full of them.

P.R.: Do you mean there were techniques and practices, but the discourse did not exist?

M.F.: I did not say that discourses upon architecture did not exist before the eighteenth century. Nor do I mean to say that the discussions of architecture before the eighteenth century lacked any political dimension or significance. What I wish to point out is that from the eighteenth century on, every discussion of politics as the art of the government of men necessarily includes a chapter or a series of chapters on urbanism, on collective facilities, on hygiene, and on private architecture. Such chapters are not found in the discussions of the art of government of the sixteenth century. This change is perhaps not in the reflections of architects upon architecture, but it is quite clearly seen in the reflections of political men.

P.R.: So it was not necessarily a change within the theory of architecture itself?

M.F.: That's right. It was not necessarily a change in the minds of architects, or in their techniques—although that remains to be seen—but in the minds of political men in the choice and the form of attention that they bring to bear upon the objects that are of concern to them. Architecture became one of these during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

P.R.: Could you tell us why?

M.F.: Well, I think that it was linked to a number of phenomena, such as the question of the city and the idea that was clearly formulated at the beginning of the seventeenth century that the government of a large state like France should ultimately think of its territory on the model of the city. The city was no longer perceived as a place of privilege, as an exception in a territory of fields, forests, and roads. The cities were no longer islands beyond the common law. Instead, the cities, with the problems that they raised, and the particular forms that they took, served as the models for the governmental rationality that was to apply to the whole of the territory.

There is an entire series of utopias or projects for governing territory that developed on the premise that a state is like a large city; the capital is like its main square; the roads are like its streets. A state will be well organized when a system of policing as tight and efficient as that of the cities extends over the entire territory. At the outset, the notion of police applied only to the set of regulations that were to assure the tranquility of a city, but at that moment the police become the very *type* of rationality for the government of the whole territory. The model of the city became the matrix for the regulations that apply to a whole state.

The notion of police, even in France today, is frequently misunderstood. When one speaks to a Frenchman about police, he can only think of people in uniform or in the secret service. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, "police" signified a program of government rationality. This can be characterized as a project to create a system of regulation of the general conduct of individuals whereby everything would be controlled to the point of self-sustenance, without the need for intervention. This is the rather typically French effort of policing. The English, for a number of reasons, did not develop a comparable system, mainly because of the parliamentary tradition on one hand, and the tradition of local, communal autonomy on the other, not to mention the religious system.

One can place Napoleon almost exactly at the break between the old organization of the eighteenth-century police state (understood, of course, in the sense we have been discussing, not in the sense of the "police state" as we have come to know it) and the forms of the modern state, which he invented. At any rate, it seems that, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there appeared—rather quickly in the case of commerce and more slowly in all the other domains—this idea of a police that would manage to penetrate, to stimulate, to regulate, and to render almost automatic all the mechanisms of society.

Translation by Christian Hubert

"...Le Corbusier, who is described today—with a cruelty that I find perfectly useless—as a sort of crypto-Stalinist. He was, I am sure, someone full of good intentions...."

Space, Knowledge, and wer

This idea has since been abandoned. The question has been turned around. No longer do we ask, What is the form of governmental rationality that will be able to penetrate the body politic to its most fundamental elements? but rather, How is government possible? That is, what is the principle of limitation that applies to governmental actions such that things will occur for the best, in conformity with the rationality of government, and without intervention?

It is here that the question of liberalism comes up. It seems to me that at that very moment it became apparent that if one governed too much, one did not govern at all—that one provoked results contrary to those one desired. What was discovered at that time—and this was one of the great discoveries of political thought at the end of the eighteenth century—was the idea of *society*. That is to say, that government not only has to deal with a territory, with a domain, and with its subjects, but that it also has to deal with a complex and independent reality that has its own laws and mechanisms of reaction; its regulations as well as its possibilities of disturbance. This new reality is society. From the moment that one is to manipulate a society, one cannot consider it completely penetrable by police. One must take into account what it is. It becomes necessary to reflect upon it, upon its specific characteristics, its constants and its variables....

P.R.: So there is a change in the importance of space. In the eighteenth century there was a territory and the problem of governing people in this territory: one can choose as an example *La Métropolite* (1682) of Alexandre LeMaitre—a utopian treatise on how to build a capital city—or one can understand a city as a metaphor or symbol for the territory and how to govern it. All of this is quite spatial, whereas after Napoleon, society is not necessarily so *spatialized*....

M.F.: That's right. On one hand, it is not so spatialized, yet at the same time a number of problems that are properly seen as spatial emerged. Urban space has its own dangers: disease, such as the epidemics of cholera in

Europe from 1830 to about 1880; and revolution, such as the series of urban revolts that shook all of Europe during the same period. These spatial problems, which were perhaps not new, took on a new importance.

Secondly, a new aspect of the relations of space and power were the railroads. These were to establish a network of communication no longer corresponding necessarily to the traditional network of roads, but they nonetheless had to take into account the nature of society and its history. In addition, there are all the social phenomena that railroads gave rise to, be they the resistances they provoked, the transformations of population, or changes in the behavior of people. Europe was immediately sensitive to the changes in behavior that the railroads entailed. What was going to happen, for example, if it was possible to get married between Bordeaux and Nantes? Something that was not possible before. What was going to happen when people in Germany and France might get to know one another? Would war still be possible once there were railroads? In France a theory developed that the railroads would increase familiarity among people and that the new forms of human universality made possible would render war impossible. But what the people did not foresee—although the German military command was fully aware of it, since they were much cleverer than their French counterpart—was that, on the contrary, the railroads rendered war far easier to wage. The third development, which came later, was electricity.

So, there were problems in the links between the exercise of political power and the space of a territory, or the space of cities—links that were completely new.

P.R.: So it was less a matter of architecture than before. These are sorts of technics of space....

M.F.: The major problems of space, from the nineteenth century on, were indeed of a different type. Which is not to say that problems of an architectural nature were forgotten. In terms of the first ones I referred to—disease and the political problems—architecture has a very important role to play. The reflections on urbanism and on the design of workers' housing—all of these questions—are an area of reflection upon architecture.

P.R.: But architecture itself, the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, belongs to a completely different set of spatial issues.

M.F.: That's right. With the birth of these new technologies and these new economic processes one sees the birth of a sort of thinking about space that is no longer modeled upon the police state of the urbanization of the territory, but that extends far beyond the limits of urbanism and architecture.

P.R.: Consequently, the Ecole des Ponts et Chaussées....

M.F.: That's right. The Ecole des Ponts et Chaussées and its capital importance in political rationality in France are part of this. It was not architects, but engineers and builders of bridges, roads, viaducts, railways, as well as the Polytechnicians (who practically controlled the French railroads)—those are the people who thought out space.

P.R.: Has this situation continued up to the present, or are we witnessing a change in relations between the technicians of space?

M.F.: We may well witness some changes, but I think that we have until now remained with the developers of the territory, the people of the Ponts et Chaussées, etc.

P.R.: So architects are not necessarily the masters of space that they once were, or believe themselves to be.

M.F.: That's right. They are not the technicians or engineers of the three great variables—territory, communication, and speed. These escape the domain of architects.

P.R.: Do you see any particular architectural projects, either in the past or the present, as forces of liberation or resistance?

M.F.: I do not think that it is possible to say that one thing is of the order of "liberation" and another is of the order of "oppression." There are a certain number of

Interview: Michel Foucault

"After all, the architect has no power over me. If I want to tear down or change a house, . . . the architect has no control. The architect should be placed in another category—which is not to say that he is not

Conference on alcoholism in the auditorium of the prison at Fresnes.

Michel Foucault on a visit to the University of Southern California. (photo: Michael Yada/Time Magazine)

things that one can say with some certainty about a concentration camp to the effect that it is not an instrument of liberation, but one should still take into account—and this is not generally acknowledged—that, aside from torture and execution, which preclude any resistance, no matter how terrifying a given system may be, there always remain the possibilities of resistance, disobedience, and oppositional groupings.

On the other hand, I do not think that there is anything that is functionally—by its very nature—absolutely liberating. Liberty is a *practice*. So there may, in fact, always be, a certain number of projects whose aim is to modify some constraints, to loosen, or even to break them, but none of these projects can, simply by its nature, assure that people will have liberty automatically; that it will be established by the project itself. The liberty of men is never assured by the institutions and laws that are intended to guarantee them. This is why almost all of these laws and institutions are quite capable of being turned around. Not because they are ambiguous, but simply because "liberty" is what must be exercised.

P.R.: Are there urban examples of this? Or examples where architects succeeded?

M.F.: Well, up to a point there is Le Corbusier, who is described today—with a sort of cruelty that I find perfectly useless—as a sort of crypto-Stalinist. He was, I am sure, someone full of good intentions and what he did was in fact dedicated to liberating effects. Perhaps the means that he proposed were in the end less liberating than he thought, but, once again, I think that it can never be inherent in the structure of things to guarantee the exercise of freedom. The guarantee of freedom is freedom.

P.R.: So you do not think of Le Corbusier as an example of success. You are simply saying that his intention was liberating. Can you give us a successful example?

M.F.: No. It *cannot* succeed. If one were to find a place, and perhaps there are some, where liberty is effectively exercised, one would find that this is not owing to the order of objects, but, once again, owing to the practice of liberty. Which is not to say that, after all, one may as well leave people in slums thinking that they can simply exercise their rights there.

P.R.: Meaning that architecture in itself cannot resolve social problems?

M.F.: I think that it can and does produce positive effects· when the liberating intentions of the architect coincide with the real practice of people in the exercise of their freedom.

P.R.: But the same architecture can serve other ends.

M.F.: Absolutely. Let me bring up another example: The *Familistère* of Jean-Baptiste Godin at Guise (1859). The architecture of Godin was clearly intended for the freedom of people. Here was something that manifested the power of ordinary workers to participate in the exercise of their trade. It was a rather important sign and instrument of autonomy for a group of workers. Yet no one could enter or leave the place without being seen by everyone—an aspect of the architecture that could be totally oppressive. But it could only be oppressive if people were prepared to use their own presence in order to watch over others. Let's imagine a community of unlimited sexual practices that might be established there. It would once again become a place of freedom. I think it is somewhat arbitrary to try to dissociate the effective practice of freedom by people, the practice of social relations, and the spatial distributions in which they find themselves. If they are separated, they become impossible to understand. Each can only be understood through the other.

P.R.: Yet people have often attempted to find utopian schemes to liberate people, or to oppress them.

M.F.: Men have dreamed of liberating machines. But there are no machines of freedom, by definition. This is not to say that the exercise of freedom is completely indifferent to spatial distribution, but it can only function when there is a certain convergence; in the case of divergence or distortion it immediately becomes the opposite of that which had been intended. The panoptic qualities of Guise could perfectly well have allowed it to be used as a prison. Nothing could be simpler. It is clear that, in fact, the *Familistère* may well have served as an instrument for discipline and a rather unbearable group pressure.

P.R.: So once again the intention of the architect is not the fundamental determining factor.

M.F.: Nothing is fundamental. That is what is interesting in the analysis of society. That is why nothing irritates me as much as these inquiries—which are by definition metaphysical—on the foundations of power in a society or the self-institution of a society, etc. These are not fundamental phenomena. There are only reciprocal relations, and the perpetual gaps between intentions in relation to one another.

P.R.: You have singled out doctors, prison wardens, priests, judges, and psychiatrists as key figures in the political configurations that involve domination. Would you put architects on this list?

M.F.: You know, I was not really attempting to describe figures of domination when I referred to doctors and people like that, but rather to describe people through whom power passed or who are important in the fields of power relations. A patient in a mental institution is placed within a field of fairly complicated power relations, which Erving Goffman analyzed very well. The pastor in a Christian or Catholic church (in Protestant churches it is somewhat different) is an important link in a set of power relations. The architect is not an individual of that sort.

After all, the architect has no power over me. If I want to tear down or change a house he built for me, put up new partitions, add a chimney, the architect has no control. So the architect should be placed in another category—which is not to say that he is not totally foreign to the organization, the implementation, and all the techniques of power that are exercised in a society. I would say that one must take *him*—his mentality, his attitude—into account as well as his projects, in order to understand a certain number of the techniques of power that are invested in architecture, but he is not comparable to a doctor, a priest, a psychiatrist, or a prison warden.

P.R.: "Post-modernism" has received a great deal of attention recently in architectural circles. It is also being talked about in philosophy, notably by Jean-François Lyotard and Jurgen Habermas. Clearly, historical reference and language play an important role in the modern episteme. How do you see post-modernism, both as architecture and in terms of the historical and philosophical questions that are posed by it?

M.F.: I think that there is a widespread and facile tendency, which one should combat, to designate that which has just occurred as the primary enemy as if this were always the principal form of oppression from which one had to liberate oneself. Now, this simple attitude entails a number of dangerous consequences: first, an inclination to seek out some cheap form of archaism or some imaginary past forms of happiness that people did not, in fact, have at all. For instance, in the areas that interest me, it is very amusing to see how contemporary sexuality is described as something absolutely terrible. To think that it is only possible now to make love after turning off the television! and in mass-produced beds! "Not like that wonderful time when . . ." Well, what about those wonderful times when people worked eighteen hours a day and there were six people in a bed, if one was lucky enough to have a bed! There is in this hatred of the present or the immediate past a dangerous tendency to invoke a completely mythical past. Secondly, there is the problem raised by Habermas: if one abandons the work of Kant or Weber, for example, one runs the risk of lapsing into irrationality.

totally foreign to the organization, the implementation, and all the techniques of power that are exercised in a society."
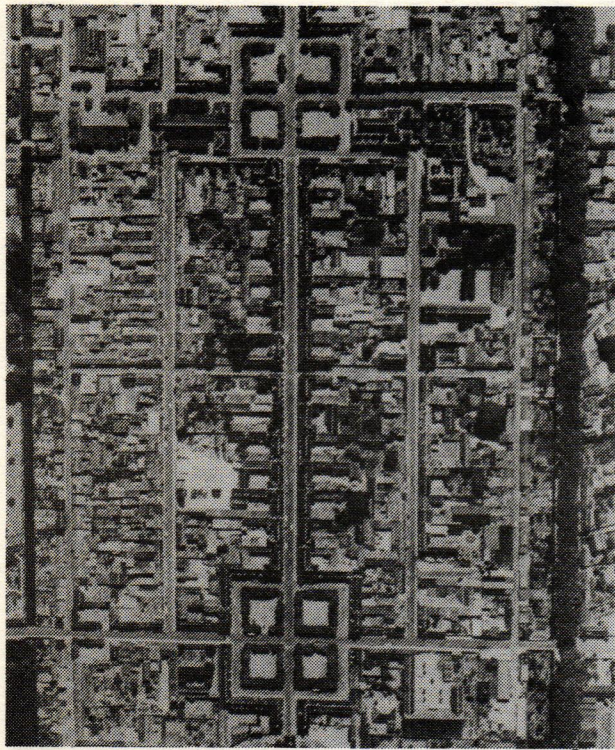
Above: 17th century town of Richelieu, France, showing control through spatial ordering. (photo: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris) Right, above: Le Corbusier; plan of a contemporary city for 3 million people; 1922. Below: Facades and site plan showing the principal axis of Richelieu. Far Right, above: Plan of Karlsruhe, built in 1715 as a hunting retreat for Karl Wilhelm, margrave of Baden. Below: Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, perspective view of the second project for the town of Chaux; c. 1773.
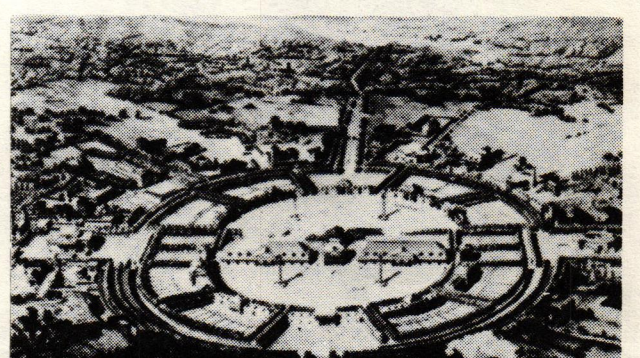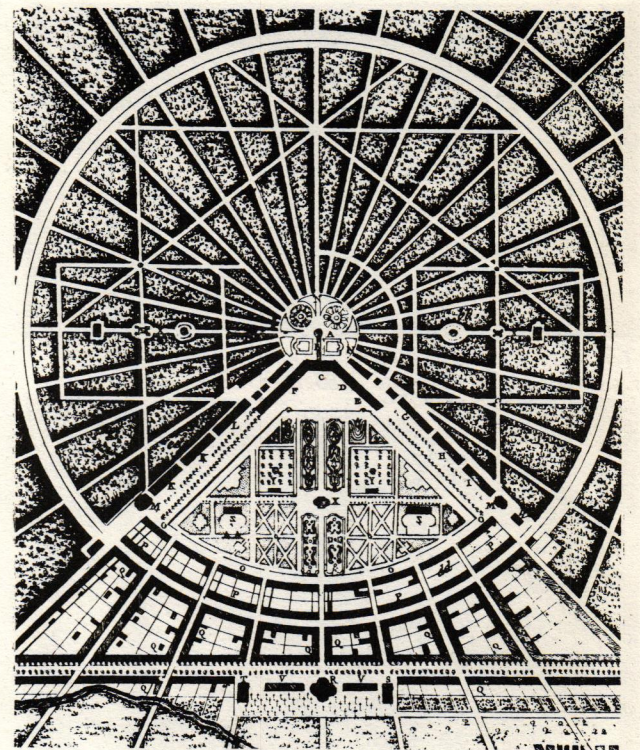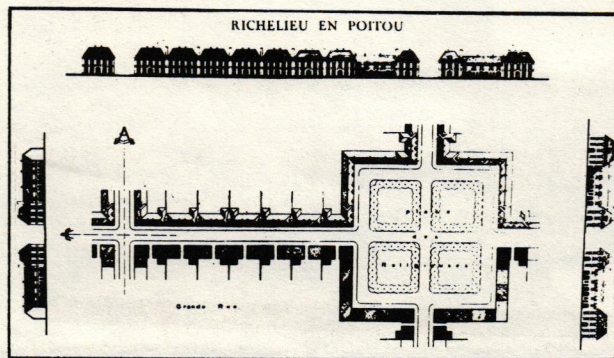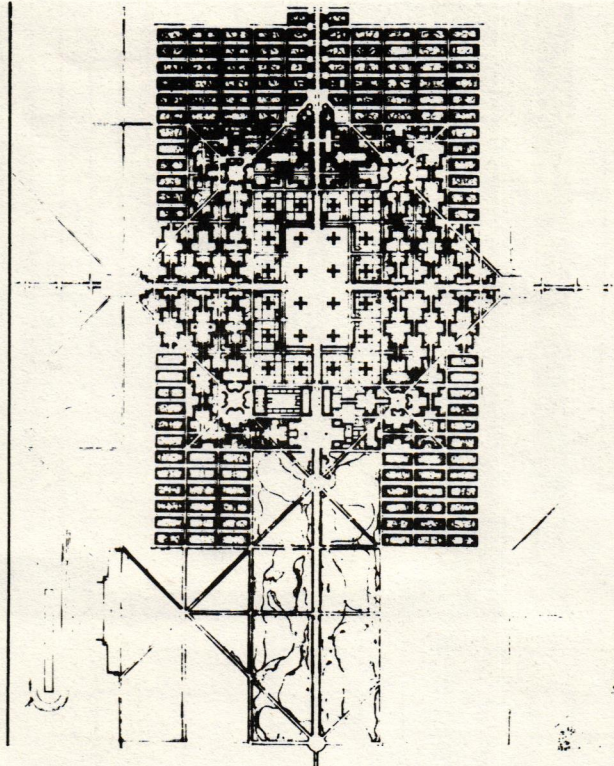
I am completely in agreement with this, but at the same time, our question is quite different: I think that the central issue of philosophy and critical thought since the eighteenth century has always been, still is, and will, I hope, remain the question, *What* is this Reason that we use? What are its historical effects? What are its limits, and what are its dangers? How can we exist as rational beings, fortunately committed to practicing a rationality that is unfortunately crisscrossed by intrinsic dangers? One should remain as close to this question as possible, keeping in mind that it is both central and extremely difficult to resolve. In addition, if it is extremely dangerous to say that Reason is the enemy that should be eliminated, it is just as dangerous to say that any critical questioning of this rationality risks sending us into irrationality. One should not forget—and I'm not saying this in order to criticize rationality, but in order to show how ambiguous things are —it was on the basis of the flamboyant rationality of Social Darwinism that racism was formulated, becoming one of the most enduring and powerful ingredients of Nazism. This was, of course, an irrationality, but an irrationality that was at the same time, after all, a certain form of rationality....

This is the situation that we are in and that we must combat. If intellectuals in general are to have a function, if critical thought itself has a function, and, even more specifically, if philosophy has a function within critical thought, it is precisely to accept this sort of spiral, this sort of revolving door of rationality that refers us to its necessity, to its indispensability, and at the same time, to its intrinsic dangers.

P.R.: All that being said, it would be fair to say that you are much less afraid of historicism and the play of historical references than someone like Habermas is; also that this issue has been posed in architecture as almost a crisis of civilization by the defenders of modernism, who contend that if we abandon modern architecture for a frivolous return to decoration and motifs, we are somehow abandoning civilization. On the other hand, some post-modernists have claimed that historical references per se are somehow meaningful and are going to protect us from the dangers of an overly rationalized world.

M.F.: Although it may not answer your question, I would say this: One should totally and absolutely suspect anything that claims to be a return. One reason is a logical one; there is in fact no such thing as a return. History, and the meticulous interest applied to history, is certainly one of the best defenses against this theme of the return. For me, the history of madness or the studies of the prison . . . were done in that precise manner because I knew full well—this is in fact what aggravated many

people—that I was carrying out an historical analysis in such a manner that people *could* criticize the present, but it was impossible for them to say, "Let's go back to the good old days when madmen in the eighteenth century . . . ." or, "Let's go back to the days when the prison was not one of the principal instruments. . . ." No; I think that history preserves us from that sort of ideology of the return.

P.R.: Hence, the simple opposition between reason and history is rather silly. . . . choosing sides between the two. . . .

M.F.: Yes. Well, the problem for Habermas is, after all, to make a transcendental mode of thought spring forth against any historicism. I am, indeed, far more historicist and Nietzschean. I do not think that there is a proper usage of history or a proper usage of intrahistorical analysis—which is fairly lucid, by the way—that works precisely against this ideology of the return. A good study of peasant architecture in Europe, for example, would show the utter vanity of wanting to return to the little individual house with its thatched roof. History protects us from historicism—from a historicism that calls on the past to resolve the questions of the present.

P.R.: It also reminds us that there is always a history; that those modernists who wanted to suppress any reference to the past were making a mistake.

M.F.: Of course.

P.R.: Your next two books deal with sexuality among the Greeks and the Early Christians. Are there any particular architectural dimensions to the issues you discuss?

M.F.: I didn't find any; absolutely none. But what is interesting is that in Imperial Rome there were, in fact, brothels, pleasure quarters, criminal areas, etc., and there was also one sort of quasi-public place of pleasure: the baths, the *thermes*. The baths were a very important place of pleasure and encounter, which slowly disappeared in Europe. In the Middle Ages, the baths were still a place of encounter between men and women as well as of men with men and women with women, although that is rarely talked about. What was referred to and condemned, as well as practiced, were the encounters between men and women, which disappeared over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

P.R.: In the Arab world it continues.

M.F.: Yes; but in France it has largely ceased. It still existed in the nineteenth century. One sees it in *Les*

Enfants du Paradis, and it is historically exact. One of the characters, Lacenaire, was—no one mentions it—a swine and a pimp who used young boys to attract older men and then blackmailed them; there is a scene that refers to this. It required all the naivete and antihomosexuality of the Surrealists to overlook that fact. So the baths continued to exist, as a place of sexual encounters. The bath was a sort of cathedral of pleasure at the heart of the city, where people could go as often as they want, where they walked about, picked each other up, met each other, took their pleasure, ate, drank, discussed. . . .

P.R.: So sex was not separated from the other pleasures. It was inscribed in the center of the cities. It was public; it served a purpose. . . .

M.F.: That's right. Sexuality was obviously considered a social pleasure for the Greeks and the Romans. What is interesting about male homosexuality today—this has apparently been the case of female homosexuals for some time—is that their sexual relations are immediately translated into social relations and the social relations are understood as sexual relations. For the Greeks and the Romans, in a different fashion, sexual relations were located within social relations in the widest sense of the term. The baths were a place of sociality that included sexual relations.

One can directly compare the bath and the brothel. The brothel is in fact a place, and an architecture, of pleasure. There is, in fact, a very interesting form of sociality that was studied by Alain Corbin in *Les Filles de Noces* (Aubier, 1978). The men of the city met at the brothel; they were tied to one another by the fact that the same women passed through their hands, that the same diseases and infections were communicated to them. There was a sociality of the brothel; but the sociality of the baths as it existed among the ancients—a new version of which could perhaps exist again—was completely different from the sociality of the brothel.

P.R.: We now know a great deal about disciplinary architecture. What about confessional architecture —the kind of architecture that would be associated with a confessional technology?

M.F.: You mean religious architecture? I think that it has been studied. There is the whole problem of a monastery as xenophobic. There one finds precise regulations concerning life in common; affecting sleeping, eating, prayer, the place of each individual in all of that, the cells. All of this was programmed from very early on.

P.R.: In a technology of power, of confession as opposed to discipline, space seems to play a central role as well.
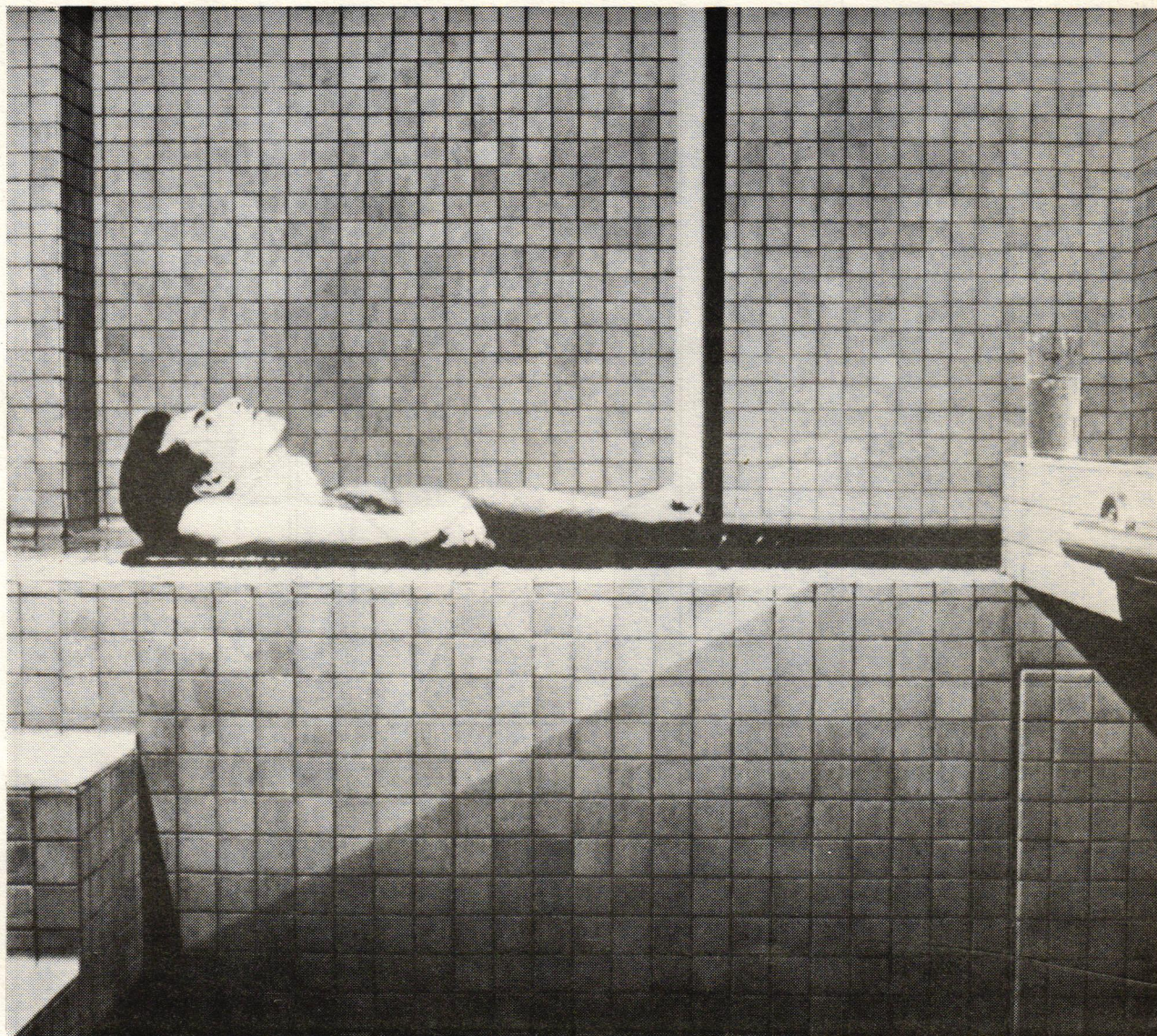
"One can directly compare the bath and the brothel. The brothel is in fact a place and an architecture of pleasure. . . . but the sociality of the baths was completely different from the sociality of the brothel."
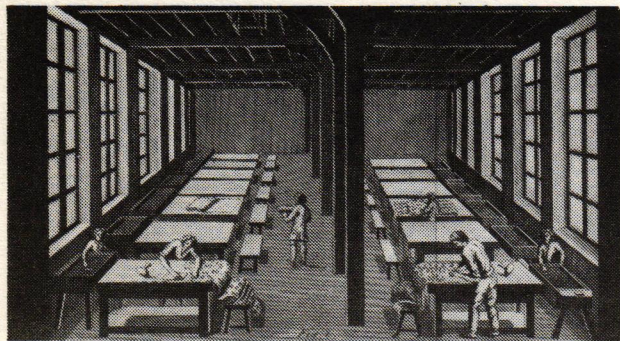
Textile printing workshop at Jouy, from de la Platière's Encyclopédie Méthodique, 1785. (Bib. Nat., Paris)

Detail of a Philadelphia prison in the early 19th century.

Robert Mapplethorpe. James Ford, 1979.

M.F.: Yes. Space is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power. To make a parenthetical remark, I recall having been invited, in 1966, by a group of architects to do a study of space, of something that I called at that time "heterotopias," those singular spaces to be found in some given social spaces whose functions are different or even the opposite of others. The architects worked on this, and at the end of the study someone spoke up—a Sartrean psychologist—who firebombed me, saying that *space* is reactionary and capitalist, but *history* and *becoming* are revolutionary. This absurd discourse was not at all unusual at the time. Today everyone would be convulsed with laughter at such a pronouncement, but not then.

P.R.: Architects in particular, if they do choose to analyze an institutional building such as a hospital or a school in terms of its disciplinary function, would tend to focus primarily on the walls. After all, that is what they design. Your approach is perhaps more concerned with space, rather than architecture, in that the physical walls are only one aspect of the institution. How would you characterize the difference between these two approaches, between the building itself and space?

M.F.: I think there is a difference in method and approach. It is true that for me, architecture, in the very vague analyses of it that I have been able to conduct, is only taken as an element of support, to insure a certain allocation of people in space, a *canalization* of their circulation, as well as the coding of their reciprocal relations. So it is not only considered as an element in space, but is especially thought of as a plunge into a field of social relations in which it brings about some specific effects.

For example, I know that there is an historian who is carrying out some interesting studies of the archaeology of the Middle Ages, in which he takes up the problem of architecture, of houses in the Middle Ages, in terms of the problem of the chimney. I think that he is in the process of showing that beginning at a certain moment it was possible to build a chimney inside the house—a chimney with a hearth, not simply an open room or a chimney outside the house; that at that moment all sorts of things changed and relations between individuals became possible. All of this seems very interesting to me, but the conclusion that he presented in an article was that the history of ideas and thoughts is useless.

What is, in fact, interesting is that the two are rigorously indivisible. Why did people struggle to find the way to put a chimney inside a house? Or why did they put their techniques to this use? So often in the history of techniques it takes years or even centuries to implement them. It is certain, and of capital importance, that this technique was a formative influence upon new human relations, but it is impossible to think that it would have been developed and adapted had there not been in the play and strategy of human relations something which tended in that direction. What is interesting is always interconnection, not the primacy of this over that, which never has any meaning.

P.R.: In your book *Les Mots et les Choses* you constructed certain vivid spatial metaphors to describe structures of thought. Why do you think spatial images are so evocative for these references? What is the relationship between these spatial metaphors describing disciplines and more concrete descriptions of institutional spaces?

M.F.: It is quite possible that since I was interested in the problems of space I used quite a number of spatial metaphors in *Les Mots et les Choses*, but usually these metaphors were not ones that I advanced, but ones that I was studying as objects. What is striking in the epistemological mutations and transformations of the seventeenth century is to see how the spatialization of knowledge was one of the factors in the constitution of this knowledge as a science. If the natural history and the classifications of Linneas were possible, it is for a certain number of reasons: on the one hand, there was literally a spatialization of the very object of their analyses, since they gave themselves the rule of studying and classifying a plant only on the basis of that which was visible. They didn't even want to use a microscope. All the traditional elements of knowledge, such as the medical functions of the plant, fell away. The object was spatialized. Subsequently, it was spatialized insofar as the principles of classification had to be found in the very structure of the plant: The number of elements, how they were arranged, their size, etc., and certain other elements, like the height of the plant. Then there was the spatialization into illustrations within books, which was only possible with certain printing techniques. Then the spatialization of the reproduction of the plants themselves, which was represented in books. All of these are spatial techniques, not metaphors.

P.R.: Is the actual plan for a building—the precise drawing that becomes walls and windows—the same form of discourse as, say, a hierarchical pyramid that describes rather precisely relations between people not only in space but also in social life?

M.F.: Well, I think there are a few simple and exceptional examples in which the architectural means reproduce, with more or less emphasis, the social hierarchies. There is the model of the military camp, where the military hierarchy is to be read in the ground itself, by the place occupied by the tents and the buildings reserved for each rank. It reproduces precisely through architecture a pyramid of power; but this is an exceptional example, as is everything military—privileged in society and of an extreme simplicity.

P.R.: But the plan itself is not always an account of relations or power.

M.F.: No. Fortunately for human imagination, things are a little more complicated than that.

P.R.: Architecture is not, of course, a constant: it has a long tradition of changing preoccupations, changing systems, different rules. The *savoir* of architecture is partly the history of the profession, partly the evolution of a science of construction, and partly a rewriting of aesthetic theories. What do you think is particular about this form of *savoir*? Is it more like a natural science, or what you have called a "dubious science"?

M.F.: I can't exact. say that this distinction between sciences that are certain and those that are uncertain is of no interest—that would be avoiding the question—but I must say that what interests me more is to focus on what the Greeks called the *techne*, that is to say, a practical rationality governed by a conscious goal. I am not even sure if it is worth constantly asking the question of whether government can be the object of an exact science. On the other hand, if architecture, like the practice of government and the practice of other forms of social organization, is considered as a *techne*, possibly using elements of sciences like physics, for example, or statistics, etc. . . , that is what is interesting. But if one wanted to do a history of architecture, I think that it should be much more along the lines of that general history of the *techne*, rather than the histories of either the exact sciences or the inexact ones. The disadvantage of this word *techne*, I realize, is its relation to the word "technology," which has a very specific meaning. A very narrow meaning is given to "technology": one thinks of hard technology, the technology of wood, of fire, of electricity. Whereas government is also a function of technology: the government of individuals, the government of souls, the government of the self by the self, the government of families, the government of children, and so on. I believe that if one placed the history of architecture back in this general history of *techne*, in this wide sense of the word, one would have a more interesting guiding concept than by considering opposition between the exact sciences and the inexact ones.

Institutional Style

Deconstructing Modernism: Meier's Hartford Seminary

Anthony Vidler
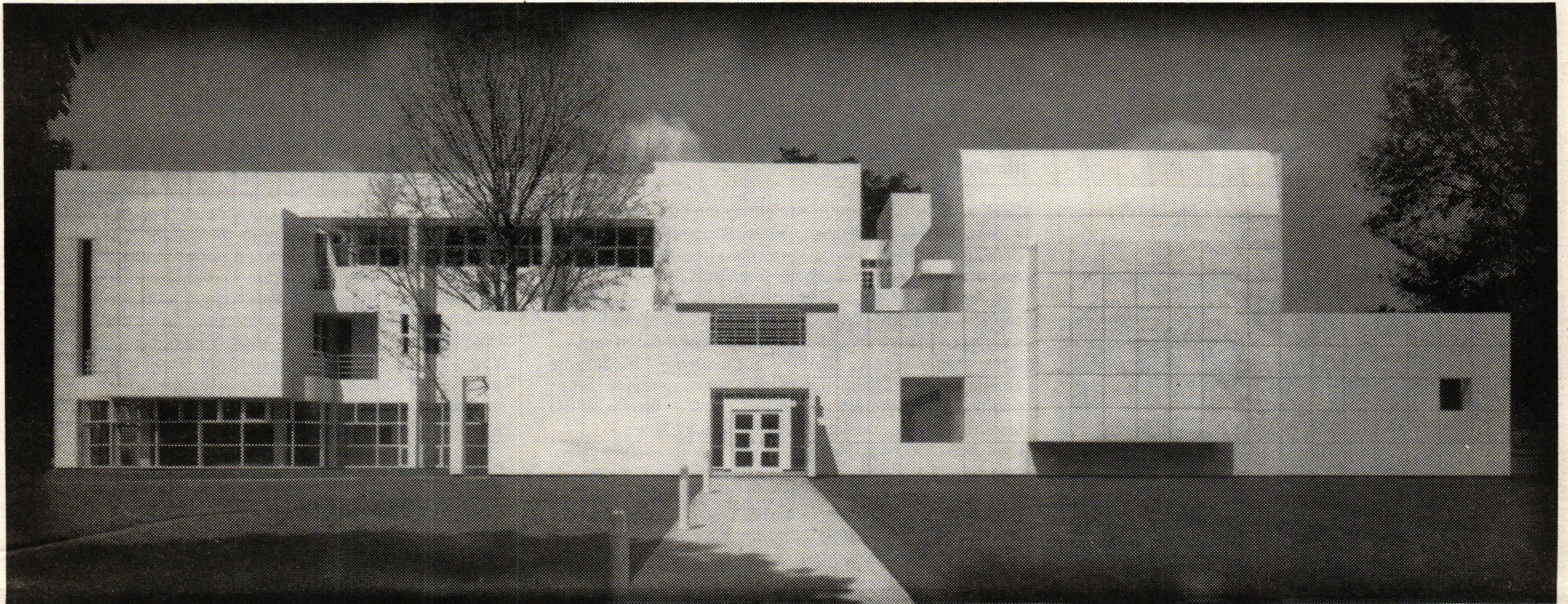
Richard Meier. The Hartford Seminary, Hartford, CN; 1981. Entrance (east) elevation. (photo: Ezra Stoller/ESTO)

"A villa on the dunes of Normandy conceived like one of these ships would be more appropriate than those heavy "Normandy roofs," so very, very old! But it would perhaps be claimed that this was not a maritime *style*!"
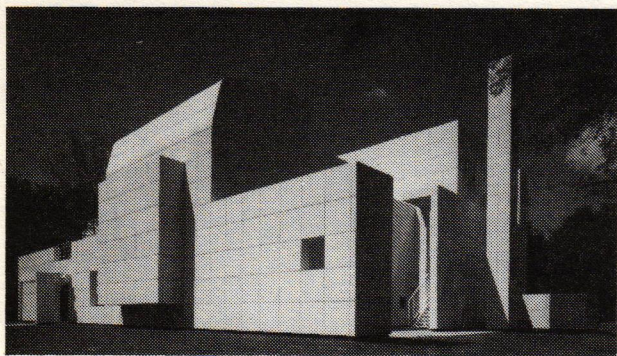
Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, 1923

In an age when "Normandy roofs," whether mansarded or shingled, have become the signs of a revived nostalgia for a pre–machine-age world, the very survival of a style that might with justice be termed "maritime" according to the tenets of the 1920s would in itself be remarkable. It is all the more ironic that such a manner, developed with formidable consistency in the work of Richard Meier, must now be seen as a *style*. For while during the years 1920 to 1923, the liners *Aquitania, Lamorcière*, and *Empress of Asia* were advanced to *MM. les architectes* as the necessary correctives for eyes which were unable to see the coming of a machine age — the paradigms of an architecture "free from suffocating styles" — now the recapitulation of such elements cannot be viewed without a sense that a specific historical period is being referred to, with all the contradictory questions that arise in such a situation. No longer can we be persuaded that the engineering forms of ships, airplanes, and cars are in some way natural rather than conventional forms; nor can we fully participate in the white crusade against a brown Victorian world in the belief that the machine will redeem where politics have failed. The slogan "Architecture or Revolution" has grown old and bitter together with the utopianism that supported it. Today, even more than twenty years ago, the idea of a continuity between the Modernism of the Heroic Period (rendered less and less heroic by historical research) and our own less confident, post-utopian sensibility lacks resonance.
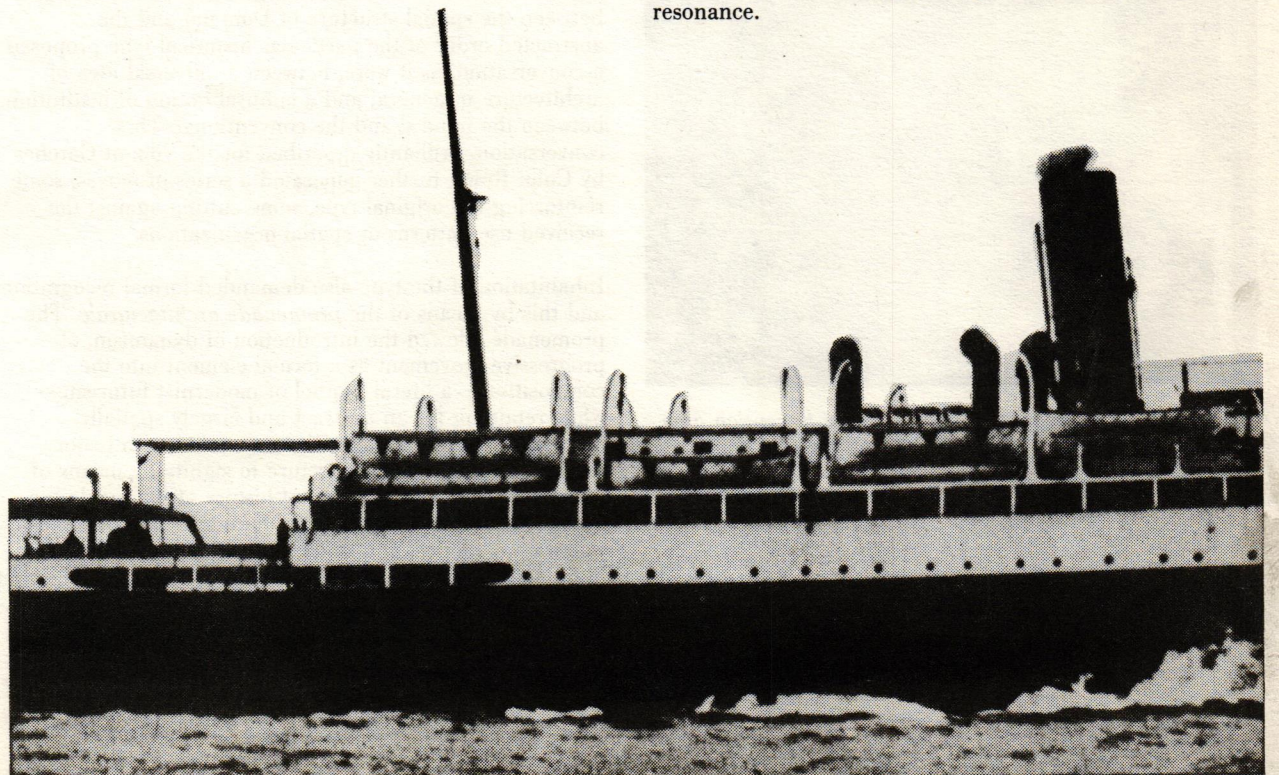
The "Lamorcière." Illustration from Le Corbusier's Vers une architecture.

Vidler on Meier

"Like some country house from the 1890s, it sprawls along an axis, asking us to read its narrative from left to right—from library, to entrance, to chapel—as if the whole story of the program were laid out from knowledge to faith; individual to community."

Hartford Seminary. View from northeast. (photo: Ezra Stoller/ESTO)

Above, top: Interior of the Chapel. Below: Reception area, looking along courtyard wall toward entrance to library. (photos: Ezra Stoller/ESTO)

And yet, more than any other practicing architect in the U.S., Richard Meier presents himself as the heir to a didactic modernism framed on the one hand by the tenet "A house is a machine for living in," and on the other by the paradigm of the Dom-ino House, Le Corbusier's attempt to weld classicism to reinforced-concrete technology. In the first case, this means for Meier all the received <u>references to ship architecture—rails, white surfaces, horizontal windows, linear plan distributions, and complex three-dimensional intersections</u>—what Le Corbusier himself characterized in 1923, referring to the liner *Aquitania*, as "<u>new architectural forms, elements both vast and intimate, yet on the human scale; freedom from suffocating styles, the contrasts of solids and voids, strong masses and graceful elements</u>." In the second case, the reference to the Dom-ino House represents the attempt to construct such modern forms according to rules of composition based not on mechanical, but on architectural typologies. The utilization of such a purist aesthetic has provided a consistent vocabulary for Meier, in most of his private houses and many of his public institutions: the themes run clearly from the Smith House (1967) to the Hartford Seminary.

Such a self-consciously lived debt to modernism places a special burden on criticism: his works cannot be entirely detached from the Corbusian canon, from which they derive much of their aesthetic force and conceptual unity; nor can they be totally separated from a "post-modernist" context, where the operative criteria call for them to be seen as so many consumable examples of a dated and already eclectic style. Neither "authentically" Modern in an age that is nostalgic for roots, however tenuous these might be, nor completely "post-modern"—insofar as the term refers to an unabashed historicism—Meier's buildings stand equivocal and hallucinatory, suspended between past and present. Their dreamlike quality is enhanced by their very perfection; untouched by time, and technically perfect; even, as in the case of the Seminary, divided from the ground by a thin black line. They seem to ask for special consideration in an age preoccupied by the ruin, the fantastic past, the comfortable colors of childhood trips to Tuscany. They are also hybrids. In spite of the white panels, the nautical imagery, and the exposed frames, they cannot be seen in quite the same way as 1920s-Le Corbusier. A first attempt at interpretation might well examine this primary debt to Corbusian formulas.

The Dom-ino House diagram, invented by Le Corbusier between 1914 and 1920, was in itself simple enough. A structure of slabs and free-standing columns, it served first to present the basic elements of reinforced-concrete construction in polemical form: a kind of "primitive hut" of modernism, it demonstrated the potential for architecture to free itself from load-bearing walls, to raise itself up from the ground on pilotis, to utilize the roof as a new ground, to accept within this general frame all the specificities of modern life articulated in the free plan. On another level, the Dom-ino diagram was a highly sophisticated aesthetic device: geometrically controlled according to the Golden Section rectangle; tensioned along its sides by the curtain-wall hung in front of the column grid; additive at its ends, like a domino, it proposed a dynamic interplay between vertical skin and horizontal slab, virtually demanding the dialectic of free-plan elements that was to inhabit it with Garches (1927) and Poissy (1929–31).

In another sense, however, the Dom-ino was an empty frame, awaiting inhabitation by a historically derived type, whether the Charterhouse of Ema or the Villa Malcontenta. At a first level of signification, the interplay between the spatial structure of Dom-ino and the abstracted order of the particular historical type proposed a conversation, as it were, between a universal idea of architecture in general and a cultural notion of institution; between the natural and the conventional. This conversation, brilliantly described for the villa at Garches by Colin Rowe, further generated a series of moves, some reinforcing the original type, some cutting against the received use patterns or spatial organizations.

Inhabitation of the type also demanded formal recognition; and this by means of the *promenade architecturale*. The promenade allowed the introduction of dynamism, of progressive movement as a formal element into the composition—a literal symbol of modernist futurism—while retaining for an abstract and largely spatially determined utopia a link with temporality, with history itself. No longer was architecture to signify by means of historical styles, but the natural history of life inside the building would be exhibited by the interaction of ramps, walkways, galleries, and stairs that formed a system of movement interlaced with the system of structure. The first projects for Garches illustrate this dialectic in its pure form.

In Meier's most recently completed institutional building, the Seminary at Hartford (completed in summer of 1981), all these motifs are deployed with a dramatic force and technical virtuosity that seems at once to pay homage to their origins and to transform the vocabulary into a working language of its own. The Dom-ino frame is there, but, as in many of Meier's other projects, complicated and developed into an expressive device in its own right; the undulating walls of the free-plan are there, but they now have escaped from the grid, and turned into volumetric wrappings that articulate—sometimes as walls, sometimes as roofs—the building's major functions; the *promenade architecturale*, marked by stairs, walkways, and continuous railings, seems to play in and out of the building, for all intents and purposes tying together the otherwise-fragmented volumes. In the overall diagram, reference is made to the firm back wall of stairs and services, which is often found in Le Corbusier, and functions consistently as an organizing device for Meier in both private houses and public buildings.

The overall massing of the building, however, is hardly Corbusian; rather, its composition is Romantic, its volumes self-consciously assembled in favor of the random view, the chance effect. Like some country house from the 1890s, it sprawls along an axis, asking us to read its narrative from left to right—from library, to entrance, to chapel—as if the whole story of the program were laid out from knowledge to faith; individual to community. Its pattern reads more like that of the picaresque novel than of any classical prototype: *Tristam Shandy* more than Alexander Pope. We are referred away from the world of Phileban solids and neoclassical types, toward a picturesque genre in which each functional element exhibits its difference; where the total idea of the institution must be pieced together by a moving observer. Here unity is provided not by the tightly controlled and overriding grid and skin of Dom-ino, but by the uniform wrapping and the total coherence of the vocabulary.

The insistence of this fundamentally *empirical* genre over the classical norms that generated its style of representation is revealed in the entrance sequence, where, rather than being turned by the elaborate plays between movement and formal structure present in Le Corbusier, we are led without mediation into and through the building; form accommodates movement as if bound by a diagram of circulation, rather than informed by a consciousness of the meaning to be derived from the stages of passage.

In the case of the villa at Garches, for example, which was a play on the Palladian convention, the approach to the block is indirect; as if he had been conscious of the fragile nature of the taut skin stretched over the edge of the slabs, Le Corbusier protected the wall from direct penetration. The visitor traverses the facade from one side to the other, turned by the impossibility of entering the servants' door, passing in front of the center—the proper entry point for any Palladian villa—and finally entering beneath the airplane-wing canopy. In the public version of this promenade, the penitent on his way to cleanliness from the streets of Paris to the Salvation Army hostel (1926–33) is moved through a series of pavilions parallel to the main dormitory block before being allowed to puncture the surface of the entry wall. In both cases the tension of the entry wall is increased, and the strength of its fragile surface reinforced.

At Hartford, however, a building equally as narrow as that of the Salvation Army hostel is entered directly from the street on axis, protected only by a frame around an exterior stair; the wall itself is pulled back, as if in reaction to this assault, behind the columns. A direct path links the entry hall with the rear main stair affording the visitor only the briefest pause, on the threshold, as it were, aware of the major cross-axis of the first floor, as it passes across the entryway to right and left. Running between library and meeting hall, this passage is pressed against the front wall of the building. Any potential tension that would act to give meaning to the turn to the left—the route of knowledge—or to the right—toward community and God—is dissolved by the immediate turn required; equally, the power of the back wall of stairs and services, from which all volumes are projected, is lost on the first floor, and the clarity that appears on the next two floors by virtue of the main corridor is disseminated within a labyrinth of interior rooms. In this way the virtues of a layered and stratified plan, which presents to the user a clear set of planes, lateral and *phenomenal*, against which enclosed volumes may be read and penetrated, is defused, as if the demand for literal movement has overcome all pretense to working on the level of language.

In a similar literal manner the apparently intricate network of passageways—marks of the *promenade architecturale*—is, in fact, a piecemeal set of incidents, inserted where particular opportunities present themselves; the promenade—which serves in modernist architecture as an essential
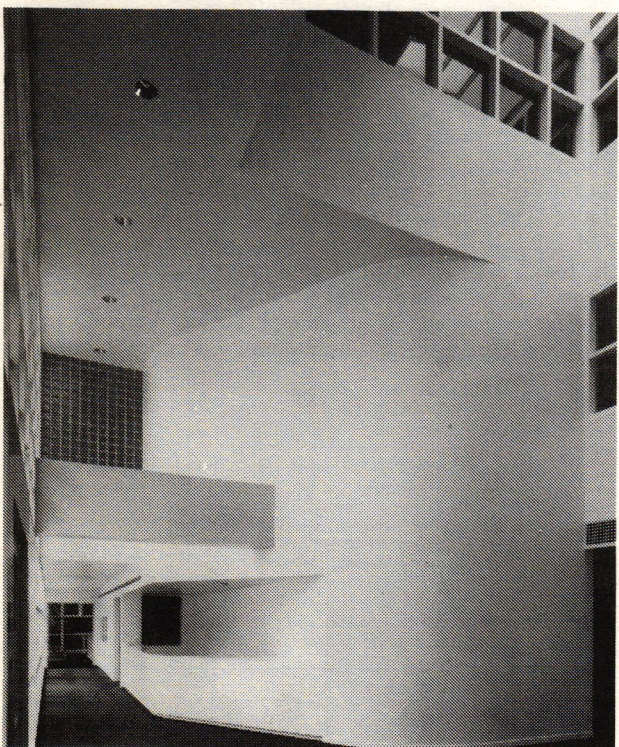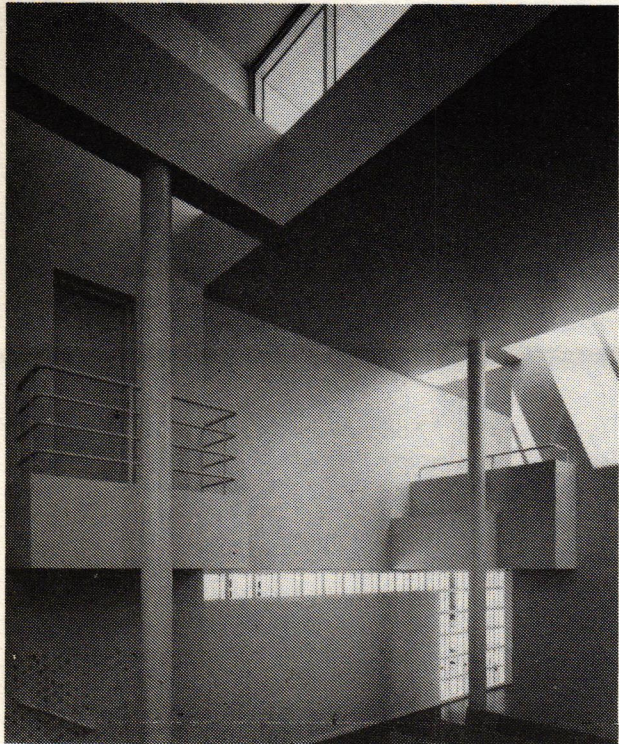
> "Neither 'authentically' Modern in an age that is nostalgic for roots, however tenuous, nor completely 'post-modern'—in-so-far as the term refers to an unabashed historicism—Meier's buildings stand equivocal and hallucinatory, between past and present."
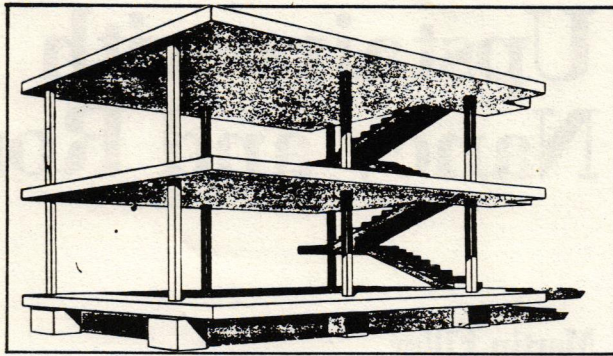
narrative key to the experience of the whole building—is here fragmented, if not ruined, as notations of a system once existing, now exhausted by the demands of empirical reality.

Perhaps the most evident divergence from Corbusian precedent, which also reveals Meier's continuous debt to the more functionalist Gropius, is the absence of any overall referent, or type, by which we might measure the institutional value and cultural significance of this seminary among all other religious and educational buildings. Even as in the New Harmony Atheneum (1978), we find no trace of the "museum" type as it was carefully elaborated throughout the nineteenth century, or even as it was reinvented by Le Corbusier himself (nor, for that matter, do we find echoes in the plan of this building of the New Harmony community plans of George Rapp or Robert Owen). In Hartford all such cultural reference is eschewed in favor of a universal architecture that indeed speaks about route and passage, about entry and exit, but holds no more specific reference to its public social role than do Meier's earlier houses to their private, individual function. Only the forecourt of the building, framed on one side by the chapel, and on another by a screen and stair to the upper deck, makes some reference to a cloister; but this is more in terms of image than in any organizational sense.
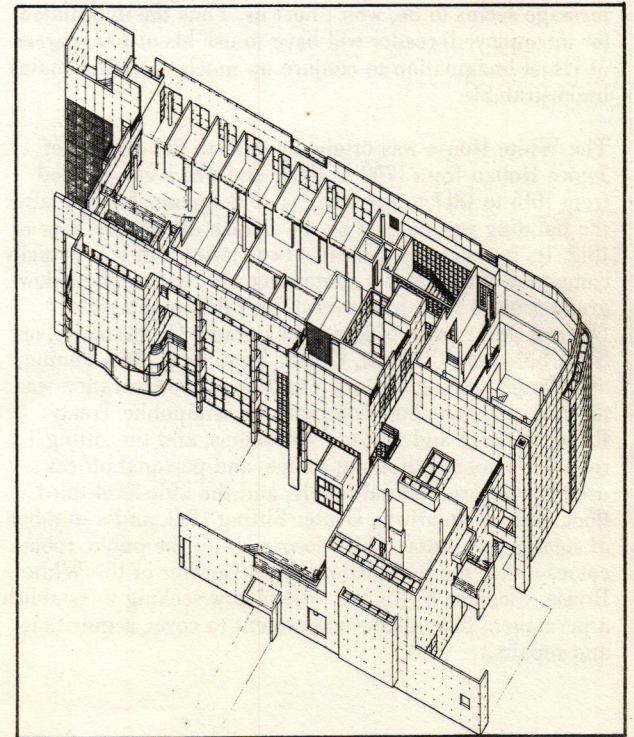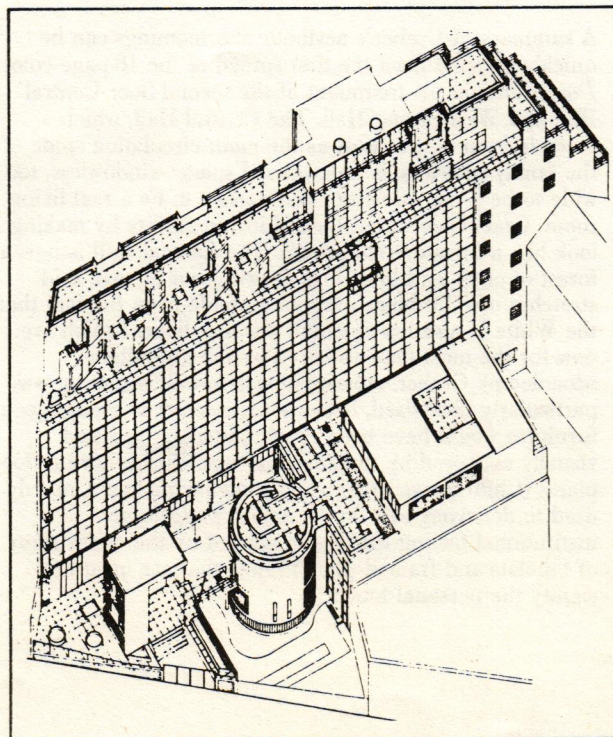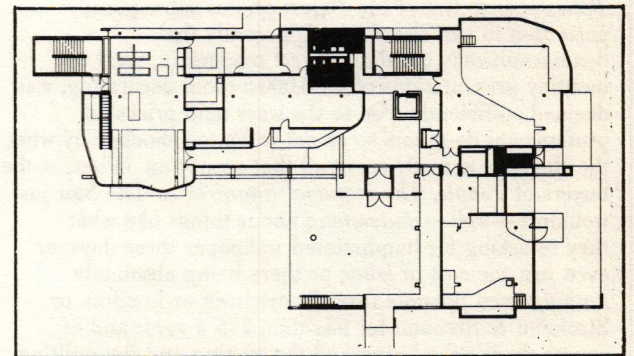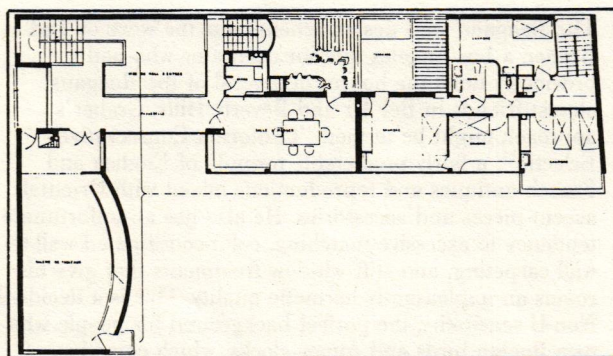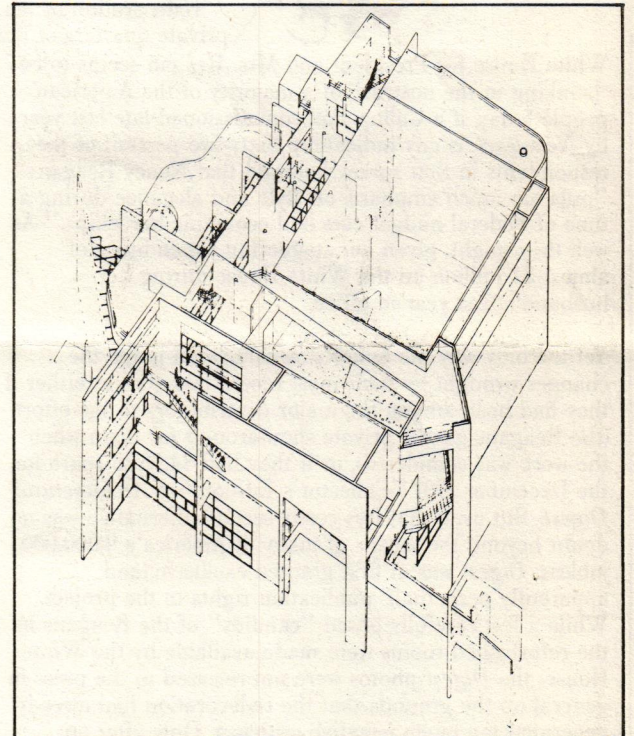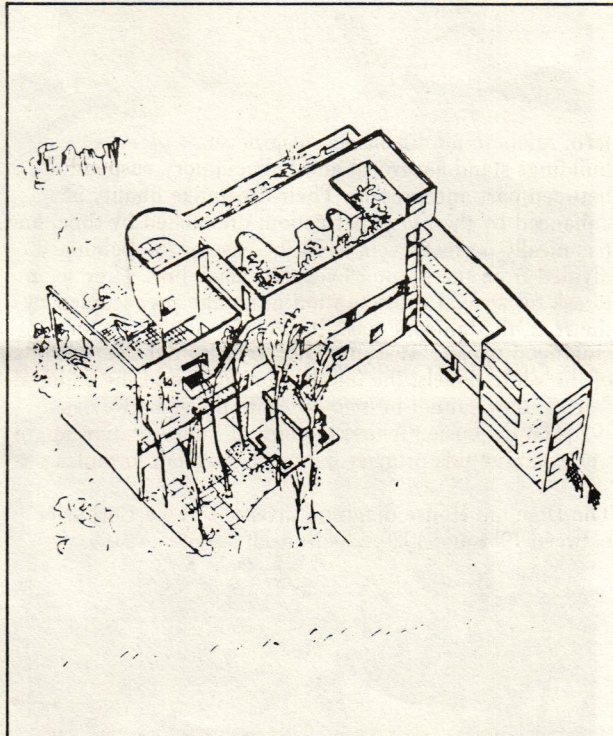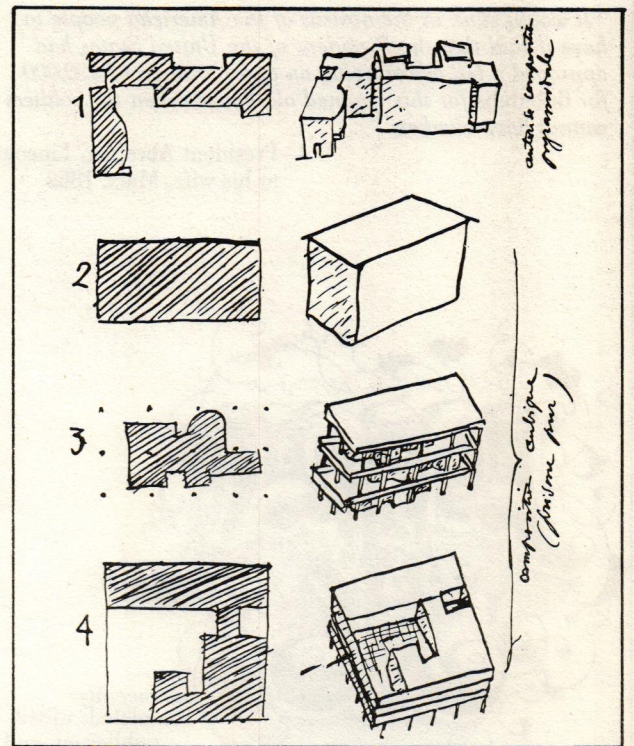
Like a beached 1920s liner, like some Robinson Crusoe of Modernism stranded on the greensward, the Hartford Seminary is at once nostalgic—an emblem of an elegant past of yacht clubs and first-class cruises—and inevitable—a sophisticated machine, wrapped in the latest of paper-thin wrappings and baked irredeemably white. It presents itself as the completion of a hope, the realization of functionalist utopia: the objective result of that evolution of technology predicted by *l'esprit nouveau*. It is as if what was proclaimed as *future* by modernism, and clumsily anticipated in stucco, paint, and welded iron is here deposited as *fact*. What was before promised is now delivered.

We are forced to the conclusion that the Corbusian language of Meier hides a more "objective," accommodating, even pragmatic, architecture, where history is finally dispensed with in favor of the satisfaction of immediate need. In one sense, of course, this was the radical premise of a modernism dedicated to "starting again"; and we should not be displeased to find a renewed Sachlichkeit decked out in less austere clothes than the 1920s would have allowed. In another sense, however, such a relentless pursuit of fact and event marks the point at which the Modern Movement as a whole was forced again and again to admit its failure in front of society. And while a sense of the historical and cultural has, in the wake of this failure, led to much work that has to be classified as the kitsch of nostalgia, and to far too many singular and empty images of one past or another, it is also true that this sense of the historical, of the context in which culture develops, has stimulated much of the better work on typologies, both urban and institutional, in the last decade. If the endless debates over "meaning in architecture" have any productive end, it is in the idea that: the spatial accommodation of social institutions is a matter of meaning in and of itself, and that renewed meaning can only be engendered when previous forms of occupation are taken as the starting point for our own inventions.

Above: Le Corbusier, Dom-ino House prototype. Below, top to bottom: Le Corbusier, early sketch for the villa at Garches; 1927, Le Corbusier, second story plan for the La Roche-Jeanneret house, 1923. Le Corbusier, Salvation Army Building (Cite de Refuge), Paris; 1933. Right, top to bottom: Le Corbusier's sketch of the four types of composition; 1929. Richard Meier, Atheneum, New Harmony, Indiana; axonometric, 1976. Richard Meier, Hartford Seminary, first floor plan. Richard Meier, Hartford Seminary, axonometric.

Project: The Hartford Seminary, Hartford, Connecticut.
Architect: Richard Meier & Partners. Richard Meier and Gerald Gurland, principals-in-charge; project team: Bruce Nagel, Philip Babb, David Woolf, Paul Aferiat, Alan Schwabenland.
Size: 27,000 s.f.
Structure and materials: Steel frame with white porcelain enameled steel facade.
Interiors: Richard Meier & Partners
Landscape: The office of P. De Bellis
**Client:** The Hartford Seminary, Hartford, Connecticut.

The Taste of Power

"It would stink in the nostrils of the American people to
have it said that the President of the United States had
approved a bill overrunning an appropriation of $20,000
for flub-dubs for this damned old house, when the soldiers
cannot have blankets."

—President Abraham Lincoln
to his wife, Mary, 1862

Upstairs with Nancy and Ronnie

Martin Filler

The First Family Bedroom (photo: Michael Evans/The White House)
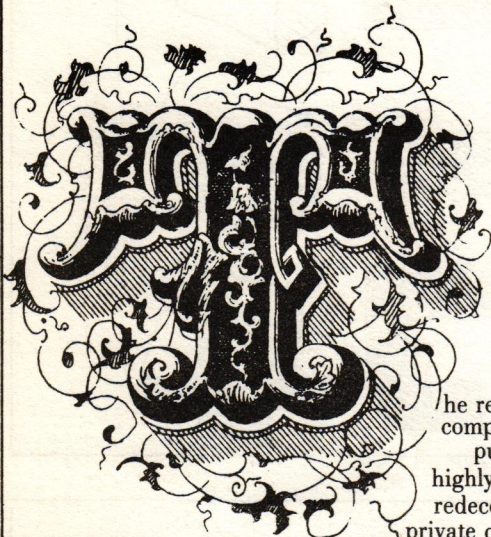
The recently completed, widely publicized, and highly controversial redecoration of the private quarters of the White House for President and Mrs. Reagan seems to be "stinking in the nostrils" of a majority of the American people today, if a Gallup Poll commissioned late last year by *Newsweek* is any indication. Sixty-two percent of the respondents in that survey believed that Nancy Reagan "puts too much emphasis on style and elegance during a time of Federal budget cuts and economic hardships." As well they might, given her staggering expenditure of almost $1 million on the White House during her husband's first year in office.

Yet the only way the house's owners could judge the changes wrought by their most recent tenants was either if they had been among the major contributors to the effort (the Reagans gave a private show-around for them when the work was completed), or if they had $4.95 to spare for the December 1981 "Collector's Edition" of *Architectural Digest*. But even that less costly second alternative was no doubt beyond the means of many of America's 9,000,000 jobless. *Digest* was at first granted exclusive (and apparently perpetual) publication rights to the project. While a few carefully posed "candids" of the Reagans in the refurbished rooms were made available by the White House, the *Digest* photos were not released to the press in general on the grounds that the redecoration had already generated too much negative criticism. Only after an outcry from other publications—including *The New York Times*—were five of the *Digest* photos subsequently permitted to run elsewhere. Apparently the demographically dazzling *Digest* readership, used to monthly presentations of $100,000-a-room decorating, was deemed sufficiently wise to the ways (and prices) of professional designers so as not to be too shocked by what the Reagans actually spent all that money on. Whereas the buyers of *People, The National Enquirer*, or *The Star* just wouldn't—well—*understand* about things like what they're asking for handpainted wallpaper these days, or even just the cost of *labor*, or there being absolutely *nothing* even *possible* from Brunschwig or Lee/Jofa or Stroheim & Romann for less than $75 a yard; and of course there's the lining and the welting and the quilting . . . and it can all *add* up. What the poor don't know, the message seems to be, won't hurt us. Thus the uninitiated (or unemployed) reader will have to use his or her powers of visual imagination to conjure up much of what remains unillustratable.

The White House was originally built to the designs of James Hoban from 1792 to 1800, and was reconstructed from 1815 to 1817 to the designs of Benjamin Latrobe after the building was burned by the British during the War of 1812. Its fenestration indicates two stories, but it is actually composed of four floors containing 132 rooms. The below-grade ground floor has several reception rooms, the Library, workrooms, offices, and storage. On the main, or State Floor, are the East, Green, Blue, Red, State Dining, and Family Dining Rooms. The Reagan redecoration was focused on the second floor, with its semipublic Treaty Room, Lincoln and Queens' Bedrooms, and the sitting rooms, bedrooms, dressing rooms, and personal offices used by the presidential family; and the attic-level third floor, with its Solarium, Center Sitting Hall, and a number of small guest rooms. (The decoration of the public rooms comes under the jurisdiction of the Curator of the White House, Clement E. Conger, who is now seeking to establish a permanent $25-million endowment to cover acquisitions and repairs.)

Third Floor Central Sitting Hall (photo: Arch. Digest)

The Reagans' new design scheme was the work of Ted Graber, a Los Angeles interior decorator who had previously done the houses of several of the Reagans' closest friends in Bel Air and Beverly Hills. Graber's approach might be termed "California Conservative Eclectic": a fairly predictable formula of English and French antiques and reproductions mixed with Oriental accent pieces and accessories. He also has an unfortunate tendency to excessive matching, color-coordinated wall-to-wall carpeting, and stiff window treatments that give his rooms an unpleasantly hermetic quality. This is a decidedly Non-U sensibility, the perfect background for people who own Boehm birds and Atmos clocks, which come in airtight glass cases and never need to be wound.

A summary of Graber's aesthetic shortcomings can be quickly grasped from the first spread of the 18-page color *Digest* tour, in his treatment of the second-floor Central Hall and West Sitting Hall. The Central Hall, which extends from east to west as the main circulation spine of the family quarters, is an awkward space: windowless, too wide to be a mere corridor, too narrow to be a real living room. Graber has opted for a third possibility by making it look like a furniture showroom. The Central Hall is now a forest of chair and table legs growing out of vast, arid stretches of solid beige carpeting. Aside from the fact that the White House has splendid parquet floors (which are now for the most part obscured by the ubiquitous broadloom), Graber's choice of wall-to-wall carpeting was particularly ill-advised, because his numerous groupings of furniture would have been much better defined and visually anchored by smaller area rugs. Bushy, boring floor plants (Chinese evergreens and what Jacqueline Kennedy used to derisively call "hotel palms") add to an institutional feeling that is not allayed by the dense array of bibelots and framed photographs that are meant to signify the personal touch.

Oval Room (photo: Architectural Digest)

One of the most egregious design errors has been committed in the adjacent West Sitting Hall. Among the White House's most distinguished architectural features are Hoban's gracefully arched fan windows at the east and west ends of the second floor. They are now covered by square-cornered curtains that cut off the tops and sides of the arches, killing their unusual outlines. (It must be added that a similar window treatment existed before the Reagan redecoration, but during the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations a much better curtain design revealed and emphasized the shape of the window.) Jacqueline Kennedy's favorite upstairs interior had been the elliptical room that she had redecorated in 1962 with Louis XVI antiques (a style known to have been favored by Thomas Jefferson) and renamed the Yellow Oval Room. The color remains to this day, but that is about all. Most of the fine French pieces purchased for that room have been dispersed to other parts of the house. Brand-new Louie Schmooey gilded coffee tables with dark-red marble tops now face the yellow damask sofas, which, astonishingly, have self-fabric protective covers over the arm-rests (as do the armchairs in the President's second-floor study). This is a detail so at odds with Nancy Reagan's usual "let-'em-eat-quiche" attitude that it is about as explicable as her emerging from Monsieur Marc's wearing a hairnet. But old housekeeping obsessions die hard.

> "*Graber has an unfortunate tendency to excessive matching, color-coordinated wall-to-wall carpeting, and stiff window treatments that give his rooms an unpleasantly hermetic quality. This is a decidedly Non-U sensibility.*"
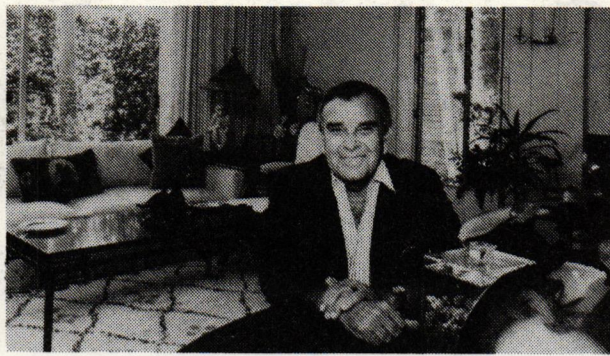
Ted Graber, left and right, for bi-coastal appeal (photos: Raul Vega)

West Sitting Hall (photo: Michael Evans/The White House)

Second Floor Plan

President's Second Floor Study (photo: Michael Evans)

The President's and First Lady's second-floor offices are a study in contrasts. His hideaway, with its eye-popping red-and-white floral chintz (the decorative equivalent of those loud plaid jackets he favors), its solid red wall-to-wall carpeting, and its fire chief's horn cleverly converted into a lamp base, could just as well be the office of the CEO of any major American corporation. Her office is pale mint green with the inevitable matching broadloom. One wall of Nancy Reagan's office is covered with 25 gilt-framed reproductions of botanical watercolors; a photograph of England's Queen Mother sits next to the phone. The First Lady's apricot dressing room in the southwest corner of the second floor has the same apricot aura of *nouveau riche chichi* as the interior of Le Cirque, the New York restaurant favored by Nancy Reagan and her set. The couple's bedroom—pompously called "The First Family Bedroom"—is clearly Nancy's domain. The walls are covered in a twittery, handpainted, Chinese-inspired wallpaper of multicolored birds and white bamboo against an ivory background (echoed by the ivory wall-to-wall, of course).

Throughout these interiors the strong visual tension between tabletops and mantels cluttered with small objects on one hand and vacant expanses of monochromatic floor covering on the other provokes an uneasy sense of disproportion. That same feeling of imbalance prevails in other ways: high vermeil candelabra better suited to a massive dining table are perched atop small commodes in the Yellow Oval Room that are just slightly taller than the candelabra themselves; strangely attenuated trompe l'oeil pediments and finials painted over built-in bookcases in the third-floor Center Sitting Hall are particularly disturbing in a house whose Classical exterior features might well have been consulted as a model.

But by far the worst interiors are on the third floor. The Center Sitting Hall is horribly overcrowded and claustrophobic. The Washington Sitting Room is no better than a parlor in a respectable old Boston hotel. The Red Sitting Room is dominated by a curio of highly dubious

suitability: an atrocious crocheted interpretation of Jonathan Trumbull's *The Signing of the Declaration of Independence.* This is the Mount Rushmore of antimacassars. And the Solarium, with its lime-green-and-white floral print upholstery, new duck decoys, and bland "contemporary" furniture is pure Marina del Rey Condo. (The Carters' Solarium, it should be noted, was no better, though it would be more accurately characterized as Sea Pines Plantation Condo.) Perhaps most awful of all is the thoroughly inappropriate white wrought-iron and lime-green-upholstered '40s-style garden furniture, crowded onto the shallow Truman Balcony of the curving South Portico in a vain attempt to bring a little Pacific Palisades to the Potomac. The furniture looks as if it comes from the set for Joan Crawford's Brentwood house in *Mommie Dearest.* These embarrassing pieces are shamed by the capitals of Latrobe's noble Ionic columns that tower above them.

Then there is the issue of what wags have irresistibly termed "Nancy's China Policy." Even before the 1980 election, Clement Conger claimed that a new White House dinner service would soon be needed, but the Carters balked at the estimated $300,000 pricetag. Now, however, it's full speed ahead. For the bargain price of an $209,000, the First Lady has commissioned a complete service (including fingerbowls) for 220 people from Lenox China, the New Jersey manufacturers who supplied President Woodrow Wilson with the first American-made White House service in 1917. The new dishes are a traditional off-white bordered with a broad rim of what has become known as "Reagan red" (not the most felicitous background color for food). In the center of each dish is a raised and gilded representation of the Presidential Seal (not the most practical motif where knives and forks are concerned).

Mrs. Reagan's rationale for her $1,000-a-place-setting china (sounds as if all those political fundraisers finally got to her) is that over the years breakage had taken its toll to such an extent that it was no longer possible to serve a large White House dinner party all on the same pattern. (Since World War II, complete services have been purchased during the Truman Administration and as recently as the Johnson Administration; the Eisenhowers added service plates.) But why should all the china for a party of 220 have to match? The State Dining Room holds only about half that number of people, and for that maximum capacity small round tables are used, rather than a long, formal table at which pattern discrepancies would be more noticeable. For parties larger than the State Dining Room's capacity, other rooms (the Blue Room, and even the East Room, for monster bashes) are pressed into service. But clearly Nancy Reagan is the kind of woman who wants *everything to be the same.* Whatever
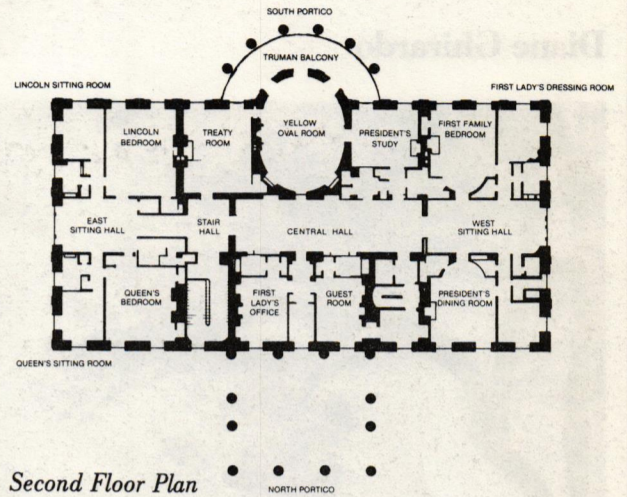
the motivation, the new White House china has become the single most controversial aspect of the domestic side of the Reagans' short tenure. Coming as it does during the wholesale cutback of the Federal School Lunch Program, the symbolism and the inequity of this extravagance seem nothing short of obscene.

There is no doubt that some work was necessary when the Reagans occupied the White House. The Carters, parsimonious to a fault, really weren't that much interested in their surroundings, and had more than enough problems to deal with without looking for new ones. Things were thus allowed to run down. True, relatively little new furniture has been bought as part of this redecoration: much was retrieved from White House storage; the Reagans brought some of their own pieces from California; other furniture and materials were donated. But faced with a bottom line of almost $750,000 for surface refurbishing and over $200,000 for china, one must ask "Was this trip necessary?" History has shown that almost any architectural or design project—no matter how seemingly excessive or how costly—can be rationalized after the fact if the results are wonderful. The murderous politics of the Medici, for example, do not seem all that immediate as one stands in their magnificent chapel, and the corruption of the Renaissance popes is virtually laudable under the dome of St. Peter's. But we are not dealing here with a Julius II, or even a Thomas Jefferson. Recall for a moment that it was Nancy Reagan who refused to move into the old California Governor's Mansion, a fine Victorian survivor that she spurned as "an old firetrap." Rather than having it restored, she raised $1,300,000 (from much the same kind of donors as her White House project) for the construction of an appallingly ordinary new mansion—a Holmby Hills Hacienda utterly without distinction, a disgrace for a state that has spawned some of America's most architecturally imaginative houses.

Alas, Nancy's new White House rooms do not even begin to approach the simplicity and easy grace those same spaces had when they were redone 20 years ago for the Kennedys by the great French decorator Stephane Boudin (who designed the public and semipublic rooms) and the New York decorator Sister Parish (who did the private quarters). No final figures were ever publicly released on what the Kennedy restoration project cost *in toto,* but although it was certainly extremely expensive, it was also extremely well done. But now the White House interiors are just not good enough to justify either their great cost or their becoming a serious political liability.

Ironically, the latest White House redecoration program, which was financed largely through tax-deductible gifts (Congress supplies $50,000 to incoming presidents for fixing up their private quarters) has been cited by the administration as an admirable example of private initiative. Never mind that the contributions came largely from personal cronies or political supporters of Ronald Reagan, twenty-three of whom have ties to the oil industry. And never mind that the project is still not without its cost to other taxpayers, for the tab represents close to $1,000,000 on which the Federal government cannot collect a very significant tax bite. That is the basic hypocrisy behind this whole misguided sumptuary binge. But what else was to be expected of a ruling circle that blatantly tries to pass off greed for fiscal responsibility, that equates legality with morality, and quality with money?

Power and Leisure

On Victoria de Grazia's
## The Culture of Consent

Diane Ghirardo
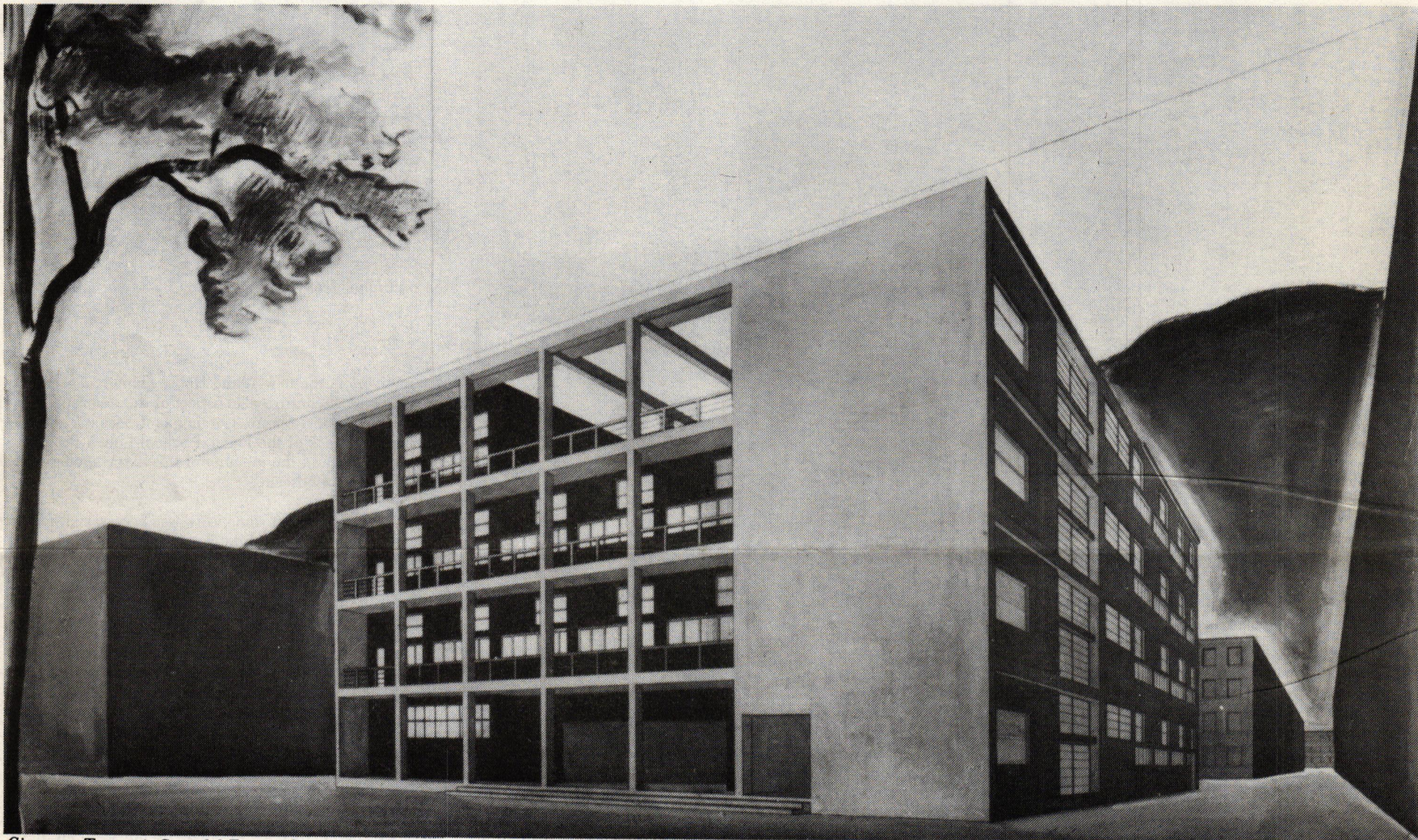
*Giuseppe Terragni. Casa del Fascio, Como; 1932–36.*

It is fashionable among architects (especially American architects)—and some historians to maintain architecture's independence from political or ideological blemishes and to look at architecture only in aesthetic terms. Behind today's best-selling historians and critics stand legions of other historians who see the history of architecture as a history of "styles" and "masterpieces," which may also have some relation—however trivial—to historical circumstance, generally referred to as "sensibilities." This is the architectural star system, wherein a limited number of exemplars of excellence are trotted out as flagships for the architecture of entire generations and countries: buildings that stand in splendid isolation and transcend political, social, and ideological contingencies. Thus historians writing about architecture designed in politically undesirable situations, such as Facist Italy, encounter dilemmas. More than a few twentieth-century architects have been stained by the brush of Nazism and Fascism—Albert Speer and Marcello Piacentini come to mind. The association of Modern Movement heroes—Le Corbusier, Giuseppe Terragni, Adalberto Libera—with the same extremist governments has placed historians in the delicate position of condemning some architects for their political associations, but at the same time declaring that politics are irrelevant to the work of others.

But how do we account for the animus that devolves on any analyses that fail to regard architecture exclusively as an aesthetic object? (Robert Stern's review of Kenneth Frampton's *Modern Architecture: A Critical History, Skyline,* October 1981, p. 22, is a prime example.) Given the dangers of political association, the prospect of evaluating architecture on anything other than narrow aesthetic grounds always poses the threat of raising troublesome problems in which American architects and historians are loathe to engage. It might, after all, lead to turning a critical eye toward the whole complex of political and social values that underlie the entire business of building in this country—or worse. The response to this potential Pandora's Box has been to pretend that it is not an issue, or that it simply does not exist.
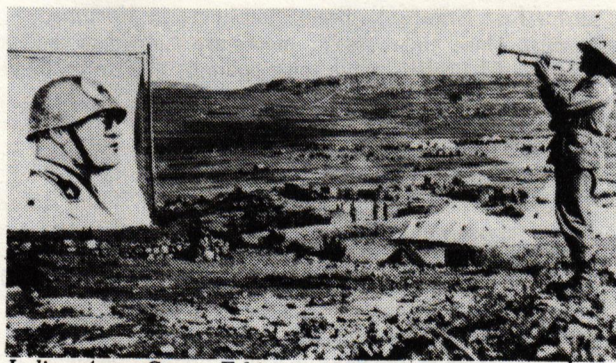
Italian Army Camp, Ethiopia; 1935.

There is also a related fear that might be summarized as follows: architecture sullied by politics or ideology would lose its purity and integrity as a unique aesthetic object. Put another way, if a Casa del Fascio (Fascist Party headquarters) bespeaks its origins in the politics and society of the time, it may be because it has a secure value *only* when embedded in that time. The relation to the earlier fear is obvious: when the politics are no longer fashionable—or even are damned—the architecture, torn loose from its berth, will drift aimlessly about with no criteria of value. It would appear far safer to seek refuge in art, where the status of the work rests solely in its stature as an aesthetic object. In reality, all this does is abandon the complex reality of history in favor of the arbitrary canons of taste. But the dangers that drive "historians" and architects into the safety of purely aesthetic criteria are more apparent than real: architecture need not suffer a loss of "objecthood," nor need it succumb to the imperatives of more or less coherent ideological systems. By the same token, history is not something to be tossed onto a building like so much ornamental confetti. Such a vision of historical analysis is as naive as it is flawed. There is, nevertheless, a possibility for historical analysis—even of twentieth-century architecture—that neither omits aesthetic considerations nor denies special stature to individual buildings; a history
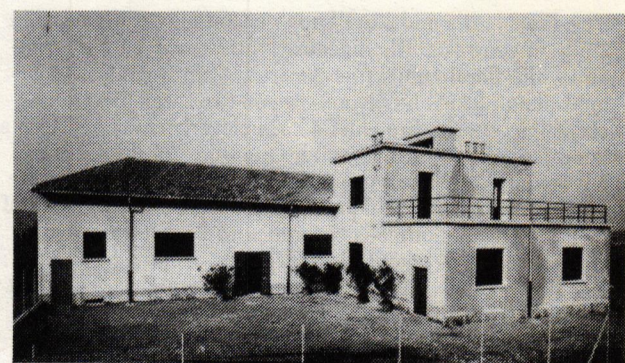
Casa del Fascio, Alzate Brianza; c.1937.

that is neither waspish and gossipy (e.g. Tom Wolfe), nor selectively promotional of self and/or others (Robert Stern, Charles Jencks, et al.). But to make it happen, authors will have to turn for guidance to the very best histories.

One such broadly architectural history is Victoria de Grazia's *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy,* a text whose chief virtue lies in the recognition of the complex and changing expectations of the Fascist government regarding leisure activities for the masses. Because de Grazia avoids a simplistic schemata for interpreting the past, the value of her work for architectural historians lies precisely in the examination of the cultural politics of the regime as expressed in the leisure organization OND (Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro) and related institutions, for whom some of Italy's finest works of modern architecture were commissioned. With her analyses in mind, we can understand why certain structures were built, why they "looked" as they did, and why Rationalist architecture was acceptable to Italy's Fascist government when it was rejected elsewhere.

In order to remain in power in the 1930s, post–World War I governments began to realize that they needed at least the consent—if not the full participation—of the masses. Italy had to develop mechanisms for creating national identities to transcend traditional class lines and regional

> *"With this analysis in mind, we can understand why certain structures were built, why they 'looked' as they did, and why Rationalist architecture was acceptable to Italy's Fascist government when it was rejected elsewhere."*

Entrance to the first Dopolovoro Exhibit, Circus Maximus, Rome; May, 1938.
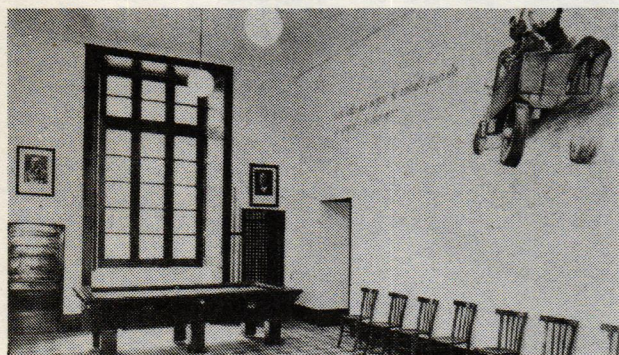
Billiard room, Dopolovoro, Syracuse; 1942.

or local allegiances; the Fascist state chose to develop institutions that would mediate between the state and civil society (at least initially) in informal ways. De Grazia groups the OND and several other Fascist institutions—the ONB and GIL (youth groups) especially, but also the PNF itself (Partito Nazionale Fascisto, the Fascist Party)—into the category of "agent of consent." The OND aimed to surmount regional and class lines in part by replacing independent, pre-Fascist economic and sociocultural organizations with chapters of the new OND, and by subsequently bringing every organization, however small, under the umbrella of the state. OND groups operated out of the factories of large industrial concerns such as Fiat, Montecatini, and Snia Viscosa, in former Socialist quarters in rural areas, and, especially during the 1930s, out of provincial and community Fascist Party headquarters (Case del Fascio). They provided a wide range of integrated social services: instruction (agricultural, industrial, or domestic, where appropriate); physical education and training (everything from semiprofessional teams to cycling clubs); summer camps for young people; assistance (social insurance, housing, consumer affairs, hygiene); and, especially, art education and popular culture (theater, cinema, folklore).

But the activities of the OND were not simply disinterested attempts to extend the rewards of capitalism to the masses. As de Grazia demonstrates, the OND was supposed to fulfill a number of Fascist aspirations. Supporters of the OND claimed that it would improve workers' output by helping to organize their time and "giving" them some extras. It would cultivate consumerism (hence promote Italian industry) by offering savings at special OND stores; it would also defuse discontent with Fascism by keeping it within the control of a state institution and satisfying certain basic demands. And, during the 1930s, the OND was to help rally nationalistic support for Italian foreign policy—the Ethiopian invasion and German alliance. What did this mean for building? This is not the place for an exhaustive assessment, but de Grazia's analysis is intriguing in a number of respects. As the architects of the time were fully aware, they now had an opportunity to design building types for new institutions. They were also aware that the fact that these designs were built at all was the result of political circumstance. Precisely because the state was venturing into new areas, architects were no longer in bondage to long-established building types, which meant that they could exploit design programs of the Moden Movement. The association with a "modern" architecture also dovetailed with Fascism's self-image as the most modern of modern governments. The PNF nonetheless wanted to preserve local traditions, although the architectural union of these conflicting goals proved to be an unstable compound at times.

As the representative structures of an "agent of consent," OND buildings also had more obvious propagandist aims to express. They did so with words and symbols engraved on exterior walls and facades ("Believe, Obey, Fight!"; and "Mussolini is always right"), with slogans and images of Mussolini on interior walls, and with the services of radio, cinema, and libraries offered within the building—all of which were intended to legitimize the new order. When placed in the context of leisure and self-improvement centers, the organization member received the message that emancipation lay in self-improvement and submission to the state, not in revolution. The OND's mandate to

instill patriotism, to nourish the cult of the Duce, and to provide diversion from unpleasant economic and social realities became even more important during the Depression, when the potential for discontent was high and rewards were few. Instead of redistributing land or vigorously supporting the wage demands of industrial workers, the regime built seaside colonies up and down both coasts for children of OND and PNF members. At the same time, the architecture and exhibitions were correspondingly monumentalized, and the national character of the OND received increasing emphasis. The entrance to the OND exhibit reflects naked power and monumental grandeur, and it emphasizes the PNF at the expense of the OND: a telling bit of visual confirmation of the OND's steady loss of autonomy to the PNF.

Even the choice of building materials was dictated more by political necessity than by the architect's preferences: After the League of Nations imposed sanctions on Italy, the government curtailed the use of iron and steel and demanded a return to cheaper local materials. Without this bit of information, those who consider only aesthetic issues would come up with a different and mistaken reading of the building. But have we now sacrificed the individual building to the imperatives of Fascist ideology? By no means. We will know why a building has door frames fashioned from the *fasces*, why there is a balcony, why there is marble veneer, why a basketball court has been included (to assure physical prowess for future wars), why a particular building is situated in a certain place, or why a building is unsuccessful when it is crudely propagandistic. We will still be able to appreciate the structure on aesthetic grounds, but it will be with a full understanding of its historical origins, without which much of the structure is meaningless. Although there is nothing inherently fascist or democratic about any architectural style, when governments appropriate an architecture or its elements for representational purposes, they have usually done so *because* of their reading of the style's historical connotations. Understanding that history is a prerequisite for understanding the building.

Mind's Eye

On Roland Barthes' <u>Camera Lucida</u>

Abigail Solomon-Godeau

The publication in France of *La Chambre Claire* (entitled *Camera Lucida* in its English translation) just over two years ago was almost immediately followed by Roland Barthes' death. At the age of 64, he was struck down by a laundry van while crossing the rue des Ecoles. Reading this last elegant work of his, which is as much a meditation on mortality as on photography, one cannot help being struck by those passages dealing with his adored mother's recent death, in which he resigns himself to his own:

The horror is this: nothing to say about the death of one whom I love most, nothing to say about her photograph, which I contemplate without ever being able to get to the heart of it, to transform it. The only "thought" I can have is that at the end of the first death, my own is inscribed; between the two, nothing more than waiting; I have no resource than this irony; to speak of the "nothing to say." (p. 93)

Part One of *Camera Lucida* is in certain respects recognizably linked to the semiological examination of photography Barthes first launched in "Photography and Electoral Appeal" (*Mythologies*, Hill & Wang, 1957) and elaborated later in "The Photographic Message," "The Rhetoric of the Image," and "The Third Meaning" (all reprinted in *Image—Music—Text*, Hill & Wang, 1977). The second part of the text—elegiac, somber, almost shockingly personal, coming from a writer such as Barthes —is more than any other of his works informed and inflected by his reading of Proust. Specifically, the extended meditation on his mother's photograph that forms the core of Part Two of *Camera Lucida* echoes and alludes to Proust's Narrator's epiphanous contemplation of the photograph of his grandmother; a photograph of little meaning while she lives, but suffused with significance after her death.

That allusions to *Remembrance of Things Past* should resonate in the pages of *Camera Lucida* is not surprising or unexpected. Barthes' last lectures at the College de France were devoted to Proust (and included a lecture on Proust and photography), and *Remembrance* figures in Barthes' writing as a type of literary *summa*, a textual point of eternal return, which Barthes elsewhere described as *"the reference work, the general mathesis, the mandala of the entire literary cosmogony ..."* *Camera Lucida*, evidently written in a state of absolute mourning ("I could live without the Mother [as we all do sooner or later]; but what life remained would be absolutely and entirely unqualifiable [without quality]"), during a period in which Barthes was deeply immersed in Proust, marks, as he himself puts it early on, "a desperate resistance to any reductive system."

For Barthes, as for Proust, the ultimate significance of the photograph is "the rather terrible thing there is in every photograph: the return of the dead." This spectral aspect of photography has been perceived and acknowledged since the nineteenth century: the vogue for deathbed portraits, the fin-de-siècle trafficking in "spirit photography," as well as the more banal recognition that the photograph is at once a death-in-life and a life-in-death, have been recurring motifs in photographic commentary. Walter Benjamin observed of certain photographs by Hill and Adamson taken in the Edinburgh cemetery of Greyfriars that it was as if the models were at home in the cemetery; a writer closer to our time, Susan Sontag, has written of Peter Hujar's photographs in precisely this context. In "The Rhetoric of the Image" Barthes had theorized that far from being simply a new picture-making technology in a continuum of image-making, the invention of photography signaled "a decisive mutation in informational economies"; an anthropological revolution in man's history"; "a new space-time category: spatial immediacy and temporal anteriority," which Barthes termed the "having-been-there," a notion that resurfaces in *Camera Lucida* as the "that-has-been." In *Camera Lucida* Barthes locates this new anthropological space in Death: "For Death must be somewhere in a society: if it is no longer (or less intensely) in religion, it must be elsewhere; perhaps in this image which produces Death while trying to preserve life.... With the photograph we enter in *flat Death*." "Death," says Barthes unequivocally, "is the *eidos* of the Photograph."

Roland Barthes, Paris, 1973. (photo: Diana Agrest) "*But the punctum is:* he is going to die."

Camera Lucida thus represents in certain respects a continuation and elaboration of Barthes' thinking about photography, and in other ways a departure from, or possibly even a recantation of the earlier essays. This is no doubt why much of the critical discussion of the book— particularly that coming from photography critics— reflects a collective uncertainty about precisely what Barthes intended to accomplish in these seemingly ontological reflections on photography. To the degree that these reflections represent a departure from earlier ideas, perhaps the key may be found in the third essay, which culminates in Barthes' resolve to formulate the fundamental feature, the unifying and universal essence that constitutes all photography:

Then I decided that this disorder and this dilemma, revealed by my desire to write on Photography, corresponded to a discomfort that I had always suffered from: the uneasiness of being a subject torn between two languages, one expressive, the other critical; and at the heart of this critical language, between several discourses, those of sociology, of semiology, and of psychoanalysis— but that, by ultimate dissatisfaction with all of them, I was bearing witness to the only sure thing that was in me (however naive it might be): a desperate resistance to any reductive system.... It was better once and for all, to make my protestation of singularity into a virtue—to try making what Nietzsche called the "ego's ancient sovereignty" into an heuristic principle. So I resolved to start my inquiry with no more than a few photographs, the ones I was sure existed for me. Nothing to do with a corpus: only some bodies. (p. 8)

The constant opposition between critical and expressive languages is, of course, one of the most distinctive qualities of Barthes' writing. Encyclopedic and elliptical, erudite and conversational, simultaneously weighty and light, Barthes is at once the most *writerly* of critics and the most critical of writers. To attempt to define the particular authorial voice of he who dispatched the very notion of such an entity is to risk making oneself ridiculous. In any case, Barthes has already described his own writing in— appropriately enough—his own biography. By insisting on the principle of subjectivity as the *a priori* of his photographic inquiry and by electing to distill all photography from those pictures imbued with personal meaning, he is at liberty to roam freely between such bodies as André Kertesz and Robert Mapplethorpe (both having pride of place in terms of the number of references to them in the book); Richard Avedon and the Dutch photojournalist Koen Wessing; James Van Der Zee and Nadar, to name just a sampling. For the notion of a photographic aesthetics, much less that of individual *style*, plays no part in Barthes' thinking on the subject.

"Camera Lucida represents a continuation and elaboration of Barthes' thinking about photography, and a departure from, or possibly even a recantation of the earlier essays."

Cartoon by Maurice Henry of (l. to r.): Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Roland Barthes.

Alexander Gardner. Portrait of Lewis Payne; 1865.

In his earlier discussions of photography, the primary issue for Barthes was that of signification: how does the photograph signify, or produce meaning? how is it read? what are the structural mechanisms that both determine and yield that meaning? The photograph, like any other cultural artifact, and notwithstanding its status as "perfect analogon" of reality, was seen by Barthes as constituting a complex sign system that could be apprehended semiologically. That the photograph—a product of culture—should be generally perceived as a product of nature placed it for Barthes squarely within the domain of contemporary mythologies.

But Barthes reasoned that, unlike most other cultural sign systems, the relation between the photographic signifier (what is literally within the frame) and the photographic signified (the aggregate meanings the viewer receives from the image) underwent no mediating transformation, no institutional coding; that it was, indeed, quasi-tautological; hence the now-classic formulation of the photograph as constituting a message without a code. Within the space of the photographic message Barthes distinguished two rhetorical systems: the denoted meaning, which appears to deliver only its literal contents, and a connoted meaning, which comprises the domain of the ideological. "Signification," Barthes wrote in "The Rhetoric of the Image," "is the dialectical movement that resolves the contradiction between cultural and natural man." It thus follows that "thanks to its code of connotation the reading of the photograph is thus always historical; it depends on a reader's 'knowledge,' just as though it were a matter of a real language, intelligible only if one has learned the signs." The three types of photographic imagery Barthes used as both touchstones and exemplars for these earlier analyses were, respectively, the press photo (generally perceived as purely transcriptive, unmediated, transparent); the advertising photo ("Because in advertising the signification of the image is undoubtedly intentional and these signifieds have to be transmitted as clearly as possible"); and some stills from films by Sergei Eisenstein.

While not exactly jettisoning any of the previous conclusions, Camera Lucida, taken in its entirety, is less concerned with the semiotics of photography than with a kind of personal lexicon of photographic meaning, and, ultimately, an "ontology" of the photograph. To be sure, there are allusions, continuations, recapitulations of the previous essays (Barthes was never loathe to repeat himself). Baudelaire's remark on "the emphatic truth of gesture in the important moments of life," which Barthes used to characterize an Eisenstein still, serves in Camera Lucida to describe an unreproduced photograph of tragedy in Nicaragua by Koen Wessing; the "that-has-been" echoes the "having-been-there." The weakness of photography as politically effective critique (this apropos of August Sander) is also reiterated ("no critique except among those already capable of criticism"), and so on. But perhaps the most significant carry-over, which forms the kernel of Part One, is Barthes' formulation of the twin rhetorical devices *studium* and *punctum*. Related, but by no means identical to Barthes' notion of denoted and connoted meaning, at least one belle-lettrist critic has recently gamboled through the fields of photography wielding *studiums* and *punctums* as so many wooden swords. As Barthes has it, the *studium* consists of the cultural/social/historical components of the photograph, all those elements of the image that can be named, known, read. All photographs are thus endowed with the *studium*; the repository of all the photograph's functions that are sought out and received by the spectator. In contrast, the *punctum*, possessed by only certain photographs, is that which breaks out of, punctuates the *studium*, what Barthes describes as "this element that rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me." *Studium* and *punctum* are clearly reminiscent of the concepts of obvious and obtuse meaning Barthes articulated with respect to the Eisenstein film stills. There he postulated that the obvious meaning (from the Latin *obvius*—that which comes ahead), comprising the informational and the symbolic, is the terrain on which signification and significance are mapped out. The obtuse meaning (again from the Latin *obtusus*—that which is blunted, rounded in form), comprises a third, supplementary meaning, and is that part of the image which carries an emotional charge and cannot be situated structurally. This meaning "is a signifier without a signified, hence the difficulty in naming it." And although the obtuse meaning is blunted and round, and the *punctum* sharp and piercing, their shared locus is the eye of the perceiving subject. There can be no debate on the identity, effect, or affect of *punctum* or obtuse meaning, because both are, in the end, determined entirely subjectively. But inasmuch as Barthes' declared strategy in *Camera Lucida* is to use his very subjectivity as his first principle, his chosen *punctums*—the necklace of the woman in James Van der Zee's studio family portrait (1926), the bandaged finger and Danton's collar of the "idiot" children in the Lewis Hine photograph (1924)—remain wholly idiosyncratic, somewhat quirky fascinations.

Far from being tools forged for deconstructive purposes, as were so many of Barthes' earlier rhetorical devices, *punctum* and *studium* represent almost a withdrawal from the field; instead of a demythologizing impulse, Barthes is here undertaking to interrogate the image for its private, rather than public meanings. When the notion of *punctum* reappears in Part Two, however, it is given a somewhat different sense.

Regarding an 1865 photograph by Alexander Gardner of the young Lewis Payne about to be hanged for his assassination attempt on Secretary of State Seward, Barthes observes:

But the punctum is: he is going to die. *I read at the same time*: this will be *and* this has been; *I observe with horror an anterior future of which death is the stake. By giving me the absolute past of the pose (aorist), the photograph tells me of death in the future. What pricks me is the discovery of this equivalence. In front of the photograph of my mother as a child, I tell myself: she is going to die: I shudder, like Winnicott's psychotic patient, over a catastrophe which has already occurred. Whether or not the subject is already dead, every photograph is this catastrophe.* (p. 96)

James Van Der Zee. Family Portrait; 1926.

Inasmuch as every photograph is a "certificate of presence," a ratification of the "this-has-been" before the lens of the camera, every photograph constitutes a unique superimposition of present and past reality. It is here that Barthes locates the object of his search; the essence of the photograph, revealed in his search for the essential photograph of his mother. *Camera Lucida* is the chronicling of these twin quests: a backward and circular voyage—as was Proust's—to recover what would otherwise be lost to Time. Having rejected, in the final analysis, a phenomenology of the photographic image (*Camera Lucida* is, in fact, dedicated to Jean-Paul Sartre's *L'Imaginaire*, a phenomenology of the image), Barthes offers an ontology—a theory of essence.

Running throughout the essays, particularly those in Part One, are what one is tempted to call "typically Barthesian observations": on photography in general; on specific photographs; on distinctions between the photographically erotic and the photographically pornographic. The highly condensed and elliptical form of Barthes' writing charges even the most casual-seeming observations with pyrotechnic dazzle and intensity. Confronting what he had earlier termed an "unclassifiable" type of cultural object, Barthes returned to the photograph to elicit its private meanings, as he had previously worked to elicit its public ones.

It is this intense scrutiny of Barthes' own subjectivity that makes *Camera Lucida* so different from his earlier essays on photography, where the presiding impulse was deconstructive—to unmask, to reveal, to demystify. *Camera Lucida* in no way presents itself as a critical system; indeed, systems were what Barthes consistently sought to oppose. *Camera Lucida*—idiosyncratic, speculative, refusing convenient categorization—is thus an apt and salutary legacy. The sense of loss, of melancholy, that pervades *Camera Lucida* never diminishes the eloquence of the writing or the brilliance of the intelligence.

A. Kertesz. Piet Mondrian in his studio, Paris; 1926.

Dateline: March '82

Events

Boston/Cambridge

Harvard Lectures
March 9 Charles Moore, "Two Agendas" **March 16** Moshe Safdie, "Context" **March 23** Robert Royston, "Design and Community." 5:30 pm, Piper Auditorium, Gund Hall, Harvard; (617) 495-2591

Charlottesville

U.VA. Lectures
March 8 Francois Choay **March 25** Barton Myers **April 1** Charles Jencks **April 12** Vincent Scully. 8:15 pm, Campbell Hall, Room 153, Department of Architecture, U.VA.; (804) 924-0311

Houston

Rice Design Alliance Lectures
Series on "Landscape Architecture and Urban America" **March 24** Grady Clay **March 31** Elizabeth Barlow **April 7** Ian McHarg. (Series continues through the end of April.) 8 pm, Brown Auditorium, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; (713) 527-4876

Ithaca

Cornell Lectures
March 9 Haig Beck **March 16** Bernard Feilden **March 18** Jurgen Sawada **April 16** James Stirling **April 23** Julian de la Fuente. Exact times and locations to be arranged. School of Architecture, Cornell University; (607) 256-5236

Los Angeles

SCI-ARC
March 3 Robert Marquis **March 10** Sam Davis **March 31** Rob Wellington Quigley **April 7** Raymond Kappe **April 14** Glen Small. 8 pm, Studio/Auditorium, S. California Institute of Architecture; (213) 829-3482

UCLA
March 4 Ann Markusen, "Is There a New Regionalism? The Lopsided Sunbelt-Frost-Belt Debate," 5:30 pm **March 11** Esther McCoy, "Gregory Ain," 8:00 pm **March 18** Susan Oliver, "Urban Crises: Tighten Your Belts, Bite the Bullet." 5 pm. Room 1102, School of Architecture, UCLA; (213) 825-5752

Miami

Architecture Club of Miami
March 26 Marc Treib, "The Rationalization of Nature." 6:30 pm, Douglas Entrance, Coral Gables; (305) 858-8081

New Haven

Yale Lecture Series
March 2 William Turnbull **March 30** Christian Otto **April 6** Gerhard Kallmann **April 13** Giuseppe Zambonini. 6 pm, Hastings Hall, Yale School of Architecture, 180 York Street; (203) 436-0853

Architecture Film and Tour
March 27, April 24 A showing of the film *Louis I. Kahn,* narrated by Vincent Scully. 11 am, Lecture Hall, First Floor, followed by a discussion and tour of the Yale Center for British Art at 11:30 am. Yale Center for British Art, 1080 Chapel Street; (203) 432-4594

New Orleans

Tulane Talks
March 2 Dr. S. Frederick Starr, "Soviet Modernism and Avant-Garde Painting" **March 15** Fred Stitt, "System Design Drawings" **March 9, 10, 11** Aldo Rossi **March 23** Arata Isozaki **March 30** David Slovic, "Architecture for Humanoids." School of Architecture, Richardson Memorial Building (except for Rossi lectures at McAlister Auditorium), Tulane; (504) 865-5389

New York City

Woman and the Environment Symposium
March 1 Elizabeth Minnich, "Feminist Analysis of the Structure of our Lives" **March 2** Rosemarie Bletter, "Woman and the Bauhaus" **March 8** Linda Nochlin, "Women, Art, and Power" **March 9** Susana Torre, "Women and Housing" **March 22** Ada Karmi Malamede, "Recent Work" **March 23** Christine Boyer," Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store" **March 29** Sharon E. Sutton, "Elementary School: A Place Where Mothers Learn" **March 30** Gwendolyn Wright, "What Happened to Feminist Architecture?" **April 7** Panel discussion, "Redefining Space: The Impact of Feminism on Architecture" **April 17** Alumnae Symposium. For exact times and locations please call (212) 280-3414

Film Series
March 2 *Full of Life* (1957), *The Finishing Touch* (1927) **March 9** *Playtime* (1969), *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* (1931) **March 16** *Metropolis* (1926), *Manhatta* (1921). 6:15 pm, Cooper-Hewitt, 2 East 91st Street. $3.50 members, $4.00 nonmembers; (212) 860-6868

Forums on Form
March 3 Ronald Lee Fleming and Renata von Tscharner *Place-Makers: Public Art that Tells You Where You Are* **March 10** Lester Walker *American Shelter: An Illustrated Encyclopedia of the American Home* **March 17** David Naylor *American Picture Palaces: The Architecture of Fantasy* **March 24** Kenneth Frampton *Modern Architecture: 1845–1919* **March 31** Gerald Allen and Richard Oliver *Architectural Drawing: The Art and the Process.* Series continues through April. Sponsored by Urban Center Books. Urban Center, 457 Madison; (212) 935-3595. All talks begin at 12:30 pm

Wednesday Lectures at Columbia
March 3 T. Merrill Prentice, "Games Architects Play" **March 10** Tunny Lee, "Cities and Planning in China" **March 24** Richard Plunz, "Projects with Students Since 1968" **March 31** Gwendolyn Wright, "Politics of Housing in the 1920s" **April 7** James Freed (topic to be announced). 6 pm; Wood Auditorium, Avery Hall, Columbia; (212) 280-3414

Open Atelier of Design Spring Lectures
March 4 Kenneth Frampton, "Hannah Arendt and Louis Kahn" **March 11** Mary McCloud, "The Architecture and Politics of Le Corbusier" **March 18** Bernard Tschumi, "Reciprocity and Conflict" **March 25** Giuseppe Zambonini, "Public Space in Medieval Italy **April 1** Jon Michael Schwarting, "The Lessons of Rome." (Series continues through April.) Admission per lecture when available. Open Atelier of Design, 12 West 29th Street; (212) 686-8698

Emerging Voices
March 9, 16, 23, 30, April 6, 13, 20 Presentations by a cross section of young, up-and-coming architects. **March 9** John J. Casbarian, Danny Samuels, and Robert H. Timme of Taft Architects; David Slovic of Friday Architects / Planners **March 16** George Ranalli; Tod Williams **March 23** Steven Holl; Lauretta Vinciarelli **March 30** Frank Israel; Susana Torre (Series continues through April.) 6:30 pm, Architectural League, Urban Center, 457 Madison Avenue; (212) 753-1722. Free to members, $5 nonmembers

Mathews Lectures/Columbia
March 9, 23, 30, April 6, 13, 20 Series on "The Gothic Revival in France" by Neil Levine, professor of fine arts, Harvard University. Wood Auditorium, Avery Hall, Columbia; (617) 495-2591

Artists and Architects: Humanism Rediscovered
March 27 Conference sponsored by AIA Committee on Design and the Skowhegan School at the New School for Social Research; 9:30 am–4:30 pm. Admission $25 general, $15 students. Call (212) 861-9270 for speakers

Philadelphia

University of Pennsylvania Lectures
March 3 Sydney Goodman **March 24** Aldo Van Eyck **March 31** Fay Jones. Department of Architecture, University of Pennsylvania. All lectures are at 6:30 pm. For room assignments call (215) 243-5000

Robert Geddes
March 12 Illustrated lecture by Princeton Dean Robert Geddes in conjunction with the show "Robert Geddes: The Forest Edge" at the AIA. 8 pm, Art Alliance, 251 South 18th Street; (215) 569-3186

Princeton

Princeton Lectures
March 10 Rafael Moneo, "Recent Work" **March 24** Lauretta Vinciarelli, "On the Theme of the Courtyard: An Architectural Research for Southwest Texas" **April 2** Fernando Montes, "The Impossible Two Modernities" **April 5** Gwendolyn Wright, "Public and Private Space in the United States". 4:30 pm, Betts Lecture Hall, Princeton University School of Architecture; (609) 452-3741

St. Paul

Lecture Series/Minnesota Museum of Art
March 3 H. Allen Brooks, "The Prairie School and Sinclair Lewis: Wright, Griffin and the Architecture of Main Street" **March 10** H. Frederick Koeper, "Sullivan Viewed in Relation to European Styles and Movements Such As Art Nouveau and the Vienna Secession" **March 17** John H. Howe, "Prairie School Architecture: The Continuing Tradition After 1925" **March 24** David Gebhard, "Purcell and Elmslie's Unbuilt Works in Minneapolis and St. Paul." 8 pm, Frederick King Weyerhaeuser Auditorium, Landmark Center, St. Paul; (617) 224-7431

San Francisco/Bay Area

Berkeley Lectures
March 3 Lewis Baltz, "Park City: An Environment in Transition" **March 10** Daniel Solomon, "Grids on the Port of St. Francis." Department of Architecutre, U.C. Berkeley, 8 pm; (415) 642-4942. (Lecture rooms vary, call for specifics)

Syracuse

Spring Lectures/Syracuse University
March 3 Michael Dennis, "Five French Pieces" **March 17** Christian Otto, "Glass Box and Paradox: The Architecture of Balthasar Neumann" **March 24** Leon Satkowski, "The Renaissance Renewal of Central Florence" **March 31** Joseph Connors, "Borromini's Early Work and the Nobility of Baroque Architecture" **April 7** Werner Seligmann, "Frank Lloyd Wright and the Evolution of the Prairie House." 8 pm, 117 Lyman Hall, School of Architecture, Syracuse University; (315) 423-2255

Washington, D.C.

Modern Questions: Post-Modern Answers?
March 10 Romaldo Giurgola **March 24** John Blatteau **March 31** Paul Rudolph **April 7** Alan Chimacoff **April 14** Charles Gwathmey **April 21** David Schwarz. 7:30 pm, Nursing Auditorium, Catholic University; (202) 635-5188

The Genius of British Architecture
March 27 Symposium with lectures by David Durant on Inigo Jones and the English Renaissance; Christopher Wren and the Baroque; Lord Burlington and the Palladians. Carmichael Auditorium, American History Building. 10 am–5:30 pm; members $30, nonmembers $40. Smithsonian Resident Associate Program; (202) 357-3030

Montreal

Alcan Lecture Series
March 2 Susan Doubilet, "A Critical Overview" **March 9** Leon Krier on his work **March 16** Kurt Forster, "Karl Friedrich Schinkel" **March 30** Michael Wilford on his work **April 6** Sir Peter Shepheard "Light, Water, Architecture, and Landscape". 6 pm, Leacock Building, McGill University; (514) 392-5409

Coming

To San Francisco's Fort Mason May 20–July 25: The 1980 Venice Biennale, "The Presence of the Past." Eight California architects and architecture firms have been invited to participate. They are:— William Turnbull, Daniel Solomon, SOM, Joseph Esherick, Batey & Mack, Frank Israel, Coy Howard, and Hodgetts/Mangurian. The installation will be designed by Batey & Mack.

At Cornell University beginning April 6: The Preston H. Thomas Memorial Lecture Series will be given this year by noted scholar and architectural historian Colin Rowe; the series title is "The Architecture of Good Intentions: Towards a Possible Retrospect." As a condition of the series, these lectures, given here for the first time, will appear later in published form.

At Harvard April 16, 17: "The International Style in Perspective," a symposium marking the 50th anniversary of the show at MoMA. Papers will be presented by David Handlin, Kurt Forster, Robert Stern, Rosemarie Bletter, Anthony Vidler, and Neil Levine. Lewis Mumford, Henry-Russell Hitchcock, and Philip Johnson have promised to be on hand. Robert Venturi will be delivering the Gropius Lecture the night before.

To the Whitney Museum June 24–October 10: "New Art Museums in America," an exhibit of plans, renderings, and models of new museums and museum extensions. Helen Searing, Professor of Art at Smith College, is the guest-curator. Projects to be shown include: Dallas Museum of Fine Arts—Edward Larrabee Barnes; High Museum, Atlanta—Richard Meier; Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College—Charles W. Moore; Museum of Contemporary Art, L.A.—Arata Isozaki; Museum of Modern Art, N.Y.C.—Cesar Pelli; Joseph Price Collection, Bartlesville, Oklahoma—Bruce Goff; Portland Museum of Art—Henry Cobb of I.M. Pei & Partners; and Virginia Museum of Fine Arts—Malcolm Holzman of H H P A.

Exhibits

Boston/Cambridge

Charles Moore
Through March 12 Works from 1966 to the present. Harvard Graduate School of Design; (617) 495-5864

Moshe Safdie
March 15-27 "Context," an exhibition of Safdie's recent work. Harvard Graduate School of Design; (617) 495-5864

Chicago

Edward H. Bennett, Architect and City Planner
March 4-July 4 Architectural drawings, documents, and sculptures by the Chicago Beautiful Movement. A catalogue by Joan Draper of the U. Illinois, Chicago Circle will be available. Lectures are also planned. Art Institute of Chicago, Michigan Avenue at Adams Street; (312) 443-3625

Houston

Le Corbusier's Firminy Church
March 10-April 4 Sketches and models for the church at Firminy. Farish Gallery, Anderson Hall, Rice School of Architecture; (713) 527-4864

Los Angeles

SCI-ARC
Through March 13 "Form, Energy, and Humanism"
March 15-20 Thesis Presentation Exhibit March 24-April 4 Drawings by Ron Herron and Peter Cook. The Architecture Gallery, Southern California Institute of Architecture, 3021 Olympic Boulevard; (213) 839-3482

Anthony Lumsden
March 1-20 Architectural Projects. Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning, UCLA; (213) 825-5752

Minneapolis

De Stijl, 1917-1931: Visions of Utopia
Through March 28 Paintings, drawings, architectural models, furniture, and graphic designs by the de Stijl artists. A 260-page book with 12 essays has been published by Abbeville Press to coincide with the exhibition. Walker Art Center, Vineland Place; (612) 375-7600

New Haven

James Gamble Rogers' Drawings for Yale, 1913-35
Through April 28 70 drawings by the architects who did the most to give Yale its Neo-Gothic look. Yale University Art Gallery, 111 Chapel Street; (203) 436-8062

New York City

Stanley Tigerman
March 2-27 Architectural drawings. Rosa Esman Gallery, 29 West 57th Street; (212) 421-9490

Landmarks that Aren't
Through March 11 Photo exhibit of outstanding buildings in New York City that do not yet have landmark status. Urban Center, 457 Madison Avenue; (212) 980-1297

Rem Koolhaas/Elia Zenghelis
March 11-April 3 Project drawings and models, 1972-82. Max Protetch Gallery, 37 West 57th Street; (212) 838-7436

Evelyn Hofer
Through March 13 Photographs, including images from *Stones of Florence, New York Proclaimed, Dublin,* and *London Perceived.* Witkin Gallery, 41 East 57th Street; (212) 355-1461

U.D.C.
March 13-April 2 Exhibition of work by the Urban Development Corporation. Avery Hall, Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture and Planning, 118th Street and Amsterdam Avenue; (212) 280-3414

OMA Exhibit at IAUS
March 17-May 22 Models, sketches, and photomontages of four European housing projects by the Office for Metropolitan Architecture. Projects by Rem Koolhaas and Elia Zenghelis include two from the Internationale Bauausstellung in Berlin, as well as one each from Rotterdam and Amsterdam. Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies, 8 West 40th Street; (212) 398-9474

Architecture 1: Lebbeus Woods
Through March 14 Drawings about four cities based on earth air, fire, and water. Network Gallery, 59 Greene Street; (212) 431-6560

Vienna Workshop
March 17-April 30 Textiles, embroidery designs, and graphics from the Wiener Werkstatte, a creative source for Art Nouveau and Art Deco founded by architects Joseph Hoffman and Koloman Moser. Austrian Institute, 11 East 52nd Street; (212) 539-5165

St. Bartholomew's: An Update
March 19-April 14 Documentation, including photographs illustrating the background and the latest on the St. Bart's struggle. Municipal Art Society, Urban Center, 457 Madison Avenue; (212) 742-6732

Avant-Garde Photography in Germany, 1919-1939
Through March 21 Works by Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Herbert Bayer, Martin Munkacsi, and Erich Salomon, among others, in a setting designed in the Constructivist style of the day, including original publications, posters, and film material. International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Avenue; (212) 860-1773

Planning Around
Through March 27 Plans and drawings of houses, cities, and gardens through history, including work by Louis Kahn, Richard Meier, Tony Garnier, and Frank Lloyd Wright. Spaced Gallery of Architecture, 165 West 72nd Street; (212) 787-6350

Cast-Iron in Central Park
Through March 31 Drawings, restoration documents, and photographs of cast-iron structures in the park. The Dairy, Central Park, 65th Street between the Zoo and the Carousel; (212) 360-8141 for information

Manhattan Observed: Fourteen Photographers Look at New York
Through April 1 Photographs of the changing architectural composition of the city. New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West; (212) 873-3400

Robert Adam and His Style
Through April 11 Drawings, furniture, and silver by this celebrated Scottish architect and his circle. Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 East 91st Street; (212) 860-6868

Preservation in Progress: The Seaport District
Through April 18 An exhibit illustrating the philosophy and technology of the architectural preservation underway at the South Street Seaport. South Street Seaport Gallery, 215 Water Street; (212) 766-9020

Architectural Fantasy and Reality
Through May 9 80 drawings form the late-17th to mid-18th centuries, made as entries for the annual architectural competition at the National Academy of St. Luke in Rome. Cooper-Hewitt, 2 East 91st Street; (212) 860-6868

Philadelphia

Robert Geddes: The Forest Edge
March 10-April 10 An exhibition on the connections between landscape, cities, and buildings as seen by artists, philosophers, and architects, including work by Geddes, Brecher, Qualls & Cunningham. Sponsored by the Fund for Architecture. AIA Downstairs Gallery, 117 South 17th Street; (215) 569-3186

Princeton

March 9-April 29 An exhibit of recent work by Rafael Moneo. **March 23-April 5** Lauretta Vinciarelli, "On the Theme of the Courtyard: An Architectural Research For Southwest Texas." Princeton University School of Architecture, (609) 452-3741

Purchase

Robert A.M. Stern: Tradition of the New
March 28-June 20 Drawings and models emphasizing the incorporation of classical and vernacular traditions into an architectural vocabulary for the present. Neuberger Museum, SUNY, College at Purchase; (914) 253-5575

St. Louis

The City in the 1900s
Through March 14 An exhibit on the city's architectural heritage from 1803-1891. Washington University, Gallery of Art, Steinberg Hall; (314) 889-5293

St. Paul

Prairie School in Minnesota, Iowa & Wisconsin
Through April 10 Photographs, drawings, furniture, stained glass, and decorative objects designed by Louis Sullivan, Walter Burley Griffin, Marion Mahoney, Percy Dwight Bentley, and Frank Lloyd Wright. Minnesota Museum of Art, Landmark Center, 75 West 5th Street, (612) 224-7431

Seattle

James Turrell
Through July 28 Light environments in carefully controlled architectural space. Lippy Building, 108 First Avenue South; (206) 624-6394

Washington, D.C.

P.B. Wight
March 2-May 2 46 drawings from the Art Institute of Chicago by the architect who helped establish the High Victorian Style in America. AIA, The Octagon, 1799 New York Avenue N.W.; (202) 638-3105

Naples, Italy

New Chicago Architecture
Through March 21 Eleven photographs, models, and original drawings of work by 15 "new" Chicago architects — Thomas Beeby, Laurence Booth, Stuart Cohen, Deborah Doyle, James Goetsch, Gerald Horn, Helmut Jahn, Ron Krueck, James Nagle, Anders Nereim, Peter Pran, Kenneth Schroeder, John Syvertsen, Stanley Tigerman, and Ben Weese. Museo di Castel dell'Ovo

Any information on exhibitions, lectures, and other events to be considered for inclusion in the Dateline should be sent to the *Skyline* offices at least four weeks before date of publication.

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