

PRECEDENT AND INVENTION

The Harvard Architecture Review · 5

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The Harvard Architecture Review

Precedent and Invention

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Contents

THE EDITORS	10	Introduction
	12	A Competition for a Gate
	58	Editorial
JOHN E. HANCOCK	64	Between History and Tradition: Notes Towards a Theory of Precedent
JAMES ACKERMAN	78	Why Classicism?
MARY ALICE DIXON HINSON	80	Erasing the Ghost of Perrault
PHILIP SMITH AND EMILIO AMBASZ	96	A Millenarian Hope: The Architecture of Emilio Ambasz
ANDRES DUANY	104	Principles in the Architecture of Alvar Aalto
RICHARD LONGSTRETH	120	J. C. Nichols, The Country Club Plaza and Notions of Modernity
HELENE LIPSTADT	136	"Bad Enough to be Good Enough"— Precedence and Type in Montgomery Schuyler's "Architectural Aberrations"
MONTGOMERY SCHUYLER	154	Architectural Aberrations No. 9 The Hale Building
	158	Architectural Aberrations No. 26 The Hearst Building in Chicago
DENISE SCOTT BROWN	162	Invention and Tradition in the Making of American Place
TOMASO ZANONI	172	Precedent and Invention: Design in the Field of Tension
COLIN ROWE	188	Letter to the Editor
	190	Credits

As architects, we have come of age in an era characterized by pluralism and eclecticism. The proliferation of sources and strategies has produced a disturbing equivalence among choices, and our capacity to evaluate options and make thoughtful judgments has not kept pace. As editors, we chose to investigate the relationship between precedent and invention as a means of exploring how new works of architecture are created. Together precedent and invention, the meaningful source and the creative operation, encompass the process of design.

Today we design within an overwhelming field of choice. All of world history and culture is available as source and inspiration. Sophisticated means of transportation carry us to any point on the globe, and television satellites bring the world into our studios. Archaeology and the study of history make the past as accessible as the present; photographic processes provide instant ownership of any image.

Before the advent of the instant copier, the student was required to repeat, in part, the process of his predecessor by redrawing what had been done before. This process accomplished two things: it helped the student understand the nature of the original and, by the creation of a new object—the drawing—offered the inevitable occasions, either by error or intention, for change. Today the selection of an image often substitutes for the study of it. Instant and effortless replication encourages a fascination with surface qualities and undermines the importance of structure and intention.

Critical judgment is made more difficult by the absence of a unified tradition. We can not assume that the forms and images from our architectural past and our inherited ways of working with them are relevant to the tasks of the present. We must be able to structure our choices and to evaluate the content and associations carried by architectural forms and languages. The framework that we choose to work with becomes a confirmation of a set of symbols and values.

Precedent and invention are both components of a working method. A precedent is “something that precedes, an earlier occurrence of a similar character.” Invention is the act of productive imagination, of discovery, or of finding out. Yet if “every word is a preconceived judgment,” then we must go beyond the preconceptions of invention as that which is new and unusual and precedent as that which is old and conventional. Invention may be understood as both an idea and as its manifestation. A precedent may exist in the designer’s memory or imagination; it may be perceived as a specific object or understood as a more generalized rule or idea. It is only through the rejection of preconceived definitions that one approaches an understanding of precedent and invention as complements in a synthetic process.

In this journal we have included projects and articles that address the problems of source and process in architecture. The projects were submitted by young designers to an open competition in which they were requested to express the use of precedent and invention in their design process. The jury addressed problems of context, typology, and principle in their discussion of selected entries. Questions of inspiration and methodology that were raised by the competition are explored further by our contributing authors.

Several of the articles consider the issues of precedent and invention in American architecture. **Denise Scott Brown** raises the issue of cultural heritage when she discusses the dilemma of colonial cultures. With Robert Venturi she demanded that architects consider the existing American landscape as legitimate precedent for design. Now she proposes returning to Rome with the lessons from Las Vegas so that we may find new meanings in old sources.

Richard Longstreth examines the evolution of a characteristically American form, the shopping center, in one of its earliest examples, Kansas City’s Country Club Plaza. He shows how developer J. C. Nichols began with a serious evaluation of the emerg-

ing suburban environment and brought to this new context the precedent of European market towns to create the model for a new building type.

Another American invention, the skyscraper, is the subject of **Helene Lipstadt's** essay on the critical writings of Montgomery Schuyler. As she demonstrates, Schuyler used his anonymous essays, the "Architectural Aberrations," as workshops for his seminal criticism of this building type without precedent. Although current architectural practice has produced some bizarre examples of pastiche, Schuyler's collection of "Aberrations" firmly establishes the precedent for eclecticism in American architecture. His application of a clear critical method to this assortment of strange to hilarious constructions provides an inspiring example for the contemporary critic. Several of these essays are included.

Tomaso Zanoni focuses on the issues of building in a contemporary European city that contains manifestations of its own history and aspirations for its future. Drawing from the work of 20th century European architects he investigates the tension between the historical context and the contemporary culture as generative forces in design.

Mary Alice Dixon Hinson criticizes contemporary architecture for offering revisions of the past and previews of the future with no convincing vision of the present. She traces the alienation of contemporary architecture to the separation of science and art at the founding of the French academy of architecture. To remedy this situation and produce an architecture truly of the present, we must experiment in the more immediate plane of gesture and thought as demonstrated in the works of Daniel Libeskind and John Hejduk.

James Ackerman challenges the resurrection of classical paradigms as an unrealistic reflection of the uncertainty of our contemporary culture. He proposes that we are not limited to the choices of either endorsing classical order or rejecting our cultural heri-

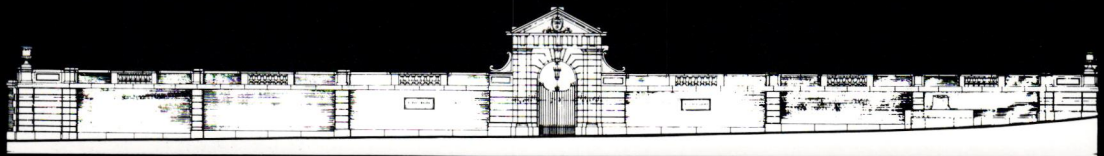
tage. He directs our attention to the alternate traditions of romanticism and the picturesque for an architectural method based on individual sensibility rather than platonic absolutes.

In his article on the architecture of Alvar Aalto, **Andres Duany** offers an example of the systematic application of principles of the picturesque. Duany argues that concentration on the experiential qualities of design allowed Aalto to use his own work as a base for his continuing exploration of the basic architectural themes of program, space, and form.

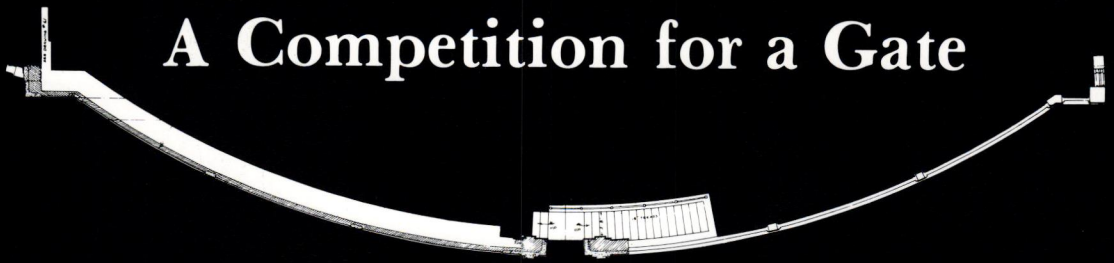
The primacy of the human viewpoint, demonstrated to be the visual foundation of Aalto's work, provides the emotional core for the designs of **Emilio Ambasz**. Whether working with grape arbors or floating high-tech machines, Ambasz produces an architecture rooted in the fundamentals of human experience.

John Hancock offers a theory of precedent solidly based on the facts of architectural design and his studies of how an acquired body of tradition is used in the disciplines of law and science. He acknowledges the diversity of influences facing the architect and proposes a methodology for making meaningful selections based on connections to context, type, and principle.

Finally, a letter from **Colin Rowe** both concludes and reopens the investigation of precedent and invention.



A Competition for a Gate



The Harvard Architecture Review

PRECEDENT AND INVENTION

The editors of the Harvard Architecture Review, Issue 5, "Precedent and Invention," invite entries to an open competition for the design of a gate. This gate is to be located at the southern end of Quincy Street on the Harvard University campus, and will provide a public introduction to the architectural promenade along Quincy Street. Buildings along this street include those by Le Corbusier, H.H. Richardson, Ware and Van Brunt, McKim, Mead, and White, James Stirling (under construction), and John Andrews.

The focus of the competition will be the exploration of precedent and invention, and their relationship to the process of design. Some of the questions that will be asked of the entrants are: How do designers today search

out and use precedent? What evokes the image of a particular precedent in the mind of the designer? What part does precedent play in the invention of a personal architectural language?

Seven distinguished designers and critics will participate in a jury. These will include Henry Cobb, Laurie Quinn, Jacqueline Robertson, Susanna Torre, Anthony Vidler, with two to be announced. The jury will review all entries and select a dozen or more for an in-depth discussion on Saturday, February 19, 1983. This jury will be held at Goud Hall, Graduate School of Design, 18 Quincy Street, Cambridge, MA.

Prizes of \$100, \$50, and \$25 will be awarded by the jury. Honorable mentions will receive \$100. All the entries selected for public

discussion will be published in the Harvard Architecture Review, Issue 5, "Precedent and Invention". In addition, a wide selection of the projects will be exhibited in several buildings along Quincy Street during the month of February.

All entries must be received by February 8, 1983. Entry requirements are one 36" x 36" board, oriented vertically. Documentation of the ideas that lead to the final design of the entry will be required. Registration and competition materials may be obtained by sending \$20.00 (U.S.) to: Competition, The Harvard Architecture Review, Goud Hall, 18 Quincy Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

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A Competition for a Gate

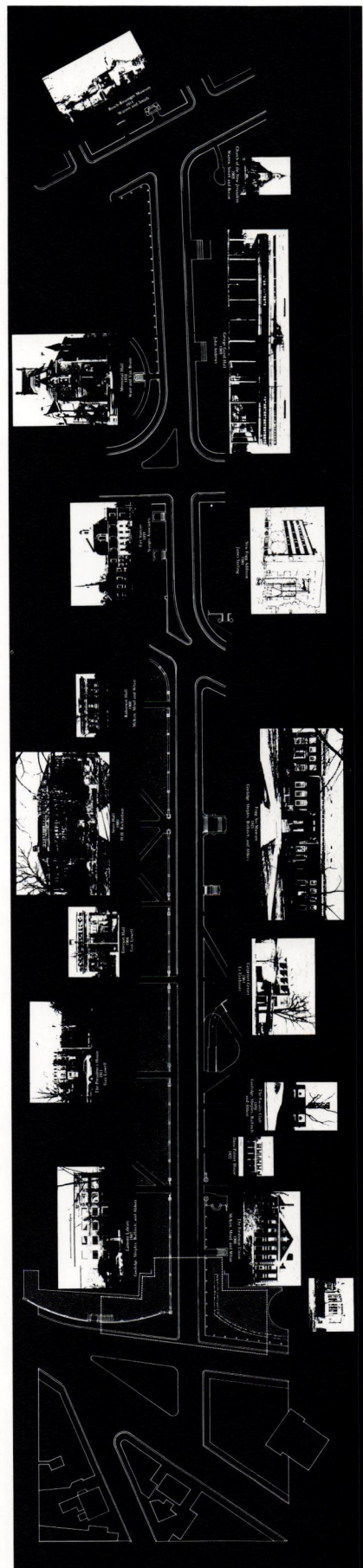
A gate can be functionally and physically quite simple. However, this simplicity belies a richness of tradition and symbolism. The challenge is therefore less to solve a complex problem than it is to restate it and in so doing exercise an attitude toward the use of precedent and the role of the individual in its reinterpretation.

Quincy Street offers another source of information for the designer to choose from. Its buildings exhibit an eclectic range of styles. The adjacent enclosure of Harvard Yard with its many gates is equally provocative. The associations it carries are as much social and political as they are architectural and emphasize the need to begin by examining the role of a gate in this contemporary context.

On February 19, 1983, the entries to a Competition for a Gate were reviewed in a public forum at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Three hundred eleven designers from across the United States and around the world submitted 30" x 40" design boards, all of which were displayed in the lobby of Gund Hall.

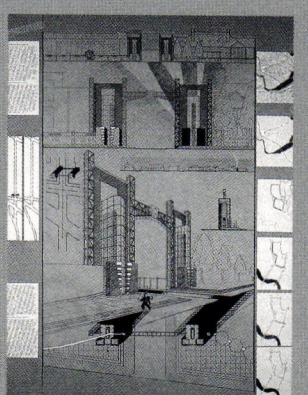
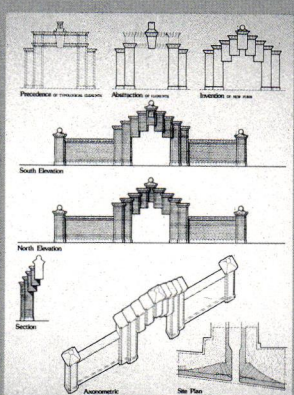
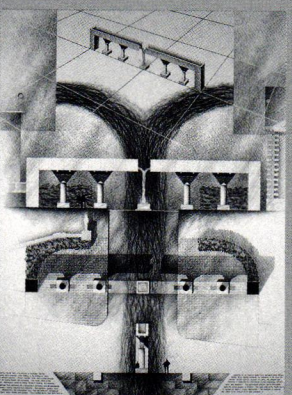
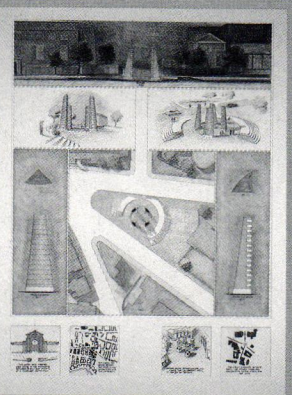
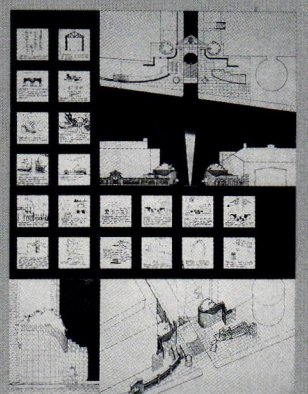
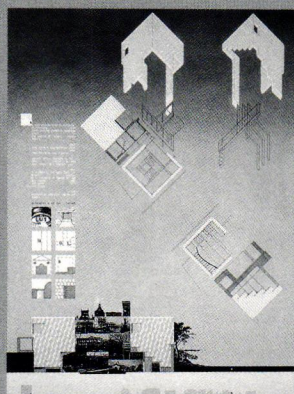
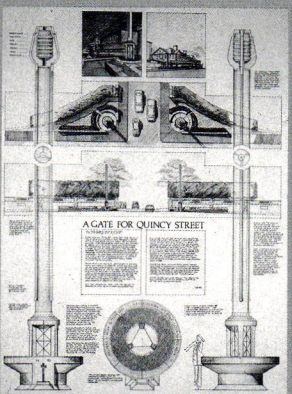
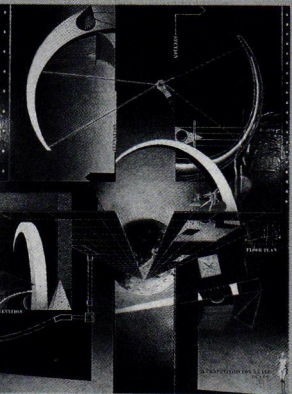
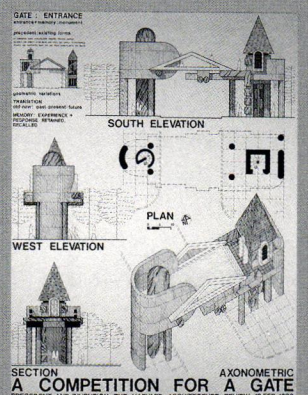
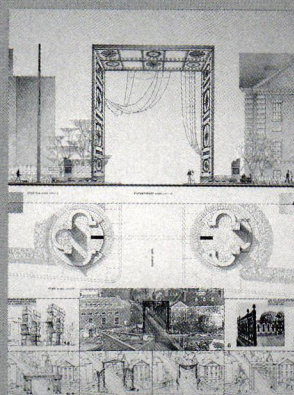
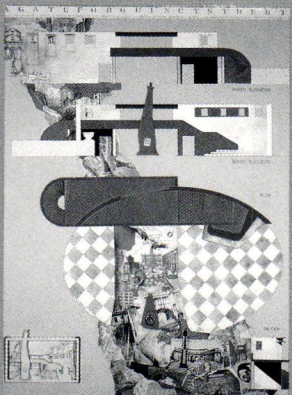
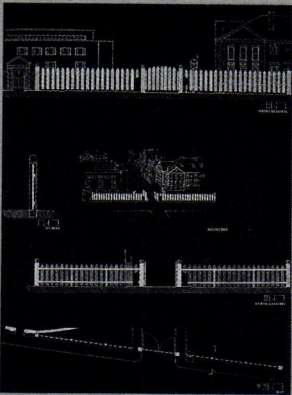
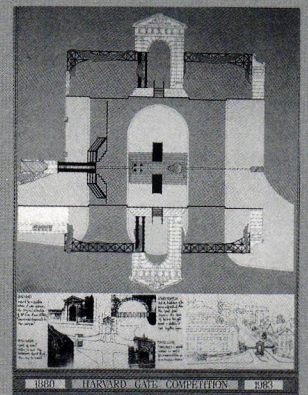
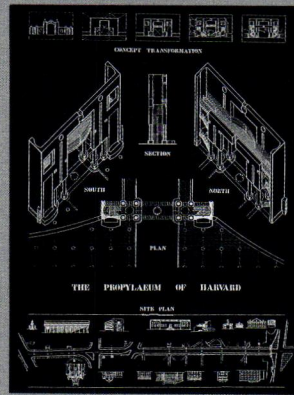
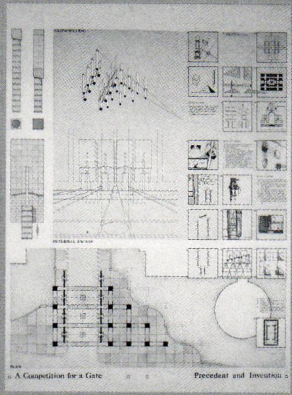
A jury of architects, historians, and critics was assembled to review the projects and award prizes. Henry Cobb, Edward Jones, Laurie Olin, Jaquelin Robertson, Susanna Torre, and Anthony Vidler met in Piper Auditorium to narrow the field down to a group that they could productively discuss at the assembly. After eight hours of work they had reduced the number to around fifty. Joined by Stanley Tigerman the next morning, they succeeded in limiting themselves to eighteen projects for the discussion.

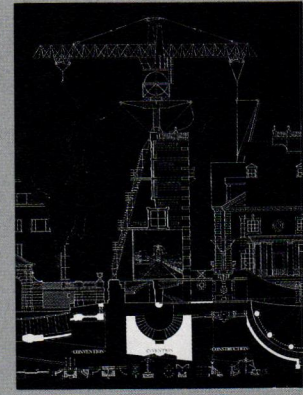
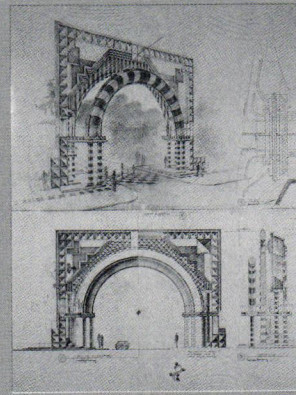
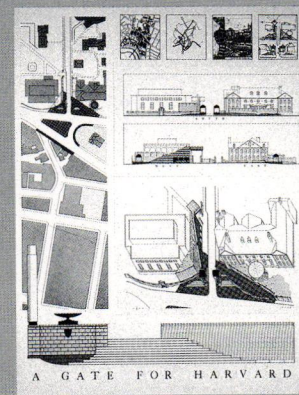
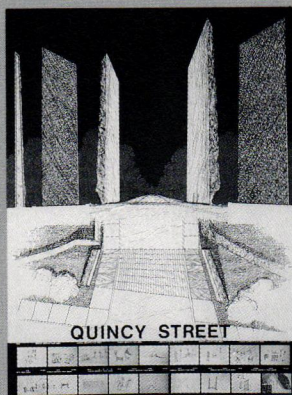
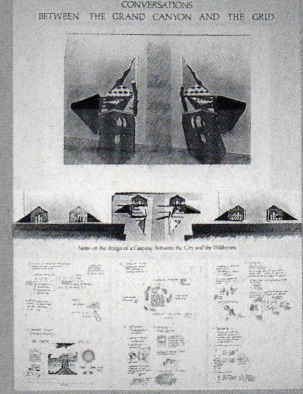
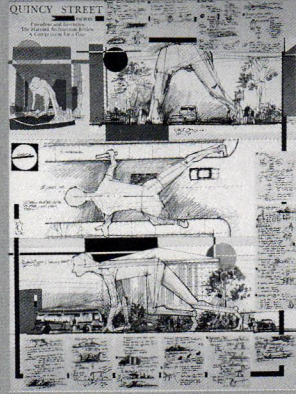
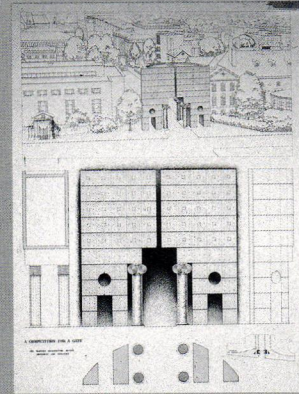
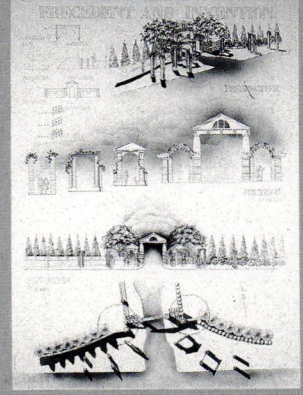
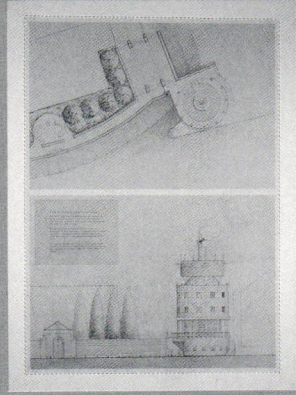
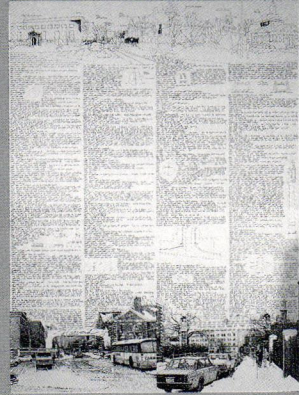
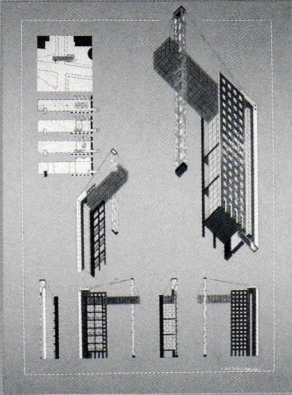
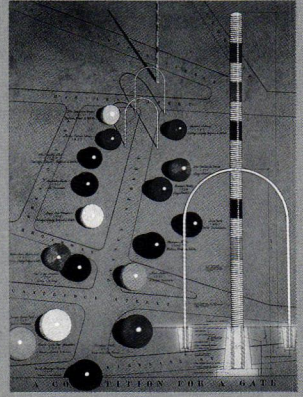
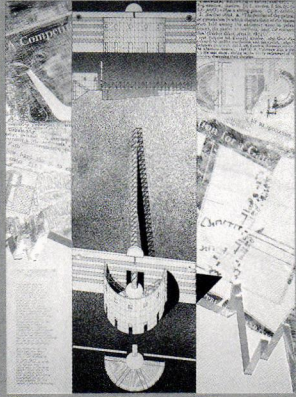
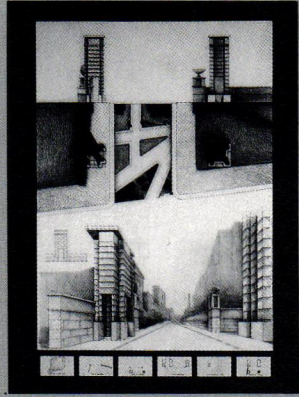
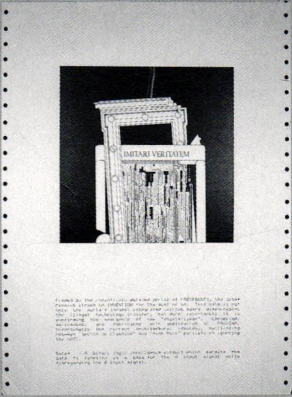
That afternoon the jury met once again, this time before a large audience in the auditorium. Seated on an eclectic array of chairs which may or may not have suited their respective personalities, they discussed each of the eighteen projects in the order in which they had been received by the competition committee.

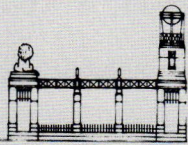


QUINCY STREET

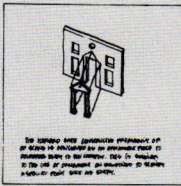
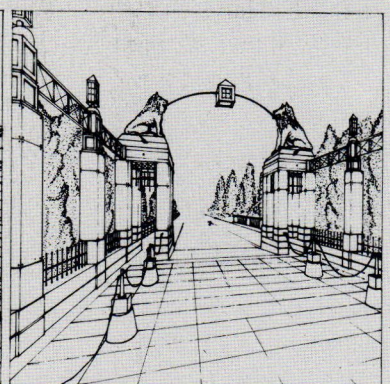
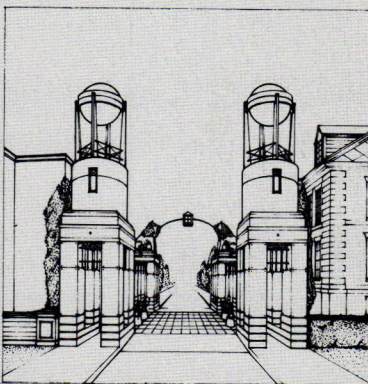
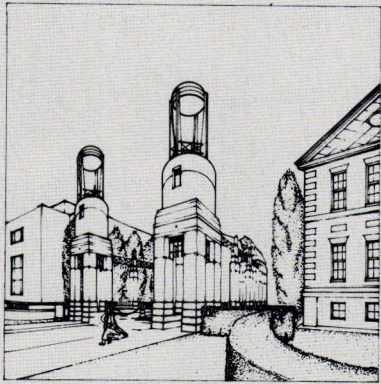
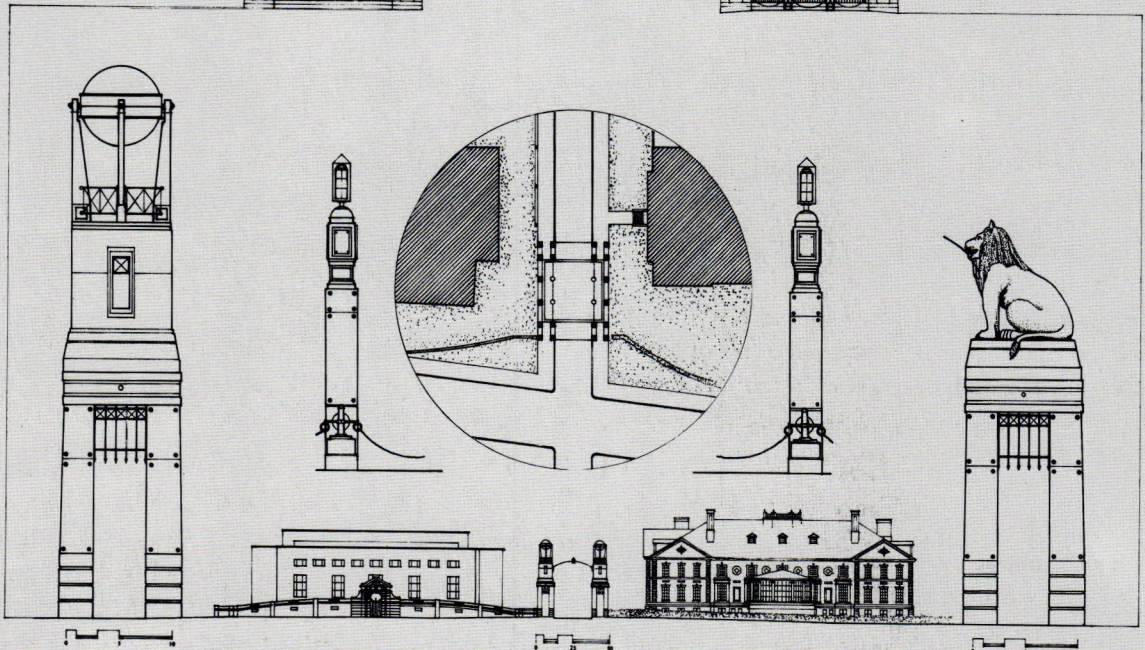
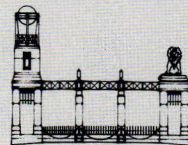
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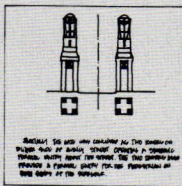




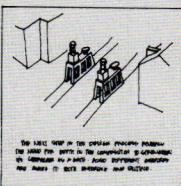
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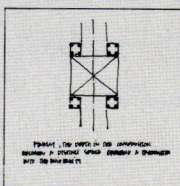
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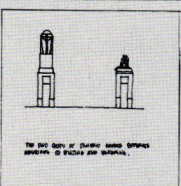
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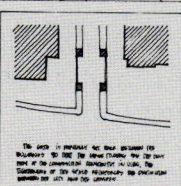
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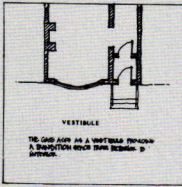
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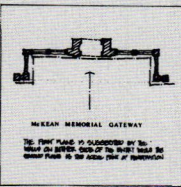
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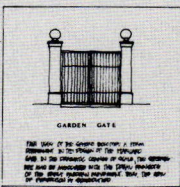
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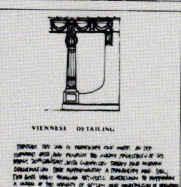
MURKIN MEMORIAL GATEWAY



GARDEN GATE



GROVENOR HOUSE - SCREEN



VIENNESE DETAILING

Craig S. Spangler • Stephen M. Bartlett
Fourth Prize

Torre: This entry represented an interesting typological specimen. It is fairly representative of the proliferation of gate houses and gateposts that constituted the largest percentage of the submissions to this competition. It limits the objectives to a circumscribed definition of the problem. This entry proposes the combination of the gate house and the gate post. It does not acknowledge the asymmetrical nature of Quincy Street at that particular point, but it does suggest an acknowledgment of the Cambridge side versus the Harvard side by the idea of the double gate. I believe that the imagery, precedents, and references are misplaced; but the idea of the double gate remains an interesting one.

Jones: This was one of the first panels we saw that attempted quite seriously to document this difficult area called precedent and to encapsulate it in the drawn project. It reads extremely well. However, the imagery is displaced. It comes from Wagner, and one might wonder what the bridgeheads of Vienna have to do with Harvard Yard.

Cobb: This panel contains in one of its smaller sections the nicest rear elevation of a lion that I've seen in a long time.

Olin: With built elements instead of trees, this scheme created the semblance of an allée as one enters from the low point of Quincy Street. This is one of its principal merits. It succeeds despite its lions.

Tigerman: I was less taken with lions or other objects or houses, than with the transition from one side to the other, and the spatial depth involved. It is not a proscenium which one is immediately thrust through; it takes a more substantial period of time to walk through. In that period of time there is a kind of transition which is very different than just passing through a plane.

Robertson: There are two things that I find exceptionally perceptive here. First, the argument starts at the top of the page by establishing the larger urban order of things. You state the urban function of the obelisk along these two streets, and you show the precedents of both streets. You then identify the precedent, in this case a wrought iron lamp on the side of one of the existing buildings, and it is transformed into this wrought iron obelisk with its lamp on the top. Immediately, you understand the issue of precedent and transformation. And then only lastly do you begin to deal with the specific architecture of the street and in a sense its traditional aspects.

Cobb: The whole sheet is very elegantly organized. The descriptive elements of architecture are themselves used to ornament the panel so that it's not merely decorative, but it actually contributes to one's understanding of the intention. I also commend the inclusion of a nighttime and daytime sketch.

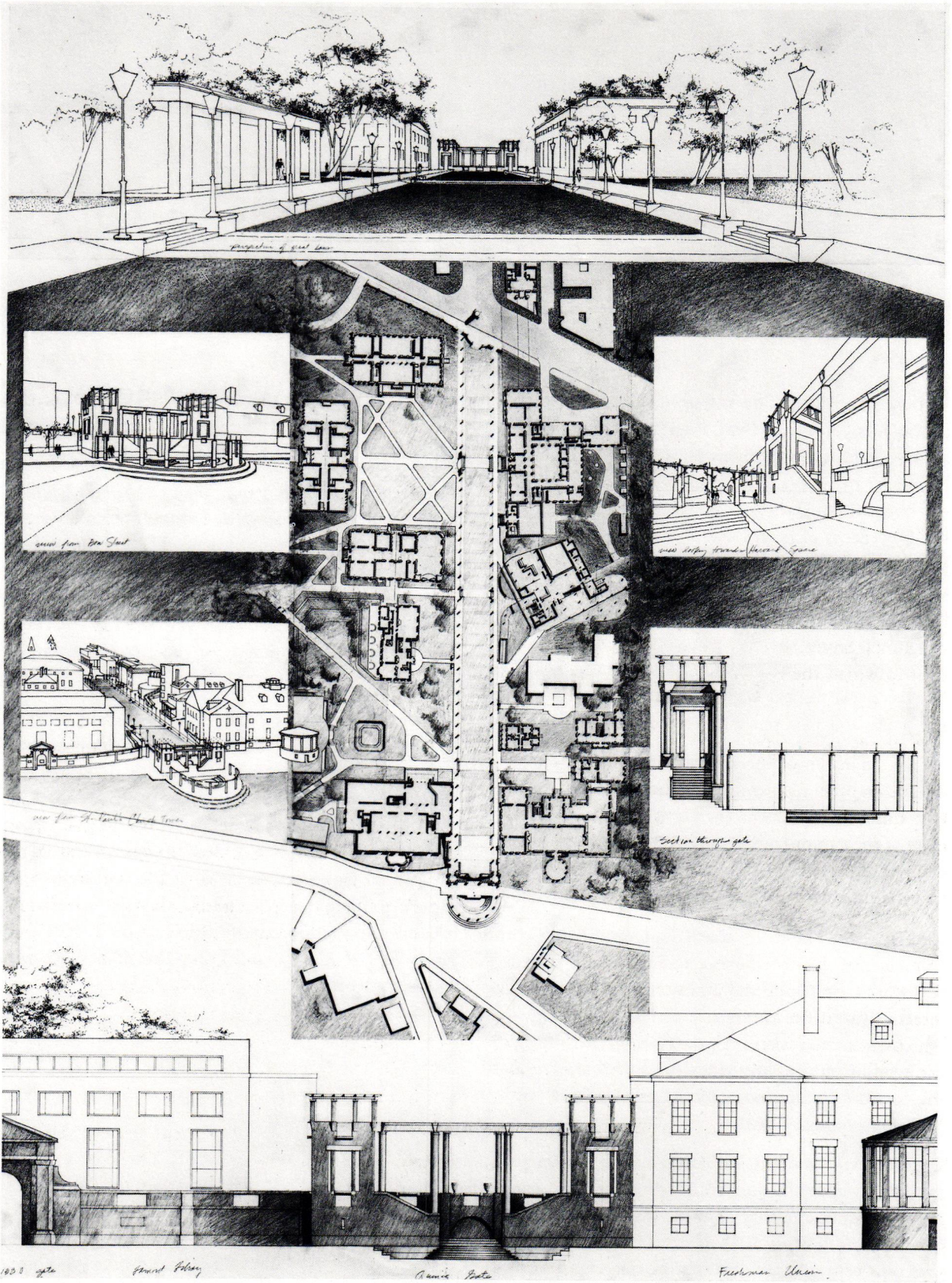
Tigerman: The thing that I find very strong is the ambivalence. Does it belong to Harvard or does it belong to Cambridge and Massachusetts Avenue? The interest lies in the ambiguity of Harvard being pulled out to that island. By developing this ambiguity it has a certain poignancy, and presents an offering, instead of the containment, privacy, and tradition of a boundary wall.

Torre: The competition is filled with entries that purport to have the answers to the problem. And it is very clear to me that in those cases the questions have been forgotten. This is one of those schemes that asks very pointed and specific questions regarding the location of Harvard's boundaries, its relationship to Cambridge, the nature of the continuity of the street, and the passage between Harvard and the immediately adjacent site which is to be developed. To use the conventions of *Learning from Las Vegas* it has a high and a low source that acknowledge

the different scales of the problem, and I think that they are justifiable in this case and are extremely well utilized.

Jones: It's making a monument more for Cambridge and less for Harvard. I think one could see it as part of the City Beautiful where the university is one of a number of elements that exist in Cambridge, so I think it's strictly a civic thing and it ducks the main question that was raised in the competition. It's a monument for the city and by inference refers to Harvard.

Vidler: I like what I take to be a certain irony in challenging the competition, turning a gate into a monument, and subsequently making a comment about the nature of the monument itself. An obelisk was in one way always a marker of things past, it was erected to certain kinds of dead things—dead institutions. In this case, the base of the obelisk has become a tomb and on the side of the gate which has become a tomb you can see who just died. It is written H A R V A R D, and I take that to be both wit and precedent.



Cary Tamarkin • Timothy Techler • Steve Johnson
 Third Prize

Jones: This is one of the rare schemes that attempted to change Quincy Street and to see it not as a democratic street but instead chose to absorb it within the field of the campus. The street is closed, and with great care the edges of this street and the surrounding spaces are given a figural nature by either plantings or opening the spaces up to the street. In a sense, it doesn't matter what the gate is really like because of the strategic moves that reframe the nature of Quincy Street. It deals with the greater body of stuff to which the gate refers.

Olin: I don't know if Cambridge could survive without the vehicular use of Quincy Street, but the idea of closing it and turning it into a crosswalk that actually unifies the campus in a new way is terrific. One question which it poses is: Where is the new edge of the campus? Does one have to come down the next street, Prescott Street, with a new fence? It forces a much more ragged edge to the campus than the one that currently exists.

Cobb: As can be seen in the topmost drawing in this scheme, the proposal is not only to close Quincy Street but to make a lawn across it. For me this is the best part of the scheme. From there on I find it is not terribly interesting in terms of the street, and I am not so forgiving of the badly realized gate.

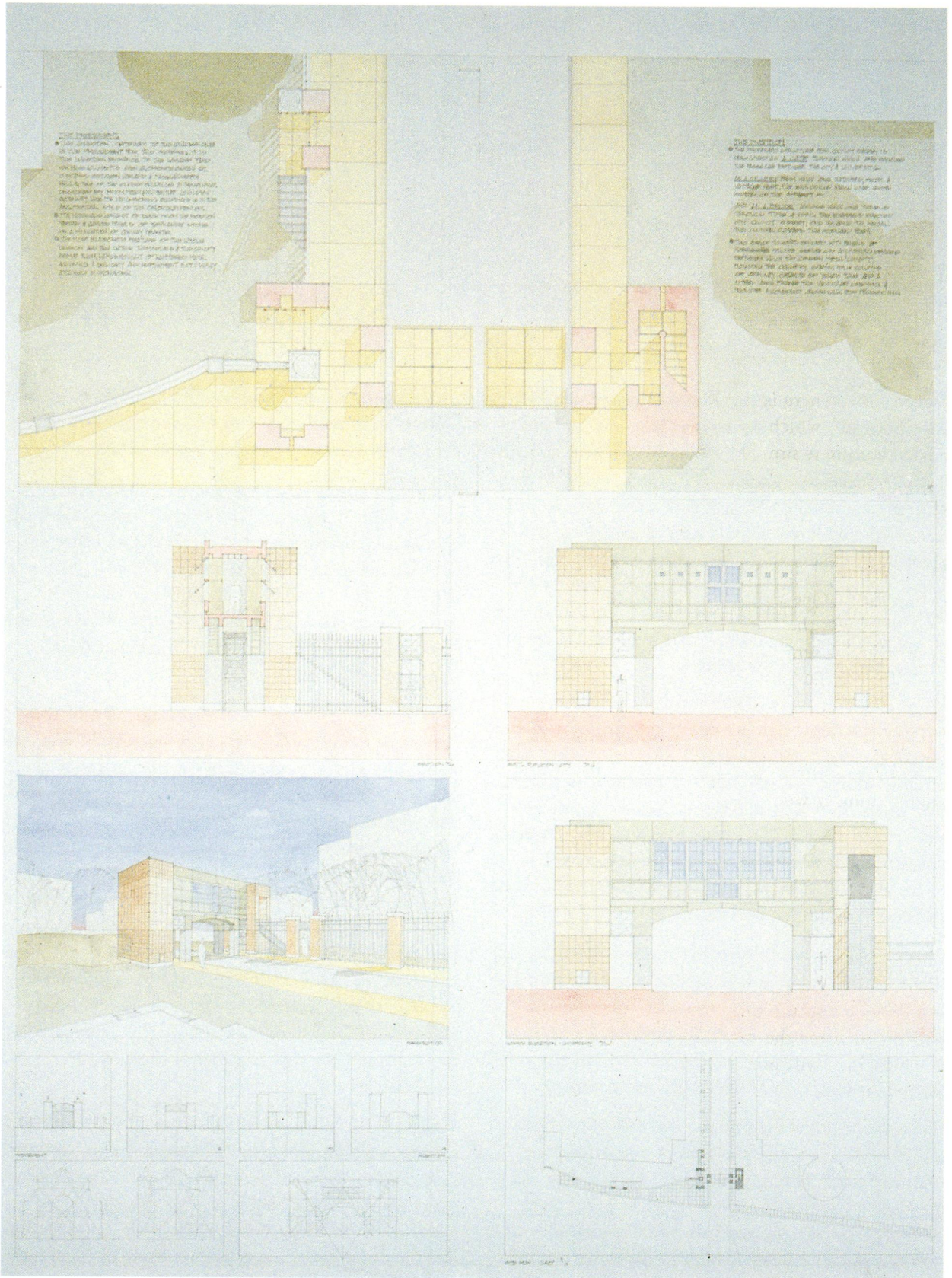
Robertson: In much of our discussion we have talked about two different sets of conditions for Quincy Street. One is the rather neutral, that is, democratic, public—private street as part of the overall grid that continues to pass through the university precinct just as it might pass down an ordinary street. This really runs counter to the notion of putting a gate across it at all. The second is that one can embrace the open space system, and using the precedent of the campus crosswalk, make this a major communal seam or space that really unifies both sides of Quincy Street into a much greater yard. This provides precisely that kind of university campus setting which is so clearly in the mainstream of

American campus planning. This is quite a brilliant piece of urbanism once you decide to remove the democratic street by putting a gate across it.

Torre: I think that this is a very competent scheme. But it suggests that Quincy Street is an axis, or that it could be turned into an axis, and that violates my sense of how that street operates. I am disturbed by the City Beautiful implications of the closed axis at either end which attempts to replace the quality and character of the buildings that flank either side of the axis.

Tigerman: By showing the ground plan of the Carpenter Center and by picking up certain diagonal walks, the figural elements in the plan are arrived at in an interesting way. The transformation or invention is then derived from this new way of looking at buildings that once had a boundary wall, which was the original Harvard Yard itself. Yet by making things symmetrical, no trace or memory is retained of the weighting of the original site. Our discussion inevitably focuses on what things look like, but actually there are certain symbolic characters represented by what things were when Harvard was founded. I find it both formally and symbolically problematic not to remember that original asymmetrical condition.

Vidler: I have reservations about what otherwise is a deeply thought out scheme. One is that it assumes that the two sides of Quincy Street and the objects which flank them are equal in a way that is patently not true. If the analysis had dealt with the objectlike character of the buildings on the right hand side of the street and the fenced-in character on the left side, there would not have been an attempt to produce an equality by putting rows of trees and bollards and making a closed axis to produce a kind of set piece. I think this falsely pulls two rows of buildings out of the city context in order to make what is nonetheless a rather elegant composition.



Raphael Portuondo • Rolando Ilanes • Raul Rodriguez
Honorable Mention

Tigerman: There is a certain celebratory implication in a gate, which is lacking here. On the other hand, I admire it simply because of that, in the sense of its modesty and of its directness. I do like the asymmetry—it's a very subtle and quiet voice going through it. But then I wonder, if this asymmetry is based on the stair, why go above the street?

Robertson: One of the things that interested some of us was the combination of quite eclectic styles which is reminiscent of the entire street, this kind of mock Tudorian, collegiate treatment combined with a stark modernism.

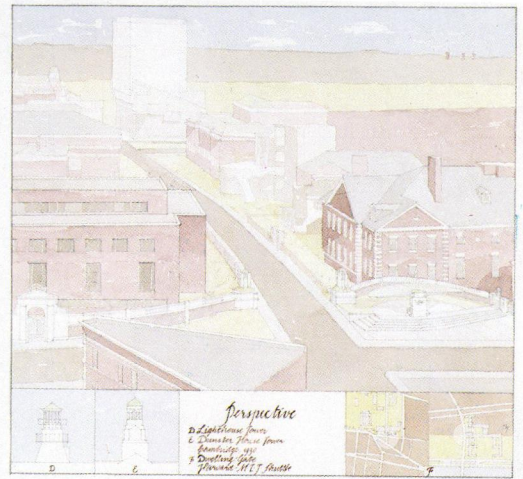
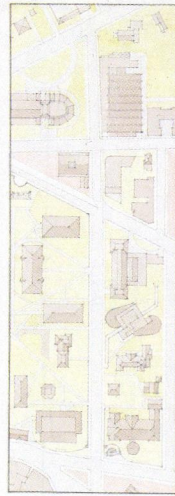
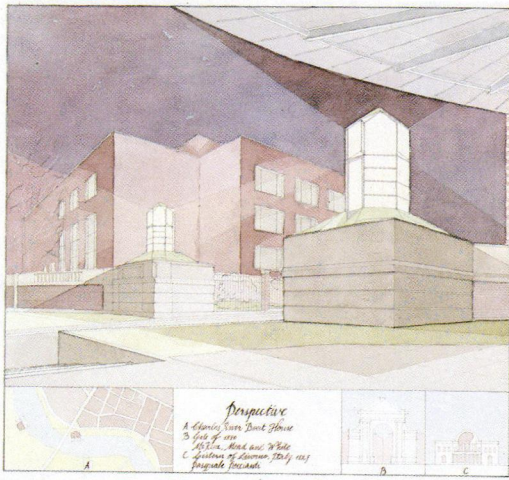
Olin: It's simple and straightforward. Unfortunately, it brings to mind the imagery of subway toilets. I don't think it would work well in this particular place.

Cobb: I think that certain aspects of it are pretty.

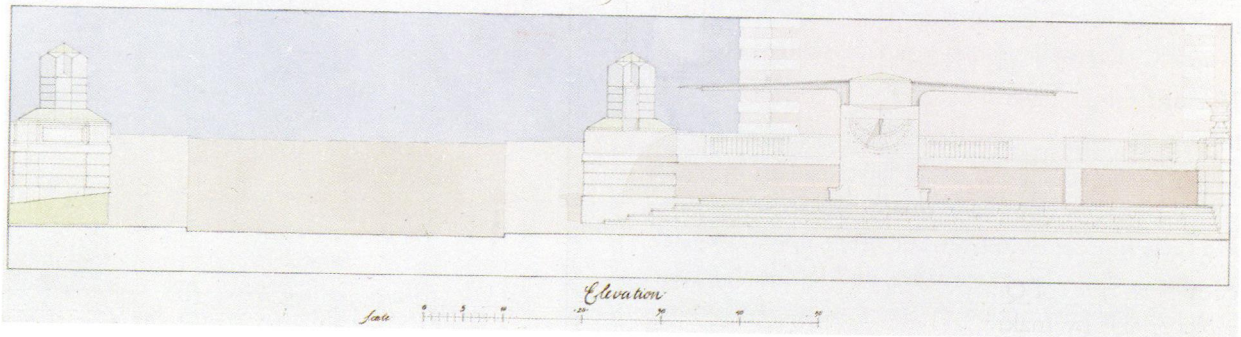
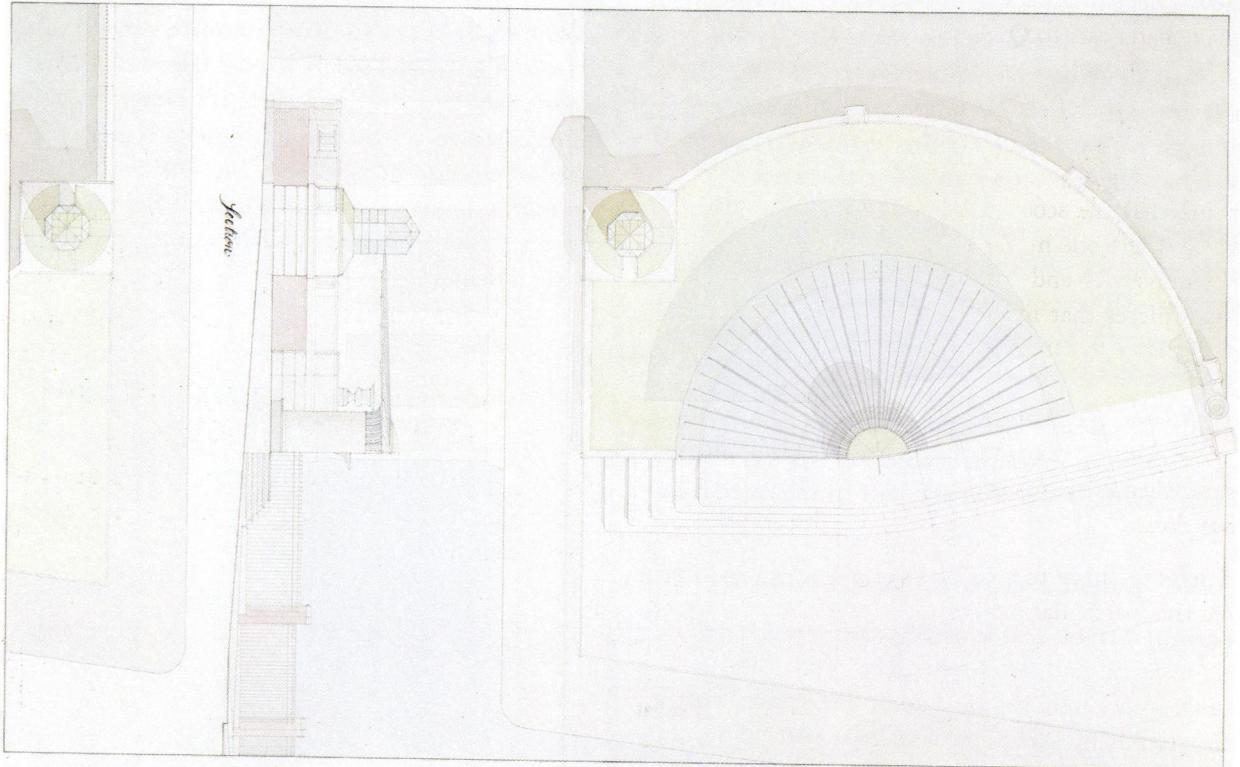
Torre: I think that it could possibly work well on 125th Street and Broadway, New York City, as a subway station for the El. I don't understand what it bridges but by providing a vantage point it would also provide a secure place for Harvard architecture students to watch the development of Quincy Square, in which they will probably not be invited to participate.

Jones: It tries to be a door. This is one of the schemes into which one could have read an intention of one facade or door to Harvard proceeding north and then another door from the other side to the city. Of course, doors have two sides, and in not choosing to make that distinction in this scheme, I think it loses its principal point.

Vidler: To me, living in the late Victorian suburb of Princeton, the scheme looks very much like the kind of thing that a student of Robert Venturi might have done if he had seen what a student of Michael Graves had done the day before. It's rather like a listless Edwardian aesthete reclining on a couch in a posture reminiscent of Proust, but without the energy to lift a finger to write like him. It has that kind of faint Edwardian, post-modern quality that many works now have.



Quincy Gate



J. Frano Violich
 Honorable Mention

Jones: This is essentially a very nice scheme which deals with a simple marker or lanterns that make gateposts to Quincy Street. It then establishes to the right side an asymmetrical element which tempers the kind of oppression syndrome that we've seen in many gatepost schemes and deliberates on the possibility of a composition that is slightly free. I think that the scooped out shape to the right is a place where one might sit on the boundary between the university and the city. I'm slightly sad that the main pieces that make the posts are so faint. You really have to struggle very, very hard to see what they might be. There's a particularly unfortunate perspective on the top left that gives the posts monumental status that isn't true. I think the architect of this scheme has not fully understood what he or she has done.

Torre: I have to admit that it took me a while to see this particular scheme—particularly because of the modesty of its ambition, and partly because I was looking for projects which redefine the rules of the game in some way. I think that it's an accommodating scheme. It manages to borrow or to use the proposal for a gate as an excuse to do something different, which is to provide some kind of reasonable shelter and public meeting place as a small gift that Harvard might make to the city of Cambridge.

Tigerman: I find it interesting not because of its modesty, but because it illustrates an appropriate way of dealing with a public street. It is really not a gate into Harvard, although the university does occupy both sides of Quincy Street. This scheme marks a place, and by making things equivalent on both sides it says that Harvard is, in fact, on both sides of Quincy Street.

Vidler: I think that the site plan might have worked well if the way in which the bus shelter and the pylons were realized was slightly different. It could have had another language and been a much more effective scheme.

Robertson: It's the kind of sensible public works architecture that cities should have a lot of in convenient locations, like at the entrances of streets. It does not get involved with the pompous gatepost issues. It provides a place to sit and stand under cover. I find it an extremely good piece of urban design furniture in a location where you probably need it, and in that way it avoids the sort of ceremonial issue of gate and provides some amenity.

Cobb: It recognizes the university's obligation to enrich the public realm and not merely to assert its own presence.

Jones: It might be accurate to say that this is one of those schemes that is a contentious kind of joker in the pack. It has certain things that are banal and simple. I quite like it in the sense that it has a rough side and a smooth side. It's got a sort of civic architectural side and a random stone side. This opposition speaks about the entrance to the civitas and the entrance to the outside, once the country.

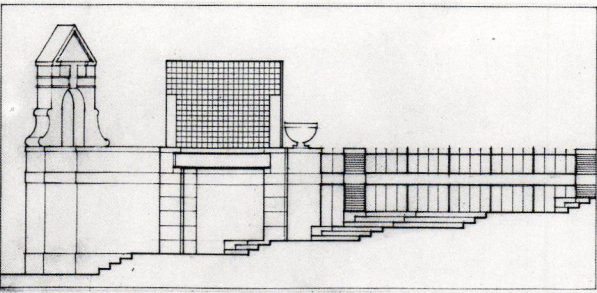
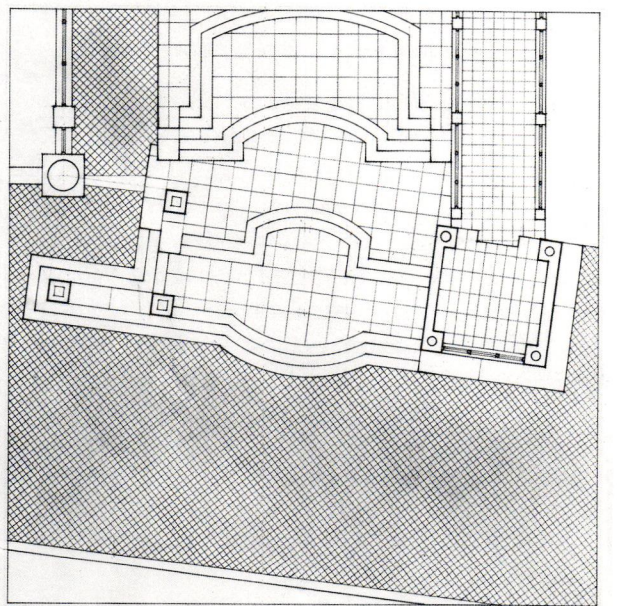
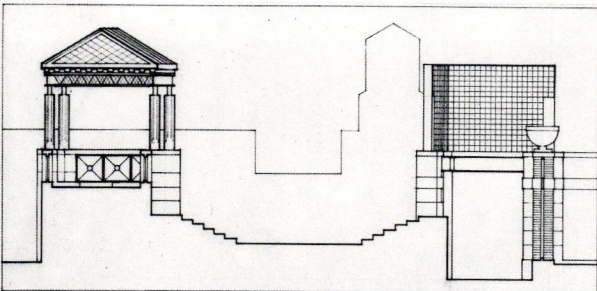
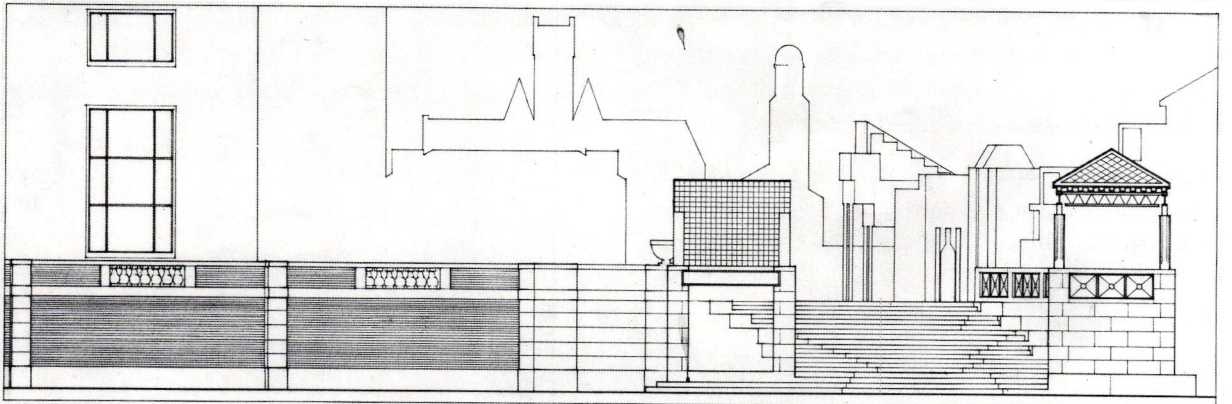
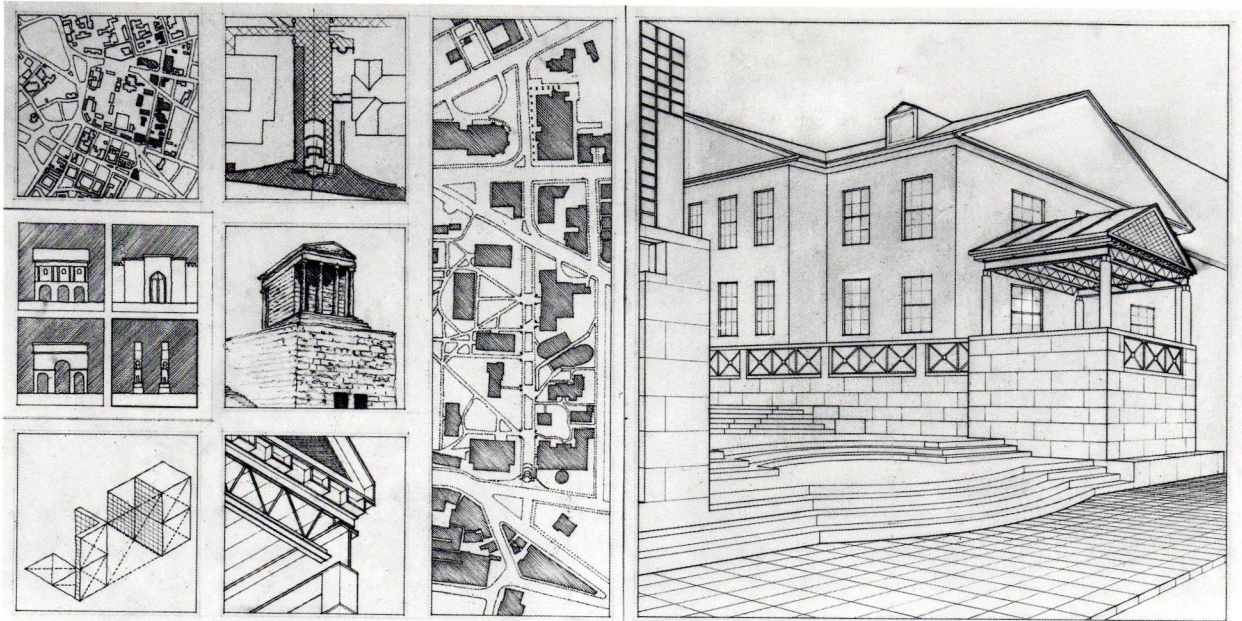
Olin: It's quite mad; I love it. I don't think the text with the marvelous translation of the Beckett short story really has much to do with gate. I don't think that Wren and Robbe-Grillet's *Last Year at Marienbad* has anything to do with it either.

Robertson: We really were looking in vain for landscape solutions to this portal. It's an architectural fantasy of landscape. You really would be entranced by it when you found it; it looks rather cuddly.

Torre: I think that it would be better if it were made out of flocked concrete because it is difficult to imagine what would happen if it could not stay in that particular shape all the time. I like it because, of all the schemes that very narrowly defined their objectives, that were about themselves, about a sense of monumentality, this particular one at least attempted to make those gestures out of landscape material which is present else where on campus.

Vidler: The proportions are execrable but I like it because in a discussion with the Harvard University gardener this morning, he told me that it would provide employment for thousands in a time of depression.

Tigerman: I think it's flocked concrete and I love it.



Joseph DePace • Vinay Kapoor • Shirley Fujikawa
Honorable Mention

Jones: This scheme is full of extraordinarily good intentions and has a certain eye. It's one of the few schemes that tries in its plan to deal formally with the complex geometry of the skew of the street and the frontal system of the quads. I think it's quite knowing and skillful in plan. For me its principal crisis is in the details of the industrial trusses for they cheapen the very thing that it's referring to.

Torre: Quincy Street may be one of America's most exciting architectural promenades but it's certainly no Acropolis. This scheme redefines the rules of the game. It has done so quite willfully. It possibly works well in relation to the interface between Harvard and the City of Cambridge. But the main problem that I have with it is the sectional resolution of the project throughout the entire street. I would have liked to have seen a section that took into account the full length of Quincy Street. I think that in relation to Quincy Street it's actually quite damaging to the urban environment.

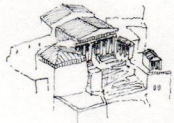
Vidler: I liked it at first when I saw in the perspective that the little temple pediment reflected the pediment of the building behind. But then I saw that the little temple was in the scheme itself paralleled by a cube; presumably the temple symbolized precedent and the cube symbolized invention of something of that kind. Then I started to see the temple, and I just cringed in front of the trusswork. Although one could think of it as primitive modern in that respect, the particular junctions don't work.

Tigerman: The two things that are important to note about this scheme are: 1) its juxtaposition at an angle which in fact is not perpendicular to the street, and 2) the terracing that formally makes the transition onto Quincy Street. More importantly, there is an attempt at a transition. It is not a gateway into the original memory of the first Harvard Yard; it's a transition in an urban way through a place which on both sides has to contend with Harvard and the idea of that transition. The time that it takes to make this transition is its major gesture.

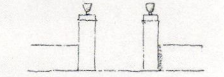
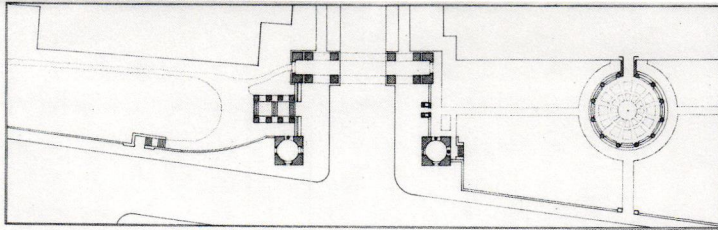
Robertson: I think that if you could get rid of the left-hand building altogether it would be infinitely better. If you then make this right-hand building much more accurately a small Greek pavilion you would add the one style that is missing to this zoo-like street of all styles. I think the space of the steps is quite beautiful. If you don't look closely at the details it could be quite winning.

Cobb: I think that this scheme is unfortunate. To pursue it a step further I think that this top right drawing is very fetching, partly because it only shows the edge of that left-hand pavilion, and I became interested in this scheme precisely because of this drawing. After that it was downhill all the way.

Olin: The only thing to add is that when one begins to play with recall of certain precedents one has to be careful. One has to do something different or do it straight.



THE PROPYLEA, ATHENS



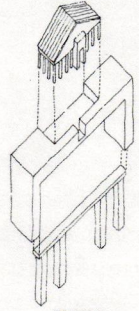
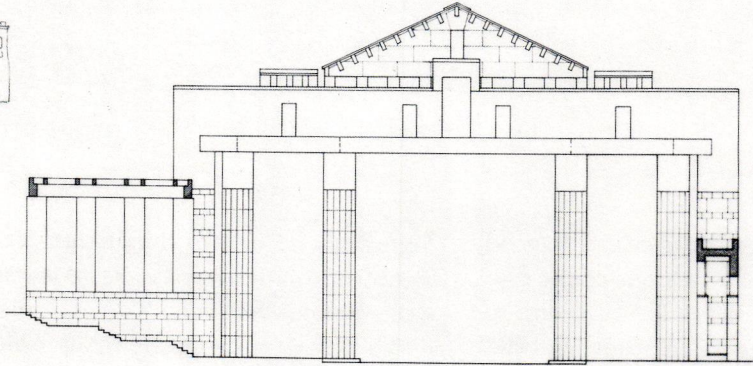
COLLEGIATE GATE



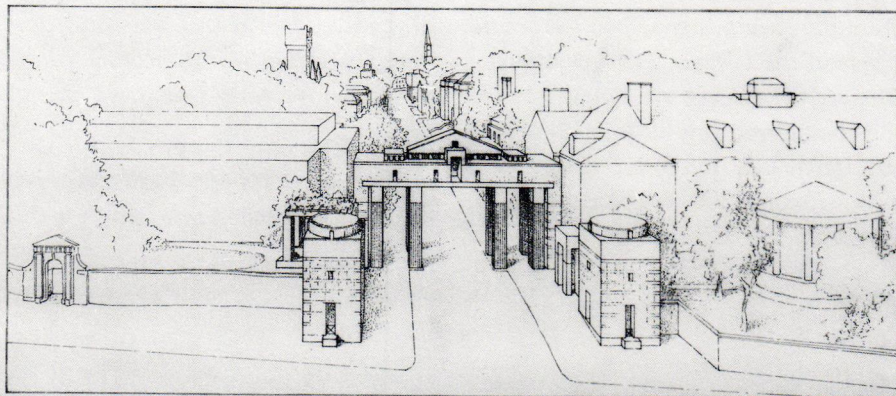
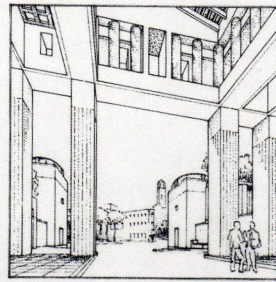
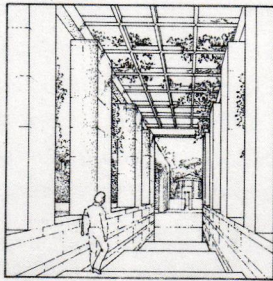
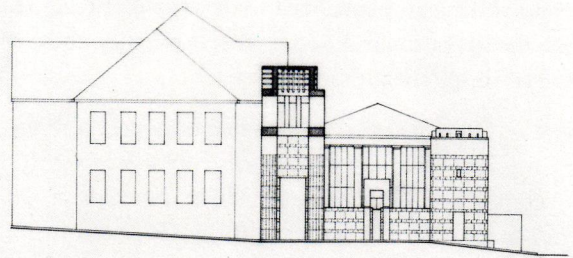
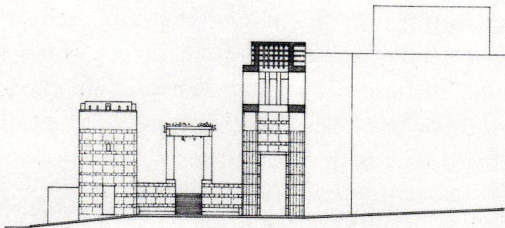
TWO TOWERS



MUNICH PROPYLEA



THE ELEMENTS



Victoria C. Meyers • Thomas Hanrahan
Honorable Mention

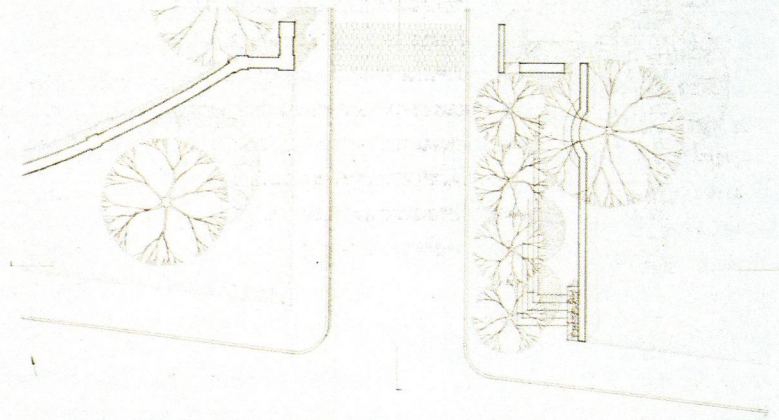
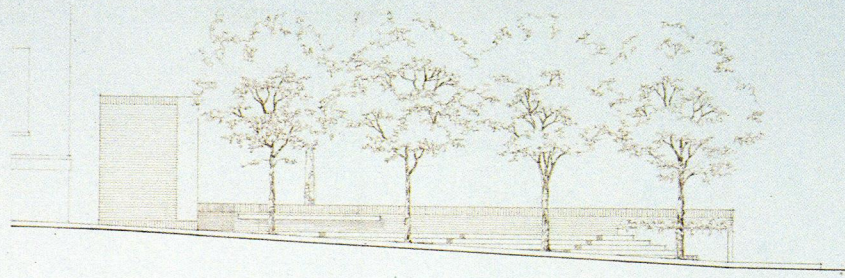
Cobb: This scheme consists of a gate which is some distance back from the intersection, and in front of the gate is a pair of symmetrically organized pavilions. Between the pavilions is a cross-axis which connects the upper terrace by way of a stair down, across the street, and into this space. I mention those things because it's that conceptual structure that I think interested us. I found these pavilions architecturally very interesting. This scheme proposes a spatial sequence from a pair of pavilions past a cross-axis into a gate. It's quite rich as it begins to be more than simply an object that you pass through. It begins to contain its own piece of city if you will, with its own space and movement systems within it.

Olin: I don't have much to say about this at all because it didn't really interest me.

Robertson: First the good news—this cross-axis. There's a very beautiful perspective through that little trellised portal toward this very nice drum building. It's something that no one else in the competition picked up, and it connects that yard to the Lamont yard, which otherwise is like a graveyard now with this dead gate in front of it. Whether you like the salt and pepper bollard buildings is inconsequential because I think there is entirely too much architecture in much too small a space. It's the classic problem of architects trying to get all of their hang-ups and kinks out in a rather simple problem, and I find it really preposterous.

Vidler: Not half so preposterous as things you'll be seeing in the future. There are many things I like about this scheme mainly because it was presumably done by my friend Maurice Culot from Belgium. The plan is very elegant and sophisticated. I like the sequence of spaces within the gate itself. I like the perspective views backward and forward. But the bad thing about it is the extraordinary combination of elements which brings together precedents in a very mechanistic and completely ill-proportioned way and blows the gate itself out of proportion. I have a long-distance call placed to Brussels right now and I have a little taped message for Maurice which is something like "On ne peut jamais composer des éléments architecturaux comme ça."

Jones: I think this is an homage to Krier and not to Culot. I think it has to do with a European theme about the reconstruction of a European city at Harvard. If you can take from the gate or its arrangements an intimation of what might follow I think you might be terribly let down by this hors d'oeuvre. It sets up an expectation of this particular citadel that I don't think it can match. Having said that, the lateral moves and the establishing of the rotunda of the of the breakfast room is all-knowing and very beautifully planned. But I think you would never really go beyond that gate. It's a scheme that has been compressed into a city in itself and is no longer a gate.



A Competition for a Gate



A gate that gives invitation of passage and opportunity of pause
To reflect and delight in the transition between inside



Myles A. Katz

Jones: This is put in as a minimal gesture which does virtually nothing. The wall on the extreme right is of questionable Fifties origin with a minimal piece of art mirroring the urn on the left as the cut-out of the figure on the right. We liked this scheme on the first day because it was a refreshing change from the plundering of more distant history.

Robertson: This is a scheme done by the Garden Club using a traditional oldtimer who had made the mistake of hiring a young recent graduate from one of the prominent architecture schools. Seriously, I do think we kept hoping that someone would do a simple landscape scheme with some trees and a low retaining wall. Not very distinguished, but really not totally offensive.

Vidler: I originally thought that this was an authentic number from the Brown Decades proposed by a member of the class of '97 or '01, but then I realized that what was being done was probably even too much for this minimal scheme.

Tigerman: I agree. It's one shot and little else is done. The details are beyond minimalism.

Cobb: We were all longing to find this scheme better than it is. I would add one more reason for wishing this: namely because it was the only submission which could fit within the conceivable budget that would be assigned to it by the University.

Olin: We were hoping yesterday for something modest just as a contrast. In the cold light of dawn this morning it would appear that E. H. Shepherd, the illustrator of Winnie-the-Pooh could have done it better.

Olin: This scheme is very mature. I think it could be achieved and Harvard would be better for it. The drawing to examine is the site plan, which is the genius of the whole scheme. The combination of the gate and the obelisk is very intelligent.

Cobb: I find the pavilions to be very sophisticated buildings with a satisfactory combination of precedent and invention. One of the things which makes this scheme compelling is the relationship between solid and void. The size of the arches with respect to the volumes that contain them is just right. This pair of pavilions succeeds in offering something to the public realm in addition to asserting the presence of the institution. This offering is made in the form of the internal space of the pavilion which is proposed as a public space.

Robertson: I also like the combination of civic and institutional architecture. This plaza is one of the most sophisticated resolutions of a particularly nasty piece of existing urbanism. This scheme might end up with these gates closed and traffic taken out, so that the life of the street changes depending on whether the gates are open or closed. Yet it does not recognize the real asymmetry of the street and it very clearly takes Quincy Street out of the public realm.

Tigerman: That is why I despise this scheme. I think it trivializes through the cartooning of an architecture that pre-dates it, and in so doing makes a mockery out of the concept of precedent and invention. The other side of the argument is representationalism versus abstraction. This is clearly not abstract if invention is the abstracting of precedent. There are two other reasons why I don't like this scheme. It takes Quincy Street out of the democratic realm; Harvard continues to gobble up Cambridge. I think the gates would probably be closed; the pavilions are guarding elements on either side; and I find that problematic in 1983. The other thing that I find difficult is the overriding symmetry of each of the pieces; there is no dialogue between the two sides.

Vidler: Quite early I marked this as a scheme which many of the jurors would like, and immediately tried to search for reasons which made me dislike it. In the first place the pavilions are not portals, not lodges, but sentry boxes. In the second place in relation to the architecture of Edwardian or pre-Edwardian sentry boxes they don't comment either very wittily or very knowingly on that architecture which they attempt to display. The only thing that I think might bring this scheme back in my eyes is that if it were sold as a ubiquitous type for all universities, in which case the red and white stripes would go to Princeton and become black and orange.

Jones: This scheme is a rebuke to the last 30 or 40 years of architecture. It's an abrasive scheme on the one hand, but on the other hand I find it's almost apple pie. It's as though Edward Lutyens had been reborn. I think that in terms of the grammar it's not good enough.

Torre: I admire this scheme very much because it expanded upon the boundaries and definitions posed by the rules of the competition. I think that even innovation has tradition. Innovation, or invention, in this country in particular has been fostered by the willingness to ask new questions and to tackle unforeseen parameters, conditions, and realities. I think that this scheme is ultimately more poignant than the one with the obelisk (scheme No. 2) because it acknowledges and addresses the conflict of the boundary between town and gown. And while it allows for an interpretation of Quincy Street as a semi-private precinct, it trades off with the city a public space which it did not have before. To me, that is probably the central characteristic of the democratic process. The monument proposed but not designed in the triangle is for the men of Cambridge who died in the Vietnam War, and that reminds me of all those monuments to the Civil War which became the basis for establishing a formal definition of public place in America. It seems to me a very appropriate choice of subject.

Jones: This is really Celesteville or Babar's Ville. The drawing at the top is full of charm, and the scheme is best read from this drawing. It would be difficult in reality to make a convincing mark with the two pieces. They are in fact quite tiny.

Torre: I also find this drawing enormously charming, but somewhat sentimental.

Vidler: Charm is not everything.

Robertson: It's a simple scheme which thankfully has some charm since most of them don't.

Cobb: Part of the charm of this scheme is what I perceive to be a kind of speculative character, despite the refinement of the drawing. This is not an overkill presentation; it simply works from bottom to top through a set of images which inspire some fairly simple drawings. The speculation fulfills itself on a charming sketch at the top.

Tigerman: I think that the problem with this scheme is that the two lanterns sit uneasily on a bed of untended ground cover or something. Yet the idea of leaving the street alone and simply marking the way redeems the scheme in a very modest sense.

Olin: I think the place that it makes would be disappointing, and I actively dislike the treatment of the shrubs and plantings. This is the kind of stuff we have been living with for ages; it's just the kind of vegetation you find in butcher shops for garnishing porkchops. It is not plants used well.



Fred Biehle • Nora Biehle

Cobb: I think that this proposal is substantively quite thin but I wanted to be sure that it was put on the wall because of its rather extraordinary graphic qualities as an entry in a competition.

Robertson: Yes, I think it's an entry in a poster competition.

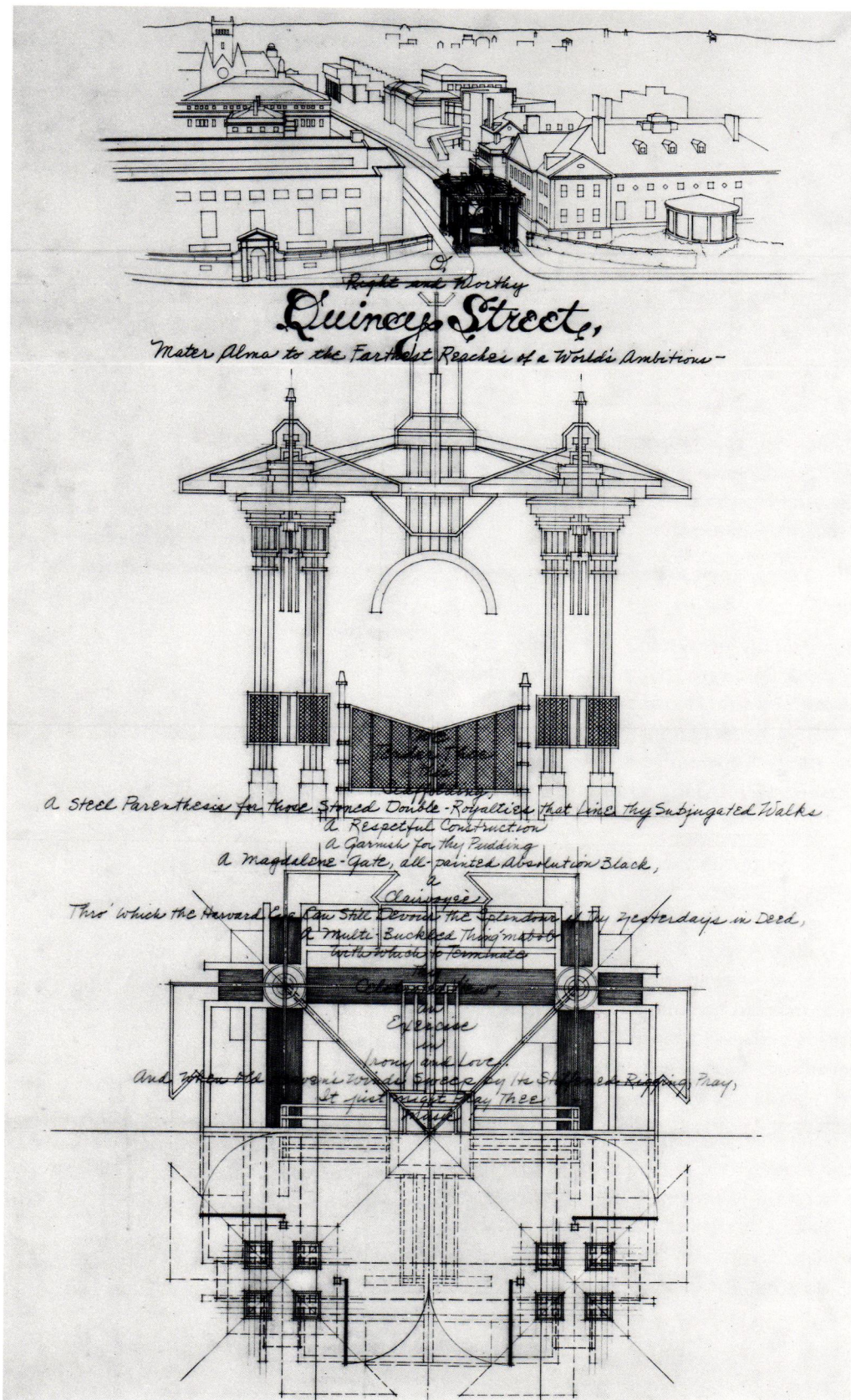
Olin: I don't totally understand this graphic image. I don't think it's a very good entry to the competition. This sort of Tatlin cloned with Duchamp is a memory of Italian set design in the 1930s. The language of the theater program is all there, and I admire it. I haven't seen it for a while and it seems so fresh.

Tigerman: It brings up the question of an appropriate selection of precedent. I'm not sure what the Uffizi or anything Italian, or a surrealist stage set has to do with Quincy Street. While it's very compelling graphically, so were many other entries. It's difficult to understand in the context of the place that the competition addresses, and the concept of precedent and invention, what it was that generated this otherwise very attractive object.

Torre: I think that this scheme is not architecture. Yet the interest that it has for me is that it addresses the question of image in a graphic sense as opposed to making it the central object of the architectural problem, as we saw again and again in the majority of the competition entries.

Jones: Yes, I would agree, it's an extreme form of image-making but a fatal architecture.

Vidler: If you've seen me shifting around in my seat it's simply because I wanted to try out the wonderful variety of positions that the Riedtvelt chair allows you to sit in without going numb.



Spillman Farmer Architects

Vidler: I told you that the outrageous scale of the Culot gate would be surpassed, and here it is.

Robertson: Gehry meets Maybeck.

Cobb: I have to acknowledge that it was on my insistence that this be shown, because I wanted to have the pleasure of reading to you the text which is inscribed on it.

*"Oh right and worthy Quincy Street,
Mater alma to the farthest reaches of a world's ambitions,
We tender thee this steel parenthesis for those stoned
royalties that lined thy subjugated walls.
A respectful construction,
A garnish for thee pudding,
A maudlin gate all painted absolution black,
A clear voyeur through which the Harvard eye can still
devour the splendor of thy yesterdays,
With which to terminate thy celebrated view,
An exercise in irony and love,
When old heaven's winds sweep by its stiffened rigging,
Pray, it just might play thee music."*

Olin: I was surprised when I first saw this. I have seen an awful lot of things that were fatuous, pumped up, and pompous; things that were made out of heavy masonry. This was the first very delicate linear scheme that was all of those things, and I found that a contradiction in terms.

Torre: I wondered about chain link on Quincy Street.

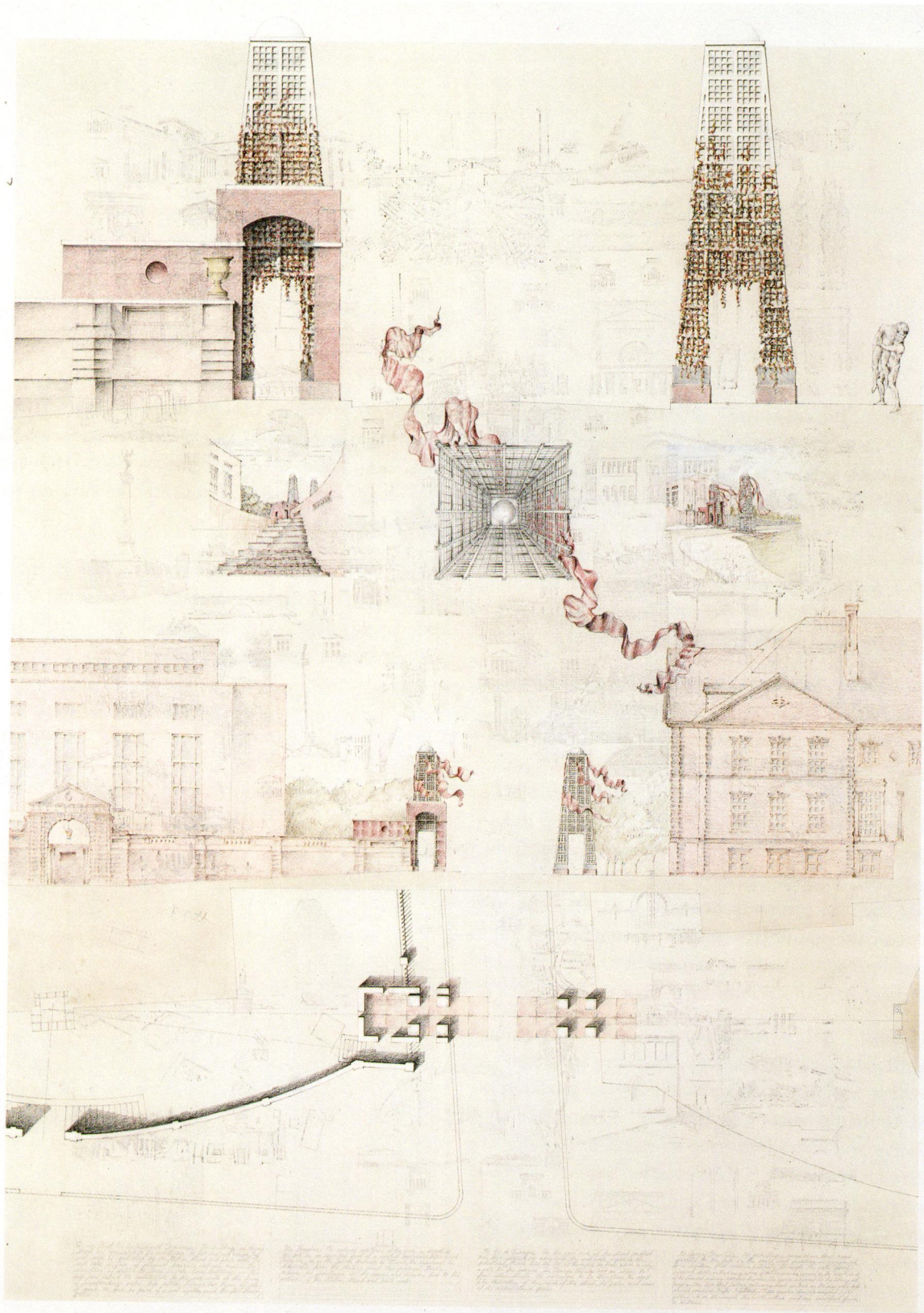
Olin: We have seen many schemes which were presented to us as object gates, where there was a pavilion on each side with a bridge or spanning member across the top, combining a traditional gate type with a tripartite bridge gate. This one intrigued me, and I thought it was very well presented, although I was puzzled by some of the views. For instance, the odd choice of the perspective looking through the gap up towards Quincy Street.

Cobb: This is another scheme that enriches the idea of a gate with a cross-axis, which adds considerably to the possibilities of the gate and engages the flanking space in an interesting way. However, in terms of the character of the presentation, despite the skill in the drawing and a large measure of skill in the design, I find myself annoyed by a rather incoherent presentation. It does not have that wonderful quality that the first obelisk scheme has, in which every element of the graphic presentation contributed to one's understanding and appreciation of the idea. In this respect it is disappointing.

Robertson: All of us immediately went to the upper right-hand watercolor and the plan, and from there on it was an unbelievable crossword puzzle trying to figure out what was going on. I think one of the things you should all keep in mind in looking at portal or arch schemes is their relative heights, since the longitudinal section of Quincy Street does change. Quincy Street drops down to Massachusetts Avenue, so that when you are coming up this slope you are only going to see the top of any arch or portal. Very few people as urban designers went to the trouble to show that intersection and what it would mean in terms of a straight elevation.

Jones: It seems as though none of these rather charming discrepancies in the presentation would, if built, be its fate as to how one views it. But very competent, it even has a working drawing on the right-hand side.

Torre: This scheme needs to make up its mind about what it is. Is it two gates? Is it some kind of space that is defined by two gates? Or is it the space that surrounds them as a frontal object?



Maritere Trelles • Jorge Trelles • Luis Trelles
Honorable Mention

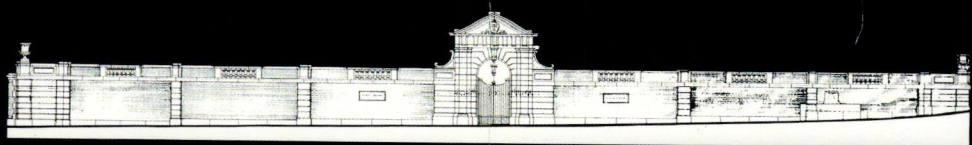
Jones: Really, this is Stanley's scheme. It is a decomposition of symmetrical gates, a transformation from the masonry gate with an aspect of hut or bird-cage growing out of it, which has to do with the literalness of trees. Its plan is much better than what it looks like in three dimensions.

Tigerman: This is the jury's token gift to the token midwesterner. The reason that I was compelled by it is that it is the only scheme that has some vestige of asymmetry not for its own sake but with respect to a remembrance of the Yard as the original campus. It exhibits a resistance to a concept of a symmetrical gateway, of an equivalency on either side of Quincy Street. This is less important in its attempts to develop a cross-axis, which it really doesn't do, and more important, not for its deconstructing attitude, but because it remembers that the left hand side toward the Yard is in an entirely different condition than the side toward the Freshman Union.

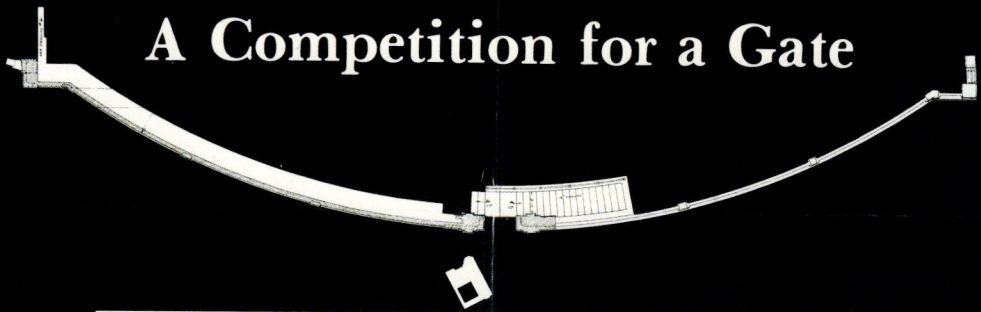
Torre: It is asymmetrical; it is beautifully rendered, and it shows that the author attended one of the better eastern architectural schools. I can't make up my mind on whether it is gothic, classical, or a transformation of an enlightenment piece.

Cobb: I admire the quality of the graphic presentation. The references to precedent have been left as a kind of residue beneath the entire surface of the drawing. You can see the traces of it. I think the organization of the drawing shows exemplary judgment and spirit.

Olin: Yes, there are architectural fingerprints all over it. Also, seeing somebody really try to draw the surrounding buildings, I'm starting to loathe Lamont. I'm getting more and more upset about Lamont, and I'm beginning to think a couple of the schemes that wanted to do something rather drastic to it may turn out to be very serious.



A Competition for a Gate



The Harvard Architecture Review

PRECEDENT AND INVENTION

An investigation of Precedent and Invention leads in this case to the decision to avoid a rather superfluous intervention.

The so-obvious idea of a gate for Quincy Street, Harvard's "outstanding architectural promenade", seems redundant and counterproductive, certainly from the viewpoint of urban design. The gate of McKim, Mead and White already occupies the (adjacent) site and expresses the idea, although its impact is reduced, or even nullified, by the Lamont Library.

The originally intended axial approach from the Charles River cannot be realized. However, the notion of a "ceremonial threshold" is still valid. The symbolic meaning and functional value of the existing gate need only be rediscovered.

The discomfort with the idea of "the celebration of passage between the city and the university" expressed in a gate for this particular street at that particular location was accompanied by the desire for more modesty, simplicity and clarity, that is for an approach which, by acknowledging the context,

was prohibitive of academic muscle-flexing and its associated impositions.

The gate already exists: also, the precedent: Harvard Yard. Invention is an attitude that respects the site.

It is suggested that the Lamont Building, which must be considered an intrusive and annoying element along the "architectural promenade", be demolished.

It should be replaced by a building which, while fulfilling all of the functions of the old, responds to the formal requirements of both "yard" and "promenade". A narrow, rectilinear building, presumably designed by an architect of international repute as a university showpiece, running parallel to Quincy Street, would meet these criteria.

The new (court) yard, defined by the redesigned library to the east and the nineteenth century gate and wall to the south, refers to the system of rectangular spaces created by the orthogonal arrangement of building volumes of Harvard Yard and to the type of building used along

the perimeter of the yard to define a boundary and form an enclosure.

The character of this new yard would be different, as it is not an introverted space, protected by several layers of building wall. Because it is situated at the periphery and because the gate (which marks the passage from one open space into another) forms the southern boundary, this space functions as an entry yard (foyer). It is permeable along the southern side and thus open to the shops and businesses of the city. Ideally, this space reaches over its architectural boundaries, allowing an exchange between the city of Cambridge and the "historic core of the University".

The definition of Quincy Street as an "architectural promenade", as a spine of the campus, can be accomplished more effectively by resolution of this corner piece (historic gate and new building wall) than by the addition of a new gate on the suggested site. The new building would complete the vertical definition of the street, while the physically liberated McKim, Mead and White gate would attain new life.

Thomas Bartels
First Prize

Olin: And here it is. This scheme caused dissension among us as to whether this was a real presentation, a real problem being solved. As a first move diagram I like very much the economy with which this person took the poster, cut out a small portion, and added a few red marks. After that I find it very disappointing that they didn't bother to show us how to do it, elaborate on it, demonstrate that they knew what they were doing and could pull it off.

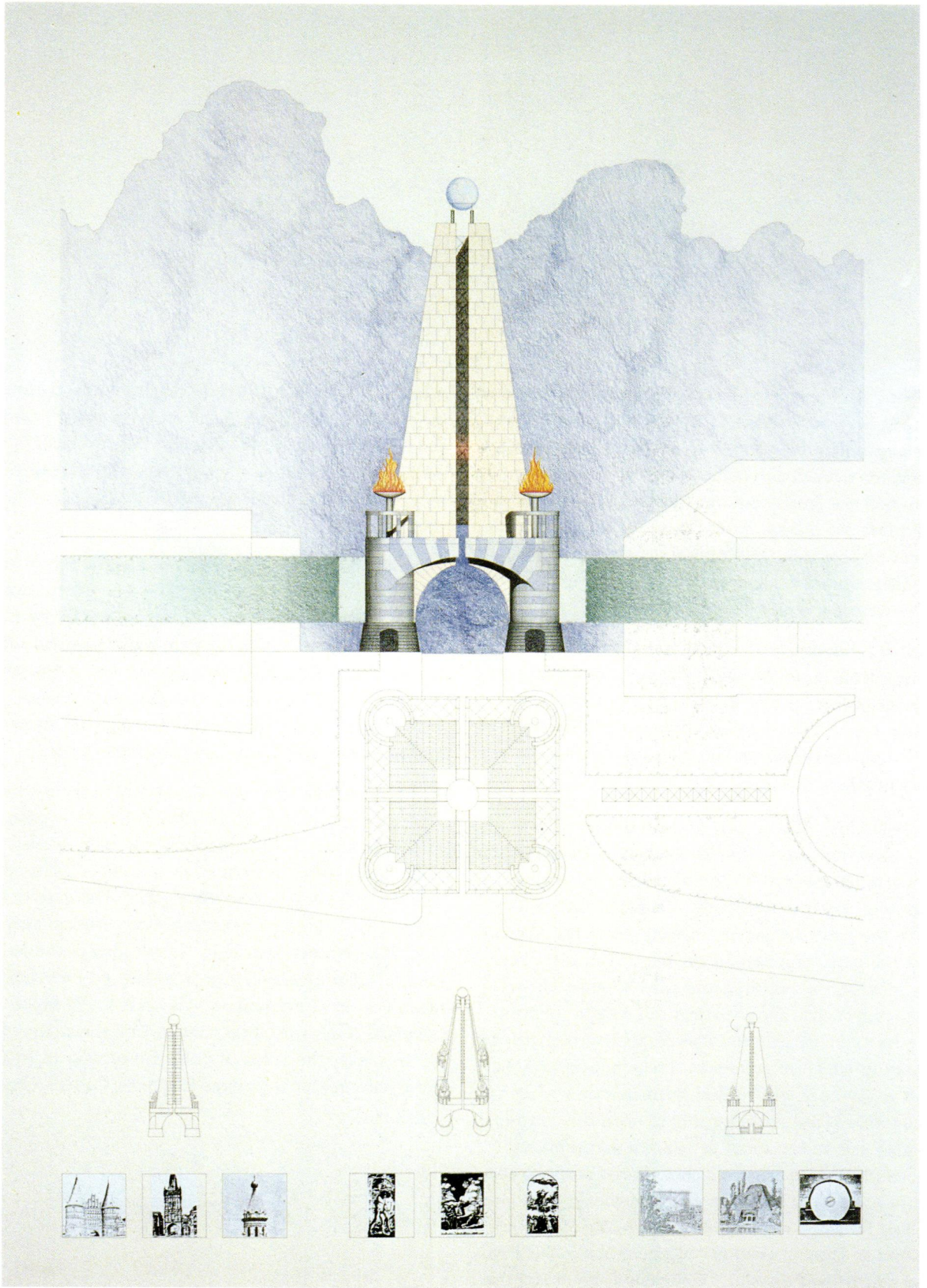
Cobb: I'm not at all disappointed in the failure of this scheme to go beyond what is shown there. As a matter of fact, the brilliance of this scheme is precisely that it didn't go beyond itself and therefore focused our attention on the essential urban issue of this problem.

Robertson: We all sort of did a double take on it . . . now wait a second, what's different about it from the original poster. We didn't realize until this morning that the rest of the Yard had been added with the fence around it, making very clear that in fact the gate, as it says in the text, is already there. By moving the building the gate becomes the most important portal and the street can remain, performing its exact present and contemporary role with the building which reinforces it. The text also says that this is the only way to deal with that axis when you know that you'll never be able to open this long-intended axis to the river. It is a *fait accompli* and therefore give up on that urban design attempt and go to something which is an acknowledged eyesore. When Ed and I got out of the cab yesterday, we looked at Lamont and just began to shake our heads and said "what a disaster." Get rid of Lamont, replace it with a proper building by an appropriate architect, and transform the whole issue. It goes, of course, much deeper in that it also challenges whether putting a gate across a gridded town street is

where one should be focusing one's energy. I think we're all quite taken with the seeming ease of using the existing poster, introducing your own text, which is quite beautifully written, and making a move which transforms the entire precinct urbanistically.

Tigerman: One always finds in a competition the sort of ultimate rule-breakers. This one offers a way of not rejecting a gate *per se*, but reidentifying the condition around which the gate was to address certain specifics—the juncture of town and gown, the memory of the Yard and its origination, and so forth. All of those things are addressed in this very modest piece, and I am very compelled by it.

Vidler: It was obviously a very late entry in the game, the result of someone who, passing the poster in the corridors of his university for many weeks, at some point stood in front of it and said, "What do you mean 'a competition for a gate?' The gate is already there." It has an extremely erudite and very elegantly phrased text which is not always the hallmark of architectural critics or architects. I suddenly heard echoes of my past in this text, and I began to understand the voice that runs behind the writer. It is, of course, the voice of Colin Rowe who in this guise has translated Collage City into College City.



Kirk Kreuzwieser

Torre: I think that of all the monumental schemes this is the one that was clearly more mysterious and compelling. This one also raises the issue of the long search for the object of architecture that we have pursued so relentlessly during the past decade. It begins to ask the question whether in this search for the object of architecture we have not completely forgotten about the subject of architecture.

Vidler: This, as an object, obviously has a certain kind of immodest power to it, a rather dynamic, vertical, thrusting obelisk form, and I wondered at a certain moment why I was very uncomfortable with the burning pots on either side of the bottom. And then, although I am very unhappy with Freudian analysis of architecture, I began to painfully work my way up from the burning pots, up the center to the top and found myself agonizingly split.

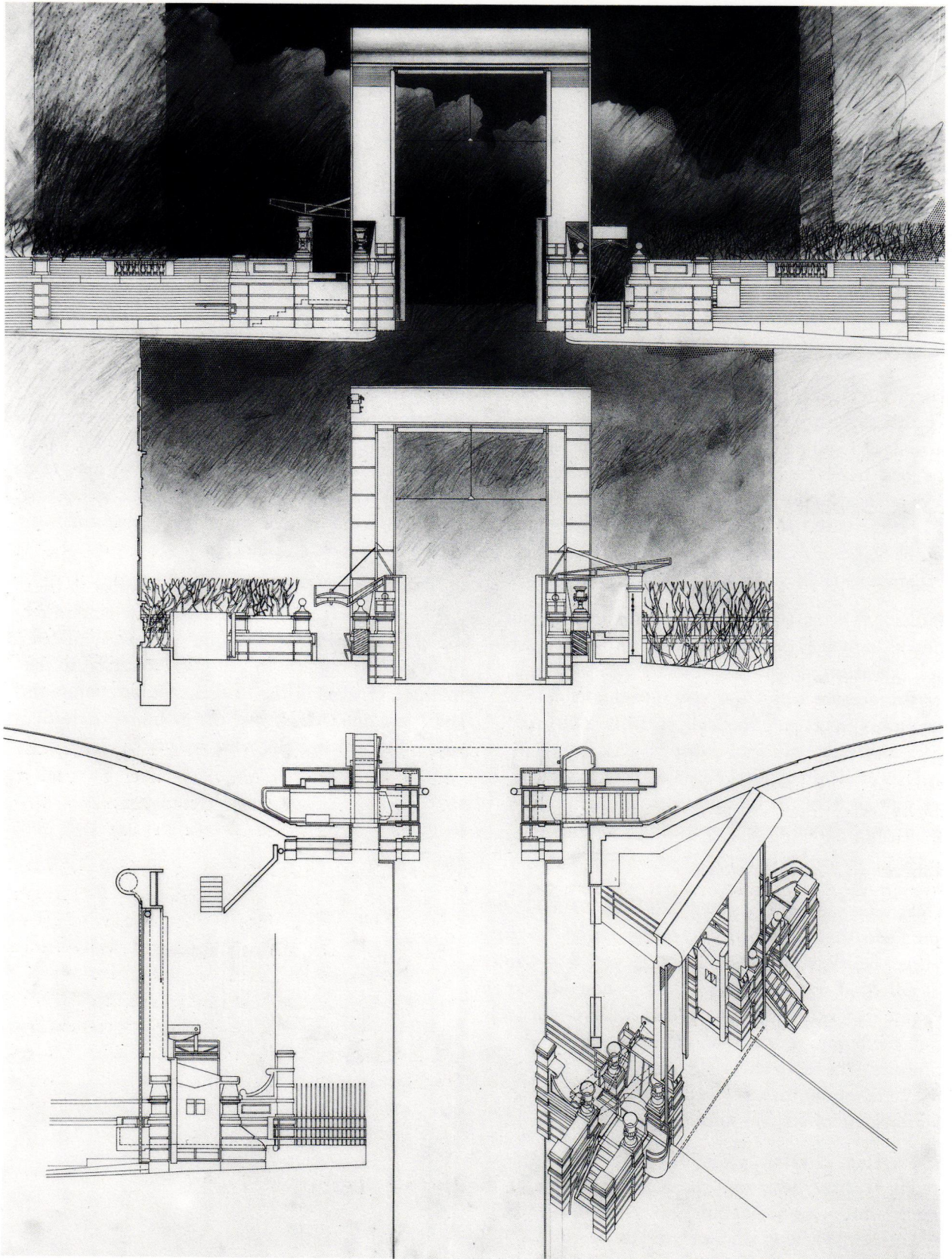
Robertson: It's monstrous.

Tigerman: I think between Susana and Tony's comments there's little to add except to refer to the earlier obelisk (scheme No. 2) which probably was a bit taller but was eminently less immodest, in part because its form came from the context around it and from the public realm of lanterns and other street furniture. The self-referentiality of an object like this, in a competition that has specificity, strikes me as quite inappropriate and somehow all wrong.

Robertson: I think it would make a nice paper-weight. I think there are precedents for this building littering some wonderful 19th century graveyards in America. There is absolutely no reference to Quincy Street.

Cobb: I agree with Jack's reference to the paper-weight as being more appropriate. The enlargement produced by the showing of the slide on the wall leads me to suspect that as it gradually grows to be lifesize I will like it less and less. What's interesting about this kind of iterative review is that one had a chance to reassess at each step.

Olin: This is sort of caught in the throat of the street whereas the first obelisk with the lantern on top of an arch was out there free, brilliantly placed in the city. We do have to pay more attention to the meaning of some of the images that we conjure up, and I just don't think that the grammar of death and militarism is really what we need.



Wesley Jones • Jean Young
Honorable Mention

Cobb: Perhaps we have forgotten the subject of architecture. Here at least the subject is not death. It may be something equally strange, or not much more appropriate, but it has for me a certain vitality, not a mortuary quality. And the way in which it proposes superimposition of this Rube Goldberg device on top of a most conventionally rendered and designed stone base has its own charm.

Robertson: Rather than attempting to take an arch or a doorway, and combine some modern and some classical motifs and carry that amalgamation down into the wall system, the designer chooses very cleverly to separate those two. This is an almost precise Edwardian series of base conditions with urns, vases, etc., and on to that is superimposed an extraordinary piece of mechanism, and into it are inserted Richard Meier-like balconies. And each one of these holds its own language and attempts to gain a strength through comparison by standing next to the others. There is a kind of third vocabulary which I'm not sure I understand; these drawbridges numbers sit like canopies over the walkway system. It's a very bizarre collage which is quite different from most of the transformations that are occurring now in post-modernism.

Tigerman: The problem I have with it is that the virtuoso performance is somehow never enough. I am very disturbed by what I see as either a roller shade or a guillotine. If you recall, Jack opened this by reading from the dictionary one of the definitions of invention, that aspect of invention as a rediscovery, a discovery of things that were always there. The literalness of its base brings up the question of abstraction, which is interesting because it's another take on invention and perhaps even on precedent. But once one removes oneself from the realism or the representationalism connected with the obvious, what is one left with but these other somewhat frightening images? I don't find anything here that could celebrate or ennoble, which is something that I always look for.

Vidler: Two things. One, my extraordinarily relaxed sensibility at this stage is not due to this scheme, but of course to the extraordinary way in which the metaphysical planes of the Riedtvelt chair accommodate themselves to the uncomfortable curves of my body allowing me to be cupped, so to speak, in spirituality while I look at reality. I, like Stanley, as a student of the late 18th century, am always made nervous by large machines which stand portal-like in the center of public places inviting me to go under-neath. The back of my neck becomes somehow cold, and I feel very much that I am in the grip of a Sartrean imagination.

Torre: I find this to be an appealingly wacky and extraordinary scheme done in the spirit of criticism and possibly belonging to the great American tradition not of architecture but of tinkering.

Jones: This is one scheme that really answers the brief of the competition. It attempts to encapsulate every building on Quincy Street. We have all those symbols or attachments that you could extract from the architectural promenade of Quincy Street and have it represented as what Tony has called a kind of ransack of history or culture, somehow expressing the extreme ambition of the program. The shutters make me think that this is sort of a touching brutalist point, but you know, if you're going to have a door, it's going to come down.

Cobb: Incidentally Tony, my chair is killing me.

Stanley Tigerman

I think this was a very difficult competition on several levels. First of all to even have a competition for a gate is suggestive of another time. The competition is made more complex by the use of language such as 'precedent and invention.' Normally competition briefs avoid that kind of language, leaving such things unstated. This brief attempted to bring to a conscious level certain ideas that may be talked about here at Gund Hall but are normally quite intuitively and privately worked out by each of us. It strikes me that when it comes to a conscious level, unfortunately much of it becomes trivialized as it becomes representational.

The whole subject of invention . . . does one begin with the representing of things from another time in their symbolic visual form and then abstract them from that time?

Modernism at its best was an attempt—a reductive attempt to be sure—to get back to first principles. I don't sense much of that at work here.

I think another level of precedent that has not really been talked about is the precedent of the place . . . the precedent of Harvard and the meaning of a gateway between it and the town. Nobody really attacked the problem at the level of a threshold between the sacred and the profane.

Now, on the positive side, the diversity of approaches of an architectural society in confusion struggling to come to grips but not yet seeing the clarity of some zeitgeist is as evident here as it is outside this building.

Laurie Olin

One of the things which puzzled me about many of the entries was how few dared move beyond the gate as object. Those we gave the prizes to chose to take the stated problem and then expand the brief, ignoring the original problem. That, I think, is always to be commended.

I have a much dimmer view of the quality of Quincy Street than many of the others do. I feel that it is a real ragbag of buildings. There are a couple that I think are okay, but I'm not taken with this street as a piece of urbanism.

I was distressed by one simple idea that never came up: the idea of seeing the street as a volume that, if you sliced the end of it off, would be a gate. Suppose one imagined the street as having four rows of trees. That would give you a nave and side aisles, right? You would have an extruded space—the volume we know as Elm Street America. When these rows stopped at Massachusetts Avenue you would have a spectacular gate. In fact, there are photographs of Quincy Street when it did have elms on both sides that bound all those disparate objects together and gave the street the presence that it certainly lacks today.

Ed Jones

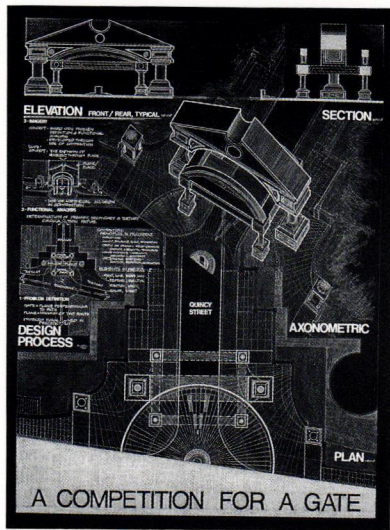
I find it quite curious that one comes to judge a competition and ends up giving the first two prizes to schemes which don't answer the brief. One could say that it is in a good tradition of the liberal spirit. The first-prize scheme exemplifies an embarrassment about the making of honorific form in the present age and attempts to avoid the problem of the honorific gate and what it might mean. We're not in the nineteenth century when armies would go marching through arches. So the scheme finds a way of recovering something that is nearly lost, which is actually a fine gate.

The obelisk (entry No. 33), of which we have seen a number of types, does the same thing but in a different way. It attempts to address the notion of the City Beautiful and to not put enormous pressure on the barrier or arch or doorway to Quincy Street. It avoids the problem of the transformation of Quincy Street that would come with that door from the democratic street to the University.

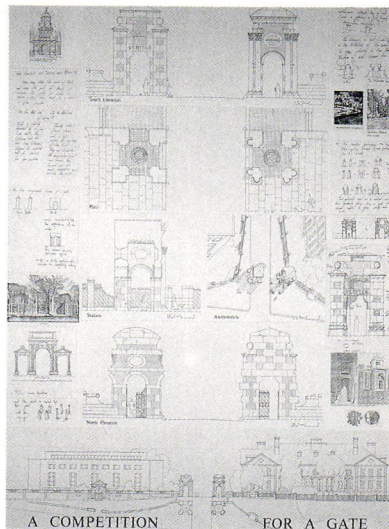
I would say that the first scheme, which looks to the city first and thinks urbanistically, is essentially a European move. On the other hand one of the fourth place schemes, the pink and blue one, demonstrates the wish to make something from precedent, but its process is a selective one. It has to edit history in a deliberate way so it edits out the last forty or fifty or sixty years to find something that it can make a comment on.

If one thinks of the chauffeur's lodge at Poissy one can see in that lodge a kind of condensed statement of what one's anticipation of the parent building might be. If one looks at Soane's lodges at Tiringham in Buckinghamshire one finds an equally compressed and fragmentary statement which anticipates what you might then find. There is an effort to collage all the buildings that the gate should represent, and it expresses the impossibility of doing that within the range of codes that one might attach to all those buildings down Quincy Street.

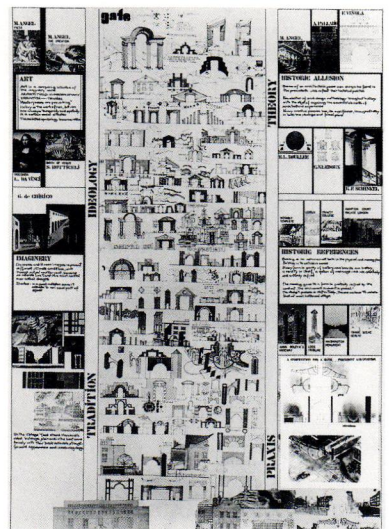
Given the impossibility of the lodge or gate or gate-house attempting to coalesce and condense that wide range of architectural styles, we find that the intelligent schemes avoided that and found something else that could motivate a schema.



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Susana Torre

I thought that it might be useful to try to give you an idea of what the other side of the competition looked like because to a very large extent we have been discussing those pieces that were deemed to be exceptional by virtue of their skill, quality, intelligence, nerve—whatever. And I have chosen these images to give you glimpses into what the other side looks like to me.

Many of the schemes that I saw were symptomatic of the most troubling aspects of the question of correct precedent and image, taken in a literal and thoroughly illiterate way. This is exemplified by the notion that you can indeed take an object of the past that was attached to a place, to a culture, to a network of facts of an economic, political, ideological, cultural, formal nature and that you can then simply use this stuff merely as image regardless of any other considerations.

This next project (fig. 2) is about two gate houses, that is, a recognizable type. This is an example of someone who played it by the apparently stated rules. It is a comment on language, an asymmetrical piece, and it takes a variety of precedents and combines them in a thoroughly skillful way with no further elaboration of context and without taking the project, in a sense, beyond. The competition brief stated that without the functional constraints imposed in a programmatic problem some other kinds of ideas could be explored. The short-sightedness of that statement refers to the belief that a program states some functional use. But it refers also to a metaphorical use or interpretation of the object. We are very badly in need of redefining the function and program. What we have seen as a limitation may, in fact, signal one of the ways out of the present predicament.

This panel (fig. 3) is symptomatic of the prevalent confusion about what constitutes the right way to select a precedent. It is almost as if the sort of mad proliferation of this sketchbook notation for its own sake is able to generate endless alternatives. The really amazing thing is that eventually on the right-hand side a final scheme is produced which is really not the synthesis that that presumed analysis ought to have produced, but just one of the endless possible versions and probably not the best one in the group. It leads me to ponder the validity of the process of pseudo-analyses that does not hone and refine a quality of judgment, good judgment, that is essential to making decisions that eventually result in projects.

In the past, to be able to analyze precedent you would have gone to the library and would have meticulously traced over an example. And in the act of tracing you would have understood something, not about the image of the object but about how it was put together, why it was put together in that way, what were possibly the intentions and purposes that guided those specific decisions. And I think that the xerox machine has contributed to this kind of proliferation of imagery that has no substance, that leads to no judgment whatsoever.

Fig. 1: Janet C. Pople.

Fig. 2: David Cornelius • Mary Beaver.

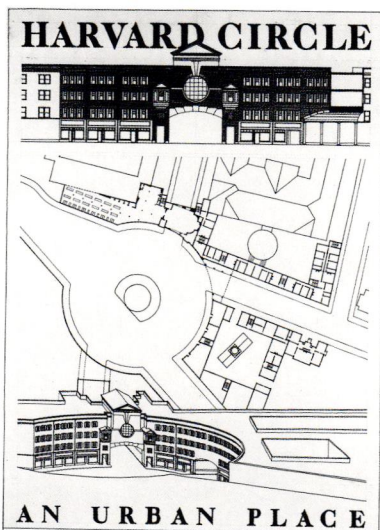
Fig. 3: Guillermo Cossio.

Henry Cobb

I think it's clear from both the jury's selection and from the conversation that has taken place here today that the jury was preoccupied with the issues of the gate as an element intervening in the public realm and the expression of the relationships among the institution, the city, and the individual. We were more interested in how the competitors interpreted and speculated on these questions than on the specifics of their proposals. I think that this reflects a negative as well as a positive comment. One cannot argue with being interested in principle, yet in the end architecture must always be more than principle. We see here a lot of interesting speculation but we do not see very much of that ultimate transformation in which the principle becomes imbedded in architecture and becomes vivid through the architecture. The vividness of the first prize winner is still at a very schematic level. There was an absence in the competing entries of that ultimate transformation that would have elevated principle into architecture.

I'd like to say one thing about the position of this gate proposal in the evolution of Harvard. Relative to the other parts of the community, Harvard has traditionally had a very uneven relationship, one in which ceremonial sequences, boundaries and clear definitions were avoided. The Harvard Yard emerged relatively casually compared to most universities, and wasn't even walled until the late nineteenth century. Those gates which we associate with so much nostalgia are relatively recent additions, additions which did bring a very specific kind of definition between the institution and its community, one which in its time worked. Given that for the last

thirty years or more the university has been transcending physically and symbolically the limits of that walled yard, so much so that the yard has become almost meaningless as a definition of the university except as a sort of kernel, it does seem to me an appropriate time to pose a question: Does not a university have an obligation as it grows in the community to think about the ways in which it defines its presence in the public realm? I think what we have seen here has brought into focus these questions of principle.



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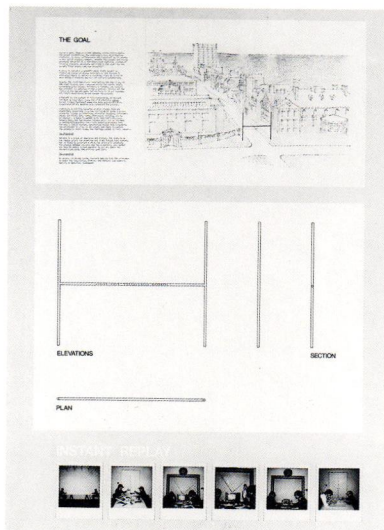
Jaquelin Robertson

I show you this scheme not because I think it is an elegant solution, but because I think in its notion of urban design it shows a way of completing a space, creating a gate, and dealing with a difficult node (fig. 4). As I understand it, the university has purchased the entire triangular site. There may well be some development of that site, and in this proposal there is a strategy for an urban space which is quite different from a traditional gateway.

One of the competition entries which dealt with Harvard, the past, precedent, invention and was also quite economical in its proposal was a red goalpost (fig. 5). Some of the entries which were very serious were certainly sillier than this.

I was interested in the first definition of invention, which is one of discovery not a creative a priori leap but investigation and discovery. I find this definition peculiarly appropriate to this problem in that it forces you to look at the entire urban picture, not just the gateway or the street. The first-prize winner considered the entire Harvard campus, the impossibility of completing the long axis, the existence of a very beautiful wall in place and at the top of the poster; the invention of this scheme was in the investigation and the discovery in the place and in the product of the competition an answer which is, in the best sense of the word, an extraordinarily inventive act.

Quincy Street is not very nice to walk on, unless you like a kind of Noah's Ark approach to architecture. One is not terribly pleased with the way in which all the buildings add up. Therefore, I find the decision of the third-prize winners to be an enormously brave choice: to make a cross campus walk which would in fact become a wonderful place for everyone who uses the campus. If it were built tomorrow, everyone would say what a wonderful and sensitive way of



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taking this rather tawdry street out of circulation and giving it back to us. The problem with it is a problem with American urbanism. This is not, despite the style of the end gates, a necessarily European notion. You find these cross campuses all through American citiscapes. The real problem with this scheme is that the collision between the public and the private realms, the institution of Harvard with its old, rather loose network of streets (paths) and a regular street that runs through the campus and has buses on it and cars and people shouting is simply not addressed. One is reluctant to give in so easily to that as the only way out. I think it is the only way out if you put the gate across. If you do, then I think this is the best scheme.

I think by fighting the battle for the street, the second-prize winner becomes the best scheme. It has taken us two days to understand these issues. The more one looks at this the more one realizes that these people are still fighting to make something out of American urbanism. I find that commendable. The reason I didn't vote for the first-prize winner, although I think it was intellectually the most clever and the broadest in scope, was that in the end an architect must become very specific about his devices. The device in this scheme was one which kept the street open and said it will remain open. It didn't attempt to put a classical portal there, but it did put a marker, a kind of buoy-obelisk which is both peculiarly American in its imagery and modest in its straightforward urban function of being a big lamp-post. And it was very, very, very specific in its architectural commitment.

I, for one, admire the three prizewinners because I think they illustrate and try to come to grips with the basic dilemma of American urbanism.

Fig. 4: James Volney Righter • Jacob Albert.
Fig. 5: Robert Hart • Steven Fisher.

Anthony Vidler

I have two kinds of comments. First, I was disturbed continuously by the realization that abstraction, and abstract modernism itself, has become a kind of secondhand precedent to be quoted like the rest. Whereas abstraction represented in the best kind of modernism is a getting back to basic principles and an understanding of the root structure of a problem, abstraction now becomes a language which is ransacked and quoted with as much ignorance of the basic principles of the problem as with other languages. My feeling therefore is that, among the schemes that were premiated, the first scheme won precisely because it insisted on a principle, and a critical principle at that and it refused the elaboration of a language, however modest or grotesque, to cover its lack of understanding of principle.

The second kind of comment is addressed to the list of questions which gave us guidelines for the competition. I want to answer these questions briefly:

How will the term precedent be understood in relationship to other terms, to type and model? My answer is that unless it is understood in relation to the idea of type, it is meaningless and non-constructive, and if it is represented in terms of model it becomes the kind of imitative obscurity we see in so many of these schemes.

Does the precedent have to be architectural? Yes, unless it's a duck.

Can anything be a precedent for anything else? No, unless you think that way.

Can a building be entirely devoid of precedent—a nuclear reactor, a NASA launching pad? I would say, well, you can try very hard, but with the architectural scholar-critics on your heels you'll be hard pressed to avoid being given a precedent.

How does a designer search out and utilize precedent? Given this entire range, I haven't the faintest idea.

What evokes the image of a particular precedent in the mind of a designer? I will leave that to your imagination.

The final questions were on the subject of invention, and, what I understand to be the most important issue about precedent, that is, its relation to the idea of type, also concerns me with the question which heads this list:

How do we understand invention with respect to intervention or interpretation? I would say again, only with careful respect to the internal structure of the problem that you are given and with careful respect to the way in which similar problems have typologically been addressed in the past. Only then will invention be controlled by some form of programmatic structure.

What is the smallest level of invention? Very small.

Is invention inherent in any interpretation of a precedent? No.

Must precedents be transformed through invention? Yes.

Does the notion of invention reflect a positive view of the world by stressing man's potential to affect change? Of course.

Has this notion been modified by the human condition today? No.

Given the complexities and unprecedented technological, economic, and political innovations of the last half century, how has the role of precedents and inventions changed or been modified at all? Probably not very much if you're talking about good inventions and use of precedents as opposed to bad.

Here, is the gate - and there; the way.

—Anonymous, 15th century

Editorial

We sponsored *A Competition for a Gate* as a means of investigating how contemporary designers consider the role of precedent and invention in their work. Although it did not provide the answers we were seeking, it broadened the scope of our inquiry and increased our appreciation of the complexity of the problem. The fact that it raised more questions than it resolved is inherent to the nature of an investigation.

The theme of the competition—precedent and invention—presented a difficult challenge for the designers and the jury. This language, as Stanley Tigerman pointed out, attempts to bring to a conscious level a process of thought that is usually private or unconscious. We felt that it was necessary to attempt to make the decision-making process explicit to reveal the theories behind contemporary practice. However, few designers approached the problem on the level that we requested and articulated the sources, methods, and reasons underlying their designs. The astonishing amount of effort expended frequently emphasized a lack of coherent thought and reinforced our perception of a current disjuncture between theory and process.

Questions of Place: The Site and Its Issues

We had selected a complex urban site with a broad range of contextual issues. Context can be understood on a number of levels: as a purely visual compliance to the appearance of neighboring buildings, in their sizes, shapes, materials, and details; as the typological nature of those buildings, the formal and programmatic orders that organize their appearance; and as the perception of the qualities that characterize a location. Many of the entrants to the competition chose to work with only the first of these three meanings.

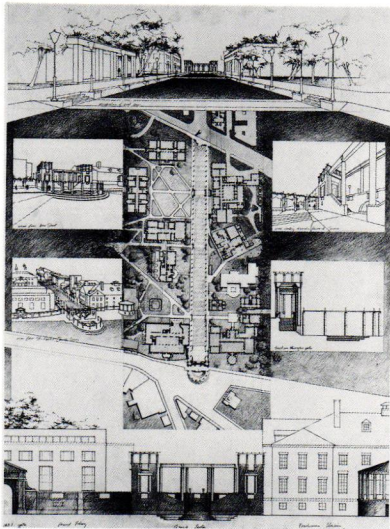
The third-place scheme, however, exemplifies the use of place as precedent (Fig. 1). In transforming Quincy Street into a pedestrian way this proposal iso-

lates specific characteristics of Harvard Yard—its system of paths and lawns—and transforms them by adapting them to the linear form of Quincy Street. The jury debated the merits of closing the street to traffic, but felt that the proposal to extend the campus green had evolved from a thorough investigation of the forms and traditions of the place. They applauded the transformation of the problem from the design of a gate to the design of a street. In fact, the architectural form of the gate was of less concern to them than the overall urban strategy.

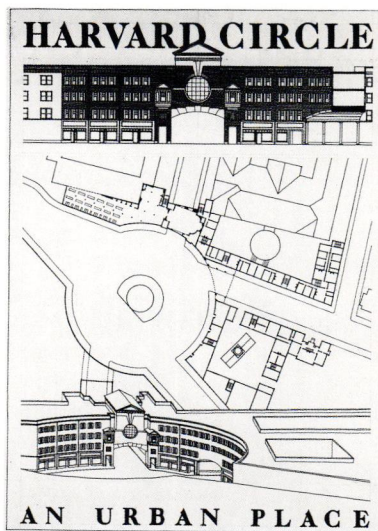
Other schemes exhibited confusion in understanding both the given context and other contexts from which precedents were drawn. Two schemes, "Harvard Circle" (Fig. 2) and the "Skyscraper Gate" (Fig. 3), demonstrate this kind of misunderstanding. Harvard Circle extracts from the given site only the most literal interpretation of context, while the author of the Skyscraper Gate fails to understand the characteristics drawn from other sites and is thus unable to apply them to the given problem.

Harvard Circle proposes the creation of a circular space that is termed "an urban place" but gives us no clues as to how this shape was chosen. The selection of architectural detail appears no less arbitrary than that of the form. The facades employ materials and shapes found in the architecture of the campus, yet the use of brick and granite, the division and ordering of bays, and the alignment of a cornice do not in themselves constitute a strategy or exhibit an intent. In the absence of a conceptual structure, we are left with a contextualism of surface as hollow as the space within the circle.

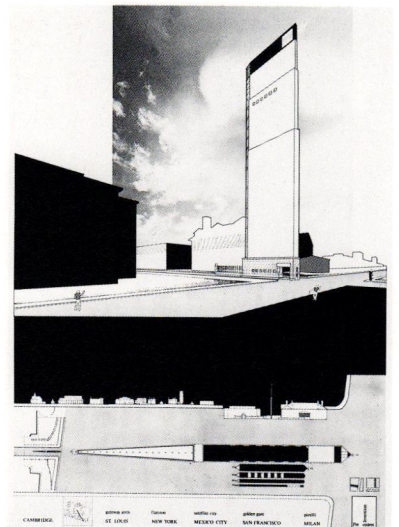
If Harvard Circle, in the desire to create a space, has completely subsumed the qualities of its location, the proposal for the Skyscraper Gate turns this argument inside out. By objectifying the gate in the desire to celebrate a place, this tower obliterates the very place it intended to mark. The names of five cities appear in conjunction with Cambridge across



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the bottom of the board. Are we to conclude from this that the qualities of these cities and of their specific monuments are interchangeable, like post card images, suitable to be sold anywhere? The architect's conception of the relationship between precedent and invention is summarized where the words precedent and invention are depicted at nonintersecting right angles.

The jury's reaction to schemes like Harvard Circle and the Skyscraper Gate was to emphasize the designer's obligation to consider the civic realm. The discussion often centered on the effect of an intervention on the community and the urban fabric rather than on the process that resulted in the choice of a particular scheme, or the forms and materials it incorporated. The qualities of an urban street, the definition of a public space, the provision of amenities, and the presence of the University within the city were all considered to be of primary importance to the architect. These issues are readily accessible and generally accepted as criteria for judgment. Consequently, these issues may have been easier to discuss than the less codifiable questions of how one makes architectural form. While these urbanistic issues are of concern to the architect, their dominance in the discussion limited the investigation of the use of place as precedent and as a starting point for invention.

Questions of Type: The Form of a Gate

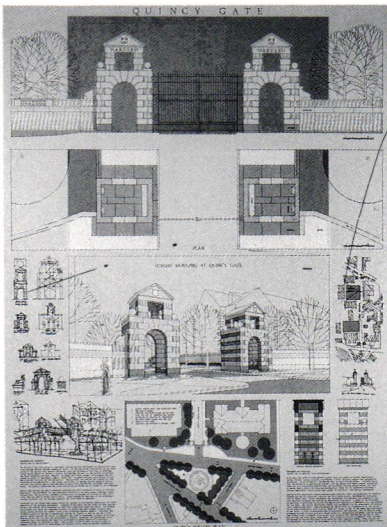
The idea of a gate evokes a rich tradition of formal types. Type can be perceived as the abstracted manifestation of a building concept which is then modified by the given constraints of site and program. More often than not, however, the use of type was limited to the quotation of a form or the assimilation of an image. Typology as a strategy was frequently undermined by being reduced to the compilation of borrowed forms.

The jury classified the entries in categories of type, or as "typological specimens." These included obelisks, gate lodges, temples, bridges, and even the "traditional gate type." Their critique followed two lines. The jury evaluated the schemes according to compliance or deviation from a given reference and they questioned the contextual and programmatic propriety of the proposals. They rejected aberrant application of detail and instances where the forms were abused, stretched out of proportion, or constructed of unsuitable materials.

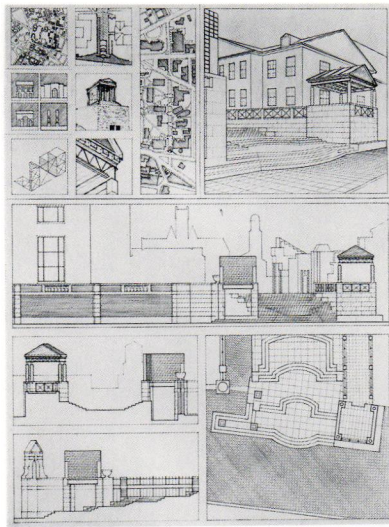
The evaluation of the schemes in terms of their referential inconsistencies sometimes limited the jury's discussion to an exchange about the propriety of the schemes for which there were often no binding criteria. The jury's focus on the design of a gate in relation to specific models illustrated the difficult balance between precedent and invention inherent in a typological approach.

A scheme for a "Quincy Gate" (Fig. 4) raised the issue of transformation versus literal replication. In their discussion of this scheme, the jury divided between finding it too literal a re-creation, "as if Lutyens had been reborn," and finding it too simplified, "a cartooning of an architecture that predates it." Still another opinion held that it was a "satisfactory combination of precedent and invention." Clearly we are considering a very fragile equilibrium; we are caught between the need to distinguish forms from the architecture that predates them and the need to rely on that architecture to give forms meaning.

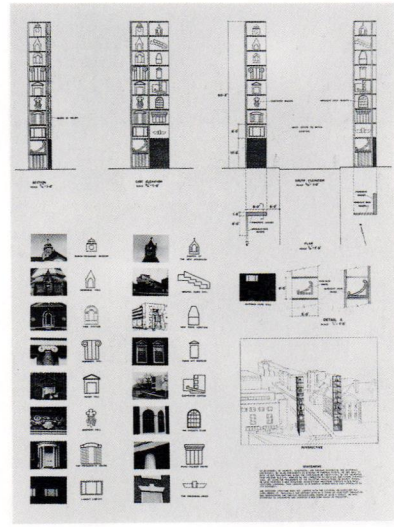
Whereas Quincy Gate attempts to strike this delicate balance between abstract representation and literal replication, one of the "temple schemes" (Fig. 5) more self-consciously attempts to distinguish between these approaches by proposing two pavilions. The first pavilion is clearly derived from the Temple of



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Athena Nike. The second pavilion is composed of two-dimensional screens, an abstraction of the surface of the first pavilion. In their discussion, the jury did not address the issues of replication or representation inherent in the transformation of a precedent. Instead they proposed the “creation of an accurate Greek temple,” and the elimination of the abstract pavilion. While neither pavilion was a satisfactory transformation, the jury’s solution seems equally inadequate. By calling for the removal of the abstract pavilion, they preclude the possibility of invention as representation. Yet by advocating that the more literal pavilion conform precisely to its model the jury brings into question the use of precedent. Even if the replication of a Greek temple were possible in this time and place, its significance would be lost.

Susanna Torre commented that “Quincy Street may be one of America’s most exciting architectural promenades, but it is certainly no Acropolis.” She insisted that one cannot “take an object of the past that was attached to a network of political, ideological, and cultural facts and simply use this stuff as image regardless of other considerations.” In order to understand and so be able to utilize a precedent, the intentions and purposes that guided its design must be understood.

When taken to its extremes, this failure to understand precedent on a conceptual level led to the separation of form and image. The “Totem Pole” scheme (Fig. 6) proposes the “evocation of precedent through a new architectural language...a graphic system which uses symbolism as its alphabet.” This was a very timely proposal, given the frequency with which contemporary architecture is reduced to two-dimensional surface. Here, buildings, regardless of their volume and form, are flattened like pressed leaves in a book and arranged arbitrarily on a totem pole. They are not represented as diagrams that re-

late to their architectural concept but as pictograms that pertain only to their exterior image. In the creation of a “language” of “symbol” the author has overlooked the function of both—to convey meaning.

Where the Totem Pole presents an extreme of surface as form, a Piranesian scheme (Fig. 7) offers the opposite condition of form as surface. A random selection of the forms found along Quincy Street—Modernist, 19th century, and Classical elements alike—are heaped together until they are legible only as pattern. Time consumes all, and we are left with the ruinous state of architectural precedent.

Questions of Type: The Program of a Gate

A program is more than a list of functional requirements. It may also reflect an intent or vision about the proposed uses that acknowledges and surpasses the level of pragmatics. The program of a gate suggests the issues of entry and threshold, of the separation and connection of two sides. Yet in formulating their interpretation of the program of a gate, many of the entrants did not distinguish between the idea of program as an analogue of use and the physical manifestation of form in which a particular program is expressed.

The simple program of a gate generated a variety of formal elaborations. These included the gate as citadel, bus stop, museum, bridge, library, theater, temple, and toilet. Given the literal nature of these in-

Fig. 1: Carey Tamarkin, Timothy Techler, Steve Johnson.

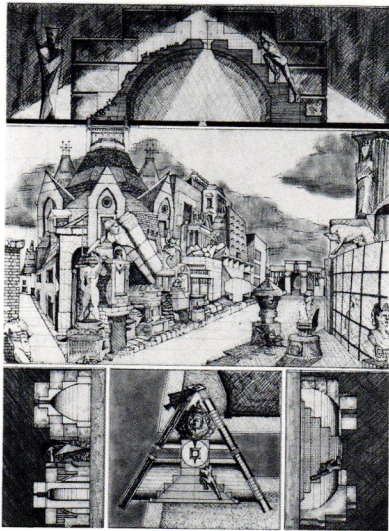
Fig. 2: James Volney Righter, Jacob Albert.

Fig. 3: Gregory Smith.

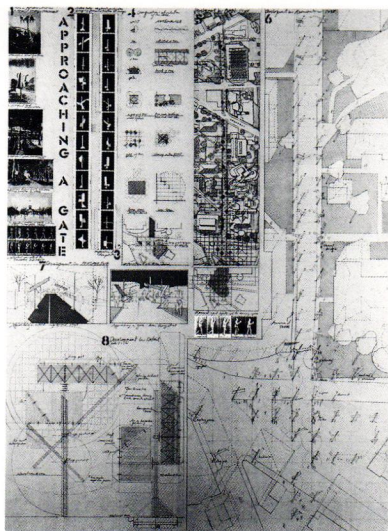
Fig. 4: Frederick Schwartz.

Fig. 5: Joseph DePace, Vinay Kapoor, Shirley Fujikawa.

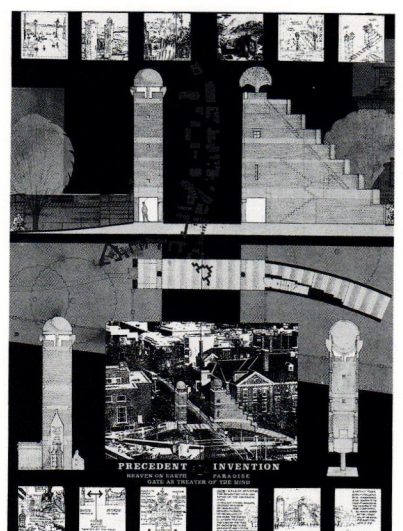
Fig. 6: Jeff Farrell, Andrew Deschenes, Alena Appiah.



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terpretations, it became clear that in the effort to embellish the program many schemes forgot to address the subject of gate.

One project which did, entitled "Approaching a Gate" (Fig. 8), attempts to intensify the experience of a threshold by extending a series of frames along the length of Quincy Street. The passage through this elongated entry is derived from a study of motion and celebrates an experience of daily life. Throughout the competition we saw very few proposals that were based on such elemental precedents.

More often, the use of program as precedent revealed a lack of correspondence between an interpretation of the program and its manifestation in a given form. Program as an applique of meaning over form is epitomized in a scheme entitled "Gate as Theatre of the Mind" (Fig. 9). Here precedent and invention are represented literally as part of the program rather than as an aspect of the process by which a program is developed.

Another scheme proposes a transformation of the precedent, the Gate of 1880, by projecting its elevation into plan (Fig. 10). The result of this invention is the same image seen from a different angle. This may be an interesting commentary on the interdependency of precedent and invention, but the scheme's program, which proposes toilets as a public amenity, is unrelated to either its process or its form. As separate elements, both the idea of the process and the idea of the program could work. Together, they offer a satiric comment on the disjunction of form and its content.

Questions of Principle: Precedent and Invention

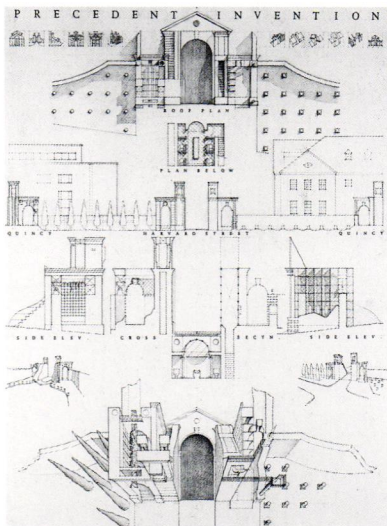
We had selected a program and a site as a means of exploring the thought process that underlies the making of form. Quincy Street and the program of the

gate were important to us because they provided a specific framework for a general inquiry. An imaginary site or the abstraction of a program might have encouraged a more theoretical response. However, we had begun with the premise that the choice of a strategy, understood within a set of principles, and the demonstration of that strategy in a specific proposal together constitute the challenge of architecture.

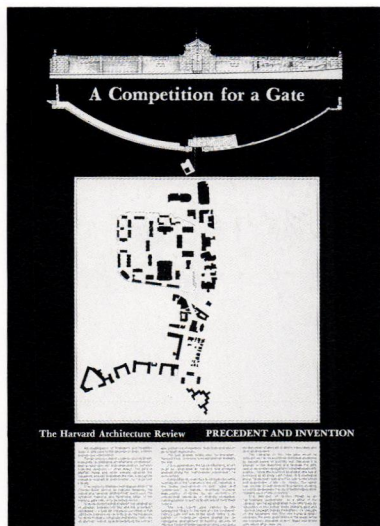
The winning scheme proposes a resurrection of the adjacent Gate of 1880 by demolishing and replacing Lamont Library (Fig. 11). This was one of the few schemes based on the definition of invention as a re-discovery of what was given in the problem. Yet the concept, the scheme's strength, also exposes its weakness. It fails to go beyond an expression of principle and avoids addressing the issues involved in the making of architecture. It does not confront the issues of form or vocabulary, and it was commended by the jury precisely because "it didn't go beyond" the level of abstract diagram. By finding "brilliance" in a lack of specificity the jury avoided endorsing a design strategy.

It is ironic that the jury praised one scheme for its principle but completely ignored another that proposed an identical strategy and also illustrated it with a building design (Fig. 12). Given the similarity between these two schemes we can only speculate as to why the jury was so seduced by the more diagrammatic proposal. They were obviously intrigued by its abstract quality and the economy of its presentation. The adaptation of the competition poster highlighted the radical proposal, while the same move was obscured in the other board by the drawing of a building and the documentation of process.

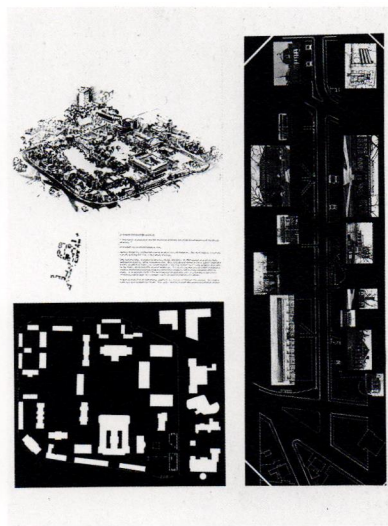
By "removing" Lamont Library and having it rebuilt by an "appropriate" architect, the problem of choosing form and vocabulary does not disappear; it is



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only postponed until someone is willing to address the confrontation of principle with the particulars of the given problem. The transformation of issues and the redefinition of problems are essential aspects of the architect's creative task, but they should not become a substitute for the commitment of creating form. The relationship of theory to the making of form, intention to the expression of that intention, are fundamental issues that can not be transformed, ignored, or put off. It is toward the resolution of these issues that we should be focusing our energy.

Conclusion

In discussing the competition, we have separated the questions of place, type, form, use, and principle. Yet the questions raised by these issues are clearly part of a single larger problem. The results of the competition demonstrate the current need for a unified approach and indicate the distance we have still to travel toward the resolution of a strategy and its expression in specific design proposals. We recognize the interdependency of both the specific and the general components of precedent and invention in the process of design. Invention may reside in the specific choice of a precedent as readily as the memory of a specific precedent may provide a structure for invention. The domain of our investigation is not delineated by the passage from precedent to invention, but is rather the territory that they hold in common.

Confronted with a seemingly equal array of possibilities—references, sources, and memories, either real or imagined—upon which to base our architecture, we are faced with the difficulty of choice. In Henry James's description of the artist's task we find an expression of the dilemma of the contemporary architect:

"He is in the perpetual predicament that the continuity of things is the whole matter for him, of comedy and tragedy;

That this continuity is never broken, and that to do anything at all, he has at once intensely to consult and intensely to ignore it."

Although we may choose to use traditional forms, the perception of their values is neither constant nor uniform. The rejection or acceptance of our inherited ways of making form is not predicated on their universal applicability, but is rather a matter of personal attitude, preference, and conviction.

The absence of a universal law does not preclude the possibility of an individual achieving meaning in his work. If this choice appears arbitrary, perhaps we should understand the term arbitrary not in its prejudicial connotation of whim or caprice, but rather as that which is subject to individual discretion. Judgment is at the core, and with that discretion comes the responsibility of the individual.

The plurality of precedents necessitates the establishment of a framework for choice so that intentions may be understood and expressed in a coherent design proposal. Such a methodology should be able to incorporate both analysis and transformation. It should, by the hierarchies that it establishes, be an affirmation of basic personal values so that the result is authentic, reflecting the motivations of the author as well as the contingencies of fact and reality. Most of all, it should be based on convictions, for without conviction, the architect is unable to work.

Fig. 7: Stephanie Feltch.

Fig. 8: Simon Smithson.

Fig. 9: Peter Bentel.

Fig. 10: Joan Hallberg, David Moore.

Fig. 11: Thomas Bartels.

Fig. 12: Melinda Humphrey.



Between History and Tradition: Notes Toward a Theory of Precedent

John E. Hancock

I. Introduction: The Difference Between History and Tradition.

The works of the past always influence us, whether or not we care to admit it, or to structure an understanding of how that influence occurs. The past is not just that which we know, it is that which we use, in a variety of ways, in the making of new work. To define the concept of precedent, we might begin by making a basic distinction between two ways of knowing the past: between tradition and history. My intention is to first portray them as opposites, and then to suggest that the concept of precedent is a constructive way of exploring the territory between them.

It has been suggested that the buildings atop the Acropolis in Athens (fig. 1) vividly reveal the contrast between tradition and history as operative views of the past.¹ The Parthenon can be regarded as the climax of at least four hundred years of tradition-bound evolution, in which the peristylar Doric temple had undergone a steady progression of refinements. The designer's knowledge of diverse or distant precedents was small, and in any case the few closely related variables of the Doric formula were imbued by the culture at large with durable sacred content, which it was neither conceptually possible nor functionally necessary to violate.

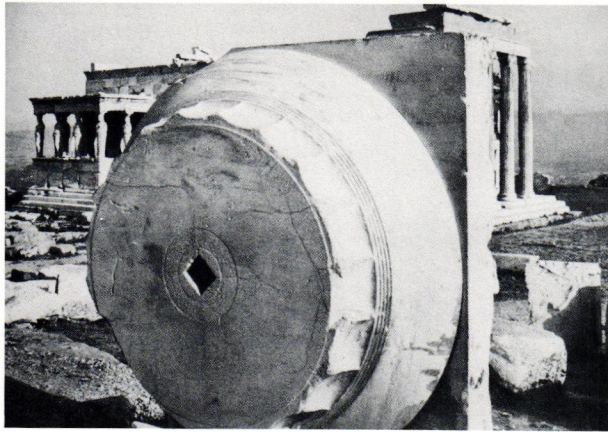
The Erechtheum (fig. 2), by contrast, reveals evidence of a flexibility of mind akin to the contemporaneous opening up of historical consciousness. Such a shift in attitude, which many scholars associate with Herodotus, may well have helped the architect free himself from the singular semiclosed chain of immediate tradition. Consequently he could produce a building, not so much decadent in its deviation from the type (as some historians have called it) as brilliant in its openly eclectic innovation toward the resolution of arduous constraints. We can easily imagine in the designer's mind the challenging question of how to follow acknowledged perfection.

Yet through his apparent capacity to synthesize diverse images, we see perhaps for the first time the fundamental distinction between tradition and history, the singularity and plurality of mental models, respectively, the closed and the open range of past-rooted possibility for creative action.

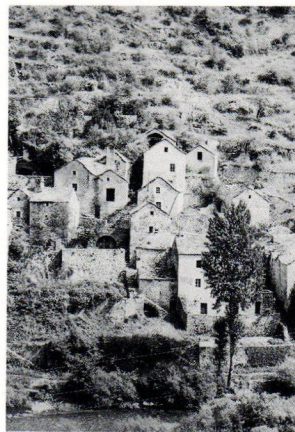
Although the Parthenon was based within a tradition, there was clearly much self-conscious intellectual and aesthetic ambition involved in its creation. The discipline of architecture was extremely advanced; it was the cultural inertia of the sacred temple type that was traditional and that controlled the exercising of that discipline. A more precise definition of the role of tradition in influencing architecture would come instead through observing the way it works in the creating and sustaining of vernacular settlements (fig. 3), where the architectural language as well as the cultural types are deeply and unselfconsciously embedded. Pure traditions are cultural forms passed down orally between generations. They cannot be history, being unavailable across temporal or geographic distance or in variety. Knowledge is present only in the immediate past, the adjacent generation, or (in architecture) in the accumulated townscape.

Such tradition is the key that holds together the continuity and authenticity of vernacular settlements. It assures that at every scale there are a limited number of thought processes and mental images which constrain and unify town and building form. The cognitive map of paths, nodes, and landmarks; the cultural models of plaza, street, house, and room (fig. 4); the unwritten building code of imagery, materials, and technology; and the shared values of the builders and their users—these are the products of a lifelong immersion in the fabric and life of a single place. Forms and meanings are stable; growth

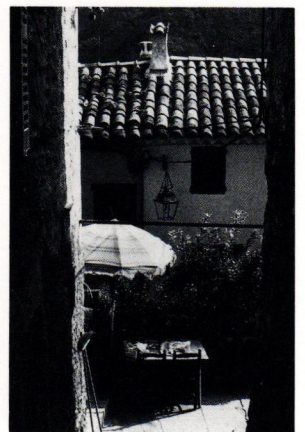
Fig. 1: The Acropolis at Athens.



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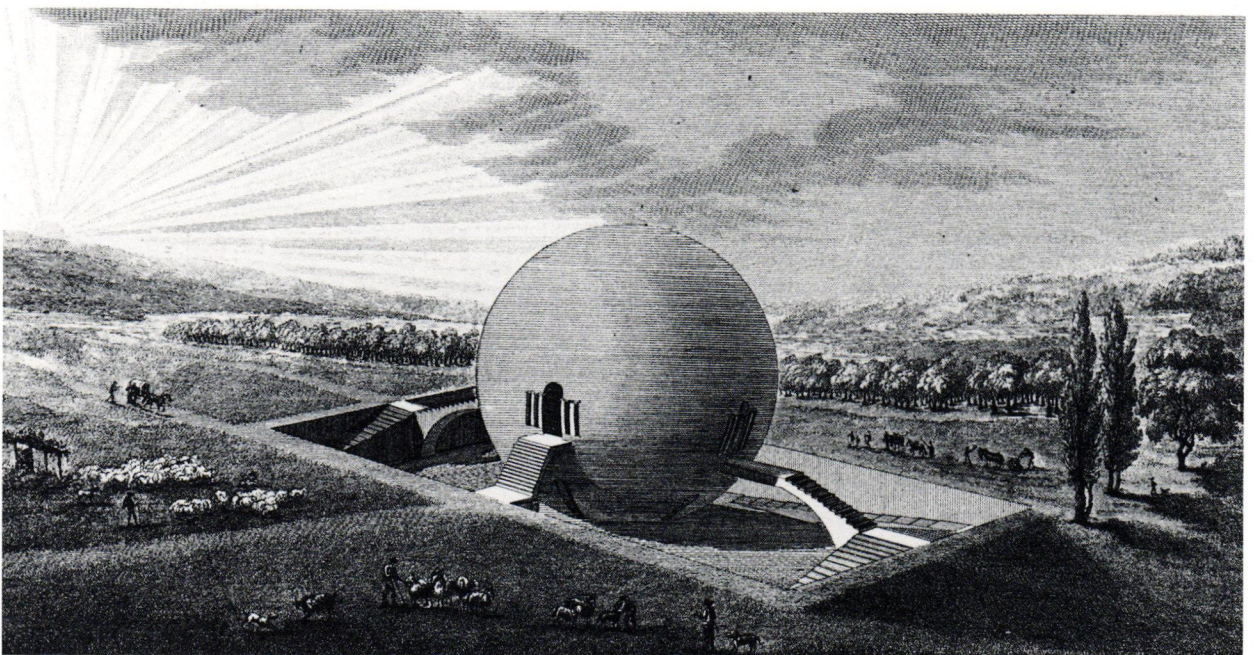
and change are gradual and incremental; truth seems self-evident and objective; intellectualized discussion is unnecessary. Knowledge of alternatives is rare or inconsequential. It never occurs to anyone to ask, "What *kind* of house?" The precedents are present, we might say. Images and ideas from the past operate directly and are empirically and intimately known.²

II. The Rise of Historical Consciousness.

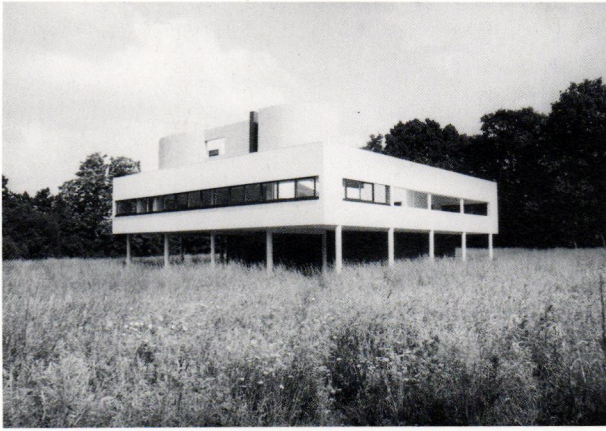
High cultures have always had more complex relationships with the past, if only because of some rudimentary exposure through travel, conquest, or education. The Romans, for example, were able to choose to adopt Greek orders instead of the Persian or the Egyptian; the Renaissance Italians were able to choose to revive the cultural standards of Rome instead of Magna Graecia or Byzantine Ravenna. Their pasts were already somewhat more open, as was the case

for Mnesicles when he chose to work with Ionic detailing instead of struggling to adapt a recalcitrant Doric peristyle for the Erechtheum.

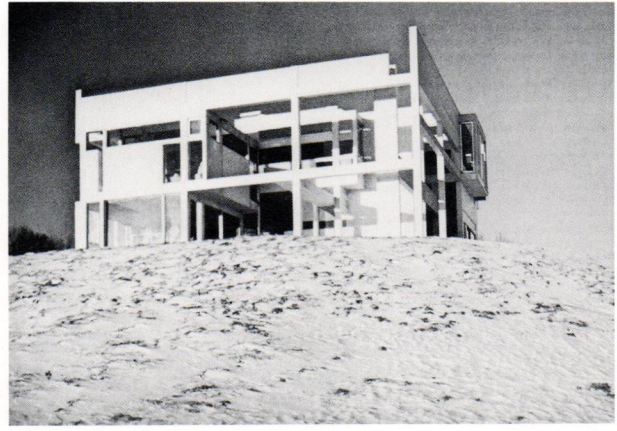
But it was the Enlightenment and the rise of Romanticism in the eighteenth century that made open-ended diversity the most salient feature of the past.³ Perhaps first for Voltaire the past was of interest as more than a sanction of present belief, and diverse historical knowledge was beginning to be regarded as good in itself.⁴ The orthodoxy was gradually established of trying to understand past cultures "each on their own terms." The architectural equivalent of this phenomenon was of course the early archaeological expeditions that fed with such "factual" knowledge the growing plurality of styles. The phenomenon of self-conscious choice ("What *kind* of house?") reached an unprecedented plateau of intensity in the so-called battle of the styles after 1830.



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With the expansion of choice came the inevitable corollary, a sacrifice of depth—to the point where many architects could with alacrity switch styles from one commission to the next.

Concurrent and sympathetic with this proliferation of history was a fascination with the inherent virtues of radical innovation. A growing sense of the artist's imperative to be *avant-garde* began to produce a variety of future-oriented visions that increasingly disregarded the criteria of cultural continuity or consensus (fig. 5). The growth of these general sentiments over two hundred years has yielded the high level of intellectual prestige which such culturally disengaged visions (figs. 6,7) have held throughout the modern era. Both the individualization of visionary futures and the diversity of historical pasts have helped to displace the naive genuineness and continuity of tradition-bound vernaculars.

For the current building designer images of the past (including past images of the future) operate historically and indirectly. The past is influential as a plurality that reveals choices. Knowledge exists in greater variety but in less depth, since it is always subject to the intervening interpretations of travelers, historians, critics, or illustrators. Forms and meanings are pluralist and volatile. Great freedom is implied, but the material itself is mute as to the criteria for selection. Truth is highly relative, its assertion inevitably subjective. It is easy to lose one's way, and the sway of fashion and idiosyncrasy is easily felt.

III. Precedent as an Epistemological Position

Designers therefore confront the proliferation of the influential past, the plurality of mental models; while the genuineness of pure tradition becomes increasingly inaccessible to us, despite our admiration for aspects of its authenticity. This contrast is important because it reveals the critical issues for any dis-

cussion of the use of precedent: Historical knowledge of the past presents choices but in its universality precludes depth of understanding and endangers conviction about the truth of its application, while traditional knowledge of the past attains great depth of understanding but only because there is no openness or breadth of choice.

The theory of precedent seeks to mediate this dilemma through the use of two intellectual tools. The first is convincing limits—the capacity to appropriately select only portions of the past according to the needs of a current task (narrowing our choices within historical freedom). The second is rigorous methods—the techniques to thoroughly analyze that which is selected in order use it most effectively (replacing the loss of traditional immersive knowledge). The idea of selective limiting need not imply the abandonment of known historical diversity, which is impossible to do in any case. But if the criteria of limitation work effectively, then the greater the initial choice the better the ultimate selection will likely be. In view of these goals it will be recognized that the past as precedent is more explicitly useful than historical scholarship, which seeks to understand the buildings of the past in their own temporal contexts, rejecting the idea of evaluative choice or applicability. It is more carefully selective than superficial allusionism in design, which is often merely a quotational ploy or claim to stylistic conformance, impatient with the demands of thorough understanding.

Fig. 2: The Erechtheum, Mnesicles, 421 B.C.

Fig. 3: Caussignac, Gorges-du-Tarn.

Fig. 4: Auribeau-sur-Saigne, Cote d'Azur.

Fig. 5: Ledoux, Quarters for the Rural Caretakers (project).

Fig. 6: Le Corbusier, Villa Savoye.

Fig. 7: Peter Eisenman, House II.

The arguments about choice and method that follow are based on the three interrelated epistemological ideas of conviction, continuity and criticism — conviction that plausible shared criteria exist for making judgments, continuity of the values, criteria, and techniques we share (known to us through precedents that endure over time), and criticism which maintains continuity by providing functional adaptation so as to maintain our conviction as situations change. According to this view, a critically maintained continuity of precedents is regarded (in the absence of absolute “truth”) as the only convincing ground we have for valid action and belief, in design as in other fields. In other words, this theory of precedent is grounded in the belief that choices, interpretations, and actions within the discipline can be durable without being timeless, valuable without being absolute, and justifiable without being utterly true. It allows us to navigate our design decisions between the pitfalls of both static objectivism and idiosyncratic subjectivism. That such a position appears the only possible epistemological grounding for thought and action in our postrelativist age is derived from philosophical theories associated with Dewey, Whitehead, Popper, Kuhn, Lakatos, and Gadamer.⁵

IV. The Law and Science: Methods of Choosing and Operating a Limited Past

Other disciplines have managed to operate such limits of choice and depth of method with substantial benefit over long periods of time. Law and science in particular have achieved remarkable long-term growth and have evolved techniques of controlled adaptability as a result of such a structuring of their pasts. Indeed they both go to the radical extent of dividing the past into two distinct parts: that which is studied insofar as it is of integral value to the on-going practice of the field, and that which is studied only to the degree that it piques the curiosity of antiquarians. The latter category is confidently regarded by practitioners as being permanently superseded or irrelevant. The former is, with equal confidence,

known, used, extended, improved, reinterpreted, criticized, and sometimes even (with almost equal confidence again) wholly superseded. In both fields a selected part of the past is comprehensively understood and confidently put to use in connection with the needs of a task in the present. A summary of how this process operates can introduce a number of key words while allowing us to envision its transposition into architecture.

Practitioners in these fields are able to choose a set of ideas, forms, theories, or events from the past according to their functionality in meeting the range of present problems. That choice is capable of being rationally justified within the nonabsolutist concept of the consensus of those knowledgeable, interested, or affected. They are also able to operate professionally with and from that chosen past, relying on a thoroughly knowledgeable grounding from which processes of criticism (infill, extension, transformation) are exercised. That operation often also includes conscious observation of the incremental changes and adaptations which are being effected within the overall visible continuity of the tradition.

A “scientific tradition” according to Thomas Kuhn (by which he means any enduringly functional body of thought and opinion) sustains itself by continuing to provide solutions to new problems in such a way that it remains plausible to the community of expert opinion. Its flexibility to absorb change without losing its coherence is of great importance in assuring its durability. If new problems arise that are beyond the capacity of the tradition, a dynamic is induced that if sustained, can force a revolution. The old tradition collapses, but continual effort eventually reveals a growing consensus around a new tradition. Copernicus in astronomy, and Newton and Einstein in physics represent moments of “paradigm-shift” when traditions changed in this way. The Modern movement in architecture almost certainly was a “revolution” in the Kuhnian sense. From Kuhn we learn that the fundamental criterion in the

maintenance of a selective past is its functionality, and that when this falters and the consensus base is consequently eroded, the selection loses its merit and is displaced.⁶

Karl Popper's discussion of "tradition" centers more on the forces of continuity than on the dynamics of revolutionary change. (He is careful to distinguish his definition of the term from the inescapable irrational qualities such as characterize the pasts of closed societies.) For Popper, the continuity of a tradition is its essential feature, fundamental to the comprehensibility and validity of any work done in or through it. But the workability of a tradition over time also requires, if it is to be "rational," what he calls a "second-order tradition" to be in place: a critical attitude applied to the primary tradition. For new work to be valid it must be a knowledgeable critique or filling-in, based on established lines of inquiry that are related clearly to the problem at hand. From Popper we learn the importance of knowledge of the tradition and of rational criticism as the means of its incremental growth and long-term durability.⁷

The Anglo-American system of common law is a durable tradition in this Popperian sense, and the ongoing practice of jurisprudence is its second-order mechanism of adaptive critique. It is a great tribute to the incrementally absorptive and rationally refining nature of jurisprudence that the primary tradition (the law itself) has endured free of Kuhnian revolutions since the Magna Charta. In jurisprudence as in scientific investigation, new work can be valid (that is inspire conviction) only if it is a knowledgeable critique or filling-in based on selected established lines of inquiry which are related clearly to the problem at hand. Unlike experimental science, perhaps, for legal judgments the constituency extends beyond the learned community because the public at large is also affected and stands in need of being convinced of the work's validity. This broadening of the consensus is also true for architecture.⁸

In both science and the law the natural inertia of the constituency is the force that maintains continuity. It establishes the criteria of legitimacy for both the choice of the past and the methods of its use, demands substantial evidence and rational argument to be overcome, and nurtures the pliability necessary to forestall violent revolutions. In both fields the knowledgeable exercise of criticism is the force that produces change — by providing the constantly needed corrective, improving on what is inherited, and adapting it successfully to new situations. Thus choice (situation-based selectivity) and method (knowledge-based criticism) are again seen to be the essential issues.

V. The Theory of Architectural Precedent, Part One: Limits of Choice

In this theory of architectural precedent we will examine the grounds for making convincing choices and the methods for attaining critical knowledge.

It is certainly an open question whether there can be in architecture anything like the conviction about the correctness or functionality of any selection from the available past such as has just been described. There is probably no boundary so clear as that which separates, for example, modern astronomy from the pre-Copernican era (whereby a body of work is now regarded by the entire discipline as unequivocally superceded). For architecture there are instead smaller, more variable, more situational contexts for choice and justification. These choices may in turn accumulate into a wider pattern that may be discernible as a more general image of the discipline at any given time.

Whether discipline-wide or situation-specific, it is clear that criteria will be necessary to control choices from among the vast array of what is historically available to us. First, and in general, choices must be grounded in the requisite functionality (demonstrated effectiveness) and the subsequent justifiability to a consensus of those interested or affected. More spe-



8

cifically, it would seem that to be broadly convincing choices must be grounded in one or more of three realms—corresponding to the three kinds of historical contexts in which we might agree that aspects of a design task may be viewed: place, type and principle.

By “place” we refer to the historic continuity of settings and we infer the desirability of new work linking somehow to what has accumulated in that continuity. Like the vernacular townscape’ (figs. 3, 4) where geography was destiny, the operative body of precedent is that revealed in the adjacent physical fabric: landscape, town-form, streetscape, local types, materials, and articulation. The conscious choice of



9



10

place-grounded precedents when confronting a design task amounts essentially to contextualism in all its possible degrees, from a trivial alignment of window frames with the building next door to a more intellectually ambitious commentary on the *genius loci*, as in Giancarlo de Carlo’s work at Urbino (fig. 8). We connect new work to place-grounded precedents when we believe that contributing to the continuity and coherence of the setting is one of the most important tasks that the work might fulfill. Our belief in that importance is most firmly grounded (and most easily broadened to a consensus) when the preexisting line of work that constitutes the “place” is itself both coherent and continuous. It reveals its coherence by possessing identifiable features associated with the place and its consistency by having been repeatedly adapted over time through previous place-dominated syntheses.

Venice is a particularly vivid example of a locality rich in such continuity and coherence (fig. 9). Aspects of Venetianness seep through every trait and feature of its fabric. The importation of new styles of architecture over the centuries almost always resulted in their subordination to the established qualities revealed by the place—the water, the light, the types and their details, and the density, texture, and organization of the city. The designers of five hundred years of Palazzi along the Grand Canal have all chosen, with their open-centered balconied facades and rich surface treatments, to be first Venetian and only secondarily gothic, renaissance, or baroque. In each palazzo the synthesis of place and style was dominated by the former.

By “type” we refer to culturally rooted form-function analogues which, like the Greek Temple (fig. 1) or the Christian Basilica (fig. 10), have become formulas imbued by the general culture with a durable and important content. The choice of type-grounded precedents amounts essentially to typology in both of its understood meanings: as the study of collected diverse examples of the type, or as the abstraction



11

from those examples toward a generic diagram of their typicality. We connect new work to type-grounded precedents when we believe that communicating the continuity of the institutional heritage or reflecting the long-standing value of an organizational format is one of the most important tasks that the work might fulfill. Again, a consensus about that importance is most easily engendered when and to the degree that the preexisting line of typical work is revealed to be itself both coherent and continuous.

The established functional and cultural format of the Venetian palazzo portrays a place-rooted typicality, indicating a body of precedent that is grounded in both these kinds of continuity at once. However, to see type precedents operating independently we may look at the Gothic Mendicant churches of the city (fig. 10) that, imbued far less than the palazzi with qualities of Venetianness, instead more closely resemble other churches of the same monastic orders in other cities like Padua or Bologna. The Church's learned constituency was European, its architectural frame of reference hence less locally Venetian than typologically Dominican, Franciscan, or even Catholic. For the builders of SS. Giovanni e Paolo the operative body of precedent was that evidenced in the set of previous solutions to the building-type or formal organization-type. Contradicting the heavily Byzantine traditions of Venetian church design, they adhered instead to a larger idea of what Christian worship space was to be like. That idea was as broadly disseminated as the institution's influence, and as broadly rooted as its frame of reference.⁹

The typology argument today asserts that despite the diversity of our culture there are still roots of this kind which allow us to speak of the idea of a library, a museum, a cityhall, or a house. The continuity of these ideas of type, such as they are, and the esteemed examples which have established their identity and assured their continued cultural resonance, constitute

an established line of inquiry in which new work may be effectively grounded.

The third historical context in which aspects of a design task may be viewed is that of "principle"—that insight which gave Mnesicles a way of controlling mass and ornament to attain the appropriate effect on the Erechtheum (fig. 2). Principles may be defined as the accumulated insights and effective techniques that collectively form the established ways in which the language of the discipline operates. We do not choose principle-rooted precedents because of any overall intention to connect new work to previous works or to a particular geographical or cultural continuity. Instead the most important continuity is that of effective technique, and the most important precedents are those which together reveal a convincing continuity of that effectiveness under a variety of conditions. The principle and its continuing capacity to attract a consensus are more important than the individual precedents themselves. A choice of precedent by principle can most easily be broadened to a consensus when and to the degree that the principle cited has both a historically evident durability and an important connection to the task at hand.

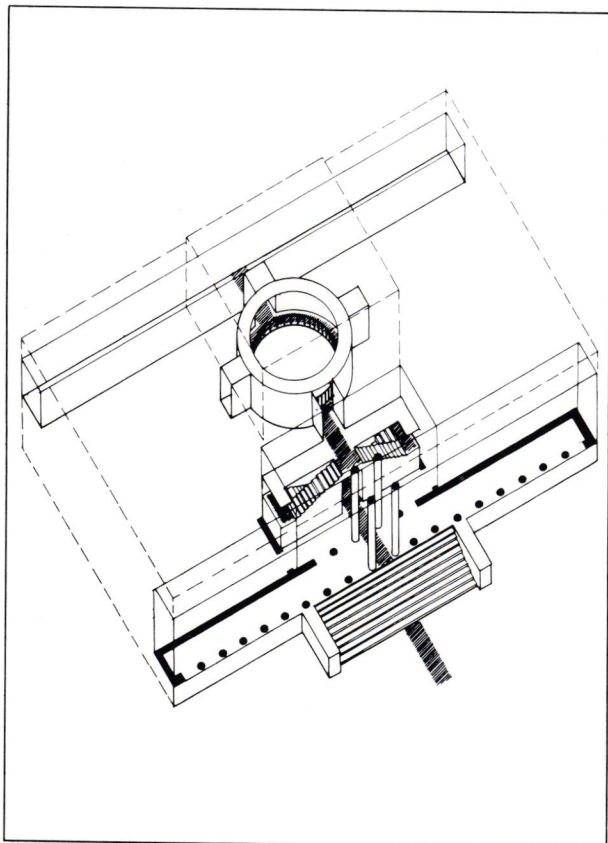
We may limit ourselves to three fairly simple examples of architectural "principles," in the process also making the point that principles can be reinforced even when they are knowingly transgressed. That corners should be articulated may be illustrated equally well by Palladio's tightening rhythms on the Basilica at Vicenza or by Mies van der Rohe's painstaking double-returned detailing on Alumni Hall at the Illi-

Fig. 8: Giancarlo de Carlo, School of Education, Urbino.

Fig. 9: The Grand Canal, Venice.

Fig. 10: SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Venice.

Fig. 11: Garden facade, Versailles.



12

nois Institute of Technology. The principle that a column should not be placed on the axis may be illustrated through the emphasis given to its purposeful denial both by the single Corinthian at the Temple of Bassae and the overscaled member in the doorway of Robert Venturi's Guild House. The principle that the imagery of a building should correspond to its function may be illustrated both by the Palace of Versailles (fig. 11, which portrays Louis's particular flavor of royal authority) and the Villa Savoie (fig. 6), which emphasizes its ideological denial of the attributes of "comfortable residence").

All the pre-Modern textbooks with titles like *Principles of Architectural Design*¹⁰ were obviously full of such wisdom, which the authors no doubt regard as the clear, coherent, and more or less agreed upon legacy of five thousand years of architectural development. And before Le Corbusier and Robert Venturi they perhaps had good reason for such belief. Principles are like conventions: We choose to believe in them insofar as they continue to demonstrate their effectiveness at doing things we think are important.¹¹ In this light we can recognize that the styles of architecture (if we were to choose a precodified one such as "Georgian," "Gothic Revival," "High-Tech," or "Neo-Rationalist") are really just ready-made sets of principles (and often types too) embodied in ready-made sets of precedents to which we selectively refer.



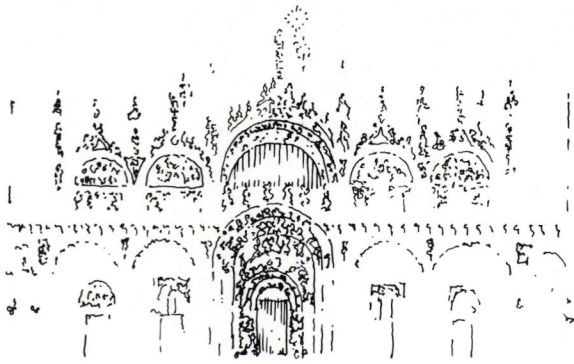
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Restating these three realms of choice (place, type, and principle) in more general terms, we could refer to them, respectively, as: precedent by accumulation, where prior work constitutes the necessary background in a line of continuing development, and to which new work is attached in direct proximity (as experimental science extends lines of previous investigation); precedent by analogy, where prior work reveals the previous solutions for similar problems, which new work resembles in overall organization (as music and literature rely on forms and genres to aid in organization and comprehensibility); and precedent by application, where prior work is the durable embodiment of the appropriate effectiveness of rules, techniques, or ideas, from which new work reuses or adapts general precepts within new situations (as the law maintains its operative equivalent of judicial "truth").

In each instance the limiting of choice is based on the need for connection to an established line of work which provides the ground of meaning, for functionality in meeting the range of new problems encountered, and for justifiability by means of broad consensus-based criteria.

VI. The Theory of Architectural Precedent, Part Two: Depth of Method

The first half of this theory of precedent has been concerned with choice: the means of limiting the past with which we have reason to be concerned in any given circumstance. Central to the act of choice was some perception of the past work's usefulness as a precedent. There is also an inherent limiting of the scope of motivated questions that follows from the act of choice itself such that choices of place, type, or principle may suggest specific questions as well as specific precedents. (Concerns of place might emphasize facade character, for example, while concerns of type might emphasize plan-organization.)

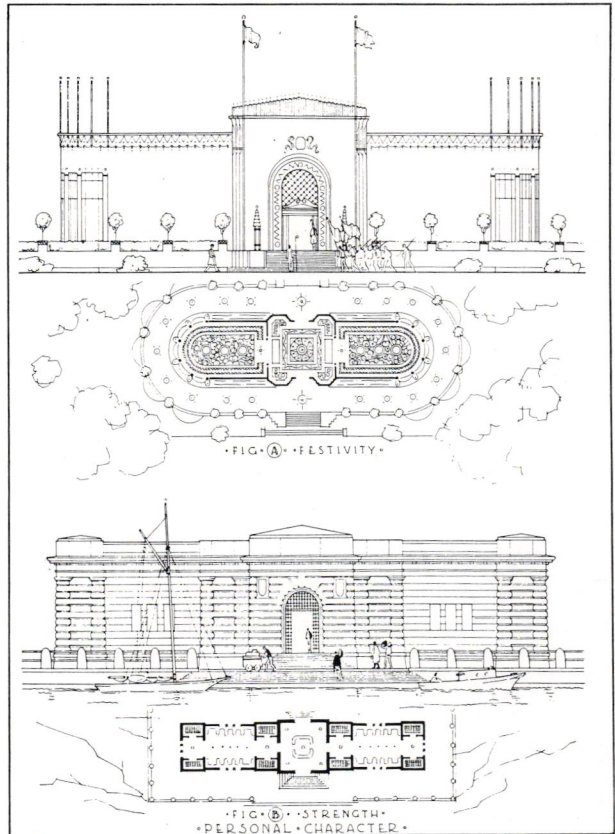


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Yet for the sake of an overall theory, it is important to begin with an ideal of thoroughness about our knowledge. Therefore the other dimension of this theory of precedent has to do with method, which, as a whole, amounts to no less than the question of how to most completely understand a prior work of architecture. Methods are needed to understand it in depth and in all aspects, to simulate the effects of immersive knowledge and prepare the way for valid criticism and extension. These methods may also be organized into three complementary categories, now corresponding to the three kinds of knowledge which we might agree it is possible to have of an architectural work: analytical, experiential, and transformational.

First, analytical methods are aimed at the rational comprehension of the building's abstract organization: space, volume, hierarchy, zones, plan-configurations, and facade-compositions. The techniques used are principally diagrammatic, such as plans, sections, elevations, axonometrics, and regulating line studies, with a graphic highlighting of the issue under consideration (fig. 12). Such diagrams present rationalized, dimensionally-accurate graphic facsimiles of the arrangement of parts, their shapes and proportions, and their controlled relationships. They subject this information to the processes of mental simplification and assimilation inherent in the idea of diagramming.

The analytical is by far the most frequently used method in recent literature on architectural precedents, which allows me to treat it summarily here.¹² This prevalence reveals the 20th century professional orthodoxy that regards the plan, spatial organization, and abstract formal composition as the most important content of architectural works. The decidedly analytical content of such distinguished and influential writings as Colin Rowe's *Mathematics of the Ideal Villa* or Rudolf Wittkower's *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*¹³ makes the point.



15

Second, experiential methods are aimed at the qualitative description of the building's sensual and meaningful presence: the effects of texture, material, color, ornament, symbolism, atmosphere, and acoustics. The techniques used are principally pictorial and literary, in that they involve the evocative representation of qualitative responses. Christian Norberg-Schulz has suggested that the "language of architecture" is comprised of two areas, which he has termed "spatial organization" and "embodied character." He has recently become one of the few writers on architecture to give increasing emphasis to the latter.¹⁴ Grounded largely in phenomenology, this approach is concerned with "how" things are, as opposed to only the way in which they are arranged. Not susceptible to scientific or abstract analysis, such content is determined by the formal articulation and materiality of the object (fig. 13) and relies on careful designation of such attributes and what they may

Fig. 12: Altes Museum, Berlin. Graphic analysis by the students of E. K. Morris.

Fig. 13: Window, Rhodes.

Fig. 14: Basilica of San Marco, sketch of facade, Venice.

Fig. 15: The characters of "Festivity" and "Strength" as portrayed in Ernest Pickering's *Architectural Design*.

mean to us. The identification of character is inextricably tied up with sensual apprehension and symbolic reading, insofar as together these constitute the qualitative experience of architectural works.

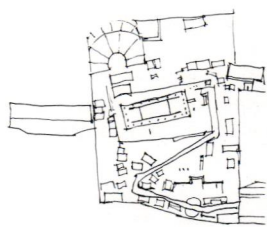
Despite their quasi-subjectivity, there are techniques for cultivating shared understanding of these aspects. First, impression sketches can effectively reveal through a shorthand process called "indicating"¹⁵ the important features by which visual character is defined. Such an interpretive drawing can be analyzed to reveal how certain formal properties of the object "indicated" the selective perception and portrayal of its content (fig. 14). Second, adjective phrases can in a similar way focus attention on aspects of sensual apprehension and character differentiation. Lightly referred to as "recipes," such verbal indications as festivity or strength (fig. 15), or hard, soft, somber, gay, or crisp — or even such subtle distinctions as enriched versus austere purity (fig. 11) — enable us to consciously enter the qualitative presence of the work, revealing how such characters plausibly correspond to certain architectonic features. Finally, there is the literary exercise of artificially disentangling this character from a more strictly semiotic, referent-based symbolism. Distinguishing what could be called opaque from transparent readings, we can ask which content derives from our vivid sensual absorption into the formal and material properties of the object itself, and which derives from an intellectual connection with other objects or ideas beyond it. The first might involve natural isomorphisms such as psychic empathy, whereas the latter might involve elaborate chains of arbitrary yet culture-bound referents.

With both analytical and experiential methods there is also the importance of discovering original intentions. Although such knowledge is primary to the scholarly study of history, precedent analysis should involve such investigation only after a study of the object so as to avoid preempting other potentially

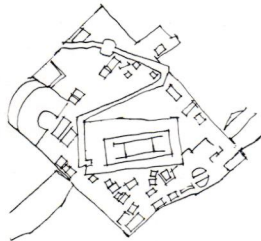
useful readings. This is not to underestimate the value of understanding origins - how difficult problems were encountered and overcome by the deliberate control of the means at the designer's disposal.

Such compunctions about intentionality need have no constraining effect whatsoever on the third category, transformational methods, which are aimed at the critical and hypothetical deconstruction of the artifact through its representation as an autonomous text. The prior work need not (for the sake of exercise) be considered a real place; nor a building reflecting the values of a particular time, place, and culture; nor a reflection of any designer's intentions or patron's aspirations. Instead, in the spirit of literary deconstruction (of the type associated with Jacques Derrida)¹⁶ it becomes an arbitrary array of visual and organizational cues which may, through any form of facsimile at hand, be deconstructed and completed by a free play of interventional and transformational techniques (called "rip and tear" exercises) to create a piece of criticism that is itself a new artifact of autonomous validity. The act of interpretation (misinterpreting or misreading in the jargon of lit-crit) uncovers a tissue of possibilities which could extend indefinitely, constrained only by the creative capacity of the deconstructor. There is no author, no origination, only language—only the "text" and its ability to generate new "texts".

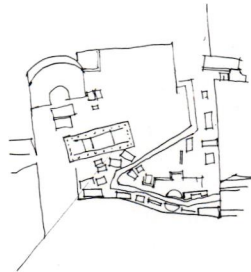
We needn't buy totally into the nihilism, idiosyncrasy, and arbitrariness of the overall Derridean point of view to partake of such exercises *as exercises*. For the sake of thoroughness, they should be put back into the context of a more realistic understanding; for the sake of rigor, they should cultivate a controlled consciousness about the transformational steps involved. They are simply a set of exploratory techniques with which we can temporarily abandon the tangible reality of the building itself to reveal, explore, and manipulate its formal, visual, and organizational properties.



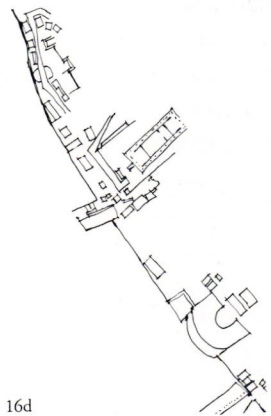
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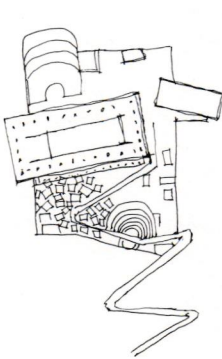
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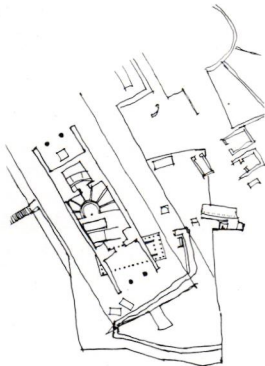
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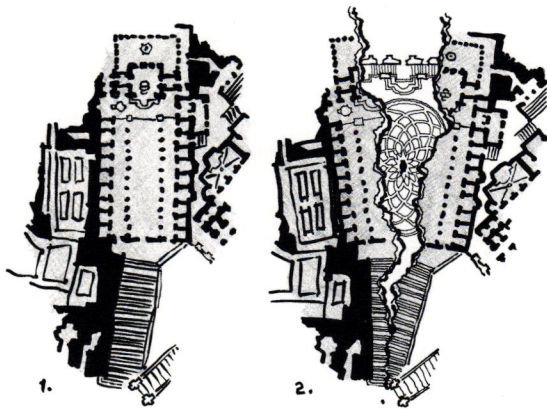


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The designer begins with a facsimile of some kind, like a plan, and passes it through his own reading and misreading, using a series of operations suggested by terms such as reversal, slippage, scattering, extension, replication, interlock, density, double-scaling and intertextuality (fig. 16). This produces a series of drawings, or other texts, which become a search for all the formal, thematic, and critical possibilities of the precedent's material. The value of such work is mainly in engendering a spirit of constructive play in the designer and the process, to enable the new work to finally escape the usually impressive weight of the precedent's direct organizational coherence and experiential force. It

suggests ways of extending new work beyond precedents, though in ways that may still reestablish a resonance with it of a perhaps unexpected kind. A frequent side-effect, ironically, is to produce striking new insights which do re-connect and have plausible readings even back in context and in relation to origins and intentions (fig. 17).¹⁷

Fig. 16: Temenos, Delphi. Graphic deconstructions of the plan.



17

VIII. Conclusion

The exercise of science and jurisprudence both involve transformational criticism. The purpose of transformation is to advance and adapt knowledge by a rational process of incremental growth; references back to an established line of enquiry are always essential. From what we know about the creative process in architecture however, it is clear that forward leaps are often made on an inspirational, intuitive basis (a phenomenon by no means absent from science either). But that is not quite the disclaimer for the validity of precedents that it may at first seem, for probably the most revealing definition of intuition is that it is merely an unconscious leap from significant and painstaking prior work: in other words, long, deep, and selective immersion in the precedents of the field.

If comprised of both the means of choice and the methods of thorough understanding, a theory of precedents remains, to whatever degree we want to be conscious about it, the designer's clear epistemological alternative to naive objectivism and idiosyncratic relativism. It provides a structuring of functional continuity about which we can have some conviction yet within which we can exercise progressive criticism as required.

Notes

1. Bruce Allsopp, *The Study of Architectural History*, New York: Praeger, 1970, pp. 15-17.
2. For the definitions and processes of vernacular architecture, see Amos Rapoport, *House Form and Culture*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969; Constantine Michaelides, *Hydra: A Greek Island Town*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967; Bernard Rudofsky, *The Prodigious Builders*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977.
3. Arthur O. Lovejoy, "Romanticism and the Principle of Plenitude" in *The Great Chain of Being*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961, pp. 288-314.
4. Peter Collins, "The Influence of Historiography" in *Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture*, Montreal: McGill University Press, 1967, pp. 29-41.
5. For a sampling of what might be called a post-Relativist epistemology, see John Dewey, "Changed Conceptions of the Ideal and the Real" in *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1967, pp. 103-131; Charles Hartshorne, "Whitehead's Idea of God" in *The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead*, Paul Arthur Schlipp, Ed., Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1941, pp. 515-559; Karl Popper, "Towards a Rational Theory of Tradition" in *Conjectures and Refutations*, New York: Harper & Row, 1963, pp. 120-135; Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962; Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave, *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970; Ian G. Barbour, *Myths, Models, and Paradigms: A Comparative Study in Science and Religion*, New York: Harper & Row, 1974; T. K. Seung, *Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1982, pp. 183-212; and Richard J. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983.
6. Kuhn, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. For an analogical application of Kuhn's ideas to another field, see David Hollinger, "T. S. Kuhn's Theory of Science and its Implications for History" in *American Historical Review*, Vol. 78, No. 2, April 1973, pp. 370-393.
7. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*. For an analogical application of Popper's idea of tradition to architectural theory, see: Stanford Anderson, "Architecture and Tradition that isn't 'Trad, Dad'" in *The History, Theory, and Criticism of Architecture*, Marcus Whiffen, ed., Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1964, pp. 71-89.
8. Aspects of the analogy between architecture and the law have been discussed in Peter Collins, "Architect's Architecture Versus Lawyer's Law" in the *Architectural Review*, February 1969, pp. 117-120 (reprinted in *The Fifth Column*, The Canadian Student Journal of Architecture, Volume 4, Nos. 3/4, Summer 1984, pp. 57-61); Peter Collins, *Architectural Judgement*, Mon-

Fig. 17: The Capitol, with S. Maria d'Aracoeli, Rome.

treat: McGill-Queens University Press, 1971; and William Q. Hubbard, *Complicity and Conviction: Steps Toward an Architecture of Convention*, Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1980.

9. Deborah Howard, *The Architectural History of Venice*, New York: Holmes & Meier, 1981, pp. 69-77.

10. A partial list of these design "textbooks" would include John Beverley Robinson, *Principles of Architectural Composition*, New York: The Architectural Record Co., 1899; Nathaniel Cortland Curtis, *Architectural Composition*, Cleveland: Jansen, 1923; Howard Robertson, *Principles of Architectural Composition*, London: Architectural Press, 1924-1947; Talbot Faulkner Hamlin, *The Enjoyment of Architecture*, New York: Scribners, 1927; Percy Nobbs, *Design: A Treatise on the Discovery of Form*, London: Oxford University Press, 1937; Ernest Pickering, *Architectural Design*, New York: Wiley, 1941; and M. D. and N. K. Robertson, *Approach to Architecture*, London: E. Arnold, 1948.

11. William Q. Hubbard, (*Complicity and Conviction*) discusses conventions as those things which "we think are important"; and complicity as "a willingness to suspend our demand for certain truth so that we can obtain something we value more than certainty." (p. 63) It is in such a way that principles must be defined, and by which they become, in effect, the only way we can discuss architecture at all.

12. The literature on precedent analysis includes Roger Clark and Michael Pause, *Analysis of Precedent*, Raleigh: North Carolina State University, 1979; Norman Crowe, "Using the Past" in *Central Papers on Architecture*, Spring 1980, pp. 21-39; The entire Winter 1982 issue of the *Journal of Architectural Education*, entitled "Typology in Design Education" (Ellen K. Morris and Edward Levin, ed.); Geoffrey H. Baker, *Le Corbusier: An Analysis of Form*, Wokingham, Berks: Van Nostrand-Reinhold, 1984.

13. Colin Rowe, "Mathematics of the Ideal Villa" in *Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays*, Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1976, pp. 1-27; Rudolf Wittkower, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*, New York: Random House, 1965.

14. Christian Norberg-Schulz has written on this subject in the following places: "Meaning, Architecture, and History," the concluding chapter in his *Meaning in Western Architecture*, New York: Rizzoli, 1979; *Genius Loci*, New York: Rizzoli, 1980; and "History and the Language of Architecture" in *History in, of and for Architecture*, John E. Hancock, ed., Cincinnati: School of Architecture and Interior Design, 1981, pp. 10-15.

15. David Varon, *Indication in Architectural Design*, New York: Comstock, 1922. See also the discussion of Varon's ideas by William Q. Hubbard, *Complicity and Conviction*, pp. 28-43.

16. Useful analytical writings about Post-Structuralism, and Jacques Derrida and his influence include John Sturrock, ed., *Structuralism and Since: From Levi-Strauss to Derrida*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1979; Harold Bloom, et al., *Deconstruction and Criticism*, New York: Seabury, 1979; Frank Lentric-

chia, *After the New Criticism*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980; and Mark C. Taylor, "Text as Victim" in *Deconstruction and Theology*, Carl A. Rasche, ed., New York: Crossroad, 1982, pp. 58-78.

17. Much of this thought has been inspired as well as illustrated by student work in history related seminars and studios at the University of Cincinnati Department of Architecture from 1982-85.

Why Classicism?

James S. Ackerman

Why has classicism dominated the return to symbolism and allusion in recent architecture? Ours is hardly a culture steeped in antiquity, like that of the Renaissance or the Neoclassical era of around 1800. In America today few of even the most educated people read the ancient languages or are in touch with the traditions that have given meaning to the forms and vocabulary of classical architecture. Classicism is not flourishing in the other visual arts or in literature.

The classical references in post-Modern architecture recall a long tradition of classical revivals that goes back to Romanesque architecture. The Pantheon in Rome may stand as a paradigm of this tradition: a building that combines rich cultural references to the Greek temple tradition in its portico and pediment with the simple geometry of a cylinder and hemisphere, basic Platonic forms out of which the universe is constructed. To a great extent the classical tradition implies the combination of such simple masses and volumes with a firmly established vocabulary of decorative-structural forms and strict rules about syntax.

Renaissance architects from Alberti to Palladio studied the Romans with a passion and gave the tradition a new refinement with a system of proportion based on theories of musical harmonies. They

claimed that since the arithmetic equivalents of musical harmonies could be translated into satisfying visual ratios, it was proof that they represented a higher order, that in effect they followed the laws of nature, and that it would be unnatural to depart from them. The classical tradition refers to absolutes and eternalities that have validity regardless of who the observer is. Every classical building claims to partake of absolute values.

The classical tradition is cumulative in the sense that each time it is called up, it accrues new elements. Thus Claude Nicholas Ledoux and Karl Friedrich Schinkel, the great Neoclassicists of the late 18th century, used elements that Renaissance architects had added to the ancient repertory.

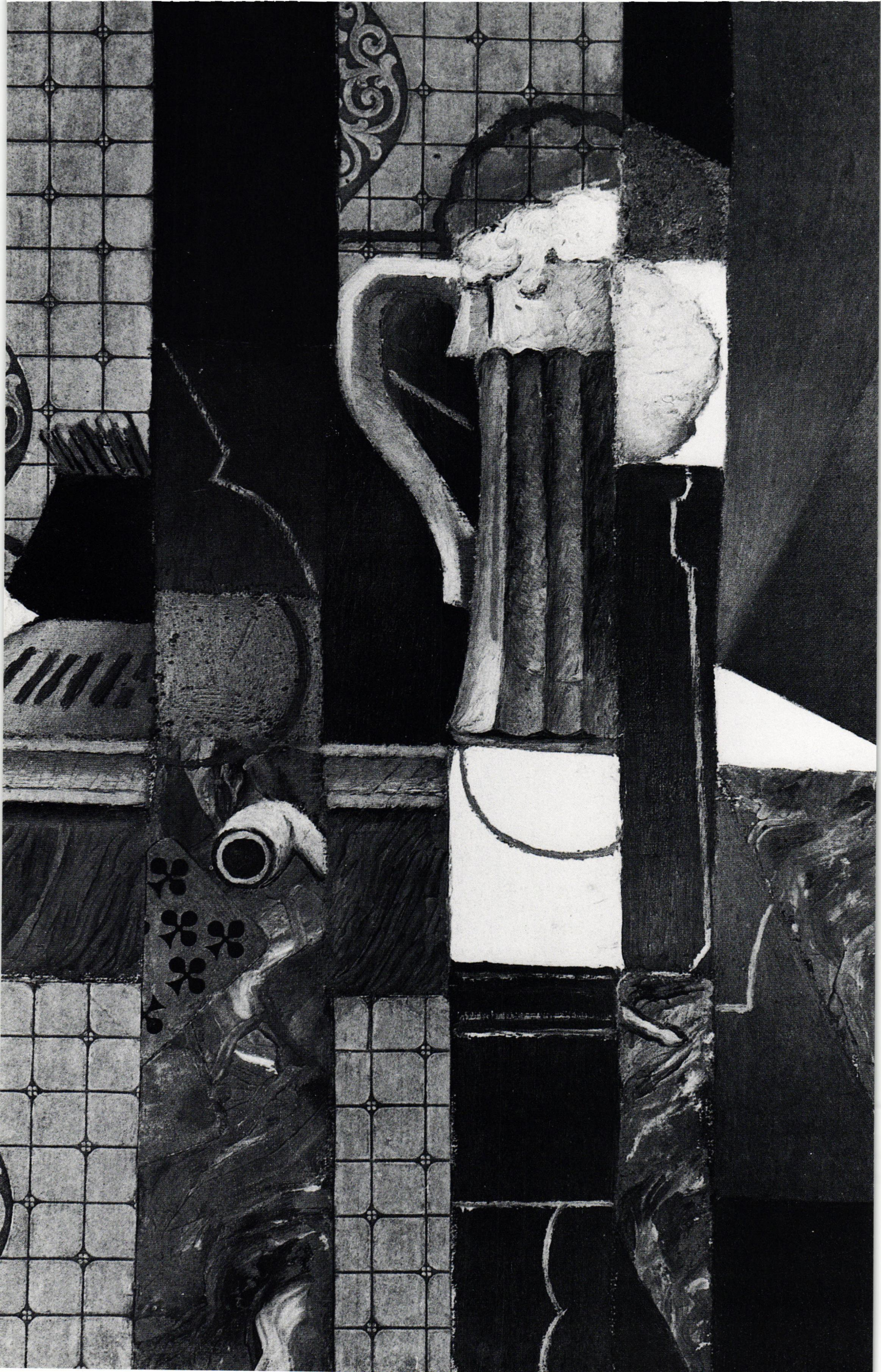
To use this vocabulary is to avow one's descent from and loyalty to the Mediterranean tradition in which it evolved. That is why until recently most American classicism in the 20th century represented conservatism, a will to cling to traditions and a refusal to accept European Modernism, as in prewar Harvard University buildings such as Widener Library and Robinson and Emerson Halls. The European Modernists were able to preserve the platonic forms and Palladian harmonies of classicism without the vocabulary, as in the work of Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe.

But in the late 18th century, as one product of the Enlightenment and the stirrings of Romanticism, a competing aesthetic emerged, the Picturesque, in which the feelings of the observer took precedence over the nature of the architecture. Now a building would be judged not on its intrinsic character, but on the responses and associations it could elicit and in the way it interacted with its environment. No absolutes, no proportions, and no preferential treatment for the Mediterranean: the exotic was at a premium. The situation was rather like the present one in that a new free spirit expressed itself as a reaction against the weight of tradition and the constrictions of the prevailing orthodoxy. Criticism, which in the classical centuries had operated with reference to absolute values, now became individualized and relativistic. All past styles were therefore equally valid. The model book of domestic architecture published in America, by Alexander Jackson Davis in 1837, broke with the classical tradition first by proposing varied and mixed styles. Harvard's Memorial Hall brought us a dining space and lecture room dressed as a Gothic cathedral with color patterns much more lively than on any medieval building.

These observations suggest the proposition that the classical tradition in the 20th century is represented by the ascetic purism of Mies van der Rohe and a few contemporaries like Rossi and that the Romantic

associationism of early 19th century eclecticism is represented by most of the postmodernists. If that is the case, it is curious that they should be using—I should say misusing—the vocabulary of classicism. I cannot believe that the architects any more than the public are eager to avow their allegiance to a tradition of Platonic absolutes. Our culture is much too chaotic and individualized for that, much more uncertain. That is why the references to the classical tradition in contemporary architecture are so often ironic, displaying an intention to evade the responsibility of being taken seriously.

If post-Modern architecture is to be based on anything more than its now rather tired denunciations of the evils of Modernism, it should be based on the kind of openness represented by Romantic/Picturesque theory, and perhaps on the direction to which Venturi and Rossi have referred in their writings: the constants of the archetypes of building, both vernacular and monumental. The historians of the *Annales* school in France speak of history in terms of the *Longue durée*, which characterizes the culture of the everyday that is rooted in its setting and which evolves only slowly and outside daily events. Today that culture may offer us models more relevant to our present consciousness than Greece and Rome, great though they were.



Erasing the Ghost of Perrault

Mary Alice Dixon Hinson

It's quite straightforward, you'll understand it.

It's not hard.

Because you're not an exploiter, you'll quite easily grasp it.—Bertolt Brecht, *In Praise of Communism*

I. The Architecture of Alienation

The modern environment is dominated by a largely unheralded yet nonetheless significant pattern that has profoundly altered the relationship between architecture and history as well as the character and substance of both.¹ This pattern consists in the appropriation by modern history of the mnemonic function traditionally held by architecture: History has replaced the designed environment as the carrier of cultural memories. We have come to accept the presence of modern historiography as an integral aspect of the conceptual realm in which we live. We rely on history to “preserve” the past, so that architecture need not. By its very existence, modern historical practice—particularly the inquiry into the life of artifacts—acts as an ideological construct that legitimizes the erasure of the environmental document of communal events and values that we call the historical fabric—the city, the town, the neighborhood. To keep the engine of history fueled, new material must be continually supplied to replace what is used. Thus the durability of things as participants in a continuous present has been replaced by the constancy of consumption: History consumes architecture. It appears that Victor Hugo’s celebrated warning—that the book shall overthrow the building—has, in fact, come true.

While history is thus an incentive to the physical destruction of the environment, this kind of continuing consumption could, of course, be halted at any time by mere legislative fiat. Far more damaging and difficult to combat is the way in which history consumes the very meaning of architecture. By presuming that meaning resides in descriptions of things rather than in things themselves, history distills

from architecture its purpose and then represents that purpose in conceptual formulations detached from their physical embodiments. History abstracts architecture as science abstracts nature. And, as in a laboratory experiment, so it is in historical practice that once the essential properties of the raw material have been extracted, the material itself is reduced to an emptied husk devoid of purpose. Because history draws meaning from architecture and represents that meaning apart from architecture, history disembodies design. The presence of history as a discipline distinct from design is proof of the alienation of architecture from itself and its own present.²

Since history rather than architecture carries the task of preserving communal memories, architectural history (a discipline that emerged only as part of the rational ideology of the Enlightenment) ratifies the alienation of architecture from the present. Because the environment is stripped of memory, it is also drained of immediacy. The irony of such amnesia is that without memory the present itself is meaningless. It has no context. The immediate moment comes not to exist: It is evanescent, ungraspable, unreal. The present is supplanted by the dual obsession with past and future. In architecture, this alienation takes the form of an exaggerated attention to the problems of precedent and invention. Today architectural strategies flourish in that attempt, through the use of precedent, to retrieve a lost past or, through formal invention, to create a salvific future. In both cases the strategies seek through past or future fantasies to compensate for an absent present.

The alienation of contemporary architecture parallels the similar schizophrenia that afflicts the theory and methodology of the history of artifacts. Current historical theory is torn between the notion of history

Fig. 1: Juan Gris, *Glass of Beer and Playing Cards*, 1913, Oil and *papier colle* on canvas. Columbus Museum of Arts, Columbus, Ohio.

as an objective (i.e., classical) record of verifiable phenomena and the opposing notion of history as a subjective (i.e., romantic) analysis in which the present impinges so radically upon the past as to alter its reality. Surely the positivist claim to total historical objectivity is illusory; but equally apparent is the assumption of total subjectivity which denies the possibility of anyone knowing anything at all—clearly not a useful proposition, even if it were true. This tension between the objective and subjective methodological views is analogous to the conflict between precedent and invention in design. This tension has so split the field that even reputable art journals devote entire issues to history as a discipline in “crisis.”³ But this crisis will not go away until history ceases to exist outside design, that is, until pre-modern perceptions of the conjunction of meaning and form reassert themselves.

The architecture of alienation is architecture shackled to modern dualism. In order to free architecture from this bondage, the conceptual errors on which it is based must be exposed. Chief among these is the false distinction between precedent and invention which, in turn, is based on the equally false distinction between science and art. That distinction was catalyzed in France during the last third of the 17th century by the establishment of the French Academy of Architecture. Before the late 17th century, science and art, like history and architecture, were generally understood as not just concordant but as fundamentally inseparable endeavors. The unity of architecture and history, for example, was clearly set forth by Alberti. In defining *istoria* as the essence of *disegno*, Alberti articulated in theory what had been known in practice for centuries.⁴ For Alberti, design embodied history. History, in turn, was both a story and an event, both the faculty of recounting and the thing recounted. Because design contained such stories, it was an imitation of nature. This was so because nature contained and made manifest the first story, the history of Divine Creation. Nature was God’s design. What Vincent de Beauvais called the

Mirror of Nature, Alberti renamed *istoria*. Alberti’s conviction that design informed by history is a memory of Divine Creation, is a Christian paraphrase of the Greek tradition that Mnemosyne, Memory, is the Mother of the Muses.

For the figural arts such as dance, painting, and sculpture, nature was imitable in the visible forms of the human body and the organic world. For architecture, however, nature was less literally accessible. Alberti, like the Greeks before him, solved the problem by equating nature with number. Geometry was nature’s great story, a story (*istoria*) retold in architectural design. With some exceptions, Alberti’s brilliant equation succeeded in linking architecture to the continuous present of nature until the 17th century, when, in the wake of Galileo and Descartes, geometry no longer seemed so simple or so certain. By the end of the 17th century, Alberti’s equation appeared increasingly meaningless. At the same time it seemed to many gentleman builders that if architecture could be reduced to a system of proportions, then any carpenter with a compass, a T-square, and the rudiments of geometry could lay claim to the nature of architectural truths. If this were so, then the architect could hardly be said to belong to a select fraternity of men.

When the French Academy of Architecture was founded in 1671, it was as much to halt the potential democratization of architectural practice as to redress the increasingly formulaic character of design-by-number architecture. With Claude Perrault at its head, the new Academy was engrossed in the problem of establishing and guarding the professionalism of its members. Theory became the solution; it was the abstract vehicle by which the academicians were to be elevated into an elite and entrenched professional corps.⁵ And significantly, at its birth, this academic architectural theory affirmed the artistic aspect of design over geometry. This new priority was given major impetus in the work of Perrault. His achievement was to put the literary quarrel of the An-

cients versus the Moderns into architectural terms. In the preface to his *Ordonnance des Cinq Espèces de Colonnes* (1683) he posited the existence of two kinds of architectural beauty: the constant or positive (that which today we term “precedent”) and the arbitrary or relative (that which today we term “invention”).⁶ This curious distinction, which our architectural culture accepts as obvious and inevitable, is itself an arbitrary—and demonstrably unsound—invention. But its consequences have been far-reaching.

Perrault’s distinction drove a wedge between design and nature from which the former has yet to recover. As Joseph Rykwert has shown, Perrault’s concept of the two beauties undermined the inviolability of the entire system of classical Orders.⁷ By sanctioning the possibility, however initially limited and restrained, of beauty as an invention rather than an imitation of nature, Perrault led the later and quintessentially modern assault on not just the Orders but on the very idea of order as a desirable—or even possible—architectural end.⁸ In so divorcing architecture from nature, the notion of arbitrary beauty gave license to the professional split between engineering and architecture that the French academic structures (models of our own) eventually institutionalized.

While the architect was free to invent novel ornamentation, it was the engineer who, by the 18th century, took command of the constant laws of nature. Design was bisected into building and architecture, science and art; the one, the sphere of the mechanistic technician; the other, that of the marginal avant-garde. Perrault liberated architecture from the old order but in so doing catalyzed the subsequent devaluation of architecture into decoration. Architecture no longer embodied a public language; it could thus be judged only according to the arbitrary standards of personal taste. Without this aesthetic relativity, the eclecticism of the 18th and 19th centuries, as well as that of today, would be inconceivable. Because architecture no longer sought to imitate na-

ture (the newly-designed domain of science and engineering), it was left instead with the task of finding, through art, a place in history. This history in which architecture sought itself was that modern “enlightened” history that, as Vico first pointed out, is man’s creation as nature—from which modern man was now excluded—is God’s.⁹

Within architecture itself the larger schism between constant science and arbitrary art is echoed in the tension between precedent, which pretends to science, and invention, which pretends to art. Today, continuity with the simulated past and rupture from it exist as competing design strategies. We, the legatees of Perrault, have merely substituted for the historical battle of the styles (the Ancients versus the Moderns and the countless variations thereof) an analogous battle of temporal strategies. The temporal orientation of modern architecture consists of an oscillation between two orientations—the past and the future, precedent and invention. The first strategic orientation is consonant with Perrault’s notion of constant beauty. This strategy upholds the value of precedent, of solidity, of continuity with the past. It affirms the existence of architectural rules, types, or vernacular patterns whose underlying validity remains constant. This strategy understands architecture as a game that can be played only because its rules are assumed to be stable. The second strategic orientation is consonant with Perrault’s notion of arbitrary beauty. This strategy upholds the value of invention, of innovation, of breaking with the past. It disavows the existence of unchanging modes or systems of design. This strategy understands architecture as improvisational play without conventions, rather than as sport with rules.

These two strategies, which can be called the historicist and the futurist, share an obsession with giving form to time, of reclaiming architecture’s traditional role as a carrier of memory. Both strategies seek to “make history” as a painter seeks to make a self-portrait. This is narcissistic. It is predicated on the

belief that the self—or the building created by the self—is real only insofar as it has a reflection. Current architecture seeks in history the reflection—and thus the certification—of its own existence. But displaced from the present by the very reflection it seeks to turn itself over to, architecture searches the past and the future to gain a foothold in time. Both the orientation toward the past, and its corollary esteem for invention attempt to manipulate time. The historicist attempts, through the use of precedent and typology, to announce to the present a pedigree derived from a supposedly constant past. The futurist by contrast attempts, through the use of novel technologies and forms, to colonize the future by projecting invented images of it into the empty present. In both cases architecture anticipates conquest; building becomes an act or an agent of temporal imperialism. Not to build, as we will see, can thus acquire unexpected resonance.

The orientation toward precedent as an instrument with which to “make history” would seem at first glance to be skewed toward contextualism; similarly, the orientation toward invention would seem to be skewed toward the unique monument. But this is rarely the case. On the contrary, “tomorrow” is so well-established in our culture that futurism is almost a normal orientation, as the corporate anonymity of almost any Sunbelt city shows. Conversely, the return to the classicizing or vernacular past is most frequently the operative mode of the self-conscious avant-garde, as the recent historicist work of Phillip Johnson or Michael Graves suggests. Nevertheless the contextual variations within the historicist and futurist orientations only further underline the inadequacy of these strategies to resolve the dilemma of architecture alienated from the present. After all, when architecture lacks mnemonic content, the issue of formal context is beside the point.

The conflict between precedent and invention (and the derivative conflict between continuity with the context and the break from it) is, as we have seen, a

false dichotomy invented by Perrault. Its continued dominance as a way of thinking about and creating architecture is a sign of the dead end to which Perrault has led us. To be modern, torn between precedent and invention without access to a living present, is to be alienated. Even the self-referential and largely opaque labels commonly used to talk about current architecture are ambiguous measurements in and about time. “Modern,” “Post-Modern,” “Neo-Modern,” are all labels that describe immaterial, temporal positions. They make no reference to form, function, program, or building technology. Like the algebraic variable “x,” the term “Modern,” whose perpetual currency we owe to Perrault, drifts in a temporal vacuum cut off from the nomenclature of people and events that might anchor it to reality. Modernity is, moreover, an asymmetrical concept. It is predicated on that which is not modern—the Ancients of Perrault’s quarrel—to give meaning to that which is. To be Modern (or Post-Modern) is to be, by definition, incomplete, to be caught in one half of an artificial dichotomy that springs from a 17th century tautology.

II. The Pluralist Response

Yet there are attempts to do away with the false polarities between temporal strategies that the rift between architecture and history has engendered. The most obvious attempt, at both popular and theoretical levels, lies in what is commonly called pluralism. Pluralists, whose most charismatic apologists are Michel Foucault and Robert Venturi, maintain that there is no real “crisis” in history and no actual alienation in architecture. Pluralism dismisses the conflict between precedent and invention just as it dismisses the analagous conflict between the objective and the subjective models of historical inquiry. Instead, pluralism holds that living works in either architecture or history telescope within themselves the contradictions that exist as opposites within the system as a whole. The pluralist view pretends to encompass totalities.¹⁰ It maintains that great works

are always visions of the future as well as summations of the past. Masterpieces, whether textural or architectural, vernacular or monumental Italian hilltowns or the Porta Pia, are perceived as transcending, synthesizing, complex. In pluralism the conflict between Perrault's constant and arbitrary beauties is, in theory, resolved.

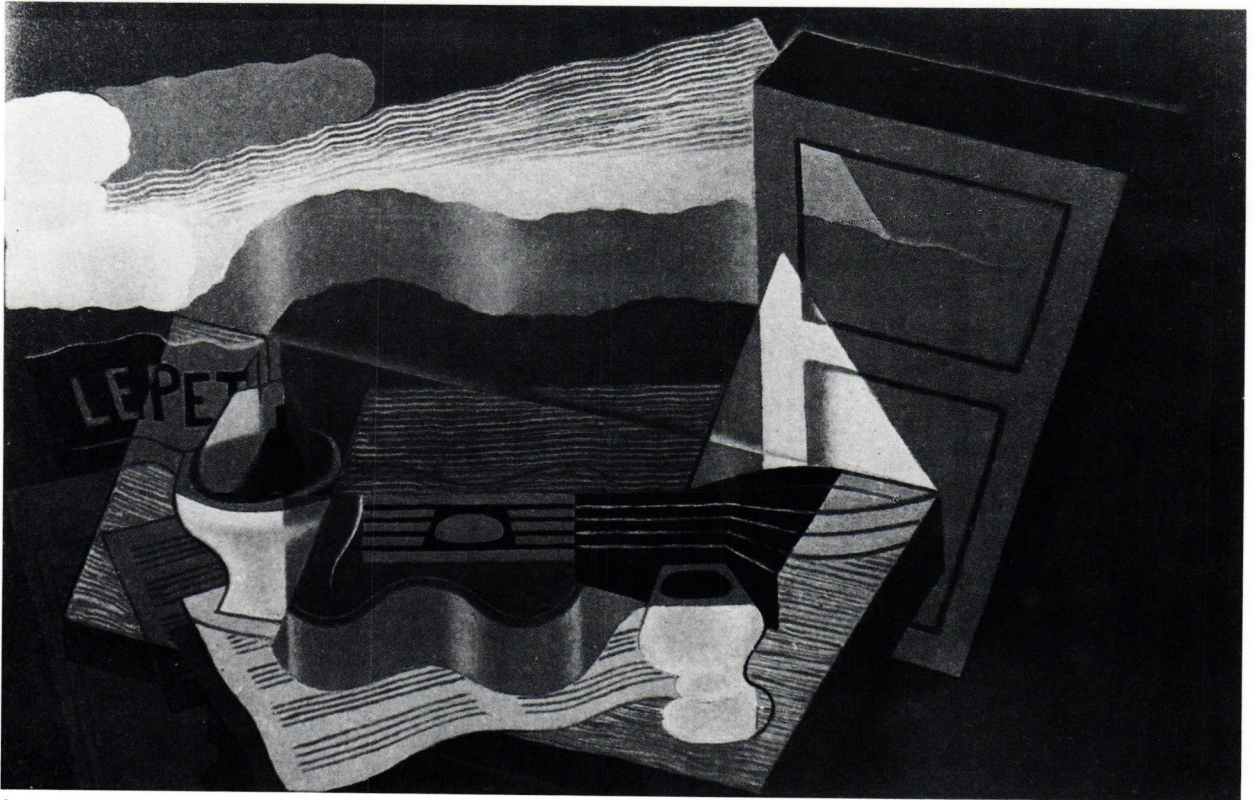
An aura of conservative mysticism permeates this view. Venturi's espousal of "complexity and contradiction," like Foucault's implicit political and linguistic anarchy, makes almost intellectually respectable the reactionary attitude that the redemptive function of both architecture and history is to embody contradictions, not dissipate them. But this is sophistry. It is complicity. It legitimizes under the guise of formal tension what is in reality cultural fragmentation. Venturi and Foucault are the last of the line of Perrault. Their pluralism concedes victory to the state of alienation inaugurated by Perrault. This is because, however cognizant of cultural displacements the pluralist view seems to be, it fails to link such knowledge with action. Pluralism thus ratifies the continued divergence of ethics from aesthetics. Consequently, pluralism becomes a prescription for neutral observation. It excuses and perpetuates that very state of alienation whose problematic nature it denies—a state of detached psychological tourism. It is this state that Hannah Arendt¹¹ alludes to in describing alienation as the omniscient view the traveler gets from the airplane window: the more alienated we are, the more we see. But the view from the airplane is the spectator's view, inherently passive and disengaged.

Yet this view cannot be easily dismissed because it is, as Michael Walzer has said of Foucault, "right enough to be disturbing," or, rather, "importantly wrong."¹² What is "importantly wrong" in the pluralist view is the priority accorded exterior appearances. Foucault, for example, proposes a methodology of history motivated by and concerned with what he terms "exteriority."¹³ Exteriority, in distinction to

conventional historical methodology (which Foucault calls a doomed search for what lies beneath the surface), seeks to describe only that which can be perceived without recourse to speculation. It focuses on appearances, relations, statements, surfaces.

While acknowledging that all variants of history are ideological devices by which power is distributed in society, Foucault specifically decries conventional modern history as serving established power by catering to the sanguine hope that there is a second, hidden history. In its advocates' minds this "other" history "lags behind manifest history and finds, beneath events, another, more serious, more secret, more fundamental history, closer to the origin."¹⁴ This other history is what conventional historians try to excavate; they seek "to re-do, in the opposite direction, the work of expression: to go back from statements preserved through time and dispersed in space, toward that interior secret that preceded them, left its mark, and (in every sense of the term) is betrayed by them."¹⁵ This mental archaeology is "directed by a desire to move from the exterior . . . towards the essential nucleus of interiority," and having located the "interior secret" of the exterior phenomenon, to give it a "second birth."¹⁶ Foucault rejects this quest as a beguiling illusion that promises to deliver to us that which we cannot know and thus distracts us from that knowledge that is within our grasp. This is why, in Foucault's mind, conventional history is so often smiled upon by the *status quo*. And in opposition to this Foucault upholds the belief that exteriors are not the mere translations of intentions, carrying only residual traces of purpose, but are in themselves events invested with meaning.

Although Foucault offers this affirmation of "exteriority" as a radical strategy, it is not. It is merely an application to historical theory of that aspect of old-fashioned American New Criticism that insists on the primacy of text over biography. In such critical theory, the surface of the work of art (in history, the surface of the event) is hermetically sealed, like the opaque and seamless skin of a modernist building.



2

And the exterior—the only thing that can be seen by the outsider—is made into a fetish and becomes the ultimate knowable fact.

Such “exteriority” is the theoretical counterpart to Venturi’s method of architectural analysis. Venturi treats buildings as elevations and plans extracted from their historical and environmental contexts. We need only glance at *Complexity and Contradiction*, for example, to see that it is a polemical picture book of abstract exteriors. It is illustrated by buildings that have no real history, no memory, that is, of program or intention. Venturi, like Foucault, presumes that such memories are phantoms. But without such memories, a building’s life in time is reduced to mere chronology and history becomes a pedantic convention we are better off without. This is precisely what occurs in *Complexity and Contradiction*. The buildings shown in it are, in Venturi’s own words, “lifted abstractly from their historical content.”¹⁷ He makes “no special attempt to relate architecture to other things.”¹⁸

Just as Foucault denies the value (because he denies the existence) of the hidden history of intentions, so Venturi denies the value (because he ignores the context) of the hidden history of social and economic conditions that qualify architecture. In these approaches, history and architecture are both deprived of their interiors. Because of this deprivation, pluralism becomes formalism. Despite his pretense to omniscience, the pluralist fails to recognize the re-

ality of the interior program as a real and at least partially apprehendable aspect of a work or event, and so denies to things—artifacts, texts, surfaces—the ability to possess memory. The pluralist *qua* formalist sins by omission. Consequently, pluralism is not only incapable of resolving the dichotomies with which current architecture and history are fraught but, in fact, reinforces them. Another name for this kind of pluralism is anarchy. Anarchy—whether political or aesthetic—thrives on the detachment of exterior from interior, of surface from program, of act from consequence, of observer from observed. Foucault and Venturi display such skill in rationalizing a preoccupation with the surface that their consummate anarchy can, in the end, only be called the dandyism of intellectuals.

III. The Art of Restoration

Any effective opposition to the pluralist’s dandyism must sacrifice the pretense of exterior omniscience without descending into the extremes of historicist or futurist ideologies. Any strategy that moves toward the transformation of architecture from a state of alienation to a state of embodied memory must not only reject pluralism—another name for acquiescence to the arbitrary—but advance an alternative. Such an alternative must demonstrate the illegitimacy of Perrault’s false dichotomy between constant and arbitrary beauties. This can only be done by seizing upon the now untenable definition Alberti proposed—nature as number—and acknowledging in its

place a more authentic definition of nature. For without the Albertian thesis against which Perrault's postulates collide, the architecture of alienation that arises from those postulates ceases to have a foundation. So long as nature is understood as abstract numerical relationships, however constant these may seem, "nature" will remain within the domain of technology, and architecture will remain detached from the continuous present or be related to it only through tenuous arbitrary means.

A strategy that restores architecture to the continuous present of nature, that restores memory to design, is implicit in a constellation of works that redefines the relationship between architecture and nature without recourse to Alberti's geometry. In these works, nature is understood not as number but as process. In particular, nature is understood as the process of selection and its human equivalent, the act of choosing. Selection and choice are actions—gestures—whose priority in design throws into high relief the empty formalism of Perrault's conceptual categories and their banal tenacity in shaping the current debate between precedent and invention.

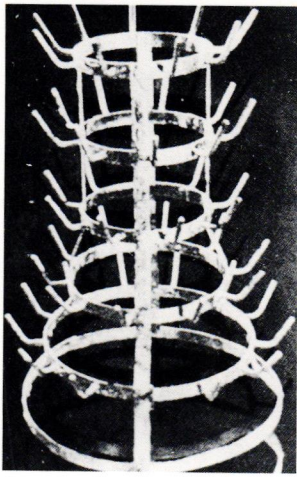
This paradigm-shift, to use Kuhn's term, appears with particular force in the still lifes of Juan Gris and the Readymades of Marcel Duchamp. And it continues in the work of contemporary designers such as John Hejduk and Daniel Libeskind whose graphic architecture demonstrates that the closest relationship between art and architecture often exists outside the confines of chronological concurrency. The potential contributions of Gris and Duchamp in rejuvenating architecture through art have been obscured by the dominant formalist interpretations of their work; Colin Rowe's application of collage to urban design theory has been among the most influential of these. But such readings ignore the fact that the real significance of Gris (who "invented" cubist collage) and Duchamp (whose Readymades invert the collage) lies not in formal technique but in iconographic content. Gris's still lifes form an iconographic pat-

tern book for an architecture of selection and assembly while Duchamp's Readymades accord this process permanent philosophical stature.

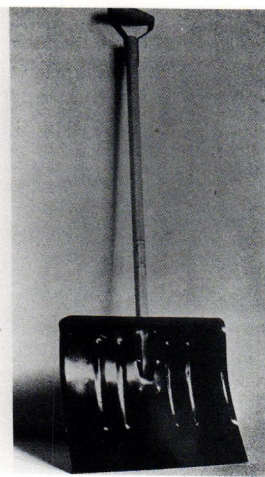
Gris's still lifes, for example, depict durable artificial goods that bear the imprint of the user's selection and use of them. While conventional still lifes depict fruits and flowers as perishable icons for contemplation, Gris's household tools are inorganic "emblems of work."¹⁹ In *Glass of Beer and Playing Cards* of 1913 (fig. 1) such mass-produced tools include a cheap, fluted beer mug, a pipe, playing cards, gaudy orange tiles, a book, and *trompe l'oeil* wood graining. The *nature morte* is here transformed into the active artificial life; architecture's nature is built out of machine-made materials chosen and arranged by the user within the interior space of the private home. In such still-lifes nature has moved indoors and become mechanized. Gone are the *fêtes champêtres* of Impressionist pastorals and in their place is the domestic landscape defined as a collection of machined fragments. The individuality of space arises from variations in the selection and assembly of these mass-produced fragments set up within the invariant shell of the picture frame. Architecture is defined as a modular process of interior assemblage. It has ceased to be a public act. The *Glass of Beer and Playing Cards* contains a premonition of architecture as a private act of consumption.

But at the same time, Gris's nature, though machined, is presented as embodied perception rather than as mechanistically abstracted conception. This is made explicit in his consistent retention of the contour line. Unlike the contemporary Cubist paintings of Braque and Picasso, in which the dissolution of the gap between object and environment is both sought and achieved, in Gris's painting objects are reconciled to their boundaries. The beer mug retains

Fig. 2: Juan Gris, *The View Across the Bay*, 1921, Oil on canvas, private collection, Paris.



3



4

its edge; it is a hard object, possessed of artificial durability. The affirmation of the contour line reinforces the integrity of the object but more importantly connects palpable (rather than abstract) nature to the object and so establishes sensuous nature as the model for architecture. In *The View Across the Bay* of 1921 (fig. 2), for example, the characteristic solidity of the guitar is assured through the concrete curves of its edges. At the same time, these edges recapitulate the sinuous outlines of water and mountains seen through the open window. This establishes an analogy between the mass-produced tool that is the basis of art (in this case, music) and the natural landscape of which it is the urban echo.

Such still lifes are inverted in Duchamp's Ready-mades, where the solid components of the interior machine for living are taken apart and scattered in the outside world with apparent abandon (figs. 3, 4). This dispersal reverses the traditional Palladian prescription for the treatment of the interior organs of the building as private parts that should be discretely hidden. Instead, Duchamp displays the inner hardware of the building with a frankness that makes us voyeurs.

As with Gris, so with Duchamp the process of selection is the key to the work. In explaining his infamous *Fountain*, the porcelain urinal of 1917, for instance, Duchamp wrote "Whether Mr. Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view—created a new thought for that object."²⁰ By this act of choice the object achieves—as art—an exact coincidence of subject matter with medium. The Machine is the message.

But the selection of the specific machine and its metamorphosis into a Readymade (the logical conclu-

sion of the *trompe l'oeil* painting) is only one aspect of the process of choice incorporated into the Ready-mades. The other aspect is the engagement of the observer. The deliberately provocative character of the chosen object requires the viewer to participate in the ascription of meaning. "It is the OBSERVERS," Duchamp contended, "who make the pictures."²¹ And the shovel wryly titled *In Advance of a Broken Arm* (fig. 4) dramatizes the necessary participation of the observer. The observer must choose the meaning and function of the shovel—tool to be used or art to be studied? The functional nature of the shovel has been subsumed by its ontological nature. Because meaning is transitive, our choice of what the shovel means amends its nature, returns it to a context, and so restores it to stability in the world of things. With our response, we give the shovel memory.

Like Gris, then, Duchamp incorporates the act of selection into the environment of these mass-produced consumer goods that are the building blocks of art. But while in Gris the act of selection is confined to the purchase and arrangement of goods, in Duchamp the act of selection extends beyond the choice of goods to include the choice of meaning as well. Gris's architecture is inside the house, as Duchamp's is inside the response of the observer. Together they restore to architecture the interior whose reality Foucault and Venturi deny. Such architectural models are unable to transcend the private realm.

This inability does not, of course, stem from any artistic ineptitude. Neither Gris nor Duchamp—nor anyone else for that matter—can create a public architecture at will. Such an architecture, by definition, is dependent on the social presence of consensual values and norms. In their absence, the designer cannot create them; and, architecture is either doomed to alienation, or at best achieves authenticity only in private unless—and until—it becomes po-

litical. The attempt to lift architecture from the private realm and root it again in the common world of the present can succeed only if it begins at the place where Gris and Duchamp stop—at the place where private choice is transformed into political action.

IV. Erasing the Ghost of Perrault

Le Corbusier's famous slogan "Architecture or Revolution" is a paradigm of the alienated dualism that remains oblivious to the material possibility of revolutionary action inherent in—not an alternative to—the nature of architecture. This revolutionary action is gesture. Gesture, purposeful and socially intelligible movement, is the only language native to architecture that both retains the process of choice (the response of the engaged observer) and is predicated upon the existence of a common tongue. Gesture reunites architecture to nature by restoring mimesis to design. In this endeavour architectural design takes as its model the performing arts—especially dance, drama and music. In gestural architecture the designer attempts neither to invent nor to replicate an original but, as in the theatre, to forge art by choices of interpretation. Because gesture is, by definition, not private, it has in architecture the potential to push the process of choice from the private realm of modern art into the public realm of social life.

If architecture is to circumvent the unhappy dualism of Perrault, it must, through gesture, reclaim history. History must become again the content of design, not its abstracted reflection. A necessary first step in this process is one that coincides with Gris's and Duchamp's reclamation of the interior denied by pluralism. This is the recovery of the page; the foundation on which modern history rests. Just as in the Reformation ecclesiastical music withdrew from the instrument to consolidate itself in the unaccompanied anthem, so too, today architecture that returns to

the ground from which it has been displaced stands as the strongest witness to its own renewal.

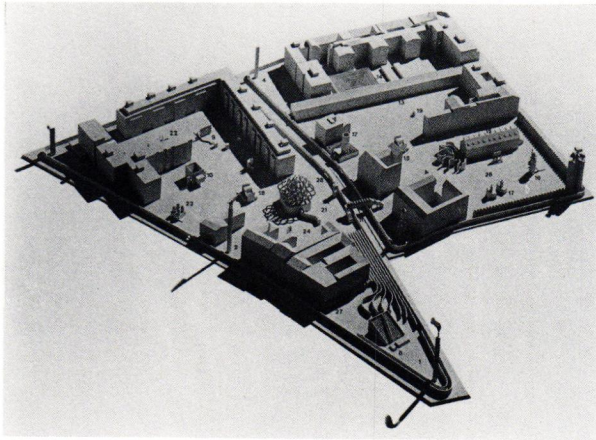
Because it uses the two-dimensional media as its format, such architecture is often assailed by those reluctant to acknowledge what they term "paper architecture" as authentic practice. To call graphics "architecture," to call a urinal a "Fountain," expands the universe of possibilities and so subverts the existing one. The work of Hejduk and Libeskind, in particular, dissolves a purely modern conceptual category of what constitutes architecture—a category to which our alienated culture has grown accustomed. To dissolve this category and reform a broader one is inevitably a political act. Such an act converts the process of choice into purposeful public gesture by means that are essentially medieval. Hejduk's masques, after all, originate as much in morality plays as in the Stuart court, and Libeskind's drawings extend the Gothic quest for diaphanous structure to its ultimate manifestation.

Hejduk's masques are based on the primitive notion that actions speak louder than words. As in ritualized dance, the body language of forms in the masque tell the story. Action is visual and design is the assembly of scenes. The corollary of this is that if design is action and action, in turn, is visual, then the architect becomes a "picture-maker"—precisely the term used in the 16th century to describe the masque-maker Inigo Jones in the era prior to the professional specialization of the building trades.²²

In Hejduk's masque the performers are buildings. They include stock types such as the house, the barn, the bridge, and the ubiquitous tower family,

Fig. 3: Marcel Duchamp, *Bottlerack*, (Original, 1914, lost). Photograph, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Fig. 4: Marcel Duchamp, *In Advance of a Broken Arm*, 1915-55, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT.

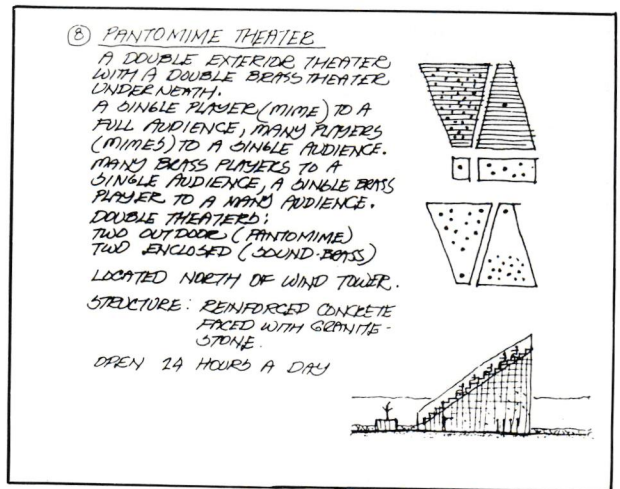


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whose members wander in and out of various Hejduk projects as if they were the lost children of Harlequin and Columbine. The value of such Readymade characters is that their generalized identities make them immediately recognizable. They are gestures. Like the mask in the *Commedia dell'arte*, building type establishes character. If type then is character rather than reductivist technique, Hejduk's cast of building characters challenge the hegemony of Durand's definition of type as merely the product of cost-efficiency economics.

Hejduk's *Berlin Masque* (1981), for example, is a play involving the recovery of the public character of the stage where architecture acts (figs. 5-8).²³ If, as Kurt Forster has shown, the Renaissance theatre equates the stage with the urban square, then in this masque the stage, the public realm, is equated with the architectural facade.²⁴ The facade, the mask of the building, is the interstitial stage on which architecture acts. And the facade is the critical in-between zone that forms the bridge between two-dimensional and three-dimensional design.

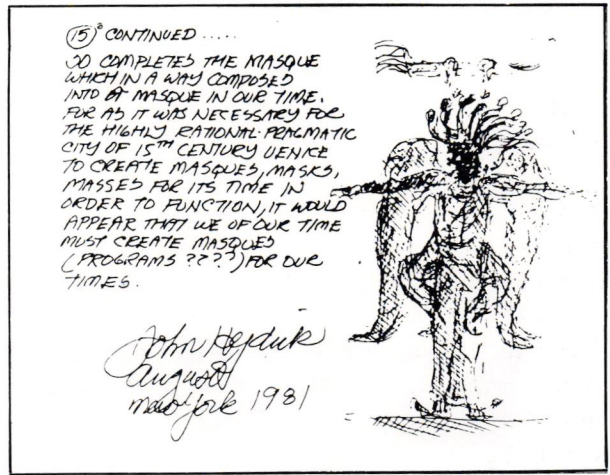
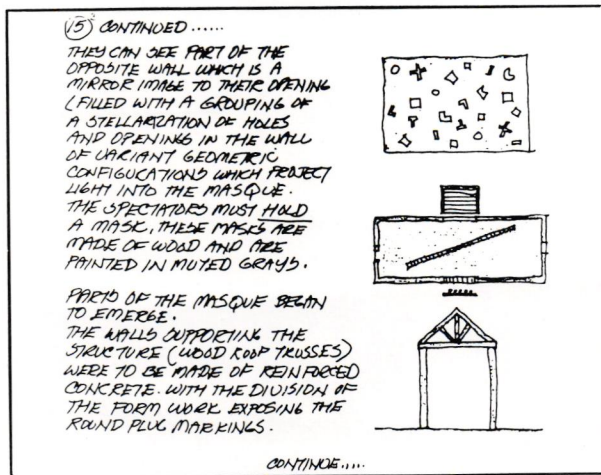
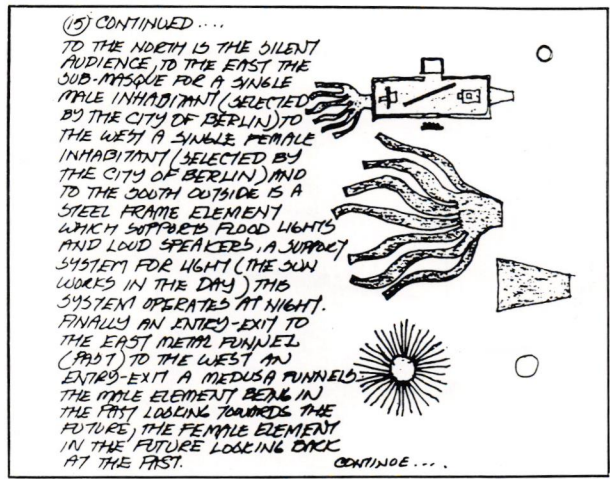
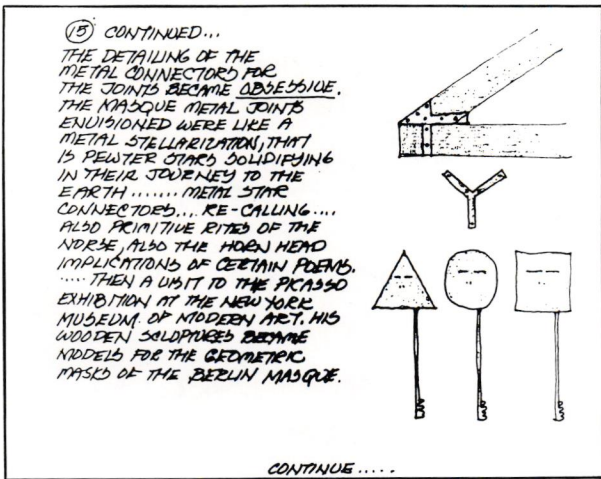
The masque is set in a town divided into a triangle and a square, a surrogate for Berlin, the place of performance and itself the divided city (fig. 5). The two halves of the bisected town are linked by a "cross-over bridge." The bridge foreshadows the central theme of intersection or linking with which the masque is concerned. Its counterpoint is the clock tower, an emblem of the architecture of alienation. In the clock tower a "square blank surface travels over time," covering the number it marks: at "five o'clock the square blank surface covers the number five."²⁵ On this clock only past and future are fixed and visible: the present alone is obscured. The blank surface that hides the present is the mask worn by time. And it is the character of the mask of the present that the final scene of the *Berlin Masque* investigates.



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The final scene revolves around a masque building. This masque-within-a-masque is a theatre containing spectators. The spectators are themselves masked and face a screen whose perforations mirror the patterns of the spectators' masks. This condenses into an icon of the perennial architectural problems of the relationship between inside and out, between private and public. As the mask is to the wearer, so the facade is to the building. Like the mask, the facade acts as a mediating pretense; it can pretend, as in some classical and Gothic architecture, to be an imitation of that which it veils. In such cases, the exterior diagrams and reflects the interior. At the other extreme, the facade pretends, as in some canonical modernist works, to be a free floating plane unrelated to the interior it conceals. Between these two extremes lie infinite possibilities. It is the contribution of the *Berlin Masque* to direct our attention to this question and the range of possible answers. The disputing claims as to what part the facade—the public mask—should play in explicating the interior are acted in pantomime within the masque building. We, the spectators of the spectators, are the arbitrators of the mask.

The draftsmanship that describes this masque lacks all pretensions to intricacy. Nothing in the sketches suggest that the building types cannot be built, yet nothing tells us how to do it. In structure, as in rendering, technique appears innocent of ambition. This same disinterest in the technology of the marketplace informs Daniel Libeskind's work. Libeskind restores integrity to architectural design through the development of drawings that can have no built parallel in the constructed three-dimensional world. His drawings can in no way be read as plans—that is, as systematic schemes whose function it is to propose and represent real achievements that are intended to take place in the future or, conversely, to



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record those that have taken place in the past. Because Libeskind's drawings have neither a future nor a past in the built world, they take from the conventions of architectural representation their powers of temporal imperialism. In so depriving the drawing of its ability to colonize time, such graphics bestow upon design the graces of autonomy and immediacy, the graces that come with the refusal to reify time. Because such works exist in the continuous present, rather than in the displaced time of "before" and "after" construction, they are ahistorical and atemporal. Because they defy that obsession with past and future we call "history," Libeskind's drawings restore memory to design.

In his *Chamber Works*, for example, architectural designs are freed from their supporting role as surrogates for three-dimensional artifacts (figs. 9-15)²⁶. By eliminating visual metaphors, these renderings extend to the architectural drawing the truth to material previously conceived of only in relation to built form. This material integrity was first propounded by those disciples of Carlo Lodoli who took the name of "Rigoristti." Their position, as Alberto Perez-Gomez has shown, was based on the belief that "Nothing

could be more absurd than to use a certain material to represent another."²⁷ Accordingly, to conceive of an architectural drawing as a representation of a building is to engage in the folly of fashioning materials to look like something they are not. The "realistic" architectural rendering, like the cast iron acanthus leaves, is deception. And the "illustration" of architecture makes drawings into an indentured servant of the technology of the marketplace. It is just such bondage that the *Chamber Works* negate.

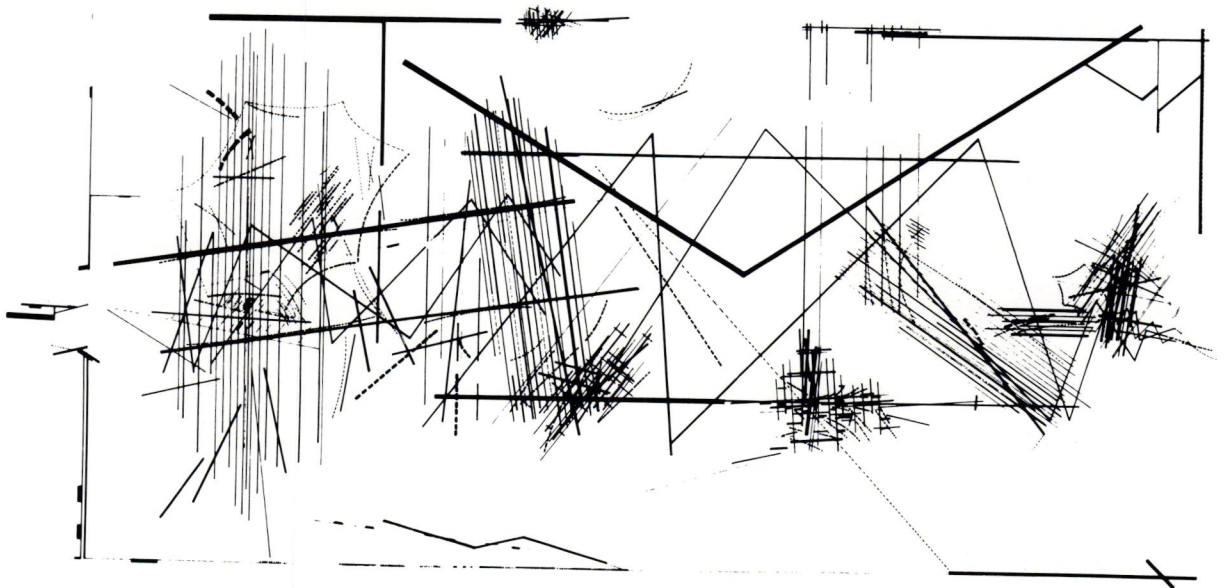
Because Libeskind's works are, as he says, "irreverent to a given system of production," they make possible an architecture constructed by the reader.²⁸ If Hejduk engages the spectator as a participant in the

Fig. 5: John Hejduk, "Frontispiece," *Berlin Masque*, 1980-81 from John Hejduk, *Vier Entwurf*, (Zurich), 1983.

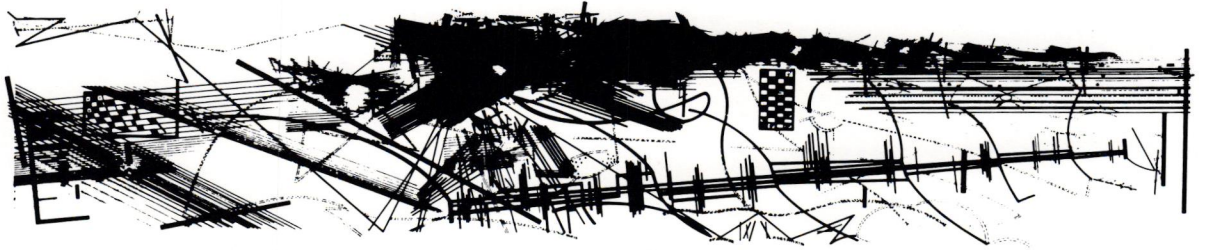
Fig. 6: John Hejduk, "Pantomime Theater," *Berlin Masque*, 1980-81, from John Hejduk, *Vier Entwurf*, (Zurich) 1983, pp. 43, fig. 8.

Fig. 7: John Hejduk, "Masque," *Berlin Masque*, 1980-81, from John Hejduk, *Vier Entwurf*, (Zurich), 1983, pp. 50, fig. 15-1, 15-3.

Fig. 8: John Hejduk, "Masque," *Berlin Masque*, 1980-81, from John Hejduk, *Vier Entwurf*, (Zurich), 1983, pp. 51, fig. 15-5, 15-6.



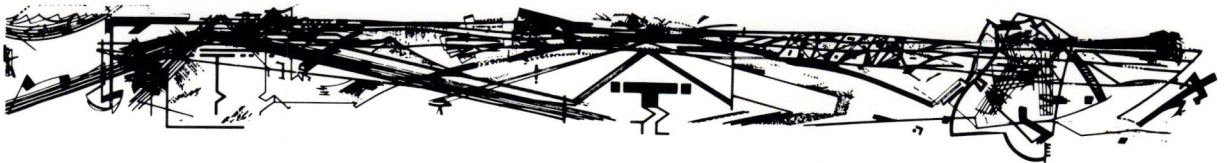
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masque, Libeskind pursues a parallel course by inviting the observer to activate the process of selection and assembly implicit in the drawings. Thus the drawings function as a score or script from which there arises an architecture that itself activates the process of selection and assembly implicit in the still lifes of Gris.

The *Chamber Works* are a set of twenty-eight black-line drawings subtitled *Architectural Meditations on Themes from Heraclitus*. They are divided into two sets of fourteen members each; the first, a series of Horizontal variations; the second, a series of Vertical variations. These two themes are introduced by the equation "1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7 = 28." This equation consists of a set of consecutive positive integers arranged in a series that constitutes what the Greeks termed triangular numbers: numbers representable by a set of dots arranged as an equilateral triangle. This equation and the triangle that it describes are the structure of the *Chamber Works*. The triangular number whose base line is seven advises us that the *Works* are divided not only into two symmetrical sets but that each set is in turn divided into two subsets of seven members each. Thus the sequential reading of the drawings as a progressive set moving from one to fourteen is an arbitrary one. It is based on the linear assumption that the first component in a series is the generator and that the direction of the *Works* consists in the broad movement from large and diaphanous drawings to narrow and dense ones (figs. 9-13). But when the equation is used as an index to the drawings, it appears that the central drawing in each set is, in fact, the primary one (figs. 11, 15). The central drawing is the foundation image that carries encoded within it the twin trajectories of movement back towards the first drawing and forward toward the last drawing. As in a litmus strip so, here, the seventh of fourteen graduated steps is the neutral median point against which the balance of all other steps are measured.

The foundation images of each set tell stories. The Horizontal, with its rolling, waving landscape and jagged cliffs, is replete with topographic content (fig. 11). The Vertical, with its abstract depiction of a Madonna and Child (descended from Durer and Schongauer as much as from Gris and Mondrian), is replete with figural imagery (figs. 15, 16). Together these two series recount the intersection between nature and the human being. The Horizontal tells the story of the earth, the land, the sea, and the story of what occurs on the surface of the earth, the farm, and the city. The Vertical tells the story of the heavens, air and fire, and the story of that which walks upright, breathing air and fire and moving perpendicular to the earth. In this Heraclitan cosmos, of which human beings and their art form one aspect, there is an underlying harmony among diverse elements. The Vertical, human beings and that which they make—art and children—is made of the same materials as the Horizontal. Art and people are depicted as parallel images of the land and sea against whose natural directions human activity stands in contrast (but not in antagonism). The Vertical is the

Fig. 9: Daniel Libeskind, Horizontal Series, Plate I, *Chamber Works: Architectural Meditations on Themes from Heraclitus*, (London), 1983.

Fig. 10: Daniel Libeskind, Horizontal Series, Plate VI, *Chamber Works: Architectural Meditations on Themes from Heraclitus*, (London), 1983.

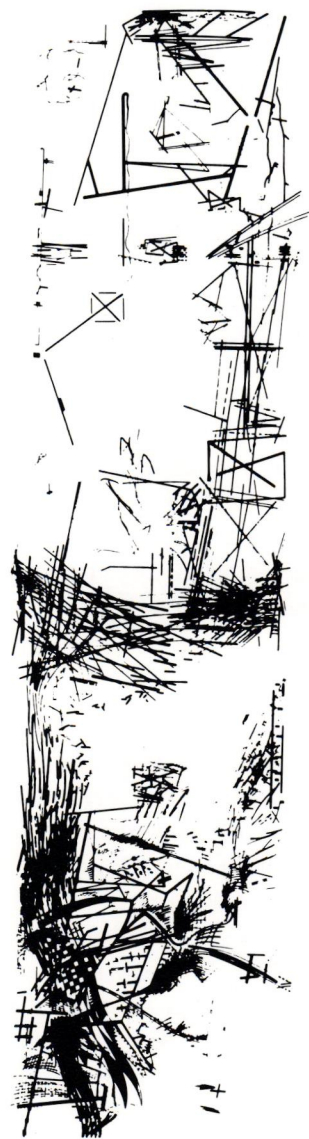
Fig. 11: Daniel Libeskind, Horizontal Series, Plate VII, *Chamber Works: Architectural Meditations on Themes from Heraclitus*, (London), 1983.

Fig. 12: Daniel Libeskind, Horizontal Series, Plate VIII, *Chamber Works: Architectural Meditations on Themes from Heraclitus*, (London) 1983.

Fig. 13: Daniel Libeskind, Horizontal Series, Plate XIV, *Chamber Works: Architectural Meditations on Themes from Heraclitus*, (London), 1983.



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triumph of the Horizontal because the commonality of the line between them is recognized. The link between the Horizontal and the Vertical, between nature and the human being, is architecture. Architecture is the missing link in the creation story of the *Chamber Works*. And this link, the intersection of Horizontal and Vertical, must be made by the *Works'* audience. The two series of drawings must be shuffled like a deck of Gris's Readymade playing cards, bringing together Horizontal and Vertical in a single integrated set, a paradigm of construction. This

construction is permitted but not prescribed by the unbounded character of the drawings. Architecture, when and if it occurs, is thus defined in the *Chamber Works* as the product of choice, and further, as that bridge between the human being and the natural environment which bears within it the memory of each. It is at this bridge that the dualistic presence of Perrault might finally be erased. If this is so, then we are in that startling place where past and future intersect, where architecture is once again at that rough strong stage of shadows caught by stones.



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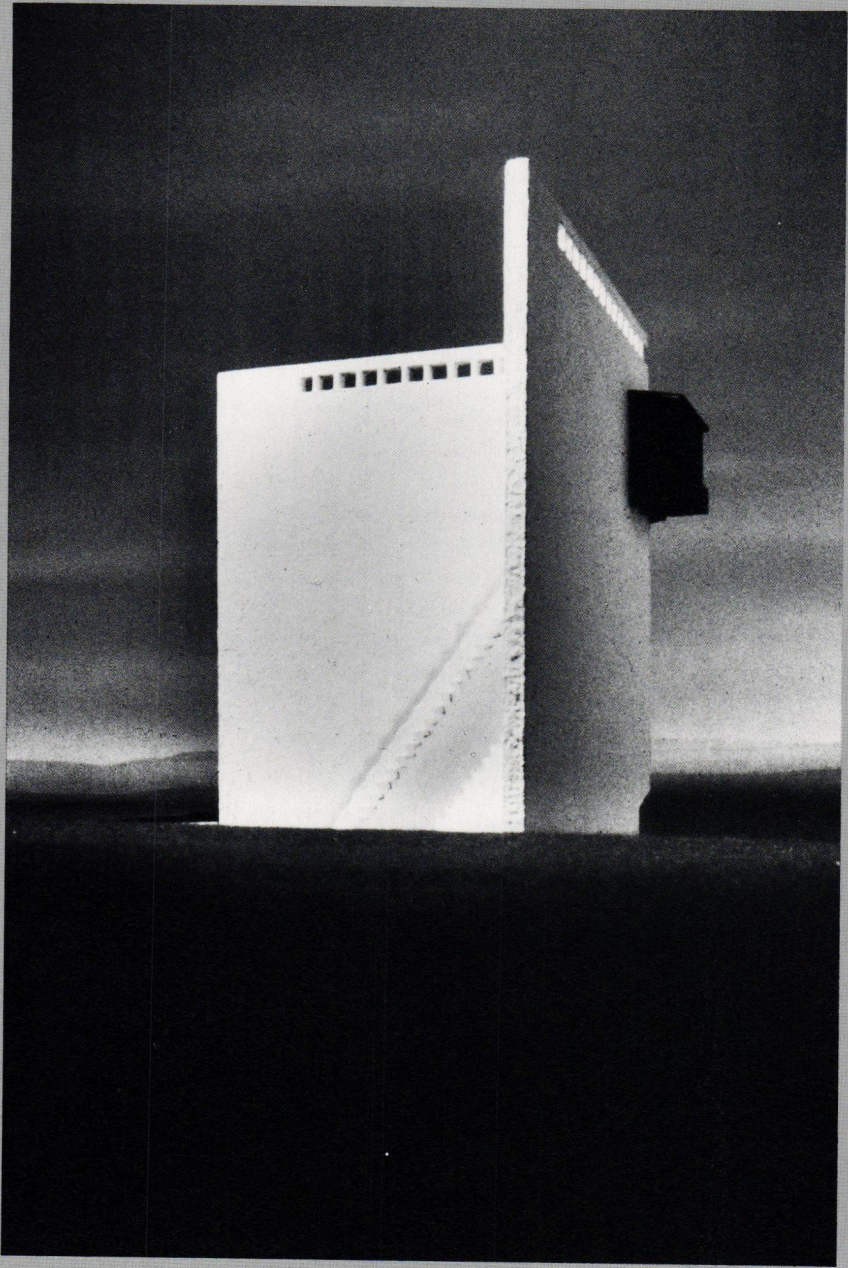
Notes

1. At various points in the development of this paper I have benefited from discussions with David Bell, John Hancock, Kenneth Lamb, Dennis Mann, John Meunier, Marc Treib, Eric Sada, and Stephen Fishman, my colleagues in philosophy with whom I taught a course in architecture and philosophy in 1983. To these and other friendly critics I owe much, yet the errors of my ways remain my own.
2. John Hancock terms the subservience of architecture to history a "Babylonian Captivity." See his "Architecture and Its History: Past Future and Future Pasts," *Journal of Architectural Education*, (Fall 1982), p. 33.
3. Henri Aerner, (ed.), "The Crisis in the Discipline," *Art Journal*, (Winter 1982), Vol. 42, No. 4.
4. Leon Battista Alberti, *Ten Books on Architecture*, ed., J. Rykwert, (London), 1955. See also Alberti, *On Painting*, ed. and trans. J. R. Spencer, (New Haven), rev. ed., 1966, especially pp. 23-28 for a discussion of the meaning of *istoria* in Alberti's work.
5. See particularly François Blondel, *Cours d'Architecture Enseignée dans l'Académie royale de l'Architecture*, (Paris and Amsterdam), 2nd ed., 1698.
6. Claude Perrault, *Ordonnance des Cinq Espèces de Colonnes, selon la Méthode des Anciens*, (Paris), 1683. See also Charles Perrault, *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes*, (Paris), 1688-1697.
7. Joseph Rykwert, *The First Moderns: The Architects of the Eighteenth Century*, (Cambridge and London), 1980, especially Chapter 2, "Positive and Arbitrary," pp. 25-53.
8. See Claude Perrault, *Recueil de Plusieurs Machines de Nouvelle Invention*, (Paris), posthumously published, 1700; Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, *Entwurf einer historischen Architektur*, (Vienna), 1721. See also Lionello Venturi, *History of Art Criticism*, trans. C. Marriot, (New York), rev. ed., 1964, especially Chapter 8, "The History of Art and Idealistic Philosophy," pp. 187-212.
9. For an incisive comment on this aspect of Vico's *Scienza Nuova*, see Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, (Chicago and London), 1958, p. 198.
10. This is, of course, what all ideologies pretend to do. See Jürgen Habermas, "Technology and Science as 'Ideology'," in *Toward a Rational Society: Student Protest, Science and Politics*, trans. J. J. Shapiro, (Boston), 1970, pp. 81-122.
11. Arendt, *Human Condition*, pp. 167-168.
12. Michael Walzer, "The Politics of Michel Foucault," *Dissent*, (Fall 1983), Vol. 30., No. 4, p. 482.
13. Michel Foucault, "Rarity, Exteriority, Accumulation," in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. S. Smith, (New York), 1972, pp. 118-125.
14. Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 121.
15. Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 121.
16. Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 121, 125.
17. Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, (New York), 1983, p. 106.
18. Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction*, p. 14.
19. Mark Rosenthal, *Juan Gris, Catalog of an Exhibition*, (New York), 1983, p. 106.
20. Quoted in Calvin Tomkins, *The Bride and the Bachelors: Five Masters of the Avant-Garde: Duchamp, Tinguely, Cage, Rauschenberg, Cunningham*, (New York), 1965, p. 41.
21. Marcel Duchamp, *Marchand du sel: Ecrits de Marcel Duchamp*, ed. M. Sanouillet, (Paris), 1958, p. 95. See also Mary Ann Caws, *The Eye in the Text: Essays on Perception, Mannerist to Modern*, (Princeton), 1981, esp. p. 135.
22. John Sumerson, *Inigo Jones*, (Harmondsworth, New York, and Victoria), 1966, p. 15.
23. All quotations and references to Hejduk's masque are from John Hejduk, *Berlin Masque*, (1980-81), in *Vier Entwurf*, (Zurich), 1983.
24. Kurt W. Forster, "Stagecraft and Statecraft: The Architectural Integration of Public Life and theatrical Spectacle in Scamozzi's Theater at Sannionetta," *Oppositions*, (Summer 1977), No. 9, pp. 63-87.
25. Hejduk, *Berlin Masque*, p. 42.
26. See Daniel Libeskind, *Chamber Works, Catalog of an Exhibition at the Architectural Association*, (London), 1983.
27. Alberto Perez-Gomez, *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science*, (Cambridge and London), 1983, p. 253.
28. Daniel Libeskind, "Symbol and Interpretation," in *Between Zero and Infinity*, (New York), 1981, p. 27.

Fig. 14: Daniel Libeskind, Horizontal Series, Plate IV, *Chamber Works: Architectural Meditations on Themes from Heraclitus*, (London), 1983.

Fig. 15: Daniel Libeskind, Horizontal Series, Plate VII, *Chamber Works: Architectural Meditations on Themes from Heraclitus*, (London), 1983.

Fig. 16: Juan Gris, *Harlequin with a Guitar*, 1917, Oil on panel. Alex Hillman Family Foundation.



A Millenarian Hope: The Architecture of Emilio Ambasz

Philip Smith
Emilio Ambasz

As an inventor of a new architectural vocabulary, Emilio Ambasz sometimes envisions his work built by "the last man of the present culture and for the first man of a culture which has not yet arrived." Accordingly, he is in the process of creating an architecture of essentials which does not purport stark reduction but rather an irreducible composite of working parts. His structures emit a strong sense of self-sufficiency. Nestled beneath vineyards, tucked underground and powered by solar panels, such architecture represents a modern unification of nature and technology in a functional and aesthetic coexistence. Like poetry, his work is purposely riddled with deliberate juxtapositions. Massive earth forms contrast with the Zen pleasures of trickling water. Brilliant solar panels barricade the landscape only to reveal acres of farmland with its community built subterraneously.

Ambasz believes in and writes fables. Like castles in the clouds, his structures appear to be found rather than built. They are every adjective: fantastic, imaginative, and illusionary. To this list I will add visionary. His fables often become the blueprints for the structures. Upon occasion he has handed his manuscript to an artist and said, "Render it." From these illustrations the structures enter into florescence, blooming into existence. The German town of Ludenhausen engaged Ambasz to build a reminder to the atrocities of war and he designed a garden, or rather a series of gardens, each defined by a wall of hedges. Within this series, every individual plot becomes the property of a child who through cultivating the plot is taught responsibility, coexistence, and the cycles of nature. After the death of an individual owner, the plot is gifted to a new child, who must then decide whether to recultivate the roots of the past or begin afresh. Eventually, it is hoped that through negotiation the separating hedges will be removed and a host of communal gardens will result.

Again using agri-tecture, Ambasz designed a more utilitarian structure for a cooperative group of Mexi-

can-American farmers. They had settled in trailers on a not-very-fertile stretch of land and were motivated toward grape cultivation. Ambasz designed an arboreal architecture for the community without bricks or nails. Rather than continuing the tradition of growing grapes on the ground, Ambasz raised the plants onto a trellis that not only shades the fragile grapes from the incessant sun but also provides the roof for their living quarters. Each family is provided with a 270-foot-square plot of land defined by hedges under the arbor. Here they park their trailers to live under a serene sky of light filtered through grape leaves, and to worship in an open-air church built into the excavated earth. With this design, Ambasz created a truly poetic solution to practical low-cost housing.

In his complex for *The Center for Applied Computer Research and Programming*, Ambasz employed off-the-shelf technology and in so doing created mechanical allusions to nature. The complex is defined by two enormous walls, one a solar panel, the other an electronic billboard, casually resting against each other. An off-the-shelf mechanical device atomizes water molecules to produce a vast water cloud complete with a rainbow for cooling the complex. The area for construction is quite swampy, so Ambasz proposed a series of office barges that rest in a water basin that will also serve to drain surrounding land, providing firm ground for future growth. The barges are connected by walkable polyethylene tubes. As work patterns change, the barges can be rearranged or removed from the basin until just a cloud and two monumental walls remain as a surrogate for architecture.

Highlighting the architect's concern for the ethereal elements of earth and sky, wind and water, is a retreat designed for a couple in Spain. The property is

Fig. 1: Cordoba House, Cordoba, Spain.

delineated by a massive structure of two free-standing walls, isolated within a vast wheatfield. Within its interior are steps cantilevered from the wall with the handrail excavated into brick. Inside the handrail, a stream of water cascades downward. The sound of water gradually diminishes to a gentle trickle as one climbs the stairs to the upper level. This architectural illusion is consciously based on an Arabic device known as "the stairway to Heaven." The uppermost portion of the wall contains a chamber balcony for meditation where one is comforted by panoramic views of the landscape and soothed by the background murmuring of nesting birds. The house is invisible from the land surface, being some distance from the wall. Built underground, it surrounds an open-air Andalusian patio. The abstract interiors further augment the feeling of serene isolation and temporary withdrawal from the modern world.

Influenced by minimalist and earthwork arts, technological and classical forms, natural forces and the imagination, Ambasz produces polyvalent architecture, a stage set that serves as surreal background for the dramas of fundamental human activity. With architecture that is both there and not there, Ambasz places us into a new state of existence which is a celebration of human majesty, thought, and sensation. Though apparently quite new, there are devices both primitive and ancient permeating the designs. The result is an architecture that seems to stand for eternity.

Smith: Unlike the now popular search for historical elements that engages in the mere reproduction of columns, porticos, and keystones, your work projects conceptual references to anthropology. There is an appeal to our innate yet almost forgotten sense of ritual. Our identification with a continuous past is based on instinct rather than the visually obvious and representational.

Ambasz: There is in all of us a deep need for ritual, for ceremony, for procession, for garments, and for magical gestures. I think it is an archetypal

search in which we all partake. The architecture of which you speak is in most cases very academic. Its architects crave references where the footnote is evident and the scholastic method flawless. They make a gate by using architectural historical pieces that have always been seen as a gate. I also make gates, but I make them by framing a passage with earth berms. Perhaps we are searching for the same thing, but the way we announce it is very different.

To put it into a larger frame of reference, one could say that every age has manifested the same immense desire to create an abode and an equally immense desire for having the roof "disappear" to reveal a very benign sky where it is always sunny, delightful, and sensually pleasant. The Baroque artists painted trompe l'oeil clouds on the ceiling and the Persians made magnificent lapis lazuli skies. I open up the roof by completely opening the center of the house.

There are architects now engaged in *recovery*. I am interested in *discovery*. In recovery, they return to the source of history and utilize elements that make sense to each other. However, they end up talking a tremendously hermetic language, in which most of the references can only be understood by those initiated into the cult. You can exist in this way if you want to remain inside a convent. But if you are really going to deal with real problems such as housing, they cannot be solved by pasting up little fragments of history. I am not against seeking to maintain a continuum with history, nor am I against a search for ornament. On the contrary, I am all for ornament; my heart beats for scrambled egg on the walls. But I don't believe in ornament that results from buying history by the foot. I believe in inventing ornament where it is intrinsic to the structure of the thing made. My objection is that in many cases, this quest has become a very culturally tired search. I hope that I am far more vital. But I must be lucid and acknowledge that I am still a product of my culture. I should confess, therefore, that I sometimes

fancy myself to be the last man of the present culture and look longingly to designing the house for the first man of a culture which has not yet arrived.

Smith: You occupy a contradictory and individualistic position in modern architecture. The work embodies the bizarre and the practical, the past and the future, the monumental and the invisible. Yet underneath all these factors is an engineer's sense of functionalism. How do you reconcile these diverse conditions?

Ambasz: A great deal of my time goes into proving that what I draw can be built. I put tremendous effort into making drawings of all details to show that it can be done. An important aspect of my technique is in using elements that exist in a catalog of available technology or contemporary agricultural methods. For the Mexican project I could give you the names of all the manufacturers, because the project is composed of ready-mades. The solar energy panels were made in Mexico, the billboard in Holland, the barges in Mexico, the hoses in France.

I like to believe that I have trained myself to have a certain discipline for getting at the principle of the problem. I try to deal with essentials, not by purpose, but by nature.

Smith: From this essence a wonderful harmony emerges. Everything works. The outcome is a quite self-sufficient machine that hums.

Ambasz: Like many self-sufficient men, I am inclined to suspect that part of that is facade. But, now, seriously, I must agree with your observation, for the houses do suggest a profound sense of security.

Smith: Every project seems to rest on some sort of mythical fable, like a house once imagined in a foreign land belonging to a princess locked in a tower. Is the project itself a fable or does the architecture exist as a separate but interdependent entity?

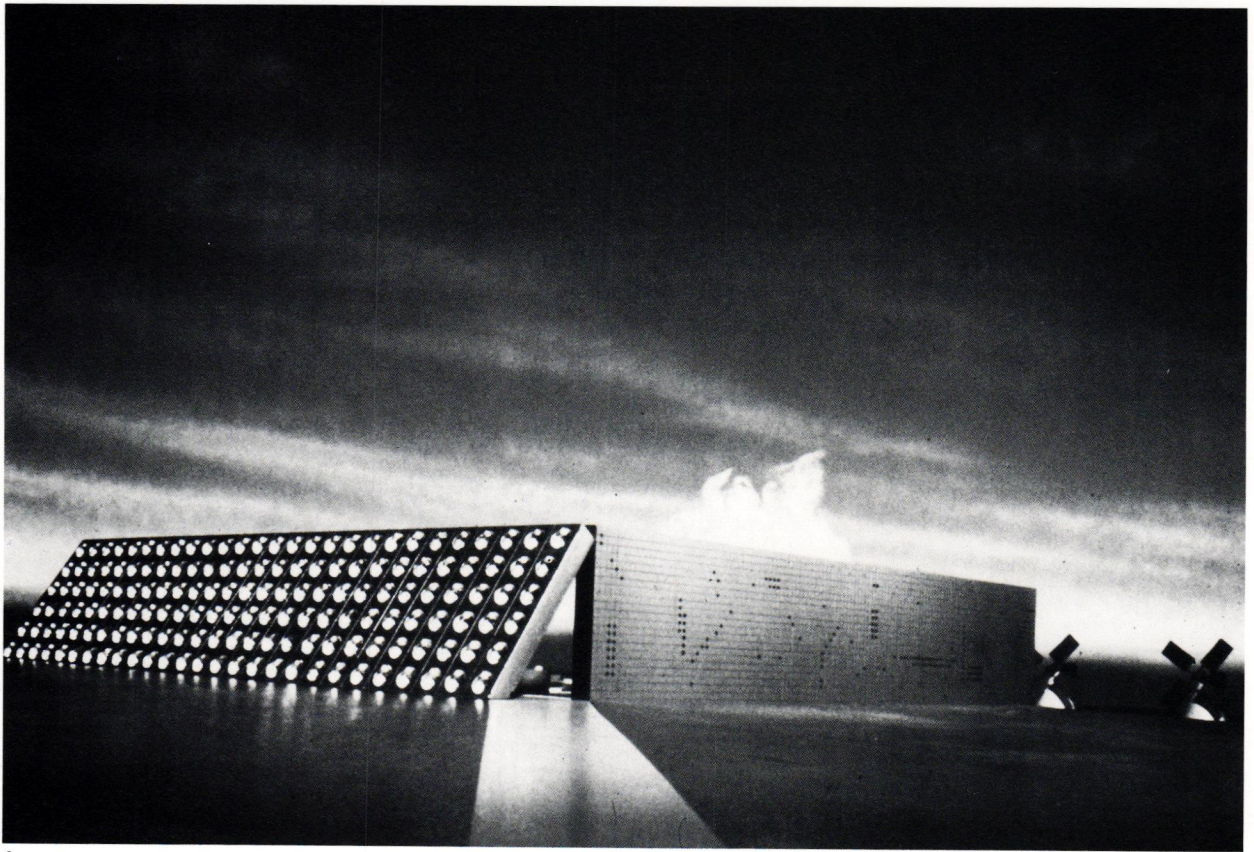
Ambasz: Your question pinpoints my reason for writing fables. The areas blur. Sometimes the fable is a project and the descriptive literary part is purely technical, and sometimes the imagery of the fable becomes the illustration. With the Chicano project I had different artists do different renderings. I never showed them plans. I just told them the fable and said, "Illustrate it." With the fable illustrated, the built architecture results.

Smith: But more than just fairy tales, the fables and the architecture seem steeped in mysticism, possibly on the order of the Arabian Nights.

Ambasz: A double role is being played. On the one hand, I am playing with elements that come from my period, such as technology. On the other hand, I am proposing a certain mode of existence that is different. This is a search for essential things—being born, being in love, and dying—certain things which always move the heart, eternal things which always return. They have to do with existence on an emotional, passionate, and sensual level. Perhaps I use very austere elements to express them and therefore the gesture is a very austere one. But by doing it this way I believe it may be far more durable. It is certainly a far more classical attempt. I am interested in the passionate and the emotional in an almost timeless way. I am interested in presenting ideas and images which can serve as prototypical.

Smith: In what way are the houses models for the future of architecture, visions of the next era?

Ambasz: The problems of the future are eminently *urban* problems but not necessarily city problems. The only way I find it possible to handle them would be to deal with relatively small numbers. Most of my prototypes are relatively simple. They are always in open areas and deal with an interesting community of people, eight or nine people animated by a certain idea or otherwise a very special family. I am interested in developing the notion of agro-urban communities—communities of 400 to 500 fam-



2

ilies—that scale of operation. In a city I find myself having to work much more in terms that recognize the city as found territory. You have to accept the restrictions and the context. You have to accept the history of the city which is a cultural history. So you must have elements which replay culturally. But, in truth, I can't make projections about the future. I can only *present* solutions.

Smith: When did you first begin to build underground?

Ambasz: Allow me to remark that although my projects use earth, very few of them are underground. Most of these projects are built *above* grade level and then earth is used to integrate them into the landscape. The first project was about three years ago. While driving through Spain I saw two walls standing, and I started thinking about a very strange square grid pattern of many walls crossing each other at regular intervals. You could have walked on top of these walls and seen the vineyards growing within each square. That was the way the image came to me. Then I elaborated on that, and I came up with the Cordoba house where the actual edge of the walls is the edge of the land. The notion of the underground house is a very simple one, a very plain device. I wanted to eliminate architecture. The only thing to stand was to be the facade which is like a mask, like a surrogate for architecture. The architecture disappears; you see only the earth.

Smith: But for a simple concept it seems so revolutionary and so appropriate for today.

Ambasz: There is a long tradition. You have ten million people in a province in China where the earth is very easy to cut, and all live underground. Some people get very anxious about living close to the earth, but they confuse berming for burying. I can take a normal house, a Levitt house or even two trailers at a certain angle to each other and cover them partially with earth, leaving the sides open for direct view and ventilation. It is that simple.

Smith: Returning to the house in Spain, I find it quite surreal—the casual placement of two enormous walls on the landscape without any seemingly logical or visual connection to any other structural elements.

Ambasz: You always have the sense that behind the walls are absent presences or present absences. The notion of that which is in front of you and that which happens behind the wall has always appealed to me. There is a certain type of anima or spirit behind the wall. When you approach it you see two walls resting offe way or another, and you can see the suggestion of clouds, or in the case of the house in Cordoba, you see the two walls and when you walk about the other side there is a great surprise—not a cubic house but just a shell. In the house for the *Castelli Houses for Sale* show you have the berms act-



3

ing as massive, strong fortresses through which you pass to discover a terribly benign giant. They are just hiding a very simple house. There is a certain symbolism there, certain atavistic memories I assume one has when walking through the berms. If you walk through massive earth like these berms, you would almost feel your hair being slightly pulled. They are such a big mass that they contain a certain gravity. You have an almost optic sensorial perception of their existence. But the mass is designed in such a way that you know you will get through. It's not a heavy overwhelming tunnel. I have no interest in anguish. The feeling should be far more religious and ritualistic. I am interested in the rituals and ceremonies for the twenty-four hours of the day. I am not interested in the rituals and the ceremonies for the very long voyage—voyages which can taken forty to fifty years. Those are utopian. *And what a tragedy to discover that for the sake of those long-term dreams we have sacrificed our daily lives.* No, I am interested in daily rituals—the ritual of sitting in a courtyard and being slightly protected from the view of your neighbors and the strong wind, looking up at the stars; the situation of the father sitting on the bed and looking across the courtyard to see his children playing in a room: an acknowledgment that there exists a certain generational distance but with the hope that they may come together in the living room, an acceptance of the fact that the family unit exists, made up of people of different ages, different modes of percep-

tion, and different ways of sensing reality. The younger ones in the family never know how much the older ones know. There is a certain form of wisdom that will come to them much later when it is too late for any form of communication. Dealing with that type of situation attracts me. It is not in the house. I don't make it, but the house provides a backdrop. I am fascinated by stage architecture, in the sense of being a stage for daily life—not one that overwhelms you but one that you can somehow consciously understand.

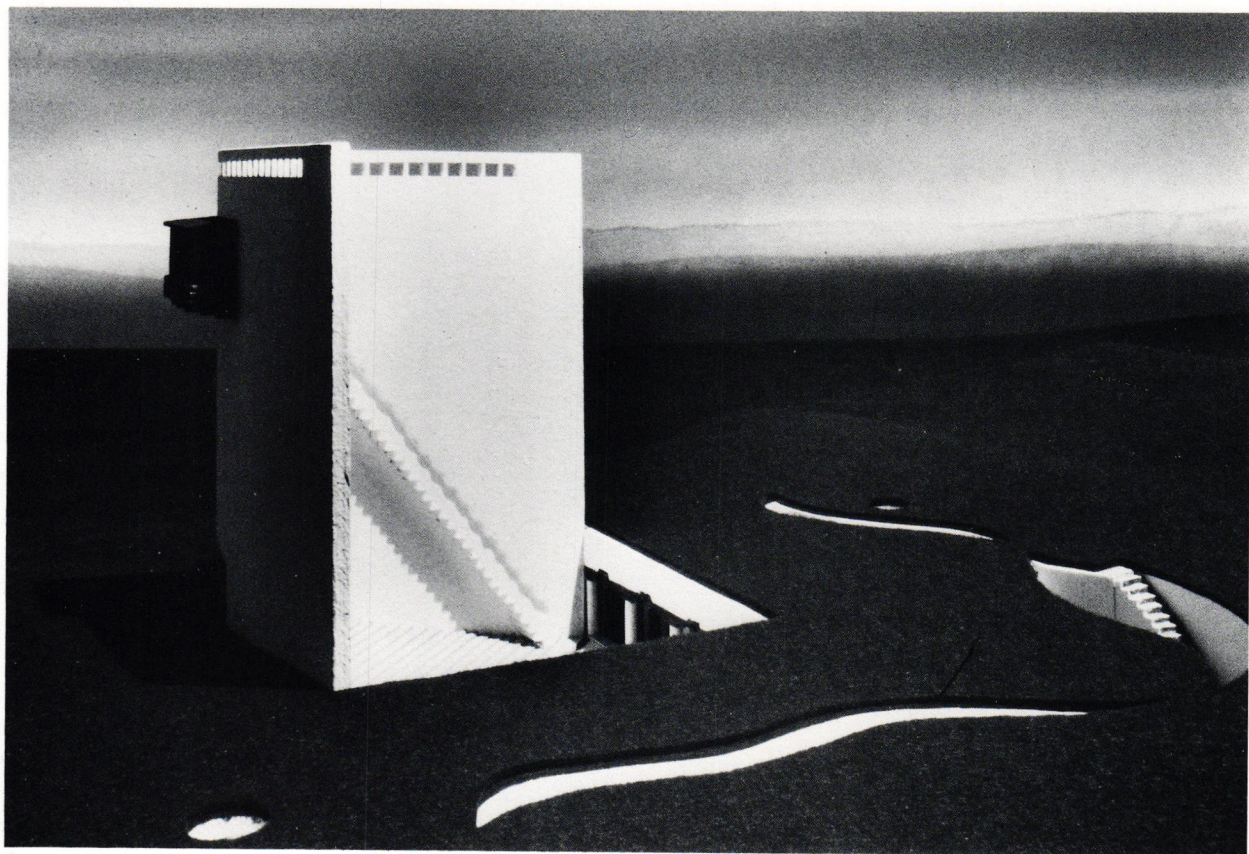
Smith: As you develop this backdrop for daily living, is there an ideal method of living that accompanies the structure?

Ambasz: He has a private space. She has a private space. They meet and reconcile themselves in the living room. The ideal situation perhaps would be two houses: he lives in one, and she lives in the other, and they have to knock at the door if they want each other. They never take each other for granted.

Smith: How civilized. Stars, wind, and family are much overlooked values today. They seem to be implied or woven throughout your architecture.

Fig. 2: Center for Applied Computer Research and Programming, Las Promesas, Mexico.

Fig. 3: Cooperative of Mexican Grape Growers, Borrego Springs, California.



4

Ambasz: I am very conservative, but in the same sense in which seeds may be said to be conservative. I am interested in those things which are eternal. The architecture I make suggests and is evocative of these. But actually I only like to talk about faucets and cubic feet of earth—you know, important matters.

Smith: Much of your work highlights classical concerns of architecture such as the presence of light, the sound of water, and the humane use of space.

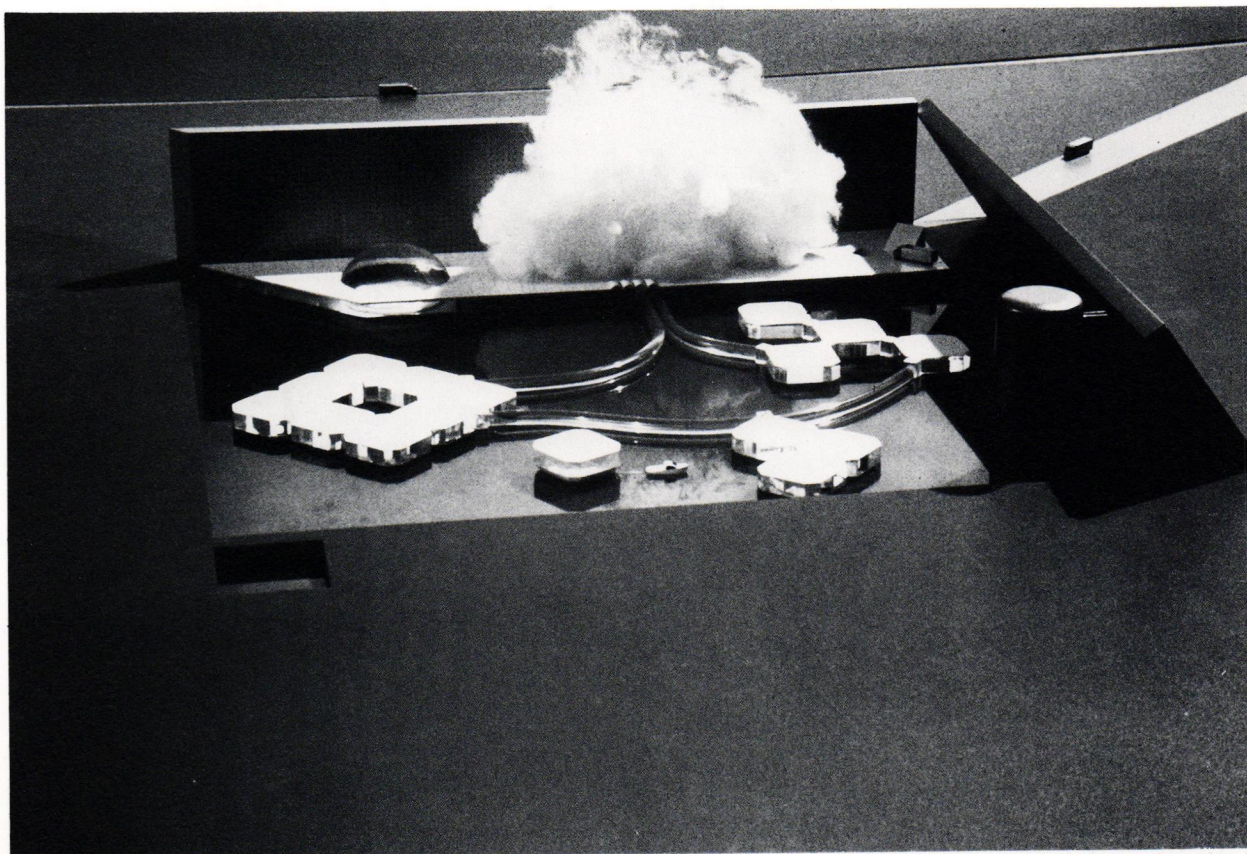
Ambasz: I love traditional techniques of architecture such as the manipulation of perspective or the modulation of light. The Baroque architects knew how to bring in light in such a way that the sculptures in the church looked as if they were lit by magic. They knew how to cover the domes with gold, which would pick up the last rays of sunset so that the peasants surrounding the little village looking out would still know that God was there, that there was hope for the night. They knew so many secrets. Those architects knew how to manipulate feelings of reassurance and hope.

Smith: Why have these traditional techniques been omitted in Modern architecture?

Ambasz: There has been a certain concern since the beginning of the century to create a new type of architecture. The ideological premise was that the new

man would be the one stepping out of history, a new man emerging out of traditional class relationships. This new man could not look at history. History had been the story of the subjugation of one class by another. In this complete ideological construct there would be a new system of property, of classes, and therefore there would be a new type of architecture. So for fifty years Modern architecture has tried not to relate to history at all. Now we realize that it was a complete conceit of the mind. In exchange we have lost a tremendous treasure of architectural experience. Now there is such a longing for ornament, for sensual surfaces, and for certain forms of emotional experiences in architecture, not only the cerebral ones. Professional architects, being as they usually are uncultured and poorly read, go to the books of architecture for reference. They cut out little doorways, little moldings, and paste them up to express a certain longing for modulated surfaces. The fact is that they are frightened of inventing ornament. They apply it; they don't invent it. They are frightened of inventing ornament because they are frightened of making images.

Every period has its mythos, and every myth has its image. The Renaissance had the myth of the Enlightened Man. Man was the creator of things, and pictorial and architectural images were created to represent this. Ours is the only period that has devel-



5

oped methods for generating infinite images, instead of creating the appropriate images to represent its myths. So the image which better represents our period may be that of the method whereby the images may be generated (something like Sol LeWitt's formula for generating images without making a statement about a definitive image). The formula is there; he can always make another one. Thereby you have architecture being taught as a method for generating architectural images but without ever making a value judgement. No wonder it is hard for people in our culture to make conclusive, irreducible images. It would mean making value statements. Because we have found our values so suspect, you can see people who have resorted to the recovery of images from the past. In a certain way, these recovered images come with a warning: "Use these images, but remember, they are just borrowed to satisfy our craving for moldings. They are brought back from history and thus may at any moment be returned." When ornament is glued on rather than being a result of the structure, it has a way of falling off whenever the cultural season changes. My contention is that very few architects take the risk of inventing new images or new ornaments. My ornaments come from using natural materials as in the juxtaposition of agriculture with architecture. Disparate elements when juxtaposed create new images—images that are sometimes moving, sometimes ironic, and sometimes perplexing.

Smith: The idea of growing a building, as in the case of the Chicanos' vineyard, inhabiting a living thing, is so primitive and yet so advanced.

Ambasz: I've seen many vineyards in Italy. They make such a beautiful light. I am interested in creating the ideal roof; the roof under which anything can take place. The ideal gesture would be to arrive at a plot of land which is so immensely fertile that your arrival would be so welcomed, and slowly the land would take shape to provide you with an abode. And within that abode, being such a magical space, it would never rain, nor would there be inclemencies of one sort or another. The hope is that you would not have to build a house. We must build a house only because we are unwelcomed on the land. Every act of construction is an act of defiance to nature.

Smith: I agree.

Ambasz: It's a millenarian hope we all share.

Fig. 4: Cordoba House, Cordoba, Spain.

Fig. 5: Center for Applied Computer Research and Programming, Las Promesas, Mexico.



Principles in the Architecture of Alvar Aalto

Andres Duany

It is remarkable that the architectural vocabulary of Alvar Aalto has not been conceptualized with the degree of precision applied to other, even minor, masters of the Modern Movement. The absence is emphasized by the nonappearance of an Aalto maniera corresponding to the Corbusian of the recent past or the Miesian of a decade earlier.

This situation may be attributed to Aalto's formal kinship with the German wing of modern expressionism and the consequent presumption of a personal and therefore incommunicable architectural syntax. Sigfried Gideon supported this attitude by postulating "irrational-organic" motivations.¹ Henry Russell-Hitchcock, otherwise so sensitive to nonfunctionalist values, resorted to the terms "whimsical," "arbitrary," and "willful" to describe Aalto's forms.² Even recent investigations, like that of Paul David Pearson, maintain that "Aalto's Romantic Modernism . . . was such a personal style that it could not be readily followed by others and was perhaps too subtle and intricate to be formularized. . . ." ³

This essay counters such interpretations by demonstrating the existence of a highly systematic architectural syntax. The documentation is direct: canonical buildings are shown to have consistently rational principles underlying their apparently idiosyncratic formal and organizational structures.

While a good measure of consistency must be assumed at the source of any identifiable architectural language, that of Aalto is elusive. His designs show little evidence of the homogeneous geometric systems which are fundamental to Mies and Wright for example, nor did Aalto ever state an explicit formal agenda on the order of Purism or De Stijl.

In fact, the keys to understanding Aalto's architecture as systematic are three: The first of these identifies a pervasive dualistic sensibility which precludes homogeneous solutions. Aalto's designs seem to involve a dialectical process which integrates mutually contradictory concepts into comprehensive syntheses.

The resulting buildings are complex and virtually free of the failures common to the application of single-minded concepts to social and urban situations.

The second of these acknowledges the primacy of perception and the human vantage point as a formal determinant. Certain important compositional techniques that Aalto employs reveal themselves only when they are understood as ways of controlling the building's impact on the perception of the observer. The ultimate goal of these manipulations is to enhance the visual character of a place and thereby inscribe it in the memory.

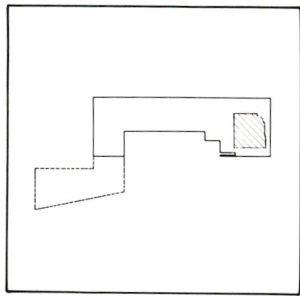
The third of these notes that throughout the Aalto oeuvre there are instances of quotation from the architecture of classical Greece. These direct allusions are interesting, but they are most useful when taken only as evidence of familiarity, the actual effect taking place at the level of principle. In fact, Hellenistic paradigms may be used to clarify the three principal components of Aalto syntax: those which organize program, those which articulate form, and those which define space.

I. Organizing the Program

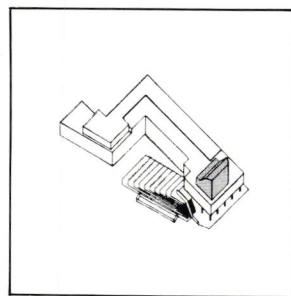
A fundamental duality usually catalyzes Aalto's organization of a given program. The process involves a schematic device which will be called the head/tail principle.

The town hall at Seinäjoki exemplifies the principle clearly (fig. 1). The head element houses the special function, in this case a council chamber. It is mass-positive and formally elaborate, and it is finite in the sense of accommodating a program of fixed scope. The tail is the opposite in every way. It accommodates a mundane program of bureaucratic activity within a neutral orthogonal geometry. It is space-

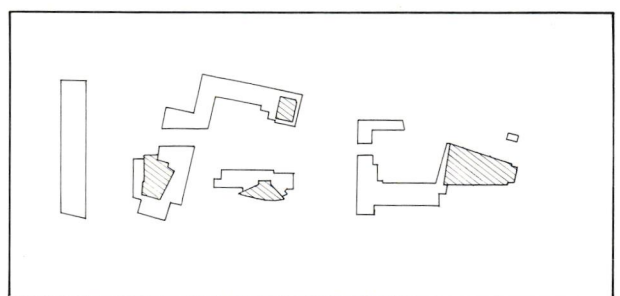
Cultural centre and Town Hall in Jyväskylä.



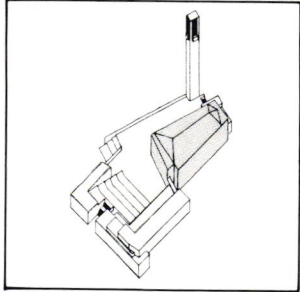
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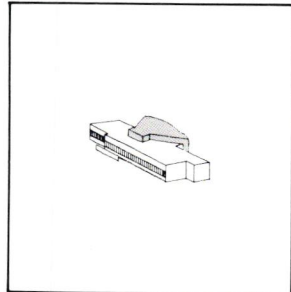
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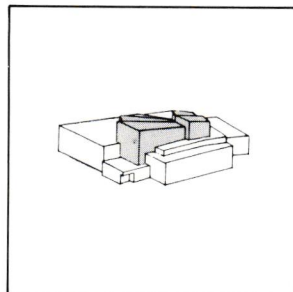
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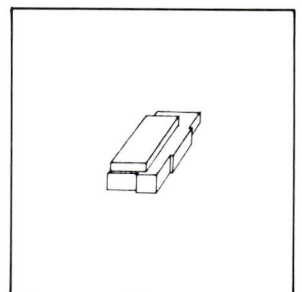
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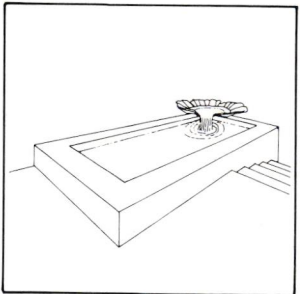
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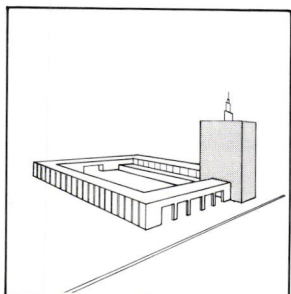
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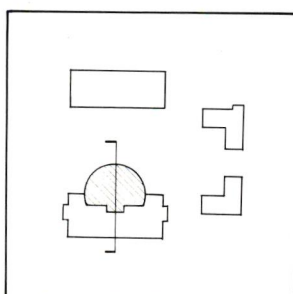
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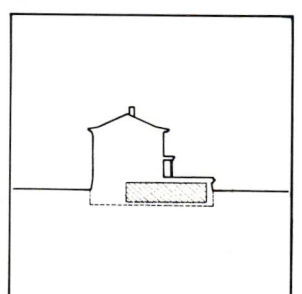
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7b

positive, and it has the intrinsic potential for expansion.

The duality of head and tail is complementary, the one providing a ground from which the figure of the other may be seen to best advantage. The composition thus resolves into a distinct public space and a memorable public object, both being typological components of civic building since the Hellenistic layouts of temenos and temple. A similar coexistence of memorable mass and defined exterior space is rarely to be found in buildings of the Modern Movement, which are usually subject to the predilection for object-gestalt. The constant recourse to this hybrid parti alone would be sufficient to identify Aalto's contribution.

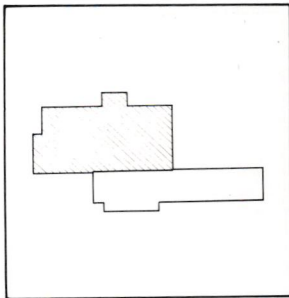
In addition to the town hall, four buildings comprise the Seinäjoki Civic Center: a church, a library, a theater and a municipal office building (fig. 2). These constitute a beautifully expounded series of variations on the head/tail principle.

The head of the church group is the nave (fig. 3). It is unusual (within the type) for an extreme formal reticence, probably attributable to a bulk that is sufficient to establish the necessary priority. This self-effacement allows the other buildings, which are

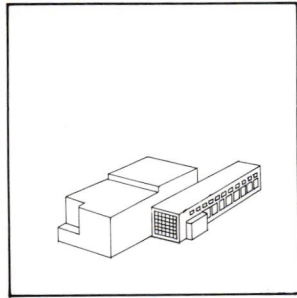
smaller but more elaborate, to assert their respective positions in the hierarchy.

The town hall overcomes the limits of its size by deploying one of the most elaborate and powerful silhouettes in the oeuvre. The heads of the library (the stacks) and the theater (the auditorium) are in turn less distinct, with the municipal office building completely lacking a head portion and being dependent on the other buildings for its image (fig. 4). This gradual typological degeneration presumably coincides with the relative importance of each building.

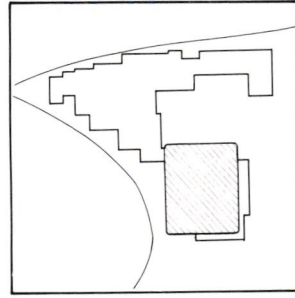
There is a parallel gradation of the tails. The courtyard of the church defines a complete four-sided enclosure; that of the town hall is three-sided and only able to cradle a partial realm; and the other three buildings have no integral courtyards and must cooperate towards a mutual spatial definition. Unlike the square or the forum, Aalto's assemblage of discontinuous individual structures is permeable, and able to perform seamlessly with the adjacent suburban fabric of Seinäjoki. This type of coherent civic place which remains open and integrated to the surrounding city first appeared at the Hellenistic agoras, where stoas define a loose precinct containing the monumental council house.



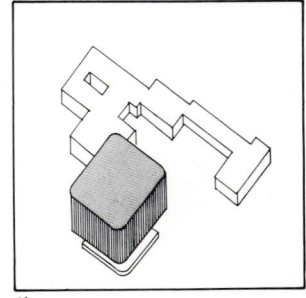
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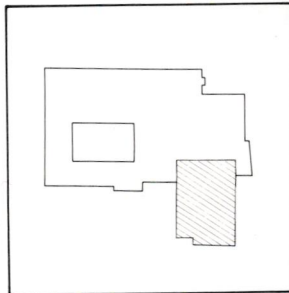
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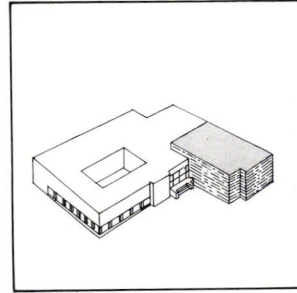
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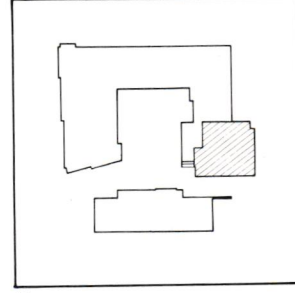
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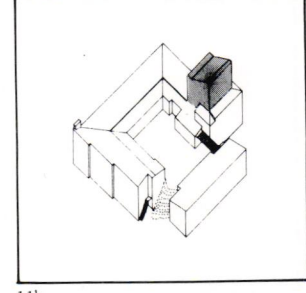
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11b

The head/tail organization at Seinäjoki extends even to the design of the baptismal font where an extreme diagrammatic clarity provides a clue to the design of the surrounding buildings (fig. 5).

The buildings at Seinäjoki represent a High Classic instance of an organizational system that had been evolving over the forty years since Aalto's Diploma Project of 1921. There it appeared in the form of a tower and courtyard—an unselfconscious residue of National Romantic convention (fig. 6).

Even Aalto's earliest commissions, such as the Guards' House of 1926, reveal the inchoate existence of a dual organization (fig. 7). This building seems to contain the elements in a clear form: a tail of out-buildings forming a space and a circular meeting hall serving as head. The hall, however, remains underground and invisible, not yet having emerged as a consciously developed head/tail organization.

During the protracted design of the Viipuri Library of 1927-1930 there occurs a remarkable evolution from a first scheme which is still involved with the compositional issues of classicism, to one where an emergent concern with the articulation of function leads to an expressed distinction between stacks and ancillary rooms (fig. 8). But this head/tail organization is not yet formally decisive because the two elements remain rectangles of similar size. Both therefore read equally as positive masses and neither dominates in the definition of exterior space.

At the Finnish Pavilion for the 1937 World's Fair the dual organization reappears with apparent clarity. A striated, round-edged head provides a palpable image, and a tail, broken by the outline of the site, performs decisively to create an exterior space (fig. 9).

The concurrent design for a Museum at Reval achieves a similar level of development with an area of stone cladding expressing a head and a rectangular courtyard formed by a tail of galleries (fig. 10). If there is a weakness in these two buildings, it is that the programmatic segregation is not sufficiently precise to establish a dualistic tension in function as effectively as it does in form.

With the Säynätsalo Town Hall of 1949, which is comparable to the later town hall at Seinäjoki in all its particulars, the disposition of forms and the allocation of functions conform thoroughly to the mature dualistic type (fig. 11). Säynätsalo may be considered the first masterpiece of the Aalto syntax.

Having established the classic use of the head/tail principle it is possible to note the ways in which it may be adapted to accommodate different circumstances. The most straightforward of the variations are the libraries. The library at Seinäjoki described above was followed by very similar ones at Rovaniemi and Mount Angel, and a related version within the

Fig. 1: Town Hall, Seinäjoki, 1963-1965.

Fig. 2: Civic Center, Seinäjoki, 1958-1966.

Fig. 3: Church, Seinäjoki, 1958-1960.

Fig. 4: Library, Seinäjoki, 1963-1965.

Fig. 5: Baptismal Font, Seinäjoki.

Fig. 6: Diploma Project, 1921.

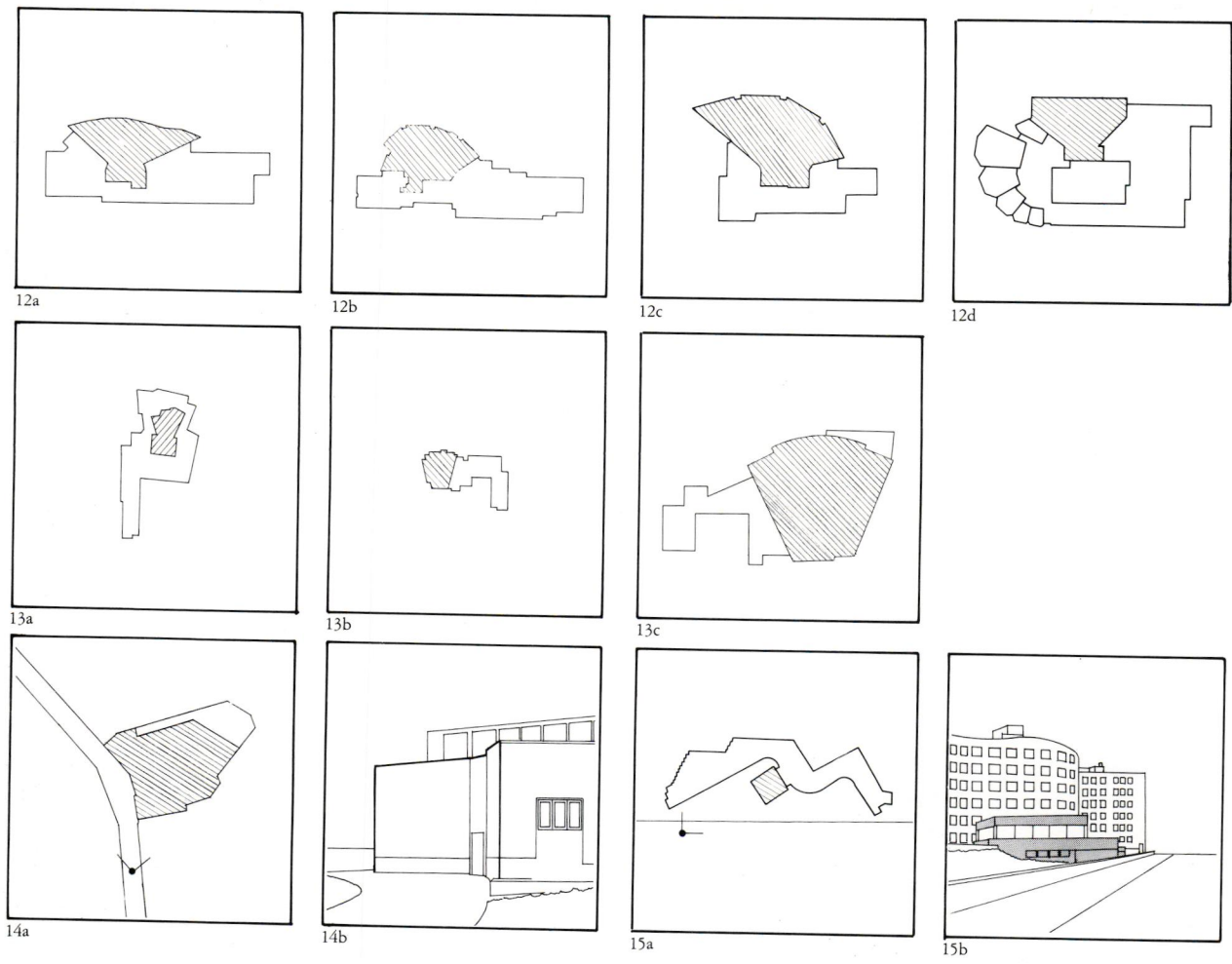
Fig. 7: Guards' House, Seinäjoki, 1925.

Fig. 8: Library, Viipuri, 1930-1935.

Fig. 9: Finnish Pavilion, Paris, 1937.

Fig. 10: Museum, Reval, 1934.

Fig. 11: Town Hall, Säynätsalo, 1950-1952.



Wolfsburg Cultural Center (fig. 12). These buildings share an extreme typological consistency equaled in the Modern Movement only by the Unites of Le Corbusier and the Miesian office blocks. A consistent organization may also be traced within the variety of assembly buildings. The theater for Wolfsburg, the small parish center at Detmerode, and the enormous convention center for Vienna are among the many examples of the type (fig. 13).

The second museum of Jyväskylä, on the other hand, is an example of a disproportionate program compromising the classically balanced solution (fig. 14). In this building a preponderance of gallery space is allocated to the head with only a minimal inflection at the entrance facade effectively contributing toward the spatial definition normally associated with the tail.

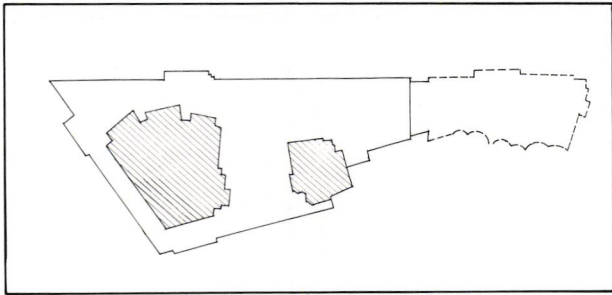
Another disproportionate program controls the organization of Baker House—but in reverse to the Jyväskylä Museum (fig. 15). Here an overwhelming quantity of student rooms is to be accommodated by the tail while only one communal room is available for the head. Aalto reverses this physical imbalance with a conception of the dormitory as an enormous backdrop curtain and the communal room as the figurative set piece. The smaller element thus reads as

the more important of the two parts, and the correct typological priority is recovered.

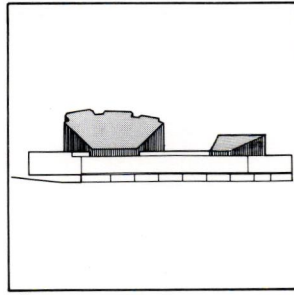
A variation presenting multiple heads appears at Finlandia Hall, where two auditoria protrude above a tail of lobbies (fig. 16). At Malm Crematorium there are three heads, each a separate chapel accompanied by its own courtyard, an arrangement which may be understood as the clustering of three complete head/tail sets (fig. 17).

The classroom building at the Otaniemi Institute, having many tails and only one head, is the converse of Finlandia Hall (fig. 18). The auditorium is an exemplary head type, due to its emblematic power as seen from the main approach and its radical metamorphosis from other aspects. The rest of the building consists of three tails, each housing an academic department around an individual small courtyard and, with the curious exception of the architectural school, independently capable of expansion.⁴ Another much greater space is defined by the aggregate of the academic departments on one side and the library on another. This space provides the temenos for the auditorium and operates at the scale of the campus as a whole.

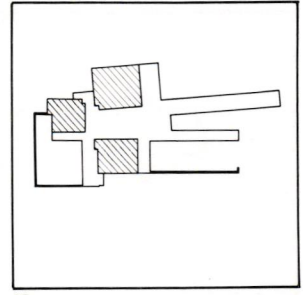
Beyond granting a broad versatility in the meaningful disposition of a variety of programs, the head/tail



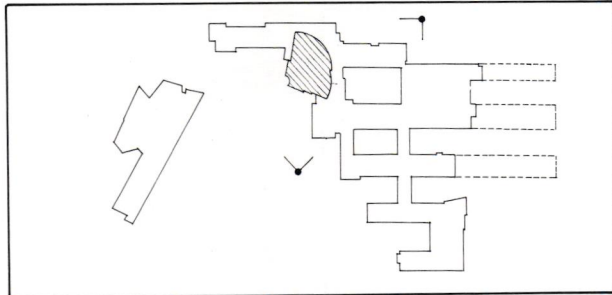
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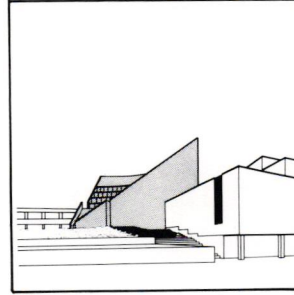
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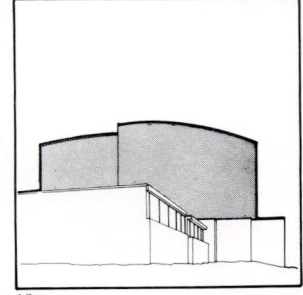
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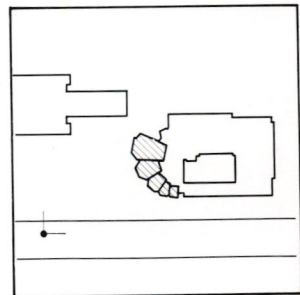
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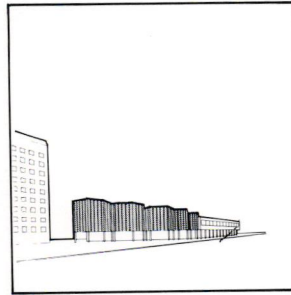
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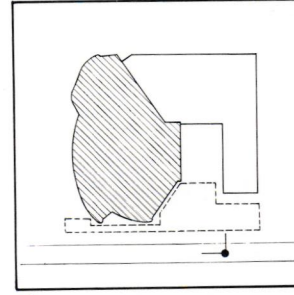
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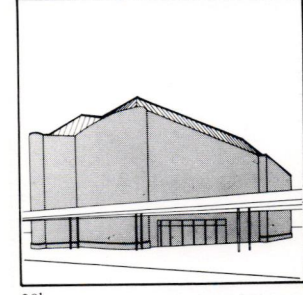
19a



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20a



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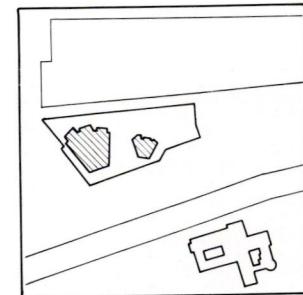
organization has important urbanistic applications.

To integrate a building into an urban context, both head and tail assume specific binding or mediating roles. A rectilinear tail section may serve to anchor the complex geometries of the head to an urban order. At the Wolfsburg Cultural Center the tail firmly defines the street edge and leaves the head free to inflect toward the existing city hall (fig. 19).

An earlier building, the House of Culture neglects the mediating function of the tail and abuts a head of overwhelming geometry directly to the street (fig. 20). Because the result would be disruptive to the urban fabric, a syntactically extraneous arcade is applied as a remedial buffer.

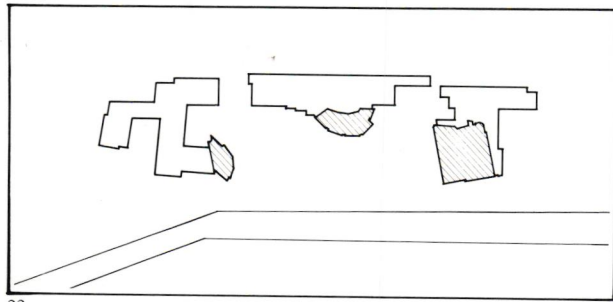
At Finlandia Hall the trapezoidal tail mediates oblique urban grids, allowing the heads to develop according to their internal logic (fig. 21). The two auditoria can thus achieve a delicate aesthetic configuration independent of the rudimentary external conditions at this formally unresolved part of Helsinki.

In the absence of built context, the tail is not necessary to resolve existing external conditions and is available to establish compelling internal relationships. Designed for a vast empty site, the three build-

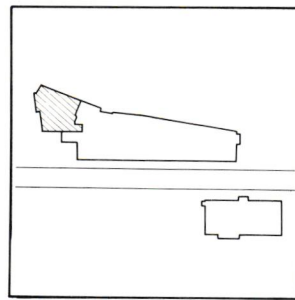


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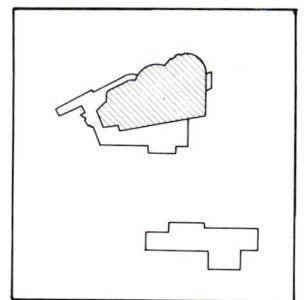
- Fig. 12a: Library, Seinäjoki, 1963–1965.
- Fig. 12b: Library, Rovaneimi, 1965–1968.
- Fig. 12c: Library, Mt. Angel, 1965–1970.
- Fig. 12d: Library, Wolfsburg, 1958.
- Fig. 13a: Theater, Wolfsburg, 1966.
- Fig. 13b: Parish Center, Detmerode, 1965–1968.
- Fig. 13c: Convention Center, Vienna, 1953.
- Fig. 14: Second Museum, Jyväskylä, 1971.
- Fig. 15: Baker House, Cambridge, 1948.
- Fig. 16: Finlandia Hall, Helsinki, 1962.
- Fig. 17: Crematorium, Malm, 1950.
- Fig. 18a: Institute of Technology, Otaniemi, 1964–1969.
- Fig. 18b: Auditorium, Otaniemi.
- Fig. 18c: Auditorium, Otaniemi.
- Fig. 19: Cultural Center, Wolfsburg, 1958–1963.
- Fig. 20: House of Culture, Helsinki, 1955.
- Fig. 21: Finlandia Hall, Helsinki, 1962.



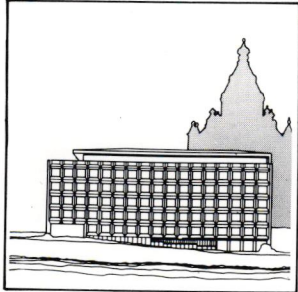
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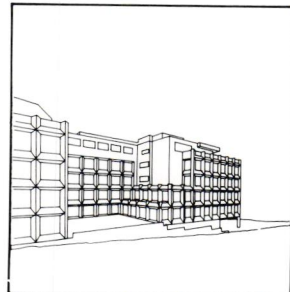
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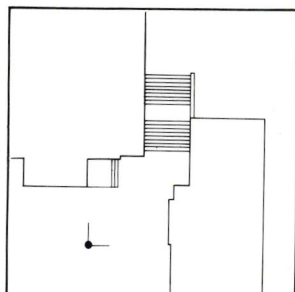
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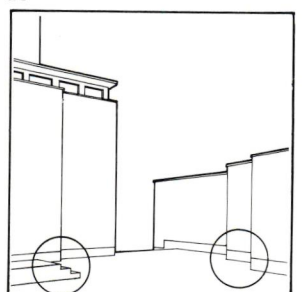
25a



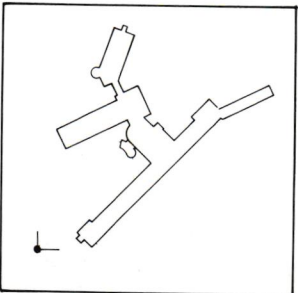
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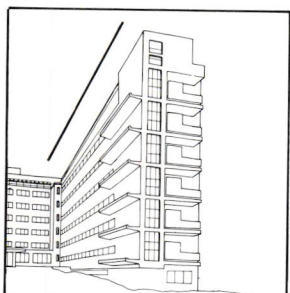
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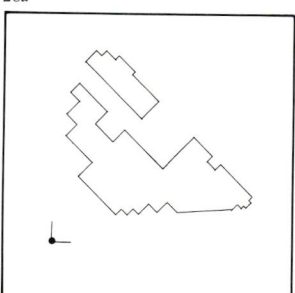
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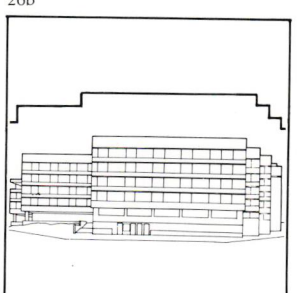
27a



27b



28a



28b

ings of the Rovaniemi Civic Center contribute their respective tails to define a single agora which contains the three heads (fig. 22). This layout assures a coherent setting for the emblematic portion of the buildings despite the urban deficiencies of the surrounding town. To a similar end, program permitting, the tail may undergo mitosis and define a space between separate parts. This is the formal role of the free-standing clinic at Alajärvi and of the parish house of the Imatra Church (figs. 23, 24). Finally, the hierarchy implicit in the head/tail organization is available to establish bonds with pre-existing monumental structures. At the Enzo-Gutzeit Offices, the routine commercial geometry of the facade is conceived as the tail portion, to be completed by the elaborate silhouette of the Byzantine church beyond (fig. 25). The study drawings leave no doubt that this was Aalto's intention.⁵

II. Form

Buildings of the Modern Movement have tended to be reticent at the skyline. The mastery of controlled picturesque composition attained in the 19th Century was an early casualty of functionalism. With the discrediting of the romantic sensibility that provided its authority, formal strategies for the picturesque were effectively reduced to the rhetorical manipula-

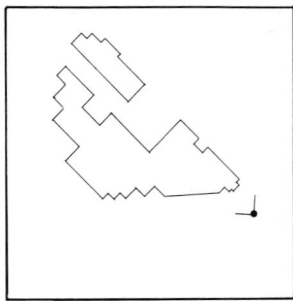
tion of structural elements and to the emulation of vernacular groupings.⁶

In this regard Aalto is exceptional. An elaborate manner in meeting the sky is a distinct component of his syntax and one often misattributed to an expressionist sensibility. In fact, the generation of such forms is systematic and their utility quite tangible, even by functionalist standards.

Aalto's compositional method is based on the premise that a decisive clue to the perception of three-dimensional form is provided by the silhouette.⁷ Neither plan nor section can be perceived by the observer as such. Only by designing the silhouette, which is the perceptual hybrid generated by the human vantage point, does the architect have precise formal control of what is to be seen.

A simple demonstration of this mechanism is found at the Säynätsalo Town Hall, where an unsemantic eye may see the sectional event of a stair riser and that of a corner turned in plan as identical visual phenomena (fig. 26).

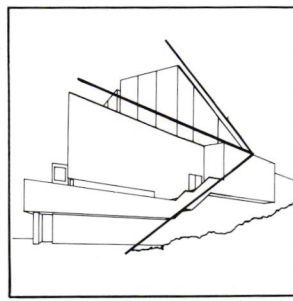
This coexistence of formal determinants permits Aalto to exercise his dualistic predilection rather than submit to the domination by the plan which is normative in functionalism. Because his architectur-



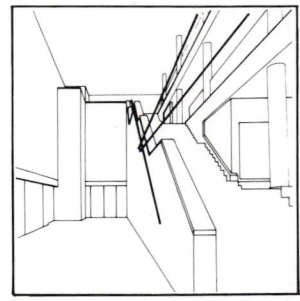
29a



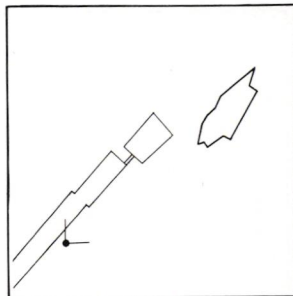
29b



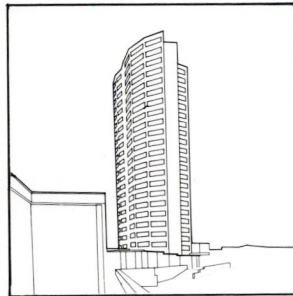
30



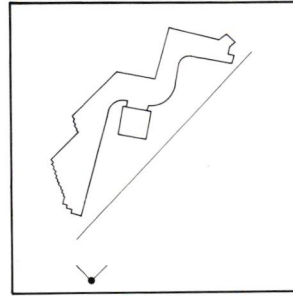
31



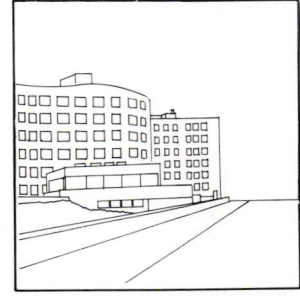
32a



32b



33a



33b

al intentions lie in a synthesis of both plan and section that is entirely within the perceptual realm, the examination of Aalto's work from two-dimensional drawings yields so much that seems arbitrary.⁸

Aalto's formal syntax resolves into five distinct formulations of the plan/section duality.

1. Where the dominant silhouette of a building is an actual horizontal set parallel to the visual axis of the observer, it will be perceived as a downward diagonal. The dormitory wing of the Paimio Sanatorium as seen from the approach is an example of this perspectival transformation (fig. 27).

2. Where the dominant silhouette is an actual horizontal, but set perpendicular to the visual axis, each corner turned in plan will be perceived as a vertical step in the silhouette. This phenomenon occurs repeatedly at the east front of the Pensions Institute with an echelon as the visual result (fig. 28).

3. Perceptually induced silhouettes (such as the two discussed above) are visually compatible with actual silhouettes and may be designed in conjunction. Thus at the north approach of the Pensions Institute, the first four steps of the silhouette decline in actual height while the next six are formed by perspectival diminution from what is actually a continuous horizontal parapet (fig. 29). At the side of Finlandia Hall the lobby roof is a horizontal which is perceived as a diagonal, formally cooperating with the actual diagonal rise of the stair and of the auditorium (fig. 30). A similar effect occurs indoors at the main lobby of the college at Jyväskylä, where both the actual diagonal of the stair and the perceptual diagonal of the balconies act in visual unison (fig. 31).

4. Where the building is tall or the vantage point sufficiently low, the configuration or the plan will appear projected powerfully into silhouette. Aalto may distort a plan to this end, often against utilitarian dictates. This is the case with the apartment house at Bremen which decisively shows the formal aspects of the plan only at the highest point (fig. 32). At Baker House, the sedate character established by the facade at eye level is unexpectedly transformed as the radical form of the plan becomes visible against the sky (fig. 33).

5. Where the requisite building height as described above is not available, the vertical extrusion of the plan may be sliced by a diagonal section, thereby becoming periscopically accessible to the observer on the ground. The council chamber at Jyväskylä City Hall is a simple instance of this (fig. 34). The more elaborate silhouette of Seinäjoki City Hall is the plastic resolution of the arc of the speaker's niche with the diagonal section (fig. 35). The extravagant

Fig. 22: Civic Center, Rovaniemi, 1963.

Fig. 23: Civic Center, Alajärvi, 1966.

Fig. 24: Church, Imatra, 1956–1958.

Fig. 25: Enzo-Gutzeit Offices, Helsinki, 1959–1962.

Fig. 26: Town Hall, Säynätsalo, 1950–1952.

Fig. 27: Tuberculosis Sanatorium, Paimio, 1929–1933.

Fig. 28: Pensions Institute, Helsinki, 1952–1956.

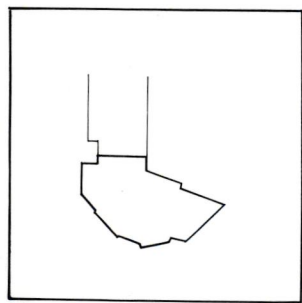
Fig. 29: Pensions Institute, Helsinki, 1952–1956.

Fig. 30: Finlandia Hall, Helsinki, 1962.

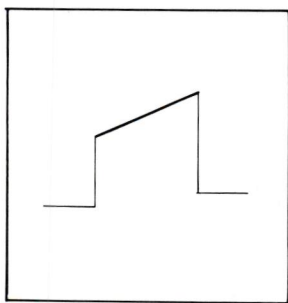
Fig. 31: College, Jyväskylä, 1963.

Fig. 32: Apartment House, Bremen, 1958.

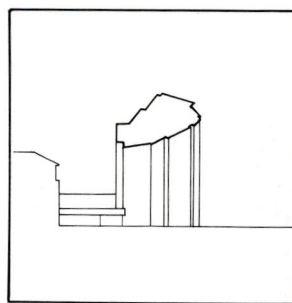
Fig. 33: Baker House, Cambridge, 1948.



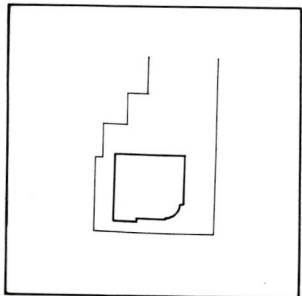
34a



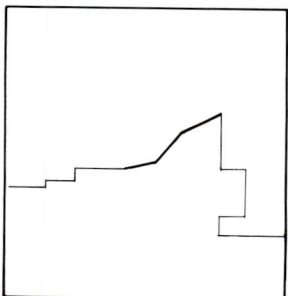
34b



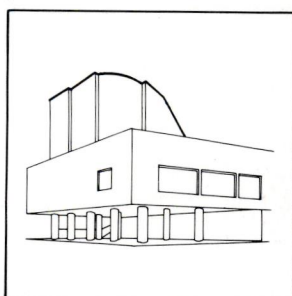
34c



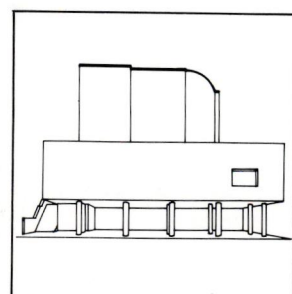
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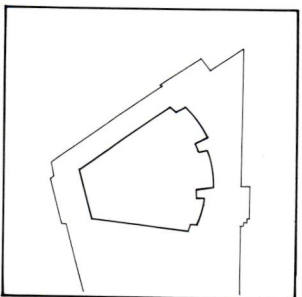
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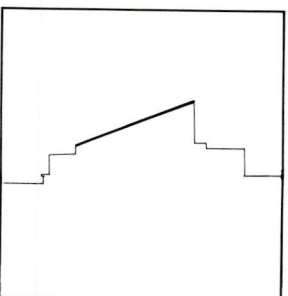
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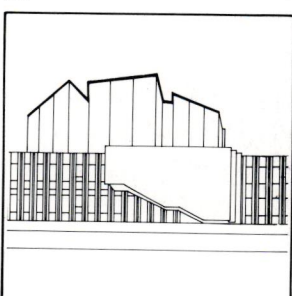
35d



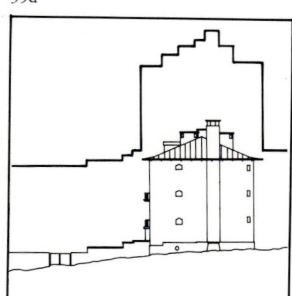
36a



36b



36c



37

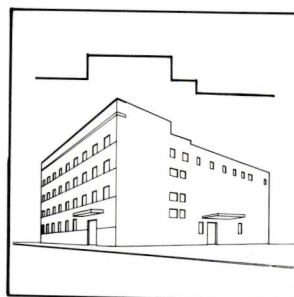
silhouette of Finlandia Hall is the result of a simple diagonal intersecting the jagged entrances at the rear of the auditorium (fig. 36).

These characteristic formal devices first appeared tentatively, in the elaboration of secondary architectural elements. At the Railworkers Housing of 1924, for example, the stepped footing generated by the natural slope of the site is amplified beyond its utilitarian requirements and then echoed by an echelon of chimneys (fig. 37).

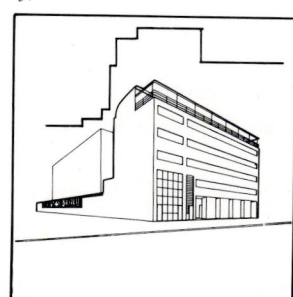
Two subsequent buildings, the Guard's House at Jyväskylä of 1926 and the Turin Sanomat of 1928 develop echelon outlines, but these remain confined to secondary usage at party walls (figs. 38, 39). With the Viipuri Library of 1930 the manipulated silhouette is fully deployed and becomes the primary compositional device (fig. 40).

Beyond contributing generally to the formal versatility of the architectural syntax, the control of the building silhouette may be applied to specific tasks. One is to bind disparate architectural elements. Another is to infuse even onto small buildings monumental presence.

The binding occurs when each architectural element is a uniquely formed and precisely located interval of



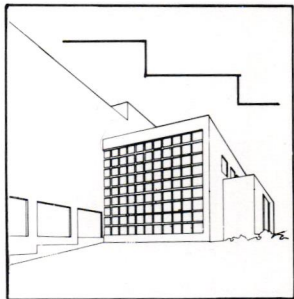
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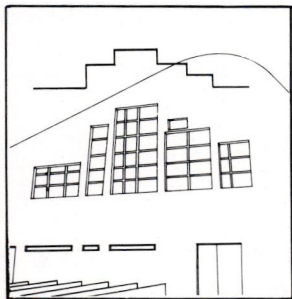
39

an overall formal intention. Each thereby becomes necessary for the composition to be complete. This is the most common of Aalto's formal devices, affecting design at every scale throughout the oeuvre.

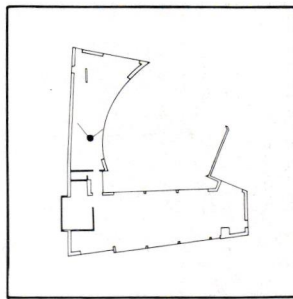
An example at the smaller scale occurs within the Imatra Church where several individually uninflected rectangular windows assemble to become a vitrail (fig. 41). In the studio at Munkkiniemi, two walls lacking a perceptual corner joint are associated by the shared stepping of the fenestration (fig. 42). At a domestic scale, the villas Mairea, Aalto, and Rovaniemi all demonstrate a rigorous assignment of silhouette as the principal discipline to unify the casual disposition of the plan elements (fig. 43). A still larger example is the classroom building at Otaniemi which presents, from one of its principal approaches, a relentless echelon integrating everything in sight,



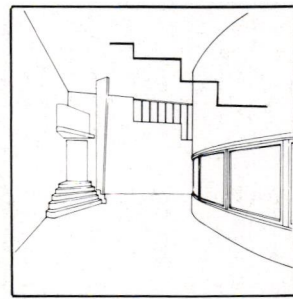
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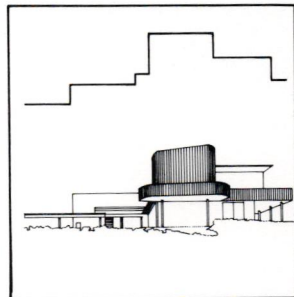
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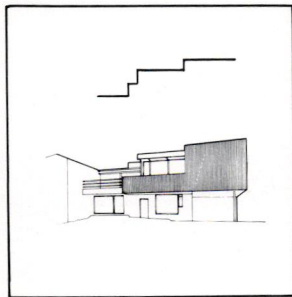
42a



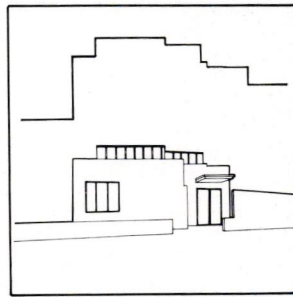
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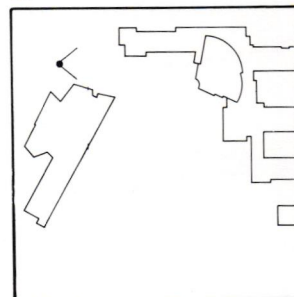
43a



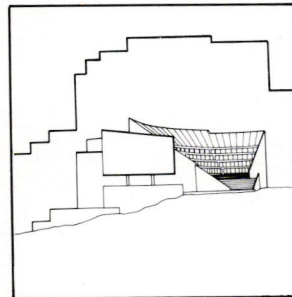
43b



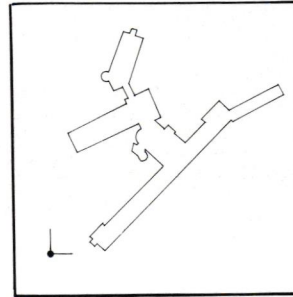
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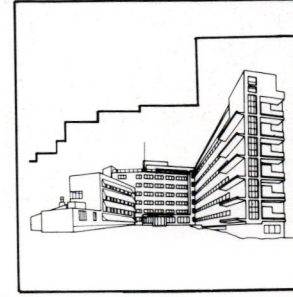
44a



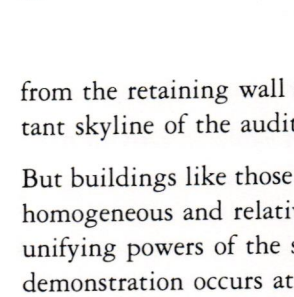
44b



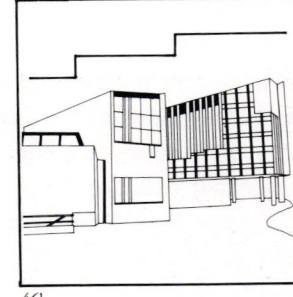
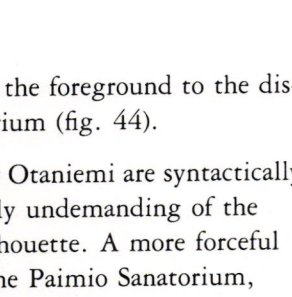
45a



45b



46a



46b

from the retaining wall at the foreground to the distant skyline of the auditorium (fig. 44).

But buildings like those at Otaniemi are syntactically homogeneous and relatively undemanding of the unifying powers of the silhouette. A more forceful demonstration occurs at the Paimio Sanatorium, where the four elements that surround the entrance court overcome an extremely sachlich disparity of fenestration by participating in a common purpose at the skyline (fig. 45). Without this discipline Paimio would remain a collection of independent, albeit adjacent, buildings. A most radical instance appears at the Wolfsburg Cultural Center, where three articulated elements collide with an aggressive syntactic incoherence that is reconciled only by a shared purpose at the skyline (fig. 46). This corner at Wolfsburg seems to be exploring the effective limits of the binding power of the silhouette.

This same technique is applied to the assemblage of multiple buildings, especially in the absence of axial relationships. The four apartment houses at Munkkiniemi are subject to the arbitrary shape of the site but become a unified composition from the main approach where all the elements can be perceived as rising to a singular point at the boiler stack (fig. 47). At Alajärvi the town hall is an exceedingly lengthy

Fig. 34: Council Chamber, Jyväskylä.

Fig. 35: Council Chamber, Seinäjoki.

Fig. 36: Finlandia Hall, Helsinki, 1962.

Fig. 37: Railworkers' Housing, 1924.

Fig. 38: Guards' House, Jyväskylä, 1927.

Fig. 39: Turun Sanomat, Turku, 1927-1929.

Fig. 40: Library, Viipuri, 1930-1935.

Fig. 41: Church, Imatra, 1956-1958.

Fig. 42: Studio, Munkkiniemi, 1955.

Fig. 43a: Villa Mairea, Noormarkku, 1939.

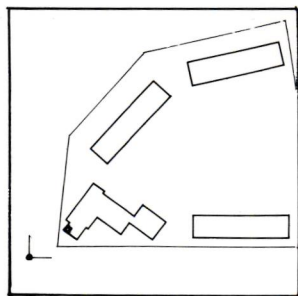
Fig. 43b: Villa Aalto, Munkkiniemi, 1934.

Fig. 43c: Villa, Rovaniemi, 1965.

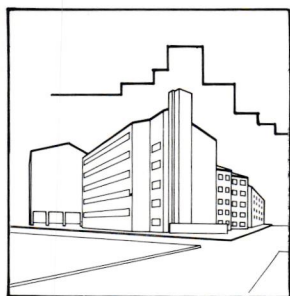
Fig. 44: Institute of Technology, Otaniemi, 1955-1964.

Fig. 45: Tuberculosis Sanatorium, Paimio, 1929-1933.

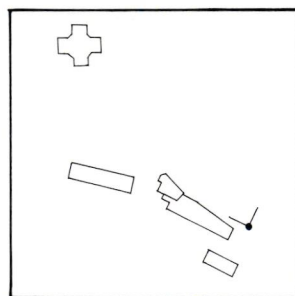
Fig. 46: Cultural Center, Wolfsburg, 1958-1963.



47a



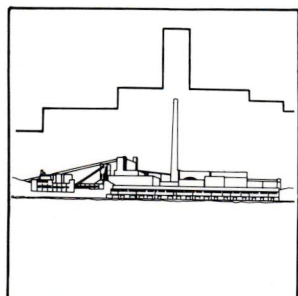
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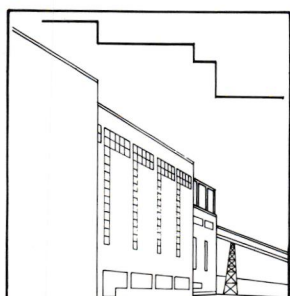
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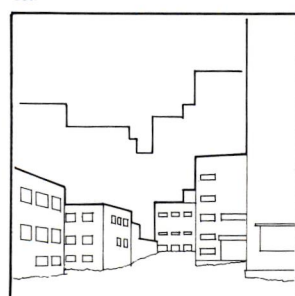
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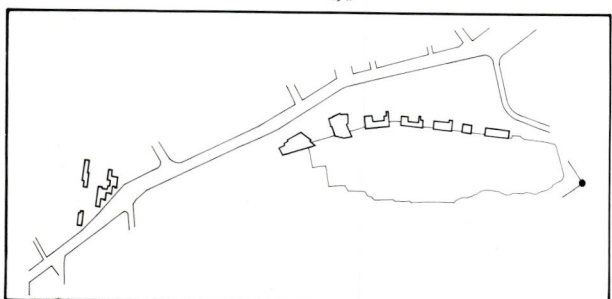
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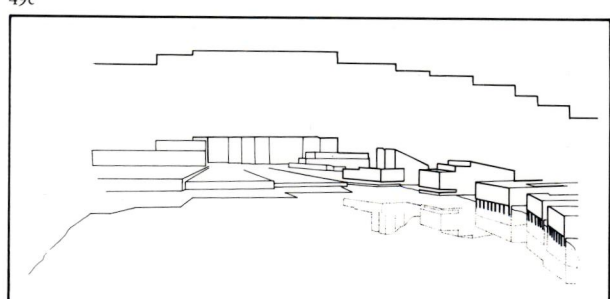
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50a



50b

echelon that performs an extraordinary visual leap across an open field to bring Engel's distant church into the composition (fig. 48). The separate structures that make up the Sunila Factory repeatedly transcend their utilitarian layout and assemble as coherent echelons (fig. 49).

This technique controls Aalto's master plan for the center of Helsinki (fig. 50). The public buildings along the lake are unified by a crescendo of silhouettes, with a preliminary peak at Finlandia Hall and a culmination at the office towers downtown. The plan proposes a single visually controlled composition sweeping across two kilometers of Helsinki. A formal relationship over such an area is comparable to the achievement of the Acropolis at Pergamon and all the more remarkable because it is sustained without recourse to the intrinsic coherence of the classical language.

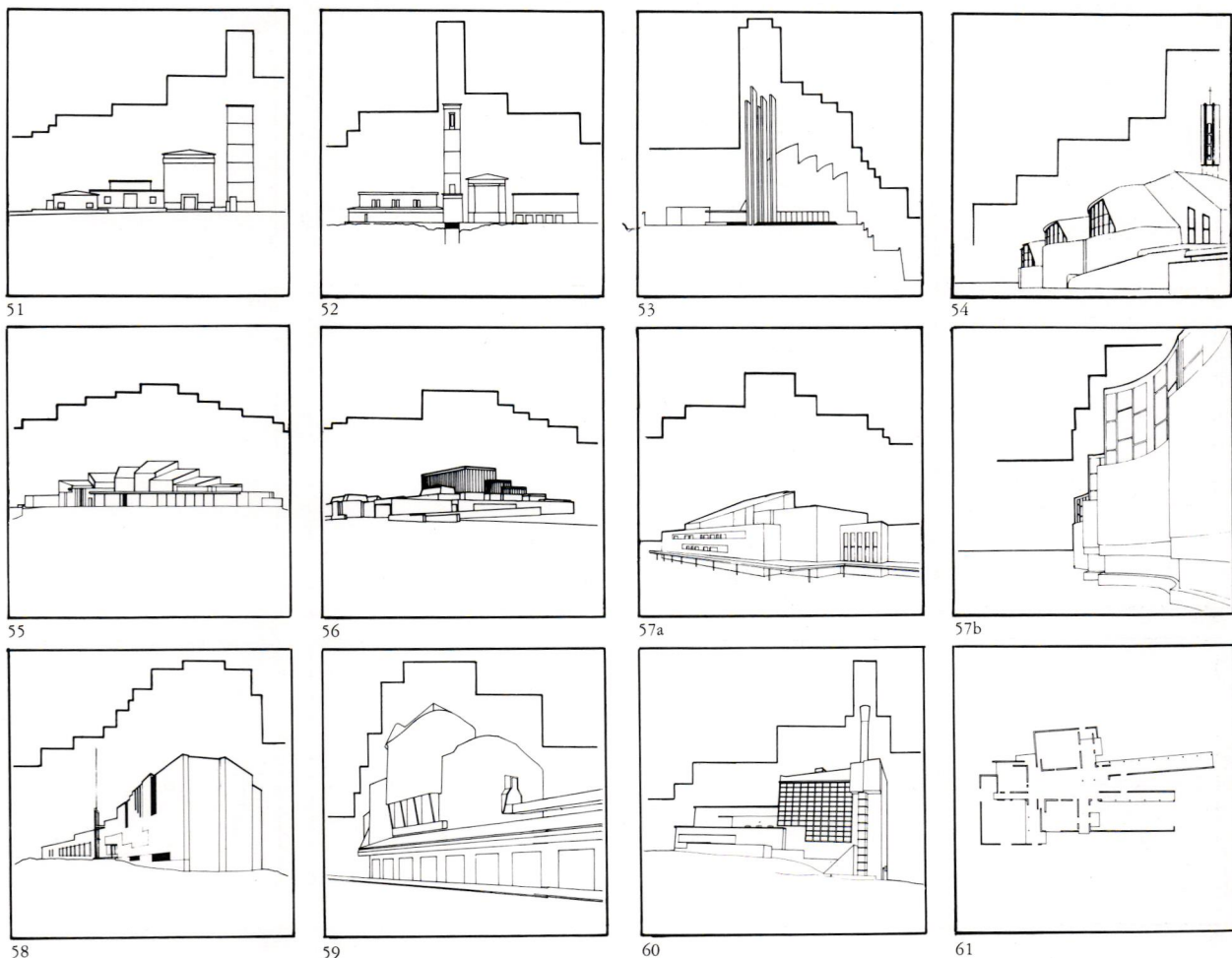
The Pergamene analogy holds for Aalto's method of generating monumental presence. Typically, a structure is first broken down into discrete elements and then recomposed, by actual size or by perspectival adjustment, to participate in a grand inflection toward one point. Based on the refinement of scale, this method is antithetical to the convention of the Late Modern Movement which proposed the obliteration

of scale as the attribute of monumentality.

This characteristic device was explored early in Aalto's career, while he was still designing in the classical language. His early churches for Tampere and Toöloö of 1927 are already accomplished examples of this formal pattern (figs. 51, 52). It was to recur in most of Aalto's subsequent churches, still being present at the ones for Riola and Imatra (figs. 53, 54).

This type of composition is applied to important civic buildings as well, such as the museums of Shiraz and Aalborg (figs. 55, 56). These designs are grand gestures in general outline but retain a small, and in the case of Aalborg, delicate scale of components. Even Finlandia Hall—the preeminent monument representing Finland to the world—is made of individual elements (fig. 57). But these elements have been formally coalesced to a grandeur unsurpassed even by the monolithic classicism of Siren's neighboring Parliament Building.

Indeed, the manipulation of the silhouette to these various ends is so pervasive in Aalto's work that it is rare to find a building which is not subject in some way. Its constant use may sometimes be negative, resulting in a general blurring of identity, with common buildings on the verge of being mistaken for lof-



tier types. The town hall at Alajärvi, for example, should by rights be formally more exalted than the saw mill at Verkaus (figs. 58, 59). More disturbing is the heating plant at Otaniemi which is as glorious in massing as any of the churches (fig. 60). If not for the possibility that the latter is a humorous Nordicism, Aalto would seem to have semantically miscalculated just as thoroughly as Mies did with his chapel and power plant at the Illinois Institute of Technology.

A formal vocabulary of such power and versatility presents, even to the master, a constant temptation to the indiscriminate rhetoric of expressionism.

III. Space

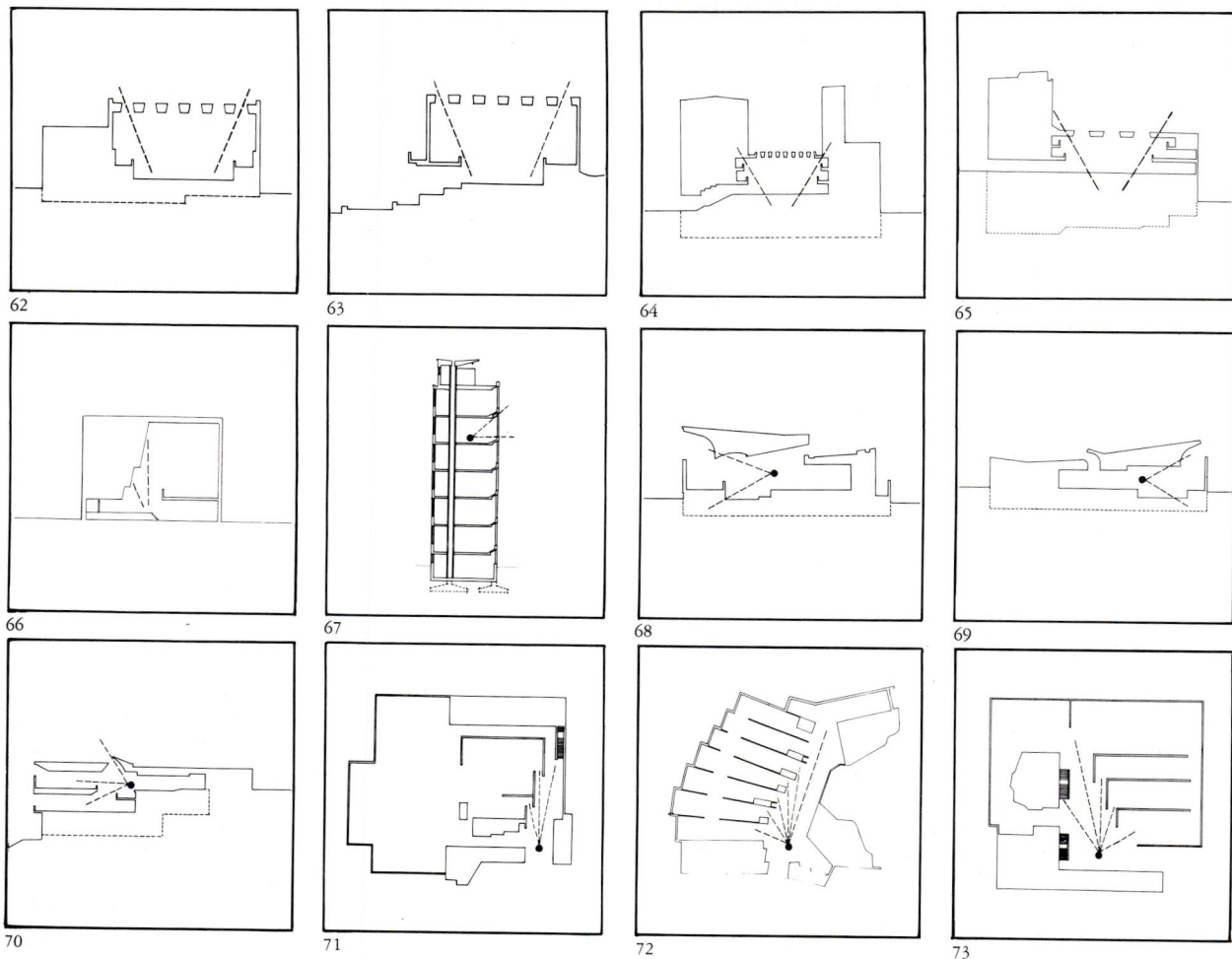
Deviations from the orthogonal appear throughout the Aalto oeuvre. A majority of the significant spaces are affected by some type of geometric distortion—sometimes as a result of programmatic accommodation, but most often in the interest of perceptual control.

Aalto seems to consider the right angle to be an unweighted point in the geometric continuum, possibly because the inevitable distortions of perspective deny it a primacy beyond its intrinsic utilitarian value. As if to assert this, some plans are allowed to deviate from the orthogonal by a casual few degrees,

increments too slight to be perceived. This may be the explanation of laconic angles such as those at the Malm Crematorium (fig. 61).

While these deviations are interesting as statements of principle,⁹ more important to the architectural syntax is the positive manipulation of geometry for a determined visual result. To this end, the crucial ref-

- Fig. 47: Housing, Munkkiniemi, 1951.
- Fig. 48: Civic Center, Alajärvi, 1966.
- Fig. 49: Factory, Sunila, 1936–1939, 1951–1954.
- Fig. 50: Master Plan, Helsinki Center, 1959–1964.
- Fig. 51: Church, Tampere, 1927.
- Fig. 52: Church, Tooloo, 1927.
- Fig. 53: Church, Riola, 1966.
- Fig. 54: Church, Imatra, 1956–1958.
- Fig. 55: Museum, Shiraz, 1970.
- Fig. 56: Museum, Aalborg, 1958.
- Fig. 57a: Finlandia Hall, Helsinki, 1962.
- Fig. 57b: Finlandia Hall, Helsinki, 1973.
- Fig. 58: Town Hall, Alajärvi, 1969.
- Fig. 59: Sawmill, Verkaus, 1945–1946.
- Fig. 60: Heating Plant, Otaniemi, 1962–1963.
- Fig. 61: Crematorium, Malm, 1950.



erence is the conal form of the human field of vision. Aalto exploits this phenomenon with characteristic duality by designing spaces that are determined by one of two opposite types of visual progression. One spatial type opens out in support of the cone of vision, thereby making more space available to the eye. Its intention is to dematerialize the boundaries and create an ethereal space free of focus. The other type closes inward, exposing more of the bounding surface and imposing focus, closure, and syntactic density as the primary experience.

The simplest examples, and the earliest to appear, are those which open out in section while the plan remains essentially rectangular. The Viipuri Library of 1930 already contains a major space of this configuration (fig. 62). A similar one appears at the 1937 World's Fair Pavilion (fig. 63). The large indoor spaces of the later urban buildings are consistently of this type: The Rautatalo Offices and the Academic Bookstore both have central halls that become wider as they rise and terminate in ceilings that are effectively dematerialized by skylights (figs. 64, 65). This expansive combination substantially enhances the out-of-doors ambiance of these winter agoras.

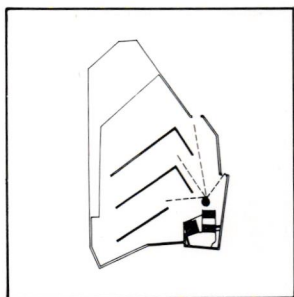
The pavilion for the 1939 World's Fair demonstrates an opposite condition, with space closing as it

rises: Here the ornamental wooden walls lean inward, displaying themselves to the observer below (fig. 66).

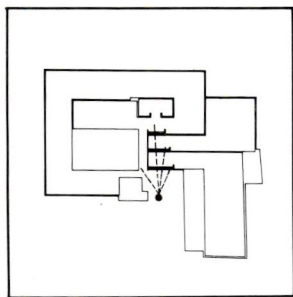
The sectional manipulation of space occurs in Aalto's work at every scale. At the Paimio Sanatorium, a slight upward distortion at the window removes the joint of glass and ceiling, eliminating the perception of complete enclosure (fig. 67).

Distortions in section may also appear in combination with corresponding effects in plan. The typologically consistent libraries of Seinäjoki, Rovaniemi, and Mount Angel have reading rooms that open out strongly in plan and both upwards and downwards in section, an expansive spatial intention supported by the dematerialization of the radial bounding wall with entering light (figs. 68, 69, 70). The shaping of these spaces suggests a greater concern with perceptual impact than with the dictates of radial supervision proposed by functionalist analysis.

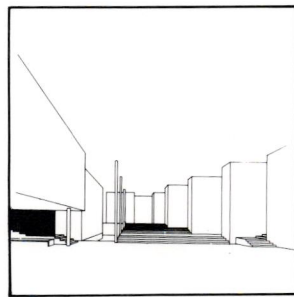
Alternatively, the field of vision may be impinged by a series of entrances coming forward to offer divergent paths. Aalto employs this spatial type in buildings of public access as a device that allows the immediate presentation to the visitor of all subsequent itineraries. This is the arrangement presented at the entrances of most museums: Aalborg, Shiraz, Bagh-



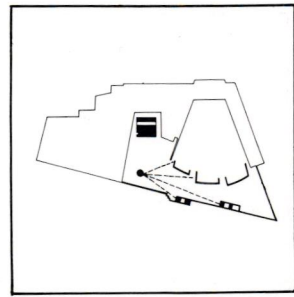
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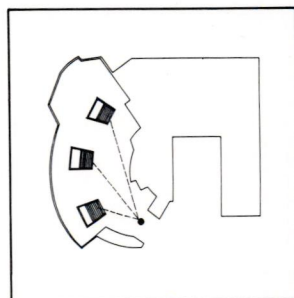
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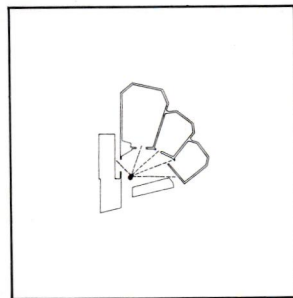
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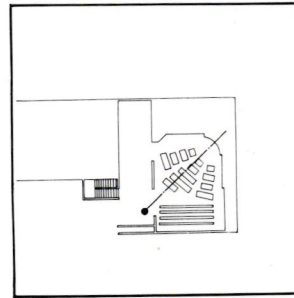
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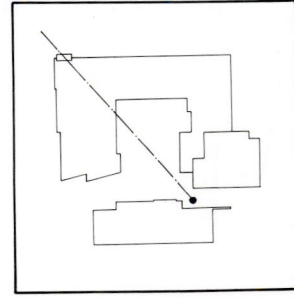
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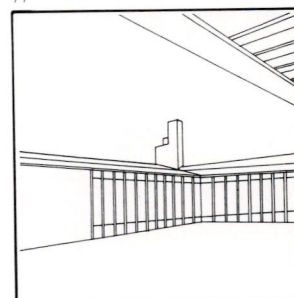
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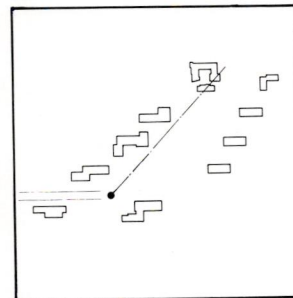
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80b



81

dad, and the second Jyväskylä all have lobbies that close down in plan (figs. 71, 72, 73, 74). The museum for Reval of 1939, which is the earliest and most accomplished of the group, closes in section as well (fig. 75). A similar arrangement is found in the lobbies of public assembly buildings like Finlandia Hall, the House of Culture and the Parish Center at Wolfsburg (figs. 76, 77, 78).

The control of the spatial effects described here is crucially dependent upon a fixed vantage point, and the progression through Aalto's buildings may be understood as sequences of such specific locations. These usually occur at places of entrance, propylaea in the strictest sense, because an entrance is the only recurring architectural element where an otherwise freely peripatetic observer may be assumed to face a determined direction.¹⁰

Control of the vantage point is so powerful a device in fact, that Aalto may use it to alter the perceptual layout of a space while the actual geometry remains orthogonal. This is a usage exactly analogous to the relationship between the Propylea and the Parthenon which achieves a diagonal reading within an orthogonal setting. For example, the council chamber of Seinäjoki Town Hall is rectangular, but the point of entry from the corner establishes a diagonal axis that

reorganizes the space into one of perceptual closure and focus at the podium (fig. 79). The same may occur in outdoor spaces such as the courtyard of the Säynätsalo Town Hall where a chimney receives the perceptual axis emanating from the entrance (fig. 80).

On a larger scale, at the town center of Säynätsalo a series of implied orthogonal spaces are approached from their corners, establishing a continuous diagonal axis that is finally received by the council chamber of the town hall (fig. 81). Spatial closure is provided by the buildings along the way, which

Fig. 62: Library, Viipuri, 1930–1935.

Fig. 63: Finnish Pavilion, Paris, 1937.

Fig. 64: Rautatalo Offices, Helsinki, 1953–1955.

Fig. 65: Academic Bookshop, Helsinki, 1966–1969.

Fig. 66: Finnish Pavilion, New York, 1939.

Fig. 67: Tuberculosis Sanatorium, Paimio, 1929–1933.

Fig. 68: Library, Seinäjoki, 1963–1965.

Fig. 69: Library, Rovaniemi, 1965–1968.

Fig. 70: Library, Mt. Angel, 1965–1970.

Fig. 71: Museum, Aalborg, 1958.

Fig. 72: Museum, Shiraz, 1970.

Fig. 73: Museum, Baghdad, 1958.

Fig. 74: Museum, Reval, 1934.

Fig. 74: Second Museum, Jyväskylä, 1971.

Fig. 75: Museum, Reval, 1934.

Fig. 76: Finlandia Hall, Helsinki, 1962.

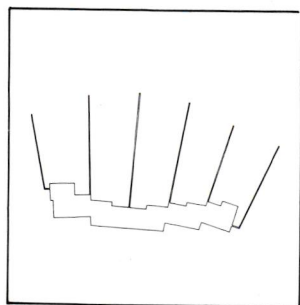
Fig. 77: House of Culture, Helsinki, 1955.

Fig. 78: Parish Center, Wolfsburg, 1959–1962.

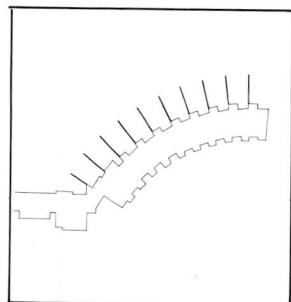
Fig. 79: Town Hall, Seinäjoki, 1963–1965.

Fig. 80: Town Hall, Säynätsalo, 1950–1952.

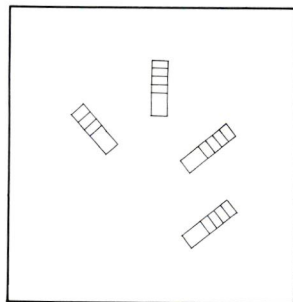
Fig. 81: Town Center, Säynätsalo, 1949.



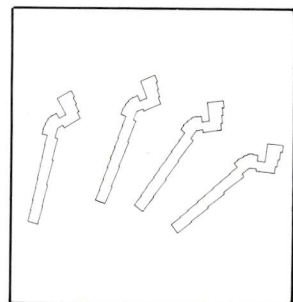
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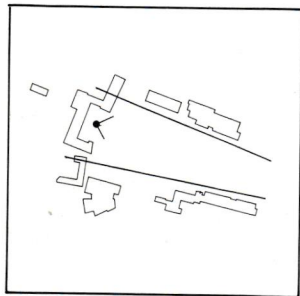
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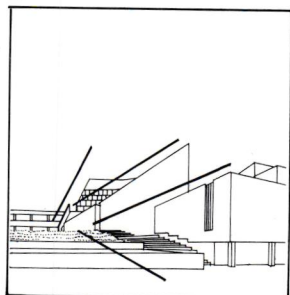
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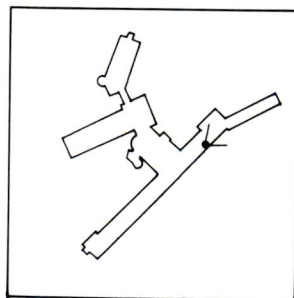
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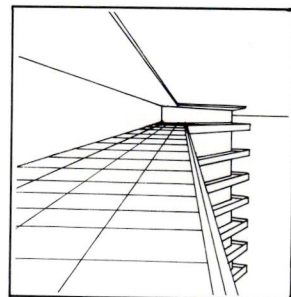
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88b

sequentially impinge to close down the field of vision. The resulting progression is very similar to that which was to be experienced while traversing the Athenian Agora of the late Hellenistic period.

In these last three examples the imposition of a diagonal axis by the location of the vantage point causes the perceptual rotation of a rectangular space and its transformation into one that narrows the cone of vision. This is the minimum syntactic operation towards the creation of a characteristic Aalto space.

Other site layouts show buildings that open out radially, minimizing their mutual impingement on vistas. This is the dominant planning strategy of the housing layouts: Those at Sunila, Lucerne, Kauttua, and Porvoo (figs. 82, 83, 84, 85) range from subtle to radical in degrees of geometric distortion.

Conversely, the space being defined on a site may close down, binding together a collection of separate buildings by intensifying the experience of a shared vanishing point. The campus plan for the college at Jyväskylä is an example of this (fig. 86). A more extreme one is provided by the main approach to the auditorium at Otaniemi, where the space not only narrows in plan but the upward slope of the ground is conscripted, and actual silhouettes join with perspectival ones to impose an illusory vanishing point

on a location within the space itself (fig. 87). The spatial intensity unleashed by this composition is unsurpassed in the Modern Movement, even with buildings much greater in size.

It is a measure of Aalto's abilities that the architect of a conception as powerful as Otaniemi is equally capable of the most subtle adjustments towards spatial definition. The oeuvre is replete with instances like the slightly rotated solarium at Paimio and the delicate slipping of the plan at Hansaviiertel which are deflected only to correct perspectives that would otherwise be disturbingly oblique (figs. 88, 89).

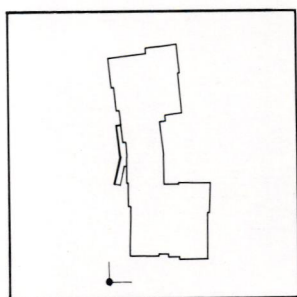
Conclusion

These are only a few of the instances that demonstrate Aalto to be among the most rational and consistent of Modern architects. There are also other components of the Aalto syntax: The ornamental use of materials, for instance, is subject to dualistic interpretation; the use of daylighting and of technical devices are also characteristic. In fact, these are the elements that identify the Aalto "style" in much of the existing literature.¹¹ But such devices, being subject to environmental circumstance or simple personal preference, are not the stuff of a syntactic system that constitutes a transmissible architectural language. In Aalto's case, this must rest on the irreducible ele-

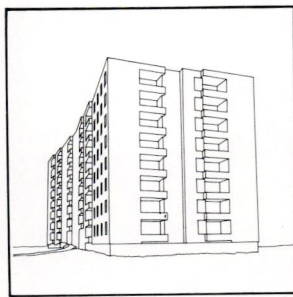
- Fig. 82: Housing, Sunila, 1939.
 Fig. 83: Housing, Lucerne, 1969.
 Fig. 84: Housing, Kattua, 1938–1940.
 Fig. 85: Housing, Poorvoo, 1966.
 Fig. 86: College, Jyväskylä, 1950.
 Fig. 87: Institute of Technology, Otaniemi, 1955–1964.
 Fig. 88: Tuberculosis Sanatorium, Paimio, 1929–1933.
 Fig. 89: Apartment House, Hansaviertel, 1955–1957.

Notes

1. "Alvar Aalto" *The Architectural Review*, Feb. 1950.
2. "Aalto-vs-Aalto: The Other Finland," *Perspecta*, 9-10. Hitchcock here praises other Finnish architects at the expense of Aalto.
3. Paul David Pearson, *Alvar Aalto and the International Style*, New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1978. It must be noted that this is not a major point within the book's argument and it does not weaken an otherwise excellent work.
4. Expansion has already taken place at Otaniemi, at Finlandia Hall, and at the town hall of Seinäjoki.
5. Enzo-Gutzeit offers an alternative reading: the regular program (office space) is zoned along three sides of the building and is expressed as a regular grid on the facade. The supporting program (circulation machine rooms, etc.) is grouped on the fourth side and expressed with every possible irregularity (fig. 25b). This gain, while not a conventional head/tail situation, manifests a dual attitude toward organization.
6. This is best illustrated with the work of Eero Saarinen: Dulles Airport is an example of the structural basis and the Yale Colleges an example of the vernacular.
7. This is especially true in Scandinavia where the dark winters preclude the use of light as a dependable modulating device for the clarification of form. Form is here understood as distinct from issues of surface and facade, which play recurring but secondary roles in the Aalto syntax.
8. This is documented by Demetri Porphyrios in "Heterotopia: A Study in the Ordering Sensibility of the Work of Alvar Aalto," *Architectural Monographs* 4, Rizzoli, 1978.
9. Subtle angles were a matter of principle for Scandinavian architects of the previous generation for whom they represented an allusion to folk building tradition.
10. The vantage point is also operational in the manipulation of form, as discussed in the previous section. The photographs in the three-volume monograph (Alvar Aalto, Karl Fleig, Ed.) are invariably taken from the correct vantage point, indicating either the sensitivity of the editor or selection by Aalto himself. Other publications usually contain photographs taken from irrelevant vantage points.
11. For example see S. Groak, "Notes on Responding to Aalto's Buildings", *Architectural Monographs* 4, Rizzoli 1978., L. Mosso, "La Luce nell'Architettura di Alvar Aalto," *Zodiac* 7, 1960., W. C. Miller, "A Thematic Analysis of Alvar Aalto's Architecture," *A + U*, Oct. 1979.



89a



89b

ments of organization, form and space, and his inclusive way of resolving the opposing themes of each.

How then is this architectural language to be applied? An immediate contribution can be made to the problem of the new cities, for Aalto is one of the few great suburban architects. Whether by cultural conditioning, or in response to the broken topography of Finland, his buildings usually stand free. They thus present themselves as prototypes to those architects working in irrevocably suburban places, for whom the formal conventions of the European city are too precise and those of the Anglo-American suburb too weak. To these Aalto can show the way.

There is another, more transcendental contribution, that involves the continued integrity of architectural culture. Aalto, alone in bringing perceptual determinants to bear on the abstract idiom of the 20th century, maintains the ancient principles born of Hellas which, being sensual, recede before the technical imperatives of our age. Without Aalto, the architectural language of the Modern Movement would be not only less satisfying but substantially incomplete.



J. C. Nichols, the Country Club Plaza, and Notions of Modernity

Richard Longstreth

When J. C. Nichols announced his intention to build the County Club Plaza in 1922, the proposal was at once branded a folly.¹ Critics insisted that the site, some three miles south of downtown Kansas City, Missouri, was too remote. The nearby population was growing, in large part due to a network of residential tracts Nichols himself had been developing for over a decade. Yet his envisioned 250 shop complex was considered much too large an outlying area. Plenty of stores already existed along streetcar lines connecting this precinct with the city center. The Plaza would be close to a carline, but customers would have to walk several blocks out of their way along curving streets. Nichols anticipated that many people would actually drive there to shop. Skeptics were certain that the venture was a colossal mistake.

The criticism soon evaporated. From its early years, the Plaza was a financial success, enjoying more or less consistent growth and rising popularity (fig. 2). Nichols in fact revolutionized the concept of the shopping center. His ideas exerted a major influence on retail design and marketing practices, commanding nationwide attention at least until the 1960s.² The Plaza and Nichols's adjacent residential developments, known as the Country Club District, became archetypes for the automobile suburb in much the same way Baron Georges Haussmann's reconstruction of Paris served as a paradigm for the commercial metropolis. Precedents existed for many aspects of Nichols's work, but like Haussmann's, the scale and degree of synthesis were a departure. In each instance, too, accommodating changes in transportation needs and creating comprehensive planning policies provided the essential matrix.

Earlier than most real estate developers, Nichols sensed that then prevalent retail center forms were rapidly becoming outmoded. The automobile, by virtue of numbers alone, was choking the urban core. While "every effort should be made to conserve the values of downtown business property . . . and increase its efficiency," such efforts must acknowledge

the ascendent role of peripheral sectors in retail trade. At the same time, Nichols recognized that these commercial strips, stretched along streetcar lines which were now burgeoning highways, suffered from almost as much congestion as the city center. Improving the situation entailed more than cosmetics. Nichols believed that the automobile was now a major determinant of people's spatial choices. The public would seek alternative locations, not transportation modes, when the existing physical order became too inconvenient.³ Thus if the Country Club District was to continue to thrive and expand, it must be served a new type of shopping center, one which would be inviting to the motorist.

Nichols was also an outspoken advocate of the most enlightened city planning of the period. He championed the cause of civic centers, parks, and other public amenities, but was just as concerned with adequate municipal support systems, stringent zoning regulations, and the details of block structure. No aspect of the urban fabric or urban life could be ignored in his concept of civic improvement. Nichols considered this viewpoint entirely practical. Through comprehensive planning, cities would become far more profitable places than they were at present. He also took the rather unorthodox stand that realtors should be the leading force in planning efforts. The city was the realtor's "merchandise," and he was thus in the best position to raise its value.⁴ In practicing this policy, Nichols created the Plaza as an integral part of the Country Club District. Commercial activity was prohibited in most parts of the district; therefore, more shops could be concentrated in one sector, which in turn could make shopping more convenient. At the same time, the Plaza must develop only as increases in the nearby popula-

Fig. 1: Jesse Clyde Nichols in his office. Photo 1928.



2

tion warranted. By growing incrementally, the center could one day provide a full range of retail and professional services while minimizing the risks of speculative investment. The same thorough planning was required for every detail of layout, appearance, and management so that the Plaza would increase in value and remain a long-term community asset rather than be undermined by the deterioration that threatened many commercial nodes after only one or two decades.

Nichols's strategy combined paternalism and free enterprise to form a modern, efficient machine for selling that catered to the middle class at a time when it regarded automobility as an ever more important part of daily life. The plan became a seminal one in the evolution of a building type that has joined the ranks of the skyscraper and single family suburban house as particularly American contributions to architecture—ones which have had a profound impact on the landscape and living patterns at home and abroad.

The Man

From broad conception to minor details, the Plaza was a personal product that embodied both the business and community values of its developer (fig. 1). Jesse Clyde Nichols was the epitome of the self-made entrepreneur who, starting with no capital, became

a rich and nationally prominent figure by the time he reached forty. All of his energies were focused on work. He worked incessantly and demanded no less of everyone around him.⁵ Nichols was unafraid to break with convention, yet never did so on impulse. He was a sagacious judge of human nature and needs without capitalizing on their weaknesses. A staunch individualist, Nichols ran his vast real estate empire as a patriarch. Employees, tenants, and even the thousands of Country Club residents were an extended family.⁶ At the same time, he was adept at delegating responsibility, assembling a corps of talented assistants trained in specialized fields. By the late 1930s, the J. C. Nichols Company had twenty-four departments, including ones for architecture, landscape design, brokerage, conveyance, financing, publicity, sales, insurance, building, and managing utilities.⁷ In its organization, scope, and size, the Country Club District was a small city.

By his own account, Nichols had always been addicted to hard work. Born in the small eastern Kansas town of Olathe in 1880, Nichols's initial employment came at age eight, assisting his father at the local grange store. Thereafter he held numerous jobs, many of them self-initiated. Few of these enterprises were needed for support. They were undertaken out of love of independence and a compulsion to formulate objectives and realize them in the best way pos-

sible.⁸ Nichols was intensely competitive; however, he never seems to have had the desire to excel at the expense of others. He strove to define his own situation, working in new territory where he would not have to confront others. This temperament may help to explain why his enterprises were concentrated in a single area rather than scattered throughout the metropolis, encompassing tracts sought by competing real estate interests. And, if Nichols was preoccupied with excellence, he also remained willing to admit failure and learn from mistakes. The modesty implicit in this attitude was in turn used to convey a sense of strength and confidence in future projects.⁹

Nichols's insatiable appetite for work did not diminish in the classroom. He graduated first in his class from high school and from the University of Kansas (1901), where he majored in economics. This academic performance led to a one year scholarship at Harvard, which he used to study law and real estate. The man who had the greatest influence on Nichols's outlook there was O. M. W. Sprague, who argued that development could generate as well as respond to land values and should be of long-term benefit to the community. Nichols had already acquired a respect for the longevity of old European towns during a bicycle trip through England and the Continent in 1900. He was also disturbed by the tendency of American urban quarters to decline after only a generation of use. Could their quality now endure, as he surmised was the case abroad?¹⁰

After leaving Cambridge, Nichols had no concrete plans for the future. Initially, he hoped to develop agricultural communities in Mexico and the American Southwest. The project was a dismal failure though he did acquire a taste for Spanish colonial architecture in the process. The next undertaking proved more successful. In 1904, Nichols organized a syndicate with several friends, purchased a tract in Kansas City, Kansas, and erected inexpensive houses on the premises. The profits made were sufficient to make him pursue another, more challenging subdivi-

sion venture. With the syndicate reformed as the J. C. Nichols Company, he acquired a ten acre parcel just outside Kansas City, Missouri.

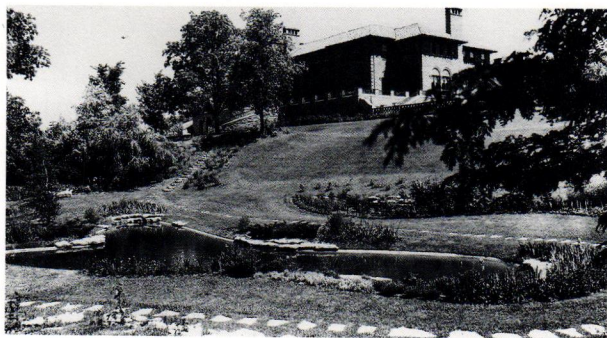
The property was a mile from the nearest streetcar line, had neither streets nor utilities, and was surrounded by a hog-feeding lot, brick kiln, squatters, and a tawdry amusement park. To Nichols the site was cheap, available, and promising. He sought to accomplish what he had been told by Sprague was possible: to create land values. The optimism proved infectious; sales were brisk, and a small enclave of residences began to take form. Nichols was not satisfied, however. The surrounding land uses still had an adverse affect on development, and no provisions existed to prevent it, like scores of predecessors, from declining in the years ahead. These circumstances, combined with some fruitless attempts to develop tracts in other outlying sections, convinced Nichols that acquiring one large, contiguous area was necessary to protect property values.¹¹

Little time was lost in devising a strategy. Several nearby parcels were purchased in 1909, and more were added almost yearly until America entered World War I. Work resumed at a fast pace after the Armistice. When the plan for the Plaza was announced four years later, Nichols had developed some 2000 acres and was planning many other projects for the near future. Two general principles had emerged to guide these efforts. All phases of the development process should be controlled by the company, and they should be formulated according to a comprehensive planning policy. The organization was thus not only selling lots, but designing and constructing houses, offering financial services, providing utilities, and imposing strict deed restrictions. Neigh-

Fig. 2: County Club Plaza, general view looking southwest. Photo ca. 1930.



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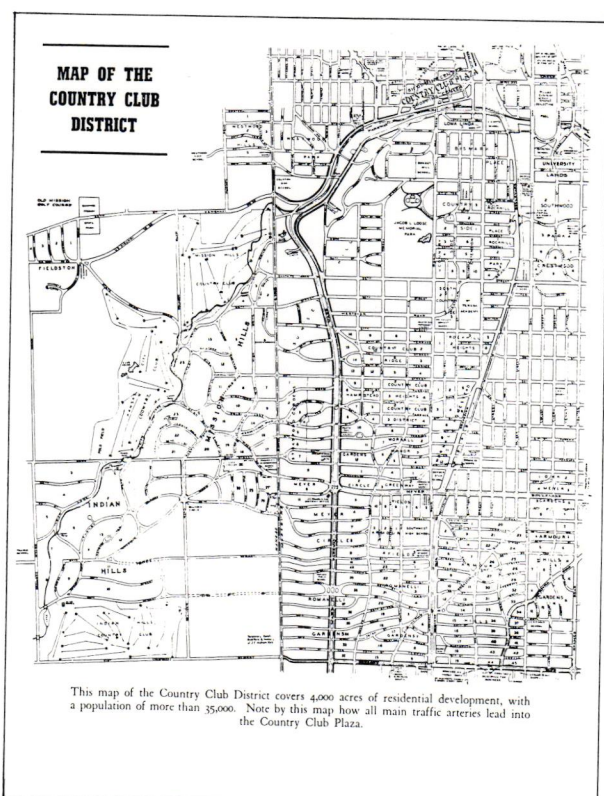
borhood associations had been formed so that residents would play an effective role in perpetuating property values.¹² Land was set aside for churches, schools, playgrounds, and parks. Nichols had lobbied strenuously to have Missouri portions of the development incorporated as part of Kansas City. Thereafter he worked with municipal authorities to extend the city's elegant park and boulevard system, as well as needed services, into his precinct. Landscape architect George Kessler, who had designed that system, was hired as a consultant and became a major influence in creating the garden city character that distinguished this. A cluster of neighborhood shops was built, and others soon followed.¹³ The residential enclaves contained scores of modest houses, but many others were more ambitious and some rank among the grandest dwellings in the metropolitan region (figs. 3, 4). The Country Club District, as it was now known, had become one of Kansas City's fastest growing and most prestigious quarters (fig. 5). Nichols had been assembling land for his large shopping center since 1912. The time seemed opportune for its realization.

The Idea

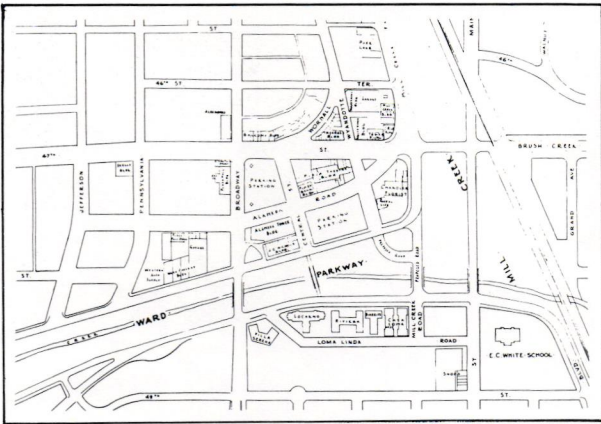
The Plaza's program departed from conventional practices in a number of respects; foremost was the attention it paid to the automobile. With the ubiquitous grid pattern of municipal streets and alleys considered a cause of vehicular overcrowding, the plan evolved as a hierarchical network (fig. 6). A single broad thoroughfare (47th Street) was planned for shops catering to everyday needs and rapid sales. Other streets were shorter, narrower, and more irregular, setting the tone for more leisurely excursions. Yet even minor roads were comparatively wide (60 feet) to permit easy traffic flow and diagonal parking for a maximum number of spaces. At a time when parking meters were being installed in cities and towns across the country, parking at the Plaza was (and still is) free. The swelling demand for reliable

automobile services was addressed with gas stations conspicuously placed at intersections and a repair facility located next to the first shops on a side street (fig. 7). Block interiors were reserved for delivery courts so as to minimize the intrusion of commercial vehicles on motorists and pedestrians alike.¹⁴

Nichols and his associates were perhaps the first developers to sense that widespread use of the automobile resisted creating a single focal point in a concentrated area. The traditional square, or in America the linear strip, enunciated by one or more prominent buildings at its heart not only fostered congestion, but was visually unwarranted because the car could cover considerable distance in a matter of minutes. Thus the Plaza's plan dispersed components more or less evenly throughout. Despite its name,



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6

the development had no center, no single landmark. The most prominent feature was in fact a series of towers that was designed to identify the various blocks while augmenting the coherence of the complex as a whole. Tall buildings, on the other hand, were regarded as a source of overcrowding on the street. The height limit was set at two stories, which Nichols argued not only diffused traffic, but allowed each building to receive plenty of natural light and made the units more cost-effective. Block size was also smaller than the average in Kansas City. The total arrangement was attuned as much to the pedestrian as to the motorist. Scattering stores on small blocks was calculated to discourage shoppers from staying in one part, while the towers offered landmarks to facilitate orientation. The shops themselves were grouped according to the services they provided, giving each sector its own identity and inducing perambulation from one zone to another.¹⁵ The ratio of open space to building lots was unusually high (46%). However, the configuration was designed to enhance property values. Consistent with Nichols's overall development strategy, amenities were at once generous and conceived to increase long term profit.

The Plaza's lateral organization intensified the need for the complex to possess a strong, cohesive, and appealing character. Nichols was a firm believer in total design. Buildings, street fixtures, and landscaping must be harmonious and orchestrated to make shoppers feel that they were in an extraordinary retail center. Over the years, large sums were spent on sculpture and other works of art, which were located at strategic points along the sidewalks. Such adornment was used as an attraction, but also to foster a sense of dignity that was central to the Plaza's image. Billboards and other conspicuous advertising media were banned. Nichols felt that the shopper's eye should be directed at window displays; hence signs were minimal and designed according to uniform standards. But if harmony was a paramount con-



7

cern, anonymity was considered detrimental. Storefronts were unobtrusive and at the same time designed to give merchants individual recognition.¹⁶ This subdued variety was seen as more inviting to the public than would be a homogeneous treatment that might carry institutional overtones.

Matching the attention paid to physical presence was a concern for human activity that fostered a community atmosphere. Classes in leisure pursuits were offered, and a dog show, art fair, and fiesta staged annually. Decorative schemes were developed for Easter, Flag Day, and Halloween. During the Christmas season, all buildings were outlined in lights, providing a spectacular nighttime display that attracted visitors throughout the region.

At the heart of retail profits lay the merchandise itself. Controlling the scope and quality of services was the linchpin of Nichols's marketing strategy. In most shopping districts, tenants were contracted by each building owner with the result that some facilities could be redundant while other goods not adequately represented. Moreover, the presence of a landlord concerned only with quick profits could undermine the stature of the whole quarter and spur deterioration in other parts. Such circumstances, combined with a substantial overbuilding of speculative commercial properties in the 1920s made the failure rate for retail stores across the country extremely high and placed many more in a marginal

Fig. 3: Greenway Fields tract, Country Club District, Kansas City, Mo., 1919.

Fig. 4: Kaufman house, Country Club District, Mission Hills, Kansas, ca. 1920.

Fig. 5: Plan of Country Club district in 1930s.

Fig. 6: Plan of Country Club Plaza in 1930.

Fig. 7: Sinclair service station, ca. 1921, Edward Buehler Delk, architect; demolished.

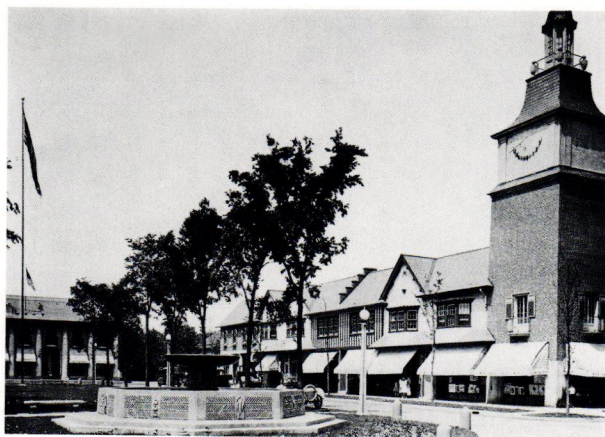


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economic position.¹⁷ Nichols sought to avoid this pattern by offering a balanced spectrum of retail products and professional services. Prospective tenants were considered within the context of their role in the entire center, and undue competition between merchants was prohibited. Thus several types of clothing stores could be included so as to give shoppers a choice, but more than one variety store offering the same range of products would not be permitted. This policy entailed both careful screening and stipulating what each tenant would sell. Grocers, for instance, could not bring in flowers on seasonal demand since it would undercut the florist's profits. The quality of products sold was equally important. Poor merchandise or shoddy sales techniques, Nichols reasoned, would tarnish the Plaza's reputation. Merchants had to be honest and discrete, but they were also encouraged to be aggressive. A percentage leasing system was initiated whereby rent was determined according to monthly sales volume. This method allowed the Nichols Company to monitor the ongoing need for a certain type of service and the effectiveness of each merchant, who in turn knew that if he was inattentive to sales there would be little inducement for his lease to be renewed.¹⁸

Additional control was fostered by the Plaza Association—inaugurated and in large part supported by the company—to which every merchant belonged. At regular meetings, members discussed means to promote the center, shared information and ideas, worked to coordinate store hours, and contributed to special events. Having a store in the Plaza quickly became a signifier of good business and good value. Tenants proved willing to submit to restrictions and fluctuating rents in exchange for the reputation and customers that were attracted.

Underlying these policies was Nichols's belief in long term investment. Such an objective, he stressed, would result in greater profits and create a lasting community asset. The Plaza was intended to be both an efficient retail center and a civic enterprise,



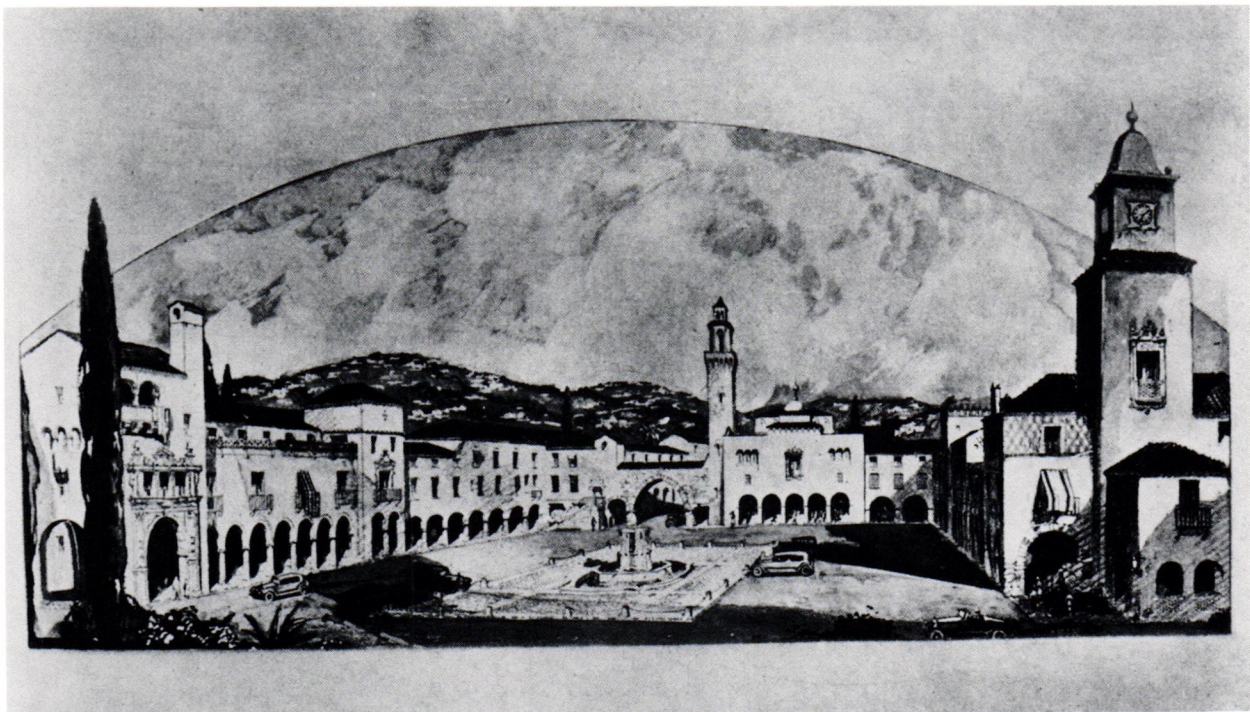
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which, like the European towns that inspired its name, could be a focus of human activity and enjoyment. In a society founded on free enterprise, with shifting market conditions and often unscrupulous speculative ventures, stringent controls were regarded as essential to execute and maintain the center's broad agenda.

Comprehensive planning was also an important means to implementation. Impressive by any standard of the day, the number of single family houses in the Country Club District was nevertheless considered insufficient to sustain so large a retail complex. Residents in older neighborhoods toward downtown Kansas City would augment the clientele, but not enough. To bolster demand, apartment houses designed for moderate and high income groups were erected around three sides of the Plaza. While these projects were induced by the Nichols Company, other developers undertook most of the actual work (fig. 8). By the late 1930s, this chain of apartments housed some 10,000 people who could satisfy most of their shopping needs within a few blocks of home. The buildings also provided inexpensive quarters for many Plaza employees. Finally, the residential towers to the south of the center were planned to serve as a buffer between the intense retail activity on one side and the secluded tracts of houses on the other.¹⁹

Precedents

In formulating the Plaza's program, Nichols and his staff drew from an array of contemporary practices in urban planning and development, while modifying them in new ways. Master plans, for instance, had been undertaken in cities throughout the nation as a means of bringing order to metropolitan form, transportation systems, and land use.²⁰ These initiatives were for the most part sponsored by civic groups and increasingly by municipalities themselves. Planning was emerging as a government responsibility in the 1920s. Nichols's designs, on the other hand, were private, money making ventures



10

where the cooperation of authorities was solicited to implement a scheme.

Precedent also existed for large commercial development projects, the most ambitious to date having been Grand Central Station and its attendant blocks in New York.²¹ But such undertakings were generally located in the urban core, not on the periphery. Ties between downtown and suburb had been created in Cleveland with the Van Sweringer brothers' bold scheme for Union Terminal and Shaker Heights. Nevertheless, this enormous development underscored the polarities of the two zones; only later would attention be paid to concentrated retail development near the residential tracts.²²

The Plaza was in fact far larger and more complex than any previous shopping center developed by a single concern. During the second half of the nineteenth century, a few planned suburbs such as Riverside, Illinois, included several stores to meet residents' daily needs. After 1900, the idea of a modest, picturesque retail center became popular in fashionable suburban areas (Market Square, Lake Forest, Illinois, 1913), as well as in philanthropic projects (Forest Hills Gardens, New York, 1909–1912), model company towns (Tyrone, New Mexico, 1914–1915), and even some of the federal government's first housing ventures (Yorkship Village, Camden, New Jersey, begun 1918).²³ All of these commercial nodes were defined by a parklike open space inspired by preindustrial sources. The historicizing matrix offered a welcome relief from the gaudy image normally associated with retail development (fig. 9). Yet the intimately scaled square lined by

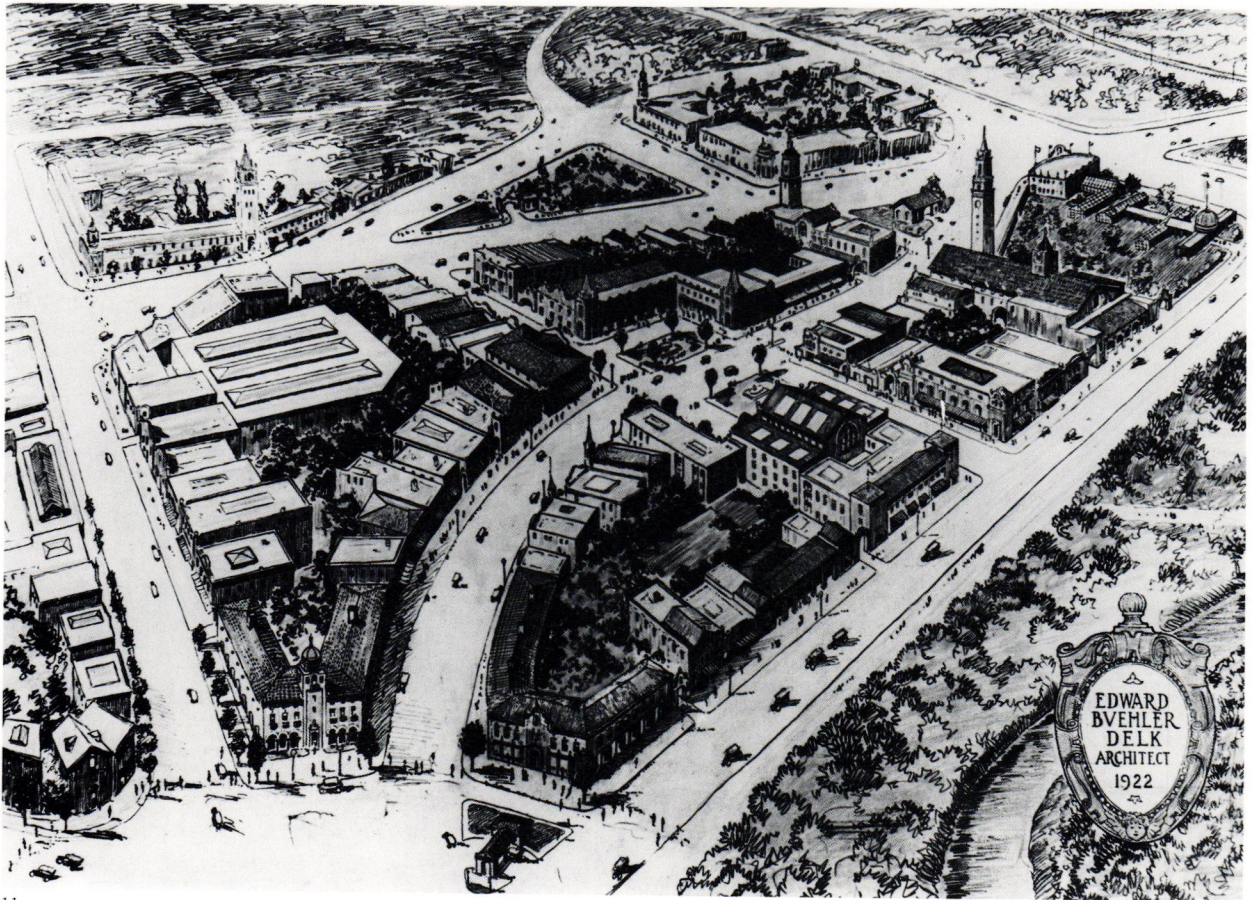
shops created traffic problems as much as it fostered an appealing village ambiance. In most cases, too, the limited number of stores implied that residents either had sufficient mobility to do their shopping in the metropolitan center, or the resources to purchase little more than basic goods. A scheme closer in size and scope with the Plaza was prepared at about the same time for Palos Verdes Estates south of Los Angeles.²⁴ The four shopping centers projected as part of this 16,000-acre suburb each had a large paved square that enabled easier vehicular circulation and parking, but this form was essentially an expanded version of the prevailing pattern (fig. 10). While shopping centers begun in the 1930s tended to be less formal with layouts specifically tailored to parking needs, they were for the most part neighborhood oriented. The Depression brought ambitious new projects to an end, leaving the Plaza and a handful of centers that appear to have been influenced by it anomalies until after the Second World War.²⁵

Adherence to traditional forms during the 1920s is understandable given the nascent stage of highway design. Little significant reordering of space to ac-

Fig. 8: Casaterra, Biarritz, Riviera, Villa Locarno, and Villa Serra apartments, 1928 to 1929, Alonzo H. Gentry, architect.

Fig. 9: Market Square, Lake Forest, Illinois, 1913, Howard Van Doren Shaw, architect.

Fig. 10: Lunda Bay Plaza, Palos Verdes Estates, California, ca. 1923, Kirtland Cutter architect; Olmsted Brothers, landscape architects; Charles Cheney, planning consultant; project.



11

commodate the automobile had occurred in densely developed areas. Most examples consisted of widening extant arteries or constructing boulevards and parkways.²⁶ The unplanned commercial strips that would proliferate along highways outside cities during the 1930s were just beginning to emerge. Nichols's anticipation of the need for a large, multipurpose suburban shopping center and for tailoring its plan to the characteristics of the automobile must have relied more on intuition than on specific models.

A major source for the Plaza's scope of services was the department store. Nichols viewed his development not as a collection of shops but as a unified organism containing diverse parts while possessing the advantages of single ownership and coordinated merchandising policy.²⁷ At the same time, this model was completely transformed in the complex's lateral arrangement. Shopping blocks also were built to be flexible so that a merchant could expand or move into another part of the center if circumstances warranted. The whole complex was planned to be erected incrementally, permitting response to retail demands. Finally, to complement its collective image, the Plaza placed great emphasis on the role of the individual merchant.

In its name and architectural motifs, the Plaza was inspired by old European market centers, but the am-

biance seems more analogous to that of small towns that dot the midwestern landscape. The wide streets with diagonal parking, particularized design of stores, informal atmosphere, frequent staging of special events, and presence of many merchants all afford a parallel. The small town commercial center was, and often still is, much more than a place to purchase goods. It was the community's salient identifying feature, the place where the finest buildings were located, where civic affairs were held and holidays celebrated, and where people socialized as much as they conducted business. Having grown up in a small town, Nichols no doubt recognized its virtues and believed that they were less pronounced in the urban core. Indeed, he had an aversion to large, corporate retail establishments. Chain operations were admitted to the Plaza only when no sound alternative existed and only on Nichols's stringent



12



13

terms.²⁸ The independent merchant, he believed, would be more concerned with making a profit and with giving customers personal service. Nurturing an association with small towns was never part of the Plaza's promotional literature, perhaps because it was feared that the public might view the center as a homespun operation. Yet the similarities are sufficient to suggest more than coincidence. Combining advantages of the metropolis and rural areas had long been an aim in suburban residential development; Nichols was among the first men to realize this connection on a large scale in retailing.²⁹

The Plan

The basic idea behind the Plaza was developed during its inception phase, yet some aspects took longer to reach full resolution. As had long been the practice in Nichols's residential tracts, development proceeded incrementally, encumbering no outside capital, but financed through returns on work already completed. This policy also gave the company time to test assumptions on a modest scale, making any necessary modifications before a large investment was made.³⁰ Furthermore, Nichols seems to have understood early in his career that long term comprehensive planning should not be bound to an intransigent physical form.

The initial design, prepared by consulting architect Edward Delk in association with Kessler, was perhaps created to publicize the idea as much as it was to provide a growth (fig. 11). Virtually all of its features were altered in execution, beginning with the development of the first two blocks (upper center and right) that same year. Furthermore, this was the only occasion that the company commissioned a formal master plan. As executed, the Plaza was more pragmatically arranged, reflecting the concerns of its client and the inclinations of the staff architect, Edward Tanner, who designed most of the buildings.³¹



14

Among the most significant initial changes to the scheme was the channeling of through traffic around the complex—a major break with convention at that time—and concentrating shoppers' vehicles on 47th Street near the northern edge. The extant curved street that bisects the center in Delk's rendering and the diagonal artery (Wornall Road) at the top, were realigned and reduced to secondary routes. That favorite feature of planned early-twentieth-century centers, the open square, was eliminated from the design, as was the triangular park above it. As executed, all blocks were filled with buildings, service yards, or parking lots. Plants and other embellishments played an important role, but not in separate areas. Several of the blocks on the south side of Delk's square were also dropped. The realized scheme was a thoroughly commercial quarter that carried fewer trappings of City Beautiful projects.

The initial phase of building occurred between 1922 and 1925 and was focused on the northeastern sector at the principal approach from downtown and thence along 47th Street (figs. 12–14). Several new components were added from 1928 to 1930, extending the original node and creating new ones to the south and west (figs. 15, 16). These buildings were located so as to make the whole complex seem larger than its actual size and to allude to the extent of its future development. With curbside spaces no

Fig. 11: Country Club Plaza, preliminary design, 1922, E. B. Delk; Hare & Hare, landscape architects, George Kessler planning consultant.

Fig. 12: Left to right: Triangle Building, 1923, 1924, Edward W. Tanner, architect; Wolferman Building, 1923 to 1924, Wight & Wight, architects; Sinclair station; and Sydenham (now Mill Creek) Building, 1922 to 1923, E. B. Delk.

Fig. 13: Wolferman Building and Tower Building, 1923 to 1924, E. B. Delk.

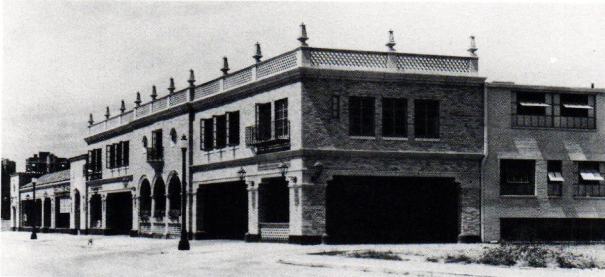
14. Triangle Building.



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longer able to accommodate the daily volume of automobiles, a large parking garage was built and two parking lots introduced on vacant lots between the most recent shop clusters (figs. 17, 18). While parking lots were beginning to appear in the commercial districts of many cities and towns by the late 1920s, these facilities were often relegated to the rear of properties and considered an unfortunate necessity by the owner. In contrast, the Nichols Company celebrated this feature, giving the lots prominent positions, ornamenting their perimeters, and repeatedly stressing the convenience they afforded shoppers.³² The parking stations, as they were called, also contributed to the center's perceived size, and when occupied, they advertised the Plaza as a focus of activity.

The next building program was launched in the mid-1930s and continued until the eve of World War II. Construction resumed in the late 1940s when, for the first time, greater density was sought. Several groups of one-story shops were replaced by larger units, a three-deck parking garage was built, and a department store (Sears, Roebuck and Company) was added to bolster the availability of products at moderate cost.³³ When Nichols died in 1950, the Plaza had not only reached its projected size, but was functioning as a regional shopping center.

Minor changes were introduced frequently. Store-

fronts were altered for new tenants or updated for old ones (fig. 19). The number of small gas stations built in the 1920s was later reduced and new facilities were constructed in response to developments in that industry. Streetlights and other municipal fixtures were replaced while conforming to company policy that they remain as unobtrusive as possible. Sidewalk adornments were continually added. From the start, the Plaza was a fluid assemblage, its parts multiplied, subtracted, and modified according to market conditions and lessons learned from experience. Modernization was inherent to the program.

The Image

Balancing change was a strong sense of continuity created in large part by the Plaza's architectural imagery. As Nichols deplored the congestion and absence of merchandising control on the streetcar commercial strip, so he considered it "the ugliest, most . . . disorderly of places—a mixture of glaring billboards . . . hideous rears, unkempt alleys . . . unrelated, uncongenial mixtures of shops . . . shacks . . . mixed up with good buildings; perfectly square, unadorned buildings of poor design . . . bringing about unattractiveness that threatens to mar the beauty . . . of the residential regions of American cities." If it was to be a permanent community feature, the Plaza must employ a harmonious design rendered in a "timeless" idiom which would never fall out of fash-



19



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ion.³⁴ The fact that European towns had sparked his concern for building as a long-term investment made them a logical source of inspiration. The specific choice of Spanish colonial motifs for the center stemmed from several factors. Since Nichols had seen such work in the Southwest and especially in Mexico, he may have reasoned that it offered a tangible link between European and American traditions. Furthermore, the Spanish had once had nominal control of the region where Kansas City lay; Spanish explorers had earlier penetrated into parts of eastern Kansas; and the metropolitan area had been an important departure point for the Southwest since the mid nineteenth century. Nichols's own love of Hispanic architecture was also reinforced by a trip to the Iberian peninsula in 1922.

As with every other aspect of the Plaza's planning, a pragmatic rationale became the overriding determinant. Spanish motifs were viewed as being ideal for generating a festive, slightly exotic atmosphere that could enhance merchandising efforts. Spanish classical architecture offered a rich source for the design of towers, yet one which to most Americans would carry less overt religious or institutional overtones than would references to counterparts in, say, England or France. Stucco wall surfaces and plaster ornament were handsome and relatively enduring in the region's climate, while they were less expensive than comparable treatments in brick or stone. Glazed tiles and ornamental ironwork offered further flourish that could be concentrated in a few areas and required little maintenance.³⁵

Spanish motifs may also have been chosen because they offered a novel image, especially in the Midwest. During the 1920s, work of this genre was for the most part concentrated in the West Coast and Florida. The mode, now generally known as the Spanish Colonial Revival, had gained considerable recognition and popularity at the 1915 Panama-California Ex-

position in San Diego and was fast becoming a symbol of elegant suburban and resort development in the other regions.³⁶ Through such associations, this "new" eclectic vocabulary could enhance the Plaza's prestige while underscoring its unique place among retail centers. Embellished with wall decoration, tile roofs, and towers, the buildings further provided a striking contrast to the generally plain "flat tops" which were endemic to the streetcar commercial strip. The Plaza's novelty was not emphasized *per se*, in all likelihood because it was felt that doing so would undermine the cultivated ties to an "unchanging" tradition. Yet Nichols and his staff must have been aware that this was a new mode that would make the Plaza seem very different from the settings that most of its clientele frequented.

To reinforce the sense that the Plaza would be a long-standing asset to the community, promotional literature stressed that its design was "authentic."³⁷ Once again, however, the reality was more complex. While references were overt, leaving no question as to their source, details were often loosely interpreted, perhaps for reasons of cost but also out of the understanding that the center's scale and function required considerable adaptation. Furthermore, the general massing of the buildings was straightforward and quite conventional (fig. 20). Arcades, which would have provided a welcome relief from the area's scalding summers, were never used, nor

Fig. 15: Plaza Theatre Building, 1928, E. W. Tanner, Boller Brothers associate architects for the theatre.

Fig. 16: Plaza Theatre Building.

Fig. 17: Ward Parkway Garage, 1928, E. W. Tanner.

Fig. 18: Parking station with Plaza Theatre Building at left.

Fig. 19: Plaza Theatre Building, remodeled storefronts.

Fig. 20: Plaza Time Building, 1947, E. W. Tanner.



21

were blocks permeated by walkways or pedestrian courts.³⁸ Nichols probably considered such features impractical, inhibiting clear views of shop windows, the flexibility he wanted for shop interiors, and the use of service yards. As a developer, he thought in terms of cubic footage. Reviewing designs at every stage, Nichols scrutinized ceiling heights, corridor widths, usable floor areas, decorative embellishments, and all other facets from the standpoint of construction cost, maintenance needs, and impact on generating revenue.³⁹ He wanted to create a pleasing environment but also valued this attribute because he was certain that it would lead to greater long term profits. Thus while program and image were orchestrated to contribute toward a single objective, they were not synthesized as a design. The image remained applique. Architectural precedent was never allowed to interfere with the creation of a productive machine for selling.

To proponents of Modernism in architecture, a complex that is at once so innovative and historicizing embodies an unfortunate paradox. The degree to which both aspects were expressed in designs such as this during the 1920s and 1930s was especially pronounced and no doubt added fuel to the Modernist polemic against eclecticism. Yet these qualities can be found in much of America's architecture since the early nineteenth century and may represent not so much a contradiction as the existence of two compatible urges. To improve the usefulness and commodity of buildings and to forge ties to traditions valued by society at a given time. Nichols thought of "modern" in terms of design expression, which was far simpler than that of the previous generation, but most of all in terms of convenience and efficiency.⁴⁰ Spanish references were selected for practical as well as associational reasons. There is no indication that this imagery was born out of either escapism or nostalgia. On the other hand, Nichols's attitude toward embracing a radically new formal design concept for its own sake is suggested by his views on proposals

for futuristic urban schemes which acquired some following in the United States by the 1930s. To him, they were irrelevant gestures—grand designs in a new guise and ones which had little substantive relation to the realities of the marketplace of human needs.⁴¹ He was not against Modern architecture per se. Such work was permitted in the Country Club District, but it was not in many suburban tracts where designs were reviewed. After World War II, new construction in the Plaza shed many of its historical trappings (fig. 21).⁴² But as a businessman, Nichols believed that design could not be founded primarily on intellectual dictates. And perhaps like most Americans, he never considered associations with the past to be explicitly anti-modern.

Acknowledgments

Lee Fowler, Barbara Barrickman and their staff at the J. C. Nichols Company graciously gave me access to the firm's extensive historical files and were most obliging in response to my requests. Howard Gillette and Gary Molyneaux read a draft of this essay and offered many useful comments for its improvement.

Fig. 21: Harzfeld's store, 1954, E. W. Tanner.

All photos courtesy of the J. C. Nichols Company with the exception of Figure 9 (*Western Architect*, October 1917, pl. 12), Figure 10 (*Architect and Engineer*, January 1930, p. 83), and Figures 19, and 21 (author).

Notes

1. "The Country Club Plaza," *Town*, December 1947, p. 5.
2. Retrospective analysis of Nichols, his developments, and his contributions to the field of city planning is meager. See Geoffrey Baker and Bruno Funaro, *Shopping Centers: Design and Operation* (New York: Reinhold, 1951), pp. 81–89; William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement in Kansas City* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1964), pp. 130–131; William H. Wilson, *Coming of Age: Urban American 1915 to 1945* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974), pp. 40–45; Martin Mayer, *The Builders* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), pp. 57–60; George Erlich, *Kansas City, Missouri, An Architectural History 1826 to 1976* (Kansas City: Historic Kansas City Foundation, 1979), pp. 72–75; and Robert A. M. Stern and John Montague Massengale, eds., *The Anglo American Suburb* (London: Architectural Design, 1981), pp. 76–77. By far the most thorough treatment can be found in Gary O'Dell Anderson Molyneaux, "Planned Land Use Change in an Urban Setting: The J. C. Nichols Company and the Country Club District in Kansas City" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1979). Much additional material used in this article has been gleaned from 49 volumes of scrapbooks and other material in the offices of the J. C. Nichols Company.
3. J. C. Nichols, "Planned Shopping Centers," *National Real Estate Journal*, 22 March 1926, p. 47.
4. J. C. Nichols, "Responsibilities and Opportunities of Real Estate Boards in Building Cities," *National Real Estate Journal*, 30 June 1924, pp. 23–27.
5. Interview with Robert S. O'Keefe, retired Senior Vice President of the J. C. Nichols Company, Kansas City, 18 July 1983.
6. Among the most telling evidence of this relationship are the hundreds of pages in the Nichols Company scrapbooks devoted to news items about employees as well as merchants and residents in the County Club District.
7. "The Nichols Organization and Its Activities," *National Real Estate Journal*, February 1939, pp. 70–72, 80; Molyneaux, "Planned Land Use Change," ch. IV.
8. The most detailed account of Nichols's life is an autobiography probably written in the 1940s and compiled posthumously by his secretary: "Jesse Clyde Nichols 1880 to 1950," typescript, n.d., J. C. Nichols Company files. See also "Portrait of a Salesman: Jesse Clyde Nichols," *National Real Estate Journal*, February 1939, pp. 19–23, 76; and Molyneaux, "Planned Land Use Change," pp. 28–44.
9. On at least several occasions, the capacity for error was emphasized in Nichols's essays. See, for instance "Mistakes We Have Made in Developing Shopping Centers," *Technical Bulletin No. 4* (Washington, D.C. Urban Land Institute, 1945). The continued demand for this article was so great that it was reprinted in 1960, a remarkable fact considering the constant changes in development practice and that many of those Nichols espoused were formulated in the 1920s.
10. "J. C. Nichols Builds Again," *Architectural Forum*, October 1934, p. 302; "Jesse Clyde Nichols," pp. 18–21; Molyneaux, "Planned Land Use Change," pp. 36–39.
11. Frederick Beckmann, "Making Money and Keeping the Faith," *Nation's Business*, June 1925, p. 22; "Jesse Clyde Nichols," pp. 24–28.
12. Henry J. Haskell, "What Kind of Pittsburgh is Kansas City?" *World's Work*, January 1921, pp. 291–298; "A City Beautiful Project," *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, 16 February 1921; Beckmann, "Keeping the Faith," p. 25; "Kansas City—The City of Beautiful Homes," *Kansas Citizen*, 12 August 1930, pp. 3–4; "Nichols Builds Again," pp. 305–306; "Restrictions Create Values in County Club District," *National Real Estate Journal*, February 1939, pp. 37–39; Molyneaux, "Planned Land Use Change," ch. VI. For an synopsis of Nichols's planning view in his own words see "Economic Saving in City Planning," in *National Conference on City Planning, Planning Problems of Town, City, and Region* (Philadelphia: Wm. F. Fell, 1927), pp. 241–247.
13. "Nichols Builds Again," p. 303; Molyneaux, "Planned Land Use Change," p. 98. Concerning Kessler, see Wilson, *City Beautiful Movement*, esp. ch. IV; and Mel Scott, *American City Planning Since 1890* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 12–16.
14. The best summary of Nichols's concerns in laying out the Plaza is "Planning and Management of Nichols Shopping Centers," *National Real Estate Journal*, February 1939, pp. 48–54, 79–80.
15. Nichols, "Planning Shopping Centers," pp. 47–49; *Country Club Plaza, Kansas City* (Kansas City: J. C. Nichols Companies, 1926), p. 12; J. C. Nichols, "A Few Suggestions on Developing Outlying Business Property," *National Real Estate Journal*, April 1937, p. 38; interview with O'Keefe.
16. J. C. Nichols, "Art Out of Doors a Community Asset," *Think*, February 1946, pp. 26–27; Beckmann, "Keeping the Faith," p. 24; Nichols, "Planning Shopping Centers," p. 16; interview with O'Keefe. Ornamental fixtures were added to the Plaza only as their cost could be recovered through rental income.
17. Clarence S. Stein and Catherine Bauer, "Store Buildings and Neighborhood Shopping Centers," *Architectural Record*, February 1934, pp. 176–177.
18. *Country Club Plaza*, pp. 29, 35; "Planning and Management," pp. 49–50; interview with O'Keefe. An early slogan used to attract tenants was "More than Location—Business Identity!"
19. "Nichols Builds Again," p. 306; Nichols Company scrapbooks, 7:100–101. To stimulate interest in building apart-

- ments, the company sponsored a competition for one of the tracts, see "First Prize for New Subdivision in Country Club District, Kansas City, Mo.," *Architectural Record*, June 1925, pp. 570–573. Plans for the actual buildings were reviewed by the company and the existence of apartment houses in the precinct was stressed in promotional literature. Further research is needed to ascertain why other firms were brought in to do the work. One possible explanation is that Nichols did not wish to create a new division in his own office when a number of local companies already specialized in this field.
20. Scott, *American City Planning*, chs. 2–4; John L. Hancock, "Planners in the Changing American City, 1900 to 1940," in Alexander B. Callow, Jr., ed., *American Urban History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 596–614.
21. William D. Middleton, *Grand Central . . . the World's Greatest Railroad Terminal* (San Marino, Calif.: Golden West Books, 1977), pp. 97–105; Carl W. Condit, *The Port of New York*, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 2:96–100; Deborah Nevins, ed., *Grand Central Terminal: City Within the City* (New York: Municipal Art Society, 1982), pp. 101–105. Histories of such developments are rare. For an exception, see Neal O. Hines, *Denny's Knoll: A History of the Metropolitan Tract of the University of Washington* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980).
22. Eric Johannesen, *Cleveland Architecture 1876–1976* (Cleveland: West Reserve Historical Society, 1979), pp. 131–134, 167–193; Baker and Funaro, *Shopping Centers*, pp. 184–185. The Van Swinger brothers visited Nichols early in their careers and were probably influenced by some of his practices in the subsequent development of Shaker Heights.
23. Harold M. Mayer and Richard C. Wade, *Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), pp. 184–186; Leland M. Roth, *A Concise History of American Architecture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), pp. 222–226; Richard Oliver, *Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue* (New York and Cambridge: Architectural History Foundation and M.I.T. Press, 1983), pp. 152–154; Stern, *Anglo American Suburb*, pp. 23–24, 61–62. Detailed study of early 20th century shopping centers is needed. For the importance of the central open space in town planning of the period see Werner Hegemann and Elbert Peets, *The American Vitruvius: An Architect's Handbook of Civic Art* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, 1922), esp. chs. I–II.
24. For background on Palso Verdes Estates see *Architect and Engineer*, January 1930, pp. 35–83; Augusta Fink, *Time and the Terraced Land* (Berkeley: Hower—North, 1966), ch. 10; and David Gebhard and Robert Winter, *A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles and Southern California* (Santa Barbara and Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1977), pp. 70–71. Only a portion of one of the shopping centers was built.
25. Highland Park in Dallas (begun 1931) was apparently patterned after the Plaza. See "A Model Shopping Village in Texas," *Architectural Record*, September 1931, pp. 197–198; and Baker and Funaro, *Shopping Centers*, pp. 90–93. In this instance, however, the open square was modified to form a U-shaped parking area. Westwood Village in Los Angeles (begun 1929) followed the Plaza's example in having a slightly irregular network of streets and no square, but the streets were more or less uniform in width. See John Steven McGroarty, "Westwood Village: A Year and a Day to Build," *Architect and Engineer*, August 1930, pp. 29–41; and M. Urmy Seares, "Westwood Village," *Arts and Architecture*, July 1930, pp. 41–43, 70. For examples of more modest work from the 1930s see "Drafting and Design Problems: Neighborhood Shopping Centers," *Architectural Record*, May 1932, pp. 325–332; Stein and Bauer, "Store Buildings," pp. 175–187; and "Community Shopping Centers," *Architectural Record*, June 1940, pp. 99–120. Regional shopping centers of the 1940s and 1950s were markedly different from the Plaza in form; nevertheless, trade literature heralded the Kansas City center as the key early work in the type's development.
26. See for example George B. Ford and Ralph F. Warner, eds., *City Planning Progress in the U.S., 1917* (Washington, D.C.: Journal of the American Institute of Planners, n.d.); and Mark Foster, "The Automobile and the City," *Michigan Quarterly Review*, Fall 1980/Winter 1981, pp. 465–466.
27. Interview with O'Keefe.
28. Interview with O'Keefe.
29. The most recent discussion of this phenomenon's inceptive phase in residential planning is John Archer, "Country and City in the American Romantic Suburb," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, May 1983, pp. 139–156.
30. "Nichols Builds Again," p. 305.
31. A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's school of architecture who received advanced training in London, Delk was reputedly persuaded by Nichols to move his practice from Philadelphia to Kansas City after World War I. Delk designed several early Plaza buildings; however, his primary role appears to have been setting design standards through developing preliminary studies and consultation, which he did between 1920 and 1930.
- Plans for most inhouse Nichols Company buildings after the mid-1920s were done under the direction of Tanner, who joined the staff in 1919 and served as chief of the architectural division for several decades. For background information on both men see Shirley Piland, "Early Kansas City Architects: A Gifted Designer," *Historic Kansas City News*, February to March 1979, p. 5; and Nichols Company scrapbooks, 4: 176–177, 219–22.
32. "Planning and Management," p. 79; Nichols, "Mistakes," pp. 13–14; "The Activities of the J. C. Nichols Company," typescript, n.d., J. C. Nichols Company files. The parking garage is reputedly the first to be built for a suburban retail center.

33. Baker and Funaro, *Shopping Centers*, pp. 84–85; interview with O'Keefe.
34. Nichols, "Planning Shopping Centers," p. 47; "Country Club Plaza," *Town*, 19 December 1947, p. 5; interview with O'Keefe.
35. Interview with O'Keefe.
36. David Gebhard, "The Spanish Colonial Revival in Southern California (1895 to 1930)," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, May 1967, pp. 131–147; David Gebhard, *Santa Barbara—The Creation of a New Spain in America* (Santa Barbara: UCSB Art Museum, 1982); Donald W. Curl, *Mizner's Florida: American Resort Architecture* (New York and Cambridge: Architectural History Foundation and M.I.T. Press, 1984).
37. *A Day in Spain: An Interpretation of the Plaza Theatre*, promotional booklet, n.d., J. C. Nichols Company files; *Country Club Plaza*, p. 15.
38. Both covered sidewalks and interior pedestrian courts were popular features of retail developments in warm climates during the 1920s. Besides references cited in notes 24 and 25 see Donald E. Marquis, "The Spanish Stores of Morgan, Walls & Clements," *Architectural Forum*, June 1929, pp. 902–909; "A Community Business Center," *Architectural Forum*, July 1931, pp. 27–30; Gebhard, *Santa Barbara*, p. 19–22; figs. 14–16, 23–31; Curl, *Mizner's Florida*, pp. 113–115, 122–126.
39. Nichols, "Mistakes," pp. 14–15; interview with O'Keefe.
40. J. C. Nichols, "The Old and the New in our Homes," *Business of Reading and Berks*, November 1936, in Nichols Company scrapbooks, 13: 189–190; Molyneaux, "Planned Land Use Change," p. 97. Similarly, Tanner readily accepted what he considered were Modernism's practical innovations, but employed its vocabulary only when a client wished him to do so. See Nichols Company scrapbooks, 4:176.
41. J. C. Nichols, *The Buying and Selling of Homes* (Kansas City: Kansas City Fire and Marine Insurance Company, n.d.), J. C. Nichols Company files; Al Dopking, "From a Tract Beside a Hog Lot Grew His District of 10,000 Homes," *Kansas City Star*, 3 August 1947.
42. Beginning in the 1910s, a number of houses inspired by work of the Prairie School were built in the district, Louis Curtiss's Corrigan house (1913) is the most remarkable example of this genre. Tanner's Bixby house (1935 to 1936) is the grandest of several modern residences. For illustrations see Ehrlich, *Kansas City*, figs. 86–87 and 125, respectively. The harbinger of modernist influence in the Plaza was the store built for Sears, Roebuck and Company, completed in 1947 and recently remodeled as Seville Square. By the late 1960s, a return to more historicizing imagery occurred with some new units reflecting the resurgence of its appeal among the middle class.



“Bad Enough to Be Good Enough” Precedence and Type in Montgomery Schuyler’s “Architectural Aberrations”

Helene Lipstadt

Around the turn of the century, from 1891 to 1913, *The Architectural Record*, then a fledgling magazine, published a series of twenty-six anonymous essays¹ in which buildings by unnamed architects were subjected to trenchant, but humorous criticism. *The Record* was emerging as the spokesman for a new professional American architecture, and generally struck a serious, almost cultivated pose. Further, its criticism was, for the most, enthusiastic; the architecture and practices of earlier, less sophisticated decades alone were mocked. The “Architectural Aberrations,” as the series was called, were thus uncharacteristic of the new magazine, and, as subsequent years have revealed, uncharacteristic of the generally laudatory American architectural journalism. They have thus attracted attention as the paramount example of “negative criticism” in this country.²

The mystery of their authorship—and the puzzle of their very existence—long remained unsolved.³ Discovery that the entire series can be attributed to Montgomery Schuyler,⁴ that the authorship could have been recognized at the time, and that Schuyler encouraged that recognition, enhances the attraction of the already interesting series. Most importantly, textual analysis reveals the affinities between Schuyler’s signed and unsigned criticism, suggesting that the “Architectural Aberrations” were workshops for the signed work, where Schuyler tinkered with themes he later put to work most powerfully.

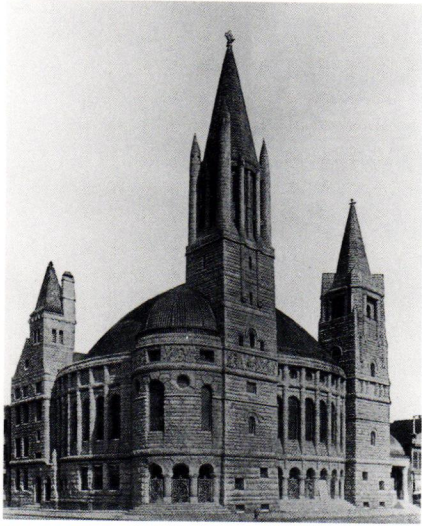
Like Schuyler, the anonymous author returns repeatedly, almost obsessively, to the role of the column analogy in establishing the skyscraper as an architectural type. The importance of this theme for the analysis of the entire oeuvre of Montgomery Schuyler leads us to stress those “Aberrations” devoted to steel-framed skyscrapers at the expense of the earlier ones. Further, in this group we can study the implications of the notion of “aberrance” in relation to that of “type.” Aberrance was defined as “that which differs from customary structure or type.”

Although the recurring topic of the column analogy first suggests the probable attribution to Schuyler, it is the word “aberration” itself that provides the first hint of a link between the “Architectural Aberrations” and Montgomery Schuyler. It appears in his often-quoted “The Skyscraper-Up-To-Date” (1899) in an argument pivotal to his defense of Louis Sullivan’s Bayard Building. Schuyler admits the existence of bad aberrations, “mere caprice[s] of the designer,” as well as those, like the Bayard, that “attempt to come closer to reason and reality than is possible under the conventional treatment.” He characterized that design as an aberration because it was the unique structure to reject both dominant assumptions about the tall building: one, that a steel-framed facade must be designed as if it were a masonry structure, and, two, that it respect historical precedent by taking on the features of the only analogous form, the column, with its tripartite division of base, shaft and capital. Schuyler termed the “column analogy” an “arbitrary assumption,” for not only did it not derive from structure or function, it “may even obstruct the detailed expression in design of structure and function.” Finally, he concluded, “these assumptions” represented “an evasion of the problem presented by the modern office building. That is why an aberration, a deviation from the customary structure or type, is not necessarily condemnable, may, on the contrary, be highly laudable.”⁵

In 1893, in the “Architectural Aberration No. 4 — The Peddie Memorial Church,” the essayist employs the same definition to distinguish between the dominant meaning of aberration, “moral perversity” or “mental weakness,” and his sense:

Aberration . . . in these pages has come to bear a somewhat indivious and condemnatory sense. This acceptation is born out by the dictionary We have no sort of inten-

Fig. 1: The Hotel Somerset, A.A. 20.

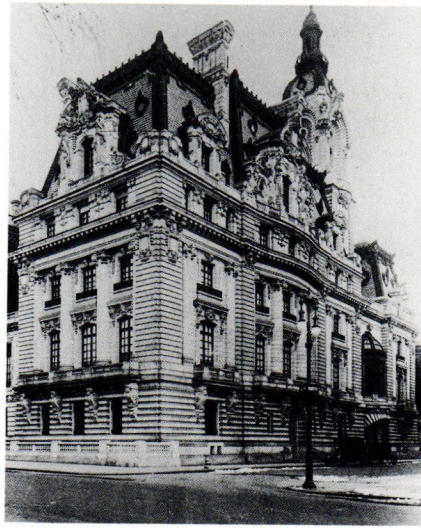


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tion of imputing moral perversity to the design of this edifice, nor even mental weakness . . . There is, however, another definition which comes timely to our rescue: that which differs from the customary structure or type. That settles it.

That, however, far from settles the problem of authorship, for Schuyler is not the only author in the *Record* to use the term.⁶ More conclusive evidence comes from the volume of off-prints left by Schuyler to the Avery Library,⁷ which includes four of the “Aberrations”: “The House of Senator Clark”; “Our Lady of Lourdes”; “The New Hoffman House”; “Apartment House in Manhattan Square.” (A reference in “Our Lady of Lourdes” allows the further conclusive attribution of the crucial “Peddie Memorial Church” to Schuyler.)⁸ On one occasion Schuyler intentionally left a clue that suggests the attribution. In April 1907, in the “Aberration” devoted to “Our Lady of Lourdes,” he maintained that this chance encounter with an aberrant building took place “during the course of a visit . . . to the new buildings of the City College of New York,” a visit described by Schuyler in the March issue of the magazine.⁹

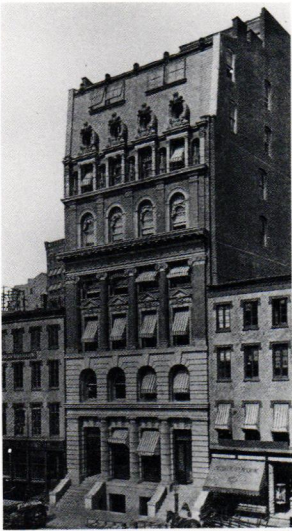
Moreover, solecisms in the literary style of both Schuyler and the anonymous author of the “Aberrations,” serve as further measures of propinquity. Unique to Schuyler’s criticism is the persona of the “*architect*,” the designer of “work that nobody looks at twice or thinks of once, or cares to talk about.”¹⁰ Similarly, “thinginess,” repeatedly defined as the absence of “quiet” and the obverse of “repose,” is an accusation leveled at 21 of the 26 buildings termed aberrant.¹¹ The anonymous author’s contention that “quiet” is “among the most essential of architectural qualities” echoes Schuyler, whose propensity for “quiet” in architecture was acquired from H. H. Richardson.¹² Finally, scattered through the signed work are echoes of the “Aberrations” and vice versa.¹³



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Anecdotes, neologisms and typically Schuylerian borrowings from (then) colloquial English, which together with a penchant for obscure literary references and complicated sentence structure constitute Schuyler’s autograph signature, abound in the “Aberrations.” Two solecisms, “letting it alone” and “built to the limit,” exemplify these tics which link the styles of the anonymous essays and the signed criticism.¹⁴

Schuyler spent 22 years in nine cities tracking down 26 examples of aberrance. His search for buildings “bad enough to be good enough” sent Schuyler to many cities from New York to St. Louis, including Washington, D.C., Jersey City, Brooklyn, Baltimore, and Philadelphia.¹⁵ Neither style, nor type—understood as building program—, nor identity of the architect, however, seemed to give the series of “Architectural Aberrations” its cohesion. In terms of style, he was ecumenical in keeping with the eclecticism of the period. Schuyler also seemed to defy fashion, publishing well-known and even notorious buildings as “Aberrations,” many of which had been published in the contemporary press: The Edison Building, The Peddie Memorial Church,¹⁶ The Chicago Board of Trade,¹⁷ The Government Building at the Columbian Exposition, The Dorilton, the New York City Criminal Court, The Studio Building by Harde and Short and the controversial Clark Mansion.¹⁸ The clear majority, however, were typical buildings by typical architects: load-bearing office buildings, hotels, a school, an armory, and a city hall; steel-framed office buildings, apartment houses, and several combinatory structures. Unique among the “Aberrations” is the church “Our Lady of Lourdes,” cobbled together by Michael J. O’Connor from fragments of Peter Wight’s Academy of Design, John Renwick’s Saint Patrick’s Cathedral Lady Chapel and John Kellum’s Stewart Mansion. Schuy-



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ler, who esteemed Wight's work¹⁹ and generally admired the Ruskinian Gothic revival, honored this building with a critical analysis of its style, but it remains the exception. In general, he refrained from stylistic analysis and even labeling (though occasionally he terms a building "pseudo-classical" or "Romanesque if it be anything" [A.A. 12, 284; A.A. 14, 80]), and only once did he identify a clear-cut case of plagiarism. Rather, he relied on a set of formal principles, which he applied with almost didactic clarity.

The series forms a body of exceptionally coherent criticism, revealing the consistent application of an articulated aesthetic theory that makes formal sense of strikingly different buildings. Schuyler especially discusses the "general composition" or massing, the "general treatment" or design of the elevation or elevations, and the "detail," a term which applies not only to ornament, but to overall surface treatment, color, and the quality, composition, and finish of materials. As a result, extraordinarily different buildings can be analyzed in strikingly similar terms, all derived from precepts that form Schuyler's explicit aesthetic criteria: first, "the expression of structural facts is the basis of architecture"; second, "there is a correlation of structure and function . . . [which] must be admitted to be an evidence of design" (A.A. 3, 403; A.A. 5, 213); and third, "decorated construction" is preferred to "constructed decoration." The latter remark echoes Pugin and Ruskin, and reflects—as do all the precepts—Schuyler's debt to these theorists (A.A. 26, 412).

This unity, however, is not the result of a sustained application of the notion of aberrance. The reader does not learn, within the confines of each essay, why the building is aberrant, from which type or structure it departs, and whether the term is applied in an "invidious" or "condemnatory" manner, or in a posi-

tive one. To do so, Schuyler would have to establish the meaning of "structure" or "type," for which he supplies only scattered indications.

At first glance, type would seem to indicate a building program in conformity with the usual 19th century definition of type as a building program.²⁰ A good sampling of both traditional and innovative building programs is discussed, as if Schuyler were assembling a representative set of types. The series breaks down as follows: 11 commercial buildings, 6 multiple-unit residences (apartment houses or hotels), 2 churches, and one example each of a city hall, court house, commercial exchange, college, exhibition gallery, police station, and colossal town mansion.

Clearly, Schuyler's type is not program. In general, in the "Architectural Aberrations" he is only parenthetically concerned with the satisfaction of program. This topic would have demanded discussions of plans and descriptions of interior spaces, subjects he preferred to avoid in both his signed criticism and here. He does not consult plans—not surprising, for it would presuppose the cooperation of the architect or client—nor does he venture into the building itself. The four interior spaces and elevations that are criticized are all public institutions, which would perhaps indicate that Schuyler was exercising legal caution when he refused to describe (and admit entering) private property. Generally, he extrapolates uses and their satisfaction in plan from the organization of openings and the distribution of windows.

Fig. 2: Peddie Memorial Church, A.A. 4.

Fig. 3: The House of Senator Clark, A.A. 21.

Fig. 4: The Edison Building, A.A. 1.

Fig. 5: The Chicago Board of Trade, A.A. 8.

If, however, the series is divided according to customary "structure," that is, method of construction, the tall, load-bearing or steel-framed, building emerges as the typical structure from which many examples depart. And from "Architectural Aberration No. 13" in 1895 to the series end in 1913, almost all the aberrant buildings are steel-framed. Schuyler considers the steel framed building in the guise of several programs, including commercial office and loft buildings, residential and travelers' hotels, and apartment houses and the Salvation Army Headquarters. He even denounced the steel frame calling it a "baleful invention" (A.A. 16, 220), decrying its presence in the "new" commercial district of Manhattan, North of Wall Street, claiming: "decidedly it would have been better for the architecture of our commercial cities if the steel frame had not come in" (A.A. 18, 95).

This perception of the steel framed structure within the series of "Architectural Aberrations" derives from his criteria for structural truthfulness, both in materials and in construction, which inform his perception of aberrance. Although Ruskin is only alluded to (through use of the terms "decorated construction" and "constructed decoration"), his ethical precepts, as well as the structural rationalism of Viollet-le-Duc, are everywhere present. Schuyler maintains that many buildings do not "proceed from the 'facts of the case,'" (A.A. 17, 702). The use of sheet metal to look like masonry, the meaningless presence of cornices and parapets, and side elevations designed without any correlation to their structure or facade are all repugnant to him. The designers of such buildings remind him of ostriches

excepting that the ostrich tries to conceal as much as possible of his front elevation, forgetting that his rear elevation is still visible and conspicuous, while the architect makes his front elevation as conspicuous as may be, trusting that nobody will observe the rest of his awkward anatomy. (A.A. 20, 295)

Schuyler's adherence to the strictures of the truthful expression of structure and materials naturally leads him to criticize the common assumption that a skyscraper's facade can be designed as if the building were made of stone. It "is the case with the best architectural renderings of the Chicago construction, as well as the worst [that] the architects play that these envelopes of masonry are real buildings, and they ask the spectator to pretend the same thing" (A.A. 13, 476). This condemnation, pronounced in 1895, with its familiar echoes of the signed criticism, was modified profoundly by 1903, at which time Schuyler not only accepts the utility of this convention, but that of the column analogy as well. He then formulates his theory of the skyscraper type, and from it extrapolates a sense of type generally. In the series type and structure are both subsumed into elevation, or morphology, although this is nowhere openly stated. In the case of the skyscraper, Schuyler contends that type and elevation are synonymous, and that the skyscraper had become a type by virtue of the general acceptance of the column analogy as the basis of its design. This puts him at odds with the great mass of 19th century theory, which held that type equalled building program and thus stemmed in great part from plan.

The "general mode of treatment" of the tall office building as if it were a "building of masonry, with walls which support themselves, and which must accordingly be more massive at the bottom" is at once dismissed as "convention founded not upon fact, but upon fiction" and accepted:

There is no denying that the convention has its uses The conventional composition, the massive base, the equable and monotonous shaft, the decorated top, and the general adoption of it, have saved us, no doubt, a great deal of wild work that would have been inflicted upon us, if every designer had gone on doing what seemed pretty in his own eyes, with no more regard to the historical properties than to facts of the case. (A.A. 20, 293)

The two assumptions mutually support not only each other, but the emergence of the skyscraper as type. For Schuyler concludes that "the tall office building is already a tolerably distinct architectural type, to which even designers who ought to know better find safety in conforming. When one of them breaks loose and refuses to conform, he commonly ends up by justifying the conformists" (A.A. 20, 293). In sum, the office building type is the result of a consensus on the dispositions of morphological solutions to the problem of skyscraper design and bears no relation to program or structure.

In the final "Architectural Aberration," a discussion of the Hearst Building in Chicago, Schuyler reviews the question of the skyscraper as type and the several critical positions it inspires. He also hints at a definitive solution to the problem:

Some people say that the design of the skyscraper is settled, in all essentials, that it is established as a "type." Others as vehemently contend that what has been done hitherto in the design of tall buildings with metallic frames is provisional and tentative only, that there is nothing definitive about it. The 'strict constructionist' cannot be pleased with a building that does not show its construction and exhibit its material. He will poo-poo the relevancy and validity of the current convention that the skyscraper should emulate the columnar division into base, shaft, and capital. He has even been known to deny the postulate of the Father of Criticism that a work of art must have a beginning, a middle, and an end. There is another class of critics, who may be the same persons, who hold that the analogy of nature should be followed, not only in securing that decoration shall proceed from structure, but also in securing that structure shall proceed from function.

Schuyler, who has methodically avoided the first person throughout the series, seems at first to be describing his own position. He has, in fact, held all but one of the described positions. Certainly, he maintained that the type was "tolerably distinct," had been displeased by the "fictional" character of its

masonry sheathing, and criticized the truthfulness of the column analogy even while proclaiming its usefulness. In this very same essay, he proceeds to argue from nature, by comparing the skyscraper to the cellular construction of the hive, and to claim that the program of the skyscraper could admit a modification that would secure that structure shall proceed from function.

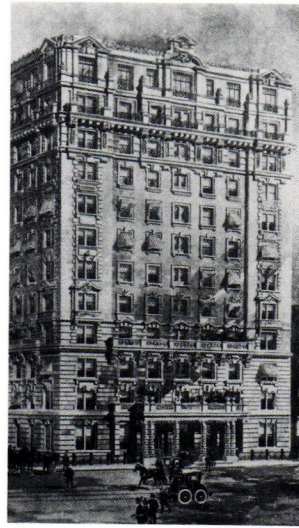
Nowhere, however, in the previous essays or in the very text he was writing, did he ever deny the Aristotelian postulates of the tripartite nature of the work of art. Rather he has continually referred to Aristotle, and to no other authority on architecture. In addition, he omits from this classification the champion of the cathedral precedent for the steel-framed building, a case made by Schuyler in "Architectural Aberration No. 18" and in his essays on Cass Gilbert. The taxonomy of critics is not only puzzling in itself, its function as a preamble to a discussion of an architectural aberration serves to signal the text as the resolution of the problem of the skyscraper as type.

Schuyler, without explanation proceeds from the taxonomy to the evocation of "the ultimate trouble with the commercial skyscraper", namely that "being by its magnitude, or at least, by its altitude, a most conspicuous structure, it is yet devoted to the humblest and most prosaic purposes. Monumental by its dimensions, it is severely utilitarian by its requirements. There is no monumental idea expressed in it, or expressible by it."

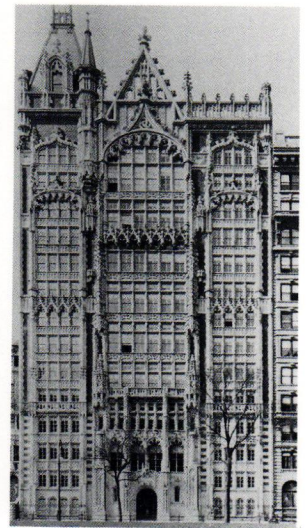
Schuyler contrasts the structure and function of the speculative office building with the "institutional skyscraper." The first "consists of a series of cells, in which the occupants do not properly live, but only, properly or improperly, get their livings. The only natural analogy is that of the honeycomb." There, "functional expression gives no scope for variety of treatment. The offices are all equal cells of the honeycomb." (A.A. 26,407) The institutional, or in today's language, corporate skyscraper is home not only



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to the secondary, administrative functions of the company but to its primary function as well.

Such a building offers a chance for differentiation at which an architect ought to jump. His "institution," his 'royal cells' would naturally be at the bottom of the building or else at the top. Sometimes both, as in the case of a respectable newspaper building, by which we do not necessarily mean the building of a respectable newspaper, though in this case it happens to be both, erected in St. Paul, Minnesota . . . {it had} twelve stories, of which the lowest is given to the counting room, and the upper two to the editorial and typographic departments, the intermediate stories being available for rental. (A.A. 26, 407)

What the St. Paul newspaper building allowed was a transfer to the steel-framed building of the tripartite division, with the further implementation of structural rationality and material truthfulness. For, he concludes "here the Aristotelian demand fulfills itself without putting the architect under the necessity of making a factious division, or even hunting for a division, but only of recognizing a division that exists" (A.A. 26, 407-408).

Schuyler had earlier recognized a second program that would allow the architect to achieve this synthesis: the residential hotel.²³ Such a building, described in "Architectural Aberration No. 17," has a "primary division of low and loft rooms" required "by the immediate purpose" which, if used "in the treatment of the exterior," contain "all the promise and potency of expression . . . in view of the possibility that it might be destined to different uses." Here, the fundamental condition is present, that is the "requirements of the building" provide "the data of its architectural expression" (A.A. 17, 702).

Schuyler's major objective for the tall building can be extracted from these two particularly impenetrable examples of his convoluted prose: program alone can

modify the limitations on architectural expression inherent in the cellular frame and the aggregation of similar uses it contains and liberate the force of architectural expression. Further, certain programs, the residential hotel and the newspaper office, contain a mixture of functions which rationally and naturally require large—and presumably two-storied—volumes related to, but different from the cellular offices. These larger volumes would not only expand the steel frame, they would do so, presumably, at the top and bottom of the structure, introducing a rational and truthful tripartite division which would express both structure and function.

The subject, structure and content of this "Aberration" suggest that Schuyler is responding to Louis Sullivan's "The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered."²⁴ Nineteen years after the last "Aberration" devoted to a Chicago building, Schuyler returns to Sullivan's city, and his review of the attitudes to the skyscraper as type in the form of a typology of critics is a device borrowed directly from that essay, strongly implying a recent rereading. The cell analogy, the use of the word "problem" for skyscraper program, the descriptions of type, and the evocation of the skyscraper's monumentality and poetic power (a theme notably absent in the other "Aberrations") are also borrowed from Sullivan. The difference is in the conclusion. If both attempt to justify the tripartite division in terms of function, Sullivan does it without modifying the program of the contemporary skyscraper and remains faithful to his argumentation from "nature." Schuyler has the program changed to come closer to nature, that is, to the existence of a "royal cell" among the "worker cells" of the honeycomb (a difference, of course, not apparent on the exterior of the hive!).

Schuyler's reappraisal of the classes of critics provides a fitting, although probably unconscious, valedic-

tory to the series, for it not only reviews the series's theoretical bases, it suggests a unifying principle hitherto unstated and perhaps even unintended. Further, it invites comparison with Schuyler's signed criticism of buildings with precisely these programs, which can in turn illuminate the relationship between signed and unsigned work.

Schuyler's campaign against "thinginess", has been, from the first, a defense of the Richardsonian wall as palpable mass, and an appeal for the Master's pet phrase for it: "quiet." As Jordy has pointed out, a partiality for "buildings with a solid base, strongly fortified corners, and a decisive cornice . . . followed." This "permitted . . . a unified composition . . . [whose] elements were base, shaft, and capital in the popular column analogy of the period to which Schuyler repeatedly alluded."²⁵ And which he used as the basis of his criticism of load-bearing structures far more than has been admitted. Moreover, in the "Aberrations" Schuyler not only blurs the distinction between admissible and inadmissible uses of the column analogy, he also intermingles the two conventions of masonry sheathing and of an extrastructural, historical model.

In this sibylline taxonomy of critics, he implies that the authority for the tripartite division is neither the Richardsonian wall nor the Classical column, but the literary precedent of the tripartite division of the work of art drawn from Aristotle's *Esthetics*—and referring, of course, to the composition of the Greek tragedy and its rites. Here, one year before his death, Schuyler reveals himself to be, primarily the *homme de lettres* that he was by profession.²⁶ The paradigm for architecture is the text, and the precedent, the classical precedent, Aristotle's *Esthetics*. In architectural terms, Schuyler has blessed an unholy marriage, that of the Classicist's perfect faith in an ineffable, indivisible ideal with the rationalist's sys-

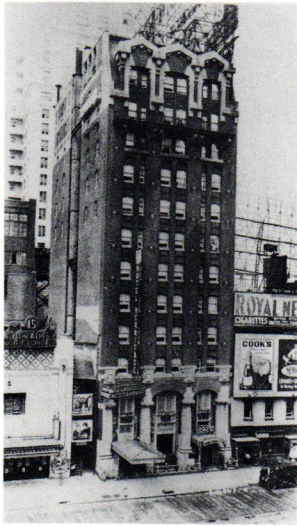
tematically determined relationship of structure and form. He has joined Aristotle to Viollet-le-Duc, in the presence of Ruskin.

In the "Aberrations," Schuyler's search for a precedent for the skyscraper does not terminate, as his anthologizer William Jordy has maintained, at the foot of the Woolworth Building. Jordy, with evident disappointment describes how Schuyler "eventually settled for the modeling of the neo-Gothic Woolworth Building as an ideal compromise between the bones of structure and the flesh of beauty."²⁷ For one moment, in an "Aberration" devoted to Harde and Short's gothicized apartment house in Manhattan, Schuyler entertained replacing the precedent of the "historical properties" with the cathedral's skeletal construction, reviving a similar amalgum of ideal and systematically, rationally determined relationships found in Viollet-le-Duc (but, peculiarly, neglecting the vault and rib while doing so). Calling the Manhattan Square apartment house "the most practicable precedent for the new skeleton construction," he declares the "cathedral window between its bounding buttresses" adapted by the Harde and Short facade, "the most accurate historical prototype of the modern skyscraper" (A.A. 21). In fact, it affords great satisfaction for, he maintains he has been "preaching for years [its] particular appropriateness . . . to skeletal construction." There is, however, little trace of this homily in the "Aberrations." In fact, he has specifically distinguished between "the reproduction of Gothic forms" and the application of the "Gothic principle of functional expression." The latter alone constituted the "true Gothic revival" (A.A. 18, 95).

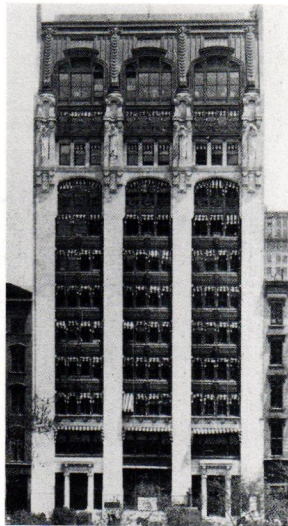
Fig. 6: The Hearst Building, A.A. 26.

Fig. 7: The Nassau Beekman, A.A. 18.

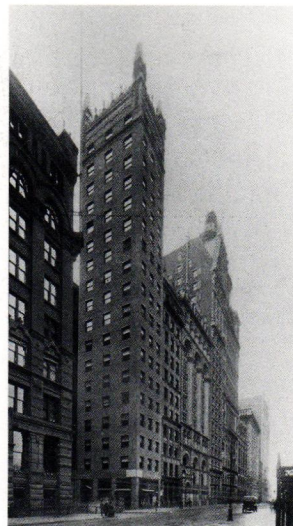
Fig. 8: The Studio Building, A.A. 24.



9



10



11

This explicit search for precedent makes a unique appearance in the "Aberration" in 1909, perhaps reflecting Schuyler's almost contemporaneous essay of 1907 on Cass Gilbert's West Street Building, the preamble to his extensive writing on the Woolworth Building in 1913-1914.²⁸ He returned however to his search for a program that would bring the "facts of the case" in concordance with the historical precedent.

In a sense, Schuyler was groping for buildings "bad enough to be good enough." Not, as he meant when writing this, worthy of reproduction as "aberrations," but aberrant enough to support the synthesis he proposed. And bad is neither, to use his words, "invidious" nor "condemnatory": it is, in theoretical terms, unthinkable. And, although the buildings chosen as "aberrations" are indeed, quite "bad," so bad, in fact that one can suspect in part that they are examples of "mental weakness" rather than "departures," it is incontrovertible that Schuyler returned repeatedly to the programs that later emerge as his new precedent for the tall building: first to the newspaper building, then the hotel, and finally to the building whose program requires large volumes joined with small, repetitive ones. He reviews three newspaper buildings: the "Record Building, Philadelphia;" The "Daily Record" Building, Baltimore", and "The Hearst Building in Chicago," the second, fifth and twenty-sixth "Architectural Aberrations." The hotel is considered in the thirteenth, seventeenth, twentieth, and twenty-third "Architectural Aberrations": "The Cairo," "The New York Family Hotel," "The Hotel Somerset," and "The Hoffman House." In the final class fall "The Medinah Temple," described as a "palace on a factory" (A.A. 11, 82), and the "Twenty-Third Precinct Police Station House, New York City," characterized as "a fort on the bottom and a lodging house on top (A.A. 25, 182).

The main thrust of the series was the description of buildings that were "as bad in design as bad can be" (A.A. 12, 248); "cheap and nasty" (A.A. 18, 96); "inartistic and absurd" (A.A. 23, 305); and "preposterous" (A.A. 20, 297). Schuyler's hesitant forays into the examination of skyscraper type and precedent are additions to the original editorial intention, the edification and amusement of his readers and the purveying of Ruskinian precepts through satire and humor. The definition of "aberration" is a pretence, perhaps a protection against libel, as artifice as the tin cornice he continually excoriated. Yet, the signed criticism offers proof that the aberrations were Schuyler's workshop where the liberty of choice allowed him to tinker with the parts of his new precedent for the skyscraper type. Two examples will suffice, examples that, could seem perplexing, given the most common interpretation of Schuyler as champion of the structurally expressive skyscraper unless they are viewed in light of this analysis of precedence and type.

In 1907, Schuyler took up the hotel type in a letter to the editor of the *Architectural Record*, voluntarily praising (and against no form of return, he claimed) Robert D. Kohn's "The Hermitage," a residential hotel in New York City.²⁹ Reviewing his theory that the column form is more plausible in a steel-framed residence than in an office building, he argues that Kohn was "logically justified in his assumption, whatever the facts may happen to be, that the three stories of his base and the stories of his capital were functionally different from the eight stories of his shaft." The idea of the hotel is sufficient for Schuyler to consider the column to be justified; the type has become a reason for ignoring the facts of the case. Further, the great piers are described as a mere envelope, which, he maintains, is what the skyscraper needs: a self-professing envelope. The mansard at the top, although it be "but the veneering of a metallic frame"

is “abundantly justified” precisely because it uses the same principle as the masonry arches turned between the street frame of the Bayard Building’s “top.” Finally, “the Hermitage comes near being a model tall building in its kind.”

Robert Kohn’s *Evening Post Building* also earns superlatives from Schuyler: “It is one of the best things in our recent street architecture, one of the most exemplary and interesting of the skyscrapers.” Here, the structure is revealed, “the ‘skeleton’ hardly draped, but articulated, developed and decorated in accordance with the facts of the case.” Further, the “differentiations” that constitute base, capital, and shaft “are not fantastic, but, at least in appearance, functional.” Schuyler then proceeds to suppose that the “capital” of three stories, one of which is double storied, “denotes the abode of the newspaper which is so eminently an ‘institution’, the shaft holds the office building, and that the base alone is “really differentiated,” that is, arbitrarily distinguished from the shaft.³⁰

Schuyler’s defense of *The Hermitage* represents a clear-cut case of an argument from precedent, the precedent being the ideal type of the residential hotel, whatever the facts of the case “may happen to be”—and Schuyler is clearly uninterested in the actual plan or function of the uppermost and lowermost spaces. Similarly, his analysis of *The Post Building* also proceeds from a “supposition” of function the argument allowing him to assume that the facts of the case are in accord. (And Schuyler, as a former editor of *The New York Times*, was probably assuming accurately when he identified the large rooftop room as the composing room.) Yet, the clinching element is not so much the truthful display of the structure but the logical justification of the column precedent, in accordance with a program that modifies structure. For in the very same article he at once congratulates

the architects of One Wall Street, Barnett, Haynes & Barnett, for “scouting” the pretence of masonry in their “bricked over trellis of a steel frame” and denounces them for not using the column analogy: “No humbug of ‘triple division,’ of composition, vertical or lateral, in short of architecture, about this man.” Structural expression in both buildings accounts for their being “the thing itself,” Schuyler’s encomium for a truthful building, once applied to the Bayard Building. One Wall Street, however, is disparaged as “artchitecture” and the *Evening Post Building* lauded as “highly artistic and effective.”³¹

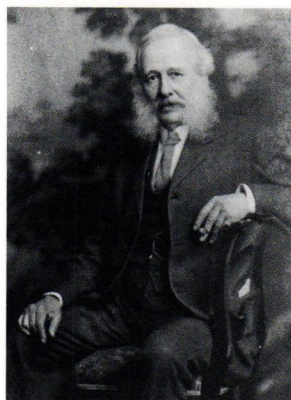
Clearly the “Architectural Aberrations” are more than critical oddities, or even slight *pieces de circonstances*. They merit their place in Schuyler’s oeuvre, for they surpass the acuity of his pseudonymous writing (as Franz K. Winkler) and the humour of his celebrated anonymous satires of American classicism.³² He lavished the detested “aberrations” with the scrutiny usually afforded by admiration, creating a body of exceptionally coherent criticism, that applied a single esthetic system with didactic clarity. The energy, even liveliness with which Schuyler accomplished this task implies that he found it a heady, even liberating experience, for it rescussitated the “billiousness” and “spleen” historians have detected in his earliest critical writings and missed in the later ones.³³ Criticism, for the first time perhaps since Pugin and Ruskin, bubbles, even seethes, with an acid wit. These essays represent an American contribution to the genre of architectural satire and parody.

There remains William Jordy’s general assessment of Schuyler’s record. According to Jordy, Schuyler es-

Fig. 9: *The Hermitage*, Robert D. Kohn, New York, 1907.

Fig. 10: *The Evening Post Building*, Robert D. Kohn, New York.

Fig. 11: One Wall Street, New York.



12

poused the right causes—Sullivan and Wright—for the wrong reasons, and “reached deplorable conclusions” through “right reasoning”—preferring the Williamsburg Bridge to the Brooklyn.³⁴ Throughout the “Aberrations” Schuyler’s flair for noting controversial buildings is evident. Several of his “aberrant” buildings have been selected for landmark status.³⁵

Finally, the “Aberrations” invite reflection on Schuyler’s compromise solution for the skyscraper type. It represents an attempt to bridge two worlds, one ruled by the Classical Unities in all the arts, and one characterized by rapidly transforming realities, rather than a failure to escape the past and wholeheartedly espouse the forerunners of 20th century Modernism like Sullivan and Wright. They should not only join the corpus of Schuylerian works, but deserve to be read alongside the most celebrated of his essays, his criticism of the early skyscrapers. They illuminate and perhaps even explain what William Jordy, has called the failure of Schuyler’s criticism, its inability “to meet the challenge . . . of the new vision, the coming vision and [to] dare to transform itself in the process of discovery,” and to escape “the world of Ruskin, Eidlitz, and Richardson where his esthetic originated.”

A history of the “Aberrations” will not restore to Schuyler the aura of prophetic courage awarded to him first by Frank Lloyd Wright and then by Louis Mumford. It will, however, demonstrate to what degree Schuyler’s attitude toward the skyscraper was the product of vacillation or a resolution between opposing forces, that however untenable in our terms, resolved the dilemma for Schuyler. In the history of the “Architectural Aberrations” and their posterity lies a cautionary tale for historians, critics, and champions of the preservation of 19th century eclectic structures as well as for designers seeking the revival of the column analogy.

Fig. 12: Montgomery Schuyler.

Notes

1. The appendix gives full bibliographic references, identifies the architect when known, and gives the current status of the building. To our knowledge, this the first full publication of the “Architectural Aberrations,” since the Avery Index identifies only eighteen of the twenty-six.

2. Writing in January 1950 of the “rareness of negative criticism” in American architectural journalism, Eugene Raskin described the “Architectural Aberrations”: “The horrors of the design were candidly analyzed and exposed in the accompanying text. It was a salutary and enlightening experience for many an architect who was perhaps himself guilty of similar sins,” “Architecture in Print,” *Progressive Architecture*, Jan. 1950, p. 12.

3. “‘Architectural Aberrations,’ or Nothing but the Awful Truth,” *Architectural Record* 118, Jul.–Dec. 1955, p. 315, enumerates 16 of the 21 numbered “Aberrations.” Henceforth, AR.

4. Often mentioned *viva voce*, the rumored attribution has been recorded in print once in Robert A. M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin and John Montague Massengale, *New York 1900: Metropolitan Architecture and Urbanism, 1890–1915*, Rizzoli International Publications, New York; 1983, p. 150.

5. William H. Jordy and Ralph Coe, eds., *American Architecture and Other Writings by Montgomery Schuyler*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1961, pp. 437–8. Schuyler discussed bad aberrations in a section of the essay not reprinted by Jordy, that is, in a discussion of the Small Singer Building and of the Park Row Building, AR, 8, Jan.–Mar. 1899, p. 295.

6. One other author used the term architectural aberration in the *Architectural Record*, John Beverly Robinson, “Lessons from Architectural Aberrations,” AR 27, Jan.–Jun. 1910, pp. 180–188. The Editors editorialized on the series in “Aberrations and Others, Notes and Comments,” AR 25, Jan.–Jul. 1909, p. 449.

7. *Architectural Essays, 1879–1913*, Avery Library, Columbia University, New York City. They are also cited in the bibliography of Jordy and Coe, *Schuyler*, as follows: “The House of Senator Clark: Architectural Aberration No. 21,” AR 19, Jan. 1906, pp. 27–30, 1906-A; “Architectural Aberrations: The Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, New York,” AR 21, Apr. 1907, pp. 295–300, 1907-B; “Architectural Aberrations: The New Hoffman House,” AR 24, Oct. 1908, pp. 303–305, 1908-E and “An Apartment House Aberration: Manhattan Square, New York,” AR 25, June 1909, pp. 434–437, 1909-G.

8. Schuyler there refers to the criticism of Peddie Memorial Church as “a previous paper in this series,” using the editorial “we” in the subsequent phrase.

9. “The College of the City of New York,” AR 21, Mar. 1907, pp. 165–168.

10. "Architecture in Chicago: Adler and Sullivan," Jordy and Coe, *Schuyler*, p.382; "Some Recent Skyscrapers," *AR* 22, Sept. 1907, p.168.
11. See A.A. 1, p.134; 3, p.463; 5, p.215; 8, p.100; 17, p.700; 19, p.225 for "things" or "thinginess"; A.A. 2, p.262; 3, p.403; 4, p.489; 6, p.336; 8, p.100; 9, pp.209–210; 12, p.248; 15, pp.77,79; 16, p.219; 17, p.702; 21, pp.27–30, for absence of "repose," "restlessness" and "uneasiness." These appear associated in the following quotation, among others: "What strikes one first is perhaps the extreme activity and busy-ness of the front or perhaps the miscellany of things. These two qualities, the absence of homogeneousness react and promote each other," A.A. 3, p.403.
12. Jordy and Coe, *Schuyler*, p. 19. Neither term, however, appears in the four "Aberrations" included in the Avery volume of offprints, perhaps because two of the four praise the buildings in question.
13. In A.A. 21 Schuyler tells a story of Edilitz and Barnum, previously recounted in "Leopold Eidlitz," *AR* 24, Sept.–Nov. 1908, and excerpted in Jordy and Coe, p. 143. Schuyler quotes and cites the "Aberrations" in his signed article on the World's Fair of 1893; "State Buildings at the World's Fair," *AR* 3, Jul.–Sept. 1893, p.62: "By far the most pretentious and costly . . . of all the state buildings is that of Illinois (by W. W. Boynington, architect of the Chicago Board of Trade, A.A. 8) and unfortunately, it is the least successful of any. Indeed it is so unsuccessful as to dispute with the building of the United States the bad eminence of being the most incongruous and obtrusive of all the edifices." The Government Building was the subject of A.A. 6 in the previous volume of the magazine. "Bad eminence," a quotation from Milton is a favorite phrase of Schuyler's in the "Aberrations." Nine years later, F. K. Winkler, Schuyler's pseudonym, returns to the Government Building in "The Architecture of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition," *AR* 15, Apr. 1904, p.360.
14. "Letting it alone," a quotation from the British Prime Minister Lord Melbourne, is used as the title of Schuyler's essay in *AR* 18, Nov. 1905, pp.391–392. It appears in A.A.'s 9, p.210; 14, p.78; 16, p.223. "Built to the limit" is applied to Senator Clark's House, A.A. 21, p.29; and reappears in "Some Recent Skyscrapers," *AR* 22, Sept. 1907, p.174.
15. He exhibits a certain affection for Philadelphia, a "kind of paleontological museum of building," and for Chestnut Street in particular as the "scene of the most outrageous commercial architecture in the United States" (A.A. 8, p.96; A.A. 16, p.219). In 1897, the "bad eminence of Chestnut Street is loudly challenged" by Broadway, between Canal and 10th (New York City) which is described as "the most horrible stretch of architecture on the face of the earth" (A.A. 16, pp.219–220). This is at present the Soho Historic District.
16. *American Architect and Building News* 31, Feb. 7, 1891, p. 94, pl. 789.
17. On Boynington's Board of Trade, described in Frank Norris's *The Pit*, see David Lowe, *Lost Chicago*, New York, 1979, pp. 10–11; Thomas Tallmadge, in *Architecture in Old Chicago*, Chicago, 1941, pp.121–22, calls it "Eastlakes."
18. Schuyler published a drawing of the Clark Mansion in a pseudonymous article: Franz K. Winkler, "Architecture in the Billionaire District," *AR* 11, Oct. 1901, p.679; Stern et al, *New York 1900*, lists the bibliography of publications of the following "aberrations": Edison Building, p. 455, 32 n.; Dorilton, p. 482, 374 n.; Harde and Short "Studio," p. 470, 135 n.; New York Criminal Court, p. 445, 32 n.; the Clark Mansion, p. 474, 194 n.
19. It would be hard to name three more admirable examples in secular work of the Gothic revival in this country than the Brooklyn Academy of Music (Leopold Eidlitz, 1860–1861), the Brooklyn Art Building (Brooklyn Academy of Design, J. C. Cady, 1870–1872/1873) and the Brooklyn Library (Brooklyn Mercantile Library, Peter Wight, 1865–1869). The two former adjoin each other on the one side of Montague Street and confront the last just across the way. "A street built up with such things would be by far the most interesting thoroughfare in the United States," A.A. 3, pp.402–403.
20. Discussion of type has been taken up by contemporary theorists, especially in relation to Aldo Rossi's use of type. Cf. Rafael Moneo, "On Typology," *Oppositions* 13, Summer 1978, pp.23–45, and especially, p. 45, 17 n. for the bibliography of recent discussions of type. Moneo maintains the "the handbooks and manuals which began to appear in the 19th century, followed Durand's teaching, simply displayed the material available to the profession, classifying building by their function in a way that could be called typological," p. 31. Cf. Antony Vidler, *The Ideas of Type*, *Oppositions* 8, Spring 1977, pp.95–113.
21. The subject of the steel-framed building is first evoked in A.A. 8, "The Chicago Board of Trade," in 1893. The first skyscraper criticized is "The Medinah," A.A. 11, in 1894, but the fact that it is steel framed is not mentioned. Cf. Charles W. Condit, *The Chicago School of Architecture*, Chicago, 1967, 111 n. and Frank A. Randall, *History of the Development of Building Construction in Chicago*, Urbana, 1949, p.135. The architects were Beer, Clay & Dutton.
22. The components of this familiar denizen of the Upper West Side which rendered it "a type, with almost as much accuracy as the Parisian prototype" are not only entirely concentrated on the facade, they are independent of both program and truthful expression of structure and materials. Schuyler identifies the numbers of floors, materials, the tin cornice, and double-swelled massing of the apartment house as the indicator of type. Ignoring the fact that the double-swelled composition corresponds to a basic plan type, Schuyler has type determined by legislation, builder's practice and economy of construction (A.A. 20, p.294).
23. Schuyler is describing the problem posed by the Family Hotel: "It would be quite unjust to blame the architect whose

instructions bound him to make a building which should not be, nor yet look like anything in particular, and in which even the primary division of low and lofty rooms which the immediate purpose required had to be foregone in the treatment of the exterior, and with it all the promise and potency of expression that the arrangement contained, in view of the possibility that it might be destined to different uses. Perhaps the evasion of the insoluble problem presented to the designers was as eligible as any, seeing that they could not look, in the requirements of their building, for the data of its architectural expression."

24. Louis Sullivan, *Kindergarten Chats and Other Writings*, Wittenborn Art Books, New York, 1947, pp. 202–213.
25. Jordy and Coe, *Schuyler*, p. 87.
26. As in this remark: "The real radical defect of modern architecture in general, if not American architecture in particular, . . . [is] the estrangement between architecture and building—between the poetry and prose, so to speak, of the art of building, which can never be disjoined without injury to both," quoted by Stern et al., *New York 1900*, Preface, n. 6.
27. Jordy and Coe, *Schuyler*, pp. 71, 83.
28. "The West Street Building, New York City," *AR* 22, Aug. 1907, pp. 102–109; "The Towers of Manhattan and Notes on the Woolworth Building," *AR*, 33, Feb. 1913, pp. 99–122; Jordy and Coe, *Schuyler*, pp. 605–621.
29. "An Interesting Skyscraper," *AR*, 22, Nov. 1907, pp. 365–368.
30. "Some Recent Skyscrapers," *AR*, 22, Sept. 1907, p. 176.
31. "Some Recent Skyscrapers," *AR*, 22, Sept. 1907, p. 168.
32. As Franz K. Winkler, Montgomery Schuyler wrote several essays of which the most celebrated are "Architecture in the Billionaire District of New York City," *AR* 11, Oct. 1901, pp. 678–699 and "The Architecture of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition," *AR* 15, Apr. 1904, pp. 337–360. The anonymous parodies include "A Long-Felt Want," *AR* 7, July–Sept. 1897, pp. 118–120 and "Architecture Made Easy," *AR* 7, Oct.–Dec. 1897, pp. 214–218.
33. Jordy and Coe remark on the disappearance of the "biliousness" and Thorn on that of the "ferocity": Jordy and Coe, *Schuyler*, p. 81; William John Thorn, "Montgomery Schuyler, The Newspaper Architectural Articles of a Proto-Modern Critic, 1868–1907" Ann Arbor, MI, University Microfilms International, 1981, p. 289. Thorn's thesis came to our attention after terminating the research for this article. It will be of interest to the reader to compare the methods used for identifying Schuyler's writings in the two studies.
34. Jordy and Coe, *Schuyler*, pp. 53, 72, 86, 89.
35. They are the Peddie Memorial Church, Our Lady of Lourdes, The Studio Building by Harde and Short, the Dorilton, and the Cairo.

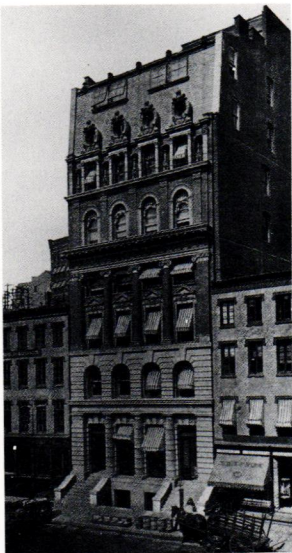
“Architectural Aberrations”:

An Appendix

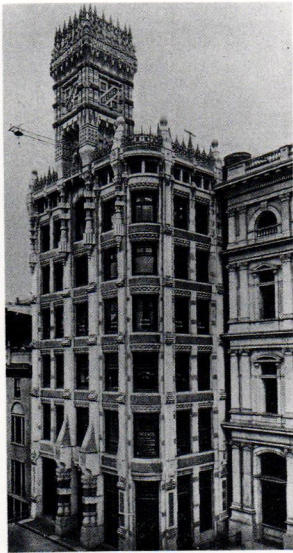
The following list comprises the entire series of the “Architectural Aberrations,” listed in order of appearance. With the exception of “The Salvation Army Building,” the “Aberrations” appearing in volumes 1–14 of the *Architectural Record* are numbered consecutively. We have attributed numbers based on their sequence to 15, and 22 through 26.

The “Aberrations” are listed by number, with the full title of the article, its volume and page numbers. Where possible we have identified the architect, date, and present status of the structure.

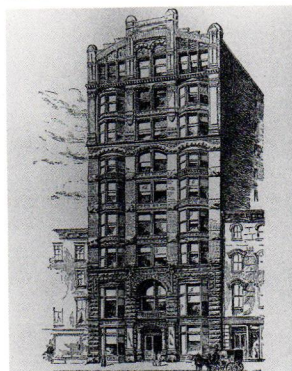
The task of identifying the New York City “Aberrations” was facilitated by Andrew Dolkart, for whose generous aid we are grateful.



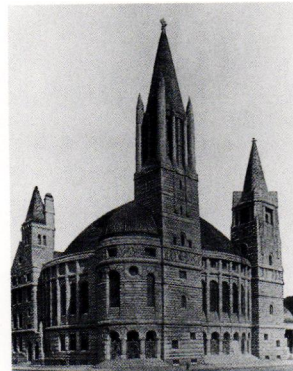
A.A. 1



A.A. 2



A.A. 3



A.A. 4

A.A. 1

“Architectural Aberrations No. 1—The Edison Building,” *Architectural Record*, Vol. 1, Oct.–Dec. 1891, pp. 133–136.
44 Broad Street, New York, NY.
Carrere and Hastings, 1890–1891.
Demolished.

A.A. 2

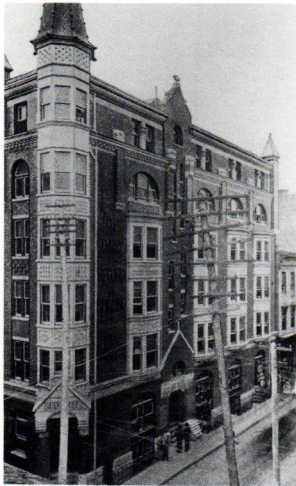
“Architectural Aberrations No. 2—The Record Building,” *Architectural Record*, Vol. 1, Jan.–Mar. 1892, pp. 261–264.
Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA.
Date and architect unknown.
Demolished.

A.A. 3

“Architectural Aberrations No. 3—The Brooklyn Real Estate Exchange,” *Architectural Record*, Vol. 1, Apr.–June 1892, pp. 401–404.
Montague Street, Brooklyn, NY.
George H. Edbrooke, 1890.
Extant. Pierpont St. facade altered; rear facade substantially intact.

A.A. 4

“Architectural Aberrations No. 4—The Peddie Memorial Church,” *Architectural Record*, Vol. 2, July–Sept. 1892, pp. 89–92.
Newark, NJ.
William Halsey Wood.
Extant. Historic American Buildings Survey.

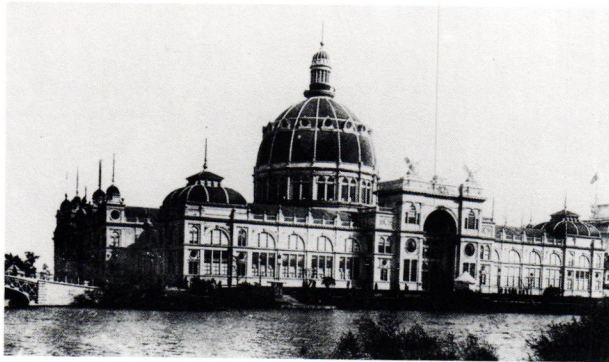


A.A. 5

A.A. 5

"Architectural Aberrations No. 5—The Daily Record Building," *Architectural Record*, Vol. 2, Oct.–Dec. 1892, pp. 213–215. Baltimore, MD.

Date and architect unknown.



A.A. 6

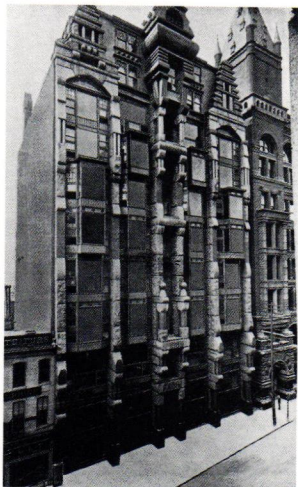
A.A. 6

"Architectural Aberrations No. 6—The Government and the World's Fair," *Architectural Record*, Vol. 2, Jan.–Mar. 1893, pp. 333–336.

Columbian Exposition, Chicago, IL.

Supervising Architect of the Treasury, W.J. Edbrooke, 1893.

Demolished.



A.A. 7

A.A. 7

"Architectural Aberrations No. 7—The Fagin Building, St. Louis," *Architectural Record*, Vol. 2, Apr.–June 1893, pp. 470–472.

St. Louis, MO.

Date and architect unknown.

Demolished.



A.A. 8

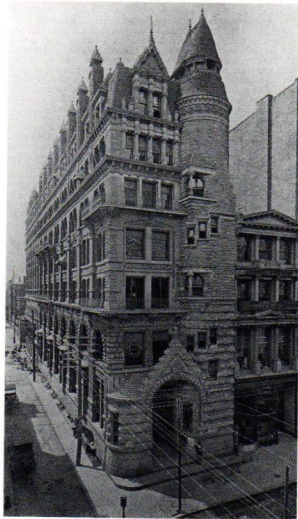
A.A. 8

"Architectural Aberrations No. 8—The Chicago Board of Trade," *Architectural Record*, Vol. 3, July–Sept. 1893, pp. 96–100.

LaSalle Street, Chicago, IL.

William W. Boynington, 1885.

Demolished.



A.A. 9

A.A. 9

"Architectural Aberrations No. 9—The Hale Building, Philadelphia," *Architectural Record*, Vol. 3, Oct.–Dec. 1893, pp. 207–210. Philadelphia, PA.

Willis Hale, 1887–1890.

Extant. Historic American Building Survey.



A.A. 10

A.A. 10

"Architectural Aberrations No. 10—The New Criminal Court Building, New York," *Architectural Record*, Vol. 3, Apr.–June 1894, pp. 429–432.

Center Street, New York, NY.

Thom, Wilson and Schaarschmidt, 1894.

Demolished.



A.A. 11



A.A. 13

A.A. 11

"Architectural Aberrations No. 11—The Medinah Temple," *Architectural Record*, Vol. 4, July–Sept. 1894, pp. 82–85.

The Medinah Office Building, Jackson Blvd. and Wells St., Chicago, IL.

Beers, Clay, and Dutton, 1892–1893.

Demolished.

A.A. 12

"Architectural Aberrations No. 12—The College of St. Francis Xavier," *Architectural Record*, Vol. 4, Oct.–Dec. 1894, pp. 247–249.

39–59 West 15th Street, New York, NY.

Architect unknown. Extant. (No photo.)

A.A. 13

"Architectural Aberrations No. 13—The Cairo," *Architectural Record*, Vol. 4, Apr.–June 1895, pp. 473–476.

Q Street, Washington, DC.

Thomas F. Schneider, 1894.

Extant. Historic American Building Survey.



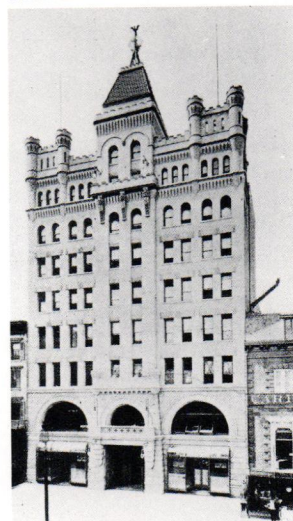
A.A. 14

A.A. 14

"Architectural Aberrations No. 14—The New City Hall, Jersey City, N.J." *Architectural Record*, Vol. 5, July–Sept. 1895, pp. 76–81.

Jersey City, NJ.

Date and architect unknown.



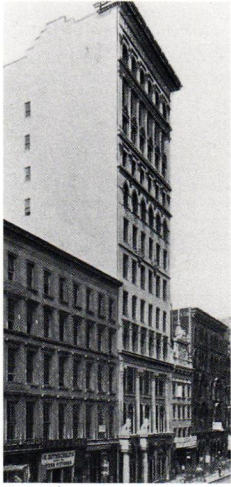
A.A. 15

A.A. 15

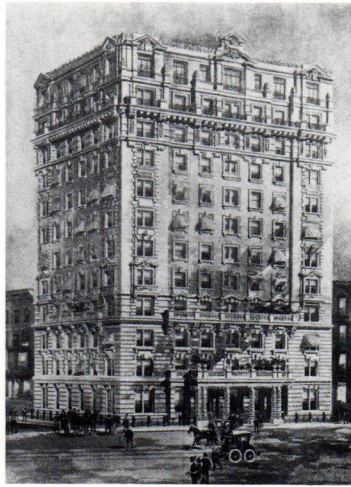
"Architectural Aberrations No. 15—The Salvation Army Building," *Architectural Record*, Vol. 6, July–Sept. 1896, pp. 77–80.

14th Street, New York, NY.

Replaced by present Salvation Army Building.



A.A. 16



A.A. 17

A.A. 16

"Architectural Aberrations No. 16—585-587 Broadway, New York," *Architectural Record*, Vol. 7, Oct.-Dec. 1897, pp. 219-224.

585-587 Broadway, New York, NY.
Cleverdon and Putzel, 1896-1897.
Extant. SoHo Historic District.

A.A. 17

"Architectural Aberrations No. 17—The New York Family Hotel," *Architectural Record*, Vol. 11, Oct. 1901, pp. 700-704.

The building pictured is 26 East 63d Street, New York, NY.
Buchman and Fox.
Extant. Upper East Side Historical District.



A.A. 18



A.A. 19

A.A. 18

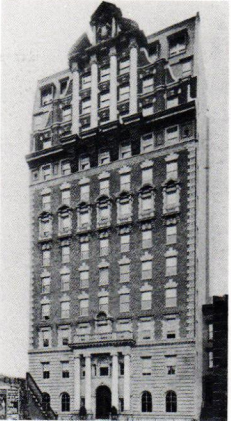
"Architectural Aberrations No. 18—The Nassau-Beekman," *Architectural Record*, Vol. 12, May 1902, pp. 93-98.

Formerly the Morse Building, New York, NY.
Silliman and Farnsworth, 1879.
Demolished.

A.A. 19

"Architectural Aberrations No. 19—The Dorilton," *Architectural Record*, Vol. 12, June 1902, pp. 221-226.

71st Street and Broadway, New York, NY.
Janes and Leo, 1900-1902.
Extant. Designated New York City Landmark.



A.A. 20



A.A. 21

A.A. 20

"Over the Draughting Board: Opinions Official and Unofficial, Architectural Aberrations No. 20—The Hotel Somerset," *Architectural Record*, Vol. 13, Mar. 1903, pp. 292-297.

148 West 47th Street, New York, NY.
Frederick C. Browne, 1901.
Extant.

A.A. 21

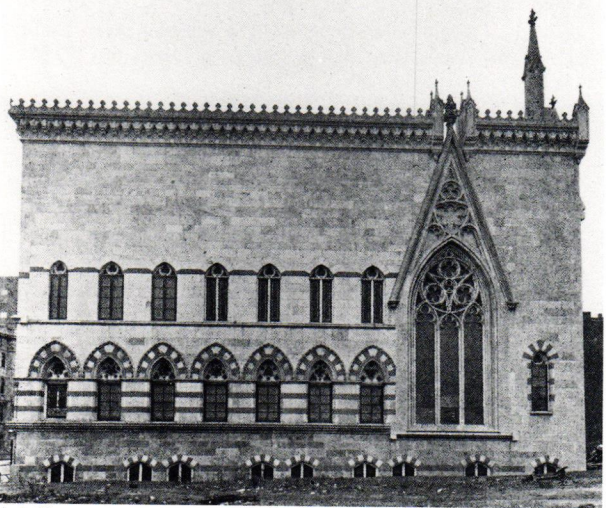
"The House of Senator Clark, Architectural Aberrations No. 21," *Architectural Record*, Vol. 14, Jan. 1906, pp. 27-30.

Fifth Avenue and 78th Street, New York, NY.
Lord, Hewlett and Hull; K.M. Murchison and Henri Deglane.
Demolished.

A.A. 22

"Architectural Aberrations No. 22—The Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, New York," *Architectural Record*, Vol. 21, Apr. 1907, pp. 295-300.

West 142d Street, New York, NY.
Michael J. O'Connor from Peter Wight, Academy of Design; James Renwick, St. Patrick's Cathedral; John Kellum, Stewart Mansion, 1902-1904.
Extant. Designated New York City Landmark.



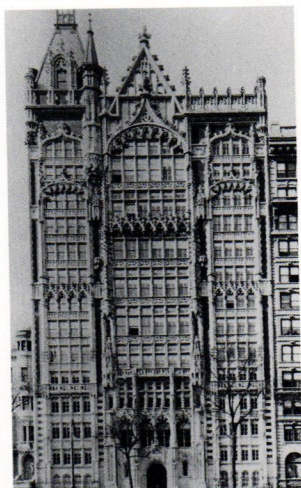
A.A. 22



A.A.23

A.A. 23

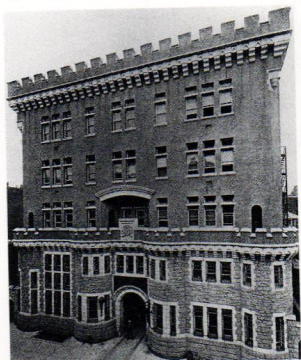
"Architectural Aberrations No. 23—The New Hoffman House,"
Architectural Record, Vol. 24, Oct. 1908, pp.303-305.
 Broadway and 24th Street, New York, NY.
 Demolished.



A.A.24

A.A. 24

"An Apartment House Aberration—Manhattan Square," *Architectural Record*, Vol. 25, June 1909, pp. 434-437.
 The Studio Building, 44 West 77th Street, New York, NY.
 Harde and Short, 1909.
 Extant. Designated New York City Landmark.



A.A. 25

A.A. 25

"Architectural Aberrations No. 25—The Twenty-third Precinct Police Station House, New York City," *Architectural Record*, Vol. 30, August 1911, pp.181-184.
 134-138 West 30th Street, New York, NY.
 R. Thomas Short.
 Extant.



A.A. 26

A.A. 26

"Architectural Aberrations—The Hearst Building in Chicago,"
Architectural Record, Vol. 31, April 1913, pp.406-412.
 326 West Madison Street, Chicago, IL.
 James C. Green, 1911.
 Extant.



Architectural Aberrations—No. 9

The Hale Building, Philadelphia

One is driven back upon Philadelphia when one is in quest of architectural aberrations that are bad enough to be good enough. The commercial architecture of the town is, in the mass, abnormal because the authors of it do not perceive, or perhaps willfully disregard the fact that there is any architectural norm. We are speaking of the designers who have given Chestnut Street its distinctive character, and not of the minority of trained architects who are pursuing the thankless task of educating Philadelphia to an appreciation of architecture; and, speaking of this majority, it is fair to say that historical architecture is to them a field not for study, but for pillage, as it was to the barbarians who incorporated in their own rude buildings such columns and capitals and other fragments of classic architecture as they found. Not otherwise can one see with his mind's eye the architect of a Philadelphian commercial palace pulling over a pile of unassorted photographs, and tossing one after the other to his draughtsman with instructions to "work that in." Evidently the draughtsmen have worked in nearly everything that caught the eyes of their principals. They have not worked them in in the sense of incorporating them with a design. They have worked them in in the sense of adjoining them, without relevancy or congruity, to structures distinguished for the absence of design. A typical commercial building of Philadelphia is an example of eclecticism working *in vacuo*, or, according to the old Latin doggerel, of a chimera bombinating in a vacuum.

Consider the Hale building, how it grows. The problem was to erect a seven story building with a narrow front on the principal street, with rooms devoted to similar purposes and of similar dimensions throughout. The danger was that this uniformity would produce monotony. There is nothing that your Philadelphia architect is so much afraid of as monotony. In fact it is the only architectural defect of which he seems to go in fear. Variety he must have at all cost, and by securing variety he makes sure

that he has avoided monotony, whereas in truth his heterogeneousness is more tiresome than any repetition could be. In the present instance the only variation demanded by the practical requirements seems to have been that the ground story should be taller and more important than any of the rest. That is a requirement favorable to architecture. A tall basement, designed with simplicity and as much massiveness as might be, would have furnished an adequate base for the building. If the upper two stories had been distinguished, so as to make a crown for the edifice, the intermediate piers might have been grouped in a uniform treatment, so as to produce a result inoffensive in the hands of a man of moderate ability, while it might have been made delightful by a master. Here, in the first place, the base is heightened by the inclusion of an intresol, so that it is almost equal in importance to the next division of three stories. This would not be so bad, however, if this next division were not itself subdivided by a bracketed shelf above the second of its three stories, which occurs across the front and at each end of the side, but ceases in the middle, where apparently the humbler tenants are not deemed to be entitled to balconies. By this subdivision the chance of a harmonious relation of the principal parts of the building is destroyed at once, while the meaningless interruption of the subdividing line is fatal to repose. The architects of Philadelphia, however, set no store by harmony or repose. The only characteristic they seem to aim at, we repeat, is variety, and they aim at this by collecting in their fronts the largest possible number of things. Whether the things have any relation to each other does not concern them. The two lower of the three stories that are at once grouped and separated are furnished, it will be remarked, with rudimentary pilasters. A row of plain and uniform pilasters along the flank of the building would have been an effective feature, and the wall is long enough to make the series impressive. But this would not have suited the architect. The question that Lord Melbourne used to ask in political crises is one

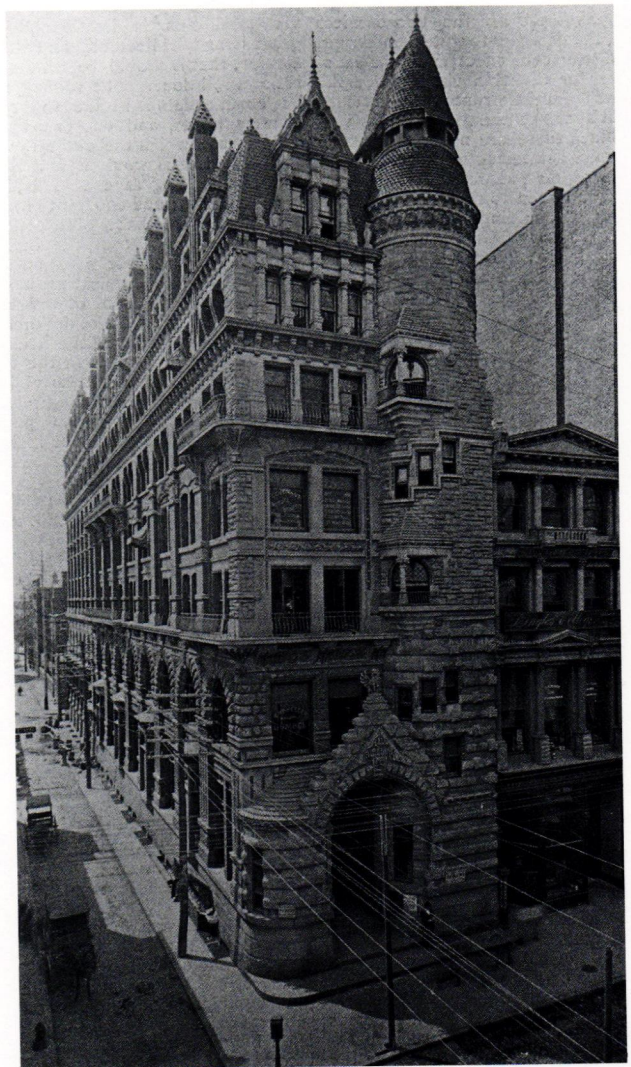
which the Philadelphia architect would do well to ask himself at critical points of his design (but he never does): "Can't you let it alone?" Alas, he cannot. Above the bases of his pilasters he has projected an absolutely meaningless interruption in the form of a moulding, and as to nullify the impressiveness of the pilasters themselves. As if this were not enough, he has variegated them by projecting the sill course of the upper range of windows across the pilasters at the ends, but not across the intermediate pilasters. By these devices he has managed to destroy the effect the series of pilasters would have had if he had been inspired to let them alone, and he has substituted for it an effect more sought after and oftener obtained in Philadelphian architecture: the effect of variety through higgledy-piggledy.

The cornice and the story over it, or rather between the two cornices, are entirely commonplace and are the best things in the building. The architect almost forgot to put in something original and diversified, and came near doing what he had to do. Almost, but not quite, for upon the flank it will be remarked that his mullions are corbels in brickwork, while upon the front they are columns, ill-modeled and with bases absurdly stilted so as to be well seen, too well seen, from below. The commonplace cornice of the side, too, is replaced in the front by a very ugly and uneasy row of projections over the columns. The pains that have been taken to diversify the treatment of the two walls have availed to prevent even this story from being a point on which the wearied eye might repose in gazing on the great chance medley, and to deprive it of the grateful sense of humdrum and quiet that a row of commonplace openings between two commonplace cornices would have had if it had been left to itself. The roof reeks with architecture, and the row of chimneys or ventilators, or whatever they are that are protruded to animate the sky line, and the design of the dormers—these things may be left to go without the comments which a humane critic has not the heart to give.

One of the chief reasons for the confusion and restlessness of the building is the absence of continuous lines. In the flank there are the two cornices which the designer forgot to interrupt, and of which the effect is so far satisfactory, for the thin shelf above the basement is interrupted by a withdrawal at the centre. Continuous vertical lines there are none. Even the angle pier is interrupted at every story, and its rigidity, as well as its massiveness, is impaired to the eye by the interrupting mouldings at the level of the fourth story and at the middle of the third, and absurd round corbels above the basement and the fourth story, the absurdity of which is mitigated in the latter case by the fact that it has a balcony to carry, but in the former is not mitigated at all. In fact every precaution has been taken (and with success) to ensure that the building shall lack unity, shall lack harmony, shall lack repose, and shall be a restless jumble. This effect is greatly enhanced by the treatment of the front and especially of the tower. The sallyport at the bottom is very absurd as the entrance of a commercial building. Even if the tower had been a good tower and had explained itself, it would have been objectionable as still further narrowing a front already too narrow. It is in fact, "in this connection," a preposterous structure. In the first place the staircase of a modern office building is of very little account, and it is highly unreasonable to make it the chief architectural feature of the building. In the second place a corner of the front is the most inconvenient place in which to establish the staircase. Moreover, the tower, as a tower of a commercial building is as inappropriate in itself as it is irrelevant to everything else in the building. As a watch tower it might have its uses, though even a watch tower should not be solid at the top. But the notion of building a circular staircase at the corner of an office building and providing balconies at the several stages upon which busy Philadelphians ascending spirally about their occasions can step out and enjoy the view—all this is irrational, incongruous, and ridiculous, and it is a comfort that it should be ill done. It

is not all ill-done. The roofing would be commendable in the tower of a country house, and one can imagine situations in which the whole tower, in spite of its freaks, would have a spirited and commanding aspect. The design of it, indeed, is good enough to indicate that the designer knew better than he builded in the rest of the building, knew what nonsense it was, and saved himself trouble by indicating his contempt for the judgment of his fellow citizens and for the art of architecture, solacing himself with a little irrelevant form on his own account in the tower. At any rate the tower is as violently incongruous with the building to which it is adjoined as it is with any purpose it may be supposed to answer. It is a sheer case of "making architecture" and it adds the last touch to the general impression of confusion which is the only general impression that can be derived from the building.

The worst things about these dreadful buildings, for there are others nearly or quite as bad as the Hale building, is that so far from being venerated by the community they satirize they are regarded in Philadelphia with a fatuous complacency. About the time that the *Record* building was considered in these pages, an illustrated newspaper actually contained, with views of the several office buildings of Philadelphia, an article in which a patriotic Philadelphian pointed with pride to the monstrosities of Chestnut Street and advised architects of other cities to go to Philadelphia and see how picturesque a commercial building might become in the hands of a man of genius! The Hale building is probably more esteemed by Philadelphians than such a real example of architectural design as the Art Club. It is very sad. So long as there is no public opinion in Philadelphia on these subjects so long will such things as the Hale building be done, alike by the incompetent and the cynical.





Architectural Aberrations—No. 26

The Hearst Building in Chicago

Some people say that the design of the skyscraper is settled, in all essentials, that it is established as a "type." Others as vehemently contend that what has been done hitherto in the design of tall buildings with metallic frames is provisional and tentative only, that there is nothing definitive about it. The "strict constructionist" cannot be pleased with a building that does not show its construction and exhibit its material. He will pooh-pooh the relevancy and validity of the current convention that the skyscraper should emulate the columnar division into base, shaft, and capital. He has even been known to deny the postulate of the Father of Criticism that a work of art must have a beginning, a middle, and an end. There is another class of critics, who may be the same persons, who hold that the analogy of nature should be followed, not only in securing that decoration should proceed from structure, but also in securing that structure shall proceed from function.

Perhaps the ultimate trouble with the commercial skyscraper is that, being by its magnitude, or at least by its altitude, a most conspicuous structure, it is yet devoted to the humblest and most prosaic purposes. Monumental by its dimensions, it is severely utilitarian by its requirements. There is no monumental idea expressed in it, or expressible by it. It consists of a series of cells in which the occupants do not properly live, but only, properly or improperly, get their livings. The only natural analogy to it is that of the honeycomb, where the "workers" at least sleep and feed, do something else, in fact, than make and store their honey. If the human workers did that, they would give more opportunity for specific and effective architectural expression. In other words, there is more of such an opportunity in a skyscraping apartment house than in a skyscraping office building. There may be a difference between the apartments. There must be a difference between the rooms of the same apartment, according to their several purposes. These differences are architecturally expressible. But in the office building the purpose

of every subdivision is the same, and functional expression gives no scope for variety of treatment. The offices are all equal cells of the honeycomb.

It is true that the designer of the honeycomb, to wit, the busy bee, may detect and provide for differences of function. So he does when he lays out his combined apartment house and office building. The male bee, being a drone, or "clubman," and reduced to the sole functions of consumption and propagation, is accommodated accordingly. The female worker, analogous to the clubman's wife who goes out sewing or takes in washing, is separately provided for in apiarian architecture, while the queen bee has constructed for herself a "royal cell." Here, you perceive, is a natural analogy for the case of an "institution" which builds primarily for its own accommodation but incidentally provides stowage for a swarm of "workers." In some cases this process seems to be reversed, and the structure to be erected primarily for the revenue derived from the workers, and only incidentally, for the transaction of its own proper business. Such a building offers a chance for differentiation at which an architect ought to jump. His "institution," his "royal cells" would naturally be at the bottom of the building or else at the top. Sometimes both, as in the case of a respectable newspaper building, by which we do not necessarily mean the building of a respectable newspaper, though in this case it happens to be both, erected in St. Paul, Minnesota, some twenty years ago, that is, after the advent of the elevator but before that of the steel frame, and thus limited to a modest twelve stories, of which the lowest is given to the counting-room, and the upper two to the editorial and typographic departments, the intermediate stories being available for rental. Here the Aristotelian demand fulfills itself without putting the architect under the necessity of making a factitious division, but only of recognizing a division that exists.

The "layout" of this building in St. Paul is, or

might be, apparently, the layout of the Hearst Building in Chicago. But one looks in vain for any recognition on the part of the architect of the facts in the case. Looking at the building as a whole, it might be any sort or condition of a commercial building. It might be an office building, and then again it might be a department store. It is true that the Chicago convention of utilitarianism and practicality is followed in the disposition and the forms of the openings. That is now become almost a matter of course everywhere. Times are changed since a New York architect designed an office building consisting of tiers of two story orders. The enclosure of two stories in one order seemed to the beholder to be a device for giving the building scale, but it appears it was a device for avoiding the presentation of the actual windows as squares or nearly so, which resulted from the construction, and for presenting them as the conventional oblong. It was an unworthy object and an ineffectual device, the proof being that the fenestration of the unregarded sides and back of the edifice in question, where the windows are left to assert themselves as squares, is more grateful to the view than the considered fronts, in which they are presented as "uprights" by an overlaid trellis of two story orders. It is not on account of his square windows that we have to quarrel with the architect of the Chicago building. His fenestration shows another caprice, not as hurtful as that of the two story trellis, but still injurious for the same reason that it is a dissembling of the facts. This is the subdivision of the end windows on each front by mullions. The object of this device appears to be to make the ends look more solid than the intervals between them. In a building of masonry there is a mechanical reason for this thickening at the corners. In a framed building, whether the frame be of timber or of metal, it loses its meaning, and becomes mere convention. But that is not the worst of it. In obedience to the exigencies of show windows, the uprights are not only thinned to the minimum, at the bottom, and apparently deprived of the fireproofing envelope which is given to

them up above, but they are withdrawn at the plane to which they are advanced above, so that the basement is the most attenuated and skeletonized portion of the entire structure. The upper part, it is true, is so far skeletonized that the contrast is not so ugly and ridiculous as where an apparent wall of massive masonry apparently stands on a sheet of plate glass, but it is glaring enough to give pain to the sensitive. And, as for the mullions that are introduced at the corners above the mezzanine floor, they suddenly cease above this floor, so that the corners are least massive of aspect precisely where the eye demands that they should be most massive, that is, at the bottom. Even that is not the worst of it, for they have no visible means of support, but merely stand upon the floor beams and impend over voids, in a manner which would be mechanically impossible if they were of the masonry which they purport to be. The convention that the structure is of masonry is abandoned. It is true that the building does not architecturally express itself as a frame building but only gives itself away as such, which is a very different matter.

A department store, one would say to look at the Hearst Building, and moreover a department store in which the architect shows himself unable to reconcile the discrepancies arising from the conflict of the exigencies of construction and the exigencies of occupancy. That is what it would look like if it were left to itself. But in an evil hour the constructor undertook to be also a decorator. We have seen that his departures, in the interest of architectural expression, from the nakedness of his utilitarian scheme, instead of cloaking its nudity, added absurdity to it. Absurdity is also, unfortunately, the "note" of the decoration. Excepting at the top. The strict logicians have ceased to put cornices on their skyscrapers, seeing that the rainfall on the roofs is in fact discharged inwardly and not outwardly. Nevertheless, we may admit that a cornice, "in the present stand of the art," *tolerari potest*, if it be of moderate projection, and does not pretend to be a shelf projecting over and

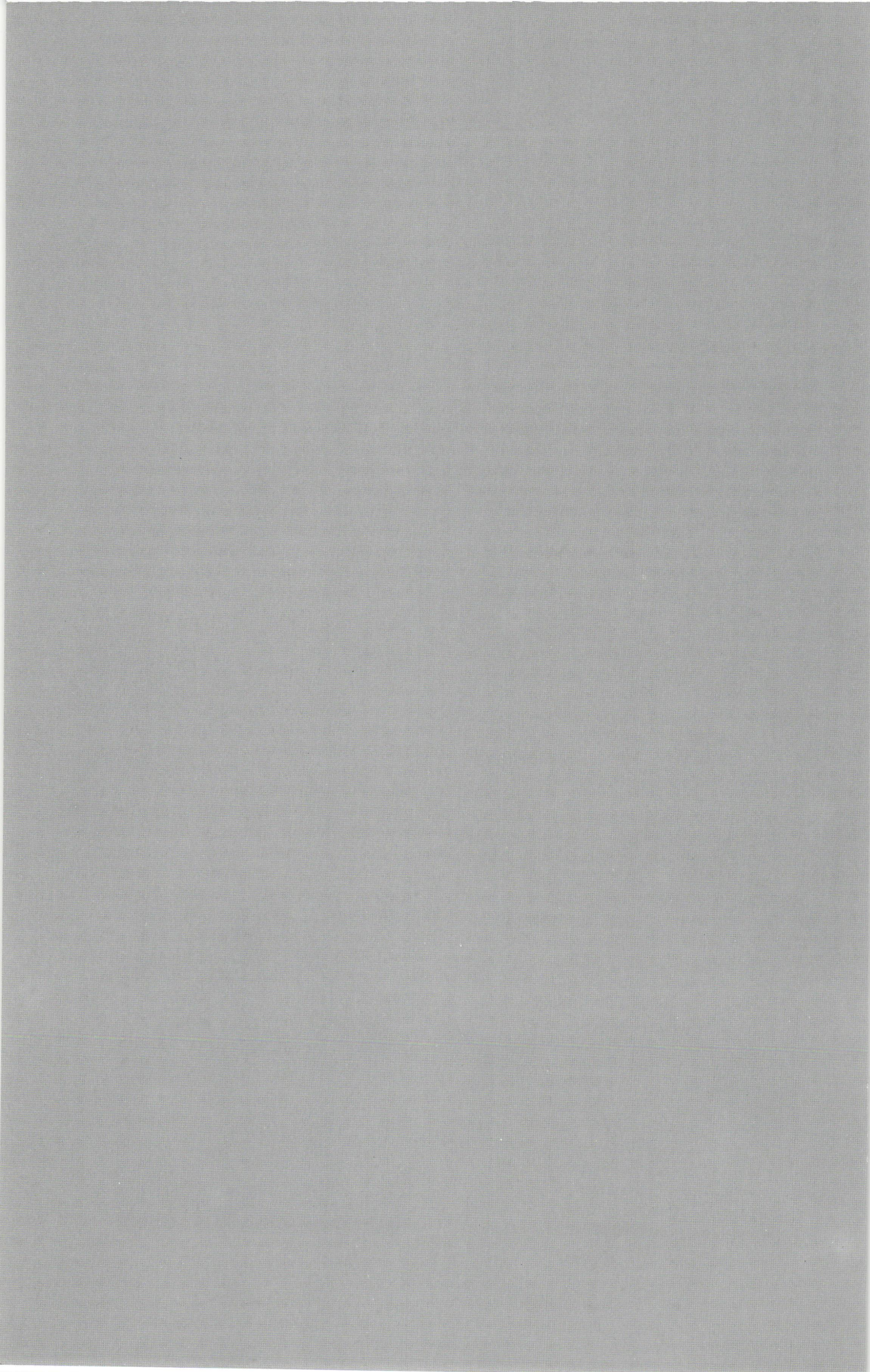
supported by a massive wall of the same material which does not exist. Also a parapet can be tolerated. It has a conceivable function in preventing the un-
way from falling off the roof. The ornamentation of the present parapet is, abstractly, good, good in division, good in scale detail, and good in scale. But it is so rich and elaborate that it is in glaring contrast and contradiction of the wall underneath, which makes it look balder than ever, while the baldness underneath makes itself look finical. It is a "purple patch" on a coat of frieze. Still, the decoration of the top, incongruous as it is, is by no means so bad as the decoration at the bottom, the lower three stories, the showrooms of the department store. This section is decorated by a highly elaborate doorway at the centre of each of the visible fronts, but what we may by courtesy call colonnettes on the face of each of the upright posts and also on each of the mullions of the subdivisions of the bays at the corners to which we have already referred as standing on nothing.

Much of the detail of this decoration is refined, some of it even "elegant." But it is all, by its profusion, even more open to the objection of incongruity that we have made against the parapet than is the parapet itself. It is open to a graver objection. We have admitted that the parapet conceivably had a function. But none of this has any conceivable function. It has absolutely nothing to do with the case. Not a bit of it is "decorated construction." Every bit of it is constructed decoration. The ornamental doorways are painfully squeezed in between the uprights, in a space evidently too narrow for them, and the uprights themselves are interrupted, in one case by crowning them, at the level of the mezzanine, with voluted capitals, in the other case with what may by courtesy be called corbels, projected to carry the projection of the entablature, projected ad hoc. But the most absurd and irrational detail is that of what we have called the colonnettes incrusting upon the uprights. These make no pretense at all of being anything but "fancy" ornaments. A cylindrical mass

is stuck onto the face of the wall, embellished with spirals, whittled away at the top and bottom to contradict the assumption in which nobody will concur that it means something, and finally, after it has died completely into the wall and one would say ceased, it crops out again, below the floor line, into one of such niched corbels as are supposed to sustain the entablature over one of the doorways. No "architecture applique" could more ostentatiously advertise itself as having nothing to do with the case, as being irrelevant, incompetent, and impertinent.

It remains to be added that he who sees the Hearst Building only in photographs sees it to undue advantage. The charms of the incrusting decoration are in fact enhanced by color, by blues and greens and reds which rather aggravate than mitigate its excrescencical character, and which also aggravate its inapplicability to the stark utilitarianism of the structure to which it is in fact applied. Whatever the solution of the problem of the commercial skyscraper may be, this treatment is not a step in the direction of such a solution. Most decidedly, this is not the way to do it.





Invention and Tradition in the Making of American Place

Denise Scott Brown

Some Paradoxes of Colonial Cultural Landscapes

I once overheard the following conversation on a bus:

First woman: "I can tell from your accent that you're from home."

Second: "Yes, I left Home thirty years ago."

Third: "I've never been Home but one day I hope to go."

This exchange, in Johannesburg, South Africa, was not an expression of sentimental nostalgia. It was the affirmation of an alliance among members of a caste. By tracing their origins directly or at one remove to England, these women reassured each other of their social status in the South Africa of the 1940s. Their jingoism induced my xenophobia. As a child, I wriggled uncomfortably when English visitors likened views of the low veld to a "little piece of Surrey," and I pondered the incongruity of black children in French West Africa reciting lessons about "Nos ancestres les gaulois." As a teenager, I joined an art class where we were exhorted to paint from what was around us, to see the landscape of veld and sun and the life of Africans in the city as our most important inspiration—if we were to produce vital art, our art was to be "African."

I have long since realized that my art teacher's formulation was too simple. After all, we spoke English. More than a few hundred years before, and in my case less than a hundred years before, the roots of our culture were in Europe. European, and particularly English culture pervaded our intellectual lives, conditioning our perception and appreciation of our African world. As artists, our attempts to understand our own landscape were inevitably made in the context of the mother culture. This orientation toward outside influences limited our ability to use our local experience as material for our art.

The South African writer, Dan Jacobson, defined that colonial artistic condition in his introduction to *The Story of an African Farm* by Olive Schreiner.¹ He observed that Schreiner's un-English, African setting, "her snowless, woodless, lawnless Karroo," seemed implausible, even in South Africa, as a background for fiction because it had never been seen in literature before. Jacobson, when he first read her novel, had to struggle with his own incredulity, "that the kopjes, kraals and cactus plants she mentions were of the same kind as those I was familiar with; so little experience had I had of encountering them within the pages of a book."

"This is not to deny," he added, "that *The Story of An African Farm* is . . . a very 'literary' piece of work; the fruit in places more of reading than of life." This literary quality Jacobson found damaging to the novel; however it may have played an important part in the unlocking of colonial artistry. Perhaps Schreiner's conversion of African sources to "literature" was key to making them artistically available. Her tale of the veld was told, not in voortrekker prose, but in the style of the author's literary contemporaries in England. By making the work comprehensible in London, Schreiner may have rendered the African landscape visible for the first time to her audiences in South Africa and England. If so, then in an artistic sense she invented the African landscape.

When, in the late 1960s, Robert Venturi and I tried to do something similar in Las Vegas, it was relatively easy to transfer my African xenophobia to an American one, suggesting that for the sake of cultural relevance and artistic vitality, American architects look at the landscape around them and learn. Yet our analyses of the American suburban landscape were based in large part on European modes of scholarly inquiry; we defined the Strip by comparing it with historical European architecture, using categories set up for the study of traditional European urban space.

These paradoxes beset societies and cultures whose origins were in another place. As problems, they are surely no worse than the problems of more settled societies, but they are different, and they persist as tensions between artistic dependence and independence long after political freedom has been won.² In America the paradox is four-fold:

—The United States is a diversified nation, differentiated regionally and ethnically, stratified socially, and is pluralistic culturally; yet it is also a mass society that shares symbols and systems to such an extent that Americans are accused by outsiders of being a nation of conformists.

—Many if not most Americans left their lands of origins because they were different from those around them. They were poorer, more oppressed, different racially or religiously, more adventurous, or maverick. The cultures they took away with them were not the same as those of the people they left behind, and in the ensuing years they diverged even further. America is far more different from Europe than most visiting Europeans realize. This is due in part to the emigrants' search for a new world which they defined as the counterform to the unsatisfactory old world. American morality, polity, governance, social structure, culture, and a physical container expressive of American aspirations were all to be invented. Inventing America was a great experiment and high adventure. Nevertheless, most immigrants brought their old worlds to the new, carrying landscapes and mores in memory and reasserting them, *mutatis mutandis*, in city or farm. Some Elizabethan English and 19th century Italian customs that were lost in their countries of origin are preserved in Kentucky and South Philadelphia. Landscapes transported from England to New England resettle uncomfortably in Arizona.

—We Americans, like other former colonials, are xenophobes, yet in some areas of life we clutch the apron strings of our mother cultures. We are proud

of our indigenous styles, yet at times we still require European endorsement to validate them in our own eyes.

—The United States is artistically both precursor and follower, and the pendulum swings quite rapidly. But in architecture, discovery by latter-day European "colonizers"—a Rayner Banham for Los Angeles, a Charles Jencks for Post-Modernism—is still needed to dignify for Americans those artistic forms that originate in America.

Is the American architectural experience a colonial experience? Can it be termed colonial after 1776? Assuredly not in all spheres. I have used the terms "colonial" and "colonizer" to discuss attitudes toward artistic sources and artistic identity in American architecture. I have not attempted here a general analysis of relations between colonialism and architecture; nor have I investigated the expression of colonial power through architecture—either in colonial America or by America today. Where I describe colonial architecture, it is settlers' rather than rulers' architecture; and I have seamed settlers and immigrants together, viewing the colonists architecturally as early ethnic groups with problems of adjustment not wholly different from the problems of those who came later.

Inventing America and Inventing the Landscape

What are the effects of immigration on the artist? If the earliest stimuli, the sights and scents experienced when the infant first comes to awareness, are in some way linked to future creativity, what is the artistic prognosis for immigrants or refugees removed, probably forever, from the environment they knew when two feet above the ground? What of the immigrant group and its group artistic culture?

In most group migrations to America the first generation was lost, in an artistic sense and indeed in most senses. They heaved their young above their heads and saw their reward as the success of the sec-

ond generation. "Culture," when there was time for it, was internal to the group. It lay in Little Italy or in the Yiddish press and theater. Subsequent generations turned to "face America."³ Yiddish poetry began to read like Walt Whitman, house decorations in Italian neighborhoods included the American eagle. Yet further in time, immigrant descendants speaking and writing in English have shared in the artistic life of the dominant cultures and have added to the vitality of what is called "American." They play a leading part today in the inventing and reinventing of America. Perhaps their off-center starting point lends intensity to their art.⁴

How does this generational sequence of adaptation, invention and reinvention tie in with American architecture and the making of place? Only fitfully perhaps, in a literal sense—most architecture is not designed or developed by actual or metaphorical immigrants—but perhaps rather well in the artistic and cultural sense of "inventing."

European colonists took their architecture with them and adapted it to conditions they found in the colonies. Dutch farm houses in the Cape Colony developed porches and pergolas. To English houses in the United States were added porches and jalousies in the South and clapboard in the North. The two major colonial heritages in the United States were the English and the Spanish, with the Anglo predominating and forming the basic matrix of architecture in this country. The English heritage itself was bifurcated, containing on the one hand a rural cottage and Romantic landscape tradition, and on the other a Classical tradition derived from English Palladianism.

High culture⁵ grafted other strands to this matrix. Classical influences from antiquity and republican France accompanied the birth of the new republic, symbolizing republican virtue in furniture, architecture and urbanism. A later Classical influence from Haussman's Paris gave expression to civic pride and served commercial boosterism in the turn-of-the-

century American city. European borrowings included 19th century Eclecticism, the International Style, and Art Deco Moderne. There were also reactions against European influences and toward non-European ones, by Frank Lloyd Wright and others in the name of Americanism.

Ethnic groups, facing the basically English character of the everyday realm, sought to express identity through a melding of ethnic and dominant group symbols; but ethnic symbolism receded as subsequent generations allied themselves to taste cultures related more to their socioeconomic than to their ethnic status. The social movements of the 1960s and the interest in roots in the 1970s brought renewed expressions of group identity, both ethnic and racial, although usually at the level of home decoration.

House styles, whether "French Provincial," "Cape Cod," or "Contempo," are assigned greater importance in the American suburban environment than in equivalent European housing areas. Styling represents perhaps one final resting place of American pluralism—although during the Sun Belt migrations of the 1960s and 1970s a further layer of complexity was added to house styling, as new residents in Houston, for example, sought highly decorated, eclectic, townhouse precincts to serve as stage sets and symbols for a new way of life in a new city.

In sum, social and physical movements to the continent and within it have been paralleled by a process of architectural invention and reinvention that started with the inception of the nation and continues today. Has this process produced space and place that are different from anywhere else?

What's American about American Place?

Such a question is typical of the colonist's search for identity. Given the paradoxes, the multiple influences, and the newness of the culture, the answer is hard to find and will be found, if at all, in slivers between borrowings and inventions, as insinuations rather than firm statements.

A literature has grown up around the question. John A. Kouwenhoven,⁶ in search of "what's American" observes that one characteristic landscape is "the 'interminable and stately prairies' as Walt Whitman called them, ruled off by roads and fences into a mathematical grid. They have become, as Whitman thought they would become, the home of 'America's distinctive ideas and distinctive realities.'" Among a dozen landscapes Kouwenhoven lists, the first three are: the Manhattan skyline, the gridiron town plan, and the skyscraper. Their particularly American quality, for him, is their "fluid and ever changing unity" and their state of being "always complete but never finished."

Vincent Scully perceives "a kind of uneasiness, a distrust of the place, a restlessness," as emanating from the American experience of "a vast landscape, a more or less scarifying contact with the Indian population, certain racial crimes, colonialism, a sense of distance from centers of high civilization, a feeling at once of liberation and of loss."⁷

Ronald Lewcock, writing of 19th century colonial architecture in general⁸ claims that its character derives from limitations of the conditions in which it was built; "amateur designs, semi-skilled or unskilled labour, and restricted building materials transformed the intricacies of fashion into fortuitously subtle and restrained statements . . . enforcing by simplicity the impact of the lines and forms of the styles." Scully⁹ describes American colonial architecture in the same terms, seeing architecture of both Spanish and English origin as "simplified, clarified, and primitivized. These qualities . . . become positive ones, like the beginning of something which—though deriving or degenerating from a more developed style—had worked its way back to first principles, from which a new kind of growth may well be possible." In America the English or Spanish original was "distilled into a more rigid order, less compromised by variety, less rich in modulation . . . The virtues sought were now the elemental

ones of strong obvious shapes and plain surfaces." Lewcock adds, "Excessive copying may have produced stereotyping, but it also ensured a familiarity with the true meaning of 'style' which is one of the strongest attributes of the best colonial work."

George L. Hersey¹⁰ suggests that there is a particularly American way, different from the European, of borrowing from artistic sources. He defines "replication" as the copying or adaptation of "some principal work of art" in various ways for different places and times. The work of art, for example the Roman Pantheon, becomes "an artistic signal that is picked up by lesser transmitters, which extend and modify the original signal." Replication was the rule rather than the exception during the 19th century. In Europe, Hersey claims, architectural borrowing followed the original with respect to siting, relation between inside and outside, and relation between scale and building type. For example, the European pantheons all contain large, "impressively scaled," single spaces that house chapels or civic spaces, and they are sited as in Rome. But in America, a shift accompanied the borrowings; the rules broke down and improper adaptations occurred: Jefferson's Rotunda is pantheonic on the outside only; A Romanesque style is used by Richardson for other than religious architecture; public buildings have Second Empire outsides and High Gothic insides; Eero Saarinen builds village hillside architecture on the flat, urban Yale campus; and whereas the English architects of the new Caius College, in following Le Corbusier's monastery, "properly" relate college idiom to monastic tradition, a Boston firm replicates La Tourette untraditionally as the Boston City Hall. In the same way, type and use collide at the roadside, as in the names "Dog City" or "Frank Palace."

The "not necessarily undesirable" effects of such free replication are "jarring stylistic dissonances, the impermanent look of having been transferred from some other site and weird scale." This is an illuminating interpretation of an essential yet difficult-to-define

difference between American and European architecture.¹¹ Although Hersey does not mention it directly, shifts in symbolic meaning cause the collisions in several of his examples—an ecclesiastical style is used for commercial architecture; royalty is associated with hot dogs.

I have culled these writings of the late 1950s and the 1960s from a larger body of assessment of American urbanism because they highlight the importance of invention and tradition in the making of place. Across the broader spectrum of urban thought from about the same period, a theme carries through a range of disciplines. The writings of Melvin Weber, J. B. Jackson, and Herbert Gans suggest that what we perceive as chaos in the urban and suburban landscape may be an order that we do not understand; that simple nostrums to complex problems may make the problems worse; and that the concept of “organized complexity” should be understood by architects and planners working in the social and physical realms. During this period, Tom Wolfe responded to the same notions in the arts with an apotheosis of Las Vegas and the Pop Art movement, and Robert Venturi in *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* called into question some simple nostrums of Modern architecture. In delineating the anatomy of complexity in architecture, Venturi grounded his analysis in historic precedent seen in a new light.

Something caused these parallel inquiries by separate individuals to be undertaken and brought to fruition at the same time. In my opinion, the common influence was social change. Shifts in American society spelled a shifting of sensibilities among perceptive scientists and artists. Changing sensibilities induced changing perceptions. Then, altered perceptions called for a reassessment of tenets and philosophies, particularly in disciplines concerned with urban life. The social turmoil of the 1960s demanded the reinvention of American architecture.

The Process of Reinvention

In the arts, change in sensibilities signals impending aesthetic change, which is in turn a precondition for innovation and invention. When the time is ripe for aesthetic change, a chance perception—even a side glance at the familiar—can set the process in motion. At first sight, the new and meaningful may not appear beautiful; it may appear ugly. But we feel it is important.

That feeling often (perhaps usually) precedes rational reassessment and may lead to it. For example, although my move to the West Coast in 1965 was part of an intellectual migration, and although I had for more than ten years joined in reasoned reassessments of architecture and the environment, nevertheless my first response to the landscape of Las Vegas and Los Angeles was not an analytic check out; it was an aesthetic shiver. The shiver was composed of hate and love; the environment was as ugly as it was beautiful. It shrieked of chaos, yet it challenged one to find the whispered order within it—because this order seemed to hint at a new architecture for changed times.

“Towards a new architecture,” had been the slogan of an earlier process of architectural reinvention based on social change. In the first decades of this century, a liberating aesthetic shiver induced by industrial architecture and engineering goaded and guided the development of Modern architecture. “Eyes which do not see,” Le Corbusier cried in 1923, against architects who could not perceive the beauty-in-ugliness of grain elevators, steamships, and airplanes.¹² Forty years later, when some cities were literally in flames and when a hundred voices railed against architects who could not see, the Modern rhetoric of industrial process and the old vision of glass towers seemed irrelevant to the social problems at hand. There was also no shock value left for factory architecture; it could produce no galvanizing aesthetic shiver. What horrified in the 1960s was the urban chaos the urbanists were studying: the deteriorated inner city and the signs, strips, and tracts of suburban sprawl.

Facing America through Learning from Las Vegas

We selected Las Vegas and Levittown for study because they were archetypes of the landscape of suburban sprawl that surrounds all American cities. Analysis of the extreme forms would be easier than analysis of more typical ones, which were usually overlaid on earlier patterns. However, the intention was to throw light on the everyday. We aimed to document the characteristics of American place that were alluded to by the writers of the 1960s and also to teach ourselves, as artists, to be receptive to the mandates of our time.

So we faced the desert Strip of Las Vegas, the winding roads and curving greens of Levittown, and later the traditional 19th and early 20th century American city. The forms we chose for analysis were new and undeniably American. Although scorned by architects as vulgar distortions and malformations of urbanism, they were the quotidian of the landscape; we sensed that they contained important lessons for architecture in the latter part of the 20th century.

We tried to define the components of strip and sprawl carefully, and we considered the factors that caused them to be as they were—primarily the automobile, the geometry induced by its motion, and the ability of the human brain to react to communication from the environment while the body is traveling at 35 miles an hour. We described the nature of the communication conveyed and the methods used for conveying it. We compared the constituents of American suburban architecture with those of traditional European urban architecture, matching the vast space of the A & P parking lot with the expanses of Versailles, and the pace of movement on the medieval market street with that on the Las Vegas Strip. We evolved a taxonomy of the forms of the everyday landscape and endeavoured to set these within a broader taxonomy of the traditional elements of architecture and urbanism.

The following excerpts from our writings of the 1960s and 1970s give the flavor and some of the substance of our enquiry.¹³

The English cathedral sits upon a close, the Greek temple upon an acropolis, the medieval castle against the medieval town wall, and the town hall on the main square. . . . In American cities, the only establishment whose location is predestined is the corner store.

Relations and combinations in American city streets between signs and buildings, architecture and symbolism, civic pride and honky-tonk, express a messy vitality and produce an unexpected unity.

Suburban sprawl eludes our concepts of urban form. It isn't enclosed or directed like the space of traditional cities—it is open and indeterminate.

The image of the commercial strip is chaos. The order in this landscape is not obvious.

The commercial persuasion of roadside eclecticism provokes bold impact in the vast and complex setting of a new landscape of big spaces, high speeds, and complex programs. Styles and signs make connections among many elements, far apart and seen fast. The message is basely commercial; the context is basically new.

Symbol dominates space. Architecture is not enough. Because the spatial relationships are made by symbols more than by forms, architecture in this landscape becomes symbol in space rather than form in space. Architecture defines very little: The big sign and the little building is the rule of Route 66.

The sign for the Motel Monticello, a silhouette of an enormous Chippendale highboy, is visible on the highway before the motel itself.

In Levittown: the lawn is a stage, the facade a backdrop, and the roofline a romantic silhouette.

The decorated house and lawn make an impact that pure architectural articulation could never make, at least in time, before you have passed on to the next house. . . . The eclectic ornament on and around the relatively small house acts as a visual booster between the house and the curb, reaching out

to you across the big lawn, linking the symbolic architecture to the moving vehicle.

What Did You Learn?

In sum, our aim in studying suburban sprawl had been to push the growing body of thought on American urbanism in directions interesting and useful to us as practicing architects and theoreticians. We sought a new open-mindedness that would enable us to act sensitively and receptively on social questions in architecture and lead us to a new aesthetic: a formal language or languages less restrictive than that of late Modern architecture and tuned to the social and creative needs of our time.

When asked, "what did you learn from Las Vegas?" we were at first at a loss for an answer. An early reply was "What did you learn from the Parthenon?" By this we meant that aesthetic ideas that engage the minds of architects are not always (or in their most important aspects) definable in words. Later we suggested that what we learned would show in our subsequent work, and indubitably it has. However, more than ten years after these studies, it is perhaps possible to discern some areas of learning more clearly than we could at the time.

The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form

The primary lessons that we as architects learned from Las Vegas and Levittown were about symbolism. We started our study with investigations of the character of the symbols that could best communicate over the vast space of the American strip; we continued with analyses of the buildings behind the signs and what they could communicate symbolically at different scales. Finally, we turned to symbolism at the traditional scale of architecture for pedestrians. Here, ornament and decoration become a major interest.

In the succession from strip to buildings our methods of analysis completed a full circle. In 1968 we sug-

gested that "we look backward at history and tradition to go forward." In 1975 we recommended that "We architects who went to Las Vegas and Levittown should now return to Rome; it is time for a new interpretation of our architectural legacy, and particularly for a reassessment of the uses of ornament and symbolism in architecture."¹⁴ Our initial analyses comparing Strip phenomena with historic, European architecture—the A & P parking lot with Versailles—we defined as going "from Rome to Las Vegas." We said we went "from Las Vegas back again to Rome," when we applied categories learned from the Strip to the study of conventional and traditional buildings—seeing the front of Chartres Cathedral, for example, as a type of billboard. The journey from Las Vegas back to Rome allowed us to learn again from historical architecture through a reappraisal of its symbolism and decoration. Although these had been there in the first place, we had ignored or forgotten them. Under the influence of Modern architecture, we had interpreted them as texture and pattern alone, not as symbolic communication.

Las Vegas therefore helped us to reinterpret traditional architecture and by redirecting us to Rome set us to mending the rupture Modern architecture made with its tradition. In so doing we were also able to incorporate portions of the American suburban landscape into the fold of architecture, where they had not been included before.

The Oscillation Between Innovation and Tradition in the Process of Reinvention

Our analyses of the American everyday environment were part of a continuous process of reinvention whereby tradition and innovation, the historical and the new are matched and rematched with changing times. We face America and then Europe, struggling to resolve the paradoxes of those whose culture originated in a different place, to become creative artists in the flux of history.

In studying Las Vegas and Levittown our intention was not to promote particular commercial idioms for architecture, nor did we turn to Rome to find good sources for historical borrowing. In my opinion, the lessons learned from Las Vegas by architects to date have been superficial ones. Stylish Post Modernism has picked up the image but not the substance of our quest. And the professions of urban design and landscape architecture, although involved equally with architecture in the making of place, seem to have been affected even less than has architecture by changing times and sensibilities. The built results indicate that social and cultural change have brought about little reassessment by design practitioners of either the emerging American landscape or the traditional roles of the professions.

Lacking this reassessment, some efforts of the design professions tend to make environmental chaos worse. If you see an awkward strip, where wirescape overwhelms imagery and the whole purveys neither communication nor order, look again: If the signs are all twelve feet high, you can be sure an aesthetic ordinance is at work, promulgated by the design professions and intended to produce order in the environment. A more successful approach could be to encourage the erection of taller signs that dominate the rest of the clutter. The fact that this suggestion would be dismissed by most design review boards in the United States suggests that urban designers still lack the means to describe and define the strip landscape; therefore they cannot see it; therefore they cannot handle it aesthetically.

As designers, we have not yet developed a profound sense of history. "A colonial culture," says Jacobson,¹⁵ "is one which has no memory." A colonial heritage makes it "extremely difficult for any section of the population to develop a vital, effective belief in the past as a present concern, and in the present as a consequence of the past's concerns." Yet absence of memory may not inhibit the perpetuation of prejudice. Indeed, "Precisely because the sense of history is

so deficient, these enmities tend to be regarded as so many given, unalterable facts of life . . . as little open to human change or question as the growth of leaves in spring. . . ." Because we designers lack a sturdy grasp on our historical heritage, we lack the confidence to tolerate architectural change. An understanding of the role of invention in historical architecture and of the way the past affects present preferences would help designers and design controllers conquer their own aesthetic prejudices and therefore deal more effectively than they do now with the everyday American landscape and the making of American place.

Conclusion: Work in Progress

In this thesis on colonies and mother cultures, innovation and tradition in the invention of American place, I have tried to suggest that the colonial paradoxes are as much opportunities as problems and that they add intensity and uniqueness to American architecture. Two "colonial" heritages, one American and the other African, both set in a European mold, have helped define my argument. Its edge probably derives from the marginal nature of my own relation to dominant cultures.

I have not used a colonial frame of reference because it is the only applicable one. Indeed, American architects are not alone in looking beyond the border. They are part of an international profession whose philosophy has been avowedly and idealistically internationalist and whose practitioners, in most nations, are eager for outside influences. However relevant the colonial aspect, it is rarely considered; it opens up a host of questions; and it should be understood as part of our artistic heritage. This is particularly so as the architectural pendulum swings now toward regionalism and as America assumes the leadership in architectural ideas. In addition, relating American architecture to a worldwide diaspora of colonial architectures can broaden our understanding of American architecture and may bring new insights

in the future as the field of colonial studies widens in Europe and the Third World.¹⁶

In discussing our own research on American place, I have emphasized the process of invention rather than the nature of our findings. We are at the port of entry to a new territory that is paradoxically familiar but unknown. It must be both explored and reexplored and there is a long distance to be traveled. Artistically, we American architects are cultural immigrants who must face the American hinterland yet make our roads return to Rome.

Notes

The paper was first delivered at the inaugural symposium of the Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture. The symposium took place at Columbia University on April 21–24, 1983. The event's proceedings, entitled AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE: INNOVATION AND TRADITION will be published in book form in the summer of 1985.

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1. Dan Jacobson, Introduction to *The Story of an African Farm*, by Olive Schreiner, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1971, pp. 18–19.

2. The paradox may persist although there is a new colonial power: *vide*, "We do not need the Graves, the Sterns, and the Jahns to tell us how to design in Africa. We also do not need to be chauvinistic in our approach." Bannie Britz, "Is a South African Architecture Possible?" *Towards Appropriate Architecture of Southern Africa: Architecture SA*, ed. Ivor Prinsloo, Nov./Dec. 1982, p. 68.

3. "Facing America": *Mitn ponem tsu America*. The experience was common enough to have given rise to a Yiddish saying. I first heard it in English. I am grateful to Mr. Max Rosenfeld of the Sholem Aleichem Club in Philadelphia for clarifying its derivation.

4. Each group plays its part in its own way. The sequence described in this passage refers largely to late 19th and early 20th century migrations from Europe. It is not immediately applicable to black groups, owing to the unwilling circumstances of their immigration and to the ensuing destruction of their heritage. However, the black artistic contribution has paralleled that of other groups from the start, and since their second migration (northward) their role in the reinventing of America—north and south—can be discussed in the same terms as those used for

other immigrant groups. Hispanic and Asian immigrants today seem to be in early stages of the same sequence.

5. The terms *high culture* and *taste culture* are borrowed from Herbert J. Gans, *Popular Culture and High Culture*, New York: Basic Books Inc., 1974.

6. John A. Kouwenhoven, "Preliminary Glance at an American Landscape" and "What's 'American' about America" *The Beer Can by the Highway: Essays on What's American about America*, Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1961, pp. 19, 42, 44, 49.

7. Vincent Scully, *American Architecture and Urbanism*, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969, p. 12.

8. Ronald Lewcock, *Early Nineteenth Century Architecture in South Africa: A Study of the Interaction of Two Cultures, 1795–1837*, Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, 1963, pp. 420, 421.

9. Scully, *American Architecture and Urbanism*, pp. 27, 37.

10. G. L. Hersey, "Replication Replicated, or Notes on American Bastardy" *Perspecta 10, The Yale Architectural Journal*, New Haven: 1965.

11. This difference is found in other colonial situations where similar encounters "between local cultures and international systems of exchange" produce "a population of hybrid architectural languages that are full of promise." (Hybrid Architecture, *Lotus International 26*, Milan: Electa, 1980, p.3.) One such hybrid is the Bengali temple with imitation church towers. George Mitchell describes the Hindu Temple of Sonarang as "genuinely hybrid architecture combining, in a unique manner, elements from different traditions to create completely original forms." ("Neo-classical Hindu Temples in Bengal. European influences in the Bengal Temples," *Lotus International 26*, p. 99) They sound like the architecture of the Strip—the more so when Mitchell writes, "Bewildering to the architectural historian, the genius of Bengali designers is undeniable, though their inventions still await an appropriate terminology by which they might be effectively described"—and without which (we may add), like the Karroo and Las Vegas, they will not be effectively seen.

12. Le Corbusier, *Vers Une Architecture*, Paris: 1923. The English title, *Towards a New Architecture*, London: 1927.

13. These are taken from *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form*, revised edition, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1977, pp. 3, 9, 13, 20 as well as from the unpublished text "Signs of Life, Symbols in the American City," from an exhibition for the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1976. Both are by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour.

14. *Learning from Las Vegas*, p. 3 and "Signs of Life."

15. Jacobson, Introduction to *The Story of an African Farm*, p. 7.

16. For example, *Lotus International 26*, is devoted to colonial architecture considered as a worldwide phenomenon.

Precedent and Invention: Design in the Field of Tension

Tomaso Zanoni

Since {the nineteenth century}, the distinguishing mark of works which count as modern is 'the new' which will be overcome and made obsolete through the novelty of the next style. But, while that which is merely 'stylish' will soon become outmoded, that which is modern preserves a secret tie to the classical. Of course, whatever can survive time has always been considered to be a classic. But the emphatically modern document no longer borrows this power of being a classic from the authority of a past epoch; instead, a modern work becomes a classic because it has once been authentically modern.¹

A vital strategy for design incorporates many investigations simultaneously. There are at least three levels of investigation. The first is one of pragmatic problem solving, the constant testing of idea against form. The program must be imagined and invented to support the proposed functions in an appropriate and logical manner. A program is more than just a list of desired functions; it requires qualitative evaluation, redefinition, and invention. Programmatic concerns are often the union of project and thesis that may be manifested by specific relationships or by carefully designed ambiguities. The second level of investigation involves the nature of architecture as a cultural pursuit. Here, typology, social responsibility, (in the form of legibility) and the specificity of a project to its context express themselves. The third level is one in which personal concerns are manipulated. The autobiography of the designer is brought into play along with memory and poetics that may extend well beyond the fringes of the discipline.

We have selected for analysis and comment four European design projects drawn from two different periods. Barstsch and Wladimirow's project for a Communal Dwelling and Le Corbusier's Immeubles-Villas were conceived in the 1920s. The atmosphere of that decade still provides inspiration for us because it constituted an explicit search for an attitude in which tradition could be transformed by

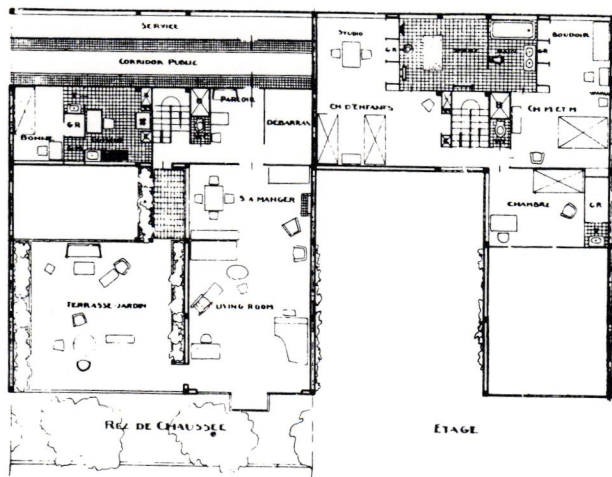
new technologies and ideologies. Gregotti's Calabria University and Koolhaas' project for the Parc de la Villette address the urbanization of architecturally undeveloped spaces and are formulated around issues that are situated at once within the traditional domain of architecture and at the periphery of a cultural definition. Inherent in all these projects is the manifestation of the tension between precedent and invention; both implicitly in the projects and explicitly in the relationship between the projects and our own work.²

Le Corbusier: Immeubles-Villas (1922/25)

In 1917 Charles-Edouard Jeanneret was invited to Frankfurt to work on a public housing project. At the Bureau of Passports he changed his mind. He left for Paris and became Le Corbusier.³ Why did Le Corbusier adopt Paris? What made him choose this city? Quite simply, the place was a challenge for him. On the occasion of his first visit to Paris he wrote to his teacher l'Eplattenier in La Chaux-de-Fonds; "The life here is austere and active. Paris is a crack of the whip every moment, the death for dreamers."⁴

Le Corbusier did not think of himself as part of the wide and comprehensive movement of modern architecture that was gaining strength in Germany. He perceived Paris as an active and ideal ground for his purposes, for at this time the City was a focus—even the center—of a culture that considered itself to be *avant garde*. In addition to being a contemporary cultural center, Paris was the capital of the Grande Nation with its rich architectural and cultural histories. In France Le Corbusier was a protagonist, a central figure of the new architecture. He stayed in Paris forever, and with all of its activity this city contributed substantially to his work.

Fig. 1: Rem Koolhaas, Project for the Parc de la Villette, Paris, 1982-1983. Site plan.

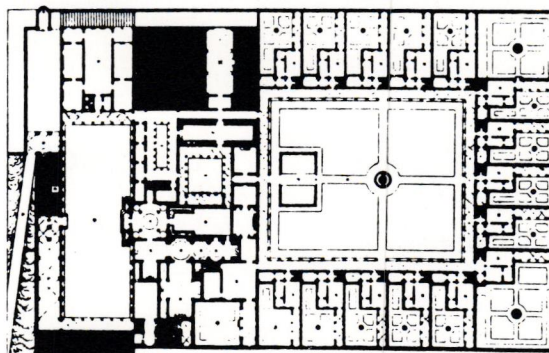


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The Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau was the standard unit in Le Corbusier's visions of life in a modern city (fig. 2). In 1925, a full-scale model, the prototype for this "villa for everyone," was displayed to the public at the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs.⁵ In the earlier project of 1922, 120 equal villas are horizontally and vertically combined to produce a series of villas, each of 2000 square feet. The plan of each apartment in the Immeubles-Villas contains an L-shaped, two-story family townhouse wrapped around a double height volume. The double height terrace is conceived of as a hanging garden.⁶ In the Pavillon Le Corbusier visualized modern living in a "greened-in" city as "le sentiment modern."⁷

With the help of industry Le Corbusier and Jeanneret realized the aesthetic standards they had wanted to implement. They achieved the "visual hygiene of the [American] office."⁸ The architectonic formulation of built-in furniture—chairs, tables, and other daily commodities—became small-scale examples of the conception of the modern apartment. The trunk/chest became the *casier standard* (a mass-producible element designed by the architect), and the glass and tableware came from a laboratory supply house. The chairs in the Pavillon were still selected from the commercial manufacturers; Le Corbusier and Jeanneret would later develop their own collection with Charlotte Perriand. It was Le Corbusier himself who heralded the Pavillon as the beginning of "a new era in domestic organization."⁹ Mass-produced objects are chosen for their formal and functional clarity. The house is no longer furnished; it is equipped.¹⁰

The Certosa di Ema, a 14th century monastic complex near Florence, was used by Le Corbusier as a model for the Immeubles-Villas (fig. 3).¹¹ The arrangement of the monk's quarters, each opening onto an enclosed garden and connected by a loggia, reappears transformed in the configuration of Le Corbusier's scheme (fig. 4). In the Immeubles-Villas,

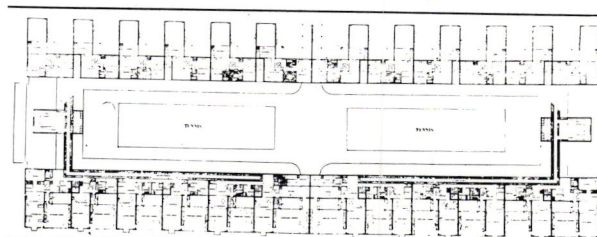


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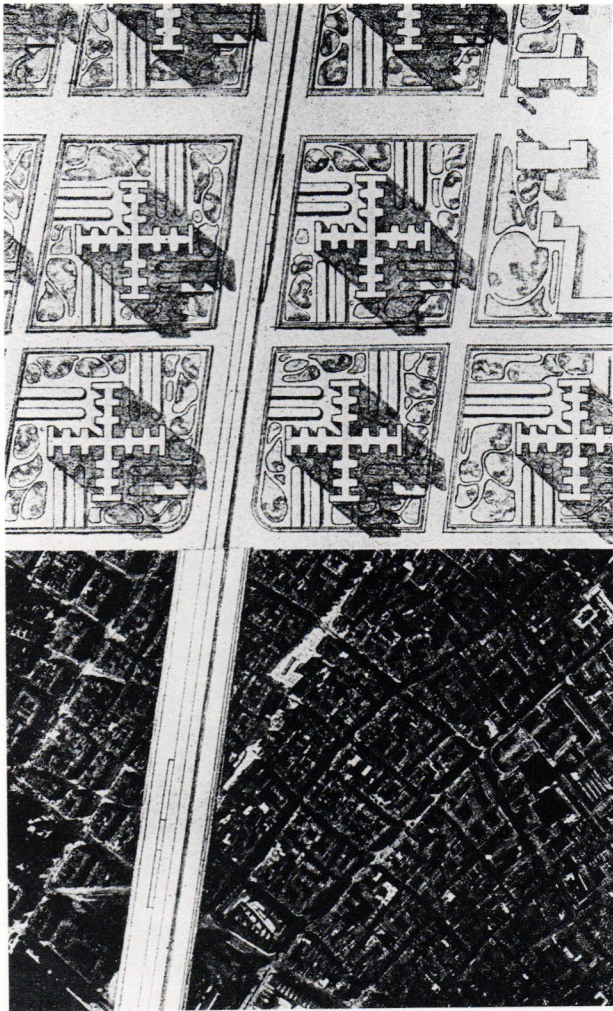
the aggregation of identical units with gardens takes place vertically, in section as well as in plan. The cloister walk of the monastery surrounding a calm, green courtyard becomes a series of elevated hallways (Laubengaenge) around a courtyard that provides sports facilities. The introverted, walled-in monk's quarters become transformed into units that give onto both the street and the garden terrace. The monastic precedent is recognized by the maintenance both of quantity and quality of the enclosure, each providing access to identical living units. The elements of an architecture with sacred implications are applied with profane significance to accommodate urban housing.

Another important source of inspiration for Le Corbusier's planning was Tony Garnier's Cité Industrielle of 1917.¹² In the introduction of the "Oeuvre Complète," Le Corbusier credits Garnier for his architectural imagination of an industrial city concerned with technical progress and social justice; "This man felt the immanence of a new architecture based on our new social conditions."¹³ The Ville Contemporaine maintains large open spaces and still presents a much denser conception of urban housing, transforming the Cité Industrielle into a metropolis for three million inhabitants.

In the work of Le Corbusier and Jeanneret there is a constant relationship between the small and the large scale, between the apartment and the urban ensemble.¹⁴ In 1922, the Immeuble-Villas with its 120 liv-



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5

ing units was conceived as an autonomous object. In the Plan Voisin of 1925, the rectangular perimeter block of the Immeubles-Villas suddenly appears as an orthogonally meandering bar that creates large and smaller urban spaces. In this formulation, the housing type becomes an element of the urban fabric, filling in the areas between the great public attractions of the city.

An important difference between the 1922 and the 1925 versions of the Immeubles-Villas is the fact that the idealized project of the Ville Contemporaine in the Plan Voisin suddenly appears in a real context. Two collages show the project inserted into Paris; the first collage exhibits the discontinuities of the Plan Voisin in terms of figure-ground (fig. 5), and the second demonstrates the new double-story scale of the Immeubles-Villas (fig. 6). These collages illustrate the contrasting urban characteristics of Paris and the proposed project.

In the 1929 text entitled "The Street" Le Corbusier explains some of the ideas demonstrated in the Plan Voisin collages.¹⁵ He juxtaposes the jagged silhouette of the 19th century street with that of a modern urban space defined by a straight skyline that accentuates the prismatic quality and extended proportions

of the architecture. This he calls "le jeu savant, correct et magnifique des volumes assemblés sous la lumière."¹⁶ His urban conception for Paris in the Plan Voisin is an architectural manifesto against the eternal half-dark atmosphere of the Mietskaserne (large, dense blocks of flats in Berlin from the end of the nineteenth century) and the narrow *rue corridor*.

Though his involvement with CIAM ran parallel to the development of his urbanistic projects,¹⁷ it seems that politics for Le Corbusier was less a pursuit of responsibility than an administrative tool; politics gave him the cultural authority to implement his visions. The life offered by the Immeubles-Villas was consistent with the motto of the French Revolution: Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité. The generosity of the individual apartments reflects Le Corbusier's notion of liberty as a comfort the city-dweller should expect. The use of a single apartment type alludes to the equality (or equalness) of man and his four-member family. Community is organized very discretely; the private unit is generous, so the use of the shared facilities is not really necessary. Thus, fraternity is available but not forced. This reading of the slogan of the Bourgeois Revolution gives some insight into the extent of Le Corbusier's political consciousness as an attempt not to substantially alter (like post-1917 Russian architecture) but rather to simply improve a standard of living.

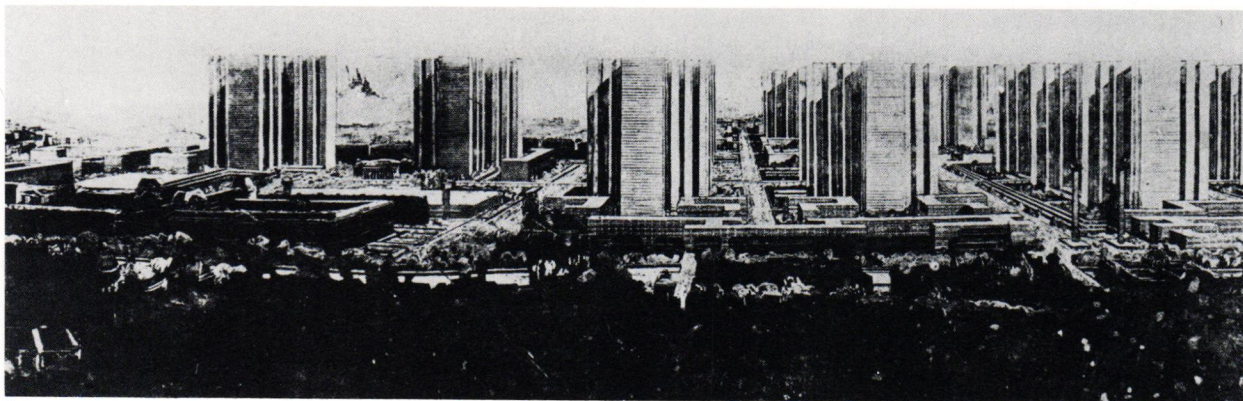
Le Corbusier's manifesto, as demonstrated in the Plan Voisin, was essentially architectural. It offered an aesthetic for housing the new society. This was a fundamentally different attitude from the German and Russian housing research, studied at the same time, which was oriented both towards economic and political issues.

Fig. 2: Le Corbusier, Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau, 1922. Plan.

Fig. 3: Carthusian Monastic complex, Certosa di Ema, Florence, 14th century. Plan.

Fig. 4: Le Corbusier, Immeubles-Villas, 1922. First-floor plan.

Fig. 5: Le Corbusier, Plan Voisin, 1922-1929. Collage plan.



6

Barstsch and Wladimirow; Project for a Communal Dwelling (1929)

The Russian revolution of 1917 led to fundamental social and economic changes that were necessary to support the new collective society. All cultural endeavors, particularly architecture and urban design, became the medium through which to make manifest the new political postulates. Thus the task of the designer was complex and included the invention of programmatic components as well as the investigation of new typologies and morphologies.¹⁸

After the abolition of private real estate property in 1918, many existing apartment buildings were turned into domestic communes. It soon became apparent, however, that new housing types would have to be developed because the organization of the prerevolution housing structures, oriented as they were towards the privacy and the comfort of the individual family, lacked shared facilities and had an overabundance of private space. To remedy this problem, architecture was called upon to establish and reinforce the new social conditions.

The study of a new organization for everyday life began much earlier. The utopian socialists of the 19th century, for example, developed various models for communal dwellings. We recall Thomas Stedmans Witwell's design for New Harmony, Indiana, in 1824, which followed the principles of Robert Owen, and the phalanstère project by Victor Considerant designed in accordance with Charles Fourier's theories of 1830.¹⁹ Whereas in the United States the development of collective organized housing was limited mostly to religious groups, in Russia, where the revolution was initiated on the theoretical background of Marxist-Leninist literature, the formulation of new programs for the future of socialist housing was developed on an official level.²⁰

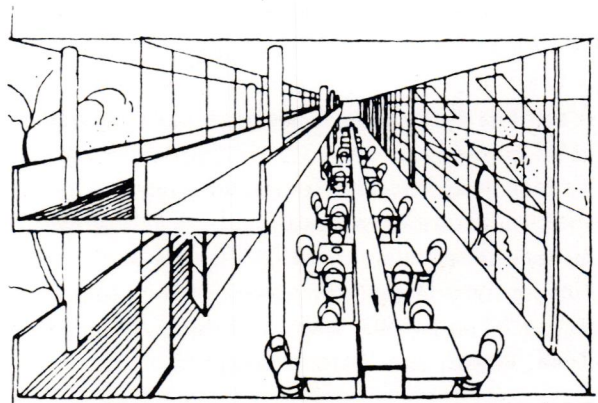
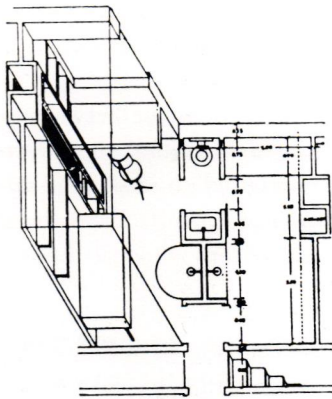
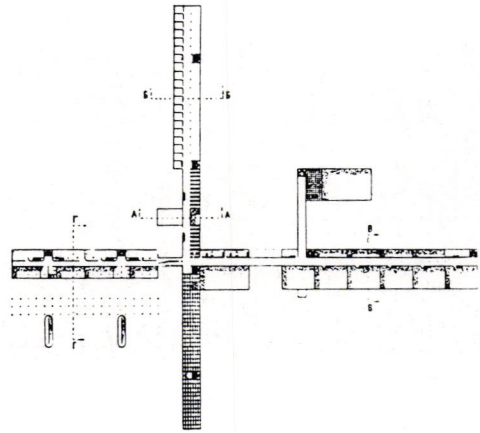
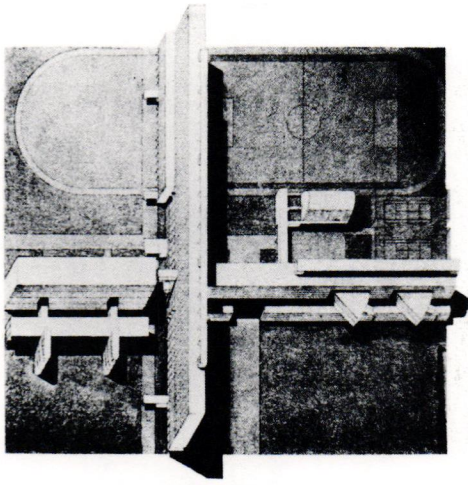
The relationship between the private and the public was the most important issue in the development of these housing schemes. Collective facilities centered

around two major realms: the accommodations for supply (the canteen, cooperative kitchen, and laundry), and for social and educational activities (the school, library, auditorium, and club). The discussion about the realm of the individual was controversial and often tedious; nevertheless, it produced distinctive results.²¹

In 1929, Barstsch and Wladimirow presented an architectural vision of the recent concepts of The Association of Modern Architects (O.S.A.) in a project for a communal dwelling. Here the juxtaposition between the new program and the new architecture is clearly demonstrated. The complex is divided into three coherent buildings that are aligned on axes that intersect orthogonally (figs. 7, 8). Each building contains all the accommodations necessary for its corresponding age group. On the left is a 6-story wing for preschoolers. On the right is a five story boarding school for older children, with classrooms and auditoria that fold out of the main volume of the building. The third building is a 10 story vertical slab that contains bedroom cabins for a thousand adults on its upper floors, and on its lower floors—where the axes intersect—the shared services: the canteen, library, and housekeeping facilities.

The attractiveness of this project lies in the economy of spatial elements used. Barstsch and Wladimirow proposed the small bedroom cabins to coincide with the understanding of a highly socialized mode of life. Thus, the distribution of space is most economical in the private units and more generous in the areas of shared activities (figs. 9, 10).

The cruciform composition demonstrates a new order for social organization: the nuclear family is pulled apart, generating one axis for the adults and another for the children (fig. 11). The arrangement of the program on these intersecting axes creates two distinct yet simultaneous experiences for the inhabitants. The linear addition of units in the slab em-



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phasizes notions of equality and community, while the extroverted crossing bars allow for individual views from all units.

The open and light appearance of this "cloister for a new lifestyle"²² illustrates the superposed ideological program and the enthusiasm of the architects to transfigure a social program into form. Like Le Corbusier, Barstsch and Wladmirow draw upon the monastic typology as a model for their communal dwelling. Yet the Russian architects interpreted this model in a more modest manner than Le Corbusier and focused not on the quality of spaces (which had inspired Le Corbusier in the Carthusian monastery) but rather on the social doctrine of the monastery.

The aesthetic quality of the Communal Dwelling bears a direct relation to the political principles of a society of comrades. The sparse and simple equipment of the individual units corresponds to the aesthetic clarity and monastic brittleness of the collective spaces.

The two contemporary schemes we have chosen to discuss deal with urban design investigations that display a particular interest in the relationship between architecture and the public realm as they define the characteristics of contemporary urbanity. In these schemes, the architectural task of creating a

coherent modification of the existing environment focuses both on the territory (geography) and the scenario (program).

Gregotti Associati (Gregotti Associates) and the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (O.M.A.) are designers who contribute to a new understanding of today's cities, whether it be with an architecture of modification that searches for notions of belonging to the 'genius loci' or with an architecture of congestion that accepts and uses the fragmentation of the recent past.

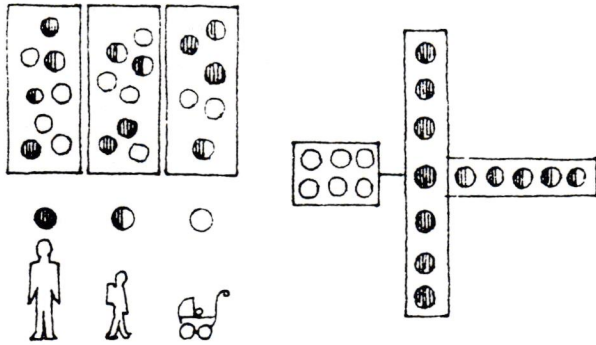
Fig. 6: Le Corbusier, Plan Voisin, 1922-1929. Collage perspective.

Fig. 7: Barstsch and Wladimirow, Project for Communal Dwelling, 1929. Axonometric.

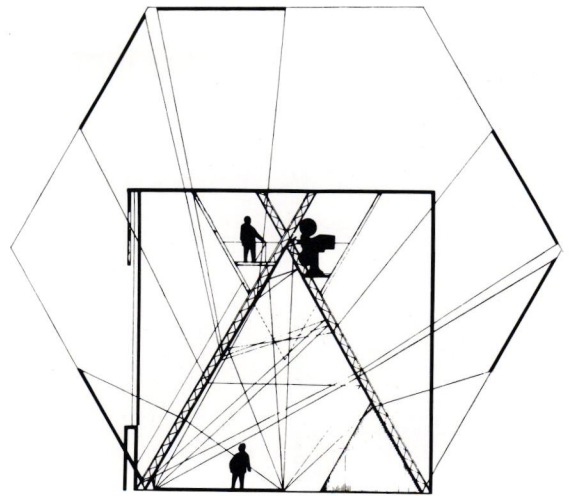
Fig. 8: Barstsch and Wladimirow, Project for Communal Dwelling, 1929. First-floor plan.

Fig. 9: Barstsch and Wladimirow, Project for Communal Dwelling, 1929. Perspective sketch of the bachelors' apartments.

Fig. 10: Barstsch and Wladimirow, Project for Communal Dwelling, 1929. Perspective sketch of communal level.



11



12

Vittorio Gregotti: Calabria University (1972-1973)

To look at architecture comprehensively—with respect to historical, political, and theoretical elements—is an Italian tradition that has been important for most of the protagonists of the “school of reality”²³ in postwar Italy, including Aymonino, Rossi, Grassi, and Vittorio Gregotti.

Gregotti was editor of the journal *Casabella* from 1955 to 1960 under the direction of Ernesto Nathan Rogers. As an architect actively initiating a self-critical discourse, Rogers stood as a “model of reference for the cultural profile,”²⁴ which Gregotti developed in those years. The phase of building up an “historico-critical analysis” while working on *Casabella* led Gregotti to the construction of a theory in which architecture is understood as a socio-cultural phenomenon as well as a “specific manifestation of forms.”²⁵

Gregotti’s “anxious search for new ground for architecture”²⁶ found its first significant realization in the installation for the 13th Triennale in Milan in 1964. In this exhibition Gregotti manipulated the effects of various communication media into assemblages of distortion, simultaneity, and interference (fig. 12). Based on the premise that the contemporary urban dweller consumes cultural disciplines both as entertainment and in his spare time, the architecturalization was conceived to “provoke the visitors’ consciousness of the ambiguities of the word leisure.”²⁷ Tafuri called the Triennale exhibition a “bombardment of multiple shades—visual, acoustical, sensory, literary,” which recomposed the “shattered codes within the single disciplines” linked only by “the transience of their relations.”²⁸

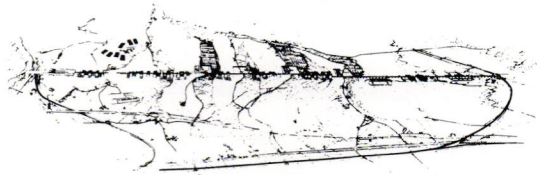
In 1966, Gregotti published *Il Territorio dell’Architettura* in which the main topic of the next phase of his

work is evident: the dialogue between geography or territory and the architectural sign. Two groups of thought that influenced his ideas were the phenomenological approach of Enzo Paci and the structuralist semiological and anthropological thesis of Umberto Eco.

The book addresses the “definitive problems of the modern culture . . . and the sense of the discipline of architecture for itself.”²⁹ What Gregotti postulates is the definition of a “strategy of the discontinuous and of the circuit . . . based on diversification.”³⁰ He is interested in the “interpretation of the territory in its concrete physical form as an archeological structure needless of restorations or completions.”³¹ Here another side of Gregotti’s thinking appears: the consciousness of designing fragments rather than overall schemes. In a recent text in *Casabella*, he discusses the “ideal of modification . . . as a conceptual instrument presiding architectural design . . . and the notion of belonging [to a tradition, a culture, a place] . . . which is increasingly opposed to the ideal of *tabula rasa*, of isolated object, of infinitely and indifferently divisible space.”³²

The Calabria University in Cosenza—a project for a new campus for 12,000 students—was designed in 1972-1973 by Vittorio Gregotti with Emilio Battisti, Hiromichi Matsui, Pierluigi Nicolini, Franco Purini, C. Rusconi Clerici, and Bruno Viganò. The project demonstrates a great sensitivity and capability for creating a dialectical relationship between man and nature, in which an architectural perception is juxtaposed with a set of forms dealing carefully and concisely with a specific landscape.

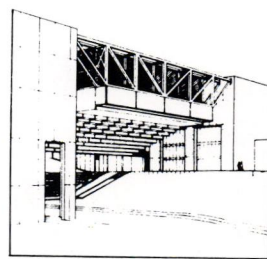
Among the intentions of the Calabria University scheme, the resolution of architecture and landscape is unequivocally the most significant (fig. 13). The theme of a dam is superimposed with the idea of a



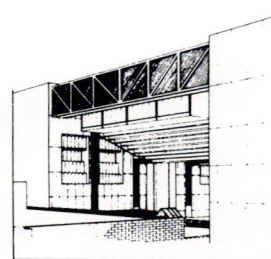
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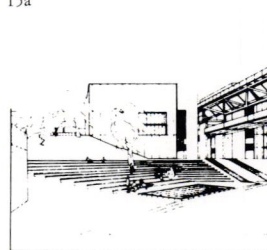
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15a



15b



15c

bridge connecting the railway station to the Silano-Crotonese road. Thus, the two most relevant modes of ground transportation in the 20th century become references in the project. Along this linear system that covers a length of two miles, a series of square blocks houses the university facilities (fig. 14). In elevation and in section the consistent height of this bridge appears to unify and connect a series of hills descending from the Paolana chain to the Crati Valley. This succession of slopes and summits runs perpendicular to the newly conceived axis on the periphery of the city of Cosenza. Tafuri speaks of this context as a landscape that is "recomposed by making it enter into gradual resonance with a dissonant but filiform element and with an architectural fabric that respects its morphology."³³ In plan, this long axis functions as both a road and a datum. It is a visual element to which every design decision is related. The form of this dialogue between man and nature is preceded in the long tradition of dams, fortresses, and especially aqueducts throughout Italian history.

Gregotti's approach to the environment in Calabria University evolved from his project for the University of Florence in 1971. The design for Florence utilized the grid, which is the traditional Roman system for the division of land in that area. Gregotti responded to this prestructured landscape with the insertion of a densely knit, cross-axial composition. In the Calabria scheme, the uncultivated landscape is cut and ordered by the introduction of the rigorous datum bridge. The purity of this scheme is supported by the built objects that define it. The scheme works with very basic elements such as the line, the square, and the cube, which become the man-made modifiers of the landscape.

The loose yet precise siting of the university build-

ings along the axis plays with the sensation of an interrupted street space and allows for a multiplicity of vistas and relationships between the various architectural elements (figs. 15a, 15b, 15c). Low residential units trail into the landscape along curving footpaths that intersect the bridge-road at large public spaces. These piazzas, in addition to providing common places of leisure and thus contributing an urban character to the university, also integrate the private and the public, the natural and the orthogonal systems. In this relationship the piazzas serve as "hinges between the two morphological systems on which the whole complex is structured."³⁴

These initial design decisions lead to a great number of successful architectural events. For an expanding facility like a university, the linear system coincides perfectly with construction in different phases. In Gregotti's scheme, architectural precision is joined with a functional flexibility that allows for future development (fig. 16). A structural system of modern techniques and materials is used. The concrete and steel prefabricated, repetitive elements of this system recall, through their order and materiality, the industrial buildings and highway bridges of the 1960s in Italy.

Fig. 11: Barstsch and Wladimirow, Project for Communal Dwelling, 1929. Diagrams demonstrating how the programmatic division of inhabitants corresponds to the massing.

Fig. 12: Vittorio Gregotti, Installation for the 13th Triennale in Milan, 1964. Section through the Kaleidoscope Room.

Fig. 13: Vittorio Gregotti, Calabria University, Cosenza, 1972-1973. Aerial perspective.

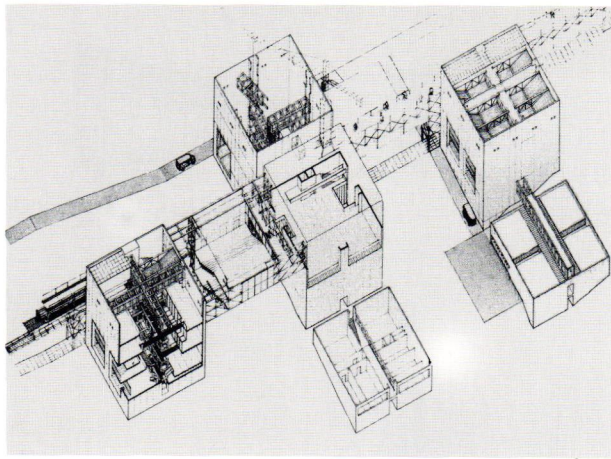
Fig. 14: Vittorio Gregotti, Calabria University, Cosenza, 1972-1973. Site plan.

Fig. 15: Vittorio Gregotti, Calabria University, Cosenza, 1972-1973.

(a) Perspective of the Department of Urban Studies.

(b) Perspective of the open air theatre.

(c) Perspective of the Department of Chemistry.



16

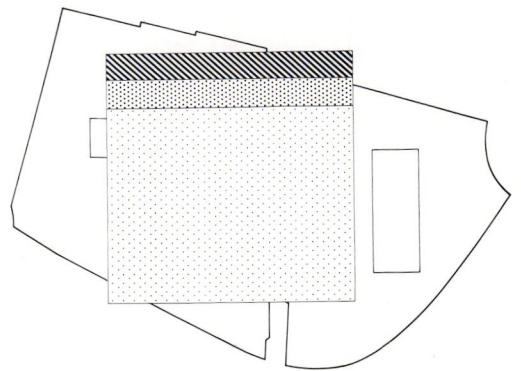
The design for the Calabria University is conceived as both a fragment and an entity; this duality makes it theoretically and formally convincing. The design makes it obvious that this is neither an exercise into the realm of pure poetry nor merely a return to an avant garde attitude because it realistically considers and accommodates the conditions of production today. It is, rather, the formation of a cultural landscape.

Rem Koolhaas; Project for the Parc de la Villette (1982-1983)

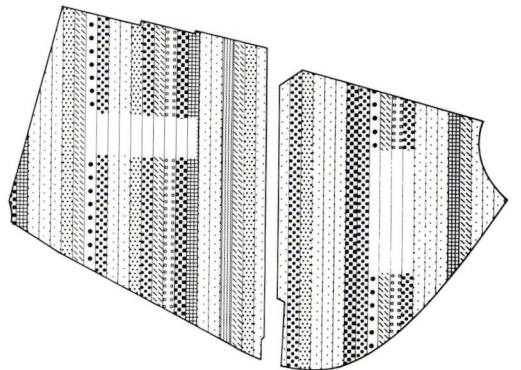
After finishing his studies at the Architectural Association in London, Rem Koolhaas came to the United States in 1972. For the next four years, he collected material for a book, *Delirious New York—A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*, which was published in 1978. Stanislaus Von Moos associates the book with the architectural fables of Filarete from the 15th century (as well as the work of Superstudio in the 1960s) but notes that the book “is a fable made up of hard facts: from historical close-ups and essayist aperçus to the American Metropolis as a colossal machinery of living, working, traffic and entertainment.”³⁶

The second phase of O.M.A. (from 1978 in London and from 1980 in Rotterdam) reveals an additional dimension—an almost hyper-realistic reading of the specific programmatic and architectural conditions for design that leads to realizable projects. At a conference in Australia in 1980, Koolhaas gave a lecture entitled “The Floor as a Functional Device”³⁷ which demonstrates something of the “unbelievable simplicity”³⁸ (which is at the same time rather complex) with which O.M.A. tries to explain itself to a larger public.

The competition for the Parc de la Villette offered an ideal medium to explore the issues of scenario as program and its formulation into architecture.³⁹



17a

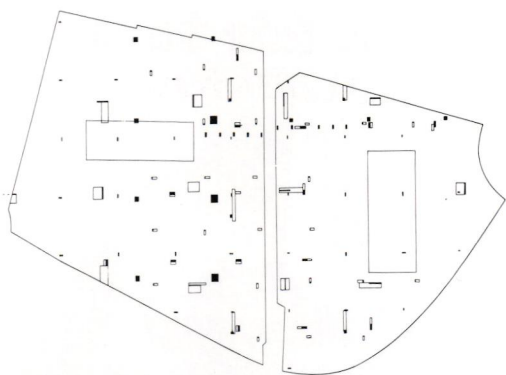


17b

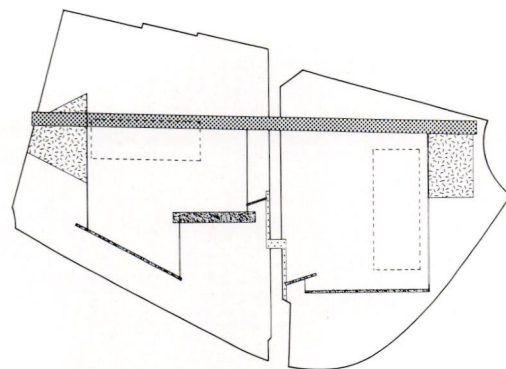
The demanding requirements of the program for the new park led O.M.A. to a design in which “the proposition of a method . . . combines architectural specificity with programmatic indeterminacy,”⁴⁰ allowing for continuous change and adjustment. In this way, the initial hypothesis remains perceivable though the functional needs might change. The primary aim of the design can be formulated as a dynamic orchestration of different activities that generate through “mutual interference a chain reaction of new, unprecedented events . . . a social condenser”⁴¹ within a metropolitan field (fig. 1).

In O.M.A.’s project, five projections are superimposed on the site in layered strips (figs. 17a, 17b, 17c, 17d, 17e, 17f). The strips have a basic width of fifty meters and run east-west in parallel bands providing zones with maximum penetration in one direction and maximum permeability in the other. This geometrical layout satisfies the given program for the theme gardens, the playgrounds, and the discovery gardens and gives the visitor “the proximity of all these activities in which he can lose himself if he moves east-west, but from which he can escape as soon as he moves north-south.”⁴²

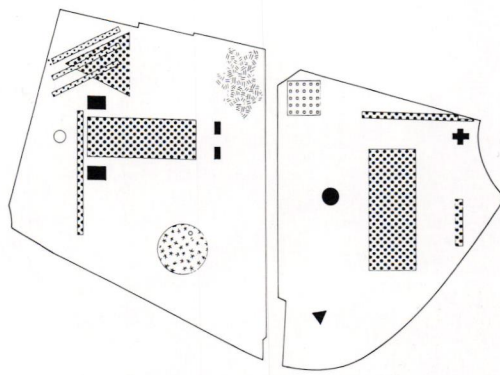
Another layer consists of point grids: atomized facilities like kiosks, playgrounds, buvettes, and picnic areas that are scattered across the site. These episodes of the grid, as “compositional permutations of a se-



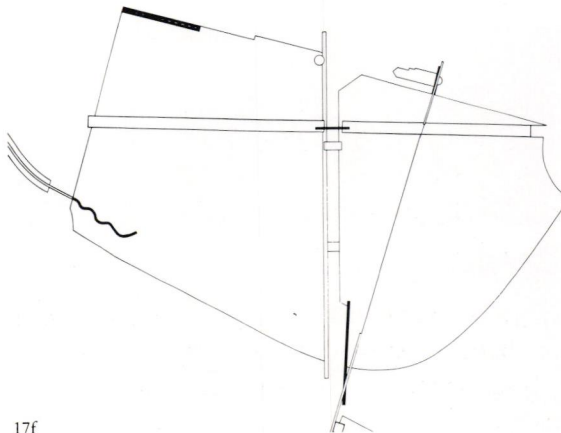
17c



17d



17e



17f

ries of identical, strong, colorful recognizable elements . . . will litter the site . . . with tectonic confetti."⁴³

Elements of access and circulation connect all the episodes of the park. The north-south boulevard that leads from the Museum and Baths to the Music City and the Grande Halle has all-night facilities along it. As a "major metropolitan element in the texture of Paris," it is conceived of as a "late 20th century equivalent to the Arcades."⁴⁴ The complementary theme is the promenade that allows for a calm walk while leading from one point of interest to another. The promenade is architecturally defined as a sequence of different plazas, affording components such as amphitheatres, chess tables, roller skating surfaces, and greenhouses.

The final layer is composed of those elements that are too large or too unique to be integrated in the other systems but relate to them as figures on a ground. In addition to the preexisting Museum, Baths, and Grande Halle, there is a Circular Forest, a Reception Square, a Music Zone, and entrance buildings (which accommodate the administrative facilities of the park).

The project adds to the given programmatic parameters a sequence of plazas conceived of as an Astronomical Garden, from the Canal Saint Denis to the Halle aux Cuirs. It contains exhibits of the Museum

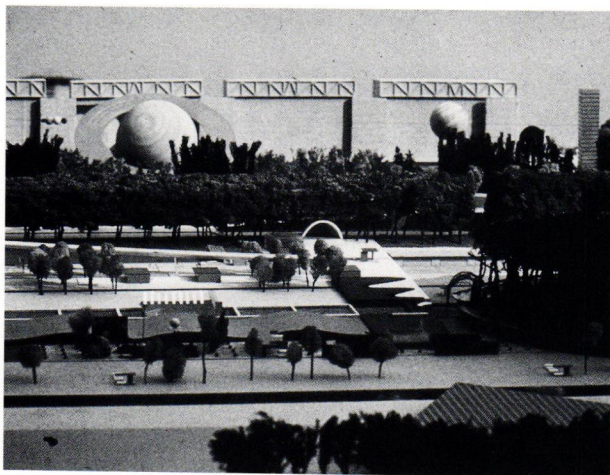
of Science, which is intersected by a line that begins as a bridge and is then a cable, a chairlift, and a parabolic ramp. A Cubic Tea Room, a Pyramidal Greenhouse, a Sphere, and other tall objects form a "Newtonian Skyline" along this diagonal path (fig. 18). In the Theme Garden is a "Media Strip" that offers opportunities for the production of film, video, and radio, allowing the visitors to play with these components of modern life.

An obvious precedent for these last elements is the 1939 World's Fair of New York, which was oriented toward communication and its technologies in various media (fig. 19). The monumental and captivating forms of the Trylon and Perisphere are influential icons in both the utilization of the interior and the enigmatic character of the exterior.

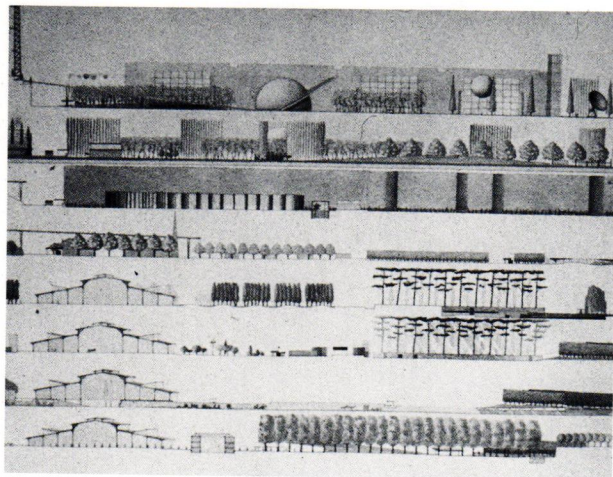
Fig. 16: Vittorio Gregotti, Calabria University, Cosenza, 1972-1973. Axonometric showing construction methods.

Fig. 17: Rem Koolhaas, Project for the Parc de la Villette, Paris, 1982-1983. Diagrams.

- (a) Initial hypothesis; plan diagram of built, covered and open areas
- (b) Projection of the program as a series of strips on the site.
- (c) Distribution of repetitive programmatic elements according to their frequency of use.
- (d) Access and circulation patterns.
- (e) Location of large scale programmatic elements.
- (f) Connections and elaborations.



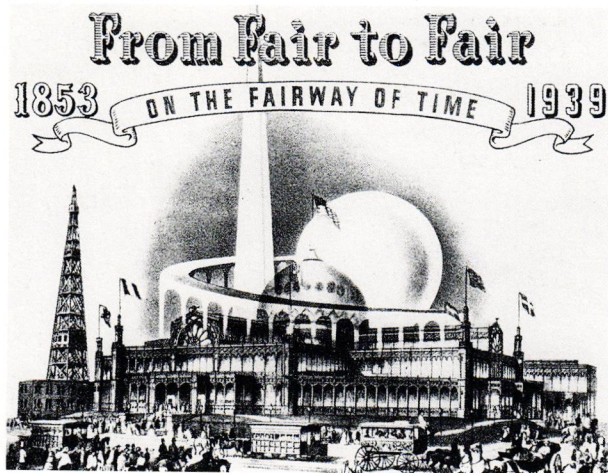
18



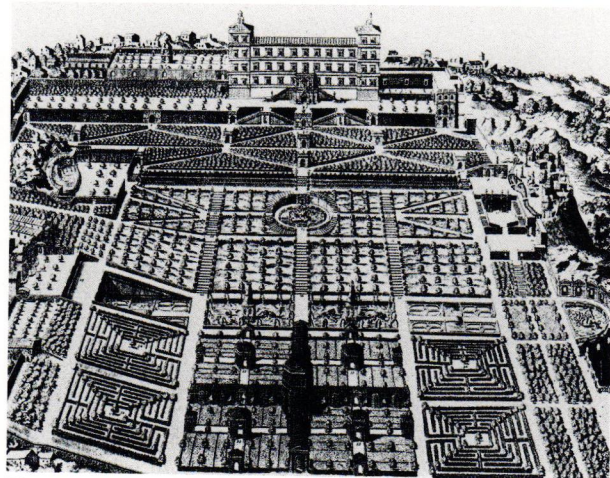
20

The landscaping in the scheme takes into account the process of time and the evolution of shapes. This is explicitly demonstrated in the Circular Forest, where two kinds of trees with different shapes and growth rates are planted together (fig. 20). This *mise-en-scène* is a contemporary formulation of a man-made environment. There is also the juxtaposition of trimmed, architectonic trees, and plants growing naturally, which alludes to the combination of French and English garden traditions (fig. 21). The layering of gardens in strips is a technique that was often utilized in the Renaissance but was generated in most cases by topographical conditions. Here, however, the way in which the layers of different characters are laid out is abstract and oriented more toward a series of events than toward a specific terrain.

If polemic is sought, it may be found in the fusion of the 19th century Romantic landscape with its emphasis on episodal vistas (Central Park, for example, where leisurely procession is somehow more important than the periodic events it leads to and through) with a kind of euphoric overstimulation similar to that offered at the World's Fair. Sequence and simultaneity are condensed into a synthetic computerized patchwork and grafted onto the figure-ground of Par-



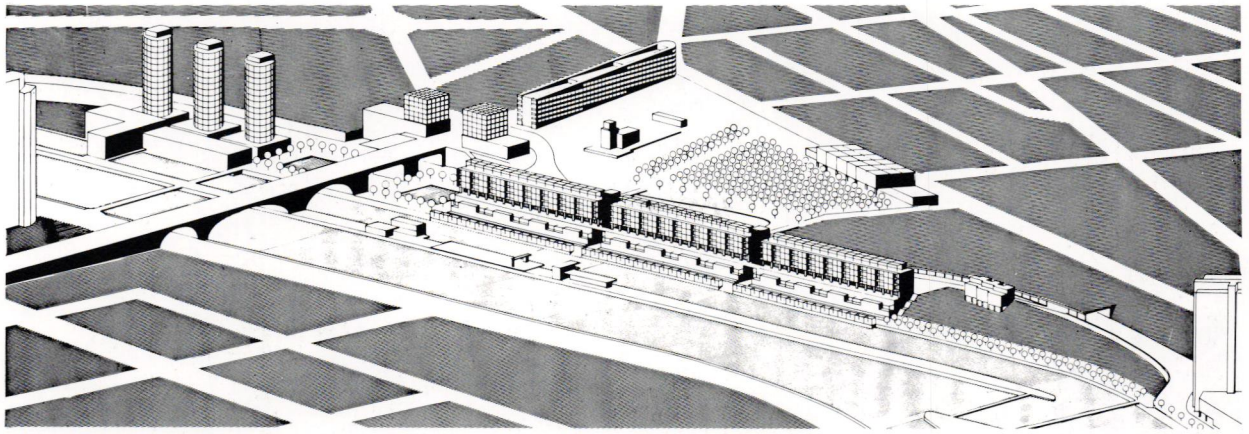
19



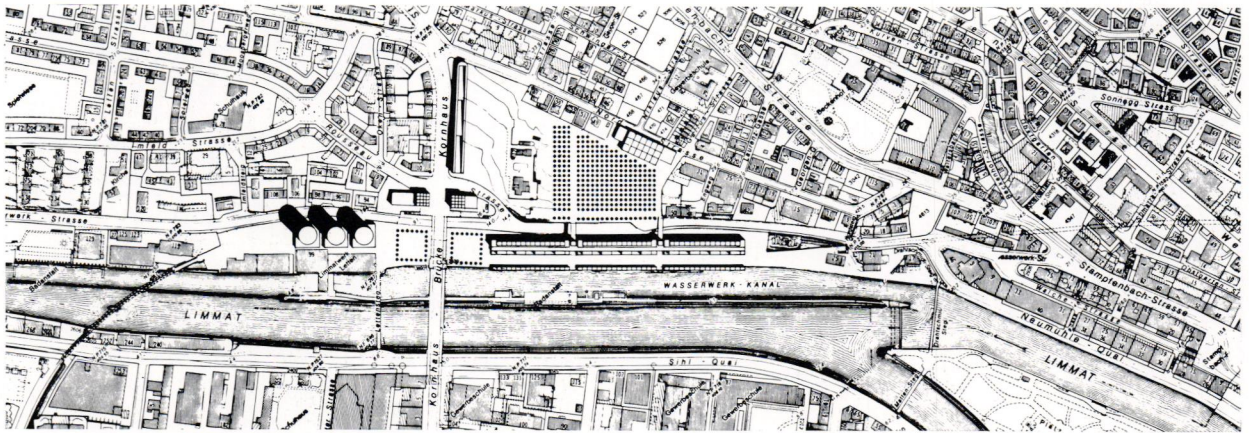
21

is. In the reinvention of a tradition for the Parisian public garden, the Parc de la Villette also drew from these precedents a decentralized, nonhierarchical plan, well suited to both the needs and the representation of a pluralistic society in which the integration of diversity produces an excitement exclusively urban in character.

Different types of drawings give distinctly different information, and the intentions of a design project may be found in the manner of its representation in three dimensions. Both Le Corbusier and Barstsch and Wladimirow use axonometric drawings to show an overview of their projects and use perspective drawings to present their preferred spaces—the individual apartment interiors for Le Corbusier, the communal spaces for Barstsch and Wladimirow. If Barstsch and Wladimirow used models, they probably were simply a part of the design process and represented the whole object at a small scale. Le Corbusier's full-scale model of the Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau on the other hand showed the smaller scaled details of a larger project (The Immeubles Villas) and was meant to demonstrate the generous lifestyle offered by the Immeubles Villas and act as a promotional example for "le sentiment moderne." As in



22



23

many of Le Corbusier's unframed interior perspectives, this model places the observer inside the project in the most effective way.

The numerous elevations, construction detail studies, and perspective drawings articulate the precise architectural language of Gregotti's project in Calabria University. These drawings emphasize the continuous process Gregotti uses to develop both large-scale and small-scale elements into a formally and technically resolved project. The perspectives show the sequential vistas of the university along the linear procession. These drawings are usually framed and inform the observer analytically without placing him directly inside the picture.

An aerial representation and Gregotti's site model present the juxtaposition of geometry and topography and demonstrate the skeleton of the project's *parti*—a long gridded axis overlaid onto the landscape, just as it appears superimposed onto the photograph.

For the Parc de la Villette, Koolhaas shows plan diagrams that mask the design process and appear instead to be the result of a mathematical computer program. In addition to the diagrams multiple site

sections are shown, as well as aerial perspectives and a "chinese" axonometric. An incredibly detailed 1:200 scale model replaces the need for further documentation. This model provides the viewer with an unlimited number of photographic stills that freeze, capture, and present the scenes of his landscape of leisure.

DeBiasio, Scherrer, Zanoni: An Urban Ensemble on the Limmat River (1982-1984)

This project was designed to initiate a discussion with the authorities of the city of Zurich about developing the qualities of an urban environment located on

Fig. 18: Rem Koolhaas, Project for the Parc de la Villette, Paris, 1972-1973. View of the 1:200 scale site model.

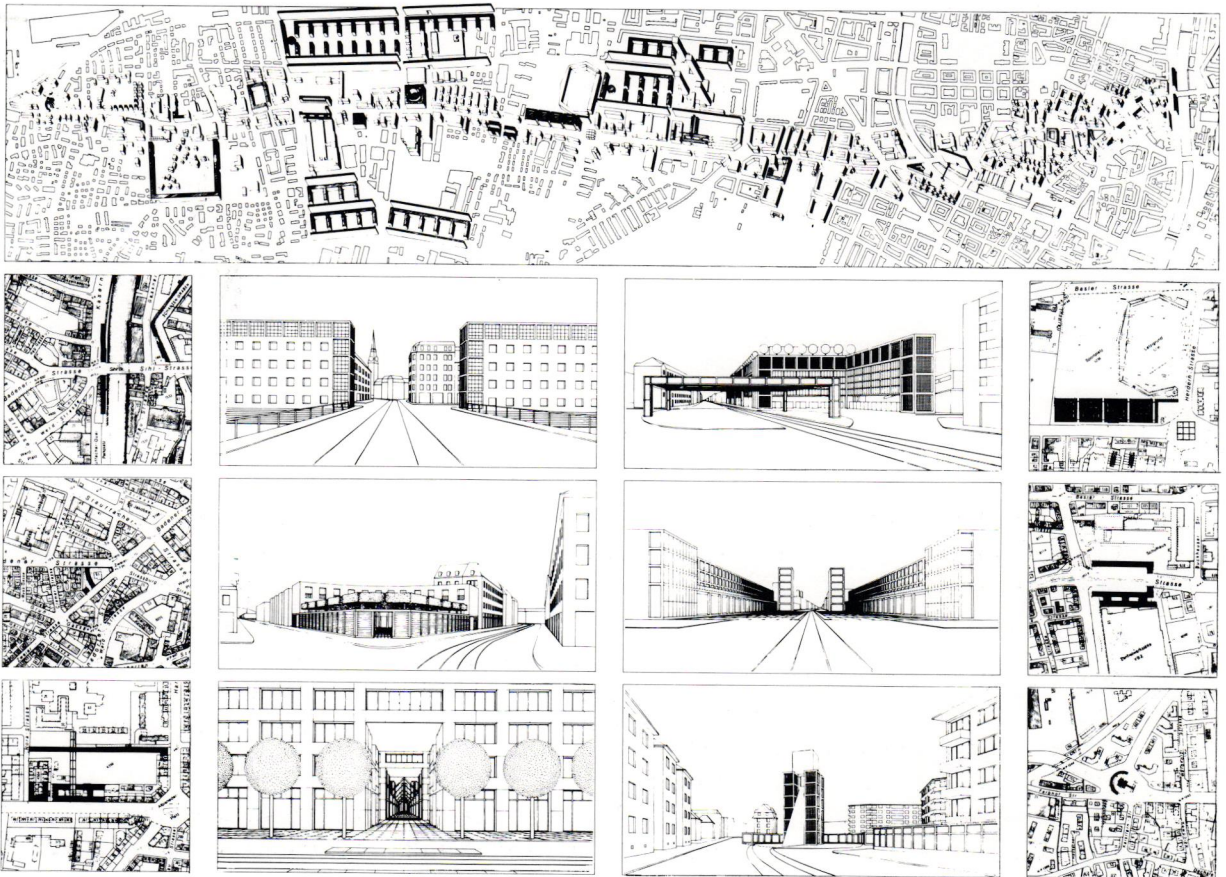
Fig. 19: World's Fair, New York, 1939.

Fig. 20: Rem Koolhaas, Project for the Parc de la Villette, Paris, 1972-1973. Sections showing different plantings and their anticipated growth rates.

Fig. 21: Giovanni Lippi, Villa d'Este Gardens, Tivoli, 1550. 18th century engraving.

Fig. 22: De Biasio, Scherrer, and Zanoni, Urban Ensemble of the Limmat River, 1982-1984, Aerial perspective.

Fig. 23: De Biasio, Scherrer, Zanoni, Urban Ensemble on the Limmat River. Site plan.



24

the east bank of the Limmat River, north of the main railway station in Zurich. The site is both urbanistically and architecturally neglected. A new suburban commuter line, which would replace the existing railway line, is currently under construction and will make this riverside site available for other uses. Our proposal involves the establishment of a program, the development of an urban design concept incorporating the nearby park and the river, and the formation of an idea for a contemporary urban style of life.

Although the riverbank itself is a stable element of the site, the relationship between the water and the built elements was conceived of and developed as a variable. Altering the relationship between the terrain and the architecture implied a change both in the use and the significance of the site. As the river has lost its former importance as a source of industrial power and transportation, this proposal transforms the character of the river space from an industrial area to a residential quarter.

The project calls for over 300 apartment units, with public and private services as well as commercial and office functions. The scale of the site and its steep slope led to the typological choice of the bar and the tower for the volumetric configuration of the project (fig. 22). Each unit faces the river. The residential

bars and towers are tied into the existing system of tall buildings in this area of the city. An existing 19th century park is extended over and onto the roof terrace of the central residential bar. A promenade leads down through the circulation towers to a middle deck level with social and commercial activities, and then down again to a riverside walk (fig. 23).

This project demonstrates the possibility of creating new space for urban housing without encroaching upon existing structures. Portions of the current cityscape can be linked in a coherent, discernable entity of fragments. Changing the character of the riverbank created the opportunity for these projected functions, which in turn may act as a catalyst to generate further interventions. A comprehensive urban design and architectural program can insure that this concept becomes a positive, activating element for the city of Zurich.⁴⁵

DeBiasio, Scherrer, Zanoni: An Urban Design Project for Badenerstrasse (1983-1984)

The Badenerstrasse is an old and important street that until the 19th century was the main connection between Zurich's medieval and baroque cities and the countryside of the Limmat river valley to the west. Today, the formal structure of Badenerstrasse consists of a series of heterogeneous elements. The

current urban and spatial quality of this street does not match its significance as a spine that connects downtown Zurich with one of the two most important new city centers developed in the 1950s.

Commissioned by the City of Zurich, we investigated and developed an architectural urban design concept to improve the existing conditions of the street. The design is less an architectural project in the narrowest sense than it is a *Stadtgestaltung*—a conceptual sketch of a city-idea including typological, morphological, and programmatic considerations that are intended to contribute to the modification of this area of the city.

Our study deals with three aspects of the character of the city: the street as a sequence of public spaces (the line), problematic sites along the street (the points), and fields of city fabric that need formal resolution (the planes). The three sections with their distinctive identities correspond roughly with the chronological development of the street (fig. 24).

Section A is characterized by the predominance of 19th century perimeter blocks and clearly defined street spaces. Here, our strategy includes the maintenance and improvement of the street edge, the insertion of elements to mediate between conflicting geometries, and the addition of open spaces where the axis of Badenerstrasse is significantly diverted.

Section B is characterized by a juxtaposition of different 20th century architectural pieces with little urbanistic value or cohesion. Here our aim is the connection of the fragments and the addition of significant buildings, in an attempt to develop a depth of field behind the street (much in the manner of the Strada Nuova in Genoa). This second section of the street, which is wider than the previous section, becomes a tree-lined boulevard which ties together the condensed aggregation of fragments.

Section C consists of such disparate elements as the nucleus of an old village and more recent 19th and

20th century residential extensions (*Siedlungen*) of Zurich. Here the media of transformation is both the repetition and the completion of existing pieces and the insertion of a large courtyard that frames the historical village and maintains its built memory and integrity, while at the same time exposing the current state of urban development in the surrounding context.

The beginning of Badenerstrasse, the centerpoint, and the end as well as the transitions from one section of the street to another are marked by places of special significance. The diverse urban developments along the length of the Badenerstrasse have been transformed into a sequence that presents a walk through the history of the city.

Living and working in a country as densely inhabited and multilingual as Switzerland has provoked a design research that is, regardless of scale or context, always concerned with issues of urbanity.

While the city is a distinct place, urbanity is a concept of the relationships that exist in, but are not limited to, cities. The relationships that constitute urbanity include those between primary elements and fabric, between public spaces and buildings, and between the memory and meaning of a certain physical density of activity.

As ideas about urbanity are perpetually evolving (like the cities which are formed by them), it is impossible to apply a specific formula in order to produce urbanity. Rather, as urban attitudes are inherent in every architectural design, the architect must redefine and reinvent urbanity in every project.

Fig. 24: De Biasio, Scherrer, and Zanoni, Urban Design Project for Badenerstrasse, Zurich, 1983-1984. Site axonometric, and plans and perspectives of schematic design solutions for critical locations along the street.

The precondition for dealing with the city is a differentiated critical understanding of its Gestalt. Architects and urban designers may develop the identity of the contemporary city by manipulating its structural texture to integrate the historical substance into contemporary form. The existing qualities of a proposed site may become ready-mades that can be used in designing a new intervention in the cityscape. An intervention can then be defined as an attitude or strategy that utilizes the insertion of architectural elements so as to affect or modify the character and form of the content.

Whenever interventions take place, the existing reality continues its life beneath the new reality. In this way, the city can be seen as an architecture whose built results include the meaning and the historical relevance of its present. With the formulation of new ideas the historical topography of the city is extended into a vision of the future. The selective juxtaposition of historical and contemporary urban design elements aims for the mutual enhancement of their respective qualities. A design concept relevant to both the present and to the future of the city can be generated by architectonic urban design studies that question the quality and meaning of type, form, and program in the public realm.

As any city consists of many fragments, the unity of the whole is no longer our primary topic. Against the background of the fragmentation of the contemporary city we focus on the activity and identity of single places and the way in which they can be added together to formulate a notion of urbanity. The connection and articulation of heterogeneous parts in the formulation of larger ensembles is an attempt to create contemporary identities and redefine the character of these urban places. If the term scenario can be understood as the assemblage of solitary and serial visions into an architectural formulation that will produce and support the desired program and projections of use, then our intention is to create appropriate scenarios for urban life in the late 20th century.

"An urban doctrine . . . we don't have. Good and evil in history were not able to be disentangled. But to the obstinate questioner we respond: certainly the village could be overlooked; it was home. The cities are jungles and full of lostness. Nevertheless, we cannot hide that we love the city and its grand style, its restlessness, its intrigue, its oscillation, its power of collectivizing, its solitude, its night which can be day, its turbulence, its supreme Talmi-life. We do not want to go back. Insofar, we are thus prejudiced."⁴⁶

Acknowledgements

I owe many thanks to Lauren S. Kogod, with whom I discussed and corrected the manuscript during the fall of 1984 in Zurich, and who helped make the English manuscript into an intelligible text.

Notes

1. Jurgen Habermas, "Modernity—An Incomplete Project," *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, Hal Foster, ed., Port Townsend, Washington, 1983.
2. The author, Norbert DeBiasio, and Markus Scherrer are the three principals of the Atelier Für Stadt Architektur (A.S.A.), a small firm practicing in Zurich. The thoughts and associations made in this article reflect our current perspective in design and can be considered a first design theory.
3. Julius Posener, "Vorlesungen zur Geschichte der neuen Architektur," *Arch +*, No. 48, 1979, p. 44.
4. See *Le Corbusier et Pierre Jeanneret, Oeuvre Complete, 1910-29*, Zurich, 1964, (hereafter *LC & PJ, 1910-29*).
5. *LC & PJ, 1920-29*, pp. 32-39, 109-121.
6. See the extensive comparisons of different apartment plans of Le Corbusier by Christian Sumi in the catalogue of the 1980 exhibit in Lugano, "La Ricerca Paziente," pp. 63-88.
7. See Giuliano Gresleri, "L'Esprit Nouveau, Le Corbusier: Costruzione e Ricostruzione di un Prototipo dell'Architettura Moderna," Milano, 1979.

8. See the comprehensive article on the development of Le Corbusier's interiors by Arthur Ruegg in "La Ricerca Paziente," pp. 151-167.
9. See Stanislaus von Moos's epilogue to the German edition of Sigfried Giedion's "Mechanization Takes Command," Frankfurt a/M 1982, pp. 779-816.
10. *LC & PJ, 1910-29*, p. 100.
11. *LC & PJ, 1910-29*, p. 40.
12. For a critical contemporary classification of Garnier's work compare Franziska Bollery, "Arbeit, Industrie und Stadt—Garnier's Cité Industrielle" in *Avant Garde und Industrie*, 1983.
13. *LC & PJ, 1910-29*, p. 12.
14. From Le Corbusier, *Ausblick auf eine Architektur*, Berlin, 1963, p. 54, the German edition of *Vers une Architecture*, Paris, 1922.
15. *LC & PJ, 1910-29*, pp. 118-119, first published in *L'Intransigeant*, Paris, May 1929.
16. From *Vers une Architecture*, p. 20.
17. For a far-reaching excursus into the formation of Le Corbusier's urbanistic thought, see Pier Giorgio Gerosa, *Le Corbusier—Urbanisme et Mobilité*, Basle, 1978; and Martin Steinmann, *CIAM—Dokumente 1928-1939*, Basle, 1979.
18. Compare El Lissitzky, *Russland: Architektur für eine Weltrevolution*, Berlin, 1965.
19. Franziska Bollerey offers an excellent analysis in *Architekturkonzeption der utopischen Sozialisten*, Munich, 1977.
20. Compare Dolores Hayden, *Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism, 1790-1975*, Cambridge, MA, 1976.
21. A comprehensive history of this period of Russian architecture is provided in Selim O. Chan-Magomedow, *Pioniere der Sowjetischen Architektur*, Dresden, 1983. Development of housing types, pp. 342-399.
22. From Adolf Max Vogt, *Russische und Französische Revolutionsarchitektur: 1917/1789*, Cologne, 1974, p. 38.
23. Manfredo Tafuri, "The Adventures of the Object: The Architecture and Designs of Vittorio Gregotti," catalogue for the exhibition of the Calabria University Project, Milan, 1979.
24. Emilio Battisti, "Architecture as a Problem," catalogue for the exhibition of the Calabria University Project, Milan, 1979.
25. Battisti, "Architecture as a Problem."
26. Manfredo Tafuri, "The Adventures of the Object: The Architecture and Designs of Vittorio Gregotti," catalogue for the exhibition of the Calabria University Project, Milan, 1979.
27. Antoine Stinco, "Notes Préliminaires à la Lecture de l'Université de Calabre," in 'Techniques & Architecture,' *Architecture et Site*, No. 339, Paris, Decembre 1981.
28. Manfredo Tafuri, "The Adventures of the Object: The Architecture and Designs of Vittorio Gregotti," catalogue for the exhibition of the Calabria University Project, Milan, 1979.
29. Vittorio Gregotti, *Il Territorio dell'Architettura*, Milan, 1966.
30. Vittorio Gregotti, *Casabella* No. 421, 1977.
31. Manfredo Tafuri, "The Adventures of the Object: The Architecture and Designs of Vittorio Gregotti," catalogue for the exhibition of the Calabria University Project, Milan, 1979.
32. Vittorio Gregotti, "Modification," in *Casabella*, No. 498/499, 1984.
33. Tafuri, "The Adventures of the Object."
34. Tafuri, "The Adventures of the Object."
35. Rem Koolhaas, "Office for Metropolitan Architecture," from *Express Extra*, New York, 1982.
36. Stanislaus von Moos, "Rotterdam ladt Leonidow ein—Zu neueren Arbeiten des Office for Metropolitan Architecture," in *Archithese*, pp. 5-81.
37. From an interview with Rem Koolhaas by the author, London, June 1983.
38. Interview with Koolhaas.
39. The La Villette scheme was designed by Rem Koolhaas with E. Zenghelis, S. de Martino, A. Wall. K. Christiaanse, R. Steiner, and J. Voorberg.
40. From O.M.A.'s report to the second stage of the Parc de La Vilette Competition, London and Rotterdam, 1983.
41. O.M.A.'s report, 1983.
42. Interview with Koolhaas.
43. O.M.A.'s report, 1983.
44. O.M.A.'s report, 1983.
45. An Urban Ensemble on the Limmat River was the winning entry from Switzerland in the International UNESCO competition "Tomorrow's Habitat."
46. Translated from Silvano Custozza and Pasquale Alferj, "Intercity -elf historische Stationen des Abenteuers Stadt," *Freibeuter*, Vol. 3, Berlin, 1980, p.64.

The Editors
The Harvard Architecture Review
48 Quincy Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear Editors:

Let me first stipulate that I don't really perceive how your topic, *the use of precedent and the role of invention in architecture today*, can very well lead to profitable dispute.

I can never begin to understand how it is possible to attack or to question the use of precedent. Indeed, I am not able to comprehend how anyone can begin to *act* (let alone to *think*) without resorting to precedent. For, at the most banal level, a kiss may be instinctual, and a handshake remains the product of convention, of habit, or of tradition; and in my reading, all of these words and whatever they may signify are related—loosely no doubt—to the notions of paradigm, of model, and hence, of precedent.

So much is my initiatory bias which I will now expand upon via the ancient strategy of a series of rhetorical questions:

1. Just how is it possible to conceive of any society, any civilization, or any culture without the provision of precedent?
2. Are not language and mathematical signs the evidence of convenient fables and hence the advertisement of prevailing precedent?
3. Further, in the romantic predicament of interminable novelty, surely one must be at a loss to discover how any discourse (other than a grunt) is to be conducted?
4. Is not precedent, and are not its connotations, the primary cement of society? Is not their recognition the ultimate guarantee of legitimate government, legal freedom, decent prosperity, and polite intercourse?

As painfully obvious and horribly banal as these implicit propositions are, I assume that they belong to the platitudes that any one operating in a *reasonably* structured society (neither savage nor subjected to overheated revolutionary excitement) will be compelled to observe. I do not assume—I *cannot*—that these platitudes are available to the average architecture student. For he or she has been educated in a much more expansive milieu, with boundaries and limitations fragile to say the least.

In the days when it was understood that all art is a matter of imitation, whether of external reality or of some more metaphysical abstraction, the role of precedent was scarcely to be disputed; and, needless to say, Aristotle produces the argument very succinctly.

The instinct of imitation is implanted in man from childhood, one difference between him and other animals being that he is the most imitative of living creatures and through imitation learns his earliest lessons; and no less universal is the pleasure felt in things imitated.

So, after this, now to procure another quote related to the doctrine of mimesis. It is from Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality* and it is here condensed.

*Behold the child among his new born blisses,
A four year's darling of a pigmy size!
See at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment of his dream of human life,
Shap'd by himself with newly-learned art;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside
And with new joy and pride
This little Actor cons another part,
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.*

But if Wordsworth expands upon Aristotle and begins to relate mimesis to infant worship (the child is the father to the man) one must turn to Walter Gropius to receive the full, the kindergarten drift of this diversion. Inadvertently, Wordsworth describes the architecture student as one knows this creature to be: but the impulsive Walter goes on to specify a *beau ideal* for the species.

Creativeness in the growing child must be awakened through actual working with all kinds of materials in conjunction with training in free design. . . . But this is important: no copying, no elimination of the urge to play, i.e., no artistic tutelage!

Such is to provide pointers to a condensed history of the doctrine of mimesis and its decline; and such is also to bring into prominence your business about the use of precedent. For with the best will in the world, it is not extremely easy to understand the Gropius distinction between “copying” and the “urge to play”: Yer gotta play but yer not gotta copy and that’s what you guys have gotta do. But could there be any dictate more perverse and inhibiting?

Is it not evident that any form of play is inherently “copying”—and is related to fantasies of war or fantasies of domesticity? And, without these models either of battle or building, surely it is extremely hard to imagine how any game from chess to architecture could very well survive. No, all play is essentially the celebration of precedent.

Now, what about the second part of your topic: *the role of invention in architecture today?*

Well, one thinks about the lawyer with a whole library bound in blue morocco behind him. This is the inventory of cases bearing upon the specific case that he is required to judge. So simply to pronounce a legal innovation, to discriminate the new, our jurist is obliged to consult the old and the existing; and it is only by reference to these that genuine innovation can be proclaimed. For are not precedent and invention the opposite sides of the same coin? *I think a better topic might have been: How does the new invade the old and how does the old invade the new?*

Sincerely,
Colin Rowe

Credits

AMBASZ

Courtesy of the Author.

DUANY

Frontespiece. *Casabella 217* (1957).

Figures. Courtesy of the Author.

HANCOCK

Figs. 1, 2. Hege and Rodenwaldt, *Die Akropolis*. (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1930).

Figs. 3, 4, 9–11, 13. Courtesy of the Author.

Fig. 5. Y Christ, *Claude Nicolas Ledoux*. (Paris: Minotaur, 1961).

Fig. 6. S. Bostwick.

Fig. 7. K. Frampton et al., *Five Architects*. (New York: Oxford, 1975).

Fig. 8. *Architectural Review* (April, 1979).

Fig. 12. *Journal of Architectural Education*, Volume 35, Number 2 (Winter, 1982).

Fig. 14. D. Ballweg.

Fig. 15. Ernest Pickering, *Architectural Design* (New York: Wiley, 1941).

Fig. 16. G. Gaska.

Fig. 17. J. Kalsbeek.

HINSON

Fig. 1. Juan Gris. Columbus Museum of Arts, Ohio.

Fig. 2. Juan Gris. Private collection, Paris.

Fig. 3. Marcel Duchamp. Photograph, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Fig. 4. Marcel Duchamp. Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven.

Figs 5–8. John Hejduk, *Vier Entwurf*. (Zurich; 1983).

Figs. 9–15. Daniel Libeskind, *Chamber Works: Architectural Meditations on Themes from Heraclitus*. (London; 1983).

Fig. 16. Juan Gris. Alex Hillman Family Foundation.

LIPSTADT

Figs. 1, 2, 4–7, 10, 11. *Architectural Record*.

Figs. 3, 8, 9. Stern, Gilmartin and Massengale, *New York 1900 Metropolitan Architecture and Urbanism 1890–1915* (New York: Rizzoli, 1983).

Fig. 12. Jordy and Coe, Editors, *American Architecture and Other Writings Montgomery Schuyler, Volume 1* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1967).

LIPSTADT APPENDIX

All figures from *Architectural Record* except as follows:

The Chicago Board of Trade: David Lowe, *Lost Chicago* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978).

The Dorilton and The House of Senator Clark: *New York 1900*.

ARCHITECTURAL ABERRATIONS

The Hale and The Hearst: *Architectural Record*.

LONGSTRETH

Figs. 1–8, 11–18, 20. Courtesy of the J. C. Nichols Company.

Fig. 9. *Western Architect* (October, 1917).

Fig. 10. *Architect and Engineer* (January, 1930).

Figs. 19, 21. Courtesy of the Author.

ZANONI

Figs. 1, 18, 20. Hans Werleman, Hectic Pictures, Rotterdam.

Fig. 2, 4–6. Le Corbusier, *Oeuvres Completes* (Zurich: Les Editions d'Architecture, 1974).

Fig. 3. Roger Sherwood, *Modern Housing Prototypes* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).

Figs. 7–10. Barbara Kreis, "The Idea of Dom-Kommuna and the Dilemma of the Soviet Avant-Garde," *Oppositions 21* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1980).

Fig. 11. Adolf Max Vogt, *Russische und Französische Revolutionsarchitektur—1917/1789* (Cologne: 1974).

Figs. 12–16. Manfredo Tafuri, *Vittorio Gregotti—Progetti e Architettura* (Milano: Electa Editions, 1982).

Fig. 17. Rem Koolhaas.

Fig. 19. Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

Fig. 21. Leonardo Benevolo, *The Architecture of the Renaissance Volume 1* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1978).