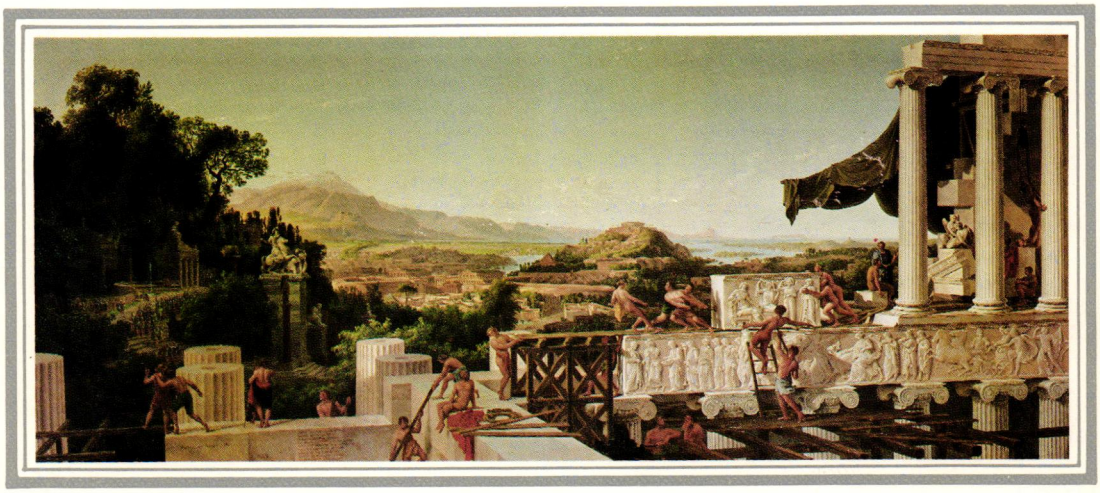
MODULUS 16

The University of Virginia Architectural Review



We have an urbanism still.

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Cover: Blick in Griechenlands Blüte *(View of Greece in Its Flowering), painting copied after Schinkel's original of 1824-25.*

In memory of
Mr. Benjamin C. Howland, Jr.
Professor of Landscape Architecture, 1975-83
The University of Virginia School of Architecture

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Introduction

Robert Claiborne

Our culture is based on the acknowledgement of the sovereign greatness of classical antiquity. We have taken our way of thinking and feeling from the Romans. From the Romans we have our social perceptions and the discipline of the soul.
Adolf Loos, "Meine Bauschule," 1913.

The history of Western culture and civilization is, ultimately, a history of the city. It is the history of an idea first discovered by the Greeks, glorified in the cities of the Romans, transmitted throughout Europe, and extended to the New World. In the city were concentrated the political, religious, economic, and cultural activities which directly affected the lives of all. Our values, our traditions, our entire way of thinking have passed down through a magnificent history that began in earnest with Graeco-Roman civilization. The cumulative results of that urban tradition are astounding.

What makes a city good? The ancient Greeks applied a great deal of intellectual energy to that question, and some of their clearest insights into it emerged through their basic political institution, the *polis*. The political activities of the Greek state made citizenship a distinctive and precious condition of life. Active participation in the civic life was both the highest honor and the most serious responsibility. As the Greek historian Thucydides credited Pericles with saying of Athens, "We alone regard a man who takes no interest in public affairs, not as harmless, but as a useless character." The *polis* compelled men to use their talents to promote an enduring good.

Based on this classical legacy, Carroll W. Westfall has offered a definition of the city as a place that not only assures the sustenance of life, but also "contains the institutions required to allow citizens to aspire to the good life, . . . the life of moral excellence." Civic institutions, the enduring forms given to the principled activities of a group of people, embody the highest values of the citizens and, therefore, of the culture. The political character of the citizens is revealed by the city's hierarchy of institutional arrangements and the unique architectural character of the city. Wolfgang Braunfels has written, "Just as the nature of the ideal determines the character of the institution, so does the ideal desire to express itself in terms of architectural form." And, of course, architecture, in combination with landscape, is the organizing element which establishes the character of the urban setting.

The ancient Greeks knew these things; the city centered on the agora and dominated by the Acropolis attests to that. The Romans learned from the Greeks, developing the political system that transformed political purpose into the making of things worthy of public man—cities, governments, laws, fora, temples, roads, aqueducts, and bridges. The Roman Empire not only developed models against which succeeding cultures gauged their achievements; it also distributed similar versions of those models throughout the world.

These observations lead ultimately to America and to Thomas Jefferson—our most direct pathfinder between *then* and *now*. In proposing architectural models worthy of and able to represent the new American Republic, Jefferson drew directly from the Romans. To him the Roman Republic was the most convincing and practical embodiment of the Greek political ideal. Jefferson's intense commitment to the symbolic power of classical architectural models—redefined to accommodate and enhance the political life of the citizens of the new republic as envisioned in the American Constitution—was an impressive reaffirmation of the Western political tradition. That tradition also maintains our cities as living embodiments of our true values, constantly remembering, preserving, renewing.

Our ideals determine our institutions and the buildings that serve them; our cities express our composite political and moral character. In our cities, we daily live out our best attempts to attain the tenets of the political ideal. As we continue to build in our cities, may we remember the cultural traits which guided men who built cities before us—order, balance, and faith in the intellectual capacity of man.

In Search of an American Urban Order, Part I: The Nagasaki Syndrome

Jaquelin T. Robertson

Introduction: The Unthinkable

One of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds. Much of the damage inflicted on land is quite invisible to laymen. An ecologist must either harden his shell and make believe that the consequences of science are none of his business, or he must be the doctor who sees the marks of death in a community that believes itself well and does not want to be told otherwise.
Aldo Leopold[1]

It is not the Bomb but Mexico City, the terror of a known world, of here and now. Not the obliteration of Nagasaki, but the slow cancer of everyday construction; the cities that we are building, not those that we have destroyed. It is the planned city of man.

Ironic, isn't it, that so many architects march against the Bomb? We circulate appeals and hold dinners, and make stylish posters of mushroom clouds hanging over precious buildings. We know a threat when we see one—our ultimate urban renewal under some white hot sun. While outside the window of one's car . . .

Funny, one doesn't see too many architects' appeals or posters about Mexico City; no marches, no rallies for that flower city of the New World, for thirty million little brown farmers settling into the delights of modern urbanism, getting their first taste of BIG CITY, our century's most lasting addiction: TV and open sewers; the haze of lung-searing smog; strangled traffic in an endless sea of concrete; tin huts and glass towers; automobile graveyards and shopping plazas; signs, dying trees, sinking buildings.

But how would you show that endless gray labyrinth of new decay on a poster? What would the poster say? "Architects for Social Responsibility; Visit Mexico City, Man's Biggest Planned . . ." What would the precious buildings look like against *that* background? Could you make a figure-ground drawing of Mexico City? A sketch? An ideogram? Really any drawing at all?

In *Thinking About the Unthinkable* Herman Kahn focused intellectual attention on the real possibility of global disaster as well as on alternative scenarios for "the day after."[2] Like Rachel Carson and Jonathan Schell, Kahn not only opened our eyes to a whole new set of dismal dimensions, he also attempted to look beyond the horror in a rational way and develop strategies for postatomic survival in an effort to combat thermonuclear-induced paralysis, Nagasaki nihilism. Whether or not his aggressive outlooks and suggestions were, or are, correct is beside the point; they offered an alternative. He played on man's nature, his curiosity and his arrogance, leading us to open the forbidden door, to look *through* the eye of the storm, even one that seemed endless or final.[3]

For those concerned with urbanism, Kahn's intention might be helpful, even necessary. His catchy title has always held for me an ironic and guilt-inducing double meaning, one suggesting alternatives to another kind of planned destruction as real, if not as final or as apocalyptic, as the Bomb; a destruction dangerously connected to my chosen profession. My "unthinkable" thoughts have increasingly had to do with the realities of modern development; of an expanding, virtually uncontrolled, unordered, oblivious, and clearly aberrant urbanism—the mindless and savage pattern of building that modern man has chosen for himself and for the housing of his families, his institutions, and his culture. This pattern of growth—accelerated by the imperatives of mounting population pressure, fractured by shifting ideological and political agendas and economic instability, goaded on by a spreading and insatiable universal commercialism, economically determinant—is the central physical reality of our lives. We have created a setting massive in cost and implication which touches everything, and yet is devoid of legibility or any significant trace of humanistic or ethical value. Modern urbanism is a well-entrenched process run amok, the most telling Western legacy in the latter half of the "American

1 (frontispiece) Aerial view of Houston, Texas.

Century."

Somehow our culture—indeed, all cultures exposed to the Western industrial-commercial virus—has apparently lost not just a comprehensible language of city building, but any recognition of the necessity of *having* such a language. Michel Foucault, in the introduction to *Les Mots et les Choses*, develops the theme of such a loss of language. As an urbanist I recoil in recognition of the sickness he describes:
"It appears that certain aphasiacs, when shown various differently coloured skeins of wool on a table top, are consistently unable to arrange them into any coherent pattern; as though that simple rectangle were unable to serve in their case as a homogeneous and neutral space in which things could be placed so as to display at the same time the continuous order of their identities or differences as well as the semantic field of their denomination. Within this simple space in which things are normally arranged and given names, the aphasiac will create a multiplicity of tiny, fragmented regions in which nameless resemblances agglutinate things into unconnected islets. . . . But no sooner have they been adumbrated than all these groupings dissolve again, for the field of identity that sustains them, however limited it may be, is still too wide not to be unstable; and so the sick mind continues to infinity, creating groups then dispersing them again, heaping up diverse similarities, destroying those that seem clearest, splitting up things that are identical, superimposing different criteria, frenziedly beginning all over again, becoming more and more disturbed, and teetering finally on the brink of anxiety."[4]

Without digressing into linguistic or behavioral analogies, I would only suggest that since architecture is made up of a number of long-established, if continually changing languages, each with its own rudimentary laws of form and structure, then urban design, which is the aggregation of various specific architectures, is a kind of generalized, even crude, metalanguage. That is, *the city is a language of languages*, also with its own rules; and it is this larger way of speaking which for a variety of reasons, some of them quite baffling, has been lost or broken. Today's practitioners are indeed aphasiacs who share most of the characteristics adumbrated by Foucault.

In my view, modern urbanism is, with few exceptions, a malignancy which now both infects the built and threatens the unbuilt areas of our planet. It is a systemic disorder that is both monstrous and growing. And while it may not kill us directly, it could condemn all of us to an endless Dantean purgatory, a world of Mexico Cities and of environments so basically nasty, intractable, and hope-sapping as to trigger that more terminal holocaust that Kahn postulated.

This all sounds theatrical and exaggerated; doomsday stuff. But is it really? I think not. The strong possibility is there, not just of military miscalculation, but of a planned and continued civilian course of action which, carried to its logical conclusion, could reintroduce many of us to the charms of the Stone Age without recourse to the Bomb at all. We have begun to seriously violate, for the first time in recorded history, a whole series of ecological laws which hold our wondrous, complex, and fragile system together. From Cairo, to Caracas, to Cleveland, a case can be made that we are hard at work making a shambles of our planet, savaging our cities, oceans, and countryside at a terrific clip. And while this process is confused and complex, it is nonetheless officially sanctioned.

There have been strong, even eloquent objections to this apparent mindlessness. Many of the most responsible, informed, mature, and sensitive "world citizens" have continued over the years to sound the alarm; have gathered in symposia, released world charters and appeals to international bodies, given speeches, written articles, even proselytized on TV. But alas! The same process continues almost unabated. Meanwhile, we (and our environment) are losing a great battle against ourselves partly because we seem incapable of planning or controlling growth. We sense that

the catastrophe does not have to happen, that there are other courses of action than the ones we know to be absurd, but that it *is* happening; that we are locking ourselves into a very grim future because we are too greedy and lazy to think ahead.

Even if we admit that architects and planners probably will not (and cannot) have a direct role in addressing the serious and pressing problems of hunger, of population or arms control, of economic and political stabilization, we should do more than fume righteously and ineffectively on the sidelines. It would seem more useful for us to focus on those issues, equally global in their impact, which we are supposedly trained to care and know something about—the rational shaping of physical development. Rather than relying simply on the resolving power of the single building, architects should turn their attention to designing cities. With too few exceptions, leading architects and planners have not been able to concentrate effectively, or for any length of time, on the problems of our Mexico Cities, or even of our Houstons. As professionals trained in the making of places to live, we bear a responsibility to at least try to make them healthy and beautiful—not just walk away or make more money by enlarging aberrant growth.

The United States—enormously rich, blessed with abundant natural and human resources, a small population, a large and beautiful continent, a relatively sane and responsive political system, and a strong economy—is the most likely place to attempt a more rational, practical, just, and elegant building and development strategy. We can plan for tomorrow and even for the day after. We can avoid befouling our land and our cities and possibly find in the process a model of urbanism as optimistic, meaningful, appealing, and enlightened as the political model left by our eighteenth-century leaders. American democracy, the most revolutionary and important social experiment of modern times, has yet to construct an appropriate modern paradigm of city and country consonant either with its basic value system or the glory of its natural setting. Great cities *are* part of our destiny. And indeed there have been some impressive beginnings. We have made significant and fine places—our tree-lined Main Streets and village greens; our boulevards, our Monument and Commonwealth Avenues; our city parks in the center of New York or on the Chicago lakefront; Boston's Back Bay, Edgartown, Savannah, Charleston, Santa Barbara; our great national parks; the Golden Gate and Hoover Dam; the Battery on the tip of Manhattan Island. These were places made by men with a vision of the city who planned for the future and built with quality. Yet for a variety of reasons, at the very moment of our greatest material strength and potential we have become diverted to other ends and are producing an increasingly unpleasant, ersatz physical world which is neither in keeping with our highest ideals nor with our real needs. In my own view most of what we have been building is junk. Not junk because its general quality is so low—though it is—but because it is shabby stuff put down in a shabby way, in a pattern defined mainly by greed, public inattention, and convenience.

Immediate objections will be made to this argument. The names of important architects and fine buildings will be brought forward, technical achievements stressed, our great public works listed. And yet there are far too few examples today of modern (i.e., post-World War II) American cities, or towns, or even precincts in which we find any real satisfaction, any convictions other than commercial ones. We not only have very few new places which are beautiful and calming, we have no consensus on what and how to plan and build anywhere; no *idea system* other than the market with which to evaluate success; no long-term cost/benefit analysis; no ends which are not purely pragmatic and short-lived. We have, in fact, few CITIES—only great sprawling built-up places filled with junk and junk toys, our "Nagasaki." My growing frustration with this desperate situation, particularly as I have attempted to deal with it professionally, comes out in an earlier piece:

"Since 1945 we've built a second America—more than half

again as much as everything built up to that date—perhaps the greatest building effort in history. Yet even the staunchest advocate of our peculiar, pluralistic, quasi-capitalistic consumer democracy cannot be happy with the results; neither with the larger patterns of order (or rather disorder) nor with the amenity of specific (generic) places. The only things we seem to be proud of or interested in are the individual objects. These we champion."[5]

During this time of great building activity we seem to have given up a vision of the city as an uplifting order of the whole, a better setting for better lives in which each part plays a role and has its place and purpose. We have indeed given up a language of the city which we believe in; and we build to try to forget this fact. Roads and buildings, for example, instead of being seen as a city's basic skeleton and building blocks are conceived and designed by specialists as ends in themselves—isolated systems and objects which maximize each user's, each owner's, and each designer's private self-interest. The social contract between buildings has been lost, landscape architecture and civic art abandoned. The street has become the strip; the square, the parking lot; urban design little more than the *ad hoc* manipulation of real estate development. Our cities are thus little more than a display of expensive (and cheap) spare parts.

No matter what rationalizations or seductive interpretations are made in defense of this process—we still feel conned, cheapened. When we drive through the countryside and see an attractive piece of land about to be developed, we experience a great sense of *angst*, of loss, not because there is not lots of attractive land left in this country—there is—but *because we have absolutely no confidence in our own ability not to mess things up.* The confirming evidence lies all around. It is the ubiquitous setting of our lives. We do not believe in or like very much what our culture builds (and to offset this real disappointment with the surroundings we can only lionize individual buildings and their creators). We do not believe in its "order of things."

In the face of such a bleak situation, the central task for all who plan, design, build, preserve, maintain, restore, and criticize our physical world is to try to find, together, some viable idea system with respect to city building which is tied realistically to the American setting and experience, but which transforms and transcends these. A formulation *different from the one we have* must be found, one which will deal with the contradictions of our recent and self-inflicted annihilation, which admits to the perplexing issue of heterogeneity, and which recognizes our various and changing subcultures and standards. This equation must be able to posit replicable American urban design devices, made up of some limited number of generic building types, or urban parts, which when aggregated will create a larger and more cohesive system than we now encounter on the road to the airport. That is, the standard pieces we employ in putting cities together must be conceived and fashioned so as to reinforce and "belong" with one another in a more convincing natural way, as in any crude system. What we need today is a reasonably simple language of city building that is free of malignancy, is easy to use, and has symbolic and ethical value. Fashioning such a language will require a major shift of emphasis for architects and planners; roles and egos will have to be redefined. Professional exchange will have to become more open, education more (not less) general, discourse more precise. I am recommending that professionals reexamine moral and natural philosophy—worldly and spiritual needs at both the pragmatic and the idealistic levels. In so doing, while postulating more cohesive and pleasant worlds, we will learn about and come to terms with the more unpleasant truths. We will also be at a point where we can embrace virtue and beauty without shame as values of central relevance to our present condition—as values which transcend cost/benefit ratios and in which everyone actually believes.

Like any serious responsibility, this kind of effort must be personal as well as communal. It must go on for years and be approached from many directions, both academic and

2 The Trappers' Return, *painting by George Caleb Bingham, 1851.*

professional. Basically, I am suggesting that we attempt to redefine ourselves as we did in the thirty years preceding the American Revolution, or even in the brave and frightening days of the New Deal. And unless we do this—actually begin fashioning an idea system about our cities and our countryside, imagining what they *might* be—we will never achieve anything other than more of today's random, ever-shifting, desperate manipulation; the mindless and commercial making do, the unthinkable road to Mexico City.

Such reformulations are based on both critical self-knowledge and an uplifting mythology. And these are to be found in our own history. As the country most committed to the future we are ironically now most in want of a sustaining and meaningful past; and we are finally old enough to have one. Our past can also be in our future.

2

The Psychic Setting of American Urbanism

The fundamental codes of a culture—those governing its language, its schemas of perception, its exchanges, its techniques, its values, the hierarchy of its practices—establish for every man, from the very first, the empirical orders with which he will be dealing and within which he will be at home.
Michel Foucault, "Les Mots et les Choses"[6]

To better understand the current setting of American urbanism, I have been increasingly drawn to two related recognitions. The first of these has to do with institutionalized impermanency, with the fact that our history has vacillated between periods of staying and periods of "moving on"; the second, with our contradictory perception of nature in the form of the American continent, which we view as both an antagonist and a kind of New Jerusalem, a mixed message which is by now well-coded in our cultural pathways. In some profound way our natural setting is still perceived as a gift, but also as a vast, even forbidding place beyond our understanding and love. In it we experience an unease, an elation, a sense of awe and fear. Longing and optimism vie in our sensibilities with alienation and a desire

to conquer, to subdue, to control—in the end even to eradicate nature itself, to pave it under.

Both of these recognitions concerning specific national idiosyncrasies are partly the result of our being still a very young country, still growing up, and of the fact that America is yet without significant urban history or any settled cultural pattern. After all, many of our cities are scarcely more than a hundred years old. It is understandable that we are not yet relaxed or "at home" in our new and vast continent. The fact that we are still "settling in" and still ambiguous about nature helps explain how we stand on, comprehend, and use our land; or, as I have tried to suggest, why we now savage that land *so carefully.*

Historically, American ideas about urbanism and the urban centers built here have been affected by successive periods of brief settlement and continuous movement—our mythic nomadic history, the winning of the continent. From 1607 to 1800, we remained on a narrow strip between the mountains and the sea after the long, exhausting voyage across the ocean. Literally, it was a time when we were making a new home in a new world. Our institutions as well as our town plans of this period were variations of European models, our culture in the New World the last flowering of the European Enlightenment. We were free *from* Europe but still *of* Europe, and more to the point, active on a magnificent piece of real estate suited to our aspirations and largely uninhibited by European socio-economic constraints. Houses in the wilderness could without embarrassment presume a kinship with classical antiquity or with a well-known historical vernacular; with notions of the Old World order. Provincial men saw themselves as free and as the logical descendants of ancient republics. This land was pictured as both a new Eden and an ancestral Arcadia—one which both challenged and enriched us. It was a land in which we created a new order out of the most sophisticated arguments for and against the old order, yet we judged our sophistication against the very standards of that old order. We were old young men, or young old men, or both.

Most of us who lived in these variants of European towns or houses adopted frontier versions of European lifestyles. It was the time when, ironically, we were closest to Europe in our ways, yet most revolutionary in our thought; when we created our political institutions and envisioned a democratic republic based on citizen-statesmen, citizen-soldiers, citizen-judge and jurors, citizen-professionals—upon the notion that all men share both public and private responsibilities. Our New England villages and tidewater plantations, our towns and cities—Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Williamsburg, Charleston, Savannah—were vernacular transformations of European models, very much our own. The public and intellectual concerns were of balance and structure, of rights and responsibilities, of quality and equality—all leavened by a healthy interest in survival against odds and in personal gain.

All this changed with the winning of the West, when we crossed the mountains and moved out onto the vast plains of the American hinterland. This exposure to the frontier was a brutal and brutalizing experience, and contrary to our romanticized histories of the period, it took a lot out of us. We lost our innocence, our sophistication, and much of our humanity. Conquering the frontier was an enormous effort, and meanwhile the bloodbath of the Civil War all but killed the legacy of Europe and the Enlightenment in America. Out on the great plains men and places of civility were few. Many of our best values expired on the prairie. Our institutions were extended and weakened in the experience. Towns were little more than way stations, nomadic camps on the road to somewhere else. The central drive of the nineteenth century, despite homesteading and mapping and platting, was one of "moving on," getting there, not staying there; a life in which traveling and the system of transportation became man's most important concerns. The trail and, later, the rail became the main ordering devices of what were essentially open-ended towns; east-west axes of the trip west,

loose collections of buildings around a movement system, impermanent places around permanent activities—the most important being the activity of motion.

Thus, while our concerns in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were primarily those of "settling in," of "arriving" and "staying," in the nineteenth century we were on the move again. It was definitely not a time of permanent place making. Decisions about cities and towns were not so important because one never really intended to stay there.

The century ended with the Industrial Revolution in high gear and with the predominantly English colonial culture of the East Coast completely transformed. We had in the process of taming our frontier become obsessed with size, quantity, the conquest of territory, the production of goods. We also became more alone and more lonely, more alienated from both cities and nature. We had too much land to come to terms with (or even comprehend), and too much private power was beginning to concentrate outside of the constraints of that public domain we had valued so much in the eighteenth century. The notion of citizen-generalist was replaced by specialized roles. There were new oppositions: farmers versus ranchers, workers versus robber barons, the rich versus the poor, cities versus the countryside.

Adams and Jefferson and Franklin were superseded in the public imagination as cultural icons by the Goulds and Astors and Vanderbilts. It was, all in all, a robust, vulgar age of exaggerated wealth and the new industrial poor, muckrakers and the beginnings of a growing and bleak cityscape. Village and town had become places of production and exploitation. Arcadia was tainted by machines and excessive greed, visions of rotten Europe from whence the original escape had been made. America had taken on a second character—the beginnings of modernism. Brawling and many-voiced, we were very strong, and much, much younger than a hundred years before. Amidst this squalor Teddy Roosevelt emerged to bring back some of the former high-minded sense of national purpose and aspiration. A man who literally went out from Harvard and New York and embraced the great Western landscape, who learned to love and revere the land and feel part of it himself, he created national parks and wrote about grizzly bears. He was both the sophisticate and the naturalist, soldier and scholar, family man and world leader. This was a promising kind of American who looked forward and back at the same time and who would have fared equally well at the Constitutional Convention or in Washington today. He was a leader who led, and who took us confidently back into the international world from whence we had come—but with a difference; we were a very different country.

It was during the latter half of the nineteenth century that the vision of growing urban blight brought to the forefront some of our most important urbanists—a small but enormously effective elite who wanted to build gardens and parks within our cities, to mix nature with buildings. The City Beautiful movement was indeed one of the high-water marks of nineteenth-century American culture. Another was the emergence of two interrelated movements in landscape painting—the Hudson River and the American Luminist schools. Strangely, between the landscape-oriented urbanists and the nature-obsessed painters the central issues of the American setting were given their clearest and most eloquent elaboration, and their poetry. But the dialogue was not sustained. By the end of the century the attention in painting had turned to Europe and to more abstract modernist technique, and that eerie vernacular power and insight into both nature and ourselves was gone. In architecture and town planning, however, the refinement and evolution of nineteenth-century themes continued up until World War II. Some of our finest moments came near the end of the period in the suburban developments of the 1920s and in the great parks and public works of the depression years. Indeed, American architecture seemed on the brink of recasting American urbanism just as the Second World War began. And after that came the two Nagasakis, the one in Japan that we inflicted on

our enemies and the one here at home that we inflicted on ourselves. It was during the latter, the greatest building boom in history, that almost everything of value was lost.

The two world wars and the intervening depression had given America a third character as a nation, a kind of extended adolescence, which came to an end in 1945 with our belated emergence as a world power. America had become, without knowing or really wanting it, the great world empire, replacing England and France and Germany. We were now cultural exporter to the world.

Urbanistically, attitudes about "settling in" and coming to grips with a given setting had been pushed aside in still another wave of "moving on." New throwaway towns emerged, this time without any limits—a new kind of endless city, organized essentially around transportation and the maximization of convenience. These sprang up everywhere. No longer bounded or controlled, this new city was running away from the smaller, more humane urban precincts of the prewar years, away from a time when people wanted to make monuments of dams and bridges as well as make cities permanent places of residence. We began creating new kinds of camps and many were forced to live in them. Mobile homes masqueraded as permanent houses while residential precincts looked more and more like trailer parks. In fact, the parking lot and the relentless commercial strip became our real and our intellectual setting. Beginning in the 1950s we built as if we were back on the frontier again—driving, rapacious, hard, eager for gain, gobbling up the land; our new heroes were the leading gobblers and their consultants and apprentices.

In this historic cycle we have finally come to the end of our three-century-long cross-country trek, and our concerns can rightfully turn now from the trip to the destination, to "being here" rather than "getting there." We are "there," finally, and we must try to make some sense and order of the place that is ours. We cannot continue to trash it as if we could move away tomorrow.

I believe it is this slow recognition of having to stay, of no longer having to move on, that will help change our thoughts about our land and its development and ultimate character. This will be a slow process (and indeed may never occur, given the aberrant addictions of junk culture), but there is at least a chance if other options are offered as alternatives to further exploitation and the celebration of only our baser tastes. In the future we will not have to try to solve all of our problems by dispersing. We can begin to try to make concentration and conservation, in the most profound sense, work. We will have a chance to get to know, to relax with, and to enjoy our continent. Maybe.

But what about that continent? How has it touched us, how do we see it "from sea to shining sea"? This leads directly to my second observation, about America's contradictory view of nature. And for my purposes, I turn to the canvas of nineteenth-century American landscape painting—at once the most disturbing, concentrated, and poetic glimpse into our national psyche. Luminist and Hudson River paintings have the power of revelation, especially when compared to their earlier European counterparts. They tell us a great deal about how we feel in the presence of our continent, a feeling which stands behind much of what we do today.

If one compares a series of European and American landscape paintings, some rather obvious observations can be made about the continental versus the frontier view of nature as a setting for man. In *Pastoral Caprice with the Arch of Constantine*, Claude's sublime scene is protectively framed by a beneficient, almost embracing nature (fig. 3). In the distance is a great triumphal arch, the remains of an ancient and sophisticated race whose spirit hovers protectively over the landscape offering intimations of a higher culture. Men and cattle are united and at ease in a pastoral setting of great repose. Classical harmony prevails between man, nature, beasts, and buildings. Claude's is a holistic, balanced,

and ecologically optimistic world. By contrast, William Trost Richards's *Sankaty Light at Sankaty Head* depicts another kind of place altogether (fig. 4). The canvas is open-ended and barren; there are no natural "bookends" or enclosures in this landscape. Sky and horizon are limitless and man's presence a singular outpost perched precariously on the very edge of the continent, small and insecure. Man is alone here, his surroundings offering no alms, no permanent protection. His only function in the world is to warn others of nature's lethal hazards. There was never any godlike race in this place, certainly no architecture and no cities.

In van der Heyden's *View of the Westerkerk*, nature and man are brought together, inextricably and harmoniously bound in a place of permanent settlement (fig. 5). Houses and churches, brick and glass, cobbled streets, trees, boats, and dignified burghers inhabit a highly structured and secure world made by man, but one in which nature has served as a willing partner. This is literally what is meant by *urban landscape*. To van der Heyden's secure harmony, William Bradford's *Arctic Scene* offers a chilling comparison (fig. 6). This is a world of cold, and awesome consequence. Here man can do little more than "hold out," connected to civilization only by the lifeline of his escape vehicle, his blessed machine, a ship which can take him away from this awful place. Buildings are temporary shacks, a camp. One is not supposed to remain here.

These contrasts continue. In *The Gardens of the Villa d'Este*, Jean-Honoré Fragonard uses nature as an ally to fashion a mysterious, luxuriant, curiously erotic bower beckoning man to lose himself in a natural world which has been cunningly manipulated to increase earthly joy (fig. 7). In this sophisticated architecture of landscape, man and his surroundings refine one another. In contrast, Frederic Church, in *Niagara*, depicts a world without man (fig. 8). His space in nature is a great natural abyss very different from Fragonard's shady grotto, one which pulls the viewer down into the plane of the canvas, a chasm carved by primeval forces, in no way

3 Pastoral Caprice with the Arch of Constantine, *painting by Claude Lorrain, ca. 1648.*
4 Sankaty Light at Sankaty Head, Nantucket, *William Trost Richards, 1865.*
5 View of the Westerkerk, Amsterdam, *painting by Jan van der Heyden.*
6 Arctic Scene, *painting by William Bradford, 1870.*

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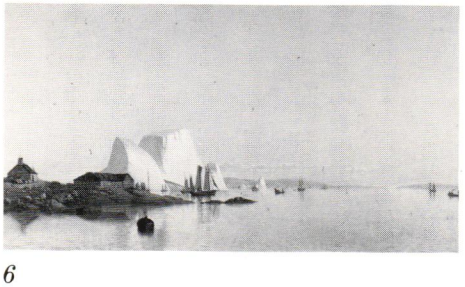

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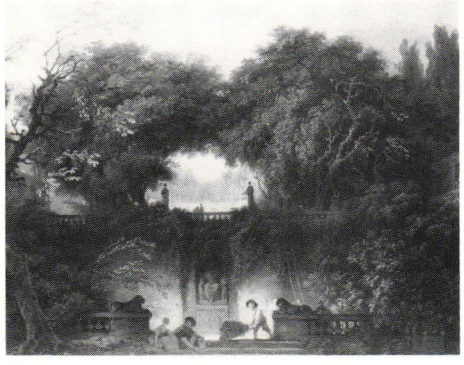
7 The Gardens of the Villa d'Este, Tivoli, *painting by Jean-Honoré Fragonard, 1760.*
8 Niagara, *painting by Frederic E. Church, 1857.*
9 The Avenue at Meerdervoort, Dordrecht, *painting by Aelbert Cuyp, ca. 1652.*
10 Thunderstorm Over Narragansett Bay, *painting by Martin Johnson Heade, 1868.*



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connected to human purposes. One could not conceivably enter into this vortex safely; no luxurious trafficking here, only stunned confrontation. Again the American continent is revealed as a place alien to man, its forces thunderous and threatening.

This notion of awesome sound and force continues. In *Thunderstorm over Narragansett Bay,* Martin Johnson Heade's landscape of boys playing by the shore of a Massachusetts tidal pond, one is a long way from the ordered, settled, domestic countryside of Aelbert Cuyp in which, again, the natural and the man-made world are intricately interlaced (figs. 9, 10). Cuyp's *allée* has a double reading. As a piece of urban design, it is a continuation of a man-made system out into the country; and as a formal and natural filter through which the landscape flows easily across a constructed path it represents the intrusion of nature into this urban design. The volume of space perpendicular to the picture plane invites the viewer down a kind of "yellow brick road" to an ideal world of ordered cities, easy toil, and contented beasts. Conversely Heade, though his subject is a summer afternoon, invokes a world filled with menace where men are apprehensive, separated from one another even in play, skeletal figures against a dark and ominous landscape. There is also no path for the viewer into this picture; one should remain safely away from this place.

In each of these comparisons the American paintings have depicted man as an intruder in an uncharted environment, not unlike an astronaut on the moon—small, insignificant, and alone, his only hope (and ally) being his mode of transportation, his machine that can take him away. I would argue that even today, much of this view of nature still directly affects how we perceive and attempt to deal with and *treat* our land. Some important part of the American psyche has been conditioned and brutalized by a history of impermanency and by an ambivalent and, as yet, unresolved view of our natural setting.

11 A member of the Pioneer Automobile Party in his Toledo car at the rim of the Grand Canyon, Arizona. Photograph, ca. 1902.
12 Cover of Progressive Architecture, *February 1983.*

Two more images reinforce this point. One of them, my favorite "man and his faithful machine," continues to trouble and delight me, a perfect coda for one coming into the country (fig. 11). Is this Grand Canyon spectator really caught up in the majesty and inspiration of the place, or merely calculating its future commercial development? He seems both fascinated by and absolutely apart from his setting, safe only in his horseless carriage. "Our man" feels no kinship with the world he surveys, only awe and entrepreneurial interest. Indeed, as we see in an image of a *Progressive Architecture*, he has decided to stay and to exploit (fig. 12). He has laid down a great concrete grid not only upon the earth, but upon the vertical plane of the sky as well, where a surrogate and synthetic landscape appears at random places—an occasional shadow box in the sky where the last palm tree, like the last Indian, is preserved, almost in amber. (Below, on the way to a place called Coral Gables, is ground zero.) We have succeeded in this country, in and around our cities, in bringing nature to its knees; blanketing it in concrete. Our urbanism is one of vanquished places.

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American urbanism is still psychically at odds with the American continent; there is no peace yet between our landscape and our language of building. The harmonious "fit" between man, nature, and architecture which has been a central concern of all high cultures has been brilliantly overtured in this country, but never resolved. Envisioned in our original Arcadian dreams, it is still our destiny. Land of national parks, of Muir, Olmsted, Burnham, Jefferson, even Robert Moses, America has still before it a proposition about how to achieve the subtle, yet extensive balance between the natural and the man-made worlds.

Until there is such a recasting of this basic city-country-man equation our urbanism will lack any compelling or culturally binding architectural force, any chance at new life, any comprehensible language or value related to our specific place, time, history, and experience. Our cities will only be as they are now, a vulgar overindulgence, only so much

13 Brace's Rock, Brace's Cove,
painting by Fitz Hugh Lane, 1864.

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"design." We will continue to condemn ourselves and the rest of the world to this wretched assortment of disconnected and ultimately dehumanizing pieces, our obvious (and lethal) legacies—the highway, the skyscraper, and the commercial strip.

Yet, superimposed over the grim visions of endless sprawl, there still remain images of promise—the hint of an American "order of things." Fitz Hugh Lane, the Luminist painter, is an eloquent spokesman for this promise in *Brace's Rock, Brace's Cove*, of 1864 (fig. 13). Lane transforms the classical model, calmly clearing the table of Old World detritus, and offers a uniquely American composition of stunning contradiction and balance; one both abstract and representational, inhabited and empty, at rest yet dynamic, old and new. (How much this tiny painting prefigures the giant abstract canvases of a hundred years later!) The indeterminant line of the endless American horizon is finally broken by rock headlands which fold in protectively upon man's "travel machine," bringing it to rest. In a crystalline pool of space and light a new sanctuary for man in the New World is offered; one of order and, almost, classical balance. Yet different. This is a neutral and abstract "classicism of the future," transfigured by interventions from wiser, more distant, and more ancient worlds. Lane's setting, like Claude's, is inhabitable by gods and men alike; a place of "childhood's end." In it we are offered a glimpse of a new and convincing relationship between man and nature on this new continent—the eerie and gemlike mythic condition of a structured American landscape. This moment of stationary transition is a starting place for our urban Arcadia.

For here we have no lasting city,
but we seek the city which is to come.[7]

Notes

Source Note: This essay is the first of a two-part series by the author on landscape and American urbanism. Part II will appear in a future edition of Modulus.

1. Richard C. Collins, "Comment," *Toward a New Land Use Ethic* (Warrenton, Va.: Piedmont Environmental Council, 1981), p. 66.
2. Herman Kahn, *Thinking About the Unthinkable* (New York, 1962).
3. That such a course of inquiry might lead to far more disturbing recognitions about our culture and ourselves is echoed in George Steiner, *In Bluebeard's Castle: Some Notes Towards the Redefinition of Culture* (London, 1971), p. 104: "It may be that the truths which lie ahead wait in ambush for man, that the kinship between speculative thought and survival on which our entire culture has been based, will break off."
4. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1970; reprint, New York, 1973), p. xviii.
5. Jaquelin Robertson, "The Current Crisis of Disorder," *Education for Urban Design*, ed. Ann Ferebee (Purchase, N.Y.: Institute for Urban Design, 1982), pp. 42-43.
6. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. xx.
7. Heb. 13:14. This verse also appears in Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, op. 45: "Denn wir haben hier Keine bleibende Statt, sondern die zukünftige suchen wir."

Figure Credits

1 Courtesy of Fred Koetter.
2 Courtesy of the Detroit Institute of Arts, gift of Dexter M. Ferry, Jr.
3 Courtesy of His Grace the Duke of Westminster.
4 Courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. James H. Dempsey, Jr.
5, 7, 9 Courtesy of the Trustees of the Wallace Collection, London.
6 Courtesy of the Indiana University Art Museum.
8 In the collection of the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Museum Purchase.
10 Courtesy of the Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas.
11 From Lois Craig and the staff of the Federal Architecture Project, *The Federal Presence: Architecture, Politics, and Symbols in United States Government Building* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1978), p. 208. Photograph by Aultman.
12 From *Progressive Architecture*, February 1983.
13. Courtesy of the Daniel J. Terra Collection, Terra Museum of American Art, Evanston, Illinois.

New Deal, New City

Diane Ghirardo

In 1929 the Great Stock Market Crash plunged America into a decade-long depression of unparalleled proportions. That same year another event occurred which, though of more modest dimensions, also reverberated during the decade of the 1930s: the publication of Ralph Borsodi's *This Ugly Civilization* (New York, 1929), a savage indictment of the modern industrial city and the factory system. Indeed, the crash could almost have been the fulfillment of its worst predictions, for Borsodi saw contemporary urban civilization as bankrupt and dangerously corrupt—as did many others after the crash. Within four years Borsodi published a sequel, *Flight from the City* (New York, 1933), in which he argued that the only future lay in abandoning the metropolis and returning to a more simple and self-sufficient rural life. This work too revealed an uncanny timing: it appeared just as Franklin D. Roosevelt launched a New Deal program designed to transfer the urban unemployed to new communities where they could grow their own food on small plots of land near their own houses. Indeed, the first so-called "subsistence community" to receive funds under this program was Borsodi's own community in Dayton, Ohio.[1]

Only three of the towns built under this program have received much press attention: the Greenbelt towns constructed along the general lines of Ebenezer Howard's Garden City model (Greenbelt, Maryland; Greendale in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Greenhills in Cincinnati, Ohio) which together provided housing for 2,267 families.[2] However, New Deal agencies such as the Division of Subsistence Homesteads, the Resettlement Administration, and the Farm Security Administration constructed another ninety-six communities, each of which accommodated anywhere from 25 to 287 families, for a combined total of 8,671 family units. These new communities represented an unprecedented venture: for the first time, the United States Government took the initiative in fabricating and managing the day-to-day life of entire communities. What prompted the Roosevelt Administration to fund these new, planned communities? What were the goals of the program? And what were the communities like in reality?

Both the Borsodi and New Deal programs were rooted in disenchantment with urban industrial civilization and, in particular, with the brutally uncertain future it held out for working-class families. Entire communities ended up being classified as "stranded populations" when the one major industry in town folded and the effects of the subsequent unemployment rippled through local businesses. Families hit by disasters such as these frequently had nowhere to turn and could not even meet the basic requirements of survival (fig. 1). Charitable resources in the communities dried up quickly as other businesses closed or cut back; until the relief program was initiated under the New Deal, government could not fill the gap. Even though there were private charities available in metropolitan areas, the large numbers of rural poor and the poor from small towns who flooded into the cities strained the existing resources beyond the breaking point.

In these desperate circumstances, it comes as no surprise that the idea of settling families on a piece of land large enough to provide a significant portion of their annual food needs should emerge. The idea had been around for quite some time, but during the 1920s it gained new credibility as an alternative to urban squalor.[3] But where Borsodi repudiated the industrial city altogether (as did most of the radical back-to-the-landers), the new communities constituted an attempt to accommodate industrialization without abandoning the virtues of America's agrarian past.

For the Roosevelt Administration, new rural or suburban communities seemed promising in a number of ways. First, they offered a healthy alternative to the squalid, poorly maintained and often unsanitary tenements of many American cities. Not incidentally, transferring families to the country also promised to help decongest metropolitan areas, often seen as potential hotbeds of radicalism. New Dealers further expected the new communities to alleviate unemploy-

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1 (frontispiece) California home of Oklahoma drought refugees, August 1936.
2 Houses at Arthurdale. Reedsville, West Virginia, June 1935.
3 House in Arthurdale, 1935.

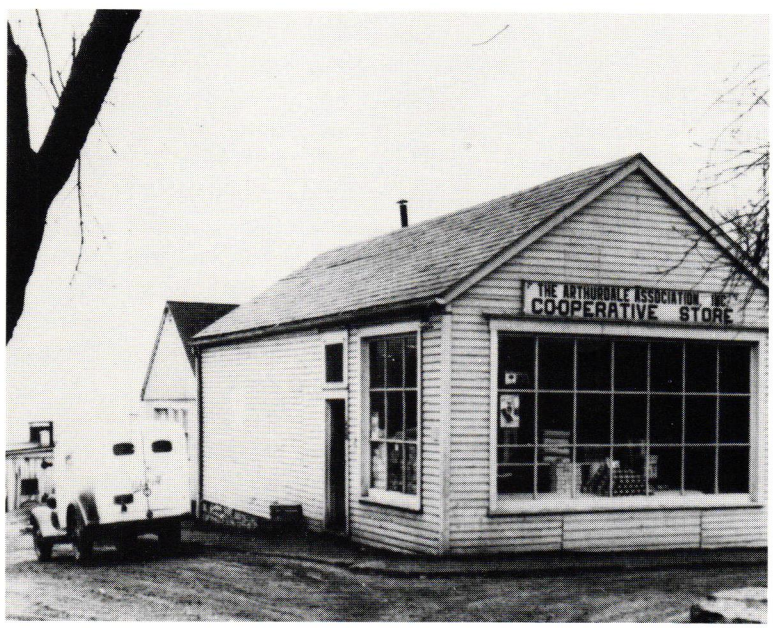
ment and to serve as adjuncts to the welfare relief system. With unemployment figures running as high as 25 percent, anything seemed worth trying. But for New Deal administrators such as Rexford Guy Tugwell, M. L. Wilson, and Lawrence Westbrook, new communities—some of which involved tenant-operated cooperatives—offered the chance to initiate a change in the social and economic order, away from excessive and destructive individualism toward a greater "spirit of community" and cooperation.[4] All three believed that America and Americans would survive only if people put community interests above their own. "Somehow," Wilson commented, "or in some way, attitudes and lives of the families who occupy these communities must be integrated so as to provide a new and different view of life and a new and different set of family values."[5] Meanwhile, others such as Borsodi sought a new community based upon an explicit rejection of modern industrial society. Still others believed in the long-term benefits of a fully planned society, and others foresaw the advantage of substituting subsistence gardens for direct relief payments.[6] In the long run, however, the often conflicting demands of providing relief to the distressed and initiating a more general reform of the system remained unresolved, while the contradictions of the two imperatives emerged with painful clarity in the planning and operation of the new towns.

When the Division of Subsistence Homesteads granted funds to Borsodi for his Ohio community, it was already in operation, and the government had played no role in its planning. Thus, Arthurdale in Reedsville, West Virginia, became the first community fully planned by the government.[7] In order to relieve the chronic unemployment of miners in this West Virginia area, the division planned to erect two hundred homes, each situated on a five-acre plot (fig. 2). Gardens would provide the bulk of the residents' food supply, with the balance coming from earnings from part-time employment in an industry to be established by the division. Eleanor Roosevelt and Louis Howe (a special assistant to the president) plunged into the plans for the community with gusto, and showered it with special attention. Hopes ran high as Howe ordered the first fifty cottages from a manufacturer of prefabricated homes. In December 1933 the cottages were assembled: each measured ten-feet-by-forty-feet, and was fabricated of Oregon cedar frame and cedar siding, with fiberboard and building paper inside. This mode of construction was the project's first mistake, for as initially built the prefabs could not survive the cold West Virginia winters. Expenses soared as the division began ripping out three of the four walls, expanding and altering the prepared foundations, and changing to a combination concrete block and frame construction.

As modified in early 1934, the homes consisted of four-to-six rooms with paneled walls, hardwood floors, copper plumbing, brass fixtures, well, septic tank, and barn. Although now roomier and far more liveable, the homes needed special oversized furnaces for heating because the original fourth wall was inexplicably left in place. Despite huge cost overruns and considerable adverse publicity, the residents moved into their homes and became the first members of the Arthurdale community. Another one hundred homes were built with similar construction (without the thin fourth wall, of course), but the final group of houses was the most expensive yet: six rooms, with locally quarried stone veneer over frame construction, and fittings that bordered on the luxurious (fig. 3).

The Resettlement Administration later added 108 cellars and fifty-six storage houses to the community's resources. Many of the future residents supplemented the income from their garden produce and relief checks by working on the housing construction projects until building slowed down in 1935. In the final accounting, the government spent $16,377 on each family, only $8,665 of which paid for the actual structures of the homes and barns. Government largesse had proved comparatively expensive: in the adjacent countryside, one could purchase a thirty-five-acre farm with a brand new two-story brick home and barn during the same years

4 The cooperative store in Arthurdale.
5 Factory at Arthurdale, 1935.



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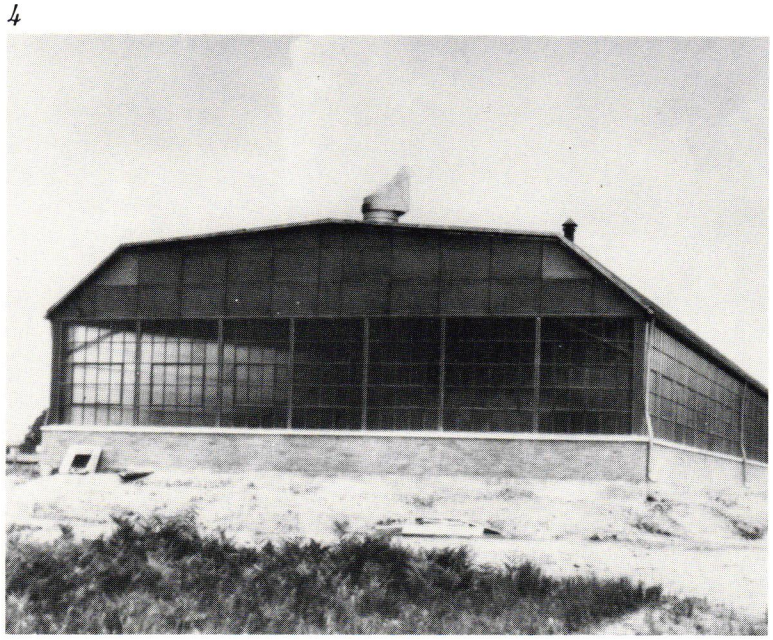

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for only $5,000.

Thus far Arthurdale was little more than a sleepy bedroom community. Planners had envisioned the community as a mini-town in which only the most basic needs of residents would be met. Grouped around a small town square were a community center, barbershop, forge, furniture shop, cooperative store, and an administration office (fig. 4). Apparently it was assumed that other necessities and services would be taken care of by businesses in Reedsville. But this also meant that local businesses could not provide sufficient part-time employment for residents once building slowed down in 1935.

Initially, the Resettlement Administration planned to set up a plant to manufacture equipment for the post office (fig. 5). Despite heavy politicking by administration officials, Congress blocked the proposal on the grounds that it involved the government in operating a business in direct competition with private industry. As its next strategy, the RA induced a vacuum cleaner company to operate a factory in the unused building. When the venture proved unsuccessful and the company pulled out, a succession of other manufacturing organizations followed: a collar factory, a farm equipment company, and finally a radio company. All folded within a year or so, each time throwing the residents out of work and back on relief again. Only with the onset of war did stable employment come to Arthurdale, as the Hoover Aircraft Corporation occupied the plant and manufactured defense materials.

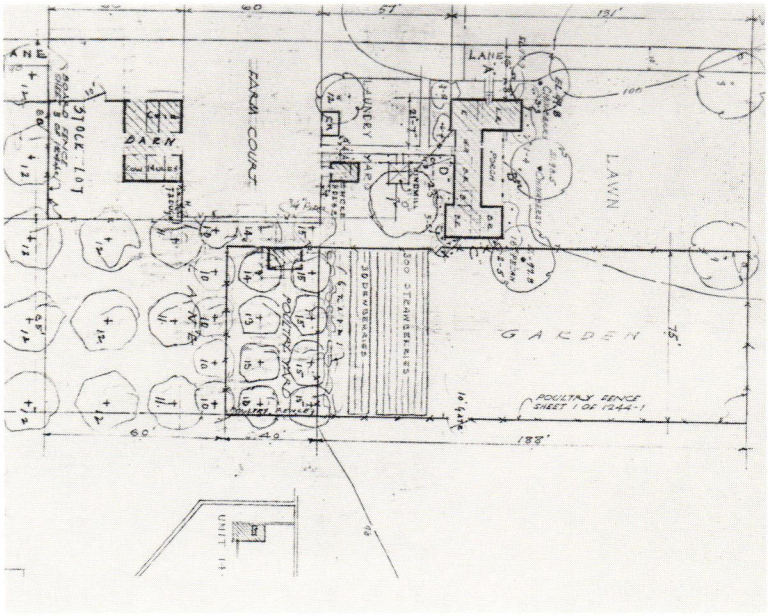
In the face of the obvious problems associated with trying to bring industry into the new community, the division abandoned this model for subsequent communities. Instead, residents ran cooperative enterprises or, more commonly, the division planned its communities so as to take advantage of existing industries near larger metropolitan areas. Two new communities in Southern California—El Monte and San Fernando—followed this latter model; most tenants commuted to work in nearby Los Angeles.

6, 7 Plans for two homes in the Ashwood Plantation community, South Carolina.

In several other respects, these two communities represented a later stage of development of the new communities program.[8] With respect to the buildings, two major changes had occurred. First, unlike Arthurdale residents, prospective tenants had nothing whatsoever to do with the construction of their homes, much less with planning them. Economy and efficiency simply did not permit that kind of waste, federal administrators believed. On the contrary, they seemed to think government engineers were best-suited to design and outfit the structures (and in many cases, even to make detailed decisions as to what to plant in the gardens; figs. 6,7). Several years later, when administrators looked back over the long record of discontent, high turnover, and high vacancy rates, some wondered whether they had erred in not allowing tenants to plan, design, and build their own homes—thereby decreasing tenant commitment to the program.

Cost factors also prompted another change in the housing. The division was determined not to repeat the expensive production costs of Arthurdale, so El Monte and San Fernando residents received three-to-five-room denuded pine or redwood boxes which had been subjected to the most rigid scrutiny in order to eliminate every bit of waste (fig. 8). Hallways were shortened and narrowed; ceilings were lowered; closets even lacked doors; and the porches were vestigial remnants of those at Arthurdale. The designers prided themselves on the fact that by cutting one foot off the hallways in San Fernando, they could add four bedrooms to the project as a whole.[9] That such economies might reduce the liveability of the projects simply failed to emerge as a relevant issue.

In other respects, however, tenants found the subsistence homesteads to be substantial improvements over their earlier housing. The division installed gas, electricity, water heaters, stoves, sinks, and bathrooms—none of which were standard features in low-priced homes at the time. Of twenty-one San Fernando residents, for example, twelve had lacked both gas and electricity in their previous dwellings; eight had had



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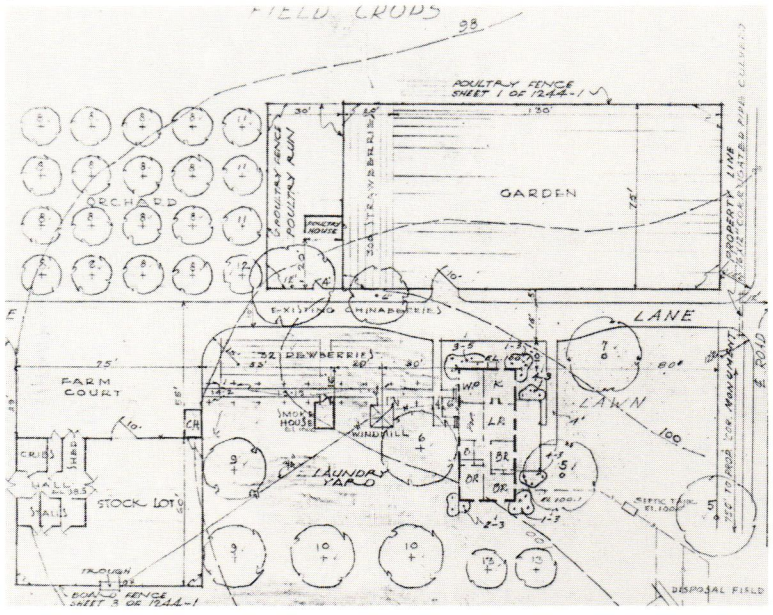

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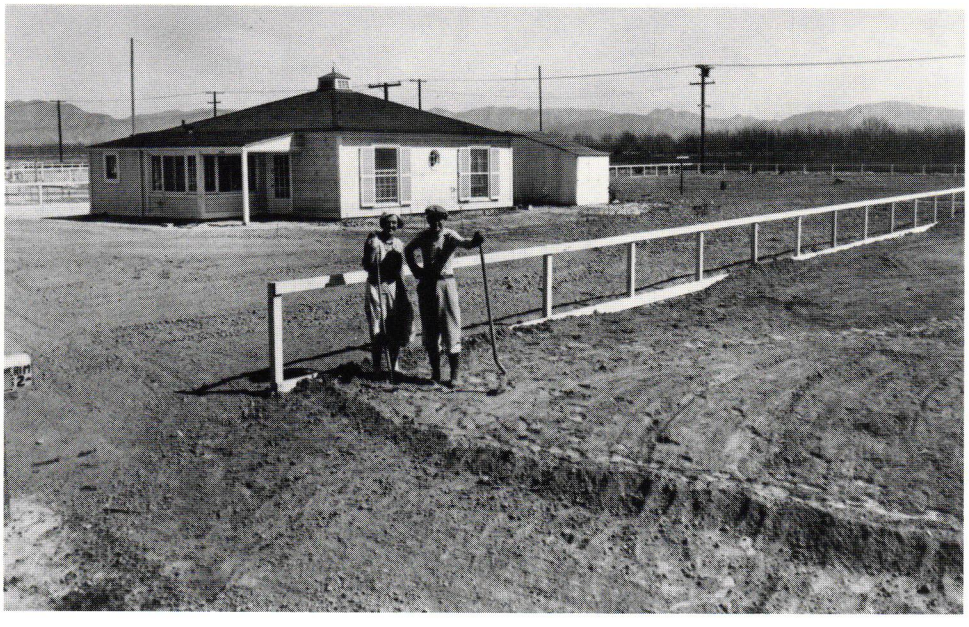
8 House in San Fernando Homesteads, 1936.



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only electricity; and only one had had both.[10] Although the standard of living with respect to physical surroundings clearly improved, tenants worried about how much they would have to pay for these improvements. In most cases, they began their tenure on the projects as renters, but with the promise of being allowed to purchase the homes at favorable terms. Considerable anxiety surfaced precisely because many believed they were living beyond their means. Not surprisingly, many worried about what would happen if they should lose their jobs again.[11]

The layout of the new communities also underwent a change in the post-Arthurdale planning. Designers drafted the features of typical suburban speculative housing into their programs, although lot sizes increased in order to permit subsistence gardening (fig. 9). The picturesque undulating patterns of Arthurdale soon disappeared as planners slapped down a flat grid for communities in California, Arizona, Texas, and elsewhere (fig. 10). Only variations in their orientation and their placement on the lots allowed the houses to escape total monotony. The fact that such variations consisted of nothing more than surface manipulations designed to create an illusion of individuality emerges clearly in the project records. Each time a tenant attempted to modify his property, the government stepped in forcefully. One family was evicted for refusing to remove a windbreak its members had planted, and another escaped eviction only by promising to tear down the cottage the husband had constructed for his mother-in-law.[12] The thin veneer of individuality which adorned the housing in fact expressed the reality of the political situation the tenants confronted: in neither case did the appearance of individuality correspond with reality.

Originally the projects had been targeted to aid the destitute and unemployed, but for two important and related reasons the direction of the programs underwent a decided shift by 1935. First, the Arthurdale experience testified to the difficulty of making government-provided employment available. But without employment opportunities nearby, the new community could not hope to be self-sufficient. This in turn fueled public and congressional opposition. As more money was sunk into building Arthurdale and keeping it afloat, increasingly vocal criticism of its cost and ineffectiveness surfaced. Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes was acutely sensitive to this opposition (and in fact, he privately agreed with the criticisms of Arthurdale).[13] Despite the heated objections of M. L. Wilson and other administrators, Ickes oversaw the complete federalization of the program in May 1934. Where the initial impulse had been to help people fashion homes and communities—designing and building their homes, planning the future shape of the community or the cooperative—the residents soon became very junior partners in the enterprise. The division engaged in a long-term battle to secure funds from Congress, but only orderly, cost-efficient communities would convince Congress that the money was well spent. This in turn depended upon getting the "right" tenants and on careful government control of the programs. The projects' demonstrational character in itself led to many of the problems. As one observer put it in 1940: "When the government stepped in . . . planning was done for, rather than with, prospective homesteaders; perfection rather than reality became the goal. There is much testimony and ample evidence that as the perfectionist idea grew the zeal of the homesteaders diminished until it became an attitude of grateful resignation."[14]

The two major instances in America's past of planned communities similar to those of the New Deal were the Utopian communities (such as New Harmony, Indiana) and communities planned by industrialists (Lowell, Massachusetts or Pullman, Illinois). Charles Eliot of the National Resources Planning Board observed in 1936 that in the nineteenth century, industrialists had proven willing to create new towns for their workers for a number of reasons: "to get their employees more securely under their thumb by (1) escaping the labor unions (2) by making employees dependent upon the industry not only for employment but for

9 House in the Eatonton, Georgia community.
10 Plan of San Fernando community. Joseph Weston, architect, 1935.

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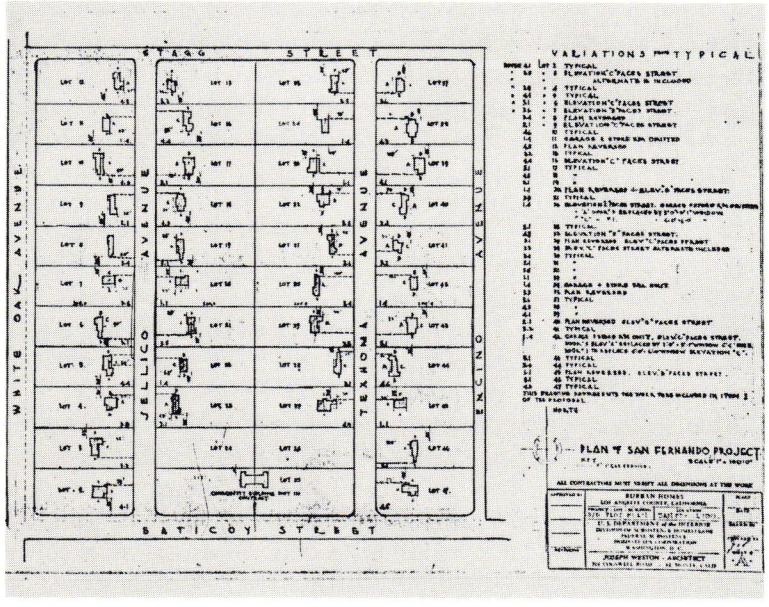

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housing accomodations as well."[15]

The programs of conservative nineteenth-century industrialists parallel those of the New Deal, for in both cases the guiding impulses consisted of an unstable blend of humanitarian aims and conservative ideas. The general organization of the communities and the specific mechanisms of operation insured that the homesteaders would be dependent, for only by having docile residents could the government's objectives be fulfilled. It is useful to recall that almost the only housing the United States Government had provided in the past was on military bases. Families moved in and out of this housing according to the desires of the government, and the government grew accustomed to deploying tenants where it chose without giving much consideration to their desires. Much the same spirit prevailed on the homesteads.

The twin testimonies to government control were the architecture and layout and the tenant selection criteria. In the architecture and planning, the new communities sported a securely and reassuringly middle-class visage packaged in the familiar local vernacular, and they were also populated by tenants handpicked to be dutiful, hardworking, and appreciative recipients of government aid. The government attempted to hedge its bets on the people selected for the projects by requiring that they possess certain skills, a job, a family, and a good work history. Obviously, during the depression a job and a good work history were scarce commodities. The administration wanted not just any families, but "good families," whose members exhibited industry, thrift, ambition, a cooperative attitude, and an appreciation of what the government was doing for them (fig. 11).[16] Such people, administrators believed, would be most likely to make the projects a success: meaning that they would be less troublesome and would adhere closely to federal guidelines, and therefore would be unlikely to arouse press or congressional ire. When slipups occurred and a family turned out to be less docile than expected, eviction generally followed.[17]

To be sure, the division faced the almost impossible task of trying to reconcile the reformist goals of the original planners with the pragmatic imperatives of recovery and congressional concerns about fiscal responsibility. No decision was ever reached as to which had priority in the communities. The homesteads never received the massive infusion of money that might have given them a reasonable chance of success. Instead, the division, and later the Resettlement Administration and the Farm Security Administration, invested energy in supervision and education based upon principles of benevolent paternalism; if the residents were going to change their lives, they would have to be guided by government employees.

With homes and communities designed by government architects, tenants selected by government employees according to strict guidelines, and government officials securely in control of the day-to-day operations, success seemed inevitable. Such was not the case, however. A study conducted by the federal government in 1943 concluded that the communities failed in a number of important ways, even if land was improved and settlers enjoyed a somewhat higher standard of living as a result of their having participated in the projects. The economic expectations of planners and tenants were far from satisfied, and a number of other aspirations remained unfulfilled. More efficient farming techniques did not develop; the capital and net worth of settlers failed to improve materially; true communities failed to emerge; and serious social tensions and frustrations built up.[18]

Most important, however, were the high turnover rates. Residents voted against the government's programs with their feet, and turned the communities into a temporary solution wherein they could hope for a degree of security until something better turned up. Full-fledged communities failed to develop on the projects largely because after May 1934 tenants lacked control over all but the most trivial common matters. They had virtually no control over their own homes and land, and the threat of eviction induced a constant state of tension inimical to the harmonious functioning of the communities. Even on the cooperatives, where success depended heavily upon the common action of all residents, nothing but moderately low incomes united the tenants. The government maintained tight control over everything, in effect making the residents little more than government laborers (fig. 12). Once again the building program mirrored social and political reality: with the exception of Arthurdale, none of the government-designed projects received anything more than a community center (which often doubled as an administration building), and many lacked even that. Families were "educated" at home by federal social workers— the wife in home economics and the husband on his responsibilities. Meanwhile, the community centers served as sites for dances or potluck dinners, and little else. By the mid-thirties, the original communitarian goals of the new towns had eroded, and were replaced by a renewed emphasis on privatism (fig. 13).

The Roosevelt Administration's community program parallels those of other governments that also found the idea of decongesting metropolitan areas and promoting subsistence homesteads in rural and semirural areas appealing. Nazi Germany aggressively promoted the creation of a "new peasantry" by decentralizing urban areas and settling people on land with gardens sufficiently large to provide most of their nourishment. Administrators hoped to reduce the effects of technological unemployment by returning people to the land, just as their American counterparts did. Between 1933 and 1935, the German Government, along with private cooperatives and private industry, constructed a total of over thirty thousand subsistence homesteads.[19]

The idea of a decentralized nation forever cleansed of slums, congestion, and urban political unrest also exerted considerable appeal in Mussolini's Italy. In twelve years the Fascist state oversaw the construction of a dozen new communities, all but two of which were aimed primarily at urban resettlement (fig. 14). Residents in the Italian new towns typically

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11 Gardening, El Monte Homesteads, 1936.
12 Barn at the Mineral King Cooperative, Visalia, California.
13 Home in San Fernando community.

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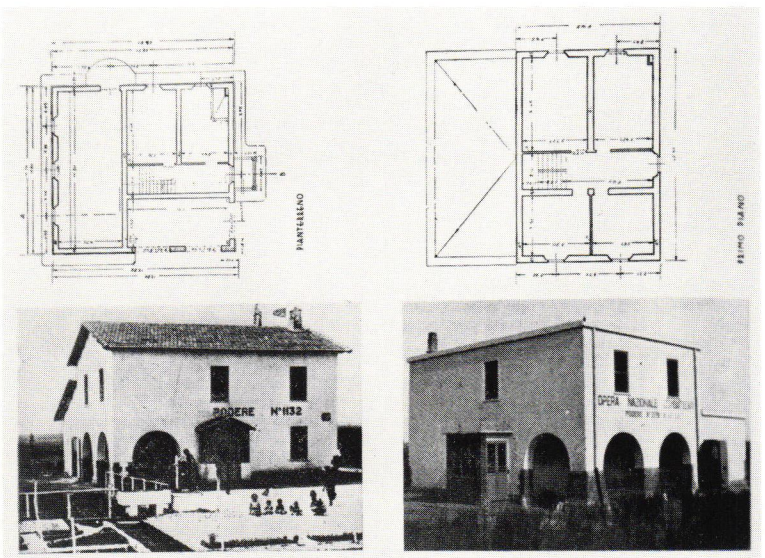
produced cash crops in addition to their subsistence gardens, making their lives decidedly more rural in reality than those of their American counterparts. At the same time, the most obvious difference between American and Italian new communities was the construction of full-scale towns in Italy. They may well have been little more than convenient administration centers catering to the needs of government employees, but architecturally they were true towns, far more ambitious in scope than Arthurdale or even the American Greenbelt towns.[20] More importantly, the new Italian towns provided the cherished community spaces so characteristic of all Italian villages and urban centers. Even in these new settlements, designers planned primary and secondary *piazze* and areas for outdoor markets and for strolling, while nothing comparable appeared in the American towns.

Although the Italian Government sought to give an air of ruralism to the new towns, they were decidedly urban in character (fig. 15). As in America, the housing followed vernacular traditions for farmhouses, and the thrust of the program as a whole was away from the modern industrialized world and into the certainties of an easier, less-complicated way of life from the past. The blandness of the formalized vernacular design and the lack of interest in anything more architecturally adventurous emphasized the backward-looking character of the settlements: they aimed not toward the future but toward the refuge of past formulae. Only a thin veneer of surface variations in the houses and layouts masked the reality of stringent government control that permeated the communities down to their most minute details.

Borsodi's dream of returning to the farm, and the Resettlement Administration's dream of redistributing the population, never really bore fruit in the new community program. The plan to make more jobs available through the construction program was accomplished to some degree: virtually everyone who worked directly on the buildings or indirectly on the fabrication of materials would otherwise

14 Housing Type 1, Agro-Pontino housing. In L'Agro-Pontino, *October 1938.*
15 Master plan of Sabaudia. Gruppo Urbanisti Romani (G. Cancellotti, E. Montuori, L. Piccinato, A. Scalpelli), 1933-34.



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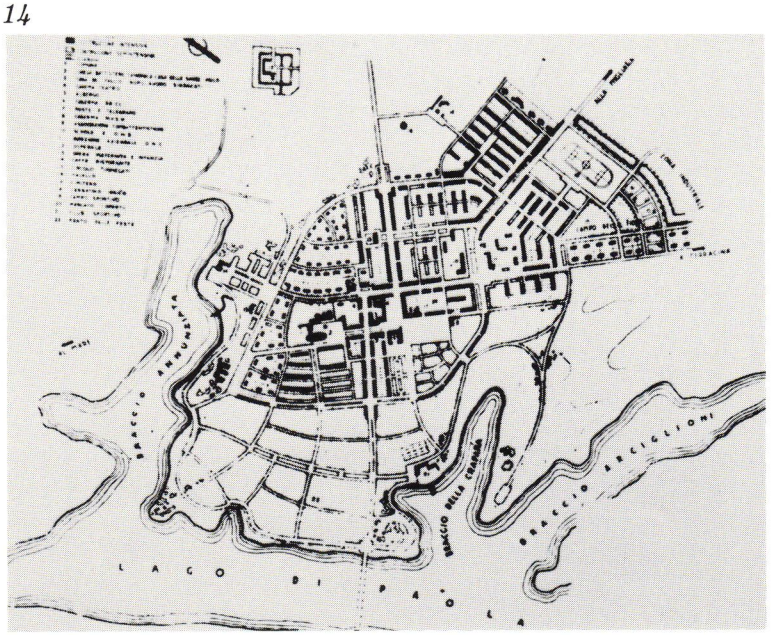

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have been unemployed. But simply reducing unemployment was a long way from the original, loftier aspirations of the program's architects. Indeed, Borsodi himself grew so disgusted with government management that he finally withdrew. Despite stated egalitarian and democratic motives, the United States proved to be a landlord arguably motivated by goals similar to those of nineteenth-century industrialists or, indeed, of Italian Fascist planners. Caught between utopian hopes and bureaucratically defined program needs, the Division of Subsistence Homesteads and its successor agencies built communities in which design and layout conveyed the inherently conservative and often authoritarian tendencies of the programs.

Notes

1. The Subsistence Homesteads/New Community program was established under the terms of the National Industrial Recovery Act, 48 Stat. 195, 205, 1933. The best study of these programs remains that of Paul K. Conkin, *Tomorrow a New World: The New Deal Community Program* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1959). See also Marion Clawson, "Resettlement Experience on Nine Selected Resettlement Projects," *Agricultural History* 52, no. 1 (January 1978): pp. 1-92; reprint of a report originally prepared in 1943. Borsodi's Dayton Homesteads received a grant from the Subsistence Homesteads program in 1933. Since Borsodi's community was already established, it reveals less about the government's aspirations than do the communities I will examine here, all of which were planned and operated by government agencies.
2. Clarence Stein, *Toward New Towns for America* (New York, 1957). See also Mel Scott, *American City Planning Since 1890* (Berkeley, 1969).
3. Among the many groups involved in such rural programs were the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, the Salvation Army, Little Landers (in California), and the National Forward to the Land League. See Conkin, pp. 11-36.
4. See for example Tugwell's comments in "When the USHA Buys Land," *The New Republic* 100, October 25, 1939, pp. 341-43; Lawrence Westbrook, "Rural Industrial Communities for Stranded Families," National Archives, Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), Old Subject Series, Rural Rehabilitation, Box 65.
5. M. L. Wilson, "How New Deal Agencies are Affecting Family Life," *Journal of Home Economics* 27 (1935): p. 227.
6. Henry Wallace to Harry Hopkins, March 19, 1934, National Archives, FERA, Old Subject Series, Rural Rehabilitation, Administrative Correspondence. Westbrook to David Ross, September 25, 1934, National Archives, FERA, Old Subject Series, Rural

Rehabilitation, General, Box 65.
7. Millard Milburn Rice, "Footnote on Arthurdale," *Harper's Magazine* 180, March 1940, pp. 411-19. See also Conkin's discussion, pp. 237-55.
8. Material about the Subsistence Homesteads and other community projects can be found at the National Archives, Records of the Farm Security Administration, Record Group 96, Project Records 1935-40.
9. See the Project Book for San Fernando Homesteads (n.d.), FSA, RG 96, Project Records 1935-40, California, SH-CF-3.
10. Ibid.
11. Clawson, "Resettlement Experience," pp. 47-70.
12. Arline L. Chewning, Report of the Secretary, San Fernando Community Association, November 17, 1936, p. 1. National Archives, Department of Housing and Urban Development, RG 207, El Monte and San Fernando Minutes of Meetings, Box 6.
13. Harold Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold Ickes*, vol. 1 (New York, 1954), pp. 207-8.
14. Rice, "Arthurdale," pp. 411-19.
15. Charles N. Eliot, "City Planning Techniques," [ca. 1936], p. 2. National Archives, NRPB, RG 187, Central Office Correspondence, 415 Urbanism reports, Eliot.
16. Rena Maycock, Chief, Home Economics Division, Region IX, Conference at Canyon Creek Lodge, Washington, July 3-5, 1936. National Archives, FSA, RG 96, San Francisco General Correspondence 1940-42, File 530.
17. Clawson, "Resettlement Experience," pp. 54-56.
18. Ibid., pp. 77-78.
19. See a variety of consular reports amassed by the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce: National Archives, Records of the National Resources Planning Bureau, RG 187, Central Office Correspondence, 1933-43, Box 415.
20. See Riccardo Mariani, *Fascismo e città nuove* (Milan, 1976); Diane Ghirardo and Kurt W. Forster, "Modelli delle città di nuova fondazione in età fascista," in Cesare de Seta, ed., *Annali di Storia d'Italia: Strutture Mentali e Materiali* (Torino, 1983).

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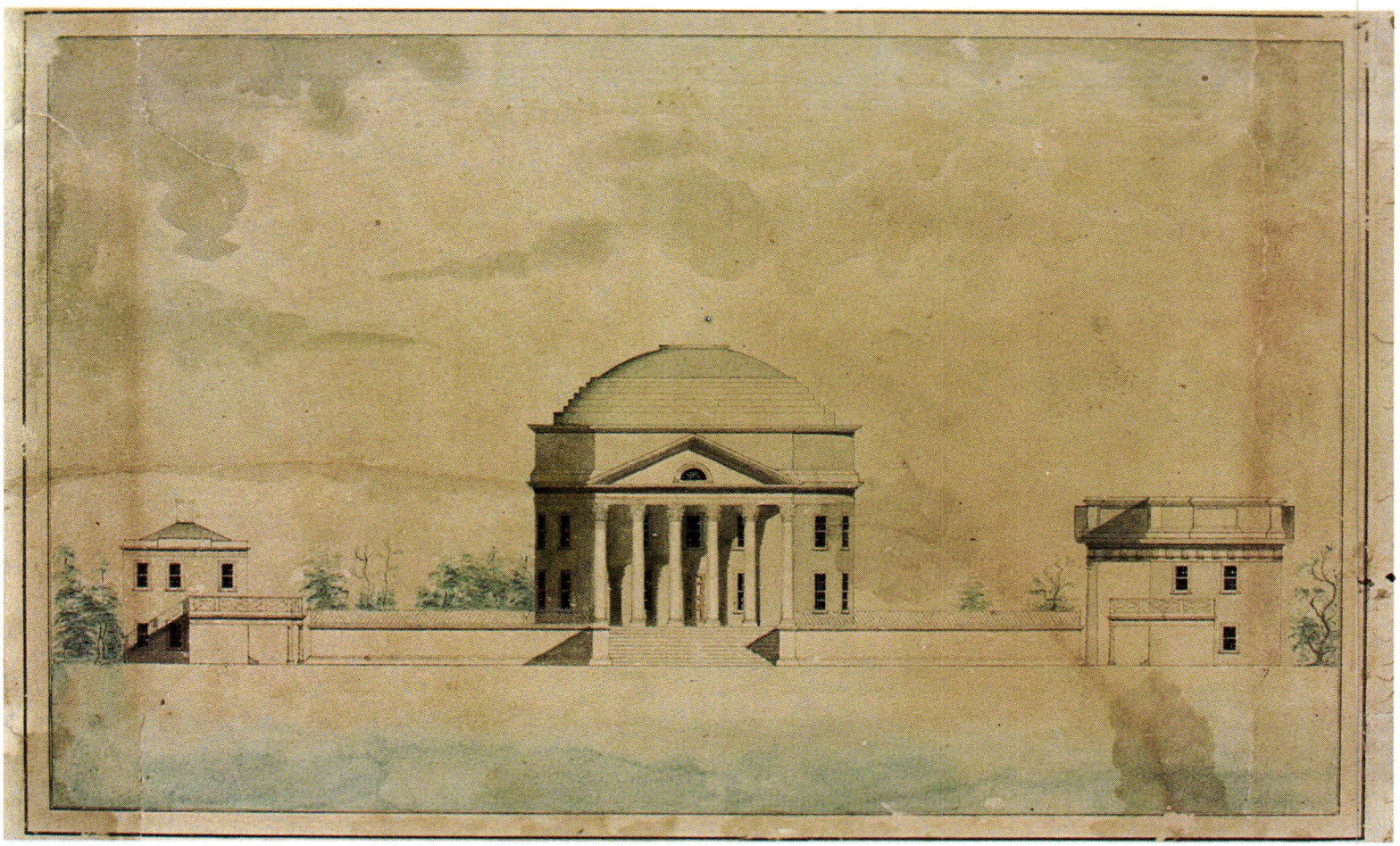
12 Photograph by Russell Lee, courtesy of the Library of Congress.
14, 15 Courtesy of the author.



Roses for the Rotunda

William Mullen

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1 (frontispiece) Elevation of the Rotunda and Pavilions IX and X, *University of Virginia. Attributed to Cornelia Jefferson Randolph, ca. 1820.*
2 Thomas Jefferson, *attributed to Benjamin Henry Latrobe, ca. 1799.*

Thomas Jefferson was a preeminently verbal man who spent a long life making memorable statements about ways the world might become a better place. But it is perhaps the highest testimony to his genius that he chose to cap a life of memorable articulations with a building which simply *is*, with an actuality rather than an ideal receding into the horizon. I am referring to the Rotunda of the University of Virginia, his last major building and the dominant focus for what was the most ambitious of his architectural projects. In Jefferson's plan, the south side of the quadrangle in front of the Rotunda was to have no buildings on it, only an arboretum planted with exotic trees. Perhaps the view from the Rotunda's porch was meant to suggest the same limitless expansion in the cultivation of wilderness that the Louisiana Purchase seemed to guarantee. But from every other point in the quadrangle the Rotunda itself dominates the view, drawing the mind to meditate on what has become actual in its own massive presence.

That actuality is more than the sum of the building's particular functions. The Rockfish Gap Report, Jefferson's blueprint for the proposed university, gives his notions of that infinite progress in the educational realm without which he considered degeneration in the political realm to be inevitable.[1] The report proposed ten professors who were to guide this progress, and as a practitioner of the useful art of architecture, Jefferson set about to house them. But instead of leaving it at that, he chose to group their houses around another building which was not only functional but also ornamental. Definitive but inexhaustible, it is a symbol which challenges us to articulate the wisdom that lies beyond its specific intentions.

In choosing to cap his life with an architectural symbol rather than a verbal statement, Jefferson articulated certain aspects of his nature of which he may not have been fully conscious. These are the forces which counterbalance his programmatic ideas and inscribe a humanistic circle around them. The greatest danger presented by a man of ideas is

3 View of the City of Richmond from the South Side of the James River, *Benjamin Henry Latrobe, 1798.*
4 View of Richmond from Bushrod Washington's Island, *Benjamin Henry Latrobe, 1796.*

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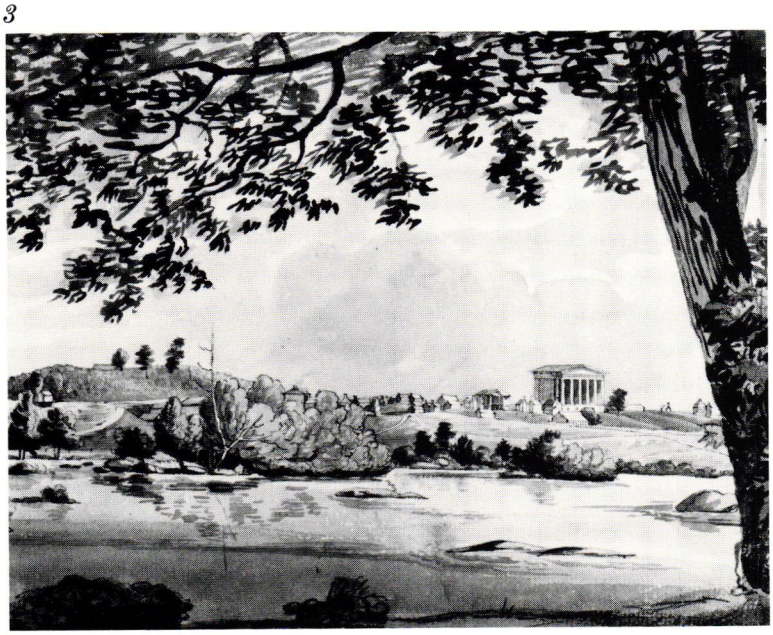

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that he can rarely imagine the day, generations in the future, when his ideas are so triumphant as to be no longer contained by all the prudent instincts with which he originally accompanied them in his life. If we cannot avoid being conscious of excesses wrought by certain of Jefferson's leading ideas (such as "progress" or "expansion"), then it is important to find language with which to fix firmly in our minds those instincts of his which anchored and contained them.

In invoking humanism as the necessary check to excesses latent in some of Jefferson's ideas, I am using a word which has been subjected to many distorting pressures; and I use it here in its most traditional sense to mean the cultivation of the wisdom basic to the achievements of Greek antiquity as transmitted and amplified by the Romans and later by the Renaissance Italians. Jefferson chose to make the University of Virginia the "capstone" of his systems of education and politics as well as of his avocation as an architect, and he chose to make the capstone of the university a rotunda modelled after the most Roman of all buildings, the Pantheon. His choice confirmed that in matters of architecture he was determined to remain "the most Roman of the Romanists."[2] Before focusing on the Rotunda as the expression of this determination, it is worth considering what it had come to mean to him in the course of a long engagement with architectural forms. In matters of literary taste, after all, he was one of the most devoted Hellenists in America, and in his long-term architectural associate, Benjamin Latrobe, he had one of the most devoted practitioners of the Neo-Hellenic revival. It is easy enough to grasp Jefferson's preference for the "chastity" of classical models over the crudity of Georgian forms or the vanity of earlier French achievements. But why did he not, as he did habitually in literature, go all the way to the source in its purest Greek form? ("I suspect, we are left at last with only Homer and Virgil, perhaps with Homer alone," he mused in his *Thoughts on English Prosody.*)

Karl Lehmann has proposed that the explanation is largely technical: Jefferson could not do without the arch, the vault,

and the dome, and these are Roman architecture's original contributions.[3] The endless possibilities arising from the combination of these elements with the pediment and the column may have offered him a plastic alternative to the static Greek ideal. Lehmann's technical explanation is not incompatible with a more conceptual one, which is hinted at in one of Jefferson's letters to Latrobe about the completion of the national Capitol:

"I shall live in the hope that the day will come when an opportunity will be given you of finishing the middle building in a style worthy of the two wings, and worthy of the first temple dedicated to the sovereignty of the people, embellishing with Athenian taste the course of a nation looking far beyond the range of Athenian destinies" (July 12, 1812).[4]

Is there a trace of irony at the expense of Latrobe's Neo-Hellenism in the last phrase? It seems possible that, quite simply, Jefferson thought only Roman architecture was sufficiently grand to express the course of a nation destined to create an "empire for liberty."[5]

On the few occasions in which he confronted Roman ruins in their actuality, he stood ready to praise them without finding anything negative in their "imperial" quality.

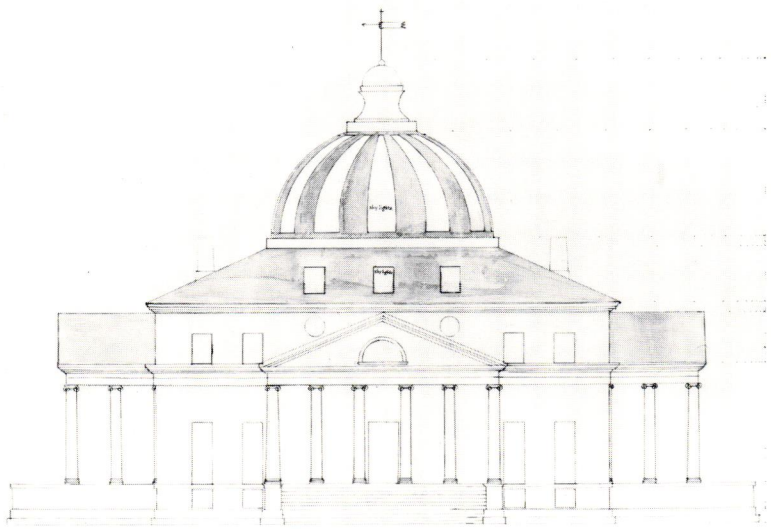
"From Lyons to Nismes I have been nourished with the remains of Roman grandeur," he wrote to his friend the Comtesse de Tessé on March 20, 1787. "For me, the city of Rome is actually existing in all the splendor of its empire. I am filled with alarms for the event of the irruptions daily making on us, by the Goths, the Visigoths, Ostrogoths, and Vandals, lest they should re-conquer us to our original barbarism."

He seems to have accepted the most traditional of all justifications for the existence of the Roman Empire: namely, that at whatever expense, it extended the frontiers of civilization. Beyond those frontiers, he thought, lay only Goths with their superstitions and their priestcraft. American architecture needed Roman grandeur because it had to preside over an "empire" of comparable proportions; and it too had the duty not only to adorn a capital city, but also to create forceful presences at frontiers.

What, after all, were the alternatives if one was determined to examine all architectural forms for their political connotations? As Lehmann points out, "The fact that the great works of European architecture almost invariably glorified and enhanced the prestige of ecclesiastical and monarchical power may have been an additional element in making him turn his back on immediate tradition and join the revivalists of ancient architecture."[6] Having so turned his back, he had Roman and Greek models to choose from. Politically, Greece connoted only the utmost instability. Whatever the imperfections of the Roman striving for republican liberty, it had a record of long perseverance in the effort. And if the effort had ended in one-man rule, it may still be said of Roman imperial architecture that in its impersonality it was designed to embody the grandeur of the empire rather than that of the emperor. The shape of the Pantheon's interior space has been characterized as "the shape of a perfect circle as the base of a perfect sphere, the circle of the Empire's horizon under the dome of its firmament."[7] The curiously Roman faculty of rearing temples to abstractions and politicizing religious concepts indicates that, whatever their nominal functions, most Roman temples were dedicated to the grandeur of the state. When Jefferson wrote to Latrobe of "the first temple dedicated to the sovereignty of the people," he was underlining a very Roman notion of the uses to which temples should be put. The author of the Declaration of Independence understood as well as anyone that the American Revolution had justified itself in the opinion of the world on the basis of its political ideas. Instinct told him that the capitol buildings of the independent states created through such a revolution had to be temples dedicated to political ideas, and for that the only models were Roman temples.

These are all considerations which have been illustrated in Latrobe's 1796 and 1798 watercolors of the "temple" then newly erected as Virginia's statehouse (figs. 3,4). Jefferson first conceived of such a temple in 1780, long before he had

5 Elevation, competition design for the president's house, Thomas Jefferson, 1792.
6 First floor plan, competition design for the president's house, Thomas Jefferson, 1792.



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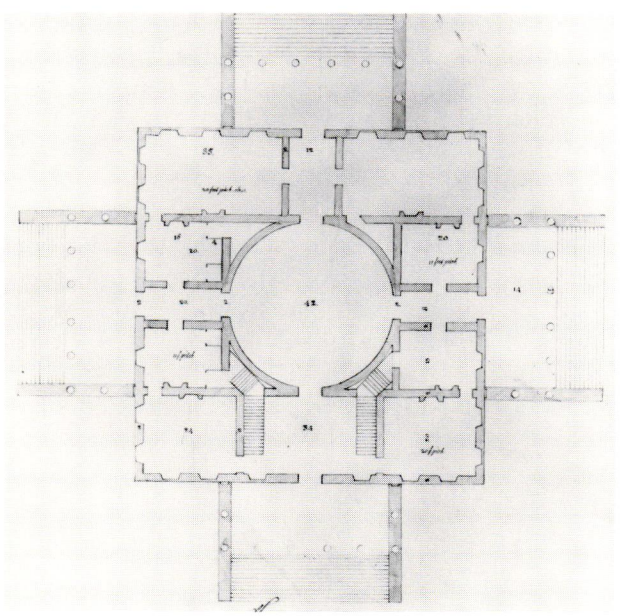

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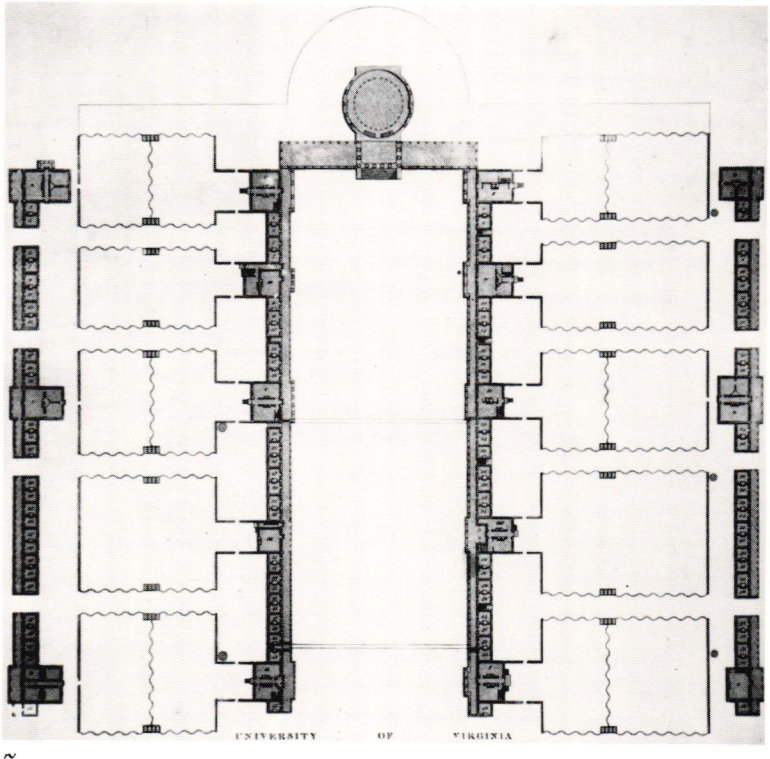
actually seen the Maison Carrée which he adopted as his model because it was "allowed without contradiction to be the most perfect and precious remain of antiquity in existence."[8] Latrobe's watercolors preserve that concept, enabling us to briefly imagine an America with only one neoclassical building. The ramshackle frame houses surrounding the temple accentuate the early republican quality; Sallust had done the traditional Roman thing in praising the founding ancestors as splendid in their public buildings and frugal in their private homes (*Bellum Catilinae* 9). These images do more than many pages of intellectual history to make comprehensible the extraordinary prestige the American venture acquired in France. The colonies had staged a lucid revolution of ideas and then proceeded, after the brief distraction of a defensive war, to begin erecting temples to liberty in the western wilderness.

Jefferson was the first to admit the element of self-consciousness in his act of transplanting the Maison Carrée. Urgently writing to Madison at the rumor that construction of the Virginia capitol had begun using a different plan, he defended his model by saying:
"It is very simple, but it is noble beyond expression, and would have done honor to our country, as presenting to travellers a specimen of taste in our infancy, promising much in our maturer age. . . . You see I am an enthusiast on the subject of the arts. But it is an enthusiasm of which I am not ashamed, as its object is to improve the taste of my countrymen, to increase their reputation, to reconcile to them the respect of the world, and procure them its praise" (September 20, 1785).
For all these purposes no architectural style equalled the Roman, which could be expected to command universal understanding and respect just as the Latin language had in the realm of science, right down to the works of Bacon and Newton.

It is not adequate to say that Jefferson observed an isolation between Greece and Rome in things literary and things

7 The Maverick Plan, University of Virginia. Engraving by Peter Maverick, 1825.

architectural. His strictly Roman plans for public buildings aside, Jefferson used architecture of Roman derivation as a means of access to Greek civilization as a whole. It was his dominant Palladianism, not his adherence to original Vitruvian canons, that disclosed the true nature of his relation to Greece. This relation was unlike the German varieties to which we have become accustomed; it was neither Winkelmann's idealization of calm beauty nor Nietzsche's turbulent archaism. It was, instead, a humanistic relation, perceiving Greece along the axis of the Italian Renaissance in its imitation of the philhellenic Romans. Jefferson's Palladianism as the authentic testimony of his humanism has been underestimated. One usually reads of a schematic distinction in his architectural thinking between public buildings with strictly antique Roman models and private homes for which "Palladio was the Bible."[9]



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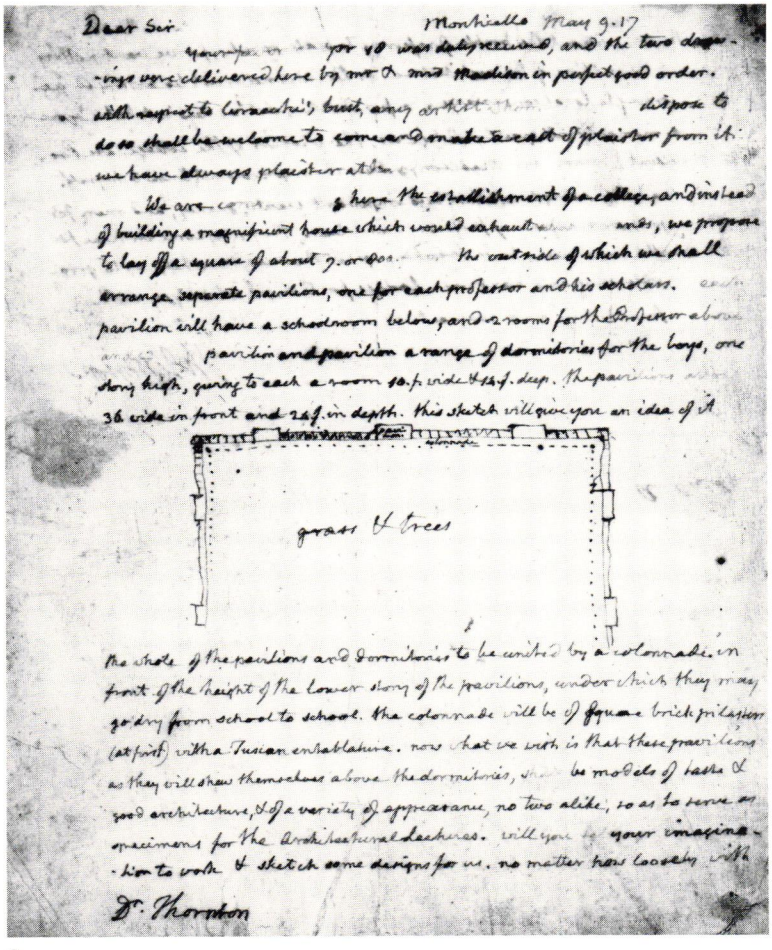
Jefferson's proposed versions of the Villa Rotunda for both the governor's house in Richmond and the president's house in Washington were his way of underlining the principle that the man who held these offices was still just another citizen when he was at home (figs. 5,6). But in fact, the Virginia statehouse is his only public building which fulfills the antique half of the dichotomy, and in the ensemble of the University of Virginia the dichotomy breaks down altogether. It might be more positive to speak of a dialectic in which the university constitutes the synthesis. The fact that its ensemble mixes Palladian and antique Roman models (with one specimen of contemporary French neoclassicism, Pavilion IX modelled after Ledoux) requires interpretation. It is important to note that the university shows many signs of having been conceived less as a set of public buildings than as an extension of the humanist concept of the private villa.

Again it is Karl Lehmann who has shown how many of the details of the university derive from cultured Romans' descriptions of their own villas. Certain aspects of Jefferson's earlier work at Monticello are derived from Pliny's villa: the situation on a hilltop, the garden in the form of a hippodrome,

8 Early plan of the University of Virginia, Thomas Jefferson, May 9, 1817. Jefferson wrote letters to William Thornton and Benjamin Latrobe for ideas for the pavilions. "We are commencing here the establishment of a college."



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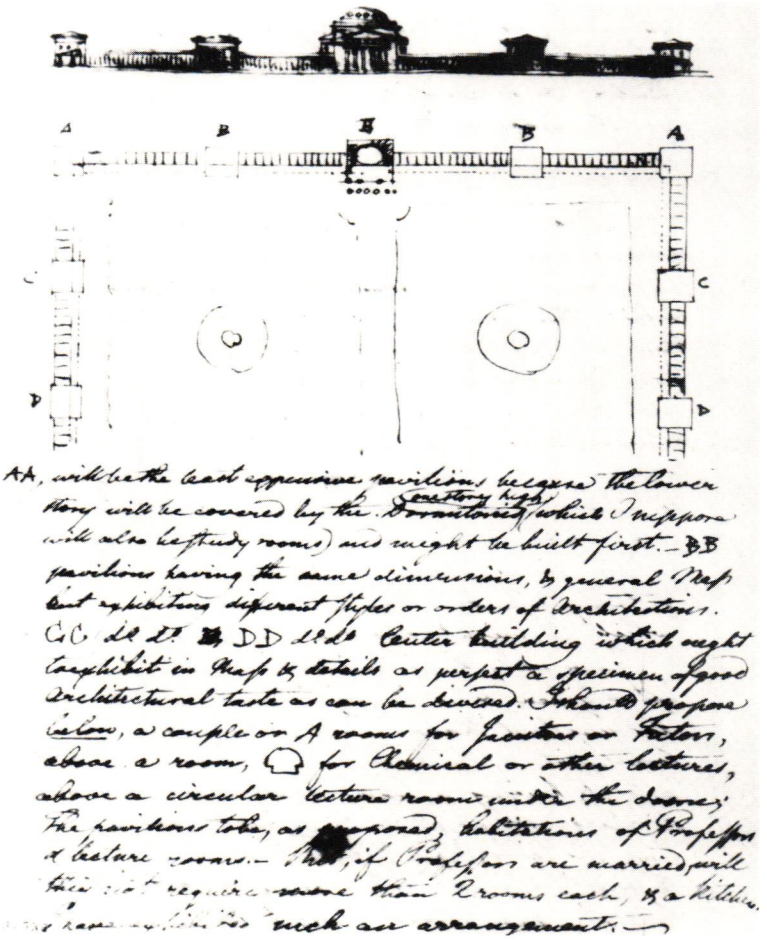
the outbuildings or *diaetae* to which the master can retire for both study and sleep, the porticoes connecting these to the main building, the underground passageways or *cryptoporticus* for the servants. The university too is in many respects an extension of this ancient concept of the villa as a loose assembly of buildings in the open country, and it is an extension following Palladio's principle that the assembly should constitute a hierarchy of spaces culminating at the center of a symmetrical system (fig. 7). The ten pavilions are *diaetae* where the professors both studied and slept. Since in Jefferson's original conception of the university's governance there was to be no president, each professor had the status of a master in the villa at large. As in the ancient villa, a generous set of porticoes brings the university's buildings into an ordered relationship. The two descending terraces of the Lawn correspond to what Cicero describes in his *Tusculan Disputations* (II.9) as his villa's upper and lower gymnasia (which he playfully named the Academy and the Lyceum), and at Tusculum too the upper terrace contained a library. Although the idea of an astronomical ceiling for the Rotunda is taken from Dio Cassius' statement that the dome of the Pantheon represented the heavens, the arrangement of mechanically moving stars Jefferson proposed comes from Varro's description of the rotunda of his aviary.

These details cohere to a purpose. What Jefferson seems to have contemplated was actually a dismantling of Monticello after his death and a continuation of its higher functions by the university. Conscious that the conversation of philosophers in the country was an activity worthy of perpetuation, he made arrangements to ensure that it would continue to grow in his own neighborhood.[10] He had already, in his "ward" system, conceived of a politically functional agrarian society of small freeholders which came much closer than the slave-based tobacco plantation system to a morally and ecologically sound way of cultivating the land (cf. the letter to Colonel James Madison, October 28, 1785). The one thing such a society of freeholders would lack was the ancient ideal of a rural space reserved for leisured philosophical discourse.

9 Latrobe's suggestion for a rotunda, 1817.



This deficiency justified his desire to transform his own humanist villa into an academical village.

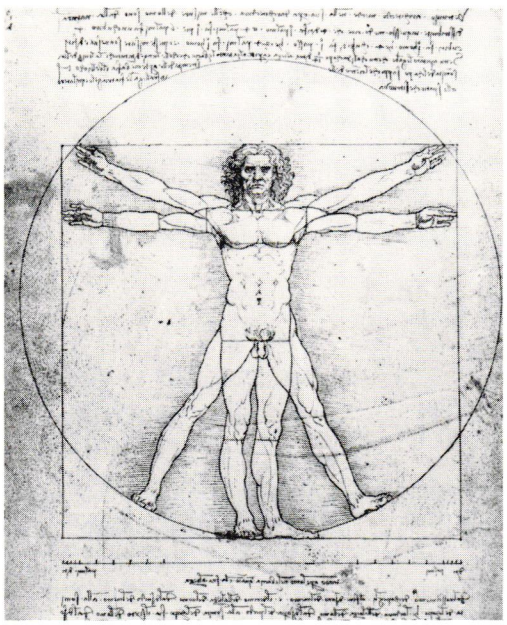
Thus far, Jefferson's intentions appear to be conscious ones. His original design seems to have placed the pavilions around three sides of a quadrangle, leaving the rest simply trees and grass (fig. 8). Latrobe suggested that some central building be added "to exhibit in mass and detail as perfect a specimen of good architectural taste as can be devised," but this suggestion is the extent of his contribution (fig. 9).[11] In choosing the Pantheon as the model for his perfect specimen, Jefferson apparently felt no conflict between his Renaissance and his antique criteria, for the Pantheon was considered in Italian humanist circles to be AEDIFICIUM TOTO TERRARUM ORBE CELEBERRIMUM, (The Most Celebrated Building in the World), as Urban VIII had inscribed on the porch in 1632. It was a choice which also had the advantage of being faultlessly in line with the most fashionable movement Jefferson had come in contact with when he was in Europe—namely, the French Visionary School. Indeed, Boullée had modelled his Cenotaph for Newton after it. In imitating the Pantheon, Jefferson found an axis back to antiquity which fell through the center of every architectural school he respected.

These intentions still seem conscious. But how clearly did Jefferson see what was situated at the vanishing point to which that axis back to antiquity leads? How deeply did he meditate on the symbolism of what he saw? The symbolism of the perfection of the Pantheon lies in the fact that the curve of its dome if extended to the ground creates a perfect sphere, and that the dome itself constitutes precisely the upper half of that imaginary sphere. The lower half is a cylinder on the interior and a rectangle on the exterior, so that the theoretical whole may be characterized as a sphere inscribed inside a cube. As such it is a unification of the categories of "spherical" and "cubical" architecture in which Jefferson seems to have thought.[12] But how well was Jefferson acquainted with the extraordinary series of exegeses of the symbolism of that

9

10 Vitruvian figure, Leonardo da Vinci.

11 Elevation, Cenotaph for Newton, Etienne-Louis Boullée, 1784.
12 Section, Cenotaph for Newton, Etienne-Louis Boullée, 1784.



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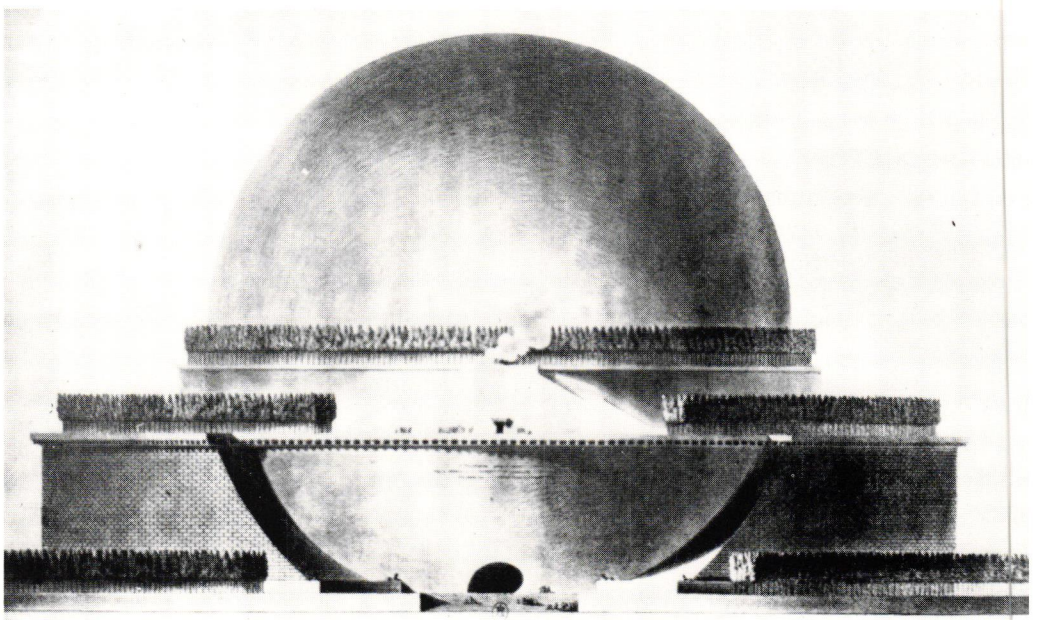

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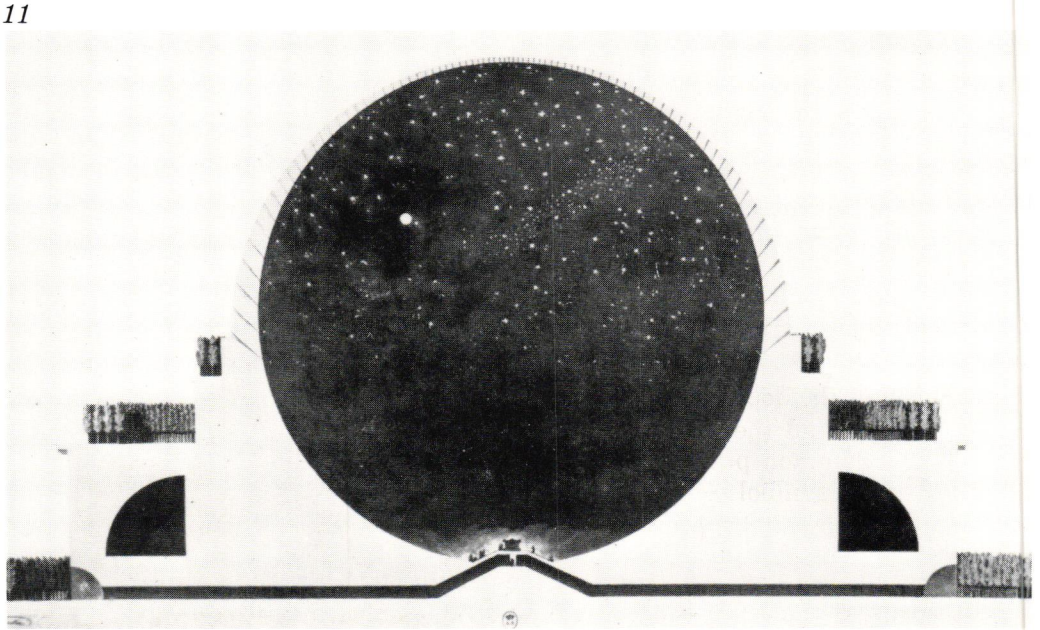

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perfection made by the architects who had recommended it, from Boullée back through Palladio, Leonardo, and Alberti, to Vitruvius, whose writing precedes the Pantheon in its present form?

To ask this question is really only to ask what he had made, or what he would have made, of one of the favored topics of conversation at the humanist villas of the Renaissance and perhaps of Roman times as well. In both cases the origin of the topic is Greek, and the delight taken in discussing it was delight in "Grecian mathematical form," as Blake puts it. One can be more precise. The canonical account of the perfection of the sphere is to be found in Plato's *Timaeus*, in the description of the demiurge's choice of a shape for the world:
"The shape best suited to the living being which was to contain within itself all others would be the shape which comprehends within itself all other shapes. Accordingly he turned the world on a lathe and made it spherical, curved so that its boundaries in every direction were equidistant from the center—the shape which is of all shapes most perfect and most like itself" (*Timaeus*, 33b).
The Renaissance theorizing on the matter is Neoplatonic.

The irony here is remarkable: Jefferson crowned his life's work with an architectural symbol inspired by the Greek thinker he most despised. Plato's *Republic* was for him the very archetype of "priestcraft," whose technique it was to persuade the people to accept leading analogies between changeless immaterial essences and changeless social institutions. What was at stake in his many broadsides against priestcraft was the doctrine of progress, according to which the educational and the political realms were to move forward with a common purpose.[13] It is at this point that the operation of the symbol sovereignly takes over and permits us to interpret it in detachment from the antipathies of the various men who used it. We are concerned here with articulating the meanings our civilization has derived from contemplation of the perfection of the spherical form, and if these include meanings Jefferson and Plato might have held in common, that is a fine extension of the general peace. It is not in any case to be supposed that Plato originated such theories, for the notion of the divinity of the sphere goes back to the Orphic poets and beyond.[14] Plato is only the vanishing point of our vision.

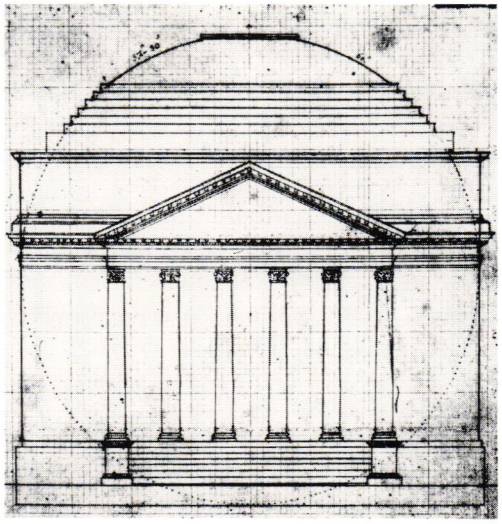
Contemplation of the sphere and its relation to other forms led architects from Vitruvius to Boullée to make two interrelated Neoplatonic propositions. The first is that the nature of the universe and of the divine principle that animates it is intelligible through mathematical proportions. The architects would then add that these proportions may be embodied in architecture. Vitruvius did not adopt such metaphysical theorizing, but a similar proposition is suggested by his use of the word *ratiocinatio* (literally, "linkage of reckonings") to cover the theoretical aspect of the development of proper proportions for buildings, since the word is otherwise used in Latin to designate the deduction of self-evident truths grounded in the nature of things (Vitruvius, *De Architectura* I.1.1). Alberti, confident in his Neoplatonic traditions, asserts that our senses instinctively perceive the beauty in a building's proportions because of an innate affinity between our souls and the harmonic structure of the universe.[15] Palladio's thinking is best inferred from the endorsement he gave to his friend Barbaro's commentary on Vitruvius by making drawings for his edition of it; in Barbaro's commentary the virtue inherent in architecture materializes in space the "certain truths" of mathematics.[16] Rudolf Wittkower sums up the thinking of the artists led by Alberti and Leonardo:
"Architecture was regarded by them as a mathematical science which worked with spatial units: parts of that universal space for the scientific interpretation of which they had discovered the key in the laws of perspective. . . . And they were convinced that universal harmony could not reveal itself entirely unless it were realized in space through architecture conceived in the service of religion."[17]
The sphere disclosed these truths most perfectly because the godhead could be defined as *intelligibilis sphaera* and had

chosen to provide the loftiest manifestation of its nature in the rotation of the starry sky.[18]

The second Neoplatonic architectural proposition was that geometrical forms bore a significant harmonious relation to the human body which a building should imitate. The Renaissance found its authority for this proposition in Vitruvius, who states that the extended hands and feet of a well-proportioned man fit exactly into the two perfect geometrical forms, the circle and the square, and that herein lay the criterion for symmetry in a building (*De Architectura* III.1.1). Leonardo's famous illustration of the passage is only one of many "Vitruvian figures" the Renaissance has left us (fig. 10). It is in the *Symposium* that Plato adumbrates this second proposition and provides the mode of thought by which it may be related to the first. Here, the beauty a lover first perceives in the body of his beloved leads to contemplation of *to kalon*, the Beautiful itself perceived by the soul as an immaterial divine principle. The Renaissance did not find this mode of thought incompatible with the Christian doctrine of Incarnation, which claims that the godhead gave testimony to the special beauty and nobility of the human body by assuming it. Renaissance architects welcomed the connection because it allowed them to pursue their Neoplatonic projects in the building of centralized churches.

Certain differences between the Graeco-Roman and the Judaeo-Christian notions of the interrelation between divinity and humanity within the visible universe will suggest themselves. Bacon, the man of two worlds, occupies the position of intermediary here:
"And therefore therein the heathen opinion differeth from the sacred truth: for they supposed the world to be the image of God, and man to be an extract or compendious image of the world; but the scriptures never vouchsafe to attribute to the world that honour, as to be the image of God, but only *the work of his hands*; neither do they speak of any other image of God, but man" (*Advancement of Learning* II.6.1).
Here the architect was in a privileged position to bridge the gap. Insofar as the temple was the work of his hands, he stood in relation to it as God to the world, but insofar as its proportions were those of a man, he could claim it satisfied the pagan ideal of a "compendious image" of God and the world alike. It is from this second proposition in general that we derive our most familiar image of humanism. The nude male body inscribed in a circle is a symbol of that reinstatement of man at the center of the intelligible universe on which the full resumption of the spirit of Greek antiquity depended.

It may be asked if either of these Neoplatonic propositions are implicit in Jefferson's most immediate model, Boullée's Cenotaph for Newton (figs. 11,12).[19] Boullée was fond of contrasting the Pantheon with St. Peter's, in reproach of the latter for having abandoned the Greek cross, with its theoretically as well as aesthetically satisfying possibilities of combining the sphere with the cube.[20] Clearly, he thought his choice of strictly simple and geometrical forms for all his buildings to be the best means of creating that sense of beauty which only approximation to the human form can produce:
"We consider *'beautiful'* those objects that most resemble the human organism and . . . we reject those which, lacking this resemblance, do not correspond to the human condition."[21]
The first proposition, the Platonic connection between ideal divine beauty and mathematical truth, seems to have been reinforced for Boullée by the renewed prestige given to mathematical truth by Newton's use of it to reveal the common laws governing the celestial and the terrestrial realms. Not merely the Cenotaph, but his whole architectural *oeuvre*, was "ruled by the recognition of the laws of nature, founded on Newton's theories. Boullée had no desire to 'improve nature'; he was no follower of contemporary thought in this respect. In his eyes the architect's task was to reproduce, by his own means and in a structural idiom, the ennobling impression which nature makes on the spectator. To attain this end the architect must first select from natural forms, under the guidance of a concept of regularity, based on Platonic traditions. . . . His theory of symmetry may be



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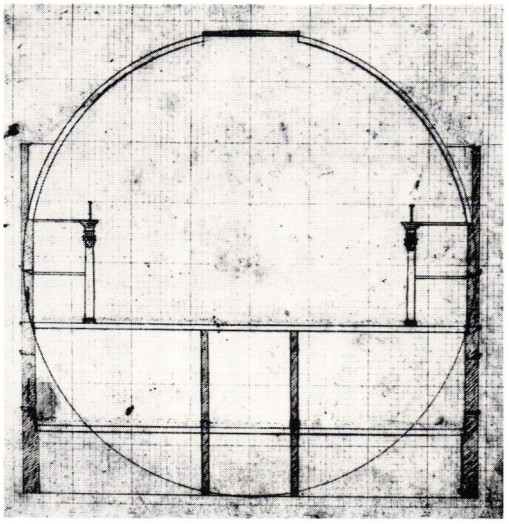

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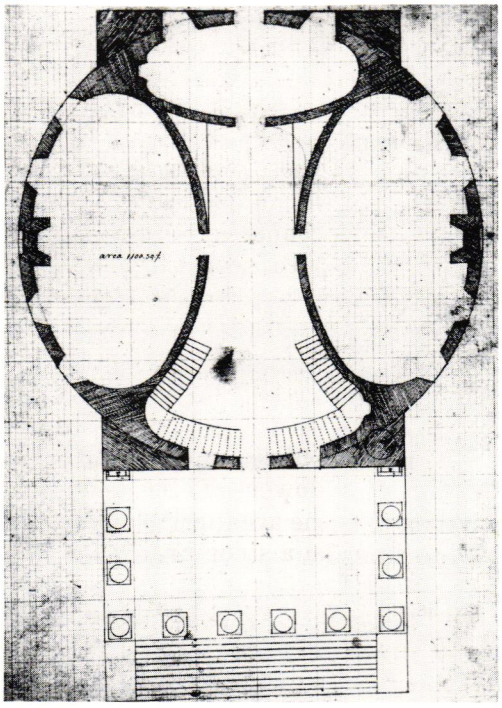

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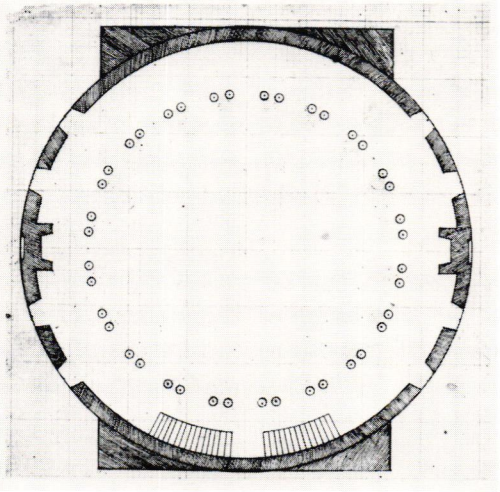

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13 South elevation, the Rotunda.
14 Section, the Rotunda.
15 First floor plan, the Rotunda.
16 Second floor plan (dome room), the Rotunda. Drawings by Thomas Jefferson, 1821.

regarded as the fulfillment of the Renaissance view of art."[22]

Helen Rosenau, the writer just quoted, has hinted at an aspect of the symbolism of Jefferson's Rotunda which is of the highest significance in interpreting its relation to its predecessors. "*Boullée had no desire to 'improve nature'; he was no follower of contemporary thought in this respect.*" That characterization is as true of the earlier architectural theorists I have cited as of Boullée, and what is at stake in all cases is their notion of the *use* to which mathematically discovered "laws of nature" were to be put by architecture. That use was the complement of the technological and the experimental. In addition to making way for man to transform the material world to his own ends, the mathematically discoverable laws of nature can inspire him to contemplation. Ezra Pound called it "the beautiful inutility of the *Tempio*," referring to Alberti's masterpiece at Rimini.[23] Architecture based on mathematical proportions was fulfilled most perfectly when it erected temples in which the divine was experienced with an instinctive sympathy by those who entered them. Such temples constituted the highest class of buildings, "without which," as Palladio insisted, "no civilization is possible."[24] To be present in such temples was to enter a state of openness to the sacred in which the technological project of dominating nature was arrested and instructed.

"Openness to the sacred" is not Jeffersonian language. One of the negative aspects of the Rotunda's symbolism of which he was quite conscious was that it replaced the chapel, normally the central building of a campus. The actual functions reserved for this symbolic structure, as stated in the university "Regulations" drawn up by Jefferson for the Board of Visitors (October 4, 1824), no more designate a temple to mathematical beauty than a cenotaph for a great scientist or a monument to a deified emperor. The order in which Jefferson lists them suggests a hierarchy created by the stories themselves. The central mass of the building is flanked by "open apartments" dedicated to the necessary task of military training and the embellishment of athletics. The laboratory for chemical experiments is relegated to the basement. On the first floor one of the oval rooms is used for such sectarian religious rituals as the law permits, but these rituals are deliberately downplayed by the fact that the room was also to be used for exams and large lectures. The two major oval rooms are predominantly dedicated to instruction in and practice of the fine arts, those "innocent and ornamental accomplishments" which point to *to kalon* itself; and when the building was first opened the assembled Virginians celebrated the occasion with a ball there. (Jefferson's concern with "ornament" is also to be seen in the pains he took to get properly carved roses for the Rotunda's porch. "When shall we get our roses for the Rotunda?" he writes impatiently in December 1824. "The whole scaffolding of the building is obliged to be kept standing only to enable the workmen to put up these small ornaments.")[25]

Finally one ascends to the library, flooded with light and exposing the eye to the curve of the dome and the oculus. This room was to the university what the university was to the world, a place set aside to realize "the illimitable freedom of the human mind to explore and to expose every subject susceptible of its contemplation."[26] And, as the actual object of contemplation for the student as his eye wandered up from the page, there was to be an astronomical ceiling (never realized for lack of funds). With its mechanically moving stars the ceiling would have been a feat of technology, but technology of the peculiarly Roman sort, used for amusement rather than for the practical saving of labor. As the student read books from the Rotunda library and fit them into the curriculum he had selected, he was to acquire useful knowledge that would "render the elements themselves subservient to the purposes of man" without losing access to the deduction of the existence of an "author of all the relations of morality, and of the laws and obligations these infer"(Rockfish Gap Report). That access was to be as direct a matter as gazing up from the books to the well-fabricated starry sky above. That Jefferson believed it to be simple is seen in the principles stated in his 1825 "Catalogue forming the Body of a Library

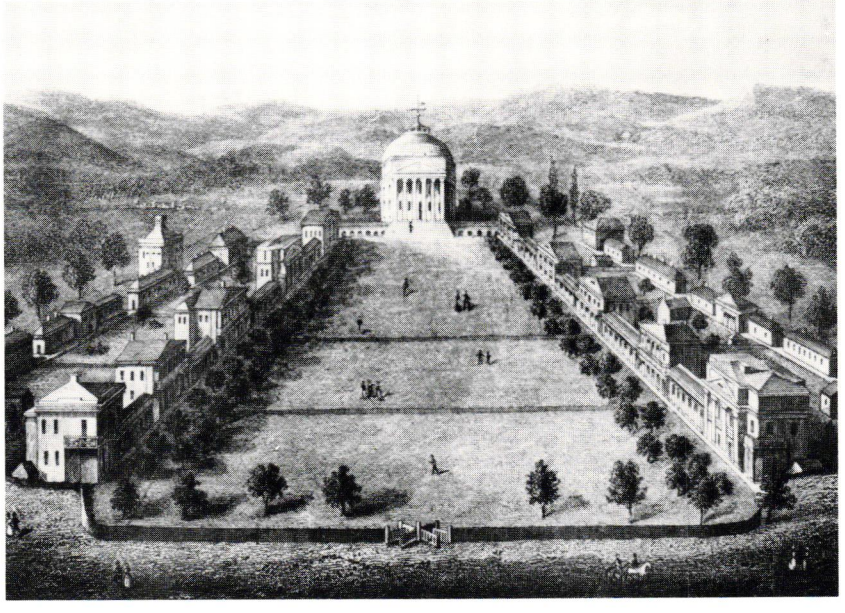
for the University of Virginia":
"In Religion, divided as it is into multifarious creeds, differing in their bases and more or less in their superstructure, such moral works have been chiefly selected as may be approved by all, omitting what is controversial and merely sectarian. Metaphysics have been incorporated with Ethics, and little extension given to them. For, while some attention may be usefully bestowed on the operations of thought, prolonged investigation of a faculty unamenable to the test of our senses, is an expense of time too unprofitable to be worthy of our indulgence."

The astronomical ceiling reminds one of Kant's famous conclusion to the *Critique of Practical Reason*:
"Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration, the oftener and more steadily reflection engages itself with them: *the starry sky above me and the moral law within me.*"
And yet to invoke Kant would be no less ironic than invoking Plato, for the abstruse account of the relation between the moral law and the existence of a supreme being in the first two *Critiques*, with their "prolonged investigation of a faculty unamenable to the test of our senses," makes them precisely the kind of books which would have been excluded from the library's shelves. Rather than spending his time on metaphysics, the professor of "Ideology" was obligated to deduce the laws of morality. In addition to "Ethics" the other subjects grouped under his rubric were "General Grammar," "Rhetoric," and "Belles Lettres and the fine arts."[27] It is notable that this alone among the ten professorships proposed by the Rockfish Gap Report was never filled in its proposed form, either in Jefferson's lifetime or afterwards. The task of setting limits to the powers unleashed by the progress of useful knowledge and the "illimitable freedom of the human mind" was no easier then than now.

No matter how much weight one has given to the ensemble of functions, there remains a peculiar importance in insisting on the Rotunda's Renaissance inspiration as a *tempio* in which the act of contemplation and the experience of innate harmony are honored above all else. To do so is to posit that the architectural achievement of the Italian Renaissance city-states was adumbrated through Jefferson's partly conscious symbolism for the state of Virginia and ultimately the whole of America. That achievement was the "instauration," the solemn renewal, of the principle by which man chooses to make contemplation of nature an experience of the sacred which instructs his *libido dominandi* and admonishes him to set limits to it. "Instauration" is Bacon's word, and I use it to point to the possibility of setting checks to the excesses of the Baconian project no less than the Jeffersonian. In this spirit Bacon's contrast, cited earlier, between the "heathen opinion" and the "sacred truth" about the relation of God, man, and world, might need recasting. As long as the world is only the work of God's hand and man remains his sole image, is it possible that man will remain prey to the temptation to imitate God by manipulating his works? And is it possible that if man can somehow acknowledge himself to be the image of the world, and the world the image of divinity, he will be less obsessed by the perfectibility through manipulation of either himself or nature? Contemplation of his own image at the center of the humanist circle should show man as the measure of all things only in the sense that he is the reflection of a sacredness that is also reflected in nature. To see himself thus should make him less interested in transforming his own species into some higher one. And the circle itself, image of the purity of mathematics by which science makes its highest claims to precision in laying bare the laws of nature, should also suggest that there is a limit beyond which the application of science to technology becomes unnecessary. It is the limit at which man's attunement to the sacred renders his contemplation of it in nature sufficient.

If one is to entertain such an interpretation of the Rotunda, and of the wisdom of Jefferson's humanism embodied in it, there is a last point that should be taken into account. That is the fact that the south facade was to look out across the Lawn to a landscape without buildings, with only an arboretum

17 View of the Lawn, University of Virginia, 1856.



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intervening. I mentioned at the beginning that this feature of the master plan of the university could be read as a metaphor for the expansion on which the Louisiana Purchase was predicated, and that the landscape to be expanded over was also, in the Jeffersonian vision, to be transformed and subdued by the artifice of man. But in fairness to the Jeffersonian vision, we must remember how he intended that transformation to be made. It was to be agricultural, not industrial, and though it is neither possible nor desirable to return to his agrarian scheme and attempt to realize it in its purity, it is both possible and desirable to reconsider the principle that underlies it. In agriculture man violates nature to initiate a process and then humbles himself again in order to let nature complete it.

This was a principle at the center of Jefferson's personality. When asked his occupation he would give the very Roman reply that he was a farmer: "There is not a sprig of grass that shoots uninteresting to me." Instead of saying that the Rotunda faces wilderness to proclaim the expansion of empire, we may choose to say that it simply faces land whose abundance it tends and whose ripening it waits on. We may choose to interpret Jefferson's final symbol as possessing authority (*auctoritas*) in the oldest Roman sense, namely, a wisdom grounded in the power to augment (*augere*)—a wisdom that makes things grow.[28] To make things grow in the agricultural sense is always in part simply to let them grow—to leave off at the right season, stand back, and watch.

1. See the 1818 "Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Fix the Site of the University of Virginia, & C.," published in Roy J. Honeywell, *The Educational Work of Thomas Jefferson* (Cambridge, Mass., 1931).
2. Fiske Kimball, *Thomas Jefferson Architect* (Boston, 1916), p. 82. It should be remembered that the popular name of the Pantheon after it was converted into a Christian church in the Seventh Century was "Santa Maria Rotunda," and that the French visionaries and Encyclopedists with whom Jefferson was familiar habitually referred to it as "la Rotonde." His very designation for the university's central building is meant to draw attention to its model.
3. Karl Lehmann, *Thomas Jefferson, American Humanist* (Chicago, 1947), p. 175.
4. Unless otherwise noted, cited letters of Thomas Jefferson are in the Jefferson Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.
5. This is a recurrent phrase in Jefferson's writings. See the letters to Andrew Jackson, September 19, 1803; and to James Madison, April 27, 1809; and the address, "To the President and Legislative Council, the Speaker and House of Representatives of the Territory of Indiana," December 28, 1805.
6. Lehmann, *Thomas Jefferson*, p. 157.
7. Frank E. Brown, *Roman Architecture* (New York, 1961), p. 35.
8. Cited without reference in William Howard Adams, ed., *The Eye of Thomas Jefferson* (Washington, 1976), p. 95.
9. Colonel Isaac Coles to General John Hartwell Cocke, February 23, 1816, University of Virginia Library, Shields 1480: "With Mr. Jefferson I conversed at length on the subject of architecture. Palladio, he said, 'was the Bible.' You should get it and stick close to it." Cited in Desmond Guinness and Julius Trousdale Sadler, Jr., *Mr. Jefferson, Architect* (New York, 1973), p. 165. See also Jefferson's letter to L'Enfant, April 10, 1771.
10. Already during his years as president he was dreaming of an "academical village" and thinking that his vast library at Monticello might be transferred to it (to Henry Tazewell, January 5, 1805, Thomas Jefferson Papers, University of Virginia Library). In 1811 he was writing abroad of the importance of pedagogy in his daily round at home: "A part of my occupation, and by no means the least pleasing, is the direction of the studies of such young men as ask it. They place themselves in the neighboring village, and have the use of my library and counsel, and make a part of my society." (to General Thaddeus Kosciusko, February 26, 1810).
11. Latrobe to Jefferson; see Guinness and Sadler, *Mr. Jefferson*, p. 125.
12. Cf. Lehmann, *Thomas Jefferson*, p. 167.
13. For a thoughtful recent exchange on Jefferson's reading of Plato see Eva T. H. Brann, *Paradoxes of Education in a Republic* (Chicago, 1979), pp. 95-98, and Chaninah Maschler, "Some Thoughts About Eva Brann's *Paradoxes of Education in a Republic*," *Interpretation* 10, no. 1: pp. 113ff.
14. Cf. D. Mahnke, *Unendliche Sphäre und Allmittelpunkt* (Halle, 1937), pp. 59ff., 243-44. Mahnke traces the history of the mysticism of the perfect sphere in inverse chronological order, arriving in his last pages at Orphism and the darkness preceding it.
15. Rudolf Wittkower, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism* (New York, 1962). See in particular pp. 3-8, 27.
16. Ibid., p. 67.
17. Ibid., p. 29.
18. Ibid., pp. 27-28.
19. There is no explicit documentary evidence that Jefferson had seen Boullée's drawing of his vision of the Cenotaph, or that he had ever met him in Paris. Evidence is to be had of his admiration for the Rotunda of Molino's Halle aux Blé—"the most superb thing on earth," he wrote to Maria Cosway (October 12, 1786)—and of his exposure to some of Ledoux's and Boullée's domestic architecture. But it is universally assumed by writers on Jefferson's architecture that he must have shown a lively interest in the visionaries while in Paris, and that discussion of their theories as well as exposure to their drawings would have been impossible for him to avoid. The quotations that follow from Boullée's *Architecture, Essai sur l'art* are from a manuscript never published during the author's lifetime, and therefore at best Jefferson could only have been familiar with versions of these ideas transmitted in conversation. An example of their general currency is in the comparison between St. Peter's and the Pantheon in the article "Goût," in the *Grande Encyclopedie*, by Voltaire, Montesquieu, and d'Alembert.
20. Cf. Helen Rosenau, *Boullée and Visionary Architecture* (London, 1976), p. 27.
21. Etienne-Louis Boullée, "Architecture: Essai sur l'art," trans. Sheila de Vallée; published in Rosenau, *Boullée*, p. 86.
22. Ibid., p. 28. It may also be asked whether either of these Platonizing propositions was entertained by the architect of the Pantheon itself. Since the architect is unknown and there is not a single contemporary statement about the building, no direct answer is forthcoming. The present building is a total reconstruction, undertaken in Hadrian's reign, of a shrine of unknown design originally dedicated by Agrippa, Augustus' second-in-command. It is possible that Hadrian himself was the architect, since building projects were one of his dominant passions during his reign; or it may have been, more simply, that from him proceeded the master concept, the novel idea of combining the traditional temple porch with a sphere. It is in any case definite that he defied Roman precedent in his rededication of the new structure, for instead of inscribing his own name above the porch he drew attention to the building's Augustan genesis by simply restoring Agrippa's original inscription. It is again unclear whether the original temple was Agrippa's idea or Augustus'. Agrippa had desired to dedicate a temple to all the gods and to include a statue of Augustus inside it; Augustus refused, but allowed him to place a statue of the deified Julius inside, in the company of the other gods, with statues of himself and Agrippa outside in the porch. Hence, from the beginning the temple was designed to mediate to the Romans the radically new concept of a deity that had incarnated itself in the

body of a human being who had recently walked among them. Hadrian's retention of the Agrippan dedication may have been a means of reemphasizing the original symbolism.
23. Ezra Pound, "Paris Letter," December 1922; published in *The Dial* 74 (January 1923): p. 90.
24. Preface to Book III of the *Quattro Libri*, cited by Wittkower, *Architectural Principles*, p. 57.
25. Jefferson to William J. Coffee, December 9, 1824.
26. Adams, *Eye of Thomas Jefferson*, p. xl.
27. When Jefferson took up residence at William and Mary at the age of sixteen in 1758, "Ethics, Rhetoric and Belles Lettres" were the three connected lecture courses being given by William Small, whom he describes in his *Autobiography* as the man from whom "I got my first views of the expansion of science, and of the system of things in which we are placed." Properly to explicate what Jefferson had in mind when he associated these subjects with "Ideology," and with the deduction of morality from the existence of God, is the task of an earlier part of the work on Jefferson from which the present article is drawn.
28. The etymological connection between the two Latin words is the subject of an extended meditation, in the context of the American founders' relation to Rome, in Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York, 1978), pp. 201ff.

Figure Credits
1, 7, 8, 13-16 Thomas Jefferson Papers, University of Virginia Library.
2-6 Courtesy of the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore.
9 Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society.
10 From Jean Paul Richter, comp. and ed., *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, 3d ed., 2 vols. (London, 1970), vol. 1, p. 343.
11 From Emil Kaufmann, "Etienne-Louis Boullée," *The Art Bulletin* 21, no. 3 (September 1939): p. 212.
12 From Helen Rosenau, "Boullée: Architect-Philosopher 1728-1799," *Architectural Review* 3, no. 666 (June 1952): p. 396.
17 Betts Collection, University of Virginia Library.

The Love of Ruins, *or* the Ruins of Love

Leon Krier
Translated by Richard Becherer

2
1 (frontispiece) Reconstruction of Pliny's Laurentian Villa. Watercolor by Rita Wolff, 1982.
2 Alix holding Pliny's Laurentian Villa. Drawing by Jacques Martin, 1982.

I dedicate this work to Jacques Martin with the hope that perhaps one day Alix will be the host of our Pliny, if only for the duration of one page or two.

For some years now, an old friend has indefatigably taken any opportunity to show me his snapshots of archaeological sites taken during his numerous trips abroad.
Knowing that I share his passion for the ancients, he very naturally concludes that landscapes studded with venerable ruins must necessarily engage my spirits. My friend's thick albums undoubtedly represent an excellent documentation of Graeco-Roman sites as they appear today to the naked eye.
To respond to his attentive gentility, and also to nourish his love, I armed myself one day with the most beautiful images of the reconstructions of KRISCHEN and CANINA, BECCHETTI and GISMONDI; furthermore, I showed him excellent photographs of the great model housed in the Museum of Roman Civilization. But to my astonishment, my enthusiastic explanation evoked in my friend only a courteous interest, and the initial reserve turned quickly into boredom. From all appearances, my good friend preferred the photo of a beautiful sunset on the Campo Vaccino to even the most evocative reconstruction of the Republican Forum.
While I am not interested in "his" sad excavations and in "his" old stones, it is equally clear that my friend is no more impassioned by "my" reconstructions. The love of ruins has, in effect, very little to do with the love of the ancients and their ideas. The confusion of these two contradictory sentiments is but one of the tragic accidents of history, because, had the ancients been lovers of ruins, we would merely know the ruins of their ruins. During the difficult years between adolescence and adulthood, I had the premonition that my love for architectural solidity, beauty, and monumentality would attract very few admirers and clients. Paradoxically, the feelings of the explorer and those of the last witness of a great event are imbued equally with a terror and a poetic courage.

In 1983, very few mortals will succeed in feeling the intensity

3 The esplanade of the rising sun.

3

of heroic sentiments that the making of a beautiful architectural drawing could produce as recently as the year 1970. Just thirteen years ago, the pleasurable dedication towards a beautiful project merited only wounding adjectives or, at best, astonished and condescending attention. Candidly and logically, I had then concluded that if I wished to make architecture in a serious manner, without, for one reason or another, being branded a fascist, a nazi, or a reprobate, it would be necessary to resign myself to becoming an archaeologist. Massimo Scolari then revealed to me that this was pointless. Today, archaeologists are disinterested in classical architecture in an insidious, yet even more radical way than architects.

A desperate neophyte without guide or master, I had to dispense far too many of my talents to illuminate the difficult twists of my solitary route, because our modern industrial education employs all subterfuges to confound both our sentiments and our intelligence. And so the ancients' splendid messages and their words of stone reach us, alas, as fragmentary, enigmatic, and always incomprehensible murmurs.

Poverty of sentiment simultaneously renders us victims and tragic actors. Thus, I only succeeded in feeling what I had succeeded in understanding to begin with. In this backwards education, my love dictated a route—oh, how correct—but I tended to follow more the distant flutterings of the Muse's wings without ever being illuminated by her inspired gaze. In my drawings, she soon animated the trees with leaves and then with branches; and after cypresses, my love discovered even more complex plant species. Raw cylinders became true columns and bare volumes became houses and palaces, pierced with doors and windows, crowned with cornices and true roofs. But while the volumes of Letarouilly and the confused encyclopedia of Luigi Crema were my inseparable companions, archaeological sites and their sad ruins interested me so little that I myself remained scandalized by the fact. Rather than burn my head in the sunlight, I preferred to let time roll by in the shade of a beautiful piazza. In search of my dead brothers, I crossed museums in long strides, stopping only before the heroic horizons of my friends Claude and Nicolas. Even today, the most celebrated ruins invariably fill me with melancholy irritation and seem to me only the indolent testimonies of glories that one assumes to be irremediably past, thus dead and lost forever.

Even when doctors brag of grafting and reconstructing what time or accident condemns, there are few projects that exasperate the majority of contemporary archaeologists as much as a proposition to reconstruct a monument in its integrity.

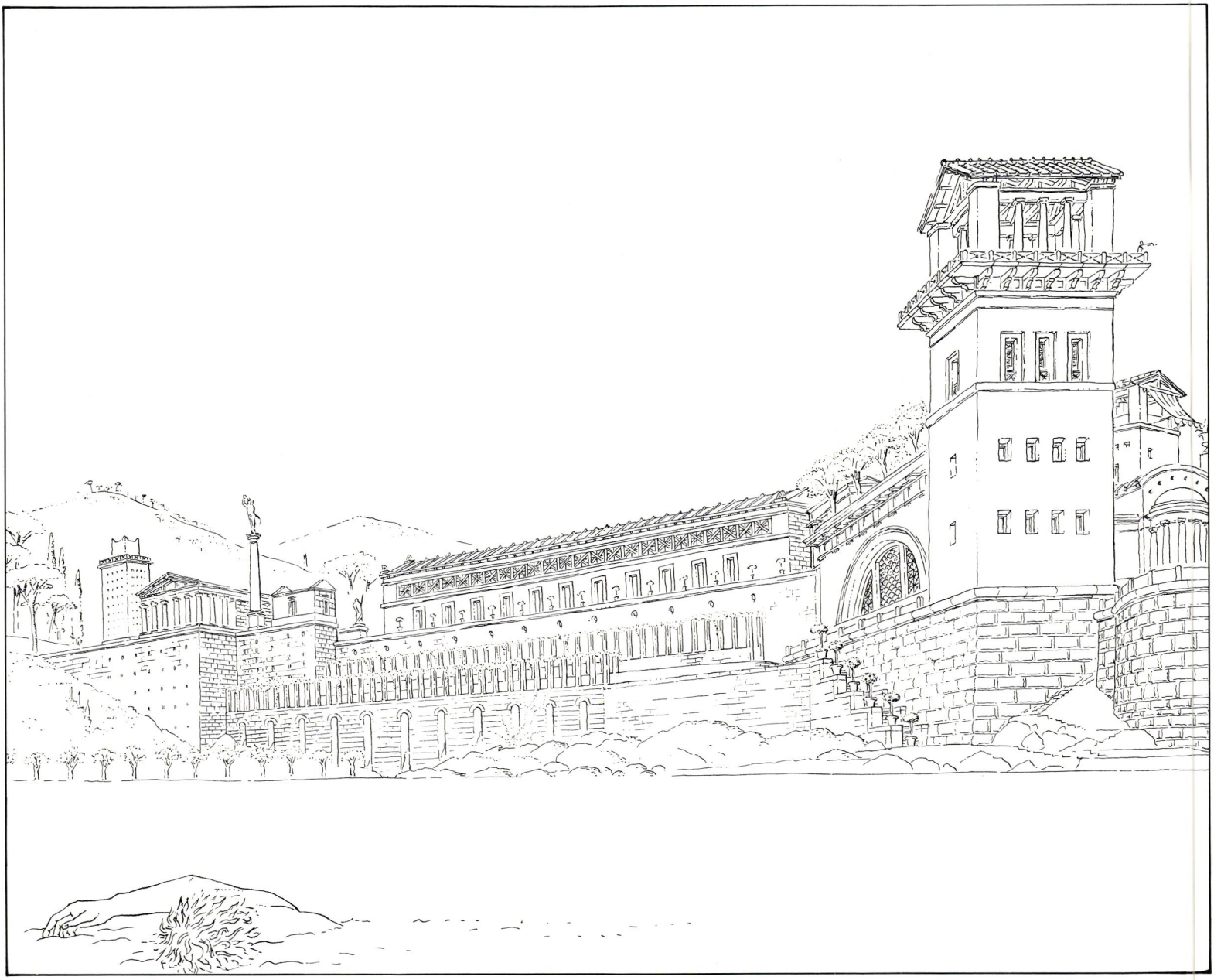
Rather than reconstruct the Athenian Acropolis in its antique glory (on the model of the Stoa of Attalos on the Agora), the archaeological services have decided to save the sacred remains by placing them at the foot of the rock in an air-conditioned space. This "Museum" is designed by the author of innumerable miserable new slums so sadly familiar to the French. On the plateau, one promises to eternalize the monument by casting its ruinous effigy in vulgar concrete. This "safeguarding" operation demands as much money as would an integral reconstruction. A cultural and spiritual event of primary importance is thus absorbed into a banal operation of industrial tourism, the creation of a temporary commercial venture. The first monument of European architecture will soon be an authentic *fake*.

Our immense industrial machine which applies itself to consume the fundamental values of all civilization encloses ruins and holy fragments with the same care and air-conditioning that it devotes to the incurably ill.

This machine is capable of the most audacious enterprises and it will construct without hesitation immense superhighways toward all the shrines of Apollo sooner than reconstruct a single one of these sanctuaries.

Paralyzed in their proper criteria of scientific verity, modern archaeologists refuse any idea of integral reconstruction for fear of committing even the most insignificant error. On the other hand, they do not hesitate to disfigure the sacred precincts with vulgar protective structures, exiling the most

4 Horti diaeta-Cryptoporticus, Sphaeristerium, the baths. View from the setting sun.



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noble works of art to such miserable huts of concrete and steel as the archaeological museums of Delphi and Sperlonga.
It is undeniable that reconstructions of the great masterpieces of classical architecture would very quickly acquire a cultural significance that would go far beyond simple, scientific, archaeological, and touristic interest, and occupy a central position in a discussion of global reconstruction.
Their exact reconstruction, from a technical, artistic, and iconographic point of view, poses no scientific problem due to the extraordinary richness of extremely detailed technical documentation which has been compiled over the last two hundred years. On these buildings, we possess more graphic documents than any modern-day construction requires.
The extremely meticulous and slow fabrication of classical structures, as well as their integration into urban life, would assume a first-order significance by recreating a qualified artisan class; the buildings' aesthetic radiance would establish a standard of excellence for all contemporary artistic and architectural creation.
The immense know-how that would be demanded by their realization could regain for architecture and construction the professional and social prestige which, in an industrial civilization, is secured by the inventors of machines of production and war.

With other artistic professions, contemporary archaeology shares a fundamental scepticism and a tragic uncertainty which can be explained only by the marginal roles to which these professions have been consigned by industry.
Consequently, like bad clockmakers, they continue to take apart the clock, contenting themselves with classifying elements according to weights and measures.
Having lost the plan of the clock, however, they doubt that a clock can ever again be used to tell the time.

An archaeologist of classical architecture must first of all be a great artist. For archaeology, as for all creative work, the motor is imagination and passion.

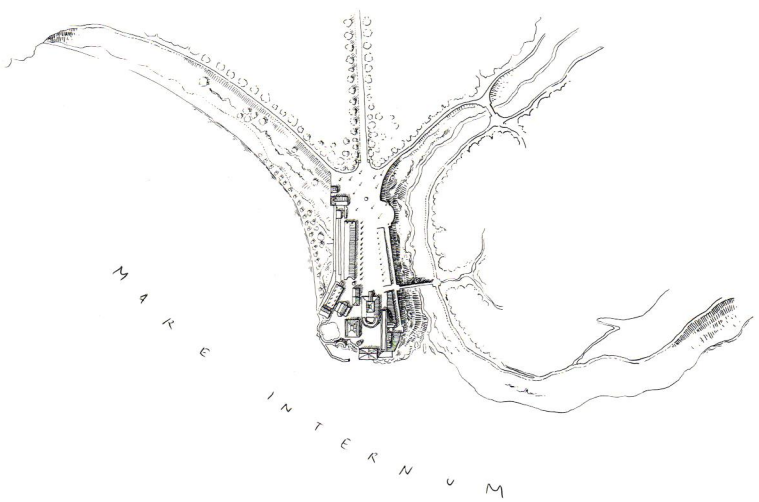
An archaeologist who knows only how to measure and weigh is a collector of fragments, and a fragment has no value in itself.
The fragment only gains its value from the extent to which it serves to reconstruct a whole; as this reconstruction passes from our heads onto paper and then into stone, it must follow its necessary and logical route.
Life is a process of permanent reconstruction. Incapability of reconstructing is an incapability of living. Death is but the definitive interruption of reconstruction according to a fixed plan and order which produces infinitely varied individuals.

During *epochs of decadence*, fields of ruins inspire a nostalgia for glorious and irretrievable past memories.

During *epochs of desolation*, even the most glorious ruin only evokes the ruin; the insignificant fragment of a value will be venerated for being the value itself; the part is taken for the whole. During these epochs the *part* dictates the law to the *whole*.

During *epochs of reconstruction*, a field of ruins has no value proper, because it is only one of many building sites which demands an even more splendid reconstruction. To the spirit, it inspires the image, and this image will guide the reconstruction.

5 Pliny's Villa on the Laurentine coast.



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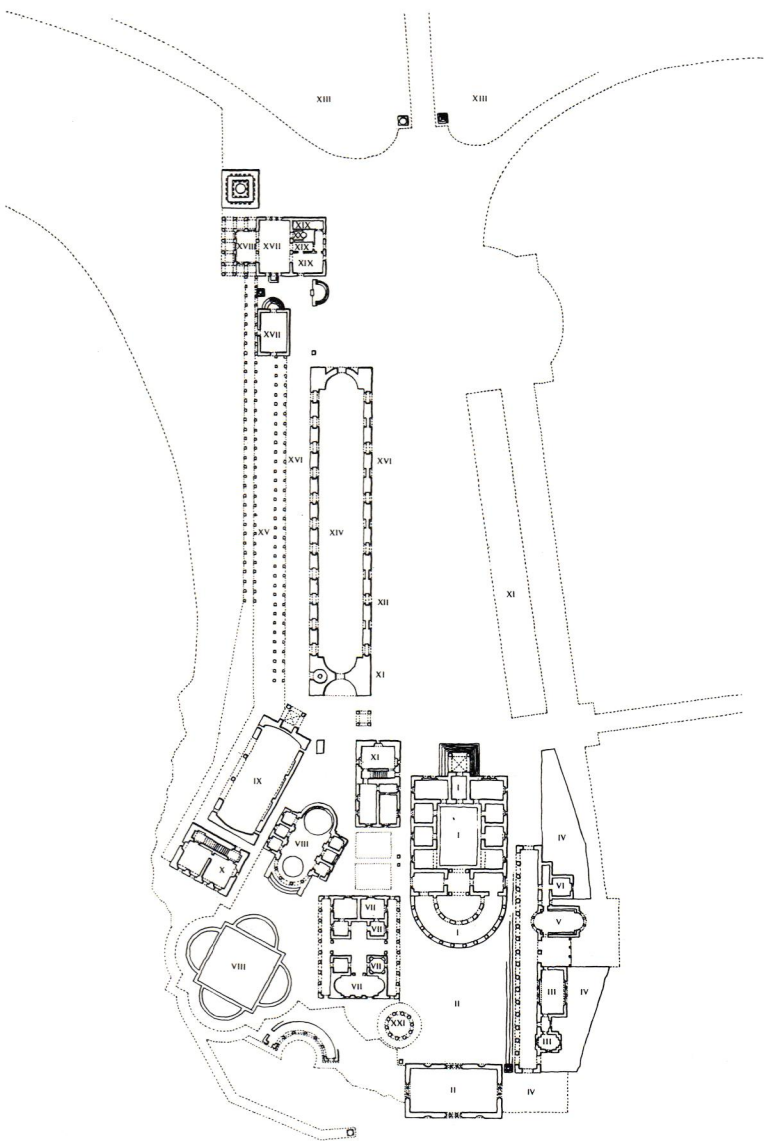
The public aspect of the Roman villa does not simply reduce itself to its exterior appearance, to its facades. The villa is not a closed world, it is not a monastery, nor a royal palace. It is an ensemble of buildings which serves diverse functions, sometimes strictly private, sometimes very public. Their form, their scale, and their construction necessarily reflect each of their very different statuses.

Far from suggesting to me an immense octopus of bricks and stones, Pliny inspires me to conceive a villa made up of a number of separate buildings. This true *villa-ge* neither had to fear brigands nor to ward off pirates; and thus, the sun, the wind, the great perspectives, and the sea dictated the disposition—sometimes open, sometimes closed—of the ensemble.
Rigorous indications regarding topographic and solar orientations discourage a purely orthogonal disposition as strictly parallel to the principal northwest-southeast axis of the Laurentine coastline. Also, the text of Pliny is replete with contradictions only if we accept the topographic configurations of the site as it presents itself nowadays.
The exposure of the Great Triclinium toward the "three seas," the north-south orientation of the Cryptoporticus, and, above all, the fact that it flanked the shoreline while opening out to the setting sun equally sustain my hypothesis of a "promontory," or "pen-insula" disposition.
After being forced to invent the site even before the composition of the buildings (rather than hold myself too closely to the prose of my ancient client), I succumbed without resistance to the seduction of the site.

Consequently, I could not possibly be diverted by an impossible historical and archaeological rigor. The particular attraction of this exercise truly resides in the fact that our proposition must remain pure of all disfiguration by habit or time. Dimensions and proportions, just as the relative scale and artistic articulation of the different buildings, constitute the principal object of my study and my RECONSTRUCTION. The fundamental simplicity of domestic buildings (Atrium, Winter Quarters, the Horti-pavilion)

6 Plan, Pliny's Laurentian Villa.



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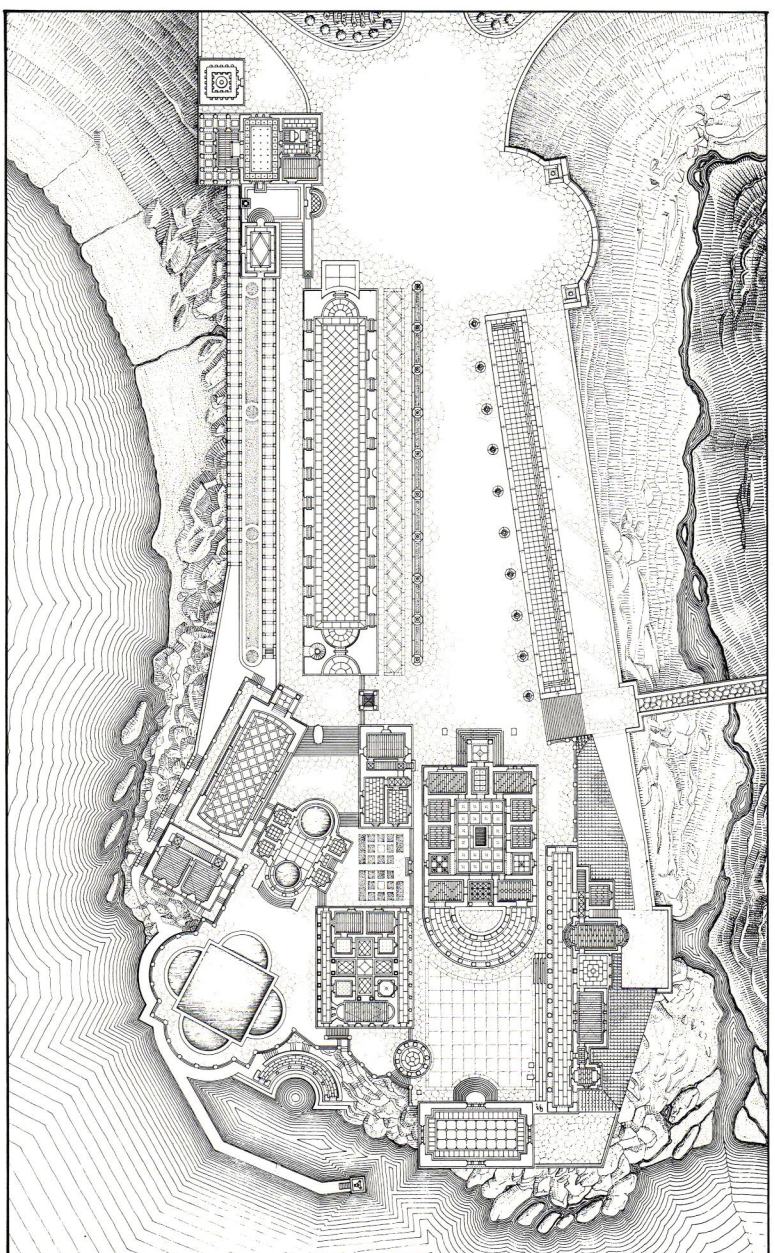
I *vestibulum, atrium, porticus*
II *triclinium, cavaedium*
III *cubiculum amplum, deinde aliud minus*
IV *angulus, hibernaculum, gymnasium*
V *cubiculum ... in bybliothecae speciem*
VI *dormitorium*
VII *cubiculum politissimum, cubiculum grande ... plurimo sole, cubiculum cum procoetone*
VIII *balnei cella frigidaria, duo baptisteria, unctorium, hypocauston, propnigeon, calida piscina mirifica ex qua natantes mare adspiciunt*
IX *sphaeristerium, quod calidissimo soli inclinato iam die occurrit*
X *Hic turris erigitur, diaetae duae, praeterea cenatio*
XI *Est et alia turris, apotheca, horreum, triclinium, quod turbati maris non nisi fragorem et sonum patitur, ... hortum et gestationem videt*
XII *buxo aut rore marino*
XIII *vinea ... hortum morus et ficus*
XIV *cryptoporticus (prope publici operis extenditur)*
XV *xystus violis odoratus*
XVI *proximam partem umbra sua temperat*
XVII *heliocaminus ... cubiculum autem*
XVIII *zotheca ... quae specularibus*
XIX *hypocauston, procoeton, cubiculum*
XX ... *cubiculum noctis et somni. Non illud voces servulorum, non maris murmur, non tempestatum motus, non fulgurum lumen ac ne diem quidem sentit nisi fenestris apertis.*
XXI *deficitur aqua salienti, sed puteos*

7 Textured plan, Pliny's Laurentian Villa.



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contrasts with the rich monumentality and architecture of the public buildings (the Cryptoporticus, the Triclinium, the Monopteros, etc.).

The unit of measure is the Roman foot and all the rooms are proportioned according to Vitruvian indications, that is to say, according to the relations between whole numbers and fractions of numbers.
The system is simultaneously simple and practical; it is a robust instrument that facilitates conception and realization and, above all, the easy communication with artisans "in situ." It helps in creating spaces and harmonious masses (bodies), and it harmonizes their most diverse and disparate parts.

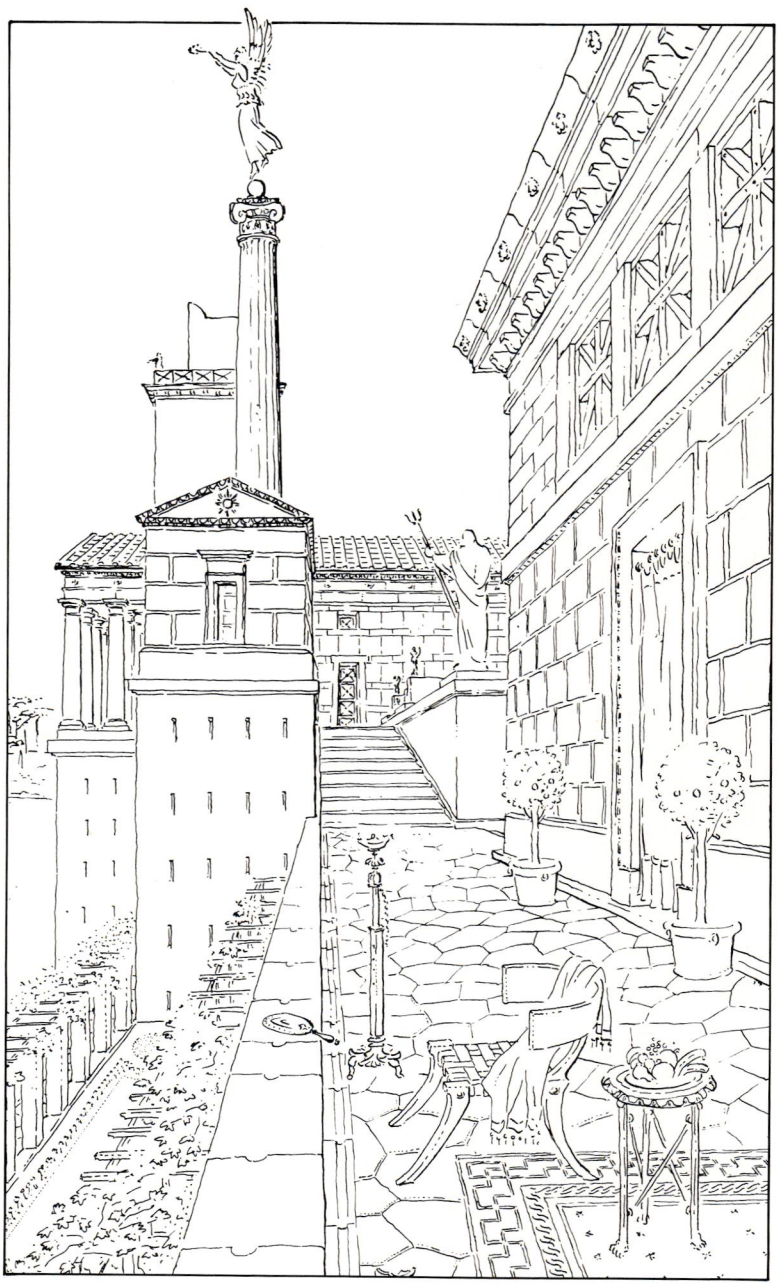
For example:
— The Atrium measures 30 x 45 x 22 Roman feet, a proportion of 2 : 3 : 3/2.
— The Great Triclinium measures 30 x 60 x 45 Roman feet, a proportion of 1 : 2 : 3/2.
— The Cryptoporticus measures 30 x 180 x 45 Roman feet, a proportion of 1 : 6 : 3/2.

In my opinion, the employment of the golden section and its numerical series, the use of complex geometrical systems and irrational numbers, must be reserved for symbolic and monumental structures which are commemorative and religious monuments; and they must not enter into the design of a villa or palace.
This complex would most certainly be embellished with rich statuary and numerous frescoes; the deep mouldings of the monuments would be heightened by vibrant colors. Facing the ocean, on the esplanade of the rising sun, the goddess holds the blind child, who liberally bestows the riches of the earth upon the inhabitants and their hosts.

Notes
Source Note: This essay was first published in French in La Laurentine et L'invention de La Villa Romaine *(Paris, 1982).*

8 Horti diaetae, the Cryptoporticus.

Figure Credits
1-5, 7-13, 15 Courtesy of the author.
6 From *La Laurentine et L'invention de La Villa Romaine* (Paris, 1982), p. 156.
14 Courtesy of Institut Francais d'Architecture.



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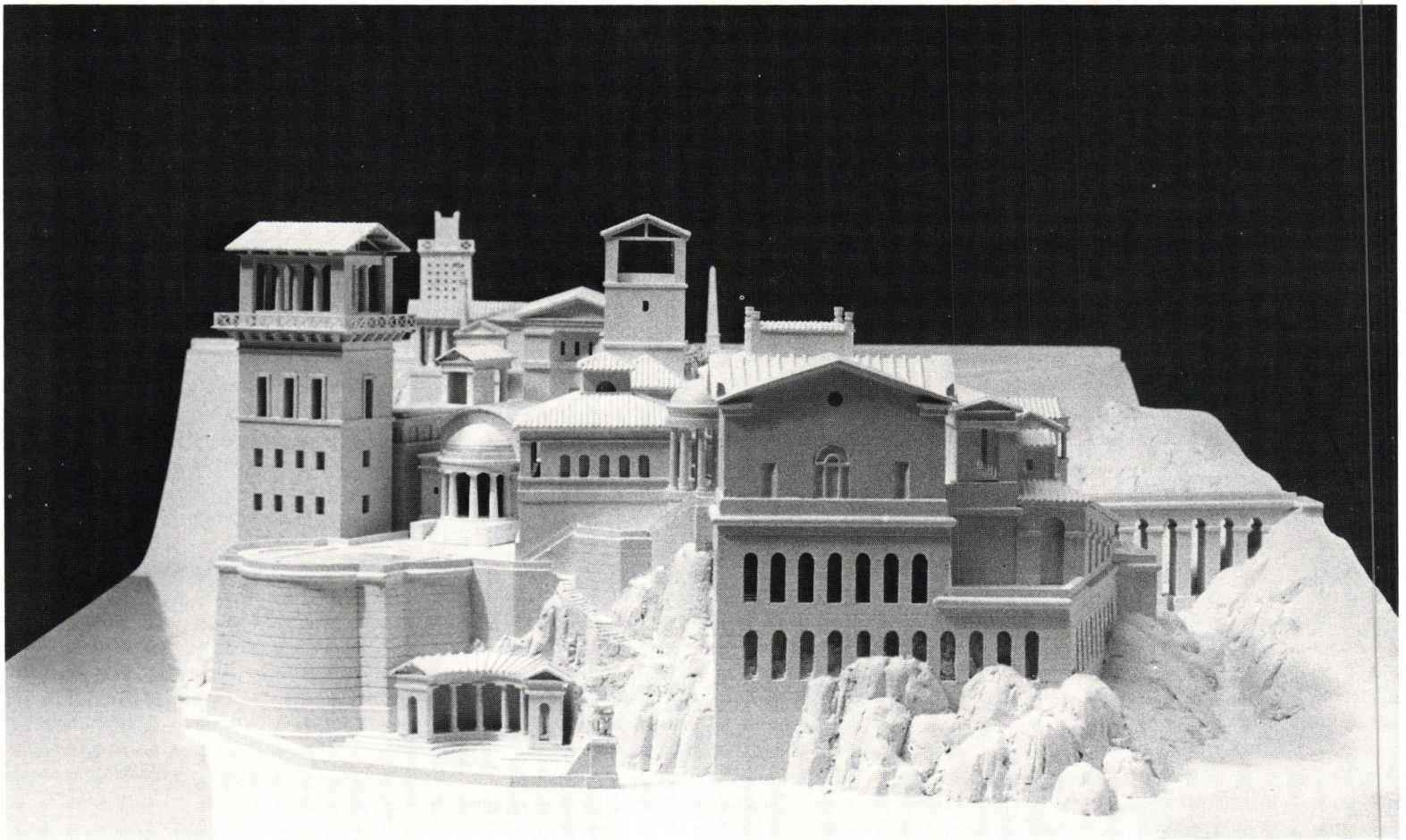

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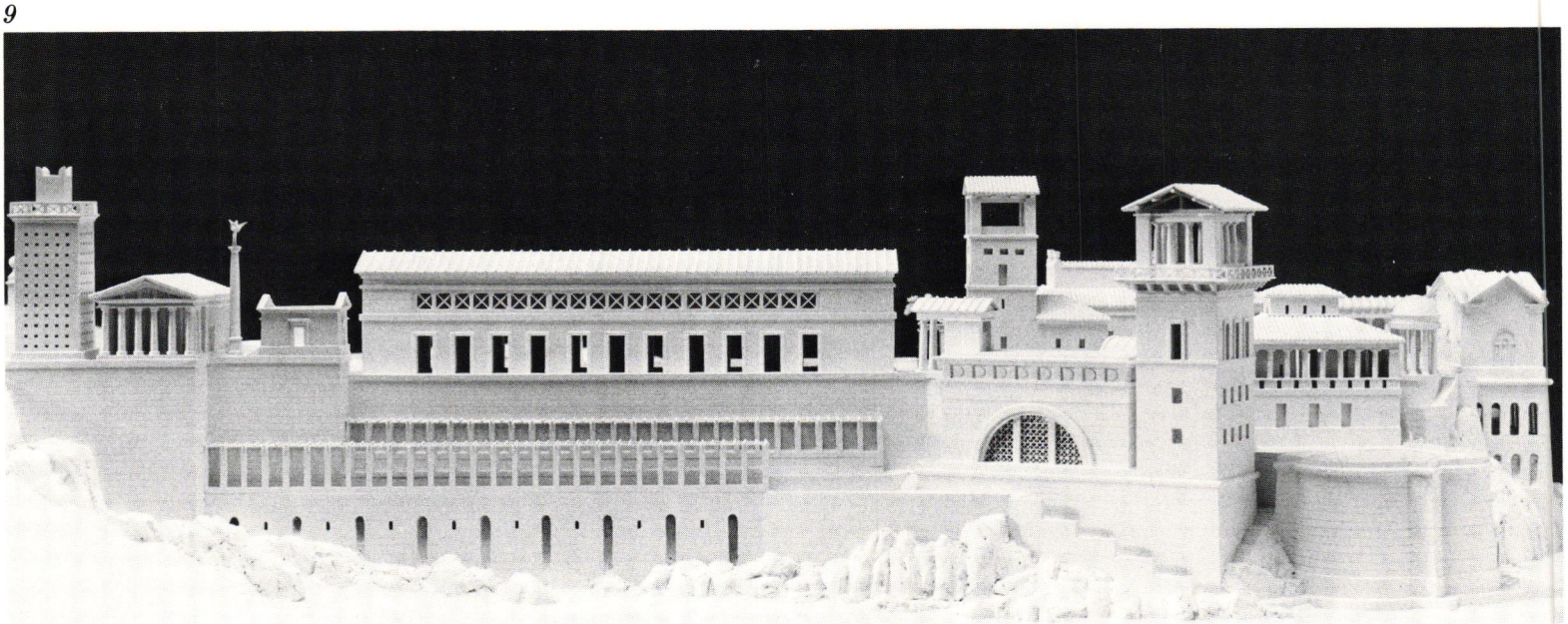

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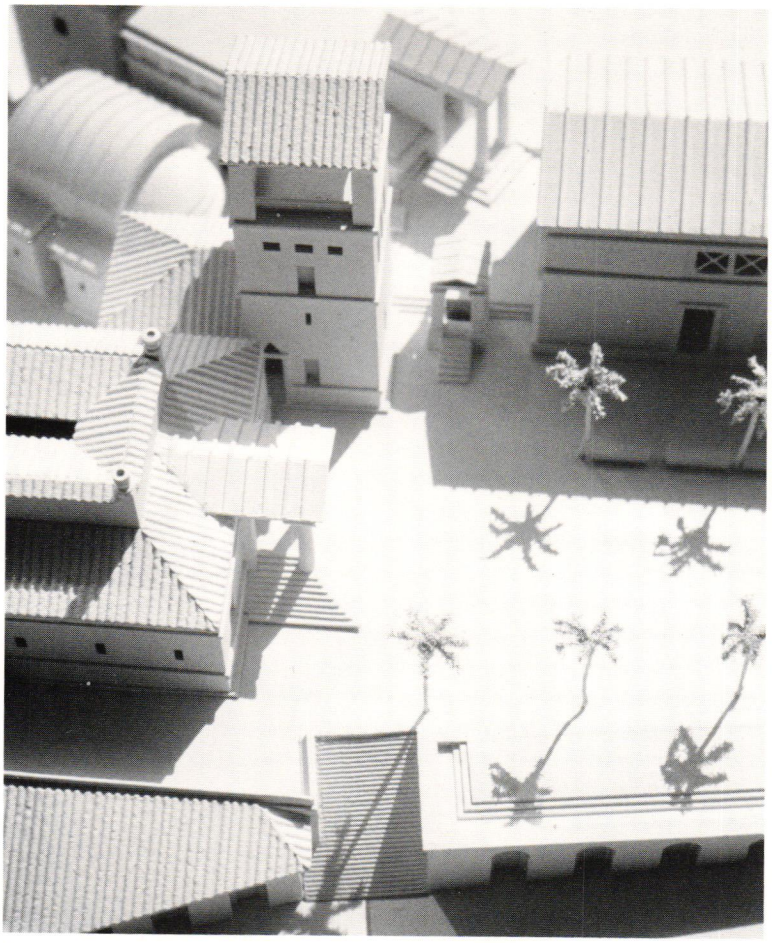

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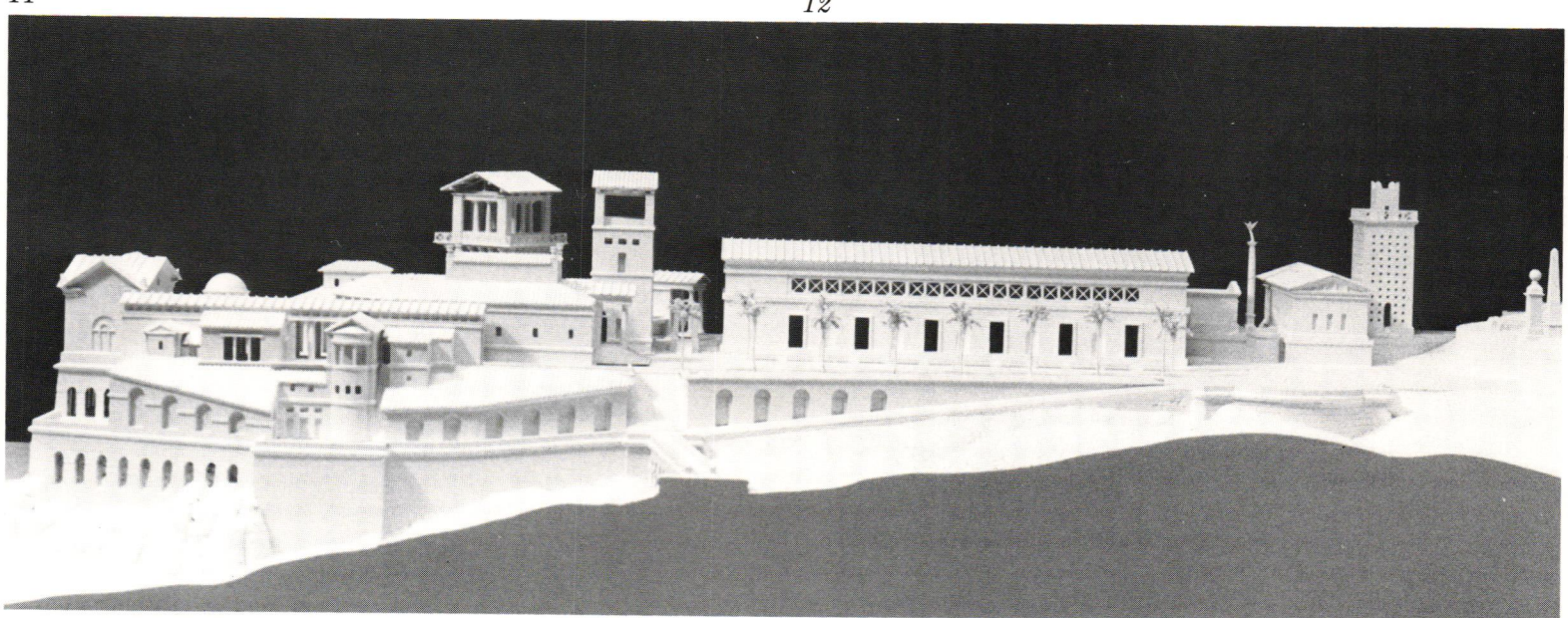
9 Model, view from the south.
10 Model, view from the west.
11 Detail. Stair, entrance portico, small tower, and Cryptoporticus.
12 Model, view from the south.
13 Model, view from the east. (Model by Thurloe Models, Ltd., London).

12



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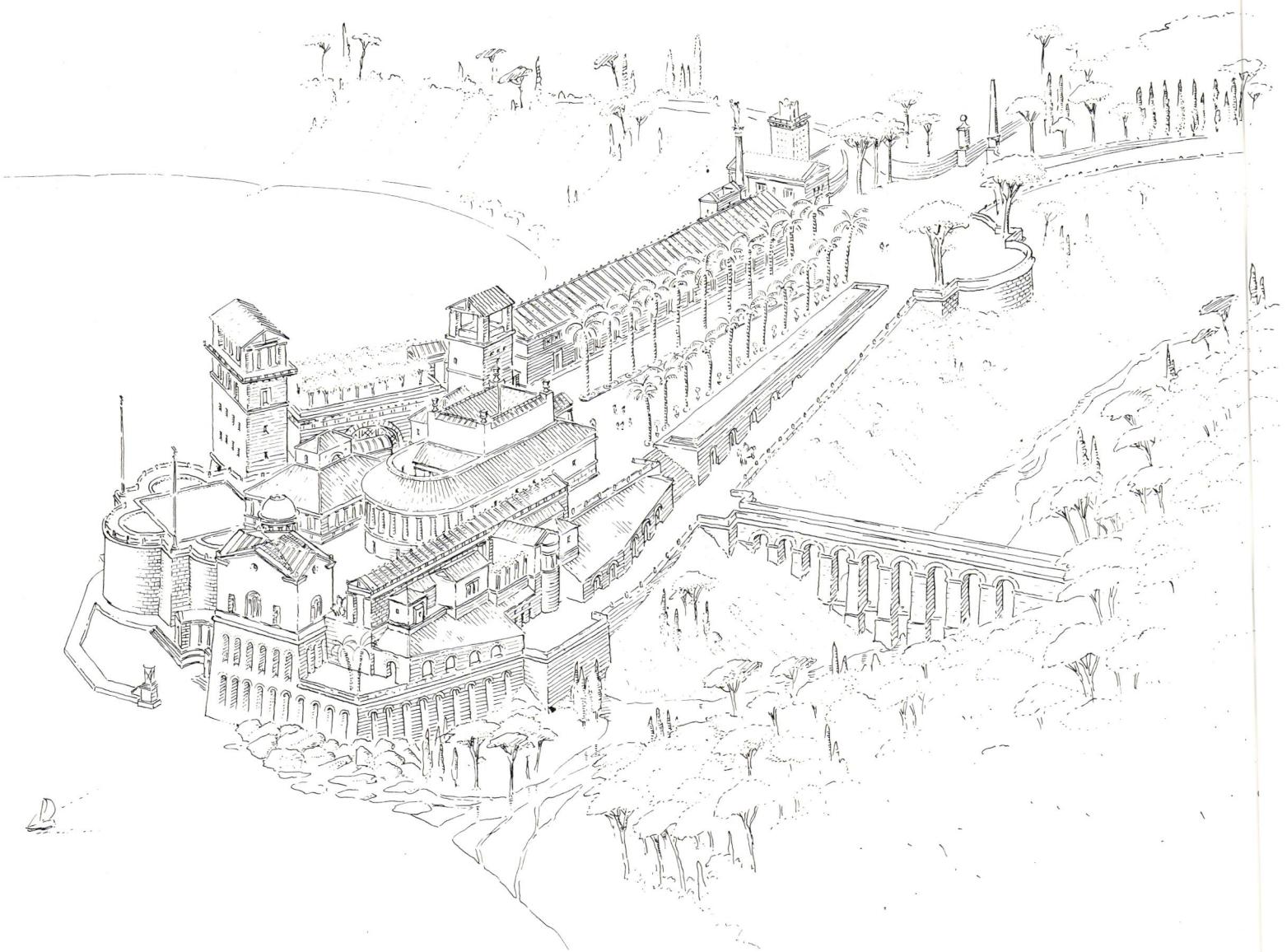
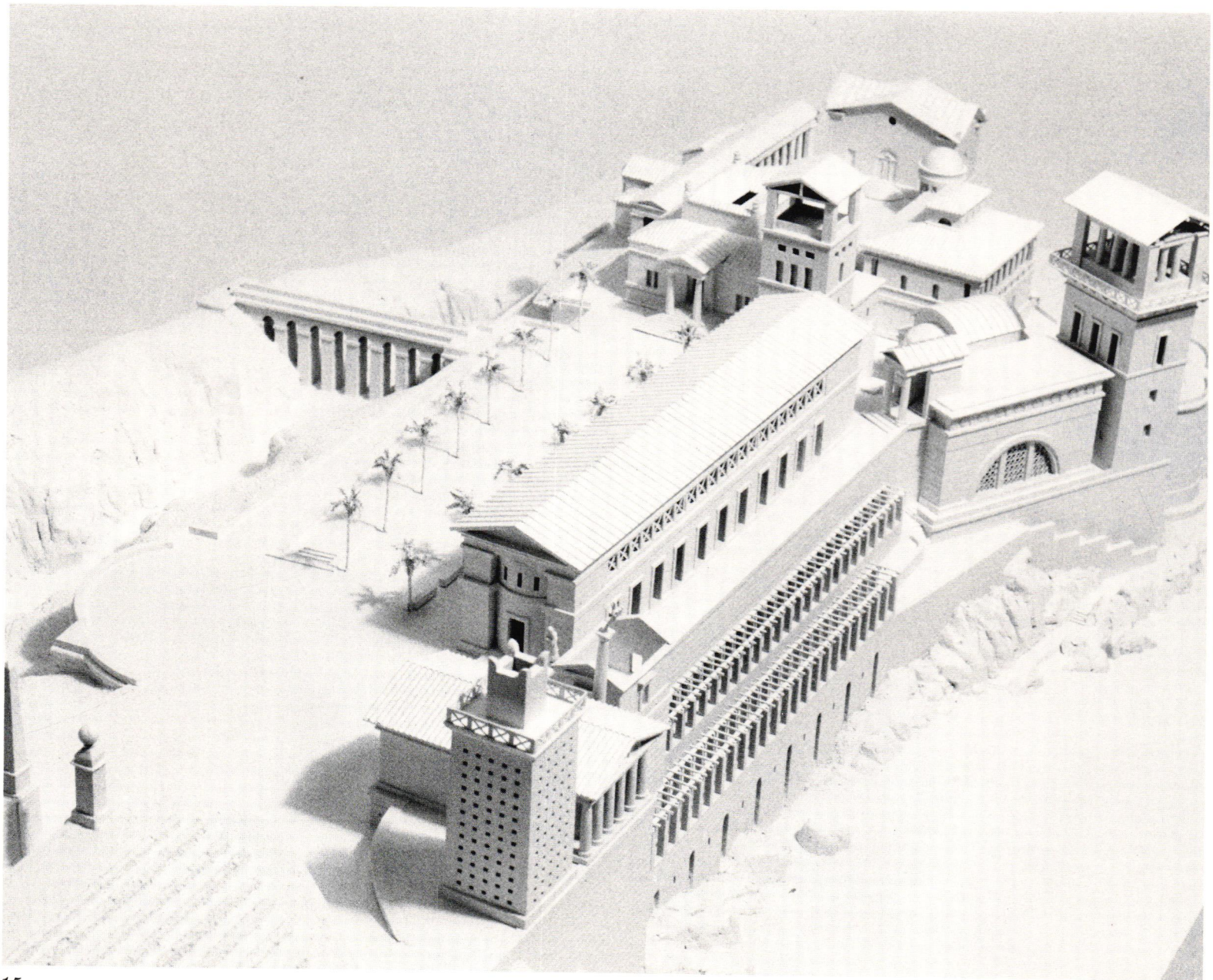
14 Perspective view from the east.



15 Model, view from the north.



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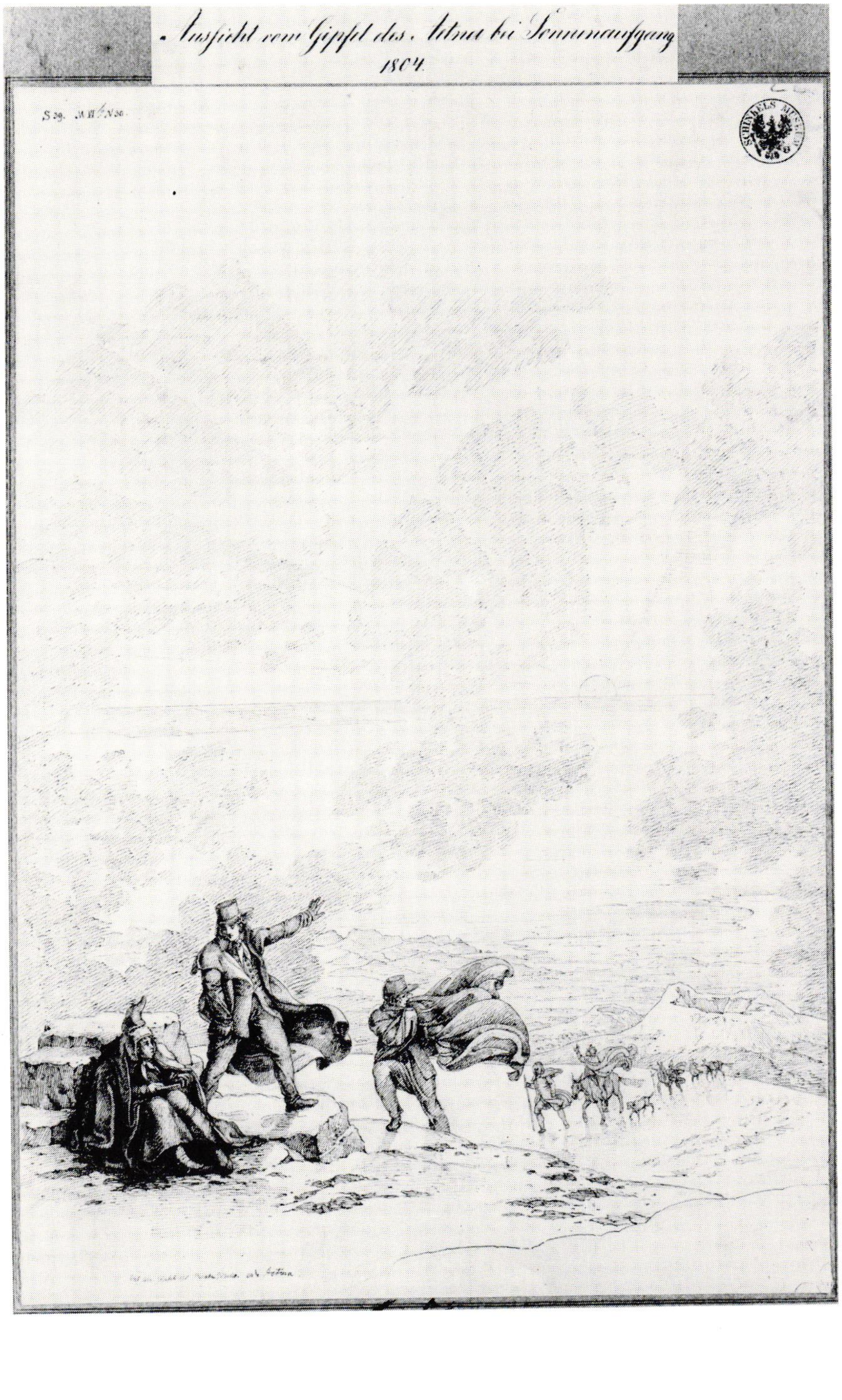

Aussicht vom Gipfel des Aetna bei Sonnenaufgang
1804.
SCHINKELS MUSEUM

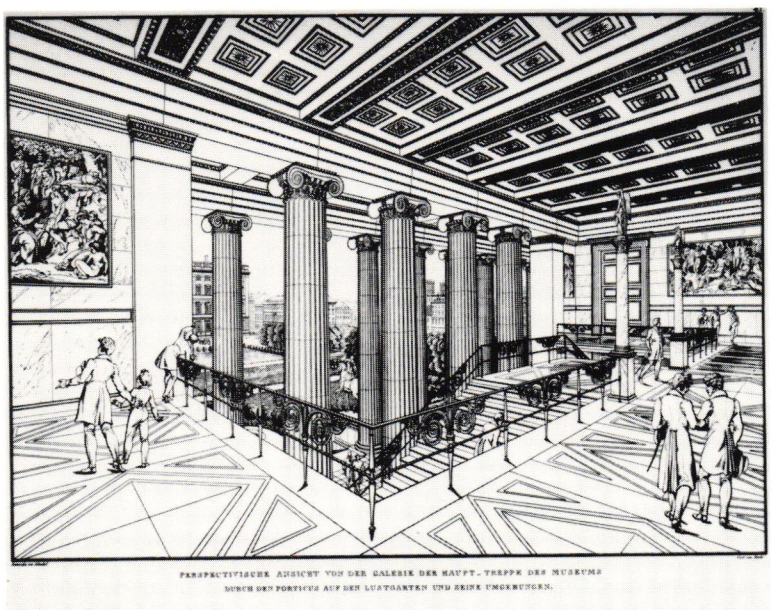
Schinkel's Panoramic Planning of Central Berlin

Kurt W. Forster

1 (frontispiece) Schinkel and his companions ascending Mt. Aetna. Drawing by Schinkel, 1804.

One of the most widely reproduced plates in Karl Friedrich Schinkel's *Sammlung Architektonischer Entwürfe* represents a "perspective view from the staircase gallery in the museum, seen through the porticus and across the Lustgarten square and its surroundings" (fig. 2).[1] Schinkel (1781-1841) did not produce this perspectival tour de force for its own sake—although he turned in a true virtuoso performance—but he compiled in this image a veritable atlas of his ideas about urban architecture. The new museum figures as only one of seven or eight structures he planned, built, renovated, or altered in the heart of Berlin. As the centerpiece in the gradual transformation of the Spree Island the museum will be examined later; as a compendium of Schinkel's urban concepts the plate provides a kind of visual initiation into his architectural thinking. There is, first of all, the deliberately exaggerated *scope* of the image; a very wide and deep field of vision in which a great number of things compete for attention. The outside space penetrates far into the building, reaching virtually to the lower edge of the image; laterally the walls of the museum atrium are ornamented with paintings whose outer edges fall beyond the frame of the plate. The viewer is assumed to stand in the rear corner of the stairwell gallery—deep in the cavity of the building—so that his panoramically extended view embraces in one sweep paintings, sculptures, the architectural members of the building, and a quadrant of the cityscape beyond, including the royal palace, public gardens, burgher houses, and Schinkel's own church at Werder. Twelve visitors create by their avid attitudes and gestures a series of rapports between the artifacts and the city. Peering at the wall paintings, discoursing among themselves, or looking back out at the town, these figures always do more than merely enliven the representation of Schinkel's buildings and sites; invariably they demonstrate that the architecture itself is the subject of their attention.[2] The viewer of the plate is the thirteenth among them, and not coincidentally the most privileged, given the view of widest compass, embracing at once inside and outside, museum and city, the pictorial history of culture and the site of its perpetuation.

2 "Perspective view from the staircase gallery in the museum, seen through the porticus and across the Lustgarten square and its surroundings," SAE, *pl. 43. Drawn by Schinkel and exhibited 1830, etched and published 1834.*
3 "Perspective view from the audience to the stage, with the representation of the set as prepared for the prologue during the inauguration of the royal theater in Berlin," SAE, *pl. 14, 1821.*
4 Blick in Griechenlands Blüte *(View of Greece in Its Flowering), painting copied after Schinkel's original of 1824-25.*
5 First project for the new guardhouse. Drawing by Schinkel, 1816.



PERSPECTIVISCHE ANSICHT VON DER GALERIE DER HAUPT-TREPPE DES MUSEUMS
DURCH DEN PORTICUS AUF DEN LUSTGARTEN UND SEINE UMGEBUNGEN.

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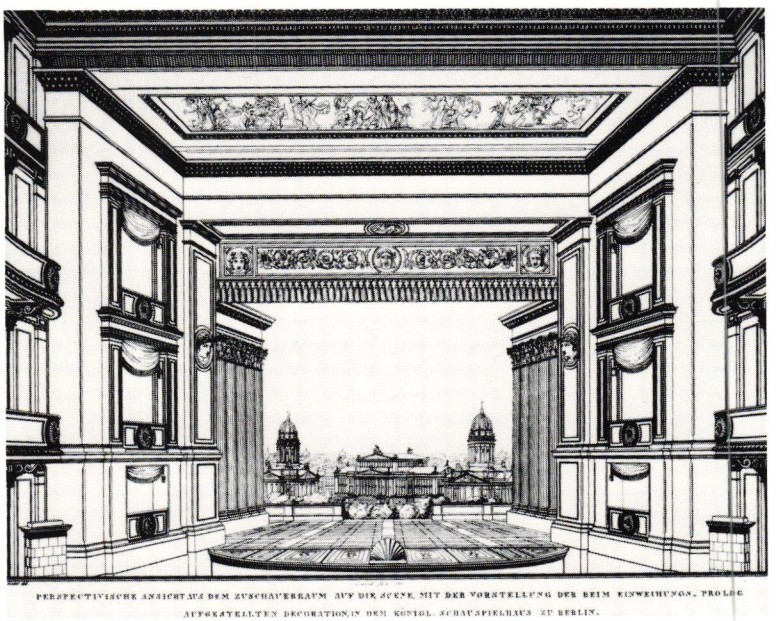

PERSPECTIVISCHE ANSICHT AUS DEM ZUSCHAUERRAUM AUF DIE SCENE, MIT DER VORSTELLUNG DER BEIM EINWEIHUNGS-PROLOG
AUFGESTELLTEN DECORATION IN DEM KÖNIGL. SCHAUSPIELHAUS ZU BERLIN.

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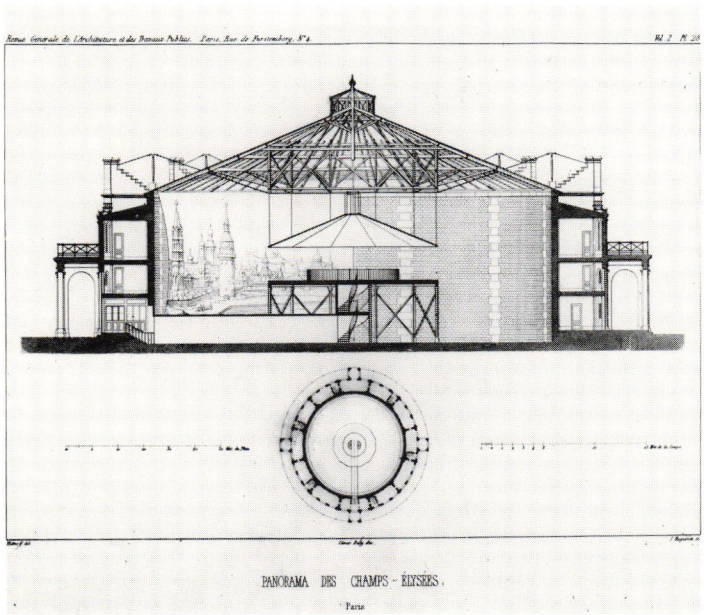
For no other of his major public buildings did Schinkel produce an equivalent plate in his *Sammlung*, with the exception, perhaps, of his Schauspielhaus (theater). Comparably captioned, the "perspective view from the audience to the stage, with the representation of the set as prepared for the prologue during the inauguration of the royal theater in Berlin," similarly combines a building's interior with the urban scenery of the stage (fig. 3). Moreover, the proscenium curtain on the stage of the theater carries an image of the theater itself, flanked by the twin churches of the Gendarmenmarkt, as seen from a considerable distance. Both in the perspective view from the museum and in the theater curtain, Schinkel assigned to the cityscape the role of the "stage" while providing for the viewer a new vantage from which things fall into place, reveal their rapports, and exhibit their significance.

The viewer rises above the din and bustle of the street, sees beyond the narrow frame of a momentary place in town, and is now able to take in the entire scope of a major urban site. With these plates Schinkel does more than just delineate the characteristic buildings—extant or proposed—and register their symbolic relationships. To be sure, his views have been constructed to convey (and precisely so) the urban topography, but they invest the physical presence of buildings with the power of *topoi*. The buildings not only signify abstract ideas, institutions, and connections, they represent them concretely, making visible in architectural forms the order of the urban world. For this reason, the visitors and viewers are indispensable; without them the architecture would fall silent rather than convey the life of urban culture. The avidly gesturing visitors enact these meanings and transpose all elements, natural or artificial, into *cultural* artifacts. The trees, the water of river and canal, the materials of construction no less than the products of human design and manufacture acquire a new status by virtue of their presence within the compass of Schinkel's urban sites. The simplistic opposition of architecture and nature yields here to a dialectical relationship that installs the city as the natural setting of civilization, and architecture as the medium of this conjunction. Schinkel himself both imaged the historic dimension of this relationship and gave it definition through his own contemporary projects.

Two examples illustrate this cultural conjunction of nature and architecture within the panoramic scope of Schinkel's view. Just when he was preparing the final plan for the museum, he also started to work on a painting, *View of Greece in Its Flowering*, which betrays a deep conceptual affinity with the museum vestibule (fig. 4).[3] Comparably elevated onto the porch of a Greek temple under construction, the viewer looks out onto a large ancient town that descends from the slopes toward a gulf. A wide awning shields from the sun the workmen and sculptors on the right, while the crowns of tall trees shade a landscaped terrace to the left. These natural and artificial umbrellas, enhanced by subtle color correspondences, complement one another and bracket the field of vision. The main activity in the painting, the construction of a great monument, centers on a sturdy scaffolding in the middle of the picture: the scaffolding is, of course, a temporary device, required merely for construction, but its prominence and pivotal role surely signify the activity of building as much as its material result. Construction is indeed the very building of social and cultural fact. This image of ancient building also lends its framework to Schinkel's example of modern architecture. The general conditions have changed, but the similarity of Schinkel's images—the temple in ancient culture, the museum in modern—also reveals a telling distinction. A comparable double row of Ionic columns, a narrative frieze appropriately transferred from sculpture to wall painting, and *spectators* rather than workmen at once liken the Berlin museum to ancient architecture and contrast the modern *consumption* of that culture to the image of its ancient production. Subsuming and transcending all of these distinctions is, of course, the fact that nature no longer provides the foil of culture but has yielded that role to the cityscape. The idealist belief in a harmonious unity of nature and culture suggested only meta-

6 Plan and section of the Panorama on the Champs Elysées, Paris.
7 Engraved reproduction (in the round) of Schinkel's Panorama of Palermo, *1808.*
8 View of the New Guardhouse Unter den Linden, *painting by E. Gaertner, 1849.*



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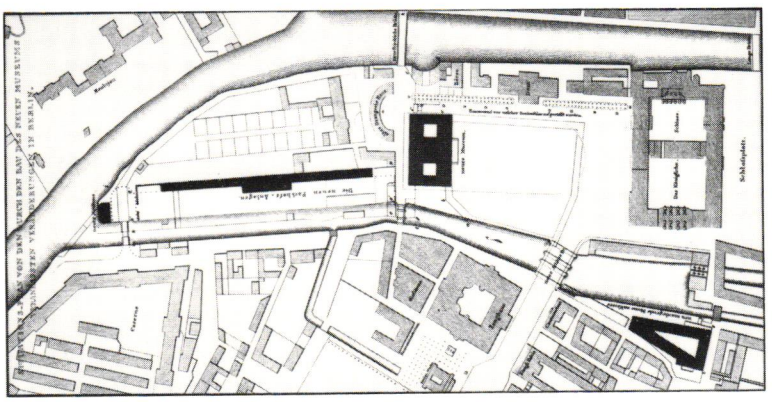
physical escape. In the world, the sites of urban civilization created an ever greater impression of total artificiality. New forms of production gave rise to a complete second nature that conveyed upon both nature and history artificial status. Potentially, everything became a re-production and, as such, was made to be consumed. Indeed, the city itself remains not only the locus of this production, it will itself be gradually consumed.[4] With only a little exaggeration, one could say that the very developments which made Schinkel's renovations and constructions possible in the early nineteenth century, largely consumed them in its latter half and during the early twentieth century.[5]

Schinkel cast his ideas for central Berlin into a peculiar graphic form. His first presentation drawing for the new guardhouse of 1816 on Unter den Linden cleverly distanced the modest building by means of a kind of inverse perspective (fig. 5). Flanking rows of trees mediate between the massive eighteenth-century buildings to the left and right, channel the view, and enhance the guardhouse with its airy porch in the distance. The triple rows of chestnut trees, articulated in plastic masses between buildings and open areas, recall the recommendations of Laugier to treat the city like a forest. Schinkel's proposal obviously aimed at a "magnificent whole divided into an infinity of different beauties, so that each quarter would have something new, original, and attention catching, but all would fit within an ordered system." The sharp contrasts in scale, the steeply exaggerated recession punctuating the street frontage, and the play of soft tree crowns against the sharp-edged volumes of the buildings bespeak the "characteristic differences"—soft versus hard, delicate versus strong, noble versus rustic—Laugier had advocated in order to make a city into a "unique creation, a prodigy, and an enchantment."[6] But this early proposal of Schinkel's does more than merely reflect generic Enlightenment views of the city; it also shares pictorial characteristics with urban *vedute*, and, specifically, with the urban panoramas. Held next to a work by Eduard Gaertner, Berlin's greatest painter of urban *vedute* (*View of the New Guardhouse Unter den Linden*), Schinkel's contribution to the development of this genre becomes strikingly clear (fig. 8).[7] Moreover, during his early years, after his return from Italy in 1805, Schinkel found virtually no opportunities to build, because Prussia was occupied by the Napoleonic armies. He therefore had to make his living chiefly as a painter. The craze for a form of spectacular images representing famous sites and historic events offered him a means of exploiting the harvest of images he brought back from Italy and exploring the optical effects of sites and buildings. The same holds true for his numerous stage sets, the first of which Schinkel designed in 1815 for *The Magic Flute*.[8]

The nature of the panorama itself must detain us a moment, because of the revolutionary character of these "optical-perspectival images," as they were often called, and because Schinkel used this entirely modern medium as a laboratory for his ideas on the city.[9] His greatest success in Berlin came with the *Panorama of Palermo* in 1808, a vast image executed in a palatial room of the royal residence during the king's absence (fig. 7).[10]

Panoramas were patented by Robert Barker in 1787 and within a few years became the most sensational commercial attraction after theaters and fairs of various kinds. Panoramas showed an undivided view, unfolding 360 degrees round the spectator, who observed these continuous images from a central platform raised inside a cylindrical structure.[11] Indirect lighting from above, carefully corrected distortions on the curvilinear surface, a low hood over the viewer's platform, and, above all, the overwhelming size and precise detail of these images combined to create an effect that flabbergasted a delighted public. Comparable to the popularity of cinema in the twentieth century, panoramas and their midcentury descendents, dioramas, levelled the traditional distinction between cognoscenti and laymen. In the panoramas, painting ceased to be primarily an object of taste; instead it traded artistic status for popular impact, fusing "scientific" accuracy with total illusion. A French govern-

9 Plan of the Spree Island with the new museum in place. Engraving from the SAE, *pl. 42 (detail).*
10 Schlossbrücke (palace bridge), drawing by Schinkel for the SAE, *1822.*
11 View from the Linden Allee across the palace bridge toward the royal residence (right), the Dome (middle), and the museum (left). Etching after Schinkel, ca. 1823.



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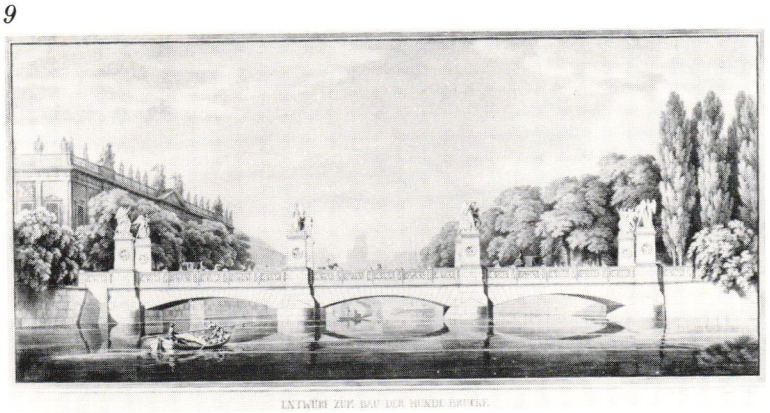

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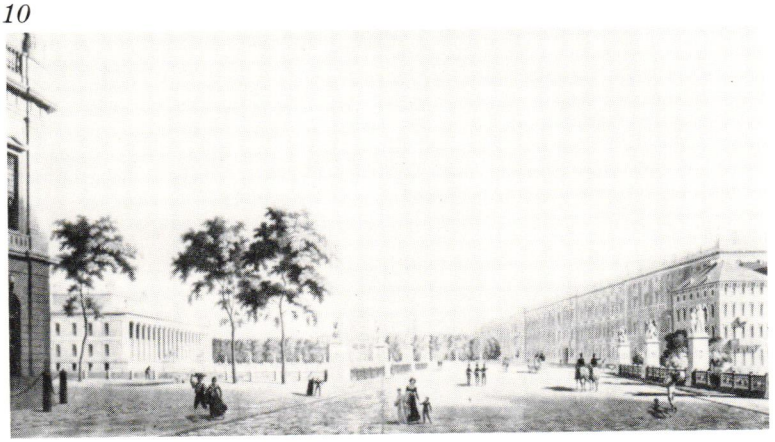

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ment committee investigated the phenomenon of panoramas when they first appeared on the continent, and produced a characterization so lucid it is worth quoting at some length: "The first panorama to be seen in Paris was executed under Foulton's direction; it represents a view of this immense city: the spectator is seemingly raised on the roof platform of the central pavilion of the Tuileries; from this point his view encompasses an immense horizon containing not only Paris but also part of its surrounding countryside; he dominates everything, seems to glide over it, his eyes follow the embankments of the Seine, move through the trees of the Tuileries Gardens, or wander through streets and squares; and wherever he fixes his gaze he is struck by the truthfulness with which the whole ensemble and the details of this immense perspective have been rendered. . . . Upon entering the enclosure of a panorama, the first impression one gains is that of an immense, but confusing view in which all points overwhelm the eyes at once and without apparent order; this effect is inevitable for it is brought about by the brusque and instantaneous transition of the appearance of nature to that of its image."[12]

To be sure, subject matter also contributed to the popular success of panoramas. The preferred themes were historical events (e.g., naval battles or the burning of Moscow) and the topography of famous towns (Rome, Paris, London always among them). Schinkel chose Palermo because he had felt ever since his visit in 1804 that from the height of the Norman villas, the city offered, apart from its faintly exotic appeal, "one of the most majestic views. . . . One surveys the entire city with the sea beyond and the mountains descending from two sides . . . so as to form a vast amphitheater."[13] It is again the conjunction of topography with theatrical potential that kindled Schinkel's interest, rather than the vicarious satisfaction of wanderlust and a mild curiosity about faraway places. The popular success of his panoramic cityscapes, and of panoramas in general, brought in its wake many souvenir pictures and a significant tradition of urban *vedute* paintings that derive, in part, from the technique of

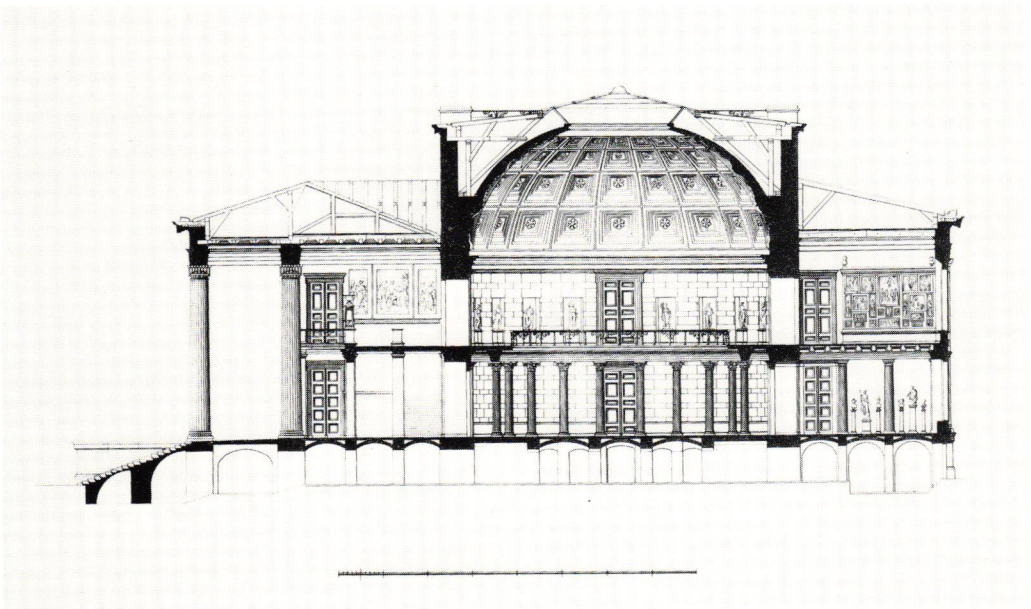
panoramic images.[14] What matters most, however, is that Schinkel exercised a particular facet of his architectural imagination long before he was in a position to apply it to a real city. An opportunity arose with the first major commission from the king for a new guardhouse in 1816, a year after the Congress of Vienna sealed the defeat of Napoleon and redrew the map of Europe. Elated by victory and propelled onto a road of recovery and modernization, Prussia initiated a host of building projects. In rapid succession Schinkel assumed, along with many private commissions, an increasingly monumental series of royal enterprises: the new theater (1818), the bridge linking the Linden Allee with the palace (1819), and the exterior renovation of the Dome (1820) on the Spree Island itself. One might almost say that Schinkel moved step by step ever closer to the very heart of Berlin where his projects of the 1820s urbanized a neglected area, transforming completely the precinct of the royal palace. In most instances his personal role went far beyond the faithful execution of royal commissions; he often took the initiative and by dint of diplomatic savvy on the one hand, and pragmatic entrepreneurship on the other, managed to parlay his projects to realization despite resistance at court and financial stringency following the Wars of Liberation.

The first, and in many ways the central project was the new museum.[15] Schinkel had succeeded not only in persuading the king to erect an independent building for the purpose, but also in convincing him that it should be located in the palace gardens (the Lustgarten). With customary skill Schinkel combined in one scheme improved fluvial traffic round the island with a thorough redefinition of the palace district (fig. 9). According to his plans of 1823, the formerly rather amorphous Lustgarten would assume the role of a grand new square at the culmination of the long avenue Unter den Linden. Now that the Dome had been fully renovated, it set a central accent above the lateral rows of trees which linked the baroque palace to the right with the planned new museum to the left. The eight tall pylons on the new bridge were set as wide as the last stretch of Unter den Linden, echoing the statues raised both in front of the new guardhouse and across the avenue (fig. 10).

The former Lustgarten now assumed the scale and qualities of a true urban square, on which Schinkel lavished the experiences he had gathered in the planning of the guardhouse. Cleverly deployed rows of trees and the crescendo of laterally expanding vistas—such as one would experience moving along the Linden Allee toward the royal palace—aided Schinkel in the *visual* definition of vast urban spaces. The baroque bulk of the royal palace to one side of the revamped Dome was now counterbalanced by the elegant classicist museum on the other: crown, church, and culture each gained a characteristic presence in this new public arena (fig. 11). Schinkel satisfied a new expectation of his age which demanded not only the fact of institutional presence but its manifestation in the image of the cityscape.

With the museum Schinkel carried a distinctly bourgeois element into the monarchic sphere of "*Krone und Altar*" (crown and church). As a cultural institution the museum was deeply rooted in Enlightenment ideas, and so modern in concept that Schinkel had to develop nothing less than a novel type of building. To be sure, a few other structures had been built expressly to house collections of sculpture or painting, but none encompassed the entire range of diverse requirements the new Berlin museum was expected to meet. None had to function on the largest urban scale and accomodate internally such a varied collection and associated curatorial installations. Schinkel's concerns extended from fire protection, heating by means of warm air, and the equipment needed for internal transportation, to the appropriate display of works of art. Not only was it necessary to alter the embankment of the Spree Island and to close a shipping canal on the site now occupied by the museum; the new building also had to be related to some of the grandest structures in Berlin: the royal palace and the huge armory across the river. "Simplicity of the basic forms" was therefore Schinkel's principal concern, for "the neighboring royal

12 The new museum in section. Engraving from the SAE, *pl. 40 (detail).*
13 View of the museum rotunda. Engraving from the SAE, *pl. 44.*
14 View of the new museum, built 1824-30. Engraving from the SAE, *pl. 37.*
15 Grosse Neugierde, an elevated viewing platform on the grounds of the royal estate at Klein-Glienicke. Designed by Schinkel and built 1835-37.



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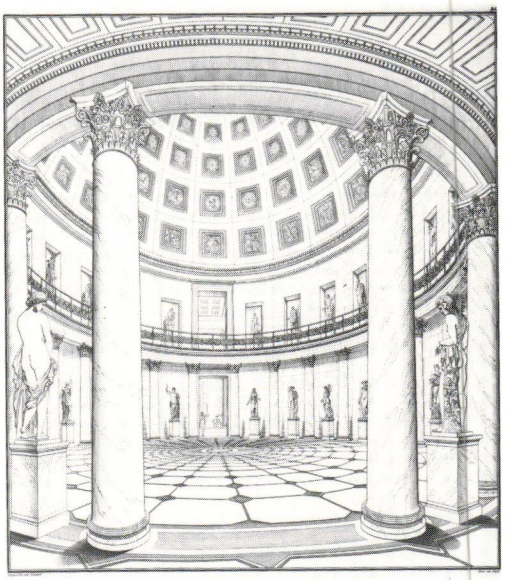

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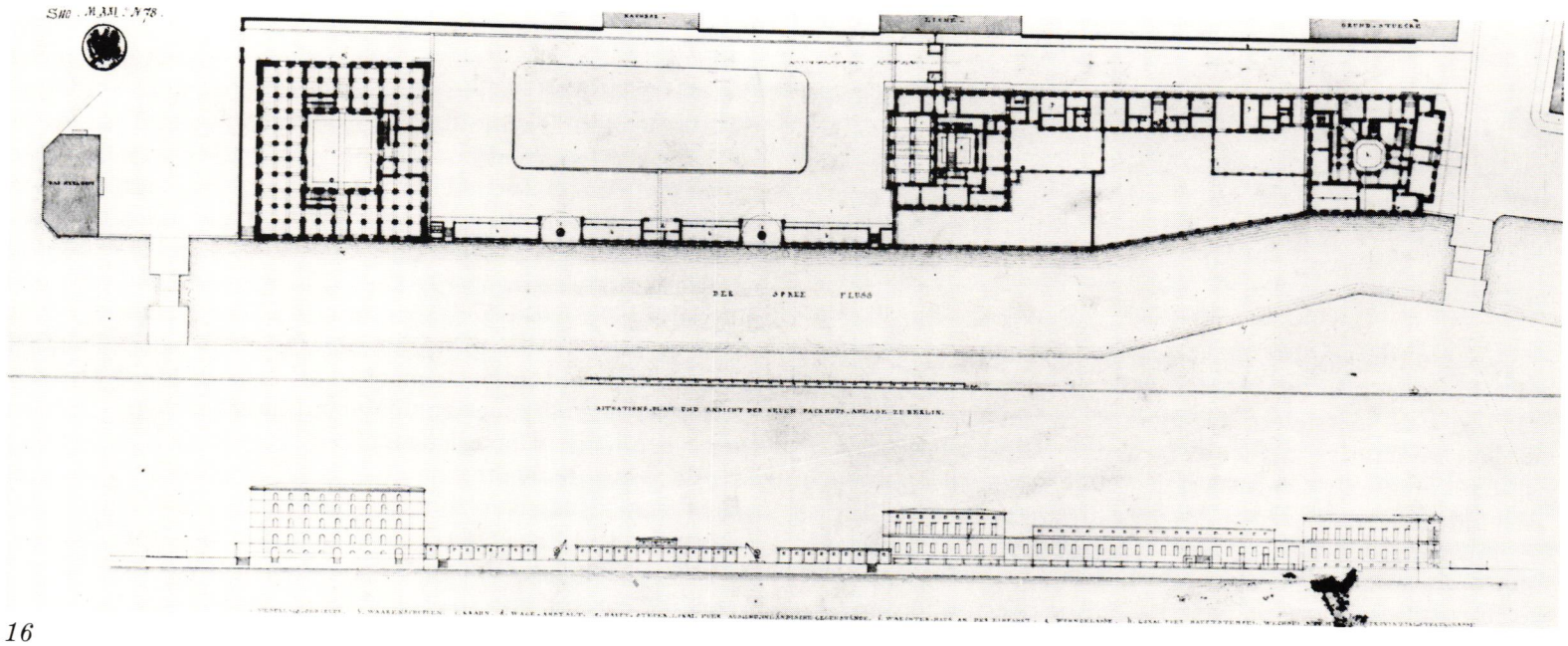
16 Plan and elevation of the Packhof, the customs offices and warehousing complex on the Spree Canal, built 1830-32. Schinkel's drawing preparatory for the etching in the SAE, *pl. 150 (detail).*
17 View of the Packhof along the Spree Canal toward the royal palace. Schinkel's drawing for the etching in the SAE, *pl. 151.*



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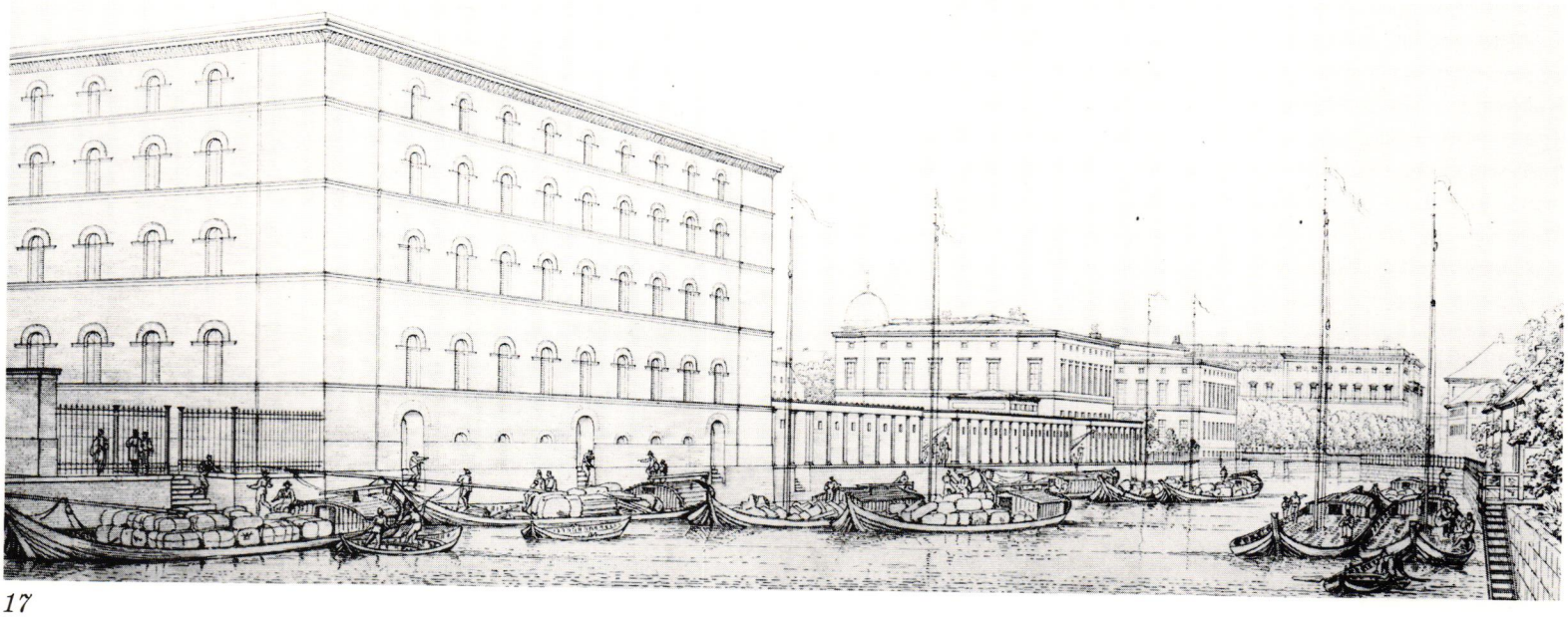

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18 View of the Packhof from the palace bridge. Schinkel's drawing for the etching in the SAE, *pl. 149.*
19 The Molo, Venice, *painting by Canaletto, ca. 1735.*

palace and the magnificent armory require grandiose proportions." Thus, he argued, "I chose a single [giant] order for the large columnar front," instead of articulating "the two stories in superposed orders. . . . The building, framed by a plinth and an Ionic entablature all around, and equipped on its four corners with piers of the same order, forms with these parts and in response to its site a simple, grand construction to which the two-story elevation has been subordinated by indentation" (fig. 14).[16]

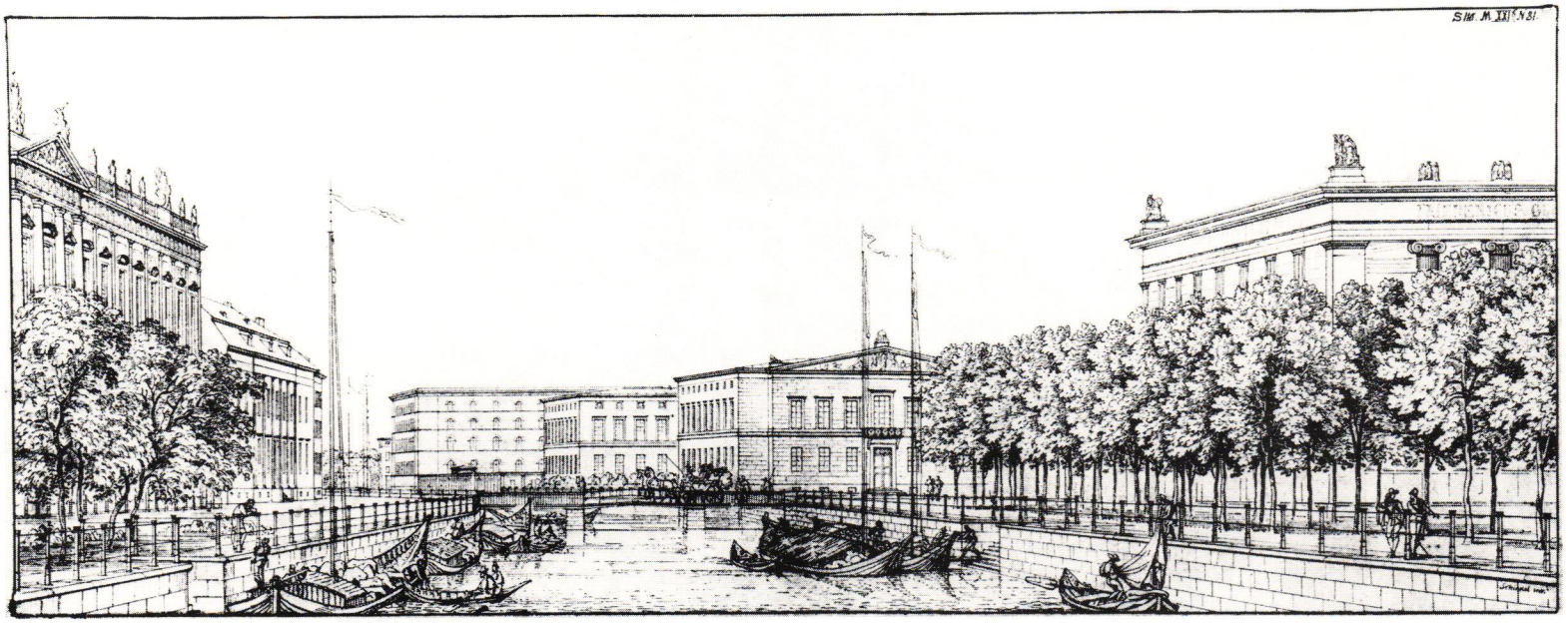
In Greek antiquity the stoa had brought a royal privilege quite literally into the marketplace. The royal stoa lent its name as well as its chief architectural elements to the later basilica, remaining a fit object of the highest patronage.[17] Schinkel adopted it in a specific version, the *stoa poikile* or "painted stoa," and used it not only to "open" the building of the museum but also to face the royal palace across the square. As a result, the open porch running the full length of the museum declares at once its public destination and its royal patronage; the former instrumental, the latter suggestive of the new ideological status of art. The deeply recessed double stairs are likewise known as an *escalier royal,* reserved for ceremonial entry and ascent into the sphere of authority.[18] In the museum the stairs remain open and visible from afar rather than being enclosed within the sphere of privilege, as are the stairs in the royal palace opposite the museum. But most telling of all, they do not lead into the museum so much as they open up toward the magnificent vista of central Berlin.

A cycle of images round the walls of the stairwell complements the panorama of the city. Had they been executed according to the architect's plans, these paintings would have told of mutual help against the destructive forces of nature and against human barbarity. Sharing the ethical conviction of the German Enlightenment, Schinkel thought art a civilizing force, necessarily anchored in social life and projected, hence, into the urban setting.

While construction of the museum was still under way, Schinkel revised his earlier schemes for the remainder of the Spree Island to the northwest and created instead a unique group of utilitarian buildings so intercalated that the prospect along the embankment acquired a highly scenographic character. The extended period of planning and revision devoted to these buildings cannot be told and analyzed here in its reflection of Schinkel's ability to resolve complex requirements within highly abstract architectural schemes. But Schinkel's concise description, together with plans and views, in his *Sammlung Architektonischer Entwürfe* suggest the architect's practical concerns as well as his desire for "characteristic" distinction: "Two buildings of nearly square plan, each with a small courtyard, are linked by a long, narrow wing of modest height, forming thereby a garden space toward the river, and, on the opposite side, a [continuous] streetfront." (fig. 16). These two cubic buildings provide office space and apartments for the chief customs administrators. "At the far end of the Packhof stands the five-story warehouse. A long storage shed runs along the waterfront like a gallery."[19]

While plan and elevation elucidate primarily the linear sequence of the so-called Packhof buildings along the Spree Canal, the two views Schinkel included in the *Sammlung* accentuate more pictorial and urbanistic qualities. The fact that Schinkel prepared *two* perspective views along the waterway, one from the palace bridge and another from the northern tip of the island toward the royal palace, shows how much importance he attached to these extended urban prospects.

The Spree Canal cuts north at an acute angle with respect to the axis of the Linden Allee, exposing to the onlooker a deeply sheared view along the waterway. This rupture in the city grid registers the historical distinction between the island and the formerly suburban quarter along Unter den Linden. Not the least of Schinkel's purposes in the renovation of central Berlin was the unification of these two formerly



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distinct urban areas. At their point of juncture, from the new bridge to the palace square, the grand edifice of the armory remains obliquely in view; and the extended flank of the island allowed Schinkel to deploy his new buildings along the waterway in such a fashion as to compose a panoramic sequence of volumes that appear approximately equidistant and visually balanced (fig. 17). Plate 149 of the *Sammlung* illustrates the staggered recession from the museum in the foreground to the two administrative buildings in the middle distance and the concluding volume of the warehouse in the background (fig. 18). The project surveyor, Baurat Schmidt, wrote about the warehouse in 1842:

"The purpose of the building is characterized by an exterior of simple and forceful architecture, and by the recession of each story by three inches. . . . The entire block assumes an almost pyramidal form, thereby strengthening stability and the impression of great solidity."[20]

Not only the warehouse exhibited such specific characteristics; each one of Schinkel's buildings along the riverfront projected its distinctive role into a panoramic ensemble. The columnar front and acroteria privileged the museum as a monumental building in neo-antique fashion, while the pedimented facade of the customs office reduced its ornamentation and surface treatment to revetted facades. Its twin to the rear, the office block, received only a stuccoed elevation, and the exterior of the warehouse was left in unfaced brick. This calibrated sequence of architectural forms and building materials injects into the optical perspective a dimension of rhetorical and historic "depth." Ashlar, revetment, stucco, and brick mark rungs on a descending scale of architectural values, each one appropriate—and characteristic—for a particular type of structure. Schinkel differentiated each building stylistically without falling into the trap of purely eclectic justification. The passage from trabeation to arcuation belongs as much to this hierarchy as do the coloristic qualities of the different building materials.

The significance of these distinctions springs from many centuries of "discursive design" with which Schinkel became thoroughly acquainted during his two years in Italy (1803-04). Another waterfront, the major public buildings along the Venetian *Molo*, may have supplied Schinkel with a memorable codex of architectural characterization: Jacopo Sansovino fitted his buildings of the Library of St. Mark's and the Mint (begun in the late 1530s) between the Doge's Palace and its square to the east, and the huge town granary to the west. The prospect remained complete only until the demolition of the granary, but it is preserved in *vedute* such as Canaletto's (fig. 19).

A similar "perspective" from the seat of government to the stoa of the library (and museum), the rusticated elevation of the Mint and the bare brick wall of the granary, gave to the panorama of Venetian institutions an architectural language as Schinkel redefined it for the prospect along the Spree: if the Venetian sequence spells out the resources of the Serenissima in the realms of books, bullion, and bread, Schinkel's buildings stand for culture, customs, and commerce. The obvious similarities between the *Molo* in Venice and the Spree front in Berlin should not obscure the differences: the tight range of individual facades along the waterfront in Venice is broken open in Berlin, where each building stands apart as a discrete volume. The structures along the Spree Canal offer an "exploded view" in which distance is as much a part of the composition as is mass. Moreover, as one emerged from Unter den Linden and moved across the palace bridge, the extended riverside panorama of Schinkel's buildings would come into view and then rapidly close up again behind the museum as the spectator continued on toward the palace square. This dynamic unfolding and contracting of the building prospect signals a sharply modern quality and Schinkel's concern with it increasingly transformed his approach to planning during the 1820s and 1830s.[21] It was precisely in Venice that Schinkel had noticed the mixture of styles in the buildings along the Grand Canal and recorded "their splendid and powerful effect as one rides past them."[22]

As the panoramas required the spectators to move about on the elevated viewing platform, so Schinkel's "panoramic" images and his horizontally extended plates in the *Sammlung Architektonischer Entwürfe* demanded scanning. The viewer's eyes will do the walking, but extended movement is intrinsic to the very structure of the images. The tempo of early modern life and the desire for an instant visual grasp of complex rapports prompted Schinkel to impart panoramic qualities to the static relationship among buildings. By careful staging and subtle rhetorical characterization of their differences, the architect created a sort of "urban CinemaScope" in which proximity and distance, appearance and disappearance, together spell out a dynamic architectural order far beyond the visually obvious.

76 The work of K. F. Schinkel has met a sorry fate. While his architecture was exploited and misrepresented by German nationalists and by the Nazis, many of his buildings suffered neglect or were demolished. The Second World War severely decimated his *oeuvre*, and today access to buildings, documents, and drawings is made the more difficult by their location in the German Democratic Republic. Schinkel's critical fate is hardly more benign. Only one book has so far been published in English, Hermann G. Pundt's *Schinkel's Berlin, A Study in Environmental Planning* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), and two recent articles in *Architectural Design* (by David Watkin, 49, no. 8/9 [1979]: pp. 56-71; and by Doug Clelland, 50, no. 7/8 [1980]: pp. 106-113) offer rather general impressions from a distinctly English point of view. A concise account of Schinkel's career and work by Barry Bergdoll is now available in the *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects, voce* Schinkel.

The Schinkel literature in German is vast. In connection with the subject of this article, the reader may find the recent exhibition catalogues (with virtually complete bibliographies) the most useful. Since the catalogue of the Schinkel exhibition in West Berlin contains references to the catalogue of the exhibition held in East Berlin (1980), I provide references chiefly to Helmut Börsch-Supan and Lucius Grisebach, eds., *K. F. Schinkel, Architektur, Malerei, Kunstgewerbe* (Berlin-Charlottenburg, 1981).

I have kept references and documentation to a minimum, but I shall discuss Schinkel's work in a book-length study. All translations are my own, unless otherwise credited. For comments and suggestions I am obliged to colleagues and students at various schools where I have lectured on the subject, particularly to Professor Anthony Vidler at Princeton University, Professor Hermann G. Pundt, Professor Donald Genasci at the University of Oregon, Professor Margarete Kühn in Berlin, and to Dr. Hélène Lipstadt. Genise Schnitman gave the text her customary editorial attention.
—K. W. F.

1. Karl Friedrich Schinkel, *Sammlung Architektonischer Entwürfe, enthaltend teils Werke, welche ausgeführt sind, teils Gegenstände, deren Ausführung beabsichtigt wurde*, 28 fascs., 174 pls. (Berlin, 1819-40, and several reeditions), hereafter also cited as *SAE*. Plate numbers are in accordance with the recently published facsimile and study editions (Chicago, 1981-82). That Schinkel thought very highly of his "perspective view from the staircase gallery in the museum" (pl. 43), is demonstrated by his decision to exhibit it at the *Akademieausstellung* of 1830 in Berlin.
2. In drawings and in the plates of his *Sammlung*, Schinkel populated his sites and buildings with visitors and viewers, usually in groups of two and three persons. By their positions and gestures they indicate that the surrounding architecture is a subject of discussion and analysis. In the plate of the museum vestibule, Schinkel depicts visitors whose gestures and glances link the various compartments of space they occupy.
3. Schinkel's painting (*Blick in*) *Griechenlands Blüte*, of 1824-25, survives only in copies and in an engraving of 1846. Our fig. 4 reproduces a copy of 1836, now in the Nationalgalerie, Staatl. Museen, West Berlin; cf. *K. F. Schinkel, Architektur, Malerei, Kunstgewerbe* (1981), pp. 261-63.
4. Jules Janin wrote in an essay on daguerreotype in 1839: "Nous vivons dans une singulière époque; nous ne songeons plus de nos jours à rien produire par nous-mêmes; mais, en revanche, nous recherchons avec une persévérance sans égale les moyens de faire reproduire pour nous et à notre place." Quoted after Heinz Buddemeier, *Panorama, Diorama, Photographie: Entstehung und Wirkung neuer Medien im 19. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1970), p. 208.
5. Not only war damage severely reduced Schinkel's *oeuvre*. The buildings on the Spree Island in Berlin, with the exception of the museum, were all torn down well before World War II. The principal subject of this essay, the Packhof complex along the Spree Canal, can be studied only on the basis of Schinkel's plans, drawings, engravings, and a few nearly contemporary views.
6. Abbé Laugier, quoted in translation after Dora Wiebenson, *The Picturesque Garden in France* (Princeton, 1978), pp. 257, 262.
7. In 1834 Gaertner painted a very impressive *Panorama of Berlin*, composed of six panels (Berlin West, Schinkel Pavilion, Staatl. Schlösser und Gärten). The view is taken from a rooftop (here Schinkel's Werdersche Kirche) similar to the six-partite *Panorama of London*, which was published in six aquatint engravings based on Henry Aston Barker's drawings of 1791; see Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1978), p. 130f.
8. Schinkel prepared the sets for thirty-two scenes in 1815, in time for a new production of *The Magic Flute* that opened on January 16, 1816. The sets were published, along with other stage decorations by Schinkel, in prints (partly polychrome) as *Decorationen auf den Kgl. Hoftheatern zu Berlin*, ed. L. W. Wittich (1819-24).
9. The literature on panoramas is considerable, if highly fragmented and usually rather parochial. The principal items are: Germain Bapst, *Essai sur l'histoire des panoramas et des dioramas* (Paris, 1891); Alfred Auerbach, *Panorama und Diorama* (Grimmen i.P., 1942); Heinz Buddemeier, *Panorama, Diorama, Photographie: Entstehung und Wirkung neuer Medien im 19. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1970); Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1978), pp. 128ff. For the early nineteenth-century topographic images of Rome see my "Wandlungen des Rom-Bildes um 1800," *Stil und Überlieferung in der Kunst des Abendlandes, Akten des 21. Internationalen Kongresses für Kunstgeschichte in Bonn 1964*, 1 (West Berlin, 1967): pp. 207-17.
10. For this giant panorama painting, measuring approximately 15-by-135 feet, see *K. F. Schinkel, Architektur, Malerei, Kunstgewerbe* (1981), p. 227f.
11. J.-J. Hittorff published a succinct "Description de la Rotonde des Panoramas, élevée dans les Champs Elysées ...," *Revue générale de l'architecture et des travaux publics* 2 (1841): pp. 500-505; from

which our fig. 7 has been taken.
12. My translation after the French text in Buddemeier, *Panorama, Diorama, Photographie*, p. 166f.
13. Gottfried Riemann, ed., *K. F. Schinkel, Reisen nach Italien, Tagebücher, Briefe, Zeichnungen, Aquarelle* (East Berlin, 1979), p. 87.
14. Panoramic images enjoyed a great vogue as souvenir items; they were not only published and sold at the panoramas in the form of pamphlet foldouts, they also appeared on vases, cups, and saucers.
15. For the museum consult esp. Paul O. Rave, *Karl Friedrich Schinkel Lebenswerk: Berlin. Erster Teil: Bauten für die Kunst, Kirchen, Denkmalpflege* (Berlin, 1941), and Hans Ebert, "Daten zur Vorgeschichte und Geschichte des Alten Museums," *Forschungen und Berichte* (East Berlin, 1980), pp. 9-26.
16. My translation of Schinkel's text accompanying the plates (37-48) of the *SAE* devoted to the new museum.
17. See Homer A. Thompson, *The Stoa of Attalos II in Athens* (Princeton, 1959).
18. See Catherine Wilkinson, "The Escorial and the Invention of the Imperial Staircase," *The Art Bulletin* 57, no. 1 (1975): pp. 65-90.
19. My translation of Schinkel's text describing the Packhof, *SAE*, pls. 149-52.
20. My translation of Baurat Schmidt's passage on the warehouse in *Bauausführungen des Preussischen Staates, für den Dienstgebrauch hrsg. von dem Ministerium der Finanzen und des Handels* 1 (Berlin, 1842), pp. 124ff.
21. This tendency is particularly noticeable in Schinkel's plans for the estate of Charlottenhof and its Gardener's House at Potsdam.
22. Riemann, *K. F. Schinkel, Reisen nach Italien*, p. 46.

Figure Credits
1, 5, 7, 16, 17 Courtesy of Staatliche Museen, Berlin.
2, 3, 9, 12, 13 From Karl Friedrich Schinkel, *Collection of Architectural Designs*, Portfolio Facsimile Edition of *Sammlung Architektonischer Entwürfe*, ed. Kenneth S. Hazlett and Stephen O'Malley (Berlin: Verlag von Ernst und Korn, 1866; Chicago: Exedra Books Incorporated, 1981).
4 Courtesy of Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen, West Berlin.
6 Courtesy of Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen, Berlin-Charlottenburg.
8 Courtesy of Hamburg Kunsthalle.
10, 14, 18 Courtesy of Landesbildstelle, Berlin.
11 From Helmut Börsch-Supan and Lucius Grisebach, eds., *K. F. Schinkel, Architektur, Malerei, Kunstgewerbe* (Berlin-Charlottenburg, 1981), pl. 200.
15 From *Du*, no. 2 (1981): p. 23.
19 Courtesy of Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas.


UNDERWRITERS' LABORATORIES

Towards a New (Old) Architecture

Carroll W. Westfall

Preservation activity is aimed at protecting five classes of buildings and sites. In the first, particular sites are so strongly associated with transcendentally worthy values that the form of the shrine on the site is largely irrelevant. It may take the form of a patch of ground, a rude shelter, or a common house such as the one Lincoln lived in while in Springfield, Illinois. This preservation activity is as old as man. It remains strong today, but is should be stronger.

Preservation activity is also aimed at preserving a second, more sophisticated class of buildings in which form and content are cast into a consonance of transcendental significance. When what one sees in architecture as a true representation of order in nature is in perfect resonance with what one understands about the true purposes of man, we have an example of the best that architecture can be. Chartres Cathedral and Thomas Jefferson's "academical village" are such achievements. Preserving such structures becomes an increasing obligation to the extent that we are no longer able to build new ones of like quality. In America we are getting better at preserving the few of these we have. Strengthening this preservation activity can have only a salutary effect.

Additional preservation effort is directed toward a third class of building, although there is some doubt that this class of building actually exists. A building in this class becomes architecture not because it is associated with something important, and not because its forms have significance, but because, quite simply, its forms possess a transcendental beauty. Before the seventeenth or the eighteenth century no such structure was built because before that time there was no transcendental beauty without transcendental significance. It may be the achievement of modernity to have made such a beauty possible; and if this is the case, then some examples of this class may already have been built. Lack of certainty that such a class exists is not a license to destroy candidates for inclusion in it; quite the contrary, the possibility of such a class works as an imperative to preserve all possible candidates. But at least two candidates have already been destroyed—Richardson's Marshall Field Wholesale Store in Chicago, and Sullivan's Chicago Stock Exchange, buildings that served inconsequential functions unworthy of their forms. Three other candidates in Chicago—an area chosen because it provides examples for the discussion that follows—demonstrate a similar lack of symmetry between their form and their content—Wright's Robie House, Mies's Farnsworth House, and the Chicago lakefront, that great achievement of the citizens of Chicago, a completely artificial and constantly threatened construction of more than twenty miles length.

With certainty, structures in the first two categories, and possibly in the third as well, are so important that nothing short of the strongest public guarantees stemming from some form of public ownership ought to be used to assure their perpetual presence. Nothing that follows is intended as an attempt to diminish the importance of preserving such structures.

The fourth class of building receiving the attention of preservationists approaches the other three classes in importance. With buildings in this class, however, the question of public or private ownership is one of relative unimportance. Whatever is required to do the job is acceptable. The goal is to preserve the nice building, the charming area, the interesting place, and the site important for its association with something valued by a community that is less than universal and timeless in its scope and its reach. This is the preservation activity, especially among structures and districts with no great claim to importance or significance, that preoccupies us today. Again, nothing that follows is to be taken as a deprecation of this activity.

The concern in this article is with a fifth class. It is composed of buildings not in the first rank of importance, but more important than the lesser structures that presently preoccupy preservationists. This level is composed of the best class of the privately built structures that proliferated in our cities

1 (frontispiece) Underwriters' Laboratories, Chicago, Illinois. Destroyed, 1981-82.

until recently. These buildings belong at the same time to the public and to their private owners, just as did the activities that transpired within them and brought them into existence. To reshape, restore, and renew our cities we must resume the habit of building and keeping this class of urban buildings.

Historians misunderstand buildings of this class, preservationists are now unable to protect them, and architects no longer design their like. Three examples from Chicago will illustrate the class. Each one has recently been denied landmark status; one has already been demolished, while the other two are slated to follow.

The Chicago and Northwestern Railroad Terminal, designed by Frost and Granger and built between 1906 and 1911, was hailed by the railroad, its owner, as the "successful accomplishment of a stupendous undertaking [that] startles and arouses the enthusiasm of Americans" (figs. 2, 3). The new terminal, continued the owners, "has been a prime mover in awakening a love of the beautiful in the breasts of thousands to whom its classic elegance has been an inspiration." It is, they said, "one of the finest monuments ever erected to the commercial life and spirit of the west."[1]

This building was a grand terminal rather than a mere trainshed or an ancillary element within a larger commercial structure. It embodied within its architectural forms the larger civic and institutional ideals of the railroad company which intended not only to move trains laden with passengers, but also to move men to know beauty in the city. Built as a part of the Plan of Chicago, being prepared at that time by Daniel H. Burnham and Edward H. Bennett, its site and design were coordinated with the rest of the physical and architectural fabric of the city which Chicago's leaders wished to bring into being.[2] Its construction helped to assure the plan's sponsors that such a plan could be realized. Now planned for the site is a thirty-six-story commercial office tower designed by Murphy/Jahn with a three-story atrium station at its base.

Another privately owned building, this one using an abstract classicism to convey a similar public purpose, was the first structure Underwriters' Laboratories built for its own use (figs. 4-6). Begun in 1905 by Argyle Robinson, a local architect of comparatively little importance, it was expanded in 1908, and then extended in 1913 by Hugh Garden, whose earlier designs had been the basis for the facade design of the first two sections. Garden's firm returned in 1937 to complete the final state of the building's facade by adding two stories.

The facade showed that UL did not consider its testing operations to be a purely private affair. The brick and terra-cotta materials and the simplified forms made the building a suitable fixture in the industrial district it inhabited. They also showed that technical and industrial activities took place within. Nevertheless, the materials possessed a high quality and careful workmanship, and the design was derived from the forms and motifs found on more important buildings in the nearby Chicago Loop. This allied the building, and thereby the purpose it served, with a much higher class of business activity.[3] Now being constructed on the site is a high-rise apartment building designed by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill.

The building at 900 North Michigan Avenue is one of the many luxury apartment buildings constructed in Chicago between 1900 and 1930 (figs. 7-9). Jarvis Hunt, an architect with a national reputation, was co-owner, designing it in 1925 and moving in when it was completed. Like others of its class, the building shows great architectural skill in the manipulation of a subdued classicism, in handling its massing in relationship to a site, and in adaptation of the structure to its immediate setting, which, in this example, was an especially important one.

The building occupies a key site on Michigan Avenue, a favored street in the Burnham and Bennett plan. Michigan

2, 3 Chicago and Northwestern Railroad Terminal, Chicago, Illinois. Frost and Granger, 1906-11.

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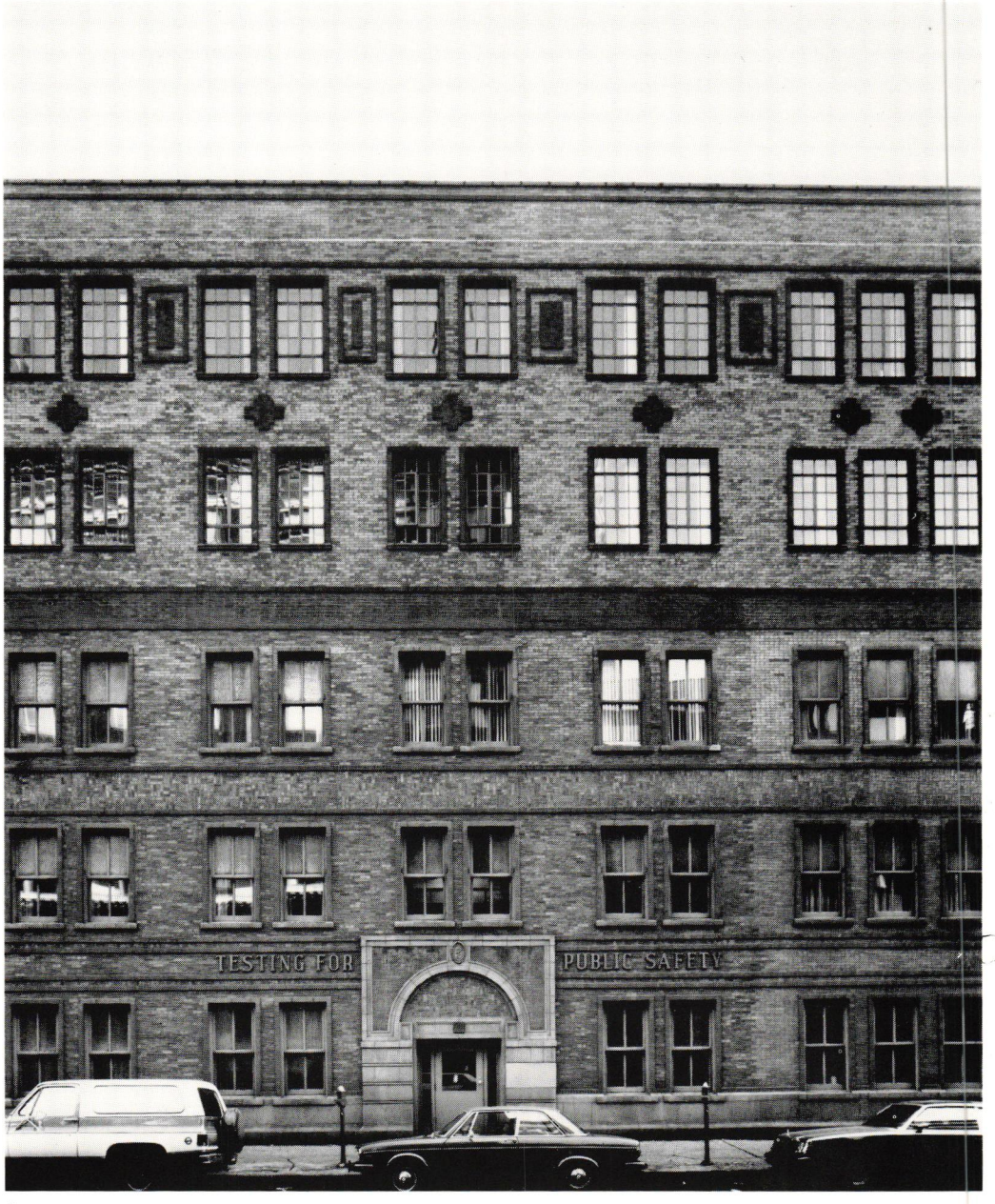
The terminal was "designed for a function which never materialized." (Wilbert R. Hasbrouck, "Statement" prepared for and submitted by the law firm of Sidley and Austin, Submission to Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council, March, 1980*).*

The terminal is neither a grandiloquent monument like those a Daniel H. Burnham or a McKim, Mead, and White might design, nor a "fresh, sharp, brilliant, clever" work we expect from a "Chicago archetype"—not, that is, "like the Home Insurance Building, the Auditorium, the Reliance Building, the Rookery, the Carson Pirie Scott Store, or the first beautiful pair of International Style apartments along the lake shore by Mies van der Rohe." (Walter Creese, in the transcript of the public hearing convened by the Commission on Chicago Historical and Architectural Landmarks, February 13, 1981).

4 Underwriters' Laboratories, Ohio Street, Chicago, Illinois (destroyed). Right bay, lower three stories: Argyle Robinson, 1908; remainder of lower three stories: Hugh Garden, 1913; top two stories: Schmidt, Garden and Martin, 1937.

5 Underwriters' Laboratories, Chicago (destroyed). Hugh Garden, 1913.

82 *"The fact that various tests of electrical and other materials took place over a period of about 75 years behind a facade through which persons other than those having business rarely stepped is certainly not sufficient to merit the preservation of a structure no longer used for that purpose. . . . The building does not 'embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction' unless we consider the fact that it and one other example, both by the same architect [Robinson] are examples of a type which failed to attract enough attention to command any sort of emulation or imitation." (Wilbert R. Hasbrouck to Irving J. Markin, December 17, 1979; from the Illinois Historic Sites Division).*



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6 Underwriters' Laboratories, Chicago (destroyed). Far right three-story section: Argyle Robinson, 1905; next four bays, lower three stories: Argyle Robinson, 1908; remainder of lower three stories: Hugh Garden, 1913; top two stories: Schmidt, Garden and Martin, 1937.

"The best I could say for Robinson's original building is that it possesses some modest interest because of its linear qualities and its relatively simple surfaces, and that it provides an early example of a modern architectural style adapted to a building of industrial character." There is "nothing about [Garden's design] that seems to me to merit registration. . . . Even though historical significance may be attached to sites and buildings without regard to their outward appearance, it is unwise to advocate listing such sites and structures unless they contribute visually to their environment, or else provide a valuable and authentic historical reference point that the general observer can understand, interpret, and appreciate. In my judgment the historical significance of Underwriters' Laboratories is not sufficiently great to warrant listing its Ohio Street building, either wholly or in part, in the National Register. But even if Underwriters' Laboratories were judged significant historically, I do not believe its former plant on Ohio Street can be made to blend well with the new environment rising around it, nor do I think its buildings, if preserved, are capable of conveying a significant historical message any better than—or even as well as—a descriptive marker." (Paul E. Sprague to Irving J. Markin, December 17, 1979; from the Illinois Historic Sites Division).

"The 900 Building embodies nothing at all. The building style avoids specificity in its historical references and may be described as non-descript classicism. Moreover, the style of the building is not without parallel. On the contrary, the 900 Building is typical of its era and resembles many other apartments in Chicago." Although earlier a member of the Steinway Hall group who "did experiment briefly with a style largely free from historical precedent in a number of warehouses designed . . . between 1897 and 1907," Hunt later "did not stray far from the historical styles that he had learned about in architecture school. . . . The development was not *a forward-looking experiment in mixed use. It was a folly of unwise speculation" as its 1934 bankruptcy proved, and "in fact the product largely of blind market forces. . . . On an avenue evolving as shops and high-rise offices and hotels," "well-designed high-rise office buildings and hotels containing shops and stores" would be the only ones appropriate for landmark status. (Paul E. Sprague, "Statement" prepared for and submitted by the law firm of Sidley and Austin,* Submission to Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council, March, 1982*).*

The original builders did not seek "the more eternal, universal, or lofty values, such as aesthetic worth. . . . The artistic aspect of the building and its apartments is interpreted [in its original promotional literature] as an all-out

7 900 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. Jarvis Hunt, 1925-26. View of south facade with second and third stories and, beyond, the courtyard facade.
8 900 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago. Jarvis Hunt, 1925-26. View of east facade. On right: 920 North Michigan Avenue, B. H. Marshall, 1900, with later alterations on lower three floors; far right: One Magnificent Mile, SOM (under construction, September, 1981); on left: Fourth Presbyterian Church, Ralph Adams Cram and Howard Van Doren Shaw, 1912-24.

7

8

9 900 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago. Jarvis Hunt, 1925-26. View of south facade from John Hancock Tower plaza.

attempt to escape from *the environs of Chicago, not to respond to it. . . . It is thus consciously alienated in what has traditionally been the most American of cities architecturally. Where innovation has prevailed, conservatism now takes over. . . . When we look at the outside of the building, we see at once that it is the design product of one of those recurring 'lost souls' of the Chicago School who cannot quite reconcile the 1920's with the vigorous spirit of the 1880's and early '90's. . . . The outside, under the new Renaissance rules, should be completely without experimentation." The building is not a good example of the hotels typical of the period and "best done in New York. To burst the chains [of those rules Hunt] uses a restrained vocabulary from Chicago of the 1880's on the outside, but by now it is too late and he is too weak." The building therefore "confuses rather than clarifies the architectural issues of the 1920's versus those of the 1880's. . . . The underlying difficulty is that Chicago possessed so many superbly original buildings, that to save this very eclectic example, inside or out, would be merely to indicate how low that former great estate had fallen." (Walter Creese, "Statement" prepared for and submitted by the law firm of Sidley and Austin,* Submission to Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council, March, 1982*).*

Avenue was subsequently developed as a special street by entrepreneurs like those who built and lived in 900 North Michigan.[4] They built it as a co-op, a form of ownership made possible through changes in Illinois law soon after World War I. Unlike any other Chicago co-op building, this one included, along with the huge luxury apartments, two other kinds of units—smaller rental apartments and commercial shops. The depression bankrupted the co-op as it did most others in Chicago, but the building survived as a rental structure. Since World War II, Michigan Avenue has gradually become the "Magnificent Mile," a strip of commercial office towers and mixed-use buildings. These include SOM's Hancock Tower, One Magnificent Mile (now under construction), and Water Tower Place, by Loebl, Schlossman, Bennett, and Dart. These giants tower above the earlier generation's 920 North Michigan (Benjamin H. Marshall, 1900), Fourth Presbyterian Church (Ralph Adams Cram and Howard Van Doren Shaw, 1912-24), Drake Hotel (Marshall, 1919), Palmolive (Playboy) Building (Holabird and Root, 1928-29), and 900 North Michigan. The demolition of 900 and 920 is being sought to make way for another high-rise, mixed-use building.

The landmark designation of these buildings was prevented by an attitude about the city that includes present-day approaches to both architecture and preservation. Current preservation is good at some things, as is current architecture, but it is seldom able to preserve buildings of this special class. As our cities mature, buildings of this class are driven from their urban fabric, and current architecture is incapable of replacing them. In the process, our cities are being destroyed as places that can fulfill their human purpose, which is to make man the best he can be. To save our cities, we need only to reverse these recent trends.

Present-day preservation is often considered our best defense against the destruction of older civic values and its concomitant urban architecture, but a brief review of preservation's origins will show that present-day preservation is ill-suited for that task. We are often told that preservation dates from the last years of the eighteenth century and that it "became a distinct activity . . . when society's needs and technology began to change so quickly that buildings became functionally obsolete before they were structurally untenable."[5] This and similar interpretations see preservation only in relationship to architecture. Architecture is seen in turn as an extension of sociology and technology which separately or together determine the world in which architecture and preservation operate. While this is a proper interpretation of current architecture and preservation, it misrepresents the situation that existed when the buildings of the special class illustrated by the three Chicago examples were being built in America's cities.

The earliest preservation activities in this country were undertaken for patriotic purposes. Old buildings were associated with the civil values of important patriots who had built, used, or encountered them. When a legislative committee in New York State in 1850 was faced with deciding the fate of the Hasbrouck House, it was able to intone:
"No traveler who touches upon the shores of Orange county will hesitate to take a pilgrimage to this beautiful spot, associated as it is with so many delightful reminiscences of our early history, and if he has an American heart in his bosom, he will feel himself a better man; his patriotism will kindle with deep emotion; his aspirations of his country's good will ascend from a more devout mind for having visited the 'Headquarters of Washington.' "[6]

A debate a generation later showed that what an earlier period thought valuable was also worthy of preservation. James Russell Lowell proclaimed in 1877 that the Old South Meeting Hall was not "a model of architecture . . . in any aesthetic sense, . . . but in another it seems to be a model of architecture. It was the best thing that our fathers could do in their day, and they thought it beautiful."[7] Beauty was not an issue to be decided by experts. Beauty was in the object, and it got there through the efforts of men who sought to

build well.

The enemy of these buildings was the same one that threatened civil values—the "incessant whirl of the trivial present," Charles W. Eliot, president of Harvard, called it when he spoke up for the Old South Meeting Hall.[8] To conquer that enemy required the same patriotic qualities that allowed man to be the best that he can be; it required "the political sense and sober second thought, the self-control and readiness in emergencies which in good measure we have inherited from the generations that have gone before us."[9]

The forces that produced the "incessant whirl of the trivial present" were the dramatic changes in society and technology and in related aspects of the new social and physical sciences that swirled around the men of the period. Only a simpleton or a continental positivist would have taken these to be engines of changes that brooked no opposition. Lowell, Eliot, and their fellows believed the changes could be harnessed to serve the higher purposes which men pursue in their politics. For Lowell, the Old South Meeting Hall was not "a model of architecture." This was because "it was a good deal harder for our fathers to build such a building as the Old South than it is for us to build a beautiful hall like the one we are in now [Harvard's Memorial Hall]."[10] He understood that a new interpretation of what a beautiful building ought to look like did not in itself justify destroying what an earlier age thought beautiful. The belief that beauty is both enduring and will take on different forms as the world of man changes is fundamental to all premodern aesthetics, just as is the belief that justice and goodness are enduring and will find different embodiments in different circumstances. Indeed, that this is so means that we speak not of beliefs in these things but of knowledge of them.

In a past that knew beauty, justice, and goodness, old buildings *were* replaced by new ones, generally for three reasons. One was that there was no one around to guard a shrine from the "incessant whirl of a trivial present." Another was that old, unimportant buildings serving trivial purposes were replaced by important ones serving important purposes. A squalid manufacturing district was cleared to make way for the new Chicago and Northwestern Station. Some outdated walk-up apartment buildings were sacrificed for 900 North Michigan. During the Renaissance, a small palace by Bramante and another by Raphael were destroyed for Bernini's great piazza in front of St. Peter's in Rome. The third reason for replacement of old buildings was that a new interpretation of the best embodiment of beauty was raised in the city to add to that city's beauty, justice, and goodness. The 1906 railroad terminal was built at the expense of one from 1881. Bramante's St. Peter's was begun on the ruins of the venerable basilica of Constantine. Bernini's new piazza included a new entrance to the Vatican Palace which required the sacrifice of a clock tower built only two generations before to mark that entrance.

When men build cities in this way, there is no need for preservation because men are then renewing the city to make it better, indeed, to make it a place to pursue the best that man can be. In such a city, architects are like a people or a government which amends a constitution or revises statutes to bring to bear on new circumstances some new knowledge about that which is always true.

In our form of government, the new circumstances that might justify invoking the power of government to effect preservation by intruding into rights of private property must result from the previous exercise of those private property rights. That is, first the owner builds, and then government restrains if government can find a just reason for doing so. What constitutes a just reason? The answer is that the intrusion must serve a public purpose which could not be reached otherwise. During the early period of preservation, such a public purpose as defined by government corresponded with the private interests of those who built structures of the class illustrated by the train station, the testing laboratory, and the luxury apartment building. The

private interest of the builder included a representation of the public purpose of what he built proportionate to the dependence he had on the public for reaching his purpose. Put another way, the building showed that its builder was a good citizen building a city that would allow man to pursue the best that man can be.

Because the purposes of builders in cities and of the government were in correspondence, the role of government in preservation was limited to preserving important patriotic sites from the "incessant whirl of the trivial present." In 1896 the Supreme Court decided that Congress had not exceeded its constitutional powers in acquiring the Gettysburg Battlefield.[11] In 1906 the Congress passed the Antiquities Act designed to protect important monuments already in its possession. And in 1935 it passed the Historic Sites Act which "declared that it is a national policy to preserve for public use historic sites, buildings and objects of national significance for the inspiration and benefit of the people of the United States." Within the act's purview were places which "possess exceptional value as commemorating and illustrating the history of the United States."[12]

The federal government stood aloof from the "incessant whirl of the trivial present" represented by museums destroying old Charleston houses to provide them with period rooms, and by oil companies seeking sites for gas stations in the old section of the South Carolina city whose seal states, ironically, "She guards her buildings, customs, and laws."[13] In 1931, to stay the destruction, the Charleston City Council passed an ordinance meant to protect the character of what it called its historic district and to retain either existing or similar uses in the district's buildings. The ordinance required very different techniques and reasons from the ones used by private organizations or government units to save patriotic sites. From those techniques and those reasons grew the ones supporting preservation activity as we know it today. Meanwhile, architecture changed. Both preservation and architecture became activities unrelated to the renewing of cities as places where man can be the best that he can be, and preservation came to be thought of as the makeweight against that new architecture.

Charlestonians found both the techniques and reasons for this preservation in the zoning codes which city after city had enacted since New York first adopted one in 1916. Zoning is a technique for imposing the public interest on private property by regulating the use of land and the general configuration of buildings intended for construction on the land. It is not meant to bring into effect any particular public purpose. Instead, it is meant only to limit the actions of private owners. The reason for the limitation is that without it, owners might inflict an intolerable nuisance on others as they use their land for their own purpose. The basis for this limitation lies in the police power, "the power inherent in government to protect itself and all its constituents." The police power may expand as needed, but its expansion is "held in leash by the Constitution."[14] In 1926, the Supreme Court found that zoning represents a proper expansion of the police power to control nuisances. In saying that "a nuisance may be merely a right thing in the wrong place,—like a pig in the parlor instead of the barnyard," it ruled that zoning is justified by the necessity of protecting the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare in an era of increased complexity in urban life.[15]

The assessment standards that might keep pigs in barnyards and out of parlors stem from notions about cities as places of social and technological change rather than centers of enduring civic and political values. The architecture that developed in conjunction with zoning had a similar basis. It looked upon buildings as ways of satisfying the private, economic, utilitarian, functional purposes of owners. Neither this zoning nor its related architecture is meant to renew cities in the way constitutions are amended or statute laws revised. Zoning of this sort may be thought of as being similar to new legislation that completely voids the old law. In doing so, it challenges the truth embodied in the old with newly dis-

covered truths suitable to the circumstances of the moment and subject to replacement as soon as circumstances change. Similarly, a building compatible with this zoning can be thought of as a private act undertaken to satisfy a private desire or a momentary impulse, subject only to the restraint imposed by the transient legislation of the moment. With this zoning and its related architecture, the question, "Architecture or Revolution?" has been answered in favor of perpetual revolution.

To extend the police power to cover preservation required demonstrating that in destroying a building or mutilating a district, the health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the citizens were threatened. This was done, albeit with difficulty, until the Supreme Court in 1954 handed down a portentous decision. In it, Justice William O. Douglas wrote: "The concept of the public welfare is broad and inclusive. The values it represents are spiritual as well as physical, aesthetic as well as monetary. It is within the power of the legislature to determine that the community should be beautiful as well as carefully patrolled."[6]

This case questioned the power of an urban renewal agency to acquire, for the purpose of completing a comprehensive urban renewal project, a department store that was not a slum. Justice Douglas wrote:
"Miserable and disreputable housing conditions may do more than spread disease and crime and immorality. They may also suffocate the spirit by reducing the people who live there to the status of cattle. They may indeed make living an almost insufferable burden. . . . The misery of housing may despoil a community as an open sewer may ruin a river. . . . The experts concluded that if the community were to be healthy, if it were not to revert again to a blighted slum area, as though possessed of a congenital disease, the area must be planned as a whole. . . . The entire area needed redesigning so that a balanced, integrated plan could be developed for the region, including not only new homes but also schools, churches, parks, streets, and shopping centers."

This is the vision the planners had, the one the Congress provided the legislation to build, and the one Justice Douglas said would be not only "sanitary" but "beautiful" as well.

This is the kind of city that results from applying the techniques of zoning and from the practice of that zoning's concomitant architecture. In it the belief prevails that the healthy, the clean, and the carefully patrolled is the same as the beautiful.

This absorption of the concept of the beautiful within the sociological notions attached to police power escaped the notice of those who hailed the 1954 decision and its progeny as evidence that the courts had shown their willingness to sanction moving into "protecting the artistic, the true, and the beautiful."[17] The artistic, the true, and the beautiful embody values different from those connected to health and safety in particular, and to morals and the general welfare. They are not concrete, and they cannot be assessed by examining health and police statistics or figures concerning crime rates and dependence on public assistance. The artistic, the true, and the beautiful are concepts embedded in the tradition of rational discourse conducted in civil societies. They refer to values that can be discovered in or be considered as qualities of things man builds for human purposes and that form part of the artificial world that stands apart from the natural world. These values are argued and disputed in the same public forum used for discovering whether or not acts are good extensions of what is known to be true.

Nevertheless, on that basis was founded the first comprehensive legislation passed to assist citizens in using government to promote preservation.[18] The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, whose most familiar provision is the establishment of the National Register of Historic Places, was followed by the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act which integrated the concern for protecting the "rich [historical] heritage of our nation" with the protection of the entire natural environment.[19] Meanwhile, throughout the nation,

local and state governments were enacting related preservation measures. The new preservation was upheld in the test case involving New York City's restrictions on the Penn Central Railroad as owner of New York's Grand Central Terminal. In its 1978 opinion, the Supreme Court held that "the restrictions imposed are substantially related to the promotion of the general welfare." The court agreed with the "widely held belief that structures with special historic, cultural, or architectural significance enhance the quality of life for all. . . . [H]istoric conservation is but one aspect of the much larger problem, basically an environmental one, of enhancing—or perhaps developing for the first time—the quality of life for people."[20]

Ever since, the phrase "the quality of life" has been invoked by preservationists. The director of the Office of Cultural Resource Preservation in the national Advisory Council for Historic Preservation said recently:

"The basic concern of modern preservation is the quality of life, which is found in the built and natural environments of the nation's communities and neighborhoods, and which depends on those environments for the maintenance of its integrity."[21]

The word *modern* is used here, I think, to set present preservation concerns apart from those predating the expansion that began in the 1930s. A similar distinction between old and new preservation is made in this statement, typical of preservationists, by the director of a preservation program at the 1980 Preservation Workshop:

"Historic preservation in the United States may spring from commemorative, patriotic, and aesthetic motivations, but it has long since moved far beyond to deal with basic concerns—housing, economic vitality, quality of life."[22]

When it deals with these concerns, preservation is disconnected from the long discourse about civic and political aims and values which, since antiquity, has nurtured cities and made them places where man can be the best that he can be. That disconnection is evident in the failure to make a distinction that is fundamental in the understanding of man and his place in cities and in the world: that is, between the artificial and the natural, between the world man builds and the one he builds in. It fails to see that a building or a district worthy of preservation is worthy for very different reasons from those appropriate for protecting, say, whales or redwoods. The result is that the protection of both proceeds not from reasons but from sentiment. If sentiment changes, the activity can collapse, and this means that preservation is always in jeopardy. To be valid and enduring, preservation must be seen as a civil and political activity based on justifiable reasons. From reasons flow judgments, and judgments are precisely what are missing in current preservation procedures.

Instead of requiring judgments of quality or of value, preservation requires mere classification. The classifications derive from the criteria that are more or less common to all preservation statutes and ordinances enacted since the early 1960s. In general, these criteria specify that if a structure or area is, in most circumstances, fifty or more years old, and if it now is basically what it used to be, and if it satisfies any one or more of several additional criteria, then people may seek its preservation according to the procedures leading to designation.[23] Each of the additional criteria is independent of the others—that is, any one is enough to lead to designation, and there is no special status for structures that satisfy more than one. The criteria fall into three broad classes. One is based on the social sciences which seek potential archaeological sites. Another incorporates the commemorative and patriotic standards of an earlier day—an important event occurred here, or an important person was associated with this place. The third refers to the intrinsic character of a building as defined by architecture and architectural history. This one requires that a building "embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction . . . or represent the work of a master, or . . . possess high artistic values." If buildings form an ensemble that does any of these things, then that ensemble would be considered a historic

district.

Practice has shown that, so long as there is sufficiently strong and broadly based sponsorship, a community can make a landmark out of any building or district that is old enough and sound enough to satisfy the criteria of the pertinent law. While this is not necessarily bad, it does expose the preservation movement's major deficiency, which is its ineffectiveness in protecting buildings that lack adequate sponsorship. Too often it turns out that these are the city's most important privately owned buildings, that is, buildings of the class illustrated by the train station, the testing laboratory, and the luxury apartment building in Chicago. Preservation became incapable of protecting these buildings the moment it accepted zoning's interpretation of the city as a place of sociological and technological change that government ought to police. As preservation expanded to encompass the related problems of "housing" and economic vitality, it became increasingly unable to serve the more important civil and political purposes which stand above and are supported by these important but nonetheless mundane and utilitarian aspects of cities.

This leaves preservation battling the "incessant whirl of the trivial present" by confronting it with a method of evaluation that substitutes classification for judgment. To be more precise, there are judgments made in preservation, but they are not reasoned judgments. They have the status of reactions to sensory stimuli rather than of judgments of the intellect. The judgments required in preservation arise exclusively from the sensations aroused within the observer. It makes no difference what the source of those sensations is—whether in gazing upon a whale or a redwood or a building, or in inwardly seeing the destruction of a whale or a redwood or a building. Contemplating any of these conduces to pleasure; contemplating the destruction of any of these leads to pain which is mitigated by seeking the reverse, that is, preservation.[24] This is the aesthetic doctrine that serves as the basis of preservation by invoking "the quality of life" in one form or another as its slogan.[25]

When preservation is based on such feeble, sentimental grounds, there is no way for the people to persuade government, or for government to persuade the people, that preservation is important enough to occupy very much attention. Although too weak to be really effective, there is enough strength in the sentiment to allow it a weak role within the realm to which its social interests ally it; that is, within the process of planning used to bring public and private desires to bear on the form our cities take. This is the great benefit preservation offers today, one that must not be lost but instead must be strengthened.[26] As Paul Goldberger trenchantly put it at the 1980 Preservation Workshop:
"A great deal of the force of the preservation movement comes from contemporary architecture's failure to build well, its failure to build in a style that satisfies the needs of our cities and the needs of our senses. A lot of our belief in preservation comes from our fear of what will replace buildings that are not preserved; all too often we fight to save not because what we want to save is so good but because we know that what will replace it will be no better."[27]

Goldberger has three complaints here. If we are to have better architecture, cities, and preservation, then we must understand these complaints. I shall present them under these headings: the style of modern architecture is like any other style, none of which can satisfy the needs of cities; there is no architectural solution to urban problems; not all buildings are equal.

Goldberger, agreeing with what most architects take to be true, tells us that there is something in *style* that can satisfy the needs of our cities and the needs of our senses. I agree that style can satisfy the senses, but it cannot address the needs of cities. This is because there is nothing important about style in either of the two meanings of that term. One meaning refers to the superficial appearance of art objects, including buildings. This meaning was developed as an analytical term

during the last hundred or more years.[28] It is closely allied with the aesthetics found, for example, in preservation's "quality of life" doctrine.[29] It is also fundamental to that approach to the history of art and architecture which seeks to classify art objects as cultural artifacts by relating them to other, like phenomena from the present, past, or future. There is nothing in this kind of "style" that can help satisfy the needs of our cities. The other meaning of style proceeds from this one. It seeks to offer an explanation of the meaning of art objects by seeing them as manifestations of the spirit of the time, or of an absolute idea, or of the spirit of man that takes on material substance.[30] In this sense style becomes something that uses men to speak rather than a means men use for speaking. If, as the traditional idea of cities as civil places has it, cities are made by men and themselves make men, then style used with this meaning cannot make cities. It follows, then, that style with this meaning cannot help satisfy the needs of our cities.

Architecture today is practiced on the basis of these two meanings of the term style. The result is that there is no architectural solution to our urban problems when architecture is practiced as it is today. According to the first meaning of the term style, architects and preservationists take the most "splendid gift" of cities to be "*a range of choice*, an entire spectrum of possible lines of action," as James Fitch and the Environmental Policy Act of 1969 put it.[31] These possible lines of action are along vectors leading to some stimulating experience, whether personal or public, whose value is measured by its intensity. Cities, according to this interpretation, are playgrounds for the senses.

This first meaning exists as the makeweight against its complement, the second meaning of the term style, which sees the city as a manifestation of the absolute spirit, or *Zeitgeist*. It sees man's relationships with other men, with nature, and the past and the future as being locked into a determined outcome beyond the reach of man's reason, his will, or his ethical sensibilities. Nowadays, in this country the mechanism operating that determinism is technology. Modern architecture, both as a style with either meaning or as an ideology, is indissolubly linked with beliefs about a deterministic technology. It posits a technology with its own momentum answerable to its own needs. In this scheme, "The city has become a garage for mechanical men."[32] The newest architectural solutions based on this notion suggest revelling in the sensual gratification offered by a technological, glittery modernism or postmodernism. This architecture has captured our cities because the two strongest dissenting views now operating ignored the city when they were developed nearly a generation ago. They developed as complements to one another, both uncritically accepting the existing world and taking it as the basis for a new approach to working with what man builds. One dissenting view, initiated by Robert Venturi, looked to the mannered, to the strip, the suburb, and the ordinary as the basis for a new architecture. The other, despairing of our incapability to do as well now as we used to, invented present-day preservation.

All of this suggests that the problems of our cities will yield to no architectural solution as we now know architecture. Let us, then, look elsewhere for another way of thinking about cities. In our system of government, a city is a municipal corporation brought into existence through the delegation of authority from a state government. Interestingly, there is nothing in the United States Constitution to sanction such a delegation, but there need not be because, as is the case with the police power, that delegation is based on something that precedes even the Constitution: that is, "The right of local self-government being so fundamental to our system of politics, our [state] constitutions are, in the absence of any express prohibitions to the contrary, to be construed as permitting it."[33] As the courts acknowledge, this allowance is based on Anglo-Saxon practice running back to "the earliest history" of European governments of all classes. The exercise of this power, one court said in 1855, "has probably done more to promote civilization than all the other causes combined which has been constantly exercised in every part of

our country from its earliest settlement, and which has raised up among us many of the most valuable institutions."[34]

American cities used to be places that built institutions in order to allow men to accomplish civic and political purposes. Not all purposes were equally compelling, and so not all institutions were of equal importance. The greater the public interest served, the more important the institution. The important institutions were the ones that historically received the greater attention of the public, builders, and architects. The form of the buildings that housed the more important institutions were the ones for which *beauty*, as James Russell Lowell used the term in 1877, was the appropriate quality.[35]

We now neglect these institutions. This neglect is matched by an architecture that cannot build for such institutions and hence cannot build well in cities. When architecture seeks not beauty but style, its buildings serve not institutional purposes but utilitarian functions. All buildings of this architecture have an equal possibility of satisfying the lineaments of a style and the requirements of functions, and they also have an equal possibility of stimulating feelings, absorbing a builder's wealth or being a profitable investment, allowing the architect to display his creative genius, or manifesting the spirit of the age. Buildings differ from one another only in the extent to which they satisfy one or more of these several disconnected, disparate possibilities. A preservation effort that willingly competes on utilitarian grounds with such an architecture, and that draws its strength from a reaction against the style of contemporary architecture, is a poor corrective and a poor guide for a society that seeks more from architecture than utility. The same may be said of an architectural history that cannot explain why a bicycle shed is different from a cathedral aside from their differences in style and function.

Cities depend for their civility upon the creation of institutions that allow men to live the ethical life in politics, as Aristotle said and civil societies have demonstrated ever since. Concomitantly, buildings serve institutions and give form to the civil and political values they promote. A corollary is that cities are places where public purposes shape and check private ends; another corollary is that the buildings in cities represent that balance between public and private which promotes civility.[36]

Traditionally, in civilized cities there have been no purely private buildings. That all buildings are more or less public was clearly shown by architecture until quite recently. A privately owned building such as a railroad terminal or a testing laboratory that was supposed to return a profit on an investment did so because, in order to prosper, its owner had to serve the public, and part of that public service, from whence derived the profit, required that his operation appear as a decorous element within the city. The same may be said, *mutatis mutandis*, for a privately owned building not meant to provide a profit on an investment, such as a residence or a complex based on luxury apartments. In each case there was a congruence between private and civil values, and that congruence was represented in the architecture. The buildings in a city were related to one another in a representational complex that allowed less important buildings such as commercial business blocks and rental residences for a middling class to appear less important, and allowed more important ones to be recognized as such. No building was isolated from another. To design a single building required knowledge of the entire representational nexus that held all buildings together in a city's civic architecture.

We have a difficult time today understanding this form of representation because we expect buildings to speak a kind of *Esperanto*, a contrived language that is supposed to be understood everywhere but has never been spoken eloquently anywhere. Good buildings convey true, universal meaning through national languages refulgent with regional dialects. To understand this form of representation requires an intimate knowledge of the institutional and architectural history

of a place and of the larger world that holds it. This is precisely the knowledge we now lack, and because we lack it, we have no way either to preserve the important buildings or to add more of them to our cities.

Present preservation laws and procedures are appropriate only for dealing with buildings as if they are primarily private in character, primarily utilitarian in use, and appealing to us primarily because we believe they are more attractive than what would replace them. To do more, better laws are needed. Such laws would allow us to identify the more important buildings. They would be the ones able to pass the stiffer test that requires linkages between the building's extrinsic qualities—that is, the extent of public service and public interest found in the purpose that brought the building into being; and the intrinsic qualities—that is, the forms given the building so that it would represent that public use and public interest.[37] These laws would also allow us to preserve the better buildings.

Such laws are rooted in the tradition of politics which began in antiquity and was still vital to the preservation activity of the nineteenth century. That tradition can provide reasons for restraining the desires and passions that interfere with the better purposes of cities and can direct the "wants" of a people to the attainment of the better purposes that cities are uniquely able to provide. Such reasons would explain that owners of some property do not have the "right" to do with that property absolutely as they wish.

One implication of this is that in order to remain in continued private ownership, we cannot expect important buildings to compete in the marketplace with other buildings that are more purely utilitarian in function. Nowadays, if a building cannot compete, it is not preserved. As the dissent in the 1978 Penn Central decision argued, quoting Justice Holmes in a case from 1922, "a strong desire to improve the public condition is not enough to warrant achieving the desire by a shorter cut than the constitutional way of paying for the change."[38]

While this view lost, the opinion that prevailed was not based on reasons that could withstand a shift in sentiment. The threat remains that public money may be required to make good private losses. A justification for invoking stronger restrictions runs back to English law, the basis of American law, to the time of Magna Carta. It is articulated in the principle that government may "authorize the establishment of laws requiring each citizen to so conduct himself, and so use his own property, as not unnecessarily to injure another. This is the very essence of government," said the Supreme Court in 1876 when it invoked the maxim embodied therein to allow government to regulate commerce. In that case, which happened to arise from practices of grain elevator operators in Chicago, the court said, quoting a seventeenth-century English jurist, that "when private property is 'affected with a public interest, it ceases to be *juris privati* only.' . . . Property does become clothed with a public consequence, and affect the community at large. When, therefore, one devotes his property to a use in which the public has an interest, he, in effect, grants to the public an interest in that use, and must submit to be controlled by the public for the common good, to the extent of the interest he has thus created. He may withdraw his grant by discontinuing the use; but so long as he maintains the use, he must submit to the control."[39]

The application to buildings in cities seems clear enough. Buildings, especially those built with private money on private land to serve a public purpose such as moving people on railroads, protecting the public from the hazards of untested apparatus, or ornamenting the city with decorous private residences, are buildings that have, in the words of the court, a "public consequence, and affect the community at large." They are clothed with a public interest, and they therefore ought to be retained as part of the city, even if they no longer serve their original roles. A building can, after all, be given a new use, even a meaner one, and still continue to

represent an earlier devotion of private resources to a public purpose. We do not remove the words inscribed in public places when those who spoke them die. The alternative, the one we use today, is to destroy the building because it is "functionally obsolete." It is usually replaced by a structure that serves a meaner, that is, a more private purpose—a building with forms that represent the intention of destroying cities as civil places through the social revolution that gave birth to the current architecture.

Destroying, like building or preserving, is a willful act. To build, to preserve, or to destroy is based on a right granted by a polity to act in public. When an owner destroys a structure built to serve a public purpose, he is doing something he foreswore doing when he built to serve that public purpose. Just as the existence of structures of this special type has a "public consequence, and affect[s] the community at large," then so too does the willful destruction of such buildings have a concomitant consequence and effect. If a person operating a business that has become clothed with the public interest can be forced, in the public interest, to operate his business in a manner different from the one he would choose on his own, then so too can the owner of an important building in a city be forced to do otherwise with his building than he would if there were no preservation restrictions. Rather than owning it, he can cease to own it—"He may withdraw his grant [of a public interest] by discontinuing the use," as the court said of the grain elevator operator—but he ought not to be allowed to destroy it.

The government regulation of commerce and of buildings is as old as government itself. The extension of such regulation to the operators of Chicago grain elevators followed a great public clamoring of the sort we hear today from those who own the buildings we seek to preserve. The more important the building, the more likely it is we will lose the preservation battle. It would be foolhardy to expect a similar clamor to lead any time soon to laws that would impose on private property the stronger restrictions needed to intrude more deeply than we now do into private ownership. The way to reach this end is for architects to lead the way just as they did in the early stages of the present form of preservation when they developed the first stirrings of reaction against the dominant strain of modern architecture.

Architects can do this by operating with an aesthetic that works like the police power used, for example, in regulating commerce, as well as with an understanding of present and past architecture that incorporates representation within its aesthetic. Preservation activity can then follow the example architecture sets. With luck, this will happen rapidly enough that a new preservation can be used to rescue buildings from the present assault on our cities.

In using the term *aesthetic* here I have in mind a different meaning from the one given it when citizens participate in planning through preservation. Here, it is meant to refer to the kind of evaluative and historical inquiry into architecture that recognizes the inequality of buildings and the linkage of their formal and institutional values. In this sense, a building is not an isolated entity and it is not an object of mere aesthetic interest. It is a part of a civil structure, and it is open to what in the eighteenth century were called judgments of taste which allowed aesthetics to consider beauty as the symbol of morality, to use Kant's terminology.

That is what a building was when buildings were the physical embodiment of true values in a society attentive to goodness and justice. As we regain the habit of thinking of cities as places that create, and, I should add, maintain, institutions and the buildings that serve them, we can once again begin designing civil buildings.

Building cities is the ongoing task of each generation. We have thought recently that architecture is creative, and we have set about dismantling the cities we have inherited because they are old and because they fail to satisfy our senses and our utilitarian desires. We ought now to return to

the task man has always had, that of learning from the men of the remote and recent past so that we can continue to build wisely in the present.[40] I have no idea what a city built on these principles would look like. Daniel Burnham did, and he was a classicist, but I am not suggesting that we must use classical forms in order to build well. I am saying that there must be some old, good buildings in such a city, which means that there must be buildings of beauty symbolizing morality. I am also saying that the new buildings must do this also as they work with the old ones in architectural and urban design. I am convinced that such a city cannot look *modern* as that term has been used to refer to a style, but I do believe that it will look new even as the new looks old, and that the old will also, finally, look new again, as good architecture always has. The cathedrals have always been white.[41]

Notes

1. *Passenger Terminal, Chicago, U.S.A.* (pub. Chicago and Northwestern Railway, n.d. [ca. 1911]), unpaginated; copy in Chicago Historical Society.
2. Daniel H. Burnham and Edward H. Bennett, *Plan of Chicago* (Chicago, 1909), chap. 5, pls. 78-79, 122-23.
3. I discuss the relationship of the building to others in "Manners Matter," *Inland Architect* 24, no. 3 (1980): pp. 19-23.
4. Unfortunately, there is no review of this building activity, but see my study of one of Chicago's prominent luxury apartment building designers, "Benjamin Howard Marshall of Chicago," *The Chicago Architectural Journal* 2 (1982): pp. 8-27. See also *A Portfolio of Fine Apartment Homes Compiled by the Michigan-Erie Office of Baird and Warner Incorporated* (Chicago, 1928); 900 North Michigan appears on pp. 40-41.
5. Robert Bruegmann, "Preservation, Restoration, and Conservation," *International Handbook of Contemporary Developments in Architecture*, ed. Warren Sanderson (Westport, Conn., and London, 1981), pp. 55-65. See also William J. Murtagh, "Aesthetic and Social Dimensions of Historic Districts," in *Historic Districts: Identification, Social Aspects and Preservation* (Washington, 1975), pp. 9-16. Murtagh reports that preservation "can be linked with the development of modern historical consciousness" (p. 9). In what follows, the historicist strain will not be traced, but it should be said that it is similar in its effects to the sociological and technological considerations that will be discussed.
6. Quoted in Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *Presence of the Past* (New York, 1965), p. 36.
7. Quoted by Walter Muir Whitehill, Foreword to Ibid., p. 11.
8. Ibid., p. 10.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., p. 11.
11. United States v. Gettysburg Electric Railway Company, 160 U.S. 668 (1895).
12. 34 Stat. 225, 49 Stat. 666. See also Jacob H. Morrison, *Historic Preservation Law* (Washington, 1965); reprint with added foreword (1974), pp. 4-11, and passim.
13. For the background activity, see Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *Preservation Comes of Age*, 2 vols. (Charlottesville, Va., 1981), chap. 5.
14. The phrase is that of Charles W. Gerstenberg, *American Constitutional Law* (New York, 1937), p. 264.
15. Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Company, 272 U.S. 365 (1926).
16. Berman v. Parker, 348 U.S. 26 (1954).
17. See for example Morrison, *Historic Preservation Law*, pp. 26-28.
18. For a brief discussion of the background leading to this legislation, in which "interest in aesthetics over association" triumphed, and including the intention of thwarting the demonstrable effects of massive urban renewal with an effective preservation movement, see Murtagh, "Historic Districts," pp. 12-14.
19. 80 Stat. 915, 83 Stat. 852.
20. Penn Central Transportation v. City of New York, 46 L.W. 4856 (1978).
21. Thomas F. King, "Is There a Future for the National Register?" *The Forum: Bulletin of the Committee on Preservation* 4, no. 2 (December 1982).
22. Louise McAllister Merritt, "A Local Organization's View," in *Preservation: Toward an Ethic in the 1980s* (Washington, 1980), pp. 167-175.
23. The criteria for the National Register of Historic Places appear at 38 FR 5387 (February 28, 1973) and in revised form at 39 FR 3366-3370 (effective from January 25, 1974); see also 46 FR 56183-56213 (November 16, 1981) for amendments to procedures. The substance of state laws and local ordinances is the same.
24. I use the phrase "conduces to pleasure" and its converse, pain, in acknowledgement of the remarks of George Dickie, *Art and the Aesthetic: An Institutional Analysis* (Ithaca, N.Y., and London, 1974), chap. 8, esp. pp. 196ff.
25. For a recent example of this doctrine, see James M. Fitch, *Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World* (New York, 1982). Written by one of preservation's leaders, this textbook makes no important distinction between the built and the natural world, although Fitch addresses only the built world, including landscape. Some objects and areas in the built world, he says, have a claim on our preservation activities because they provide the means to "participate in a range of sensual and aesthetic experience" (p. 2, see also p. 10). Preservation is especially important now because the industrial production of "cultural artifacts" has led to a "privatization" of such experience which has prevented

the artist and the audience from enjoying the physical proximity that used "to stimulate both: the one to more intense creativity, the other to a heightened response" (p. 3). Also threatened is the "urban experience with the city as a special instrument of social organization" and the "city's most splendid gift: *a range of choice*" (p. 51, original emphasis). Preservation, he concludes, "affords the opportunity for citizens," with "the sense of alienation which is so characteristic of modern society," "to regain a sense of identity with their own origins of which they have often been robbed by the sheer process of urbanization." " *The very struggle to save a bit of their local habitat is itself an important educational experience for citizens*" (pp. 403-4, original emphasis). Fitch includes the economic, utilitarian justification for preservation as well as the associative, patriotic one, separating both from the aesthetic argument which he places on a higher level. He also includes cognitive sources for the stimulation he values, but these are subordinated to the sensory ones by being treated as supplementary to sensory stimulation. This leaves his argument grounded in an aesthetic that depends upon sensory stimulation and participatory experience. This, in turn, allows judgments about value to be made only according to the intensity of the stimulation or of the experience. The result is that judgments are not based on knowledge; they therefore can have no rational basis for their exposition, and they can have no claim to being linked with values found in other aspects of man's civil activities.

26. While offering this benefit, preservation, at least in the United States, is not yet integrated with development; especially privately financed development, the primary means used to effect planning policy. This suggests that the following comment is a bit optimistic: "It is clear that in the realm of planning policy, preservation and conservation have succeeded urban renewal." Bruegmann, "Preservation, Restoration, and Conservation," p. 64.
27. Paul Goldberger, "Architecture and Preservation," in *Preservation: Toward an Ethic in the 1980s*, p. 180.
28. See Meyer Schapiro, "Style," in *Anthropology Today*, ed. Sol Tax (Chicago, 1962), pp. 278-303.
29. See note 25.
30. See Schapiro, "Style," and Ernst Gombrich, *In Search of Cultural History* (Oxford, 1969); reprint, in *Ideals and Idols* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 24-59.
31. Fitch, *Built World*, p. 51, original emphasis; cited in note 25. See also 83 Stat. 852, I, 101(b)4.
32. Pietro Gazzola, *The Past in the Future* (Rome, 1969; rev. ed., 1975), p. 23.
33. Westel W. Willoughby, *Principles of the Constitutional Law of the United States*, 2d ed. (New York, 1938), p. 693.
34. Ibid., p. 693 n. 2, quoting *State v. Noyes*, 30 N.H. 279 (1855).
35. See Wolfgang Braunfels, "Institutions and Their Corresponding Ideals: An Essay on Architectonic Form and Social Institutions," in *Smithsonian Annual II: The Fitness of Man's Environment* (Washington, 1968), pp. 63-75, a work from which I have long drawn insight which I gratefully acknowledge.
36. Here I do mean to suggest that there is representation in architecture, but to develop the notion is beyond my present purpose. Suggestions about what constitutes representation in architecture are found in Rudolf Wittkower, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*, 3d ed. (London, 1962), which discusses meaning; and, more recently, in Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Architecture* (Princeton, 1979), chap. 10, esp. pp. 248-50, where he discusses buildings in relationship to one another in a city, and where he states, "In all cases, the street must reflect the desire for a common public order, the facade being a recognition of that order" (p. 249). In chapter 8, when discussing buildings in isolation from one another and distinguishing buildings from other media in the arts, (e.g., poetry and painting), Scruton denies a representational role for architecture and concludes that "architecture is, after all, an abstract art" (p. 187), as indeed it is in the terms he established for representation on p. 180. For a sketch of my meaning, see my "Manners Matter," which is based on Braunfels, "Institutions."
37. Obviously, the forum for such an inquiry would have to be different from the kind now used for the lesser buildings. Otherwise, the outcome of the inquiry will be determined by the exigencies of the moment and the pell-mell of local politics, as illustrated in the examples from Chicago I cited at the beginning of this paper.
38. Penn Central Transportation v. City of New York, 46 L.W. 4869 (1978), citing Pennsylvania Coal Co. v. Mahon, 260 U.S. 416 (1922).
39. Munn v. Illinois, 94 U.S. 113 (1876); the citation is to Sir Matthew Hale (Lord Chief Justice Hale, 1609-1676), *De Portibus Maris*, in Francis Hargrave, ed., *A Collection of Tracts Relative to the Law of England*, vol. 2, no. 6 (Dublin, 1787), pp. 77-78; concerning a wharf owned by the king or a subject but used by the public out of convenience or necessity: "For now the wharf and crane and other conveniences are affected with a public interest, and they cease to be *juris privati* only; as if a man set out a street in new building on his own land, it is now no longer bare private interest, but is affect by a public interest."
40. See also Scruton, *Aesthetics of Architecture*, chap. 10, esp. p. 253.
41. I wish to acknowledge the role the conversations and criticisms of Daniel N. Robinson, Hadley Arkes, Nancy Kaszak, and Jeffrey Jahns played in shaping this paper.

Figure Credits
1, 7-9 Courtesy of the author.
2, 3 Courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society.
4-6 Photograph by Paul Zakoian.


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The Boston Plan

Fred Koetter and Susie Kim

The Architecture of the Public Realm

It has been noted by many contemporary observers that modern society is becoming increasingly fragmented and individually oriented. Richard Sennett, for example, in *The Fall of Public Man*, cites the continuing erosion in recent times of public consciousness and the corresponding buildup of private preoccupation. Catchphrases of the seventies such as the "Me Generation" and the "Culture of Narcissism" are indicative of this disturbing condition. Observations such as these, often founded in sociological terms, have their physical counterparts in the present-day patterns of the American city. Isolated fragments of development and disconnected islands of commerce and habitation have eroded any sense of civic place, often brutally partitioning common interests. In our cities, as in our society, we have upset the delicate and crucial balance that must exist between private pursuits and public consciousness—between individual self-interest and communal opportunity.

Traditionally, the physical form of the city has helped to maintain this critical balance—to support, structure, and give meaning to the public and communal life of the citizenry. The street and square, the urban park, the commemorative monument, the public market, the honorific building—all of these are among the tangible and visible manifestations of the *urban public realm*. They are the means by which the city registers and encourages public consciousness and civic pride. While these artifacts may transmit a continuous and variable range of associated meanings (mythical and ideological, ritualized or not), they also provide for public realization of collective interests and community awareness, structuring and sustaining the fundamental distinction between public and private life.

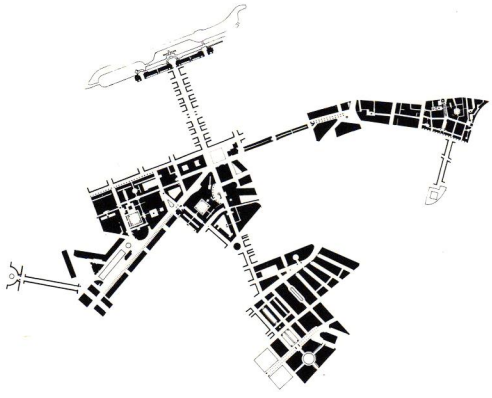
On another level of generalization, this public structure of the city also acts as an essential go-between—the mediator which allows the various quarters of the city to interact and communicate with one another, facilitating yet another critical balance between the identity of the city at large and that of its several parts. This public structure of the city is not merely an abstract generalization given in support of either the ideologue or the social engineer. It is a physical and spatial fact.

Traditionally, the formation of the public realm has been assisted by the presence of highly specific architectural and urbanistic conventions. These conventions may be identified by such fundamental urban design issues as the building format and its relationship to street and public space, the constitution of the space-defining urban wall, the role of facade in declaring and celebrating the distinctions between the public and private realms, the making of street, the symbolic and emblematic presence of urban architecture, and the delineation of urban building and space types. These are conventions which have, historically (through the workings of custom or conscious effort), informed the making of a felicitous public realm. Unfortunately, most of these conventions have recently fallen from common usage.

As architects and urbanists, it has been our ongoing preoccupation to identify, develop, and illustrate versions of these conventional references that might relate positively to the broader historical traditions of urban architecture, responding to present-day urban conditions while providing meaningful groundwork for future development.

The city is necessarily a continuum across time (a visible history), and recent urbanistic traditions such as idealized comprehensive planning, total design, and tabula rasa proposal making have worked to the detriment of this continuum. They should no longer be encouraged. Nonetheless, we must, to a very large degree, accept and find means to accommodate the built remains of these traditions.

We therefore accept the as-found conditions of the American city as the context for urbanistic study, and as the setting for an examination of how the presently shattered public structure of our cities might be effectively reconstituted.



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1 (frontispiece) The Boston Plan, including (1) the Prudential Center area, (2) Storrow Terrace on the Charles River frontage of Back Bay, and (3) Chinatown.
2 The Boston Plan removed from context. In addition to Prudential Center, Storrow Terrace, and Chinatown, the proposal includes Copley Plaza (center) and South End (bottom center).

The Boston Plan

Basic to the intentions of the Boston Plan are the strengthening and extending of the public structure of central Boston.

Generally, central Boston may be characterized as an assemblage of highly identifiable districts (e.g., Beacon Hill, Back Bay, North End) which are often weakly related one to another. Beacon Hill and Back Bay, for instance, exist as outstanding examples (perhaps *the* outstanding examples) of eighteenth and nineteenth-century American urbanism. Beacon Hill is dense, idiosyncratic, and at times ad hoc; Back Bay is overtly planned, gridded, and continuous. At the same time, the frontiers and interstices of these various districts are generally disorganized and confused, often acting as effective barriers to the possibilities of communication between districts.

These difficult interstitial conditions—impacted, colliding, and subject to the manifold forces of the more identifiable areas surrounding them—are here interpreted, however, as locations of great potential for the overall public structure and life of the city. These areas may be reorganized to achieve a positive urban balance between the identity of the city at large and the identity of the various districts or "little cities," which together constitute central Boston.

It is the achievement of this balance between *identity and communication* which is here intended—a condition whereby the various areas of the city might effectively exist in a state of identifiable semi-isolation while also enjoying the opportunities made available by increased physical, social, and symbolic connection to the city at large.

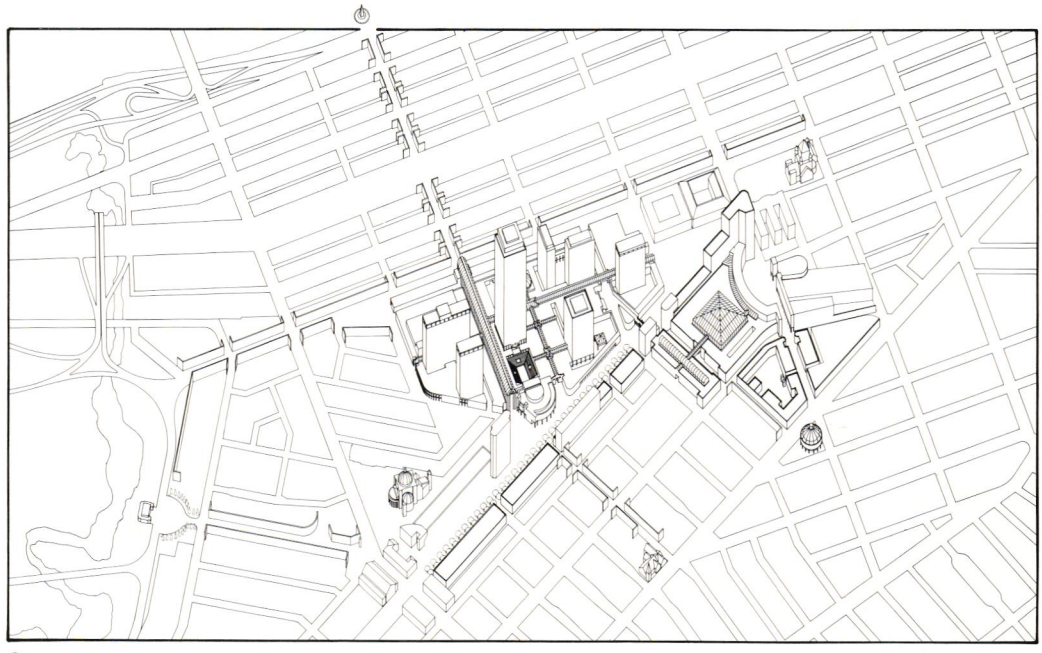
The Prudential Center Area

The Interstitial Zone between Back Bay and South End

This area includes the Prudential Center (a large-scale "tower in the park" urban redevelopment typical of the early 1960s) as well as the Copley Plaza site. As a self-contained collection of office towers, residential slabs, and commercial pavilions, Prudential Center has little internal identity and establishes no coherent physical relationship with its preexistent surrounding context. Urbanistically, Prudential Center and its environs are a negative force within the city.

It is proposed that the area be "reurbanized" and integrated into its surroundings, and that the amorphousness and isolation of the area be counteracted by the superimposition (over the existing condition) of a dense pattern of building and defined public space. This overlaid pattern establishes a legible spatial order within the area, reinforcing existing street alignments and providing positive connections to and through the site. Versions of traditional urban building and space types are utilized in this effort.

An increased commercial presence in the lower levels of Prudential Center is organized into a variegated and continuous network of glazed galleries and courtyards. New commercial, office, and hotel facilities at Copley Plaza are arranged around a large, glazed public



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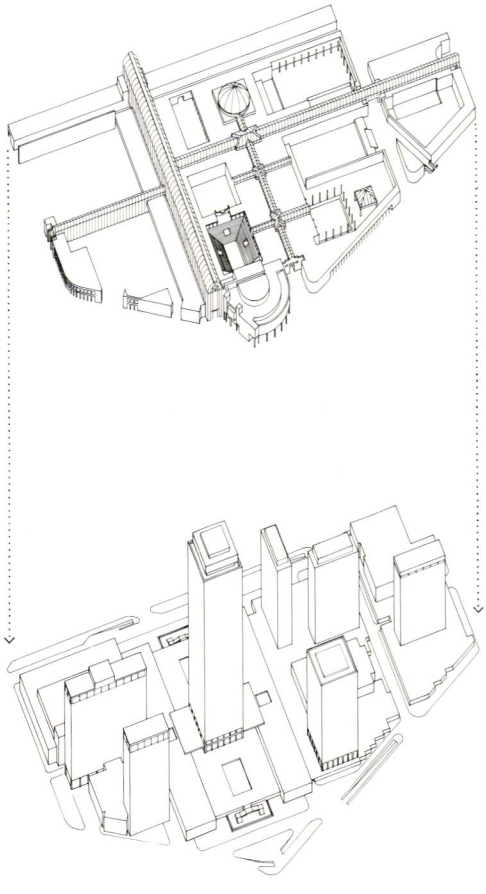

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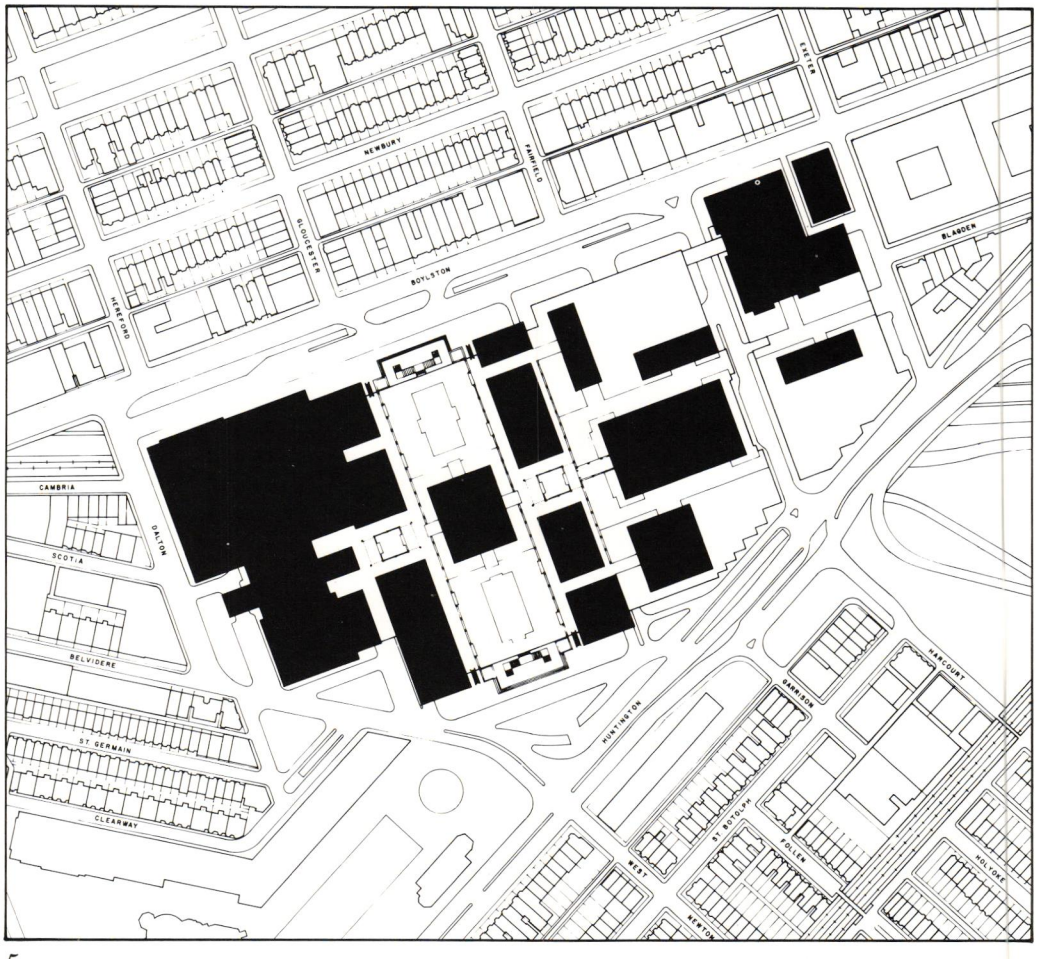
3 Axonometric of the Prudential Center proposal in context. The west shopping arcade links Back Bay's Gloucester Street and South End's West Newton Street. At right is an alternative to the present redevelopment of Copley Plaza.
4 Prudential Center diagram: the superimposition of a dense pattern of building and defined public space.

hall which also serves as an honorific vestibule to the adjacent Back Bay rail station. The urbanistic importance of Boylston Street and Huntington Avenue is recognized and their spatial integrity reestablished by a series of large public loggias.

This interpretation of conventional urban references is intended to satisfy the contextual aims of the proposal while providing the area with a clearly understandable and memorable public presence.



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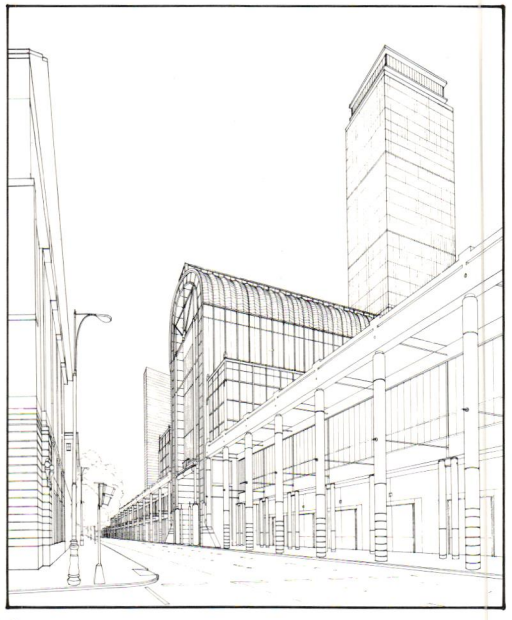

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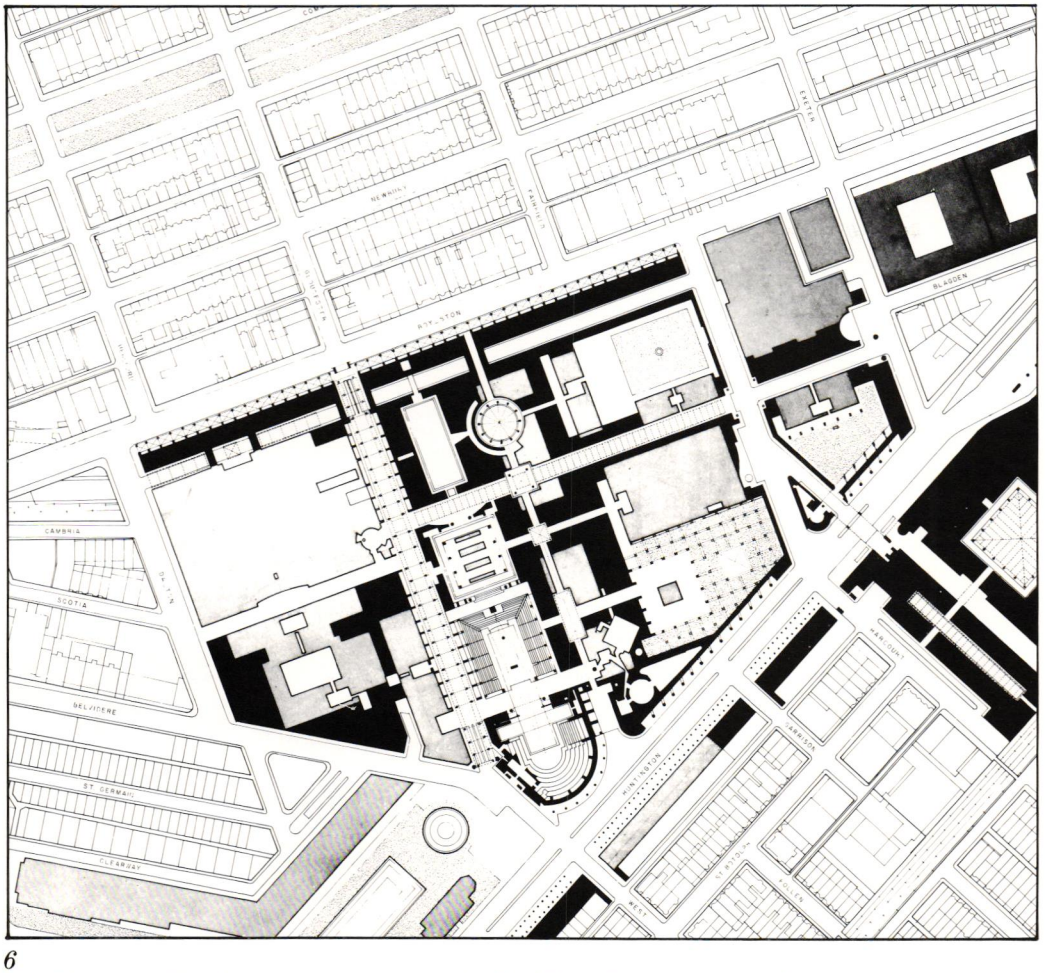

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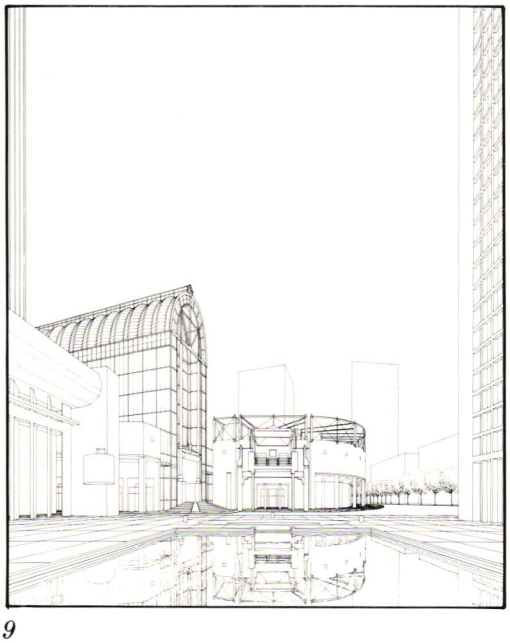
5 Existing ground plan, Prudential Center.
6 Proposed ground plan, Prudential Center. Gray: existing enclosed spaces; black: proposed infill.
7 Aerial photograph, Prudential Center.
8 View looking east along Boylston Street of the continuous public loggia and front entrance portal.
9 View looking east toward Prudential Center from the Christian Science Center. Shown are the entrance porch of the proposed indoor-outdoor theatre and the south portal.
10 View of the indoor-outdoor theatre from the outdoor theatre-plaza looking through shared proscenium and stage into the indoor theatre.
11 View of the west shopping arcade. The glazed gallery roof is supported from the existing structural grid of the center.



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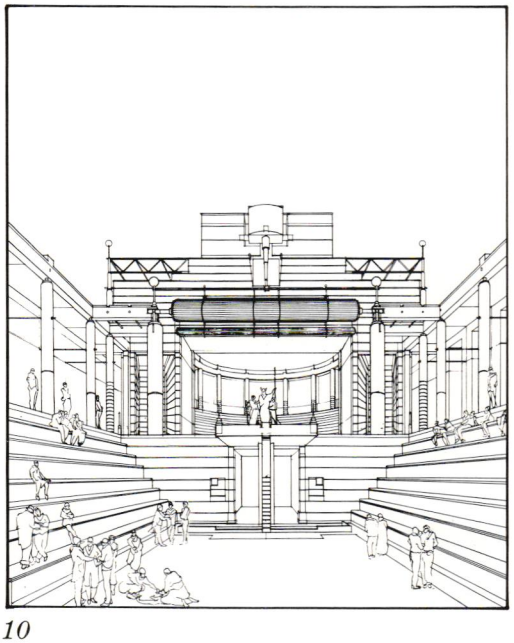

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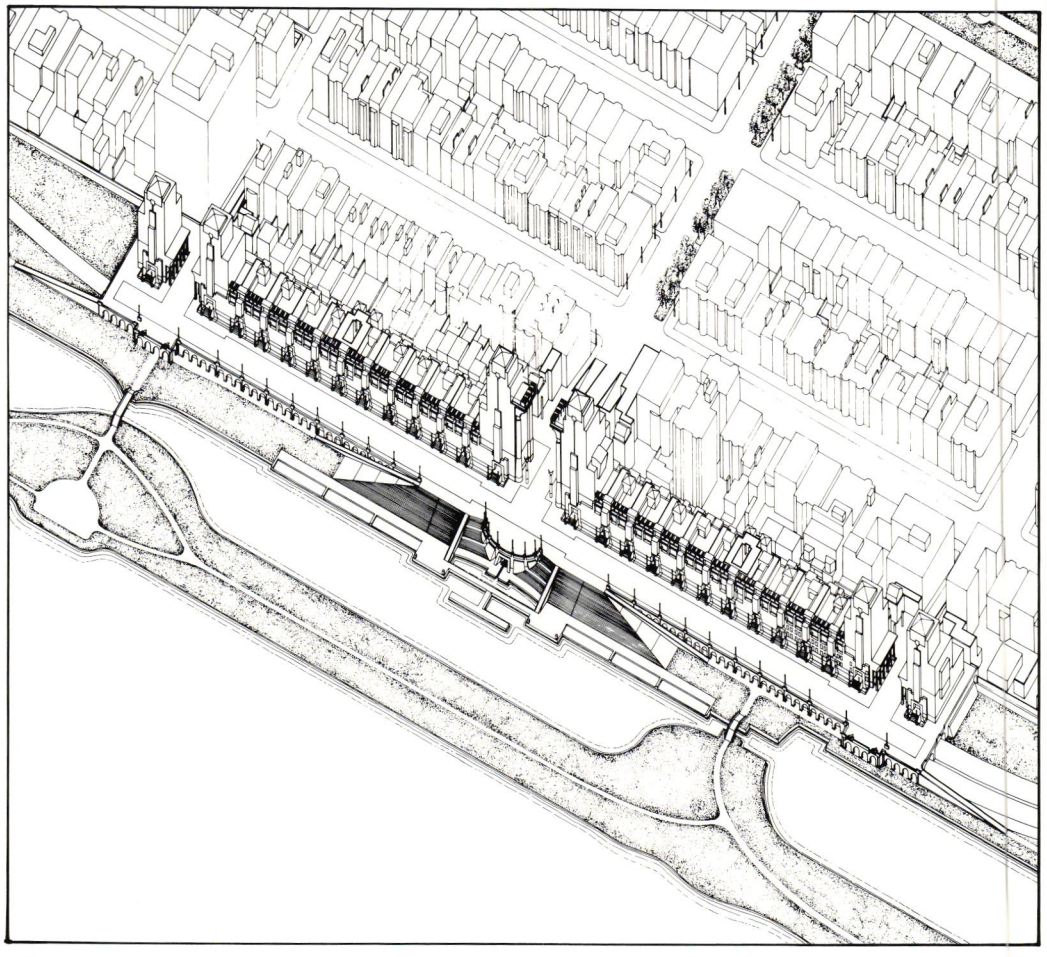
104 ***Storrow Terrace***

The Frontier between Back Bay and the Charles River

The magnificent residential layout of Back Bay presents to the equally magnificent Charles River a haphazard arrangement of private rear yards, service areas, and car parks. Given these circumstances and the strong front-to-back distinctions of the typical Back Bay house, an unfortunate confrontation and typological dilemma exists. This has been more recently aggravated by the intrusion of Storrow Drive, a major expressway which occupies the Back Bay-Charles River frontier.

It is proposed that Storrow Drive be built over with an extended residential terrace and grand public promenade, thereby completing the grid of Back Bay and providing it with an external facade commensurate in scale and importance with the public opportunities implied by the situation. Made up of typical townhouse elements and quasi-tower blocks which frame the existing alignments of crosstown streets, the proposed development establishes its center about Dartmouth Street. This crosstown street finds its way from the Charles River Esplanade through Back Bay and Copley Square into South End, serving as an urban connector. Its public importance is acknowledged in the architectural particulars of the scheme (portal and stair).



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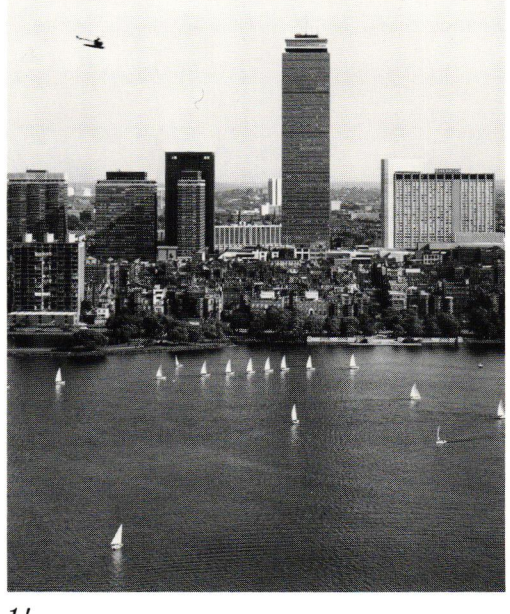

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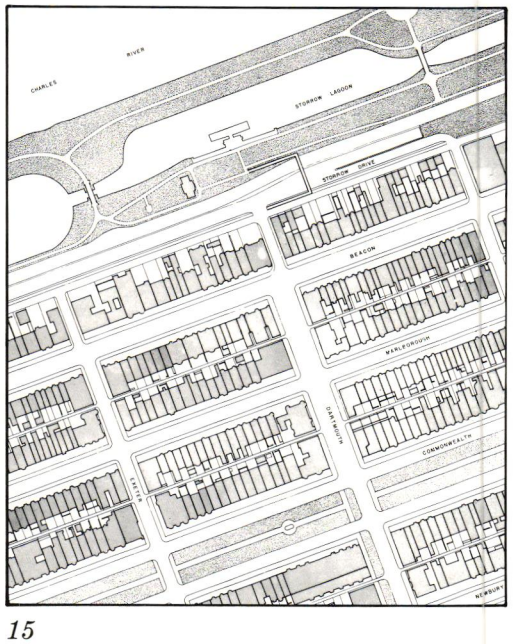

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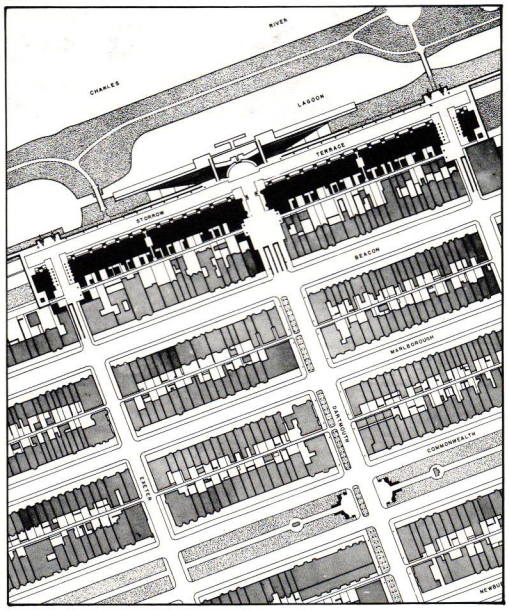
12 Axonometric view of Storrow Terrace. The Dartmouth Street Portal serves as civic gate from city to riverfront.
13 View of Storrow Terrace looking east. Bulfinch's Statehouse on Beacon Hill can be seen in the distance.
14 View of Storrow Drive looking south. (Prudential Center in background).
15 Area plan, existing.
16 Proposed plan, Storrow Terrace.
17 Section, Storrow Terrace, showing relationship to existing buildings, highways, and Charles River lagoon.



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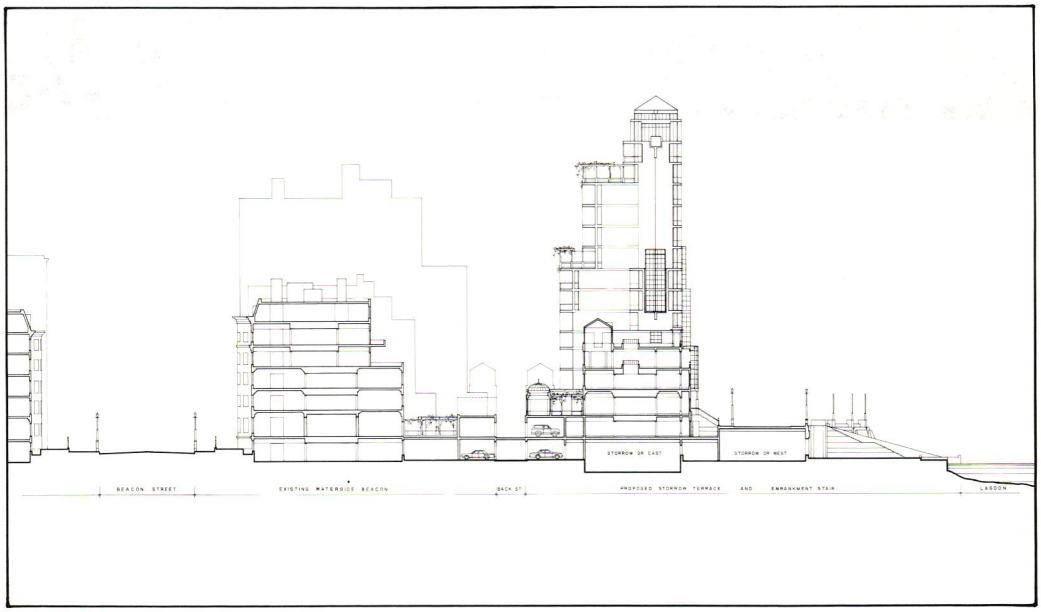

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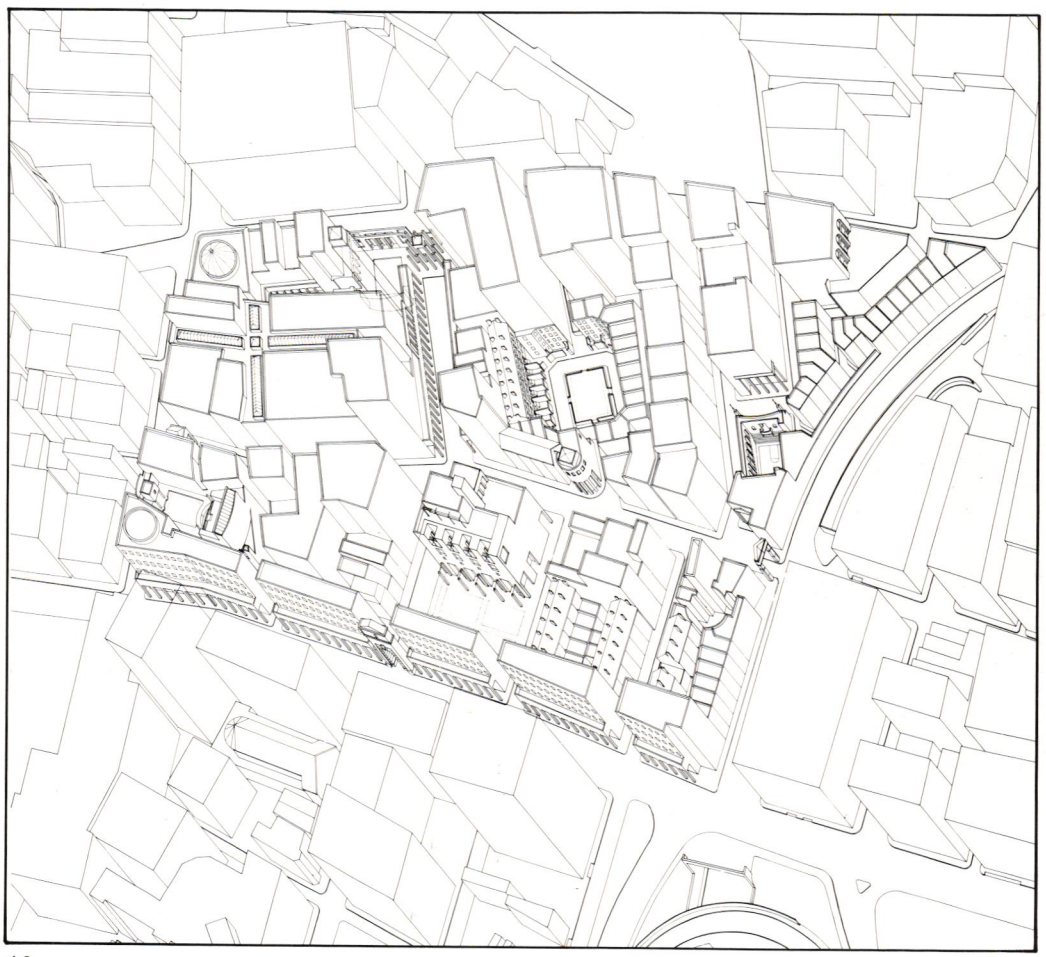
18 Riverfront elevation of Storrow Terrace and the Dartmouth Street Portal.

18

19 Axonometric of Chinatown proposal in context.

Chinatown

Chinatown is one of Boston's most impacted inner-city areas, simultaneously responding to several distinct fields of influence surrounding it. Once a waterfront edge of the city, Chinatown today is the area of convergence for Boston's remaining "medieval" center and the more legible districts of South End and Back Bay. This has been further complicated by recent highway construction efforts. The complexity of the location, together with the continuing pressures of adjacent commercial and institutional development, identify Chinatown as both a threatened community and an area of significant urbanistic potential. Although its long history has provided the area with a unique array of identifiable building types (e.g., light industrial lofts, townhouses, theatres), the overall architectural identity of Chinatown remains confused.



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In general, the proposed strategy is one of transforming and combining elements of a normally anonymous building stock into a form of conspicuous public architecture. The intentions are both the strengthening of Chinatown's specific identity and the establishment of its presence within the city at large.

The Pilgrim Theatre block, for instance, is transformed into a complex network of inner-block galleries, gardens, and public rooms. Likewise, isolated ranges of existing townhouses

are combined with new construction to form a spatially coherent residential square. The wall of Kneeland Street is completed to reinforce an important frontier of the community and to imply the presence of a more extended perimeter wall.

Notes
Also assisting in the Boston Plan were Chris Iwerks and Kelly Wilson (Storrow Terrace); Don Flagg and Kelly Wilson (Prudential Center); Phillip Eagleburger, Michael Carter, and Augie Shaefer (Chinatown). Initial work on the Chinatown portion of the Boston Plan has been assisted by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Figure Credits
All figures courtesy of the authors.

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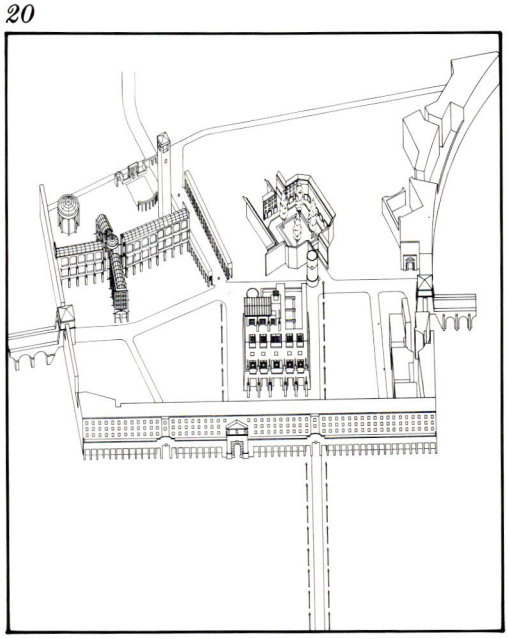

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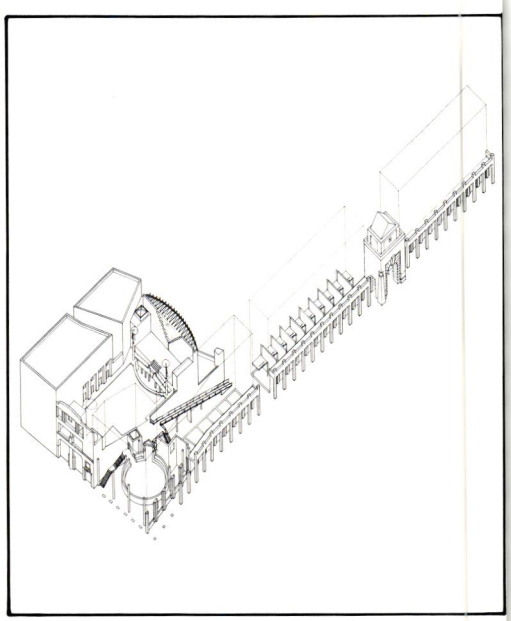

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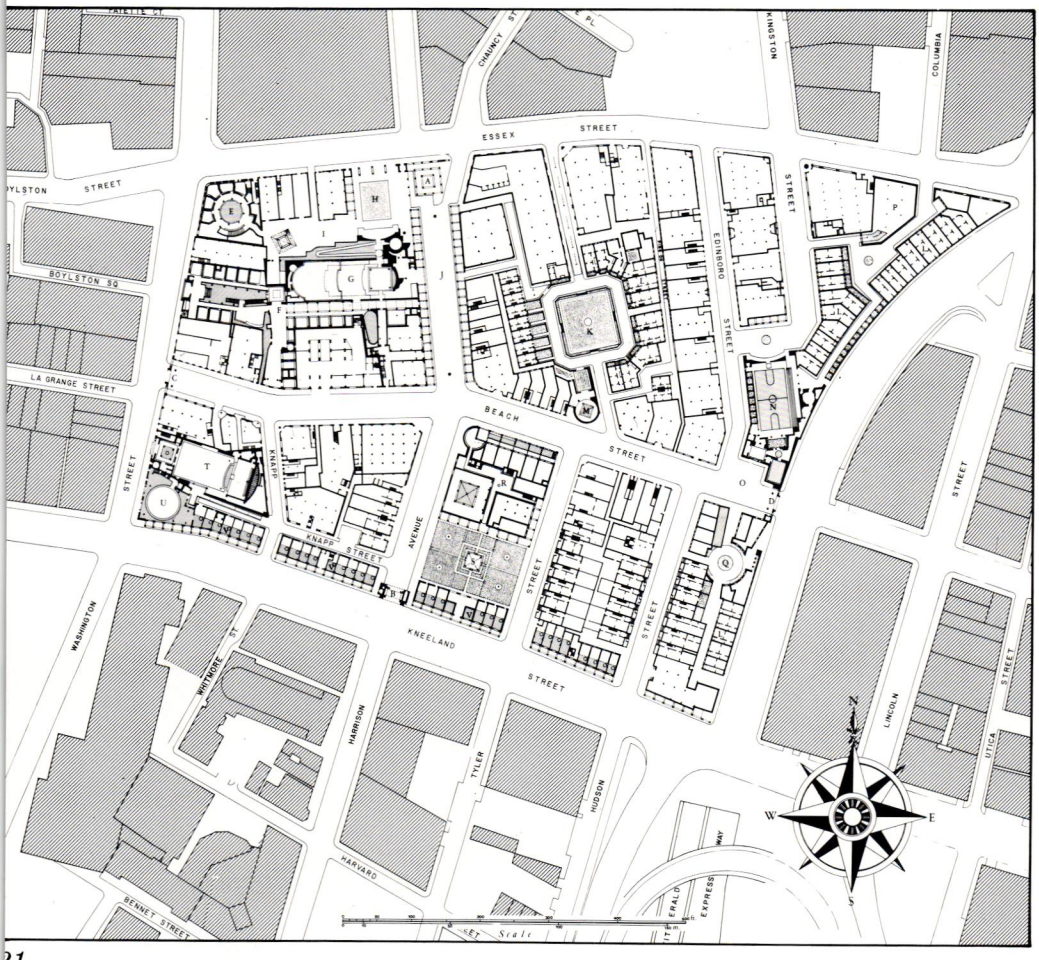

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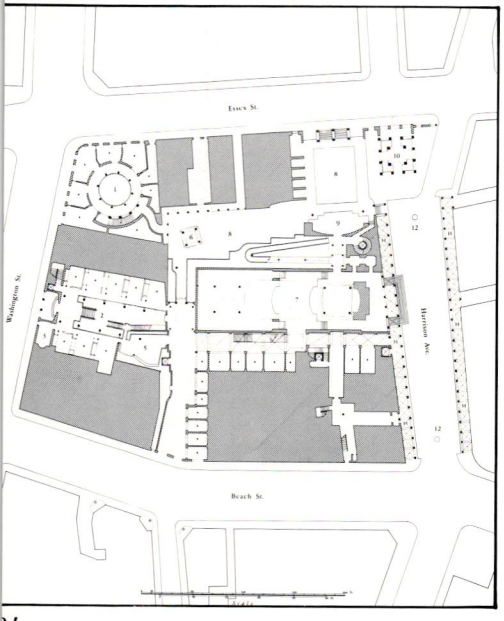

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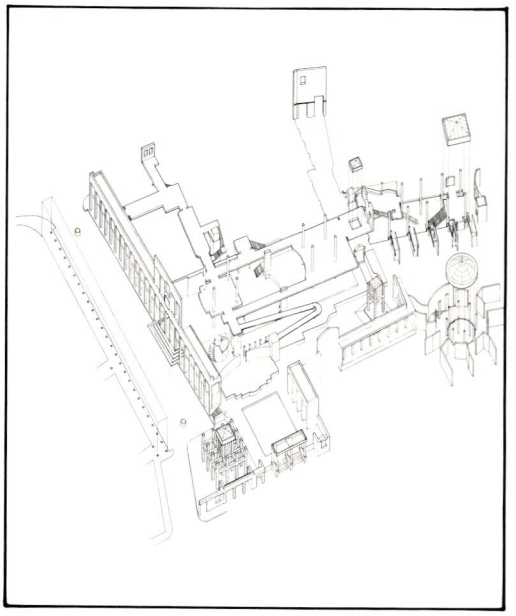

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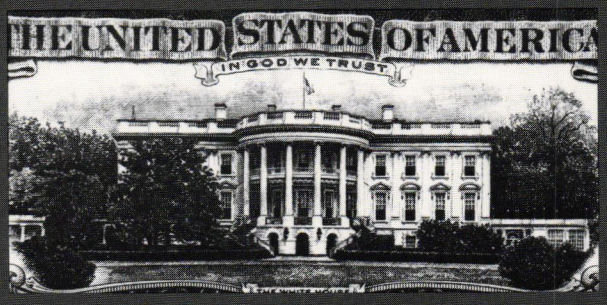
20 Existing ground plan, Chinatown.
21 Proposed ground plan, Chinatown.
22 Axonometric of the primary urban elements of the Chinatown proposal. Top left: Pilgrim Theatre block passages; top center: inner-block residential square; bottom: Kneeland Street wall.
23 Axonometric of the western section of the Kneeland Street wall at Chinatown's southern frontier. The drawing shows the children's rooftop theatre (left), streetfront commercial arcade, and the south gate of Chinatown.
24 Ground plan, Pilgrim Theatre block, showing a network of inner-block passages and spaces dominated by the large central room of the Pilgrim Theatre (7). The historic Liberty Tree building contains improved subway access at street level (1). A section of Harrison Avenue is converted into an open-air Chinese market (12), complete with a version of Chinese gate at its northern end (10).
25 Axonometric from the north of the Pilgrim Theatre block's internal structure. The new circulation network is supported by identifiable public elements (colonnade, gate, monument, garden, gallery).


THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
IN GOD WE TRUST

Excursus Americanus

Michael Dennis

The United States of America were not among the last Roman colonies, but then the idea that they were could appear equally logical. Across the entire country there is evidence of a rational and powerful society, the background of which could have been Graeco-Roman. If the town grids exhibit a lack of closure and an occasional confusion about Cardo and Decumanus, and if temples to unknown deities are rivaled in their freedom of distortion only by the greatness of their numbers, then all of this might only too easily be explained by remoteness from original models and the relative lateness of colonization. But in spite of insistent visible evidence of grid towns and temples—even an occasional pantheon—there is no trace, critically, of forum or agora, thus assuring that the United States must be the product of another time and another culture, its Roman ties being indirect, assumed, or both.

From the absence of a strong tradition of enclosed urban space (i.e., of forum or agora), one may conclude the obvious: that America was principally the product of neoclassicism, not of classicism, and that the profile of urban America with its notably fragile tradition of urban space is therefore a result of chronology more than of geography or genetics. Both the landscape and its distance from the centers of Western civilization contributed to the basic psychology of the place—to what Scully describes as "a feeling at once of liberation and of loss."[1] But it was neoclassicism that provided the urban system for the emerging nation; and it was precisely that urban system, in combination with the landscape and the psychology of the place, that turned the ideal of the Enlightenment garden city into reality in the New World.

At the time of its birth in 1776 the United States of America had a total population of approximately 2.25 million. By 1790 this had increased to almost four million, but the total urban population was only slightly more than two hundred thousand people, with only two cities larger than twenty-five thousand.[2] The whole country was regarded as something of a wilderness by foreign visitors, and there were no professionally trained American architects (Benjamin Latrobe was the first, arriving in 1796). Urbanism was barely an emerging ideal, much less a developed tradition or even a necessity. The principal architectural element in the colonies had been the detached house, and even by the time of the Revolution only the northern cities evidenced some pattern of town houses with potentially common walls. The character of the towns was still distinctly medieval. It is between this background and aspirations of an expansive future that a second wave of European influence appeared—one which would be of incalculable importance to the urbanization, and subsequent de-urbanization, of America. By 1900 this relatively primitive arcadia would be transformed; almost half of the total population of 87,832,000 would be urban, and three cities would be larger than one million.[3]

This second wave of European influence into America during the 1790s is analogous to the second wave of Italian influence introduced to medieval France in the 1540s, the principal differences being that this time the imported taste and culture were not Italian but English and French; the imported spatial sensibilities were not those of the Renaissance but of the Enlightenment; and two of the three principal couriers were not foreign, as were Vignola and Serlio, but native Americans: Charles Bulfinch and Thomas Jefferson. Both of these men were gentlemen-amateur architects, each returned from an extended stay in Europe in the late 1780s, and each attempted to introduce an appropriate architecture and urban culture to the developing United States of America. The architectural language of both men was neoclassicism, but with Bulfinch the tradition was English whereas with Jefferson it was French—and Roman.[4]

After returning from almost two years in Europe in 1787, Charles Bulfinch devoted some thirty years to providing his provincial hometown of Boston with an urban architecture. His sources, like his background, were English, primarily Robert Adam and William Chambers; and although his

1 (frontispiece) Petit Trianon, Versailles. Ange-Jacques Gabriel, begun 1762. View of the south facade.
2 The White House, as pictured on a twenty-dollar bill.
3 Plan of New Haven, Connecticut, 1824.

3

projects for Park Street, Colonnade Row, and the Tontine Crescent no longer exist, they provided the inspiration for many surviving projects which still place Boston closer than most American cities to the European urban tradition. The partially realized Tontine Crescent was especially significant. Planned ca. 1793, it was the first (and almost the only) example of a unified enclosed urban space in America. Although there were earlier squares and greens such as those of Savannah, Philadelphia, and New Haven, they were neither enclosed nor unified; and though there were subsequent examples of unified enclosed squares, there were very few, and fewer still outside of Boston.

The Tontine Crescent was originally designed as two opposing crescents of regular houses with an oval park in the middle and the Franklin Theater at one end. As finally realized, the northern crescent was replaced by a straight row of houses, but the integrity of the composition was maintained. The Tontine Crescent could have been the predecessor of a whole American tradition of enclosed urban spaces; that this was ultimately not the case may be due to the project's English derivation as much as anything else. Bulfinch's Crescent, along with his other projects, renewed the connection to English architecture and culture which had been broken for some thirty years. But while the continuity of this English relationship may have been highly coveted in Boston, it was predictably less so in the rest of the country. Having just broken away from England through revolution, the last thing that the rest of America wanted was an English architecture as a symbol of the new nation. It may not have been solely the Englishness of Bulfinch's Boston, however, which made its acceptance difficult.

America was born at a cusp of history, an architectural and philosophical turning point between the spatial tradition of the Renaissance and the iconic stirrings of the Enlightenment; and while it would be facetious to suggest that the country as a whole was consciously aware of it, there was a general longing for expression. Architects were seeking an

4 View of Tontine Crescent, Boston, Massachusetts. Charles Bulfinch, ca. 1793.
5 Plan of Tontine Crescent, Boston, Massachusetts. Charles Bulfinch, ca. 1793.

American architecture, one that was both an instrument and an appropriate symbol for a country that was a product of the Enlightenment, not the Renaissance. Of course, the ironies of the fact that the gardens of Versailles served as the model for the capital city of the new democracy have often been noted, but even this ultimate symbol of the ancien régime had its meaning converted when it was reinterpreted by New World neoclassicism. Primarily, it established the importance of the American connection to the French tradition, and this tradition, as manifest in the French Enlightenment, made the greatest impact on American architecture and urbanism. In this respect it was Jefferson, and not Bulfinch or Latrobe, who assumed the role of Serlio to the New World.

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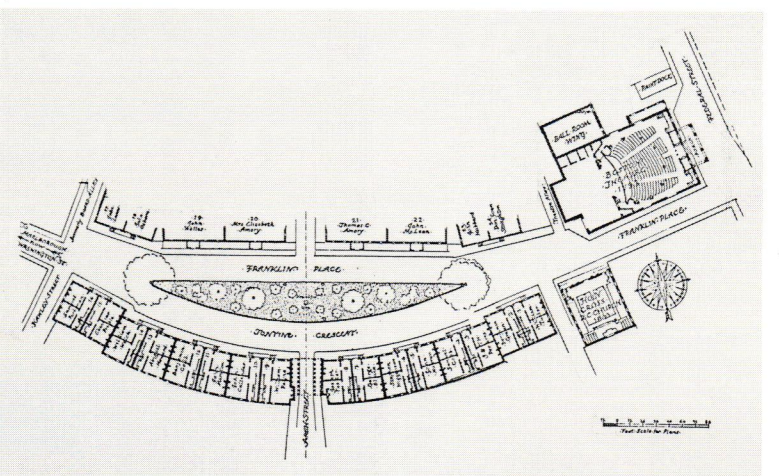

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Jefferson was an idealist as well as a practical man, and he provided the most poignant architectural and "urban" expression for the new democracy—an expression so compelling that it still permeates the American psyche and therefore remains problematic to this day, perhaps as much for its symbolic implications as for its anti-urban ones. Early in his career Jefferson consciously rejected the English architectural tradition for its political associations, and with the exception of the English landscape garden which he guardedly admired, turned instead to Roman architecture as understood through books, and particularly books on Palladio. After his visit to Paris, this was to become a kind of Franco-Romanism which he considered to be an appropriate cultural expression. Jefferson's well-known rejection of the city appeared quite early and continued until late in life when he grudgingly accepted its necessity. Even as late as 1800, after his stay in Paris, he wrote, "I view great cities as pestilential to the morals, the health and the liberties of man."[5] Indeed, Paris not only failed to change Jefferson's anti-urban convictions, it reinforced them. Paris demonstrated to him that the neoclassical pavilion in a romantic landscape had the potential to serve as the ideal fabric of a civilized agrarian democracy.

Jefferson lived in Paris from August 1784 to September

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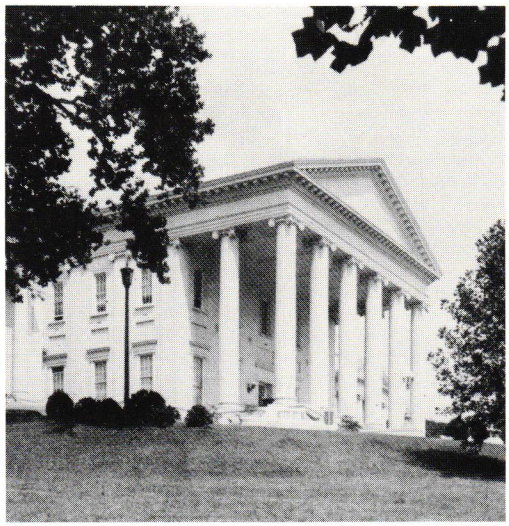

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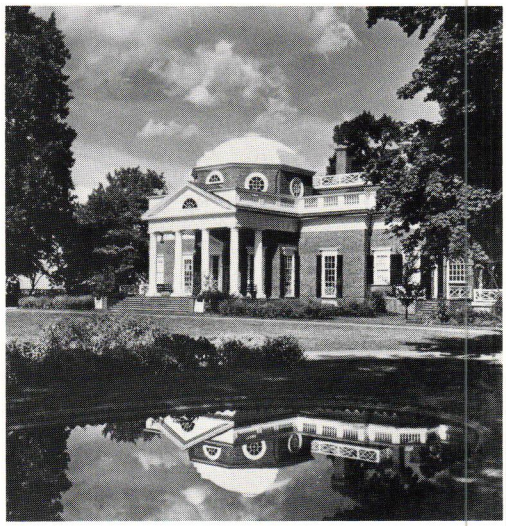

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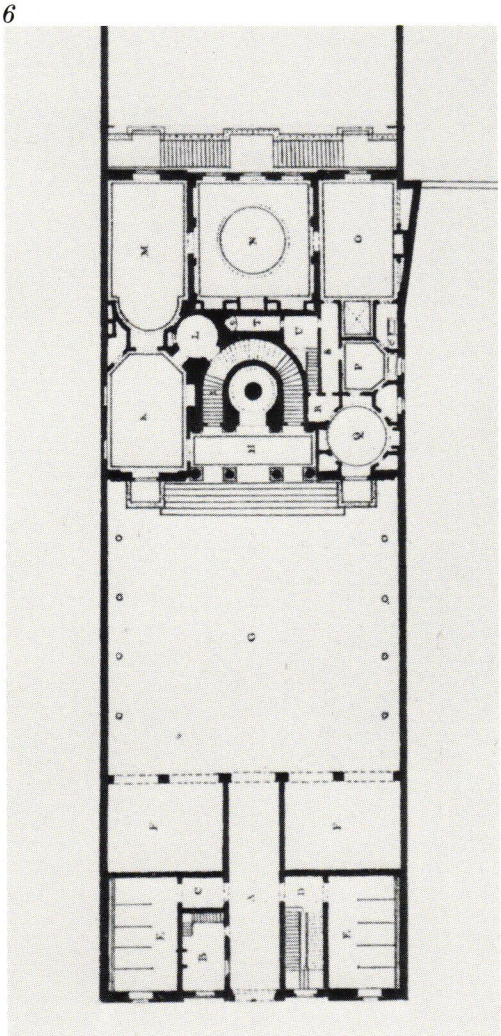

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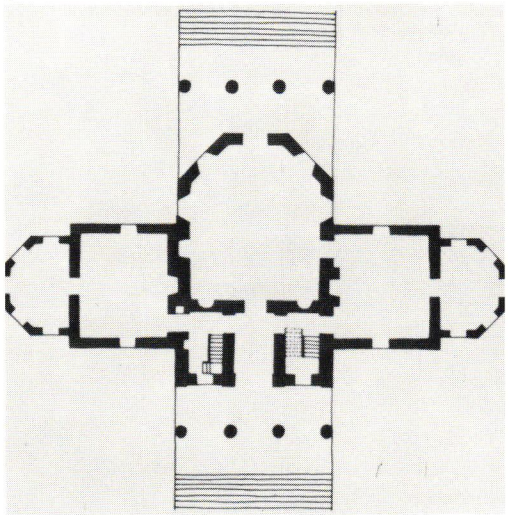

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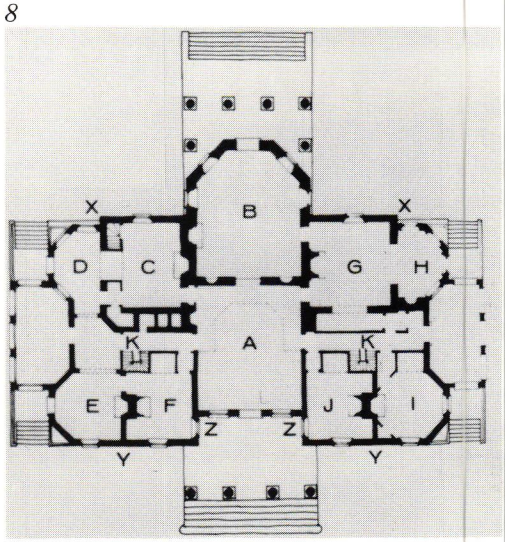

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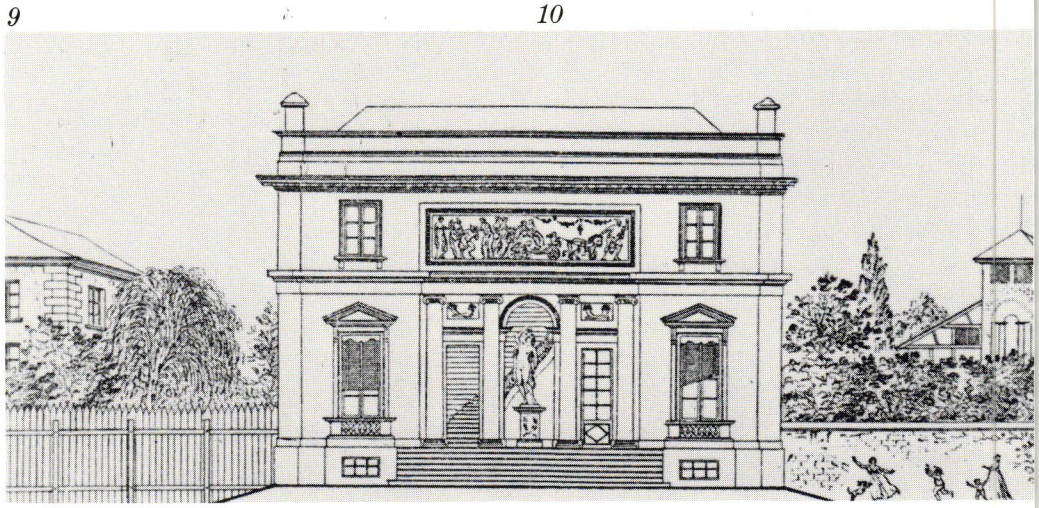

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6 Maison Carrée, Nîmes, France, 16 B.C.
7 The State Capitol, Richmond, Virginia. Thomas Jefferson, 1785-89.
8 View of Monticello, garden facade. Thomas Jefferson, 1770-1808.
9 Monticello, near Charlottesville, Virginia. Thomas Jefferson. First floor plan, before 1772.
10 Monticello, near Charlottesville, Virginia. Thomas Jefferson. Final first floor plan, 1809.
11 Hôtel Dorlian, Paris. Dorlian, 1789. First floor plan.
12 Hôtel Dorlian, Paris. Dorlian, 1789. Front elevation.

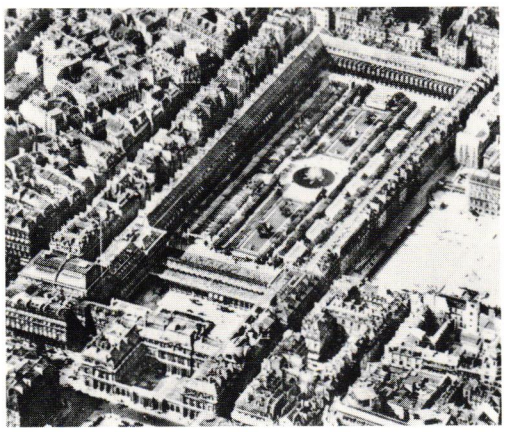
1789, replacing Benjamin Franklin as Minister to the Court of France. Not only did the experience have a profound effect on him—it also had a profound effect on America through the ideas he imported. This effect began almost immediately when Jefferson, after seeing his first and only important Roman temple, the Maison Carrée in Nîmes, reinterpreted it, with the help of the French architect Clérisseau, as America's first Roman temple, the Virginia State Capitol (1785-89). To point out that Jefferson mistook the Maison Carrée for a republican monument would verge on being petty about symbolism; what caught Jefferson's eye was the monument's beauty and perfection, and in any case its symbolism is probably close enough.

But "Jefferson's Paris" was not really Roman Paris or even seventeenth-century Paris; rather it was Paris of the 1780s—frenzied, elegant, avante garde, neoclassical Paris—the Paris of Ledoux, of the Palais Royal, and the pavilions of the new quarters beyond the boulevards.[6] Paris was a vital, active place during Jefferson's five years there, and thanks to his fanatical record keeping we are aware of his visits and his interests, two of the most influential of these being the newly completed Palais Royal and the new domestic architecture. Both of these made an enormous impact on Jefferson, and in one way or another they strongly influenced his work. As models, they represented extreme opposites: one the ultimate public gesture, an elaborate urban organism providing both textural continuity and conspicuous spatial focus; the other the ultimate private icon, prelude to the *machine a habiter*, the internally responsive, externally expressive solid.

Naturally it was the latter which had the most pervasive influence on Jefferson. During his first year in Paris he lived in the new Chaussée d'Antin section beyond the boulevards, and since Ledoux's Hôtel de Montmorency and Hôtel Guimard were just around the corner, Jefferson must have known them. In particular he appreciated the sophistication of French planning, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the development of his own house at Monticello. Before Paris, Monticello was an incomplete and slightly awkward combination of a symmetrical English plan with simple rooms, and a modified Palladian facade. Afterwards, it was not just completed but transformed into an elaborate Franco-Roman villa utilizing all the latest developments from neoclassical Paris. The outside was modified to read as a one-story pavilion like the Hôtel de Salm which he admired so much; and the inside was extended and particularized to a degree achieved in only the best French plans. There are a great variety of rooms, highly developed service areas, and separation and contrast between the public and private sequences—the private rooms being ingeniously arranged in two tiers around the double-height public rooms.

All of these are distinctly French traits which Jefferson admired, yet one glance reveals that the plan is not French, but something quite different. In the typical neoclassical French plan the idiosyncracies and irregularities are always contained within a rectangular configuration—simple on the outside, complex on the inside—and the central axis of the building is almost always blocked. Jefferson's final plan for Monticello is the opposite. The central Palladian axis is maintained through the sequence of regular public rooms, and the smaller, more specific private rooms are thrown to the outside of the plan. In addition, the perimeter of the plan is loose, articulate, particular; here the center is simple, the perimeter complex. Although the sequence of development of Monticello was actually the reverse, it is as if a French plan had been modified by the English. Later, this kind of modification actually happened when the influence of the English Cottage Ornate loosened the French perimeter and made the axes of the plan even more casual. Then, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the Americans reestablished the axes again while maintaining the English preference for the picturesque perimeter. Thus Jefferson's little house may be seen as a historical short circuit and a magnificent preview of what would be one of America's most poetic urban inventions—the one-family house on Elm Street.

13 Palais Royal, Paris. Aerial view.
14 Château de Marly. J. H. Mansart, begun 1679. Engraving by Pérelle.
15 The University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia. Thomas Jefferson, 1817-26. Aerial view.



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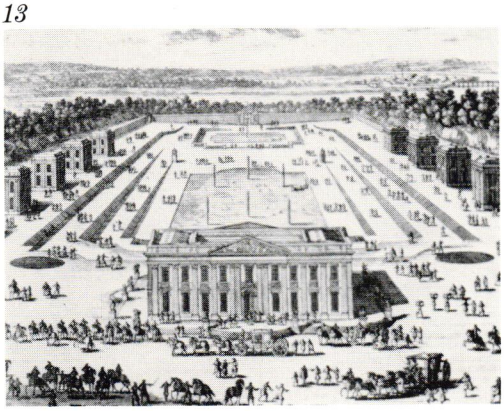

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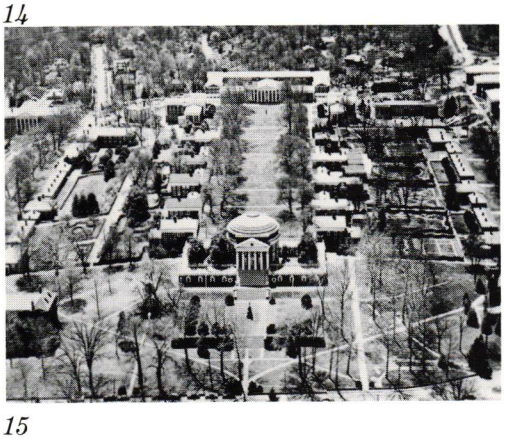

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The Palais Royal, Jefferson's other Parisian fascination, had become what Mercier called "the capital of Paris" by the time Jefferson arrived there in 1784. Indeed, it was then a complex, multifunctional public building although this had not always been the case. Until 1780 the building proper had been a royal palace facing gardens which were always accessible to the public. However, the new owner, later to become the Duc d'Orleans, decided to capitalize on the potential of the property and hired Victor Louis to transform the palace complex into a vast multiuse commercial center. The gardens were surrounded and enclosed with arcaded galleries, to the understandable outrage of the public, especially the surrounding property owners. When the building was opened in 1784, however, it was an instant success. Full of shops, restaurants, theaters, and apartments, it became the social center of Paris. The public garden remained, and was even equipped with a subterranean circus. Jefferson visited the Palais Royal frequently and was sufficiently moved to propose a similar complex for Richmond, Virginia, telling his friend Dr. James Currie that it would be "a whole square in Richmond improved on some such plan, but accommodated to the circumstances of the place."[7]

It is a great tragedy that this idea came to naught, however casual its suggestion may have been, for after the Tontine Crescent it would have been the second introduction of conspicuous urban space to America. The Palais Royal is an invaluable resource both as a fragment of the city and as a microcosm of the city, and its unrealized American counterpart might have been an equally suggestive model for the rapidly growing country. Fortunately, however, this persuasive image informs Jefferson's most important work, the University of Virginia, in a subtle yet profound way.

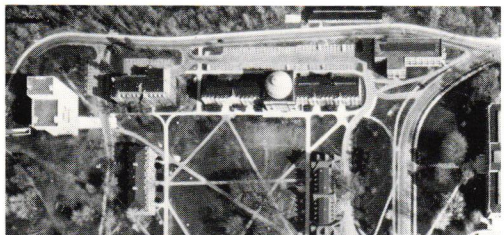
The University of Virginia sometimes evokes reference to Roman fora; it almost always invites comparisons with the original plan (1812) for Union College in Schenectady, New York, by the French émigré architect Jean-Jacques Ramée; and the similarity to the Château de Marly (begun 1679) by

J. H. Mansart has occasionally been noted. Yet Jefferson's project is unlike any of these. It is less enclosed and less unified than a Roman forum or Union College, and although it bears a striking resemblance to the arrangement at Marly, both its form and its meaning are completely different. The Château de Marly, intended as an escape from the totalitarian rigors of Versailles, is formed of separate but equal pavilions axially related to a similar but larger one for the king, and all are set in a terraced formal French garden. At Marly the order is singular and unified, and the part, although expressed, is still controlled by the whole. The University of Virginia, on the other hand, exhibits a more complex order in which the part and the whole exist in a suggestive balance, with many intermediate shades of interpretation. Both the immutability of public truth and the transcendental license of private adjustment are debated at all levels of the organization. It is as if the best qualities of the French Enlightenment and the French Renaissance—of the neoclassical pavilions and the Palais Royal—had been fused by Jefferson into one spectacular and distinctly American expression. Jefferson studiously avoided the English university models for political and religious reasons, and likewise he avoided the early American campus models because of their ad hoc inconsequential freedom. Instead, for Virginia he provided a great central space defined by colonnades and individual pavilions. Planted with grass and lined with trees, this space was open on the lower end, and, at Latrobe's suggestion, focused on the library at the upper end. Supporting the space on either side was a rich system of gardens, paths, and an outer range of service buildings. Like a democratic version of the Château de Marly, the University of Virginia was at once more subtle and more suggestive. Indeed, it is no accident that Jefferson referred to his plan as an "academical village," for it is, if anything, a metaphor of society and the city—a neoclassical ideal "adapted to the circumstances of the place." It certainly is as close as Jefferson came to a coherent idea about the city, and it did provide the United States with a sublime spatial model of the city.

This is not intended to portray Thomas Jefferson as the sole source of American architecture and urbanism, nor is it intended to slight Benjamin Latrobe. Rather, it is simply to argue that at a critical time in its history—at its birth as a nation—the United States inherited an architectural language that was fundamentally not urban, but suburban; that the principal source was not English, Spanish, or American Indian, but French; and that the most persuasive purveyor of that language was Thomas Jefferson.

Fortunately, this inherited language was not absolutely pure; like most products of revolution, it contained traces of the previous system. Thus, although Jefferson's work and French neoclassicism demonstrated the Enlightenment's preference for the evocative solid, there was still the shadow of the Renaissance in the faint structure of urban space. For example, in late eighteenth-century French engravings such as those by Krafft and Ransonette,[8] or Ledoux,[9] domestic pavilions were rendered in an apparently continuous romantic landscape, whereas the real buildings which they depict—the pavilions of suburban Paris—were always contained by walls, and the streets defined by gates and service buildings. It can be argued that in France it was necessity that compromised the new ideal—necessities of space, economics, and tradition—and to a certain extent this may be true. The United States, however, was hardly encumbered by these circumstances, and this makes it all the more remarkable that to Jefferson both the symbolic power of buildings and the sublime presence of space were considered to be, to a degree, necessary to the formulation of the public realm. In fact this may be Jefferson's most important legacy: the continued insistence on both the ideal and the circumstantial even in the absence of obvious necessity. For Jefferson, circumstance seems to validate the ideal and, furthermore, it only seems to achieve meaning within that union. From the neoclassical propensities of the American Constitution to the anatomy of the small American town this debate is inextricably present as principle and as fact, and though in the United States the balance may be tipped in favor of the

16 The Arts Quad, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. Aerial plan.
17 The Arts Quad, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. Aerial view.



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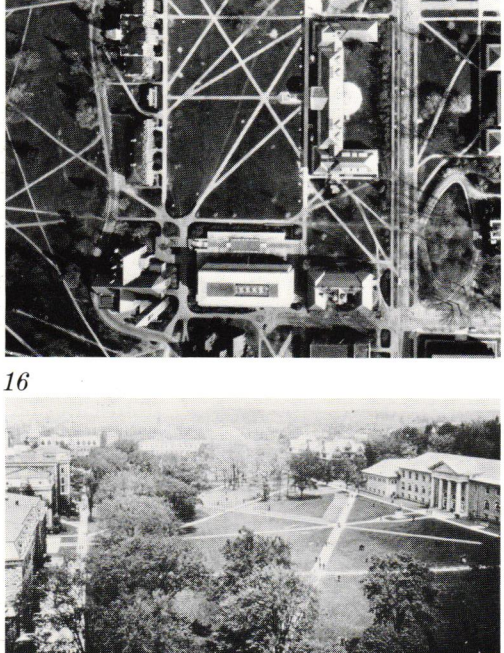

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private and the circumstantial over the public and the ideal, there was, for at least a century and a half, a dialogue.

Jefferson's interpretation of the French tradition in his two principal works, the University of Virginia and Monticello, relates directly to what can only be described as two uniquely American contributions to urbanism: the American college campus, and the essence of the fabric of the small American town—Elm Street.

From the earliest colleges of the colonial era to the land grant universities of the frontier, the American campus has been a simulated city that, with few exceptions, is distinctly unlike European models. Here loose arrangements of freestanding buildings meld with the landscape to suggest an almost urban space. Not all campuses possess clearly defined quadrangles, but the ones that do seem to be more focused and provocative. They also represent the most tangible tradition of enclosed urban space in the United States, and that is directly attributable to Thomas Jefferson. The image of Jefferson's Lawn is imprinted on countless successive campuses in America, from Cornell to Columbia to Minnesota. The order is usually less rigorous than the original, but the stable presence of public space remains, enriched and tirelessly supportive of subsequent peripheral freedoms. Here there is always the veiled sense of being in some kind of primitive urban laboratory where urbanity is in the process of being dissolved into landscape or perhaps reconstituted in spite of it. And is not the campus almost always more substantial, more urban than its host body, and a continual commentary upon it? As a model of the city the American campus may well be more suggestive than the real thing; certainly it is one of America's truly original contributions to urbanism.

American cities, for all their vitality and despite their shortcomings, are still derivative of the European urban tradition, inviting frequently unfavorable comparison. But the American small town is dream town not to be found in Europe, and

18 Satyric Street Scene, Sebastiano Serlio. From The Second Book of Architecture.
19 "Elm Street" (Temple Street, New Haven, Connecticut, ca. 1863).

therefore incomparable. It is the Enlightenment garden city rendered in infinite variations. If the Town Green is not always sublime, Church Street is usually redeeming; and Main Street may in desperation steer very close to toy town; but Elm Street—Elm Street elevates it all—occasionally to the level of poetry. With Elm Street, European hegemony in the development of urban streets is challenged, and in the process Serlio's "Satyric Street," long ignored by Europe, is resurrected, civilized, and brought center stage. Elm Street is the quintessential tree-lined residential street. It is the neoclassical street that the French could never or would never build, the penultimate stage in a long process of formal and social inversion. That process of inversion may be traced by examining a series of street types.[10]

In a typical street in the Marais section of Paris, one such as the rue des Francs Bourgeois, the space of the street is emphatically defined by a continuous mass of urban *hôtels*. Even when the forecourt of the *hôtel* is screened from the street by only a wall and a gate, the ends of the service wings are of sufficient mass to positively define the street. The private world is completely screened from the public world, and clearly defined forecourts serve as transitional spaces.

A distinct difference may be noted in the typical rococo street, one such as the rue de Grenelle in the Faubourg St. Germaine. Although the plans of the *hôtels* appear similar to those of the Marais, the forecourts are defined by low service wings and the main living blocks tend to assert themselves as pavilions between the forecourt and the garden. As a result the street is defined primarily by gates and screen walls. Here the private realm has become more emphatic, the public realm has become less so. From the rococo street to the American suburb is a surprisingly short jump, but there is one important intermediate step.

In the neoclassical streets north of the boulevards, as in the rue Poissonniere, a condition of detached, independent houses is finally achieved. The service wings have disap-

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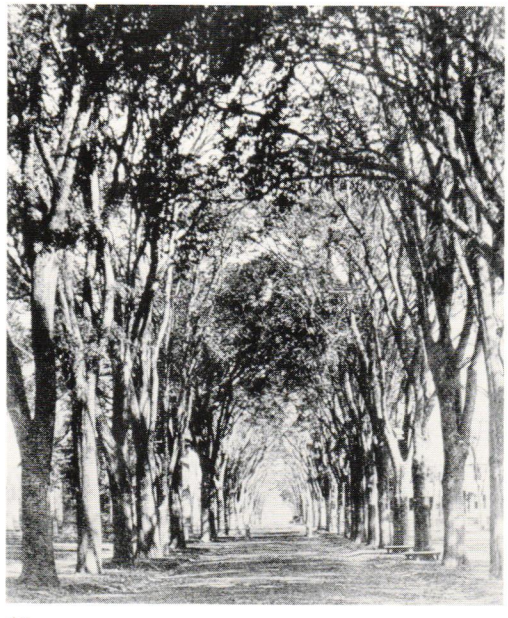

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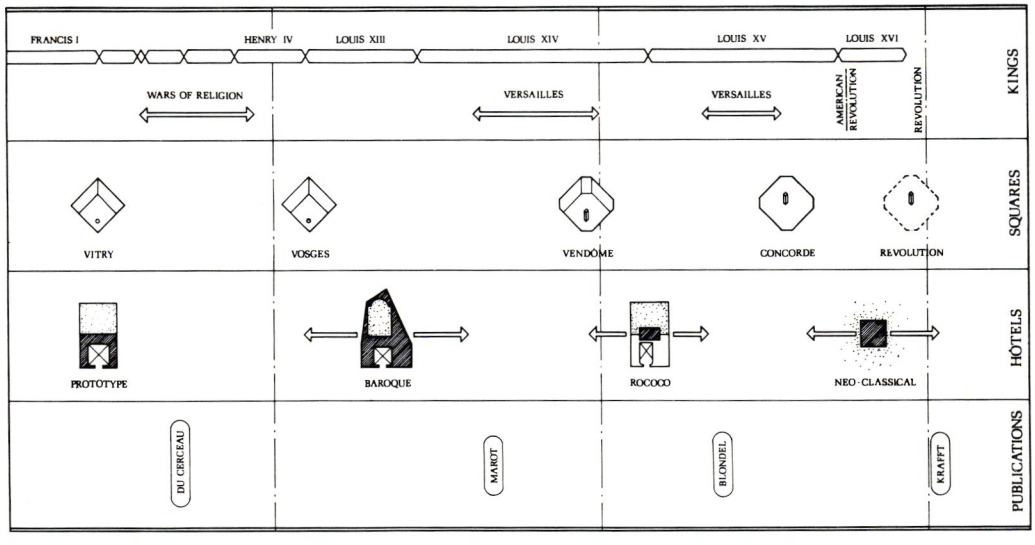

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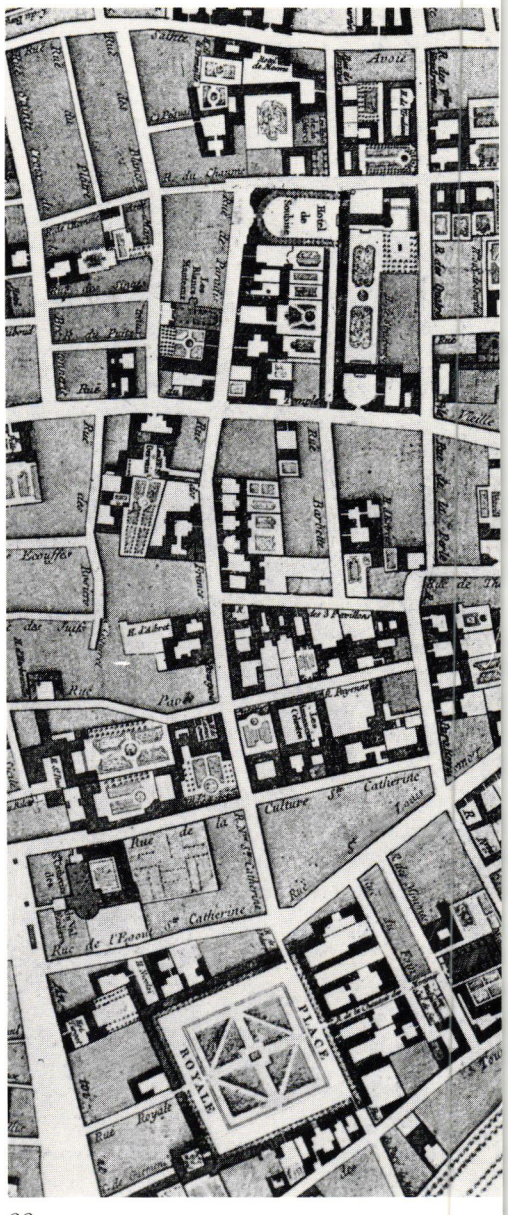

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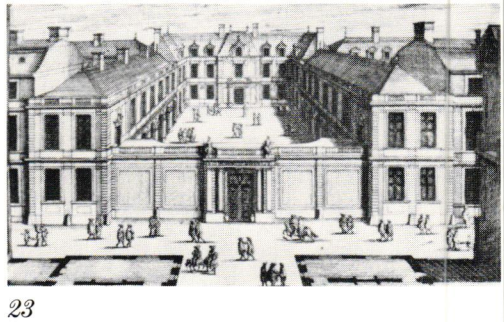

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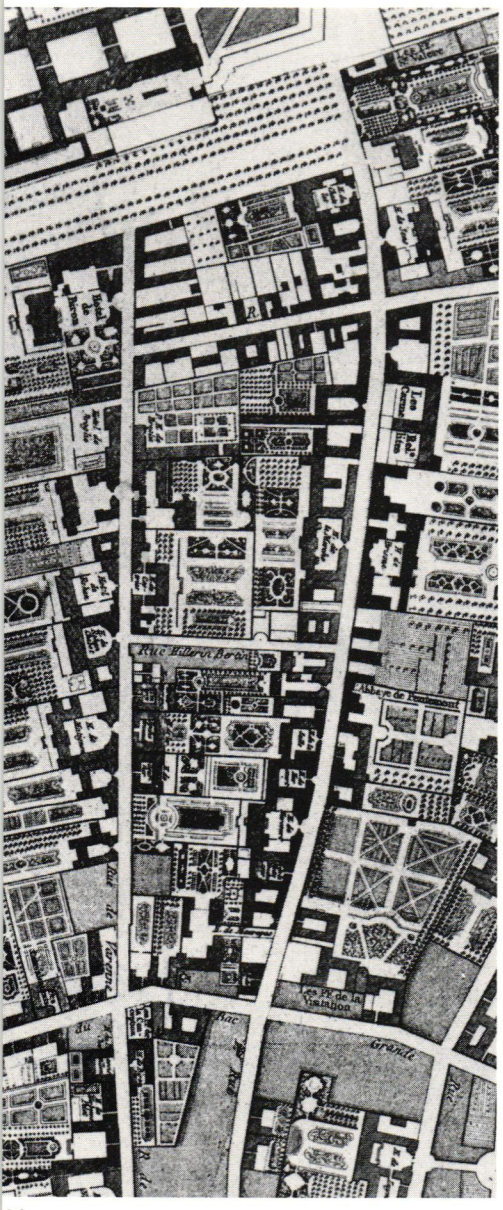
20 Turgot Plan of Paris, 1739.
21 Historical chart of Parisian hôtels *and squares.*
22 Plan of rue des Francs Bourgeois, Paris, 1778.
23 Hôtel de la Vrillière, Paris. Francois Mansart, begun 1635. Engraving by Marot.
24 Plan of rue de Grenelle, Paris, 1778.
25 Hôtel de Matignon, Paris. Courtonne, 1721.
26 Plan of rue Poissonniere, Paris, 1778.
27 Hôtel Guimard, Paris. C. N. Ledoux, 1770.
28 Plan of Hillhouse Avenue, New Haven, Connecticut, 1879.
29 The Skinner House, New Haven, Connecticut. Town and Davis, 1830.



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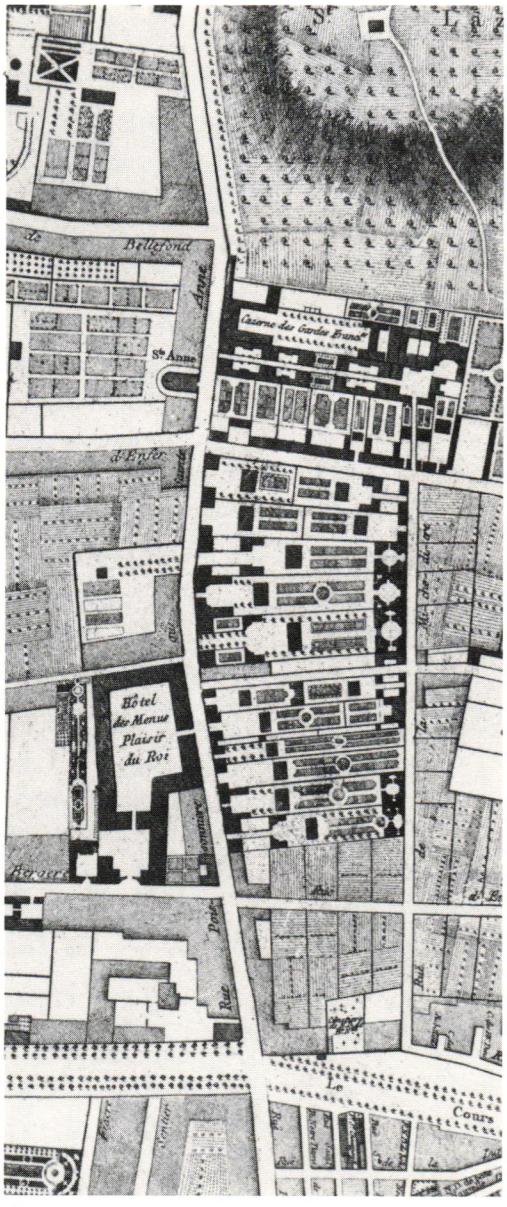

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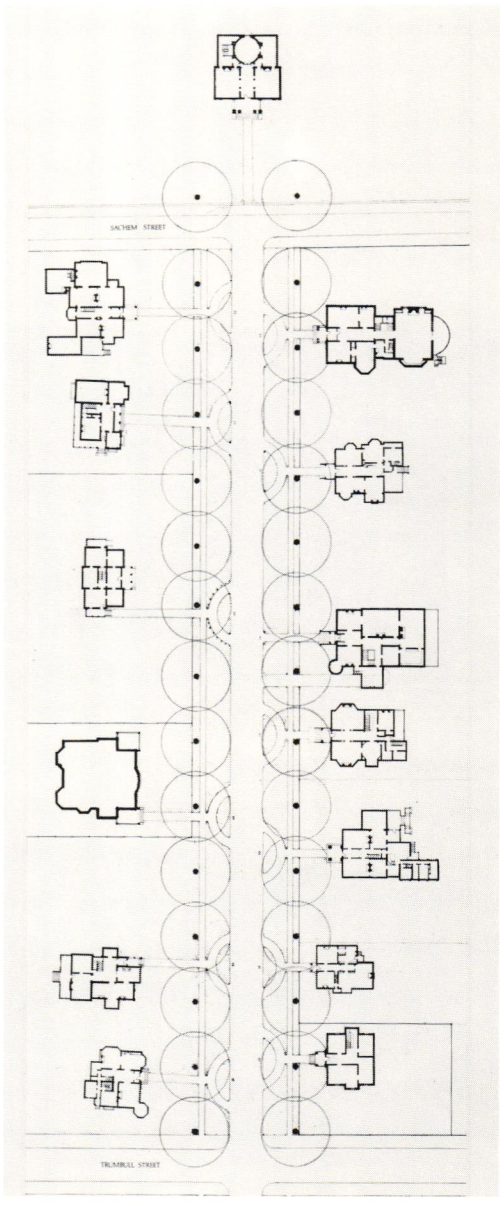

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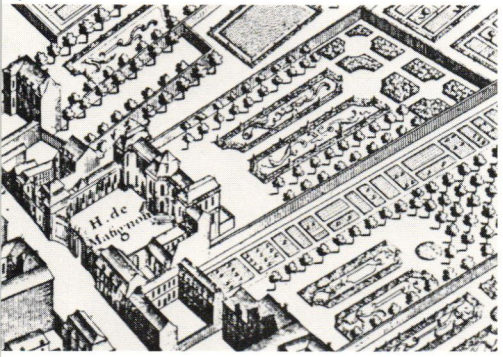

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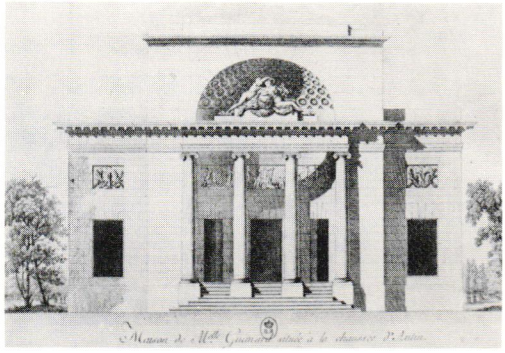

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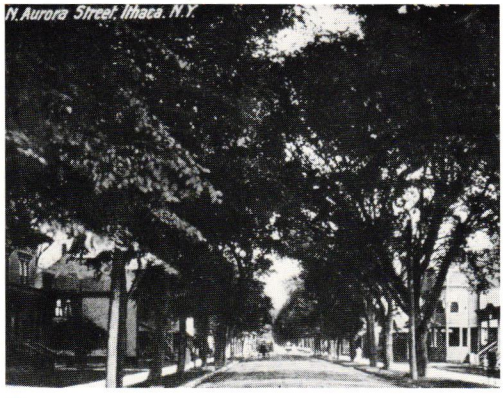
30 Aurora Street, Ithaca, New York.
31 Dewitt Park, Ithaca, New York.



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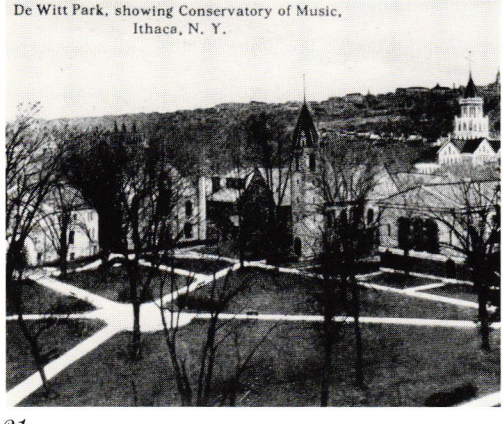

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peared and generally the houses sit free. They are still separated by garden walls, however, and the street is still defined by rather substantial service buildings and gates. Formally and socially these neoclassical *hôtels* are the inversion of those of the Marais: void has become solid, yet the positive armature of the public realm is insistently maintained.

On Elm Street, however, there is no need for even the gates and party walls of the rue Poissonniere; the forecourt has become the front yard, the garden the backyard. The house sits free—as in idealized French neoclassical renderings—in continuous Arcadia, discreetly varying but always addressing the great colonnade of trees that structure the public realm. Here public and private are both accommodated in a respectful dialogue, and adherence to the conventions of street, sidewalk, front yard, porch, and public rooms is precisely what allows for the possibility of invention and private variation.

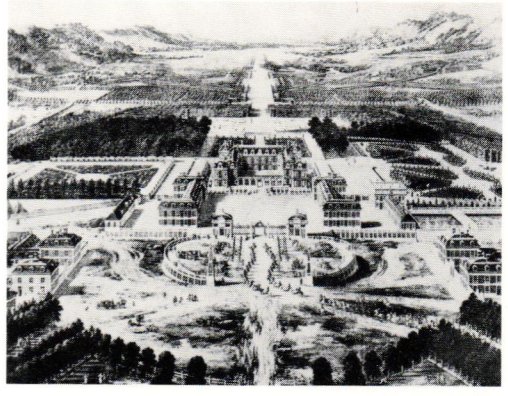
The problem is that the very characteristics which give the small American town its positive qualities are also those which make it extremely vulnerable. The delicate balance of its solids and voids allows for endless nuance and interpretation as long as that balance is maintained, but since the neoclassical system is inherently biased in favor of the private icon, reciprocity is doubly dependent on maintenance of the public realm; and the underpinnings of the public realm are still, however faint, those of the classical structure of space—of street and square. What is not done by the buildings must be done by the trees, and slight dilution of either can result in serious erosion of the system. The devastations caused by Dutch Elm disease and its professional equivalent, urban renewal, just after mid-century were rivaled in the extent of their damage only by modern architecture.

Growing slowly, quietly maturing, modern architecture in America was like a time bomb planted during the Enlighten-

32 Versailles in 1666. Painting by Patel.
33 Oak Street Connector, New Haven, Connecticut. Aerial view.
34 Subdivision near Oakland, California.

ment, armed during the 1920s and set to explode after the Second World War. And explode it did. Indeed, it is in some ways difficult to believe that America was not the actual theater of the Second World War. Even the devastation caused by Dutch Elm disease appears minor when compared to that caused by architects and city planners who, in a spirit of expansive postwar optimism, began to dismantle American towns and cities with reckless abandon. Urban renewal prepared the way by removing significant portions of existing urban fabric, but it was modern architecture which delivered the coup de grace with its insistence on the mute object and its rejection of the conventions of street and square. Neoclassicism may have carried with it the shadow of the Renaissance in the faint structure of its urban space, but with modern architecture that shadow—the public component of urbanism—disappeared as idea and as fact.

The triumph of modern architecture in postwar America thus marks the last stage of a long transformation from a kind of tyranny of the public realm during the high days of Louis XIV at Versailles to an equally demanding tyranny of the private realm in postwar Houston, or Los Angeles, or St. Louis. And if one cherishes the advance of individual liberty after the ancien régime, then, equally, one may lament the passage of civic responsibility and the urban forms which express and promote it. Ideally (as in the *ville radieuse*), the city of modern architecture was to be totally public. However, as commandeered by the Americans it became totally private; and even wealth, which before had carried civic responsibility, became private indulgence at all levels of society. Everything now appears to have been cheapened and made more superficial in the heady optimism following the Second World War: the Plan Voisin before the war begat Boston's Prudential Center after the war; Radburn before the war became Levittown after the war; and to compare the serpentine streets and ranch houses of postwar suburbia to the eloquence of Elm Street would be unbearable if it did not again illustrate that it was in America in the third quarter of the twentieth century that the public realm finally collapsed—



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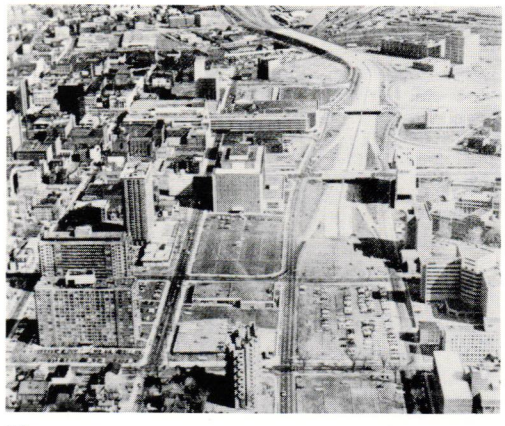

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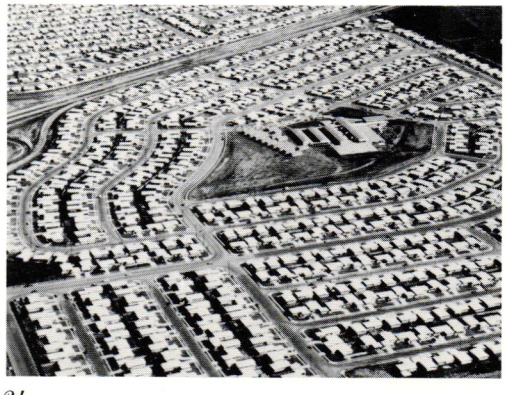

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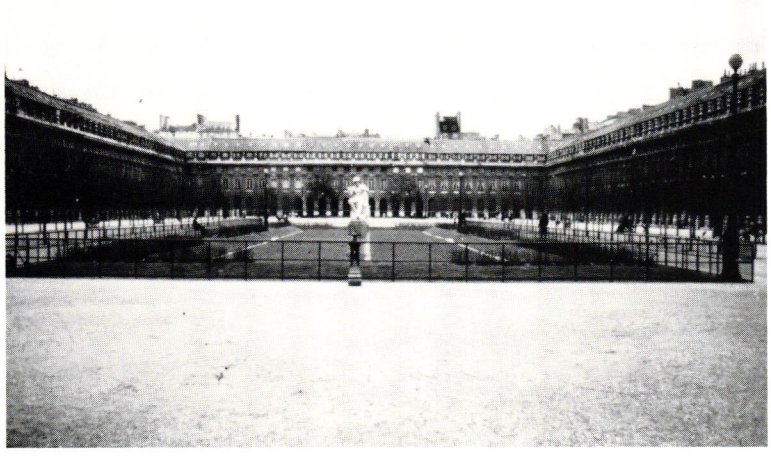
35 Courtyard of the Palais Royal, Paris.
36 The Lawn, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia. Thomas Jefferson, 1817-26.



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formally, socially, psychologically. From Versailles to Berkeley took approximately three hundred years; small wonder there is confusion in the ranks of the architectural profession.

At this point it is easy to say that the reconstruction of the city—or the reurbanization of American cities—is our principal task in the last quarter of the twentieth century. But still the nagging question remains: is there again a growing desire for public expression which lacks the appropriate means, or is there simply no desire and therefore no possibility of retrieval? Faced with this choice—paradise or apocalypse—one cannot be other than optimistic for ours is, fundamentally, an optimistic profession. As a professional and as a citizen one can only choose paradise, and believe that America does once again anticipate an urban architecture.

Provision of a new architecture can be neither quick nor easy. Nor can it be the same as that required in Europe, for our towns and cities *are* different. On the other hand we can no longer feign youth and naivete as an excuse, nor should we. If the circumstances of our birth gave us an insufficient urban language, then we have the power and the knowledge to expand it. Indeed, we have the responsibility to do so. The pre-Enlightenment tradition in Western Europe is also our own inheritance; it is not necessary to have been born two hundred years earlier or to have legitimately been a late Roman colony in order for America to claim that legacy.

And despite any limitations of language or a fundamental antipathy toward the city, America did make some surprising urban contributions in a little over one hundred years.[11] In fact, until well into the twentieth century there is evidence of a nascent urbanism, of a public sensibility desperately trying to come to terms with itself and the landscape. After all, Boston's Commonwealth Avenue and Union Park (Square) need no apologies; they are world-class by anyone's standards. And in another of the world's many ironies, it was the United States that produced Rockefeller Center, perhaps the twentieth century's most significant urban space. But

these and other examples were far from the norm; this nascent, but distinct American urbanism was little more than a promise when it was eclipsed. If it is again to be nurtured, we can only hope that it will be informed by the brilliant neoclassical balance of the American Constitution, by a dialogue between the public and private realms, and by Jefferson's insistence on the inextricable relationship between idea and circumstance.

Notes

Source Note: This essay is a slightly "adjusted" version of the last chapter of the author's recently completed book, provisionally titled Habitable Poché: The French Hôtel, *to be published by MIT Press. While the essay is intended to be autonomous and self-explanatory, it is hoped that through it much of the argument of the book might be imagined.*

1. Vincent Scully, *American Architecture and Urbanism* (New York, 1969), p. 12.
2. A. E. J. Morris, *History of Urban Form* (London, 1972), pp. 219, 222.
3. Ibid., p. 222.
4. For the various phases of American neoclassicism see William H. Pierson, Jr., *American Buildings and Their Architects: The Colonial and Neoclassical Styles* (New York, 1970).
5. P. L. Ford, ed., *Works of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 9 (New York, 1904), pp. 146-47.
6. For a complete description of "Jefferson's Paris," see Howard C. Rice, Jr., *Thomas Jefferson's Paris* (Princeton, 1976).
7. Ibid., p. 15. Letter to James Currie, February 5, 1785.
8. J. Ch. Krafft and N. Ransonnette, *Plans, coupes, élévations des plus belles maisons . . . à Paris* (Paris, 1802?).
9. C. N. Ledoux, *L'Architecture considéreé sous le rapport de l'art, des moeurs et de la législation* (1804).
10. Each of the Parisian streets and their *hôtels* may be seen on the Maire Plan of Paris, 1808.
11. Regarding this antipathy towards the American city see Morton and Lucia White, *The Intellectual Versus the City: From Thomas Jefferson to Frank Lloyd Wright* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962).

Figure Credits

1 From Nikolaus Pevsner, *An Outline of European Architecture*, 6th ed. (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1960), pl. 506.
2, 16, 17, 21, 30, 31 Courtesy of the author.
3 From Mary Hommann, *Wooster Square Design* (New Haven Redevelopment Agency: New Haven, Conn., 1965), p. 14.
4 From Raymond W. Stanley, ed., *Mr. Bulfinch's Boston* (Boston, 1963), p. 28.
5 From the *Historic American Building Survey*: Massachusetts, no. 612.
6, 7, 9, 10 From William H. Pierson, Jr., *American Buildings and Their Architects: The Colonial and Neoclassical Styles* (Garden City, N.Y., 1970), figs. 5, 212, 215, 216.
8 Courtesy of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation.
11, 12 From J. Ch. Krafft and N. Ransonnette, *Plans, coupes, élévations, des plus belles maisons . . . à Paris* (Paris, 1802?).
13 From Robert Auzelle and Ivan Jankovic, *Encyclopédie de l'urbanisme*, tome 1 (Paris, 1954), pl. 507.
14, 23 From Anthony Blunt, *Art and Architecture in France 1500-1700* (London, 1957), pls. 160(A), 93(C).
15, 33 From Vincent Scully, *American Architecture and Urbanism* (New York, 1969), pls. 92, 511.
18 From Sebastiano Serlio, *The Second Book of Architecture* (London, 1611).
19 From Rollin G. Osterweis, *Three Centuries of New Haven, 1638-1938* (New Haven, Conn., 1953), p. 315.
20 From Werner Hegemann and Elbert Peets, *The American Vitruvius: An Architect's Handbook of Civic Art* (New York, 1922), fig. 353.
22, 24, 26 From the Jaillot Plan of Paris, 1778. In *Atlas des Anciens Plans de Paris* (Paris, 1880).
25 From the Turgot Plan of Paris, 1739. In *Atlas des Anciens Plans de Paris* (Paris, 1880).
27 From Michel Gallet, *Claude-Nicolas Ledoux 1736-1806* (Paris, 1980), pl. 120.
28 Drawing by Steven Moser and Michael Markovitz, courtesy of the author.
29 From Brooks M. Kelley, *New Haven Heritage* (New Haven, Conn., 974), p. 18.
32 From Leonardo Benevolo, *The Architecture of the Renaissance*, vol. 2 (Boulder, Colo., 1978), pl. 847.
34, 36 From Peter Blake, *God's Own Junkyard: The Planned Deterioration of America's Landscape* (New York, 1964), pls. 87, 1.
35 Photograph by Christian Leprette, courtesy of the author.

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Michael Dennis was born in Sherman, Texas, in 1937. He received his B.Arch. from the University of Oregon in 1962. He has maintained a professional practice since 1970 and is presently a principal in the firm of Michael Dennis and Jeffrey Clark, Architects. Since 1981, he has been Professor of Architecture at the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University. He has taught at Cornell University (1968-81), Columbia University (1975), the University of Kentucky (1975), and Princeton University (1979-80). His articles have appeared in numerous magazines, and among his publications are Urban Precedents *(Ithaca, N.Y., 1975),* French Hôtel Plans *(Ithaca, N.Y., 1977), and* Residential Squares *(Cambridge, Mass., 1981). He is presently preparing a book,* Habitable Poché: The French Hôtel.

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Kurt W. Forster was born in Zurich in 1935. He studied in Germany, England, and Italy, and received his Ph.D. in the History of Art and Architecture from Zurich University in 1961. He has taught at Yale University, the University of California at Berkeley, and at Stanford University, and is at present a professor in the Department of Architecture at MIT. He has lectured widely in Europe and in the U.S. and also served as director of the Swiss Institute in Rome and the Stanford Study Center in Berlin. His publications include many articles on Renaissance art, Cubism, modern architecture, and methodological issues in L'Arte, The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Architectura, Archithèse, New Literary History, Daedalus, Architectural Review, *and* Oppositions, *of which he was an editor from 1978 to 1983. With Martin Kubelik he has edited a volume of studies on* Palladio—Ein Symposium *(1980). He is now preparing further articles on Giulio Romano, Palladio, ephemeral architecture in the Renaissance, and a study on Karl F. Schinkel.*

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Diane Ghirardo was born in Missoula, Montana. She received an M.A. and a Ph.D. from Stanford University, where she has taught history and Western culture. She is presently Professor of Architectural History at the Graduate School of Architecture at Texas A & M University. Her publications include articles in The Journal of Urban History, The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, The Art Bulletin, *and* Archetype, *of which she has been an editor since 1978. She has also published numerous translations, including Aldo Rossi,* The Architecture of the City *(Cambridge, Mass., 1982). She is presently preparing a manuscript comparing the American and Italian new towns.*

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Fred Koetter was born in Great Falls, Montana, in 1938. He received a B.Arch. from the University of Oregon in 1962, and an M.Arch. from Cornell University in 1966. He has been in architectural practice since 1966, and is presently a partner in the firm of Fred Koetter and Associates, Boston. Since 1978, he has been Professor of Archi-

tecture at the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University. He has also taught at Cornell University (1967-74), Yale University (1973-78), Ohio University (1974), the University of Kentucky (1974-75), and the Rhode Island School of Design (1978). His writings have appeared in numerous magazines, and with Colin Rowe he published the book Collage City *(Cambridge, Mass., 1978).*

Leon Krier

Leon Krier was born in Luxembourg in 1946 and lived there until 1967. He worked for James Stirling from 1968 to 1970. He has taught at the Architectural Association, London (1974-76), Princeton University (1977), and Royal College (1977). He was the Thomas Jefferson Professor of Architecture at the University of Virginia in 1982. He is currently working on the "Six Books of Reconstruction," to be published by Maurice Culot. He is also planning a city for twelve thousand people to be built by a private client in Bavaria.

William Mullen

William Mullen was born in 1946 and studied the Classics at Harvard University (B.A., 1968) and the University of Texas (Ph.D., 1972). He has taught at the University of California at Berkeley and Boston University, and is presently at St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland. He was the Hodder Fellow in the Humanities at Princeton University (1973-74) and a Junior Fellow at the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington, D.C. (1977-78). He has also served as a panelist for the National Endowment for the Humanities. His book, CHOREIA: Pindar and Dance, *was published by Princeton University Press in 1982. "Republics for Expansion: The School of Rome," part of a book-length study of the American founders' relation to antiquity, appeared in* Arion *in 1976.*

Jaquelin T. Robertson

Jaquelin T. Robertson was born in 1933 in Richmond, Virginia. He received his B.A. and M.Arch. from Yale University and an M.A. from Oxford University, where he was a Rhodes Scholar. He is a principal in the firm of Eisenman Robertson, Architects. Since 1981, he has been dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Virginia. He has taught at Yale University (1964-65, 1980), Columbia University (1965-67), The New School, New York (1973), the Salzburg Seminar, Austria (1974), and the Rhode Island School of Design (1978). He was a founder of the New York City Urban Design Group (1967-69), founder and director of the Office of Midtown Planning and Development (1969-72), and a New York City Planning Commissioner (1973), producing numerous studies and proposals for areas of Manhattan and writing zoning legislation intended to effect a more livable urban environment. With Llewelyn-Davies and Partners, he directed the design of Shahestan Pahlavi, a new town center planned for Tehran (1975-78).

Carroll W. Westfall

Carroll William Westfall was born in 1937 in California and completed his undergraduate work at the University of California in 1961. He received an M.A. from the University of Manchester in 1963, and a Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1967. After teaching at Amherst College, he moved to a position at the University of Illinois at Chicago where for a decade he participated in various preservation activities that provided the background for the concerns presented in his essay in this issue. His publications include: In This Most Perfect Paradise: Nicholas V, Alberti, and the Invention of Conscious Urban Planning in Rome, 1447-1455 *(1974), studies of various related topics, and, more recently, a number of papers on Chicago architecture and urbanism, published in* Inland Architect, Threshold, *and elsewhere. In 1982 he joined the faculty of the School of Architecture at the University of Virginia. His current projects include a study of representation in architecture and studies in the history of urban form.*

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