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Caring about Places: Lasting

The surroundings embed themselves in our minds. Without announcement, they construct a pattern of thinking, an expectation about how things relate to each other that is a surreptitious accompaniment to the acts and decisions of daily life. The shape of things seeps into our transactions. We live with the memories that have made us who we are, and they filter through the actions of our hands into works.

To gain mastery over our works requires close, continual attention. Sketching—watching with the hands—is one way of bringing the dimly perceived into focus, subjecting it to critical attention, programming a set of attributes into the hand muscles so that they may be recalled when appropriate. Tracing new relationships may reorder and reconstruct our sense of design possibilities even if the specific lines being traced will never be redrawn.

Sometimes it is also necessary to break the traces, to confront patterns in a new way. Close scrutiny and evaluation may lead to insights not available in the routine of our lives. Routine takes many forms: the habits of inhabitation, the strictures of bureaucracy, the conventional wisdoms of design process. Routines give structure to the world; some structures facilitate, some enslave. Distinguishing the one kind from the other requires listening to many views and watching for patterns that may not be described.

Breaking with routine may require recovering traces of memory as well as experimenting with the unexpected. A poem that strikes beneath the senses may resurface as the impetus to string polyethylene across the desert landscape. The assembly of specific tools gives shape to the imagined path. Similarly, the vision of towers gleaming in the sunshine may ride through an entire career, leaving its trace in specific landscapes across the continent. By sheer stubborn insistence, such towers gather unto themselves associations never imagined by their builders.

Tools—directed by the minds and hands of those who care—make places distinct. The range of tools varies with the place and the task, and their mastery is hard to come by. Yet to build with these tools is to make something that will last. To make something that will last well (in the mind or on the ground) is the primary responsibility of those concerned with places.

Despite the onslaught of hype and the endless stockpiling of the apocalypse, we can only hope that our society will conclude that lasting is an attribute we can afford.

Donlyn Lyndon

Imagining a Landscape

Richard Oliver

The accompanying article is based on Richard Oliver's lecture at a conference sponsored by the American Institute of Architects Design Committee. Gerald Allen, who organized the conference, has edited this version from transcripts of the talk. Richard's insights have helped us to understand better the entwining of buildings, landscapes, and the creative imagination. His death in the spring of 1985 meant the loss of a lucid voice. We are grateful to Gerald Allen for helping us to hear it once more.

There is a tradition in Southern California of thinking of the place as a promised land, an Eden, an Arcadia, or—in the legend that goes back to sixteenth-century Spain—El Dorado, that fabled land of fantastic beauty west of the Indies. This tradition has resulted in two Southern California landscapes rather than one: the semiarid desert, which is actually native to the place, and the dreamed of landscape, willed into being by the people and made possible by modern technologies that bring water down from the distant north to keep the land green.

Because it is also surrounded by high mountains and deserts to the east and by the ocean to the west, Southern California has also seemed like an island. Helen Hunt Jackson, who wrote *Ramona*, called it that, and the label has stuck, galvanizing the notion that this was a special place, remote, desirable, and difficult to reach from afar.

Because with water and care the land can sustain vegetation of the most extraordinary sorts, the early impressions it made on East Coast Americans was of an exotic world of orange groves set against views of distant mountain ranges. Some early Yankee immigrants in the 1880s reveled in its lushness by growing rose bushes so big they would entirely cover the fronts of their houses, making it unclear whether what they were living in was a house or just shrubbery.

Some of the biggest and earliest planning gestures in California were of a landscape, rather than an architectural, nature. One of them is Euclid Avenue, in which the citizens of Ontario planted four rows of trees in a straight line for sixteen miles to the foothills. Today the legacy of those early plantings is found in the palm-lined boulevards that grace many parts of San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Los Angeles.

The 1880s witnessed the completion of the southern transcontinental railroad, which made it possible for people from the east to come to California in large numbers for the first time. It was their first contact with a truly exotic landscape, since Florida was developed as a tourist mecca somewhat later. The building of the railroads often included the building of grand resort hotels at the end of the line as well, so tourists who rode the trains would actually have somewhere to go. The Hotel del Coronado, which opened for business in February 1888, is an example. In its time, the Del was not particularly special, for there were equally wonderful hotels at the end of railroad runs all over America, particularly in the west and later the south. Like them, the Del was itself a kind of island in the landscape. People came to California to enjoy the exotic landscape, but this they would do during the daytime. At night they preferred retiring safely to eastern-style luxury. The Del was thus patterned on East Coast models, and its whole point was to be familiar, reassuring, and filled with all the conveniences East Coast visitors would expect.

Illustrations from Whitaker, Charles Harris, Ed., *Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, Architect and Master of Many Arts* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1976; First Edition, copyright 1925), except as noted.

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Very often resort hotels were meant also to be anchors for surrounding real estate developments. Thus the completion of the Del in 1888 coincided with the first big real estate boom in San Diego's history, a boom during which most of the city, like the hotel, came to be made up of buildings that looked like they were from the East Coast.

The plan of the Hotel del Coronado is remarkable in its utility and in its lack of uniqueness: it worked in the 1880s, it works today, and in all essential features the plan is like that of any other resort hotel of its time. The rooms are laid out efficiently, in this case on three sides of a courtyard one acre in size. Big and imposing public rooms are on the fourth side. Over time, many aspects of the building have been altered. There have been, for example, all sorts of subtle changes in the glazing; windows have generally gotten bigger, and some dormers have been taken away and others added. Yet many things remain the same, including the imposing conical shape of the ballroom, which is still almost a symbol of the hotel. Through it all, the building has survived in its overall shape.

The courtyard at its center is a constant, yet it keeps changing too. Once it was almost wildly overgrown with exotic plants, a miniature version of that Californian Arcadia. A decade ago it was trimmer. Now it has a little Victorian gazebo in the center where weddings occur almost hourly during weekends.

1 **Hotel del Coronado,** illustration from *America's Grand Resort Hotels* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979).

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What Elijah Babcock, builder of the hotel, wanted—and what James and Merritt Reed, his architects, gave him—was a building that was not in any way provincial. It in no way represented Coronado, but instead it stood for the best in contemporary architectural style, representing everything that was both proper and current therein.

But at the very moment the Hotel del Coronado was being built, the new immigrants from the east were discovering—or in some cases investing—the Indian and Spanish pasts of Southern California. They were also beginning to pay attention to the few archaeological relics, chiefly the twenty-one mission churches that Father Junipero Serra had helped establish. Among these, the mission at Santa Barbara was the grandest and the one at San Juan Capistrano the most revered and romantic. This rediscovery of Southern California's sometimes real, sometimes imagined, and always romanticized history was very much helped along by the publication, in 1884, of *Ramona*, the work of an industrious woman from Boston who tramped over most of San Diego county looking

2 Hotel del Coronado with affiliated tent city, illustration from *America's Grand Resort Hotels* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979).

for material for her book. Helen Hunt Jackson was the first important popularizer of the rustic Spanish architecture that later became the rage of the region.

In the aftermath of the publication of *Ramona*, Californians became determined that their buildings should look like missions. The railroad companies in particular followed suit in their stations so that tourists arriving from the east would be alerted to the Southern California milieu as soon as they stepped off the train. At a more domestic scale, talented architects such as San Diego's Irving Gill looked to the missions more for inspiration rather than as something to be copied directly, and the results were wonderfully original buildings, such as his La Jolla Women's Club of 1906.

The idea that California had a Latin heritage was made to order for San Diego's Panama-California Exposition of 1915 and 1916. The decision to sponsor the fair was made by a group of enlightened citizens at a time when the city had no more than 35,000 inhabitants and led by men such as George Morriston, who thought holding an exposition to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal was an obvious opportunity to boost the city's image. After all, San Diego had the first American harbor north of the canal, and it was therefore a prime place for new trade with the eastern United States and the Orient.

There was considerable feeling that Irving Gill, the local architect, should design the fair. In the end, the commission went to the well-known New York architect Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, in part because Goodhue wanted the commission so badly that he enlisted the help of friends, who got him an interview in which he succeeded in charming the San Diego committee.

Goodhue was born in 1869 and was therefore a member of what I like to call the "Class of 1870." This was a group of extraordinarily talented architects who shared a certain common purpose even though they worked in widely different styles and in widely different places. Included among them was Edwin Lutyens of England, Frank Lloyd Wright of the United States, Auguste Perret of France, Peter Behrens of Germany, Josef Hoffmann of Austria, and Eliel Saarinen of Finland, all of them born around 1870. In California, the class of 1870 included the brothers Greene and Irving Gill.

What they shared was a strong individualism in their designs, and this was developed, no doubt, in response to the challenge laid down by their elders. In America, this challenge was epitomized by the work of McKim, Mead & White, which enforced architectural discipline through the reintroduction of a fairly strict stylistic discipline. Architects like McKim, Mead, and White believed in copying the architecture of the past rather accurately and somewhat academically, adapting its patterns as a way of making great architecture for contemporary America.

Goodhue and his generation, by contrast, though they were inclined toward historical discipline in buildings, were at the same time anxious to move beyond the canonical works of European tradition toward something much freer, and toward something more personal as well.

Nowhere in Goodhue's work do we have a clearer clue to this attitude than in his sketches of imaginary places. The Church of St. Kavin in Traumburg, Bohemia, drawn in 1896, shows an imaginary place treated as though it were a real travel sketch. Goodhue derived much pleasure watching friends pour unfruitfully over maps of Bohemia trying to find it. A striking thing about the church is that it looks like a mountain, with a tall tower rising out of it to stand high above the Kavinsplatz. Similar towers show up again and again in Goodhue's later work, such as at the exposition buildings in San Diego and in his last building, the Nebraska State Capitol. Another imaginary project was his Villa Fosca, set on an obscure isle in the Adriatic, where it would vex Paris-trained prizemen on their Rome tour when they realized they had missed visiting and studying it. This kind of gesture helps suggest what Goodhue thought of the Ecole and its strict teaching methods, which, on the whole, was not much. But in his design for the Villa Fosca, with its buildings and gardens each as rich as the other, Goodhue was also setting forth his ideas about an architecture and a landscape that merged one into the other, and he

was proposing something that he later actually realized in Southern California.

His first chance came in 1902. He was asked by James Waldron Gillespie to design a Mediterranean villa—with Persian gardens— in Montecito, near Santa Barbara. To make sure the architect understood what was wanted, Gillespie took him on a trip to look at real Persian gardens. Riding on horseback four hundred miles from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf, Goodhue and his patron visited a number of gardens, then continued on an around-the-world trek through India, the Orient, and finally back across the Pacific to the United States. The house that resulted—to say nothing of the images that were stored in Goodhue's mind for abundant use later—perched at the top of its site, with Persian terraces and gardens spilling down a steep ravine. It is probably more Mediterranean than specifically Spanish, but in 1903, when it was completed, it was the first of its kind in California.

Goodhue's design for the San Diego fair is most characteristically seen from the great bridge—constructed especially for the exposition—that leaped across the ravine separating the main approach road from the actual site: a mesa topped with a pile of buildings rising from the surrounding vegetation. The citizens of San Diego dubbed it "Nueva Espana" and the "Garden Fair." Clarence Stein called it the triumph of the romantic in city planning.

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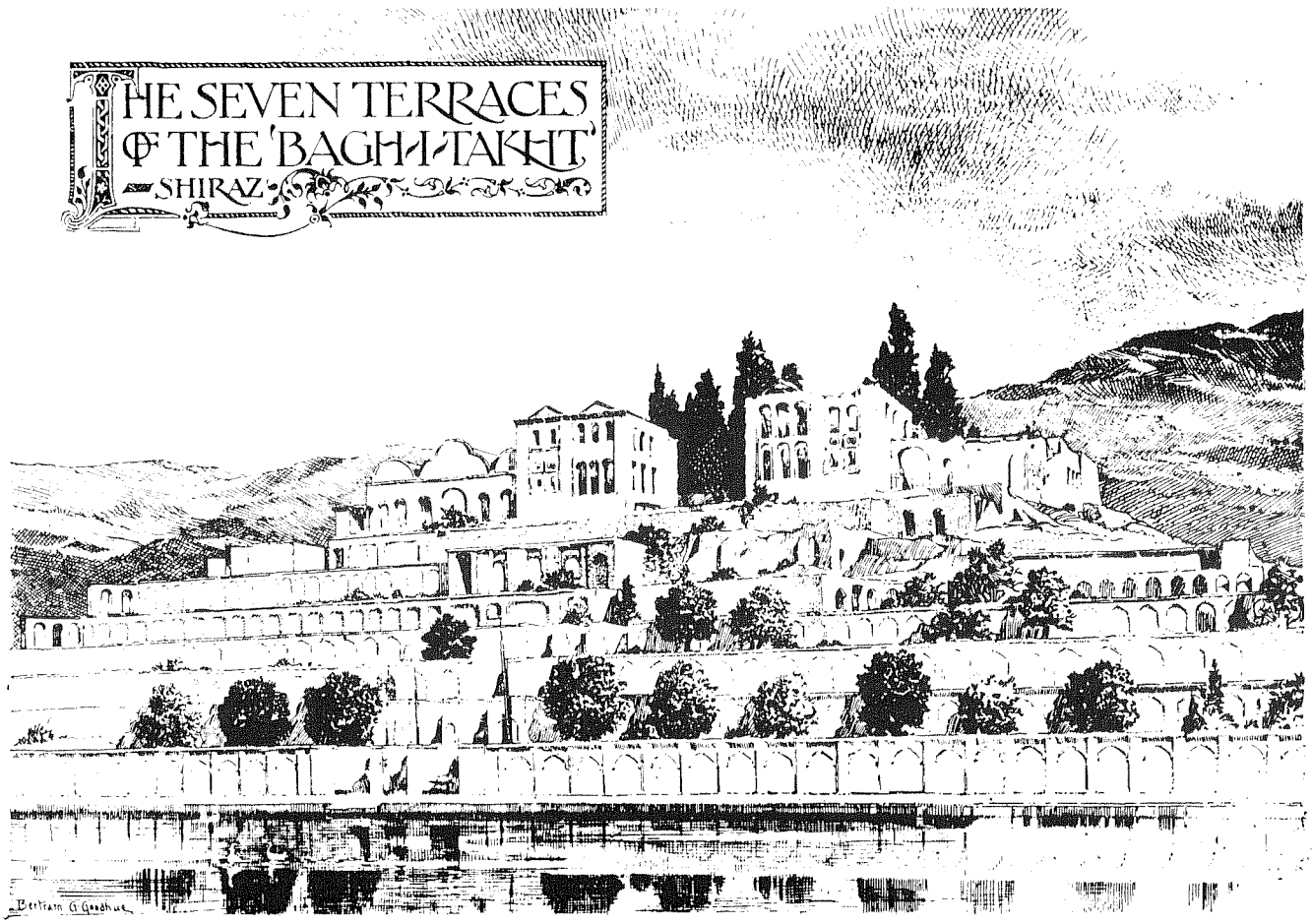
3 Transcept of St. Kavin's, Traumburg, Bohemia



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4 The Seven Terraces of the "Bagh-i-Takht"—Shiraz

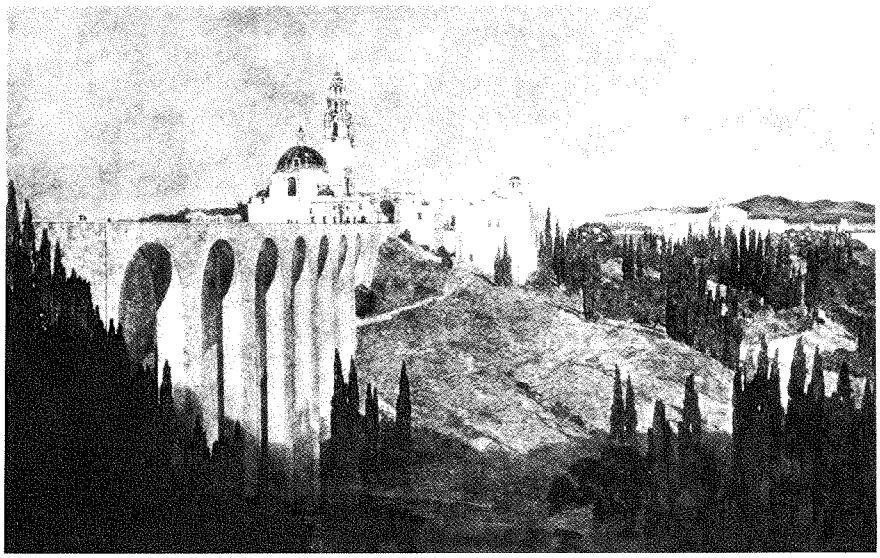
5 House for J. Waldron Gillespie, Montecito, California

At first glance, the plan of the fair seems Beaux Arts in inspiration, with a major axis (called "El Prado") and an important cross axis that leads down from a central plaza to the organ pavilion. But the plan is nonetheless very different from what McKim, Mead & White and their graduates might have drawn. Neither, in fact, is it much like a city in Spain—its "Nueva Espana" title notwithstanding—for there is no irregularity in it. It isn't Mexican either, because Mexican cities, following the Law of the

Indies, were laid out on grids. What the plan of the fair really is is a development of what Goodhue and Ralph Adams Cram had been working on in their earlier plan for Rice University: balanced, rather than actual, symmetry. The plan is clearly about a processional route; it is kinetic, and it has to do not with cross axes but with the movement of the body through space and the provision of views of buildings and gardens to the left, to the right, and beyond. The plan is relaxed and informal, held together by the idea of the long processional path.

The idea for the fair—a basically romantic one—shows up clearly in Goodhue's earlier sketches of imaginary places: in a watercolor called "Dream Cities of the East" and most particularly in a drawing called "Xanadu," which, if you squint, seems almost to become the San Diego fair. Goodhue's idealized city is a dreamlike mountain of buildings, a place in which there are shady places and sunny ones, with passages between arcades that connect plazas and gardens and in which there is the spirit of a Mediterranean city without all of its details.

The city fathers of San Diego had first assumed that the fair would be in the rustic and quaint "mission" style of California, and it was at this point that Irving Gill had seemed a logical choice as architect. Goodhue convinced them that what was really needed was something much more festive, more theatrical, with richer and more varied gestures.



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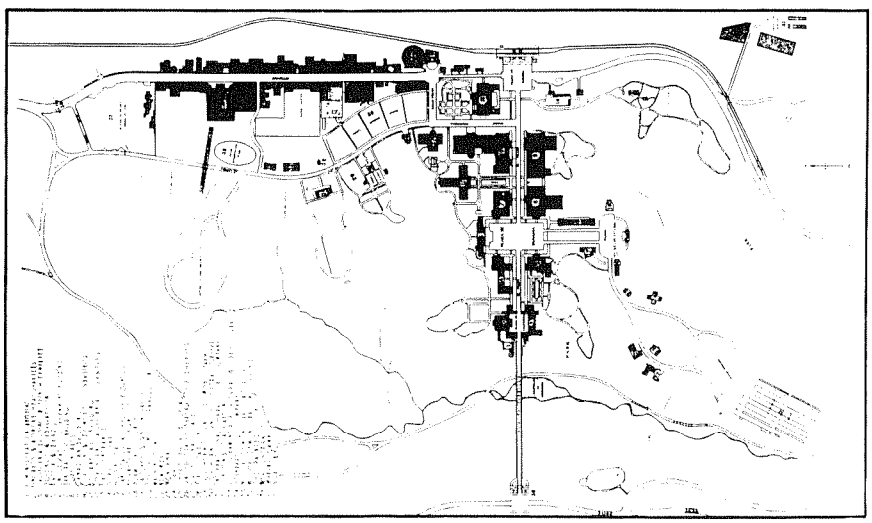

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6 Entrance approach, Panama-California Exposition, San Diego, California

7 Topographical map, Panama- California Exposition, San Diego, California

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All these things are present in the major building of the fair, the California Building. Its facade is full of statues, and on the very top is Father Junipero Serra himself, rising above busts of Charles V and Philip II, kings of Spain who ruled during particularly significant moments in California history. Then there are statues of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, the first white man to set foot on the West Coast, and the navigator Sebastín Vízcaíno. There is also California's first holy martyr. All these figures speak of California's history, and they stand there as reminders of the purpose of the fair, which was to connect the city of San Diego with its past of choice. On the dome of the California Building is a Latin inscription from the Old Testament. It describes the Holy Land, and in the process it also describes California: "A land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of oil, olive trees, and honey."

The California Building stated the theme of the fair. Beyond it lay the rest of the idealized Latin city, stretching out along the Prado. All of the buildings were painted a kind of pearl gray (which they are not painted today), and this provided a uniform backdrop for the colors of the plants and flowers, the awnings, and the tiled domes and towers that rose from various parts of the grounds. Along the Prado were arcades that were a unifying element and guided the visitor from

8 "Xanadu"

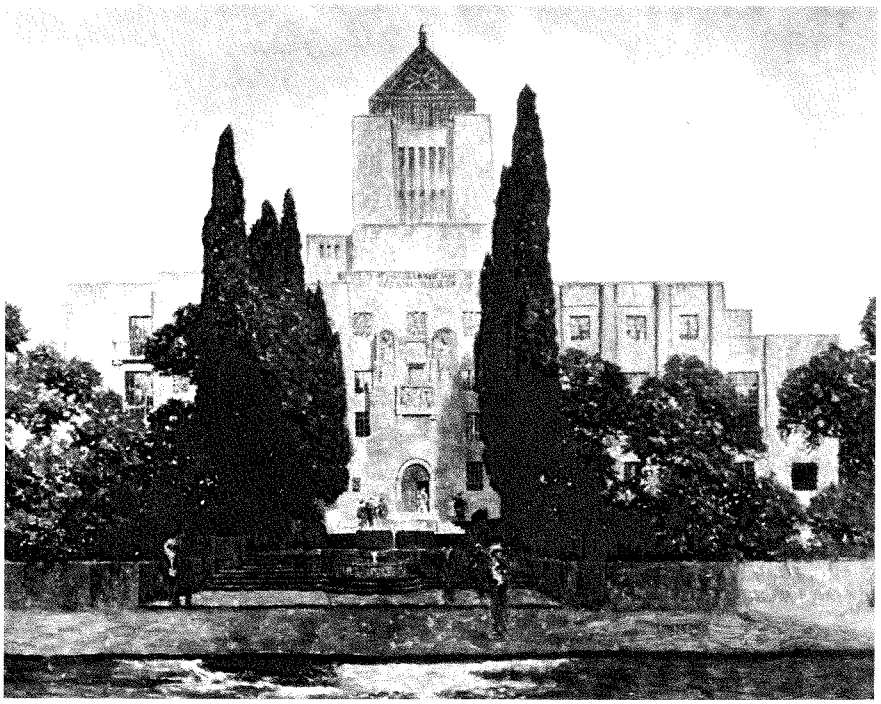
9 California Building, Balboa Park, San Diego, California. Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, architect. Photograph courtesy of San Diego Historical Society—Title Insurance & Trust Collection.

10 Central Library Building, Public Library, Los Angeles, California

one building and one garden to another. Their surfaces had on them a wonderfully dappled light, constantly changing with the moving sun. There was also a series of secondary major spaces. The most charming of them was the lagoon, at one end of which stood the botanical building, a structure made of wood lath over a steel frame that had originally been designed as a train station but somehow wound up here.

In designing this idealized Latin city, Goodhue had intended that what would remain after the end of the two-year fair would be only the bridge and the California quadrangle, including the California Building, with its dome and tower. Everything else would be demolished and replaced by gardens, so that the entire place—already richly landscaped for the fair—would become a 200-acre park, with the bridge and California Building as its gateway.

The people of San Diego did not buy this idea. Instead they liked the buildings so much that they refused to let any of them be removed, and they set about finding new uses for them when the fair was over. Most of the buildings had been built cheaply and quickly of wooden frames and plaster that was not intended to last. Only the California Building was built of concrete. Goodhue was naturally unhappy that all the buildings remained and that his original idea had failed to catch on. Nonetheless, what happened proved good for his reputation, because his buildings came to stand as a potent influence on subsequent California architecture.



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The fairgrounds have continued to change over the years. Some buildings have been replaced by others. The San Diego Art Museum, for instance, was built in 1925 to designs by William Templeton Johnson. In 1925 a second fair was held on the same site, and so many of the original buildings were altered then. This time there was a "Spanish Village," at more miniature scale than the previous Latin city but perhaps in keeping with the 1930s quaint thinking about California's heritage. In the 1960s other buildings were constructed that have very little to do with what was there. They are troubling buildings, partly because they seem evident strangers in this place and partly because, being smaller than the buildings they replace, they allow more room for gardens and are thus in keeping with Goodhue's original goals for the park. Some of the original buildings have recently been reproduced in more permanent materials, but inevitably with some loss of romantic quality, their details seeming somewhat hard and fast, and the overall effect somewhat machine made.

The San Diego fair was a wild, popular success. Visitors saw in its fusion of an exotic landscape with an equally exotic "Spanish" architecture a vision of what California

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11 California Building, Balboa Park, San Diego, California. Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, architect. Photography by Richard Oliver.

could be. They shared the vision, and they set about making California itself "Spanish" in an idiom sufficiently flexible to be interpreted afresh by many kinds of people and in almost every kind of building type. Kevin Starr, in his book *California and the American Dream*, notes that the San Diego fair, though it may not have actually started California on its quest for a Spanish image, nonetheless confirmed that that was what California should be—a place with an architecture of simple line, drama of mass, and in peace and harmony with its lush landscape.

Many subsequent examples of the dream exist, from sophisticated buildings such as the Brice house in Santa Barbara by the talented and original architect George Washington Smith to apartment complexes such as the Andalucia in Los Angeles, long a favorite of movie producers. In the Los Angeles Central Library, his last work in California, Goodhue shifted the dream back closer again to Persia. Still the image of the San Diego exposition's California Building, seen in all its evocative power against a golden sunset, remains in some ways the most memorable of all. The gestures of its tower, its dome—fundamental architectural gestures rising above the landscape of Californian Arcady—give it the power to be memorable. And these gestures have worked their magic. The building has become an icon deeply loved by the citizens of San Diego. It is the symbol of the city, just as its progeny became symbols of the state.

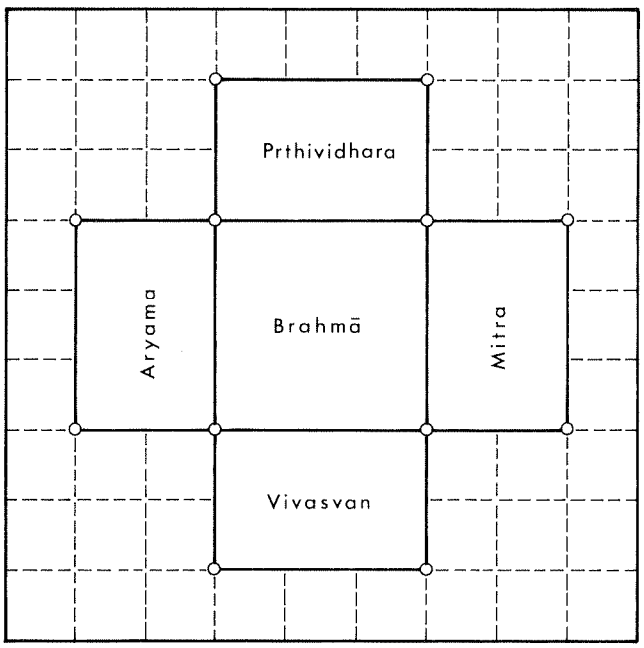
The Shape of Things

Arthur Allen

If perfection of landscape can only be found in a flat, square place, then Saskatchewan is perfect. There are several competitors for this honor. Wyoming and Colorado are closer to square, but they are disqualified by their extremely lumpy topography. Egypt, North and South Dakota, Kansas, Nebraska, Utah, and some Australian states try hard but are not quite able to complete their shapes to perfection. In spite of one flaw—the surveyors laying out the southern half of Saskatchewan's eastern border had some trouble finding the 102nd meridian of longitude—Saskatchewan's enormous, very flat, and very regular shape is, for all practical purposes, a perfect shape. It is at least as perfect as our globe will permit.

1 The garden of plenty. Photograph courtesy of Saskatchewan Government Photo Services.

Considering reports that architect-priests (sthapati) of pre-Dravidian India laid out cities and buildings in square shapes on flat plains, there is little wonder that a group of architects in Regina, Saskatchewan, in the 1950s should have spent much time arguing about the shape of things. The sthapati believed that Brahma and some lesser dieties would only live with men in cities, buildings, and temples of perfect shape, that is, in square, flat places, the designs of which were based on various mandalas. Thus it was that the Regina architects, particularly the young ones passing through, wondered and endlessly debated the possibility that



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2 Paramasayika mandala. After Andreas Volwahsen, *Living Architecture, India* (London: McDonald, 1969).

3 Harvest celebration at a homestead with a sod house, Redvers, Saskatchewan, 1900–1905(?).

4 Arthur, Stella, and the children at the Cathedral of Pinkie.

the virtuous people of Saskatchewan were perfect simply because the place was square and flat.

As I remember it, most of us worked at one time or another in the very interesting architectural office of Izumi, Arnott and Sugiyama, and we were traveling in one of two directions. Canadians were often from farms, small villages, or the backwoods and were almost invariably on their way to Europe. Europeans, particularly Englishmen, were from densely populated cities and sometimes moved romantically in search of a remote and supposedly natural life in Western Canada.

I was headed from Vancouver to Europe, via Montreal, and stopped in Regina to work for a year. The day I arrived, a dust storm blew up, and twenty years later I left town during a similar storm. I had just finished architectural school in Vancouver, had very high hopes in a great profession, and had lived all my life to that date in the cool, green mountains of Alberta and British Columbia. The dust was a brown blizzard that choked and stung, and it was so thick that the clock tower of old Victoria School at 13th Avenue and McIntyre Street was invisible from two blocks away. It loomed like a huge three-story barn owl as I approached in the wind.

My dismay deepened when on my first assignment I was put to work on an alteration project at the Saskatchewan Mental Hospital in Weyburn, a small city seventy miles southeast of Regina. What a trip that is! For flatness it is utter perfection, and the highway changes course only once in the journey. The road runs twenty-five miles due south to the Corinne Corner, then tacks smartly forty-five degrees to the southeast, continuing to Weyburn with only minor loops to avoid grain elevators along the parallel railway.

We worked, and talked, and drank beer instead of Regina's infamous water, and argued, and worked some more, and baked corn in clay pits under charcoal fires, and a few, very few, stayed to become prairie dwellers. In the middle of all this, during an intense discussion of architecture in the service of politics, I met Stella. She is one of those genuine flatlanders who has a number for a birthplace—Sec. 28, Tp3, Rge4, W2nd, Saskatchewan—simply because she was born in the family farmhouse, not in the town hospital. Some day those numbers will be of great social importance to her descendants, who will claim her as a Saskatchewan Blue-Blood, as would a New England family with an ancestor on the Mayflower or an Australian family with connections back to the criminal lists of Botany Bay.

I never did reach Europe, or Montreal for that matter, and my mind was never broadened. Instead, my backside was flattened by interminable travels with Stella all over the endless grid roads of Saskatchewan. One day early in our career, I asked Stella what we might do on a fine Sunday. She replied that she would love a ride in the country, and we spent four hours looking at the back of the next field of grain while she smiled or frowned at the crops and tested the soil for moisture. We traveled in straight lines and turned ninety-degree corners all afternoon. Sometime later, with our two children, we invented the Prairie Perfect Sunday Morning Square Drive.

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From the intersection of Albert Street and 13th Avenue, we would travel due west through a quiet residential district, past the city limits, and westward onto the flat and open prairie. Miles out we would stop briefly at the Cathedral of Pinkie, a rust red Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Elevator. Standing in awe of the huge icon, Stella would recall her father's tales of early trading in Saskatchewan wheat when the elevator was a place of greed and vicious competition for loading privileges rather than a symbol of plenty and cooperative grain marketing. Just past the elevator we would turn ninety degrees

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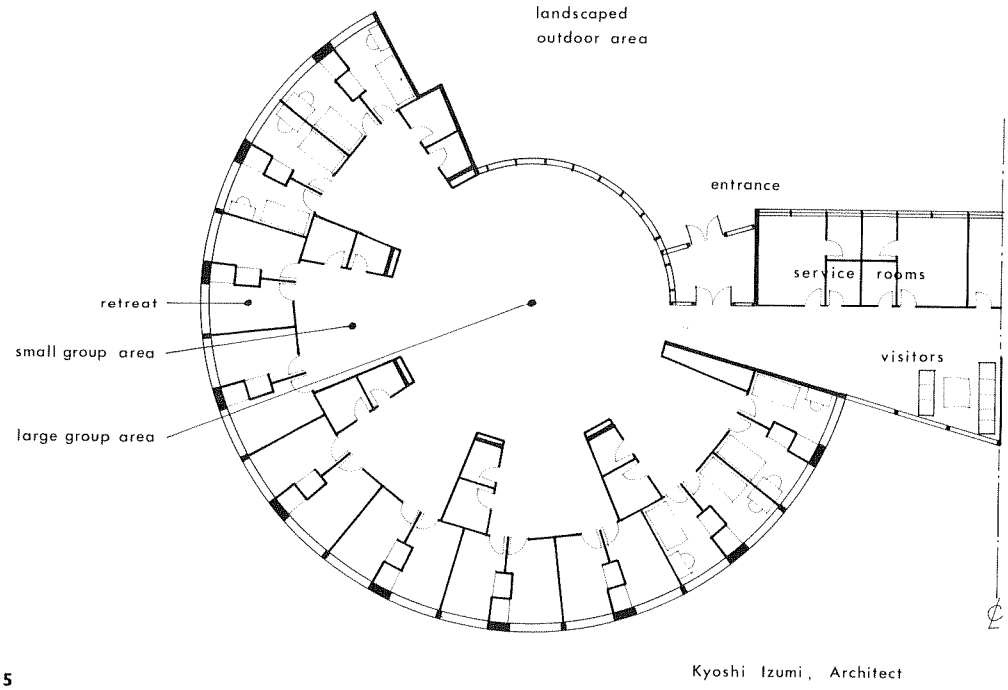

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left and travel due south on a low dirt road, the wheat so high and close on each side that we couldn't see over it in bumper years. This passage seemed uneventful to me, but Stella, sometimes oblivious to distant views, would spend a delighted hour looking down at her feet in search of tiny wildflowers and relics of early farm life near an abandoned farmhouse now alone in the wind. I had not yet learned to enjoy those things, and once or twice I entertained the children with a new version of the creation story.

According to this tale, God wanted the whole world to be perfect, like Saskatchewan, and He started just east of Winnipeg with a huge bulldozer, leveling the Great Plains as He moved westward. Unfortunately the 'dozer broke down just west of Calgary, and He had to leave western Alberta and all of British Columbia in a terrible mess of rock and debris left over from the work of prairie leveling. The children's first trip to the Rocky Mountains was an interesting experience.

Two or three miles due south of Pinkie, we would make a second ninety-degree left turn onto the slick pavement of the Trans-Canada Highway and travel east with occasional slalom turns along the broken painted centerline of the deserted highway. Stella didn't like this maneuver. She worried that

5 Prototype design for a mental hospital by Kyoshi Izumi.

sinuous curving of the car might lead the children away from the straight and narrow and into heaven knows what manner of sensuous, twisted behavior in later years. The excitement mounted, however, because the last corner, at the intersection of the highway with Albert Street, was a cloverleaf. The children would nag and worry, shouting "Daddy, look out! Be careful! The road curves! Watch out!" Then we would spin, or creep, around the two-hundred-seventy-degree curve of the cloverleaf, heading sedately north into the city, back to the corner of Albert and 13th, on the east leg of an almost square and perfect drive.

Enough of these inventive pastimes; work and argument were the main diversions in Regina. When we weren't working, we visited and debated through the long winter evenings. Those of us in Izumi's office debated the emerging collaboration of social science and architecture. In 1966 we heard Paul Goodman's CBC lectures on the "Moral Ambiguity of America" and tried to connect Goodman's ideas with architecture. None of us succeeded at that time. During those years I met a large number of traveling architects and traded many arguments with varying degrees of interest.

The main source of architectural ideas in the office was Kyoshi Izumi's work on the design of a prototype mental hospital proposed for several small cities throughout Saskatchewan. "The Saskatchewan Plan" called for the eventual closure of two huge mental hospitals, including Weyburn, after construction of six or eight small, community-oriented hospital facilities. In his prototype design Izumi drew a semicircular plan of one story with a social lounge in the center. Small parlors ringed the lounge, and individual patient bedrooms occupied the periphery of the circle. It was believed that the shape of the thing would facilitate easy movement between private and public spaces, thus aiding mentally handicapped people who experience difficulty in making these transitions. Only one of the small regional hospitals was built, and it was done with rectangular cottages because the Department of Psychiatric Services did not wish to raise any eyebrows, at least not with unusually shaped buildings.

Many years later the Saskatchewan Association of Architects received a letter, from the Canary Islands, I believe, asking about the shape of rooms in Saskatchewan mental hospitals. Apparently the book *Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain* states that trapezoidal rooms in Saskatchewan hospitals were developed as part of the treatment of mental illness. To my knowledge there was no magic intended in Izumi's shapes and spaces, but who knows. There were some unusual and interesting people working in the Weyburn Hospital.

T. E. Weckowicz undertook perceptual experiments with patients in a long, narrow room that we built for him and established that schizophrenia does distort perception of distance, leaving a victim unsure about the space in which he moves. This work reminds me of some moments when the vast space and empty foreground of prairie scenes created a landscape of miniature architecture. In winter, when snow obliterates all traces of perspective in the foreground, it really is easy to believe that distant farms and elevators are miniatures and that freight trucks are Dinky Toys sailing a dry ocean.

Leonard Ghan was in and about Weyburn in those days and continues to use rectangular diagrams in explaining the principles of Transactional Analysis. He seems to be less comfortable with recent spiral diagrams (like Stella, he grew up on straight prairie roads) and forcibly reminds me that his drawings are maps for people lost in their own minds. They are not intended to be used to develop plans for buildings or other devices that restrain

6

6 The four seated ladies of Weyburn. Photograph courtesy of Robert Sommer.

people. Ghan's work reminds me of some fascinating medieval diagrams used in the explanation of religious ideas. Various arboreal diagrams, and some architectural ones, are beautifully illustrated in an article by Michael Evans, "The Geometry of the Mind," published in the *Architectural Association Quarterly*. In the article, the biblical Tower of Wisdom and its seven pillars give a clearly architectural form to the structure of an idea. The Tree of Architecture, shown as a frontal plate in Banister Fletcher's *History of Architecture*, is a similar device used as a diagrammatic aid to thought and discussion.

Humphry Osmond was director of the Weyburn Hospital in the 1950s and was a fountain of ideas. One of my favorites at the time concerned possible disturbance to disoriented people arising from the ambiguous patterns and images of traditional architectural ornament. In 1957 Osmond wrote (in *Mental Hospitals*, April 1957),

> Gratuitous burdens are not uncommon. A famous British mental hospital welcomes its new arrivals in a richly painted and gilded hall. Among the intertwining leaves covering the walls, goblin-like creatures are concealed. Sometimes a whole head can be seen,

> sometimes only an eye gleams malevolently at the new arrival.

The unintentional ambiguity of decorative forms, and possible ill effects, poses a question that has not been tested so far as I know. It may be of interest to post-Modern designers who show a renewed interest in traditional architectural forms and ornament.

My memory is uncertain, but I think that my first meeting with Robert Sommer occurred while he and Jack Cleland, another psychologist, were attempting to estimate the number of crows that could be placed at regular intervals on the telephone wires between Weyburn and Regina. Sommer had located a book, *Studies of the Psychology and Behavior of Animals in Zoos and Circuses*, by Dr. H. Hediger, a noted Swiss zoologist, and was finding it very useful in his research. Some of Hediger's observations apply literally to the human species in and out of mental hospitals, and some zoological concepts are of course applicable to human behavior and therefore to architecture.

Sommer became widely known for his work, establishing himself as a leader in the environmental design movement. His research and his books are close to direct architectural application. His books include *Personal Space*, *Tight Spaces*, *Design Awareness*, *The End of Imprisonment*, and *The Mind's Eye*. I know that the crows on the wire had something to do with *Personal Space*, but *Tight Spaces* was prompted, I suspect, by the story of the four seated ladies of Weyburn.

The events behind this story took place before I arrived in Weyburn but are recorded in an article by Robert Sommer published in *Designing for Human Behavior*, edited by Lang, Burnette, Moleski, and Vachon. Sommer reported that early in his work in Weyburn he noted that the hospital wards chairs were often grouped in rectangular grids facing away from each other, in straight rows back to back, and occasionally on each side of a square column, facing the four points of the compass. These arrangements, preordained by an architect-priest and rigidly maintained for easy cleaning and management by hospital staff, frustrated normal social interaction of sitters. Sommer regrouped the chairs and reported the following:

> The arrangement we selected involved the chairs being placed around small tables in a good conversational arrangement. Although it is hardly surprising now to report this, we found that this more than doubled the amount of conversation between patients. Magazine reading went up twenty fold because the tables now provided places on which the magazines could be stored.

A picture of the four seated ladies from *Designing for Human Behavior* (in this case they are seated back to back) is a terribly sad picture. In my opinion it provides additional proof that the shape of things does matter.

The draughting of floor plans for buildings sometimes produces drawings as intricate and delightfully geometric as the plan view of a snowflake. This is true of many historic styles of architecture where symmetry and repetition play major design roles. It is especially true of the strict axial and radial symmetries of prison and military structures. It is a social irony that asylums, invented in the optimism of nineteenth-century reform, ultimately became warehouses to some degree, degrading in part to the function of a waste container for usually harmless but eccentric and inconvenient people. It is an architectural irony that the drawing of floor plans for these structures can be such pleasant work in spite of some miserable purposes involved in the use of these buildings.

After meeting the four ladies I continued for two years

working on the hospital renovations, meeting regularly with Kyoshi Izumi, Robert Sommer, and others on various issues of mental hospital function and design and for broader talks about architecture. My attitude was usually black. I was decidedly antigeometric and looked upon the regular prairie roads and farmsteads, and upon all symmetrical buildings, including the Weyburn Hospital, as the work of devils who had nothing better to do than trap people in rigidly ordered patterns of space and time. My disillusionment was severe, and architectural debates with my friends in Regina developed a sharper tone when I asserted that architects were demiurges, Gnostic artificers of the world, and the originators of evil.

It was Stella and the Prairie Perfect Square Drive that first eased my mind to laughter, and I began to take a new interest in the geometry of large things. I asked about wrong angles but found no one willing to debate the morality of right angles. The possibility that rect-angles might have some unrectified kin also interested me, as it still does.

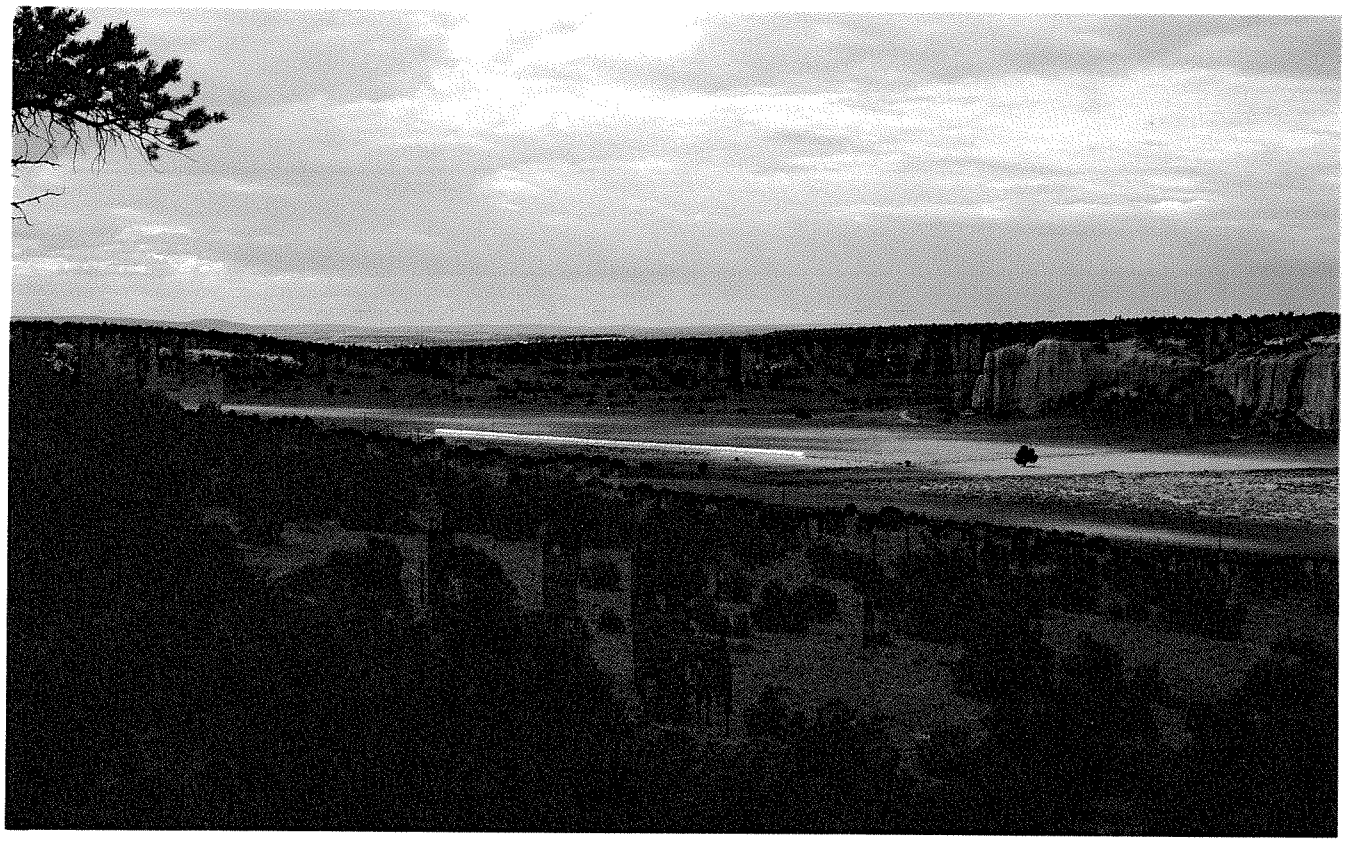
Our two growing children completed my cautious return to order when we found that degrees of discipline and geometry were necessary in the shaping of their lives. There are still places in Saskatchewan where they could lead their lives with the relative freedom of great Cree hunters, but that will be their choice, not mine.

Professionally I still worry about the four seated ladies of Weyburn and plan to continue work on the geometry of institutional buildings. Prisons, for example, generally use geometric designs, with minute and increasingly electronic surveillance and control of the activities of inmates. In spite of apparent improvements over ancient practices, some prisoners and critics have grave reservations about the totalitarian nature of modern prisons and the effect of these institutions on inmates and staff. I am therefore cautious about the extent to which architects and other caretakers are authorized to impose order on the lives of building occupants. In a wide sense every building is, or ought to be, an asylum, a safe place, and I am now ready to admit that there can be a measure of goodness in any building designed by an architect of good intentions. I am not at all sure just how and when that goodness might prevail, particularly since architects usually leave their works promptly after turning the keys at opening ceremonies. If the architect is followed by occupants and caretakers who care less, then good intentions will fail.

When these thoughts become dark, and serenity vanishes for a while, the satisfaction that I normally find in the contemplation of architecture remains, but it is not the same as it was when I was young. At these moments I remember that on many occasions Stella and I were successful in finding tranquility in a high place. Saskatchewan does have one lump, a blemish, on its otherwise flat and perfect face. From a high point in the Cypress Hills, in the southwest corner of the province, the plains can be seen best at sunrise. The farmlands and the grid roads lie flat to the horizons, laid out like a vast mandala to walk upon. On the hills, in the fresh and peaceful morning, it no longer disturbs me to wonder if the sthapati were correct. I can even chuckle, thanking Kyoshi Izumi for introducing me to social science and Robert Sommer and for sharing with me his own unique view of this very round world.

The River of the Desert

Jose de Prada



1

Original Project Proposal

The River of the Desert is an extended spatial poem about life and death spreading between horizon and horizon. Structurally, the work is a 900′ transparent corridor set in a flat desert—a corridor that begins and ends in immensity—a transparent nothing caught between infinities. The structure is a visual parallel to a fifteenth-century poem by Gorge Manrique, "Coplas por la muerte de su padre," "Ode on the Death of His Father." This luminous tunnel is a reversal of time: the beginning of the poem is the end of the poem, and vice versa.

The project concerns the translation of language as words into language as action. The integration of thought and act in a daily ritual may serve as a model for restructuring new awarenesses of living. The area of El Moro is a hinge cultural area. Spanish, several Indian tribes, and the recently arrived Anglo-Saxons. For this reason, we think it is a symbolic place for a universal poem impossible to translate into words. The project may interest people in the communications arts, actio-poetry, and ones impressed by the beauty of nothingness and the universe.

1 Photograph by Christopher Mead.

2

Coplas por la muerte de su padre

Recuerde el alma dormida,
abive el seso y despierte,
contemplando
cómo se passa la vida,
cómo se viene la muerte
tan callando;
cuán presto se va el plazer,
cómo después de acordado,
da dolor,
cómo, a nuestro parescer,
cualquiera tiempo passado
fué mejor.

Ode on the Death of His Father

O, let the soul her slumbers break!
Let thought be quickened and awake,—
Awake to see
How soon this life is past and gone,
And death comes softly stealing on,—
How silently!

Swiftly our pleasures glide away:
Our hearts recall the distant day
With many sighs;
The moments that are speeding fast
We heed not; but the past—the past—
More highly prize.

Pues si vemos lo presente
cómo en un punto se es ido
y acabado,
si juzgamos sabiamente,
daremos lo no venido
por passado.
No se engañe nadie, no,
pensando que ha de durar
lo que espera
más que duró lo que vió,
pues que todo ha de passar
por tal manera.

Nuestras vidas son los ríos
que van a dar en la mar,
que es el morir:
allí van los señoríos
derechos a se acabar
y consumir;
allí los ríos caudales,
allí los otros medianos
y más chicos,
allegados son iguales,
los que biven por sus manos
y los ricos.

Dexo las invocaciones
de los famosos poetas
y oradores;
no curo de sus ficciones,
que traen yervas secretas
sus sabores.
Aquel solo me encomiendo,
aquel solo invoco yo
de verdad,
que en este mundo biviendo,
el mundo no conosció
su deidad.

Este mundo es el camino
para el otro, que es morada
sin pesar;
mas cumple tener buen tino
para andar esta jornada
sin errar.

Onward its course the present keeps,
Onward the constant current sweeps,
Till life is done;
And did we judge of time aright,
The past and future in their flight
Would be as one.

Let no one fondly dream again
That Hope and all her shadowy train
Will not decay;
Fleeting as were the dreams of old,
Remembered like a tale that's told,
They pass away.

Our lives are rivers gliding free
To that unfathomed, boundless sea,
The silent grave:
Thither all earthly pomp and boast
Roll to be swallowed up and lost
In one dark wave.

Thither the mighty torrents stray,
Thither the brook pursues its way,
And tinkling rill.
There all are equal. Side by side,
The poor man and the son of pride
Lie calm and still.

I will not here invoke the throng
Of orators and sons of song,
The deathless few;
Fiction entices and deceives,
And sprinkling o'er her fragrant leaves
Lies poisonous dew.

To One alone my thoughts arise,—
The Eternal Truth,—the Good and Wise:
To Him I cry,
Who shared on earth our common lot,
But the world comprehended not
His deity.

This world is but the rugged road
Which leads us to the bright abode
Of peace above;
So let us choose that narrow way
Which leads no traveller's foot astray
From realms of love.

2 Photograph by Jose de Prada.

3

Partimos cuando nascemos,
andamos mientra bivimos,
y llegamos
al tiempo que fenescemos;
assí que cuando morimos
descansamos.

Este mundo bueno fué
si bien usássemos dél
como devemos,
porque, según nuestra fe,
es para ganar aquel
que atendemos.

Our cradle is the starting-place;
In life we run the onward race,
And reach the goal;
When, in the mansions of the blest,
Death leaves to its eternal rest
The weary soul.

Did we but use it as we ought,
This world would school each wandering thought
To its high state.
Faith wings the soul beyond the sky,
Up to the better world on high
For which we wait.

Unos, por poco valer,
¡por cuán baxos y abatidos
que los tienen!
Y otros, por no tener,
con oficios no devidos
se mantienen.

Los estados y riqueza,
que no dexan a desora,
¿quién lo duda?
No les pidamos firmeza
pues que son de una señora
que se muda;
que bienes son de Fortuna
que rebuelve con su rueda
presurosa,
la cual no puede ser una
ni estar estable ni queda
en una cosa.

Pero digo que acompañen
y lleguen hasta la huessa
con su dueño:
por esso no nos engañen,
pues se va la vida apriessa
comosueño.
Y los deleites de acá
son, en que nos deleitamos,
temporales,
y los tormentos de allá,
que por ellos esperamos,
eternales.

Los plazeres y dulçores
desta vida trabajada
que tenemos,
¿qué son sino corredores,
y la muerte la celada
en que caemos?

Ten Centuries of Spanish Poetry
(Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1955), pp. 81–83.

Some, the degraded slaves of lust,
Prostrate and trampled in the dust,
Shall rise no more;
Others by guilt and crime maintain
The scutcheon that without a stain
Their fathers bore.

Wealth and the high estate of pride,
With what untimely speed they glide,
How soon depart!
Bid not the shadowy phantoms stay,—
The vassals of a mistress they,
Of fickle heart.

These gifts in Fortune's hands are found;
Her swift-revolving wheel turns round,
And they are gone!
No rest the inconstant goddess knows,
But changing, and without repose,
Still hurries on.

Even could the hand of avarice save
Its gilded baubles, till the grave
Reclaimed its prey,
Let none on such poor hopes rely;
Life, like an empty dream flits by,
And where are they?

Earthly desires and sensual lust
Are passions springing from the dust,—
They fade and die;
But, in the life beyond the tomb,
They seal the immortal spirit's doom
Eternally!

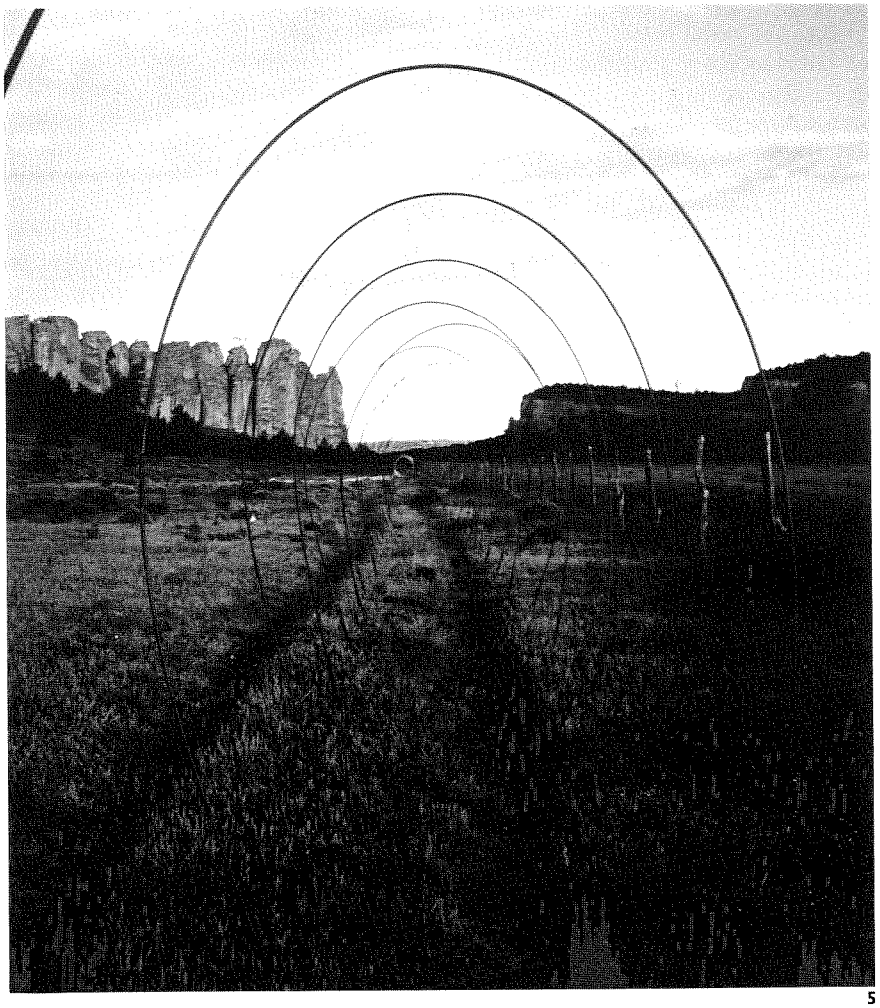
The pleasure and delights which mask
In treacherous smiles life's serious task,
What are they all,
But the fleet coursers of the chase,—
And death an ambush in the race,
Wherein we fall?

Gorge Manrique

3 Photograph by Jose de Prada.

Specific Material and Equipment for the Piece

200 rebar arches (Ø 9/16", length 21')
56,800.0 sq. ft. polyethylene film (1,000 g. width 21')
5,400 yds. nylon rope (Ø 3/16")
170,000.0 staples
8 industrial hand staplers
400 rebar sticks, one end pointed (Ø 1/2", length 24")
7,000.0 yds. wire (Ø 1/32")
2 metric tapes (150')
650' rope (Ø 1/16") for measurements
5 scissors
20 lbs. nails (Ø 1/4" × 6")
4 hammers
5 mazes
4 screw drivers
5 appliers
4 wrenches
2 shovels
3 ladders



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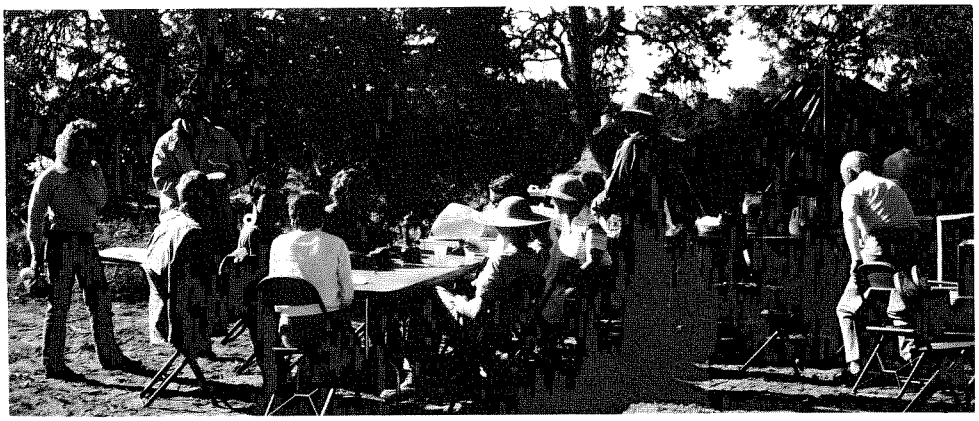


4

4 Photograph by Jose de Prada.

5 Photograph by Jose de Prada.

A Sense of Place

Christopher Mead

Sense of place and its correlate, regionalism, have preoccupied New Mexican architects since the turn of this century. Led by John Gaw Meem, local architects have formulated a stylistic idiom whose "flat topped rectangular masses devoid of ornament"[1] supposedly evoke the surrounding landscape by mimicking the adobe forms of traditional Pueblo and Spanish buildings. Last summer, this picturesque but limited interpretation of regional place was enlarged when Jose de Prada, a Spanish architect from Madrid, came to New Mexico to participate along with four other artists in a project called Siteworks Southwest. At a site near Inscription Rock in western New Mexico, each artist was to create a work that responded to the landscape and its southwestern context. Jose de Prada's piece, called *The River of the Desert*, captured the character of its site without resorting to the regionally orthodox, picturesque solution.

The River of the Desert is a 900-foot-long tunnel constructed out of curved rebar, polythelene sheeting, wire, and rope. Its title, and its meaning, was inspired by a fifteenth-century Spanish poem by Gorge Manrique that reads in part,

> Our lives are rivers gliding free
> To that unfathomed, boundless sea,
> The silent grave:
> Thither all earthly pomp and boast
> Roll to be swallowed up and lost
> In one dark wave.
> . . . .
> This world is but the rugged road
> Which leads us to the bright abode
> Of peace above;
> So let us chose that narrow way
> Which leads no traveller's foot astray
> From realms of love.[2]

Past and present thus merge through Jose de Prada's translation of this poem into his contemporary experience with building tensile, lightweight structures in Spain. Though he used a poem they might have known, he did not build his tunnel out of adobe like the sixteenth-century Spaniards who preceded him. At the same time, Jose de Prada carefully studied and interpreted his site. The tunnel, aligned with the prevailing wind, points down a valley toward a cleft between two cliffs. Arched over one rut of a cow path, it runs alongside a barbed wire fence. Its scale is equal to the landscape, and as it shimmers in the changing light, one comes indeed to look upon it as a river, but one through which man, not water, flows down its single-file path. Forced to walk alone, in a silence broken only by erratic gusts of wind, one discovers the temporal extension of a place: the landscape that shifts by outside the polyethelene-vaulted space takes on a luminous intensity as one paces the tunnel's sun-heated length.

The River of the Desert movingly defines Jose de Prada's sense of place because he interpreted the site according to his cultural heritage as a Spaniard and his training as an architect. He responded to the landscape, both natural and cultural, in which he built, but he did so by ignoring the restrictive criteria of New Mexican regionalism. How one responds should depend on the specific landscape one has chosen, because the landscape changes; it should depend upon one's cultural heritage, one's architectural training, and one's age, because those also change. Sense of place, like Jose de Prada's *River of the Desert*, is a dynamic quality that must transform itself repeatedly as individuals, cultures, and places themselves change.

NOTES

1 John Gaw Meem, "Old Forms for New Buildings," *American Architect* (November 1934), pp. 10–21.

2 Gorge Manrique, "Coplas por la Muerte de Su Padre," in Eleanor L. Turnbill, ed., *Ten Centuries of Spanish Poetry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1955), pp. 81–83.

The Egrets Are Back

Lisa Heschong

In California, we don't have much to remind us of time's long stretch. There are no ruins of an ancient civilization, no medieval town gates that we must build around. Buildings that are all of seventy or eighty years old are set off with floodlights and special status to mark their rarity. There isn't much constructed evidence that has the power to pull our minds back in time and help us sense the roots of this place.

Animals, though, do have that power. Driving into San Francisco along the bay, keep your eyes open for a bright white egret posing in the mudflats next to the freeway. Walk down to the waterfront to have a lunchtime conversation with a harbor seal playing among the piers. Go for a walk in the East Bay hills at dawn or sunset to greet the deer who casually stroll the streets looking for tender greens. In Marin County, beware of marauding wild boar.

The presence of these animals in the midst of a dense urban area is rather extraordinary. Most cities must be content with flocks of pigeons and bands of squirrels (or worse) to add a natural dimension to their resolutely built environments. Here, when the pelicans cruise by in their careful lines, when the whales breach as they migrate down the coast, they make a link with a history far grander than our few hundred years of effort. We see only the faintest remnant of the wildlife that was here two centuries ago. The well-traveled Spanish explorers found the Bay area to be the most wildly abundant place they had ever encountered. The great estuary served as a crossroad for both migratory birds traveling the length of the Pacific coast from tropical winters to arctic summers and migratory fish funneling in from the Pacific Ocean up to all the streams of the Sierra Nevada. These vast populations would blacken the skies and boil the waters, providing a bonanza for all the animals, and the Indians, that preyed on them. Now the grizzly bear and the antelope are gone, but the tracks of coyote and mountain lion are still occasionally spotted in the East Bay hills. How extraordinary it is that in 1985, amidst housing developments and office parks, a mountain lion can still travel and find its prey.

The San Francisco Bay area does have an unusual physical setting, where the waters of the bay and the ridges of hills have set limits for urban expansion and allowed wild lands and waters to interlock with cities and freeways. Geographic and historic conditions encouraged large tracts of land to be set aside for military installations, watersheds, salt ponds, and agriculture. These tracts remained undeveloped islands, preserving wildlife habitats within the urban expansion. Yet, although the Bay area may have been fortunate with its physical endowments, the continued presence of wildlife can be attributed to a long-standing public resolve to preserve, and more recently, to restore their habitats.

Twenty-five years ago things looked very grim for the survival of almost any kind of wildlife in the Bay area. The urban areas of California were growing at the fastest rate in the nation, and the pressure to develop new land was mounting. The San Francisco Bay was being filled in at an alarming rate. In 1960, only one-quarter of the original marshland remained. It was estimated that, at the then current filling rate of 3.6 square miles per year, the bay would be reduced to a river by the year 2020.[1] The city of Berkeley had made a grandiose master plan to fill 2,000 acres of its tidelands, essentially creating a second city for industrial expansion. There was the infamous Reber Plan, approved in concept by the voters of California, to dam the entire South Bay, solving problems of sewage disposal, flood control, smelly mudflats, etc., all through the creation of one vast, freshwater lake. The great estuary was well on its way to becoming a completely man-made environment of deepwater ports, flood control gates, industrial land reclamation, concrete bulwarks, and highway embankments. If the mudflats and marshlands were destroyed, it was estimated that 70 percent of the migratory shorebirds of the entire Pacific coast flyway would disappear also.[2]

Pollution was also becoming more noticeable and noxious. It was considered unsafe to swim in the bay. Sewage dumping was essentially unregulated. DDT was threatening the reproduction of most of the large birds. There appeared to be plenty of pelicans around, but someone finally noticed that there were no juveniles. In 1965, there were no nesting pairs of pelicans left in the state.

Since those dismal days in the early sixties, the trends have at least been stalled and in some cases even reversed. The filling of the bay was essentially halted with the creation of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, empowered to control all development within 100 feet of the hight tide shoreline. Some marshlands and other natural habitats have been restored by the newly created wildlife refuges. Perhaps most dramatic is the return of the egrets, pelicans, and other large birds affected by DDT. There are now over 75,000 nesting pairs of brown pelicans in the state. Although similar figures are not available for egrets, it is clear that they too are back in increasing numbers—a

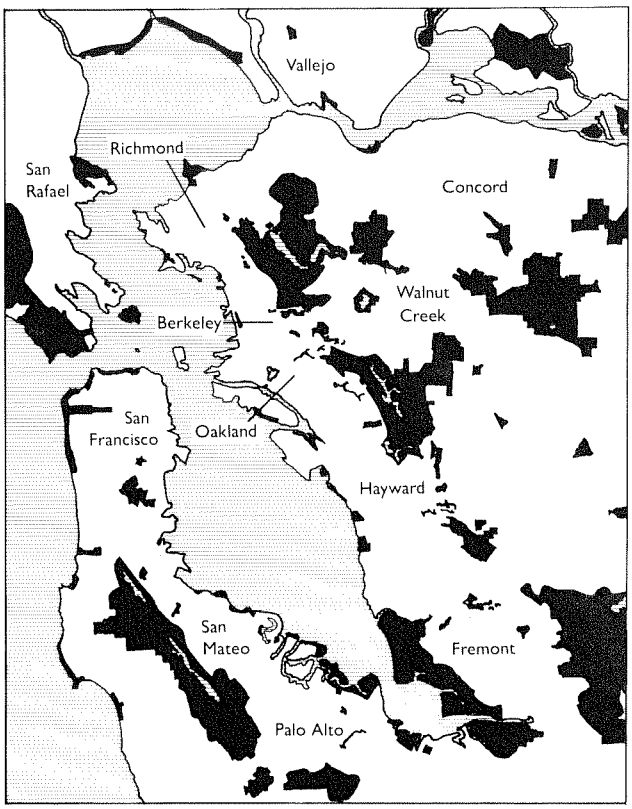
striking, yet poignant presence.[3]

Saving the bay, and saving wildlife habitats, has become institutionalized through the creation of new government agencies. The official statistics are dazzling, such as the great acquisition of parkland by regional, state, and federal governments during the 1970s. The East Bay Regional Parks more than doubled in size during the 1970s, from 22,000 acres in 1968 to 57,000 acres in 1984. Golden Gate National Recreation Area was authorized by Congress in 1972 to manage 73,000 acres in San Francisco and Marin counties. Also in 1972, Congress approved the acquisition of 23,000 acres of marsh and salt ponds from the Leslie Salt Company to create the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. But the initial turnaround, and the creation and direction of these institutions, was brought about by a simply monumental outpouring of citizen effort.

There is a long tradition of citizen action in the Bay area. The East Bay Regional Park system was first conceived by Robert Sibley in 1928, when he read that the local utility district planned to sell unneeded watershed lands in the hills behind Oakland and Berkeley. He formed a coalition of local groups that canvassed house to house and lobbied the state legislature to create the first regional park district in the country. The park system is now a key player in trying to preserve the natural corridors that allow wildlife to maintain a sufficient range.[4]

In 1961, the Save the San Francisco Bay Association was started by three women in a Berkeley Hills living room. Catherine Kerr, wife of the president of the University of California, had read an article about the filling of the bay in the Oakland *Tribune*. She shared her concern with Ester Gulick and Sylvia McLaughlin, also university wives. "We sent out about 700 letters, and got 600 replies." Within four years, the group that they had formed had successfully lobbied for the creation of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). Ester Gulick, now in her seventies and still an active leader of the 20,000-member organization, says "I think we succeed because we do our homework. I think I have read every Environmental Impact Report that was submitted to the BCDC, and, unless I was on vacation, attended every meeting of the Commission."[5]

By the middle of the 1970s, the pieces of the mosaic were beginning to make a coherent picture. Regional planning was having an impact, if only to motivate local groups to crystallize their own goals. Howard



Publicly Open Space in the San Francisco Bay Area as of 1984. (Includes city, county, state and federal parklands, wildlife preserves, and watersheds.) (map by author)

Cogswell, professor emeritus of ornithology at Hayward State University, says he helped form the citizens' group that proposed the Hayward Shoreline Plan only when he realized that Hayward was left as a blank hole in BCDC's 1969 master plan. He had first started counting egrets in the Leslie Salt ponds in 1949. After 35 years of effort to protect various rookeries and food supplies, he says with reserve, "At least we still have something left to fight for."[6]

The *Harbinger File* for 1985 is a guide to some 900 organizations in northern California that are concerned with the natural environment. It lists 99 such government agencies and 192 local citizen action groups. It lists 82 separate groups concerned specifically with bay habitats. There are still more groups than those listed.

One of the many not included in that list is the Urban Creeks Council. It is a small group with a narrow focus: the restoration of natural stream habitats. They estimate that 90 percent of the riparian habitat of the San Francisco Bay area is gone, and they are fighting for that last 10 percent.[7] They have organized weekend work parties to slog down the streams to clean out accumulated rubbish. They prepared a citizens' alternative to the flood control plan proposed by the Army Corps of Engineers for Wildcat Creek in Richmond, hoping to keep culverts away from one of the few remaining wild creeks, so that the endangered Salt Water Harvest Mouse might have a little more room and so might urban children growing up in Richmond. Their efforts bespeak the hundreds of thousands of other volunteer hours that have been invested in order to translate a perhaps romantic sense of a natural heritage into legal protection of this heron rookery of that seal pupping ground.

My young daughter and I often take walks in the nearby hills. Sometimes, we pretend that there are gnomes or fairies hiding in the tangled undergrowth, but we do not have to pretend about the animals. She is very good at spotting the deer who graze quietly and stare back at us. She takes them for granted, as an expected part of her urbanized world, without the slightest inkling of how many people have worked since her grandparents were children just so that she could.

NOTES

1 *The San Francisco Bay Plan* (San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, 1969).

2 Robert Odell, *The Saving of San Francisco Bay* (Washington, D.C.: Conservation Foundation, 1972).

3 Phone conversation with Roy Low, biologist, San Francisco National Wildlife Refuge.

4 Mimi Stein, *A Vision Achieved, Fifty Years of the East Bay Regional Park District* (East Bay Regional Parks, 1984).

5 Phone conversation with Ester Gulick, founder of Save the San Francisco Bay Association.

6 Phone conversation with Howard Cogswell, professor emeritus of ornithology, Hayward State University.

7 Written communication from A. L. Riley, member, Urban Creeks Council.

Konstantinplatz in Trier: Between Memory and Place

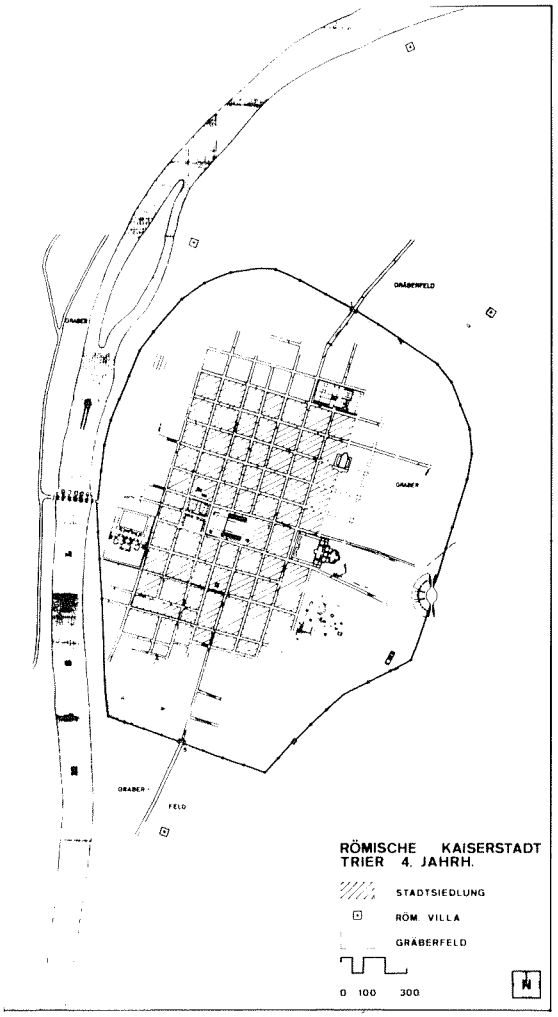
Gerardo Brown-Manrique

The city of Trier, West Germany, celebrated its second millennium during 1984. The celebrations were augmented by a number of restoration and new building efforts that have helped to clarify the city's historical evolution. One of these efforts was the re-development by O. Mathias Ungers of the site of Konstantinplatz (Constantine Square), adjacent to the so-called Basilica but properly named the *Aula Palatina*, or palace audience hall, one of the most important historical monuments in the city. The square serves as the connection between the historic center of the city and other historical sites to its southeast and thus holds a central place in the sequence of spaces that are part of the historic core of Trier. How this project evolved and how it fits into the structure and evolution of Trier, its sense of place, is best understood in terms of the historical development of the city itself.[1]

The Roman city of *Augusta Treverorum* was founded in 16 B.C. as an *oppidum*, or settlement, for the Gallic Treveri tribe that inhabited the Moselle River valley and rose to the rank of *colonia* in A.D. 50 during the rule of Claudius.[2] Its importance within the Roman Empire was twofold: Trier's agricultural and manufacturing richness supplied the Roman armies of the Rhine as well as the expeditionary armies that conquered England and it served as the *civitas* of the Treveri, the seat of the Procurator of Belgica and later of the two German provinces, and capital city of Gallia Belgica. The importance of Trier increased following the political reorganization of the empire by Diocletian in A.D. 286, when it became one of the four most important cities of the Roman Empire as an imperial residence and the seat of the Caesar of the western half of the empire. Thus, until the withdrawal of the Romans in A.D. 410 following the Frankish invasions, Trier maintained a place of prominence in the cultural, economic, and political development of Europe.

Though Trier's size changed dramatically during the Frankish, Merovingian, and succeeding rules—to approximately half the area it occupied at its height in the fourth century—it retained a position of influence in the development of medieval society and culture as the seat of one of the archbishops-electors of the Holy Roman Emperors and as the location of many and powerful monastic institutions. Nonetheless, it was the remaining Roman structures that continued to give form and image to Trier. Ravaged over time by the succeeding waves of invaders, the Roman monuments of Trier remained as testimonies to its past. In the nineteenth

1 ***Aula Palatina*, from the northwest, 1979.**



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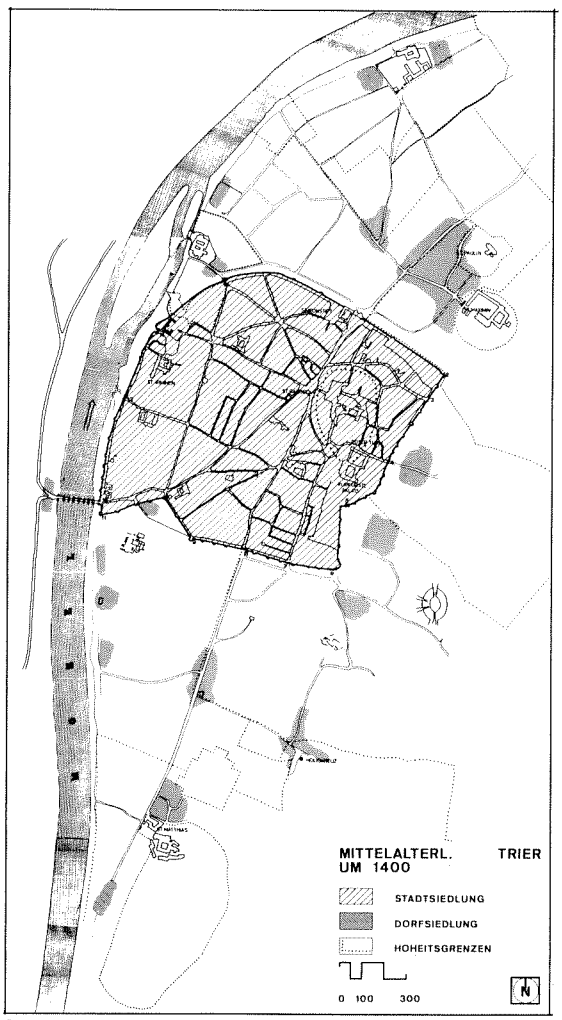

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century, some of Trier's architectural monuments were restored, first through Napoleon's initiative early in the century, then by the Prussian authorities when the Rhineland became a Prussian province. The *Porta Nigra*, following its earlier conversion into a church, was restored as a gate, and the *Aula Palatina*, from Constantine's time partially dismantled and incorporated into the rococo palace of the archbishops-electors, was reconstructed and consecrated in 1856 as the protestant Church of the Redeemer.

Mathias Ungers's project for Konstantinplatz resulted from an investigation of the architectural and historical development of the city and the specific site of the square, just west of the *Aula Palatina*. The only part of the imperial palace of Constantine to have survived since the fourth century, the *Aula* dominates the skyline of Trier. Its original site arrangement was determined through archaeological investigations, both during the last century and as part of the rebuilding following the Second World War. Originally built around 310 by Constantine I as the center of the palace precinct, its architectural form was much as it is today: an apsidal hall, without side aisles, measuring 27.5 by 67 meters in plan, solid masonry walls 2.7 meters thick and about 30 meters high, and two tiers of rounded windows. The *Aula*

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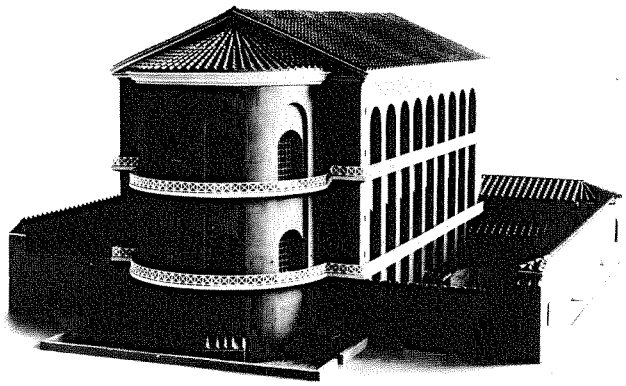

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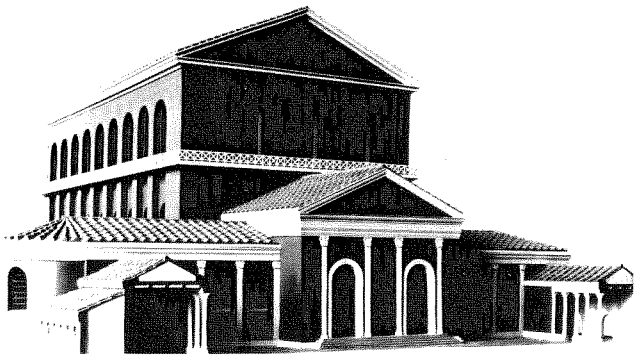

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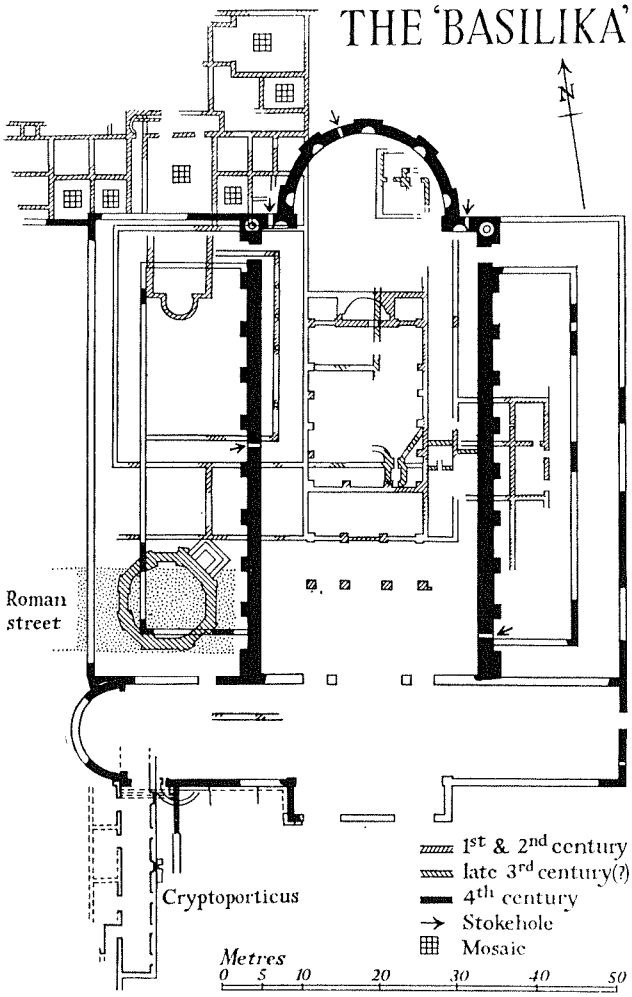

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2 ***Colonia Augusta Treverorum* in the fourth century.** The *Aula Palatina* is located in the upper right quadrant of the city.

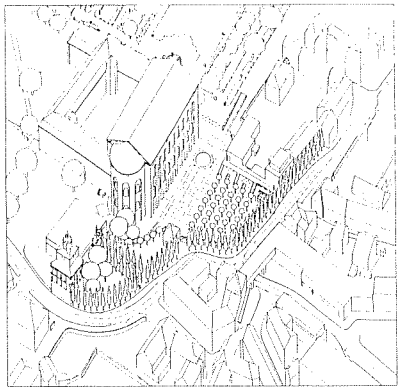
3 **Trier, ca. 1400.** The *Aula*, now part of the palace of the archbishops-electors, is located just inside the east wall that encircles the city and above the slight bend of this enclosure.

4 **Palace of the archbishops-electors, view in 1670 by Nikolaus Person.** Visible are the remaining portions of the *Aula*, sections A, B, and C, as well as the Renaissance gate and baroque tower to the left of the apse of the *Aula*.

5 ***Aula Palatina*, reconstruction model, 4th century, view from the north.** This conjectural reconstruction includes the galleries used by the praetorian guards—the location is clearly established by the holes for the support beams, which are visible below some of the windows—and the enclosure of the service atrium or courtyard, where the ovens that served the hypocaust were located.

6 ***Aula Palatina*, reconstruction model, view from the south.** This conjectural reconstruction indicates what the entry of the audience hall of Constantine might have looked like in the fourth century.

7 ***Aula Palatina*, archaeological plan** showing the various structures that preceded the construction of Constantine's Audience Hall. Edith Mary Wightman indicates that the octagonal structure to the west of the *Aula* might be from the late third century. The *Führer zu vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Denkmälen* states that it is of unknown origin and purpose (Band 32/I, p. 153). From Wightman, *Roman Trier and the Treveri* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), p. 106.



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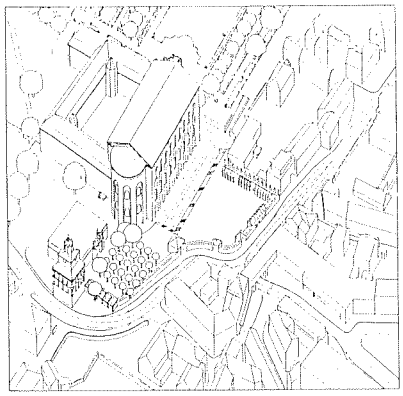

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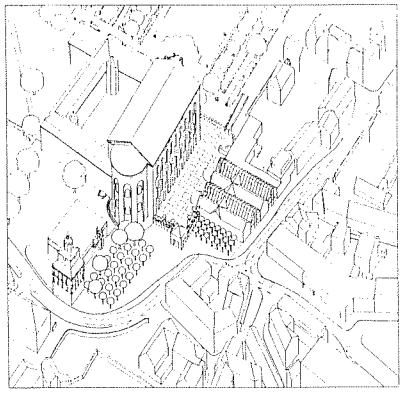

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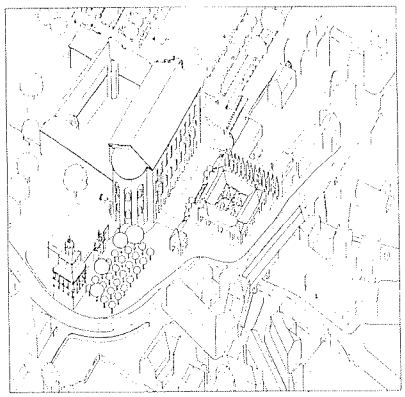

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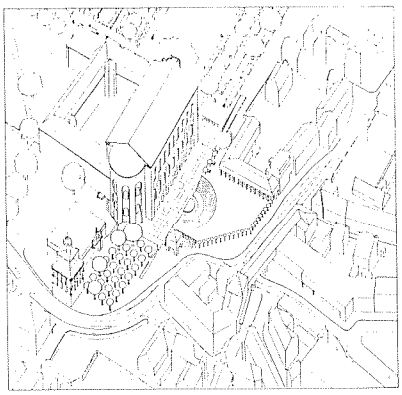

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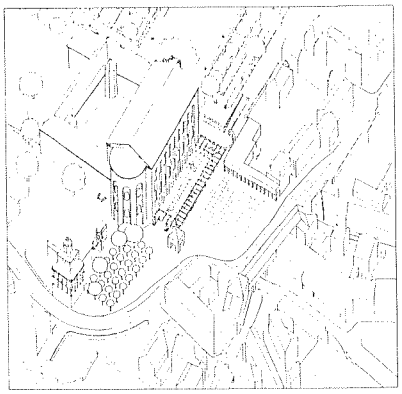

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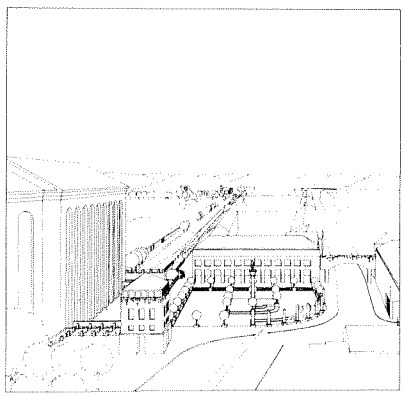

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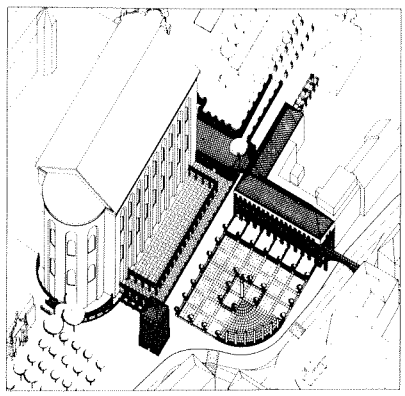

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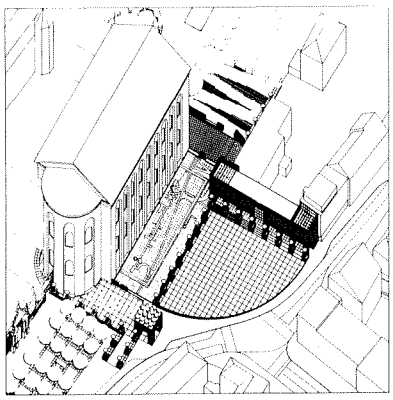

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8 Konstantinplatz, preliminary proposal 1.
9 Konstantinplatz, preliminary proposal 2.
10 Konstantinplatz, preliminary proposal 3.
11 Konstantinplatz, preliminary proposal 4.
12 Konstantinplatz, preliminary proposal 5.
13 Konstantinplatz, preliminary proposal 6.
14 Konstantinplatz, final proposal.
15 Konstantinplatz, final proposal, aerial perspective. The Kaiserthermen are visible at the end of the pedestrian path that leads south from the new plaza. In between are the formal gardens of the archbishops-electors palace.
16 Konstantinplatz, last revision.

Drawings by O. M. Ungers

however, was not free-standing but had a forehall and entrance vestibule to its south and a service courtyard to the west and east sides, where the ovens that heated the hypocaust floor and wall cavities were located and which was surrounded by a covered walk. In addition, galleries for the praetorian guards were attached to the structure at two levels. As one might expect in a city that has undergone change over time, the *Aula* was built above the ruins of a palace complex from the second and third centuries and was placed over the intersection of two existing streets within the palace compound of the imperial city. During the centuries following its original construction, parts of the *Aula* were demolished and new structures were added. Among these are the late Gothic Church of St. Laurentius, which was demolished by Napoleon in 1803, the extant Renaissance gate and baroque tower to the north of the hall, and the rococo palace of the archbishops-electors to which the *Aula* is attached.

The archaeological plan of the *Aula* shows the location of prior structures: the west courtyard, the forehall and vestibule—from which there is an entry into a *crypto-porticus* that dates prior to the construction of the *Aula*—foundations of other structures, including two small buildings—one octagonal in plan, the other apsidal—and a street. This plan served as the basis for the design by Mathias Ungers for Konstantinplatz, a design based on the ". . . reconstruction of an archaeological memory."[3] that is, where design decisions were based on the historical evolution of the site and the relationships that emerged between structures that date from the different time periods.

After initially conducting a series of abstract sketch explorations that addressed the issue of how the public space could be defined,[4] Ungers proceeded by making use of the archaeological evidence known prior to the beginning of the construction of the square. The proposal went through six preliminary explorations, each a specific trans-formation of the concrete reality of the site in juxtaposition to architectural interventions.[5] That is, these explorations, in general terms, addressed four issues that would reflect the evolution of the site from pre-Constantine times through the late Gothic period to its situation today: first how to bring to light the vestiges of those structures that preceded or surrounded the hall; second, how to return the site to the historical ground level of the *Aula* so that the floor of the square would match what was to the south of the entry level into the *Aula*; third, how to respond to the location of the demolished Laurentian church; and finally, how the block of existing postwar buildings immediately to the west should be terminated so as to front toward the new square. The six explorations used a range of archetypical elements to define the boundaries of the site and to provide enclosed space for specific functions. All six included a tower over the foundations of the Laurentian church and reconstructed the entry court to the *Aula* to the outline of its original forehall, with a ramp placed at the location of the *cryptoporticus* to connect this space to the palace gardens beyond:

1. The complete square is lowered to its Roman level and paved in a pattern that extends as a tartan grid the pilaster and bay articulation of the hall. A berm delineates the street and south edges, and trees planted within the fields of the tartan grid are used to define the area outside the original Roman complex.

2. Only the area that comprised the original Roman complex is lowered. The perimeter of the square is defined by a trans-formation of wall as a pergola, an arcade, an embankment, terraces, and greenhouses.

3. Again only the area of the original complex is lowered to the Roman level, with its border defined by a pergola and steps. The rest of the square is occupied by a galleria that forms an extension to the existing block and the connection between Weberbachstrasse to the west and the *Aula* to the east.

4. Following a similar approach to exploration 3, in this case there is a free-standing city loggia with a central, glass-covered atrium.

5. The area outside the original complex forms an amphitheater, with the *Aula* as its backdrop. Trees form the street edge, and a new colonnade completes the existing block.

6. The lower level adjacent to the *Aula* is defined by a pergola that is a transformation of the original condition in Roman times. The south edge is defined by a building that has a ground level colonnade.

These preliminary explorations for Konstantinplatz are reflected in the plan that was finally presented to the city: the site of the original complex adjacent to the *Aula* is lowered to its Roman level, with the former service courtyard recreated ". . . by means of negative forms," where ". . . (the) construction of an arcade structure or urban loggia . . ." completes the existing block, and a four-story tower building over the site of the Laurentian church, the ". . . spatial

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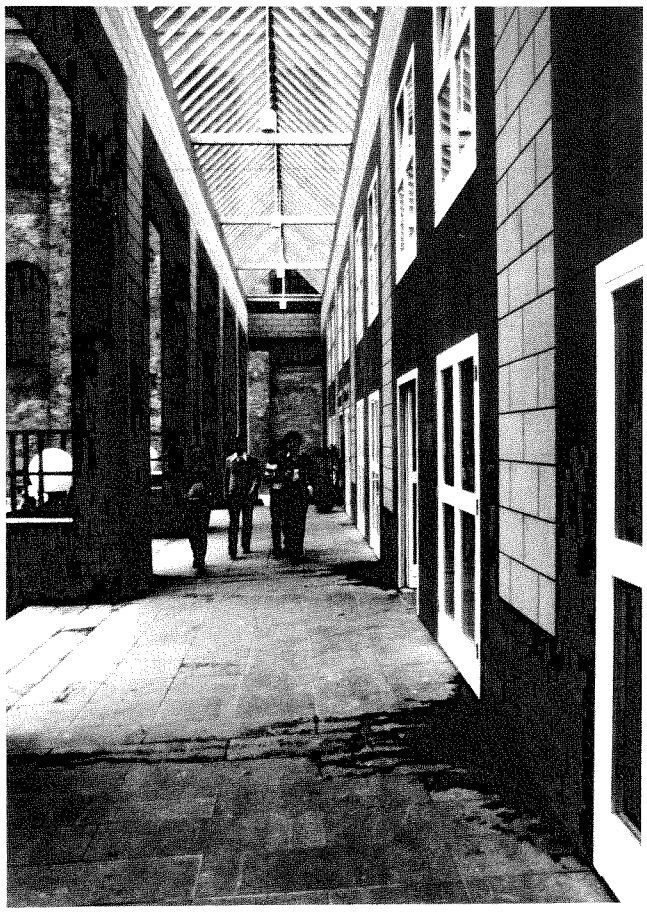

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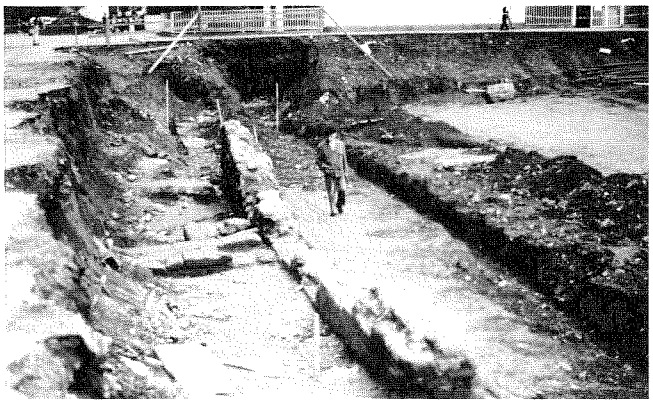
reconstruction of the entrance court" to the *Aula*, and other elements complete the design. The elements of the plaza are clearly delineated: the area adjacent to the *Aula* is at a lower level, while the area outside the original structure, with the new loggia building and the new square proper defined by a series of columns, steps, and planters, is at the level of the present city.[6] Prior to the execution of the plan, a square was added that replicates in its paving pattern the archaeological plan of the area around the *Aula*, with a large grid paving pattern over the remainder of the square. This revision separates, with a series of steps and planters, the area that represents the structures at the historic ground level from the rest of the square; maintains the urban loggia as a terminus for the existing block; and substitutes the ramp over the *cryptoporticus* with a combination ramp-stair that leads to the gardens beyond. The revised plan also reduces the construction over the site of the Laurentian church to a four-cornered platform planted with trees. The bay used in the structure is based on that of the *Aula*, as is the bay system of the urban loggia itself.

As built, the project incorporates most of these ideas yet responds to specific realities that presented themselves during execution, primarily budgetary constraints. The structure on the site of the Laurentian church was reduced to light fixtures in the form of a partitioned cube at each of its four corners, with a globe in each cube. The urban loggia that houses new facilities geared to the tourist trade was also reduced in size and is much more modest than what was originally planned to form the terminus of the existing block. From the north, this building is seen as an arcade with seven openings, the whole topped by a transparent archetypal roof. The openings are accentuated by the use of medium-gray stone that contrasts with the lighter tone of the masonry used for the rest of the structure. From Weberbachstrasse



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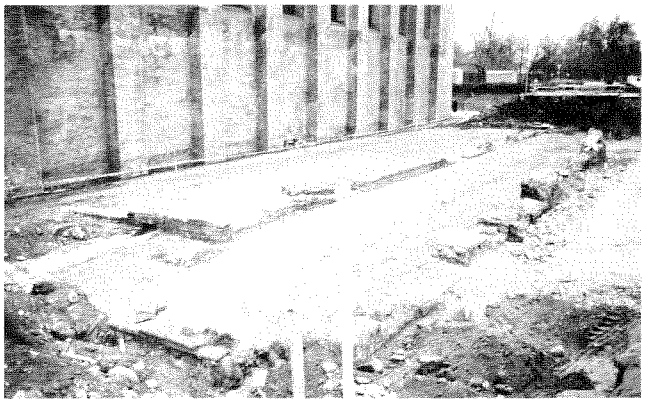

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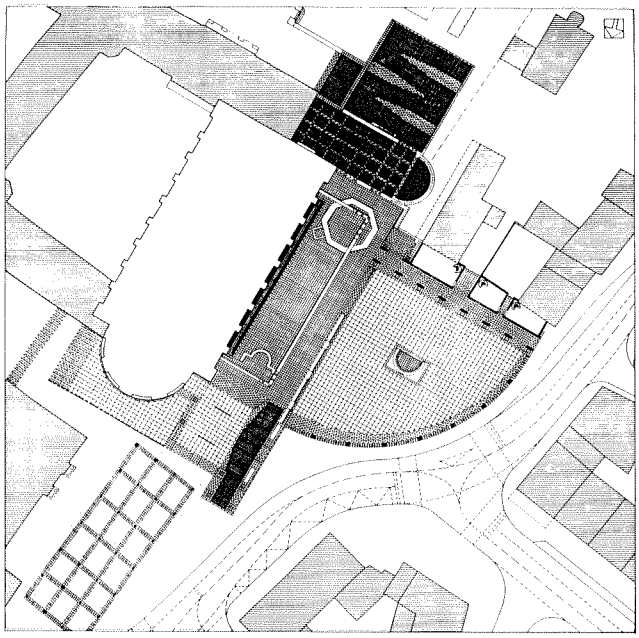

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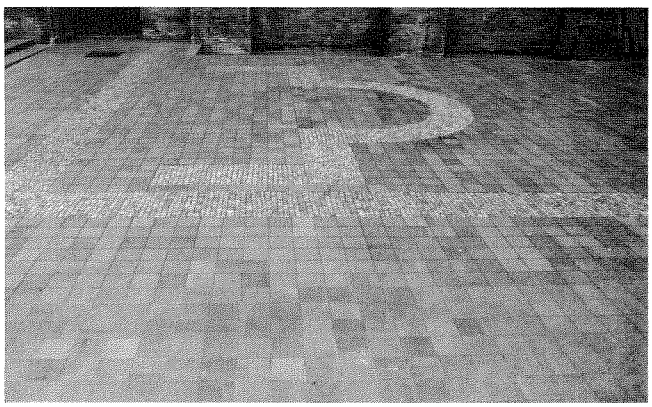

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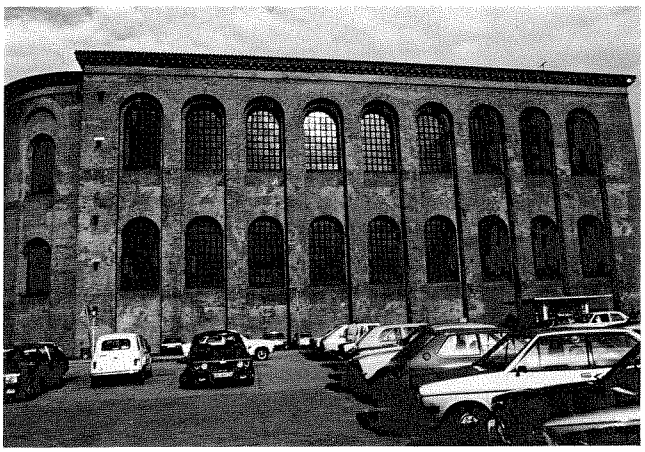
17 Konstantinplatz, view from the north.
18 Konstantinplatz, view north from the loggia.
19 Konstantinplatz, interior view of the loggia.
20 Konstantinplatz, view of the site under excavation.
21 Konstantinplatz, view of the site under excavation. The base of the enclosure around the atrium to the west of the *Aula* is fully visible in this view.
22 Konstantinplatz, final site plan. Drawing by O. M. Ungers, 1984.
23 Konstantinplatz, northeast end. This detail view of the paving shows the location of the former service courtyard and the octagonal building.



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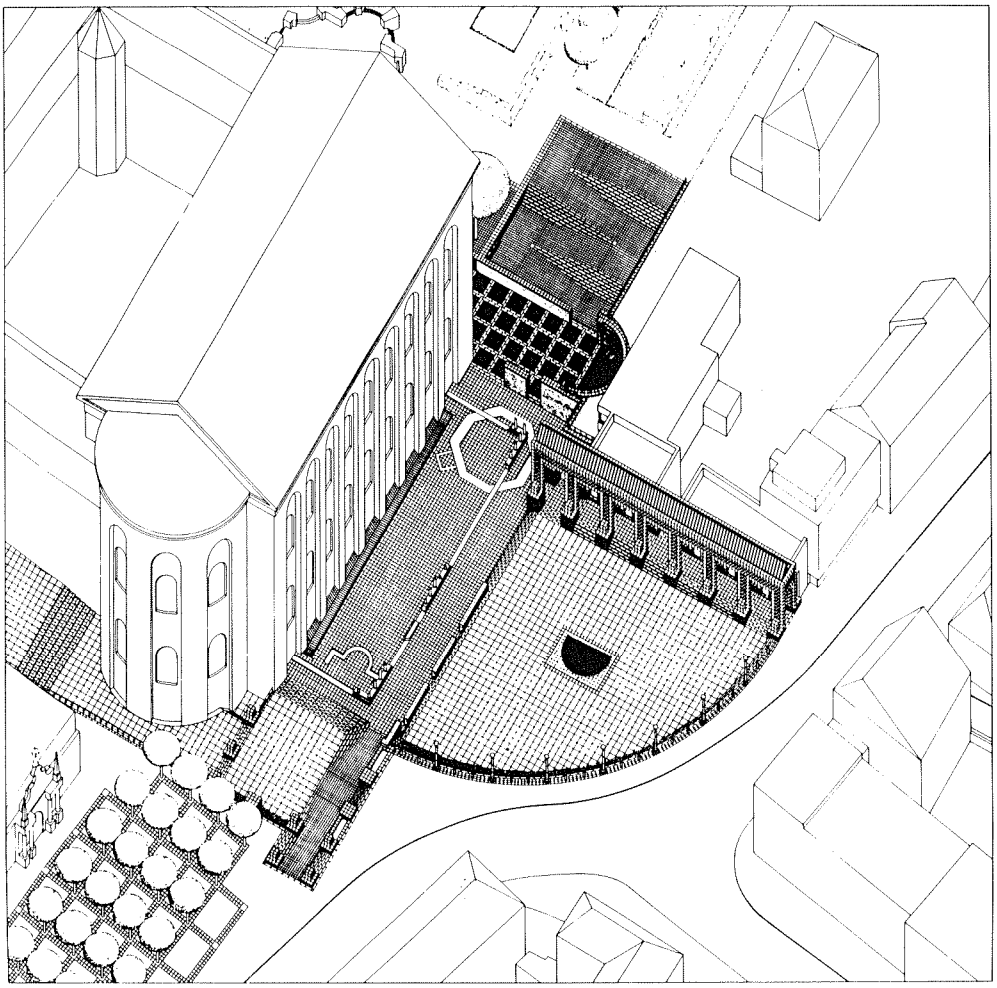
toward the *Aula*, the building is simply a tall galleria—a roofed walk that reverses the pre-Constantine condition of an open street with covered walks to either side. The stepped walk leads from the street to the lower level of the *Aula* entry itself. The main part of the square is separated from the sidewalk by wide, curving steps and a row of free-standing columns that support globe lights. The floor of the square slopes down from this level until it matches the top of the excavated foundations of the enclosure to the service courtyard and then drops to the original Roman ground.

During the actual excavations in preparation for the construction of the square, a significant, semicircular, early Christian mosaic was uncovered. Although it would have reflected the archaeological memory of the site, there was much debate about whether to include it in the design of the square. Ungers proposed that its location on the site be indicated by contrasting paving stones, as was done to indicate the location of the octagonal and apsidal buildings and the outline of the former service courtyard. In the end, the mosaic was not reflected in the executed project.[7]

In the other instances, through the subtle manipulation of materials, Ungers addressed the issue of how to reflect the vestiges of the past of this important place by relying on "memory"—in general, an awareness of the history of the place and its culture, and in particular, the history of the immediate site that results from a very methodical and methodological analysis—to "reconstruct" what was known because of the various historical clues found within the site. This reliance is a primary characteristic in Ungers's design process, as one can see in previous projects[8] where he investigated the evolution of a particular situation, identified the existing antecedents, and then transformed these in arriving at a solution. At Konstantinplatz, Ungers began with the archaeological plan of the site, with the elements that constitute the project themselves being the result of a clear understanding of form, space, and construction.[9] The geometry of the new construction at Konstantinplatz is not dissimilar to the rigid purity of the *Aula*, in which the circle and the square are the basic forms and where the architectural expression results from the construction material itself.[10] All forms and patterns in the new project are generated from a square module and the two-square rectangular masonry unit. In designing this new space for Trier, Mathias Ungers made use of archetypal forms in a very deliberate manner. For example, one finds two interpretations of the same vertical element: free-standing columns establish the boundary of the plaza without implying directionality of entry into the space; and square pillars of the new building can be seen as an eroded wall, which establishes an edge congruous to the wall of the *Aula* itself. There is additional ambiguity in how the new

24 *Aula Palatina*, view from the west.

25 *Aula Palatina*, view from the west. Photograph © Josef Tietzen. Reproduced with permission.



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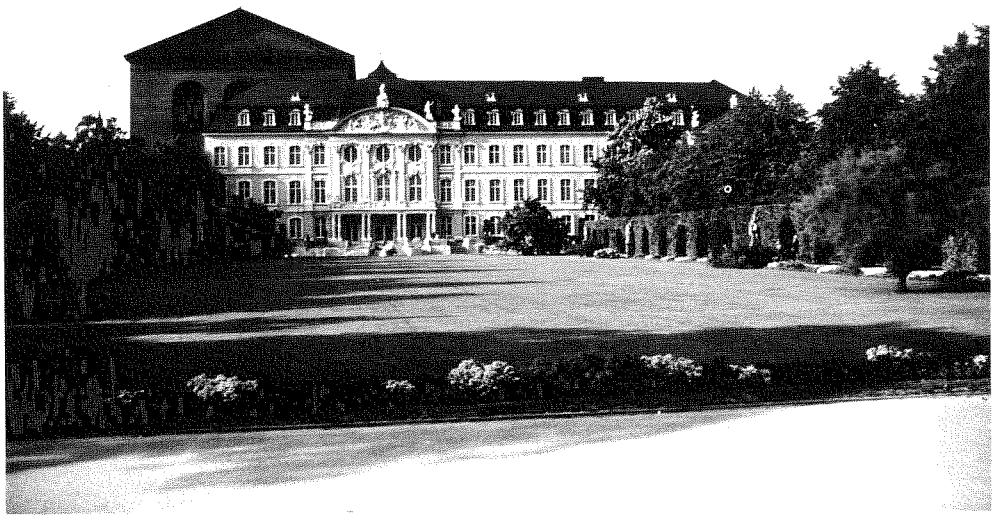

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26 Konstantinplatz, final axonometric view.

27 Trier, view north from the palace gardens. The gabled front of the *Aula Palatina* is visible to the left. The palace of the archbishops-electors can be seen immediately in front and to the right of the *Aula*.

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28 Konstantinplatz, view north from the entry area to the *Aula Palatina.*

29 Konstantinplatz, view of the urban loggia from the *Aula*. The plaque that illustrates the evolution of the space can be seen to the left of the loggia.

structure is perceived, for it is a loggia facing the plaza, a galleria connecting the street to the entry of the audience hall, and two parallel walls that are transformations of the same perforated plane. Because their beginning point relied on the historical reality of the site, the forms that create the new Konstantinplatz are complementary to the historic elements around the square.

As indicated earlier, Konstantinplatz serves as the connection between the historic center of the city, an area that is primarily for pedestrians, and the areas to its southeast. The pedestrian area in the heart of Trier has been extended to just opposite the new urban space, which allows for an unencumbered, leisurely movement from the *Porta Nigra* and the adjacent Simeonstift (the former Cloister of St. Simeon, where the city tourist office is now located) at the north end of the historic center, past some of the most important monuments in the city: the cathedral, begun by Constantine's mother, Helena, on the site of her demolished palace,[11] and the adjacent Church of Our Lady (Liebfrauenkirche);[12] across Breitenstein and Weberbachstrasse, through Konstantinplatz to the entry to the Church of the Redeemer (the former *Aula*); and beyond to the palace of the archbishops-electors and its gardens, the Rheinisches Landesmuseum, and the ruins of the royal baths, or the Kaiserthermen. Konstantinplatz also provides a forum where both formal and informal outdoor activities can take place, whether they be scheduled performances, casual strolling, or sitting in the outdoor area of the cafe that is housed in the loggia. Prior to this intervention, Konstantinplatz was a nondescript space, a parking lot for cars and tourist buses, which provided the visitor and resident alike with a truncated view of the *Aula Palatina*. Today, not only can the audience hall of Constantine be viewed without these distractions, but more important, the project by Mathias Ungers creates a space that responds

to the sense of place of Trier.

Sense of place is dependent on various conditions. At Konstantinplatz it results from a complete understanding of the history of the structures that form part of the "archaeological memory" of Trier: the cathedral, the Kaiserthermen, the palace of the archbishops-electors with its baroque gardens, and the many other monuments from Roman antiquity to the nineteenth century. In this project, the new intervention uses basic architectonic forms as the backdrop for the historic monuments; the monuments, not the new urban loggia and square, hold a central place in the history and sense of place of Trier. The new structure, however, is now part of the evolution of the specific site. The overall project results from an understanding of this evolution, and so it reflects the actual transformation of the area without replicating the elements that once existed there; the archetypal forms of the new loggia become part of the architectural evolution of the site and of the city.

The Konstantinplatz project has not been without critics who question its architectural expression.[13] Criticism has primarily centered on the nonhistorical form and color of the urban loggia itself rather than the new square. One could say with justification that the immediate questions about the design will not persist, and the new intervention will gain acceptance just as the pink and gilt rococo palace and its elaborate baroque gardens do not create great controversy as seen from the ruins of the magnificent Kaiserthermen, or even because of the precarious interlocked condition of the rococo palace and the *Aula Palatina*.

Adjacent to the plaque commemorating the dedication of the square on June 1, 1984, the loggia includes another plaque, which illustrates the architectural changes that the site has undergone and should help those unfamiliar with the history of the city understand the form of Konstantinplatz. What Mathias Ungers has achieved in this project is a design that defines the open space and allows for the audience hall of Constantine's palace to be experienced in relation to its original ground level. The *Aula* can now be viewed in a "Roman" setting as part of a series of architectural events that form the historical core of the city. And because of the way in which the design contributes to the experience of movement between the historic monuments and spaces of the city, the new Konstantinplatz is a project that responds and contributes to the sense of place in *Augusta Treverorum*.

NOTES

1 The historical information on Trier comes from a number of sources. To facilitate the reading, each has not been individually identified, particularly since the sources were often used only to substantiate or verify general knowledge of the history of the city. I gathered the material for this essay during the academic years 1982–1983 and 1983–1984, during which time I was on temporary reassignment to the Miami University European Center in Luxembourg. Aside from the specific technical sources identified below, the primary sources of information used for the architectural history of Trier are Edith Mary Wightman, *Roman Trier and the Treveri* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971); D. Ahrens et al., *Führer zu vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Denkmälen*, Band 32: Trier (Mainz-am-Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1977); and Joachim von Elbe, *Roman Germany—A Guide to Sites and Museums* (Mainz-am-Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1977), pp. 388–438. Information relative to the design of the Konstantinplatz was obtained directly form O. M. Ungers or from his associate, architect K. L. Dietzsch, during numerous telephone and personal conversations over the length of the construction of the project.

2 Wightman states that *Augusta Treverorum* was thus named in honor of Augustus, since the city was ". . . founded according to [his] policies," and to reflect the fact that the city's native population was the Treveri, though Augusta Treverorum had no established native name (op. cit., p. 37). Its native population enjoyed the status of *civitas libera*, and Trier itself was raised to the rank of *colonia* under the rule of Claudius, though there is no recognition in its name of the emperor under whom it gained this rank (ibid., pp. 40–41), as is the case with Köln, or Cologne (*Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium*, the *colonia* raised to this rank by Claudius, city with an ara, or altar, and honoring its native daughter and mother-in-law of Claudius, Agrippina the Elder; Gerta Wolff, *Das Römisch-Germanische Köln* [Köln: Verlag J. P. Bachem, 1981], p. 25).

3 Gerardo Brown-Manrique, ("Introduction." *O. M. Ungers—Works in Progress 1976–1980*, IAUS 6 (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1981), pp. 94–103.

4 O. M. Ungers, "Planungsvorschlag für die neugestaltung des Konstantinplatzes in Trier." Unpublished report (June 1981), pp. 28–29.

5 Ibid., pp. 32–55.

6 Ibid., p. 94.

7 The early Christian mosaic was uncovered in December 1982. Though the location of a number of structures, medieval streets, and so forth were known from prior investigations, the quality and completeness of the mosaic was a new discovery. It was removed from the site and will be reassembled in the *Landesmuseum Trier*, the state museum. The initial debate was whether to create a facsimile of the original, to replace the original on the site, or whether to simply

indicate in some manner its location.

8 See, for instance, the general discussion of Ungers's work, entitled "Morphologies, Transformations and Other Stories: Recent Work by O. M. Ungers," in *O. M. Ungers—Works in Progress*, IAUS 6 (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1981), pp. 6–19; and the proposal for the museum at Schloss Morsbroich in Leverkusen (Gerardo Brown-Manrique, "Schloss Morsbroich—Ungers' Museum Project in Leverkusen," *Architectural Design*, 50:1/2 [January/February 1980], pp. 8–15).

9 Ungers discusses this in his essay "Architecture's Right to an Autonomous Language," in Venice Biennale, ed., *Architecture 1980: The Present of the Past* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1980), pp. 319–324.

10 Though the *Aula* now is seen as an exposed brick structure, there are traces on the outside wall that indicate that the surface was covered with two layers of plaster, with the outermost layer being finished with crushed tile (Wightman, op. cit., p. 104).

11 This has been confirmed by excavations during the reconstruction following the Second World War, when a significant number of wall and ceiling frescoes were recovered; they are now on display in the Episcopal Museum in Trier.

12 This church is one of the first two structures in Germany built purely in the Gothic style. It has a central plan, with the four piers at its crossing resting on the bases of columns from the early Christian basilican church that formed part of the double-church complex with the cathedral.

13 In the process of collecting information on Trier and Konstantinplatz, I obtained comments on the architecture of the new square and urban loggia from both casual visitors and residents of the city. Most with negative comments felt that the new project "didn't fit"—that it wasn't historicist in its architecture—or that its color (sand and dark gray) clashed with the deep red clay of the *Aula*.

Figures 1, 17–21, 23 and 24, and 27–29 were photographed by Gerardo Brown-Manrique. Figures 2–5 and 6 are from D. Ahrens et al., *Führer zu vor- und frügeschichtlichen Denkmälen* (Mainz-am-Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1977), supplement 2 (figs. 2, 3); Band 32/I, p. 159 (fig. 4); Band 32/I, p. 142, Abb. 1 (fig. 5); and Band 32/I, p. 142, Abb. 2 (fig. 6). Axonometric drawings in figures 8–16 and 26 are by O. M. Ungers.

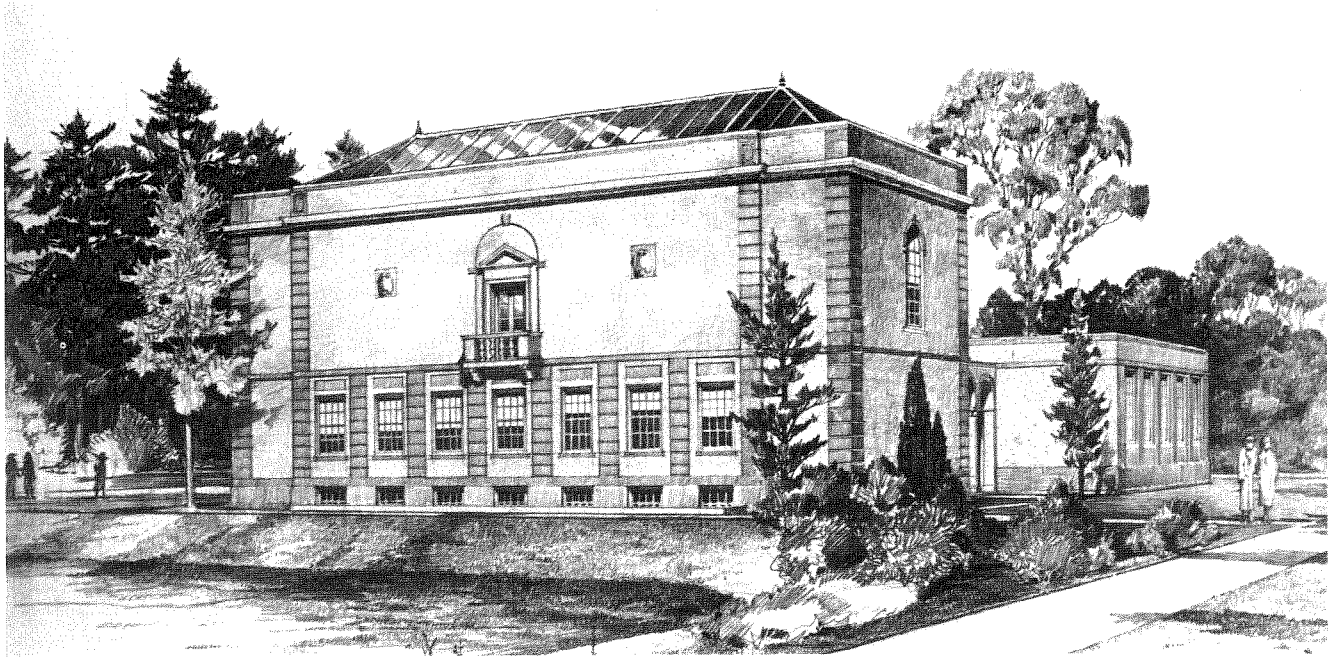
The Re-examination of Modern Architecture: A Review of Modernism in America: 1937–1943

Paul Bentel

An unfortunate consequence of the intellectual dominance of the Modern movement since the Second World War has been the emergence of two broadly manifested perceptions of Modern architecture. One is quite familiar: the so-called post-Modern view perceives Modern architecture as the result of a monolithic and narrowly conceived theoretical position in whose rejection of historical precedent and representational devices the crisis of contemporary building supposedly resides. A second, less frequently identified view has evolved that is outwardly supportive of Modern architecture but limits our capacity for a balanced criticism of the architecture of the recent past with greater rigidity than post-Modernism. This is a perception of Modern architecture that embraces the tenets of the Modern movement and sees its development as progressive, constant, and unerring. It is a view that results from an ignorance of the initial debates of which the Modern movement was an outcome and is licensed by the surprising lack of historical information pertaining to the years during which the movement was formed before World War II. Whereas the first view is part of a negative and destructive reaction against the hegemony of the Modern movement, the second is a result of that hegemony: Years of acceptance of Modernist canons have permitted a myth of origins to be perpetuated that has disallowed critical engagement with the original assertions of the Modern movement. Thus, the Modern movement is not properly understood, and those of its premises and achievements that remain valid cannot be introduced into the contemporary architectural discourse.

A recent work, *Modernism in America, 1937–1943* (edited by James D. Kornwolf and published by the Muscarelle Museum of Art, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1985), a book-length catalog for an exhibition at the Muscarelle Museum in Williamsburg, Virginia, and at Goucher College, Towson, Maryland, is a benchmark toward resolving this dilemma. Its authors present both a substantial body of work and correctly acknowledge the responsibility of the community of architectural historians to depict both the ideological structure of the Modern movement and its intellectual context. Having accepted these responsibilities, it is commendable that the authors have recalled truly extraordinary material long since eclipsed by subsequent canonical works of Modern architecture. It is unfortunate that while they have come close, they have not, in fact, managed to enter into the next difficult stage of criticism of Modern architecture, which permits this work to be seen afresh without the baggage of either its sympathetic or antagonistic propagandists.

As with many similar movements, the Modern movement was initiated incrementally and advanced slowly by the force of its ideological program as well as by the success of its proponents to express themselves publicly, attract patrons and, finally, to garner commissions. *Modernism in America* focuses on work generated through four major architectural competitions held in the late thirties and early forties. Although the projects demonstrate a wide range of aesthetic tastes, it is the Modern movement—and specifically the International Style—that is premiered. All four competitions—for an art center for the College of William and Mary, 1938; an art center for Wheaton College, 1938; a campus plan for Goucher College, 1938; and the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C., 1939—were followed closely by a professional body just emerging (along with its clientele) from the worst years of the depression and entering into a period of political, economic, and, consequently, cultural transition. Together, these competitions were among the first since the famous Chicago *Tribune* competition of 1922 and therefore were regarded as significant indications of an evolving architectural aesthetic. This notion was strongly reinforced by the fact that the majority of schemes were the products of young designers who were, unlike the preceding generation of architects, trained at schools in the United States rather than in Europe at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. Published widely, the Modernist schemes were integrated into the Modernist discourse and thus were posed as alternatives to the dominant bias for a traditional Electicism.



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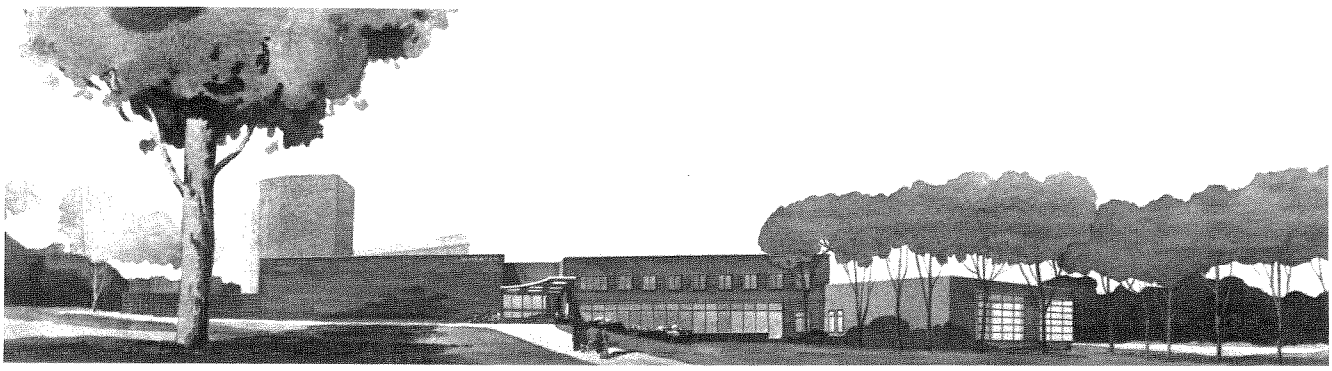
The authors of *Modernism in America*, James Kornwolf, Travis McDonald, and Thomas McCormick, have designed a method of presentation for their work suited specifically to these early American examples of designs produced by architects consciously working within the Modern movement. The reviews of the competitions, authored separately and structured as independent research topics, share a similar format, which emphasizes, on the one hand, the events surrounding the competitions and, on the other hand, the schemes presented by the competitors. Thus, the authors tempt us to consider two primary foci for this and subsequent research pertaining to Modern architecture, one to be uncovered in the theoretical and political debates of early Modernism and the other the work itself, taken apart from these debates and considered on the basis of its own formal and aesthetic merits.

An important but subtle distinction presents itself as a condition of this historical method. The authors of *Modernism in America* recognize that, as an historical phenomenon, the Modernist program proceeded along two related but not necessarily parallel lines. Throughout the two decades prior to World War II, a discourse existed between the principal protagonists of the Modern movement in the United States through which the central arguments for Modern architecture evolved, such as "Functionalism," the imperative to avoid ornament, and the liberation from the constraints of Formalism through the license of asymmetrical massing. These arguments, made increasingly vague and intangible through jingoistic overuse, derived from the fundamental convictions of practitioners as well as from the immediate and volatile confrontation between the new approaches of the Modern movement and established design practices. Moreover, the politicization of the Modernist discourse was severely at odds with the intellectual achievements of the Modern movement and constrained the theoretical underpinnings of Modernism. Given the Modernist agenda to achieve authority for the movement, a profitable affiliation or self-serving position may have had greater weight than compelling intellectual criticism. Simul-

1 Proposed art building, Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts, 1932, Cram and Ferguson. Photograph courtesy of Wheaton College, Norton Massachusetts, Marion B. Gebbie Archives and Special Collections.

2 Design for an art center, Wheaton College, 1938, Richard M. Bennett and Caleb Hornbostel. Watercolor perspective. Photograph courtesy of Muscarelle Museum of Art.

The comparison of these two schemes for the same project, separated by only six years, makes the suddenness and novelty of the aesthetic program of the Modern movement more tangible.



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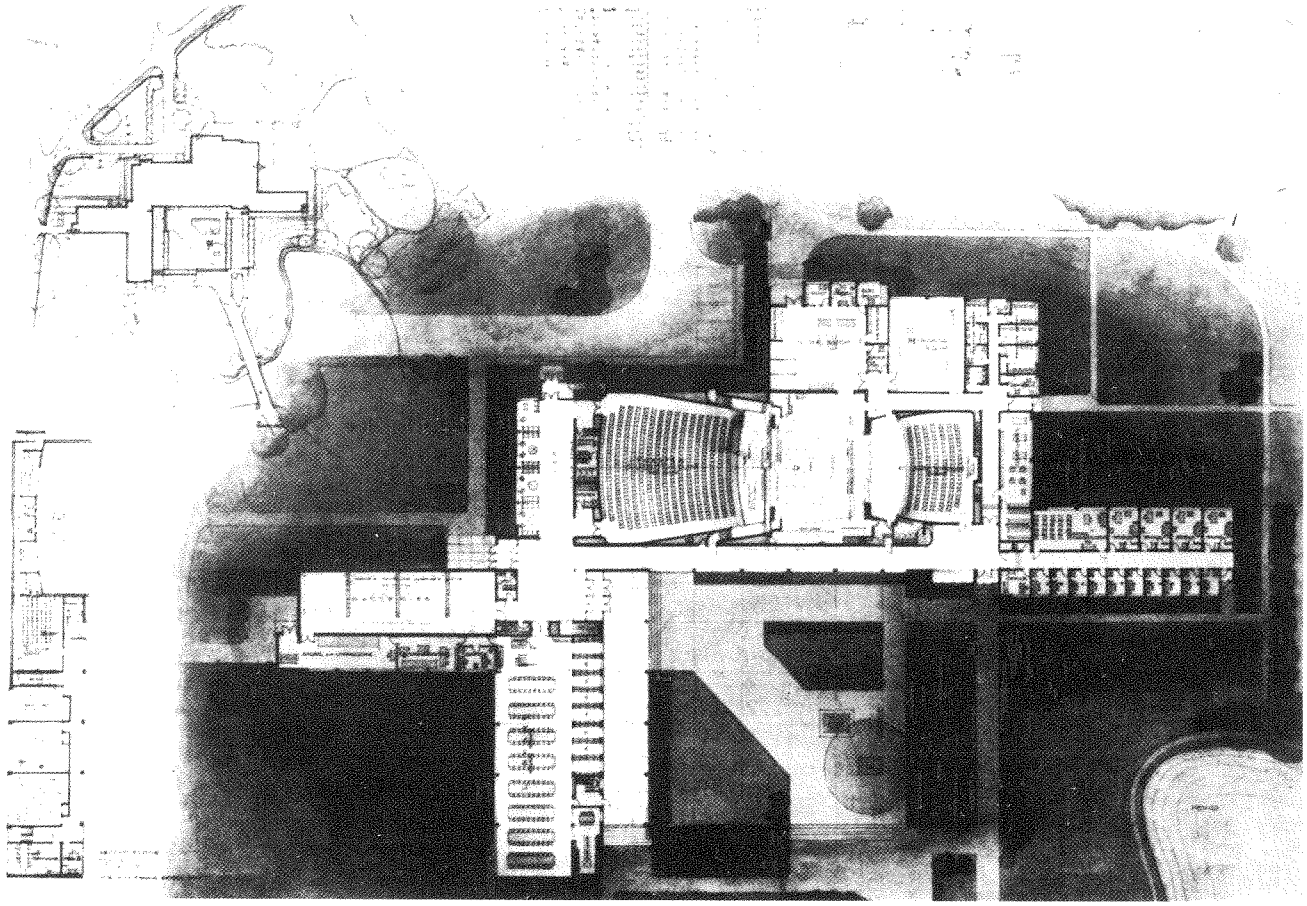
taneously, a substantial body of work was assembled, artifacts that one can now examine independently from the discourse and criticism of the Modern movement. A test of the success of *Modernism in America*—a test that is consistent with the stated goals of the authors—is the extent to which it allows us to isolate ourselves from those aspects of the Modernist debate that were merely the temporal and limited responses to the immediate dilemmas confronting the aspiring Modernist in 1938 while at the same time it facilitates a critical position that identifies those aspects of Modern architecture that continue to be relevant to contemporary architectural production.

Traditionalist vs. Progressive: The Modernist Debate

Until recently, the dominant interpretation of the intellectual development of the Modern movement was that of historians and critics partisan to Modern architecture itself. The popular but unfortunately polemical work of Siegfried Giedion or Nikolaus Pevsner invited oversimplification. Their work was used to support the view that an unconscious honesty to program, structure, and materials evidenced in large-scale American engineering projects formed the basis of the Modern movement, a movement that sponsored a sudden revolutionary breach with older patterns of architectural practice no longer capable of satisfying the problems of contemporary building.[1] In the face of declining partisanship to the intellectual tenets of the Modern movement, this view has appeared increasingly inaccurate. The charges by Modernists that the Traditionalist architectural program of the thirties, which emphasized historical and stylistic continuity, were indulgent and inadequate were—apart from the question of their validity—intentionally divisive in the sphere of professional practice. The problems of the Modernist historical perspective, which invented a determinism validating the Modern movement (variously called the "will of the Epoch," "Zeitgeist," or "spirit of the times"), is widely appreciated today.

Giedion's and Pevsner's most influential books, *Space, Time and Architecture* and *The Pioneers of Modern Design*, appeared in 1941 and 1936, respectively. The subsequent influence of these works and others similarly supportive of the Modern movement obscured the arguments of other, earlier works that had attempted to deal with the phenomenon of Modern culture and a related mode of architectural production in a less proscriptive manner. A more balanced historical view—and one to which the authors of *Modernism in America* return—dominated in the 1920s and early 1930s. Many architectural historians, critics, and theorists of the time held that the phenomena constituting Modern culture—industrial economy, international politics, the growth of bureaucracy—were unprecedented. Furthermore, both the so-called Traditionalists and Progressives held that cultural activities such as architecture must reflect these new conditions.[2]

A remarkable historical work of the first decades of the twentieth century in which this view is clearly expressed is that of Fiske Kimball and George Edgell, *A History of Architecture* (New York, 1918).



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They described the conditions of the modern era.

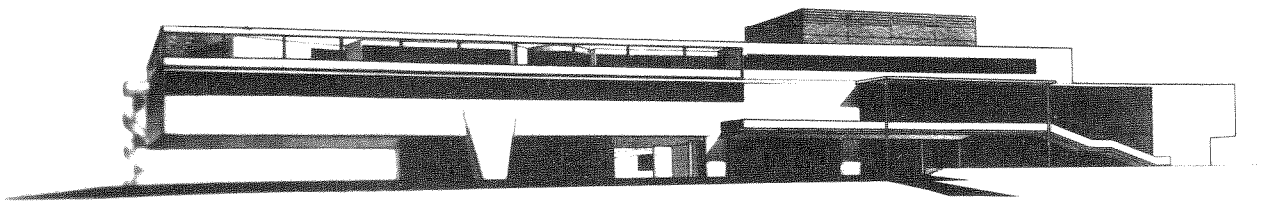
> . . . A multitude of individual tendencies combined to initiate the age of archeological discovery and historical research, of revolution and democracy, of natural science and invention, of capitalism and colonial empire. These were destined to affect not only the stylistic aspect of architecture, but equally the nature of the prevailing types of buildings and methods of construction, as well as the extent to which these were diffused over the world.[3]

These conditions, Edgell and Kimball inform us, reinforce ". . . the idea that they constitute the beginning of a new era, specifically modern." Edgell and Kimball define "Modern Architecture," that is, architecture in the "modern era," as being composed of two types of architectural production:

> Although the kaleidoscopic interplay of forces makes it difficult to generalize regarding the architectural characteristics of the period, they may be conceived broadly as the result of a synthesis of retrospective and progressive tendencies. . . .[4]

Kimball and Edgell describe these tendencies at greater length:

> After as before the cessation of architectural activity in Europe due to the great war, two contrary tendencies are struggling for mastery in matters of style. One emphasizes the elements of novelty in modern civilization. In the Germanic countries it is the radical emphasis on novel elements which has secured the advantage, in France and England it is the conservative emphasis on continuity which on the whole retains the supremacy. In view of the currently intensified nationalism, it is natural to expect that these national differences will be cultivated and perpetuated at least for a time. The underlying elements of internationalism existing in the community of practical problems, materials and structural systems and the essentially international character of both the conservative and the radical movement, however, may seem to indicate that this particularism will be relatively temporary. Whether the present conservative or the present radical tendency may ultimately be victorious, we may be sure that change in architectural style is bound to be constant and that architecture will remain a living art, not less expressive of the



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> complicated texture of modern life than it has been of the life of earlier and simpler periods.[5]

The position advanced by Edgell and Kimball in *A History of Architecture* closely parallels the views expressed almost seventy years later by the authors of *Modernism in America* and suggests a valuable, moderate critical view of the Modern movement. Although the authors of the more recent work do not cite the works of Edgell and Kimball, James Kornwolf offers an historical perspective in his introduction that similarly begins with an affirmation of the phenomenon of Modern culture. In a footnote, Kornwolf makes a necessary distinction between "Modern" and "Modernism":

> . . . The author interprets "modern" to refer to all developments in the arts since the cultural, political and industrial revolutions of the later eighteenth century; "Modernism", as a term, is restricted to those major developments in architecture crystallizing in Europe after World War I and principally associated with the International Style. Obviously, there were a number of important proto-Modernist developments prior to World War I, just as Modernism exerts a strong impact today.[6]

Kornwolf's description of a political and economic context that contributes to the formation of Modern culture echoes that of Edgell and Kimball. More important, his

3 Design for an art center, Wheaton College, 1938, Maynard Lyndon and Eberle M. Smith. Plan and site plan. From *Pencil Points* (Sept. 1938).

The massing and relationship of this scheme to its site typifies the sophistication of the planning abilities of American Modernists before 1940 as demonstrated by many of the projects illustrated in *Modernism in America.*

4 Design for an art center, Wheaton College, Design I, 1938, George Fred Keck and William Keck, architects, and Robert Bruce Tague, associate architect. Perspective. Photograph courtesy of Hedrich-Blessing Studio, Chicago and William Keck.

The expressiveness of the Keck brothers' project for the Wheaton College Art Center is one of the remarkable early achievements toward the development of an American Modern monumentality.

recognition of a separate artistic response to those conditions distances him from Giedion and Pevsner, who strongly implied in their work that artistic production was obliged to follow a specific course determined by what Giedion was fond of calling the "constituent facts" of an era.

Kornwolf's suppositions stem from his high regard for the intellectual confrontation between the Progressives and Traditionalists similar to that which Edgell and Kimball document in their book. These debates persisted into the 1930s and became an important component of a later Modernist discourse. Following World War I and up to 1929, American architectural practice was dominated by a professional body trained at the Ecole des Beaux Arts (or at American schools with educational programs based on that of the Ecole), which practiced a conservative Electicism. A rigorous conventional system determined the appropriate relationship between style, such as vertical Gothic, Corinthian, or Georgian, and building program. A decorum was recognized that respected the assumed roles and relationships of institutions within the existing social structure. Planning methods for the large urban scale of American cities, such as those espoused by Werner Hegemann and Elbert Peets in their book, *Civic Art* (New York, 1922), reflected a similar conventional association between formal properties of planning types and the expectations and sensibilities of the public. As well as satisfying programmatic requirements, architects attempted to convey an important message to their audience by symbolic or representational devices; this message was translated through conventional systems of architectural vocabulary. Through the order, conventionality, and legibility of this architecture, the anxiety of change, resulting from the disruption of traditional cultural formations by unprecedented Modern economic and political conditions, was diminished.

However, severe complications existed in the practice of Eclecticism. Even the most sophisticated theories of style were greatly confused by the introduction of building programs that did not fit neatly into the image of society for which the architect trained at the Ecole had been taught to design. The skyscraper, for example, pressed itself relentlessly into the urban context and had no easy formal or programmatic precedent. A number of alternatives presented themselves in the last decades of the nineteenth century, but no aesthetic solution clearly dominated by its logic or familiarity. The varicty of solutions proposed in the Chicago *Tribune* competition of 1922 demonstrates this point. Architects such as Louis Sullivan, an advocate for the resolution of the issues of style and ornament through a highly rationalized interpretation of the building program, the structural system, and the materials of the building's construction, were the most vocal critics of the traditional and academic Eclecticism fostered at the Ecole and practiced by its graduates. Sullivan held that the architect/artist could determine an order and reason for an ornamental system out of conditions specific to the building being designed rather than on the basis of a distant precedent.

Kornwolf defines these contrasting positions as the Traditionalist and Modernist. Whereas the Traditionalist was concerned with historical styles, precedents, and what Kornwolf calls "associationism," the Modernist designed with no explicit reference to style. Whereas the Traditionalist was concerned with legibility and appropriateness, the Modernist was principally intent on using industrially produced materials and designing a building from the "inside out."[7] Kornwolf proceeds to more questionable judgments, such as his claim that Traditionalist architecture was religious and aristocratic whereas Modernist architecture was communal and public. But, in general, his distinction between Traditionalist and Modernist is based on well-established historical interpretations. Furthermore, the outcome of Kornwolf's terminological and historical definitions has important consequences for our appreciation of the entire book. Traditionalist or Modernist, Kornwolf asserts, architects practicing in the "Modern" epoch were bound by common concerns for the same troubling determinism in the conditions surrounding Modern culture: dehumanizing industrial production, the materialism of

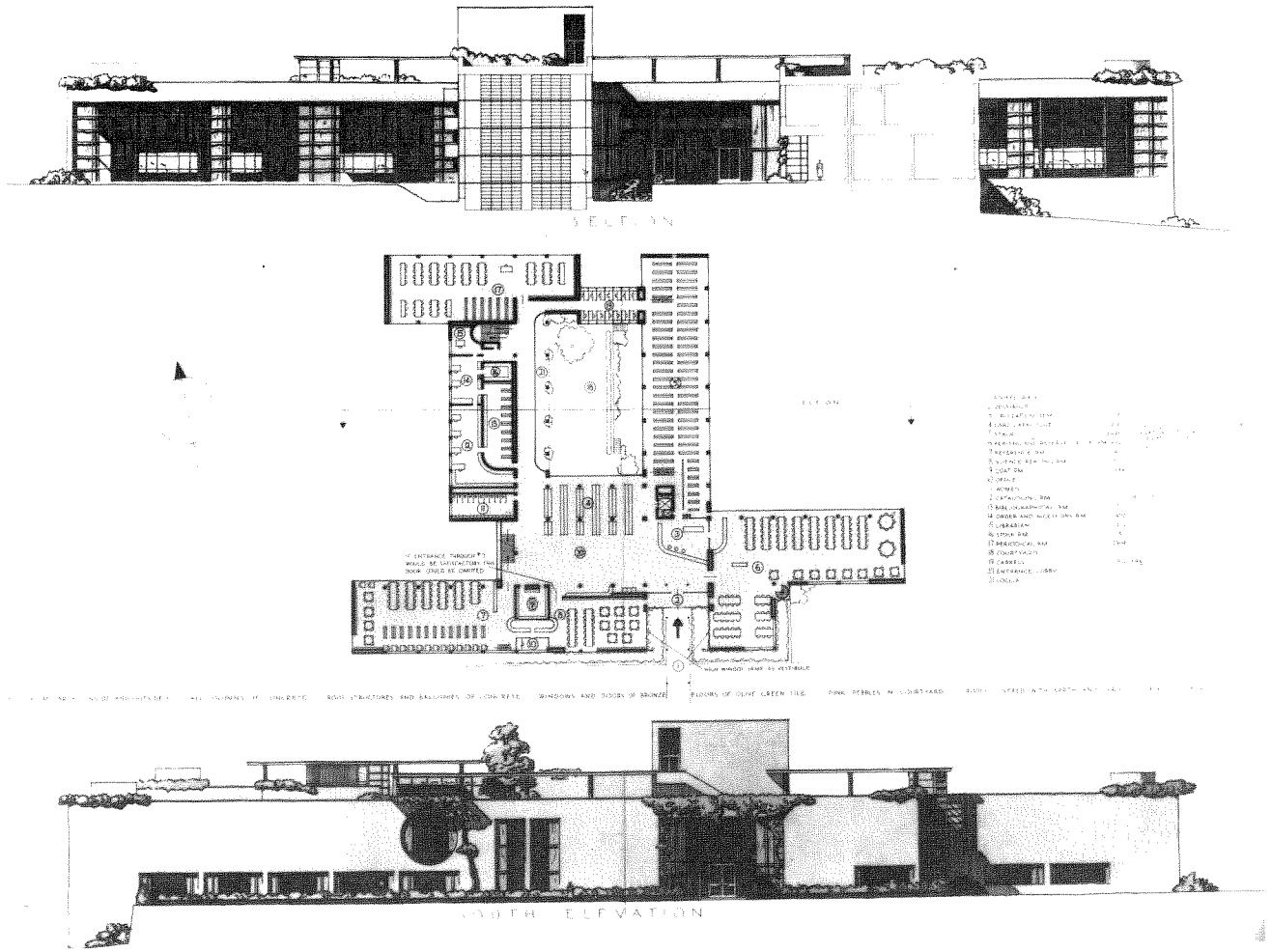
economic valuation, and a profound discontinuity with the past. Theories associated with either Traditionalism or Modernism regarded architecture as a device of culture capable of easing the tensions between the individual and the Modern world. Contrary to the frequent Modernist claim that the Modern movement broke fundamentally with traditional practice, Kornwolf finds that the contrast between Traditionalist and Modernist was one of method but not of ends.[8] Both represent "rich aesthetic and ethical" positions and form part of our "pluralistic inheritance." Thus, the motivation for a re-examination of this period, 1937–1943, is to restore to the historical account of Modernism the richness and diversity of its ordination. Moreover, in describing the value of the historical research compiled in *Modernism in America*, Kornwolf, perhaps unwittingly, endorses a position that had been central to historical and theoretical arguments prior to 1930 and voiced in the work by Kimball and Edgell: ". . . a synthesis of retrospective and progressive tendencies."

The Politicization of the Modernist Discourse

Curiously, the observation that the architectural programs of the Modernist and Traditionalist were more closely allied than their respective propagandists would admit encourages closer consideration of those differences that specifically cast the Traditionalist and Modernist as apparent adversaries. There is no question that the Modern movement introduced a novel aesthetic program. In his article on the competition for the Wheaton Art Center, Thomas McCormick offers a comparison of an earlier project for the center by Ralph Adams Cram of 1932 with the winning competition entry by Arthur Brown and Caleb Hornbostel done in 1938 that makes this fact more tangible. However, the profound antagonism between the Modernist and the Traditionalist in the 1930s cannot be adequately explained by dissimilar aesthetic values. Taken at face value, Kornwolf's claim that the Modernist and Traditionalist positions were equally valid aesthetic and ethical positions suggests that the eventual dominance of the Modern movement was the result of a more complex set of conditions than simply the greater appropriateness of Modern architecture to the conditions of Modern culture.

A significant portion of the historical documentation in *Modernism in America* demonstrates the effectiveness of Modernists in their appeals to special interests, their influence in architectural publications, as well as their ability to portray Modern architecture favorably in a period of unprecedented economic crisis. In his preface for *Modernism in America*, Walter Creese calls greater attention to the efforts of Modernists to position themselves and the growing movement. Creese recommends that five "rallying points" for the "Modernist Doctrine" in particular are made evident in the reviews of the four competitions assembled in the Kornwolf, McCormick, and McDonald book. They are the influence of Harvard, the influence of the Museum of Modern Art, "the constructive optimism gained from the construction of the Tennessee Valley Authority projects," Lewis Mumford's criticism and, finally, "the most decisive though least discussed . . . the growing conviction that Modernist buildings could be more cheaply executed than the eclectic styles." These "rallying points" are component parts of the historical context for the Modernist debates, a context that shaped the Modernist discourse as profoundly as did more generic considerations of free plan space forming or the aesthetic abstraction endorsed by the faculty of the Bauhaus and characterized by the "International Style."

The value of Creese's observations becomes apparent as one reads more deeply into the narrative accounts of the individual competitions. Each begins with a short précis, followed by a brief history of the events leading to the competition, a review of the work, and finally a discussion of the "Aftermath." Thus, only about one-quarter of the written material deals with the architectural designs themselves. The authors' work clarifies the influence on the Modern movement of institutions and individuals whose importance has, until now, been regarded as peripheral. The significance of Harvard to the history of the Modern movement, for example, has been attributed to the influence



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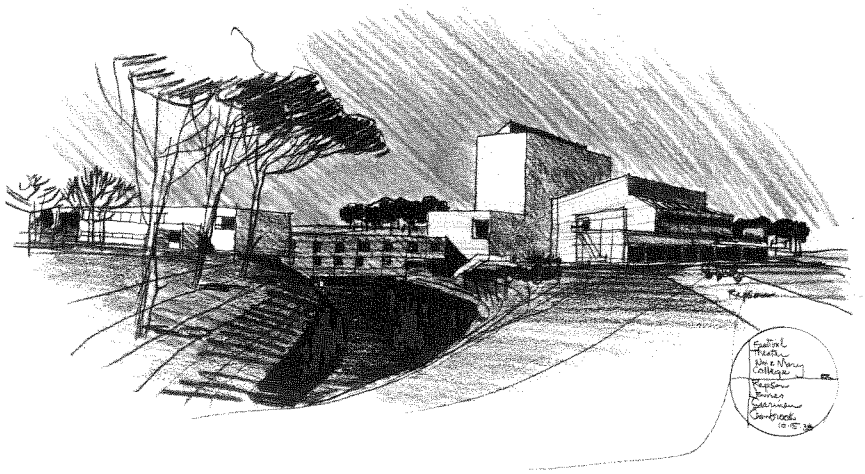
of its dean, Joseph Hudnut, and the appointment of Walter Gropius to the faculty in 1937. However, in the context of these competitions, all of which were for academic institutions, it is apparent that the perhaps unwitting institutional endorsement by Harvard of Modern architecture had greater intrinsic significance given the extent to which the university served as a role model for other, less well-known schools. The support by the Museum of Modern Art for the Modern movement was no doubt the result of an honest intellectual consensus between individuals such as Philip Johnson, Henry Russell Hitchcock, John McAndrew, and Alfred Barr. The museum's sponsorship of the movement was effective, however, because of the financial sponsorship of MOMA by the Rockefeller family and other wealthy patrons. Therefore the museum could offer extensive coverage through its publications, as it did in the case of the Wheaton competition.[9] Even an aesthetically conservative governing board of a small school such as Wheaton might be convinced of the virtues of Modern architecture given this valuable sponsorship. Appealing more directly to the financial support of the Rockefellers, A. Conger Goodyear proposed that his pet project, a national theater and performing art center, which later became the proposed theater and art center for the College of William and Mary, be close to the Rockefeller project for Colonial Williamsburg with the hope of attracting the family's funding.[10] Similarly, the federal government was seriously courted as a potential sponsor. The invitation of Roland Wank, chief architect of the TVA projects, to sit on the jury of two of these competitions can be taken, as Creese points out, as an indication that there was hope of sponsorship through the Roosevelt administration. Thus, within Creese's observation there is the insinuation that the Modern movement was purposefully and fortuitously associated with powerful economic and political entities, which, though they did not reveal any aesthetic commitments, nevertheless indirectly gave momentum to the movement.

Creese suggests that it was the depression that magnified the importance of these affiliations between architect and potential



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patron. The depression had a far more direct impact on the conception of Modern architecture and the practical role it was thought to serve. The economic downfalls following 1929 transformed the issue of cost and expense into a central feature of architectural debates to a magnitude unprecedented in American architecture. Throughout *Modernism in America* it is apparent that one of the principal (if not foremost) justifications of Modern architecture by Modernist architects was its direct resolution of program through expeditious planning, a design tactic that, coincidentally, held down costs. "Functionalism," an abstract idea relating program, material, and structure through some rationalized system, took on a tangibility and urgency after 1929.[11] Through the shared experience of the economic crisis of the depression, the collective understanding of the built environment was based not on abstract theories of style but on economics and efficient patterns of use. Thus, J. Edgar Park, president of Wheaton College, could conclude with conviction that the competition for an art building on the Wheaton campus had been a success because it had proved

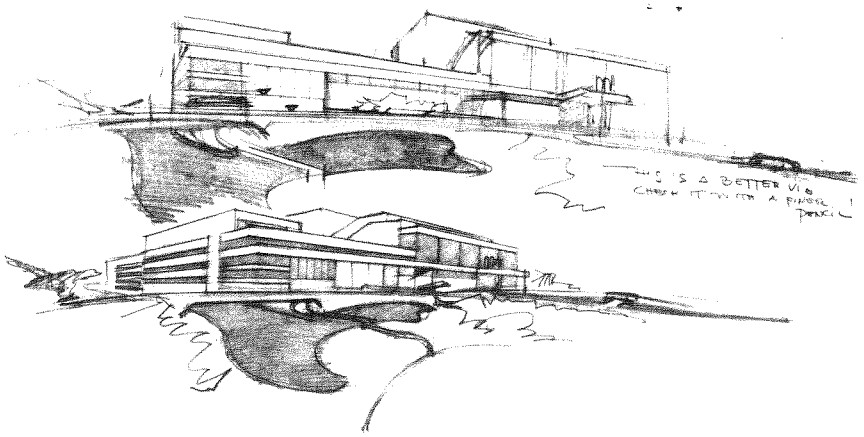
> That such a building is of more value per cubic foot than any other similar building at Wheaton. Every room, every inch of space is fulfilling the purpose for which it was separated from the rest of the cosmos.;
>
> That the cost of the building amounting to about $170,000, is not in excess of what would have been expended in the erection of an architect's mail order type building.[12]

These "rallying points"—the importance of which the bulk of the historical material in *Modernism in America* confirms—offer a critical perspective into the discourse out of which the intellectual tenets of the Modern movement were formed. For instance, special interests, such as those that existed between MOMA and the Rockefellers, can be more articulately elaborated and traced. Furthermore, the origins of compromising aspects of the canons of Modern architecture, such as "Functionalism," can be observed. Finally, perhaps as a result of this type of historical research, which seeks to examine the formation of ideas within a specific historical context, simplistic slogans, such as that which equated function and cheapness, can be identified and excluded from serious discussion of the Modernist program. Such is the value of the historical account offered in *Modernism in America*. Moreover, the isolation of architectural work from a parallel

5 Campus development plan and library, Goucher College, 1938, Walter Mellor and Arthur Meigs. Design I, library plan, and elevations. Photograph courtesy of Muscarelle Museum.

In the Mellor and Miegs scheme, circulation and structure are made simultaneously expressive in the plan.

6 Design for a festival theatre and fine arts center, College of William and Mary, 1938–1939, Ralph Rapson. Preliminary sketches. Project by Ralph Rapson F.A.I.A., Frederic James, Eero Saarinen. Photograph courtesy of Muscarelle Museum.



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discourse—the separation of what was said from what was done—permits us to return and re-evaluate the buildings and drawings themselves. Unfortunately, on this score, the authors are less successful. Though the catalog records a rich body of work—most of which was assembled with extraordinary difficulty given the inattention the period has received thus far—not enough consideration was given to a critical evaluation of the work itself. Reviewing the illustrations in *Modernism in America* briefly, one can quickly apprehend the sophistication in almost all cases of the massing of these buildings and their relationships to their sites, as in the projects for Wheaton College by Maynard Lyndon and Eberle Smith and by John Rodgers, William Priestley, and Carl Brauer. The expressiveness of the Keck brothers' projects for both Wheaton and the William and Mary competitions are remarkable early achievements in a Modern monumentality. Projects such as that by Mellor and Meigs for the Goucher College library or that of Edward Stone for the William and Mary competition are evocative and compelling schemes that simultaneously express circulation and structure as a fabric for the building program. The draftsmanship of Ralph Rapson and Richard Neutra demonstrate a unique and not frequently appreciated dimension of the American Modern movement, namely, a masterful control of the austere volumes of the International Style unparalleled even in the work of European Modernists. These drawings suggest that within the aesthetic limitations of the "Functionalist" style, there was room for a richness equal to the competing Eclectic architectural program.

Modernism in America rejuvenates the aesthetic richness and intellectual activity of the early Modern movement in the United States. Coincidentally, it sets an important precedent in the historiography of the Modern movement by recognizing the highly polemical nature of the discourse out of which the canons of Modernism were formed. *Modernism in America* is timely as an historical document, as the Modern movement slips into our immediate past to become—finally—a part of a less deterministic historical view. At the same

7 Design for a festival theatre and fine arts center, College of William and Mary, 1938–1939, Richard J. Neutra. Sketch of theatre interior. Richard Neutra Collection, Department of Special Collections, University Research Library, UCLA. Photograph courtesy of Muscarelle Museum.

The drawing abilities of Ralph Rapson and Richard Neutra reveal a remarkable and frequently underestimated control of the volumetric International Style.

time, *Modernism in America* serves contemporary architecture by promoting a more balanced view of the strengths and weaknesses of the Modern movement. This view should reduce the harmful contemporary oversimplification of Modern architecture encouraged by the so-called post-Modern criticism and will instead sponsor an appropriate and valuable consideration of work whose merits have been overlooked for far too long.

NOTES

1 Though their historical models differed, both Giedion and Pevsner endeavored to show that the exigencies of modern construction, the phenomenon of contemporary building programs, and the condition of the modern city demanded a fundamentally new concept of design. They maintained that the essence of this new concept was already plainly visible in the developments of modern technology—mass production, which had facilitated the invention of the steel frame, the automobile, and the airplane. These inventions were the products of an intuitive and collective intellect, possessed of a common "spirit," which bound all men. See Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern Design* (London, 1936); and Siegfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass., 1941).

2 An architect practicing at the time might have witnessed such encompassing and specifically "Modern" arguments in the writings of both Louis Sullivan, a "pioneer" of the Modern movement, as well as in the writings of Ralph Adams Cram, an avowed Traditionalist. Though Cram and Sullivan were poised at opposite extremes on the issue of "style"—the appropriate representation of contemporary culture exists as a phenomenon of unique and unprecedented social, political, and economic conditions. For instance, see R. A. Cram, "Lincoln Memorial," *Architectural Record*, vol. 53 (1923), pp. 478–508; and Louis Sullivan, "Concerning the Imperial Hotel, Tokyo Japan," *Architectural Record*, vol. 53 (1923), pp. 333–352.

3 Fiske Kimball and George Edgell, *A History of Architecture* (New York, 1918), pp. .

4 Ibid., p. 461.

5 Ibid., pp. 516–517.

6 James Kornwolf, "Introduction," *Modernism in America: 1937–1943*, p. 20, fn. 15.

7 Ibid., p. 8: ". . . the fundamental premise of Modernism is the unrelenting rejection of all reliance upon and reference to earlier historical styles and their theories which underride them."

8 To further demonstrate, Kornwolf cites an article written by Albert Bush-Brown in 1952 entitled "Cram and Gropius: Traditionalism and Progressivism." Cram, fighting mechanization, wrote, "The liberal arts of age-old human culture have nothing to do with the current seventy-five year old technological civilization (except as a corrective which has thus far failed to work) and consequently the artistic expression of the latter phenomenon can have no part in the manifestation of the older eternal unity." On the other hand, Gropius, ". . . wanted to create a clear organic architecture whose inner logic will be radical and naked, unencumbered by lying facades and trickery. . . . We want an architecture adapted to our world of machines, radios and fast motor cars."

Kornwolf argues that the Traditionalist and Modernist positions represent extremes in architectural thinking, extremes perpetrated by architects working in the period following the depression, which was prone to extremes. Moreover, these positions, although different, are not necessarily antithetical. Indeed, by virtue of a common basis of concern as demonstrated by the comparison of the writings of Cram and Gropius, the positions are closely allied. Ibid., p. 9.

9 At the competition's conclusion, Esther Seaver reported on its success in her terms to the faculty:

In summary I should like to point out several reasons why I believe the competition has justified itself: first, the winning architects are unknown except for being brilliant younger men in other firms and thus are given an opportunity; second, none of the four established firms invited fully lived up to what either the Museum of Modern Art or Wheaton's Art Department had hoped; third, Wheaton has taken a significant step in having sponsored the first bona fide combination of the open and closed competition in the United States; *fourth, this competition has done much toward making Wheaton better known among professional people* [Bentel's emphasis].

Cited in Thomas McCormick, "Wheaton College Competition for an Art Center, February 1938–June 1938," *Modernism in America*, p. 30.

10 Thus, the odd juxtaposition of a Modern building in the vicinity of the restored colonial Williamsburg project can be more easily understood.

11 Creese notes that ". . . Perhaps the most decisive though least discussed factor was the growing conviction that Modernist buildings could be more cheaply executed than the eclectic styles. This aligned with the functionalist arguments Esther Seaver and Eleanor Spencer presented to their administrators." "Preface," *Modernism in America: 1937–1943*, p. xi.

12 McCormick, "Wheaton College Competition for an Art Center. . . ," *Modernism in America: 1937–1943*, p. 36.

The Architecture of Joseph Esherick, or Anatomy against Composition

Josep Muntanola Thornberg

After Joseph Esherick came to the School of Architecture of Barcelona in 1984 to give a lecture on his work, the students who attended wondered why such buildings as the Cannery on San Francisco's waterfront and the "Cary House" in Mill Valley, California, had been ignored for so long in Spain. Some keen comments throughout the lecture also struck us. For example, Esherick explained that the height of the ceiling in the Child Study Center at the University of California, Berkeley, had been determined neither by the size of the children nor by the size of the teachers but by the interrelation of the two, since under a very low ceiling teachers would look gigantic to children. This and other statements about architectural design caused me to investigate the work of Joseph Esherick.

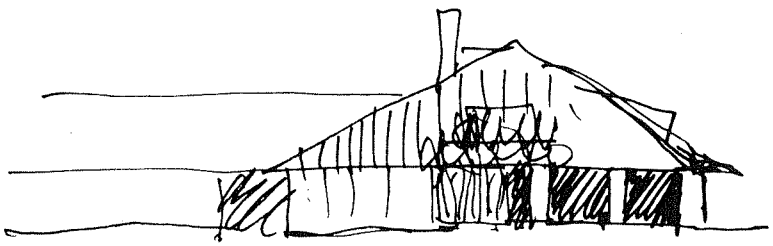
The ideas of Joseph Esherick have developed over almost fifty years of professional activities. He had wanted to be an engineer like his father; however, something happened that changed his mind. When he was visiting an aircraft factory, a worker asked him what he was doing there. He said that he was there with his father because he wanted to be an engineer, too. The response of the man decided him forever against engineering as a career. "Listen, boy," said the man. "You are wrong. In this profession all the basic problems are already solved; only refinements are left." Joseph Esherick turned to architecture; he did not want to work only on refinements.[1]

His training at the University of Pennsylvania School of Architecture did not change this basic attitude. Since he has recently described in detail his experience in Philadelphia,[2] I do not think it necessary to discuss it here beyond noting the eclectic atmosphere of the school following the "Beaux Arts" tradition, its respect for the vernacular American architecture, and its ignorance of the Modern movement "Avantgardes" both outside and within the United States. Esherick pointed out the relevance of the treatise by Guadet that he read as a textbook in French and that this treatise is fundamental to understanding the ideas of Louis Kahn, who attended the same school some years before.

Equally important in Esherick's training was the time he spent with his uncle, the important American sculptor Wharton Esherick. He learned from him and from other sculptors and artists the need for anatomical knowledge of a thing before trying to represent it. So he dissected real human bodies; he went to the forest to find the best wood. This anatomical principle, I will argue later, lasts throughout his work. We find, then, by surveying his training, an American "Beaux Arts" tradition, a sculptural and anatomical understanding, an interest in engineering and experimental technologies, and, finally, a skepticism toward any kind of architectural style, fashion, or "movement." Reality should be first, style second.

"Form is what things are," a statement published in one of the best and longest articles on Esherick's work in 1964,[3] expresses clearly his architectural empirical existentialism. It both opens and closes any dialogue, and it suggests to professionals and students the need for a real architecture projected from a dialogue with clients and users and from a creative mind free of prejudgments about style, fashion, composition, or any other architectural routine.

We cannot analyze all the buildings projected by Esherick during the last forty-five years. Each of these buildings defeats the critic who looks for laws of composition and regularity. The houses are experimental; they reflect in each case the dialogue between architect and client and the specifics of the site. We can point to the Metcalf House (1948); the Berma House (1962), an ideal aerial-engineering house; the "Oestriecher House" (1967), which optimizes the functional complexity of the site and the uses by the occupants; the "Woodside House" (1970); and, perhaps the best known, the Cary House (1960) and the "Sea Ranch" houses and store (1966–1972). The design process is essential in order to understand these single-family houses. Esherick explains, "I can recall only one house—Metcalf—when the design emerged as a whole—all at once—with all the parts neatly together and complete. And it didn't happen in the office but while riding in a Greyhound bus. That was the exception. Otherwise, it's been like making a fruit salad and, at the last minute, you realize you have to go down to the store because you forgot the mangoes."



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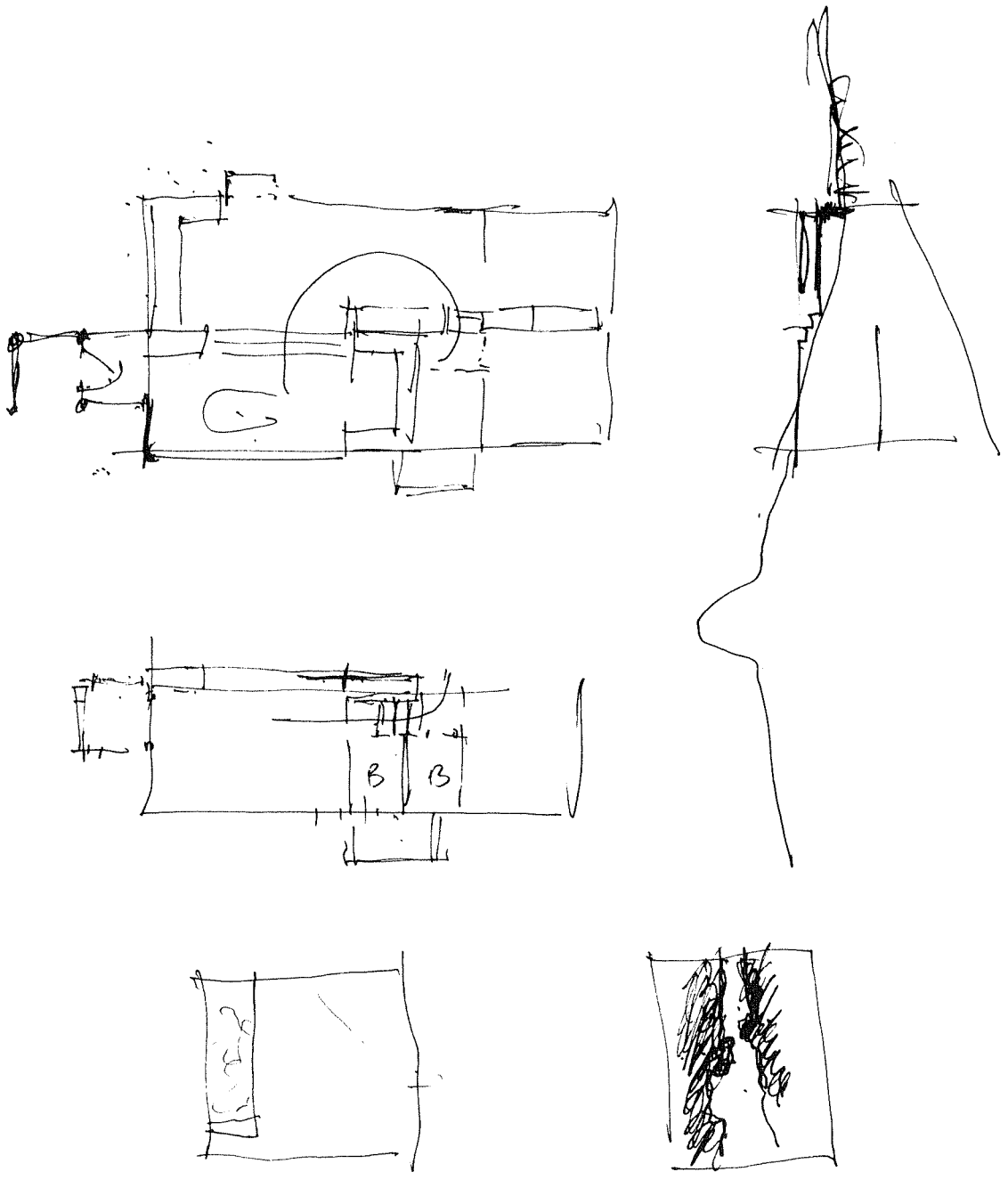
All these houses explore the views, the light, the earth/building accommodation, the physical structures, the vernacular images of the Bay area, the climatic conditions throughout the seasons, the needs of the client, and the empirical experience of space and time on concrete singular places. It is easy to understand that these principles lead to very singular poetic experiences. And this is just what these houses are: singular poetic experiences rooted in the Bay area tradition and open to new social and physical conditions. However, as I have said before, it is difficult to find rhetorical rules of composition and persuasion. One statement by Esherick is very relevant here. He says, "I have never built a monument, but if I do project one, sometime, I will make one which escapes from the older visual monumental compositions towards other nonvisual experiences." I will not agree, however, with an early criticism about Esherick's buildings, which argued that the Cary House was a "casual" set of relationships between the structure and the site, light, views, etc. The lack of visual composition in a modern sense is not enough reason to claim "casualness."

In some cases, Esherick's works follow clear rules of composition, as in the Lyons House (1958), which is arranged with a fairly rigid frame and japanese design strategies, or his own cottage house at the Sea Ranch, where he organizes the shape of the house through a "spiral promenade," from the entrance to a very important room at the top of the house. Some of the other houses have an organization generated from the internal experience, even including the furniture arrangement and specific views and functions. Some very old strategies of design are used, such as repetition and amplification. Structural elements and textures are combined with formal shapes and dispositions in order to obtain a poetic vernacular flavor. Old methods of construction and new technologies are linked without prejudices, each having a role in the overall structure. A closer examination of some of the houses, such as the Berma House (1962), reveals some other regularities. You discover a cubic envelope distorted in order to adapt to the site and the desires of the client. You can see repetitions, amplifications, and some axial dispositions. But, overall, you can see the movement from composition to anatomy, from formal visual rules to experiental empirical constructions. Esherick states again and again that the clues for the design are already in the site and in the needs of the users. You should be able to read these clues if you are a good architect. This is not easy. The best architects can be wrong in one place and right in the next. So students should not be depressed by some failure. Everybody fails sometimes. Nobody is always right.

A rhetorical analogy to painting can be significant at this point. Esherick feels that the obsessive connection of the works of Mondrian with architecture has not helped modern architects to build good buildings. Goya and Turner could have helped much more than

1 **Metcalf House.** Front view sketch by Joseph Esherick in 1984.



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2 Sea Ranch Cottage. Joseph Esherick's 1985 sketch indicates the "spiral promenade" and the accommodation of the cottage to the site.

Mondrian to organize the new places that society needs. Esherick learned from painting that any boundary organizes simultaneously internal and external space; it does not only separate the facade from the inside.

With these anatomical design strategies in mind, we can understand why Esherick's rehabilitation projects are so powerful, most notably the Cannery in San Francisco and the aquarium in Monterey. The old and the new in both cases are so interconnected that it is impossible to disentangle them without destroying the buildings. Sometimes, as in the Cannery, only the outside walls remain of the original construction; yet its industrial flavor is retained. The anatomy of the new structure has been assimilated into the old, as in a modern medical grafting operation. The old skin works perfectly with new bones and new organs; sometimes it is the other way around, where the old bones and organs accept new skin. Here the anatomical metaphor works exactly in the way that the important French philosopher Paul Ricoeur has described it: as a healthy and lively transformation and invention of architectural meaning.[4]

As Esherick pointed out in a recent lecture at Tulane University, this combination of modern and old images was described by Lewis Mumford in 1949 in his introduction to the catalogue of the exhibition held at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. He wrote

> . . . the main problem of architecture today is to reconcile the universal and the regional, the mechanical and the human, the cosmopolitan and the indigenous. No manner of building that exaggerates the local at the expense of the universal can possibly answer the needs of our time. . . . it is just for the opposite reason that the Bay Area Regional architecture is significant. Here the architects have absorbed the universal lessons of science and the machine and have reconciled them with human wants and human desires with full regard for the setting and nature. . . .

These arguments and others by Lewis Mumford were at that time strongly rejected by the leaders of the Modern movement as a step backward to historicism, academicism, and eclecticism. Today we can view this matter with less prejudice. Lewis Mumford himself stated that he admired the Modern movement and that his arguments were not against *it*, but against a narrow and dogmatic attitude toward what the Modern movement was about. Now we are talking again of regional trends in our post-Modern architecture, and we are able to understand, I hope, the complexity of architecture and not only the simplification of one or several "styles."

To sum up my critique on the work of Joseph Esherick, I would stress his empirical expressionism. He admires today sketches with vibrant lines from the Viennese expressionistic period with the same enthusiasm as when he discovered them at the very beginning of his career. Sensuality and technology are not contradictory in his way of thinking about architecture; on the contrary, they work together. If forms are what things are and what things do, we need to think of man using and living in space and not think of a building as a thing in itself. We cannot isolate forms from context and from content, walls from the space between them, construction from dwellings, expression from matter and reality, composition from the thing that is being composed. We cannot differentiate ideas from sensations in architecture without killing the specificity of architecture, that is, the "being" of the form, the place. Perhaps by chance we arrive at a perfect correlation between Berkeley as a real place and Berkeley as an English philosopher with a precise theory of the mind and the body, of the sensations and ideas. "Forms are what things are."

NOTES

1 This and other anecdotes in this article are extracted from personal conversations I had with Joseph Esherick from November 1984 to January 1985. I am very grateful to him for his kindness.

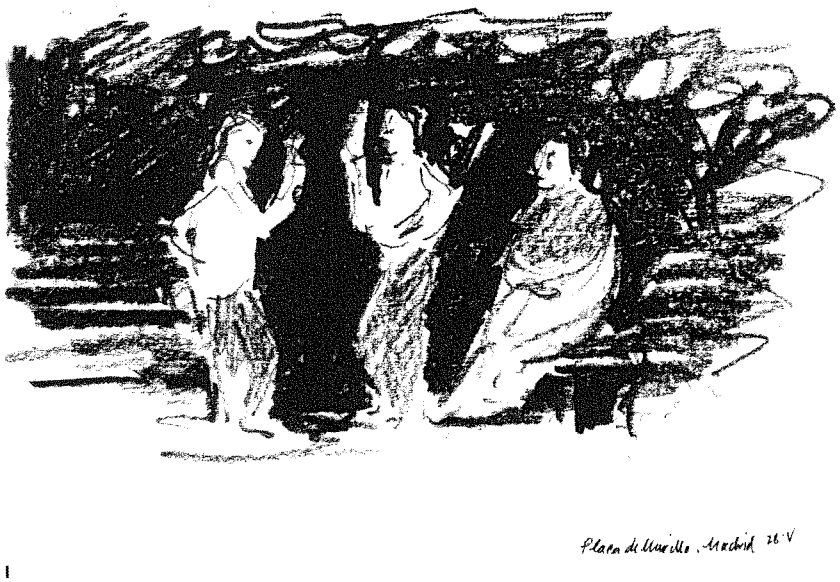
2 "Architectural Education in the Thirties and Seventies: A Personal View," in S. Kostof ed., *The Architects* (Oxford University Press, 1977).

3 "Form Is What Things Are," *Progressive Architecture* 45 (May 1964).

4 Paul Ricouer, *La Metaphore Vive* (Paris: Seuil Publications). The recent English translation, *The Rule of the Metaphor*, has, in my opinion, a very bad title. It completely changes the meaning of Paul Ricouer's book.

Sketches by Joseph Esherick

Joseph Esherick retired from the University of California, Berkeley, in the spring of 1985 after thirty-three years of teaching. Esherick's distinguished architectural practice, combined with his effective teaching, have altered our understanding of architecture. His buildings and questions have led many to look at architecture with fresh eyes and renewed purpose. We asked for the opportunity to rummage through the sketchbook from his most recent trip to Portugal and Spain and made the accompanying selection of drawings, which seemed to capture his sense for architectural inquiry and for the entwinement of people with buildings and buildings with landscape.



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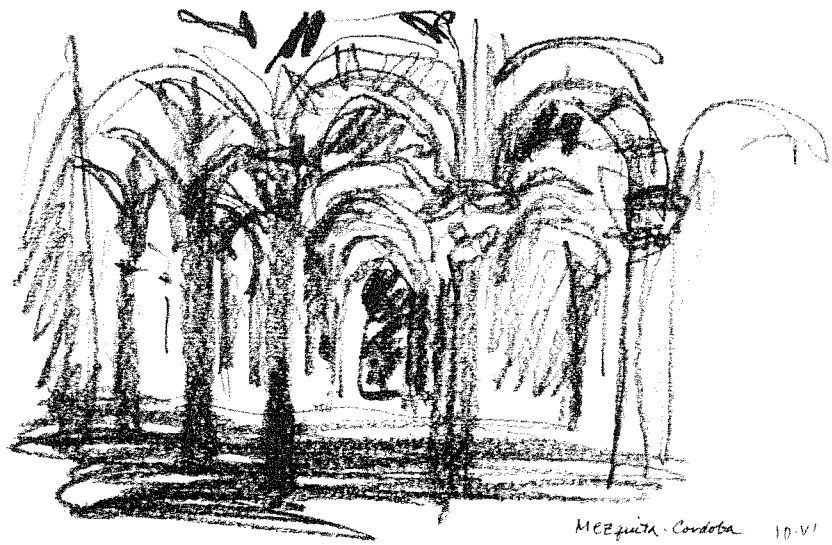

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1 Plaça de Murillo, Madrid
2 Mezquita, Cordoba

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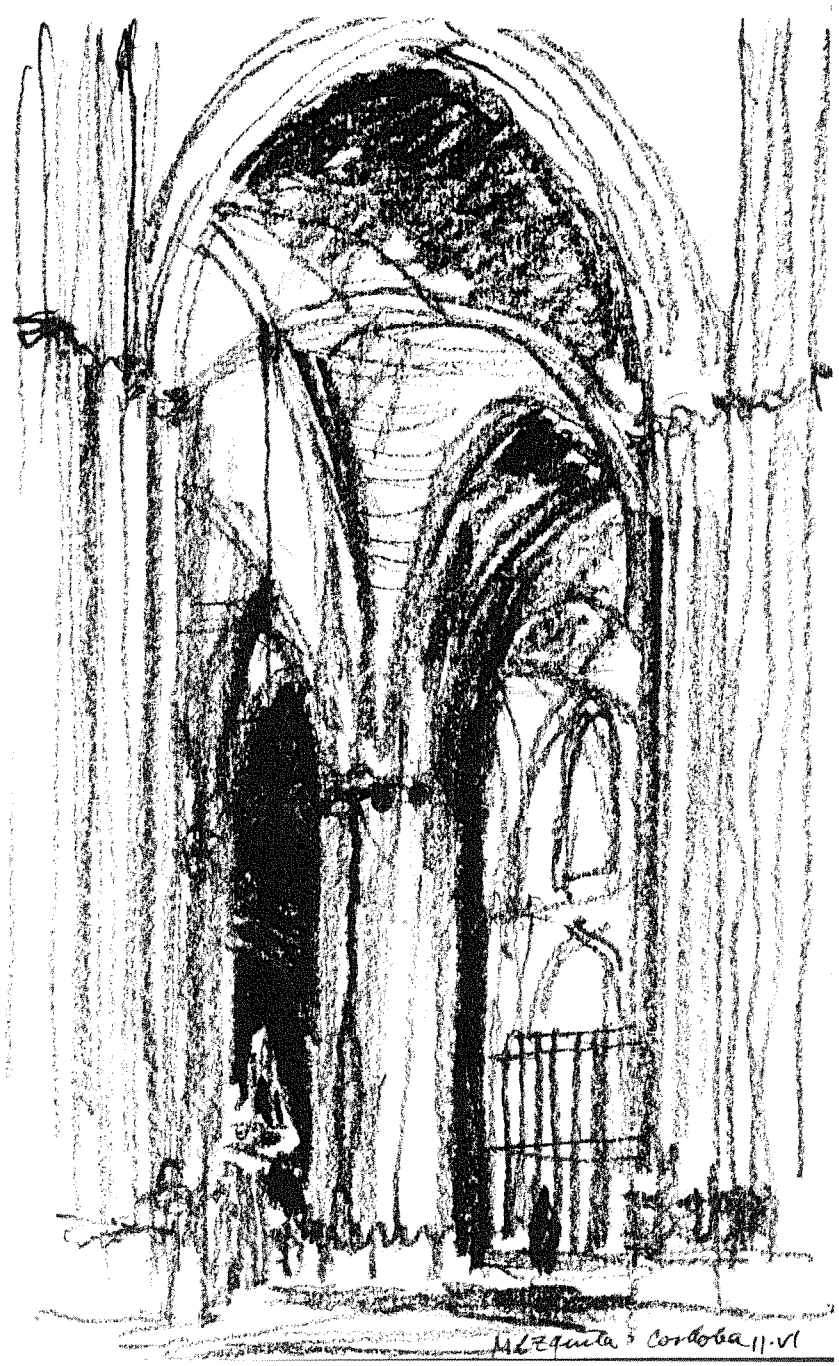
3 Mezquita, Cordoba
4 Mezquita, Cordoba



5 Mezquita, Cordoba

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6 Generalife, Granada

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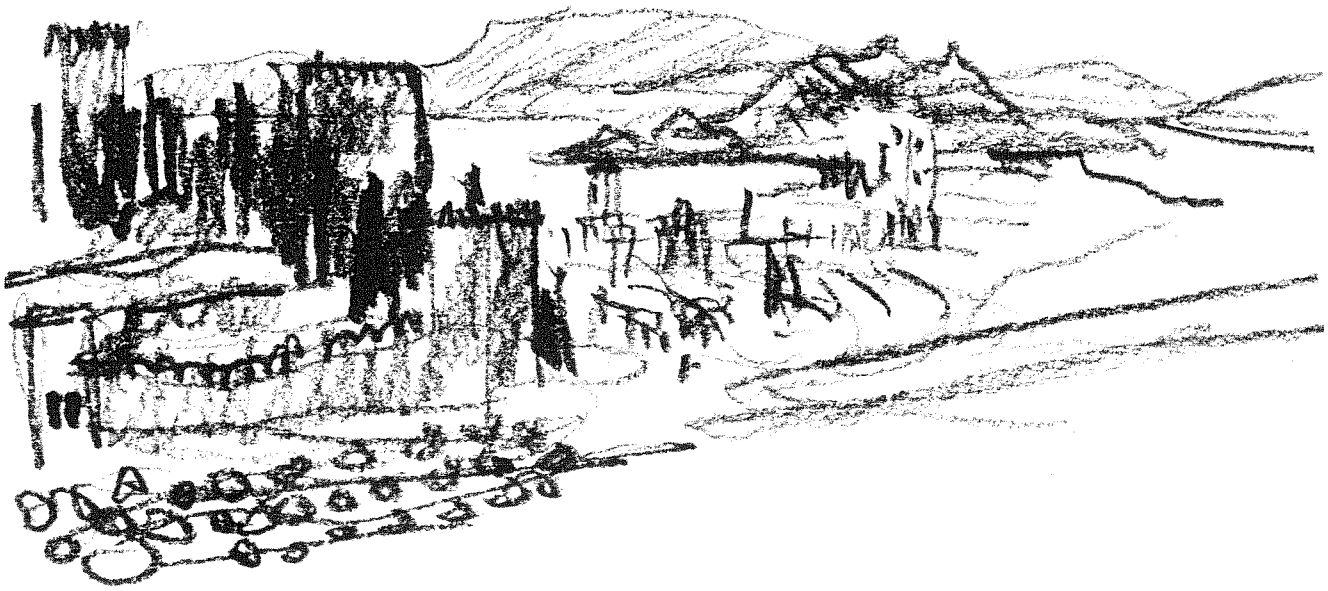

Alhambra from Generalife · Granada 3.VI

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Generalife · Granada 06.VI

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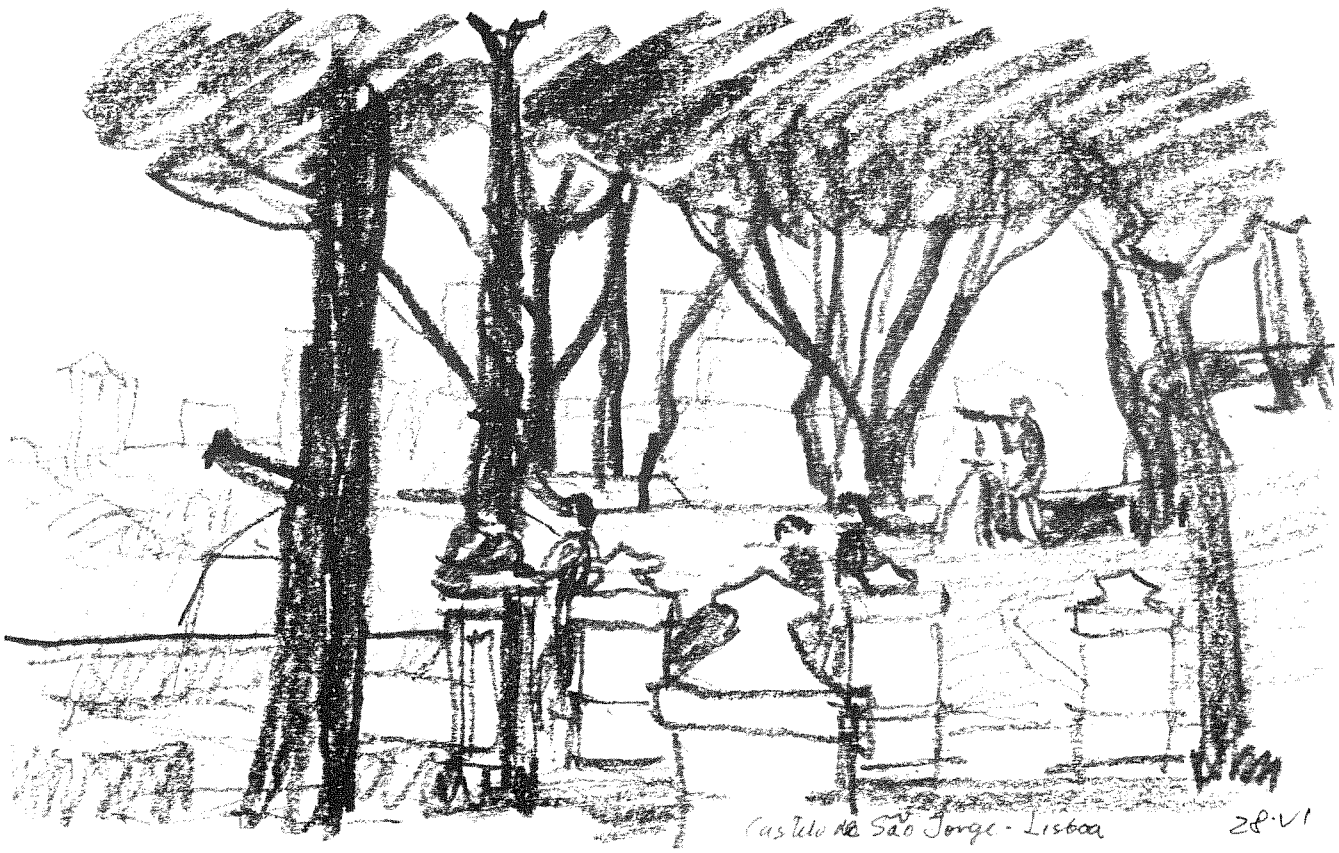

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7 Alhambra from Generalife, Granada
8 Generalife, Granada
9 Castelo de São Jorge, Lisboa

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10 Jardim Botanico, Lisboa
11 Rua Garrett, Plaça de Camões, Lisboa
12 Miradoura de São Pedro de Alcântara, Lisboa
13 Sketches from a bus, San Francisco
14 Sketches from a bus, San Francisco
15 Sketches from a bus, San Francisco

Evaluating Evaluation: Analysis of a Housing Design Awards Program

Jacqueline C. Vischer
and Clare Cooper Marcus

The process of giving design awards is widely embraced and respected by the design professions. It has, however, been left curiously unencumbered by any kind of follow-up research. Generally speaking, attempts to devise a more "scientific" or at least rational basis for understanding and rewarding good design have not been welcomed by designers. As consultants employed to evaluate a national design awards program, we had the unique opportunity to compare the evaluative frameworks of four sets of people who make value judgments about buildings: the designers of housing submitted for an award, the jury in the awards competition, an environment and behavior researcher, and users of the buildings. The results were provocative enough to raise some serious questions about design awards.

The Canadian Housing Design Counsil (CHDC) runs a biannual design awards program to promote improvements in Canadian housing design. Every two years, designers, contractors, and owners are encouraged to submit housing that has been built within the previous seven years for an award. Each submission is evaluated by a regional jury and may receive either a full Design Award or an Honourable Mention.

In 1981, an appraisal of the awards program was initiated to determine how much overlap existed, if any, between consumers' (that is, residents') and design professionals' evaluative criteria. We were retained by CHDC to examine in detail five projects in Vancouver, British Columbia, three which had received design awards and two which had been "near misses." The housing to be evaluated is identified in Table 1.

Four sets of evaluative criteria were gathered, recorded, analyzed, and compared for each development. The first were the designers' criteria for submitting their work, which were expressed in short written texts that accompanied each submission. The second set were the design awards jury's criteria, as expressed in two lengthy working sessions observed by Vischer, one a short-listing process, and the second selecting the final winners after site visits. The third and fourth sets of criteria were aimed at eliciting the residents' viewpoints. One of these was a set of generic user-needs criteria based on design guidelines developed by Cooper Marcus and Sarkissian and applied to each housing development through on-site observation.[1] The other was direct resident feedback obtained through surveys in each development, using a standardized questionnaire, administered by an interviewer after the awards process was completed.[2]

Table 1

Award-Winning Developments	*NonAward-Winning Developments*
Barclay Infill Townhouses 10 units, condominium, adults	English Bay Village 10 units, condominium, adults
False Creek Terrace 65 units, rental, adults	Meadowlands Cooperative 64 units, co-op, senior citizens
Alder Bay Cooperative 95 units, co-op, family housing	

Three Award-Winning Developments

The three award-winning developments studied are all located in inner city neighborhoods of Vancouver in western Canada. All are medium density developments, ranging from 36 to 64 dwelling units per acre. Data on each development are presented in the following order: designers' evaluation, that is, why the project was submitted; jury's evaluation, that is, why the project won (or did not win) a design award; observers' evaluation, that is, rating according to generic user criteria; and residents' evaluation, that is, rating according to project residents.

False Creek Terrace

False Creek Terrace is located on a steep sloping lot in central Vancouver. The development contains sixteen market rental units and was two years old at the time of the study. Units with separate entrances are stacked on three levels around a T-shaped, paved courtyard, which contains a small pool, fountain, and access stairway. There are five different floor plans, each containing two bedrooms. Each unit has either a private patio, balcony, roof deck, or a combination of these.

The designer felt that these rental apartments offered an inner city housing form that was a good alternative to existing apartment buildings. The desire "to defeat the traditional apartment feeling by creating a sense of community and place" is expressed through the provision of private entrances directly from the outside; private open spaces for every dwelling unit; and a "central grand stair," which is seen as "the physical as well as social link for all apartment dwellers" and is given a focus by a fountain.

The jury agreed that this development represented an original solution to high density housing design and "met all the criteria for good market housing." The jury also thought the development represented a good use of site, agreeing for the most part on its "refreshing" and different

style. Some concern was expressed for the evidence of shabby construction, but not enough to warrant not awarding a full design award.

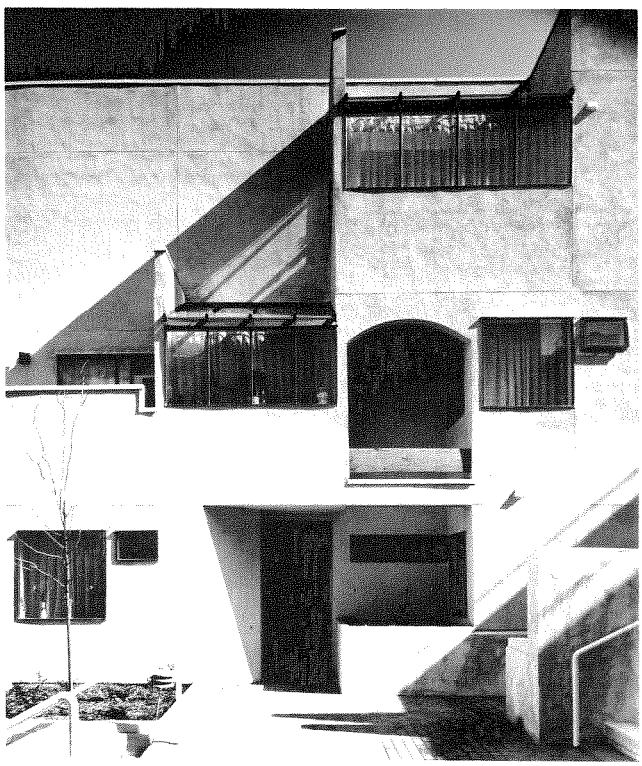
Applying generic user criteria, the site observer (Cooper Marcus) felt, like the jury, that the development fit moderately well into its neighborhood, and the site plan was easy to understand.[3] It was noted that entrances provide few opportunities for personalization; patios facing the courtyard are poorly screened; and the development has numerous security hazards, such as recessed windows, hidden spaces, and lack of surveillance of entries.

Six interviews out of a possible sixteen were completed with False Creek Terrace residents. Most residents stated that they selected the development as a place to live because of its appearance, thus supporting the designer's and jury's opinions of its primary advantage. Residents were attracted to the multi-level interiors and private entrances; the view; the California/Mediterranean image; and the fact that it was "new" and "different." Residents valued the privacy, quiet, large rooms, and the "feeling of being in a house, in your own place."

When asked about features of the dwelling unit they are dissatisfied with, respondents produced a very long list of items, which can be grouped into three categories: first, quality of construction complaints, which included noise between units, crooked walls, cracks in the ceiling, and poorly fitting doors; second, design complaints, which included a two-foot-wide unusable space in the dining room, limited storage space, no southern exposure, useless patio areas, and security problems; and third, maintenance complaints, which reflected the renter status of residents and their relative helplessness regarding standards of maintenance and management.

The difference between the jury's and the residents' evaluative frameworks are clearly separated in this case. Even the site observer, who spent two hours looking at the site in detail (the jury members spent twenty minutes there) could not

1 False Creek Terrace, exterior



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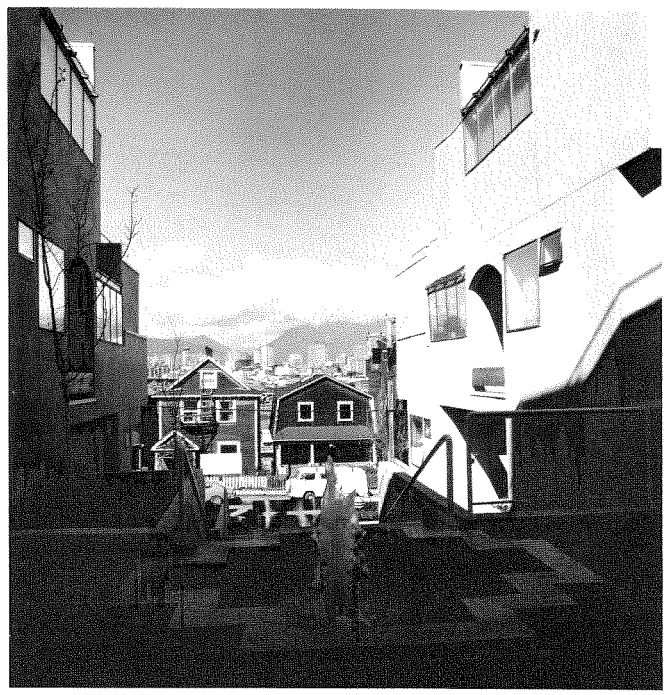

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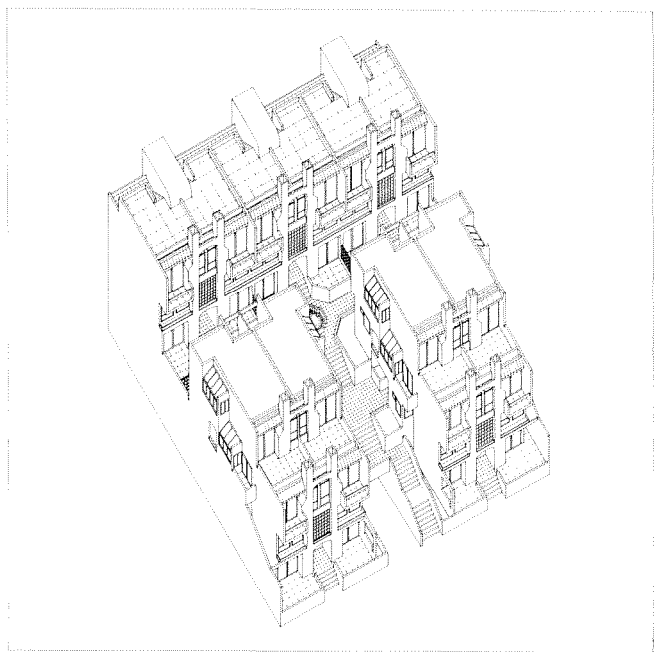

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2 False Creek Terrace, exterior section
3 False Creek Terrace, view of Vancouver from center of building
4 False Creek Terrace.
Illustrations of False Creek Terrace courtesy of James K. M. Cheng, Architect, Vancouver, British Columbia

have assessed how many complaints residents would have about construction quality. One respondent compared the difference in quality between design and construction by saying, "It's like somebody doing the Mona Lisa in crayon." Another felt that "We should be protected as consumers from this kind of bullshit." An attempt was made in False Creek Terrace to design high-quality units; however, these could not meet equivalent construction standards and still realize an adequate return on investment. A question posed by this disparity in evaluation frameworks is to what extent the design awards program should "trade off" design issues with construction quality and market realities. This project received a full design award, yet in retrospect the attractive design did not yield a high-quality residential environment for users.

Barclay Infill Townhouses

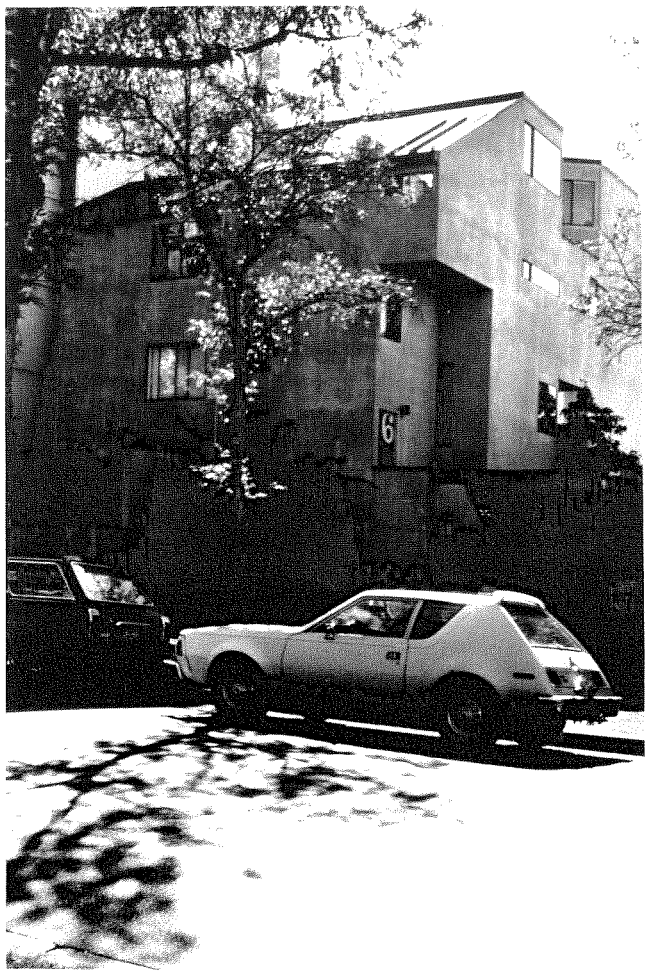
The Barclay Street townhouses are located on a narrow 48×18-foot lot between a high-rise tower and a three-story frame apartment building in Vancouver's high-rise downtown residential neighborhood. The development was two years old at the time of the study. Five upper units and five lower units are organized in a stepped configuration on three levels in which upper and lower units "share" the second (middle) story. Entrances to all units are off a small landscaped "alley," or courtyard, entered from the street.

The designer cited four primary design objectives: to provide an inner city "townhouse" alternative to conventional apartments; to overcome the limitations of a narrow site through exploitation of courtyard and zero lot line concepts; to respect the views and privacy of neighbors; and to provide a pleasing transition in scale between adjacent apartment buildings for both residents and passersby.

Although jury members differed in their evaluations of the interiors, they generally felt that this development was a good example of infill housing, contrasting favourably with local high-rise developments. They like the inner courtyard and the respect for neighbors' light and views, although some reservations were expressed regarding facade textures and colors. The development received an Honourable Mention for its excellent and unique use of a difficult and constraining site.

The observer rated favorably the exterior low-profile image, the clear visual access into the development, and the private entrances. Each unit has access to two private open spaces, each of which is screened with a wall or

5 Barclay Infill Townhouses, exterior view. Photograph by Clare Cooper Marcus



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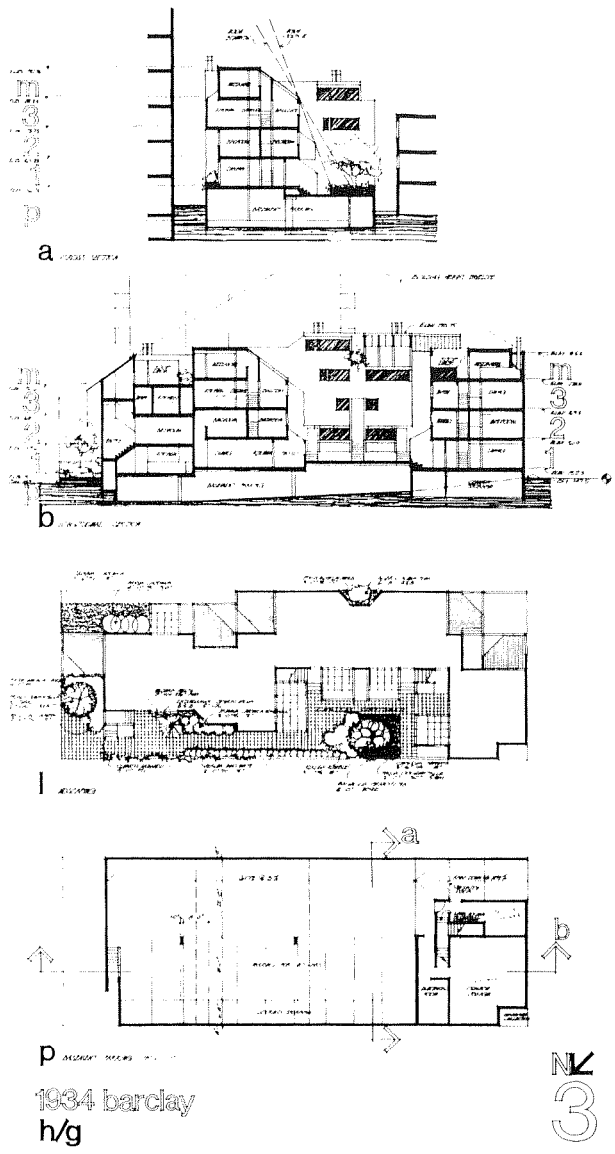

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6 Barclay Infill Townhouses, exterior view. Photograph by Clare Cooper Marcus

7 Barclay Infill Townhouses. Drawing courtesy of Robert Hassell, Architect

trellis. Some have chairs and plants to indicate they are used, but some look dark and empty. The communal open space was rated as too confined to be used for any resident activities except access, but is well-designed for easy maintenance. The interior layout of rooms was seen as ingenious with considerable variety.

Six households of the ten in Barclay Infill Townhouses were interviewed. Residents said they chose these townhouses because of their small scale and the overall appearance of the development. They liked the "townhouse feel," which derives from the small overall size, the separate unit entrances, the multilevel interiors, and the open courtyard design that generates a feeling of neighborliness. When residents were asked to identify sources of dissatisfaction, a few mentioned construction problems, including roof leaks, dampness, and less than adequate interunit soundproofing.

The designer's criteria, and to some extent the jury's, reflect a concern for the *context* of the building. The designer wanted to do something innovative and attractive in a neighborhood dominated by high-rise and walk-up apartment buildings. The jury's comments suggest that they sympathized with this objective, and furthermore, felt that it had been adequately achieved. The residents appeared to recognize the fact that this is high-quality architectural design in a neighborhood that offers little architectural variety; however, they were preoccupied with features of daily living within the development, many of which pertain more to construction quality than to architectural design. Features of the design that the designer felt were important, namely the private open spaces, the penetration of light and sun into the interiors, the provision of two-story units, and the screening of the patios from the courtyard, were also found to be important to residents. The jury awarded this scheme an Honourable Mention rather than a full Design Award; while they wished to reward the designers' sensitivity to context, they did not feel the building itself warranted a full award.

Alder Bay Co-operative

Alder Bay Co-op comprises ninety-five townhouses located on approximately two and a half acres on a waterfront near downtown Vancouver. It was built under the federally subsidized cooperative ownership program. The units are organized into six three- and four-story buildings comprising stacked two-story townhouses. These are clustered into two "enclaves," each defining a landscaped, semiprivate courtyard. Kitchen and

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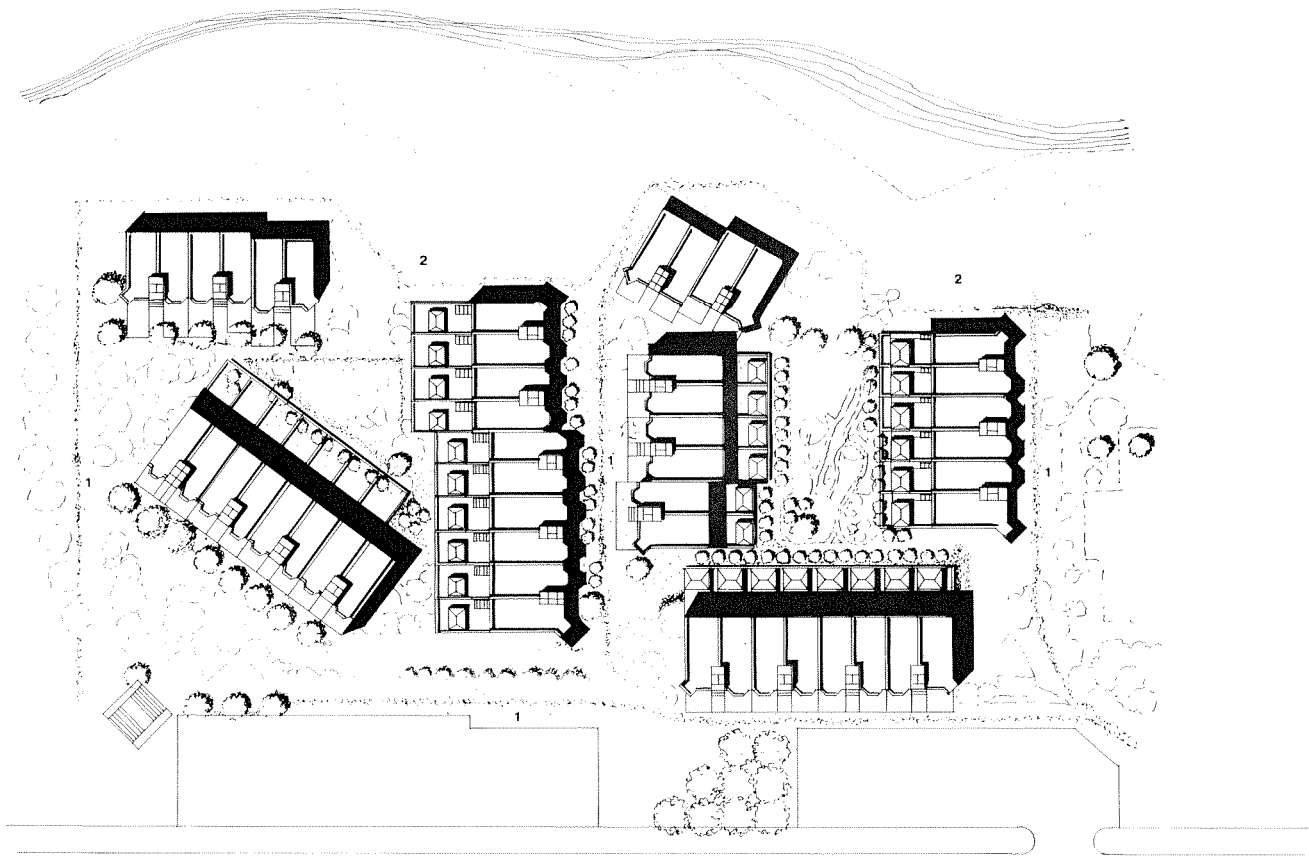
8 Alder Bay Co-operative, exterior view. Photograph by Clare Cooper Marcus.



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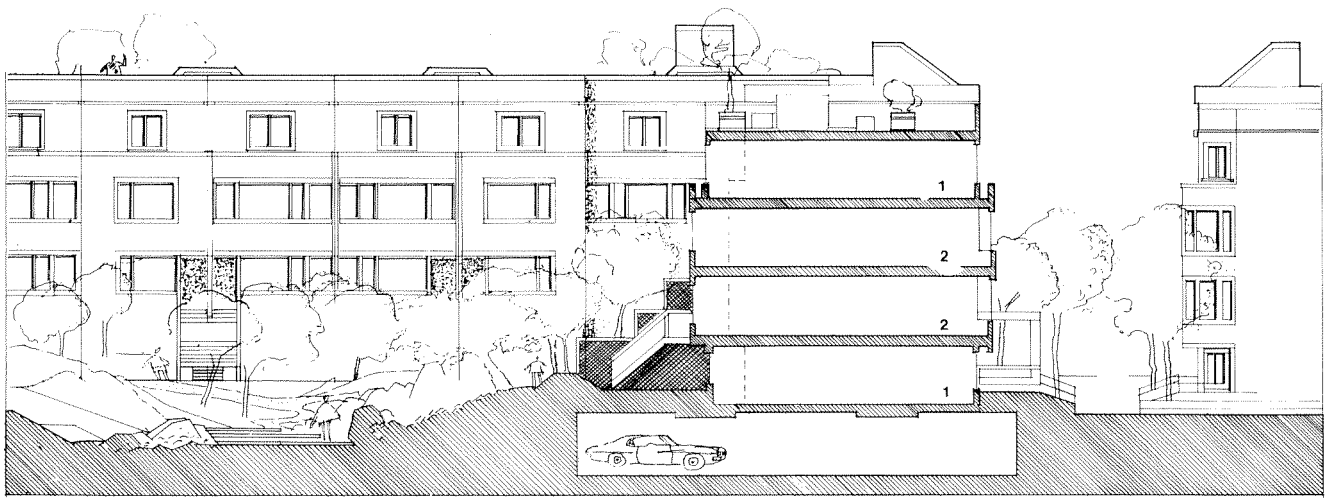

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family rooms face pedestrian streets, and living rooms face the semiprivate, landscaped courtyards. Each unit has a bay window, and these, the other windows, and the door frames are painted in bright colors to contrast with the muted darker tones of the exterior walls.

The architects viewed their main challenge as providing "affordable housing that achieves a high degree of livability." As well as creating "a high quality of urban design" in keeping with the unique features of the site, the designers wanted Co-op residents to have the freedom to make alterations and adjustments to their living environment. By providing front entrances off the major pedestrian ways, the designers hoped to encourage children's and adults' use of these "streets," thus limiting social activities within the landscaped courtyards.

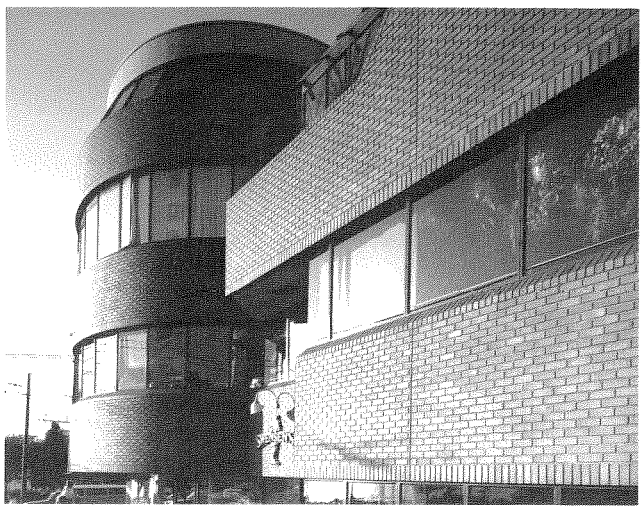
Jury members felt this development was "good architecture" either in spite of or in addition to being a good response to Co-op program constraints. They praised the lively "streetscape," the unit interior layouts, and the attractive roof decks. They were critical of the lack of privacy of the lower units, the open wooden stairwells, and the lack of designated children's play areas. Despite these criticisms, the jury concluded that this development deserved a full Design Award.

The observer rated this scheme highly on its appearance. Varying building heights and orientations, colors, materials, bay windows, and planting were combined to create a visually interesting image. Units share access stairs to their front doors, and the observer felt that these open stairwells might be perceived as back or fire stairs and that visitors might inadvertently approach a unit from its back door in the courtyard. The exterior stairs and landings were observed to be too narrow to allow personalized entries. Few of the "private" patios are screened or fenced; however, most had toys, plants, and furniture, indicating they are used. The courtyard areas were poorly rated for pedestrian use. Bark mulch spilled out on to pathways, which themselves appear more ornamental than functional. Many of the paths pass close to bedroom windows, and drapes appear to be permanently drawn. The site is only partially wheelchair-accessible, owing to steps, narrow paths, and gravel surfaces. Moreover, there are no specifically designed play areas for small children in the courtyards.

When interviewed, residents of Alder Bay Co-op were satisfied with site features such as the "view," "parklike setting," and the "siting of buildings." The design features they appreciated include the bay windows, unit interiors, roof decks, and small scale of the buildings. Resident dissatisfaction was divided between design features (open wooden stairways, unfenced patios, courtyard detailing) and quality of construction (unfinished walkways, water leakage, and plumbing noise). Residents' suggestions for courtyard improvements indicated some tension between households with and without children. Some respondents felt the areas should be redesigned for children; others felt that children's use should be deterred by installing mature planting or an ornamental garden. Both sets of comments reflect a concern with the indeterminate nature of the present space.

At least two significant questions of concern to a design awards program are raised here. First, should all members of a design team automatically receive awards? In this case, an award was apparently deserved by the architects but not by the landscape architects. Second, should special consideration be given to a scheme in which a livable and attractive environment is created within severe budget constraints? In this case, the jury felt that Alder Bay Co-op, while not strikingly innovative, deserved an award for a high-quality environment designed within

9 Alder Bay Co-operative.
Drawing by Carol Silverman
10 Alder Bay Co-operative.
Drawing by Carol Silverman



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the strict budgetary constraints of a federal subsidy program.

Two Nonaward-Winning Developments

The condominiums known as English Bay Village were selected for study because they represent a mixed-use (residential and commercial) development of a type currently being encouraged in Vancouver's downtown. Meadowlands, a senior citizen co-op, was selected for study because it presented something of a dilemma to the jury. During a site visit, jury members learned that residents were highly satisfied with the development, but the jury was not sure how much of this satisfaction could be "attributed" to design and how much to its being a *co-operative* senior citizens' community. Both schemes came very close to receiving a design award but were rejected after much discussion.

English Bay Village

English Bay Village is an example of mixed-use development in the inner city. Ten luxury two-story dwelling units are located two stories above grade over shops and restaurants. The development is on a busy street corner across from a downtown beach and was first occupied in summer 1979. The ten townhouses are arranged around two sides of a small landscaped roof garden. A covered outdoor walkway links the dwellings with an elevator. The two smaller units are located at the corner of the development, where a "turret" marks the street intersection. This creates an unusual rounded interior living space. Because of noise from the streets, enclosed sunrooms instead of open balconies are provided off the street-facing living rooms. Open sundeck spaces are provided on the roof of each unit.

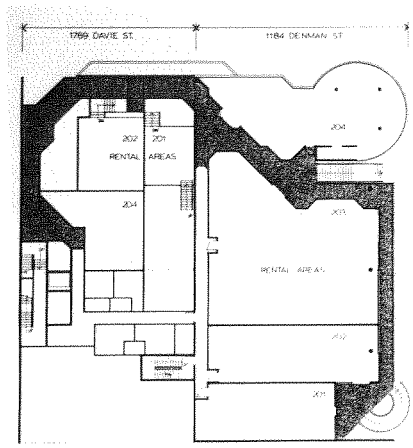
The designer felt the main assets of this scheme were good mixed-use housing "to humanize and revitalize" a commercial area of downtown and a successful solution to three "major urban problems": noise, privacy, and security. The corner turret emphasizes the street intersection and "contributes interest to the urban fabric."

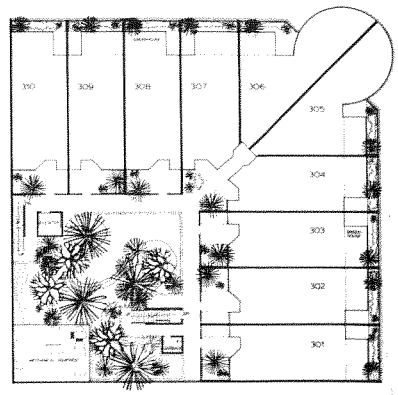
The jury commented that although this scheme has some attractive features, it is not a unique example of mixed-used design. They liked the use of materials (that is, brick facing) but were critical of the design of the commercial (street-level) component. The development did not receive an award.

The site observer noted that the development presents a luxury rather than a "homelike" image. On the upper courtyard level the arrangement of the units is simple and pleasing. Unit

entrances are private and clearly defined; however, the main entrance—at ground level within a shopping arcade—is hard to find, possibly for security reasons. The conflict between security and accessibility is a problem in any mixed-use development, and it is not resolved explicitly in this particular design. Most of the individual entrances are secluded from casual surveillance, as are the roof deck doors; dwelling security may therefore be a problem. The units are well supplied with private open spaces, and the semiprivate courtyard is attractively landscaped for ornamental rather than functional use.
Four households were interviewed. For most residents, the amenities of its location were strong factors in their decision to move here. The secluded quality of the landscaped inner courtyard was seen as an attractive contrast to the bustling active street life outside. Dissatisfactions included the difficulty of moving furniture in to the units and the lack of security. Regarding dwelling unit design, what residents liked about their units appears to outweigh substantially what they dislike.

In summary, in terms of the three "major urban problems" mentioned in the designer's submission, residents concurred that privacy is adequate and that noise is controlled. How-





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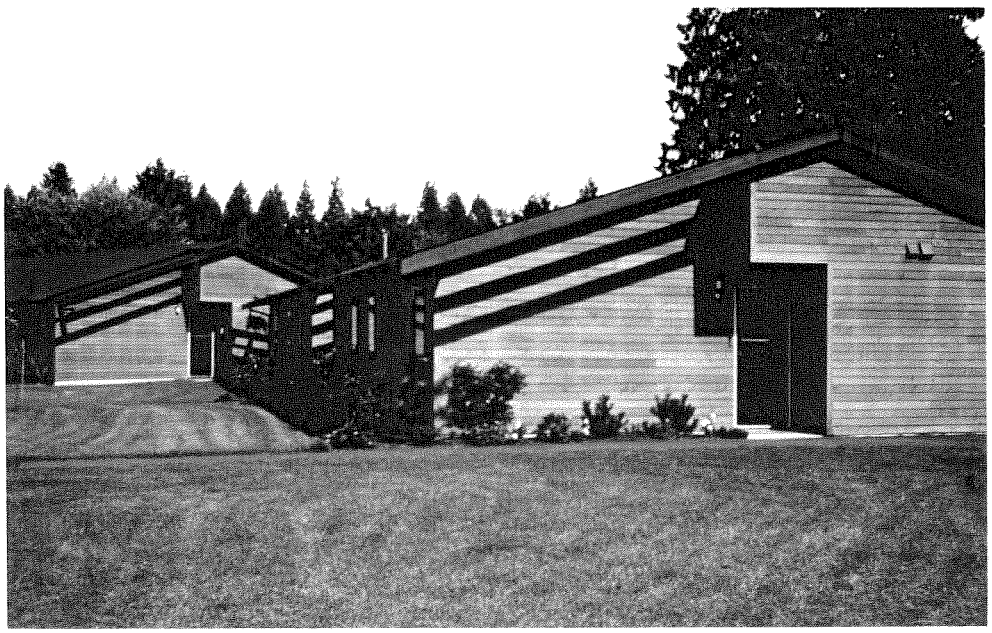
11 English Bay Village, facade
12 English Bay Village, plan.
Drawing courtesy of Henriquez and Partners, Architects, Vancouver, British Columbia



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ever, lack of security in the residential part of the building is the single biggest deficiency of the design from generic and specific residents' viewpoints. The jury mentions this but does not single it out as a major factor in their decision. The designer was aware of it but believed he had solved it adequately.

Meadowlands Co-operative

Meadowlands is a low-density senior citizens co-op housing development located in a semirural suburb of Vancouver. The project comprises sixty-four single-story units clustered into sixteen side-by-side quadruplexes on 5.8 acres. A centrally located community building contains community rooms, laundry, and mailboxes. The dwellings have private front entrances and semi-enclosed back patios. The front entrances face vehicular access and parking, and the back patios face a perimeter fence and forested areas beyond. The units have similar layouts in that the living rooms and kitchen/dining areas face the back patios and surrounding woodland.

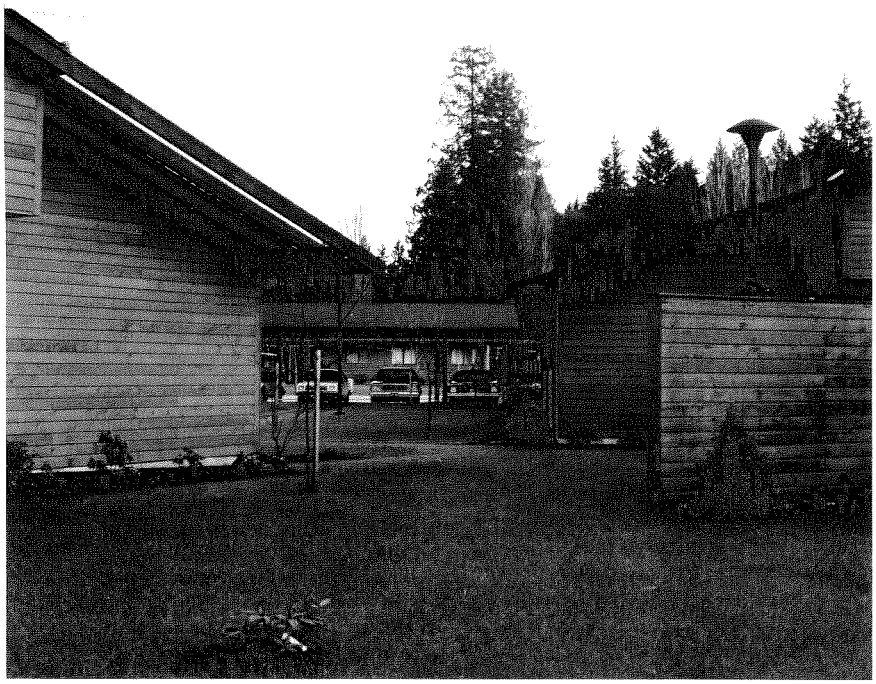
The chief merits of this scheme, as perceived by the designer include the importance of consumer participation in design, the concept of a "retirement village," the provision of "a bit of a garden" to all

13 Meadowlands, exterior. Photograph by Clare Cooper Marcus
14 Meadowlands, exterior
15 Meadowlands, exterior

residents, and opportunities for residents to experience companionship without losing their independence.

The jury expressed considerable confusion regarding this development. They recognized that the residents were very satisfied and that the design of the development met its stated social objectives; however, they had serious reservations about the aesthetics of the design. Jury members felt that the site planning was poor and that residents suffered from a lack of privacy. They criticized the design of the living room, the window shapes, and the use of trelliswork on the exterior and compared the development to "a Nissen (Quonset) hut with decoration on the sides." It did not receive a design award.

Though there is a little variety in terms of building facades, the observer felt that the positioning and orientation of buildings on the site creates considerable variety. The cladding material of stained cedar seems appropriate to its semirural context. The site is flat, and all buildings are wheelchair-accessible. The arrangement of buildings on the site, clustered around the one entry road and several parking areas is easy for visitors to grasp; front entries are clearly designed and distinct from back



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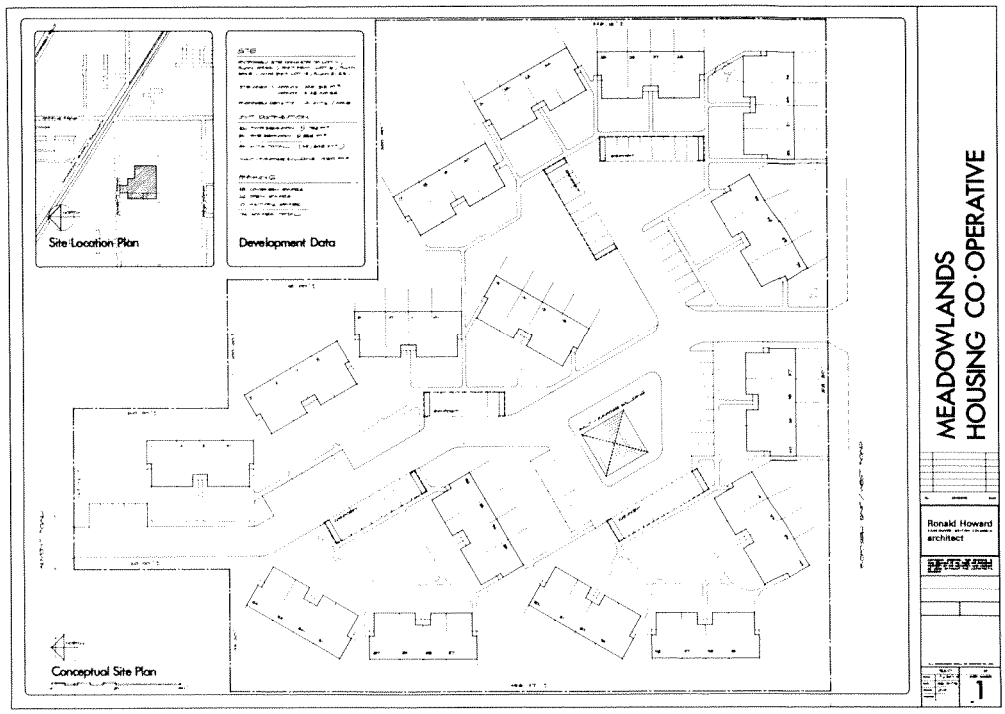

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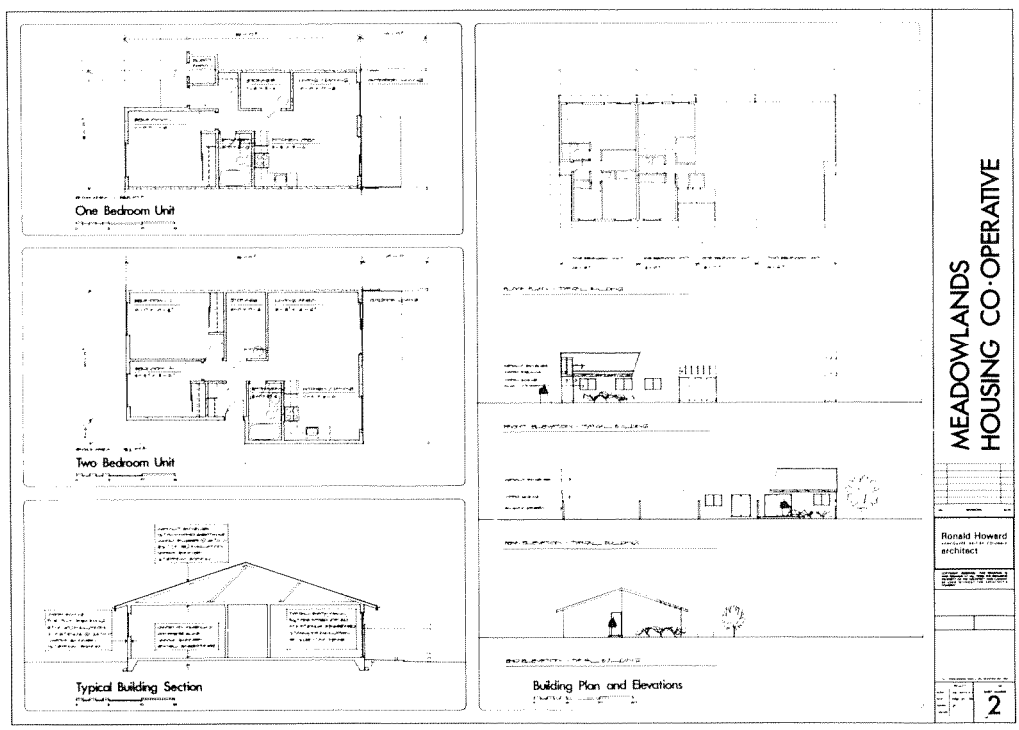

16 Meadowlands, site plan
17 Meadowlands, building plan Photographs and Drawings of Meadowlands courtesy of Howard/Yano Architects, Vancouver, British Columbia

entries. Residents have the opportunity to personalize their front entrances and have done so extensively. The back entrances have sliding glass doors that open onto enclosed patios, which most residents have highly personalized with flowers, vegetables, shrubs, and garden furniture. None of the pedestrian pathways is close enough to windows or patios to violate the privacy of residents. Most of the front entrances are visible from other dwellings, and as residents are home much of the day, surveillance is good and the site feels safe.

Sixteen interviews were completed at Meadowlands. They show that Meadowlands residents are a very satisfied group. They appreciate the social aspect of living in Meadowlands—the support, safety, and cameraderie—and consider themselves fortunate to have this housing option. Residents like the "design for older couples," with no steps and easy access to the unit, the "staggered and well-spaced units," the small garden and maintenance-free layout, the quiet, both back and front entrances, and "no one above or below you." Many residents expressed appreciation for the layout of the grounds ("like a garden city") for the community center, the feeling of safety, and the fact that "the units are well built and well insulated."

Residents had very few complaints about the development, mostly "cold floors" and uncomfortable unit layout, with bedroom windows facing the front and the living room facing the patio. Some felt the location was "isolated." From most residents' point of view, the development deserved a Design Award; many were sorry that it did not receive one.

Although the residents did not mention specifically the positive effect of their involvement in the design process, this may be one of the reasons for their high level of satisfaction. Consumer participation in design was one of the designer's criteria. The jury recognized the satisfaction value of consumer involvement in design but did not feel this should outweigh the lack of innovation they perceived in the architecture.

Jury criticisms regarding poor site planning, lack of privacy, window design, and the shape of the living room were not upheld by either the observer's or the residents' own evaluation. The jury's comment regarding the unattractive trelliswork on the exterior is validated by the residents, but for different reasons. The residents do not feel they are living in wartime housing with decoration, but they do object to the lack of a rainproof roof over their front porches. The residents share the site observer's high evaluation of private open space, the attractive appearance of the development, and the feeling of security.

Comparison of Evaluative Criteria

The major findings from the four evaluations as applied to each project are summarized in Table 2 (see pp. 83–85). This table shows that there appears to be a certain amount of overlap among the evaluative criteria used by designers, jurors, the observer, and residents. All four sets of criteria show some interest in the appearance and overall look of the development and in some aspects of livability. The observation criteria tend to anticipate residents' responses, with the exception of "quality of construction" issues, which were raised repeatedly by residents but failed to be included to any significant extent in any of the other evaluative frameworks. The jury's criteria anticipate some of the more pronounced residents' concerns but show a greater overlap with designers' criteria, perhaps because jurors read the entrants' written submissions and undoubtedly have the same professional value system. In terms of the jury's decision-making process, their criteria are better predictors of the designer's aspirations than of residents' reactions.

The designers show some variation in what they consider to be the important features of their designs. Some emphasize consumer involvement, user needs, and social-behavioral solutions; others emphasize size, innovation, context, or visual image. This variation in priorities suggests in part that the objectives of the awards program are not perceived similarly by all entrants. The designers varied in how extensively they identified their aesthetic, economic, and social objectives. In future awards programs, it would be advantageous if the designers identified how each of these objectives were met in the housing design they submitted. They should also describe the constraints and difficulties they had in implementing their concept and illustrate these with support material from their subconsultants, clients, and, if possible, the residents themselves. This may discourage some designers from entering; on the other hand, it would allow the considerable thought behind many designs to be made more explicit.

The jury had been instructed that the theme for this year's awards program was "housing alternatives." It is not surprising, therefore, that jurors show a fairly similar set of concerns for all projects. Although consensus was not instantly achieved on each submission, the

jury was consistent in its evaluative approach. The jury felt that its mandate was to evaluate each submission as "architecture" and therefore responded most strongly to the exterior form and appearance of the development. They were reluctant to take into account either quality of construction or use livability in their *final* decisions, although these factors figured largely in their deliberations. The jury did not seem to attach as much value as did the designers to the importance of responding to user input. The data suggest that, from the jury's point of view, the critical factor in making an award is architectural (as opposed to social or technological) innovation. The Barclay Infill Townhouses appear to be valued because they are an innovative response to their context. Alder Bay Co-operative is considered an achievement because of the stringent budgetary constraints under which it was designed. False Creek Terrace's merit seems to lie exclusively in its attractively different exterior appearance. Meadowlands is too plain: its socially innovative design process did not rate. English Bay Terrace, although ambitiously innovative, is not attractive enough to make the final award-winning selection. The jury's emphasis on innovation can be attributed partly to a pervasive value in the architectural profession—rewarding forms and ideas that are new and nonderivative—and partly to the specific theme of the awards program.

The site observer attempted to balance the design criteria employed by jurors—appearance, form, and aesthetics—with criteria pertaining to livability. Many of the observer's conclusions were borne out by residents' responses. This is attributable to the fact that the observation criteria were derived from post-occupancy evaluations of almost one hundred multifamily housing schemes and formulated as design guidelines for livable housing. They are therefore useful criteria for judging livability in the absence of resident opinions. If, as demonstrated here, a structured evaluation taking two or three hours points up similar issues to a resident survey that takes two or three days, then the technique may have some applicability to other awards programs. In fact, the organization responsible for this awards program accepted the observation criteria used in this study for use in site visits by future juries.

The observer's evaluation resulted in a rank ordering of the five schemes that is the reverse of the rank ordering that may be inferred from the jury's comments. The two highest-scoring designs by the observer were Meadowlands and English Bay Village. If the observer's criteria alone were applied, these two nonaward-winning schemes would have won awards; Barclay Street Infill would have been a possible award winner. Alder Bay Co-operative and False Creek Terrace would not have won awards. Clearly, here is a conclusion that needs further study: a set of observation criteria based on critical design issues for *residents* results in a different rating of housing schemes from the judgment by a jury of professional designers. This raises some critical issues about design awards. Are they primarily to reward design in terms of aesthetics and physical form—a "peer review" process—or should they also reward design in terms of livability for the residents? Is there, in fact, a truly aesthetic architecture without some "quality of life" for the users of the building?

On the other hand, residents' criteria alone do not do justice to the broader social and aesthetic goals of good architecture. Residents' criteria, as they emerged during the interviews, show a preoccupation with "how the building works." This is only partly a design issue; it is also a construction and maintenance issue. Residents' concerns reflect the gap between where the designer's responsibilities end and the builder's take over. To some residents, for example, those at False Creek Terrace, the architect was at fault in not insisting on better quality construction. The jury scarcely mentioned construction quality, suggesting that they perceived the architect's responsibility to end with the completion of the design. The maintenance of a building clearly passes to the building's owners on completion of a building, but the quality of construction, and indeed design, can significantly affect the amount and type of maintenance that is subsequently required and thereby the amount of satisfaction experienced by residents.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The review of the four sets of criteria suggests that there are three fundamental evaluative approaches to which a design awards jury should be addressing itself: appearance, construction quality, and livability. First, does the development look interesting and attractive? Is it aesthetically and functionally appropriate to its context? Second, does the building work? Is it well-built? Third, is the development enjoyed and appreciated by the people who are living there? Does it fulfill their day-to-day social and psychological needs? These three approaches overlap somewhat, but to apply only one at the

expense of another is clearly insufficient.

The findings from this study suggest that meeting user needs is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for good design. Similarly, a well-built building "that works" is also a necessary but not a sufficient condition for good design. A building must also look good: it must be attractive and interesting, it must respond to its context, either by blending in or by standing out, and it must make some kind of contribution to the urban fabric. A good-looking appearance is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for a good design. Our findings indicate that the jury placed more emphasis on this criterion at the expense of the other two; and users placed more emphasis on construction quality and livability at the expense of aesthetics.

The problem the designer has is balancing the three requirements of his or her design: appearance, quality of construction, and livability or delight, firmness and commodity! It may be necessary to compromise on the elegance of a design detail in order to maintain or enhance the livability of a dwelling unit. Similarly, and more commonly, it may be necessary to use inferior construction methods or materials in order to make the housing affordable, which is a precondition for livability. One aspect of the design process that has a significant effect on these trade-offs are the codes, standards, permits, and inspection processes that all buildings must submit to. These obviously exert a considerable influence on the form, details, and overall quality of the environment. Although the designer may exercise an heroic role in defending his or her design concept—its appearance, livability, and quality—this does not, by and large, come to the attention of users or to the jury. As most of these struggles and confrontations result in a series of small compromises, the combined effect of which on the final product is difficult to estimate, the design awards process should perhaps take this into consideration.

This design awards program specifies that the housing submitted should be built and occupied. This implies an interest in the consumers' perspective. If the jury were exclusively concerned with appearance, the buildings submitted for consideration could be hypothetical schemes. Thus some modifications in the review process should be considered so that resident feedback in the selection process is ensured. Although the program administrators made a point of mixing planners and contractors with architects and landscape architects on the jury, one of the interesting aspects of the decision-making process was how the nondesigners deferred to the members of the design professionals. It was the nondesign members who expressed most the concern for livability, but if they were instructed during the discussion by, say, an architect, that something they did not like in the design was unavoidable for obscure architectural reasons, they tended to accept the designer's judgment.

It should be mentioned that the Canadian Housing Design Counsil did in fact make a serious attempt to incorporate some of the findings from this study (undertaken in 1981) into subsequent design awards programs. Their major change was to oblige the awards jury to make more in-depth site visits. The jury is now required to interview managers and residents in each project in order to ensure that projects ultimately selected for awards are also liked by the people living in them. Consideration was given to the possibility of supplying the jury with written testimonials by residents, but this was rejected by the Counsil as too cumbersome to administer properly. In order to make more thorough site visits, however, the awards jury is obliged to select a shorter "short list" of projects to be visited. The short list is further curtailed by the requirement that all jury members visit each project, whereas previously each visit was only made by two jury members.

Certain key questions remain. Some are listed below, so that they may initiate a debate in the pages of *Places*.

How extensively should criteria for submission be formulated and communicated to designers?

Should the jury be given specific guidelines, or should they look for a shared consensus to emerge from the group process, even if this results in some jury members dominating others?

How much detail should the jury go into in order to determine the "worth" of a submission? For example, should they consider the "history" of the design, the construction quality, the opinions of residents, and the marketability of the housing itself?

How should a design team be treated in an awards program? For example, should a construction firm receive an award when it is primarily *design* that is being evaluated? Should the landscape architect receive an award in a scheme where the landscape design was deemed to be the weakest element of an otherwise prize-winning scheme?

Should different standards be applied to subsidized and unsubsidized housing?

Is it desirable to trade off the number of submissions evaluated with the detail with which each evaluation is carried out?

Do design awards programs in fact (when all is said and done) provide an incentive for better housing design? And does "better" equate with "more livable"?

NOTES

1 C. Cooper Marcus and W. Sarkissian, *Housing as if People Mattered: Site Design Guidelines for Low Rise Family Housing* (University of California Press, 1986).

2 For a more detailed description of the methodology, see J. C. Vischer and C. Cooper Marcus, "Design Awards: Who Cares?" in *Knowledge for Design*, proceedings of the 13th annual conference of the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA), Polly Bart, Guido Francescato, and Alexander Chen, eds. (College Park, MD: EDRA, 1982).

3 At the time of the site visits, Cooper Marcus did not know what the designers submission had said; what the jury had said; or what were the residents' views. Nor did she know which schemes had won awards and which had not.

Postscript by Clare Cooper Marcus

In May 1985, as we were completing this article, I was asked to be on the National Jury for CHDC's 1985 awards. Switching hats from researcher-observer to jury member, I was able to gain another perspective on the awards process.

Since our 1981 study, the process has changed in a number of significant ways. Entries are submitted initially at a regional level and viewed by regional juries. Certain awards are given at this stage, which is important in a country with such vast regional differences (and loyalties) as Canada. Regional juries then select a number of schemes to go forward to the National Jury. An attempt is made at this stage to compare entries within categories (high-rise, conversions, multifamily, special housing, etc.) and not to let any one or two regions dominate the awards. (By sheer weight of numbers, British Columbia and Ontario come close to doing this.)

In view of the questions we have raised, the following points about the current awards program should be noted. Each regional jury visits every submitted scheme in its region, but these are still largely the brief walk-through visits as documented in the 1981 process. However, one CHDC member was present at *all* regional juries and thus had visited all the sites considered by the National Jury. His input to the National Jury was invaluable, though that jury concluded that two people would have been better, in order to effect a dialogue; site visits are still essentially looking at form and aesthetics; future site visits might incorporate a point or scoring system to effect some simple yet systematic ranking of schemes on context, livability, and construction as well as on form. Overall, the process *still* hinges on judging design from photographs. It is hard to see any other way of dealing with nationwide awards in a country the size of Canada. The cost of having the entire jury travel to every region would be prohibitive. Solutions include returning to a regional awards system only, so that each local team *can* visit each site and perhaps compare entries on a more systematic basis than a quick walk-through. The issue of form versus livability still remains. Finally, a suggestion of one 1985 jury member—Ray Spaxman, city planning director of Vancouver—bears thinking about. Each entry was accompanied by a detailed text answering specific questions on the project posed by CHDC. Spaxman suggested, "Next time, have the jury on the first round *only* read the text so as not to be 'seduced' by the photographs. . . ." How many designs would stand up if we had to communicate their merits *only* in words?

Table 2 **Evaluative Criteria**

False Creek Terrace

Designer's Criteria
Innovative rental housing alternative
Maximize views, light, and privacy of unit interiors
Privacy of dwelling entrances
Sense of community through shared exterior access
Architectural images of Mediterranean hill-towns and Georgian townhouses

Jury's Criteria
Positive Features
Contextual fit into neighborhood
Good use of sloped site
Attractive shared exterior access
"Extremely interesting design" . . . "ingenious" . . . "refreshing"
Well-designed interiors; "homey" feeling

Negative Features
Design "unduly complicated"

Observer's Criteria
Positive Features
Fits into neighborhood (size, massing)
"Readable" site layout
Attractive roof deck
Units sensitively oriented to light and views
Positive use of sloped site

Negative Features
Too much facade variety
Color and materials not "homey"
Some entries not private
Patios not private and face north
Communal open space not designed for use (e.g., sitting, socializing)
Numerous potential security hazards

Residents' Criteria
Positive Features
Attractive exterior image
Views to downtown and mountains
Interior layout and size of rooms
Privacy for upper units
Roof decks and upper level balconies

Negative Features
Poor quality construction
Poor upkeep and maintenance
Visual intrusion into lower units
Patios not private and face north
Security problems in lower units

Barclay Infill Townhouses

Designer's Criteria
Low-rise alternative in high-rise neighborhood
Provision of private open space
Front and back entries
Access courtyard to offset density
Choice of views from dwellings
Concern for light penetration into interiors

Jury's Criteria
Positive Features
Good low-rise/high-density solution
Exterior image simple and uncluttered
Respect for neighbors' light and views
Variety of private open spaces

Negative Features
Exterior image "boxlike"
Entrance "mundane"
Poor landscaping

Observer's Criteria
Positive Features
Appearance is unobtrusive and "homelike" compared to adjacent high-rise
Shared access from street is clear
Back/front unit entries clearly differentiated
Some patios well screened for privacy
No ambiguity between public and private space
Ingenious interior layouts

Negative Features
Shared landscaped space too small to be usable
Some windows and patios very close to public accessway
Site feels "crowded"

Residents' Criteria
Positive Features
Privacy and clarity of shared accessway
Well designed for security
Interior layout and dwelling size
Some usable private open space
Shared courtyard/accessway

Negative Features
Some patios lack privacy and sun
A few structural problems
Some leaking roofs/structural problems

Table 2 (cont'd) **Evaluative Criteria**

Alder Bay Co-operative

Designers' Criteria
Liveable affordable housing
High quality urban design
Bay windows and facade color to create "familiar urban quality, reminiscent of earlier architectural mode"
Front entries oriented to pedestrian streets to encourage use
Courtyards designed for visual access
Interior layouts designed for flexibility and spaciousness

Jury's Criteria
Positive Features
"Good design" considering budget constraints
Lively "streetscape"
Attractive unit interiors
Roof decks

Negative Features
Lower units lack privacy
Lack of designated play areas
Shared exterior access stairs unattractive

Observer's Criteria
Positive Features
Visually interesting images
Convenient access to adjacent park and boardwalk
Public to semiprivate (site) transition moderately well handled
Kitchen attractively oriented to pedestrian streets

Negative Features
Ambiguous back/front entries
Narrow and unattractive access stairs
Unclear site circulation and access
Patios lack privacy fencing
Poor courtyard design, not landscaped or detailed for real use
Some windows lack privacy
No play areas on site
Some security problems

Residents' Criteria
Positive Features
Access to adjacent park and play areas
Attractive bay windows
Sense of community
Good views
Pleasant dwelling layout
Roof decks

Negative Features
Courtyards not designed for children's play
Confused pedestrian circulation
Some poor construction features
Exterior access stairs unattractive, unsafe
Unfenced patios
Poor soundproofing

English Bay Village

Designer's Criteria
Mixed-use (housing/commerical) to "humanize and revitalize" downtown
Design to solve recurring urban problem of noise, privacy, and security
Turret design to add interest to urban fabric and marks street intersection
Energy-saving sunrooms

Jury's Criteria
Positive Features
Exterior design is bold and corner location handled well
Street life enhanced by commercial uses
Good use of materials

Negative Features
Commercial uses not well designed
Resident/commercial access not well handled

Observer's Criteria
Positive Features
"Elegant" luxury image
Housing site plan simple and pleasing
Unit entries private and clearly articulated
Private open spaces well screened and oriented to sun
Orientation to quiet, upper level courtyard offsets urban, high-density location
Living areas oriented to sun and view

Negative Features
Shared entry at street level difficult to find
Courtyard landscaped for ornamental rather than functional use
Lack of surveillance of entries may create security problems

Residents' Criteria
Positive Features
Downtown location
Tranquility of upper level courtyard
Interior size and layout
Sunrooms
Adequate privacy

Negative Features
Poor security of units and underground parking
Sunrooms not energy conserving (not double-glazed)
Shared entry at grade difficult to find
Security problems in garage and on roof

Table 2 (cont'd) **Evaluative Criteria**

Meadowlands Co-operative

Entrants' Criteria
Involvement of residents in design process
Residents able to maintain independence while having potential for companionship
All residents have a "bit of a garden"

Jury's Criteria
Positive Features
Development meets its stated social objectives
Design meets financial constraints
No steps for elderly to climb

Negative Features
Design not innovative
Building forms too mundane
Poor site planning
Lack of privacy
Poor detailing (e.g., window shapes, exterior trelliswork)

Observer's Criteria
Positive Features
Wheelchair-accessible housing in suburban setting
Materials, color, and "cottagelike" image creates homelike environment
Variety of orientations compensate for identical building forms
Front/back entries clearly designated
Opportunities for exterior personalization
Patios subtly designed and oriented for privacy
Centrally located community building
Good surveillance potential for security

Negative Features
No sidewalks on access road
Residents may prefer kitchen oriented to street rather than patio
Porches are not roofed

Residents' Criteria
Positive Features
Affordable housing
Well-spaced units
Tranquil setting
Secure feeling
Patios for gardening and sitting
Better than apartment living
No steps, good accessibility

Negative Features
Uncomfortable unit layout, with bedrooms facing front
Unnecessary speed bumps on road ("old people aren't racing")
Cold floors
Porch not roofed