

SAH NOTICES

**1986 Annual Meeting—Washington, DC (April 2-6).** Osmund Overby, University of Missouri, will be general chairman of the meeting. Antoinette Lee, Columbia Historical Society, is serving as local chairman. Headquarters for the meeting will be the Mayflower Hotel.

Several receptions are being planned, including one in the Great Hall of the Pension Building, the home of the National Building Museum. Tours will include the U.S. Capitol Complex, Georgetown, and Washington's early suburbs. Sunday tours will include the great mansions of the Potomac River, Alexandria and Annapolis.

A list of all SAH sessions appeared in the April 1985 *Newsletter*, with the names and addresses of the persons who will chair them. Persons wishing to submit papers for the Washington meeting are reminded that proposals for papers should be sent directly to the persons chairing the sessions; the **deadline is September 13, 1985.**

**The Rosann Berry Annual Meeting Fellowship.** Awarded each year by the SAH to enable a student engaged in advanced graduate study to attend the annual meeting of the Society. For the recipient, the Society will waive all fees and charges connected with the meeting itself, and, in addition, will provide reimbursement for travel, lodging and meals directly related to the meeting, up to a combined total of \$500.00. To be eligible, an applicant must have been a member of SAH for at least one year prior to the meeting; be currently engaged in advanced graduate study (normally beyond the Master's level) that involves some aspect of the history of architecture or of one of the fields closely allied to it; and apply for the Fellowship by using the application form that may be secured from the Executive Secretary, Society of Architectural Historians, 1700 Walnut Street, Suite 716, Philadelphia, PA 19103-6085.

**1987 Annual Meeting—San Francisco, California (April 22-26).** Richard Betts, University of Illinois, will be general chairman of the meeting. Dell Upton, University of California, Berkeley, will serve as local chairman. Headquarters for the meeting will be the Palace Hotel.

**1985 Domestic Tour—Providence/Newport (June 19-23).** William Jordy, Brown University will be leader of the tour. Announcements have been mailed to the membership.

**1986 Foreign Tour—China.** Nancy Steinhardt will be the leader of this tour which will take place during the summer of 1986.



Paulette Olson, Executive Secretary of the Society since 1981, announced her resignation at the January board meeting in New York. She has returned to the midwest and will be married in August to SAH member Robert Jorgenson, who served as Treasurer of the Society from 1971-81.

The Society is most appreciative of the exceptional work that Paulette has done, and she will be missed very much, particularly by the staff in Philadelphia. She brought to the Society a good natured and finely-detailed sense of organization which was enjoyed and admired by all, especially by those who were fortunate enough to be with Paulette on SAH tours. Paulette has made many, many friends in the SAH, so we look forward not only to seeing her at SAH events, but also hearing about her through the SAH family. We wish her our very best.

**1986 Domestic Tour, Southern Indiana (October 14-19).** Tom Slade, Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana is leader of the tour. Areas to be visited include Indianapolis, Columbus, Madison, Jeffersonville, New Harmony, Bloomington and points of interest in between.

**Nominating Committee for 1985/1986 Slate.** Suggestions and recommendations to the committee should be sent to William Drake, c/o Society of Architectural Historians, 1700 Walnut Street, Suite 716, Philadelphia, PA 19103-6085. Other members of the committee are David Gebhard, Dell Upton, Patricia Waddy, and Cynthia Zaitzevsky.

## REPORT OF ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

William Penn Hotel  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
April 19, 1985

The meeting was called to order by President Carol Krinsky.

**President's Report.** Krinsky welcomed SAH members and guests to the 38th annual meeting. General Chairman Osmund Overby and local chairmen Franklin Toker and Richard Cleary were introduced and thanked for the success of the meeting. The new Executive Secretary, David Bahlman, was introduced, followed by a standing ovation for Paulette Olson, who resigned in January after five years with the Society. President Krinsky, for herself and on behalf of the Society, expressed the deepest appreciation to Paulette for the wonderful work she has done. Camille Pello, Assistant to the Executive Secretary, was introduced and thanked for her great success in maintaining smooth operations in the Philadelphia office during the interim period.

**First Vice-President's Report.** Osmund Overby warmly thanked Franklin Toker, Richard Cleary and all of the volunteers who did so much to make the Pittsburgh meeting such a success. Overby then reminded the membership of next year's annual meeting in Washington, DC (April 2-6, 1986). The local chairman for this meeting is Antoinette J. Lee of the Columbia Historical Society.

**Second Vice-President's Report.** Richard Betts reported that the SAH tour of Yugoslavia (May-June, 1985), to be led by Slobodan Curcic is completely filled, and that the announcement of the 1985 domestic tour to Providence and Newport will be mailed within the next week. The Providence/Newport tour will be led by William Jordy of Brown University, and promises to be a very special offering. Betts reminded the membership that the 1986 domestic tour will be to Southern Indiana, and that the 1986 foreign tour will be to China. Details on both will be forthcoming.

**Treasurer's Report.** President Krinsky introduced Treasurer Paul Henderson, and with great regret informed the membership that Paul had decided to step down from his position as Treasurer. Krinsky lauded Paul's abilities and thanked him for the wonderful help that he has given the Society over the past four years. The new Treasurer of the Society will be Mr. Carter Page, of the Chicago firm of Murphy/Jahn.

Mr. Henderson reported that the Society almost "broke even" in 1984, but that it was necessary to borrow some of the 1984 interest and dividends from the Endowment Fund. The fund is now at \$148,700. The Rosann Berry Memorial Fund received \$343.00 in contributions and \$1,000 in dividend income on its principal. Mr. Henderson reported that rising *Journal* costs and the cancelled tour to Mexico were the main factors contributing to the 1984 shortfall.

**Secretary's Report.** Eileen Michels informed the membership that currently there are 26 SAH chapters, and that the fifth annual Chapters' Representatives meeting held that morning had presented a very positive forum for the exchange of ideas among chapter representatives. Secretary Michels expressed her appreciation in having the assistance of a special Chapters Committee, which has established procedures by which a representative of the SAH chapter is chosen to attend each SAH Board meeting as a non-voting observer.

**Journal Editor's Report.** Betty MacDougall reported on the progress she has made in getting the publication of the *Journal* back on schedule. The May issue will, in fact, be mailed to the membership in May. Betty thanked Moira Duggan, Copy Editor, for her much appreciated help. MacDougall also reported that nearly eighty manuscript submissions have been made, and that she is in the process of reviewing them.

**Newsletter Editor's Report.** Geraldine Fowle thanked Publications Editor Judith Holliday, and Assistant Editors Cydney Millstein and Ellen Ugucioni for their able assistance.

**Buildings of the United States.** Adolf Placzek, Editor-in-Chief, gave an update on the project. The Editorial Board has approved publishing arrangements with Oxford University Press, and a contract is about to be signed. The Society is awaiting results of grant proposals to both the NEH and American Express. Four volumes of the series are well underway.

**Founders' Award.** Christine Smith, Georgetown University, was awarded a certificate and the third annual Ann Van Zanten Memorial medal for her article "East or West in 11th-Century Pisan Culture: The Dome of the Cathedral and its Western Counterparts." Ms. Smith's article appeared in the October 1984 issue of the *JSAH*. The selection committee was chaired by Jessie Poesch. Members were David Brownlee and Mardges Bacon.

**Alice Davis Hitchcock Book Award.** The 1984 Alice Davis Hitchcock Book Award was presented to Paul Venable Turner, Stanford University, for his book *Campus: An American Planning Tradition*, published by The Architectural History Foundation and MIT Press. The selection committee was chaired by Richard Pommer. Members were Reyner Banham and Dora Wiebenson.

**Nominating Committee.** The 1984 Nominating Committee (James Ackerman, Catherine Bishir, Mirza Dickel, William Drake, and chaired by Adolf Placzek), prepared the following slate of officers and directors, which was presented by Chairman Placzek: Carol Herselle Krinsky, President; Osmund Overby, First Vice-President; Richard Betts, Second Vice-President; Eileen Michels, Secretary; Carter Page, Treasurer; Directors Lawrence Booth, Robertson Collins, Phyllis Lambert, Margaret Supplee Smith, Franklin Toker, Dell Upton, Karel Yasko. Secretary Michels called for a vote. Unanimous in favor of the presented slate with the addition of 19 proxies.

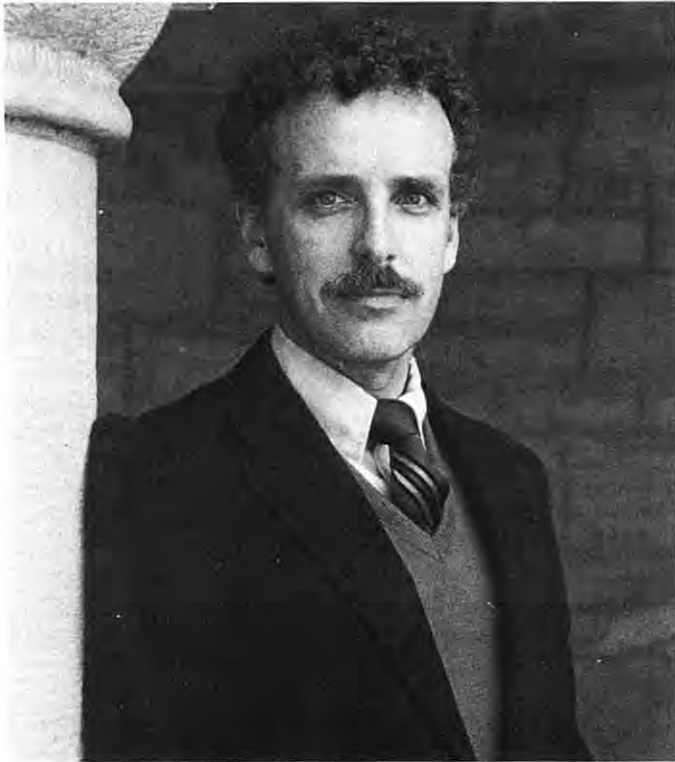
President Krinsky thanked the Board of Directors and the officers for their work, and adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Michels, Secretary  
April 19, 1985

## SCHOOLS AND CONFERENCES

Two upcoming programs of interest at the Winterthur Museum and Gardens, Winterthur, DE 19735: a conference on **Changing Perspectives in American Furniture Study**, Nov. 8-9 (contact: Office of Advanced Studies), and the annual Winter Institute, **Two Centuries of the Decorative Arts in America**, Jan. 3-24, 1986 (contact: Reservations Office, 302/654-1548). Deadline: Sept. 16.



#### HITCHCOCK AWARD

Paul Venable Turner, Associate Professor in the Department of Art at Stanford University, received the Society of Architectural Historian's Alice Davis Hitchcock Book Award for his book *Campus: An American Planning Tradition*, published in 1984 by The Architectural History Foundation and MIT Press. The prize is awarded annually for the most distinguished work of scholarship in the history of architecture by a North American scholar during the two preceding years. Professor Turner's book is the first comprehensive study of the American campus, and traces this distinctively American type of architectural planning from colonial times to the present.

Born in Schenectady, New York, Professor Turner received his Ph.D. in Fine Arts from Harvard University in 1971. Since 1971, he has taught in the Department of Art at Stanford University, and is also the author of *The Founders & the Architects: The Design of Stanford University* (Stanford, 1976), and *The Education of Le Corbusier* (New York, 1977).

Professor Turner has been the recipient of many notable fellowships, including those from the Pew Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities, which have supported research for his forthcoming monograph on Joseph-Jacques Ramée.



#### FOUNDERS' AWARD

Christine Smith has been named recipient of the 1984 Founders' Award of the Society of Architectural Historians. This citation is presented each year for the best article on the history of architecture published in the Society's *Journal* by a young scholar.

Ms. Smith received the award for her article, "East or West in 11th-Century Pisan Culture: The Dome of the Cathedral and its Western Counterparts," which appeared in the October 1984 issue of the *JSAH*.

In this article, Ms. Smith presents evidence to suggest that the dome of the Cathedral of Pisa at its completion was probably housed in a lantern tower, arcaded and with a pyramidal roof, a modification of the original concept when the foundations were laid sometime after 1063—and that the dome has only been exposed since the late 14th century.

Christine Smith received her Ph.D. in 1975 from The Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, and is currently a Professional Lecturer at Georgetown University, and has taught at Georgetown's Charles Augustus Strong Center in Fiesole since 1981.

#### NEW PUBLICATION

The Construction History Group announces the publication of the first issue of a new journal: *Construction History*. Dealing with all aspects of the history of building and construction, including economic, technical and organizational, as well as studies of individual firms and unions, the journal also includes abstracts of periodical literature and book reviews. Contents of the first two issues include Summerson on construction, Trowell on architects and

speculative housing in 19th-century Leeds, Cooney on innovation in building since 1945 and Yeomans on early carpenters' manuals. Founded in 1982, the CHS also publishes a quarterly newsletter, as well as holding seminars and other events. Annual membership, which includes copies of the journal, is £7.00. Contact: Peter Harlow, Chartered Institute of Building, Englemere, Kings Ride, Ascot, Berks SL5 8BJ.



## SAH PLACEMENT SERVICE BULLETIN\*

\*Dot indicates first listing.

*Deadline for submission of material to the Placement Service Bulletin is the 15th of the preceding even-numbered month. Contact the SAH office in Philadelphia for full information about the categories and conditions for inclusion in the listings.*

### BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS

Austin, Texas 78711. CURATOR OF THE CAPITOL. The Architect of the Capitol's Office of the State of Texas is seeking a highly qualified professional curator to develop and maintain the decorative arts collection of the historic Capitol in Austin. Work will involve developing and maintaining a registration system; accessioning, preservation, cataloguing and utilization of collections, exhibits, and publications. Applicant must have four years experience in museum curatorial work (or historic interiors) and a masters degree from a recognized decorative arts program. Salary negotiable. Send resume. EO

Apply: Architect of the Capitol, P.O. Box 13286, Capitol Station, Austin, Texas 78711.

• Indianapolis, Indiana 46204. Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission. ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR. Assists in program planning, budget, and personnel matters. Coordinates the Certificate of Appropriateness, Technical Assistance, Minimum Maintenance, and Hearing Officer programs. Develops design guidelines and provides architectural review for major redevelopment projects. B.A. in Architecture, Historic Preservation, Public Administration or Public Affairs, M.A. preferred. Minimum three years related work experience. Must know *Secretary of the Interior's Standards* and their application. Excellent communication skills. Architect registration useful. Send resume, salary requirements. Deadline: June 15, 1985.

Apply: City of Indianapolis, Central Personnel, 1541 City-County Building, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204.

• Chicago, Illinois 60616. Chicago Architecture Foundation. EDUCATION DIRECTOR. Position coordinates education programs informing the public of Chicago's architectural and urban planning traditions. Director is responsible for planning and implementing exhibits and related lectures in the Foundation's architectural gallery, the annual 15 week docent training program, classes for school groups, occasional public lectures, and new tours. Requirements include Masters Degree in Architectural History, Preservation, Museum Studies or Museum Education; or Bachelors Degree and qualifying experience.

Application deadline: July 15, 1985. Send resume with three letters of recommendation to: Executive Director, Chicago Architecture Foundation, 1800 South Prairie Avenue, Chicago, IL 60616.

• Albany, New York 12206. Historic Albany Foundation, Inc. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. Position opening September 1, 1985. The Executive Director is the Chief Executive Officer of the Foundation, which offers a broad range of preservation programs and services, reports directly to its Board of Directors and presently is assisted by a staff of seven and volunteers. Candidates must have a strong professional background in preservation or a related field and proven administrative ability. Resource development ability is essential, including fundraising, marketing and promotion. Must possess strong oral and written communications skills, especially in the areas of public and media relations, and writing for publications.

Application deadline: June 28, 1985. EOE Send resume and salary requirements to: Search Committee, Historic Albany Foundation, Inc., 44 Central Avenue, Albany, New York 12206.

## Curator of prints and drawings



**Centre Canadien d'Architecture /  
Canadian Centre for Architecture**  
Montréal, Québec, Canada

The Centre Canadien d'Architecture / Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal, a study centre and museum, is seeking a Curator with extensive museum experience to assume responsibility for a major international collection of prints and drawings dating from the 15th century to the present.

The Curator will report to the Director and be responsible for the development of the Prints and Drawings collection, acquisitions, cataloguing, research required for publications and exhibitions as well as maintenance and conservation. The Curator directs and coordinates activities of a department of five.

The Curator will develop and maintain standards pertaining to the collection in close cooperation with the Departments of Archives, Conservation, Photography, Library, Exhibitions and Publications and Advanced Studies Program at the CCA. The Curator will also develop and maintain professional relationships with related national and international institutions.

### Requirements:

Candidates must have a Ph.D. in architectural history, as well as solid curatorial experience with prints and drawings in a museum drawing collection. Fluency in French and English, spoken and written, is essential.

The salary level is competitive and the CCA offers excellent personnel benefits.

Please submit your curriculum vitae and references, before June 28, 1985 to the following address:

Director of Administration  
Centre Canadien d'Architecture /  
Canadian Centre for Architecture  
1440, rue Sainte-Catherine ouest  
2nd Floor  
Montréal, Québec H3G 1R8

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 1700 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 • Carol Herselle Krinsky, President • Richard W. Longstreth, Chairman of the Committee • Editor: Michael A. Tomlan, Graduate Program in Historic Preservation Planning, College of Architecture, Art and Planning, Cornell University, 214 W. Sibley Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853.

People interested in a subject justifiably seek to learn its language so that they may discover more and communicate with others who share their predilections. Regardless of what the subject is, categorical terms provide a key linguistic shorthand whereby a multitude of characteristics, relationships, and ideas can be conveyed in a few key words. Richard W. Longstreth, Director of the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation at The George Washington University explores the use of stylistic terminology, an emblem of specialized knowledge in architectural history.

### The Problem with "Style"

"Style" is irresistible, or so it seems. Practitioners have discussed both past and contemporary work in stylistic terms since the late eighteenth century. The delineation and analysis of stylistic properties have been central concerns of art history for almost as long. By comparison, other categorical constructs have been given much less exposure. The concept of type based on building form is quite a recent development, derived from methods employed in the social and physical sciences. This approach to classification was initiated in the 1930s; it has only entered widespread scholarly use during the last two decades and, with few exceptions, remains outside the realm of popular literature. Type based on building elements connoting function is of course a much older idea, the origins of which date from the same period as those of style. Classification by this means received considerable attention from architects associated with the French academic tradition. Since World War II, a growing number of scholars have studied the history of individual building types and have tended to avoid theoretical classificatory schema. Yet an emphasis on function has rarely been a conspicuous part of writing intended for a general audience. (Much to its credit, the National Trust has recently published popular histories of city halls and rural schools, as well as a concise lexicon of common building types.) Technical classification systems have remained almost exclusively within the province of the engineer and the serious student of industrial archaeology. The language and indeed the concerns of this realm probably seem the most obtuse to the layperson. Style is the obvious choice for the individual who wishes to learn something about architecture.

The enormous growth of popular interest in the subject during recent years—an interest that has encouraged and in turn has received added impetus from the preservation movement—has not surprisingly generated an abundance of published material on "style." Guides to architectural styles began to appear in the late 1960s and have enjoyed brisk sales ever since—40,000 copies of one such volume have been printed since 1977. Dozens of regional and local studies include and often emphasize "style." Preservation newsletters issued by state offices and non-profit organizations have joined the march with serial features. "Style" never had it so good.

By offering fodder so enthusiastically received, preservationists may feel that they have made significant advances in nurturing public support for their cause. Ample ammunition exists to defend this rationale. Architectural history is a complex and, for the novice, a perplexing field. Nevertheless, grassroots interest has swelled and many preservationists believe they must sustain that interest by using terms the public can understand. From this perspective, a letter to the editors of *Historic Preservation*, in all likelihood reflecting thoughts shared by thousands of subscribers, sums up "style's" immense practical value: "I want to express my appreciation for 'What Style Is It?' I have often looked for a book showing architectural styles so that I would learn to identify them easily. The ones [books] I have seen go into so much detail and have pictures of details so that [sic] the woods are lost for the trees."

The preoccupation with "style" does not end at the popular level. "Style" has infiltrated the working sector of preservation, becoming a stock tool-of-the-trade in numerous survey and documentation programs. "Style" sections can be found on many state and local survey forms and a similar component will soon be an integral part of forms used to nominate properties to the National Register. In some circles, "style" has become the focus of architectural history to the point that one graduate course in American work places "special emphasis on the applicability of style recognition."

The fact that style guides, inaugurated to assist the novice, have become important texts for the discipline as it is practiced in preservation should serve as a warning signal. Few people in the preservation field would knowingly tolerate, let alone encourage, using amateurish techniques for development strategies, legal statutes, design criteria, or materials conservation standards. One reason for this disparity may be that history of any sort appears to have ever less bearing on preservation's priorities. If one has a somewhat clouded view of the past, it does not necessarily inhibit a successful preservation effort. The movement has always received much of its impetus from the concerned citizen, and even today many of its leaders have no more than a general knowledge of history. Thousands of buildings have been saved because people cared about them, not because they had a profound understanding of architecture. Such rationalizations can be persuasive, but only up to a point. A lack of sound historical perspective can open the door to needless distortions of the past in rehabilitation and restoration work—a tendency that is occurring on a larger scale than many people care to admit. Furthermore, overemphasis of "style" can encourage preservation's advocates and supporters alike to think of architecture in a superficial way, which, in turn, could jeopardize the movement in years ahead. Some of the underlying reasons why second-rate history is bad for the discipline are closely tied to those that make it bad for a general audience.



I have placed “style” in quotes because what generally passes for style in this context is often a debased and sometimes a fallacious version of concepts that have been used by scholars for generations. Style is not a thing; it is comprised of ideas developed to facilitate the interpretation of physical qualities. There never has been a consensus on the precise meaning of style. Over three decades ago, in what is still one of the best essays on the subject, Meyer Shapiro reviewed no less than seven approaches to stylistic classification that had been advanced by art historians during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>2</sup> Each approach, he concluded, had strengths but also weaknesses; a redefinition or new, consistent theory of style was needed. Shapiro reiterated that despite traditional differences in approach, one can posit common attributes: style comprises more than conventions of form; it entails “a system of forms with a quality and a meaningful expression through which the personality of the artist and the broad outlook of the group are visible” and is “a vehicle of expression within the group, communicating and fixing certain values of religious, social, and moral life through the emotional suggestiveness of forms.” Furthermore, styles can encompass the “qualities shared by all the arts of a culture during a significant span of time.”

Style thus may be very particular, connoting strong characteristics in the work of one person (e.g., Michelangelo, Le Corbusier) or of a small group (e.g., the creators of the Court Style or Art Nouveau). Style can also refer to broad and generalized tendencies occurring over many decades or centuries, as is indicated by terms such as Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque. Pertaining to phenomena of vastly different scales and involving intangible as well as tangible qualities, the ideas that style represents are complex and not easily confined to neat boundaries.

Additional factors must be considered when addressing the matter of style. Although the term may have value when applied to the work of certain key artistic personalities, it does not follow that the products of all or even most people are best understood in this way. Likewise, some groups may have a distinct style, but others may not. Finally, style used in the broadest sense is not monolithic; it refers to important characteristics—some would say the most important characteristics—but not all aspects of a given era. It must also be remembered that scholarly conceptions of style were formulated in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to analyze a select range of work belonging for the most part to the realm of high art. The periods under study were also well-removed in time and were purportedly more homogeneous in their artistic content. Stylistic concepts were not devised to address the then-prevalent practice of eclecticism which, in its use of references to numerous historical precedents and its pursuit of varied expressive modes, was quite unlike the perceived qualities of earlier periods. Nor could style concepts have anticipated modernism, which has been just as multi-faceted in its complexion, albeit in different ways.

With modernism, too, came a hostility toward the very idea of style. When Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson employed art historical methods to define one of modernism’s thrusts, which they believed was becoming a new International Style—a universal manner of expression destined to flourish for years to come—the initiative was derided by members of the very circle it sought to canonize.

The modernists’ emphatic rejection of style has no doubt had an impact on concerns of art and architectural historians during the past several decades. Even as Shapiro delineated the need for fresh thinking on the nature of style, young scholars were less and less interested in the matter. That withdrawal is succinctly reflected in another letter to *Historic Preservation*, this time from Christian Otto. He criticized a recent article not because of its

interpretation of style, but because of the fact that style was being featured:

I am dismayed to see *HP* begin a series on architectural styles. Almost a century ago, our historic laundry was rinsed in stylistic analysis by the German art historian Wolfllin [Heinrich Wolfllin developed a new approach toward stylistic analysis; he did not invent the process itself]. As he and his students handed down this wet wash its messy underside became apparent. Neither they nor anyone since has been able to avoid vagueness in stylistic categories. And the process of categorization has been based on suspect methodology, with the notion of “development” in the Darwinian sense. The architectural condition can be studied by means of other interesting and informative lines of inquiry—the history of ideas, a psychological analysis of art and creativity, or the social context of architecture, addressing such concerns as patronage, purpose, personality and meaning. In pursuing these questions, historians are grappling with the richness and complexity of their discipline.<sup>3</sup>

Thus as grassroots interest in architecture was swelling, many historians who believed style had become an academic imbroglio turned to new avenues of exploration. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century architecture has been intensely studied during the past several decades, but seldom with much emphasis on stylistic classification, which in any event is not well-suited to the material.

As a result of these tendencies, the authors of style guides have had to devise a system based on fragments. They could rely on a scattering of terms frequently used to identify certain phases, movements or interludes—some of the nomenclature long-standing (e.g., Gothic Revival, Queen Anne), others new (e.g., Shingle Style). Much territory remained uncharted, however, lacking both thorough research and appropriate names, so that a host of additional categories had to be created *di nouvo* to fill in at least some of the obvious gaps. The whole process appears to have been expeditious and pragmatic, responding to an immediate need: there are numerous buildings which possess certain obvious characteristics and, therefore, can be given a name, which is called a “style.” An approach of this nature may have some merits. Few people would dispute the convenience of being able to refer to a building as Mission Style or Art Deco, knowing that others will have a general idea of what that means. Yet does an architectural quilt placed in this manner constitute an acceptable whole, clarifying intricate issues in a consistent way? Without extensive study of the period itself, without the focused rethinking of style concepts that Shapiro advocated, without even a delineated methodology, style guides give the reader little substance. Basic questions probably have not been raised and certainly they have not been answered. How is style best defined for work of the past two centuries? Should categories be broad, narrow, or both? What are the advantages and disadvantages in each case? Is style a concept best limited to major works or can it be applied to all architecture? Are existing terms such as Federal, Italianate, or Arts and Crafts appropriate within the context of an inclusive system? What should we be learning about this work, and how can style assist us? Do we in fact need style, or is it best relegated to the annals of history?

Among the problems that arise when “style” is freely concocted is the encouragement of an impulse to create even more categories without much thought as to what collective purpose they serve. From the start, the style guides have tended toward hair-splitting divisions. There are attempts, for example, to distinguish between “Italian (in the U.S.?) Villa and Italianate” (a tower seems to be the essential difference); between “Italian Villa, Renaissance Revival—Roman Tuscan, and Renaissance Revival—North Italian;” or between “Beaux-Arts Classicism, Second Renaissance Revival, and Neo-Classical Revival.” Yet even such thin slicing

has yielded a patchy selection. Efforts to broaden the coverage have produced a plethora of new ingredients in the architectural gumbo. A regional study offers "National Park Style" and a "Half Modern Style," in addition to "Modernistic Style." In another instance a vaguely Richardsonian building is designated "Celtic Norman or Hiberno-Romanesque style," and a genre of rather conventional houses from the early twentieth century are in the "Shirtwaist Style." One local survey provides no less than seventy-five options under "style."

From the start, too, the guides have been inconsistent in the way "style" is derived. Some categories are based on an architect's personal style: "Wrightian, Miesian." Sometimes form becomes the central factor: "Octagon Mode." In yet other instances, "style" comes from popular generic terms that suggest type as an idea: "Bungalow," or the more clinical "Bungaloid." All restraint has been abandoned in some recent publications. A few of the categories used in two of them will suffice to make the point: "Shaker Style, Shanty Style, Cottage Style, False Front Style, Fantasy Style (which includes the Brown Derby and Bruce Goff's work), Rammed Earth Style, Mobile Home Style, Prefabricated Style, A-Frame Style;" and "Edwardian Villa, Georgian Revival-Romanesque, Beaux-Arts Manhattan, Millionaire's Colonial, Tudor Nouveau, American Prelude, The Natural House, The Regional House, The Articulated House, The Essential House, The New Roof, The In-Joke." The confusion is heightened by the fact that each successive style guide offers some new variations on (or substitutions for) the terms propagated by its predecessors. The Park Service is seeking to control this taxonomic melee by initiating thirty-eight standardized stylistic classifications for National Register listings. Yet some divisions retain a derivational inconsistency and are redundant: "Commercial Style, Chicago, Skyscraper." Moreover, a very large number of examples will inevitably have to be dumped into the amorphous realm of exceptions: "Other, No Style."

Another fundamental problem resulting from the absence of a clear method in these books is that they tend to ignore underlying commonalities of periods which can entail shared values, ideas, and intentions in design, and shared characteristics in the way form, space, scale, and ornament are handled. For all phases of eclecticism, these commonalities transcend the specific historical references used. A Gothic villa by Richard Upjohn bears much greater affinity to an Italianate one by John Notman than to buildings by Leopold Eidlitz or William Potter, Ralph Adams Cram or James Gamble Rogers. Yet the fact that such work makes reference to that of the Middle Ages can be the overriding consideration in style guides: one volume includes work by both A. J. Davis and Frank Furness under "Gothic Revival." Furthermore, new terms are introduced such as "Late Gothic Revival," which implies that the legacy of Cram and his followers is best characterized as the final phase of a "style" begun a century earlier. At the same time, there is at best only vague indication that work such as that by Cram, Charles Platt, and Paul Cret possesses numerous qualities that are closely related.

An even more disturbing pattern emerges when the products of European colonists are grouped with work done in the early twentieth century which, to a limited degree, drew on Colonial imagery. In one book, San Estevan at Acoma, eighteenth-century houses in St. Augustine, designs by Irving Gill, and the exotica of Palm Beach from the 1920s all fall under the heading of "Spanish Colonial." Fundamental differences not only in intent, planning, and expression, but also in culture are ignored. If such factors are not central determinants of style, what are? One does not have to peruse the guides for long to discover the surrogate.

The idea that style equals decoration and selected motifs is implicit in these books, and sometimes the analogy is made in

such a matter-of-fact way that the authors must assume most people will take it for granted. One volume entitles the first chapter "Style: The Fashions of American Houses," explaining that "most surviving American houses are not folk houses but are styled; that is, they were built with at least some attempt at being fashionable." Fashions may come and go, but it is intimated here that they also come back again and again—a process that has been occurring for centuries. After the introduction of genealogical roots—"Ancient Classical, Renaissance Classical, Medieval, Modern, and Other"—the text proceeds to schematize connections. Thus the Farnesina, Westover, an Italianate suburban villa, a large country residence by Delano & Aldrich, and a developer's "Colonial" tract house emerge as members of the same group. The family trees are then cross-pollinated with chronological periods creating hybrids such as "Eclectic Houses," which in this case does not include work of the pre- and post-Civil War eras, but does not encompass that by Wright, Schindler, and Gropius.

Form and materials can also contribute to fatuous linkages. In one case a "theory" is introduced, although never explained, that the false fronts common to numerous wood-frame buildings erected during the second half of the nineteenth century are direct descendants of the stepped gables found on work in New Amsterdam. A few pages later "The Log Tradition and Pioneer House" category presents dugouts and sod buildings along with almost anything constructed of logs, including some of the enormous summer camps in the Adirondacks.

Style as ornament, style as motifs, style as fashion, style as materials—all suggest that style is but a garnish, applied independent of any underlying thought or order, and that it is subject to change at the slightest whim. Add a portico and the work becomes Neo-classical, an *espadaña* and a little stucco and it is Mission Style, a mock thatch roof and it is Tudor. To be sure, motifs used as so many interchangeable parts can be found in all phases of eclecticism. J. C. Loudon's influential *Encyclopedia* (1833) diagrammed how the same basic box could be dressed in many historical "jackets" according to the client's taste. A. J. Davis boasted that he could design houses for persons planning to build in Llewellyn Park in any mode they desired: "American Log Cabin, Farm House, English Cottage, Collegiate Gothic, Manor House, French Suburban, Swiss Chalet, Swiss Mansion, Lombard Italian, Tuscan from Pliny's Villa at Ostia, Ancient Etruscan, Suburban Greek, Oriental, Moorish, Round, Castellated . . ." But Davis and other talented colleagues of his generation knew better, for they also shared an overriding concern for creating varied manners of expression to reflect programmatic factors such as size, function, site, and cost. While the repertoire of historical references was much increased by the end of the century, leading architects became quite explicit that this inclusivity was not tantamount to practicing in dozens of styles. To claim otherwise would indicate that their primary objective was replication. Whatever may be Romanesque, or Georgian, or Spanish Colonial about them is subsidiary to what is new when one considers all aspects. On the other hand, most style guides probe no further than parts of the surface. They seldom include interiors and, with one exception, almost never provide plans. When virtually all the context and most of the architectural fabric are ignored, "style" is left a lonely and trivial thing.

Style guides are probably used most by people who wish to learn more about the buildings in their locale, and yet these books pay little attention to the myriad differences that exist from one part of the country to another. Documenting locational variations fully would be far beyond the scope of these books. Nevertheless, when the very existence of such variety is discounted, readers can get the impression that "styles" coated the nation in more-or-less uniform waves and even infer that a place is architecturally



impoverished if it is not well represented by a large number of "styles."

A related danger is the perpetuation of the idea that pure "styles" comprise the prevalent tendencies in architecture and, by extension, are the most important ones. Much significant work designed by architects with a strong personal style is omitted from this schema. More onerous for preservation work is the failure to emphasize that pure style, however it is defined, is very much the exception. This is especially true when examining popular design. The most casual study of urban and rural areas will confirm that most of what has been built falls outside the strict confines of the usual categories. One book takes a stab at explaining "stylistic mixtures" by noting that sometimes "styles" were "blended" in the original design and that on other occasions the result stems from remodeling. This section constitutes eight out of more than 500 pages, intimating that regardless of the reasons for "blending," the product is of peripheral concern. One might also deduce from style guides that non-conforming work is inferior. Both their structure and content encourage people not to look at whole buildings, but to stalk features which match those in the illustrations.

If "style" is a poor guide to Main Street, it can get one hopelessly lost in industrial quarters, amid working-class neighborhoods, along the highway, or on the farm. In such places "style" often has little or nothing to do with the salient architectural qualities, and attempts to apply such labels can only distort or debase the work at hand. One recent effort to include vernacular examples simply results in the creation of more meaningless categories such as "Folk Victorian—a style . . . defined by the presence of Victorian decorative detailing on simple folk house forms, which are generally much less elaborated than the Victorian styles they seek to mimic." In another case, work related to industry and transportation is placed at the end of the book under the title "Utilitarian." Windmills, bridges, factories, barns, railroad stations, lighthouses, diners, steel mills, oil derricks, and a host of other types are gathered together not only because they fall outside the standard view of genteel architecture, but also because they are not readily classified by "style." Yet when the bulk of a text *is* stylistically organized, the exceptions are given an odorous tint. Although it is not nearly as blatant, such relegation to the back of the architectural bus echoes the once common attitude Europeans had toward non-Western cultures. Many editions of Sir Banister Fletcher's *History of Architecture* (1896), for instance, introduced the concluding section, devoted to "The Non-Historical Styles," by stating:

A History of the world's architecture would be incomplete if we did not pass in review not only those allied and progressive styles which we have designated as Historical, but also those other styles—Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Central American, and Saracenic—which remain detached from Western Art and exercised little direct influence on it, and which we therefore term Non-Historical.<sup>5</sup>

(Fletcher, incidentally, considered "constructive" aspects of architecture to form the essence of style: "in the East decorative schemes seem generally to have outweighed all other considerations;" this aspect comprises the "essential difference between Historical and Non-Historical architecture.")

It is ironic that books written with the admirable intention of encouraging people to look at the architecture around them employ a technique that ignores so much and depicts the rest in a

manner that gives little insight on its historic significance. One pathetic result of this approach is to have an extensive survey conducted and then published with the main emphasis on "style." A rich local legacy is devalued in the process, for the things that are there become important not so much for what they tell us about architecture, society or place, as for the degree to which they can be stuck into so many stylistic pigeonholes.

Style, like type, can be useful as long as its structure is kept consistent, simple, diagrammatic, and responsive to modifications. If style is applied to the architectural mainstream, it should be treated as a hypothetical model based on some evidence, tested in the field, and altered as the situation warrants. All such categorical systems are but a beginning; once digested they may afford an instructive point of departure for the intricate realm of the real stuff. When placed in a proper perspective, style can indeed further one's understanding; as an end unto itself, this creature merely intensifies the quagmire. There is nothing simple about the history of architecture, but its aspects—including style, structure, systems, function, patronage, and symbol—can be presented in a clear, straightforward language that the public finds engaging. To accomplish this balance is no small challenge; it is, however, an imperative one. The integrity of the discipline as it is practiced in preservation is at stake, and so is the subject matter. When people eventually get tired of looking for this or that embellishing motif, will they understand that our architectural heritage is comprised of more than a collage of "styles?"

Richard W. Longstreth  
Washington, D.C.

### Guidelines for Submission to the *Forum*

The purpose of the *Forum* is to serve as a platform for the exchange of ideas and viewpoints on the many preservation issues which concern the Society. Contributors should address an issue or take a position on a problem which is of widespread importance and interest to architectural historians as well as others in the preservation field. Opinions should be supported by reasoned argument. If a case study is presented it should be thoroughly grounded in a broader, more meaningful context.

The editors, in cooperation with the contributor of a lead essay, will seek written responses from other members of the Society in order to provide a balanced discussion and to stimulate further thought on the subject. Unsolicited viewpoints on a specific topic previously published in the *Forum* will be included at the editors' discretion.

The initial essay should be approximately 700 words to allow adequate space for two or three respondents whose contributions should be approximately 250 to 300 words. In general, the text should conform to the editorial guidelines for the *SAH Journal*. Contributors should send two copies of their typed, double-spaced manuscripts directly to the Editor of the *Forum*. Photographs should be clearly labeled black-and-white prints, with glossy finish, no smaller than 5 x 7 inches.

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A limited number of all the back issues of the *Forum* are available for distribution, and may be obtained by writing directly to the Editor.



## BOOKS AND ARTICLES

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## MUSEUMS AND EXHIBITIONS

**Venturi, Rauch and Scott Brown: A Generation of Architecture, 1964-1984**, organized and circulated by the Kranert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, is on view at the Octagon Museum, Washington, until June 9. An illustrated catalog is available.

**The Painted House**, featuring 19th-20th century English and American books on house design and organized by SAHer Edward Kaufman, is on display in the Library of the University of Chicago through Sept. 20. For further information, phone 312/962-8705.

**Beatrix Farrand's American Landscapes: Her Gardens and Her Campuses**, featuring the work of the only woman among the Founding Fellows of the American Society of Landscape Architects, will be at Wave Hill, 675 W. 252nd St., Bronx, NY 10471 (212/549-3200), through Aug. 4. Included among her significant commissions are the Graduate College at Princeton, the Memorial Quadrangle at Yale, the Morgan Library, portions of the campuses at Oberlin, Hamilton, Vassar, and the University of Chicago, the Rockefeller Gardens at Mt. Desert Island, and Dumbarton Oaks.

**Selections from the Architectural Collection: Interior Drawings by Arthur Hertz** will be on display at the Chicago Historical Society, North Ave. and Clark St., through October 27. Trained in Vienna, Hertz came to Chicago in

1892 to design several of the German pavilions at the World's Columbian Exposition and stayed on in the city designing primarily private homes and churches.

Two new circulating exhibitions organized by the National Building Museum are available for six-week bookings from Fall 1985 through 1987: **The Contemporary Terra Cotta Competition**, featuring works designed for the first national competition to focus on this material, and **Samuel Yellin, Metalworker**, surveying the work of an early 20th-century virtuoso whose favorite medium was iron. Contact Anne D. Nissen, NBM, Pension Building, Judiciary Square, NW, Washington, DC 20001 (202/272-2448).

**Modernism in America** (see *NSAH*, Feb. 1985, p. 2) will be at the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va. Sept. 6-Oct. 21, and Goucher College, Md. Nov. 1-Dec. 31.

The **National Building Museum**, Judiciary Square, NW, Washington, DC 20001 (202/272-2448), will open its first exhibition galleries on Sept. 20, 1985 with four exhibitions, the first three closing, Dec. 28, the last one open indefinitely: (1) **Building Our National Image: Architectural Drawings for the American Republic, 1789-1914**, including ninety drawings of federal buildings, (2) **Samuel Yellin: Master Metalworker**, (3) **Models of the Brooklyn Bridge**, seven full-scale three dimensional models, and (4) **The Pension Building: Its Design, Construction, and Renovation**, a permanent exhibition explaining the historic landmark building that now houses the NBM.



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## NEW EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

David Bahlman, known to those of you who were on the 1981 tour to Japan and Virginia, has, as of January 26th, accepted the position of Executive Secretary of the SAH. He has been a member of the SAH since 1975, when he was a graduate student in architectural history at the University of Pennsylvania. Mr. Bahlman comes to the SAH after three years' experience in arts management at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York, most recently as Associate Director of Public Relations for the New York Philharmonic. He has also been the President of the Mozart Society of Philadelphia since 1980. We are delighted to have him back with us.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

The Society for Commercial Archaeology and the Art Deco Society of Washington request proposals for papers on **historical and preservation issues related to Art Deco commercial architecture 1920-1950** for a one-day symposium to be held in Washington, D.C., Nov. 16, 1985. Send one-page abstract for 20-25 minute talk to Susan Shearer, 3900 Connecticut Ave., N.W., #202-F, Washington, DC 20008. Proposals for shorter talks are also welcome (please specify length), as well as proposals for complete sessions—theme, moderator and 2-3 papers. Deadline: August 15.

Papers in **all aspects of architectural glass** are invited for the meeting of the University Art Association of Canada, Ottawa, November 14-17, 1985. Send one-page abstracts to M.R. Bismanis, Department of Visual Arts, University of Regina, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada S4S 0A2. Deadline: September 1.

The World Planning and Housing Congress, to be held in Adelaide, South Australia, Sept. 28-Oct. 3, 1986, is seeking papers on **Innovation in Planning and Housing**. The four basic sub-themes are: the form of innovation, social forces behind changes, how innovation occurs, and the role of technology. The emphasis will be on case studies and practical topics, such as Low-Cost Housing, Land Tenure, Planning Practice, and Housing and Planning Services. Contact: Congress Secretariat/International Convention Management Services Pty. Ltd./GPO Box 2609, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia 2001. Deadline: Sept. 30, 1985.

**Victorians Abroad**, treating such varied aspects of British Victorian life abroad as imperialism, emigration, exploration, tourism, and colonial architecture, will be the topic of

the tenth annual meeting of the Midwest Victorian Studies Association in Cincinnati, April 25-26, 1986. Ten-page papers or two-page abstracts should be sent to Kristine Ottesen Garrigan, MVSA Executive Secretary, Dept. of English and Communication, DePaul University, 2323 North Seminary Avenue, Chicago, IL 60614. Deadline: November 15.

## FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

The **Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (CASVA)**, at the National Gallery of Art announces deadlines for its next series of awards. Although normally awarded for an academic year, **Samuel H. Kress Senior Fellowships** (intended primarily to support research related to objects in the National Gallery's collection) and **Ailsa Mellon Bruce Senior Fellowships** may also be awarded for up to two years or for a single academic semester/quarter. **Visiting Senior Fellowships** are for a maximum of 60 days, and **Associate Appointments** are for periods of from one month to an academic year. Contact CASVA, NGA, Washington, DC 20565 (202/842-6480) for brochure and application forms. **Senior Fellowships and Associate Appointments** (1986-87 academic year) deadline: Oct. 15, 1985. **Visiting Senior Fellowships and Associate Appointments** deadlines: Sept. 21, 1985 (March 1-Aug. 31, 1986 award period), and March 21, 1986 (Sept. 15, 1986-Feb. 28, 1987 award period).

Deadline for the 1986-87 **National Humanities Center Fellowships**, open to senior scholars and young scholars from any nation, is October 15. Most fellowships are for the academic year, but a few are available for a single semester. Contact: Kent Mullikin, Asst. Director, NHC, 7 Alexander Drive, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709.

The next series of **King Fahd Awards for Research in Islamic Architecture** will be made to students of architecture in 1986. Students associated with research organizations are invited to submit their research work on topics ranging from philosophy, history, theory, morphology and symbolism to environmental response, materials, techniques, crafts and even futuristics constructs for architecture and urbanism. Contact: King Fahd Awards Office, Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, IRCICA, P.K. 24, Beşiktaş, Istanbul, Turkey. Institutions and individuals intending to participate must register by December 30, 1985. Due date for entries is July 1, 1986.

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