

A Brief Historical Review of Architecture and Planning in Philadelphia

While still in London in 1681, William Penn developed an idealistic conception for a utopian settlement of considerable size to be placed in his newly won proprietary province in the New World. As an initial step to raise the necessary money he planned to sell 100 shares, each representing 5000 acres of country land. Two percent of this property would be in the "Greene Country Towne," or "Liberties," laid out in such a manner that in its original conception it would have had to extend in a mile-wide strip fifteen miles along the Delaware River. Here, in the "great town," the settlers would build their principal homes, each having access to navigable water. Central to the Liberties, at a convenient harbor, was to be a small commercial settlement with its area (set at 200 acres) apportioned to owners and renters of larger tracts.

But the settlement of the Delaware Valley had begun over forty years previously with the founding of a Swedish trading post at Fort Christina (now Wilmington) in 1638. Five years later Governor Johan Printz established a post farther up the Delaware at Tinicum,

just below the southwest border of present-day Philadelphia. Other concentrations of settlers began to form at Upland (now Chester) and Kingsessing, and, although Swedish rule ended in 1655, the people remained and continued to thrive, extending over a fair portion of the region. By the late 1670s English Quakers had also begun moving into the area, principally on the eastern side of the Delaware River, where they established the town of Burlington (New Jersey) in 1677.

Upon this primitive but surprisingly well settled area, Penn had intended to apply the grand conception of his Holy Experiment. But the original plans clearly could not fit. When his emissaries arrived to lay out Philadelphia around the nucleus of the port at Upland, they discovered that most of the land they would need was already occupied, and they eventually settled on the current location. Centered around the small cove at what became known as Dock Creek, the land was held by several owners willing to sell and had large adjoining unsettled acreage inland where the Liberties could be placed. Facing what was regarded as a hostile environment,

the participants in the venture pressed for a more urban development than Penn had planned. Following Penn's arrival in late autumn of 1682 and a series of compromises and quick improvisations, the settlement began. Those who were ready to build received land along the Delaware, so that the city might assume an established appearance; investors who did not settle were given lots on land Penn bought along the Schuylkill. Construction was energetically pursued to the point that when Penn returned to London in 1684 he reported that some 357 houses had already been erected.

The 1682 plan of the city appears to have been closely patterned after Richard Newcourt's 1666 proposal for the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire of the same year, the chief elements of which—a grand central square at the intersection of axial streets (to be called "High" and "Broad"), symmetrically placed subordinate squares, and a grid pattern of streets—were taken up in the proposal for Philadelphia by Penn's surveyor, Thomas Holme. If not especially original (it also had similarities to nearby Burlington) or the first planned city in the country (for example, New Haven in 1638 and Charleston ca. 1670), it was of a size (two square miles) and scope that made it unique in the English colonies.

Although rather conservative compared with contemporary English and French Baroque schemes, more than any other community on the eastern seaboard it was a reflection of the ideals of the Age of Reason. Even with the further compromises that were to follow, Philadelphia's sense of order and established matrix of growth contrasted significantly with other communities' random collection of narrow, angled streets haphazardly placed. Part of the compromise had involved enlargement of the city, making it, rather than the Liberties, the principal settlement. Still Holme's plan, while distinctly urban in its system, attempted to retain the character of the country town Penn considered so important, with free-standing houses set on ample lots, gardens and yards surrounding each. But even this remnant soon succumbed to economic and social pressures. An increasing number of small, narrow houses were erected adjoining each other along the streets, and before 1700 the generous blocks themselves were subdivided by alleys where smaller houses were often built.

The buildings of the Swedes consisted of simple one- and two-room structures constructed from stones and logs. The log cabin was introduced to the New World here by them. While it has achieved a certain legendary status, after initial settlement it did not remain prominent in this region, and only a very few examples of these early log buildings survive (for example, in Delaware County). The Swedes' churches are a cultural legacy, but as all extant were erected after 1698, they represent an almost complete assimilation of English principles of design (see SP I 3).

The English initially also built wooden structures often following the Swedish model. However, the soil proved to be excellent for brickmaking, and eventually this form of masonry construction became the dominant building method. The early buildings were unsurprisingly small and simple in adornment. Aside from their somewhat awkward proportions, with steep roofs, and such variant details as diamond-paned windows and clustered chimneys, the general character of these houses was far more Renaissance than medieval. As such they were considerably more advanced than most urban dwellings erected elsewhere at

that time, possibly reflecting the emigration from London of a number of carpenters no longer employed in the rebuilding after the Great Fire. The majority of the rural buildings were far less advanced, dwellings acting more as a fortress from the elements than as a focus for the cultivation of them (for example, the William Brinton House, 1704, near Dilworthtown). The notable exception was Penn's own country place in Bucks County, "Pennsbury" (1692), which was, if the reconstruction bears any similarities in character to the original, unquestionably one of the most splendid houses in the Colonies. Laid out in a manner more like later Georgian plantations in Virginia and South Carolina, it establishes a sense of order and dominance over the terrain in a manner suggestive of Penn's attitude toward planning and, indeed, his philosophy of civilization itself.

The Georgian Period

By the 1720s Philadelphia was emerging as one of the Colonies' most substantial urban areas and was clearly the most sophisticated. As much a center of commerce as of science and the arts, the city had grown by mid-century to be the second largest in the British Empire. The values of the divergent and often conflicting elements, which are responsible for any metropolitan growth, began to coalesce into two major and distinct, if interrelated, architectural attitudes. On the one hand, there was a splendid ornate Georgian, inevitably reminiscent of London and frequently more sumptuous in its details than could be found elsewhere in the colonies. On the other hand, there was the conservative and studied austerity of the buildings of the Quakers. Christ Church (see CC I 20) (begun 1727) and the Greater Meeting House (1755), which once stood a block to the south, illustrate the differences at an extreme.

In form as well as detail, the Georgian buildings in the city were among the most sophisticated to be found along the Eastern Seaboard. So venturesome a structure as the State House (see CC I 1) (begun ca. 1730) was then unique as a civic expression, but visually not an isolated anomaly. Domestic architecture in scale and interior embellishment was often of similar pretension; while much of it has disappeared, the Neave and Abercrombie Houses (after 1758)

(CC II 7 and 8) and the Powel House (1765) (see CC II 3) give some indication of the magnificence achieved.

It is interesting that no one figure comparable with William Buckland or Peter Harrison appears to have been responsible for the major local eighteenth-century structures. This could, in part, be due to the guildlike Carpenters' Company, which apparently controlled virtually all building that was conducted in the city. Robert Smith in his ecclesiastical work is the only master builder who attained a significant reputation. Gentlemen amateurs sketched out a few edifices such as the State House, but the carpenter still determined the final form of the building.

Juxtaposed with the individual architectural monuments was an equally distinct sameness fostered by the simplicity of the Quaker architecture, in keeping both with their religious philosophy and the building traditions they had known in England. Somewhat varied, house-by-house, but with a prevailing unity of basic materials and small scale, Philadelphia had many aspects of a straightened-out, intensified, block-on-block Buckinghamshire village. The unvarying lines of the streets, with the regularity of their intersections, helped secure an impression of the routine, subduing individual variations in facades and giving rise to a reputation of monotony. The most indicative Quaker buildings have been the meetinghouses. Most are astute studies in sensitivity to material and proportion, and although elements reflect the periods of their construction, they possess a certain timelessness in their expression of the abstract.

The Liberties laid out inland to the north of the city were only sparsely settled, but the banks of both the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers continued to attract development. Through the eighteenth century a number of

great houses were erected there, often as elaborate as civic and ecclesiastical design in the city. While all traces of these have long since disappeared along the Delaware, Fairmount Park has preserved many that were built along the Schuylkill. Farther into the country these formal structures were the exception. Rural areas began to develop an important indigenous architecture essentially Quaker in character, the finest results of which appeared in the stone farmhouses that have characterized the region and have provided a continued influence on its architecture. Basically Georgian, these houses were often built over a period of years, being added to as the owners acquired the means or developed the need for additional space. The result was a spontaneous and completely natural mass, often asymmetrical, responding to basic needs but revealing a strong and subtle sensitivity to form and the general character of the land.

When tastes in architecture began to shift, after the Revolution, and to coalesce, after the establishment of the national government, into a Federal style, builders in Philadelphia remained content to erect Georgian designs with only slight variation. Nevertheless, there were some notable exceptions that were comparable with the finest work of the period in New England or the South.

The President's House (1792-1797) was ruefully demolished not many years after it was completed but represented one of the grandest endeavors in the country at the time. The Center Pavilion of the Pennsylvania Hospital (1794-1805), designed by David Evans the Younger, is another principal monument of the style (see CC III 11). Both Dr. William Thornton, before he won the National Capitol competition, and Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant left their mark on the city; Samuel Blodgett's First Bank of the United States (1797) was one of the most impressive heralds of the change (CC I 14). The First Bank appears in the background of photograph CC I 15.

Still, the members of the Carpenters' Company remained the main force in building. In an era of considerable expansion, when the city began to spill out to the north of its intended boundary, most of the new structures were little more than variations on what had already occurred. The Carpenters' Company 1786 Rule Book and even Owen Biddle's Young Carpenter's Assistant published in 1805, which were used as the standard models for building, gave little indication of the very radical shifts in style that were occurring elsewhere. Many structures of this period (such as the bulk of what exists today in Society Hill) (CC II) bear close similarity to their predecessors of a number of years.

This is probably a reflection of the conservative nature of the populace. But more important was the fact that Philadelphia had achieved her considerable stature before the Revolution; her institutions had undergone their initial period of development and were now primarily concerned with consolidation rather than innovation. Most other cities were really only beginning to establish comparable status for themselves and were predictably more receptive to new architectural concepts that could be associated with their new prosperity.

The changes that did occur in Philadelphia did so very slowly. Gradually through the first decades of the nineteenth century houses grew in scale and size, generally becoming simpler in detail and more austere in appearance. Variants of this sort of dwelling continued to be standard through to the 1850s when the Brownstone came into vogue. It was in the early 1800s that the house row grew to a prevalent status. An obviously profitable solution for the land speculator, the number of these often very fine blocks quickly increased until they dominated the residential areas of the city. Even most nonrow dwelling construction occurred as semidetached or twin houses until the latter part of the century, and the row house has continued to be a standard form in the city to the present day.

Architects and Classical Forms

It was Philadelphia's prominence that attracted Benjamin Henry Latrobe from Virginia in 1798. A brilliant, sensitive architect and engineer, far advanced for his time, he had been professionally trained in his native England and arrived in this country as the first man to bear that distinction. While he entered a society that was often unsympathetic to his creativity (as architects' services were still generally regarded as an unnecessary luxury and the unpredictability of scientific experimentation in engineering was not always tolerated), he nevertheless made a very significant impression upon the city's architectural development and presented the first serious challenge to either the amateur designers or the seemingly impregnable position of the Carpenters' Company.

Stylistically, his designs represented what was felt to be a return to antique prototypes, which in many respects closely conformed to English Neo-Classical examples of the period. But aside from both this and the important nationalistic connotations that his revived Greek forms were quickly to assume, Latrobe's Philadelphia work marked a fundamental shift in architectural expression in this country, emphasizing mass and the use of geometric

form in buildings consciously conceived in abstract terms. The end result still retained a certain Federal scale and delicacy, and while more antique elements were often incorporated, they were still freely adapted to serve contemporary building functions.

Taught by both Latrobe and Thomas Jefferson, Robert Mills was inheritor of much of their flair for innovation as well as Latrobe's highly professional attitude toward his work. The style of his designs remained very much under the influence of Latrobe while he was in Philadelphia, experimenting freely with classical forms but with a sound knowledge of precedent. It was not until he left the city that his works began to assume a strong personal character.

Both architects stayed in the city only a few years, designing a relatively small number of buildings, almost all of which have long since been demolished. A talented but hardly original amateur such as John Dorsey borrowed directly from them and received far more commissions by virtue of the fact that he worked for little or no fee. Still Latrobe and Mills had enormous influence on the ensuing decades. Partly as a result of their example, the concept of the architect was beginning to change in the public's mind, and through their work Philadelphia assumed a position of principal leadership in the development of the Greek Revival in America.

It was William Strickland, as much as any other architect, who was responsible for bringing the style to its prominence in the city. Achieving distinction with his winning design for the Second Bank of the United States (1818-1824, see CC I 7) his work embodied a creative archaeological approach that extended the Greek Revival to a high level of sophistication and freed it of its Federal vestiges. With some of the subtleties of Greek monumentality, sympathetically reinterpreted to the Philadelphia streetscape, his best buildings became dominant focuses in the city, achieving, through different means, what the Georgian churches and State House complex had done over half a century earlier. Strickland appears to have had more of an interest in the refinement of his achievement than in further experimentation. His approach met with considerable success, and he was able to conduct a flourishing practice for some thirty years, designing many of the city's more important buildings. In addition, his seldom discussed planning efforts have an unobtrusive dignity that fits well into the pattern of the city. Unfortunately such farsighted projects as the plan for Cairo, Illinois (1838), or a scheme for the redevelopment of virtually the entire Philadelphia waterfront for Stephen Girard (1836) never materialized.

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Of no less importance was John Haviland whose austere, brutal interpretation of forms was the opposite in approach to that of Strickland. His designs show his interest in expressing a strong abstraction of form, with archaeological style seemingly of secondary importance. While parallels can be seen with Latrobe's work, both in attitude and scale, Haviland gave considerably more emphasis to pure geometric expression, and even in his more academic Classical designs the simple massiveness rests in contrast to Latrobe's delicate balance between solids and voids.

All of the early architects to some degree also engaged in the more exotic Gothic, Egyptian, and Chinese modes. Latrobe's awkward and naïve Sedgely (1799) was one of the earliest endeavors in the country in a style best called Gothick (to separate it from the later Gothic Revival) (FP I 4). Mills and Strickland made similar infrequent indulgences in the picturesque. Haviland was particularly known for his Gothic and Egyptian Revival prisons. Although their later works became more archaeologically credible, these styles were nonetheless still employed more for their literary significance and associative connotations; most of the buildings were essentially classical in their predominant attitude of order and symmetry.

The other primary form giver of the Classical Revival in Philadelphia was Thomas Ustick Walter, whose work was often as florid as Haviland's was stark. In this light, it is interesting that his efforts were perhaps the most successful in achieving monumentality in large commissions. Certainly his adroitness in manipulating classical forms on a very large scale is evidenced by Founder's Hall for Girard College (1833-1847) (see NP I 18). Haviland's work, while far more massive in appearance, lacked a sensitivity to scale and when executed in too large a size tended to sacrifice monumentality for oppressiveness; Strickland's more subdued assertions became unconvincing once they exceeded certain dimensions. These were falterings in the style which were not uncommon either for architects or builders in the country. Walter was one of the very few men of his era who could have enjoyed in the additions to the United States Capitol (1851-1865) the same degree of success he had attained in his smaller buildings. The Capitol became probably the first building in the nation which could rival the great palaces of Europe in civic grandeur if not in refinement. On the other hand, several buildings he executed in the small town of West Chester, Pennsylvania, are almost equally monumental but rendered in a scale entirely sensitive to the size and nature of the community.

Although principally known for his later work in New York, Napoleon LeBrun played an important role in Philadelphia as well. A student of Walter's, he designed works difficult to classify within the framework of then contemporary American architecture. His two major commissions here, the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul (1846-1864) (CC VII 8) and the American Academy of Music (1855) (see CC V 27), as conceived, were closely derived from the Neo-Baroque that was then becoming popular in France. Their grandiose, heavily embellished spaces were a somewhat abrupt departure from Philadelphia's past. Lesser works, however, were usually executed with more conventional means.

Trends to the Romantic

Evolving concurrently with the mature Classical Revival was the Romantic movement, a principal member of which was John Notman. Although the extent of his work has yet to be fully evaluated and his buildings are not widely known outside the area, it is certain that he played a very significant part in the development of early Victorian architecture in America. Having emigrated from Scotland in 1831, he had a firsthand knowledge of current British design. In part inspired by the works of John Nash, he erected what is credited as being the first Italianate villa in the country for Bishop Doane (1837), which stood until recently in Burlington, New Jersey. A beautiful and sophisticated study in asymmetrical balance, it received immediate attention through illustration in Andrew Jackson Downing's widely circulated books and exerted enormous influence on ensuing country house design. The style was, in turn, applied to urban commissions, but now with an emphasis on the symmetrical rectilinearity of the Italian Renaissance. With such works as the Athenaeum (1845) (see CC III 1), Notman did much to foster the formal and urbane approach that was to gain immense popularity during the next three decades. Indeed he may well have designed the first house in the country faced in the brownstone with which the style is so commonly associated. Along with Richard Upjohn of

New York, his ecclesiastical work in the vocabulary of the English rural Gothic was instrumental in bringing a maturation and relevance to the American Gothic Revival.

Of no less importance to the Romantics was landscape design. Notman's Laurel Hill Cemetery (NP III 4) exemplified the adaptation of wild acreage for its own sake as well as the picturesque juxtaposition of man-made objects in nature. The same approach was applied by the engineers and planners of the rapidly developing Fairmount Park, which grew along the Schuylkill River from a nucleus at the Waterworks (see FP I 1). Incorporating a balance of winding roadways, wild glens, and open pastures with a restrained number of visual landmarks (including Georgian houses and Centennial buildings), it represents planned Romantic naturalness at its very best. It also set the notable precedent of keeping the river free from exploitation, protection that in later years was extended to include creek valleys elsewhere in the city.

Samuel Sloan was the most prolific contributor to the Romantic ethic in Philadelphia. While possibly not possessing the same degree of originality as Notman, he executed a wide variety of commissions including great Gothic, Italianate, and Moorish villas. He was responsible for some of the most sumptuous town houses erected in the city as

well as numerous speculative ventures, particularly in then suburban West Philadelphia. But he is probably best known for his institutional work, which seems to have represented a continuation of the Quaker tradition of simple, functional building. Many of his schools and hospitals set standards for organization and design that had wide following in this country and abroad.

A separate commercial architecture as such evolved in the early nineteenth century, and the work in Philadelphia after 1820 is considered to be as important as that of New York or Boston in the development of later functional architecture. Resulting from a period of flourishing trade, these mainly anonymous structures once comprised a large and cohesive district along the Delaware River. The Independence National Park in the 1950s destroyed a majority of the most significant examples, not the least of which, the Jayne Building by William L. Johnston and Thomas U. Walter (1849), was generally regarded as the country's first protoskyscraper. The remnants of the district to the north of the Park remain—threatened (see CC I 19).

Joseph Hoxie and Stephen Button were two designers of commercial buildings who achieved a clarity of architectonics without violating the sense of structure or denying the building's intended use that was quite exceptional

for the time. Unfortunately the majority of their numerous noncommercial commissions were mediocre, their clumsy handling of Italianate forms often providing unintended comic relief.

The effects of the Civil War were of sufficient magnitude to relegate the Romantic ethic in architecture to a subordinate position, with almost all the optimistic, straightforward, and slightly naïve aspects of its approach becoming greatly subdued in a materialistic and pretentious mixing of styles. The years that followed saw the continued spread of urban development into areas adjoining the old city (the city annexed the rest of the county in 1854). But with few exceptions, the prominent architects of the prewar era had little influence in this expansion. Variants of the so-called Second Empire Style never gained the immense popularity in Philadelphia that they did elsewhere throughout the country. Nonetheless, one of the most significant achievements of the movement is City Hall (see CC V 4), which attains the symbolic (civic) monumentality so eagerly sought after in this "national" style. Its creator, John McArthur, Jr., was a competent but hardly exceptional architect, and, in comparison to the bulk of his work, City Hall is especially remarkable. As with the Second Empire, the High Victorian Gothic and the later Romanesque Revival also were never prevalent.

Furness and Regionalism

A large portion of the buildings erected in the 1870s and 1880s were strongly regional in character, although identifiable with construction of the era elsewhere. To some extent this was due to Frank Furness, who in 1866 established practice in Philadelphia after training in the then radical office of Richard Morris Hunt in New York. A brilliant designer of practical and stylishly upsetting structures, he became the city's preeminent architect for nearly two decades. With the force of his personality and the dearth of comparable talent in Philadelphia at that time, the influence of his work appears to have been very strong throughout the city and its surrounding area.

In Furness's youthful work, much of which was his finest, Hunt's sophistication and experimentation were reflected along with the influence of such European contemporaries as Ruskin and Viollet-le-Duc. A keen admiration for the strong mercantile tradition in the city was also seen combined with his own maniacal love for contradiction. That he was one of the earliest American architects actively to pursue the use of negative elements as a vocabulary of architectonic expression is an aspect that renders Furness particularly significant. It was in part an expression of his rebellion against the austere Quaker simplicity that was still so dominant in

existing buildings throughout the city. His considerably better known contemporary, H. H. Richardson, justly received recognition for the order and clarity he brought to design; Furness's work, on the other hand, emphasized the heterogeneous and uncertain state of the period with a haunting deliberateness that could border on parody. Unlike his lessers who heaped a more or less standard bonanza of conceits on what were basically simple structures, Furness would construct a fundamentally complex structure and express it in a clear, if awkward and often insulting, manner. In the old library at the University of Pennsylvania (1888-1891) (see WP I 13) he developed a series of flagrant Piranesian spaces, enjoying the discomfort of direct confrontation of masonry and iron construction. Where vast expanses of raw steel "atrociously" join frantic piles of masonry, fig leaves mockingly cover the "meeting place."

On the other hand, a sense of rational order and clarity, certainly related to the Quaker precedent, became increasingly important in Furness's later work. While occurring partly as the result of personal maturation and changes in the cultural climate, as well as the ascendancy of Allen Evans as a design partner in the firm, there was evidence of this strain in the early years of his practice, as indicated in his long-demolished Jefferson Medical College Hospital of

1875. The austere, simple houses standing at 2206-2208 Walnut Street (probably ca. 1873) again contrast sharply with the once-adjoining Livingston House (1887), which represents the more popular conception of Furness's work. More sizable buildings in later years, such as the Merion Cricket Club (1895) and the demolished Broad Street Station (1893), employed a heavy terra-cotta masonry interaction, reiterated in the forms themselves, which created a direct if somewhat weak expression.

If the qualities that distinguish Furness above his eccentricity were not entirely shared by his contemporaries, there nonetheless was a certain similarity in attitude, but as is frequently the case such a bond was not necessarily apparent at the time. There is a prevailing awkward ugliness in Philadelphia design of the period which it is difficult to believe was wholly unintentional. The brooding and inherently gloomy atmosphere is perhaps more closely associated with Teutonic rather than Anglo-Saxon design of the nineteenth century. In keeping with this character was the work of George W. & William D. Hewitt, the former having been an early partner of Furness's, and the latter a draftsman in the firm.

Willis Hale was one of the least disciplined architects of this era. Perhaps his most significant contribution was the design of hundreds of speculative row houses in North, South, and West Philadelphia (see NP I 29 and WP I 33), which seem to have become models for the character of the other work in these areas. Indeed, the extent of the popularity (and the commercialization) of this generally vulgar eclecticism in the newly developed portions of both the city and its suburbs is astounding.

Theophilus Chandler, who ultimately had a strong influence as an architectural teacher, scorned Furness's inventiveness. But while his own work was the product of a distinctly different approach to design, parallels of distortion and tension now appear evident. Chandler considered himself an academician, but his designs ultimately bear little similarity to High Victorian work elsewhere in the country.

Frequently openly parallel to Furness in design, the work of the architecture-engineering firm of The Wilson Brothers was often less bold and/or more refined. A chief competitor with Furness for the railroads' business, they should be particularly noted for their commercial and industrial designs. James Windrim, later joined by son John, was also a prosperous commercial architect, designing a number of handsome if not entirely original buildings.

Coming from Canada about 1860, Henry Sims was active in Philadelphia until his death in 1875. Henry was later associated with his younger brother James, who succeeded him. They both seemed somewhat independent of regional impressions in their approach and worked with competence and originality in new and fashionable modes from the Stick Style to the emerging Queen Anne Revival as well as the High Victorian Gothic. The bulk of their active practice, although limited to about a decade and a half, was extremely influential in introducing the quieter and more sensitive approach that was to become dominant by the late 1890s. Collaborating with them on occasion was T. Roney Williamson, who, while working with similar inclinations, fused them with the studied complexities Furness enjoyed. After a brief practice in the city, he moved to West Chester, where he practiced for a number of years, designing some of the most delightfully original work of the period in the region, much of which remains intact.

A Tasteful Creative Eclecticism

Wilson Eyre, Jr., chief draftsman for James Sims, inherited the firm upon the latter's untimely death in 1882. Soon emerging as one of the leading practitioners of the Queen Anne Revival in the country, he gave it a seldom known cohesiveness while relating it to the Philadelphia tradition of strong, simple masonry construction. Integrating the small-scale, eclectic detail and stress upon the picturesque in both plan and elevation, which were the most significant elements of the style, he added to them a unique sensibility and feeling for asymmetrical balance. Also present was a new concern for the work of the traditional artisan, not unrelated to the concurrent Arts and Crafts Movement in England. While he was the most talented, Eyre was only one of a group of young men whose work appeared in the 1880s and 90s as an exciting and more "tasteful" reaction to prevailing architectural inclinations.

Still, his earliest designs embody the overt awkwardness of Furness. If the means were different, the spirit was much the same, expressing an inherent delight in the unexpected through the intricate modeling of unlike elements. In his urban structures, like Furness and his generation, Eyre attempted consciously to break the "monotony" of the conservative neighbors, interrupting peacefully established patterns of the block. This was achieved, however, with

a facade finely studied in terms of tradition and carefully related in its individuality to the buildings around it.

With his maturation, Eyre's designs became increasingly evocative of the simple and comfortable unpretentiousness of Pennsylvania rural models of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as well as related English prototypes. Even in the largest houses a quiet unity between building and the environment prevailed over any interest in architectural lavishness. Superb detail and balanced but not static composition of mass and interior space remained, but increasing stress was placed on the inherent qualities of materials and setting to evolve an architecture that ultimately seemed to transcend style. Such structures as the Turner House (1907) (see GM I 30) and the Townsend House in Radnor (1914) reveal this evolution of a unique design approach from a regional base that parallels the important work of Eyre's contemporary, Irving Gill, in southern California.

Eyre's principal colleagues, Frank Miles Day and partners Walter Cope and John Stewardson, although of considerable talent, never developed an equal power or personal style. More academically inclined and almost never concerned with expression of either awkwardness or complexity, they did produce a number of excellent designs in the last decades of the nineteenth century. With Eyre, they were responsible for the great monument of Philadelphia Romantic Eclecticism, the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania (begun 1893) (see WP I 10). An interesting portion of their early work, while in part derived from the Renaissance, also in some respects anticipated the spirit of the somewhat later Prairie School. Cope & Stewardson's recently demolished Harrison Laboratories at the University of Pennsylvania (1893) afforded a prime example, but by the turn of the century both firms had become well entrenched in the Beaux Arts orientation, which never really seemed to interest Eyre. However, country houses and their collegiate work, for which they were especially noted, were frequently Tudor or Jacobean in derivation, incorporating those elements that stressed the styles' informal, asymmetrical qualities. Urban designs, if more classical in origin, nonetheless retained a certain freedom and informality typical of the city, which was quite unlike the "fashionable" work in New York, Boston, or Chicago.

Horace Trumbauer's work was wholly in the spirit of those other cities. While the earliest buildings were executed in a weak and reasonably standard version of regional eclecticism, his first significant commission, an enormous "castle" for William Harrison in Glenside (1892), was of a scale and stylistic pretentiousness competitive with the contemporary country houses of Richard Morris Hunt. For the next thirty-five-odd years the majority of Trumbauer's work was to continue in this vein, borrowing principally from English and French Renaissance examples. The huge palaces he erected along the Eastern Seaboard had a display of formality and lavishness which was unusual for the city and frequently brought scorn from old Philadelphians. Nevertheless, in an age of fast fortunes, he was never without clients. In recent reevaluations of the Beaux Arts design, Trumbauer's significance on a national level has often been overlooked, possibly because he tended to keep his work within safe formulas somewhat at the expense of originality. Yet his finesse of detail and ability to manipulate masses in proportion should place him on a par with the best architects of the school in this country.

The Beaux Arts and the Pastoral

In recognition of the growing national dominance of the Ecole des Beaux Arts, Philadelphia in 1903 imported one of its most promising young graduates, Paul Cret, to instruct at the University of Pennsylvania. He fit well with Philadelphia and became a leading force in planning and architecture for several decades. The Pan American Building in Washington, D.C. (1910, with Albert Kelsey) is perhaps the most noteworthy early example of his work.

But it was in the late 1920s and early 1930s that Cret was the most successful in expressing the formal statement. Through a sensitivity in the handling of mass and detail, a prevailing sense of form in the abstract transcends the materials and a certain period bias; Cret's best work has much the same quiet monumentality Strickland had achieved one hundred years before. His buildings are superbly sited, achieving a serenity that, while formal, renders building and grounds a natural whole. Beyond this, Cret devoted much effort to effecting a Beaux Arts integration of architecture and engineering. His broad scope of design included numerous bridges, dams, and even superstreamlined trains.

Other than Cret there were not many architects in the area who designed competently in the moderne. A notable exception was Ralph Bencker, who continued the work of William Price's firm of Price & McLanahan. That office had developed a strikingly original style marking a fusion of English and Sezessionist sources, which Bencker developed more fully in his commercial projects for the ubiquitous chain of Horn & Hardart restaurants and the enormous (now demolished) State Theatre (1930).

As imposing as were the Beaux Arts works in the city, they remained isolated monuments, and in an era of rapid physical expansion for Philadelphia materialized principally as conspicuous buildings in commercial centers rather than having any primary effect on the city's growth patterns. The two major products of the City Beautiful movement, the Benjamin Franklin Parkway (see CC VII 6) and the Roosevelt Boulevard, were exceptions to the body of urban development.

Concurrently, however, the influence of Wilson Eyre and several of his contemporaries began to coalesce in the work of a younger generation of architects who, like him, concerned themselves primarily with suburban domestic design and who had an enormous influence in directing the nature of the growth in these areas. While reflecting certain aspects of the shift in taste toward the academic for its own sake, they rested only on the fringe of the American Beaux Arts movement. These Pastoral architects were interested in creating an atmosphere that ultimately involved an idealization of rural life, whether that of Pennsylvania, England, or Normandy, using prototypes freely in creative and often sophisticated academic exercise. The group included Edmund Gilchrist (who had trained with Eyre but did not really carry on his primary concern for practicality before precedent), Robert McGoodwin, Mellor & Meigs, and Duhring, Okie, & Ziegler. Especially notable as an early example of their creative suburban work were the extensive speculative developments for Dr. George Woodward on his properties in Chestnut Hill (see GM II 12).

Completely unobtrusive, their buildings were nonetheless a product of an intensely creative search for natural anonymity; the extent of their ingenuity within a traditional orientation can be matched only by the best work of the Spanish Colonial Revival in southern California during the 1920s.

Ultimately the most significant member of the group was George Howe who, after working in the Furness office at a time when its meaningful existence had long passed, joined Mellor & Meigs in 1917 as a design partner. His own house in Chestnut Hill (see GM II 22), executed two years before, had already established him as a leading practitioner of the Pastoral, and with the new firm his work rapidly matured. Throughout the 1920s buildings were simplified with an increased concentration on form and its relation to the site. Yet especially in the exterior expression, the general attitude had strong similarities to that of the Shingle Style of some forty years previous. Natural materials—brick, stone, wood, and iron—were astutely contrasted in the same direct manner. Towers and complex roof patterns became as much abstract elements used to formulate a balanced but varied composition as they were picturesque attractions to charm their clients, and they also assumed a certain Mannerist distortion. Perhaps the finest of these houses was erected at Laverock for Arthur Newbold (1919-1924). The dwelling itself became only a component of a large, picturesque compound that emphasized the elements of a working farm, and although it was enormous it was completely informal.

It was during these decades of the Pastoral that literally hundreds of old farmhouses were restored and added to, and even with some of the most extensive places the simplicity of the old buildings was carefully maintained throughout. The counties surrounding Philadelphia underwent a degree of natural cultivation (in many ways similar to that of the eighteenth-century English garden) that few other rural areas in the country have chanced to experience. R. Brognard Okie was one of the first to make a scholarly study of the rural vernacular and, especially later in his career (when in practice on his own), developed the capacity to manipulate its elements as though he were an eighteenth-century master builder. His originality and creativity within these very limited boundaries were quite remarkable.

Influence of the International Style

In 1928 Howe left Mellor & Meigs and, after several months of practice on his own, joined in partnership with Swiss-born William Lescaze, who had briefly and unsuccessfully practiced in New York City. The dynamics of their six-year association is somewhat obscure, but the result was a small number of International Style buildings, the most important of which was the Philadelphia Saving Fund Society Building (1930) (see CC IV 7). This structure, built by a conservative, Quaker-dominated institution at the height of the Depression, joined the seemingly incompatible backgrounds and philosophies of the partners into a beautifully integrated statement. Their smaller work is, perhaps, more indicative of the unresolved difficulties of their partnership, suggesting that they were still groping in their attempts to express the New World Architecture. Their first commission was, in fact, the first building in the International Style in the East, the now demolished Oak Lane Country Day School (1928). A certain awkwardness, and at times contradiction, here and in other (unexecuted) jobs may also have been Howe working in a spirit close to Furness's, but of more importance was his interest in relating local materials and elements of design to modernistic principals. Once the partnership of Howe & Lescaze was dissolved, this effort was partially continued, but the quality of

Howe's few commissions of this period was remarkably inconsistent. Not long after designing several rather awkward moderne residences, he produced a summer house for Mrs. C. F. Thomas in Maine which is unquestionably derived from International Style theory yet employs warm materials and a pitched roof along with details that render it in conscious sympathy with its surroundings. Such interesting and early efforts in this direction can also be found in the work of Kenneth Day, who, like Howe, had formerly designed in the Pastoral (in partnership with Edmund Purves).

The other major figure at that time was Oskar Stonorov, who was one of the first men to introduce the advanced European concepts of mass housing and urban planning to this country, designing several housing projects that were to serve as models for similar work throughout the country. They remain sensitive balances between the organization which a planner must give and the individuality and intimate scale which is desired by the inhabitants. His country houses of the thirties and forties form some of his most interesting work, with a sophistication acquired from his European training coupled with a sympathy for the landscape and understanding of the local, traditional architecture. There also exists the element of complexity, partially the result of his love for the unexpected.

Through the late 1930s, despite the quality of Howe's, Day's, and Stonorov's building, the city was basically retardataire in its general design ideas and in the immediate postwar period responded only vaguely to the forces that contributed to architectural innovation elsewhere in the country. After the war the three maintained generally lean practices (although Stonorov's grew sizably by the 1960s). Louis Kahn, after association with Howe and Stonorov, established his own office, producing a few searching works, but was recognized more for his role in education. Other prominent designers, Robert Montgomery Brown, George Daub, and Norman Rice, had only limited commissions. The new firm built by Vincent Kling seemed to be the only group wholly committed to the modern ethic able to secure large projects, bringing to them a number of design and engineering innovations.

If the city lacked a substantial quantity of good new architecture during the 1950s, it did have one of the most dynamic and comprehensive city plans. This was principally the creation of the then director of the City Planning Commission, Edmund Bacon, who allied his efforts with many of the city's more able architects. Oskar Stonorov and Louis Kahn made important contributions sensitive to the nature of the city and its diverse elements. Likewise, Vincent Kling, with a sophisticated organization of systems and design coordination, added significantly. Stressing practicality and taste above architectural innovation, Bacon's plans have established a pattern of quality firmly cast in the character of the city which is unusual for most mid-century urban renewal. Indeed, with maturation and a surprisingly large amount of similarly pleasant speculative work, these efforts are proving to be among the most successful in the country. But aside from the compromises apparently inherent in the realization of any significant change, the many plans for quiet and sensible neighborhood revitalization which seemed so promising an element twenty years ago generally have been forgotten. With the actual destruction of much of Southwark (see SP I 1) and the moral destruction of South Street, a less sympathetic attitude toward some of the city's assets now seems evident.

Contemporary Development

With the 1960s, Philadelphia re-emerged as a place of significant new architecture and architectural thought with the late maturation of Louis Kahn, the arrival of Romaldo Giurgola, and Robert Venturi's start of practice. Although substantially different from one another, they share an overriding and somewhat binding attitude toward building which fits them well into the continuum of Philadelphia's past. The dominating geometric order that becomes the criterion for organization in Kahn's buildings, as well as their monumental solidity, seems an aspect evolving from his training with Paul Cret. However, unlike Cret but shared with Furness is the recognition that architectural statement need not always be in either beautiful or simple terms. Not unrelated is Venturi's interest in redefining contemporary vernacular architecture without violating its frequently ugly qualities. While the unifying elements in his work are not always immediately apparent, there is a pervading simplicity of the dominant mass and individual detail which has a directness and austerity that relate to the indigenous Quaker tradition. This interest in studied complexities subordinated to a quiet, simple whole is not dissimilar in spirit to the work of Wilson Eyre and his successors in redeveloping an anonymous farm architecture in the first decades of this century. Romaldo

Giurgola, while less involved with a rigidly defined philosophy, is more integrative of divergent attitudes, reflecting both his contemporaries and elements of Philadelphia tradition.

The influence of these men has been evidenced more in general stimulation of the work of others than in a significant collection of their own buildings. Kahn, though idolized by many students and critics, has scared many in the city with a reputation for gross impracticality, and amidst his honors glares the fact that he has not had a major commission built in Philadelphia for a decade. Venturi likewise has been limited to only minor work in the city, and Giurgola is only beginning to receive conspicuous commissions. But a number of other architects are now expressing a decisive interest in their work, even if in execution they often fail to capture the integrity of the ethic with which they have become allied. A considerable amount of the new construction and design of the past several years seems to reflect this new attitude. If calling this phenomenon the "Philadelphia School" is a bit overenthusiastic, there is nonetheless a suggestion of the emergence of a vital, and once again widely practiced, regionalism not dissimilar to that evident during creative periods of the past.

The scope of contemporary architecture in the city extends, of course, well beyond these limits. Both the firms of Geddes, Brecher, Qualls & Cunningham and Bower & Fradley share a certain sympathy with such work, yet their buildings usually express a more direct and essentially simple clarity. The resulting conservative dignity is even more consciously apparent in the work of Vincent Kling, whose office continues to produce many of the larger buildings in the area and has been instrumental in keeping the general level of commercial and civic development at a high standard of integrity and taste. Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen have worked toward a more openly eccentric but not unrelated concern. While there has been no large body of significant domestic design in the Philadelphia area over the past twenty years, a number of offices have done some notable residential work. Cope & Lippincott along with Montgomery, Bishop, & Arnold have done modern work with a clear appreciation of the early local traditions. Louis Sauer displays the rare ability to give a "wide" appeal to imaginative, livable, and distinctively personal residential design, often of a multiunit type. Frank Weise has been conducting interesting architectural experiments for the past twenty years and has produced some of the more fascinating houses in the area.

Likewise, Joel Levinson, while just beginning his practice, is part of no school but a source of tasteful and inventive works.

The patterns of architectural and urban development of the city are intricate and exceedingly complex; no attempt has been made even to summarize them here. Further research, particularly in the work of the past one hundred years, is needed before an accurate depiction of such events can be attempted. Essential to such progress is a well-founded knowledge of the buildings themselves and of the environments they help to create, and it is toward this end that the following pages are devoted.