

I think I always wanted to be an architect. At least since seventh grade. Growing up in Philadelphia, I saw my first “modern” building, the PSFS tower by George Howe. Still one of the best. The use of space, materials, landscape in the Germantown and Chestnut Hill houses of Mellor, Meigs, and Howe still recall vivid images.

During the war, I traveled in the Midwest, making pilgrimages to Frank Lloyd Wright’s buildings around Chicago – especially the Oak Park and River Forest houses and, up to the north in Racine, Wisconsin, the most electrifying of all – Wright’s office building for Johnson Wax.

I have since had three periods of “education” in architecture: the first at Harvard, 1946-50; the second at the University of Pennsylvania, 1950-65; and the current period at Princeton since 1965. At Harvard’s Graduate School of Design, I was caught up in the great spirit of modern architecture. We thought we were on a frontier and loved it. During this time, my favorite buildings were Walter Gropius’ and Marcel Breuer’s houses in Lincoln, Mass.; and Philip Johnson’s own residences on Ash Street, in Cambridge, and the one in New Canaan. My favorite fantasy buildings, from afar, were published in Le Corbusier’s *Oeuvre Complète*. Later, on my first European travels, I saw his famous Unité, in Marseilles, under construction. Unforgettable. And I encountered a set of very personal places, like Kairouan and the Isle of Djerba. The Harvard man’s love affair with Italian towns like Siena made my heart beat fast. They still do. Besides Gropius himself, the great teachers at Harvard then included Joseph Hudnut who taught me something very vital – for he wrote, “The architect is modern who, forgetful of self expression and self advertisement, develops his constructive

forms out of the work to be done, the techniques to be employed, and the idea to be expressed.”

My second period was Philadelphia, teaching at Penn, and setting up our firm. It was a wonderful renaissance kind of time. For the mayors – Joseph Clark, Richardson Dillworth – and for the Citizens’ Council on City Planning, architecture became important as a social art. So naturally, a strong sense of comradeship developed among us young architects. We sent our work for presentation at the European congresses; we even formed a team and entered the Sydney Opera House competition, taking second prize! All the while, we were actively developing a new kind of school for architecture at Penn. And what a school! Imagine a senior faculty made up of a dean like Holmes Perkins, and of men like Louis Kahn, Lewis Mumford. And imagine a younger faculty made up of people like Robert Venturi and Romaldo Giurgola. I learned a great deal from teaching at Penn – especially about the public nature of architecture, about the integration of technology with aesthetics, and about the expressive qualities of materials, certainly of light.

Here at Princeton, I am deeply engaged in the intellectual life of the University, the town, and find it extraordinarily stimulating. Culturally, historically, philosophically, my personal dimensions have grown. I actively seek collaboration with colleagues from other disciplines, like the social sciences, studying and evaluating the value of buildings and the overall environment in terms of how people use and react to them. For example, in my work with sociologists Suzanne Keller and Robert Gutman on behavioral assessment, I am trying to understand the values of architectural form from the standpoint of the social scientist. This is one way of determining not only what form our buildings

will take but also, by analysis, what form our past buildings might have taken. There's simply not enough study of buildings as they undergo use and change as a basis for improving what architects do next.

For another example, we recently won a design competition for a housing site based upon a research project and conference on Housing for the Elderly here in New Jersey. This kind of competition substantiates our belief that ideas and facts generated by such shared research and reflection can translate into more healthy architectural solutions. This is my old fascination with task and form, but it is also an example of new ways in which to determine what the task, or range of tasks, really is.

At this point in my life, I am delighted with the prospect of a stronger interest in history and philosophy having a strong impact on architecture and urban design in coming years. Certainly, here at Princeton, I am delighted with the prospect, and I see this as a pragmatic development from the standpoint of the business of architecture as well. The business, so called, has not been the best for the profession in recent times, and this is precisely what has caused so many in our field to dig a little deeper into what architecture's purpose is. This is going to be one of the great periods of architecture, and it will be known for its classic tendencies – those of classification, and those of stating and acting upon a more clearly understood set of generalized principles. It will be a disciplined architecture because theory will attempt to objectively understand the reality out of which coherence – buildings – must derive. Out of this sustained study of events, influences, and human experience can come a more valid, warmer kind of individual expression.

Perhaps this is why my favorite example of the integration of building, landscape, and cultural idea is the original University of Virginia, by Thomas Jefferson. As townscapes, the English city of Bath and the Palais Royale in Paris are other examples. In terms of individual buildings, look at Le Corbusier's Carpenter Center at Harvard, or the Center Le Corbusier in Zurich. But above all, Jefferson's design is the single image of my ideal – not in terms of its architectural style which is classic, but in terms of its classicizing character, its striving for order out of the nature of an idea about what education is. In fact, someone once described an artist as one who strives for order and hopes for beauty. There has never been so much hope.

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#### Illustrations:

University of Virginia: Designed by Thomas Jefferson

Gropius House 1937-1938: Designed by Walter Gropius

Carpenter Center, Harvard University 1963: Designed by Le Corbusier

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