responses. This is to say that we inhabit a pluralist world, and that we ourselves are many-faceted creatures. Thus no single orthodoxy — including the single-minded return to copying buildings from the past — will do, no single set of forms and images to shape the environment we build for ourselves. The meaning of buildings like those around Rockefeller Plaza and the new ones along the Avenue of the Americas is that architecture can have many potent likenesses. The choice is altogether ours, and the task is to learn to cast our nets backwards in time — and outwards — to find what feels right for a given design problem, and what among the many options seems really worthwhile.

G.A.

You Have to Pay for the Public Life

In 1964 I set out to find examples of contemporary monumental architecture in California which functioned as a part of the urban scene. I thought I might discover that there is no contemporary monumental architecture there, or that there is no urban scene (except in a sector of San Francisco), or perhaps that both monumental architecture and the urban scene were missing. These suspicions were well founded; any discussion from California about monumental urban architecture was bound to be less about what we had than about what we had instead.

Any discussion of monumental architecture in its urban setting should proceed from a definition of what constitutes "monumental," and what "urban" means to us. The two adjectives are closely related: both of them involve the individual's giving up something (space or money or prominence or concern) to the public realm.

Monumentality must have to do with monuments. And a monument is an object whose function is to mark a *place*, either at that place's boundary or at its heart. There are, of course, private monuments, over such places as the graves of the obscure. But to merit our attention here, and to be of any interest to most of the people who view it, a monument must mark a place of more than private importance or interest. The act of marking is then a public act, and the act of recognition an expectable public act among the members of the society which possesses the place. Monumentality, considered this way, is not a product

of compositional techniques (such as symmetry about several axes), or flamboyance of form, or even of conspicuous consumption of space, time, or money. It is, rather, a function of society's taking possession of, or agreeing upon, extraordinarily important places on the earth's surface, and of the society's celebrating their pre-eminence.

A version of this agreement and this celebration was developed by José Ortega y Gasset into a definition of urbanity itself. "The *urbs* or *polis*," he says, "starts by being an empty space, the *forum*, the *agora*, and all the rest is just a means of fixing that empty space, of limiting its outlines . . . The square, thanks to the walls which enclose it, is a portion of the countryside which turns its back on the rest, eliminates the rest, and sets itself up in opposition to it."[1]

Ortega y Gasset's product is the city, the urban unit based upon the Mediterranean open square, a politically as well as physically comprehensible unit that people used to be willing to die for. The process of achieving an urban focus is the same as that of achieving monumentality. It starts with the selection of a place which is to be of particular importance, and it continues when the inhabitants invest that place with the attributes of importance, such as edges, or some kind of marker. This process, the establishing of cities and the marking of important places, constitutes most of the physical part of establishing civilization. Charles Eames has made the point that the crux of this civilizing process is the giving up by individuals of something in order that the

public realm may be enhanced. In the city, urban and monumental places, indeed urbanity and monumentality themselves, can occur only when something is given over to the public.

Some planners have a way of articulating their (private) discovery that the public body's chief concern is *people*. They then say, unrelatedly, that it is too bad the sprawling metropolis is so formless. It might well be that if the shibboleth about people were turned inside out, if planning efforts went toward enlarging people's concerns — and sacrifices — for the public realm, that the urban scene would more closely approach the planners' vision, and that the people would be better served.

The most evident thing about Los Angeles, especially, and the other new cities of the West, is that, in contrast to any of the traditions we have inherited, hardly anybody gives anything to the public realm. Instead, it is not at all clear what the public realm consists of, or even, for the time being, who needs it. What is clear is that civic amenities (of the sort architects think of as "monumental") which were highly regarded earlier in this century are of much less concern today.

A pointed example is the small city of Atascadero, which lies in a particularly handsome coastal valley between Los Angeles and San Francisco. It was first developed in the 1920s as a real-estate venture with heavy cultural overtones and extensive architectural amplification. Extraordinarily ambitious

Atascadero, California

"monumental" architecture popped up all over the townsite. Buildings of a vaguely Italian Romanesque persuasion with a Classic Revival touch, symmetrical about several axes, faced onto wide malls punctuated or terminated by Canovesque sculpture groups. The effect was undeniably grand, if a bit surreal, exploiting wide grassy vistas among the dense California oaks.

But there wasn't much of a town until the 1940s. Then, on the major mall (an elaborately sunken panel of irrigated green) came a gas station, and then another one, and more recently an elevated freeway has continued the destruction of the grand design. All this has happened during the very period in which Philadelphians, with staggering energy and expense, have been achieving in their Center City long malls, grand vistas at every scale, an architectural expression overwhelmingly serene, an urban desideratum which the Atascaderans did not especially want or need, and have been blithely liquidating. Does this liquidation not constitute some sort of crime against the public?

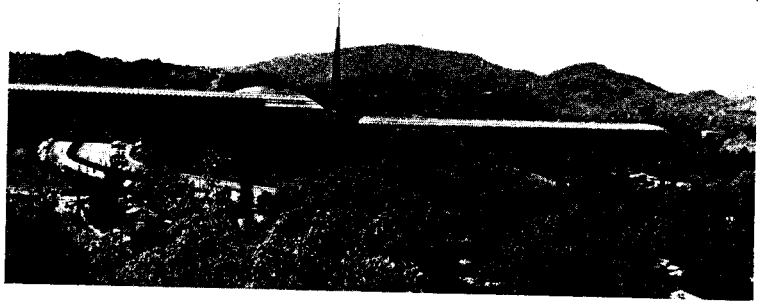
Before we start proceedings, we should consider what the public realm is, or rather, what it might be in California now and during the decades ahead. The "monumentality" and the "urbanity" that we seek may then be appropriate as functions of our society, and not of some other one.

In California cities, as in new cities all over the country, the pattern of buildings on the land is as standard as it is explosive. Everywhere near population centers, new little houses surrounded by incipient lawns appear. They

could be said to be at the edge of the city, except that there is no real edge — thanks to the speed of growth, the leapfrogging of rural areas, and the long commercial fingers that follow the highways out farther than the houses have yet reached. Meanwhile, in areas not much older, houses are pulled down as soon as zoning regulations allow, to be replaced with apartments whose only amenity is a location near a garage in the basement.

The new houses are separate and private — islands, alongside which are moored the automobiles that take the inhabitants off to other places. It might be more useful and more accurate to note that the houses and the automobiles are very much alike, and that each is very like the mobile homes which share both their characteristics. All are fairly new, and their life span is short. All are quite standard, but have allowed their buyers the agonies of choice, demonstrating enough differences so that they can readily be identified during the period of ownership, and so that the sense of privacy is complete, in the car as well as in the house. This is privacy with at least psychic mobility. The houses are not tied down to any *place* much more than the trailer homes are, or the automobiles. They are adrift in the suburban sea, not so mobile as the cars, but just as unattached. They are not so much like islands alongside which the cars are moored as they are like little yachts, dwarfed by the great chrome-trimmed dinghies that seek their lee.

This is, after all, a floating world in which a floating population can



Marin County Civic Center, by Frank Lloyd Wright

island-hop with impunity; one need almost never go ashore. There are the drive-in banks, the drive-in movies, the drive-in shoe repair. There is even, in Marin County, Frank Lloyd Wright's drive-in Civic Center, a structure of major biographical and perhaps historical importance, about whose forms a great deal of surprisingly respectful comment has appeared. Here, for a county filling up with adjacent and increasingly indistinguishable suburban communities, quite without a major center, was going to be *the* center for civic activities. It was to be the public realm, one would have supposed, for which a number of public-spirited leaders in the community had fought long and hard.

It might have been, to continue our figure, a sort of dock to which the floating populace might come: monumental in that it marked a special place which was somewhere and which, for its importance, was civic if not urban. But instead of a dock for floating suburbanites, it is just another ship, much larger than most, to be sure, and presently beached (wedged, in fact) between two hills. It demands little of the people who float by, and gives them back little. It allows them to penetrate its interior from a point on its underside next to the delivery entrance, but further relations are discouraged, and lingering is most often the result of inability to find the exit.

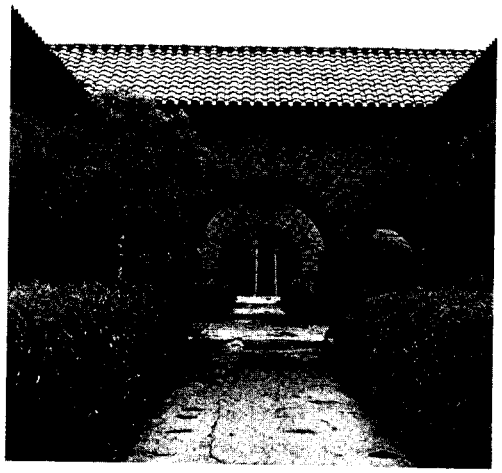
This kind of placelessness has not always been characteristic. During the 1920s and into the 1930s, with what was doubtless an enormous assist from the Hollywood vision in the days of its greatest splendor, an architectural image

Arcade of the Fox-Arlington Theater, by Edwards, Plunkett and Howell

of California developed. It was exotic but specific, derivative but exhilaratingly free. It had something to do with Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona*, with the benign climate, with the splendor of the sites and their floral luxuriance, with the general availability of wood and stucco. It also had to do with the assurance, supplied by Hollywood, that appearances *did* matter, and the assumption that we, the inheritors of a hundred traditions, had our pick. What came of this was an architecture that owed something to Spain, very little to the people who were introducing the International Style, and a great deal to the movie camera's moving eye.

It seemed perfectly appropriate to the energetic citizens of Santa Barbara, for instance, that after their city had been devastated by an earthquake, it should rise again Spanish. The railroad roundhouse became a bull ring, the movie house a castle. Everywhere in the rebuilt town, the act of recalling another quite imaginary civilization created a new and powerful public realm. Out of this public act came the Santa Barbara County Courthouse (pages 41-50) certainly one of the most extraordinary public buildings in the United States. It did so much about sweeping the whole landscape up around it that one might have expected the really large-scale projects of the 1960s to catch even more of the grandeur of the place.

Whole new college campuses, for instance, which sprung magically out of fields across the state, surely presented unparalleled chances to order a public



Detail of a building on the Stanford University Campus, by Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge

realm, to invest a place of public importance with the physical attributes of importance. Yet, by any standards, the clearest and strongest campus to be found in the state is still the old campus at Stanford, designed in Boston by Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge, and built in the years just after 1887. The buildings in the old campus are H. H. Richardson warmed over (and cooled off again in the long passage from the architects' Boston kitchens); the gaudy mosaic facade of the chapel, the centerpiece of the composition, is an affront to the soft yellow stone surfaces around it. But the play of the local sunshine across the long arcades, the endlessly surprising development of interior spaces from big to small to big again, the excitement of a sensible framework that is strong and supple enough to include the most disparate academic activities — all combine to make this a complete and memorable place. Even though the surrounding countryside is not swept into the picture, as at Santa Barbara, at least there is an orchestration of spaces varied and complete enough to evoke a complex public use.

It is a place, however, that dates from the previous century, and this is a survey of our own times, times that have multiplied opportunities for spatial and functional orchestrations like the ones at Stanford and Santa Barbara. What, then, do we have?

During the years of California's growth, the extravagances of the landscape and of the settlers on it have suggested to many that straight opulence

San Francisco City Hall, by Bakewell and Brown

might create centers of the public realm. In this respect, three city halls clamor for attention. The San Francisco City Hall probably leads the list in sheer expensive grandeur; its expensiveness was, one gathers, as much a political as a physical phenomenon, but the grandeur is a manifestation of the highly developed *Beaux Arts* compositional skills of the architects, Bakewell and Brown. These great skills, though, have been curiously ineffectual in commending themselves to the public concern. It is a sobering experience, for instance, to stand in the towering space under the aggressively magnificent dome and to notice that hardly anyone looks up. And the development of the extensive and very formal civic center outside has had remarkably little effect on the growth of the downtown area, which has remained resolutely separate from all this architectural assertion. Surely a part of the failure to achieve an important public place here rests with the entirely abstract nature of the *Beaux Arts*'s earlier international style. It takes a major master, like Sir Edwin Lutyens at New Delhi, to lift this idiom out of the abstract and give some point to its being somewhere. The San Francisco City Hall demonstrates skill, but no such mastery; so the city is not specifically enriched by its being there. It could be anywhere.

Or almost anywhere. It could not easily be in Gilroy. A small garlic-farming community north of Salinas, Gilroy relied on a similar, if more relaxed, show of opulence in the building of its own city hall in 1905. An elaborateness,

Gilroy City Hall

of vaguely Flemish antecedent, served the town's desires; a truly remarkable array of whirls and volutes was concentrated here to signal the center of the public realm. But, alas, this concentration has not kept its hold on the public mind much more effectively than San Francisco's city hall has, and now this fancy pile is leading a precarious life as temporary headquarters for the town's Chamber of Commerce and police station.

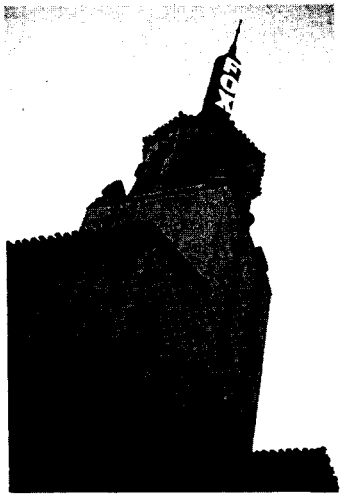
The citizens of Los Angeles adopted a slightly different route to achieve importance for their city hall. In their wide horizontal sprawl of a city, they went *up* as far as seemed practical, and they organized their statutes so no other buildings could go higher. But economic pressure has mounted, and now commercial structures bulk larger on the skyline than the city hall. The Angeleno's vertical gesture should get some credit, in any case, for being a gesture — an attempt to make a center for a city which otherwise had none. As a formal gesture, it has even had some little hold on the public mind, although its popular image now involves a familiar tower rising in the smoggy background while a freeway interchange fills the sharp foreground.

Thus the opulence and the effort involved in the San Francisco, Gilroy, and Los Angeles City halls both seem to come to very little in the public mind, lacking as they all do any activity which elicits public participation. Whatever the nature of the welfare state, these public buildings seem to offer far less to the passer-by than such typical — and remarkable — California institutions

The Nut Tree

as the Nut Tree, a roadside restaurant on the highway from Sacramento to San Francisco, which offers in the middle of a bucolic area such comforts as a miniature railroad, an airport, an extensive toy shop, highly sophisticated gifts and notions, a small bar serving imported beers and cheeses, a heartily elegant — and expensive — restaurant, exhibitions of paintings and crafts, and even an aviary — all of them surrounded and presented with graphic design of consummate sophistication and great flair. This is entirely a commercial venture, but judging from the crowds, it offers the traveler a gift of great importance. It is an offering of urbanity, of sophistication and chic, a kind of foretaste, for those bound west, of the urban joys of San Francisco.

In the days before television, moving-picture theaters afforded one of the clearest and easiest ways for people to participate in the American Dream. In Southern California, where movies came from, and where the climate allowed forecourts for theaters to be largely out of doors, some of the most image-filled places for the public to congregate were movie theaters. The Fox-Arlington Theater in Santa Barbara invites our inspection. The idiom is movieland Spanish (like nothing in Spain). The architectural opportunity was a double one. First, it was to make of the immense auditorium, set a block back from the theater's entrance on the main street, one of the city's noblest bastions, with high white walls sprouting turrets and balconies and follies. Only the grandest of the grandees of the other hemisphere could have afforded walls this size to

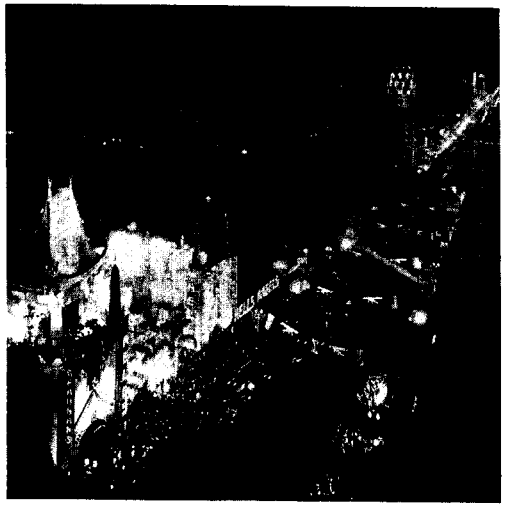


Tower of the Fox-Arlington Theater

stick their balconies onto. Second, and more importantly for the city, it was to make partly roofed and partly open the block-long passageway from the box office to the ticket-taker, thus providing the opportunity to extend the sidewalks of the city, still outdoors, past gardens and along a tiled esplanade, where soft lights play at night, and where by day the sun filters down among the leaves. Santa Barbara's sidewalks are ordinary enough, but in the mind's eye they merge with the passage to the Fox-Arlington Theater and other commercial arcades and patios off State Street to form a public realm filled with architectural nuance and, even more importantly, filled with the public.

Another such public monument, which should not soon be forgotten although it has been left isolated by Los Angeles' swiftly changing patterns is Grauman's Chinese Theater. It seems more astonishingly grand today than it did in the days when millions in their neighborhood theaters watched movie stars immortalizing bits of its wet concrete with their hands and feet.

To more recent times there are monuments as well. Indeed, by almost any conceivable method of evaluation that does not exclude the public, Disneyland must be regarded as the most important single piece of construction in the West in the past several decades. The assumption, inevitably made by people who have not yet been there, is that it is some sort of physical extension of Mickey Mouse. This is widly inaccurate. Instead, singlehandedly, it is engaged in replacing and extending many of those elements of the public realm which



Grauman's Chinese Theater in Los Angeles

have vanished in the featureless, private, floating world of Southern California, whose only edge is the ocean, and whose center is undiscoverable. Curiously, for a public place, Disneyland is not free. You buy your tickets at the gate. But then Versailles cost someone a great deal of money, too. Now, as then, you have to pay for the public life.

Disneyland is enormously important and successful just because it recreates all the chances to respond to a *public* environment, which Los Angeles in particular does not have any longer. It allows play-acting, both to be watched and to be participated in. In as unlikely a place as could be conceived, just off the Santa Ana Freeway, a little over an hour from the Los Angeles City Hall, in an unchartable sea of suburbia, Disney created a place, indeed a whole public world, full of sequential occurrences. It has big and little drama, hierarchies of importance and excitement, with opportunities to respond at the speed of rocketing bobsleds (or rocketing rockets, for all that), or of horse-drawn streetcars. An American Main Street of about 1910 is the principal theme against which play fairy-tale fantasies, frontier adventure situations, jungles, and the world of tomorrow.

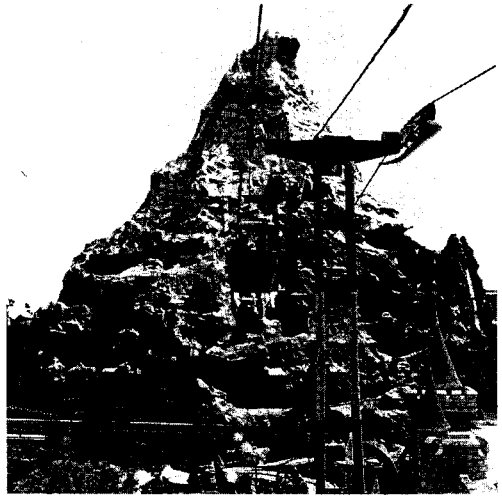
All this diversity, with unerring sensitivity, is keyed to the kind of participation without embarrassment which apparently we crave. No raw edges spoil the picture at Disneyland. Everything is as immaculate as in the musical-comedy villages that Hollywood has provided for our viewing pleasure. Nice

Main Street in Disneyland

looking, handsomely costumed young people sweep away the gum wrappers almost before they fall to the spotless pavement. Everything works, the way it doesn't seem to any more in the world outside.

The skill demonstrated here in recalling with thrilling accuracy all sorts of other times and places is of course one which has been developing in Hollywood throughout this century. Disney's experts are breathtakingly precise when they recall the gingerbread of a turn-of-the-century Main Street or a side-wheeler Misissippi River steamboat, even while they remove the grime and mess, and reduce the scale to the tricky zone between delicacy and make-believe. Curiously, the Mickey Mouse/Snow White sort of thing, which is most memorably Disney's and which figures heavily in an area called Fantasyland, is not nearly so successful as the rest, since it perforce drops all the way over into the world of real make-believe.

Other occurrences stretch credulity but somehow avoid snapping it. The single most exciting experience in the place is that which involves taking a cable car in Fantasyland, soaring above its make-believe castles, then ducking through a large *papier maché* mountain called the Matterhorn, which turns out to be hollow and full of bobsleds darting about in astonishingly vertical directions. Whence one swings out above Tomorrowland. Nobody, of course, thinks that that mountain is the Matterhorn, or even a mountain, or that those bobsleds are loose upon its slopes — slopes standardly being on the outsides



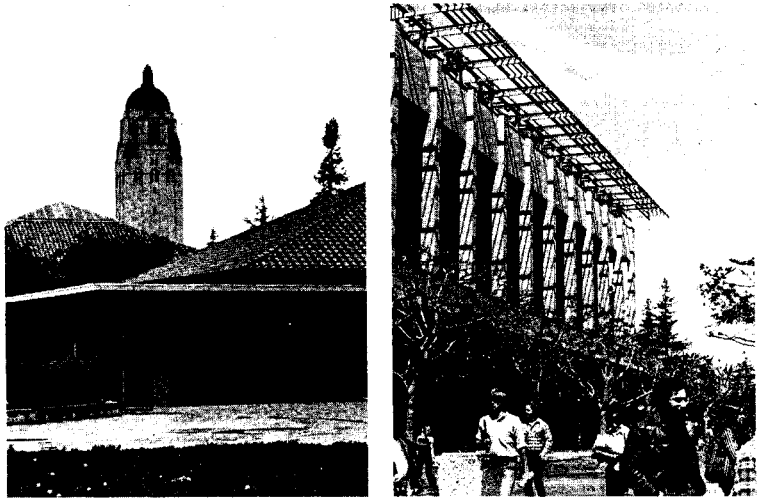
The Matterhorn at Disneyland

of mountains. Yet the experience of passing that space is a real one, and an immensely exciting one, like looking at a Piranesi prison, or escalating in the London Underground.

Of course Disneyland, in spite of the skill and variety of its enchantments, does not offer the full range of public experience. The political experience, for instance, is not manifested there. Yet there is a variety of forms and activities great enough to ensure an excellent chance that the individual visitor will find something to identify with.

Methods of seeking "character" for buildings in northern California are mostly much less theatrical than in Southern California, and adhere more strictly to a single pattern, an outgrowth of the redwood Bay Region Style in the direction of the standard universal American motel, employing stucco walls, aluminum windows, wooden shakes, and casual, if not cavalier, attitudes toward form.

New monumental buildings in Northern California bear a firmer recollection of the residential Bay Region Style. They have achieved varying degrees of architectural and critical success. John Carl Warnecke's post office and book store adjoining the old campus at Stanford University uses its masonry walls and Mediterranean red tile roofs as a point of departure to make, with two large, steep overhanging roofs, a form almost strong enough to take its place beside the old campus. A finely detailed colonnade, roofed with hyperbolic



Stanford University Book Store, by John Carl Warnecke (above left)
Student Union at the University of California, Berkeley, by Vernon De Mars (above right)

paraboloids, tucks rather redundantly under the great tile overhang and fails to measure up to the rest. The care taken in forming its concrete members is, however, heartening assurance that the arts of construction have not yet died out.

At the University of California Student Union in Berkeley, Vernon De Mars has sought to induce an active public response by devising (in a manner that closely parallels Disney's) astonishing juxtapositions of fragments. Individually, they are often exquisitely designed, but they are left to fend for themselves in a hubbub meant to recall the chaos of the city. The forms, like Disney's, sometimes unabashedly recall another time or place: a steel trellis surmounting the major block of the building is said to owe allegiance to Bernard Maybeck's wooden ones of an earlier generation, though those generally bore vines. The spaces around the building are by way of appreciation of the *Piazza di San Marco*. The carefully developed street furnishings recall Scandinavia. But the scope offered for this collection of occurrences is by no means Disney's so that the chance to recreate the moods of the city is severely restricted. From the Student Union there is no aerial tramway direct to Tomorrowland, no Disneyland chance to create still another world.

Whatever is missing, however, this collector's approach to enlivening the public realm demonstrates real advantages over the single-mindedness of, say, the San Francisco City Hall or some of the soberer classroom blocks that stand

Hearst Mining Building, Berkeley, by John Galen Howard

about on the Berkeley campus. The simplicity and the anonymity of these high blocks, mostly tile-roofed, set on knolls in groves of oaks and giant eucalypti, are in the spirit of the Bay area, are praiseworthy, and have often been praised. But success eludes most of them, probably because they set out to recall the area's last two idioms, but seldom with enough conviction to rise above the perfunctory. The two local idioms they seek to recall were lively ones, and look lively still.

The first, a high-spirited explosion of Classical or other forms, which break apart to leave voids in astonishing places, so as to create lofty spaces and dark shadows, has left a major monument on the campus, the Hearst Mining Building of 1907. John Galen Howard was its architect. The second local idiom, in whose development William Wurster was the central figure, usually comes out best at small scale, since the carefully understated, spare, almost anonymous efficiency of a well-understood carpenter's constructional system is most clearly in evidence there. "No matter how much it costs," Catherine Bauer Wurster pointed out about her husband's work "it will never show." The new large buildings on the Berkeley campus of the University of California succeed because they share either in the exuberance of the first local idiom or in the naturalness of the second. When they fail, they fail from attempting continuity with the first local idiom (their great tile roofs lifted up and out of sight) or from seeking to cash in on the apparent casualness of the second local idiom,

without noting that that is a casualness born of an intimate understanding of a constructional system and a way of life.

Not only the University, but all of California and the West, now face an architectural crisis different in many ways from the problems of the rest of the country. The Boston architects of the nineteenth-century railroad tycoon Leland Stanford had their own clear notions, social and architectural, of the nature of hierarchy, and they manifested them with great success in the old Stanford campus. But twentieth-century California has been egalitarian. As its population grows phenomenally, the people who comprise it, rich and poor, come from all sorts of places and owe no allegiance to any establishment of the sort that exercises at least some control of money and taste in areas less burgeoning.

While California was largely rural, this egalitarianism lent special delights to living there. In Southern California, from a combination of white-walled Spanish Colonial and the International Style, there developed, through Gill and Schindler and Neutra and *Arts and Architecture* magazine, and through the climate and the landscape, a way of building large numbers of private houses of a charm and comfort never before possible anywhere. This development was surpassed only in northern California. If the climate was a bit moodier there, the views of bays and forests were better; and there were architects, first of the generation of Bernard Maybeck, then of the generation

Street in Gilroy, California

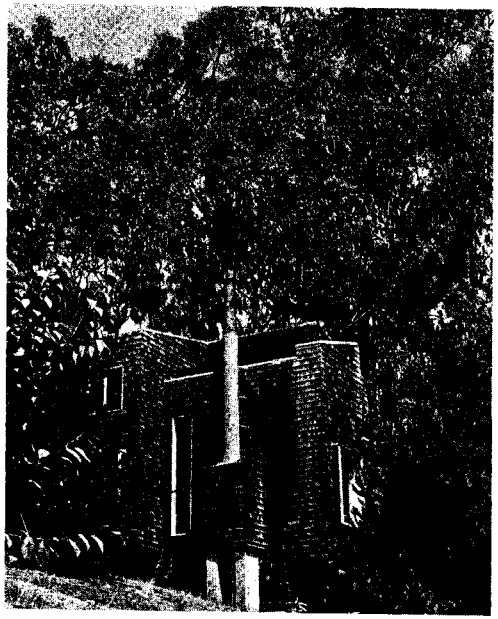
of William Wurster, Gardner Dailey, and Hervey Parke Clark, who were willing and eminently able to make the most of the opportunities. They developed a domestic architecture not only esteemed by architects, but almost universally accepted and enjoyed by the people for whom it was made. This is the domestic architecture we can call the Bay Region Style.

California was once a golden never-never land with plenty of room, with open fields for the public realm, with magnificent scenery for a sharable image, and with Hollywood's grandiose offerings for a publicly sharable experience. Nothing then could have been more natural than this emphasis on provision for domestic life, nothing more understandable than the gradual atrophying of concern for a public realm that people go to and use. The public weal was being extensively considered in projects built hundreds of miles from Los Angeles and San Francisco to provide those cities with water and electric power. But the kind of monumentality that occurs when the Establishment requires buildings more important than other buildings in places of special importance never occurred. California during the first four decades of the twentieth century was being developed mostly at a domestic scale — and very well, too. It seemed quite proper that man's impact on the land should be of this cozy, egalitarian, and very pleasant sort.

This process, however, is continuing in the later twentieth century, and by now it brings worry. The domestic arrangements of the earlier decades are

being reproduced endlessly, no longer in the places that laid some claim to public attention — places like Bel Air, Berkeley, and Sausalito (for the view); San Francisco and San Diego (for the bay); Hollywood (for a very special activity); and Santa Barbara (for high mountains coming close to the sea). Instead they are being reproduced in the no-places in between — like Hayward, Daly City, Inglewood, Manchester, and other municipal fictions even less memorable. The character and the sense of special place that came for free to the first communities — from the oak trees around them and the yellow hills and the mountains and the sea — do not similarly serve the later comers. Indeed they do not serve anyone. The oak trees go, and the yellow hills vanish; the smaller mountains are flattened, and even portions of the sea are filled in, all to be covered in a most egalitarian way with endless houses. Even the movie studios are being covered up.

It occurs to some, while the gray domestic waves of this suburban sea fill in the valleys and the bays and erode the hills, that something should be done, and that that something should be urban and monumental. The Bay Region Style, for all its domestic triumphs, offers no architectural framework for making a special celebration. The characteristic Wurster reticence, which has served so well in helping to create the continuous domestic fabric of the Bay cities, is too deeply ingrained to allow that. In Southern California, a latter-day straightforwardness, born mostly of a habit of commercial expediency, mili-



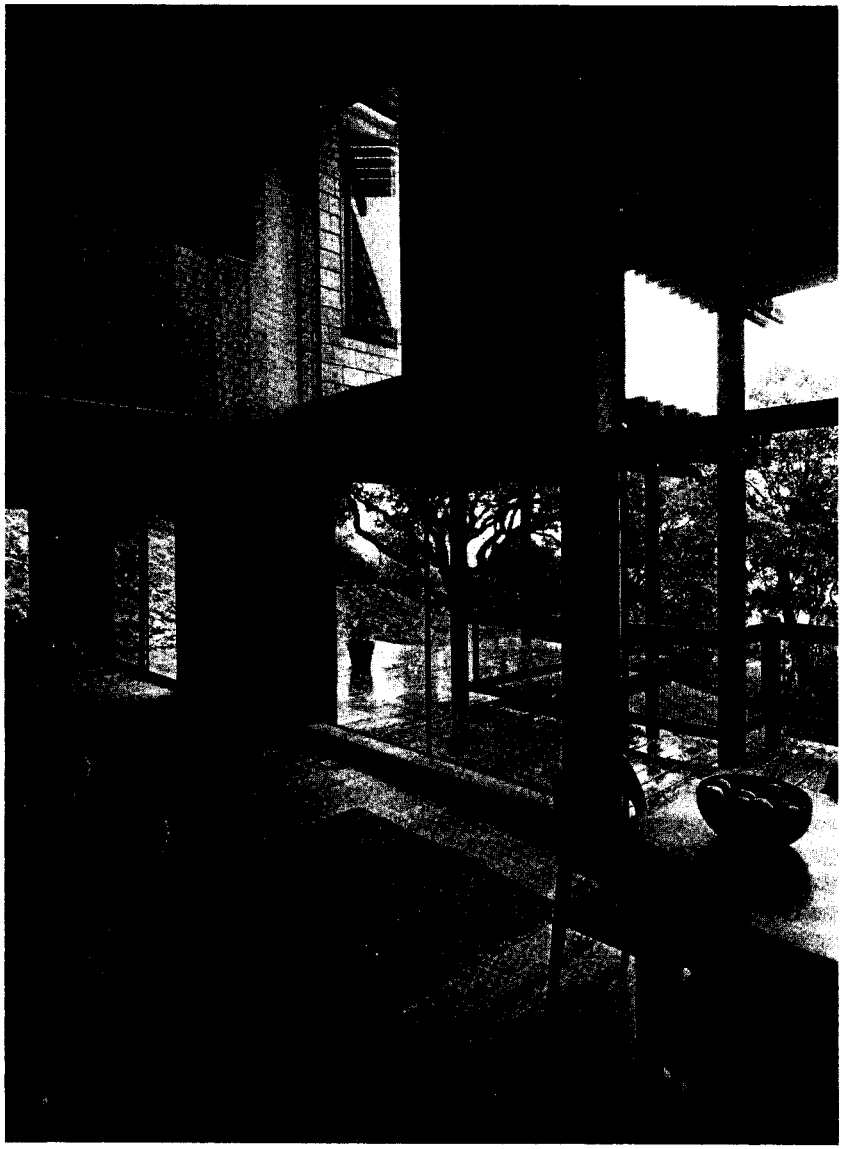
The Rubin house in Albany, California, by George Homsey

tates against the architectural celebration of a particular place. But even more basic than the absence of an architectural idiom for making public centers is the absence of any Establishment ready to shoulder the responsibility for the public realm. So what, as we started out by asking, might we have instead for an architectural framework?

The first and best chance for these floating gray suburbs comes from our asking what the problems really are.

A few houses by a few architects, mostly under the immediate influence of Joseph Esherick, are especially concerned with the specific analysis of (and response to) the problems of site, its outlooks and climate, the client and his needs. This is not a revolution, really, away from the attitudes of the second Bay Region idiom; it embodies many of the same methods of direct response to the problem. But it seeks to clarify and extend these methods to cope with the aggravated situation.

Esherick's Cary House in Marin County, for instance, has a wooded view. But it does not rely on a wall of glass pointed in that direction; instead it has a wall with glass openings, each carefully placed to perform a specific function of admitting light, lighting a surface, or exposing a carefully selected portion of the view. The Rubin House in Albany, by George Homsey, though on a less dramatic site, reacts even more specifically to such local delights as the dappled light coming in between the eucalyptus leaves, and the usually hazy



The Graham house in Berkeley, California, by Richard Peters and Peter Dodge (above)
The Cary house in Mill Valley, California, by Joseph Esherick (opposite)

sun of the bay shore sliding through skylights and along white walls. The exterior of the Graham House, by Richard Peters and Peter Dodge, on a steep Berkeley hillside, also demonstrates forms that grow not from a generalized formal impulse but from a specific search for light, air, space, and outlooks. All this extends the simpler idiom of the earlier unformal Bay Region work toward what promises to be a much fuller vocabulary, generated, like its precursor, not by restrictive formal systems but by specific responses to specific problems. So far, these are restricted domestic problems. But there is no reason why the elusive problems of the public realm could not respond to sophisticated extensions of the same efforts.

For the opportunity to create a public realm, we must look to sources other than the Establishment, to people or institutions interested at once in public activity and in place. We depend, in part, on more Disneys, on more men willing to submerge their own Mickey Mouse visions in a broader prospect of greater public interest. They must be willing and able to focus their attention on a particular place. Disneyland, however arbitrary its location, is unique, even as Los Angeles is, and much of its power comes from that fact.

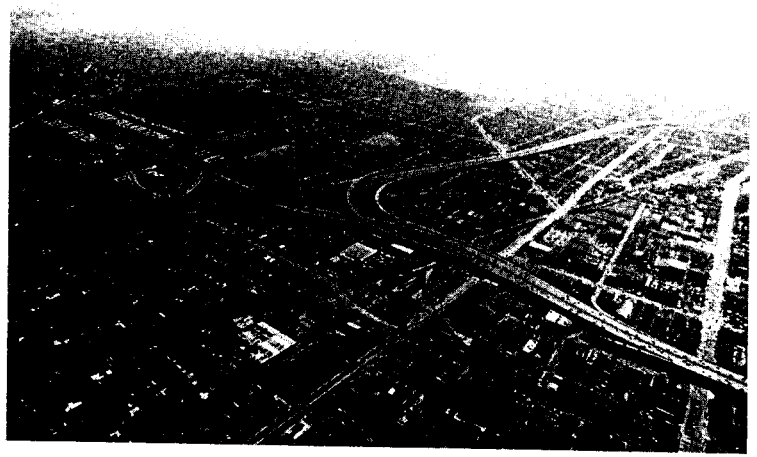
Until lately the largest single patron available to be pressed into service of the public realm has been the State Highway Department. Freeways have been one of the most serious generalizers of place in the state, ruthlessly and thoughtlessly severing some communities, congesting others, and obliterating

still others, marring, gouging, and wiping out whole landscapes. Yet, they loom large in the public eye as one of the biggest, strongest, most exciting, and most characteristic elements of the new California. If one had to name the center of Southern California, it would surely be the place not far from the Los Angeles City Hall where the area's major freeways wrap together in a graceful, strong, and much-photographed three-level interchange.

Much of the public excitement about San Francisco's small but dramatic skyline is a function of the capacity to see it, a capacity which is greatly enhanced by the bridges (themselves major California monuments) and by the freeways that lead to them. Indeed, in San Francisco, as in few places, the view which gives a sense of the whole city is one of the most valuable parts of the public realm. It is one of the parts that is most frequently attacked, and it must be most zealously defended. One of the public view's most effective defenders could be the freeway builders — though, admittedly, they have more often acted as saboteurs, as when they tried, and partly succeeded, in building a freeway wall between San Francisco and the bay.

The cities of California urgently need attention, before the characteristics that distinguish them at all are obliterated. There is no need, and no time, to wait for a not-yet-existent Establishment to build the traditional kind of monuments. Nor is there time for a disaster gripping enough to wake the public conscience to the vanishing places of the public realm we got for free. Most

(Continued from front flap)

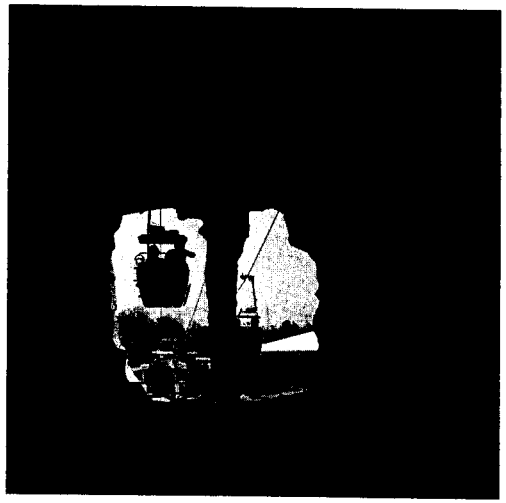


Freeways in Los Angeles

effectively, we might first develop a vocabulary of forms responsive to the marvelously complex and varied functions of our society. Then we might start sorting out those things for which the public has to pay and from which we might derive the public life. These things would not be the city halls and equestrian statues of another place and time. They had better be something far better, and of far more public use.

They might, for instance, be freeways. Freeways are not for individual people (like living rooms are and like confused planners would have you believe the whole city ought to be). They are for the public use and are part of the public realm. If the fidgety structures beside them (and the deserts for parking — or for nothing — under them) do not make sense, it is surely because there has been too little understanding of the public realm, not too much. The freeways could be the real monuments of the future, the places set aside for special celebration by people able to experience space and light and motion and relationships to other people and things at a speed that only this century has allowed.

Here are structures big enough and strong enough, once they are regarded as a part of the city, to re-excite the public imagination about the city. This is no shame, to be covered by suburban bushes or quarantined behind cyclone fences. It is the marker for a place set in motion transforming itself to another place. The exciting prospects, not surprisingly, show up best at Disneyland.



Inside the Matterhorn at Disneyland

There, on the inside of the Matterhorn from the aerial tramway over the bobsled run on the inside of the plastic mountain, is a vision of a place marked out for the public life, of a kind of rocketing monumentality, more dynamic, bigger and — who knows? — even more useful to people and to the public than any the world has yet seen.

C.M.

Discrimination in Housing Design

Discrimination in housing design — not between black and white, but between "front" and "back," "public" and "private," "ours" and "yours" — is a basic part of the process of contemporary housing design, and it may well be a basic part of its undoing. It is a technique taught in schools, practiced in architectural offices, and so well learned and so familiar that many designers never even question the fact that they are using it. It analyzes and dissects the problem at hand into discrete and (it is hoped) essential components.

Take, for instance, the colors on a planner's land-use map. They discriminate by consecrating whole areas of a city to some particular use. The governmental bureaucracies that regulate architectural design also make careful discriminations — like the one between circulation space in a building and habitable space, which assumes, we might guess, that it is not possible to circulate in a room or to inhabit a corridor.

Architects practice discrimination when they separate out all of the programmatic requirements for a building and assign some amount of square footage to each. Then, with the help of bubble diagrams or a "functional relationships matrix," they analyze and demonstrate how each part relates to all the other parts. They also make broad, general assumptions about "public" and "private" zones, and the zones needed for mechanical equipment and for vehicular and pedestrian circulation.

What results from all this analytical effort is a universe made up of discrete