

The Society of Architectural Historians
Missouri Valley Chapter



News Letter

Volume VI

Number 3

Fall 2000

EXHIBIT: Architect of Form and Spirit: Eric Mendelsohn in St. Louis

Opening Reception & Lecture
Sunday, September 17, 2 p.m.
Center of Contemporary Arts
Washington & Trinity, University City

COCA, the Center of Contemporary Arts, is mounting a major exhibition on the history and significance of its landmark building, originally designed in 1946 by Eric Mendelsohn. Curated by Kathleen James-Chakraborty and designed by Stephen Leet, the exhibit takes a broad look at the subject:

- Mendelsohn's background and career in Germany, England and Palestine
- Religious architecture in Weimar, Germany
- Modern architecture in St. Louis before Mendelsohn
- The importance of B'nai Amoona
- Religious architecture in St. Louis after Mendelsohn
- Later work by Mendelsohn & his contemporaries

Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum is building and donating a basswood model of a cut-away section of the former sanctuary space and social hall. A video interview with the original contractor, I. E. Millstone, has been funded by CALOP.

Kathleen James-Chakraborty will speak on the work of Mendelsohn at 3 p.m. Sunday, September 17. She has also written the accompanying catalog, a 96-page hardback published by the Missouri Historical Society Press, and distributed by Syracuse University Press. Kathleen James-Chakraborty is assistant professor of architectural history at the University of California, Berkeley. She is the author of *Erich Mendelsohn and the architecture of German modernism* (Cambridge University Press, 1997) and is recognized as a leading authority on the modern movement in Germany.

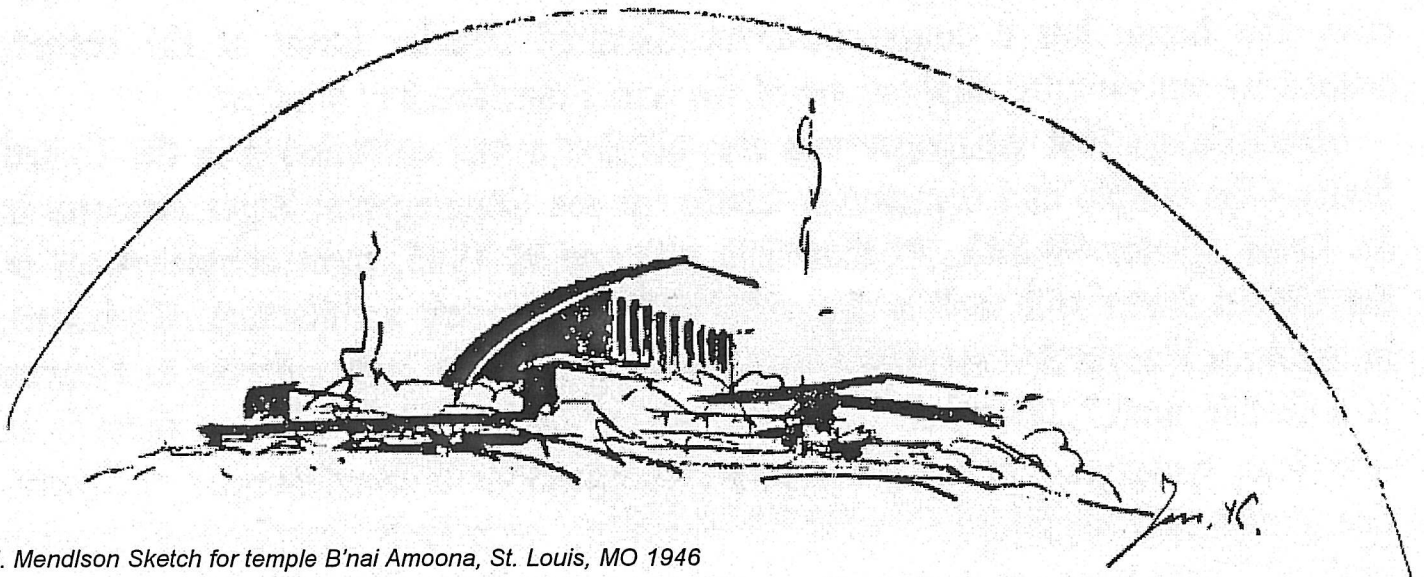
Free Public Tours
Sunday afternoons at 1 p.m.

Architectural historian Mark Maloney will lead tours of the Mendelsohn exhibit on the following dates:

October 1, October 29, November 26,

December 17, January 21, and February 18.

Docent-led tours are also available for groups at other times. Call 725-1834, extension 104. The exhibit will continue until March 10, 2001.



E. Mendelsohn Sketch for temple B'nai Amoona, St. Louis, MO 1946

CHARLES B. CLARKE AND THE LEBANON PUBLIC SCHOOL

by Dona Monroe

Editor's note: Continuing research on the offbeat 19th-century St. Louis architect Charles B. Clarke (see Newsletter IV,4, Winter 1998) has uncovered some unusually blunt criticism of his work by his clients. Dona Monroe is a retired teacher and author of two books about Lebanon, Illinois.

History is alive and well in Lebanon, Illinois – a college town of 3700 situated twenty-five miles east of St. Louis. Neatly laid out in 1814, it sits atop a hill enhanced with an abundant supply of beautiful trees. McKendree College and the business district are at the top of the hill, the district schools at the bottom, and an outstanding array of homes and buildings from several architectural periods, from the Greek Revival style to late 19th-century Queen Anne houses sit majestically in neighborhoods throughout the town.

The first public school was taught in churches and halls rented for the purpose until 1866 when, according to *The History of St. Clair County* by Brink-McDonough (1881), “a fine brick schoolhouse was erected.” “About one o’clock, Saturday morning, February 28, 1874,” the school board secretary later wrote, “the Public Schoolhouse was discovered to be on fire and was entirely consumed, with the exception of the outside brick walls, with furniture, library, organ, etc.” The school was insured for \$15,000.

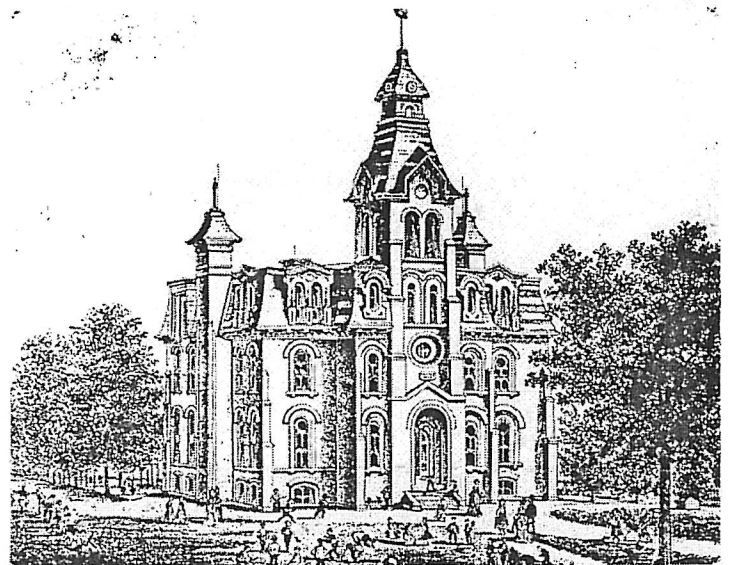
The arduous task of taking down and disposing of the remaining brick began. By March 18, 1874, the old building had been razed, and according to the minutes of the school board, “Mr. C. B. Clarke presented to the board the plans of a schoolhouse, which were examined and found to suit with several alterations, viz.: change the lower hall so as to have no steps in it, making the floor level entirely through the house, throwing the steps outside the building.” This was the only time that the board secretary spelled Clarke’s name correctly. The next entry concerning him was dated April 1874: “Board met. All members present. Mr. C. B. Clark, [sic] Architect of St. Louis, Mo. presented a plan and specifications for a schoolhouse, which in appearance suited the board; and Mr. Clark told us that the building could be built for about \$20,000 or \$22,000.00 Said plans were upon the statements recommendation of Mr. Clark conditionally adopted for our new schoolhouse.”

Apparently, the school board conducted an investigation on the previous work of C. B. Clarke, as evidenced in

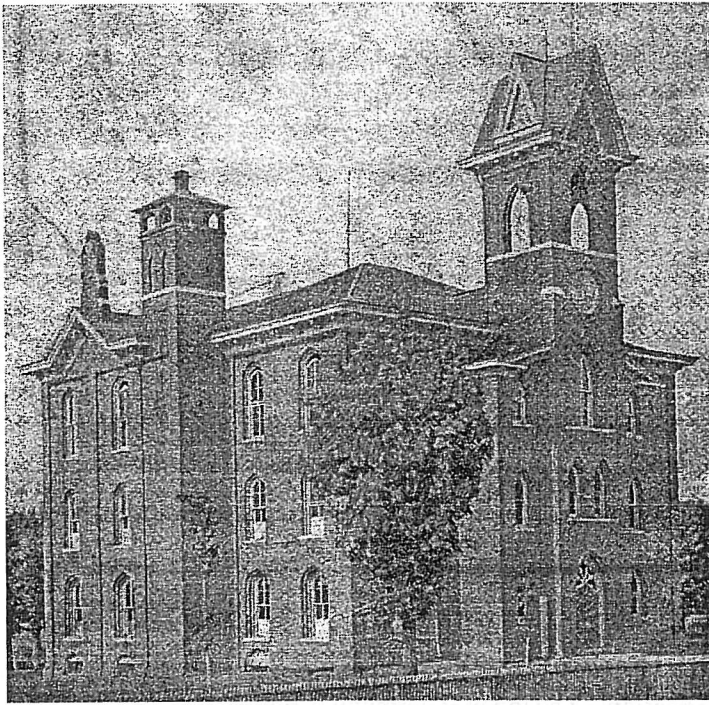
the minutes of April 25, 1874: “Mr. Chamberlin, Mr. Lehman, and Mr. McCoy, having been to Collinsville to look at the public schoolhouse of that place, reported the same a very miserable concern in every respect; the same being only 2 or 3 years old, and now needing thousands of dollars repair. Mr. C. B. Clark, of St. Louis, having been the architect and superintendent. This being the day set to open the bids for our new schoolhouse, as designed by Mr. C. Clark, (the same that superintended the said Collinsville Schoolhouse) he appeared during the meeting of the board. Mr. J. Chamberlin and other members of the board stated to Mr. Clark, that the reports from several buildings of his designing and superintending were so adverse to his capacity & as an architect and superintendent for schoolbuildings, the board being satisfied that the building, as he designed it could not be properly built for 20 or \$22,000.00; and furthermore, that the walls of our buildings, as contemplated, were entirely too weak for a substantial school house, and the board therefore agreed to open none of the bids (5) so far received, and told Mr. Clark that we would not accept his plan and specifications, nor any other of his making. The board being unanimous on this conclusion.”

At this point, one would surmise that was the last of Mr. Clarke, but ten days later, the school board met again, and a notation in the minutes of May 4, 1874, indicated that he was yet active in the planning of the school. The minutes read, “By mutual agreement a plan for our new schoolhouse was adopted and Mr. C. B. Clark engaged to perfect the same and write up the specifications for the same; the plan being something like our old schoolhouse.”

Bids were received on May 22, 1874, and Mr. Clarke was not listed among the bidders. The minutes indicate that



Collinsville Public School erected 1872



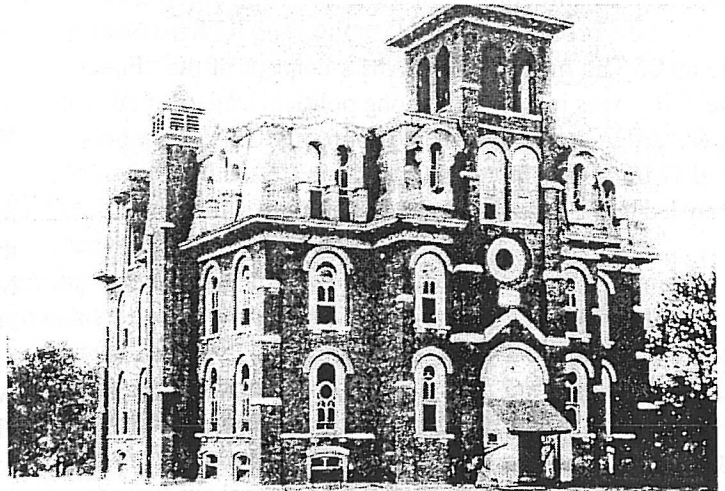
Lebanon Public School 1874-1938

Shaw, Mills & Swears, Lebanon builders, were the lowest bidders, and the contract was awarded to them, "to build and complete the whole schoolhouse, according to the plans and specifications for the sum of \$24,526.75/100 Dollars. . .

Work began on the new school in the spring and proceeded during the summer and fall at an apparently rapid pace, as the new building was opened for classes on December 7, 1874.

The first two floors of the new school were divided into four large rooms with accompanying cloak rooms and a middle hall and stairway leading to the next floor. Mildred Robinson Blaine, a student, who later became a teacher in this school from 1918 to 1938, remembered that the teachers would sometimes say of a student, "He'll never climb the stairs," as the first four grades were on the first floor and the upper grades on the next. Due to early dropouts and the fact that children who did not "pass" into the next grade until they could qualify, some did not go to school past the fourth grade. She said there were fifty-four children in her own first grade class and seven who graduated with her in the class of 1917. To finish the eighth grade, students had to pass a county examination.

The third floor was not designated for a particular use at this time, but it was sometimes used as a gymnasium. The teachers and her physical education classes were often interrupted by a student carrying a note from a lower floor teacher, that the thumping of the basketballs was shaking the whole school. Later the third floor became the first high school.



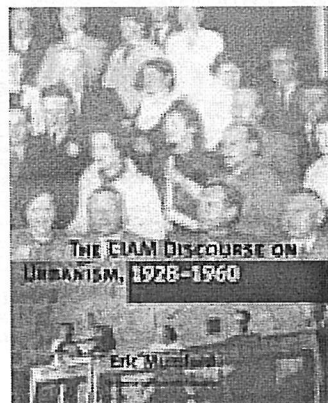
Collinsville Public School after tornado repairs

The April 1877 bills allowed sixty cents for a trough to be made for a privy, reminding us that indoor plumbing was a long way into the future. A cinder path led to the two eight-seated outhouses situated in the back of the school yard, one for girls and the other for boys. Complete with Sears-Roebuck catalogs, they were also the place for wasps to settle, much to the apprehension of those using them.

The school was sixty-three years old in 1937, when a letter written to the Federal Department of Public Works indicated that the school board was ready to build a new school and had asked for funds to aid construction. The laying of the cornerstone in the new building was held March 6, 1938. The three-story brick school which had served the community for sixty-four years was torn down for scrap during the summer of 1938 while the new school was being completed.

©1999 by Dona Monroe, excerpted from a paper presented at the 1999 Conference on Illinois History, Springfield.

ERIC MUMFORD'S NEW BOOK



The MIT Press has published chapter member Eric Mumford's new book, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960*. It recounts the history of the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne, known as CIAM, an avant-garde association of architects intended to advance both modernism and interna-

tionalism in architecture in order to serve the interests of society. Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, and Richard Neutra were among its members. CIAM's concept of the "Functional City" was influential among political leaders of all stripes. After World War II, a group of younger members called Team 10 attempted to transform CIAM but ultimately led to the organization's dissolution in 1959.

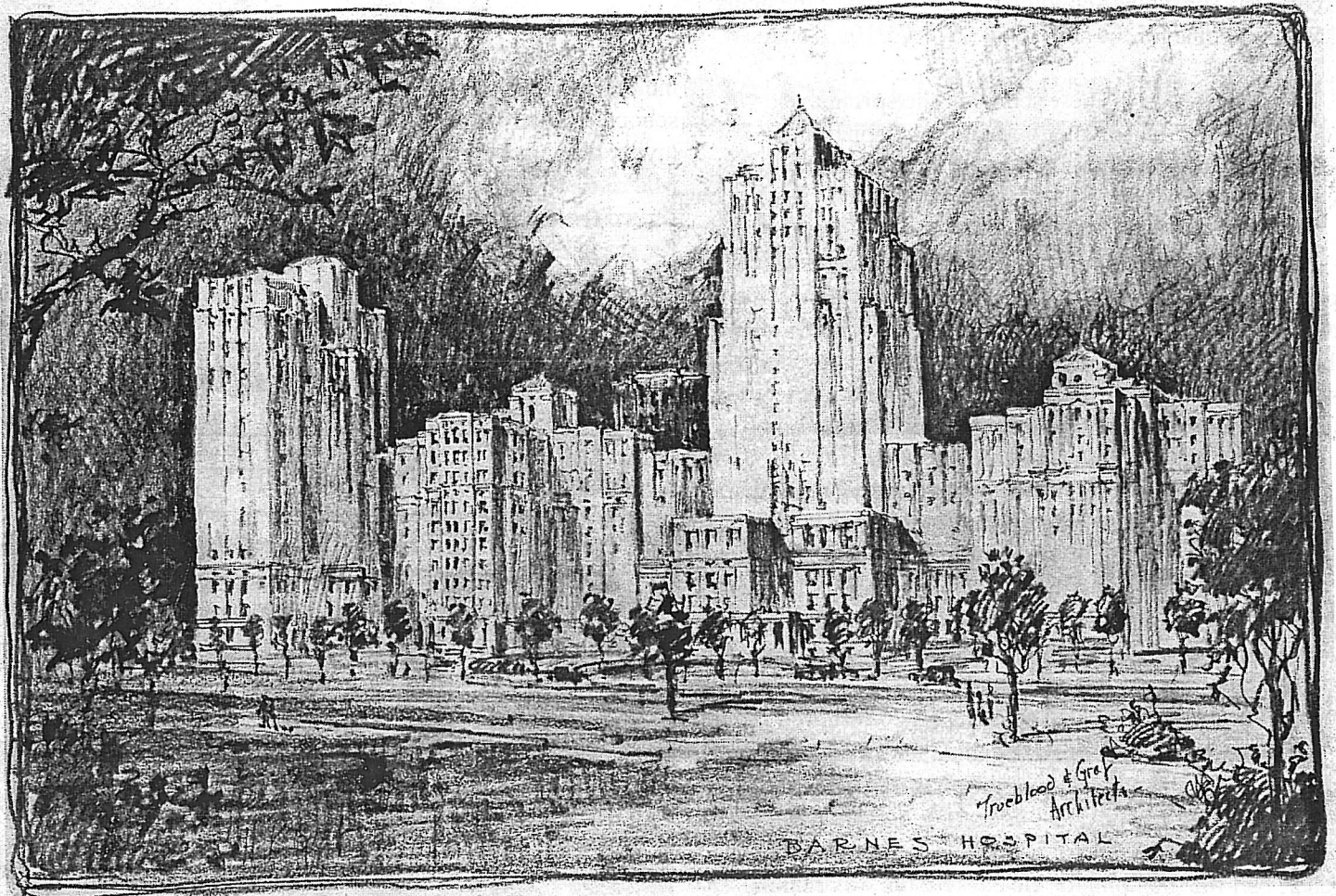
Mumford is assistant professor of architecture at Washington University School of Architecture. He holds a bachelor's degree from Harvard, a master's from MIT, and a PhD from Princeton. Originally from Ohio, Eric practiced architecture in Chicago in the 1980s and maintains that connection with a course comparing the architecture of Chicago and St. Louis. A grant from the Graham Foundation in 1997 enabled him to study significant apartment buildings in the two cities.

Pick up your copy of *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism* at Left Bank Books, St. Louis's only independently owned full-service bookstore.

HELP WANTED: Two Important Architectural Collections to WHMC-UMSL

Two large collections of architectural materials have recently come to WHMC, and help is needed in cataloguing them for future researchers. The Western Historical Manuscripts Collection is the St. Louis branch of the State Historical Society of Missouri and is located in the Thomas Jefferson Library at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Although not as well known to St. Louisans as the Missouri Historical Society, WHMC has rich and growing collections on many subjects of local interest, including conservation, journalism, local government, and African-American institutions.

The Woermann Construction Company has donated more than 900 boxes of records of construction projects dating back to 1917. Included are letters, drawings, and specifications. The index Woermann provided lists clients and dates but not architects or locations. The collection is thus a potential treasure-trove of new information about St. Louis architecture. The first box opened on a recent visit,



Rendering of Barnes Hospital by Hugo Graf

for instance, included a previously unrecorded project by Charles Eames.

The architectural drawings of Hugo Graf, a popular designer of period-style houses from the 1920s to the 1950s, have come to WHMS, following an earlier gift of Graf's photos. Included in the collection may be works by Wilbur Trueblood, Graf's early partner, and by Gerhardt Kramer, who succeeded to Graf's office.

William "Zelli" Fischetti, senior manuscript specialist at WHMC, encourages your help with either or both of these projects. You will be making an important contribution to St. Louis architectural history. Phone Zelli at 516-5143 or e-mail him at zelli@umsl.edu.

THE ST. LOUIS FOUNDATION FOR ARCHITECTURE

by Michelle Swatek

On April 30, 1990 leaders of the St. Louis Chapter of the American Institute of Architects established the St. Louis Foundation for Architecture (SFA), created with the revenues earned from hosting the national convention in St. Louis in 1989. SFA is registered with the Missouri Secretary of State as a non-profit organization with tax exempt status granted by the Internal Revenue Service. Eugene J. Mackey III, FAIA serves as the chairperson, assisted by members of the Foundation's Board of Directors: Rex L. Becker, FAIA; H. Curtis Ittner, FAIA; Laurance P. Berri, AIA; Peter Burley Griffin; Jane Piper Gleason, St. Louis Hon. Assoc. AIA; Clark S. Davis, FAIA and William F. Yarger, AIA.

Today's Mission: The St. Louis Foundation for Architecture is a nonprofit organization, dedicated to advancing public interest and knowledge about architecture and design. This mission is carried out through innovative programs, promoting the public's awareness and appreciation of architecture in our community.

Over the years, the Foundation has supported programs that meet its mission, such as architectural education in schools and most recently, providing assistance to the Society of Design Administrators to better understand design, its importance in our daily lives and how we make the public more aware of, and sensitive to architecture.

During the first half of 2000, the Board researched the work of other architectural foundations to develop a model for the St. Louis Foundation. Of most interest was the nearby Chicago Foundation for Architecture (CFA) that places its focus on Chicago tours, lectures and gift shops in

the Santa Fe Building and the John Hancock Center. Often confused with AIA Chicago, the CFA is known as the public face of architecture in Chicago, supported by over 300 docents and volunteers.

Under the steady stewardship of the current Board, the Foundation will soon announce activities to promote knowledge of architecture in our community. Please remember that as a charitable organization, the St. Louis Foundation for Architecture is an excellent vehicle for tax deductible donations to serve as honorariums or memorials. Should you wish to make a donation in memory of, or in honor of someone, please contact AIA St. Louis at 621-3484 for further information.

Michelle Swatek is executive director of the St. Louis Chapter, American Institute of Architecture.

RUSKIN ON HOUSING

In response to a recent query to the SAH listserv from Loretta Lorange, Dietrich Neuman of Brown University was able to clarify the sources of two often-paired quotes from Ruskin. They come from the "Lamp of Memory" chapter in the *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849):

"I would have[,then,] our ordinary dwelling houses built to last and built to be lovely; as rich and full of pleasantness as may be within and without." *subchapter VI.*

"[Therefore,] when we build let us think that we build forever. Let it not be for the present life nor the present use alone;" *subchapter X.*

Helene Lipstadt drew attention to another line from the "Lamp of Memory" that should be of interest to preservationists: "Do not talk of restoration. The thing is a lie from beginning to end."

AFRICAN-AMERICAN ARCHITECTS SOUGHT FOR NEW REFERENCE

Dreck S. Wilson, SALA, NOMA, is preparing *A Bibliographical Dictionary of African-American Architects, 1865-1945*. He is seeking nominations for inclusion in the book and also needs finished 25-100 word biographies on individual architects. Contact Dreck S. Wilson, 505 Dahlia, Street, NW, Washington, DC 20012, phone 202-726-2101, or e-mail DWi5928417@aol.com.

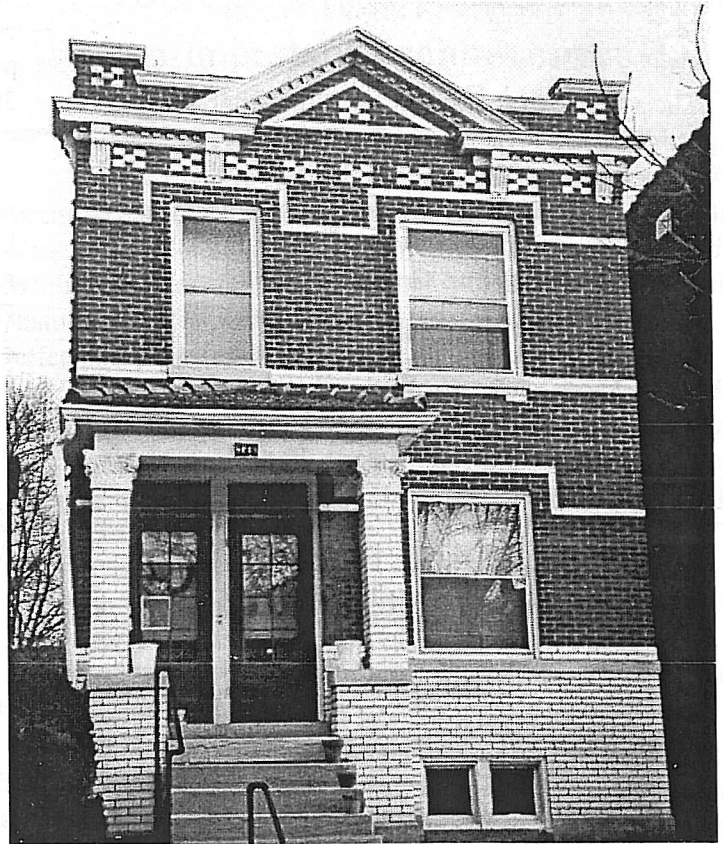


Louisiana Avenue, St. Louis

THE BAKERY BRICK HOUSE: ST. LOUIS VERNACULAR

NiNi Harris, a chapter member, writes about a distinctive St. Louis building type in the Winter/Spring 2000 issue of the *Carondelet Historical Society Newsletter*. "Carondelet's Bakery Brick Houses" describes the buildings decorated with white glazed brick that are scattered throughout South St. Louis, with concentrations on blocks that were developed between 1906 and 1916. NiNi has coined the term "bakery brick" to bring to mind the familiar, easily washable glazed bricks that lined the interiors of bakeries and breweries of that era. In the blocks surrounding St. Cecilia Catholic Church at Alaska and Eiler, nearly half the buildings are bakery brick houses. These houses may have glazed brick composing whole sections of their facades, especially the areas below the first-floor window sills. Bakery brick may create square-sectioned porch pillars with rounded corners or may outline windows and doors, and decorative patterns along the cornice may recall Navajo carpets. A few builders seem to have been especially attracted to bakery brick, including Alphons Naert and Anton Degenhardt, and the "architectural company" of Zentner-Kissell often appears on these building permits. Building types using bakery brick range from five-room cottages to two-family and four-family buildings, and many of these have above-average amenities, including nine-foot ceilings and extensive, sometimes ornate, woodwork.

More research is needed on this newly-identified vernacular building type, especially in other parts of the city. Meanwhile, for a real eyeful, go down to Eiler and Fassen streets between Virginia and Alabama.



5200 Louisiana Avenue, St. Louis

TALLEST CORINTHIAN COLUMN?

Cynthia R. Field, Ph.D., chair of architectural history and historic preservation for the Smithsonian Institution, recently presented an interesting question on the SAH e-mail exchange: What are the tallest Corinthian columns in the world? Jon Davey of SIU suggested the **Grand Avenue Water Tower** at Grand and 20th in St. Louis. Designed by George I. Barnett in 1871, it is 154 feet high.

The competition for tallest Corinthian columns that are part of a building was less conclusive. Architect David Cornelius of Philadelphia noted that the tallest in antiquity are those of the **Temple of Jupiter at Baalbek**, Lebanon, which stand 65 feet tall, surpassing the **Olympeion at Athens** at 55 feet. By comparison, **St. Isaac's Cathedral** in St. Petersburg has columns only 60 feet tall, but each is made of a single granite shaft weighing 114 tons, making them the largest monolithic columns in the world. The church, designed by Auguste de Montferrand, took 40 years to build from 1818 and also has probably the most costly Corinthian columns, including 10 of malachite and 2 of lapis lazuli on the interior. Bruce Laverty of the Philadelphia Athenaeum suggested Thomas U. Walter's **Girard College**, a peripteral temple of 1833-1848 with columns having 55-foot shafts and measuring 66 feet 8 inches from base to top of capital.

■ ■ ■ Events Calendar ■ ■ ■

EXHIBIT: Architect of Form and Spirit: Eric Mendelsohn in St. Louis

Opening Reception & Lecture
Sunday, September 17, 2 p.m.
Center of Contemporary Arts
Washington & Trinity, University City

See front page for more information.

Modern Architecture Bicycle Tour Sunday, September 24, 9 a.m. Start at COCA, Washington & Trinity

Bike-along architects will serve as guides for the tour, which will follow a route to the Arch including a stop for lunch at the Tap Room, 20th & Locust. Visit local bike shops for a registration brochure, or call COCA at 314-725-6555. Registration Fee: \$5, or \$7 that day.

Modern Architecture at Home: A Tour of Significant Residences throughout St. Louis Sunday, October 15

Depart 1:30 from COCA, Washington & Trinity

A motorcoach will take participants (limited to about 50) to four of the most important modern houses from Mendelsohn's era in St. Louis, including works by Frank Lloyd Wright, Harris Armstrong, Fred Dunn and Isadore Shank. The tour will end at COCA with a reception and viewing of the exhibit. Registrations (\$35) will be accepted at COCA beginning Friday, September 1.

Talk: Front Porch and Log Cabin: Presidents' Homes and the Presidential Image Saturday, November 18, 2 p.m. Cupples House, St. Louis U. campus

In conjunction with an exhibition of presidential election campaign memorabilia, Esley Hamilton will speak on how the presidents' public personas have been shaped by their own residences, whether they be humble cabins, middle-class Victorians, or exclusive estates. The United States is unique in the extent to which it has turned the homes of the presidents into public shrines.

HIKES INTO HISTORY

Esley Hamilton, preservation historian for St. Louis County Parks, offers 2-hour walks through historic parts of Clayton and University City. The cost is \$3 per person, free to members of the Hiking Club.

Washington University Saturday, September 23, 9 to 11 a.m.

Meet under the tower of Brookings Hall at the head of Lindell Boulevard to see this outstanding example of Collegiate Gothic design associated with the 1904 World's Fair and Olympics with the fine houses along Forsyth.

Parkview And The University City Loop Saturday, September 30, 9 to 11 a.m.

Meet at Melville & Kingsbury, outside the west gate of Parkview a 1905 development by Julius Pitzman, who invented the private street. Tour the treelined streets and the lively University City Loop adjacent.

Wydown Boulevard Saturday, October 7, 9 to 11 a.m.

Meet on the corner of Wydown and Ellenwood in front of the Church of St. Michael and St. George, one of several outstanding religious institutions in this neighborhood, site of the Philippine exhibit at the World's Fair.

University Heights And The Civic Plaza Saturday, October 14, 9 to 11 a.m.

Meet at Delmar & Trinity in front of the 1903 City Hall, center of one of the finest City Beautiful public spaces in the nation, and the adjacent neighborhood marked by the Lion Gates has a distinctive plan and architectural styles.

WORLD ARCHITECTURE SERIES

The chapter's popular series of talks on architecture outside the United States moves this fall to Washington University's Steinberg Hall, thanks to William Wallace, chairman of the Department of Art & Archaeology. We shall be using Room 200, the classroom at the top of the stairs, just outside the entrance to Steinberg Library. Gather in the upstairs lobby until the room is free. Steinberg is located near the corner of Skinker and Forsyth, with parking on the north side of the building.

"The Louvre: An Architectural History" Thursday, September 21, 7:30 Steinberg Hall, Washington University

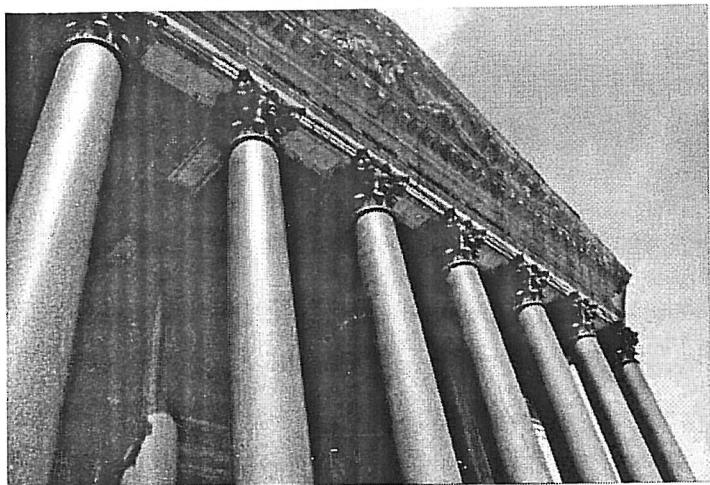
Jeanne Morgan Zarucchi, Ph.D. returns to our series with a look at one of the world's great palaces. Jeanne is associate professor of both French and Art History at UM-St. Louis. She traces the Louvre's development from its early medieval beginnings and shows how its present form has been shaped by its setting in Paris and by changing politics as well as taste.

"The Architecture of Malta" Thursday, October 26, 7:30 p.m. Steinberg Hall, Washington University

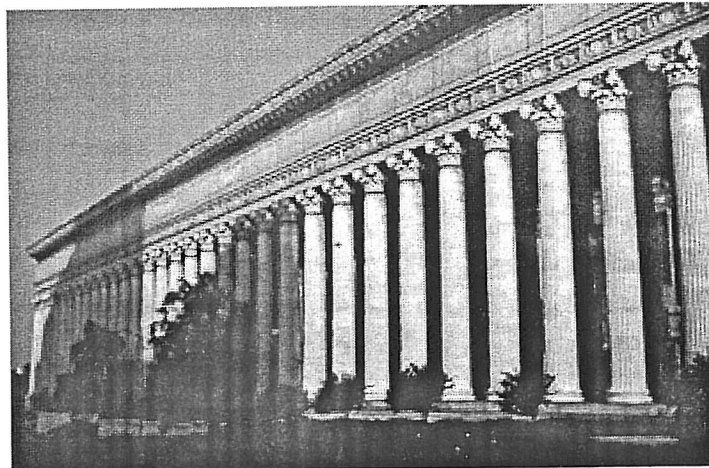
Carolyn Toft, Director of Landmarks Association, and independent scholar Mimi Stiritz combine their talents to report on Malta, the independent island in the Mediterranean. Maltese architecture reflects the island's position as a crossroads of cultures for several millennia.

Corinthian Column, Continued

John Ferguson noted that the great hall of the 1882-1887 **Pension Building** in Washington, D. C., now the National Building Museum, has paired columns at each end that are 75 feet high. Made of plastered brick, they are possibly the tallest interior Corinthian columns. Linda Lyons, author of a book about the building, noted that Montgomery Meigs, the military engineer who designed the building, made a point of checking the height of the columns at Baalbek, presumably to be sure that his were taller.



St. Issac's Cathedral in St. Petersburg, Photo by Andy Raimist



*NY State Department of Education Building
1908-12 Henry Hornhostel*

Topping everything else, however, according to David Cornelius, is the **New York State Education Building** in Albany, formerly the State Museum, designed by Henry Hornbostel and built 1908-1912. Its marble and terracotta columns are 90 feet tall.

© 2000 The Society of Architectural Historians, St. Louis and Missouri Valley Chapters.

News Letter

NewsLetter is published quarterly by the St. Louis and Missouri Valley Chapters of the Society of Architectural Historians.

Please mail editorial correspondence and submissions for publication to Esley Hamilton, Editor, 7346 Balson Ave. University City, MO 63130 or contact him at 314-615-0357; Fax 314-615-4696; E-mail Esley_Hamilton@stlouisco.com. Deadlines for submission of material for publication in **NewsLetter** are as follows:

Spring issue	15 February
Summer issue	15 May
Fall issue	15 August
Winter issue	15 November

St. Louis Chapter, SAH Board of Directors (1999-2000)

Peter Wollenberg	President
Ruth Bohan	Vice President
Mimi Stirtz	Secretary
Patty Bausch	Treasurer
Esley Hamilton	Newsletter Editor

student \$5	organization \$25
individual \$10	supporting \$25+
joint \$15	

St. Louis & Missouri Valley Chapters,
Society of Architectural Historians
P. O. Box 23110
St. Louis, MO 63108

