ARCHITECTURE IN EDEN
BY
RICHARD OZIEMBLOWSKY

THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

APPROVED:

WILLIAM BROWN, CHAIRMAN

JAAN KOLT

THOMAS REGAN
A TRANSITION BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL CONDITIONS.
ARCHITECTURE IN EDEN. (A transition between urban and rural conditions).

This project examines the relationship between urban and rural conditions that exist in Alexandria, Virginia. The architect has drawn heavily from an editorial for OPPOSITIONS magazine entitled "The Third Typology", by Anthony Vidler. "The Third Typology" is not utilized as a paradigm for architectural design, but rather as a validation of the ideologies employed.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

DEDICATED TO MY PARENTS,
WHO HAVE PROVIDED ME THE BASE THAT HAS ENABLED
ME TO INVESTIGATE ARCHITECTURE.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARCHITECTURE TODAY</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE IMAGE</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE SITUATION</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE PROJECT</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE PROGRAM</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE MAN-MADE AXIS</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE NATURAL AXIS</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE MACHINE</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE THIRD TYPOLOGY</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRAWINGS</td>
<td>19-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MODEL PHOTOGRAPHY</td>
<td>30-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE IMAGE</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LITERATURE CITED</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As an architect entering the professional field in an age of a fixation on the past and a great uncertainty of the future, I realize that we must act decisively to right the direction of architecture. To help in this dilemma, I choose to look to the modernists (of which the architects of today are heirs) for a clarification of the present situation. The first generation of modern architects provided subsequent generations with a formidable challenge, a challenge that has recently not been accepted. Le Corbusier, Gropius, Mies, Wright, and Kahn all serve as paradigms for "Modern Architecture."

Modern Architecture was an architecture freed from the constraints of history, an architecture born from the spirit of the times. Subsequent generations of architects interpreted the modernists and expounded and elaborated on the general ideologies of that movement. Robert Venturi responded with *Complexity and Contradiction* and advocated a theory of design that again looked to the classical vocabulary of architecture. Venturi remained a modern architect but contaminated modernism with a reassemblage of historical elements.

Venturi's disciples practiced this approach and were termed as "Post-Modernists." Post Modern architecture relies on a philosophy that states that how we perceive reality is just as valid as reality itself. This approach to design produces a product which is actually two buildings, a building that is perceived and a building that is the reality. For example, a typical office building of today is actually a concrete and
steel structure with a brick veneer skin which is hung from the edge of the slab. This type of building system is an absurdity in the sense that one; it conceals the true structural system of the building and two; the brick is used in a manner that violates its' nature (brick traditionally being a structural material). "Post-Modern Architecture" is satisfied with being read as architecture and not functioning as or actually being architecture.

When we look at American society it becomes clear to us as to how this architecture can be advocated and embraced as substantial and valid. Traditional American values that helped preserve and perpetuate our society have eroded to the point where we are a society in a crisis. Advancing technology has provided us wealth of material goods, and we seem to consider successful the individual who can attain these goods. The striving for comfortability has supplanted the striving for immorality. Technology, heralded as being able to free man to work for cultural good, is now being seen as the end and not the means. Modernists saw an architecture of honesty and integrity producing an individual with like attributes. Today we see a society of eroding values producing an architecture of deception that finds its' truth in appearance.

The new generation of architects must accept the challenge of the modernists and must work to produce an architecture of our age. The playing of historical forms for the sake of formal exploration breaks no new ground, it chooses to be satisfied with what exists and can only lead to trendy
styles that are derivatives and co-mixtures of past styles.

A Modern Architecture that addresses important issues that are relevant to modern man must evolve. We as architects must deal with rapidly developing technologies that may or may not be incorporated into our building systems. We must deal with a technological revolution that has provided man with the capability of endangering his very existence. We must use architecture to explore as well as to shelter. We as architects must accept the challenge of the modernists, only then will we be investigating a reality and not just an illusion of reality.

Architects can serve as models for society. An architecture of integrity and honesty may not produce like individuals, but it will have an impact on its' users, an impact that over a period of time will raise important questions in individuals.

In the pages that follow, I will present a project which will raise important questions, but only for those who care to invest the time to explore.
The space between Natural and Man-made forms is essentially a void between opposing solids, so that the Human Beings who occupy it are neither sheltered nor brought to a single conclusion. Instead they are exposed to the two separate and hostile realities of Human Life: what Nature is and what Men want and do.

Vincent Scully, MODERN ARCHITECTURE.
THE SITUATION

This project arose out of the concern for the existence of a suitable termination of the strong King Street axis at the Potomac River in Alexandria, Virginia. The site is bound to the north by King Street, to the South by Prince Street, to the west by Strand Street, and to the east by the Potomac River. King Street and Prince Street run from west to east and are the major avenues for pedestrian and vehicular access to the site.

These two streets, although close in proximity, are of very different and distinct natures. King Street is lined with commercial activity from the George Washington Memorial to the waters' edge, and is a major tourist attraction. The many shops, restaurants, and nightclubs make the King Street axis a hub of activity. Prince Street has an entirely different character, lined mostly by residential structures, much greenery exists there, and street activity, especially vehicular, becomes more subdued as one nears the water. In fact, the street remains the original cobblestone in the block nearest the water, and vehicular traffic is almost non-existent. Many of the row houses here retain their original Federalist character, and one can easily visualize Prince Street as it was in the 1700's.

Similarly, the vista of the Potomac River from the site to the north has a much more urban character in comparison to that of the south. To the north, one can see airplanes arriving and departing from the National Airport, much river traffic, and a splendid view of the city.
of Washington, D.C.. To the south one sees a much more rural landscape, with little development of the waters edge and virtually no development south of Jones Point. Continuing southward along the Potomac, river traffic is linked to Mount Vernon (with it's formal gardens and natural observations), which together with Fort Washington, becomes the first element of architecture experienced by a north bound traveler of the Potomac en route to the Capitol.

This analysis of the site, of the Potomac River and it's environs, provides the architect with two concerns. One concern is the transition from land to water at the site and a suitable termination to both King Street and Prince Street at the waters edge. The other concern is the meeting of the rural landscape with the urban cityscape both from Alexandria (Prince and King Streets) and along the Potomac River (from Mount Vernon to Washington). These concerns were of paramount importance to the architect and were to become the catalyst for the architecture that was to result.

The project in response to the rural and urban characters that exist in Alexandria, I have designed a place where a dialogue between these two can occur. The King Street corridor is designated as the man-made axis and the Prince Street axis is designated as the natural axis (rural). The man-made axis becomes an architectural wall, the natural axis, a wall of trees; the space between these two walls is now a place for a dialogue between and a resolution of this dycotony.
The program is basically that of an urban park that informs the visitor. Unlike traditional parks that passively relied upon the play of the urban quality of the city juxtaposed with the greenery of the park, this urban park is a catalyst and a generator of these qualities.

This park has two distinct paths, the man-made path and the natural path. The paths have a common destination, the area designated as the departure of passenger boats north on the Potomac to Washington D.C., or south on the Potomac to Mount Vernon. This area contains a third element, a machine. A machine that is a trussed megastructure which allows the visitor to this park to board the ferry boat or to cross over from one path to the other.

The man-made wall (basically an extension of King Street) accommodates two transitions. As an architectural wall, it encompasses the chronological developments of architectural technologies developed in history. It begins as a path between two thick walls, the wall being the first architectural technology. As one travels further along the wall, elements that span these walls are encountered as introductions to the next technology, the post and lintel. The first pavilion that one reaches is a pavilion constructed of the post and lintel technology, which I consider to be the second important chronological development of architectural technology.

This pavilion is to house artifacts and information of Old Town Alexandria; This pavilion essentially belongs to Old Town Alexandria, the visitor has not yet crossed the threshold from old to new or from land to water.
As one exists this pavillion to continue along the architectural path, one comes to a bridge. This bridge symbolically acts as the transition from old to new, from land to water, and also embodies the third architectural technology, the arch. Traversing the bridge, one rises to a height that allows the whole of the project to be viewed, here for the first time the relationship between the three major elements are revealed.

At the end of the bridge, the second pavillion is entered, it is designed to house artifacts and information relating to Washington, D.C., specifically the mall area. Upon entering the pavillion, the transition to the new development is complete. One may continue on through the pavillion to the draw-bridge and to the platform which hovers over the water, almost daring individuals to dive in and experience the water. This pavillion also introduces the forth technological development, truss construction, and completes the historical review of architectural technologies (the wall, post and lintel, the arch, and finally trussed construction). One exits the pavillion to the center of the site, where the machine element is encountered, here the visitor can either board a boat to travel to Washington or cross the bridge to experience the natural path.

The natural axis (basically an extension of Prince Street) consists of a wall of trees at the southern most edge of the site. Inside of the tree wall is a pedestrian path that leads to the waters edge. Along this path are located four temples, one for each season of the year. This wall accomplishes the transition from land to water by locating the land
seasons, Fall and Winter, at the landlocked edge of the site, and the water seasons, Spring and Summer, on the waters edge.

The temples are designed so that each subsequent season emphasizes the natural environment surrounding its appropriate temple. The first temple along the path is the temple of the Fall. This temple is a pergola that extends toward the center of the site and is surrounded by Sourwood and Blackjack Oak trees, trees which are of the most distinctive colors in Autumn. This temple is seen as a temple of green in which to walk and experience the change of foliage.

The next temple encountered is the temple of Winter. The form of this temple has the connotations of shelter, the sloped roof indicative of vernacular architecture. This temple faces the north with a thick concrete wall, the south is open to the sun's warmth and is enclosed in glass. This structure will serve as a passive solar structure to warm visitors along the path on cold Winter days. To the north of this temple is a solitary Virginia Pine tree, symbolic of the constant life of nature enduring the rigors of Winter.

The Spring temple consists of a solitary gazebo set into a formal garden. Formal gardens abound in Alexandria, especially to the rear of townhouses that line Prince Street. This garden will flourish in the Spring with many varieties decorative and colorful flowers. Planted in the formal garden are two Dogwood trees, indicators of the arrival of Spring.
As one approaches the water, one encounters the final temple, the temple of Summer. This temple consists of a gazebo with a walkway that leads directly to the waters edge. The dynamic quality of the water compliments the Summer temple, Summer being the most dynamic of all four seasons.

From the waters edge, the visitor may choose to either experience the small craft dock area or may choose to continue on to the machine element to either board the passenger boat or to cross over the bridge to experience the man-made architectural wall.

The two axis' differ greatly in terms of form, space, material, and significance. The natural axis is conscience of the cyclical sequence of nature and of the continuum of time. The architectural man—made axis is essentially a linear development. This poses a dialectic in terms of not only design, but also in terms of the way in which we view history. History has been seen in terms of both, here the two are merely presented for the inquisitive.

The machine element, the trussed bridge structure, is basically an element for the boarding and deboarding of the passenger boat which travels northward to Washington and southward to Mount Vernon. It spans the boat harbor and serves as a visual frame for the viewing of the arrival and the departure of the boat. It is a mediating device between the man—made and the natural (in the same way that a lever is a mediating device between man and gravity) and completes the triology of typologies of which architects
can draw on as paradigms for architecture. For clarities sake in this discussion, the author chooses to reprint the majority of an article written by Anthony Vidler for OPPOSITIONS magazine, entitled "The Third Typology."

THE THIRD TOPOLOGY

From the middle of the eighteenth century, Two distinct typologies have informed the production of architecture.

The first, developed out of the rationalist philosophy of the Enlightenment, and initially formulated by the Abbe' Laugier, proposed that a natural basis for design was to be found in the model of the primitive hut. The second, growing out of the need to confront the question of mass production at the end of the nineteenth century, and most clearly stated by Le Corbusier, proposed that the model of architectural design should be founded in the production process itself. Both typologies were firm in their belief that rational science, and later technological production, embodied the most progressive "forms" of the age, and that the mission of architecture was to conform to, and perhaps even master these forms as the agent of progress.

Rapidly multiplying examples suggest the emergence of a new, third typology.

We might characterize the fundamental attribute of this third typology as an espousal, not of an abstract nature, nor of a technological utopia, but rather of the traditional city as the locus of its concern. The city, that is, provides the material for classification, and the forms of its artifacts provide the basis for reconsumption. This third typology, like the first two, is clearly based on reason and classification as its guiding principles and thus differs markedly from those "latter day" romanticisms of "townscape" and "stripcity" that have been proposed as replacements for Modern Movement urbanism since the fifties.

The celebrated "primitive hut" of Laugier, paradigm of the first typology
was founded on a belief in the rational order of nature; the origin of each architectural element was natural; the chain that linked the column to the hut to the city was parallel to the chain that linked the natural world; and the primitive geometries favored for the combination of type-elements were seen as expressive of the underlying form of nature beneath its surface appearance.

In these two typologies, architecture, made by man, was being compared and legitimized by another "nature" outside itself. In the third typology, as exemplified in the work of the new Rationalists, however, there is no such attempt at validation. The columns, houses, and urban spaces, while linked in an unbreakable chain of continuity, refer only to their own nature as architectural elements, and their geometries are neither scientific nor technological but essentially architectural. It is clear that the nature referred to in these recent designs is no more or less than the nature of the city itself, emptied of specific social content from any particular time and allowed to speak simply of its own formal condition.

This concept of the city as the site of a new typology is evidently born of a desire to stress continuity of form and history against the fragmentation produced by the elemental, institutional, and mechanistic typologies of the recent past. The city is considered as a whole, its past and present revealed in its physical structure. It is in itself and of itself a new typology. This typology is not built up out of separate elements, nor assembled out of objects classified according to use, social ideology, or technical characteristics: it stands complete and ready to be de-composed into fragments. These fragments do not re-invent institutional type forms nor repeat past typological forms: they are selected and reassembled according to criteria derived from three levels of meaning—the first, inherited from meanings ascribed by the past existence of the forms; the second, derived from choice of the specific fragment and its boundaries, which often cross between previous types; the third, proposed by re-composition of these fragments in a new context.
such an "ontotogy of the city" is indeed radical. It denies all the social utopian and progressively positivist definitions of architecture for the last two hundred years. No longer is architecture a realm that has to relate to a hypothesized "society" in order to be conceived and understood; no longer does "architecture write history" in a sense of particularizing a specific social condition in a specific place or time. The need to speak of function, of social mores—of anything, that is beyond the nature of architectural form itself—is removed. Here it is that the adoption of the city as the site for the identification of the architectural typology becomes crucial. In the accumulated experience of the city, its public spaces and institutional forms, a typology can be understood that defies a one-to-one reading of function, but which, at the same time, ensures a relation at another level to a continuing tradition of city life. The distinguishing characteristic of the new ontology beyond the specifically formal aspect is that the city, as opposed to the single column, the hut-house, or the useful machine, is and always has been political in its essence. The fragmentation and re-composition of its spatial and unconstitutional forms thereby can never be separated from the political implications.

When a series of typical forms are selected from the past of a city, they do not come, however dismembered, deprived of their original political and social meaning. The original sense of the form, the layers are accrued implication deposited by time, and human experience cannot be lightly brushed away; and certainly it is not the intension of the Rationalists to disinfect their types in this way. Rather, the carried meaning of these types may be used to provide a key to their newly invested meanings. The technique, or rather the fundamental compositional method suggested by the Rationalists is the transformation of selected types—partial or whole—into entirely new entities that draw their communicative power and potential critical force from the understanding of this transformation.

This new typology is explicitly critical of the Modern Movement; it utilizes the clarity of the eighteenth-century city to rebuke the fragmentation, de-centralization, and formal disintegration introduced into contemporary urban life by zoning the techniques and technological
advances in the twenties. While the Modern Movement found its hell in the closed, cramped, and insalubrious quarters of the old industrial cities, and its Eden in the uninterrupted sea of sunlit space filled with greenery—a city becomes a garden—the new typology as a critique of urbanism raises the continuous fabric, the clear distinction between public and private marked by the walls of street and square, to the level of principle. Its nightmare is the isolated building set in an undifferentiated park. The heroes of this new typology are therefore to be found not among the nostalgic, anti-city utopians of the nineteenth century nor among the critics of industrial and technical progress of the twentieth, but rather among those who, as the professional servants of urban life, direct their design skills to solving the question of avenue, arcade, street and square, park and house, institution and equipment in a continuous typology of elements that together coheres with the past fabric and present intervention to make one comprehensible experience of the city.

ARCHITECTURE OF ISSUE: In the light of this article, the three elements in this project can be seen as utilizing the three typologies as a paradigm. We can see the natural wall as an example of the first typology, or Laugier's rational view of nature as a paradigm. The machine element becomes exemplary of the second typology, or the typology which "confronts the question of mass production." The architectural wall can be seen as an example of the third typology, being solely derived from architectural technologies and formal vocabularies that have previously existed. Whether this is the case is not for the architect to say, it is for critics of this work to judge.

I do, however, maintain that this project as a whole can be clearly seen as an example of the third typology. What exists in this project was drawn from the city of Alexandria itself. The grid of trees that exist
in this project are drawn from the rigid grid plan upon which the city is laid out. These trees being topiaries (trees shaped by man) can be seen as man's will being imposed upon nature, of which any city that exists is an example. The architectural wall is basically an extension of the highly developed King Street axis, the natural wall an extension of Prince Street, a street that has much greenery and is built of elements that are in their primitive form.

This contension is seen as valid in light of Vidler's closing remarks in The Third Typology;

For this typology, there is no clear set of rules for the transformations and their objects, nor any polemically defined set of historical precedents. Nor should there be; the continued vitality of this architectural practice rests in its essential engagement with the precise demands of the present and not in any holistic mythicization of the past. In this sense, it is an entirely modern movement, and one that places its faith in the essentially public nature of all architecture, as against the increasingly private visions of romantic individualists in the last decade. In it, the city and typology are reasserted as the only possible basis for the restoration of a critical role to an architecture otherwise assassinated by the apparently endless cycle of production and consumption.

This project is actually an abstract microcosm of the city of Alexandria, designed to help the visitor to Alexandria to better comprehend the city, its relationship to Washington, D.C., its relationship with the natural environment.
LITERATURE CITED

LAUGIER, ABBEY, ESSAI, 1727.
The vita has been removed from the scanned document
ARCHITECTURE IN EDEN
BY
RICHARD OZIEMBLOWSKY

(A TRANSITION BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL CONDITIONS).

This project examines the relationship between urban and rural conditions that exist in Alexandria, Virginia. The architect has drawn heavily from an editorial for OPPOSITIONS magazine entitled "The Third Typology", by Anthony Vidler. "The Third Typology" is not utilized as a paradigm for architectural design, but rather as a validation of the ideologies employed.