

“GREEN DESIGN:” The New Term for Old-Fashioned Preservation

BY JAMIE GIBBS

I grew up in the 60s when *recycle* was not a word yet. Air pollution was only a recognized problem in major cities. Green was only a color and we had one waste basket in the kitchen. At the same time, I was raised by my grandparents. They had lived through two World Wars, the Great Depression, several recessions and rationing, and they were cautious! In other words, without the government or consumer groups telling us to be thrifty and conscientious, we cashed in Coke bottles, gave the milkman back empties, reused aluminum foil, balled string, wrapped garbage in old newspapers and never left the lights on. The house was a comfortable 65 degrees in the winter and 75 degrees in the summer.



Meridian Street House - Indianapolis, Indiana

- Photo courtesy of Jamie Gibbs

Today’s greening mandates on residential and commercial design are not a big mystery. They are a logical progression

(see GREEN DESIGN, p. 3)

PRESERVATION ALUMNI NEWS

Letter From the President

This summer has brought both great happiness and great sorrow to the Columbia University Historic Preservation Program community: Happiness (and relief) for the recently graduated Class of 2008 but also sorrow at the loss of two of our most influential faculty members, Jan Hird Pokorny and Paul Byard. A memorial service, attended by many alumni, was held for Jan in June. One is planned for Paul in September. Our thoughts are with the families of both men.

Preservation Alumni has been very active the first half of the year. I would like to thank everyone who braved the stormy weather to attend our spring party at the Merchant’s House Museum. I would especially like to thank PA board member Blaire Walsh ’07 for all her hard work

in organizing the party. PA also held our first ever stand-alone Career Day in Avery Hall and by all accounts the turnout was great. Thanks should go to PA board member Amy Diehl-Crader ’03 for putting it all together. PA also held our third members-only tour in January, organized by Gina Crevello ’98. PA members got treated to a behind-the-scenes look at Grand Central Terminal.

There have been a few changes over the past few months on the PA board, including the addition of several members. Please welcome our newest members: Christine Djuric ’01, Sabine van Riel ’06, Richard Handler ’08, and Cristiana Peña ’08. Please also welcome our first-year (soon to be second-year) student representative, Lindsay McCook ’09. We also have (see LETTER, p. 2)

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Preservation Alumni, Inc. is an independent, non-profit organization founded and run by alumni of the Historic Preservation Program at the School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation at Columbia University. The mission of PA is to support and enrich the Historic Preservation program by advising and assisting the students, faculty and alumni, and to advance preservation as a diverse field of public and professional endeavor.

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The Memo welcomes submissions from alumni, students, faculty and friends. Please contact us at:

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Editors: Sybil Young
Britton Baine

LETTER (continued from p. 1)

a change in board leadership, with Amy Diehl-Crader '03 taking on the role of Vice President and Jennifer Most '05 stepping up to serve as the new Secretary. I would like to extend a special thanks to outgoing board members Dan Lane '00, Mike Caratzas '02, Jacqui Hogans '05, and George Jaramillo '05, who have each provided years of hard work to PA.

I also want to thank the editors of the PA Memo, Sybil Young '04 and Britton Baine '04, for putting together another great issue. Please contact them if you have an article that you would like to submit. You can e-mail them at info@preservationalumni.org.

I would like to invite you all to come to our annual fall party to be held on September 4 at the Scandinavia House on Park Avenue. Join us in welcoming the new class of 2010, welcoming back the class of 2009, and congratulating Andrew Dolkart '77 in taking over as Director of the Historic Preservation Program. Stay tuned for other upcoming events, including a reception for the GSAPP Alumni Weekend, a volunteer work day and a winter members-only event. Check our website, www.preservationalumni.org, for the latest events and of course keep an eye out for our e-mail announcements.

Please keep your membership and contact information current so we can keep you in the loop. If you have events or job openings that you would like posted on the website, send them to update@preservationalumni.org.

I hope you all enjoy the rest of your summer and I look forward to seeing you all in the fall.

Best Wishes,

Kevin Seymour, Class of 2002

PA Makes Annual Book Donation to Avery Library's Rare Books Collection

In the fall, the PA Board once again gathered in Avery's rare books room to review options for PA's annual donation to the library's growing collection. This year we were pleased to be able to contribute two items: an 1890 chromolithographic two-fold brochure advertising *The New Combination Folding Bath-tub* manufactured by the Marshall Furnace Co.; and the 1876 W.S. Blunt's *Report on Jennings Closets [to Colo. Goe. E. Waring Jr.]* along with a Description of Blunt's Massage Apparatus from 1893.

Blunt was a manufacturer of force and suction pumps, and Waring was a drainage engineer for Central Park in the mid 19th century. The report makes recommendations for improvements to the first toilet, while Marshall Furnace promotes a new folding bathtub with the slogan, "No need for a bathroom. Every family should have one."

If you're interested in contributing to PA's annual donation to the library, please visit our website, www.preservationalumni.org.

for a preservationist. They are common sense and thriftiness combined with new products and services that finally address the need to conserve our energy and protect our environment. As a design professional specializing in the preservation, restoration and habitability of residential and commercial spaces for thirty years, I have found the transition towards specifying and designing to the standards of LEED and the U.S. Green Building Council easier in recent years. After pushing the preservation of not only the environment but existing materials, original architecture, and the reclamation or recycling of architectural materials for many years, I am pleased that this is now actually a mainstream philosophy. Those of us with preservation backgrounds certainly have an experiential advantage over those of the “tear it down and start



Stained-Glass - Meridian St.
- Photo courtesy of Jamie Gibbs

over” school. In numerous land-use fields, we are seeing a surge in the need for our services.

We also have many more materials-sourcing options and contractors than in the recent past. First, there are new products that emphasize preservation doctrines in order to be called green. Certifications, logos and specification documents quickly identify these materials. Second, many manufacturers, contractors,

architects, designers and restoration specialists have received green certification for their fabrication, design or construction activities. There are Continuing Education courses and industry-sponsored certification programs readily available. Having a collegiate education in preservation has taken on new meaning in the current job market. Our skills are honed and now required on many development projects.

There are new agencies and websites useful to the preservationist. The US Green Building Council, AIA, ASID and LEED all have excellent materials available for download from their websites. Most local municipalities also have links or tabs on their “dot-gov” websites that explain local requirements, tax incentives, energy rebates and loan programs for green design. Even local utility companies have green programs useful to the preservationist. We have not seen this volume of incentive programs since the energy crisis of the late 1970s. Anyone who reads the descriptions will recognize that green design is preservation.

To exemplify this unique symbiotic relationship between preservation and the green movement, I'd like to cite a recent example from my own practice. In Indianapolis, Indiana I am restoring a 1922 “Gatsby-era” mansion in the Meridian Street Historic District. We are using energy credits from the local utilities to cover some mechanical upgrade costs. We are using new materials for the restoration of historic detail that will qualify for a silver LEED certification. We have also received Certificates of Appropriateness from the local and federal landmarks agencies for the sensitive restoration of the property back to a 1927

renovation that will include the restoration of original tile, limestone and custom brick. More importantly, we have received approvals to use energy efficient interior windows in combination with the restoration of original single-strength leaded



Solarium Fountain - Meridian St.
- Photo courtesy of Jamie Gibbs

windows; solar-collecting tile for a replacement carriage house roof that will duplicate the original structure but have many additional benefits; new devices to collect gray water for use in the landscape irrigation system; and reduced turf areas and increased landscape plantings that are drought and disease resistant. These are just a few of the many preservationist activities on this job that qualify as green design. Our background in preservation made the historic research on the property much easier. With period photography, testimonials from previous owners, newspaper and magazine articles, and collections in local, state and federal archives, we were able to justify every design proposal, including materials, usage and the impact on the historic district. Without further conversation, our applications were approved at the first hearing. Preservation is green.....and always has been!

Jamie Gibbs is an interior designer and landscape architect in New York.

IN MEMORIAM



JAN HIRD POKORNY
1914-2008

On May 20th, 2008 Professor Emeritus at Columbia University, Jan Hird Pokorny, died at his home on East 51st Street in Manhattan. He was 93.

During his long career in New York, Mr. Pokorny influenced the growth and shape of the built fabric of the city through many of his design projects and in his ten-year turn as a commissioner on the Landmarks Preservation Commission. In addition to his active professional life in New York City, Mr. Pokorny retained strong ties to his native Czechoslovakia and his personal identity was inextricably linked to old-world Europe. In manner, dress, speech, and in his respectful, diplomatic treatment of others, Mr. Pokorny embodied the idea of a European gentleman. His mastery of design, studied professionalism and genteel, soft-spoken manner as well as his dedication to educating the younger generation garnered him the respect of his colleagues and the love of his students and staff.

Born in 1914 in Brno, Moravia, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, he was educated and raised primarily in Prague, Czechoslovakia. In 1932 he entered the School of Architecture and Civil Engineering at the Czech Technical University in Prague and graduated in 1937 with a degree in architecture. He practiced architecture briefly in Czechoslovakia, designing the Sykovec Hotel in the (see POKORNY, p. 5)



PAUL SPENCER BYARD
1939-2008

Paul Spencer Byard, a land-use lawyer who returned to school in his late 30s to study architecture and who became an important figure in the renovation of some of New York's most prominent landmarks, died on July 15 at his home in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn. He was 68. The cause was cancer, said Charles A. Platt, a partner of Mr. Byard's in Platt Byard Dovell White Architects of Manhattan.

Mr. Byard was one of very few people — perhaps the only one — whose résumé included both the elite law firm Winthrop, Stimson, Putnam & Roberts and the high-profile architectural firm James Stewart Polshek & Partners. As an architect, he worked on the renovations of Carnegie Hall, the Cooper Union Foundation Building, the State Supreme Court's Appellate Division Courthouse on Madison Square and the old Custom House on Bowling Green.

In person, Mr. Byard was the embodiment of a preservation-minded professional: a graduate of three Ivy League schools and of Cambridge University, and a vestryman of Trinity Church. But he did not view preservation as a matter of casting the past in amber, unaltered.

"Every act of preservation is inescapably an act of renewal by the light of a later time, a set of decisions both about what we think something was and about what we want it to

(see BYARD, p. 5)

POKORNY (continued from p. 4)

Czech-Moravian Highlands. In August of 1939, however, shortly after the German occupation of Czechoslovakia and the outbreak of World War II, he fled Europe for the United States. He arrived at the Port of New York on February 6th, 1940, on a student visa.

Although he had already received full training in Europe, Mr. Pokorny enrolled at Columbia University's School of Architecture where the Dean, Leopold Arnould, placed him in the second year class, primarily to allow him to learn English, a language which was completely unfamiliar to him. Within two years he had earned a Masters in Architecture from Columbia. In 1945 he acquired full American citizenship. In 1946 he returned to Columbia University to participate as a design critic, re-establishing a vigorous relationship with the institution that had sheltered him as a war émigré. He would continue uninterrupted on the faculty until just a few years before his death.

After a brief stint with the firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in the mid 1940s, Pokorny opened a firm with his then wife, Elizabeth Hird. A major commission in 1949 to design a student union and library at Centenary College in Hackettstown, New Jersey, gained the firm notice and began a string of successful commissions designing institutional buildings and interiors, including The School of General Studies at Lewisohn Hall, Columbia University, in the early 60s. This commission brought out Mr. Pokorny's latent preservation instincts and laid the groundwork for his later shift into preservation architecture. While many architects would have lobbied for wholesale changes, exterior alterations, or the construction of a new building altogether, Pokorny left Lewisohn's exterior intact, reworking the interior to accommodate new programmatic requirements. The result was a beautiful, functional interior and an exterior that continued to contribute to the visual continuity of the campus as a whole. The project came to the attention of James Marston Fitch, the father of the discipline of architectural preservation, who admired the project for its restraint and fine interior plan. Fitch characterized it as a successful "adaptive use," the first of many that Pokorny would perform in the coming years. He subsequently joined Fitch's faculty at the program for Historic Preservation in the Columbia School of Architecture, leaving his post as the director of the Evening Division of Architecture at Columbia, which he had held for thirteen years.

He is survived by his second wife, Marise Angelucci-Pokorny, and their son Stefan.

- Daniel Lane

BYARD (continued from p. 4)

be and to say about ourselves today," he wrote in his book "The Architecture of Additions: Design and Regulation" (W.W. Norton, 1998).

Mr. Byard was born August 30, 1939, in New York. He graduated from Yale College in 1961, and he received degrees from Clare College, Cambridge, and from Harvard Law School. His legal career included a three-year stint at Winthrop, Stimson, positions as general counsel to the Roosevelt Island Development Corporation and associate counsel to the New York State Urban Development Corporation. He was also a private practitioner.

In 1977, The Graduate School of Architecture and Planning at Columbia awarded Mr. Byard an architectural degree, and he joined the firm of James Stewart Polshek & Associates (later James Stewart Polshek & Partners), becoming a partner in 1981, and working on the renovations of Carnegie Hall, the former United States Custom House and the Villard Houses on Madison Avenue.

Peg Breen, the president of the New York Landmarks Conservancy, credited Mr. Byard with devising a novel preservation-financing method that involved a revolving loan fund using proceeds from the residential conversion of the Federal Archives Building in Greenwich Village. "That was his vision because of his unique skills as a lawyer and architect," she said.

Mr. Byard joined Charles A. Platt Partners in 1989, at which time the firm became Platt & Byard, Architects.

In addition to maintaining his architectural practice, Mr. Byard directed the historic preservation program at Columbia from 1998 until this year. He created a joint third-year studio and workshop for architecture and preservation students. Mr. Byard was also working on another book, tentatively titled, "Why Save This Building? The Public Interest in Architectural Meaning."

Mr. Platt said, "I think it disappointed him the most — at the end — that he couldn't finish it."

Mr. Byard is survived by his wife of 43 years, as well as his sister, his daughter, his son and two granddaughters.

A public memorial service will be held on September 15, 2008, at 4:00 PM at St. Paul's Chapel on the campus of Columbia University.

- adapted from The New York Times

PRESERVATION ALUMNI SPRING PARTY



PA held its annual Spring Party this year in the garden of the historic 1832 Merchant's House Museum. Members were also treated to tours of the house during the party. PA Treasurer Seri Worden presented this year's Fitch Thesis Grant to John Gomez for his thesis work *Church of the Sacred Heart: A History and Analysis of Ralph Adams Cram's Seminal Spanish Gothic Masterwork*.

- Photo courtesy of Sybil Young



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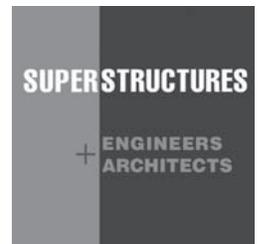
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