

The Architect's Eye: American Architectural Drawings, 1799-1978.

DEBORAH NEVINS and ROBERT A.M. STERN. New York: Pantheon Books, 1979. 173 p. illus. ISBN 0 394 50262 0 \$44.50.

Architectural drawings have become eminently collectible in recent years, both by institutions and by individuals. The authors of the present volume see the new interest as resulting from the gradual break-up of modernism in design combined with the decline in the quantity of architectural production. Whatever the cause, and one suspects it is more market-oriented, architectural drawings often find their way into exhibitions and publications. Efforts are being made across the country to steer architectural records into public collections. Two new institutions (The Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal and the Canadian Architectural Archives in Calgary) are devoted solely to building history, with a third (Guildwood Hall near Toronto) hoping to become established soon.

The book under review responds to this trend. It reproduces seventy-six drawings (the jacket blurb says eighty, the Foreword 'sixty or so') by American architects. They range in date from James Hoban's elevation for the White House (drawn in 1792, not 1799 as indicated by the book's subtitle) to six produced in 1978. Virtually all architects of renown, and many others as well, are represented. The drawings are not necessarily holographs: work by assistants and collaborators is included, and the draftsman identified where possible.

The drawings are well reproduced, many in colour. All, however, have been sized so as to fit comfortably on one (sometimes two) twelve-by-fifteen-inch page, whether they are greatly reduced (the largest original, from the office of Susana Torre, is four feet by eight feet; many are two or three feet in width) or, as in some cases, slightly enlarged. Care has been taken to reproduce the drawings as they appear. Tears, creases, and even, in a presentation drawing by Paul Rudolph, the proverbial coffee stain show clearly. Textures also read well, as in the shimmering rendering by Marion Mahoney Griffin either lithographed on satin (according to the caption) or drawn on silk (according to the text). In a number of drawings the edges are shown faithfully, but one suspects slight cropping in many cases.

Each drawing is accompanied by a brief essay, written much like a catalogue entry (the book was inspired by a gallery show), which casts some light on the architect, the project, the role of the drawing, and/or the place of the project in the history of architecture. These texts are generally interesting, if far from comprehensive. A 'technical caption' at the bottom of the page gives terse information on subject, medium, size, and collection. Unfortunately the reader must usually seek out the caption, set in tiny type, in order to identify the project which is being discussed and illustrated. As hinted above, caption and essay do not always agree.

The authors explain in a Foreword that their selection 'is based on the artistic value of the drawing as a representation of architectural ideas we hold in high regard' — in other words, both quality of draftsmanship and the perceived validity of design concept. An Introduction comments upon more general issues. It offers a typology of drawings using classifications based variously upon the reason for the drawing ('objective/conceptual' vs. 'subjective/perceptual'); the kind of projection (plan, elevation, section, perspective, axonometric); the condition relating to the phase of design development (initial sketch, developed sketch, definitive drawing, working drawing — regrettably none of the latter are reproduced); and use category (presentation drawing, travel sketch, fantasy, etc.). While this taxonomy is certainly helpful in gaining a better understanding of the subject, it is not useful as a formal classification system because the distinction is rarely clear and many drawings fit into multiple categories. The Introduction also identifies several problems inherent in the study of architectural drawings. One is the ques-

tion of whether 'polemical drawings' are drawings for architecture or works of art that just happen to have architecture as their subject.

Architectural historian Nevins, who did most of the curatorial work, and architect Stern, who wrote the Introduction and served as general editor, have produced a fine and lavish book that will be of interest to both the professional and the gift markets. Their selection is sensible and sensitive, the texts enlightening if not profound, and the book itself a treat to read and hold.

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Klondike Lost: A Decade of Photographs by Kinsey & Kinsey. NORM BOLOTIN. Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Publishing, 1980. 127 p. ill. \$14.95 pa.

The Klondike gold rush, which helped spiral the North American economy out of a world-wide depression that began in the early 1890s, created and sustained a number of important photographic enterprises. No less significant than the photographs of E.A. Hegg, the best known photographer of the last great gold rush, are the images of Kinsey & Kinsey, the younger brothers of the most proficient nineteenth century lumbering photographer, Darius Kinsey. While the Klondike work of Clarke and Clarence Kinsey was not technically nor aesthetically as accomplished as that of their older brother, their photographs, as the author states, "show a segment of history previously unrecorded, or more accurately, previously unpublished."

The Kinsey brothers were attracted to the far north not so much for the gold but for the opportunity to exercise their talent and document, perhaps intentionally, a vanishing way of life. Arriving in the Yukon in 1898 from Seattle, Clarence, 26, and Clarke, 21, with his new wife Mary, eventually settled in Grand Forks where the Bonanza and Eldorado creeks meet south of Dawson City. Staking their own mining claim, they persevered at the difficult task of grubbing the ore from ground permanently frozen while taking views of their fellow miners and townspeople at work and play. Four years later, the brothers built what the author calls "one of the most unique" buildings in Grand Forks, this being their studio; it was a two-storey wood-frame structure with a skylight, "unusual in 1902," which probably faced south to make maximum use of available daylight. While two photographs of the studio are included, its geographic location is not precisely fixed. The ambiguity about the skylight's unusual nature is not clarified, for the statement can be taken to mean that either the architecture was odd because photographic technology had gone beyond skylights or unusual because of its design. The author also states that the brothers operated the studio until 1904, but that the partnership was dissolved in 1906 when Clarke and his family moved back to Seattle. Unless the last date of the studio operation is a misprint for 1906, there are two years unaccounted for.

The reader is taken inside the Klondike and through the town of Grand Forks and then back Outside, following, through chapters arranged chronologically, the lives, fortunes and losses of the town's often florid population. Among these can be numbered the famous Belinda Mulrooney who was "responsible for the existence of this second town in the Klondike"; her husband, the enigmatic Count Charles Eugene Carbonneau; the Mounties who were "heroes to the children of Grand Forks. . . [and] sports stars"; the prostitutes whose cabins were across the streets from Mountie headquarters, no doubt for more efficient law enforcement; and the thousands of miners, male and female, who lived in or passed through Grand Forks. Of this group the only persons not explicitly identified through photographs are the prostitutes. An interesting but not unique omission given the moral and hypocritical structures under which they were allowed to live.