

Slouching Towards Byzantium



Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson (Ralph Adams Cram), Administration Building (Lovett Hall), Rice Institute, 1909–12. Academic Court elevation.

DREXEL TURNER

Actual representation of history has in modern times been checked by a difficulty, mean indeed, but steadfast: that of unmanageable costume; nevertheless, by a sufficiently bold imaginative treatment, and frank use of symbols, all such obstacles may be vanquished.

John Ruskin

Ours is not an era for expressive form and architectural space, but for flat manifestations of symbolism in the landscape.

Robert Venturi

EVEN after 80 years of academic accretion, the chief appeal of the Rice University campus is still vested in the inventive eclecticism of Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson's 1912 Administration Building (now Lovett Hall) and a slim supporting cast of like-minded, if much plainer, buildings assembled under Cram's guidance just before World War I.¹ That this fragmentary initial production, bound together by strategic plantations of live oaks, might still suggest to so practiced an observer as Colin Rowe that the campus resides in

spirit "not too very far from Ravenna" is almost exclusively the result of Ralph Adams Cram's pleasurable Lombardic-Venetian-Byzantine fusion.² But the illusion dissipates almost as soon as one passes through the arched opening of the Administration Building into the

Academic Court and surveys not the distant exoticism of Bertram Goodhue's vast, mosquelike auditorium (originally proposed as the focal point of a quarter-mile-long mall)³ but, at much closer range, the bulky, unelaborated mass of the Fondren Library of 1947–49, incapable of sustaining either Cram's evocative program or the abrupt departure it occasions from his general plan.

This lapsed aspect of the Rice campus can be attributed in part to the absence of any more explicit guidance for future building than that provided by the footprints of the general plan and the example of Cram's initial buildings, devised, in his own words, to produce "magnificence . . . at moderate cost."⁴ It also stems from the failure of the general plan to anticipate the eventual role of the library as a dominant and central feature of the campus. For despite the architects' Burnhamesque overestimation of the university's prospects, spread wishfully across more than 300 acres in 36 buildings, the library was relegated to a narrow, classroomlike footprint at the extreme west end of the axis facing an equivalent outline designated as a museum. These both adjoined, at right angles, Goodhue's sumptuous, if overreaching, domed auditorium, an object that within the hyperbole of the general plan might more providently have been reconciled to the needs of a library.

By 1927, when Cram began to consider the prospect of a library for Rice as imminent, the university's building program had, by his own admission, already been recast "in more modest terms" by virtue of the institution's circumscribed endowment and charter-imposed commitment to free tuition.⁵ At the same time, the facility and enthusiasm that had characterized the firm's initial efforts at Rice seem to have diminished too. In response to a still indeterminate program, Cram and his partner Alexander Hoyle (who had collaborated in the design of the first buildings

at Rice) resorted to a reworking of the loggia-front scheme of their neo-Georgian Williams College Library of 1920, applied to a blockier, deeper building mass than that suggested by the general plan. Although characterized by the firm as "the merest approximation of what you might want,"⁶ it accurately forecast the height, breadth, and depth of Staub & Rafter's Fondren Library of 20 years later. Further planning was evidently suspended until 1941, when, following an informal visit by Lovett to the architects' Boston office, the firm dispatched an H-shaped diagram for a library that was to have been located on the cross-axial site occupied by the new biosciences building in 1991. While the firm's correspondence mentions "numerous [other] studies for the proposed library building"⁷ prepared by Cram at the time, none are to be found in the university archives and, in any event, the project was preempted by the Second World War. Cram did, however, succeed in applying much the same vocabulary used at Rice to the design of the Edward L. Doheny, Jr., Memorial Library at the University of Southern California (with Samuel E. Lunden, 1932) — a building that nevertheless falls short of the standard set by Lovett Hall.

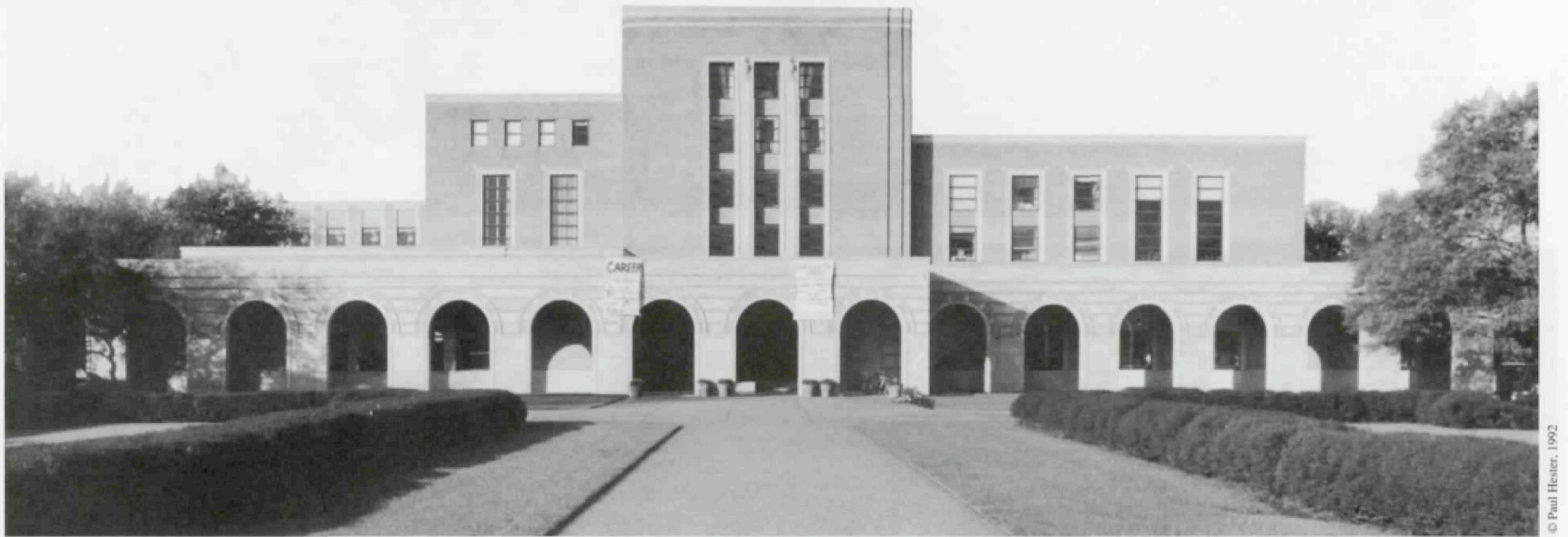
University libraries, by virtue of their considerable size and consequent unwieldiness, have almost invariably proved a stumbling block in American campus planning, their sheer bulk approximated only by gymnasiums, which are more readily consigned to peripheral sites. This cumbersome necessity has yielded such awkward accommodations as Robert Mills's rearward extrusion (1851–53) of Thomas Jefferson's library rotunda at the University of Virginia (1822–26) and Horace Trumbauer's lumpish Roman temple (1913–15), deposited amid the Georgian and post-Georgian accumulation of Harvard Yard. Even the more shapely, premeditated installation of Charles McKim's Roman-domed Low Library



Yearbook of the Architectural League of New York, 1911

Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson (Bertram G. Goodhue), auditorium (project), Rice Institute, 1909. Academic Court elevation.

About Face at the Rice Library



Staub & Rather, Fondren Library, Rice Institute, 1947–49. Academic Court elevation.

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(1893–95) as the centerpiece of his uptown campus for Columbia University seems somewhat forced, despite the “thickening of classic shades” detected by Henry James on Morningside Heights.⁸ Aside from Jefferson’s half-scale adaptation of the Roman Pantheon at Virginia and Frank Furness’s rogue castle-greenhouse at the University of Pennsylvania (1888–90), no other American university library has reached an anthologizable state of grace, and even these two have long since been outgrown as principal campus libraries.

THE *éminence grise* behind the Rice library as it eventually came to be realized was not Cram (who died in 1942) nor his frequent Houston associate, William Ward Watkin (who had come to Rice in 1910 as the firm’s supervising architect and stayed on to head the program in architecture), but John E. Burchard, an architect and chairman of the libraries at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who was engaged in 1945 as a consultant to the university. In siting the library, Burchard considered the convenience of a central location a *sine qua non* and, despite Watkin’s objection and the prescription of the general plan, also alluded to “a general agreement that it should be on [rather than to one side of] the long . . . axis passing through the sallyport and the founder’s statue.” The coordinates of the entrance to the library were fixed on axis at “the temporary crosswalk back of the founder’s statue a hundred yards,” as an “intermediate solution” between the latitude favored by the general plan and what Burchard reported as the sense of “the most pragmatic members of the faculty . . . that it should be just behind the founder’s statue.” With its threshold planted 750 feet west of the Administration Building, or half the distance contemplated in the general plan, Burchard commended the placement of the library-to-be as both “central to Rice for some time to come, and possibly permanently,” and capable of ensuring a “vista . . . still grand and more than adequate.”⁹

As to the building itself, Burchard, a modernist of conventional prejudices, stipulated that “no a priori conceptions of symmetry [should] lead to warping the functioning of the plan. . . symmetry can serve but one useful purpose and that is aesthetic, . . . and the fact that the building is to be on a center line of the campus should not lead the architect to an arbitrary assumption that a symmetrical building is necessary or even desirable.”¹⁰

Burchard’s “open-ended” biases continued with respect to style, counseling that while “the prevailing architecture of Rice . . . is derived from the Mediterranean and is beautiful in its location, . . . it is not the only architecture which can be beautiful in this location, and it is not necessarily true that if multiplied in the many buildings which are to be built it will remain beautiful. The Library building in a way marks the crossroads for the future Rice. If the style of the present buildings is closely perpetuated, it will doubtless be more difficult to depart from it in the future. As a generalization, American universities are plagued by the perpetuation of a specific, old, and usually European style as is to be found in varying exposition at Harvard, Chicago, and . . . Princeton . . . This is not a plea that the Library at Rice be ultra-modern but it is a plea that the design of the building proceed in an uninhibited atmosphere. . . . The building must, regardless of its style, be appropriate to the environment.”¹¹

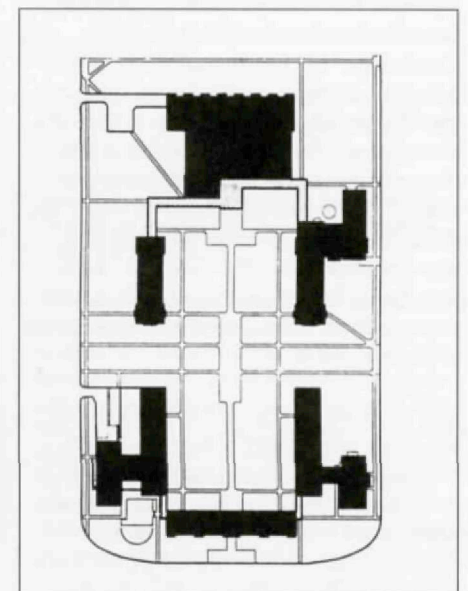
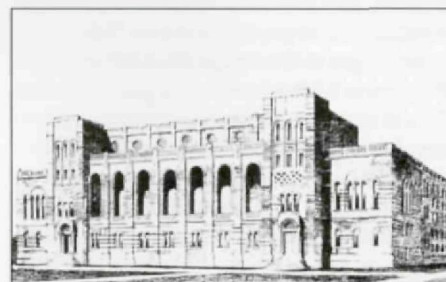
Raising the specter of stylistically induced contamination working its way from the outside in, Burchard also cautioned that “no picture architecture of any period should be allowed to intrude itself on the smooth operation of the Library inside, since such a solution is merely a concession of weakness. It is clearly not essential to the achievement of purpose that a monumental style be adopted. Indeed, no non-structural columns, cornices, or any other pure embellishment should be tolerated if

they will in any way either force the building budget to relinquish important elements of the program, or sacrifice to the . . . users . . . any important light or view, or impair the future flexibility of any space.”¹²

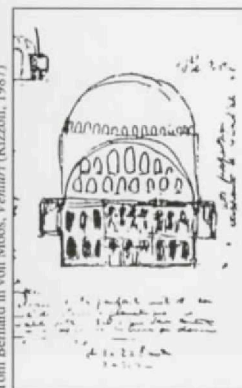
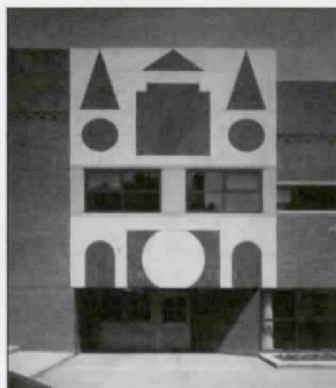
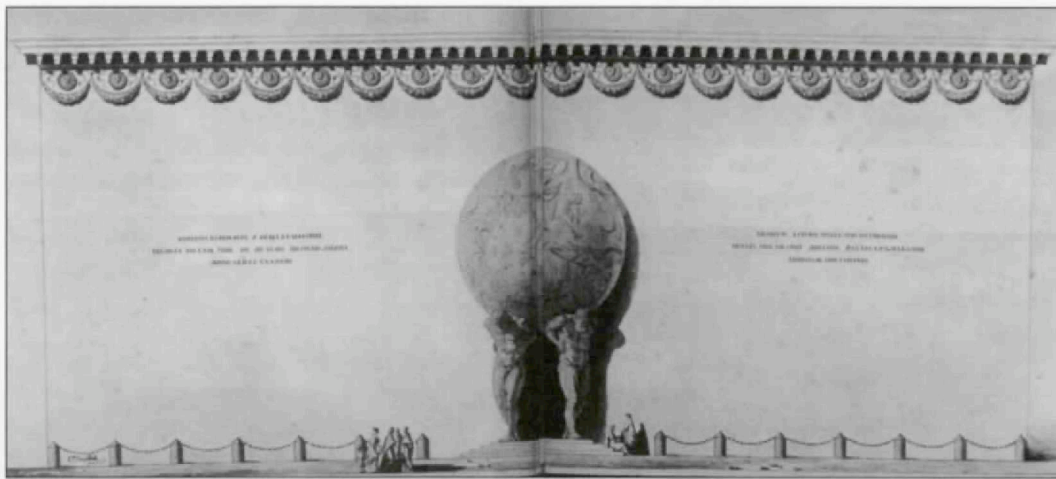
The structure that ensued was arguably the wrong building in the right place: reticent yet overbearing, serviceable but hardly “uninhibited,” with its plan uncomfortably “warped” to produce an asymmetrical result. By even the most measured assessment, Fondren Library seems “ponderous,”¹³ its chief virtues limited to accessibility and the clublike interiors of its twin leather-paneled, cork-floored main reading rooms, where large, arcade-shaded windows gave excellent views of Lovett Hall.

The initial 135,000-square-foot increment of Fondren, realized with Burchard’s help, has since been expanded by a blank, ill-joined 100,000-square-foot rear addition

(Staub, Rather & Howze, 1965–68), whose only, if inadvertent, Byzantine affiliation is possibly the fifth-century Fildami cistern near Istanbul. A second expansion may now be imminent to accommodate needs identified recently in a study prepared by Nancy McAdams, an architect and librarian at the University of Texas.¹⁴ This prospective new growth also offers a practical excuse to extricate the middle ground of the campus from its *hex libris* by refashioning the library – most particularly its front – as a credible architectural complement to Lovett Hall. The timing may also be propitious in view of architecture’s recently recovered, if still uneven, capacity to reengage the past on sympathetic and representational terms. At face value, such a reworking might aspire to what Robert Venturi has described in Jasper Johns’s treatment of the American flag, where the artist seeks “to represent it literally, but also to modify its context, its medium, and its scale, thereby making it



Top left: Cram and Ferguson, Rice Institute Library (project), 1927. Bottom left: Cram and Ferguson (and Samuel E. Lunden), Doherty Library, University of Southern California, Los Angeles (1932). Right: Plan of Academic Court, Rice University, 1992. Fondren Library at top, Lovett Hall at bottom.



Top: Etienne-Louis Boullée, *Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (third project), 1788. Main elevation.*

Bottom left: Raymond Hood, *Daily News Building, New York, 1930. Entrance.* Center left: Louis Sullivan, *Merchants' National Bank, Grinnell, Iowa, 1914.* Center right: Venturi, Rauch & Scott Brown, *Gordon Wu Hall, Princeton University, 1980-82. Entrance.* Right: Le Corbusier, *sectional sketch, 1911, of the Mosque of Suleiman, Istanbul (Mimar Sinan, 1550-57).*

familiar and strange at the same time and heightening our sensibilities toward it."¹⁵

At Rice, the iconographic basis is more diffuse and less familiar than that treated by Johns, for as Cram enumerated, Lovett Hall represents a combination of "a dozen different sources knit together as well as was possible" to create a "measurably new style . . . built on a classical basis." Drawing in this instance from his own well-itemized travels in "southern France and Italy, Dalmatia, the Peloponnesus, Byzantium, Anatolia, Syria, Sicily, Spain" and from untold monographs at hand, Cram sought to invest "richness, variety and a certain splendor of effect" in a building form "as rectilinear as the prairie area on which it was built."¹⁶ That this armature might correspond both to Nicholas Hawksmoor's austere, classically conceived project for King's College, Cambridge (1712-13), and to the prayer hall (and onetime university quarters) of the Mosque of al-Azhar, Cairo (1131-49), also suggests the ease with which it was then possible to regard the Byzantine as simply "the re-orientation of classic art, the linking of . . . Roman building to a new decoration, vividly alive and inventive, frank, bright and full of colour, and yet as rational in its choice and application as the construction."¹⁷

The problem of reconstituting the library as a more satisfactory consort to Lovett Hall is also conditioned by the need to trespass as little as possible on the already abbreviated precinct of the Academic Court, perhaps advancing the upper front a bay or so, but no farther than the openings of the north section of the arcade. In such a case, the principal maneuvering would be confined to the large, all-but-flat surface that could be achieved by filling out the present building to make it

symmetrical. A similar strategy obtains in what may be the most astonishing proposal for the remodeling of a library ever – Etienne-Louis Boullée's third project for the Bibliothèque Nationale (1788), conceived as a less costly alternative to the construction of a new building on another site, yet entirely capable of "giving to the Library called the King's Library the advantages appropriate to such a building."¹⁸

In its best-known version, the new face Boullée proposed to erect was a sparsely embellished, flat, windowless expanse, entered at its center through a large elaborated portal flanked by twin Atlantes upholding a large globe incised with autumnal constellations, signaling the harvest of knowledge. Thus adorned, the portal led to a great skylit, barrel-vaulted basilica, 300 feet deep by 90 feet across, formed in a courtyard between two appendages of the Palais Mazarin in emulation of Raphael's setting of *The School of Athens*.¹⁹ The compositional emphasis of Boullée's remarkable door ensemble, set against a windowless and virtually plain field, is also evident in Louis Sullivan's Merchants National Bank, Grinnell, Iowa (1914). Similarly elaborate door ensembles appear as dominant motives on the more liberally fenestrated fronts of Raymond Hood's Daily News Building, New York (1930), and, flanked by sculptural figures, on Cram's Doheny Library at USC. The appropriateness of a second emphatic portal centered in the academic court at Rice is problematic, however, unless the portal could be rendered in some formally and symbolically distinctive variation, perhaps adapting Le Corbusier's cross-sectional notation of the dome of the Mosque of Suleiman, Istanbul (Mimar Sinan, 1550-57), to evoke the prospect of Goodhue's unbuilt auditorium.

Apart from Boullée's extra-mural expedient, a similarly emboldened treatment of a virtually unfenestrated building is evident in the decorative panels and banded appliqué that consume Piranesi's composition from the *Parere su l'Architettura* (after 1767) in token of his enthusiasm for "prudently combining the Graecan, the Tuscan, and the Egyptian together."²⁰ This unsettling assemblage of signlike excerpts positioned on, around, and within a twin-towered easel-frieze suggests a formally

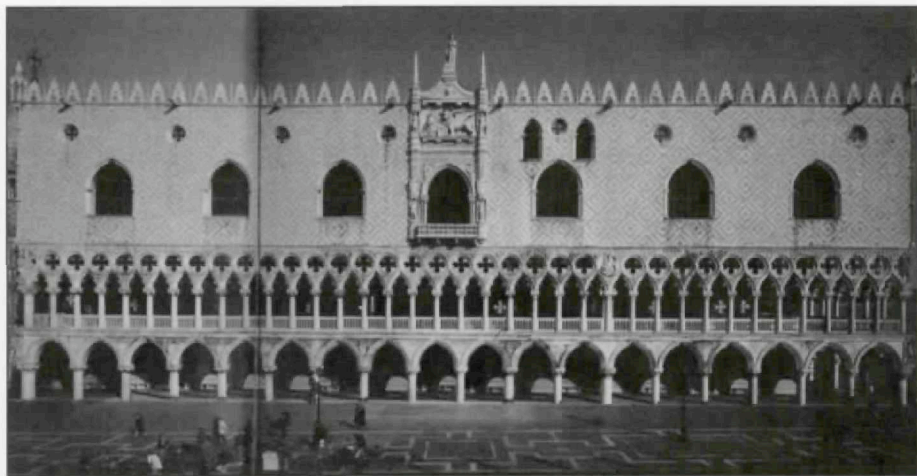


Top left: Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *composition from Parere su l'Architettura, after 1767.* Top right: *Early-12th-century representation of Holy Apostles Church, Istanbul.*

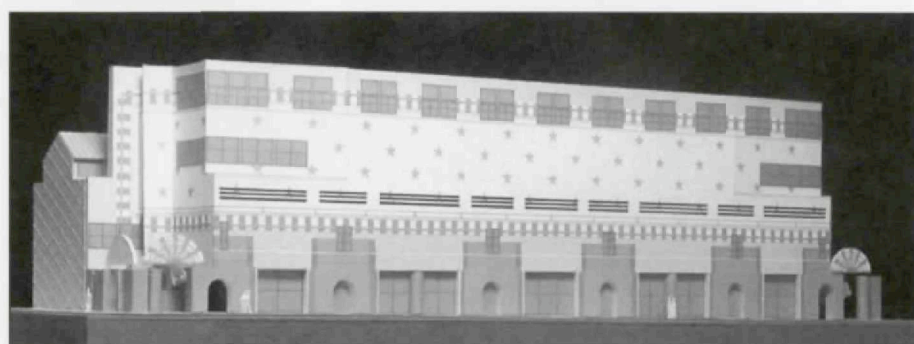
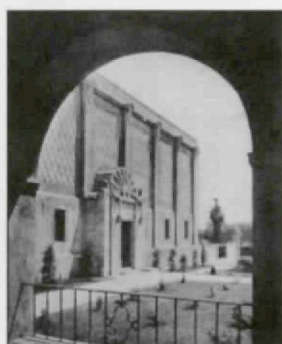
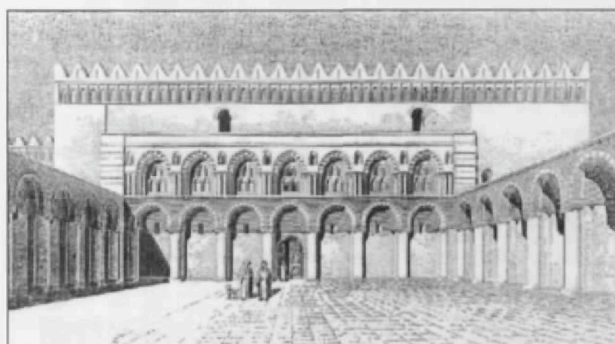
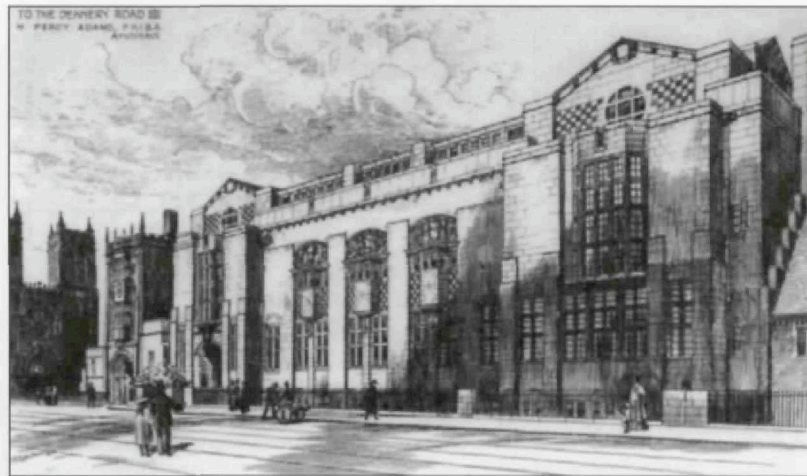
Bottom: Venturi, Rauch & Scott Brown, *competition project, 1985, for the renovation of the Ponte dell'Accademia, Venice.*

ordered outdoor equivalent of Sir John Soane's eclectic compilation of architectural fragments in the crypt-tribune of his house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, London (1813). Beside the ostentation of Piranesi's monumental collage or the emblematic effusion of the Church of the Holy Apostles, Istanbul (c. 536-50), the embroiderylike pattern of the upper expanses of the Doges' Palace, Venice (c. 1344-65, 1423-38), roped at the corners with corkscrew moldings and topped with an Italo-Islamic fringe, seems almost subdued. The Doges' Palace (unlike its archaeologically reconstructed Islamic precursor, the palace at Ukhaider, 764-78) corresponds with thematic resonance to Robert Venturi's "Plea for Pattern All Over Architecture,"²¹ as does the harlequin crosshatching of Goodhue's High Potential Laboratory Building at the California Institute of Technology (1923) and the more aggressive folkloric mural wrapped all around the stack tower of Juan O'Gorman's library for the Autonomous University of Mexico (1953).

Of related interest in view of the slight depth that might be gained for manipulation in refronting Fondren is the compaction implied by Le Corbusier's sideways perspective sketch of the Mosque of Suleiman. This vignette suggests a layering of arcade against small windows set within large windows, interposed between two towers more slender but more appreciable than the blocky ones that anchored Cram's loggia-front library scheme of 1927. A similar impression of planar interchange at close quarters is cultivated in Charles Holden's astute premodernist design for the shallow principal elevation of the Central Reference Library, Bristol (1905-1906), which renders a maximum of effect from tightly compressed step-back staging, vertically elaborated central window bays, staunch *risalits*, and windows penetrating piers. The various schemes produced by Venturi, Rauch & Scott Brown for the



Paolo Maroni from *Venetian Palaces* (Rizzoli International, 1990)



Top left: Doges' Palace, Venice, ca. 1344–65, 1423–28. Piazzetta elevation. Top right: Charles Holden, Central Reference Library, Bristol, England, 1905–1906.

Bottom left: Palace of Ukhaidir, Iraq, Court of Honor, 764–78 (reconstruction from K. A. Creswell, 1940). Bottom center: Bertram Goodhue, High Potential Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, 1923. Bottom right: Venturi, Rauch & Scott Brown, Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin (project), 1983. Façade study model.

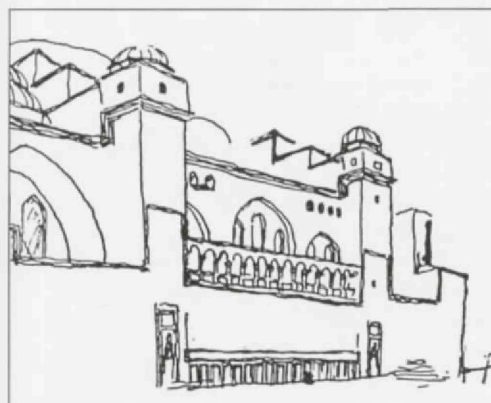
long, extremely slender, and ultimately little-fenestrated façade of the unbuilt Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin (1983), employ something of Holden's sensibility crossed with that of a hyper-stretched Villa Schwob (Le Corbusier, 1916). The narrow four-story corpus of the museum, devised to be grafted onto a much larger office block, precipitates the library problem at Rice, except for the laid-back *gravitas* ultimately approved for its limestone façade as a backdrop for a changing marquee of oversize banners. At Rice, such reserve might give way to the more vivid sorts of decoration applied by Venturi, Rauch & Scott Brown to the programmatically uneventful fronts of Wu Hall (1980–82) and the Thomas Laboratory (1983–86) at Princeton; the Seattle Art Museum (1984–91), with its "peasant skirt" arcade; and the proposed reconstruction of the Accademia Bridge, Venice (1984), carried across with eye-dazzling Cosmati-work.

The problem of Fondren Library is most conspicuously associated with its front, but extends around the rest of the perimeter and inside as well. In considering the obstacle the library presents to the processional convenience of the campus, Louis I. Kahn in 1970 suggested inserting a reconnective tunnel through the center of the building at ground level, a procedure also recommended by Cesar Pelli in a subsequent reworking of the campus plan (1983).²² Some modest remodeling of the library's interior was in fact undertaken several years ago, producing a squat rond-point where the circulation desk once stood and a wholesale sheetrocking, mahoganizing, and carpeting of the reading rooms and public spaces, although it refrained from addressing the center-line or vertical possibilities of the situation. Any extravagant penetration of the library front-to-back on the model of Boullée's *School of Athens* court is precluded for want of a sufficiently generous slot, but the beginnings of a more collegiately scaled channel nevertheless can be found in the double-height section through the foyer and former circulation room. This channel might not only be extended but could connect, farther back, to a more imposing space on the order of Kahn's four-eyed centrum at Exeter or Furness's hearthlike main reading room at Penn. Such a space might also present the basis for a new treatment (and, if necessary, modest expansion) of the rear elevation. In general, the interior of the library could benefit from a coloristic infusion of Ravenna and Istanbul to atone for Cram's fiscally induced asceticism inside Lovett Hall and other campus buildings.

taste, and, to the stern purist of religious faith, no art was thinner than Venetian Gothic. All trader's taste smelt of *bric-à-brac*.²³ Even presumably appreciative contemporary accounts of the first Rice buildings also betrayed a certain wariness. The anonymous but extensively illustrated exposition of the new campus in the *American Architect and Building News* referred to Cram's stylistic excursion as "a somewhat unusual but nonetheless satisfactory motive of design . . . that doubtless will be compelled to submit to the stress of much criticism as has every innovation in art."²⁴ Montgomery Schuyler, in signaling the Administration Building as "the one distinctively 'architecturesque' building thus far erected" to the readers of the *Brickbuilder*, was guarded too, venturing by way of preface "that all beholders will . . . agree upon two points, . . . that it is a highly interesting building [and] not at all 'the regular thing' in collegiate architecture." He also emphasized the functionally expressive attributes of its composition, just as, much later, Cram still felt it necessary to insist that his "deed without a name"²⁶ had "grown from within outward . . . instead of from a predetermined exterior."²⁷

But however determined or predetermined, Cram's Administration Building succeeds in fixing the image of Rice as vividly and indelibly as any trading city might wish. The bric-à-brac of a similarly potent and sophisticated companion to Lovett Hall might prove equally unsettling at first, but it is a Rice tradition worth revisiting across the face of Fondren Library. ■

- 1 Cram's work at Rice is documented in Stephen Fox, *The General Plan of the William M. Rice Institute and Its Architectural Development*, Architecture at Rice Monograph no. 29 (Houston, 1980).
- 2 Colin Rowe, "James Stirling: A Highly Personal and Very Disjointed Memoir," in Peter Arnell and Ted Bickford, eds., *James Stirling: Buildings and Projects* (New York: Rizzoli, 1984), p. 24.
- 3 The original planning contemplated an unobstructed mall half a mile in length. William Ward Watkin, "Architectural Traditions Appearing in the Earlier Buildings of the Rice Institute," [*Houston Engineers Club*] Slide Rule, July 1953, pp. 6, 10.
- 4 Ralph Adams Cram, *My Life in Architecture* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1936), p. 127.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 127.
- 6 Fox, *General Plan*, p. 67.
- 7 *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 91.
- 8 Henry James, *The American Scene* (1907; reprint ed., Bloomington: University of Indiana, 1968), p. 142.
- 9 John E. Burchard, *Report to the Trustees of Rice Institute on the Proposed New Library Building*, 1 January 1946, p. 11.
- 10 The reflexive distaste for symmetry that characterized Burchard's consideration of the library was sufficiently prevalent to prompt a less dogmatic librarian-architect, Talbot Hamlin of the Avery Library, Columbia University, to counsel, "We have become so thoroughly imbued with the idea that organic forms based essentially on natural functions are asymmetrical that we are often blinded to the equally valid truth that some problems are formal in their very nature." Hamlin, *Forms and Functions of 20th Century Architecture*, Vol. 2, *The Principles of Composition* (New York: Columbia, 1952), p. 571. Burchard's candid opinion of the campus architecture is reflected in his later misapprehension of "Cram and Ferguson's pitiful variation upon Spanish Renaissance at Rice Institute in Houston" Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown, *The Architecture of America: A Social and*



Le Corbusier, perspective sketch, 1911, of the Mosque of Suleiman, Istanbul (Mimar Sinan, 1550–57).

The Rice style and its basis have always been something of an acquired taste. To Henry Adams's immaculate sensibility, "all trading cities had always shown traders'

Cultural History (Boston: Little, Brown, 1961), p. 382. Rowe's counterassessment is more solicitous of Cram's "quasi-Liberty performance, simultaneously located both in Texas and the former Exarchate of Ravenna," asking: "But, intrinsically, was it any the worse for that? From the 1930s onwards, as the social consciousness and attendant *Zeitgeist* obsessions became activated, certainly a lot of people thought so; but . . . so far as the fabric of Rice is concerned, it is not abundantly clear that their contributions were other than destructive." Rowe, "James Stirling," p. 24.

11 Burchard, *Report to the Trustees*, pp. 31, 32.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 32.

13 Stephen Fox, *Houston Architectural Guide* (Houston: American Institute of Architects, Houston Chapter, 1990), p. 121. See also "Fondren Library," *Architectural Record* 107 (June 1950), pp. 138-42.

14 McAdams Planning Consultants, Inc., "Library Facilities Planning Study for Rice University," Houston, Texas, January 1992. The study recommends that "planning for new library space at Rice should follow . . . a . . . twenty year time target" and considers "the need for additional library space . . . genuine." It suggests that studies of Fondren be undertaken to "establish its potential for expansion [and] identify . . . site constraints [that would include] massing studies of Fondren and surrounding structures to establish acceptable height and area limits." It also advocates evaluating "the various service options for a new library building . . . [and making] an officially documented 'reservation' for a library site on the proposed west quad for use in the indefinite future" (p. 20).

15 Robert Venturi, "Four Houses for *Gran Bazaar* (January-February 1982)," collected in Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, *A View From the Campidoglio: Selected Essays, 1953-1984* (New York: Rizzoli, 1984), p. 101.

16 Cram, *My Life*, pp. 126-27. Cram's eclecticism at Rice is prefigured in an account of a visit to Palermo at age 25: "Here was indeed a new thing in architecture! Roman columns, pointed arches, Byzantine mosaics, Arab inlays of marble and coloured glass, Renaissance altars and tombs, and all knit together in a perfectly harmonious and organic synthesis. After this showing, it was impossible . . . to become a purist in point of style" (p. 61). He was also appreciative of the creative regionalism of Carrère and Hasting's Ponce de León and Alcazar hotels in San Augustine, Florida (1888) for their "exuberant romanticism, . . . new picturesqueness, . . . free and easy charm" (p. 35), assembled with an imagination not usually found in the firm's work and partially explained by the involvement of Bernard Maybeck.

17 W. R. Lethaby and Harold Swainson, *The Church of Sancta Sophia, Constantinople* (London: Macmillan, 1894), p. 199. Something like Cram's regenerative "historical" rationale for the Rice style (*My Life*, pp. 125-26) can be found in Reginald Blomfield's essay "Byzantium or Lombardy," collected in *Studies in Architecture* (London: Macmillan, 1905), pp. 17, 18.

18 Etienne-Louis Boullée, "Architecture: Essai sur l'Art," translated by Helen Rosenau, ed., *Boullée and Visionary Architecture* (London: Academy Editions, 1976), p. 104.

19 Henri Labrousse succeeded in filling in the courtyard with his remodeling of the Bibliothèque Nationale (1862-68).

20 Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Diverse Maniere d'Adornare i Cammini* (1769), p. 32, quoted in John Wilton-Ely, *The Mind and Art of Giovanni Battista Piranesi* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), p. 80.

21 Venturi, "Diversity, Relevance, and Representation in Historicism, or Plus ça Change . . . plus A Plea for Pattern All Over Architecture with a Postscript on my Mother's House," *Architectural Record*, June 1982, collected in *A View From the Campidoglio*, pp. 108-19.

22 Cesar Pelli and Associates, "William Marsh Rice: University Master Plan for Growth," September 1983, p. 35. Staub, Rather & Howze's initial proposal for the library extension also depicted a prominent west entrance on axis. *Sallyport*, Summer 1965, p. 7.

23 Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, (1918; reprint ed., Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), p. 340.

24 "William M. Rice Institute, Houston, Texas," *American Architect* 102 (11 December 1912), pp. 207-208.

25 Montgomery Schuyler [Franz Winkler, pseud.], "The Administration Building of the Rice Institute, Houston, Texas," *Brickbuilder* 21 (December 1912), pp. 322-24.

26 Cram, "Recent University Architecture in the United States," *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 3rd series, vol. 19 (25 May 1912), pp. 502-503.

27 Cram, *My Life*, p. 127.

E-Z

MARGARET CULBERTSON



Permatex-covered lawn umbrella and glider by Troy Sunshade Company.

PORCH swings are pleasant, and rocking chairs are relaxing, but for me the pinnacle of porch seating is the cushioned glider of the 1930s. I encountered the perfect glider on the cool brick floor of a screened room, referred to as "the breezeway," attached to my grandparents' house in the country outside of Waxahachie. The breezeway was oriented to the prevailing wind and was bordered on two sides by a trellised walkway covered with honeysuckle, which made it the coolest space in the whole countryside. However, at the height of a Texas summer, before air conditioners became common in rural areas, even the coolest space was not exactly comfortable unless you were reclining on a cushioned glider. The slightest push of your big toe could produce both a breeze and the blessed, smooth, gliding motion that gave this inspired but unassuming piece of furniture its name.

For those familiar with this term only in reference to a kind of aircraft, a glider is a porch seat suspended from an underframe by means of short chains or metal straps that allow it to swing smoothly back and forth. It should not be confused with a porch swing, which is suspended from the ceiling. Porch swings came into use long before gliders, as did cushioned or padded variants that were referred to as "hammocks." However, these were suspended from the ceiling and consequently could not be moved easily, used in a garden or terrace setting, or adapted to grouped seating for outdoor socializing. Gliders can do all these things and at the same time allow a gentle movement that neither disturbs social conversation nor induces motion sickness.

The desire for both movement and comfort in a free-standing, movable piece of outdoor furniture that culminated in the invention of the glider produced a host of other delightful, if not totally successful, creations. Among them were the "Comfort



Front porch glider with mosquito netting, Magnolia Grove subdivision, Houston, Texas.