# PALLADIO'S INFLUENCE IN AMERICA

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2008 MARKS THE 500TH anniversary of the birth of Andrea Palladio. Americans might ask why we should see this as a cause for celebration. What does an Italian architect born long ago and far away have to do with us? Indeed, most American's have never heard of Palladio, much less recognize any impact he may have had on our surroundings. Some of our well-traveled countrymen may know one his churches, specifically Venice's San Giorgio Maggiore, a building hard to miss by any visitor to that unique city. Or they may have seen a couple of his villas in the countryside around Venice, but they know little else about him or why he matters. So what do Palladio's life and works mean to Americans?

To answer these questions we need to do a background check on Palladio. Palladio (whose real name was Andrea di Pietro della Gondola) was born in Padua in 1508 and began training as a stonemason at age thirteen. When he was thirty he made the acquaintance of Count Giangiorgio Trissino, who hired Andrea to work on the loggia of his new classical-style villa. Trissino recognized a special aptitude as well as potential in Andrea. He decided to become his mentor and sponsor his education. He also gave him the name Palladio, a name suggesting the wisdom of the mythical figure Pallas Athene. Palladio's education stirred within him an intense interest in classical antiquity, particularly the architecture of the ancient Romans. This interest led Palladio from crafting buildings to designing them.

We now have to put Palladio in the context of his times. The first half of the 16th century marked the full-flowering of the Italian Renaissance: the rebirth or rediscovery of ancient Roman culture–its institutions, arts, and glorious buildings, all mostly destroyed or forgotten during the Dark Ages. Knowledge of Rome's culture remained largely dormant during the subsequent Middle Ages. The religious rigor of that period stifled curiosity about the achievements of a pagan civilization. The early 15th century, however, saw the emergence of a new interest in "Humanitas", the ancient ideal of the importance of the individual human and his understanding of the world around him. This led to a study not only of ancient philosophy and literature but of the surviving relics of Roman antiquity, including its architectural remains. Regrettably, so many of the Romans' great buildings and structures had fallen into ruin and plundered for their materials. What was left, not only in Rome and in other regions of its former empire, was little more than sections of walls, broken columns, and half-buried rubble. Nevertheless, for individuals inspired by the Renaissance, these ruins excited the imagination and stimulated study–a seeking of architecture's fundamental aesthetic principles.

# I QUATTRO LIBRI DELL'ARCHITETTURA DI ANDREA PALLADIO (THE FOUR BOOKS)

Palladio was but one of numerous architects of the era who undertook an investigation of the ruins of antiquity. Like others, he published a treatise on classical architecture, beginning with an exposition of the "Five Orders," or the five basic types of columns employed by the ancients. Palladio's illustrations and explanation of the five orders, however, stood out among similar works by his contemporaries for their clarity and precision *(Figure 3)*. This study of the five orders was included in Palladio's seminal work: *I Quattro Libri dell'Architettura (The Four Books) (Figure 2)*, one of the most influential writings on architecture ever produced. Published in 1570, *The Four Books*, as its title implies, was divided into four books or sections. As noted, its first book or section dealt with the orders. The second book included a series of Palladio's own designs, showing the application of the orders to his schemes for villas and large urban dwellings, or palazzos. As we shall see, this section in particular had an important impact on American architecture, both directly and indirectly. The third book concentrated on engineering works, including roads, bridges, town planning, basilicas, and xysti, or ancient gymnasiums. The fourth book was a survey of the ancient Roman ruins that Palladio had studied and measured. Here Palladio combined his scholarship and design skills to produce reconstruction drawings. These included plans, elevations, and sections showing how he thought these edifices looked originally. This section too was to have a huge impact on America's architectural image as well as much of that of the Western World.

It is axiomatic that architectural ideas and influence are spread as much or more through the medium of publication than by actual buildings. Palladio's lavishly illustrated and coherently written *The Four Books*, assured his immortality far more than his surviving architectural works, wonderful though they are. Palladio was exceedingly generous with his knowledge and talents. He wanted *The Four Books* not to be a self-serving monograph, but rather a manual for other architects so that their designs could be as literate and true to ancient principles of aesthetics as his own. Through his instructions on delineating the orders, his own brilliant designs, as well as his observations on engineering and planning, and his seductive reconstructions of ancient monuments, Palladio charted a course for architectural design that has extended to the present.

*Figure 2*

*Figure 3*

# THE FOUR BOOKS AND AMERICA

Let's now investigate what *The Four Books* has meant to America, for it was through the various editions of *The Four Books* that Americans first came to know Palladio. We should start with the first book: Palladio's discussion of the rules for drawing the orders. From its first publication, this section became a textbook for architects and builders. This was especially true for America's colonial period. Numerous other architectural pattern books with instructions on the orders were available to colonial Americans, but most of their authors ultimately obtained their information from Palladio. The availability of various editions of Palladio in 18th-century America is a subject in itself. It is sufficient to note here that editions of Palladio could be found in libraries in Boston, Salem, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Charleston, as well as in the libraries of Harvard and Yale universities. The estate of the Virginia Carpenter, Richard Brown, lists a copy of Palladio (Brown's only book) in 1717. The Salem architect/builder, Samuel McIntire, owned the first section of Palladio, the treatise on the orders *(Figure 4)*. Thomas Jefferson, Palladio's greatest advocate in America, called Palladio's book "the Bible," and believed it should provide the basis for the new architecture of the young country. Jefferson owned seven editions of *The Four Books* during his lifetime.

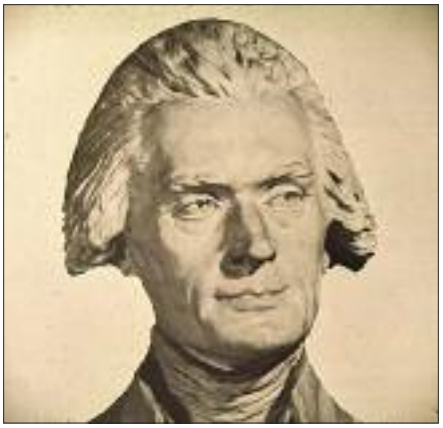


*Figure 4*

# JAMES GIBBS AND PALLADIO

Palladio's exposition on the orders was also a principal source for the British architect James Gibbs, whose two architectural treatises: *A Book of Architecture, Containing Designs of Buildings and Ornaments* (1728) *(Figure 5)* and *Rules for Drawing the Several Parts of Architecture* (1732 ) were also principal references for colonial American builders and architects *(Figure 6)*. Gibbs was a leading figure in Britain's 18th-century Anglo-Palladian movement, the vogue for adapting Palladio's classical style to the British architectural scene. Gibbs's published designs, particularly his interpretations of Palladian-style houses for the British aristocracy, provided inspiration for many of our country's more sophisticated 18th-century works *(Figure 7)*. In his introduction to Rules for Drawing, Gibbs conceded his debt to Palladio, stating:

*"Palladio in dividing and adjusting his orders, had no doubt excelled the rest, whom I have therefore followed."*

As with *The Four Books*, Gibbs's *A Book of Architecture and Rules for Drawing* were available in various colonial libraries and thus were accessible as references for local builders who might not have had their own copies. It is not surprising then that the orders on many of our colonial-period works are derived from Gibbs's plates or from those pattern book writers such as Batty Langley, who shamelessly plagiarized Gibbs *(Figure 8)*.

Gibbs's *Rules for Drawing* continued to be a standard text for the orders for British architectural students well into the 20th century. On the other hand, France's national architectural academy, the *Ecole des Beaux Arts*, promoted the use of Jacopo da Vignola's *La Regola delli Cinque Ordini d'Architecture* (1562) as the primary text for the orders. As a result, American architects of the late 19th and first half of the 20th century, particularly those who attended the *Ecole*, relied on Vignola as the authority for the orders. Hence, many of our classical buildings of that era, known as the American Renaissance, employ orders based on Vignola rather than Palladio. As with fine wines, the differences between Palladio's and Vignola's orders are subtle. Palladio's orders have a distinct elegance while Vignola's are more full-bodied *(Figure 9)*. Unlike Palladio, however, Vignola did not illustrate ancient buildings in his treatise; hence *The Four Books* remained a principal source for building design.


*Figure 5*


*Figure 6*

*Figure 7*

*Figure 9*

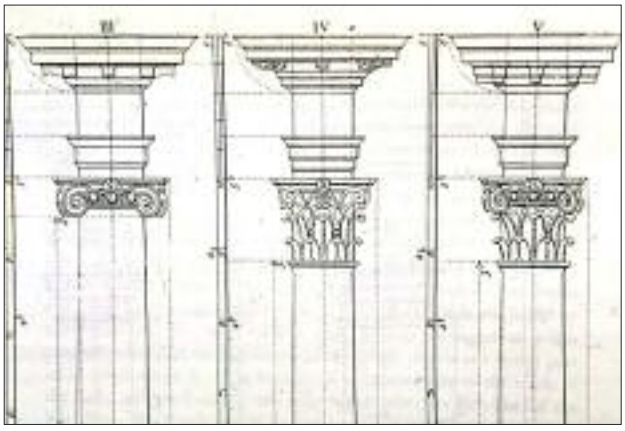


*Figure 8*

# THE PORTICO

Although Palladio's discussion of the orders and Gibbs's subsequent refinements in Rules provided essential instruction to our colonial builders for various details, it is Book Two of *The Four Books* that has had the most widespread influence on American building. In Book Two, Palladio offered some fifty of his own designs for various buildings. This was one of the earliest published presentations illustrating how the classical elements and proportional systems could be applied to a variety of contemporary designs, from modest farmhouses to grander villas and imposing town mansions. To today's eyes many of these images, particularly those of the villas, have such a familiar character that it's difficult to appreciate how revolutionary they were for their time.

Let's look at Palladio's elevation for the Villa Emo, for instance *(Figure 10)*. To most of us it appears as a normal, relatively unpretentious, classical style dwelling–a regular, symmetrical house with four columns. But Palladio was the first architect to promote the application of the pedimented portico, the signature motif of an ancient Roman religious building, to domestic design. The portico was a form developed by the ancients for buildings to house gods. It was a form meant to inspire awe. Indeed, its powerful, ordered formality inspired awe in ancient times and still does today *(Figure 11)*. Palladio mistakenly believed the Romans employed porticoes for dwelling facades as well as for temples. He thus didn't hesitate to attach porticoes to his houses. The Romans, however, reserved the portico for temples and major civic buildings. Nonetheless, Palladio's use of this ancient device to give a dignity of appearance to an otherwise plain dwelling was a profoundly important innovation.

It was largely through his villa designs, published in *The Four Books*, that the fashion for fronting houses with free-standing columns and pediments was spread throughout Europe. It gained a particularly strong toe-hold in England with the Anglo-Palladian movement. The monumental portico did not come into use in America until the middle of the 18th century, when the popularity of more formal classical architecture was nurtured. One of the very earliest classical porticos in this country is seen on the 1749 Redwood Library in Newport, Rhode Island, a strongly Palladian-style building by the New England architect Peter Harrison. Harrison's other works, such as the Brick Market in Newport and King's Chapel in Boston also exhibit Palladian qualities, but mainly though the lens of Gibbs *(Figure 11a)*. Perhaps the earliest, if not the first example of an American house embellished with a full classical portico is Whitehall near Annapolis, Maryland, designed by William Buckland and completed in the 1760s. In the 1790s James Madison enlarged Montpelier, his father's colonial house in Virginia *(Figure 12)*. This expansion included the addition of a large Tuscan portico to the façade. Madison's portico was a device consciously meant to signal his growing importance as a statesman and was one of the earliest truly monumental porticoes on an American house.

The portico has continued to be a status symbol for American houses to the present day. The columns and pediment signal that a dwelling is the home of successful and important people. Remove its portico and a house loses much of its visual and psychological impact.We see this in the 1823 Virginia house, Frascati, whose Tuscan portico is nearly identical to the Villa Emo's. The portico tells us this is an important building. Remove it and Frascati becomes a straightforward square brick house *(Figure 13)*. America today has thousands of porticoed dwellings. Many of these porticoes follow the canons of classical proportions; many of the more recent ones unfortunately do not and often impose a dissonant note on the buildings they front. Be that as it may, the porticoed house is a familiar feature of our cultural landscape, one for which Palladio must receive the ultimate credit.

*Figure 10*

*Figure 11*

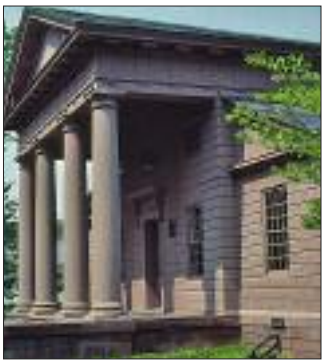


*Figure 11a*

*Figure 13*

*Figure 12*

# THE TWO-TIERED PORTICO

In addition to the monumental portico, with its full height columns, Palladio is to be credited with popularizing the two-tiered portico. In Book Two of *The Four Books*, Palladio presented some eight designs for villas fronted by two-tiered porticoes (*(Figure 14)*, i.e. porticoes with two floors or levels of columns. Following ancient precedent, Palladio always employed superimposed orders in his two-level porticoes, which means placing a lighter order above a heavier order such as Corinthian over Ionic. The two-tiered portico saw use in this country well before the monumental portico and its two-story columns. With its two-tiered portico, Drayton Hall, erected in the 1740s near Charleston, South Carolina, is perhaps our earliest example of a house clearly illustrating characteristics of Palladianism *(Figure 15)*. Its design parallels Palladio's illustration in *The Four Books* of the Villa Pisani at Montagnana, the garden front of which has a recessed two-tiered portico with three bays similar to that on Drayton Hall *(Figure 16 & 17)*. A later, more refined example of the two-tiered portico is the 1760s Miles Brewton house in Charleston, which is a reflection of the center section of Palladio's design for the entrance front of the Villa Cornaro *(Figure 18 & 19))*.

Thomas Jefferson made use of two-tiered porticoes on the entrance and garden facades of the first version of his home, Monticello, begun in the late 1760s *(Figure 20)*. Jefferson was intent on having Monticello be a display of the correct use of classical orders, and employed Palladio's version of the Doric order on the lower level and his Ionic on the upper level of each portico. With its lower hipped-roof wings, Monticello was a reduced version of the entrance façade of the Villa Cornaro *(Figure 21)*. We might note here that Jefferson relied primarily on Giacomo Leoni's English edition of *The Four Books*, in which Leoni added numerous embellishments to Palladio's original designs. Jefferson later removed the two-tiered porticoes when he remodeled Monticello to appear as a domed, one-story house. This redesign was partly inspired by the Hotel de Salm, which Jefferson admired while residing in Paris *(Figure 22 & 23)*. The use of the two-tiered portico continued well after the colonial period; scores of examples can be found on houses from the Federal period into the mid-19th century, particularly throughout the South where both levels of the portico became popular sitting places in warm months. A handsome example is the 1790s Annfield in Virginia, with his portico highlighted by fashionable Chinese lattice railings *(Figure 24)*. Dating from 1815, Rosedale, in Charlotte, North Carolina, is an engaging provincial expression of a Palladian-influenced house with a two-tiered portico *(Figure 25)*. Many traditional dwellings today are embellished with two-tiered porticoes, some more informed than others.

*Figure 14*

*Figure 15*

*Figure 16*

*Figure 17*

*Figure 18*

*Figure 19*

*Figure 20*

*Figure 21*

*Figure 22*

*Figure 23*

*Figure 24*

*Figure 25*

# THE LOGGIA

Palladio illustrated two villa designs fronted not with columned porticoes but rather with arcaded loggias *(Figure 26)*. The restrained but visually pleasing Villa Saraceno design demonstrated how the loggia, highlighted by a pediment, could give dignity to what is primarily a large but architecturally restrained farmhouse *(Figure 27)*. This architectural device also has the advantage of providing an inviting outdoor room. The idea of a central loggia was picked up by James Gibbs and incorporated into his design for a country house for "a gentleman in Dorset," and published in his highly influential *A Book of Architecture (Figure 28)*. This design served as the inspiration for Mount Airy, the 1740s Virginia plantation home of John Tayloe. The central feature of Tayloe's house is a rusticated arcaded loggia directly copied from the Gibbs design *(Figure 29)*. Tayloe's reliance on a published design for inspiration fulfilled Gibbs's stated intention for his book. In his introduction Gibbs' wrote:

*"They were of the opinion that such a work as this would be of use to such Gentlemen as might be concerned with Building, especially in the remote parts of the Country, where little or no assistance with Designs can be procured."*

America was certainly the remotest part of the British world in the mid-18th century and architects were certainly few and far between here. Hence, a pattern book such as Gibbs's A Book of Architecture was of great value to those colonials seeking literate, fashionable designs. It was mainly through Gibbs that the British version of the Palladian mode was introduced to this country. Mount Airy, albeit in smaller scale than most of its British country house counterparts, remains one of our purest expressions of 18th-century Anglo-Palladianism. Although rarely seen on other colonial works, the loggia incorporated into a portico was a popular device for 20th-century architects.

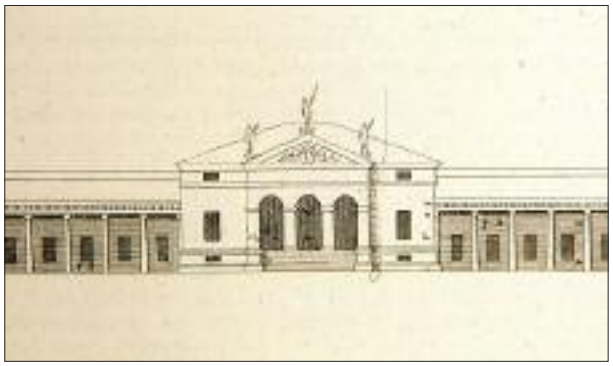


*Figure 26*

*Figure 27*

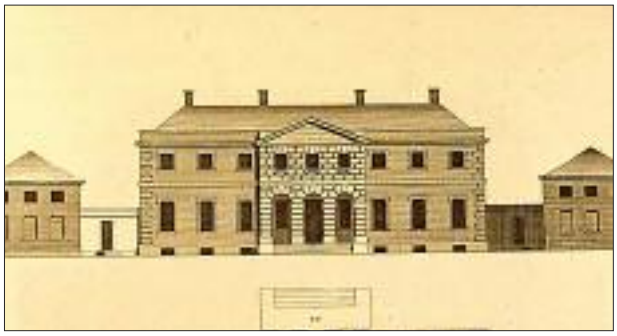


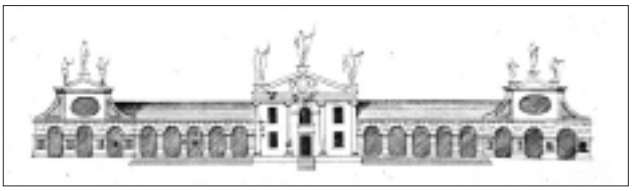
*Figure 28*

*Figure 29*

# THE FIVE-PART HOUSE

Like the Gibbs design, Mount Airy incorporates the Palladian practice of connecting the main block to service structures by the use of connectors or hyphens, in this case curved hyphens. This was a compositional arrangement used by Palladio in several of his villa designs, one that connected service areas to the main block to form a pleasingly balanced architectural ensemble. One of the most influential of Palladio's multi-sectioned villa schemes was that produced for the Barbaro family at Maser, near Vicenza *(Figure 31)*. The Villa Barbaro consists of a center section fronted by an engaged portico, which is flanked by long arcaded hyphens connecting to terminal wings housing stables and a winery. This linear five-part composition gained popularity in 18th-century America, resulting in numerous architecturally noteworthy dwellings. An early example of the five-part type is the 1768 villa, Battersea, in Petersburg, Virginia *(Figure 32)*. Battersea acquired a more Italian look in the early 19th century when its brick walls were stuccoed and the Palladian-style windows added to the terminal wings.

The five-part composition found particular favor in 18th-century Maryland.An abbreviated list would include the 1790s Wye House, in Talbot County, and the ca. 1790 house, Kennersley near Centerville. Three well-known Annapolis mansions: the 1765 William Paca House, the James Brice House of ca. 1770 *(Figure 33)*, and the 1774 Hammond-Harwood House, designed by William Buckland, are striking examples of late-colonial five-part houses, although their general character is more English Georgian than strictly Palladian *(Figure 34)*.The popularity of the five-part composition continued well into the first half of the 19th century. Examples of the form are scattered throughout the eastern United States, from Massachusetts to Kentucky and Tennessee. Among the most famous Federal-period five-part houses is Homewood in Baltimore, built for Charles Carroll, Jr. in 1801-03. Homewood is an eye-catching illustration of how the Palladian form could be interpreted in the delicately elegant Adamesque or Federal style *(Figure 35)*. During this same time the noted architect, Benjamin Henry Latrobe, was producing a number of five-part composition house designs in more of an English Regency mode, with stuccoed walls and minimal ornament.Regrettably, few of Latrobe's house designs were built, and none of his five-part schemes survives.A little known and comparatively late example of a Palladian five-part house is Moss Neck Manor, near Fredericksburg, Virginia, erected in the 1850s for the Corbin family. Extending 255 feet from end to end, and fronted by a two-level portico, the house is an arresting commentary on the Palladian influence on an anonymous country builder/architect *(Figure 36)*.



*The Five-part house*

*Figure 31*

*Figure 32*

*Figure 33*

*Figure 34*

*Figure 35*

*Figure 36*

# THE SEVEN-PART HOUSE

Along with James Gibbs, the British architect, Robert Morris produced a pattern book of designs in the Palladian mode. This work, titled *Rural Architecture* (1750), also found an audience in America *(Figure 37)*. In Plate 3, Morris presents a design for a seven-sectioned farmhouse *(Figure 38)*. With its two-story center section with lower wings and hyphens attached to dependencies, the scheme echoes Palladio's illustration in Book Two of *The Four Books* (Chapter XVI) *(Figure 39)*. This shows an elevation of Palladio's interpretation of an ancient Roman villa, also a seven-part composition. The Morris design provided the basis for the layout of at least two colonial Virginia houses, Tazewell Hall, and Brandon. Tazewell Hall, a wood-frame house, was severely altered in the 19th century and later moved from its original site in Williamsburg *(Figure 40)*. Brandon, on the James River, survives intact as a faithful colonial-period translation of the Morris design and ultimately of Palladio's perception of a Roman villa. Interestingly, no house in Britain based on Morris's seven-part scheme has been identified.


*Figure 37*

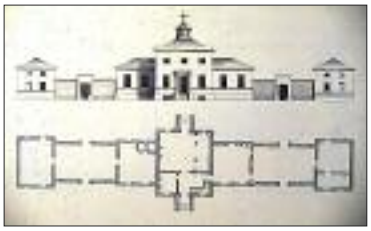


*Figure 38*

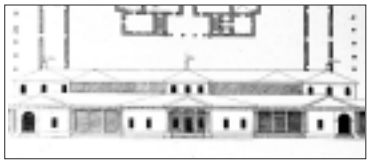


*Figure 39*

*Figure 40*

# THE THREE-PART HOUSE

The center potion of Palladio's illustration of a Roman villa consists of a three-part structure with a two-story center section and one-story wings *(Figure 41)*. If we separate this section from its connecting lower wings, we see a design that parallels another design in Morris's work: Plate 37, an elevation for a tripartite dwelling *(Figure 42)*. This design provided the inspiration for the William Finnie House (formerly known as the Semple House) in Williamsburg, an architecturally dignified wooden dwelling characterized, like the Morris design, by its two-story pedimented center section and one-story wings *(Figure 43)*. The William Finnie House, completed ca. 1780, served as a prototype for scores of three-part dwellings scattered throughout the Southern Piedmont, and into the Midwest. These three-part houses have come to be described as "Piedmont Palladian." Versions of the form range from articulate examples such as Oak Lawn in Charlottesville, to stripped-down, countrified expressions *(Figure 44)*. Except for Jefferson, and indeed some of the workmen who learned the classical language while working on his projects, it's likely that few owners or builders of these houses had much awareness of Palladio. Nonetheless, Palladio is ultimately responsible for the genesis of this American house form.

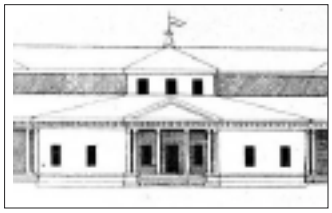


*Figure 41*

*Figure 42*

*Figure 43*

*Figure 44*

# THE VIRGINIA STATE CAPITOL

As noted above, Thomas Jefferson wanted Monticello, among other things, to be a demonstration of the correct use of the classical orders on a residence. However, he was also concerned about the state of the new nation's public architecture and wanted a clean break from the prevailing provincial Georgian mode. He believed it to be a role of government to provide proper models of architecture for the public to emulate. By this he meant that civic architecture should be expressed with the correct use of the classical vocabulary. To him, the classical architecture of ancient Rome was the foundation of the architecture of western civilization. It had achieved what he described as the "approbation of the ages." Jefferson, of course, was introduced to classical architecture primarily through Palladio's *The Four Books.* The opportunity to put his thoughts about public buildings into practice presented itself in the 1780s when his native Virginia proposed erecting a new capitol building in Richmond. Although serving as our ambassador to France at the time, Jefferson seized the chance to provide a design. His concept was to employ the ancient temple form as the basis for the new capitol. The use of a religious form for a modern public building was a revolutionary idea for its time. In so doing, Jefferson was creating a "temple of democracy," consciously using architecture to give expression to the ideals of the young nation.

We might ask, were does Palladio fit into Jefferson's project? With his reading of *The Four Books*, Jefferson was introduced not only to Palladio's villa designs and classical orders, but to ancient Roman temples through Palladio's drawings in Book Four. Jefferson's specific inspiration for the Virginia capitol was the Maison Carree in Nimes, France *(Figure 46).* The temple survives as one of the best-preserved of all Roman temples, a building to which Jefferson was first introduced through Palladio's illustrations.Moreover, the Maison Carree was one of the few ancient Roman buildings that Jefferson actually saw. Although, Jefferson's Virginia capitol is nearly double the size of the Maison Carree, and employs the Ionic order rather than the Corinthian for its columns, the capitol owes its temple form and prostyle portico to the ancient work Jefferson so admired. Jefferson's Virginia capitol marked the birth of the Classical Revival movement in American and established a precedent for the use of the monumental classicism learned from Palladio for our public buildings, a practice that lasted well into the 20th century. Nearly every one of our state capitols, along with our national capitol, is expressed in some version of the classical style.

*The Virginia State Capitol*

*Figure 46*

# THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Jefferson's belief that government should provide sophisticated models of architecture to inspire the public was carried forward into his design for the University of Virginia, the crowning achievement of his architectural endeavors. Jefferson held that architectural literacy was an essential ingredient of higher education and therefore students needed to be exposed to correct examples of the classical orders. This was difficult in early 19th-century Virginia. Except for Jefferson's Virginia capitol, buildings displaying the correct use of classical orders were practically non-existent.Jefferson was intent on supplying an ample display of the use of classical orders with his designs for the university's numerous components. The layout of Jefferson's "Academical Village" is one of world's most ingenious collegiate complexes, a design which owes a heavy debt to Palladio *(Figure 48)*. The focal point of the scheme, the Rotunda, is a reduced version of the Pantheon in Rome, the great domed structure which Jefferson knew from Palladio's illustrations in *The Four Books (Figure 49)*. Stretching out before the Rotunda are ten "pavilions," housing classrooms and faculty quarters. Each of the pavilions displays a different version of a classical order, five of which are derived from Book One of The Four Books. The include Palladio's ideal Corinthian on Pavilion III *(Figure 51)*, his Ionic, on Pavilion V *(Figure 52)*, and Palladio's Doric on Pavilion VII *(Figure 53)*. It was Jefferson's belief that university students should become acquainted with classical architecture through actual examples rather than through published illustrations. Many other details of the university complex, such as the colonnades fronting the student rooms, were also based on Palladian designs.

*The University of Virginia*

*Figure 48*

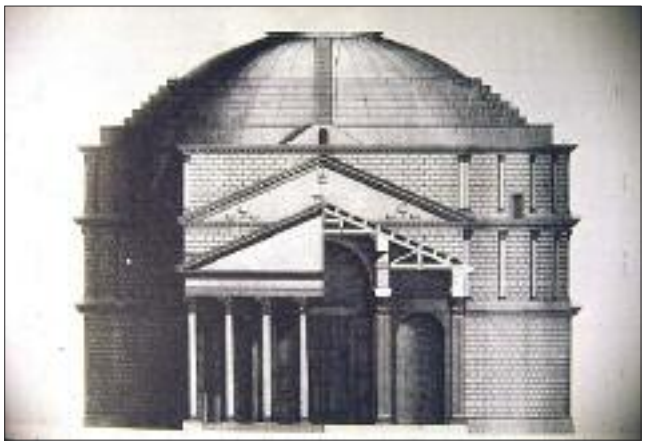


*Figure 49*

*Figure 50*

*Figure 51*

*Figure 52*

*Figure 53*

# JEFFERSONIAN PALLADIAN

Apart from the university, Jefferson strongly advocated Palladian villas as models for the homes of Virginia's gentry. This predilection was exhibited in his own designs for houses for his friends, such as that for Barboursville, home of his friend, Governor James Barbour, now a ruin *(Figure 54)*. Barboursville was intended to have a dome similar to Monticello's. Jefferson's infatuation with domes induced him to design what would have been this country's most striking example of a Jeffersonian Palladian house. In 1792 he anonymously submitted in competition a proposal for the President's House in Washington *(Figure 55)*. The scheme was closely modeled on Palladio's Villa Rotunda, as illustrated in the Leoni edition *(Figure 56)*. Jefferson put his own stamp on the design by calling for glass panels between the dome ribs to light the central space. The winning entry, of course, was James Hoban's scheme, for what we now know as the White House. Not to be outdone, in 1803 Jefferson worked with Robert Mills on the design of yet another rotunda house. Mills, who was serving Jefferson as a draftsman, produced ink-and-wash renderings for the elevation, section, and plans of a domed dwelling. Regrettably, this bold proposal remained primarily an exercise *(Figure 57)*.

Probably, the purest of all Jeffersonian Palladian houses, Bremo, was not designed by Jefferson but by his principal builder James Neilson, who mastered the Palladian idiom while working at both Monticello and the University of Virginia *(Figure 58)*. Neilson worked up the design in collaboration with Bremo's owner, John Hartwell Cocke, Jefferson's close friend. Bremo follows the Palladian five-part scheme, with a central monumental dwelling fronted by a columned loggia. Flanking it are long low hyphens that originally sheltered farm equipment in the manner of the *barchese*, or low service wings, of Palladian villas. These are connected to porticoed end pavilions housing additional service areas. Bremo's Tuscan portico on the opposite front is reminiscent of the Villa Emo *(Figure 59)*. Cocke became so intrigued with the Palladian theme that he even built his version of a Palladian-style barn at Bremo, also fronted by a rustic Tuscan portico *(Figure 60)*. Bremo remains but one of many Jeffersonian-Palladian houses and other building types designed and built by the builders who had for Jefferson and learned his style.

*Figure 54*

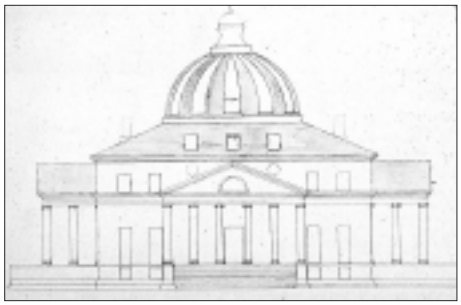


*Figure 55*

*Figure 56*

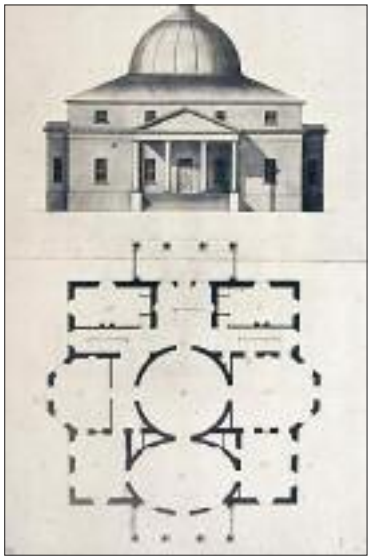


*Figure 57*

*Figure 58*

*Figure 60*

*Figure 59*

# THE FOUR BOOKS: BOOK FOUR

Book Four of The Four Books, the section in which Palladio presented his restoration and reconstruction drawings of ancient Roman temples and other public buildings, was no less influential than the other sections of his work. In the foreword to Book Four Palladio wrote:

*"I intend therefore to illustrate in this book the form and ornaments of many ancient temples of which one can still see the ruins and which I have recorded in drawings, so that anyone can understand the form and ornaments…. And although one can see only portions of some of them standing above ground, I have nonetheless proceeded to deduce form them what they must have been like when they were complete, taking into consideration the foundations that could be observed as well." (Figure 62)*

The importance of this effort cannot be overstressed. It marked one of the first concentrated study and recording projects involving above-ground archaeological remains. The results were amazing from the standpoint of Palladio's comprehension of what he observed. Add to that the quality of his drawings:his plans, elevations, sections, and details, all first published as woodcuts. And we must realize that is it is mainly through these drawings that we have an idea of the probable appearance of much of ancient Roman architecture. Moreover, the illustrations in Book Four of The Four Books are a priceless documentation, since a number of the ruins he recorded were subsequently destroyed, either wholly or partially. The impact of Palladio's published illustrations of this large corpus of Roman works has been profound. The drawings presented for the first time a credible image of the grandeur, beauty, and variety of ancient architecture. In writing about the temples Palladio stated:

*"The ancient Greeks and Romans expended the greatest care on them and composed them with the most magnificent ornaments and finest proportions."*


*The Four Books, Book Four*

*Figure 62*

# THE AMERICAN RENAISSANCE

While many studies of ancient buildings have been undertaken since Palladio, his drawings and commentary were a primary motivation for the renewal of the classical tradition. They provided the ultimate source if not inspiration for many of America's great classical works, particularly during the American Renaissance, the decades from the 1880s into the 1930s, which witnessed the flowering of one of the greatest periods of classical architecture. We've already noted how Jefferson began the tradition of dressing our public and institutional architecture in classical garb. This practice was fully exploited by the disciples of the American Renaissance. Go into any American city and you will find monumental classical edifices dating from this period. Typical of some of the more ambitious expressions is the Mecklenburg County Courthouse in Charlotte, North Carolina *(Figure 63)*. Such a public building probably would have looked very different had Palladio never existed. We have civic works, memorial buildings, educational buildings, museums, churches, railroad stations, and commercial buildings, all of which in some form or other echo the splendor ofimperial Rome as first revealed by Palladio. These structures are enduring monuments to civic pride and reflect American artistry at its noblest. They maintain a tradition that has come to define some of the highest aspirations of Western Civilization. America has not been alone in this effort, of course. Numerous other countries have outstanding examples of classical architecture from the last two centuries, but America's best efforts are conspicuous for transcending regionalism and being remarkably pure reflections of Palladian ideals. A list of great American classical works would occupy more pages than space here permits. The number is astounding. Nevertheless, it's necessary to illustrate the richness of this legacy with number of examples both iconic and typical.

*Figure 63*

# PUBLIC BUILDINGS

For civic works, we can be proud that our nation's capital city contains some of the noblest expressions of the classical tradition to be found anywhere. These buildings supported the tradition for use of the classical style for public buildings throughout the country. We will note here three works that most conspicuously reflect the grandest aspects of the Palladian sprit. The imposing complex comprising Washington, D.C.'s Federal Triangle, most notably Arthur Brown, Jr.'s magnificent centerpiece housing the Departmental Auditorium, is without peer in evoking the Rome documented by Palladio *(Figure 64)*. On a par, or course, is Cass Gilbert's Supreme Court Building on Washington's Capitol Hill, a reflection of Palladio's elevation of the Temple of Neptune (now more accurately identified as the Temple of Venus Genetrix) *(Figure 65)*. No one standing before Gilbert's great Corinthian temple could fail to be awed both by the building and the institution it houses. And next door, the domed reading room of the Library of Congress ranks among the nation's most awesome classical spaces *(Figure 66)*.

*Figure 64*

*Figure 65*

*Figure 66*

# EDUCATIONAL BUILDINGS

Following Jefferson's precedent, we have countless educational buildings in Palladio's classical tradition, McKim, Mead, and White's Low Library at Columbia University, like the University of Virginia's Rotunda, takes its cue from the Pantheon, both works being expressed as domed temples of learning. The campus of MIT is defined by a Pantheon-type structure as well, fronted by a decastyle Ionic colonnade. At Yale University, the dome and colonnade of Carrere & Hastings' Memorial Rotunda take their cue from Bramante's Tempietto in Rome, the one Renaissance work Palladio included among the buildings he illustrated in Book Four *(Figure 67)*. Palladio expressed his admiration of Bramante when he wrote:

*"Bramante was the first to make known that good and beautiful architecture which had been hidden from the time of the ancients till now, I thought it reasonable that his work should be placed amongst those of the ancients..." (Figure 68)*

Extending behind the Memorial Rotunda is Thomas Hastings' great Corinthian colonnadeof 1927 recalling the remaining colonnade of Rome's Temple of the Divine Hadrian, a structure measured and drawn by Palladio (which he identified as the Temple of Mars, *Figure 69 & 70)*. In seeking a less monumental example, we find that the Palladian influence can reveal itself in surprising places. The entrance feature of a gymnasium at Woodberry Forest School in Virginia is inspired by the Villa Emo *(Figure 71)*.

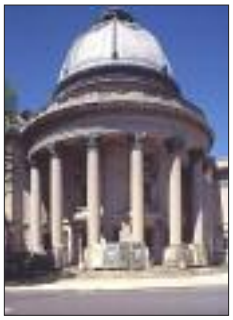


*Figure 67*

*Figure 68*

*Figure 69*

*Figure 70*

*Figure 71*

# MUSEUMS

It is not surprising that many of our most impressive classical works are art museums. Though rendered in Greek rather than Roman orders, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, by Horace Trumbauer, follows Palladio's principles for siting a temple in a city. In Book Four he wrote:

*"But we ... should choose sites for temples in the most dignified and prestigious part of the city, far away from unsavory areas and on beautiful and ornate squares where many streets end, so that every part of the temple can be seen in all its majesty and arouse devotion and awe in whoever sees and admires it. And if there are hills in the city, one should choose the highest part ... " (Figure 72)*

Situated on an Acropolis-like promontory above the Schuylkill River and the historic Waterworks complex, and terminating a great boulevard, the Franklin Parkway, the Philadelphia Museum is the consummate temple of art. Also among museums, we might add the great hall of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York *(Figure 74)*. Its lofty vaults and domes suggest Palladio's section for what we now know is the Basilica of Maxentius and Constantine. Nor can we speak of great classical museums without mentioning John Russell Pope's National Gallery of Art, on the Mall of the nation's capital. Its interior dome supported by a circular peristyle of black-green marble columns captures the spirit of the Roman imperium *(Figure 75)*. Pope embellished his more diminutive Baltimore Museum of Art with an interior courtyard recalling Palladio's design for what he termed an Egyptian Hall, illustrated in Book Two of *The Four Books (Figure 76 & 77)*.

*Figure 72*

*Figure 73*

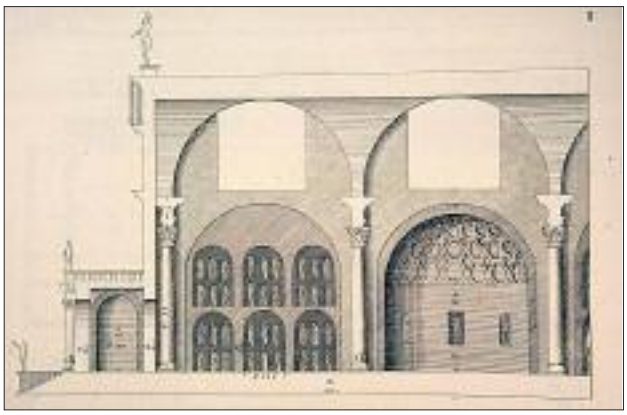


*Figure 74*

*Figure 75*

*Figure 76*

*Figure 77*

# CHURCHES

For churches, Americans have tended favor the Gothic over the classical, yet we have hundreds of churches throughout the country patterned after James Gibbs's St. Martin-in-the-Fields, one of the first Anglican churches designed specifically for Protestant worship *(Figure 78)*. Characterized by its porticoed temple form and multi-tiered steeple, St. Martin became the model for numerous colonial urban churches as well as for many early New England meeting houses. These established a widely accepted pattern for American churches, particularly in the 20th century. As a consequence, churches of the St. Martin type can be found almost any city in the country and are still being built today.A particularly faithful and refined 20th-century version is All Souls Unitarian Church on Meridian Hill in Washington, D.C. Like St. Martin, it's a pure Corinthian temple but with a fanciful classical steeple to signal that it's a church *(Figure 79)*.

In contrast to our Gothic Revival behemoths, classical churches of truly heroic scale are much less numerous in America. Nevertheless, a precedent was set as early as 1821 with the completion of Benjamin Henry Latrobe's Baltimore Cathedral, embellished with a Pantheon-like dome and fronted with one of the country's earliest great classical porticoes, albeit employing the Greek Ionic order of the Erectheion, which would have been unknown to Palladio *(Figure 80 & 81)*. Later prodigious examples of classical houses of worship worthy of mention are the domed chapel of the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis and the 1906 Mother Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston *(Figure 82 & 83)*, topped also with a vast dome and fronted by a curved portico suggestive of the Temple of Vesta at Tivoli, illustrated by Palladio. Most cities, however, can boast a literate classical-style church or two. A suave example is John Russell Pope's 1926 University Baptist Church in Baltimore, set off by a Roman Ionic portico and a topped by a dome reminiscent of the Baptistery of Constantine–a building measured and drawn by Palladio *(Figure 84)*.

*Figure 78*

*Figure 79*

*Figure 80*

*Figure 81*

*Figure 82*

*Figure 83*

*Figure 84*

# RAILROAD STATIONS

The architects of the American Renaissance were especially keen to celebrate cities with imposing entrances in the form of railroad stations. Regrettably, Penn Station, America's greatest railroad station and probably the signature building of the American Renaissance has been lost. Its great concourse was inspired by Rome's Baths of Caracalla. Fortunately, important monumental classical stations survive to give us a taste of the ancient grandeur first delineated by Palladio *(Figure 85)*. A short list includes New York's Grand Central Station, Philadelphia's 30th Street Station, Baltimore's Pennsylvania Station, Chicago's Union Station, and Richmond's Broad Street Station, now the Science Museum of Virginia. Also a work by John Russell Pope, Broad Street Station's dome served as the prototype for the saucer domes Pope would later employ for the National Galley of Art and the Jefferson Memorial *(Figure 86)*.

*Figure 85*

*Figure 86*

# COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

The country is replete with classical-style commercial buildings, also products of the American Renaissance. We could list hundreds of examples just of banks, great and small, where the classical image lent an air of permanence and security. One of the great banks showing the Palladian spirit is the result of in ingenious enlargement: the former Merchant's Exchange on Manhattan's Wall Street *(Figure 87)*. The Greek Ionic lower colonnade, designed by Isaiah Rogers, dates from 1842. In 1907 McKim, Mead & White added the upper story, fronted by a Corinthian colonnade, transforming the structure into a Palladian-like palazzo of the grandest scale, one recalling the colonnades of the Palazzo Chiericati in Vicenza *(Figure 88)*. In contrast, a diminutive, but no less informed work is the 1903 Valley National Bank in Staunton, Virginia, an evocation of Rome's Arch of Constantine, a structure certainly known to Palladio *(Figure 89)*.

*Figure 87*

*Figure 88*

*Figure 89*

# HOUSES

The Palladian-inspired houses of the American Renaissance make for a subject much too extensive to do justice within the confines of this website. They are being covered at a regular pace through the Acanthus Press's superb on-going series of monographs on the domestic works of the architects of the period. The architects featured thus far include William Lawrence Bottomley, Carrere & Hastings, Delano & Aldrich, John Russell Pope, Charles A. Platt, and Horace Trumbauer among others. If we were to select one work of domestic architecture of the American Renaissance that best presents Palladian ideals, it might be one that regrettably has been lost *(Figure 90)*. Horace Trumbauer's Whitemarsh Hall, erected outside Philadelphia in 1916–20, combined the best of Palladian, Gibbs, and American Renaissance traditions. This magnificent stone mansion, with its portico, loggias, and interior rotundas, reflected the period's impeccable quality and mastery of historic traditions. This proud work of architecture was demolished in 1980.

*Figure 90*

# THE PALLADIAN ARCH

We cannot end a discussion of Palladio's influence in America without mentioning one of the most ubiquitous of architectural features, the so-called Palladian arch. This device, consisting of a compass-headed or semicircular arched opening flanked by narrower flat-topped openings, was not Palladio's invention. It was known to the Romans and was particularly favored by the Emperor Hadrian, as seen in the Temple of Hadrian in Ephesus, and in a repeated series in the colonnade that surrounded the pool at Hadrian's villa in Tivoli. As an ancient device it became better known to the world through the illustration of the arch of the Aqueduct of Hadrian appearing in Stuart and Revett's *Antiquities of Athens*, Vol. III (1794) *(Figure 91)*. Prior to Palladio, Renaissance architects such as Bramante and Serlio made use of the device in their works. Serlio employed it so frequently in his designs of Venetian palaces, illustrated in his *L'Architettura* (1537–75) that the device came to be known as the *serliana (Figure 92)*. It is still referred to by that name in Italy, although it's just as frequently termed the *Venetian* arch. Palladio made it famous, however, when he used a multiplicity of *serlianae* to screen the galleries he added to the medieval basilica in Vicenza, and later published the design in *The Four Books (Figure 93 & 94)*. Surprisingly, he employed the device only sparingly in the rest of his schemes. It appears on only two of his published villa designs.

It was during the 18th-century Anglo-Palladian movement in England that this architectural motif was really exploited. Colin Campbell illustrated in *Vitruvius Britannicus* (1715–25) some one dozen buildings using the device. In his *A Book of Architecture*, James Gibbs showed an equal number of plates of building schemes incorporating this three-part feature, including the rear elevation of St. Martin-in-the-Fields *(Figure 95)*. Because it became so associated with the Anglo-Palladian movement the serliana became known in much of the English-speaking world as the Palladian arch or the Palladian window. It was through the pattern books of James Gibbs, Batty Langley, William Pain, and others, that the Palladian arch was transported to 18th-century America, where it can be found on scores of buildings from that period. A most famous example is that on Philadelphia's Independence Hall *(Figure 96)*. Other handsome uses of the motif are seen on Mount Pleasant in Philadelphia's Fairmont Park and Mount Clare in Baltimore *(Figure 97 & 98)*. An interesting interpretation of the Palladian arch is the front porch of George Mason's home, Gunston Hall, in Virginia *(Figure 99)*. A beautiful example from the Federal period is the 1800 Read House in New Castle, Delaware *(Figure 100)*. The Palladian arch became a favored accent for houses of the American Renaissance. A walk through New York's Upper East Side reveals several early 20th-century town houses made distinctive by bold Palladian windows *(Figure 101)*. In recent years the Palladian window has unfortunately become a cliché, particularly for many of the McMansions gobbling up the countryside *(Figure 102)*. It reached the status of over-kill with one of the structures of Johnson & Burgee's One International Place in Boston *(Figure 103)*. Let us hope this beautiful signature device, with its impressive pedigree will be treated with more respect in future American works.

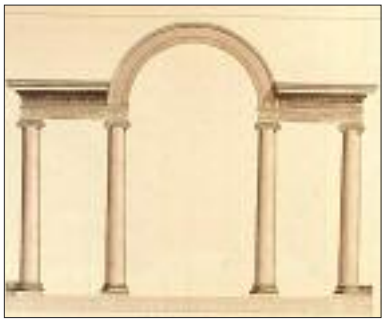


*Figure 91*

*Figure 92*

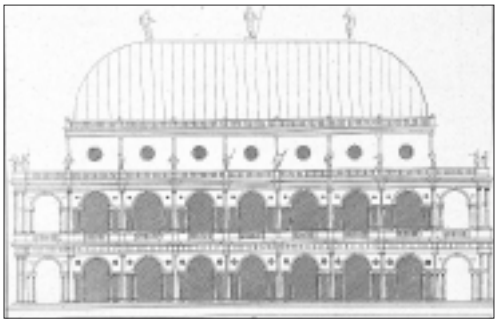


*Figure 93*

*Figure 94*

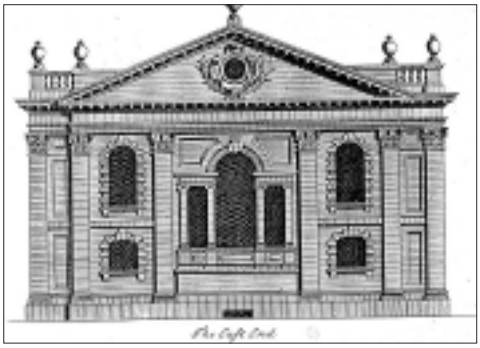


*Figure 95*

*Figure 96*

*Figure 97*

*Figure 98*

*Figure 99*

*Figure 100*

*Figure 101*

*Figure 102*

*Figure 103*

# ICA&CA

Fortunately, the Palladian spirit in American architecture has achieved its own renaissance in recent decades, particularly among the numerous architects affiliated with the Institute of Classical Architecture and Classical America. Palladio's spirit was kept alive during the modernist-dominated last half of the 20th century through the untiring efforts of Henry Hope Reed, with his founding of Classical America, later to be merged with the Institute of Classical Architecture to become the ICA&CA. It would unfair to the many talented new classicists to single out specific contemporary names or works as representatives of those practicing effectively in the Palladian mode. The ICA&CA illustrated their mastery best in its beautiful record of achievement: A Decade of Art and Architecture 1992-2002.

It may be questionable to end this discussion with an illustration of one of the most mundane of all modern structures, a parking deck. Yet the parking deck is an essential, if not a premier building type of current times *(Figure 104)*. Out of respect for all the other contemporary practitioners of the classical style, the architect and location of this building will be kept anonymous. It's presented here only as a demonstration that such a workaday structure as this can be instilled with the Palladian spirit. In so doing, it can become a literate work of traditional architecture and be a respectable ornament of the city or countryside. Certainly not every building should be so treated, but it's refreshing to have instances when it's done well. Even here, we have Palladio to thank for giving us a standard to emulate.

PALLADIO, BORN 500 YEARS AGO, HAS ENRICHED OUR SURROUNDINGS AND CONTINUES TO DO SO. HIS LIFE IS INDEED CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION.

*Figure 104*

*Figure 105*