

president's column

*David Epstein, AIA
2005 President AIAVT*

aiaVT



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We had a great turn out and a fun evening on December 15 at the Annual Meeting and Design Awards Program at One Main Street in Burlington.

We owe a big thank you to our sponsors for the event: A.W. Hastings and Window and Doors by Brownell. This is the third year that they have sponsored the event. We really appreciate their support of the event and of our profession as well.

More than 100 people attended the event, which featured all 44 entries on display as well as more elaborate presentations of the eight award-winning projects. Another big thanks to Susan Weeks and Meghan Fitzpatrick of my office (Truex Cullins & Partners) for helping hang the show. As part of our ongoing effort to get more exposure for Vermont architects, we have arranged to have the project boards on display at One Main until mid-January. Stop by and check it out if you haven't already. It is an impressive display of quality work.

The first part of the evening was for socializing. People were having such a good time we actually had trouble getting the meeting started! When we did finally get started, a terrific roster of new board members was nominated. Joining the board this year will be Jerry Bridges, Cleary Buckley, Juliet Landler, Lisa Rovner, Al Russell and Joseph Cincotta. They will be joining me, Michael Hoffman, Lauren Davis, Andrea Murray, Guy Teschmacher and Donna Leban in what should be an active and exciting year. Welcome aboard (or back) to all!

cont.

excerpt from Walter Pater's "NOTRE-DAME D'AMIENS"
March 1894

Light and space—floods of light, space for a vast congregation, for all the people of Amiens, for their movements, with something like the height and width of heaven itself enclosed above them to breathe in—you see at a glance that this is what the ingenuity of the Pointed method of building has here secured. For breadth, for the easy flow of a processional torrent, there is nothing like the "ambulatory," the aisle of the choir and transepts. And the entire area is on one level. There are here no flights of steps upward, as at Canterbury, no descending to dark crypts, as in so many Italian churches—a few low, broad steps to gain the choir, two or three to the high altar. To a large extent the old pavement remains, though almost worn-out by the footsteps of centuries. Priceless, though not composed of precious material, it gains its effect [112] by ingenuity and variety in the patterning, zig-zags, chequers, mazes, prevailing respectively, in white

cont.

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- David Johnson, Burnell Architects

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The final part of the evening was the awards program. Michael Hoffman exceeded this portion with his unique blend of erudition and humor. Congratulations to the eight winners of the awards and citations and to all the entrants. Remember, it never hurts to resubmit a project that didn't win this year. The juries are different each year and their sensitivities are as well.

Next month in this column I will describe programs and initiatives we have in store for the coming year. We have also developed a framework for guiding the kind of programs I will discuss. For the time being, however, I would like to remind everybody that aiaVT will be joining our ASLA landscape architect colleagues for a day of skiing at Stowe on January 28. Contact Claire Humber at 862-0098 for more details. Should be a lot of fun!

and grey, in great square, alternate spaces—the original floor of a medieval church for once untouched. The massive square bases of the pillars of a Romanesque church, harshly angular, obstruct, sometimes cruelly, the standing, the movements, of a multitude of persons. To carry such a multitude conveniently round them is the matter-of-fact motive of the gradual chiselling away, the softening of the angles, the graceful compassing, of the Gothic base, till in our own Perpendicular period it all but disappears. You may study that tendency appropriately in the one church of Amiens; for such in effect Notre-Dame has always been. That circumstance is illustrated by the great font, the oldest thing here, an oblong trough, perhaps an ancient saintly coffin, with four quaint prophetic figures at the angles, carved from a single block of stone. To it, as to the baptistery of an Italian town, not so long since all the babes of Amiens used to come for christening. Strange as it may seem, in this "queen" of Gothic churches, l'église ogivale par excellence, there is nothing of mystery in the vision, which yet surprises, over and over again, the eye of the visitor who enters at the western doorway. From the flagstone at one's foot to the distant keystone of the chevet, noblest of its species—[113] reminding you of how many largely graceful things, sails of a ship in the wind, and the like!—at one view the whole is visible, intelligible;—the integrity of the first design; how later additions affixed themselves thereto; how the rich ornament gathered upon it; the increasing richness of the choir; its glazed triforium; the realms of light which expand in the chapels beyond; the astonishing boldness of the vault, the astonishing lightness of what keeps it above one; the unity, yet the variety of perspective. There is no mystery here, and indeed no repose. Like the age which projected it, like the impulsive communal movement which was here its motive, the Pointed style at Amiens is full of excitement. Go, for repose, to classic work, with the simple vertical law of pressure downwards, or to its Lombard, Rhenish, or Norman derivatives. Here, rather, you are conscious restlessly of that sustained equilibrium of oblique pressure on all sides, which is the essence of the hazardous Gothic construction, a construction of which the "flying buttress" is the most significant feature. Across the clear glass of the great windows of the triforium you see it, feel it, at its Atlas-work audaciously. "A pleasant thing it is to behold the sun" those first Gothic builders would seem to have said to themselves; and at Amiens, for instance, the walls have disappeared; the entire building is composed of its windows. Those who built it [114] might have had for their one and only purpose to enclose as large a space as possible with the given material. No; the peculiar Gothic buttress, with its double, triple, fourfold flights, while it makes such marvels possible, securing light and space and graceful effect, relieving the pillars within of their massiveness, is not a restful architectural feature. Consolidation of matter naturally on the move, security for settlement in a very complex system of construction—that is avowedly a part of the Gothic situation, the

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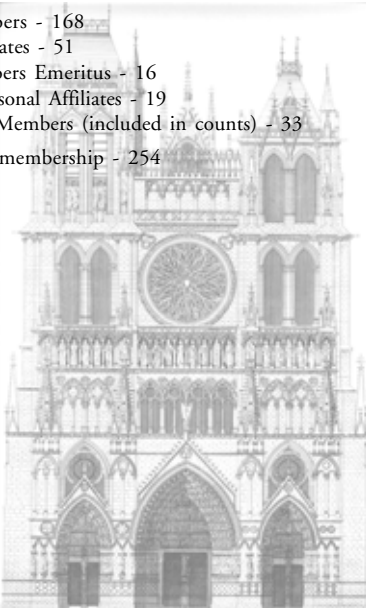
aiaVT welcomes

vance hosford, *aia of west townsend*
douglas sonsalla, *assoc. aia of west fairlee*
brian wiseman, *int'l associate of mont-royal, canada*

*aiaVT also welcomes Andrew La Rosa, Assoc. ALA of Burlington
(We apologize for a misspelling of his name in the December 2004 issue of this newsletter.)*

aiaVT annual membership statistics

Members - 168
Associates - 51
Members Emeritus - 16
Professional Affiliates - 19
New Members (included in counts) - 33
Total membership - 254



aiaVT annual awards program

aiaVT Public Recognition Awards

This year, aiaVT reinstated its award program to recognize individuals or organizations for their unique contribution to the public in advancing and encouraging discussion, awareness and other educational programs in design and architecture. aiaVT distributed two public recognition awards:

* Donald Maurice Kreis

That an interested amateur can write more insightfully about architecture than most architects is always a sobering realization. (That he is a lawyer is absolutely shattering - at least to us, architects.) Don writes with passion, humor and intelligence: a fantastic combination. His writings for various AIA chapter newsletters and the popular press have been a significant force in promoting and provoking a critical discussion of design and architecture in the public realm.

* Yestermorrow School

Founded in 1980, or a little earlier by John Connell, Yestermorrow is still one of the only design/build schools in the Country, and arguably the most well known. Through its long-standing advocacy of good design, particularly within a sustainable framework, it has done a great deal to advance the public understanding and appreciation of architecture.

cont.

Gothic problem. With the genius which contended, though not always quite successfully, with this difficult problem, came also novel aesthetic effect, a whole volume of delightful aesthetic effects. For the mere melody of Greek architecture, for the sense as it were of music in the opposition of successive sounds, you got harmony, the richer music generated by opposition of sounds in one and the same moment; and were gainers. And then, in contrast with the classic manner, and the Romanesque survivals from it, the vast complexity of the Gothic style seemed, as if consciously, to correspond to the richness, the expressiveness, the thousandfold influence of the Catholic religion, in the thirteenth century still in natural movement in every direction. The later Gothic of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries tended to conceal, as it now took for granted, the structural use of the buttress, for [115] example; seemed to turn it into a mere occasion

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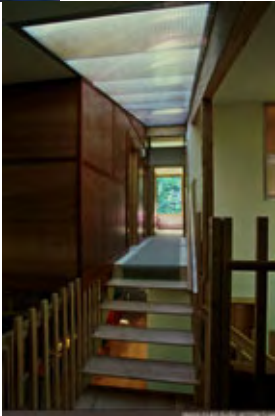
Centerline Architects & Planners, PG



John Anderson Studio



Gossens Bachman Architects



Design Build Studio

aiavt Excellence in Design Awards

The jury for the Design Awards was chaired by Michael Hoffman, AIA (ex officio) and included:

Adrian Shepard / *Professor of Architecture, McGill University / Independent Practitioner*

David Covo / *Director of the School of Architecture, McGill University*

Erik Marosi / *Principal, Marosi+Troy*

Jean Beaudoin / *Principal, Integral Jean Beaudoin (Interdisciplinary Office)*

The following awards were presented:

Mention

Centerline Architects & Planners, PG (*Bennington, Vermont*)
Wolfe Residence

Citations

John Anderson Studio (*Burlington, Vermont*)
The Firehouse Center for the Visual Arts

Gossens Bachman Architects (*Montpelier, Vermont*)
Kellogg Hubbard Library Addition

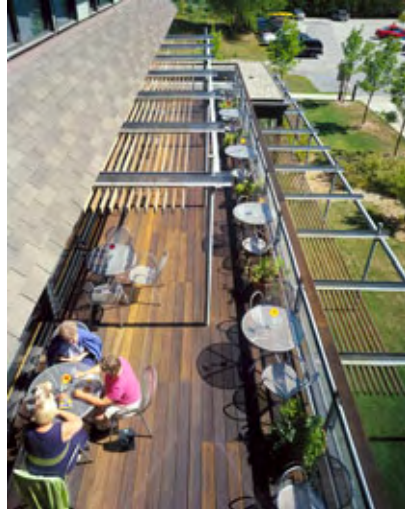
Design Build Studio (*Norwich, Vermont*)
Mascoma Lake House

cont.

for ornament, not always pleasantly;—while the ornament was out of place, the structure failed. Such falsity is far enough away from what at Amiens is really of the thirteenth century. In this pre-eminently "secular" church, the execution, in all the defiance of its method, is direct, frank, clearly apparent, with the result not only of reassuring the intelligence, but of keeping one's curiosity also continually on the alert, as we linger in these restless aisles. The integrity of the edifice, together with its volume of light, has indeed been diminished by the addition of a range of chapels, beyond the proper limits of the aisles, north and south. Not a part of the original design, these chapels were formed for private uses in the fourteenth century, by the device of walling in and vaulting the open spaces between the great buttresses of the nave. Under the broad but subdued sunshine which falls through range upon range of windows, reflected from white wall

cont.

1.05:4



Gossens Bachman Architects



William MacLay Architects & Planners



Gossens Bachman Architects



Birdseye Design

ARTIST'S RESIDENCE
BRIAN MAC, AIA (BIRDSEYE DESIGN) &
H. KEITH WAGNER, ASLA
PHOTOGRAPHER: H. KEITH WAGNER

Honors

Gossens Bachman Architects (Montpelier, Vermont)
Woodbury College Addition

William MacLay Architects & Planners (Waitsfield, Vermont)
NRG Manufacturing Facility

Gossens Bachman Architects (Montpelier, Vermont)
Private Residence

Birdseye Design (Richmond, Vermont)
Artist's Residence

Many thanks to all who submitted; your work is inspiring.
Congratulations to the award winners; you set a high standard.

and roof and gallery, soothing to the eye, while it allows you to see the delicate carved work in all its refinement of touch, it is only as an after-thought, an artificial after-thought, that you regret the lost stained glass, or the vanished mural colour, if such to any large extent there ever were. The best stained glass is often that stained by weather, by centuries of weather, [116] and we may well be grateful for the amazing cheerfulness of the interior of Amiens, as we actually find it. Windows of the richest remain, indeed, in the apsidal chapels; and the rose-windows of the transepts are known, from the prevailing tones of their stained glass, as Fire and Water, the western rose symbolising in like manner Earth and Air, as respectively green and blue. But there is no reason to suppose that the interior was ever so darkened as to prevent one's seeing, really and clearly, the dainty ornament, which from the first abounded here; the floriated architectural detail; the broad band of flowers and foliage, thick and deep and purely sculptured, above the arches of nave and choir and transepts, and wreathing itself continuously round the embedded piers which support the roof: with the woodwork, the illuminated metal, the magnificent tombs, the jewellers' work in the chapels. One precious, early thirteenth-century window of grisaille remains, exquisite in itself, interesting as evidence of the sort of decoration which originally filled the larger number of the windows. Grisaille, with its lace-work of transparent grey, set here and there with a ruby, a sapphire, a gemmed medallion, interrupts the clear light on things hardly more than the plain glass, of which indeed such windows are mainly composed. The finely designed frames of iron for the support of the glass, in the windows from which even [117] this decoration is gone, still remain, to the delight of those who are knowing in the matter. Very ancient light, this seems, at any rate, as if it had been lying imprisoned thus for long centuries; were in fact the light over which the great vault originally closed, now become almost substance of thought, one might fancy,—a mental object or medium. We

cont.

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1.05:5

william w. freeman, faia (1908-2004)



*leaders past and present; from left:
steve mosman, bill weise, david ashley,
jesse beck, bill freeman, fred senfleber*



*original founders: john french,
ruth reynolds freeman, bill freeman*

Bill Freeman died a few weeks before his 96th birthday, which would have been on Christmas Day. He filled his life with civic activity, architectural practice, and sailing; he was also proud to be a born and bred Vermonter. At 92 years old, he retired from his last service to the City of Burlington as Interim Chair of the Design Review Board.

In his long life he served the community in many ways. When he set up his Burlington practice in 1937 he also taught art classes in what was then Edmunds High School. He served on the City's first Planning Commission and wrote its first zoning ordinance. He was President of the Chamber of Commerce in its infancy and was a member of the original Board of Directors of the Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation (GBIC). This group of business leaders was convinced that good employment opportunities for the community could only be generated if GBIC built a general-purpose industrial building on speculation that it would attract a manufacturer. The building was built in Essex Junction, and the manufacturer was found: the International Business Machines Corporation.

Bill's architectural practice with his wife, Ruth, and partner John French, started with houses and soon grew to significant public projects. The State Office Building in Montpelier was designed in 1940 and built after the war in 1947. The Masonic Temple and Bethany Church followed in the same city. In Burlington he led the designs for St Mark's Church on North Avenue. Schools came next with the Flynn School, the C.P. Smith School, Lyman C. Hunt School and finally the Burlington

cont.

are reminded that after all we must of necessity look on the great churches of the Middle Age with other eyes than those who built or first worshipped in them; that there is something verily worth having, and a just equivalent for something else lost, in the mere effect of time, and that the salt of all aesthetic study is in the question,—What, precisely what, is this to me? You and I, perhaps, should not care much for the mural colouring of a medieval church, could we see it as it was: might think it crude, and in the way. What little remains of it at Amiens has parted, indeed, in the course of ages, with its shrillness and its coarse grain. And in this matter certainly, in view of Gothic polychrome, our difference from the people of the thirteenth century is radical. We have, as it was very unlikely they should have, a curiosity, a very pleasurable curiosity, in the mere working of the stone they built with, and in the minute facts of their construction, which their

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st. michael's chapel



st. michael's chapel



High School. At the University of Vermont he led the design teams for Redstone Campus dormitories, the gym, pool and Gutterson Fieldhouse. The UVM College of Medicine for which Bill teamed with Skidmore, Owings and Merrill significantly enhanced the campus in 1967, and the Harris-Millis dormitories and dining facilities on Spear Street followed soon thereafter.

While Bill's focus remained in the local area, opportunities came from outside and Bill was not one to turn a good project down. At Saint Michael's College came the first four dormitories, a science building, the student center, and the 1000-seat Chapel. At Middlebury College, Bill led the work for the Stewart Hall Dormitory, the Dana Theater, the swimming pool, and several restoration projects. In the 1950's and 60's banks seemed to spring up almost everywhere. Bill worked with the local banks, the Howard, the Merchants, and the Chittenden to produce main buildings in Burlington and branches throughout Vermont. All this activity led to the design of the 10-story Canal Bank Building in Portland, Maine, which turned out to be the centerpiece for the Canal Plaza, a group of three office buildings all designed by Freeman French Freeman.

In 1966 Bill was honored with Fellowship in the American Institute of Architects.

Sailing was the recreational passion of Bill's life. He loved to race, he loved to win, and he loved to cruise. He was a founder of the Malletts Bay Boat Club in the early 1930's and served as Master and member of its Afterguard for several years. While Lake Champlain and the rivers and canals that link it to the Great Lakes were always in his summer plans, he wanted to race his boat on the ocean. He did this with the Southern Ocean Racing Circuit and the races to Bermuda and Jamaica. Cruising in the Bahama Islands always cleared his mind and charged him again to resume his very active life in Vermont.

cont.

colouring, and the layer of plaster it involved, disguised or hid. We may think that in architecture stone is the most beautiful [118] of all things. Modern hands have replaced the colour on some of the tombs here—the effigies, the tabernacles above—skilfully as may be, and have but deprived them of their dignity. Medieval colouring, in fact, must have improved steadily, as it decayed, almost till there came to be no question of colour at all. In architecture, close as it is to men's lives and their history, the visible result of time is a large factor in the realised aesthetic value, and what a true architect will in due measure always trust to. A false restoration only frustrates the proper ripening of his work. If we may credit our modern eyes, then, those old, very secular builders aimed at, they achieved, an immense cheerfulness in their great church, with a purpose which still pursued them into their minuter decoration. The conventional vegetation of the

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1.05:7



given research building, uvm

Bill retired from active practice in 1974 but never lost interest in the firm he started, and he was always aware of what was going on in "his city." He was a remarkable man whose practice in Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Maine and New York was guided by the principles of design that he established in 1937, and that guide the firm today:

- a) The budget is fragile, don't break it.
- b) The building plan must work to meet or exceed the Owner's expectations.
- c) Keep it simple and in balance.
- d) The appearance of the building must support its purpose and contribute to the character of its surroundings.

Bill left his mark through his architecture, his public service, and in the memories of his friends and colleagues in practice. A great man, a great life.

By William Wiese, FAIA
Principal, Freeman French Freeman, 1958-1990



Harris-Millis dormitories



Romanesque, its blendings of human or animal with vegetable form, in cornice or capital, have given way here, in the first Pointed style, to a pleasanter, because more natural, mode of fancy: to veritable forms of vegetable life, flower or leaf, from meadow and woodside, though still indeed with a certain survival of the grotesque in a confusion of the leaf with the flower, which the subsequent Decorated period will wholly purge away in its perfect garden-borders. It was not with monastic artists and artisans that the sheds and workshops around Amiens Cathedral were filled, [119] as it rose from its foundations through fifty years; and those lay schools of art, with their communistic sentiment, to which in the thirteenth century the great episcopal builders must needs resort, would in the natural course of things tend towards naturalism. The subordinate arts also were no longer at the monastic stage, borrowing inspiration exclusively from the experiences of the cloister, but belonged to guilds of laymen—smiths, painters, sculptors. The great confederation of the "city," the commune, subdivided itself into confederations of citizens. In the natural objects of the first Pointed style there is the freshness as of nature itself, seen and felt for the first time; as if, in contrast, those older cloistral workmen had but fed their imagination in an embarrassed, imprisoned, and really decadent manner, or mere reminiscence of, or prescriptions about, things visible. Congruous again with the popularity of the builders of Amiens, of their motives, is the wealth, the freedom and abundance, of popular, almost secular, teaching, here afforded, in the carving especially, within and without: an open Bible, in place of later legend, as at monastic Vézelay,—the Bible treated as a book about men and women, and other persons equally real, but blent with lessons, with the liveliest observations, on the lives of men as they were then and now, what they do, and how they do it, or did it then, and on the doings of nature [120] which so greatly influence what man does; together with certain impressive metaphysical and moral ideas, a sort of popular scholastic

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philosophy, or as if it were the virtues and vices Aristotle defines, or the characters of Theophrastus, translated into stone. Above all, it is to be observed that as a result of this spirit, this "free" spirit, in it, art has at last become personal. The artist, as such, appears at Amiens, as elsewhere, in the thirteenth century; and, by making his personal way of conception and execution prevail there, renders his own work vivid and organic, and apt to catch the interest of other people. He is no longer a Byzantine, but a Greek—an unconscious Greek. Proof of this is in the famous Beau-Dieu of Amiens, as they call that benign, almost classically proportioned figure, on the central pillar of the great west doorway; though in fact neither that, nor anything else on the west front of Amiens, is quite the best work here. For that we must look rather to the sculpture of the portal of the south transept, called, from a certain image there, Portail de la Vierge dorée, gilded at the expense of some unknown devout person at the beginning of the last century. A presentation of the mystic, the delicately miraculous, story of Saint Honoré, eighth Bishop of Amiens, and his companions, with its voices, its intuitions, and celestial intimations, it has evoked a correspondent method of work at once [121] naive and nicely expressive. The rose, or roue, above it, carries on the outer rim seventeen personages, ascending and descending—another piece of popular philosophy—the wheel of fortune, or of human life. And they were great brass-founders, surely, who at that early day modelled and cast the tombs of the Bishops Evrard and Geoffrey, vast plates of massive black bronze in half-relief, like abstract thoughts of those grand old prelate persons. The tomb of Evrard, who laid the foundations (*qui fundamenta hujus basilicæ locavit*), is not quite as it was. Formerly it was sunk in the pavement, while the tomb of Bishop Geoffrey opposite (it was he closed in the mighty vault of the nave: *hanc basilicam culmen usque perduxit*), itself vaulted-over the space of the grave beneath. The supreme excellence of those original workmen, the journeymen of Robert de Luzarches and his successor, would seem indeed to have inspired others, who have been at their best here, down to the days of Louis the Fourteenth. It prompted, we may think, a high level of execution, through many revolutions of taste in such matters; in the marvellous furniture of the choir, for instance, like a whole wood, say a thicket of old hawthorn, with its curved topmost branches spared, slowly transformed by the labour of a whole family of artists, during fourteen years, into the stalls, in number one hundred and ten, with nearly four [122] thousand figures. Yet they are but on a level with the Flamboyant carved and coloured enclosures of the choir, with the histories of John the Baptist, whose face-bones are here preserved, and of Saint Firmin—popular saint, who protects the houses of Amiens from fire. Even the screens of forged iron around the sanctuary, work of the seventeenth century, appear actually to soar, in their way, in concert with the airy Gothic structure; to let the daylight pass as it will; to have come, they too, from smiths, odd as it may seem at just that time, with some touch of inspiration in them.