

*CHARLES MOORE:
BUILDINGS AND PROJECTS 1949-1986*

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**“FORM, SHAPE, AND ORDER IN THE
WORK OF CHARLES MOORE”**

Form, Shape, and Order in the Work of Charles Moore

Kent Bloomer

When Charles Moore referred to the word *form* in his early lectures at Yale, he often referred to Louis Kahn's particular definition. Kahn said that a form represented the most basic organizing principle in a structure, like the wheel in which something revolves around a stationary axis. The *shape* of a wheel is a particular configuration of its form, such as a water wheel with its paddles or a bicycle wheel with its treads or the mythic wheel-of-life.

Most designers who have investigated that definition agree that there are only a few truly basic spatial forms in which to organize the rooms and principal passageways within the boundaries of a building. For example, rooms can be strung out along a passageway like a railroad flat or they can encircle an open hall or they can be stacked, one upon another, like a Saxon keep in medieval England. Each of those basic forms may be shaped differently by bending the walls, employing different systems of construction, or by accommodating different conditions of light. In terms of spatial form, versus actual shape, one would describe a hemispheric dome and a shed as being alike if both were organized with rooms facing inward and surrounding a central skylit atrium.

It is important to note that some designers do not make this distinction between form and shape and prefer to use the words interchangeably. For them, the domed house would have a different "form" than the gabled house because, I suspect, they give to the word *form* a sculptural or at least "outline" character rather than a "topological" or "spatial" character. To understand Charles Moore's work, it seems essential to treat the sculptural properties in his buildings as shapes which he subordinates to the organization of a particular species of spatial form.

In addition to *shaping* form in a particular way, he also *orders* form in a particular way; which is to say that he gives certain values, meanings, or metaphors to certain parts of his architecture. Charles Moore has often quoted Kahn's preference for "served" and "servant" spaces as a strategy for ordering his architecture, and he often implies that certain spaces are less sacred and others more spectacular or more absolute. I dare say that the desire to order space by dramatizing differences of importance, by resisting homogeneity, by freely moving from the miniature to the magnificent is Moore's greatest compulsion. Indeed, it is by examining the orchestration of Charles Moore's choice of *form*, mastery of *shape*, and assignment of *order* that we are allowed a glimpse of the methods of composition and the virtuoso underpinnings of his work and style.

An examination of the formal and the methodic in Charles Moore's work cannot dismiss the mysterious, romantic, charming, and quirky attributes that so many recognize. Charles Moore is an individual full of surprises and in possession of seemingly infinite resources and talents. Often his colleagues and students have had to exert persuasion before he would lecture about his formal strategies, because he almost always prefers to talk about the joyful and memorable responses that architecture allows.

To talk about joyfulness in an architectural school of 1965 was probably about as offbeat as discussing sex in a middle-class parlor in 1865. Joy, for many, was simply not a serious property of architecture, if a property at all! Yet for Charles Moore joy performs a principal function, which is to proclaim life. He never suggested that joy should displace the practical or the ecological requirements of building, but simply proposed that it was one of architecture's agendas.

I believe that Charles Moore has also found joy in much of the architecture he has visited over the years and instinctively wants to re-create or re-present those moments in his own work. It is well known that he has an extraordinary memory, which combined with his inexhaustible touring of the

Fig. 1. Casa Alfenique
Mexico

Fig. 2. Gates of Solomon
Drawing by Charles W. Moore

Fig. 3. Vitruvian man
Drawing by Kent Bloomer

Fig. 4. Cartesian man
Drawing by Kent Bloomer

Fig. 5. Modular Man (Le Modulor)
Drawing by Kent Bloomer

Fig. 6. Moore man
Drawing by Kent Bloomer

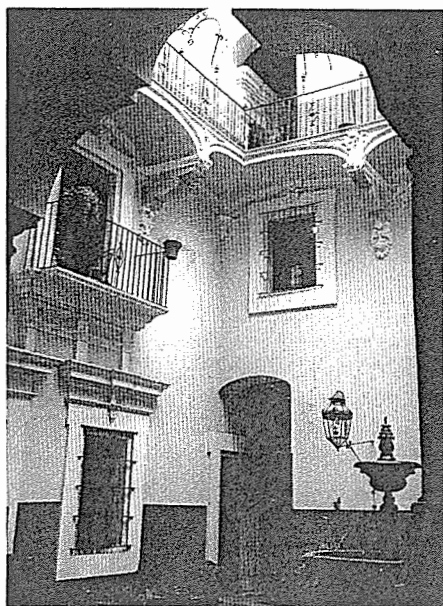


Fig. 1

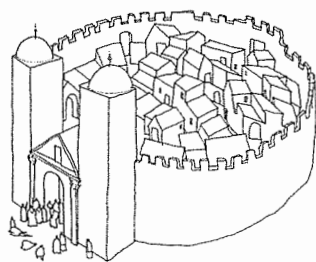


Fig. 2

world establishes a formidable body of knowledge. I can recall more than once announcing with enthusiasm that I had “discovered” a wonderful chapel in some relatively obscure corner of Mexico, only to hear him respond that he also liked it but preferred another church, around the corner, two and a half blocks up the hill, particularly because of its ornamented ceiling. He has never attempted to disguise his sources of inspiration, and many critics of his work have cited architects like Kahn, Jefferson, and Schinkel; or places in Rome, Mexico (*fig. 1*), and rural America; or buildings like Soane’s house in London and a shrine in Ise as special influences. While I have heard these and other specific references many times, I have been most impressed by his freedom from dependency upon any one source, period, culture, or style. His knowledge is encyclopedic, his recollection of that knowledge immediate, and his utilization of specific recollections has always revealed a curiously uninhibited or hybrid character. Some critics and historians have suggested that his work is primarily influenced by a Roman “classicism,” but how do they explain his lack of commitment to facades, monumental entries, or to the specific ornaments, harmonic ratios, and homologous geometries, which many would require as essential ingredients to that unique tradition? He may design a courtyard that recalls the Mediterranean in its qualities of light and enclosure but that may very well be overshadowed by a chimney curiously English in profile. Perhaps it is because he understands so much about architecture throughout the ages that he recognizes the hybrid (*fig. 2*) elements of so many great structures: Hawksmoor’s steeples atop Greek temples, Michelangelo’s Roman dome atop a Gothic nave, or Jefferson’s agora-cum-Pantheon functioning as a residential complex along the greensward of a college campus.

He has taught many of us the principle that great architectural traditions and styles, like the tenets of Christianity and democracy, are not pure, immutable systems; instead they are modified and wed over time with the customs of the local population, descendants, or subsequent invaders. This mutability signifies the secret strength, not the theoretical weakness, of a living tradition. Indeed, it is one of Charles Moore’s most important messages that architecture is a living tradition, very dependent upon renewal, and that the pantheon of memories resulting from pilgrimages to magnificent and humble buildings everywhere is a prerequisite that must precede any claim of invention.

Form

Many have declared that Charles Moore was among the very first to denounce modernism in post-World War II America; but any visitor to one of his buildings must be struck by the kaleidoscopic wonder of its spaces and feel the pulse of today’s world in an architectural ambience that modern painting and music promise but only occasionally deliver. Yet it is true that he has opposed particular doctrines that have dominated modern architectural academics in the middle of this century, particularly those that reject the past or try to explain the great works of the past with an ideological, self-serving, and sparse vocabulary. He has also opposed the overacceptance of certain forms or formal systems that plagued the drafting rooms of the fifties and sixties, particularly the authority of gridded Cartesian coordinates and the linear regulation of form.

René Descartes himself would probably have rejected the Cartesian grid as an appropriate form to dominate the design of an actual building, because he never intended infinitely extendable coordinates to perform any more than a mathematical function suitable for deducing relationships or measuring space. He considered the coordinates to be absolutely immaterial. The grid for Descartes was a property of the brain’s rational apparatus, which, in his seventeenth-century viewpoint, was separated entirely from the physical body and from any of its experiential or sensual apparatus, including sight.

Infinite extendability is never an abstract presence in the work of Charles Moore unless it is a reflection of shapes already manifested in some material context such as a street or a network of streets in a town or landscape. Recent work such as the one-half-mile-long and eleven-foot-wide Wonderwall (37) or the footprint of the Angel’s Flight urban housing proposal for Upper Bunker Hill dramatically conform to hills. If the surrounding streets were angular or

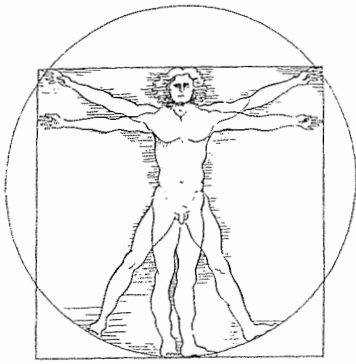


Fig. 3

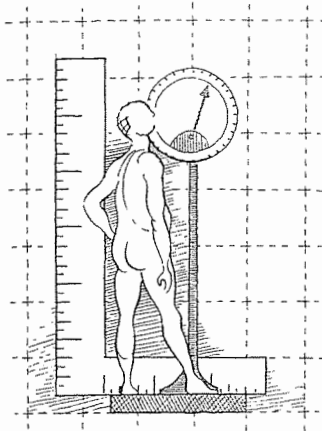


Fig. 4

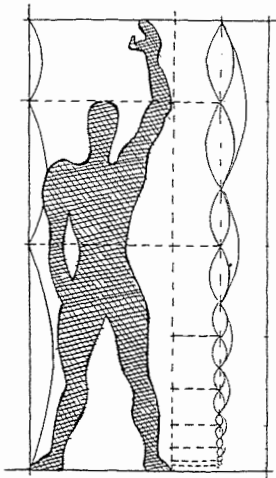


Fig. 5

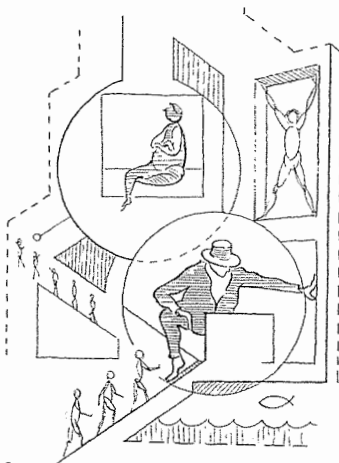


Fig. 6

curvilinear, as they were in his Church Street South Housing (26.2), the buildings would probably be oriented to those configurations as well, for obvious practical or visual reasons. In no case, however, do his buildings presume to extend an arm or imaginary coordinates beyond the civilized boundaries, a gesture of infinite or aggressive extendability.

Another species of form, less loudly rejected but as visibly omitted, is the fashionable cubes, spheres, and cylinders curiously considered by designers to be the so-called "primary" geometries. While those forms do not claim an extendability, they do tend to establish a tyranny of their own. Pythagoras and his followers might be said to have regarded the cube and sphere as absolute and eternal forms capable of pervading architecture with a divine and harmonic rightness, while Charles Moore seems to regard them as somewhat impotent but not particularly evil nuisances to be carved up and served to higher callings.

The architectural form that Charles Moore values above all others may be described topologically as one dependent upon a series of concentric boundaries denoting inside-outside and establishing a centerplace or centerplaces. The centers may "geographically" be inside or outside the building. They may be focused about a point or a path and may expand or contract upward or outward, but in all cases the centers are the most powerful organizing events. His enclosing forms are rarely intruded by a strong axis of approach, and while his entrances are legible, they are visually subordinate to the continuity of the outer boundary.

Another way of describing form in the work of Charles Moore would be to illustrate its relation to the human body. The cultural historian Anthony Vidler once compared the Pythagorean form to the Cartesian form by showing a picture of the Vitruvian man (fig. 3), nude and heroic with limbs outstretched neatly inside concentric circle and square, next to a picture of a twentieth-century Cartesian man (fig. 4), naked and neurotic, standing on a doctor's scale which registered on "Cartesian" rulers his height and weight. We could add to those two illustrations the outstretched abstract silhouette of the Modular Man (fig. 5) by Le Corbusier who is expanding and gesturing upward next to an exponential scale.

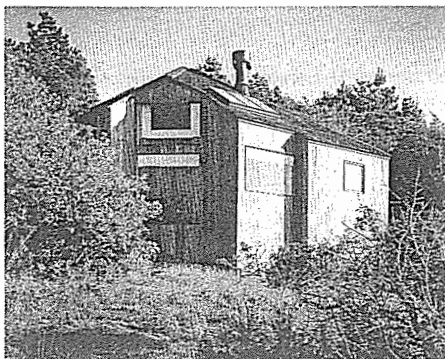
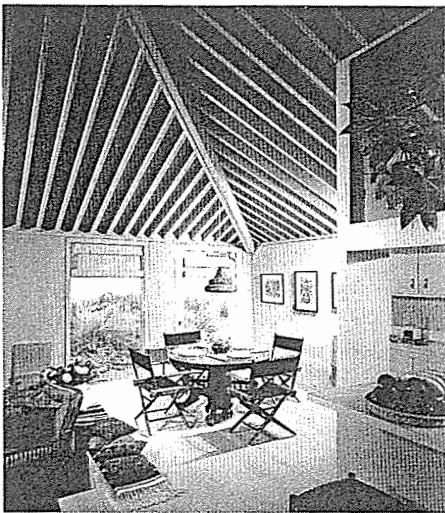
The Pythagorean man is centered or noncentered within boundaries which are far too singular, static, and idealized for Charles Moore. The Cartesian man is ignoble and pathetic; the modular man is too abstract, a little scary and even cartesianized by the mathematical formulation of his body. Moore's man (fig. 6), if he were to be illustrated in a similar cosmic diagram, might be expanding, turning, or contracting, and there might be two or more men functioning in a multiconcentric grouping with some standing still and others walking, ascending, or descending. Such an illustration might suggest that his architecture simply dramatizes the conventional functions of the people who are expected to inhabit a building by identifying spaces derived basically from a functional diagram and igniting them with unusual energy. That suggestion, however, does not adequately explain the persistence of the concentric boundaries and the shifts in scale from spaces which are smaller than life to those which are larger than life. Neither does it explain the shift from the physically uninhabitable, to the conventionally inhabitable, to the apparently supernatural habitations often found at the centers. Indeed, if we are to characterize Charles Moore as a member of the humanist tradition, we might understand that his body-centered architecture forms a collective "body-spirit" with characteristics ranging from the divine and devilish to the commonplace, and derived from an architect's mind as rich in human spirit as it is in recalling architectural places.

Important architectural theorists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries argued that architectural form should be determined by the geometries essential to engineering, expressed by the tectonic details of physical structure. After the First World War some of those theories, such as those proclaimed by the authors of the International Style, were to be "modernized" to include an expression of the regularities and economies of mass production. Those theorists argued that the machine was liberating man from the social tyrannies of the past and was therefore a more benevolent image in architecture than the expression of man's figural self. Charles Moore has always been sympathetic with the pragmatics of construction, although for him the dramatic or exclusive expressions of construction or structural

Fig. 7. MLTW
Slater House
Stinson Beach, California
1964, interior
(Photograph © Morley Baer)

Fig. 8. MLTW
Johnson House
Sea Ranch, California
1965, exterior from east
(Photograph © Morley Baer)

Fig. 9. MLTW
Johnson House
Sea Ranch, California
1965, exterior from northwest
(Photograph © Morley Baer)



systems do not necessarily provide better economy or superior expressions of our age than conventional construction. He recognized that the two-by-four, a sheet of plywood, and a nail are not only extremely economic units of production but constitute a remarkably strong system that is practical in the hands of the ordinary builder and capable of adopting many shapes. Given a choice of engineer, he usually selects one with the greatest understanding of conventional construction and the most common sense. Although his principal concerns in architecture have been inclined toward human choreography and expressions of the natural environment, he is probably more responsible than any other architectural educator during the sixties and seventies for promoting a measure of craftsmanship and a love of building among his students by requiring that they collectively design and build a small public building in their first year of architecture school. For many of these students those experiences in basic technology marked the beginning of their careers and the beginning of their style as architects. His own expressions of construction and technology have not been limited to walls, posts, and brackets, but also include the designs of solar-heating equipment, low-voltage and neon lighting systems, and water devices suitable for bathing, washing, meditating, or cooling down. A look at the tentlike beamed ceiling in the Johnson House (11.11) or the Slater House (fig. 7), or at the hot-water tank and belvedere commanding the interior of the Barber House, reveals a relaxed and skillful expression of technological realities, which he honors as helpful and economic codeterminants of his architectural form.

Shape

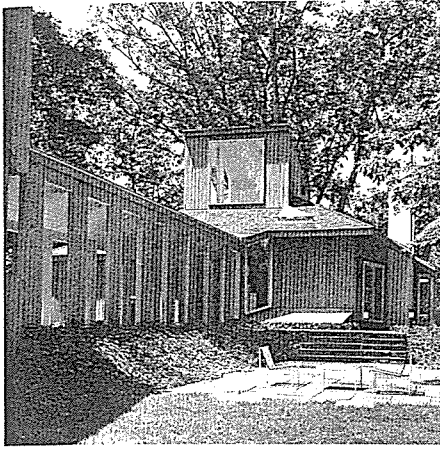
Although Charles Moore rejected certain prevailing doctrines associated with modernism, his mastery at shape-making reflects a strikingly modern sensibility. His shapes are taut, spatially graphic, and abstract. They are abstract at least in the sense in which his figures subliminally represent certain human gestures, natural forces, or very basic shapes traditionally found in architecture, as well as shapes commonly perceived in the landscape.

The landscape is the most powerful determinant in the shaping of the edges and profiles of his buildings. Early works like the Sea Ranch (48.13,14) and the Lovejoy fountain (33.2) correspond figuratively to the contours of hills and waterfalls. The embanked profile of the St. Simons Island condominium, Xanadune, echoes the shapes of surrounding dunes (29.2). The House Near New York embodies the romantic and more complex, picturesque massing of the mythical English country house, which itself evolved over time from responses to multiple views and the cragginess of hillsides and real or imagined rock outcroppings.

Viewed from a distance, his smallest buildings are perceived as simple solid shapes basically rectangular in plan with pyramidal roofs like the Moore House in Orinda (2.2) or central sheds surrounded by "saddlebags" or buttressing subsidiary sheds like those in the Johnson (fig. 8), Johnson (11.4), Bonham (12.1), and Karas houses. As the buildings increase in size and programmatic complexity, the basic shapes do not inflate in the Roman manner but instead divide into a larger number of the discrete solid shapes visible in the Sea Ranch and Burns House (18.1). They are often roofed with single sheds, loosely oriented and increasing in size toward the center of a composition, punctuated at the highest points by ridges or smokestacks or belvederes. The wooden textures and colors of the siding and roofing are similar and joined by eaves elements in which both the fascia and soffit are minimal (fig. 9). The result is the perception of solid prismatic shapes rather than planar walls capped by overhanging roof shapes. With the exception of the very largest of structures, like the Turtle Creek Condominiums, neither horizontal bandcourses nor vertical mouldings are employed as compositional elements to divide the surface continuity from grade to eaves. Conspicuously absent is the rigorous bilateral symmetry, the boxiness, the gable ends, and the wind of the classical Eastern American house. Clustered, asymmetric, explicitly nonfrontal, and rarely pretentious in the sizing of the individual shapes, the compositions seem more indebted to villages and farms than palaces.

Charles Moore's employment of purely defined prismatic shapes is typically modern, but his manipulation of them is unique. The purity of the

Fig. 10. MLTW
Tempchin House
Bethesda, Maryland
1968, exterior
(Photograph courtesy Centerbrook)



solid shapes is reiterated in the taut, geometrically simple and minimally trimmed openings in the walls. The window glass in most of his work is set as nearly as possible in the plane of the exterior wall surface. Mullions are minimal and apparently installed as concessions to the practical requirement of the moveable sash, rather than as important compositional elements. In the many instances in which the openings are voids without glass, the framing members virtually disappear and the shapes of the voids correspond in size and proportion to the windows and doors. Although the openings are generally regarded as abstractions of “conventional” shapes, such as window, door, balcony, and gate, Moore’s method of abstracting them delivers ambivalent readings. That ambivalence is particularly visible in the openings in the terrace side of the long gallery (fig. 10) connecting the two ends of the Tempchin House. Do those openings represent a row of doorways cut out of a wall, or are they an arcade of flattened columns? Why do the two rows have different rhythms of spacing? Clearly Moore is a master at striking the balance between figure and ground in which at one moment the dominant shapes are windows and doors on a wall and at another the dominant figure is a continuous wall with the openings serving as cutouts. That tendency to compose multiple readings explains the positioning of the glass on the surface plane of the wall from which the opening is cut, where at one moment the window is a hole in the wall and at another, a continuation of the opaque wall expressing a wall virtually without openings. This strategy recognizes both the transparency and the solidity of glass.

Figure-ground and solid-void manipulations may conjure alternate images over time and provide the designer with the power to make multiple references, instead of subordinating the composition once and for all to a dominating visual shape. If, for example, the windows, doors, walls, and columns were subordinated to the shape of a regular grid, the grid might prevail to the extent that the subordinate shapes would become compositionally impotent. Moore’s compositional strategies provide more choices for the viewer; thus on one level of perception his cutout shapes represent architectural elements taken from the grammar of construction. On another level, they represent conventional windows and doors. On still another, they are autonomous graphic shapes serving the total composition. In the Moore, Rogger, Hofflander Condominium (6.4) some of the readings are less conventional: the rotating cutouts seem to represent windows, half-arches, buttresses, and the spokes of a giant wheel, at different moments of perception.

The outer boundaries of his buildings are generally the lowest in height as well as the “hardest” in shape, like the crusty surface of a geode. Because his buildings are rarely set within formal or “walled” yards, the building boundary represents the first transition from the landscape to a civilized interior space. If a piece of the outer boundary is chipped away, as it is on the terrace side of the Faculty Club (34.5) or the front of the Larson House, a second boundary may be revealed and often those secondary boundaries are tautly articulated. Further within, additional walled boundaries may be established to encircle the center. At the Faculty Club, the innermost boundary is a high-stepped arcade facing inward to an open court.

In the Tempchin House, the culminating centerplace is not a courtyard but a stairwell dramatically extending the long exterior gallery connecting the residence to the garage. Like a courtyard, the stairwell is enclosed by side walls composed with rectangular voids. The voids signify windows, but more significantly, they suggest walls larger than the section of the house they occupy, by incorporating openings which seem to extend through the ceiling. The apparent extension through the ceiling does more than proclaim that there is space and a bay above the body of the house. It provides a presence which is larger than life or at least the habitable “life” of the house and which begins to merge in size and shape with the trees outside.

Almost all of the shapes in the plans, sections, surfaces, and voids of Charles Moore’s architecture seem to respond to a motion striving at once to contain the multiple forces of the landscape and the activities of the program and ascertain a firm and tranquil centerplace like the eye of a storm. Although they produce a sensation of encirclement and helical ascent, forces also found in storms, curved lines or curved surfaces are seldom employed. There are spectacular exceptions, like the pool and peristyle of the Piazza d’Italia (35.9),

Fig. 11. MLTW
Shinefield House
Sea Ranch, California
1968, plan

Fig. 12. MLTW
Stern House
Woodbridge, Connecticut
1970, plan

Fig. 13. Aedicula
Drawing by Charles W. Moore

Fig. 14. MLTW/Moore-Turnbull
Kresge College
University of California at Santa Cruz
1966–1974, exterior with draincover

Fig. 15. MLTW
Johnson House
Sea Ranch, California
1965, interior
(Photograph © Morley Baer)

Fig. 16. Charles W. Moore and Richard Oliver
House near New York
1973–1976, exterior
(Photograph © Norman McGrath)

Fig. 17. Psychoanalytic Associates Building
Los Angeles, California
1968–1971, interior
(Photograph courtesy Centerbrook)

the convex facade of the Rodes House, and the sequence of elliptical courtyards in the Beverly Hills Civic Center (55). But more often, the buildings are shaped from fundamentally rectangular plans, the corners of which are often carved away with diagonals. In the extreme case of the Klotz House, the pervading diagonals (15.5,6,7) form enclosures which are more cylindrical than square. In the plan of the Burns House, the diagonals are incorporated more sparingly, with several inflections at the key points of entry, alcove, and pool wall. In the Shinefield House (fig. 11), the simple rotation of the fireplace and the entry steps and the parallel 45-degree cutting of the two diagonally opposite corners act in unison to confirm the center. In the Larson House, where the virtual center is in front of the building, there are two wings projecting at 45-degree angles from either side of the entrance, revealing an interior space which doubles as a grand facade. The plan for the St. Simons Island condominium (29.1), by rotating the principal passageways of the entrance and diagonal walk, a strategy more classically developed in the Beverly Hills Civic Center, dynamically centers the entire composition with streetscapes rather than wallshapes.

The Stern House (fig. 12) is probably the most extreme instance of two passageways intersecting to establish a horizontally dynamic and volumetrically low centerplace. Movement from the center upwards toward the edges is a reversal of Moore's convention. It is dramatized by a sequence of windows stepping upwards toward the outside, unlike stepped windows rising toward the center. An example of the latter is found in the House near New York or the south wing of the cancer research facility in Cold Spring Harbor (49.1,2).

The many-faceted, three-dimensional manipulations of shape reveal the deft hand of a virtuoso of space, who spins a web and endows it at one moment with altogether ordinary spaces, and at another with towering enclosures bathed in a dazzling world of light and shadow that both animates the ordinary with, and lends the spectacular, extraordinary moments of repose.

Order

The least ordered spatial arrangement in a house would be one in which all the rooms were identical. A slightly more ordered condition might develop from a large single room like a loft in which the inhabitants could at least shuffle themselves and their furniture around as they wished. A higher order could be achieved if the inhabitants unanimously agreed that they wanted three bedrooms, bath, a kitchen, a parlor, and a dining room and all of those rooms were efficiently related in a plan. None of these schemes, however, is constituted to provide an architectural order between the inhabitants' house and the world at large.

An order which includes the world must have a public dimension as well as a sacred dimension, like a shrine (fig. 13) located inside a grove of trees on a respected hillside facing east. If a shrine could be invested with an appropriate amount of privacy, community, comfort, and utility, it would probably deliver the greatest amount of architectural order.

Some architects believe that the sacred order in building is articulated by incorporating certain geometries which they claim are eternal and immutable. Charles Moore, I suspect, is far too earthbound for that, honoring instead the temporal world with its seasons and particular places. His icons are neither mystical nor esoteric. If I were to name at least four of them, they would be Earth, Water, Fire, and Air. No other architect in recent times has given more architectural order to these elements by expressing them within the realm of ordinary, domestic, and public buildings.

His homage to the elements of earth is evident in the shaped and crystalline responses to the landscape both inside and outside his buildings. The geodetic and naturally textured materials of his buildings at once engage the profiles and colors of nature and brace against the environment, by turning inward to contain and civilize portions of earth, water, fire, and air.

Charles Moore used to tell his students about a Japanese principle in which it was supposed that one could more clearly see and comprehend a body of water in the distant landscape if there were a bowl of water on a table facing the view. The architectural act of possessing and claiming the element of water is completed with magnificence in his Orinda House by placing a

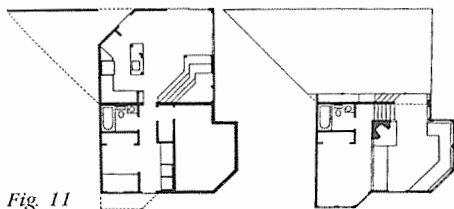


Fig. 11

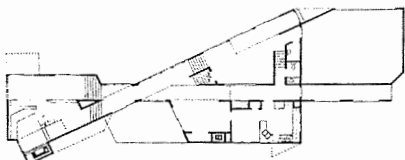


Fig. 12

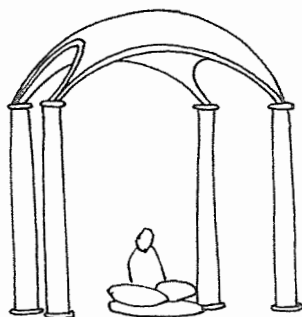


Fig. 13

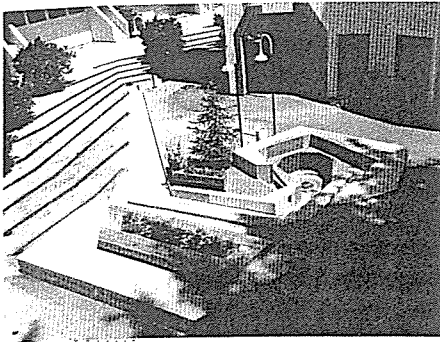


Fig. 14

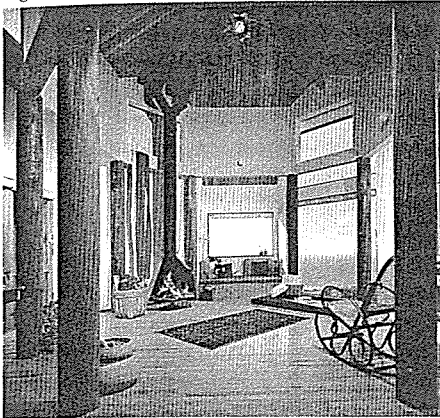


Fig. 15

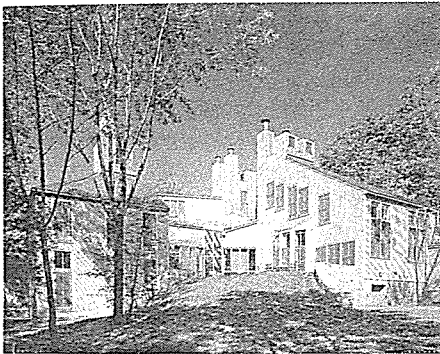


Fig. 16

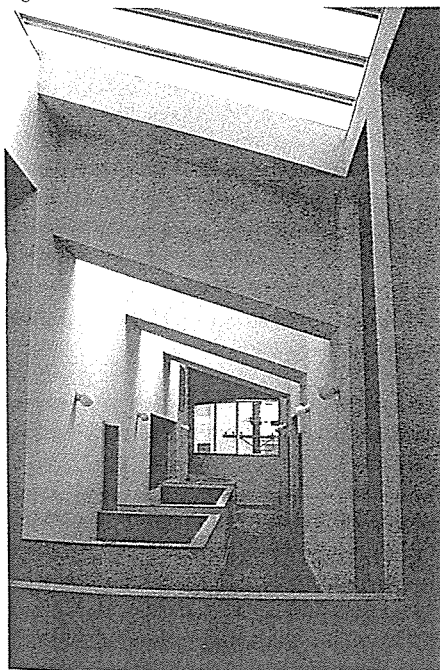


Fig. 17

bathtub (2.4) literally within a shrine. Water served subsequently as the architectural centerplace in the swimming pools of the Burns House (18.1) and the St. Simons Island project (29.1), and was proposed as the content of one of the three grand elliptical courtyards in the Beverly Hills Civic Center (55.9,10). At Kresge College a mere draincover (fig. 14) becomes the focal point within the central courtyard, while in the forty-acre urban design for Tegel Harbor in West Berlin, water dominates by invading the landscape with lakes and canals, leaving behind an island in the shape of a riverboat. The Piazza d'Italia is a water extravaganza representing in microcosm the Po, the Arno, and the Tiber pouring into the Mediterranean Sea. In the New Orleans World's Fair, the Wonderwall (37) was to include a half-mile-long chain of fountains, while nearby the Theme Building emerged from an artificial lake which provided a spectacular and immense center to a cramped fairground.

The element of fire is the most conservatively treated of the four elements, as illustrated by the treelike hearth standing tentatively outside the center of the treelike peristyle within the Johnson House (fig. 15). In his earliest buildings, chimneys barely appeared; but over time, the fireplace became more monumental, with dominant chimneys like the one at the Faculty Club (34.3) or multiple chimneys like those of the House near New York (fig. 16) and the Licht House, all derived from Stratford, the Lee house in Virginia.

It is significant that Charles Moore does not design empty space, a condition that he often referred to as representing "no place." If he is not using space to choreograph human movement and settlement, he is using it to choreograph light and air. His colleague Donlyn Lyndon is often quoted for having proposed that "myths belong on the ceiling," and in many of Charles Moore's centerplaces, a mythic body of air hovers above and expands through the windowed inner boundaries as though the world had turned inside out. This containment of the "sky" may be sensed in the interior towers of his house in New Haven, or the windowed walls in the stairwells of the Tempchin House. It is similarly found in the hall (fig. 17) of the Psychoanalytic Associates Building, and the Airlie House at Cold Spring Harbor. Whether it is night or day, the bouncing and reflected light in the inverted cascades of space seem to illuminate an elemental presence.

Charles Moore seldom used the word *space* in the sixties and seventies. Today he refers to space more frequently, and that word is used by most architects when they describe the particular strengths of his work. *Space*, however, has many meanings; to me the tall, white, overhead "places" are pieces of the world captured and animated. They are the sky, imaginary clearings in the forest, or small streets in Mexico with earth underfoot and air above.

The presence of the environment inside Charles Moore's architecture distinguishes his work from a hard-core humanism in which nature is walled out, in order to pay man the greatest possible attention. This presence, therefore, dismisses the faith of the rationalists who argue that architecture should become a geometric or machinelike substitute for an otherwise unsettling and, at best, romantic vision of nature. It is precisely the act of representing the environment in the order of his architecture, rather than treating the "outside" as an entity to be stared at through a picture window, that endows his work with visions of an American legend. Indeed, the work can be unsettling because it harbors the restless, exploratory nature of the American psyche with a choreography in which the elements, vistas, and enclosures are often surprise encounters to be discovered after walking up, down, and around a potential centerplace. His paths ultimately lead to clear places of repose, but the journey is along loosely prescribed routes with uncertain edges. Choices of path, dramatic arrivals, and the onward motion record both the passage of American life and the ambiguity between the inside-outside or town-country character of the places in which Americans choose to settle or camp. Although he has been generously informed by his memories of world architecture, he has been more powerfully informed by his own culture, particularly the more mythologically Western American sensibility of his childhood.

I believe he has created a style as vivid and recognizable as that of Frank Lloyd Wright or H. H. Richardson before him. Even more than those of his

antecedents, however, his may be a style that is very difficult to mimic or perpetuate intact unless we understand and grant the content and strategy of its order. It is an order that is essentially responsive and only secondarily formal. His knowledge of the architectural forms and shapes from history is immense, but recollections are employed only in an episodic, abstract, and hybrid manner, as the necessary ornaments and grammar in the ordering of specific places. The minimum requirements for working within his style would include a thorough knowledge of architectural history, the experiences gained from touring distinguished and vernacular sites, the love of specific places, a practical sense of construction, a knowledge of contemporary conventions of design, a dislike of frozen or assertive conventions, close collaboration with colleagues, wonderful clients, a brilliant imagination, and the talent to coherently distill so large an agenda. That combination necessarily establishes a profoundly modern style of process always dependent upon influences and destined to change over time.