

Building in the Aftermath

ON AUGUST 29, HURRICANE KATRINA made landfall along the Gulf Coast of the United States, and literally changed the shape of our country. The change was not just geographical, but also economic, social, and emotional. As weeks have passed since the storm struck, and yet another fearsome hurricane, Rita, wreaked further damage on the same region, Americans have begun to come to terms with the human tragedy, and are now contemplating the daunting question of what these events mean for the future of communities both within the affected area and elsewhere.

In the wake of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington in 2001, the National Building Museum initiated a series of public education programs collectively titled *Building in the Aftermath*, conceived to help building and design professionals, as well as the general public, sort out the implications of those unprecedented acts of mass violence. Now, following the one-two punch of Katrina and Rita, the Museum is resurrecting this educational series. Working in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and other government agencies, along with fellow non-profit organizations including the American Institute of Architects, the American Planning Association, the American Society of Landscape Architects, the American Society of Civil Engineers, the National Association of Home Builders, the National Association of Realtors, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Urban Land Institute, the Museum is developing a roster of programs that will address possible solutions to the many challenges raised by these natural disasters. We hope that the series will be a model of interdisciplinary cooperation and

dialogue that can inform the processes by which professionals of all stripes will work in unison to repair, restore, and, where necessary, rebuild the communities and landscapes that have suffered unfathomable destruction.

I am sure that I speak for my colleagues in these cooperating agencies and organizations when I say that we believe good design and planning can not only lead the affected region down the road to recovery, but also help prevent—or at least mitigate—similar catastrophes in the future. We hope to summon that legendary American ingenuity to overcome the physical, political, and other hurdles that may stand in the way of meaningful recovery.

It seems self-evident to us that the fundamental culture and urban character of New Orleans, one of the world's great cities, must be preserved, revitalized, and protected. At the same time, we recognize that the city's devastation, tragic though it was, presents an opportunity to correct some obvious errors dating back decades or even centuries, and to create a new, twenty-first-century city that is safer, more viable, and even more beautiful than it was when Katrina unleashed its fury.

To paraphrase John F. Kennedy, this will not be accomplished in a hundred days or even a thousand, but let us begin.



Chase W. Rynd

Executive Director
National Building Museum

Mapping Jewish Washington

by Laura Schiavo



above / (Figure 1) Six Buildings, Pennsylvania Avenue at 21st Street, NW. Washington's first Jewish resident, Isaac Pollock, completed these brick mansions near the President's House in the 1790s. Known as the Six Buildings, they initially housed the U.S. State Department and Secretary of the Navy. The building at the right was built separately.
Courtesy Historical Society of Washington, DC

Laura Schiavo is director of museum programs for the Jewish Historical Society of Washington, DC, which organized the exhibition *Jewish Washington: Scrapbook of an American Community*, currently on view at the National Building Museum. This temporary exhibition, which complements the Museum's long-term show *Washington: Symbol and City*, traces the story of one ethnic group in the nation's capital through the places and events that have defined the community.

STUDENTS OF WASHINGTON HISTORY HAVE NOTED time and again that the capital is a city of neighborhoods off the Mall and beyond the White House. Unlike in other cities, however, the District's neighborhoods are not easily reducible to national origins or ethnic or religious heritage. Like immigrant groups across the country, Washington's early Jews sought community amongst fellow Jews. But new arrivals established residential patterns that contrasted with patterns in other U.S. cities. Washington never had a single "Jewish neighborhood;" newcomers lived in enclaves along major thoroughfares across the city.

Nineteenth-century Washington, like virtually all cities of that era, was a "walking city." Before the advent of streetcars, residents often lived within

walking distance of work. Many Jewish merchants and shopkeepers literally lived “above the store.” Washington lacked the manufacturing industry of other cities — its “industry” was the federal government — and Jewish merchants catered to the needs of the ever-expanding bureaucracy.

As their numbers increased, Jewish residents formed congregations and built neighborhood houses of worship. The religious dictate that Orthodox Jews walk to synagogue on the Sabbath resulted in close-knit neighborhoods where Jews lived, worked, and worshipped. These early synagogues were (and continue to be) known for their geographic monikers — “Sixth and I” (Adas Israel Congregation) and “Eighth and Shepherd” (Beth Sholom Congregation), for example — suggesting a strong sense of place. Many of these synagogue buildings stand today, a lasting record of Jewish presence in neighborhoods no longer easily recognizable as having a Jewish past.

Early Arrivals

Twenty-three Jews who fled Recife, Brazil and landed in New Amsterdam (now lower Manhattan) formed North America’s first Jewish community. The Jewish community in Washington, like the capital city itself, got a much later start. The diamond-shaped area along the shores of the Potomac was not designated as the future home of the federal district until 1790, and the government did not arrive until 1800. Among early land speculators who set their sights on the area was Isaac Pollock, the first known Jewish resident of what became Washington, D.C. Arriving from Savannah, Pollock completed a row of state-ly houses along Pennsylvania Avenue near the President’s House. [figure 1]

Fleeing harsh restrictions in their native countries, German-speaking Jewish immigrants began crowding the East Coast’s port cities in the early part of the nineteenth century. The Washington Jewish community’s comparatively late start occurred when some of these new immigrants later set out for the growing capital’s economic opportunities. In 1852,

21 Jews formed the first Jewish congregation in the city. During the Civil War, the city’s Jewish population grew from 200 to almost 2,000. Many settled along the commercial corridors of Seventh Street, Georgetown, and Southwest.

Seventh Street, NW

Anchored by the bustling Center Market on Pennsylvania Avenue, Seventh Street, NW became the city’s main business district in the 1840s. Among the earliest Jewish arrivals on Seventh Street were members of the Behrend family. Immigrants from the German city of Rodenberg, they had arrived in New York harbor and later moved to Washington. By 1860 Bendiza Behrend ran a fancy goods store on Seventh. Further down the street, Adolphus Solomons sold stationery to Congress and the White House from his shop on Pennsylvania Avenue just east of Seventh. [figure 2]



Amid smaller furniture, jewelry, and millinery shops, several Jewish merchants expanded their businesses into fashionable department stores. Among them were brothers Max and Gustav Lansburgh, who expanded their dry goods store into a grand 24,000-square-foot department store in 1882. Lansburgh Brothers was a downtown landmark on Seventh Street for 114 years.

Farther north on Seventh Street, new Eastern European immigrants, part of the second wave of Jewish immigration to Washington and nationwide, ran “Mom and

above / (Figure 2) Trade card, B. J. Behrend and Son. Bendiza Behrend was among the early German Jews who lived, worked, and worshipped in the Seventh Street neighborhood. Courtesy Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington



right / (Figure 3) Washington Hebrew Congregation, Eighth Street between H and I Streets, NW. When it outgrew its first building, Washington Hebrew Congregation built this Byzantine-Romanesque temple designed by architects Stutz & Pease. Completed in 1898, the building still stands on Eighth Street between H and I Streets, and is now home to Greater New Hope Baptist Church. Courtesy Washington Hebrew Congregation

bottom right / (Figure 4) Keshet Israel Congregation, 28th and N Streets, NW. In 1915, Keshet Israel Congregation purchased this private home at 2801 N Street, NW. The new synagogue, built on the site in 1931, has been in continuous use ever since. Courtesy Keshet Israel Congregation

Pop” operations in the 1890s and into the early twentieth century. Between L and N Streets in the area now occupied by the Washington Convention Center stood Ottenberg’s and Hinkel’s bakeries, Zoltrov’s fish store, and at least two kosher butchers. In 1924 Shmuel Shinberg opened the Jewish Store selling Jewish literature, prayer books, and Hebrew New Year’s cards. A soda fountain rounded out the offerings.

In the early twentieth century, enough families lived in the neighborhood to support three synagogues within a few city blocks. Members of the city’s first Jewish congregation, Washington Hebrew, had worshipped on Eighth near I Street, NW, since the Civil War. [figure 3] A second congregation, Adas Israel, was built in 1876 just blocks away at Sixth and G Streets, NW. By 1908, Adas had moved to a new, larger synagogue two blocks north at Sixth and I Streets. After meeting above a Seventh Street shop, orthodox Russian immigrants converted a nearby church at Fifth and I Streets, NW, for use as Ohev Sholom Congregation in 1906.

Georgetown

A port town on the Potomac River established decades before the founding of Washington, Georgetown was an affordable place to gain an economic foothold when German-speaking Jews first arrived. Jews lived above their stores clustered at the hub of 31st and Bridge (now M) Street,

NW. Immigrant Wolf Nordlinger had been a peddler in Georgia; after the Civil War, he opened a clothing store on Bridge Street where his brother Bernard later ran a shoe store across the street. Although Jews comprised only one percent of Georgetown’s population, the 1870 census listed 30 Jewish heads of households with businesses in Georgetown, including ready-made clothing, dry goods, a jeweler, a hardware store, and a grocery. Georgetown’s Jews initially worshipped together as the Mount Sinai Society, but joined Washington Hebrew Congregation by 1880.

Newly arrived Eastern European Jewish immigrants opened shops along M Street and founded a congregation in 1911. In 1915, 50 members bought a house at 2801 N Street, NW to be used as Keshet Israel, an Orthodox synagogue. [figure 4]



Southwest

In the 1860s and 1870s a small group of German Jewish merchants settled on what was called “the Island” in Southwest, which was separated from the Mall by a canal. Jewish immigrants and African Americans were among those who contributed to the near doubling of the neighborhood’s population between 1870 and 1900. Close to 200 Jewish families in Southwest supported two synagogues: Talmud Torah Congregation, founded in 1887, and Voliner Anshe Sfard, founded in 1908. The famous entertainer Al Jolson (born Asa Yoelson) attended synagogue at Talmud Torah, where his father, Moshe Yoelson, served as cantor in the early twentieth century.



Jewish-owned businesses lined the cobblestone streets near 4-1/2 (now Fourth) Street, SW [figure 5] Harry Chidakel's barbershop was on Seventh Street, and Aaron Berkman's grocery was at Third and G. Morning Star Bakery on 4-1/2 Street kept neighboring stores stocked with fresh bread. Isaac and Cyril Levy opened Levy's Busy Corner department store on 4-1/2 Street in 1888.

When urban renewal legislation passed in 1945, Jewish storeowners in Southwest were among those who resisted plans to uproot the entire community. The legal case *Berman v. Parker* fought the planned demolition of the Southwest neighborhood all the way to the Supreme Court. When the plaintiffs were defeated, demolition proceeded. [figure 6]

H Street, NE

By the early 1900s many Jewish immigrants had settled on H Street, NE, a commercial corridor that developed along the eastern end of one of Washington's first streetcar lines. Eastern European Jews and Italian and Greek immigrants, attracted by affordable housing and small stores in which to

start businesses, added their ranks to the English, German, and Irish residents who had settled there previously, giving the area the highest percentage of foreign-born residents of any Washington neighborhood. These new arrivals contributed to a thriving commercial enclave. Seventy-five businesses in 1880 doubled to 154 in 1890, and 428 twenty years later.

As on Seventh Street, in Southwest, and in Georgetown, many merchants first lived above their shops before they could afford a separate residence. When Jacob Love rented a building at 1405 H Street for his shoe repair store in 1907, the second floor served as the apartment for his family, with a small kitchen with a wood burning stove behind the store for bathing, laundry, and cooking.

In 1907, Jewish residents founded Ezras Israel, an Orthodox synagogue at Eighth and I Streets, NE. [figure 7] Two years later a small community of Orthodox Jews living nearby on Capitol Hill established Southeast Hebrew Congregation, initially meeting in a converted loft near the Navy Yard on 8th Street, SE.



upper left / (Figure 5) Berkman Grocery Store, 3rd and G Streets, SW. Aaron Berkman's grocery was one of many Jewish-owned businesses that lined the cobblestone streets near 4-1/2 Street, SW. Courtesy Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington. Gift of Esther McBride

above / (Figure 6) Destruction of Talmud Torah Synagogue, 1959, 467 E Street, SW. In 1951 Talmud Torah Congregation in Southwest moved to upper Sixteenth Street and in 1957 merged with Ohev Shalom Congregation. Two years later, Talmud Torah's original synagogue was one of the last buildings demolished as part of urban renewal. © *The Washington Post*; Reprinted by permission of the DC Public Library



above / (Figure 7) Ezras Israel Congregation, 800 I Street, NE. After meeting in several locations, Ezras Israel Congregation adapted a former church at 800 I Street, NE in 1911. The congregation remained in that location for fifty years. Courtesy Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington. Gift of Robert I. Silverman

below / (Figure 8) Economy Meat Market, 1922, 2827 Georgia Avenue, N.W. As the Jewish population moved northward in the 1920s and 1930s, storeowners followed suit, opening delicatessens and kosher butcher shops along Georgia and Eastern Avenues. Courtesy Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington. Gift of Mildred and Nathan Shankman

Moving Uptown

As Jews became more established, they moved uptown into neighborhoods made possible by the late nineteenth-century development of streetcar suburbs. By the early 1910s and 1920s, more established German-American Jews had begun moving away from their downtown businesses toward Cleveland Park and Forest Hills. More recent Jewish immigrants moved to neighborhoods east of Rock Creek Park such as Brightwood, Crestwood, and Petworth in the 1930s and '40s. The move to upper Northwest and later to the suburbs was restricted in part by developers

who placed covenants in the real estate deeds of areas like Spring Valley and parts of Chevy Chase specifying that homes could not be sold to “Negroes, Hebrews, Persians and Syrians.” Though the Supreme Court ruled restrictive covenants unconstitutional in 1948, their effects lingered in many neighborhoods.

New synagogues formed as the Jewish community moved uptown. Tifereth Israel Congregation formed in 1914 when Jews living near Columbia Road and Eighteenth Street (now Adams Morgan) began meeting in neighboring homes. In 1925, B’nai Israel Congregation gathered in a converted house on Georgia Avenue, NW before adapting a church at Fourteenth and Emerson Streets, NW. Beth Sholom Congregation dedicated their synagogue at Eighth and Shepherd Streets, NW in 1938 and remained there for 18 years, a cornerstone of Petworth’s Jewish community. [figure 8] In 1925, the Hebrew Home for the Aged opened new, expansive headquarters on Spring Road near Thirteenth Street and was joined in 1940 by the Jewish Social Service Agency.

The period of the 1930s through 1950s saw an exponential increase in Washington’s Jewish population. Young professionals arrived in droves to work for Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal. During World War II, Washington experienced an influx of Jewish war workers, and the federal bureaucracy expanded in the 1950s. Three new Conservative congregations formed in the 1940s to serve Jewish soldiers and government workers flocking to wartime Washington. These congregations later merged in 1965 to create Congregation Shaare Tikvah at 141 Xenia Street, SW. Soon after, the congregation moved to Prince George’s County, Maryland. Residents of Riggs Park in Northeast created two new congregations, Shomrei Emunah and Shaare Tefila, in the 1950s.



Postwar Communities

As in metropolitan areas across the country, many Jews left the city in the post-war decades, with a plurality moving to Montgomery County suburbs. By 1956, half of the area's 81,000 Jews lived outside the city. Community leaders began planning to move communal agencies to the Maryland suburbs.

Synagogues and other Jewish organizations followed. By 1960, Adas Israel, Washington Hebrew, Ohev Sholom Talmud Torah, B'nai Israel, and Tifereth Israel had moved to new synagogues in upper Northwest. In 1969, the major Jewish agencies including the Hebrew Home, Jewish Social Service Agency, and Jewish Community Center (JCC), moved to a new campus in Rockville. Synagogues including B'nai Israel and Beth Sholom also moved to the suburbs in the 1970s and '80s.

Today, 83 percent of greater Washington's more than 215,000 Jews live in the Maryland and Northern Virginia suburbs. However, the percentage of Jewish residents living in the city, rather than the suburbs (17 percent), is still one of the highest among major metropolitan Jewish communities in the United States. Throughout its history, Washington's Jewish community has maintained a commitment to the city. In the late 1950s, Marvin Caplan led Neighbors Inc. — a multiracial organization that worked to maintain integrated neighborhoods in Brightwood and Shepherd Park. In Southwest, residents of the River Park Cooperative, an urban renewal project, re-established a Jewish presence in the neighborhood by forming Southwest Hebrew Congregation (later renamed Temple Micah) in 1966. District residents formed a new downtown Jewish Community Center in the late 1970s and in the 1990s purchased, restored, and reopened the former JCC building at Sixteenth and Q Streets, NW. In the mid-1990s, Temple Micah chose to stay in the city, building a new synagogue near Massachusetts and Wisconsin Avenues, NW.

Since the early part of the last century, members of the Orthodox Keshet Israel continue to live in Georgetown where they walk to synagogue on the Sabbath. Recently a new Jewish day school opened on upper Sixteenth Street, and Hillel International opened a new headquarters downtown in the old Seventh Street neighborhood. Adas Israel's former synagogues have been saved and serve as downtown cultural institutions.

As these examples make clear, an active Jewish presence in Washington belies the notion of the city's Jewish community as, in the words of historian Hasia Diner, an "outpost of a suburban community." Washington's Jewish community and its neighborhoods tell a story distinct from the familiar American immigrant narrative: "Immigrant Jews moved to the 'old Jewish neighborhood' where they ran small businesses until achieving financial stability and moving uptown and into the suburbs." In Washington, the more complicated and more accurate narrative — of Jewish enclaves, of suburbs, and of a resurging urban presence — is a far more interesting story. •

below / (Figure 9) Moving the original (1876) Adas Israel synagogue, 1969. When construction of the Metro headquarters threatened the city's oldest synagogue building at Sixth and G Streets, NW, the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington mobilized to save it. Hoisted onto a pair of dollies, the building was moved to Third and G Streets, NW, where it serves as a museum today. Courtesy Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington



Architecture



by Deborah Sorensen

Deborah Sorensen is a curatorial associate at the National Building Museum, and was project manager for the exhibition *Washington: Symbol and City*. A graduate of the film program at Columbia College Chicago, and recipient of a Master of Arts degree in museum studies from the George Washington University, she programmed and helped organize the *Reel Architecture Film Series*.

A Summertime Smash

In celebration of its 25th anniversary, the National Building Museum hosted its first *Reel Architecture Film Series* this summer. The series was launched in July by a weekend of films dedicated to the built environment that surrounds Hollywood. Titles ranged from the Laurel and Hardy short *Liberty* and Robert Altman's *The Long Goodbye* to L.A. Story and Thom Andersen's much-admired documentary *Los Angeles Plays Itself*. This special

above / The *Reel Architecture Film Series* featured sixteen films and seven musical performances, attracting many first-time visitors to the National Building Museum.

on Screen



left / During World War II, new arrivals to Washington, D.C. were often single women in need of a place to call home, but in *The More the Merrier* (George Stevens, 1943) two men vie for a room in Jean Arthur's apartment. Advertisement, 1941–1945, courtesy National Archives and Records Administration

below / So close and yet so far, Joel McCrea (as Joe Carter) and Jean Arthur (as Constance 'Connie' Milligan) wake up to their romantic situation in *The More the Merrier* (George Stevens, 1943). © Columbia Pictures, courtesy Columbia Pictures/Photofest

weekend event was followed by seven Wednesday night screenings of films in the Museum's Great Hall. In keeping with the Museum's anniversary, each week featured a film that shared or commented upon a past exhibition's thematic focus. Some films were selected for having a direct connection with an exhibition, such as how *The More the Merrier* touches upon the wartime housing shortage in Washington—one of the many stories featured in the long-term exhibition *Washington: Symbol and City*. Other films were chosen more playfully. No tales of cannibalism were to be found in the popular exhibition *Big & Green: Toward Sustainable Architecture in the 21st Century*, for instance, but the film picked as that exhibition's representative, *Soylent Green*, paints a melodramatic but no less urgent picture of a future





above / Just as a front parlor in *The Heiress* (William Wyler, 1949) represents public hospitality, the rigid modern workplace featured in *The Best of Everything* (Jean Negulesco, 1959) clearly reflects the corporate power structure facing newcomer Hope Lange (as Caroline Bender).

© 20th Century Fox, courtesy 20th Century Fox/Photofest

below / *The Best of Everything* (Jean Negulesco, 1959) enhanced the melodrama but accurately reproduced the look of contemporary office spaces, such as the sleek interior of Inland Steel's Chicago headquarters (designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1958)

in which sustainability may have more to do with population control than healthy building practices.

In total, more than one thousand people attended the series, with many choosing to stay for multiple films during the opening weekend and returning week after week throughout July and August. During the weekly portion of the series, before each movie, local bands played in

the Great Hall while visitors explored the Museum's gift shop as well as the exhibitions *Liquid Stone: New Architecture in Concrete* and *Washington: Symbol and City*. Food was provided for moviegoers by the Museum's non-profit neighbor Third & Eats. PIP Printing generously supplied the series with printed programs. Each week audience members spread themselves out on the carpeted floor, in folding chairs, and against the columns to enjoy a film in the relaxed atmosphere of the Museum's beautiful Great Hall. After the lights came up at the close of an evening, many visitors were drawn to the fountain, looking up at the columns or snapping group photos.

The success of the series resulted largely from the positive word of mouth that came from a wealth of dedicated D.C. filmgoers eager for opportunities to watch and think about films in new and unusual ways. And although one news item may have wondered about the connection between architecture and film, those who read the program, listened to the opening remarks, or simply watched the films from a new perspective, were rewarded by discovering another layer of meaning in otherwise familiar movies. The openness with which the general audience approached the titles reflects a more academic trend of



interest in the relationship between architecture and film that has been growing over the past couple of decades.

Academic Venues and Approaches

Only a few weeks before the opening weekend of the *Reel Architecture Film Series*, an interdisciplinary conference called *Designs for Living: Space and Place in the Cinema* was hosted by the Centre for Film Studies at Queen Mary, University of London. This three-day conference featured more than 36 presenters on topics such as “Domestic Spaces in Hitchcock Cinema,” “London on Screen,” “Representations of the Victorian Age: Interior Spaces and the Detail of Domestic Life,” as well as a keynote speech by James Sanders, architect and author of the critically acclaimed book *Celluloid Skyline: New York and the Movies* (2001). Such a collection of scholars, gathered to discuss the critical points of intersection between architecture and the filmed image, is not unprecedented.

There has been a relative boom in conferences and publications specifically dedicated to this subject over the past 15 years. Examples range from the 1990 *Architecture and the Moving Image* conference sponsored by the architecture program at the Catholic University of America (see the Summer 1990 issue of *Blueprints* for an article by the conference organizer, Neal I. Payton), to the inauguration of the Austria-based international biennial *film+arc.graz* in 1993. The Getty Center’s oft-cited 1994 film series and symposium *Cine City: Film and Perceptions of Urban Space, 1895–1995* honored one hundred years of filmmaking since the Lumière brothers’ public projection of an oncoming train—commonly accepted as the “birth” of modern cinema. Another centennial-year celebration was Cambridge University’s symposium *Cinema & Architecture: Méliès, Mallet-Stevens, Multimedia*, the proceedings of which were published in 1997—the same year that *The Cinematic City*, edited by David Clark, was published. Soon after came the 1999 traveling exhibition and catalog for *Film Architecture: Metropolis to Bladerunner*, and in 2000 editor Mark Lamster offered a compilation of excellent essays



in *Architecture and Film*. Add to this mix an untold number of lectures offered through museums and architecture programs, such as the talks and classes offered locally by architect Stanley Hallett at the Corcoran Gallery of Art and the Catholic University of America.

These events and written works may simply reflect a desire to find connections between different cultural forms. Nonetheless, cinema and the built environment share many points of entry into the analysis of their creation and use. At the most basic level, there is the formalist approach toward the study of film architecture or set design, such as the examination of a particular studio’s “look” or methods of fabrication and matte painting. Similarly, films can be mined for the documentary data they provide about real locations—though the now commonplace digital alteration of even basic visual information makes such usage increasingly difficult. These two approaches comprise perhaps the majority of analyses of the built environment on screen and have produced many valuable histories about modes of film and architectural production. At the other end of the spectrum is critical film theory. Whereas, in a technical approach, background is allowed to become foreground, close textual analysis tends to fuse a film’s environment, story, and style into a unified field of symbols and signs. A standard interpretation of films often labeled as *noir* would fall into this

above / *The Big Combo* (Joseph H. Lewis, 1955) may have been a late arrival to the genre, but cinematographer John Alton’s use of light and shadow makes it a striking example of how environment expresses moral conflict in *film noir*.

© Allied Artists, courtesy Allied Artists/Photofest



above / Florence Yoch's most familiar design on film is the landscape surrounding Tara, the beloved home of Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone With the Wind* (Victor Fleming, 1939). Featured here, from an exhibition brochure, is her set for *Romeo and Juliet* (George Cukor, 1936)

below / Visitors spread out on blankets and beach chairs to enjoy the "Open Views: Short Films from Around the World" program associated with the 2005 exhibition *OPEN: New Designs for Public Space*.

category—in which a dark and threatening physical environment is taken to be an expressionistic representation of the characters' internal conflicts.

Somewhere between viewing film environments as historical artifacts and analyzing them as forms of symbolic representation is another method—studying the interaction between filmic representation and architectural space, and how such interaction reflects social practice on screen and off. The idea that set design and environment inform a film's narrative is nothing new, and can be found as much in the study of a particular designer's style as in the psychological import of a dark alleyway. Looking at how architectural space is used on screen, however, is a way to acknowledge film as both product and process. Taking this approach offers insight into not only character motivation and the filmmaker's perceptions about the built environment, but can also cast light on how the use of architectural space has changed over time. James Sanders uses this approach to good effect in his book *Celluloid Skyline*. His discussion of the post-war films *Life With Father* and *The Heiress* is a montage of techniques and documentary materials: frame analysis, information about story origins, production history, design illustrations, photos of 19th century locations, floor plans and elevations. Through his analysis of how each

film's characters use their dining room and front and rear parlors, respectively, Sanders provides a fascinating window into elite 19th-century perceptions of public and private space. Even with the understanding that film is a product of economic and technological limitations inasmuch as it is ever a reflection of the world at large, Sanders' exercise nicely illustrates the potential that film offers as a tool toward understanding how social practice plays out in real architectural space.

Film at the National Building Museum

As declared in its mission statement, the National Building Museum "explores the world we build for ourselves." And as product and reflection of that world, film is a critical but often underused component in the effort to show how architecture is relevant to the social practice of everyday life. Over the past 25 years the Museum has celebrated film through exhibitions like *Personal Edens: The Gardens and Film Sets of Florence Yoch* (1999) as well as through the countless film clips and video productions that have been featured within other exhibitions. *Up Down Across: Elevators, Escalators and Moving Sidewalks* included spectacular, historic footage of such devices filmed by none other than Thomas Edison. There is the Museum's long history of screening hard-to-find films, like the terrific screening programmed by Rooftop Films in association with the exhibition *OPEN: New Designs for Public Space*—the Museum's first foray into a Great Hall movie-night. Consider also the Museum's participation as a venue during the DC Environmental Film Festival, and public programs like the lecture given by James Sanders, and it becomes clear that the Museum has a long-standing interest in the important role film plays within our culture. The *Reel Architecture Film Series* is no anomaly then, but an extension of the Museum's commitment to providing visitors with a rich variety of experiences that support and promote its mission—the popcorn is just a bonus. •



CityVision Earns Grant from The History Channel

THE NATIONAL BUILDING MUSEUM'S innovative urban study program for at-risk youth, *CityVision*, received a \$10,000 grant from The History Channel for the spring 2005 semester. *CityVision* gives participants the tools to analyze and document the conditions of existing neighborhoods and then propose design solutions addressing the problems and opportunities they have identified. This past spring, about 35 middle and junior high school students explored the Ivy City neighborhood in Northeast Washington, DC, focusing on proposals for the renovation of the decrepit Alexander Crummell School building. The students produced detailed drawings and models of their proposed solutions, and presented them to a panel of design professionals and community leaders.

The History Channel grant was part of the larger *Save Our History* initiative, a national program intended to encourage preservation of communities' historic resources. •



above / *CityVision* participants, History Channel representatives, and Museum staff accept a grant from the History Channel.

Photo by NBM staff



left / An Ivy City resident introduces his neighborhood to *CityVision* participants.

Photo by NBM staff

Bridge Basics Program Kit

by Ann Lambson

AFTER MORE THAN A YEAR OF WRITING, FIELD-TESTING, AND DESIGNING, the Museum proudly announces the publication of the *Bridge Basics Program Kit*. This multi-media kit makes one of the Museum's most popular school programs, *Bridge Basics*, available to fifth through ninth grade students across the country. Development and production of the kit was made possible by the Construction Industry Round Table.

A team of educators at the Museum developed preliminary versions of the kit's components and then tested them with school teachers in different parts of the country. The final product also reflects the input of design educators and engineers.

Bridge Basics meets national standards of learning in language arts, math, science, social studies, technology, and visual arts through curriculum-based lessons that use bridge construction and design as a basis for understanding fundamental structural engineering concepts. The hands-on, interdisciplinary lessons present bridges as structural solutions to specific problems and introduce students to basic bridge types such as truss,

beam, arch, cable-stayed, and suspension. Students become engineers and work in teams to build model bridges that solve transportation problems, while balancing issues of geography, materials, cost, and aesthetics.

The *Bridge Basics Program Kit* conveniently packages together all the materials necessary for teaching the program, including:

- A 98-page curriculum guide that provides teachers an overview of bridge engineering fundamentals, detailed lessons plans, student worksheets, and a wealth of supplementary resources such as vocabulary and lists of books, Web sites, videos, and organizations;
- Full-color posters depicting examples of the five bridge types taught in the program;
- Instructions teaching students how to construct models of five bridge types using playing cards; enough cards and string are provided to build the first set of models; and
- A CD-ROM containing an engaging computer interactive titled "Bridging the Gap" and master copies of worksheets and bridge poster images.

Like all education programs at the Museum, the *Bridge Basics Program Kit* inspires students to examine the people, processes, and materials that create buildings, places, and structures. The Museum's education programs use the design process as an educational model that requires young people to identify problems or needs, imagine solutions, test them before building a suitable design, and evaluate the product. Learning by doing is central to design education and this *Bridge Basics*

below / Using instructions and cards, students start the program by building models, such as this arch bridge, that demonstrate how actual bridges work.
Photo by Pensaré Design Group





left / Having learned how bridges work, students solve an engineering challenge by designing and building a cable-stayed bridge.

Photo by National Building Museum Staff

below / *Bridge Basics Curriculum Plan* cover. Designed by Pensaré Design Group

Program Kit. Through this process students gain a fresh perspective on their surroundings and begin to understand how design decisions can have an impact on the environment.

A variety of instructors may effectively use the *Bridge Basics* program: a traditional classroom teacher, youth group leader, or building professional. Building professionals such as engineers can utilize the lessons, either singly or as a series, to teach the complexities of their profession on an appropriate cognitive level for students.

For more information about the *Bridge Basics Program Kit* and how to purchase it, contact Ann Lambson, director of youth education, 202-272-2448, or via email at alambson@nbm.org.



Another Festive Time at the Museum



above / A youngster tries his eye at surveying.



above right / Curator Chrysanthe Broikos processes "permits" for young builders.



bottom left / A visitor gilds a picture frame.



bottom right / Another visitor learns to drill.

All photos by F.T. Eyre



MORE THAN 3,200 CHILDREN AND ADULTS flocked to the National Building Museum on Saturday, September 17 for the *Festival of the Building Arts*. One of the Museum's signature events, the annual program allows visitors of all ages to try their hand at a variety of building activities, from placing drywall to laying bricks. Kids, in particular, always enjoy this opportunity for officially sanctioned drilling, hammering, and experimenting with messy substances.

The festival included 27 distinct demonstrations and activities. Some visitors took part in a nail-driving contest, while others admired the work of professional trompe l'oeil painters and faux finishers. On the street just outside the Museum, blacksmiths and decorative iron workers demonstrated their crafts, and young visitors had an up-close look at large-scale construction equipment, including a crane and a concrete mixer.

The 2005 *Festival of the Building Arts* was sponsored once again by The Associated General Contractors of America. *Washington Parent* magazine was the Museum's local media partner for the event. In-kind support was provided by The Quikrete Companies and the International Masonry Institute and



International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftsmen. The Museum is grateful to all of these organizations, as well as the many individuals and companies that took part in this year's festival. •

top / Drywall finishing — one of many hands-on activities at the festival.

Photo by F.T. Eyre

above / Young apprentices prepare to build an arch.

Photo by Museum Staff

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top right / Museum members and staff from the collections department discuss the items on display for conservation.

middle right / Members enjoy the reception prior to a special exhibition preview discussion.

bottom right / Chase Rynd, executive director of the National Building Museum, mingles with members at *Builders* reception.

below / Members study selected items from the Museum's collections and pledge their conservation support.

Builder's Event

FUN WAS HAD BY ALL ON AUGUST 11TH as the Museum treated members of *The Builders* (those who make unrestricted contributions between \$100 and \$1,000 per year) to an exclusive reception and preview of the upcoming exhibition *Cityscapes Revealed: Highlights from the Collection*. Members mingled, enjoyed refreshments, and viewed an illustrated lecture led by curator Chrysanthe Broikos. She discussed the Museum's vision for the exhibition, which will be the first-ever retrospective of the permanent collection and will feature seldom-seen objects that illustrate American architectural history. At the conclusion of the presentation, Chase Rynd, the Museum's executive director, led *The Builders* into a special temporary gallery to view many of the items selected for the exhibition. This rare opportunity to view elements from the Museum collection up close also afforded members the chance to "adopt" an object—that is, to make a special contribution to support the cost of conserving that item.



The Museum would like to thank the *Builder* members listed above for their support, which ensures that these objects will be returned to their original richness—preserving them for future generations and securing their place in our nation's collective building history. •

Thank You!

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The Museum thanks these individuals, companies, associations and agencies for gifts of \$250 or more received from June–August 2005. These generous gifts provide essential support for the Museum's exhibitions, education programs, and endowment funds. Some of the contributions listed below are in partial fulfillment of larger pledges.

Mystery Building... Stumped!



FOR THE FIRST TIME IN RECENT MEMORY, we received no correct responses identifying the Mystery Building from the summer issue. One respondent was on the right track, guessing that it was a sports facility, but she had the wrong one.

The building pictured was, in fact, the old Madison Square Garden, one of several structures to bear this name over time. This particular rendition existed from 1925 to 1966, and was designed by Thomas W. Lamb. We thought that the clues to identifying the building lay in the distinctive fire escape, and the row of small pediments along the roofline. It seems, however, that we cropped the photo a little too tightly for anyone to make a positive ID. The photo, by the way, is from the Museum's Stewart Brothers Photographic Collection, and will be featured in our upcoming exhibition *Cityscapes: Highlights from the Collection*.



This issue's Mystery Building is a classic image of the machine in the garden. It is part of a larger complex the location of which may come as a surprise to those not familiar with it. Can you identify the building, its location, and its architect? Send responses to:

Mystery Building
National Building Museum
401 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

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