intellectual, and political contexts. When Harvard’s Massachusetts Hall was first built (1719–21), for instance, the aim was to provide housing for a growing student body, but the building site and design were intended to mimic the closed courtyards of Cambridge and Oxford. Hollis Hall (constructed in the 1760s) shared much of the interior design of Massachusetts Hall, but its orientation, “facing westward toward the Common” (15), Tolles interprets as an indication of the college’s desire to demonstrate its connections to the wider Cambridge community. That particular conclusion may remind some of Paul Venable Turner’s well-known study Campus: An American Planning Tradition (1984), and indeed Tolles’s entire volume is written in that tradition.

Architectural descriptions account for a substantial portion of Tolles’s scholarly yet readable text. These are interwoven with historiographical discussions and brief comments on some of the more important historical figures involved. We see that several individuals were at work on the design and construction of many of the buildings that are considered. For instance, in 1777 Yale’s president, Ezra Stiles (1727–1795), “provided the Yale Corporation with an informal plan for campus development” (29). Stiles “turned to James Hillhouse, a Yale graduate, U.S. Representative, and force in New Haven’s civic affairs” to help bring his plan into reality. And Hillhouse, in turn, relied largely on John Trumbull (1756–1843), “a talented painter and amateur architect, a Connecticut native, and a Harvard graduate” (29). Tolles’s descriptions of the people involved are often rather sparse. At Harvard, Stoughton Hall “was planned by the highly esteemed Bos- ton architect Charles Bullfinch (1763–1844), who was responsible for numerous major Boston building designs in the Federal vein, derived from English classicism” (18). At Williams College, Edward Door Griffin “closely consulted the illustrated design books of Asher Benjamin, used as guides by many New England master builders at the time” (75–76). While brief contextualizing comments such as these are useful, readers may come away from the text wishing that there was more of an effort to bring to life the personalities running through Tolles’s story. Fleshed out biographical sketches would have helped Tolles better to link his college buildings with the wider cultural world they inhabited.

Notable are the volume’s lavish reproductions. There are sixteen pages of full-color plates offering splendid photographs of many of the buildings discussed in the text, including Harvard’s Hollis Hall, Yale’s Old College Library, Dartmouth Hall, Bowdoin College Chapel, Fenwich Hall at the College of the Holy Cross, and Bates College’s Parker Hall. In addition to the color plates are more than 200 black-and-white illustrations liberally scattered throughout the volume. There are modern photographs and also others from the nineteenth century, as well as reproductions of sketches and broadsides, eighteenth-century engravings, elevation drawings, and floor plans. The book includes detailed endnotes and concludes with a thorough index. I was disappointed, however, that the volume did not have a concluding chapter, as that would have bookmarked the thoughtful introduction.

This is a solid volume with much to offer. No doubt it will be read with interest by architectural historians, but it also has lessons and pleasures for others whose scholarly interests intersect Tolles’s at one place or another. Architecture & Academe aptly demonstrates the potential of architectural history to inform and build upon a range of disciplines. Part of that breadth comes through in the volume’s extensive bibliography—which, helpfully, is subdivided into several sections for easy access.

MARK G. SPENCER
Brock University

Anthony Vidler
James Frazier Stirling: Notes from the Archive

New Haven and London: Canadian Centre for Architecture and Yale Center for British Art, in association with Yale University Press, 2010, xix + 303 pp., 360 color illus. $70. (cloth)
ISBN 9780300167238

First some disclosures: I attended the Liverpool University School of Architecture, starting in 1953, three years after James Stirling graduated from that same institution. When I began teaching at Cambridge in 1962 I inherited from Colin Rowe a tutorial supervisee named Anthony Vidler. On sabatical leave to Harvard from Cambridge in 1968, I was called in to “pinch-hit” for Stirling at Yale for a semester, much, I’m sure, to the dismay of his students.

These connections made reviewing this book a journey of reminiscence. There was the recognizable work of a postwar student of the Liverpool University School of Architecture—typically commonsensical and programmatically thorough, revealing influences from international figures such as Le Corbusier and Marcel Breuer, and at the same time very aware of Liverpool’s architectural, maritime, and industrial history, and its orientation westward toward the U.S.A. There was the influence of Colin Rowe, who refused to accept that architecture had separated itself from its past during the rise of modernism. There was the punctilious work of a Cambridge-trained history scholar (Vidler). There were all the names associated with the English architectural debates of the fifties and the sixties: Peter and Alison Smithson, Reyner Banham, Colin St. John Wilson, Sir Leslie Martin, Cedric Price, Banham’s student Charles Jencks, and Stirling’s best friend and fellow Liverpool student, Robert Maxwell. There were the European members of Team Ten who joined with the Smithsons in challenging CIAM’s dogmatic urbanism: Georges Candilis, Giancarlo De Carlo, Aldo van Eyck, and Shadrach Woods. There was Aldo Rossi and Rationalism. But most importantly there again were the crystalline three-dimensional drawings, notably Stirling’s trademark axonometrics, that announced the presence of a major architectural intelligence. What I had not seen before was the treasure trove of preparatory sketches, some drawn on the backs of airline tickets, and at least one on a table napkin.

Vidler sees it as his task—in a book he modestly describes as no more than “a preliminary survey”—not only to introduce the wealth of the archive currently held at the Canadian Center for Architecture
(CCA), but to identify a consistency to Stirling’s career, one that contradicts the widely held view that his work radically shifted from an earlier rationalist modernism toward an eclectic postmodernism (the latter phase coinciding with the presence in Stirling’s office of Leon Krier). Some have seen many shifts. As the directors of the CCA state in their foreword, “Stirling’s work has too often been pigeonholed into numerous stylistic categories, from Modernism through Constructivism to Eclecticism, Neo-Classicism and Post-Modernism.” Vidler, by contrast, claims to have “found a very different James Stirling than that normally presented, either by critics throughout his career, or by historians after his death. This is a Stirling never wavering in the search for what he called the right balance between the ‘context’ and the ‘associational’ values of the architecture, between the rigorous analysis of the programme and its disaggregation and re-composition into volumetric elements.” This emphasis on program and its expression evokes Sir John Summerson’s speech to the Royal Institute of Architects in 1957, where he claimed that “the programme as the source of unity is, as far as I can see, the one new principle of modern architecture.” Echoing this, Stirling later wrote, “I believe that the shapes of a building should indicate—perhaps display—the usage and way of life of its occupants, and it is therefore likely to be rich and varied in appearance, and its expression is unlikely to be simple.”

One of the reasons that the Leicester University Engineering Building was greeted with such enthusiasm when it opened in 1963 was that it was seen to slough off dependence on the architectural languages of the masters: Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, and Alvar Aalto. Even the best British architects of the time used such languages at least as a starting point, and this was certainly true of Stirling in his early work. Although architectural scholars were quick to point to Konstantin Melnikov and Russian Constructivism when they saw the exposed lecture theatres of Leicester and the window-cleaning gantry at the History Faculty Building at Cambridge University (1964–67), this was clearly no effort “in the manner of.” These buildings represented, as Vidler claims, a reinvention of the language of modernism. Coming together here were Stirling’s enthusiasm for the powerful three-dimensional forms of “the functionalist tradition,” his fascination with materials and with the vernacular and industrial buildings of northern England, and, via Colin Rowe, his relatively sophisticated knowledge of architectural history. All of this was given coherence by his design skills and his tireless commitment to investigation, invention, and testing through drawing.

For Vidler, “what had become clear by 1978 was the great divide that separated the generation of Stirling from that of Krier. The one a modernist at heart with a love for an architecture in play, and an endless capacity to invent and reinvent the languages of modernism; the other a deep antagonist of modernism and its urban effects.” Vidler’s major claim is that Stirling, throughout his career, sought to reinvent modernism by deep attention to the program and the context, and by synthesizing diverse historical sources. Although the sources might shift, from say, nineteenth-century northern English terrace houses to the Neoclassicism of Etienne-Louis Boullée, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, or Karl Friedrich Schinkel, the apparent changes in the buildings’ forms do not imply any fundamental theoretical shift. His argument, based as it is on a careful study of this remarkable archive of Stirling’s drawings and photographs, is persuasive.

It is a relief to find a large, handsome book on a well-known architect and his partners and associates that takes as its subject matter not another set of professional photographs of immaculate, empty new buildings, but the engagement of designers relentlessly investigating programs and sites through innumerable drawings aimed at developing an architecture that acknowledges both its geographical and cultural contexts. As a historian, Anthony Vidler has honored and matched that commitment.

John Meunier  
Arizona State University

Note

G. R. H. Wright  
Ancient Building Technology. Volume 3: Construction  

Carmelo G. Malacrino  
Constructing the Ancient World: Architectural Techniques of the Greeks and Romans  
trans. Jay Hyams  

These two books devoted to the ancient art of building differ in aim and scope. G. R. H. Wright’s book follows upon his two earlier volumes, focusing respectively on the historical context and building materials in the ancient world. Wright presents this third volume as a compendium of research on ancient construction, intended as a reference for specialists, particularly during fieldwork. Although Carmelo Malacrino’s book also addresses scholars, it seeks a wider audience of non-specialists, and will appeal to classical archaeologists, historians of art and architecture, and the general public with an interest in antiquity. While narrower in terms of the technical specialization of its intended audience, Wright’s book features greater breadth in its balance of classical and nonclassical material. Including extensive treatment of the architecture of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Anatolia, the Levant, and Iran, it stretches chronologically from the Neolithic period to the Sassanians. Unlike Malacrino’s book, which makes for a pleasant cover-to-cover read in addition to serving as a reference, Wright aims to facilitate reference by repeating information throughout chapters that are organized according to phases or techniques of construction, as

Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/jsah/article-pdf/70/4/546/179895/jsah_2011_70_4_546.pdf by guest on 10 June 2020