
*An Interview
With*

**BAIRD &
SAMPSON**
Associates, Toronto



Vancouver
Public Library
(circa 1958)

*"...if history means shutters, then
obviously the Fifties aren't
history...."*

George Baird was educated at the University of Toronto and University College, London, and has practised in Toronto since 1968. He has lectured in Canada, the United States, Europe, and Australia. He was co-editor, with Charles Jencks, of Meaning in Architecture and is the author of Alvar Aalto. He was recently appointed Chairman of the School of Architecture at the University of Toronto, where he has been as associate professor since 1972.

Barry Sampson was educated at the University of Toronto and has worked with George Baird since 1972, forming a partnership with him in 1982. He has worked in Paris and did independent study research on the relationship of the formal garden and urban form. He has lectured in Toronto, Waterloo, and Halifax, exhibited work in Toronto and Princeton and contributed to a number of magazines. He is presently an assistant professor at the University of Toronto.

TFC: The theme of this issue of *THE FIFTH COLUMN* is 'A Canadian Architecture'. I would like to begin with a discussion of Canadian architecture itself, and whether or not there is such a thing?

Baird: I don't think you can isolate it. You can isolate tendencies that have some local significance, but I don't think you can identify something that is truly generic. Mind you, I'm not sure that they can do that anywhere else, either.

TFC: Let's say within the Ontario context, as described in "Essays in the Vernacular". Could you see it as a more localised condition?

Baird: To some extent you can...

Sampson: ...if you want to designate some regional tendencies rather than a Canadian architecture.

Baird: Yes. If you want to talk about all of that eighteenth century building in the Maritimes, it constitutes a clearly discernible pattern, which, of course, is not that distinct from New England. It has a lot in common with that, but it has identifiable motifs. The same is true of Quebec, where you have a pattern that is recognisable as distinct from other areas of Canada. In the nineteenth century, a certain kind of primitive Baroque was going on in all the churches that, again, would be characteristic of only Quebec. Or, all those wooden buildings that were built on the West Coast. These are identifiable.

Sampson: They are a synthesis and adaptation of a kind of colonial architectural heritage.

Baird: They all come from someplace else. The New England stuff comes from England, the French stuff from Brittany, and the Vancouver stuff is not that distinct from the contemporary stuff further down the coast. In "Essays in the Vernacular" I was depressed at the way buildings got wrecked in the process of renovation — all of those projects were renovations. None of them were new buildings. At the time it was published, you tended to get fake historical stuff going on. There was an architect, Napier Simpson, who had a career, a large part of which consisted of building and renovating country estates for people. He had developed a kind of technique of adding on '1850' family rooms to 1850 houses. Four-car garages and cabanas were all in the genre of your standard Ontario farmhouse. They were all meticulously done; the guy was by no means a hack architect. It's a funny kind of image of a farmhouse to accommodate the exurban gentleman farmer's social programme. The other tradition was...

Sampson: ...the one of just ignoring it.

Baird: That's right. Just hack; brick up the windows, sandblast it, paint the front grey.

Sampson: Or, at its most extreme, you cover it all over with aluminium siding. There are several examples of this on Spadina Avenue.

Baird: We were interested in a way of working with these buildings, which played off their existing formal characteristics, without making fake history out of it.

TFC: Don't you think the process of trivialisation of history is more of a problem now than it was eight years ago when you published the article?

Baird: Well, yes and no. It's a more complicated situation now. Back then you either got fake history or the hack stuff. Now we have a funny situation where a more complex attitude to history has entered the mainstream of architecture.

Sampson: A potentially more complicated attitude toward history. Then, people were reacting to the mustiness of all this old stuff and the rest was seen as progressive and modern. They just covered it all over and transformed it. The others respected it to the point that they reproduced it, so that you couldn't tell what was genuine. The new stuff tended to call into question the historicity of the old stuff. Now there seems to be a similar reaction except that it's anti-modern. You have either complete transformations of modern structures or their demolition, as we previously had with the historical structures. One would like to think that it is a more complicated possibility of working with historical structures, except that it still has this reactive component to it, except that it is reversed. Now things need to be historical and things that are modern are not good. So you have this transformation of that yellow brick, modern industrial showroom that was down on Front Street, by Moriyama's office, into a pseudo-historical building, in keeping with the historical precinct that it is in.

Baird: It wasn't a great building. It was a kind of passable piece of Fifties, with a buff brick and glazed front. It was a machinery showroom and had an open plan to show all that stuff. Up above, it has strip windows. They covered them all up with brick arches — it's very disconcerting. It depends on what your view of history is. If history means shutters, then obviously the Fifties aren't history. If you have a more interesting idea of what you think history is, then the Fifties are history by now. If you take the Williams and Wilson showroom, it wasn't a building of great significance, but the addition to the Park Plaza Hotel was a building of some significance which got trashed up six or seven years ago.

TFC: The gas station on the corner of Carlton and Jarvis which was being demolished just yesterday.

Baird: Another case in point. That was the original Four Seasons Hotel next door.

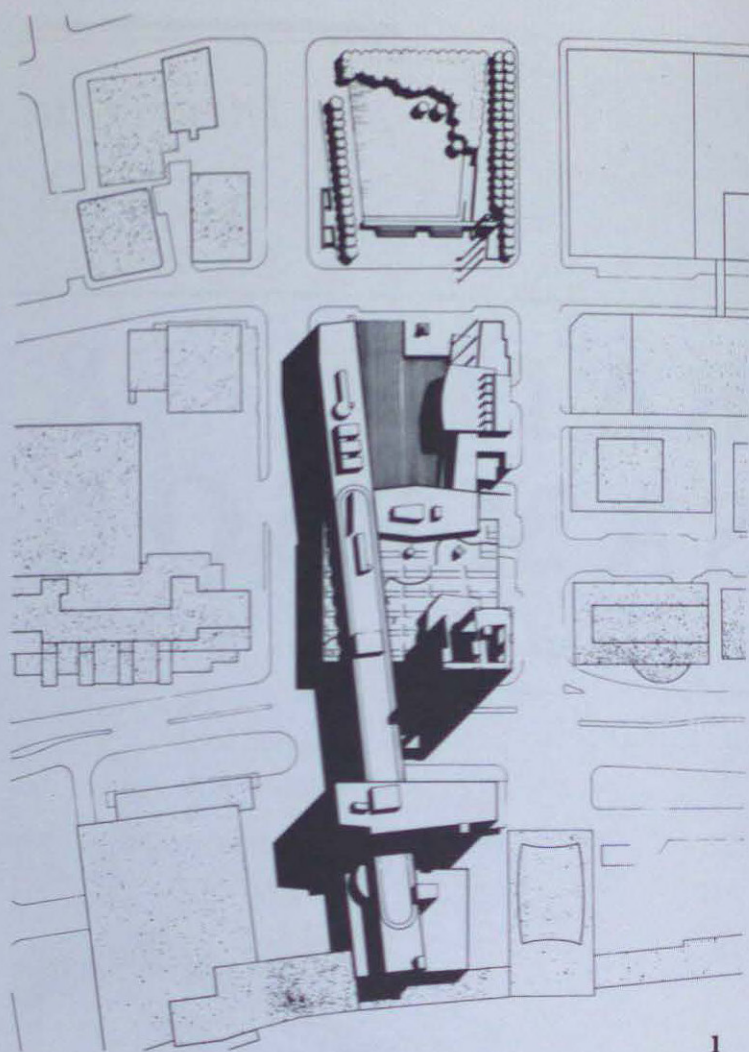
Sampson: The Lothian Mews.

Baird: These are all works of Peter Dickinson, who was an interesting Fifties architect, probably the most interesting Fifties architect working in Toronto. The O'Keefe Centre is another building by him, also recently renovated. Lots of these buildings are threatened. Another interesting one is the Vancouver Public Library. It is considered to be functionally obsolete and there is an idea for a new one, which would make the old one — what does the government call them — 'surplus property'. It is interesting to see how the cycles of fashion and usage are such that, except for Queen Street West, the Fifties are as out of fashion as you can get. Any day now, we will be called on to rescue Scarborough College as the wheels of indifference move ever onward.

TFC: How is the approach taken here in the office any different? Is the consciousness of history enough?

Sampson: I guess we are interested in entering into a discourse with history. It's important that some continuity be maintained in the city, rather than go through these continual complete transformations. It is well within the realm of possibility that the Toronto fabric will not have any examples of buildings from the Thirties. There are very few examples of Art Deco buildings left even now — they could easily vanish. We are not interested in keeping buildings just for their own sake, but it's not necessary to take a culturally vandalistic view of the city. In the Edmonton City Hall (competition), we opposed the destruction of the existing building primarily because Edmonton is going through these cycles of demolition that have now gotten up to the Sixties. Given that the existing City Hall is one of the higher quality modern buildings built in Edmonton, we decided that we would try to do the scheme around it.

Baird: In a certain way, there is an attempt to elaborate an idea of a certain kind of cultural space that has texture and definition to it, so that it is not just these historical fragments that have some

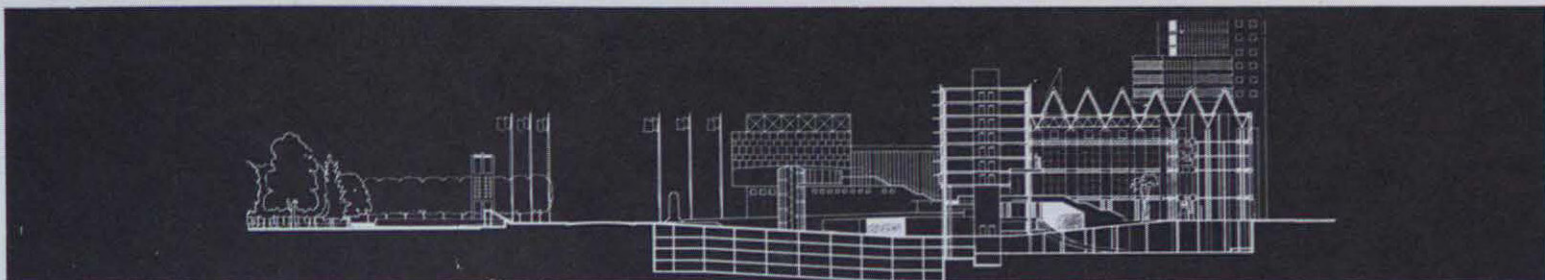


value in their own right, but that (idea), by virtue of somehow positing them as a configuration that is recognisable within a certain set of characteristics, in historical status, and also elaborating a second kind of system which is something to do with our time. To me, the superimposition of one on the other is more significant. It's not just one plus one, it's more than that, because a third term enters the equation, whereby you can actually see the possibility of an extended cultural metaphor having to do with the fact that there is this place and it has these things in it from some time ago. It also has a present and there exists a possibility of positing a relation between them. That implies something about the larger historical possibility of the society. That's why, to me, it is consistent, on the one hand, to oppose the cavalier treatment of these older buildings and, at the same time, oppose the historical emulations. Both of these obviate on the question of what the relation of the past to the present really is.

TFC: In this process you are involved in the intellectual selection of those aspects of a given historical element that you will keep in the transformation. Again, how do you keep from trivialising the object that remains?

Sampson: By taking a certain distant respect for them and then by entering into a discourse with them. It is in the city fabric that the city generations touch in a concrete way. There have been events that, for me, throughout our studies, have been Epiphanies. The disappearance of Victoria Square in Montreal, the complete destruction of the market square in Brantford, and the complete destruction of Confederation Square in Ottawa are examples where a very coherent period of city building just completely disappears, completely destroyed and made unrecognisable to the next generation by only one or two generations who saw no value in them. They saw them as surplus elements in the city.

Baird: The examples that Barry has mentioned are the most startl-



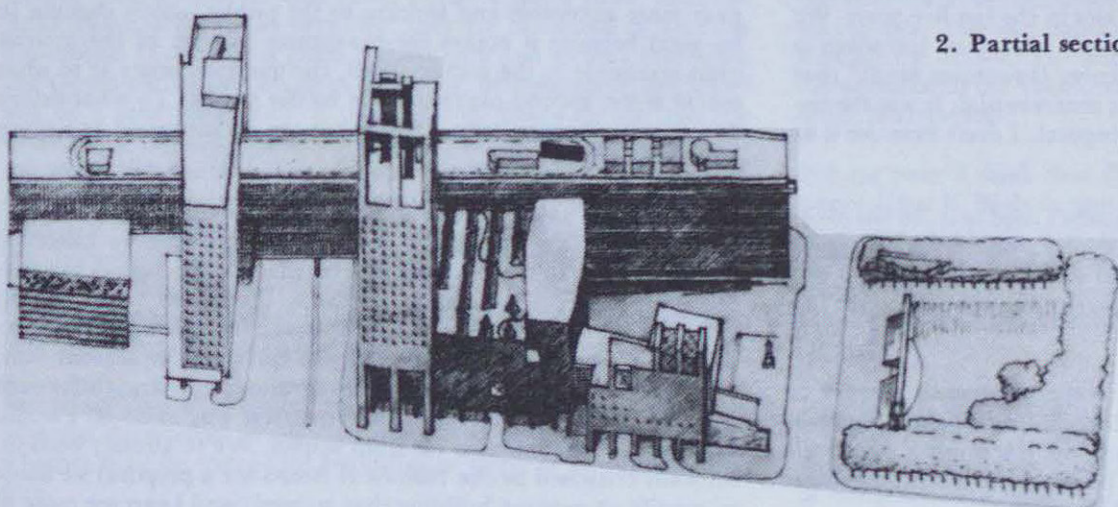
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Baird & Sampson/Edmonton City Hall competition proposal

1. Site plan

2. Partial section through principle public spaces

3. Axonometric view



3

ing ones. Unless you go back and look at the picture books, you would not even be able to know that these were once squares. The transformation of the ground plan and the surrounding elements is so complete that they are just vacant lots. Take, for example, in Toronto; I'm extremely resentful about the churchyards of St. James Cathedral and the Metropolitan United Church. Both used to have wrought iron fences around them, which constituted a kind of low level mechanism of space definition. To make a square that has buildings around it is tricky and normally relies on a constant and reasonably high wall around the edge on the other side of the street. Well, in Toronto, where there was a variable condition, the fence provided a buttress of space definition. Again, in the Fifties, as an act of vandalism against an earlier generation, those churches made a deal with the City whereby the City took over the maintenance because they were being used by the public. City Parks agreed to take them over in exchange for removal of the fences, the idea being that they would become more of a public place. Formally, it has been a catastrophe because the spatial definition is gone. There is no longer any structured pattern of movement. They, of course, have discovered that the old paths don't correspond with the new patterns of movement, so they hack up the park. It is a kind of progressive deterioration of what used to be some rather fine spaces. Those are some examples of the progressive loss of judgement as to the status of formal elements as part of the urban fabric.

TFC: When faced with a programme that doesn't have much context, such as the Mississauga City Hall Competition, what do architects do, then?

Baird: First of all, Mississauga is not without context. The historical introduction to the competition programme, having to do with the patterns of land division, the organization of the farm lands, and the concession grid, forms a kind of first order for any kind of building in Ontario. Following that, you have all the patterns of regional growth that came out of the Sixties; that produc-

ed Mississauga City Centre. On top of that are sets of assumptions about what is the current typology of suburban practice, which, in a community as fast-growing as Mississauga, form a sort of nascent context. One of the things clever about Edward Jones's and Michael Kirkland's position was manifest in those little alternative drawings they made. There is an implication in the Secondary City Plan for a more traditional city fabric, with buildings forming street walls. On the other hand, the planning approval process is not exactly powerfully directed toward obtaining that result and, in the meantime, the developers that are building in Mississauga are, to varying degrees, resisting it. What gets built are —

TFC: The 'cactus' Michael Kirkland speaks about.

Baird: That's right. It doesn't correspond with what is sought, at least to date. Michael (Kirkland) and Edward (Jones) did set their scheme up in such a way that it could respond to either kind of configuration, as foreseen in the city plan or, alternatively, as something that is a more straightforward extrapolation of the present development patterns in the area. Well, that's a contextual response.

Sampson: One of the things we have discovered while studying the formation of the towns in the nineteenth century in Ontario is that one started from an empty field or clearing. In fact, there were deliberate efforts to set out controlling lines for a city that had shape. The shape of that city could not be manifest initially in building, so there were strategic moves that might be made, in the first instance, to create the basic structure of that city, to guide the town as it grew. It was a condition that might be described as contextual, as the basis there was the concessional grid.

Baird: I think that one of the most amazing characteristics of modernism is that it entails the abandonment of the idea that an urban fabric was an accumulated creation over time by...

Sampson: ...generations.

Baird: Different actors in one generation followed by subsequent generations, all of whom would be proceeding on the basis of some common assumptions as to what kind of objectives were desired.

Sampson: Like a chain letter.

TRC: Your guidelines for the Mississauga competition were much stricter than either the Calgary or Edmonton competition guidelines. Are these strict guidelines the way to restore the continuity to city building?

Baird: Only in terms of the urban design. In other respects, the guidelines were much looser. It's not so mysterious, you know, the notion of 'build-to' lines and other obligations of the building to the definition of public space. There are some rather elementary rules of thumb which in very recent times have become reasonably familiar again. Things have changed a lot in the last five years. We recommend to the people in Vancouver that they introduce a 'build-to' line, in relation to the "Greening Downtown Study" that we did for them. That has been rather controversial. It was the only really controversial aspect of our proposal. I don't even see it as being particularly directive.

Sampson: It's just that the developers aren't used to it. In the nineteenth century or the eighteenth century, one didn't have to legislate it because there was a cultural assumption that when you built a building, it faced the public space. They contributed to the appearance of the public space.

Baird: In fact, generally speaking, in the nineteenth century in Toronto, the only architecture of the buildings is their facades. They don't have any other architecture, the rest is just a party wall and a blank wall against the lane. The notion of a building as an object in its own right comes with Modernism.

TFC: In Colquhoun's discussion of the 'superblock', he says that it is not only a change in aesthetic sensibility but changes in the scale of interventions in the city that makes things modern. Within Toronto, where developers play with whole city blocks, doesn't this create an opportunity for architecture that is more than just street facades?

Baird: Yes and no.

Sampson: The question I have is: What?

Baird: I'm not saying that you shouldn't impose a new pattern. In any event, there will always be a relationship of the new pattern to the larger pattern around it; that's inevitable. You are always relating to a road that is already there. Within the larger framework, setting up some kind of pattern that doesn't exist can't be done. It can, instead, come from principles that don't necessarily derive from what is there: patterns of movement, microclimate, all sorts of things could give you clues.

Sampson: Comprehensive development was encouraged in the Fifties and Sixties, but it wasn't actually new. Eaton's College Street was a comprehensive development that was to envelop the whole block. It was uncommon at the time, here, as few people had the financial and organisational ability to carry it out. In London, there were major precincts that were developed, such as Grosvenor Square and so on. It is more a question of what opportunities are presented and the thing itself that is created by these redevelopments.

Baird: Take a superblock development like College Park, which is the son of Eaton's College Street, where they again have closed one more street and it has grown from two blocks to three blocks. Then they made diagonal entrances in the corner and the park in the middle. I must confess that I find the whole thing rather introverted and I can't see what the city gets out of that kind of

development. Alright, it gets a park and there is this rather low level sentimentality about the idea that having a park is somehow better than not having a park. This cloying idea that always having more parks and green space is better is highly questionable. Indeed, for me, it is a kind of pathological response to the hatred of Modernism; that people are so alienated from the idea of urban form, that the anti-city is always better. This is the state of our civilisation.

Sampson: That's where I think that what is happening is that the idea of the city has been divorced from any sense of politics associated with the city. Subsequently, you have some very loose ideas like 'public accessibility', that everything should be made accessible. There is a tendency to generate more and more publicly accessible terrain but there are fewer and fewer places that have a public intensity, the low side of public action, be it political demonstration or the more informal kinds of meetings that take place between people. The issue is to make gardens and plazas appear more accessible and inviting to the public; this is thought to be good because it makes the maximum amount of the ground plan accessible to the public. Well, the question arises as to what extent is the ground plane useable by the public. To what extent does it actually constitute a place that can be identified as a place of public action?

Baird: I want to go back to something you went off a bit earlier. You were talking about the trivialisation response to historical form. It seems to me that at the level that the discussion has proceeded so far, there is step one; that is, that history is important and that one actually responds to it, which by now is generally accepted. The second one would then be this point we started with, the fact that while history is important, the straightforward rehashing of it isn't necessarily the smartest way to do it. I would say that that argument is far from settled. We've already been informally criticised by the Historical Board for a proposal we made to modify an existing building that is listed, and I can see more of that kind of thing coming. So, it seems to me that that is a whole new threshold of debate as to how you respond. Even that is still a rather rudimentary level of a more complex discussion, which would presumably lead on to considerations having to do with formal relationships and typologies in which you could say, given that you are taking history as a given which merits consideration and you are not emulating it, then what kind of generalised principles of response could one talk about that would imply the possibility of a kind of architecture which exists in this broader historical and cultural spectrum. I would say, just to cite one example in this third level of the discussion, take the case of entrances. Any kind of plan type is going to revolve, rather critically, around the consideration of where you go into it. I think it is extremely interesting that, in respect to the kind of modernisation or transformation of historical monuments in relation to modern programmes, the crisis of the entrance is really an acute one.

In the renovations of the branch libraries all around Toronto, the Beaches and Wychwood were (two libraries) which were basilica plan types or medieval hall plan types. Very powerful typological axiality and, in both cases, I don't think the architects did not have a deliberate intention to change the entrance, but they were cornered by interpretations of function.

Sampson: The existing organisation was difficult and it was easier to abandon the existing entrance sequence in favour of a new location for the entrance.

TFC: Yet, in the Beaches Library, there is still this incredible urge to walk up to where the bay window is now.

Baird: Of course; it's the residual power. It seems to me that there are available and unavailable transformation moves. We've closed up an entrance, recently; the first time we've done it, so I'm not saying it's impossible. All I'm saying is that it is a little like poker. If the building sets up a powerful plan order where the entrance is implied in a particular position, then if you are going to change it,

the question is: What kind of corresponding moves do you have to elaborate in order that the misleading cues are then definitively redirected? So, it's a question of secondary and tertiary moves that go with the residual motif that still seems to make more sense than not being an entrance, while still being a prominent part of the visual array of the building. In neither of these cases does this seem to have been successfully dealt with. Now, if we move from those two, we have the most notorious example, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, where they just welded the doors shut. This is the collapse of the imaginative faculties, it seems to me. And now Arthur Erickson is doing the same thing to the Court House in Vancouver, which is going to have its doors...

Sampson: ...turned around.

TFC: You'll obviously have to enter his plaza from behind.

Baird: That's right, in that case. There, I don't know what the final resolution of it has been, but they are not going to weld the doors shut; that much is given. I think they had an idea that when the Queen comes she can go in that door, or something, but it will not be a functional door to the building; that's a real crisis for Courthouse Square. These are really fundamental questions having to do with the language of architecture. Now, to my mind, the discussion of these kinds (of questions) hasn't even gotten to this level yet. The debate over whether old buildings are worth keeping, it seems to me, has largely been won. But then this question of the relationship of modern to old isn't there, although it is coming. But this more sophisticated discussion, that would have to do with how you actually do it, hasn't even begun yet.

Sampson: This is, of course, an age-old discussion for those people who see themselves as inevitably involved with existing fabrics, whether they be individual buildings or parts of an urban situation.

TFC: This debate, then, comes from Europe?

Sampson: It comes from any situation in which the amount of building that is existing is such that one can't tear it all down and build something new and 'proper'. It means that, inevitably, you will have to involve yourself with the analysis of structural characteristics, which George is talking about in terms of the typology of the fabric. You have to understand its tolerances, its advantages, its codes, and in transforming it, you have to enter into some kind of dialogue with that structure and set of codes. It will allow certain things and not allow others. And I would extend that from building an entrance to building a street.

"...if you are talking to architects who are supposed to know something about the history of architecture, then...you can't just throw Terragni out the window."

TFC: The conscious use of history is something that is attributed to the Post Modern and, from our discussion today, I sense a critical stance towards traditional Modernism, so where does that place you?

Baird: It's really tricky. You place me in a room with Moshe Safdie, then I'm Post Modernist, but if you place me in a room with Robert Stern, then I'm not.

Sampson: I think that one of the problems is that Post Modernism has been developed on an extreme reduction of the history of Modernism and has a tendency to depend on that. Modernism

should not be reduced to Fifties American corporate Modernism. I've always been interested in our contradicting this revisionist history and Modern ideology with examples of Modernism that are contextual, that are street related, that are city buildings. There are lots of these.

TFC: So the Post Modernists have accepted certain aspects of Modernism and rejected others?

Sampson: They had to work in a context that was strong enough that it was not possible to create a full-blown example of Modernism, with respect to Modernist tendencies in urbanism. Even then, I don't think it as simple as the Post Modern histories tend to suggest. One should always be suspicious of a critical position that depends on the re-writing of history. The Graves lecture was a good example. Matched against his very amusing criticism of the Villa Cook, you could put Palladio's Villa Barbero. The Villa Barbero has a false entrance; in fact, it's an entrance to the kitchen on the axis. The real entrance to the *piano nobile* of the house is through the arcade. The entrance is concealed by the arcade, as is the entrance to the Villa Cook. That example is taken as exemplar of all Modernism.

For my part, I think that Post Modernism is a self-fulfilling prophecy. That is, by declaring the end of Modernism and, by general consensus, believing in it, then it probably is true. I'm concerned about its reactive nature *vis-à-vis* Modernism. I'm very much interested in Modern compositional codes. I think that you will find that Michael Graves makes no sense without understanding collage.

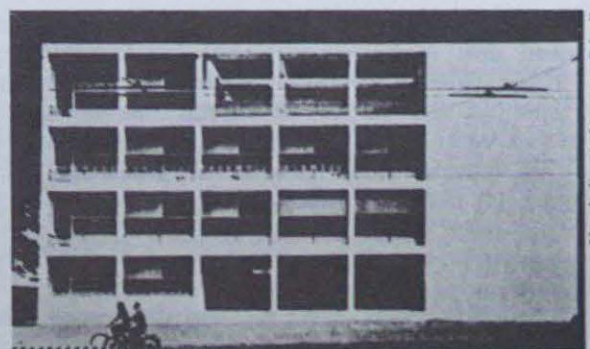
Baird: And non-frontality.

Sampson: We're very interested in Constructivism, *de Stijl* modes of composition. I think that of all the interiors Graves showed, the most powerful was the Maison de Verre, which is one of the canonical works of Modernism. I would compare it with any of the interiors that he showed. There is a tradition there that, as far as I'm concerned, is not closed and informs our work. In that respect, I'm quite prepared to let history decide whether or not we are Modern or Post Modern. What we are interested in, I think, is contemporary architecture.

Baird: There are some lineages there that are explicit. If you are interested in an architecture that is historically allusive and has iconographical connotations at a variety of levels and is full of anthropomorphic references, which I would say I am, you can find that all within the repertoire of Modernism. It's just that you probably won't talk about Mies, but you would definitely talk about Corb, Terragni, Aalto, and Scarpa.

Sampson: Absolutely. The Italian Modernists' work really invites comparison.

Casa del Fascio, Como
Giuseppe Terragni (1936)



New Italian Architecture, Galand

Baird: Its materiality, its figuration; all of these components are there. The Modernism to which Post Modernism is generally opposed polemically is a bit of a straw man. Even Mies — those really bad pictures you're shown aren't even by them. Gropius might just get into the running, but what you are typically shown is Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, and Kevin Roche; I'm not going to bat for them. The general public's view of Modernism is determined by what they see on the streets, which is largely appalling. On the other hand, if you are talking to architects who are supposed to know something about the history of architecture, then, in that more knowledgeable milieu, one has to take the position that you just can't throw Terragni out the window.

Sampson: Post Modernism takes a critical position *vis-à-vis* Modernism — modern practice and the ideology behind those aspects of modern practice that you are discussing with the general public. If you look at Peter Dickinson's work again, you'll find now that there is a guy who should fall into this revisionist history of Modernism. You have the building at College and Bay which is one of the best corner buildings in the city, in that it has both the tower that is square, or at least rectilinear, and a base that is inflected, *à la* Venturi, to deal with the inflection of the context. The Park Plaza uses a hotel court to deal with the modern problem of entry by automobile. The building that he did at Merton and Yonge also makes use of an auto court and builds a screen wall to the street.

Baird: The Wawanesa Insurance.

Sampson: That gas station we talked about has those rubble stone walls that act as those fences George was talking about previously with respect to the churches. So there is a guy who fits in to this nasty period and yet he seems to have some sort of commitment to city building which actually informs the way he constructs buildings in the city. He was also the one that initiated the Lothian Mews, which was an effort to...

Baird: It was an 'infill' project.

Sampson: That's right. It maintains buildings on Bloor Street and intensifies the use of the block and then becomes a model for York Square, which is done by people who are already critical of modern comprehensive development. So what is he (Dickinson) in respect to this critique?

TFC: He doesn't fit any attempt to classify him. My last question would be to find out what you perceive to be the advantages and disadvantages of teaching and practising?

Baird: I'm interested in the combination. Indeed, I suppose, for myself, I see it as an essential mixture. I suppose there is some question in my mind as to the variability of the weight of those commitments over time. The truth of the matter is that I haven't been that engaged in teaching recently.

Sampson: I think they need to vary. There are three components to our practice. One is the teaching component, which is individual. George teaches and I teach, for different reasons.

Baird: In fact, we have never taught together.

Sampson: There has always been a major research component of the practice and that research component has largely been research into urban development and the ways that cities have evolved. But there has been an interest beyond that, in theories evolving out of that research as well as theoretical interests *vis-à-vis* architecture itself, separate from issues of city building. Then there is the day-to-day practice of designing and having buildings built and doing all those things that architects have to do: client liaison, trying to get work, and all that. Teaching can be a liability, with respect to the latter, because there is a traditional view in Canada that people who teach, don't do, and that people who think and write are likely to be less practical than people who have

their sleeves rolled up all the time and are doing things. Sometimes, clients are quite reserved about the fact that one teaches as well as runs a practice. I think that, for my own part, teaching is something that I always like to do because I'm concerned about the generations of people that actually practice in the city. I'm concerned that the schools produce not only brilliant practitioners, but also practitioners that are capable and will improve the average level of building in the city. There are going to be the stars and there are also going to be the good solid people that do a lot of the building. Cities are, frankly, built not only out of great monuments but out of sensible well-built buildings. I like teaching because it is sometimes stimulating with respect to the practice, as practice becomes pragmatic and one can become forgetful of some theoretical issues.

TFC: The second aspect of your practice that makes you different from the common practitioner is the commitment to office research. Is that paired with your teaching at the University, or is it something that would go on independently, even if you stopped teaching?

Sampson: It has tended to go on, anyway. I guess it's partly that we have developed a reputation for it. In the old days, we often did it because we didn't have anything else to do.

Baird: I was just going to say that my attitude toward education has changed somewhat, in that it seems to me that we have entered a phase where architectural teaching once again needs to be more didactic. This kind of relationship, between the making of judgements to the rules that Barry elaborated earlier, I share as a kind of general principle for the relationship of theory and practice. But it does not seem to me that, whether one likes it or not, the principles of Modernism have been sufficiently diffused by now, pedagogically speaking; there is at issue the expository setting out of familiar architectural principles. Not so much that one would have to follow them absolutely, but it does seem to me that one needs to have an awareness of them existing as a body of principles, which at the very least could be considered to be the way that buildings are made — such a body of principles would be subject to critical revision to the kind of model of action one would be looking forward to seeing. At the moment, we have a kind of vacuum of principles, in which various attempts are made to fill it with intuition or *ad hoc* perceptions of faculty. This is a finger in the dike, you know. So, I'm interested in the possibility of a more didactic pedagogy and I'm not saying that this is for all time and all applications but, relative to the situations that I've been used to, I think it is an appropriate move to make.

TFC: Where would those rules come from?

Baird: For my part, it would, probably, primarily consist of case studies. One would just take...

Sampson: Principles.

Baird: Take a Terragni building and just take it apart, see how it works.

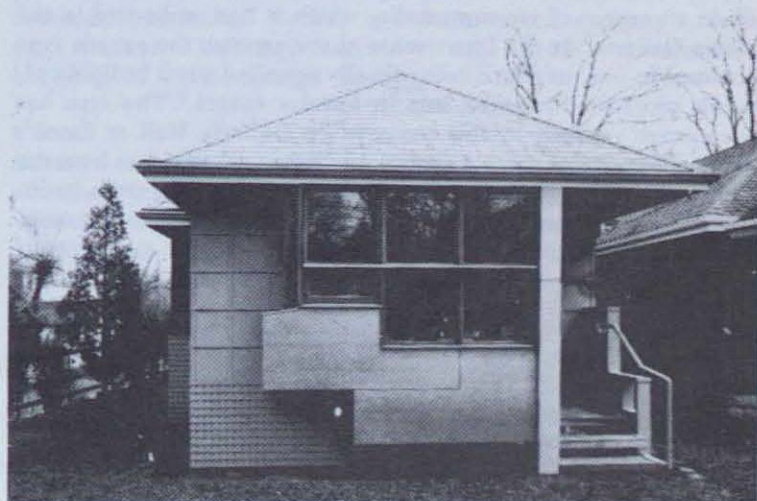
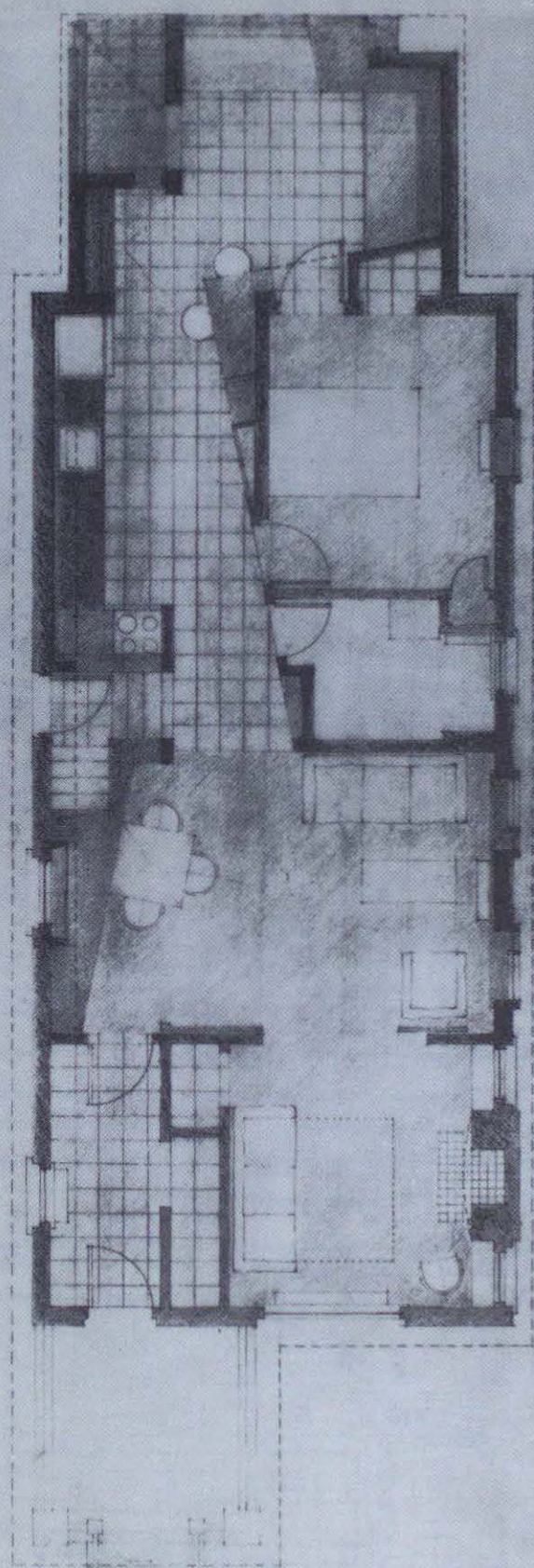
Sampson: It is another thing that one discovers in teaching; a lot of these canonical works are not known. People see them in magazines, but they don't really know them.

Baird: They acquire a kind of iconographic or polemical status, but that doesn't mean that they are understood.

TFC: Without the analysis?

Sampson: For sure. At the University of Toronto, for example, if you talk in detail of Corb buildings, students, who thought they had been overexposed to Le Corbusier, will be amazed, having never known that all that was there.

Baird: Others, of course, will deny that it is there.



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- Baird & Sampson/McGrath Residence renovation
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1. Reorganized floor plan of bungalow

2. View through skewed corridor

3. Rear elevation with addition

George Baird and Barry Sampson were interviewed in Toronto for THE FIFTH COLUMN by Leo DeSorcy. Leo DeSorcy has attended the University of Calgary and the University of Manitoba and is presently completing his final year in the B.Arch. program at the University of Toronto. From 1979 to 1981 he worked with the Sturgess Partnership in Calgary and was a contributor to Release magazine.