Fig. 1. Semmens Simpson, Vancouver Public Library, 1957, Vancouver. (photo R. W. Liscombe, 1995).

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Rhodri Windsor Liscombe

Conditions of Modernity: Si[gh]tings from Vancouver

In memory of Alan A. Macnaughton, P.C., O.C., D.L.

The discussion of the relative chronologies and properties of Modernism and Postmodernism tends to the rhetorical and global.[1] Comparative analysis of specific architectural commissions supposedly representative of each phenomenon but within single typologies and locations remains to be attempted, especially in the Canadian context. This paper will compare the two central public libraries built in post-war Vancouver, each of which has been held to represent, or embody, the respective conditions of Modernism and Postmodernism. Modernism and Postmodernism are here defined, respectively, as a universalizing anti-historicist design process centred on the technical solution of functional need and concerned with social improvement, and as a contextually generated, historically-referenced style seeking to attain both more particular and symbolic architectural expression. The comparison indicates that the relationship between Modernism and Postmodernism is less discontinuous than reflexive and revisionist in nature, and that neither has been as homogeneous as presumed. The current dependence upon either a visual or a sociological reading underplays the impact of what might be called the internal discourse of architecture, including the conditions of practice. Such readings also oversimplify the discussion of architectural contextuality and consumption.

Vancouver is unusual among most major cities in having commissioned two central or civic libraries since 1945.[2] While these buildings, respectively opened in 1957 and 1995 to markedly divergent critical acclaim, they are equally remarkable for their aesthetic, symbolic and functional difference[s].[3] The 1957 library by the local firm of Semmens Simpson was incisively rectilinear and chiefly dependent upon the interplay of line and plane for the formal expression of purpose and meaning (fig. 1). It was largely glazed and metallic in fabric, including even its external ornamentation, and hence transparent and relatively weightless in appearance. These qualities are particularly evident at the main entrance. Recessed at the intersection of its Burrard and Robson Street facades, this arrangement clearly embodies the library's declared mission of public accessibility and civic engagement (fig. 2). By contrast, and as a consequence of significant redefinition of those socio-political concepts, the

Fig. 2. Semmens Simpson, Vancouver Public Library, 1957, Vancouver; Burrard Street facade (photo G. Warrington, 1958). (J.R.A.I.C., by permission)

1995 library is integrated into a multi-use bureaucratic and commercial complex. The library component is curvilinear, or more properly eliptical (fig. 3); enclosed if not entirely opaque; masonry finished and monumental. The team of architects — now a celebrated international practitioner, Moshe Safdie, in partnership with the Vancouver firm Downs Archambault — reverted to the semblance of historical tradition. The profile and columnation of the library recall ancient Classsical and Renaissance precedent which is reiterated by incised mouldings delineating triadic patterns in its upper register (fig. 4). Where the interior of the Semmens Simpson library was open-plan and inoffensively utilitarian, the Safdie/Downs Archambault facility is spatially and functionally diverse as well as deliberately spectacular.

The visual differences reflect individual architectural taste and changes in technology, professional practice and cultural attitudes. Yet, notwithstanding their contrasting appearance and impact, the libraries had similar requirements. Both in the 1950s and the 1990s these requirements were to accomodate expanding print, publication and such new media as records and microfilm, as well as an increased role for the public library in what is now usually termed cultural production. Moreover, despite discrepant iteration or realization, the architects concurred in many of their declared design objectives. Uppermost was maximum spatial and technical efficiency through the integration of stack with service and public areas, arranged as much by pattern of use as by pedagogical system. An imagery of transparency is architectonically appropriated through the extensive glazing of both libraries, and most notably in the 1995 building by the glass "community wall" across the internal entrance front (fig. 5). In both, the window onto an information resource functions as a symbol of rapid accessibility.[4] Thus in their initial scheme for the 1957 library, the local firm of Semmens Simpson stated that the building was "[d]esigned to invite [in] the citizens it will service," to be durable and substantial while functional, with "overall flexibility which provides for ready reallocation of space" and expansion.[5] The curtain wall was intended "to show to advantage the book stacks and study access within and to encourage passers-by to enter and become users."[6] Some thirty-five years later, in his "Vision Statement" for the second library, Moshe Safdie defined its design concept (for which he was primarily responsible) as "display, with books enveloping the user, everywhere proclaiming visually what it has to offer."[7] In each library the building and librarian operate less as defenders of culture — and its implied socio-political hierarchy — than as facilitators of infor-
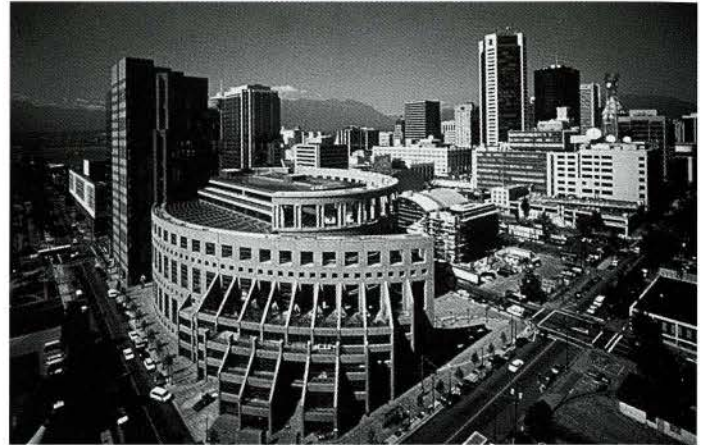

Fig. 3. Moshe Safdie/Downs Archambault, Vancouver Public Library, 1995, Vancouver; aerial view (photo Barry Downs, by permission)

mation retrieval and leisure reading. Lastly, the original program for the 1957 library included plans for commercial rental space that, actualized in the 1995 building, has contributed to its negative critical reception as a facility more for commodified information/exchange than for public literacy.[8]

What had changed profoundly between the 1950s and 1990s was the diminution of social democratic principles in the framing of urban policy.[9] This in turn impacted the definition of the overall architectural agenda and thereby the relative conceptual agency of the architects. The simpler service objectives of the mid-1950s were replaced forty years later by the preoccupation with symbol and imagery required by the municipal and institutional patron and largely endorsed by the public. The competition documentation was now prepared by professional program consultants. Picking up on its rhetoric, Safdie/Downs Archambault revealed their strategy in a corresponding epistemology of what they termed "Ritual and Ceremony."[10] They satisfied the functional requirement through the superimposition of symbolism — even visual pageantry — in the architectural satisfaction of practical requirement. Their written description also neatly articulated, and thereby partly redirected, the cruder materialistic ambition masked by the grandiose and aestheticized language in the competition literature: "We [the public] yearn for our institutions to engender civic pride," adding in subtle contestation of the entrepreneurial values re-emphasized in the resurgence of conservative capitalist, or neo-liberal, politics over the preceding decade, "[w]e want them to counteract the pervasive commercial culture."[11] Nearly half a century earlier, Semmens Simpson had not confronted such sophisticated if fundamentally contradictory, even conflictual specifications.

The concern with spectacle and discourse was a consequence of altered socio-cultural attitudes that intersect with aspects of Postmodern theory. But equally significant — and not unrelated — was the emergence of the professional program consultant and the revival of the limited public competition. In this competition Safdie/Downs Archambault were matched against two accomplished United States firms with expertise in commercial as much as institutional design: Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer of New York in association with Waisman Dewar Grout Carter of Vancouver, and Kuarabara Payne McKenna Blumberg of Toronto

Fig. 4. Moshe Safdie/
Downs Archambault,
Vancouver Public Library,
1995, Vancouver:
colonnade.
(photo M. Grignon, 2000)

Fig. 5. Moshe Safdie/
Downs Archambault,
Vancouver Public Library,
1995, Vancouver; atrium
and "community wall."
(photo Barry Downs,
by permission)

with James Cheng of Vancouver, who would later be commissioned to revamp the 1957 library. The competition was judged by four architects: two local and two international.[12] They were charged with selecting a design that expressed cultural tropes appropriate to the promotion of learning, civic dignitas and consumerism. The embrace of consumerist values was partly an outcome of the funding of construction through market financing. This policy included the sale for redevelopment of the 1957 building despite its heritage designation. The once stoically elegant exterior and spacious interior were substantially altered in 1996-97 to accommodate garish and generic outlets for Planet Hollywood and Virgin Records — each business, however, exemplifying the continuing internationalization of commercial practice and standardization of popular taste associated with the Modern ethos. A different expression of continuity comes in the descriptive phrases — an oasis of "calmness and security," and a "treasury of culture" — used by Safdie and Barry Downs to attune their project to current attitudes.

The uncompromising abstract functionalism of the 1957 library embodied the values of an era preoccupied by world conflict and the Cold War, when library buildings seemed to signify "free access to the world's knowledge for all people," and the construction across Canada of community centres with integral libraries intended to promote "better citizenship" and "enrich the cultural and post-educational life."[13]

The Modernist rhetoric of post-war Canadian libraries melded culture and education with free market democracy, paralleling the conventionalization of Modernism in Cold-War North America as a project divided between urban high-rise commercial and suburban residential architecture. That division, with its adverse impact on transportation and community, would undermine the comprehensive and collective tenets of Modern movement design as well as its public endorsement. The positive aspect of modernization was articulated by E.S. Robinson, Director of the Vancouver Library system up to 1957. In the February 1947 issue of the *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada*, he declared: "The time has come to prove to our citizens that the public library is not a remote institution holding no attraction for the working man or the business man."[14] Surely alluding negatively to the still operating 1903 Carnegie Library (designed by H.W. Grant), Robinson privileged the following design attributes: "friendly, inviting and functional [...] simple though distinguished." The plain language manifest in the periodic articles on library design in the *J.R.A.I.C.* through the 1950s reflected the clear sense of objectives, means and expectations of that era and the legacy of the missionary zeal of the between-the-wars Modern movement.[15] Such clarity was intensified by

the onset of Cold War propaganda, to the advantage of library expenditure. In his 1948 annual report to City Council, titled *Growing with the Vancouver Public Library*, Robinson described the public library as the "University of the People," making available everything from Robert's *Home from the Cold Wars* to the writings of Churchill, Eisenhower, Huxley, Kinsey and Mailer. "Good readers," he asserted, "make good citizens and the library is the ounce of prevention which will keep our people informed, balanced in their judgement and firm in their belief in democracy as our way of life. An intelligent vote cannot be cast by an ill-informed citizen. A public library is truly an 'Arsenal of Democracy.'" While announcing initial plans for a new main library in addition to the construction of several smaller branches, Robinson's 1948 report further stated the contemporary political consensus for expenditure on social infrastructure. The new library would be flexible in plan, modular in construction and include "space for commercial purposes [...] until such time as the library needs it."

Robinson's comment underscores the need to nuance the Modern/Postmodern dialectic. For in commending the Modernist project, Robinson was also appeasing those civic politicians who regarded the library as a contribution to either the monumental hubris of the city or its economic growth. A civic centre, including a new main library and Federal offices, had been promoted in the 1930 Harland Bartholomew City Beautiful Plan (renewed by the conservative council in 1944 and 1947) as "stabilizing and enhancing the business district."[16] For its part the civic Library Board "insisted that its new proposed main library building had to be located as near the heart of the business district as possible." That notion would recur in the caption to a photograph on the cover of the City Library 1957 annual report: "Bang in the middle of the business district." It also articulated the belief of Tom Ingledow, Chief Engineer of the major provincial corporation B.C. Electric, and Chair of the Trustees of the Vancouver Art Gallery, that "cultural development must keep pace with the industrial and economic expansion."[17]

The argument of commercial potential in cultural expansion had almost succeeded in accelerating construction of a new main library in 1947, no longer at the proposed civic centre on Georgia

Fig. 6. Fred Lasserre, photomontage scheme for a new public library and civic auditorium, 1949-50. (L. Maranda archive, by permission)
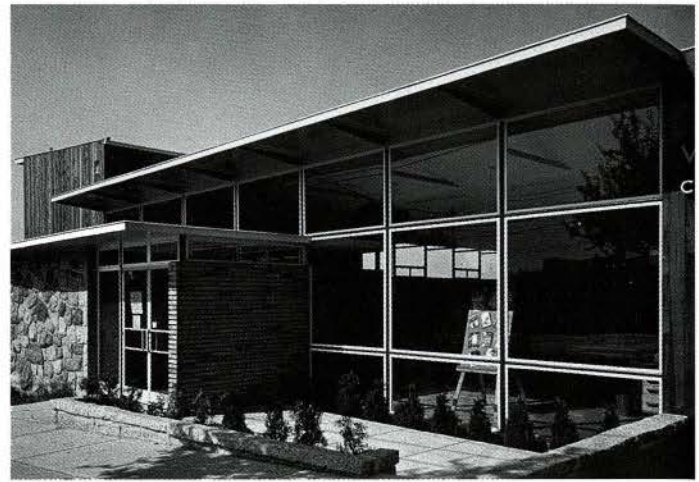

Fig. 8. Semmens Simpson, Collingwood Branch, Vancouver Public Library, 1952 (photo G. Warrington). (B. Simpson archive, Collection Centre Canadien d'architecture/ Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal)

Fig. 7. Sharp and Thompson Berwick Pratt, South Hill Branch, Vancouver Public Library, 1950
(photo G. Warrington). (*J.R.A.I.C.*, by permission)

Street but at the core of current redevelopment along Burrard Street. This move was anticipated in the earliest Modernist design for the library by Frederic Lasserre, who then had been recently appointed inaugural Head of the University of British Columbia Department of Architecture.[18] Aware of the Library Board's insistence on a site in the business district, he won support of the Downtown Business Man's Association for a strikingly lucid Modernist complex: an 11-storey office block, auditorium, radio station and linking 3-storey library around a landscaped court within the perimeter of one city block (diagonally southeast of the final location). This combination of civic and popular culture with commerce narrowly failed to win public approval in March 1947 for a tax increase to raise the $2.5 million for site and construction. The comparatively small local economy also aborted Lasserre's later and more comprehensive 1949 scheme for a civic cultural centre on the Georgia Street site (fig. 6).

Nevertheless, over the next decade, the electorate endorsed the funding of eighteen beachheads of literacy in schools or firehalls, mobile branches or "Bookmobiles" — a telling icon of the mechanical and social episteme of Modernism — and the building of eight branch libraries. The most highly regarded were the South Hill Branch, 1950, by Sharp & Thompson Berwick Pratt (S. & T.B.P.) (fig. 7) and the Collingwood Branch, 1952, by their chief rivals in the vanguard of Modernist architecture, Semmens Simpson (fig. 8). Each adapted aspects of British, European and United States Modernist design to local conditions and materials. Not surprisingly, Semmens Simpson and S. & T.B.P. were invited by the Library Board to present separate preliminary designs for a new main branch in this period. At first, C.E. Pratt of

S. & T.B.P. became front-runner with a design influenced by Gordon Bunshaft's Lever House in New York (fig. 9). A glass curtain-walled library block was allied to a 14/16 storey office tower, probably intended for the 210' x 120' plot, adjacent to the Hotel Vancouver, that just purchased by the City. Then the initiative passed to Semmens Simpson in conjunction with C.B.K. Van Norman. Together they designed a single tall slab block, compacting lower floor library with upper floor commercial space, faced with a tartan pattern of metal frame and glass and panel infill. In each case the architects deployed the Modernist strategies of modular reinforced concrete and steel structure, open plan and curtain wall; these were still symbols of technological innovation validated by the war and now accepted as economical by commercial developers with considerable provincial and municipal clout. Those strategies also satisfied the professional librarians' post-war requirement for open stacks directly integrating departmental with public areas, and their self-image as agents of social enlightenment and personal empowerment through literacy. Finally in 1955 the Library Board endorsed a revised 5-storey scheme by Semmens Simpson, who, due to budgetary restraint and the small site, only had to accommodate the library (fig. 10).

This design presented glazed facades to the two downtown streets bounding its site. The architectural implementation of user-attracting access was achieved by recessing the lobby at the intersection of the glazed public facades, behind which the floor plate was cantilevered 12 feet from the periphery of the structural steel grid. This counterpoint was augmented by the contrasting deep eave, and by the use of opaque components such as the painted concrete and marble veneered walls alongside the adjacent buildings. These formal metaphors of modernity were to have been reinforced by a Corbusian curved elevator shaft (built square) and photocell-operated, vertical aluminum slat sun screen on the upper level of the Robson Street facade. That screen exemplified the extensive research undertaken by the architects and their engineer, the Norwegian-born, Swiss-trained, Per T. Christoffersen. He adapted new photographic techniques to record the performance of a plastic model under different weight-
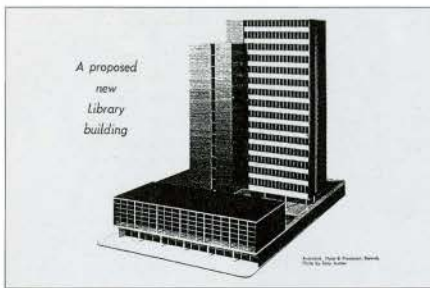
Fig. 9. Sharp and Thompson Berwick Pratt,
photograph of the model for a new public library, 1953.
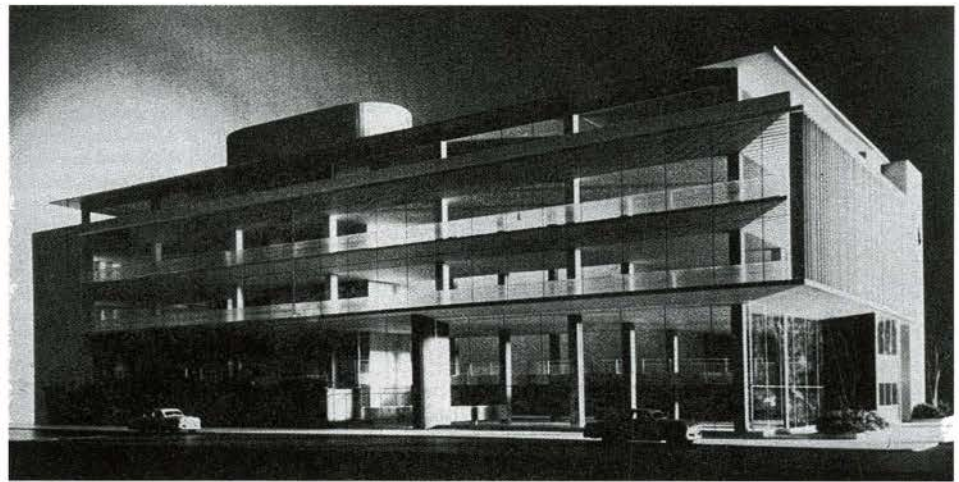(Annual Report, VPL, by permission)

Fig. 10. Semmens Simpson, Vancouver Public Library, 1957, Vancouver; photograph of the model for the accepted design, 1956.
(B. Simpson archive, Collection Centre Canadien d'architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal)

ing conditions.[19] This technique enabled the 3.5 air-conditioned public service floors above the two-storey basement (fireproof) book storage to sustain maximum stack weight at all points. Moreover the structure could support the addition of two more floors above the upper administrative floor. A capacity of over 800,000 volumes was attained together with the provision of designated subject departments, those most heavily used, like general information, history, applied or social sciences on the ground floor and mezzanine (fig. 11). Each area was easily reached by elevator or separate sets of public and service stairs, including one set on the Robson Street front for the capacious children's department. And much of the library interior was intriguingly visible to the passerby.

That feature especially gratified the City Librarian, who in his 1956 annual report had responded in the affirmative to his own question, "Should librarians live in glass houses?" After all, his Modernist branch libraries had helped boost library usage twelve percent over the previous year despite the advent of television. Yet the new main library also achieved the monumentality and visual relevance that had been commended in 1943 by Siegfried Giedion, secretary of the C.I.A.M. [Congrès Internationaux de l'Architecture Moderne][20]. Semmens Simpson resolved volumetric, planar and textural asymmetries through formal structural integrity and proportional consistency. They were also responsible for the commission from the local artist Lionel Thomas of the bronze and plexiglass exterior sculpture — backlit by automobile headlights — evoking Babylonian and Assyrian cuneiforms, and the mosaic mural of the runic origins of language in the lobby (fig. 12).[21] Signifying the classless social mission of the contemporary library, Thomas used abstract forms to assert Modernist belief in their communicative universality, as well as to integrate ornament with architectural effect. At its official opening on 1 November 1957 the library was lauded by the National Librarian and Archivist, Dr. Kaye Lamb, as "a model of functional design and architectural beauty."[22]

The critical response to its successor was almost diametrically opposite. In the January 1997 issue of *Architectural Review*, in his regular editorial article entitled "Outrage," Peter Davey convicted the new library of "aggressive pastiche" inimicable to its picturesque and architectonic setting (fig. 13). He did so on the single indictment that it represented a "pre-cast miniature of the Colosseum."[23] This allusion prevails as a mark of both popu-

lar favour and professional-critical disapproval, compounded by imprecise accusations of functional deficiency.[24] However, there exist significant iconographic variations between the Roman original and the Vancouver edifice. In particular, the library is neither detached nor of dominant scale like the Colosseum, it involves peripheral containment rather than punctuated structure, and it is not fully arcaded. Nevertheless, in devising their composition to solve functional and symbolic objectives, or their structuration of cultural signification,[25] Safdie/Downs Archambault certainly anticipated this popular allusion. Their presumed historicist intention caused many commentators to invoke the by-then pejorative association with so-called Postmodernist architectural practice: the resurgent taste for historically referenced exterior ornamentation — facadism — that coincided with the rise of conservative political and economic ideology from the mid-1970s.

Reaction against Modernist architectural and socio-political attitudes emerged before the construction of the 1957 library. The Modernist legacy in Vancouver increasingly seemed to be what a prominent group of architects in 1958 termed "urbanicide" — the destruction of the downtown core through unregulated demolition and construction.[26] The rejection of their "Project '58" proposal for a downtown participatory planning agency in conjunction with the centennial of the Province heralded the decline of the social democratic agenda in provincial and civic politics and the consolidation of the entrepreneurial and commercial dicta that had predominated before 1945.[27] Although several entirely speculative real estate schemes such as that for Coal Harbor [Milltown] were rejected and parts of the historic Gastown district and Chinatown were preserved, the civic fabric was primarily determined by property speculation.[28] This financial and cultural construction of the city arguably reached an apogee with Expo '86 and related real estate development. Each reflected the laissez-faire business attitudes of the Social Credit administrations which regarded the city as a site of trade and diversion wherein public space was to generate revenue rather than community.[29] These profound changes — again reflecting federal and international phenomena, including the steady withdrawal of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation from low-income
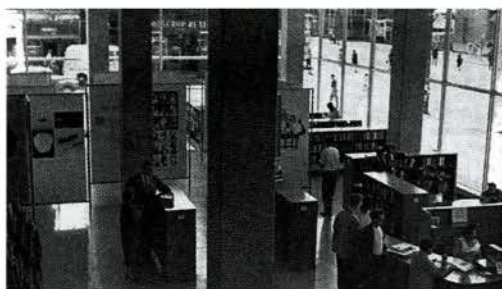
Fig. 11. Semmens
Simpson, Vancouver
Public Library, 1957,
Vancouver; ground
floor, from mezza-
nine.
(photo G. Warrington,
1958). (*J.R.A.I.C.*, by
permission)

Fig. 12. Semmens
Simpson, Vancouver
Public Library, 1957,
Vancouver; mosaic
main hall, by
L. and P. Thomas.
(Annual Report, VPL,
by permission)

housing and changed regulations for immigration — are visible in the striking contrast between the topographically unobtrusive low-rise community False Creek development (from 1964) and strident high-rise construction of the Expo lands (from 1993).[30] Notwithstanding a generally higher level of architectural design, including work by Downs Archambault, and communal spaces and facilities, the Expo lands follow the Yaletown and other more recent downtown building campaigns in privileging higher income residential or office accomodation. Together they represent a successive gentrification of a formerly depressed area of the city in which the Vancouver city council wanted the 1995 library to play a part by raising land values in contradistinction to the communitarian "New Community" vision still redolent in the 1957 library.

This return to unmediated commercial urbanism followed upon various local architectural manifestations of the wider revision of Modernist design conventions. Some aspects of that revision are typified in three high-rise buildings standing along Burrard Street. The earliest is the Daon Building (Musson Cattell Mackey Partnership; 1980-81) which heralded the transformation in Vancouver of Modernist glass-curtain walling from signifier of functional transparency into a High-Tech icon where reflectivity is a surrogate for contextuality and a means to reduce actual size. Those latter ploys are even more evident in the hotel and office complex developed by Peter Wall (Wall Centre, 1990-94, designed by Hamilton Doyle and the Wall Design Group). Altogether different from the sheer surfaces of the Wall Centre is the Canada Place complex, including the Pan Pacific Hotel, convention and cruise ship docking facilities (1983-86, Zeidler Roberts Musson Cattell Mackey and Downs Archambault), and Cathedral Place (1989-91, designed by Paul Merrick), where the architectonic vocabulary of each derives from associative and contextual formal models. The roof of Canada Place recalls ships' sails and the hotel a naval vessel's conning tower. At Cathedral Place, the Neo-Gothic arches and pitched roof are copied from the adjacent Christ Church Cathedral (1889-95, C.O. Wickenden) and Hotel Vancouver (1929, 1936-37, Archibald and Scholefield) (fig. 14). The masonry-clad but essentially Modernist steel frame is decorated with versions of the figural sculpture from the heritage Art Deco building it supplanted (Medical Dental Building; 1929-30, McCarter and Nairne).

A less straightforward, if potentially less ephemeral, contextuality can be discerned in the high-rise architecture of Richard Henriquez.[31] Although basically Modernist in structural practice, Henriquez conceived the facade as a separate entity through which to narrate the place of the new building in its existing context. This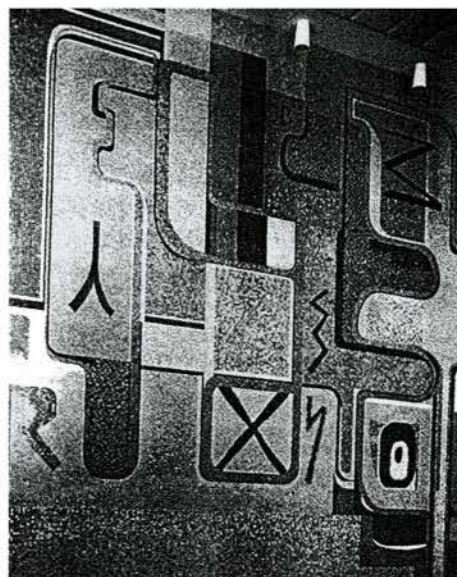 strategy arguably succeeds best in the Sylvia Tower (1988-90) but is more contrived in its neighbour the Eugenia Place high-rise condominium (1993-94). The fenestration and detailing of the Eugenia apartments adapt features of the hotel. Then the central bay has a semi-circular projection, conical at the entrance and flared at the uppermost level of the main facade, intended to invoke a nail or screw. The memorialization of the successive building activity on the once forested location is further and ironically conveyed by a tree planted at the top of the mythic nail. Elsewhere, however, the local progeny of Postmodernist facadism seldom rises above a superficial historicism, with which the Safdie/Downs Archambault library was implicated by several local critics.[32]

The architectural historical references in the 1995 library were more considered and integrated with the formal solution of functional and planning requisite. The referencing alike played better in the public arena.[33] This derived in part from the much greater consultative process that preceded the competition for the second Vancouver Public Library. The extent of that transformation in client-architect relationship is most evident in the variation between the respective program and commission documents. The 15-page ring-bound proposal Semmens Simpson submitted in 1956 contained a mere two typed pages of conceptual and factual explication prefacing photographs of their model and plans. It was considerably smaller even than the "Call for Expression of Vision" compiled in 1991 by the Director of the Vancouver Public Library, Madeleine Aalto. Derived from a series of studies commenced in 1980, each page was densely written around such headings as 'Architectural Concepts,' 'Key Design Issues,' or 'Design Challenges' — the latter alone comprising sixteen subheadings. In fact, the materials on the aesthetic program distributed to potential competitors and then to the four co-partnerships selected for the second, final round in the Fall of 1991 exceeded those concerned with technical requirements for the library — notwithstanding its objective of correcting the inadequacy of the 1957 building to accommodate the supposedly imminent transfer of knowledge to hypertext and cyberspace. The very organization of a competition that favoured the teaming of local firms in subsidiary partnership with central Canadian and/or international practices — exemplified by Moshe Safdie with offices in Toronto and Jerusalem — betrays the preoccupation with information technology and civic pomp.[34] In-
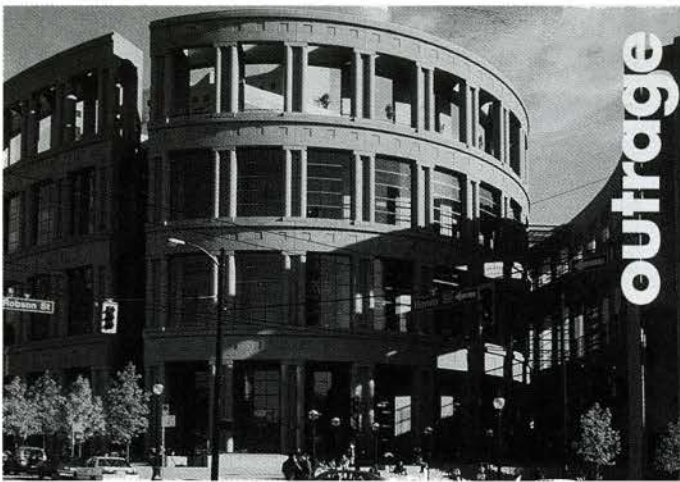
Fig. 13. Moshe Safdie/Downs Archambault, Vancouver Public Library, 1995, Vancouver.
(photograph from P. Davey, "Outrage," *Architectural Review* 201, no. 1199 (January 1997): 21/1)

Fig. 14. Paul Merrick,
Cathedral Place, 1989-91,
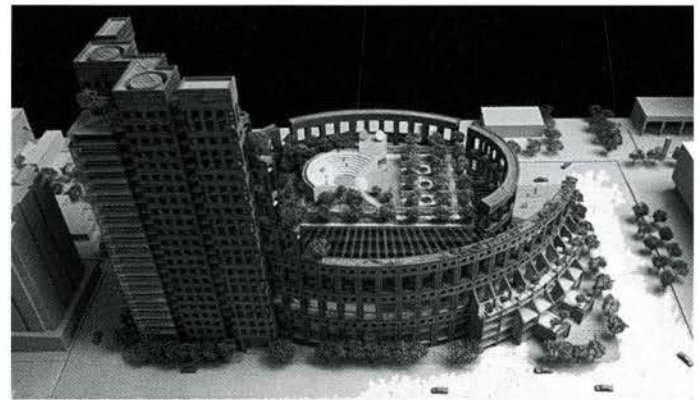Vancouver.
(photo L. Noppen)

Fig. 15. Moshe Safdie/Downs Archambault, Vancouver Public Library, 1995, Vancouver;
model of the competition scheme.
(photo Barry Downs, by permission)

deed, architecture was appropriated to manifest the essentially technocratic and commercial polemic of "world city" status as motor of entrepreneurial connectivity vaunted by Vancouver municipal politicians and their federal and provincial peers. A corollary is the absence of an accompanying campaign of branch library construction. The exception is the Renfrew Branch by Roger Hughes (1993-95), recipient of the Governor-General's Award for architecture. In company with John and Patricia Patkau's Newton Library (1989-90), in the nearby municipality of Surrey, the Renfrew library exemplifies the more self-conscious manipulation of structure and space in the resolution of functional factors that characterize renewed Modernist design on the west coast.

The 1991 commission was conceived primarily around symbol and signage, with the library officially defined simultaneously as agent of cultural promotion, information commodification and technological populism. Equally unresolved was the language of the documents distributed to the competing architects. The competition documents contained elements of semiotic, phenomenological and critical discourse theory. The architect reading them thus confronted a slippery melange of only partially synthesized criteria. Take one sentence from the 'Architectural Concepts' section: "The external image of the library [including the Federal office tower] should act as a directional and informational device for the library patron and should make a symbolic statement about the historical social values which the library embodies." Aside from the imprecise definition of those social values, the architects had to valorize the book as cultural object while also institutionalizing the electronic galaxy; put another way, the program material failed to indicate whether information technology, and its inherently rapid evolution, was intended to service or subsume the permanency of print culture. Moreover, the question of imagery was complicated by instruction to, on the one hand, introduce a dramatic and inviting outdoor space that would enhance the decrepit surrounding urban environment and, on the other, establish a grand enclosed civic space. The architects replied in kind, devising a conceptual fabric that inflected linguistic with architectonic tropes. Literal, or rather literary and iconographic equivalence was most evident in the scheme by

Safdie/Downs Archambault (fig. 15), which, it should be acknowledged, scored highest in the non-binding public as well as the professional adjudication despite declared distaste for its historicism.[35] The adjudicators unanimously concurred that only Safdie/Downs Archambault had resolved the several design problems and attained an integrated use of site and clear definition of circulation and library access.

Although in his "Vision Statement" Safdie invoked Louis Kahn's reinvestment of functional space with intrinsic spiritual value, the formal composition he and his partners devised manifests descriptive representation.[36] The parti depends on four conjoined strategies, here defined from issues of ambience to that of plan-form. First, the maximization of natural light without detriment to the books, as signifier of their power to enlighten.[37] Second, the glazed entrance "community wall" that invitingly displays the private act of reading to the public gaze. Third, the functional primacy of openness and flexibility facilitated by central escalators between floors, moveable stacks, bridges to contiguous reading galleries, and the housing of ducting and wiring under a carpeted service floor thereby eliminating the need for partition walls. Fourth, the Renaissance Vitruvian-figure-inspired plan of library rectangle within oval to accommodate its specified distinct floor plate with separate reading areas, accessible yet impressive civic space, pedestrian transit across the sloping site, and integration with the Federal office. (Several of their
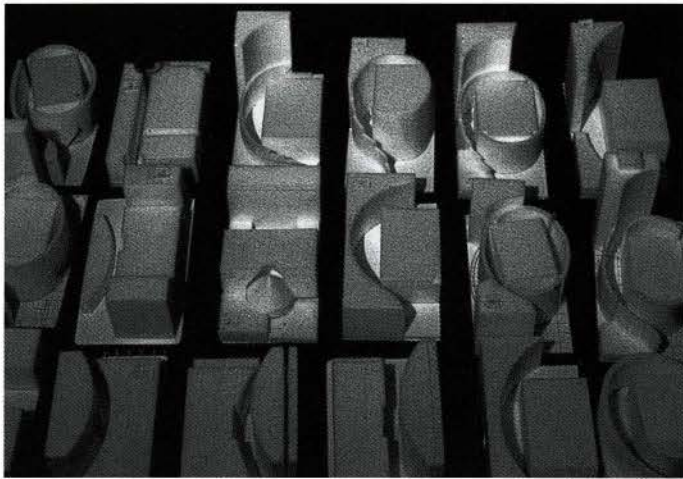
Fig. 16. Moshe Safdie/Downs Archambault, Vancouver Public Library, 1995, Vancouver; massing models.
(photo Barry Downs, by permission)

Fig. 17. Thompson Berwick Pratt and Partners, CBC Building, 1973-75, Vancouver.
(photo L. Noppen)

Fig. 18. Moshe Safdie/ Downs Archambault, Vancouver Public Library, 1995, Vancouver; interior.
(photo Barry Downs, by permission)

massing models (fig. 16) envisaged a more peripheral arrangement of library and Federal office not involving an ovoid block.) The addition of columnar structural service mullions to the resultant oval external mass of the library, coloured at Safdie's insistence to resemble stone, clinched its reading as a transplanted Colosseum.

The columnation became the chief object of criticism as being inappropriate to the indigenous as well as settler architectural traditions and predominantly wood vernacular building. But Safdie grounded his design conception in the typological and cultural heritage of library design as well as customary public expectation.[58] He specifically associated the columnar motif with the ancient library of Alexandria and neoclassical libraries in London, New York, and Paris, and most especially with Jacopo Sansovino's library in Venice, that were similarly contiguous to public spaces appropriated to commerce and spectacle. It is worth noting that Semmens Simpson also contested the prior design idioms of Vancouver in favour of a largely imported Modernist architectural vocabulary. The 1957 library altered rather than accommodated the architectural context, and in a manner more deliberately autonomous than the Safdie/Downs Archambault edifice. Nor can the major official building adjacent to Library Square be accounted any less obtrusive aesthetically or intrusive upon the physical environment. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation building (1973-75, Thompson, Berwick Pratt and Partners, Paul Merrick project architect) is inimical to conventional views of West Coast architecture and cultural ethos, if more formally experimental (fig. 17). It has been popularly dubbed "the bunker" for the uncompromising, New Brutalist, external statement of internal organization, structural-service system and functional materials.[39]

By contrast, Safdie's recourse to fundamentally classical disciplines of plan and form correspond with those encyclopaedic systems of knowledge instituted on classical grounds in the 18th century. Their architectural embodiment reverberates in the conscious monumentality of the 1995 library, which recalls the pre-eminence accorded to knowledge by the architect Etienne Louis Boullée when describing his 1785 design for the Royal Library of France: "The building that is most precious to a Nation is undoubtedly one which houses all acquired knowledge."[40] Yet there are still further dimensions to Safdie's frankly classical monumentality. By virtue of being consistently embodied in each element and aspect of the complex, the library images continuity and collective social memory in an urban environment of rapid change and reconstruction; indeed, the satisfaction of a desire for formal recognition and durability is a consistent feature of popular reaction to Library Square.[41] In addition, the classical monumentality is abstracted to the point of being reconfigured in a manner comparable to the hybridized western core of contemporary popular culture, itself globalized by the information technology integrated into the 1995 library. In this respect Safdie attempted an inclusionary re-inscription or regenerative inversion of once-dominant cultural forms quite different from the commodified populist historicism of the late Modern cultural industry and much Postmodern architecture.[42] This process of re-inscription, or redemptive transformation of iconographic symbolism, parallels contemporary practice in other cultural domains. For example in the western Canadian context, British Common Law, formerly an agent of imperial expropriation, is now being operated to establish rather than erase indigenous political and cultural identity. In a similar process, the Vancouver-based First Nations painter Lawrence Yuweluptun represents his powerful critique of colonialism by deliberate and ironic inter-
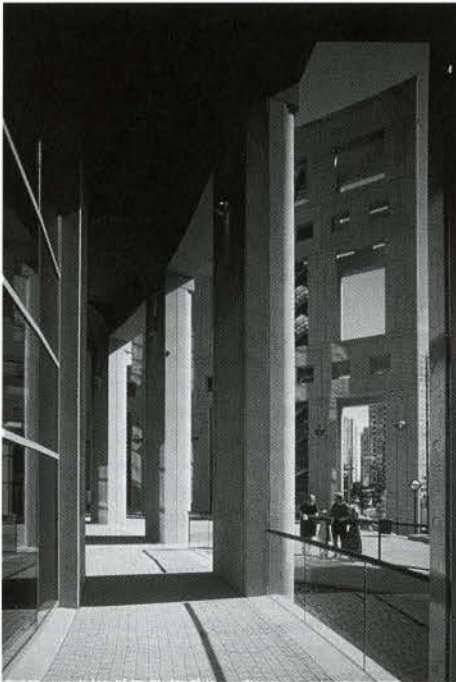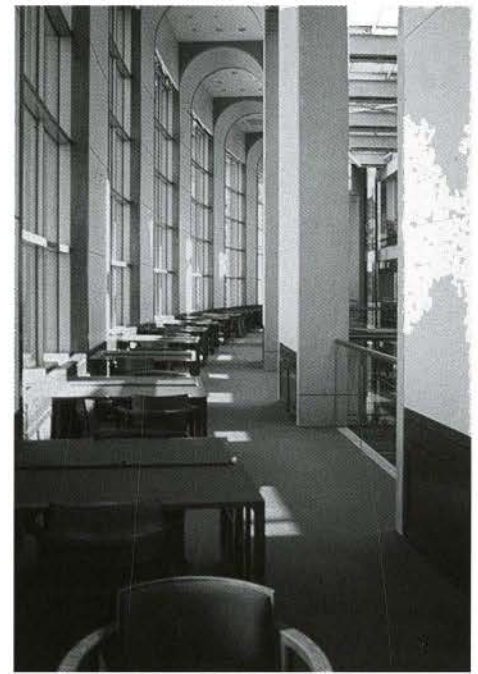
restitution of recreative landscape lost through construction. Safdie had endorsed these themes in his book *For Everyone a Garden* (1974). Downs, in addition, interpreted the roof garden contextually, describing it as a microcosm for Vancouver as a "place of small urban gardens and parks, returning nature to the city."[45] Regrettably, the roof garden fell victim to neuroses about public mischief and security, although the central part of the library building is covered by a sod [grassed] roof, sought but seldom achieved by earlier west coast architects. The omission of the public roof garden exaggerated the contrast between masonry external walls, reminiscent of the partially collapsed fabric of the Colosseum, and the library's glass community wall. Nevertheless, as Downs claimed, the outer walls "hook" potential library and office client, or casual visitor, into its circulation pattern just as they hook the edifice into the urban landscape (fig. 19). The urban connectivity of the complex is reinforced by the twenty-one storey Federal office tower, especially after its relocation by order of the Urban Design Panel from Robson to Georgia Street. The tower does act in the guise of what Downs termed a "slender spire, a campanile on the piazza"[46] which, being visible from many sectors, creates an organizing civic focal point. In addition the powerfully modelled tower and library complex counteracts the disparate scale and quality of the dislocated commercial, rather than comprehensive civic, development in nearby Yaletown and 'Expo Lands.'

Classical disciplines also inform the modular planning and furnishing of the Safdie/Downs Archambault library proper, including the chairs devised around a rectangular frame and elliptical arm rests. The seven floor levels are arranged in an ascending subject-use hierarchy from the childrens' section occupying the south quadrant of the first, below grade, floor to the uppermost administrative quarters, and Special Collections. The changing social and political patterns of Vancouver are signified to some extent by the placement on the second, entrance level of the Multilingual Collection, the popular Reading Library, Youth Collection, and Library Shop; this last is close to the circulation counter. However, the central escalators introduce a vertical axial organization that corresponds with classically inspired Academic practice. Similarly, the architectonic articulation emphasizes the

mixing of native form with western pictorial convention.[43] Safdie intended — and conveyed, to judge from the popularity of the 1995 library — the visual and formal invocation of shared and durable meanings amidst the volatility of multi-cultural society and advanced communication technology. Moreover Safdie/Downs Archambault recovered the spectacle of the street through external and internal forms and spaces that accommodated the temperate climate but high rainfall of Vancouver.

Undoubtedly Safdie/Downs Archambault eschewed merely gestural classicism through allegiance to Modernist structural rationalism recurrent in their respective work. The library "columns" are load bearing and of standardized pre-cast sections, in company with the poured-in-place reinforced concrete cladding; both include aggregate of granite from Horsefly, B.C. Their classical and humanist narration of Modernist design strategies reverberates most clearly in the formal "atrium" forecourt. Here hi-tech glass and steel replace antiquarian referencing and retailers take the place of trader and scribe.[44] Furthermore, entry to the library lies across a ritualistic entry bridge, initiating a transformative experience that is repeated in the more vertiginous bridges to the reading gallery (fig. 18). This process was to have culminated in a roof garden replete with trees visible from street level. The garden would have signified features of early modern thought and Modernist design: respectively the benign moderation of knowledge in the human use of nature, and Corbusian

Fig. 21. Moshe Safdie/Downs Archambault, Vancouver Public Library, 1995, Vancouver; atrium and "community wall."
(photo M. Grignon, 2000)

dignity of civic literacy by contrasting the lower arcaded and artificially illuminated service and stack areas with the peripheral expansive and naturally lit spaces (fig. 20). This contrast also recognizes the dialectic in current librarianship between the literary (the book/print) and the technical (the screen/digital) as well as the traditional demarcation between reading and browsing, individual study and consultative research. The positioning of carrals next to the community wall integrates the private act of reading with the public activity of literacy through formal structure and spatial volume that conjoins the monumental with the functional, the technical with the aesthetic and the spectacular with the commercial (fig. 21). In that respect the 1995 library most clearly unites properties and effects customarily associated with both Modernism and Postmodernism.

The reintegration of symbolism and contextualism into abstract functionalist Modern movement design had been predicted by one of its most ardent advocates: "Everyone is susceptible to symbols,"[47] Siegfried Giedion averred in his 1943 essay. Vancouver's post-war civic libraries demonstrate that this process has come to be one of reflexive continuity wherein architectural form and imagery are successively redefined through public ideology, professional intent, and commercial interest. The two Vancouver library commissions map both the endurance but complex changes, or slippages, in Modernist theory and practice across the transition from post-war Reconstruction to later century consumerist technocracy. In the final analysis, their evident architectural differences reflect a reconfiguration more than caesura of Modernism that is emblematic of the increasingly hybrid social and economic conditions of modernity.

Notes

1 The extensive literature on their attributes is typified by J.F. Lyotard, trans. G. Bennington and B. Massumi, *The Postmodern Condition* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota, 1984), David Harvey ed., *The Condition of Post Modernity* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989), Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, Ca., Stanford University, 1990), Tim Woods, *Beginning Postmodernism* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000), and Gary Genosko ed., *The Guattari Reader* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1996); and with specific reference to architecture: Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture. A Critical History* (Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1991 rev. ed.), Charles Jencks, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (New York, Rizzoli, 1977), Heinrich Klotz, *The History of Post Modern Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass., M.I.T., 1988), and Neil Leach, *Rethinking Architecture. A Reader in Cultural Theory* (London, Routledge, 1997). This article derives from a paper read at the 1997 Society of Architectural Historians Annual Meeting in Baltimore, and from research for *The New Spirit. Modern Architecture in Vancouver 1938-1963* (Montreal, Vancouver and Cambridge, Mass.; Canadian Centre for Architecture, Douglas & McIntyre and MIT Press, 1997).

2 Civic library architecture in North America is examined in a series of articles, chiefly on the Evanston Public Library, in the *Journal of Architectural Education* 47, no. 3 (Feb. 1994): 126-161, edited by Nicole Pertuiset, who, in her article on "The New American Library Design," refers to the 1995 Vancouver Public Library as Safdie's "Forum Romanum," 127.

3 Obviously size was also a factor, the second library doubling the square footage of the first to over 280,000 for a fifty-fold increase in construction cost to almost $100 million, albeit including the Federal Office Tower. These figures are based upon documents in the archives of the Vancouver Public Library and of Downs Archambault and Partners, together with the booklet, *Vancouver Public Library*, distributed at the library. For the architectural historical contexts of both libraries see Harold Kalman, Robin Phillips and Robin Ward, *Exploring Vancouver. The Essential Architectural Guide* (Vancouver, U.B.C. Press, 1993), and for the growth of the Vancouver library system, especially in the post-1945 era, and the socio-cultural phenomenon see R. Windsor Liscombe, "The Culture of Modernism: Vancouver's Public Libraries 1947-1957," in *Architecture and Culture* (Ottawa, Carleton University, 1992), 358-361.

4 The impact of new communication technologies on library design is examined in Dean Harrison ed., *Library Building 1984-1989* (London, LSL, 1996), and *Library Building in the United Kingdom 1990-1994* (London, LSL, 1995), and on librarianship in *Technology in Public Libraries* (London, Library Association 1994), Herbert F. White, *The Myth of the Electronic Library: Librarianship and Social Change in America* (Westport Conn., Greenwood, 1994), Anne G. Lipow ed., *Building Partnerships: Computing and Library Professionals* (Berkeley, Ca., Library Solutions Press, 1995),

and William F. Birdsall, *Information Superhighway: The role of librarians information scientists and intermediaries* (Colchester, Essex, University of Essex, 1995). For a broader contextualization see Roger Chartier ed., *The Culture of Print* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1989) and George P. Landow, *Hypotext. The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins, 1992).

5 Explanatory statement in the illustrated ring-binder submitted by Semmens Simpson to the Library Board, Douglas C. Simpson archive, CCA.

6 E.S. Robinson reiterated the idea of access oriented transparency in his article, "Public Library, Vancouver, British Columbia," *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (J.R.A.I.C.)* 33, no. 10 (1956): 368-372.

7 Safdie, "Vision Statement," October 1991, Downs Archambault archive. This was in deliberate contradistinction to the massively contained new Chicago Public Library (1988-90) designed by Hammond Beeby and Babka with particular emphasis upon monitored access. The continuing respect for, but fundamental reconfiguration of Modernist principles, and especially functional analysis and structural technology as generators of design, is evident in Safdie's sentence from the "Vision Statement": "It must have a sense of permanence, and must transcend the fashion of the day when its conception is deeply rooted in its program, in a passion for those who use and work in a building, and in understanding that style emerges from the materiality of a building and the authentic expression of the modes of its construction." In a subsequent passage, Safdie declared: "The library is for everyone, and everything about the architecture must say, 'Here I am, come in, see what I have to offer'." Safdie's architec-

tural concept and practice are outlined in Irena Murray ed., *Moshe Safdie: Buildings and Projects 1967-1992* (Montreal, McGill University, 1996) and the architect's own *Beyond Habitat* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University, 1970).

8 Discussed by Pertuiset, "The New American Library Design," and variously in Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (London, Routledge, 1990), Richard Sennet, *Flesh and Stone. The Body and the City in Western Civilization* (New York, Norton, 1994), and Noam Chomsky ed., *The Cold War and the University: Toward an Intellectual History of the Postwar Years* (New York, New Press, 1997).

9 The demise of social democratic thought in urban and cultural terms is mapped by Detlef Mertens, *Metropolitan Mutations. The Architecture of Emerging Public Spaces* (Toronto, Little Brown, 1988), Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1991), Rob Shields, *Places on the Margin. Alternate Geographies of Modernity* (London, Routledge, 1991), and Michael Keith and Steve Pile, *Place and the Politics of Identity* (London, Routledge, 1993), among others.

10 "Vision Statement," October 1991.

11 Ibid.

12 They were, from Vancouver, Bing Thom, chair, and Jerry Robinson, serving President of the Architectural Institute of B.C., and, interestingly, an architectural programmer; the external judges were Bill Pedersen of the major New York firm Kohn Pedersen Fox, and the current recipient of the prestigious Pritzker Prize for Architecture, Fumihiko Maki. They were joined by the Mayor, Gordon Campbell, Les Mitchell, chair of the Library Board and Councillor Libby Davies.

13 This definition of Modernist architecture is chiefly based upon both the theoretical writings of its

main proponents and the contemporary professional publications, journals and books. It is also informed by recent histories of the movement, most notably Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture*, and Joan Ockman, *Architecture Culture 1943-1968* (New York, Columbia University Press and Rizzoli, 1993). The quotation is from the submission of the Canadian Teachers Federation to the Federal Committee on Reconstruction and Re-Establishment in 1944, National Archives of Canada, Record Group 14 (House of Commons) Aa 87-88/146, vol. 39, Feb. 2, p. 7-10.

14 E.S. Robinson, "Libraries for Today," *J.R.A.I.C.* 24, no. 2 (1947): 60

15 In April 1959 (vol. 36, no. 4) the library issue included an article by Jean Scarlett of the Calgary Public Library Board pronouncing "[t]he use of the library is no longer a privilege granted, it is a necessity for citizens of a democracy" (p. 105). However, Hilda Gifford, librarian of Carleton University, regretted "the current compulsive use of large expanses of glass in public libraries."

16 The latest version of the Bartholomew Plan is reproduced in J.A. Walker, "Vancouver British Columbia. Planning Comes of Age — After Twenty-One Years of Successful Pioneering Vancouver Revises its Town Plan for Future Growth," *J.R.A.I.C.* 24, no. 9 (1947): between p. 310-311.

17 From an article on Ingledow in the *Vancouver Sun*, 29 March 1959. Ingledow was encouraged by the local Maecenas Albert Grauer, Chairman of B.C. Electric, whose patronage of architecture and the arts is recounted in Liscombe, *New Spirit*, 52, 102-104.

18 This section summarizes Liscombe, *New Spirit*, 94-98 and "Vancouver libraries."

19 Interview with Per T. Christoffersen, 1995; a brief biography appears in Liscombe, *New Spirit*,

202. Chirstoffersen described the process in "Structural Design by Model Analysis," *J.R.A.I.C.* 33, no. 8 (1956): 286-290.

20 In an essay entitled "The New Monumentality," in Paul Zucker ed., *New Architecture and City Planning* (New York, Philosophical Library, 1943), 549-68.

21 The conceptual and formal program for each work (the mural being designed in collaboration with his wife, Patricia), are described in a pamphlet printed by the Library in conjunction with the opening of the main branch.

22 From the speech delivered by the National Librarian and Archivist of Canada, Dr. Kaye Lamb, quoted in the 1957 *Annual Report*, describing the new library as "a vital weapon [...] to help with the battle for men's mind [...] being in the middle of the business district." The complimentary rhetoric recurred in the local press, typified by an extensively illustrated article in the *Province*, 16 November 1957, especially praising its "spaciousness [and] ultra-modern" style.

23 Peter Davey, "Outrage," *Architectural Review* 201, no. 1199 (1997): 21/1. Davey, in justly acknowledging Arthur Erickson's Provincial Law Courts (1979-1983) as a "masterpiece of modern public building," failed to commend the 1957 Library. The more conciliatory comments on the new library itself include this assessment: "a comparatively simple, modest, rectangular building completely concealed from the outside by the overblown cardboard stage set. Perhaps there is something to be said for working from the inside outwards after all." Trevor Boddy sought to identify the library with facadist architecture in Vancouver in "Plastic Lions Gate," Paul Delaney ed., *Vancouver. Representing the Post Modern City* (Vancouver, 1994). Incidentally, the curving facade and repeated fenestration might equally be likened to B.H. Latrobe's radial plan Vir-

ginia State Penitentiary, Richmond Virginia, 1798-99; see J.A. Cohen and C. Brownell, *The Architectural Drawings of Benjamin Henry Latrobe* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1994).

24 The press criticism is legion, typified by Andrew Brown, "Colossal Blunder," *Vancouver Sun*, 16 May 1992, or the shorter piece in Shawn Blore, "Building Smileyville," *Vancouver Magazine* 32, no. 9 (November 1999): 51. The sharp division between public and professional reaction partly corresponds to the distinction between plebian culture and patrician taste drawn by C.P. Thompson in the *Journal of Social History* 7 (1994): 382-405; Ian Chambers would add the third category of official culture.

25 Peter Jackson, *Maps of Meaning. An introduction to cultural geography* (London, Routledge, 1989), esp. p. 175-77, and Derek Gregory and John Urry eds., *Social Relations and Spatial Structures* (London, Routledge, 1985).

26 Briefly examined in Liscombe, *New Spirit*, 57. The proposers were Arthur Erickson, Geoffrey Massey, E.J. Watkins, Peter Oberlander and Wells Coates, the Canadian who had moved to Britain in the 1920s there to become the leading industrial designer and proponent of Modernism.

27 The most useful sources for the development of Vancouver, and of its place in provincial affairs, are Graeme Wynn and Tim Oke eds., *Vancouver and Its Region* (Vancouver, U.B.C. Press, 1992), Patricia E. Roy, *Vancouver: An Illustrated History* (Toronto, Lorimer, 1980), and Jean Barman, *The West beyond the West* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1991).

28 Liscombe, *New Spirit*, and Kalman, *Exploring Vancouver*. The promotion and contestation of these schemes circa 1958-1978 are the subject of a forthcoming article by this author.

29 Discussed in Habermas, *Public Sphere*.

30 An uncritically laudatory account of the early Expo Lands development appears in Anthony Chan, *Li Ka-Shing: Hong Kong's Elusive Billionaire* (Toronto, Macmillan, 1996). The unmaking of the comprehensive regional planning regulations by the Social Credit Party in the mid-1980s and generally pro-development policy of the Vancouver City Council — typified by the failure to moderate gentrification in the downtown Eastside and the failure of low-income housing schemes for the former Woodwards building — have coincided with the undermining of the professional status of the architect, both through fee undercutting and diminished input in the planning process.

31 A complementary view of Henriquez's work was argued by Howard Shubert, curator of the C.C.A. and Vancouver Art Gallery exhibition and catalogue *Richard Henriquez and the Theatre of Memory* (Montreal, C.C.A. 1993); see also Andrew Gruft, *Measure of Consensus: Canadian Architecture in Transition* (New York, 49th Parallel, 1985).

32 Especially Boddy, "Plastic Lions Gate"; a more measured analysis appears in Christopher Thomas, "Canadian Colossus," *Architecture* 84, no. 10 (October 1995): 72-79.

33 Safdie had already experimented with the rotunda and arcade in his unsuccessful scheme for the extension of the National Museum of Scotland, illustrated in Sophia Dekel, *Moshe Safdie: Museum Architecture 1971-1998* (Tel Aviv, University Art Gallery, 1998), 107-108.

34 The emergence of a new genus of civic ideology (apparent in the promoting of Expo '86 in Vancouver) is addressed by Jill Delaney in "Re-Vision and Representation: The Public Square in the Privatized City," *Journal of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada* 22, no. 4 (1997): 88-93, citing recent studies of this phenomenon.

35 Urban Design Panel Reports and interview with Bing Thom in November 1997. The competition judges noted that the Safdie/Downs Archambault scheme C, was "referred to as the 'Colosseum'" (p. 14) and that "a large part" of their discussion "had to do with the literal aspect of the 'Coliseum' expression and the potential for 'folly'" (p. 9). They "recommended that design development of the architectural detailing take a direction that conveys a more uniquely Vancouver character rather than one borrowed from antiquities" even if it had "potential to become a great library with broad recognition" (p. 9).

36 Safdie, "Vision Statement," Downs Archambault archive. Safdie was primarily responsible for both the conceptual and planning processes of design, as well as for identifying the architectural historical exemplars which are cited in the text below. Those libraries are related to the development of the typology by Nikolaus Pevsner, *A History of Building Types* (Princeton N.J., Princeton University, 1976), 91-110.

37 The "Vision Statement" commended Kahn's Exeter Library and Philips Academy (1968-70) and Raymond Moriyama's Metropolitan Library, Toronto (1974-76).

38 The conservative expectations of those who visit or use cultural institutions and especially the preference for authorizing strategies, are documented in Nicola Lisus and Richard Ericson, "Authorizing Art: The Effect of Multimedia Formats on the Museum Experience," *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 36 (May 1999): 199-216.

39 On the site selected for the 1995 library, Arthur Erickson had in 1975 devised a dramatically techno-functionalist scheme for the Federal office that envisaged two glass and steel octangular tubes elevated on stilts; reproduced in Edith Iglauer, *Seven Stones. A*

Portrait of Arthur Erickson (Madeira Park, B.C., 1981): 82-83; see also Liscombe's introductory essay to Barbara Schapiro, *Arthur Erickson: Selected Projects 1971-1985* (New York, Centre for American Relations, 1985).

40 Paula Lee, "Standing on the Shoulders of Giants. Boullée's 'Atlas' Facade for the Bibliothèque du Roi," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 57, no. 4 (December 1998): 404-31.

41 As evident from a poll taken of mature learners from the Vancouver downtown east side attending the segment of Humanities 101 taught by the author in October-November 1999. An excellent summary of the deeper problems of architectural practice in an era of cultural dislocation and what Alvin Toffler has denominated "After Shock," appears in Gilbert Herbert, "Architecture in an Age of Uncertainty," in *The Search for Synthesis. Selected writing on architecture and planning* (Haifa, Technion, 1997): 319-24.

42 See Homi Bhabha, "Dissemi-Nation" in *Nation and Narration* (London, Routledge, 1990), 255-66, where the author proposes this potential shift in meaning. The uncritical commodification of historical culture was condemned by Theodor Adorno, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor, *Aesthetic Theory* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota, 1997). Aspects of these ideas are discussed in Richard Cavell, "Theorizing Canadian Space: Post Colonial Articulation," in T. Goldie, C. Lambert and R. Lorimer, *Canada: Theoretical Discourse/Discours théoriques* (Montreal, Association for Canadian Studies, 1994), 75-104.

43 Charlotte Townsend-Gault, *Lawrence Paul Yuweluptun, Born to Live and Die on Your Colonialist Reservations* (Vancouver, Helen and Morris Belkin Art Gallery, 1995). A particularly interesting example of such transposition, however ironic or parodic, is his "Blue Lady" of 1986 referring both to French *Fauve*

and Haida stylisms — neither native since his ancestry is Kootenay.
44 This humanist element becomes more apparent in comparison with two comparable almost contemporary civic libraries: the Central Library in Mississauga, Ontario, 1988-90, by Shore Tilbe Henschel Irwin Peters, where the quasi-classical referencing is more attenuated and commercially packaged, and Will Bruder's Phoenix Public Library, 1992-95, where the heritage of French library architecture is reconstituted as monumentalized technocracy. See Abby Bussel, "Will Power," *Progressive Architecture* 76, no. 7 (July 1995): 80-89.
45 "Vision Statement," October 1991, Downs Archambault archive.
46 Ibid.
47 See note 20, quoted on p. 568, in Paul Zucker (1943).