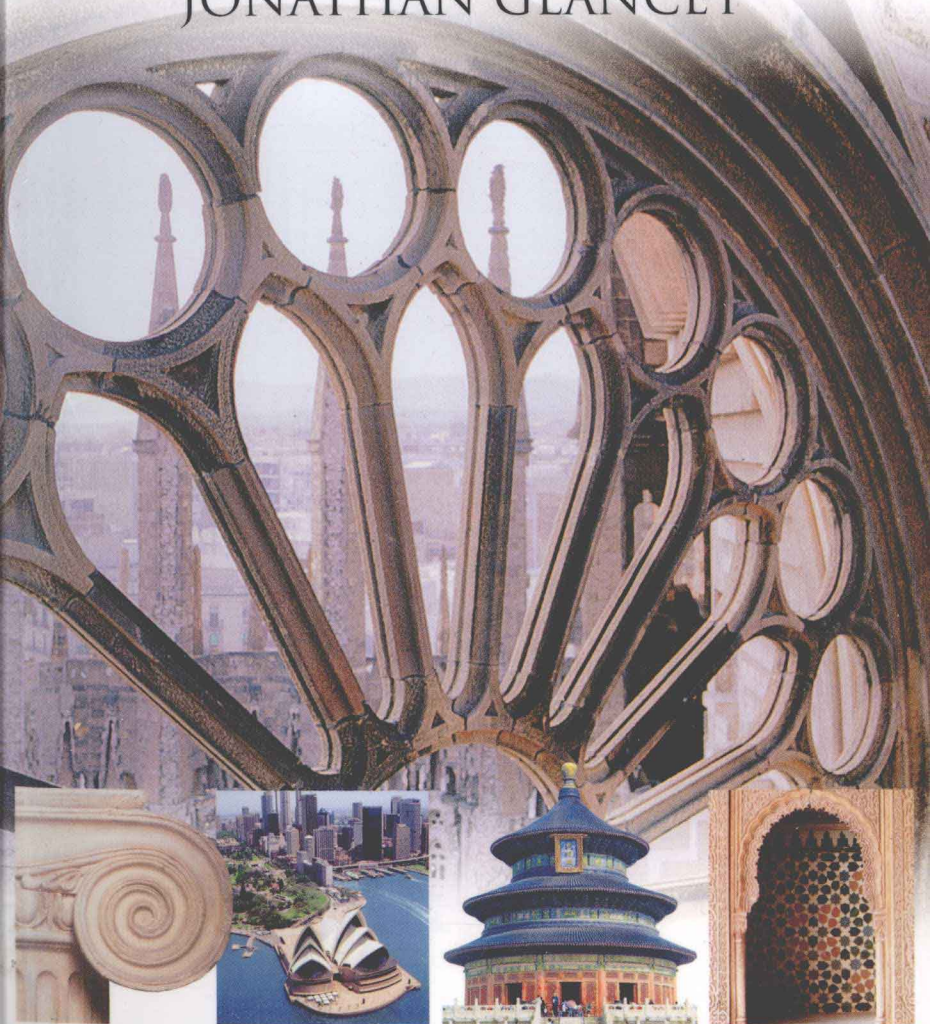




EYEWITNESS COMPANIONS

Architecture

JONATHAN GLANCEY



WORLD'S GREATEST BUILDINGS
HISTORY AND STYLES • ARCHITECTS



EYEWITNESS COMPANIONS

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Architecture

JONATHAN GLANCEY

with contributions from
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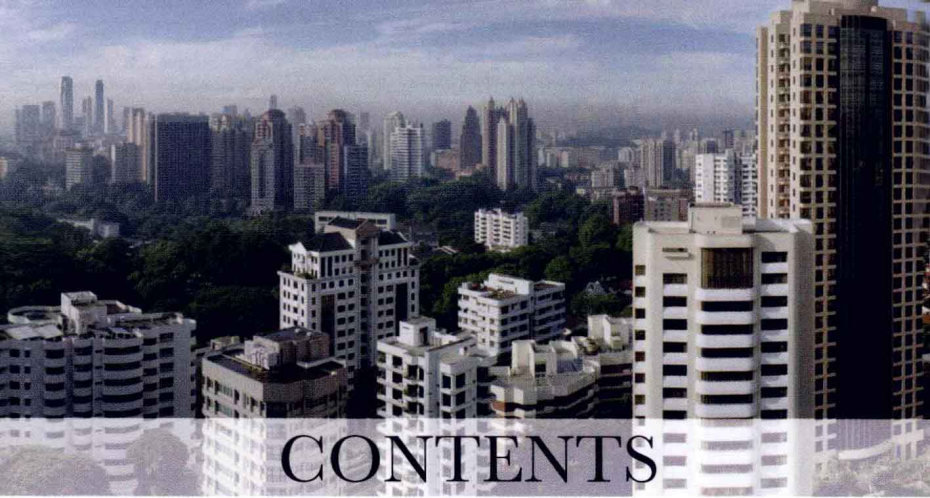
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INTRODUCTION

Architecture is an enormous subject, plumbing the depths of ancient history while embracing the world. How could we ever have thought of squeezing its sky-piercing towers, mighty domes, and flying buttresses into a book designed to fit neatly into handbag, briefcase, or rucksack? Well, we did, and we have done what we hope is our best to please as many readers as possible. Of course, there will be those of you who will ask why we have missed out the temple of X or the cathedral of Y. There are very many thousands of buildings worth

celebrating in a guide to world architecture, but even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written if they were all to have their rightful place.

There is, though, a simple logic to this book. We have tried to include, as far as possible, buildings that I have visited. This amounts to nine in ten. Those we have included that I have not seen are there because it would be impolite and improper to exclude them: these are often pivotal buildings in the story of architecture. Equally, there are those that I long to see. Some



I am more than grateful to have seen, such as the ziggurats of ancient Iraq, because it may be a long while yet before it is safe to travel there again. We have also included buildings that I could not possibly have visited because they were destroyed long ago; these are designs of such importance to the story of architecture that it would have been wrong to ignore them.

As to dates, we have tried our best to give those that correspond to the known completion of a particular building. These cannot always be wholly accurate, not only because historical sources disagree with one another, but also because there are times when we simply do not know.

Potala Palace, Tibet

Great buildings may completely dominate the landscape or rub shoulders with others in crowded city streets.



Divine detail

Visiting a site enables an appreciation not just of its context, but of details such as this dragon's head at the Platform of Venus, Chichén Itzá, Mexico.

Names of architects become apparent, and then clear, from around 1450 at the start of the Renaissance, when the works of individual artists were celebrated.

It is not that there are

no earlier records of architects, but that these are few and far between. We do know, though, the name of one of the very early architects: Imhotep. He designed pyramids and became a god. The words modesty and architect have rarely gone together since.

We have tried to include as much of the world as possible. Even so, the buildings of many countries are missing from this guide. This is, again, for the obvious reason that the book would have to be as big as a building to squeeze them all in, but also because there are a number of other countries, or regions, of the world that have produced a disproportionate amount of the world's best and most significant architecture. There is very little "vernacular" architecture here. I think this is a subject for a separate guide, or a much bigger one. This guide concentrates on buildings that are self-conscious works of art.

Buildings in this book are listed and illustrated mostly as if they stand proudly alone. This is so that they can be readily identified, described, and understood. Many, of course, are in streets and avenues among crowds and rows of other buildings. I remember first looking for Gaudí's Casa Batlló – a dragon-like apartment block in Barcelona. On a dull day, it seemed to fit all too comfortably into the flow of the tall buildings lining the city's Paseo





Masters of the modern age

Le Corbusier bestrode the built landscape of the 20th century with his inventive and poetic interpretations of the Machine Age.

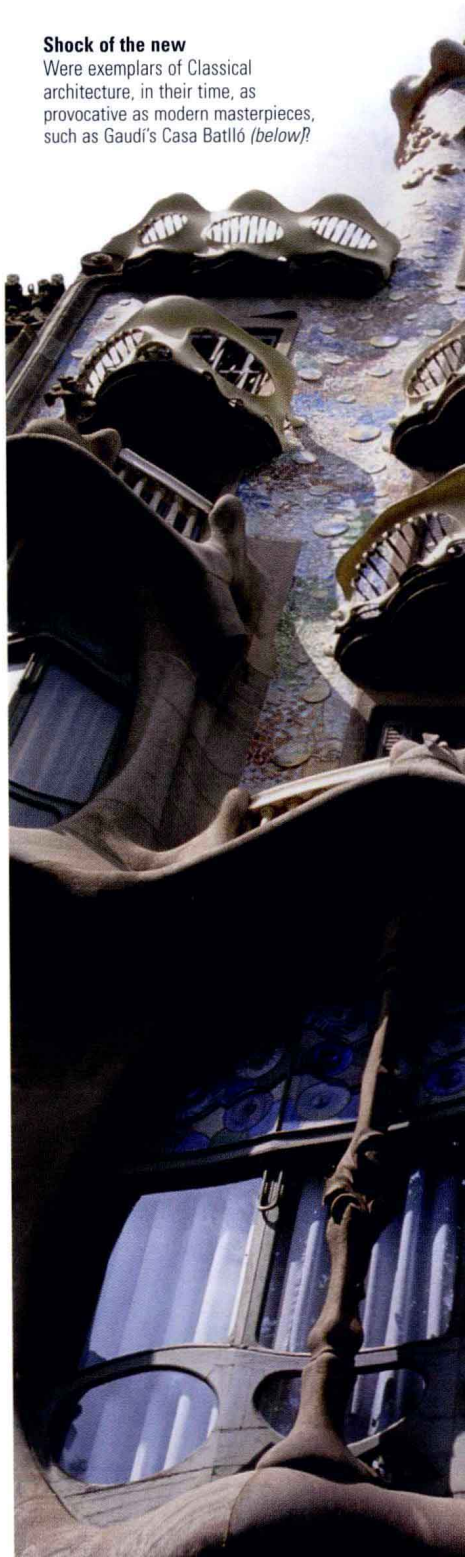
de Gracia, despite its colourful and unusual design. This, though, made me think more of the building, not less; it has, despite its eccentricities, good urban manners, unlike the Post-Modern architecture of the 1980s found in Barcelona, as elsewhere.

Post-Modernism reminds me that I should mention that there are a few episodes in the history of architecture where I find myself totally out of tune with a particular style. Architecture might be a continuum and its history a book to treasure and borrow from, yet “Po-Mo” design, virulent worldwide in the 1980s, was a case of ripping up the pages of history books and plastering the torn fragments childishly across the steel and concrete frames of otherwise nondescript buildings in the hope of eliciting a laugh from passers-by. A few of these buildings have been included in these pages in order to present a continuous record of architectural development, even though I personally do not like them.

I hope this book will be just the beginning of an adventure for those setting out to discover the world through its buildings and its architectural history. It is a unending journey and might just be the start of a lifetime’s pleasure.

Shock of the new

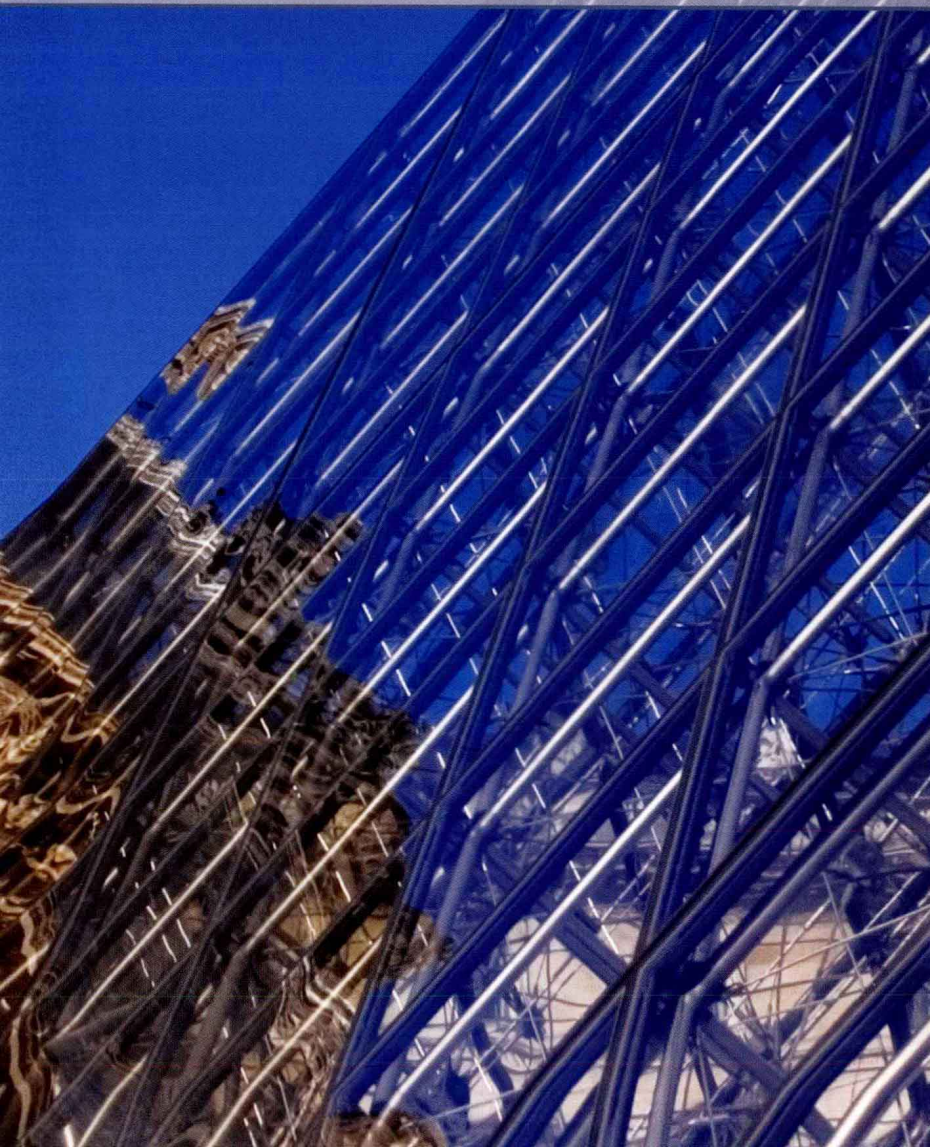
Were exemplars of Classical architecture, in their time, as provocative as modern masterpieces, such as Gaudí’s Casa Batlló (*below*)?







Introducing architecture



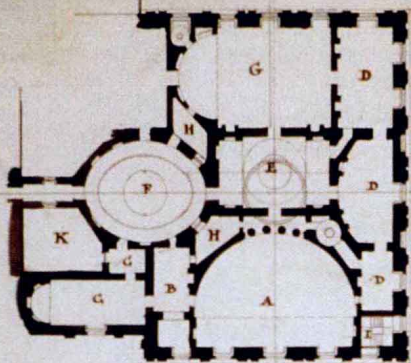


Fig. 6. Plan of the principal story of the North Wing of the Capitol, as proposed to be altered.
Scale 32 inches to a foot.

Conference
 Senate Chamber
 Lobby
 Secretary of the Senate
 Summation room
 Central lobby, or Vestibule
 of the Senate Chamber
 Staircase
 Library
 Deposits of papers
 Chairs of the Gallery
 Court

Details of the North Wing of the
on the Principal Floor.

Scale 8 feet to

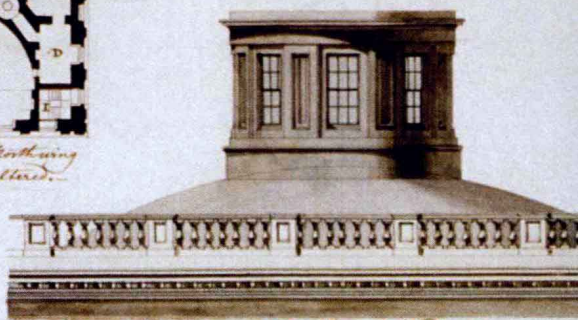


Fig. 5. Elevation of the Top of the Dome.

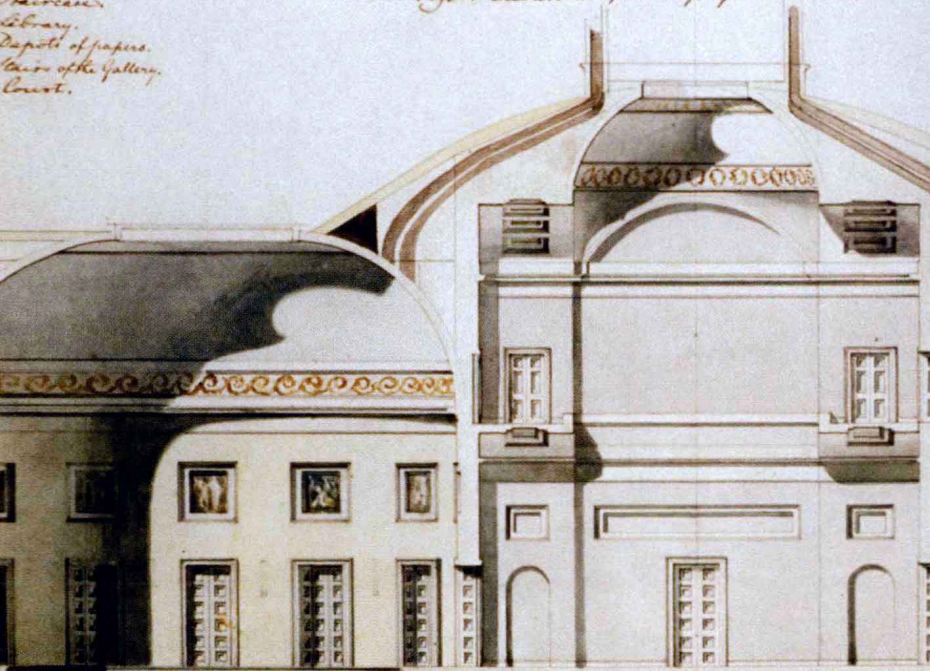


Fig. 3. Section of the Staircase on the principal floor.

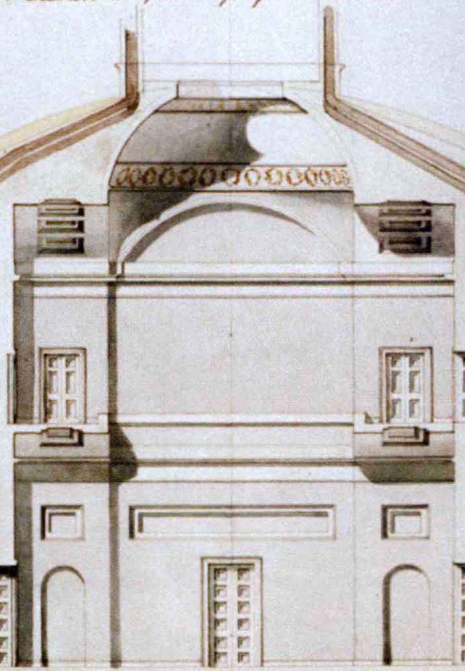


Fig. 4. Section of the Central lobby of the Senate Chamber.

Fig. 2. Plan of the staircase.

