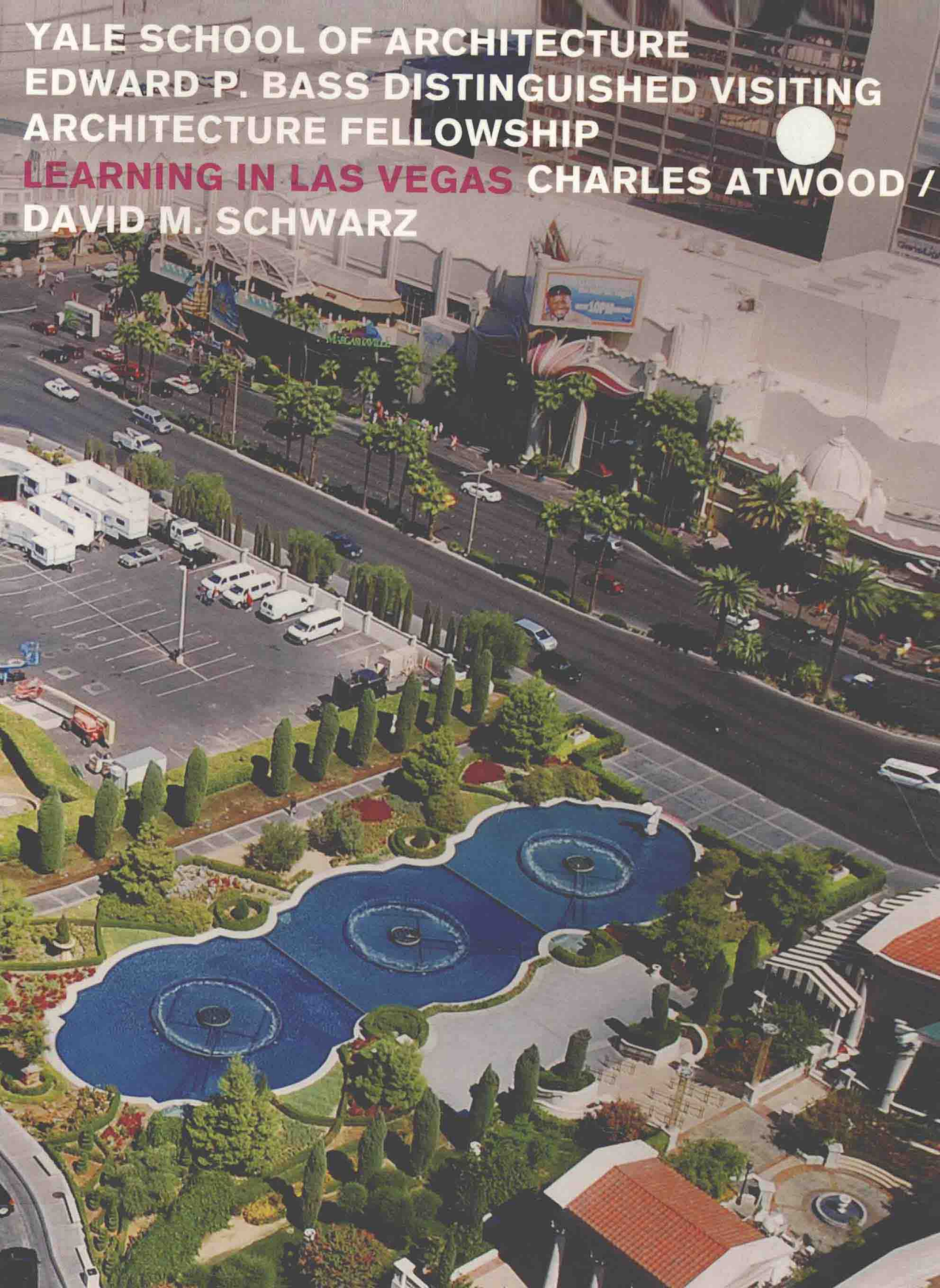


YALE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
EDWARD P. BASS DISTINGUISHED VISITING
ARCHITECTURE FELLOWSHIP
LEARNING IN LAS VEGAS CHARLES ATWOOD /
DAVID M. SCHWARZ



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Edited by Nina Rappaport, Brook Denison, and Nicholas Hanna



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Edward P. Bass Distinguished Visiting Architecture Fellowship In 2003, Edward P. Bass, a 1967 graduate of Yale College who studied at the Yale School of Architecture as a member of the class of 1972, endowed this fellowship to bring property developers to the school to lead advanced studios in collaboration with design faculty. Mr. Bass is an environmentalist who sponsored the Biosphere 2 development in Oracle, Arizona, in 1991, and a developer responsible for the ongoing revitalization of the downtown portion of Fort Worth, Texas, where his Sundance Square, which combines restoration with new construction, has transformed a moribund urban core into a vibrant regional center. In all his work, Mr. Bass has been guided by the conviction that architecture is a socially engaged art operating at the intersection of grand visions and everyday realities.

The Bass fellowship ensures that the school curriculum recognizes the role of the property developer as an integral part of the design process. The fellowship brings developers to Yale to work side by side with educators and architecture students in the studio, situating the discussion about architecture in the wider discourse of contemporary practice. In 2005, the first Bass studio, led by Gerald Hines and Louis I. Kahn Visiting Professor Stefan Behnisch was documented in *Poetry, Property, and Place* (2006). The second Bass studio, in 2006, which teamed Stuart Lipton with Saarinen Visiting Professor Richard Rogers ('62), engineer Chris Wise, and architect Malcolm Smith ('97), was documented in *Future-Proofing* (2007). *The Human City* (2008) records the collaboration of Roger Madelin and Bishop Visiting Professor Demetri Porphyrios. *Urban Integration: Bishopsgate Goods Yard* with the Nick Johnson and FAT architecture partnership was collected in 2009. With this fifth book in the series it is a pleasure to present the research and studio led by property developer Charles Atwood and architect David M. Schwarz ('74), Davenport Visiting Professor of Architecture, in *Learning in Las Vegas*.

Preface: Robert A.M. Stern, Dean *Learning in Las Vegas* documents the fifth architect-developer studio to be conducted at Yale, led in fall 2008 by Edward P. Bass Distinguished Visiting Fellow, Charles Atwood who was then at Harrah's Entertainment, and David M. Schwarz, Davenport Visiting Professor of Architecture, who asked advanced students at the Yale School of Architecture to reassess Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown's Yale studio of forty years ago and analyze ways in which today's Las Vegas can learn from other places in order to reinvent itself for the future.

Atwood, a graduate of Tulane University with an MBA in finance, joined Harrah's Entertainment Inc. in 1979. He was named chief financial officer in 2001 and became a member of Harrah's board of directors in July 2005. In 2006, he was named its vice chairman. At Harrah's, Atwood oversaw the company's strategic growth initiatives including development, design, and construction through 2009 while also serving on community boards for the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce and the Las Vegas Performing Arts Center as well as on the Dean's Advisory Board for the University of Nevada-Las Vegas Business School.

David M. Schwarz, who founded his Washington, D.C., and Fort Worth, Texas-based firm in 1978, received his B.A. at St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland and his master of architecture at Yale in 1974, after which he worked in the office of Paul Rudolph. Committed to a contextual approach, Schwarz regards the past as a repository of ideas that can be adapted to solve modern problems. His projects include the Bass Performance Hall in Fort Worth, the Ballpark at Arlington, and the Environmental Sciences Center Building at Yale, the first Gothic-style building constructed at the university in two generations. In Las Vegas, where this Yale Studio took place, Schwarz has designed the Smith Center for the Performing Arts as a new monumental focus for the city's nascent downtown.

I offer my gratitude to Charles Atwood and David M. Schwarz for their dedication to the studio, as well as to Brook Denison ('07) and Darin Cook ('89), who ably assisted the students in their research and design. I also offer thanks to Nina Rappaport, publications director at the Yale School of Architecture, who with Brook Denison and Nicholas Hanna ('09), one of the students in the studio, co-edited *Learning in Las Vegas*.

Introduction In the forty years since the famous “Learning from Las Vegas” studio led by Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown at Yale in 1968, the Las Vegas’s Strip has been transformed by explosive growth. The studio’s work fascinated developers, planners, architects, gamblers, and entertainers, and the book of the same name became an essential text for both architectural theory and popular culture. The studio asked why the Strip looked the way it did and analyzed its development. Arising from the desert town that boomed with the construction of the Hoover Dam while the rest of the county suffered during the Great Depression, Las Vegas started out as a gaming town in the clutch of the Mafia only to become the escapist resort it is today. But what is this city’s future? Charles Atwood, who guided the entertainment company Harrah’s in its urban growth strategy, and David M. Schwarz, architect and planner of several Las Vegas projects, collaborated in this new Yale architecture studio, “Learning in Las Vegas.” They asked the students to analyze vital urban places around the world and then apply their findings to 270 acres of Harrah’s properties located at the center of the Strip.

This book opens with a discussion between Edward P. Bass Distinguished Visiting Architecture Fellow Charles Atwood and Davenport Visiting Professor of Architecture David M. Schwarz about urbanism in Las Vegas in the section titled “Collaborations in Design and Development.” The next section, “Teaching in Las Vegas,” includes an essay on the Strip by Mr. Schwarz, a selection of photographs from the original 1968 Las Vegas studio paired with those taken by the 2008 Yale students, the essay “Imagineered Worlds” by geographers Steven Flusty and Paulina Raento, discussions with public officials and developers, and the students’ analyses of Harrah’s site—all of which provide insight into the social and physical development of the Las Vegas Strip and its relationship to the broader cityscape. The following section, “Learning in Las Vegas,” begins with the students’ analyses of successful urban environments around the world, continues with the students’ master-plan designs and their specific resort designs, and concludes with excerpts from the discussion that accompanied the final review of the student’s work.

Throughout the research, analysis, and design phases, students absorbed the culture of Las Vegas while visiting and analyzing other cities for inspiration. To understand how the city works and how it differs from other cities, the students met with Las Vegas developers and officials, including Las Vegas Mayor Oscar Goodman; Gary Loveman, chairman, C.E.O., and president of Harrah’s; visionary urban developers Craig Robbins in Miami and Henry Miller in Dallas; and Alan Feldman, a senior vice president with MGM. Financial experts weighed in on developers’ goals and expectations, giving the students context and cautionary advice. While the studio was in session, financial markets collapsed, which altered assumptions about development on the Strip and heightened the student’s sensitivity to the economics of design.

Having studied the urban planning behind successful cities, the students applied strategies to their own projects. By midterm, in teams of two, they completed their analysis and master plans, which were then used as a basis for specific individual resort designs. The project descriptions close the book along with the final-review jury participation of developers Edward P. Bass, David Bonderman, Alan M. Feldman, Robert B. Frey, Greg Miller, Marc Rowan, Brian Yost, and Richard Fields, and architects Deborah Berke, Leon Krier, and Keller Easterling.

The editors would like to acknowledge the work of the students (all class of 2009) who participated in the studio and whose cooperation was essential to this book: Terry Chew, Cheng-Hui Chua, Nicholas Hanna, Eric Krancevic, Louise Levi, Patrick McGowan, Lauren Mishkind, Zakery Snider, Christopher Starkey, and Tom Tang. We also extend our appreciation to the work of copy editor David Delp and graphic designer Sarah Gephart of mgmt. design, New York.

I. COLLA TIONS IN DESIGN DEVELO

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Developer / Architect Charles (Chuck) Atwood and David M. Schwarz discuss the role of the developer and architect in building mega resorts as well as strategies to urbanize Las Vegas.

Nina Rappaport Charles, as Harrah's financial director and vice chairman, how did you become involved in real estate development, and what is your role with the company regarding in new mixed-use development in Las Vegas?

Charles Atwood I was first involved with large, mixed-use developments in New Orleans, where I went to school and worked for ten years. I have worked for Harrah's on a number of real estate developments for nearly thirty years. As vice chairman, I am in charge of our new development and design and construction. What we are doing in Las Vegas is unusual in our industry. Historically, buildings in Las Vegas were fortresses; once guests were inside, they were not intended to go out. This contradicts demonstrated consumer behavior—people want to have a fun entertainment experience, including visiting an average of 5.5 resorts each day. We now have acquired enough facilities and land to make it not only possible but desirable for customers to move from place to place. This new vision requires a more expansive approach to Las Vegas as to how real estate is organized. The 350 acres of contiguous land Harrah's owns is prime real estate located at the heart of Las Vegas' world-famous Strip. With nine resorts and more than 20,000 hotel rooms already in place, the objective of the development is to add new attractions while at the same time ensuring the contiguous resort's interstitial space seamlessly connects the properties.

NR Has the attitude changed now that the commercial and entertainment industries in Las Vegas have become more involved in urban planning issues? How do you fit the Harrah's complex into the urban design of Las Vegas and incorporate your concepts into creating a city?

CA I would say Las Vegas is growing up. It is now being developed around modes of transportation other than just the automobile. Historically, the major highway, the Las Vegas Strip, was for automobiles and not very friendly to pedestrians. Over time that roadway system became insufficient to carry all the traffic. Now there is another "roadway" to move people from place to place, the Las Vegas monorail. It is interesting because we can have architecture on both sides of the highway and both sides of the monorail. Now that we have a mass-transit system, it is possible for people to abandon the automobile. Further, the pedestrian experience can be much more vibrant as buildings are linked together in a number of places—all this is urbanization, in my view.

