

Architectural Forum, 1932-64
A Time Inc. Experiment in American Architecture and Journalism

BY

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THESIS

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This dissertation is dedicated to
my father, Dr. Gerry Dreller (1939-2002), who started
encouraging me to be "the second Dr. Dreller"
when I was 14 years old
and
my mother, Aletta E. Dreller, who was absolutely instrumental
in making both of our Ph.D.s possible.

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SUMMARY

This study tells the story of *Architectural Forum* magazine during the Time Inc. ownership period, 1932-64. Why and how did this episode in American discursive life come about? What were its failures and successes, lessons, potential legacy? In answering these questions I describe the unusual building industry-wide sense of community this magazine's editors attempted to nurture, and I explore its implications for both the development of American architecture and the aspirational reach of one of the modern world's most consequential publishers. For 32 years *Forum* was an object fully embedded in two creative and eminently public practices simultaneously. Reconstituting the relative situation of architecture at Time Inc., opening a place for Time Inc. in our evolving understanding of twentieth-century American architecture and discovering the extent of their interconnectedness are my key aims.

The first of this study's five main chapters offers a chronological overview history of *Forum* as a Time Inc. publication. The next three thematic chapters work together as a suite exploring the constituencies within and against which the magazine itself operated: the building industry community; the publishing universe of Time Inc.; and American society broadly-

SUMMARY (continued)

defined, especially the so-called "American Century" ideology propagated by Time Inc.'s founder, Henry Luce. The final chapter shifts the dissertation's focus from the magazine's creators to the nature of the audience's interaction with *Forum*. Here I use independently audited circulation data, just as architectural journalists did historically, to approach what can otherwise be a quite ephemeral aspect of media history. This chapter is crucial to the project because formulating an actual community of enlightened American building professionals and client-owners around the magazine was such an important component of *Forum*'s Time Inc. editorial personality.

Through this research I found that the *Forum* experiment achieved much of what its creators set out to do. However, I also found that this editorial success did not align with the assumptions about architectural practice on which the typical business model of nationally-circulated architectural journals relied. Time Inc.'s accomplishments with *Forum* hastened the magazine's end, in other words, possibly deterring future experimentalism as a result.

I. INTRODUCTION TO AN EXPERIMENT

In the early 1920s, Le Corbusier wrote to a local Paris department store soliciting advertising for *L'Esprit nouveau*. He described his magazine as having experienced "its most sympathetic response precisely in the active milieu of society," and supported this claim with subscribership percentages by occupation - specifying 8% for architects and 31% for "industrialists and bankers."¹ Le Corbusier had reportedly exaggerated these sorts of numbers elsewhere, making the exact details of his department store letter untrustworthy.² Yet, the notion that influence over architecture could be exercised by publishing a credible periodical circulated mostly among non-architect decision-makers is not quite as far-fetched as it may seem. In the United States a decade later, in fact, Henry Luce and Time Inc. embarked on a just such an experiment in architecture and journalism with *Architectural Forum* (*Forum*) magazine.³ Luce even paraphrased Le Corbusier's famous

¹ Le Corbusier, letter to Ateliers Primavera, n.d., A1 (10), Foundation Le Corbusier, Paris, France, quoted in Beatriz Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996): 194 and 365n34. Colomina's citation for Le Corbusier's letter does not indicate the actual date of the letter, but it must have been written at some point in the first half of the 1920s since the magazine was only published 1920-25.

² Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity*, 194.

³ *Architectural Forum's* early nickname was actually "The *Forum*" rather than just "*Forum*," and this continued into the Time Inc. years - especially among the editors and readers who had personal experience with the magazine's pre-Time Inc. existence. The "*The*" dropped out of favor around the end of World War II, though, and it remained just "*Forum*" for the rest of the Time Inc.

"Architecture or Revolution" dictum in his prospectus for what was called "the new *Forum*."⁴ While scholars recognize *L'Esprit nouveau*'s continued relevancy despite its comparatively small circulation and brief five-year run, though, Time Inc.'s *Forum* dominated architectural journalism for over three decades and has essentially been forgotten today.

The following dissertation tells the story of *Forum* during the Time Inc. ownership period, 1932-64. Why and how did this episode in American discursive life come about? And, what were its failures and successes, its lessons, its potential legacy? In answering these questions I construct a sense of the magazine's own "active milieu" and describe the ways in which that particular formulation of community reflected and informed the aspirational reach of one of the modern world's most consequential publishers. Recovering the history of Time Inc.'s *Forum* enriches our understanding of architecture and of experimental journalism in mid-twentieth century America - and

period and through the post-Time Inc. years as well. To avoid unnecessary confusion, for this study I have used "*Forum*" regardless of the era under discussion.

⁴ Luce wrote: "...by general agreement, the old order, that is to say the only existing order of life and thought, is passing or has already passed - and unless chaos is to intervene, a new order must be more or less consciously created, - and, in terms of decades, soon. ('Either you will have architecture or you will have revolution' is the famed phrase of Corbusier.)" Henry Luce, "A Long Preface to The New *Forum*," manuscript c. April 1935, page II, "ARCH FORUM 1935 JAN-APRIL" Folder, *Architectural Forum* Subject Files, Time Inc. Archives, New York City, New York (hereafter cited as TIA).

the broader culture of creative practice to which their intersections contributed.

A. Forum in Context, Part I: Architectural Journalism

Even as *Forum's* publisher, Time Inc., routinely celebrated the singular achievements of specific well-known architects on the covers and in the pages of *Time*, *Fortune* and *Life*, the editorial policy at *Forum* during the middle of the twentieth century was based on fostering professional dialogue and collaboration. The concept was to create a publication that looked like journal for architects but that actually appealed to leaders of every facet of the building process - clients, engineers, contractors, realtors, bankers, product manufacturers, etc. - in order to actively reform how the entire industry operated. The goal of that change was to make the wider practice of building more responsive to the needs of a rapidly modernizing society, first of all, and in so doing transform the products of that practice into a built landscape worthy of America's evolving global "superpower" status. The hope was that *Forum's* editors could achieve this goal by creating a discursive sense of community in, through and around this magazine which channeled its readers' self-interests, making contributions to the group's welfare appear to also benefit the individual.

Nearly everything about Time Inc.'s editorial formula for *Forum* made this magazine different from the periodicals it was compared with at the time. The most fundamental distinction lay in the way its constituency was conceptualized. In journalism's disciplinary jargon, *Forum* as published by Time Inc. from 1932 until 1964 was "horizontal," that is, it connected together a broad range of people with a loosely-defined common interest. This openness obligated editors to actively construct a sense of community among readers, an eminently creative task that potentially yielded something readers would not find elsewhere. More typical professional journals, on the other hand, were "vertical" because they targeted members of only one or two professions with a narrowly-delineated common interest. Audiences of these publications brought a strong pre-existing group identity with them to their reading experience, an identity that editors could treat as a relative given since the journals' existence reinforced the group's validity by default.

These geometric differentiations applied to print magazine publishing generally regardless of discipline. Within the context of professional architecture, specifically, the audience that vertical journals targeted was essentially the private community of people responsible for formulating unique architectural ideas and then guiding the transformation of those ideas into actual three-dimensional physical objects. Everyone

else involved with the wider practice of architecture could subscribe if they desired but they were not part of the relatively exclusive population of design professionals to which these vertical journals spoke. Time Inc.'s horizontally-composed *Forum* reversed that prioritization when it also actively engaged the various people who owned, financed, constructed and regulated buildings. *Forum's* editors valued exclusivity since it helped them shape their magazine's constructed sense of community, but in this case they followed Luce's emphasis on decision-makers rather than occupational affiliation *per se*. In other words, lower-rank architecture-oriented professionals could subscribe if they desired but they were not part of the population of building industry leaders to which *Forum* spoke.

Despite the ways in which Time Inc.'s overtly horizontal building-oriented publication differed as an editorial idea, in the day-to-day running of the magazine *Forum's* staff directly vied with their peers at the vertical architectural journals for news scoops, advertising dollars and the chance to profile particular projects or people in-depth for the so-called "features" sections. And although there were a number of smaller magazines during the 1932-64 period, most notably *Arts & Architecture*, journalists and advertisers at the time only perceived *Forum's* class of major nationally-circulated professional architecture periodicals as including two others:

Architectural Record (*Record*), which appealed to some engineers in addition to architects because of its tendency toward highly technical coverage, and *Pencil Points-Progressive Architecture* (*Pencil Points-P/A*), which focused on draftsmen initially and then designers later.⁵ [Fig. 1] Like *Forum*, both *Record* and *Pencil Points-P/A* offered editorial content primarily emphasizing custom-designed American buildings, had nation-wide circulations numbering in the tens of thousands and were published by media corporations that also produced other kinds of periodicals. The publishers of all three of these journals also regularly reported statistics about their subscribers' occupational affiliations to the same independent auditing organizations, empowering advertisers to compare the specific nature of the three subscriber audiences before purchasing page space. Of course there were other much smaller or less corporate architectural magazines circulating around the United States at this time as well, such as Southern California-based *Arts & Architecture* and the American Institute of Architects' own *Journal of the AIA*. And, of course *Forum's* heterogeneous constituency sometimes put the magazine in competition with vertical journals serving other building industry professions,

⁵ *Pencil Points* became *Progressive Architecture* (*P/A*) midway through the 1932-64 years that are of primary interest in this study. As such, I have combined this magazine's two names into "*Pencil Points-P/A*" when referring to this period as a whole.

Ideal Target Audience: Vertical vs. Horizontal Professional Architecture Magazines

	clients	realtors/ lawyers	bankers	architects/ draftsmen	engineers	government officials	contractors	interior designers/ landscape architects	photo- graphers	critics/ academics
celebrities										
business owners										
well-known										
established										
known										
professionals										
unknown										
students/young										

— *Architectural Forum*
— *Architectural Record*
— *Pencil Points/Progressive Architecture*

Fig. 1. Ideal Target Audience: Vertical vs. Horizontal Professional Architecture Magazines

such as *Engineering News Record* and *American Builder*. Throughout the Time Inc. ownership years, however, *Forum's* operational similarities to *Record* and *Pencil Points-P/A* made it a full participant - albeit a conceptually unusual one - in the universe of big architectural journalism.

By the mid-twentieth century, the tradition of verticality in professional architectural journalism - the tradition to which *Record* and *Pencil Points-P/A* belonged and against which Time Inc.'s *Forum* agitated - was already several generations old. The first successful nationally-circulated magazine, *American Architect and Building News (AABN)*, set the tone. Founded in 1876, the purpose was not only to inform the country's architectural professionals on matters of nation-wide importance but also to elevate the general level of discourse among practitioners so that they, in turn, could learn to be articulate spokesmen on behalf of architecture to the broader American public. It happens that at the same time *AABN* was being established, members of the AIA were formulating their own plan to publish a similar national journal. The decision was therefore made to save money by appointing *AABN* the AIA's official publication, giving what had started as an ambitious

undertaking by a private publisher immediate stature and a pre-formed architect-based circulation.⁶

There had not really been an urgent need for such a publication before. With the Industrial Revolution had come increasingly complex building projects, however, and as a result anyone involved with architecture professionally during the nineteenth century had to master more technical information than their predecessors and to absorb changes to that information at a much faster rate as well. As managers of the entire design and building process, this obligation applied even more rigorously to architects in particular. Similarly, the Industrial Revolution also spurred the evolution of capitalism and the growth of a middle class, which meant that the wealthy-but-not-necessarily-well-educated client began replacing the enlightened patron-peer as the origin of actual commissions. Importantly, this dynamic added taste leadership to architects' core societal responsibilities in a way that did not really occur within

⁶ My purpose here relates specifically to the historical character of professional architectural journalism's audience composition. For more background on the advent of professional architectural journalism generally, see Michael Tomlan's lengthy entry entitled "The Architectural Press in the Field of Publishing" in *The Encyclopedia of Architecture, Design, Engineering & Construction* vol. 1, edited by Joseph A. Wilkes (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1988): 266-294. For a more contextualized discussion of the profession's press as a part of the nineteenth century architectural literature scene, see his dissertation: "Popular and Professional American Architectural Literature in the Late Nineteenth Century," (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1983). And for more in-depth information about *ABBN*, in particular, see Mary Woods' dissertation: "The 'American Architect and Building News' 1876-1907 (Massachusetts)" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1983).

engineering, construction and other building professions whose duties required less direct interaction with the lay public. In short, by the time *AABN* was founded, practicing architects throughout the United States had to know more than they ever had before, and were expected to be able to explain that expanded knowledge clearly, confidently and frequently to people across a wide spectrum of architectural understanding.⁷ Providing current information and modeling taste leadership were precisely the kinds of services that an architect-centric national periodical press was well suited to provide.

A large number of architectural journals were started in the United States in the two decades after *AABN*; according to Michael Tomlan, a historian of nineteenth century architectural

⁷ For more history, reflection and analysis of the evolution of architects' professional responsibilities, see especially: Magali Sarfatti Larson, "Emblem and Exception: The Historical Definition of the Architect's Professional Role," 49-86, in Judith Blau, Mark La Gory and John Pipkin, eds., *Professionals and Urban Form* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1983) and Spiro Kostof, ed., *The Architect: Chapters in the History of the Profession* (New York City: Oxford University Press, 1977), reprinted with a new forward and epilogue by Dana Cuff (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000). Additionally, several important essays and books were written as architects' twentieth-century responsibilities were still evolving. See especially: Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer, "Client and Architect (1890)," in Lewis Mumford, editor, *Roots of Contemporary American Architecture; a Series of Thirty-Seven Essays Dating from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the Present* (New York: Reinhold, 1952): 260-268; Frank Jenkins, *Architect and Patron: A Survey of Professional Relations and Practice in England from the Sixteenth Century to the Present Day* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961); James Marston Fitch, "The Profession of Architecture," in Kenneth Lynn, editor, *The Professions in America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965): 231-241; and Walter and Ise Gropius, *Apollo in the Democracy: The Cultural Obligation of the Architect* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968).

publishing, there were as many as 45.⁸ Although most of these new magazines did not survive the mid-1890s economic downturn, two of the three major twentieth century journals were founded in the last decade of the nineteenth century. One was *Record*, first published in 1891 and still operating today.⁹ Its original mission, targeted to building designers, was to specifically distinguish examples of art-architecture and to infuse American architectural design culture with an appreciation of sophisticated self-critique. The other was the magazine that eventually became *Forum*, initially established in 1892 as *The Brickbuilder* to serve the interests and specialized knowledge of masons. [Fig. 2] It was probably not coincidental that, like *AABN*, *Record* and *The Brickbuilder* also filled clear audience niches and weathered the worst of the era's recession; their overtly vertical focus on particular subsets of the architectural community would have helped distinguish these periodicals from their competition for readers and advertisers.

Profession-specific periodical journalism proved more than just a workable business model during this period, though. The notion of vertical magazines also directly engaged and informed

⁸ Tomlan, "The Architectural Press in the Field of Publishing," 269.

⁹ *Record* remains the only professional journal founded in the nineteenth century that continues to be published in the twenty-first century. A major factor in its continued viability during the last decades of the twentieth century came as a result of its multi-year contract with the AIA to be that organization's official member magazine. The contract expired in December 2010 and was not renewed.

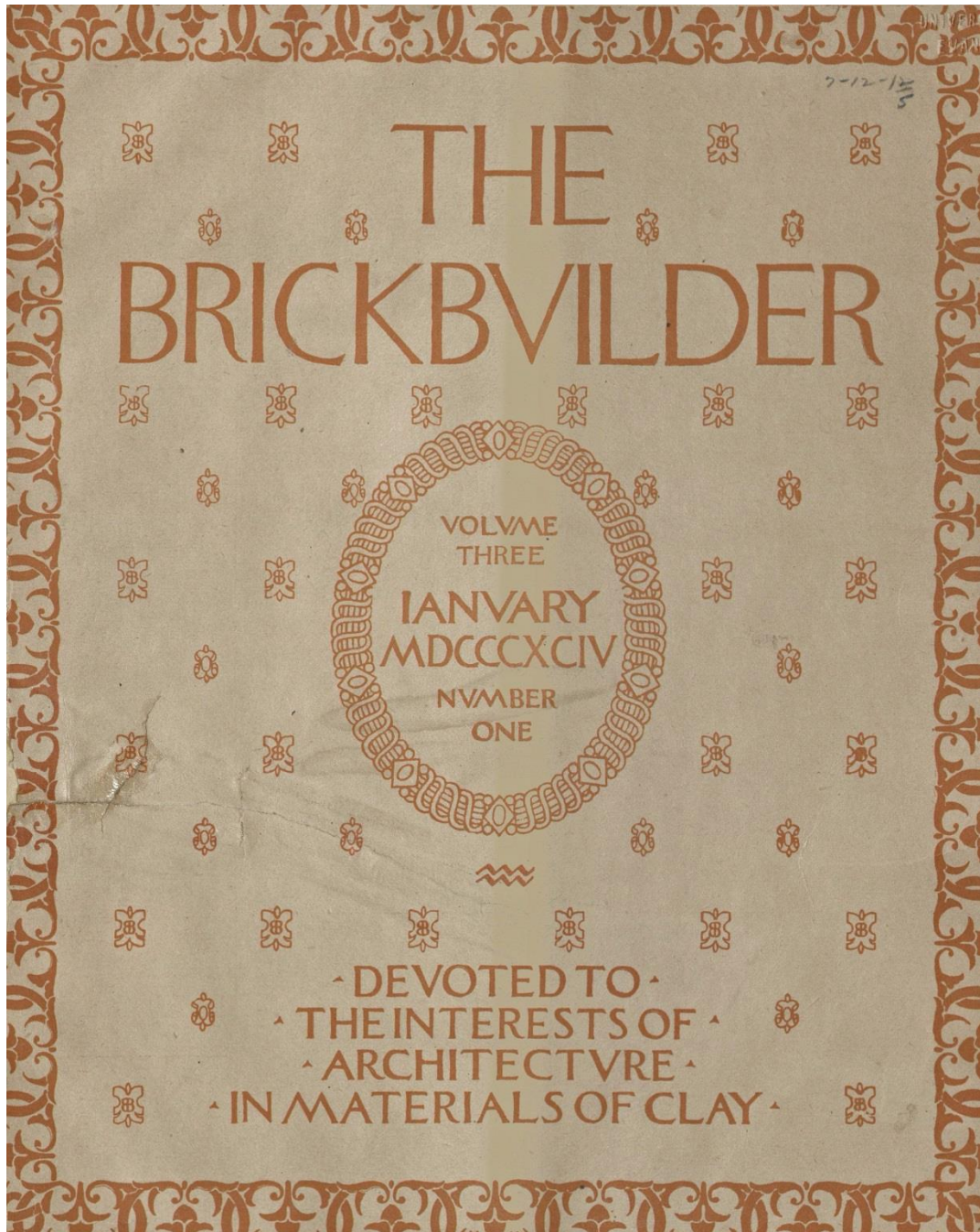


Fig. 2. Cover, *The Brickbuilder* (January 1894)

the trend toward increasing professional specialization. Two different scholars have identified the last years of the nineteenth century as pivotal in the development of a professional sensibility among architects in particular. Cultural anthropologist Magali Sarfatti Larson, who has studied the history of professionalization generally and of the profession of architecture especially, has written that the 1893 World's Fair gave architects what she calls "a public identity on which to found their professional ambitions."¹⁰ And, not coincidentally, historian of nineteenth century American architectural journalism Mary Woods has noted that architecture's early professional magazines helped establish a feeling of national cohesion among the country's private community of architects.¹¹ To these remarks I would add that by consolidating and validating the unique self-identities of core audience groups, vertical magazines - whether targeted to architects or others - would have also amplified the distinctions between their readers and the allied professionals their readers interacted with in their day-to-day working lives. This undoubtedly played a role in the historical development of the acrimony between architects and other building project team

¹⁰ Larson, "Emblem and Exception," 68.

¹¹ Mary Woods, "The First American Architectural Journals: The Profession's Voice," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 48:2 (June 1989): 117-138.

members, especially contractors and sometimes engineers, which Time Inc. eventually aimed to mollify by publishing an architectural magazine with a horizontal constituency and collaboration-focused editorial content.

Tomlan has observed that architectural journal publishers in the first decades of the twentieth century purposefully narrowed the scopes of their ventures.¹² This certainly applies to some of the most important periodicals of the era. For instance, in 1909 a new publisher acquired *AABN* and re-named it *American Architect*, eliminating the "Building News" portion of its title altogether in favor of highlighting "Architect" instead. And, in 1920, the third of the three major twentieth century journals was started as *Pencil Points*, a publication specifically for the large corps of career draftsmen who constituted the functional backbone of medium- and large-scale architectural offices.

It was within the context of this relationship between more focused vertical journalism and increasing professional specialization that *The Brickbuilder* was re-branded as *The Architectural Forum*. [Fig. 3] Announced in the January 1917 issue, it involved two connected changes. The first was a shift in target audience from masons to architects, retaining the

¹² Tomlan, "The Architectural Press in the Field of Publishing," 270.

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Fig. 3. Table of Contents, *The Architectural Forum* (January 1917)

magazine's commitment to verticality albeit with a different building profession as its focus. The other was a much-expanded editorial mission that included coverage of all three of architecture's modalities - art, science and business. This latter change may initially appear to diverge from the pattern of increased narrowness that Tomlan observed for the era's architectural journals. However, I would argue that generalizing editorial content acknowledged architects' unique professional responsibility as overall project managers - that is, relative to contractors, engineers and others who were only obligated to master the knowledge necessary to their particular specialties. The existence of this kind of periodical implied a solidifying hierarchy within the building professions that placed broadly-educated architects at the top and everyone else at their service below. Indeed, the subtle promise was that architects who read the re-envisioned magazine would come to understand more about what their contractors, engineers and so on were doing, and would be able to control the process and the outcome more as a result.

Forum and its competitors fared well in the 1920s, likely because the thriving American economy supported advertising, subscriptions and building generally rather than because of these magazines' verticality *per se*. Then, after the stock market crashed in 1929, in many cases the severity of the era's

financial problems overwhelmed whatever protection verticality might have offered. Some of the smaller nationally-circulated architectural periodicals ceased to exist entirely during the 1930s, in fact, while the journal that had started as *AABN* was absorbed into *Record*. *Record* itself survived the decade partly due to the injection of financial capital it received when it was acquired and briefly published by Hearst Publications. And, the company that published *Forum* in the 1920s had essentially declared bankruptcy before Time Inc. entered the fray.

In retrospect, verticality's irrelevance to both the 1920s boom and the 1930s bust - in combination with the country's Depression-inflected self-examining mood - make some form of challenge to the tradition of vertical architectural journalism and its attendant assumptions about the building industry's professional hierarchy seem almost a foregone conclusion. It is also not surprising that the publication within which this occurred was *Forum*, in particular; given its pre-existing editorial identity as the journal that covered architecture's various artistic, technological and financial facets, Time Inc. only needed to market *Forum* to a correspondingly broad target audience in order to achieve a semblance of horizontality. By contrast, the publishers of other vertical journals may have also considered widening their potential subscriber base as a strategy for negotiating the Depression, but those narrowly

focused magazines would have also required an expensive investment in correspondingly expanded content.

Whereas the connection between the early decades of architectural journalism and the evolution of professionalism has drawn some scholars' interest to audience specificity, historians of architecture's post-World War I periodical press have focused on other matters. The literature on journals dating to this later period divides into two main lines of inquiry. The more common approach has involved tracing the discursive treatment of a specific theme or subject through an in-depth object-based analysis of specific magazines. The majority of people investigating professional magazines' role in the history of particular buildings have taken this route. *Forum* figures prominently in two especially insightful studies of this sort: *The Pan Am Building and the Shattering of the Modernist Dream*, in which Meredith Clausen emphasizes the intensely critical way *Forum* and its competitors reacted to the Pan Am Building in New York City (Walter Gropius and Pietro Belluschi, 1963), and *Fallingwater Rising: Frank Lloyd Wright, E.J. Kaufmann, and America's Most Extraordinary House*, in which Franklin Toker describes the origins and implications of Wright's self-designed special insert published in *Forum's* January 1938 issue.¹³

¹³ Meredith Clausen, *The Pan Am Building and the Shattering of the Modernist Dream* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005): 155-272, especially 255-259; and

Additionally, many of the architectural journal-oriented Ph.D. dissertations have been written thematically. William Braham's "The Heart of Whiteness: The Discussion of Color and Material Qualities in American Architectural Journals around 1930" and Susanne Lichtenstein's "Editing Architecture: 'Architectural Record' and the Growth of Modern Architecture, 1928-1938" are two representative examples.¹⁴ Logically, although the main impetus for these studies has been to understand their specific themes, some appreciation of the richness of twentieth century architectural journalism more generally has emerged with each additional inquiry.

The second interest within architectural journalism scholarship, developed relatively recently, has been an assessment of so-called "little architecture magazines," periodicals intended as extensions of design praxis rather than full-fledged commercial journalistic ventures along the lines of *Forum*, *Record* and *Pencil Points-P/A*. Like the "little magazines" that literature and media historians have described, "little architecture magazines" were often self-published, handmade, extant for a short amount of time and/or very limited in terms

Franklin Toker, *Fallingwater Rising: Frank Lloyd Wright, E.J. Kaufmann, and America's Most Extraordinary House* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 2005): 243-299, especially 253-258.

¹⁴ William Braham, "The Heart of Whiteness: The Discussion of Color and Material Qualities in American Architectural Journals around 1930," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1995 and Susanne Lichtenstein, "Editing Architecture: 'Architectural Record' and the Growth of Modern Architecture, 1928-1938," Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1990.

of circulation.¹⁵ They created a sense of community by virtue of their "littleness" – often in such a way as to highlight the people, processes and critical attitudes that caused them to exist in the first place. Beatriz Colomina's book-traveling exhibit-lecture series-website project she has undertaken with Craig Buckley about little architecture magazines of the 1960s and 70s, entitled *Clip/Stamp/Fold: The Radical Architecture of Little Magazines, 196X to 197X*, is by far the most ambitious investigation of this type to date.¹⁶ Notable among the other little architecture magazine studies is a marked focus on two particular publications, *Oppositions*, a critical journal published by the Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies for 11 years beginning in 1973, and *Arts & Architecture*, a Southern California-based design magazine published 1929-67 but known today mainly for its Case Study Houses program of 1945-67.¹⁷

¹⁵ Robert Scholes is one of the best known and highly respected scholars of literary little magazines. His recent writings, especially, provide accessible observations about the little magazine as a type regardless of content discipline. He is also the founder of The Modernist Journals Project, an internet-based searchable database of digitized little magazines. See: Robert Scholes, "Afterword: Small Magazines, Large Ones, and Those In-Between," in *Little Magazines and Modernism: New Approaches*, Suzanne Churchill and Adam McKible, ed. (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2007): 323-335; Robert Scholes and Clifford Wulfman, *Modernism in the Magazines: An Introduction* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010); and Brown and Tulsa Universities, *The Modernist Journals Project* (searchable database), ongoing, <http://www.modjourn.org>.

¹⁶ Beatriz Colomina and Craig Buckley, editors, *Clip/Stamp/Fold: The Radical Architecture of Little Magazines, 196X to 197X* (Barcelona: Actar, 2010). For detailed information about the other aspects of the project, see: <http://www.clipstampfold.org/>

¹⁷ See especially Mitchell Schwarzer, "History and Theory in Architectural Periodicals: Assembling Oppositions," *Journal of the Society of Architectural*

My project shares some elements of both of these approaches to twentieth century architectural journalism history. The focus on the development and wider implications of *Forum's* horizontality here give the dissertation a particular direction; like the typical thematic study, my work does not attempt to narrate the complete history of its given publication in a genuinely comprehensive and in-depth way. As *Forum* was a large for-profit nationally-circulated professional magazine, it is also characterized by a geographic breadth that many of the existing thematic studies include. My project is fundamentally different, however, in that *Forum's* horizontality was journalistic in nature rather than a theme that existed independently what editors then brought into the realm of journalism through their discursive explorations. This connection to form/modality makes my project more similar to

Historians 58:3 (1999): 342-48 and Joan Ockman, "Venzia e New York = Venice and New York," *Casabella* 59:619-620 (January 1995): 56-73. Additionally, a new documentary film by one of *Oppositions'* editors, Diana Agrest, entitled "THE MAKING OF AN AVANT-GARDE: The Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies 1967-1984," has recently been released and may spur fresh interest in this particular journal as a result. Regarding *Arts & Architecture*, its Case Study House Program is routinely cited as an important episode in twentieth century American architectural history and several of the buildings created for that project have also been the subject of specific historical inquiry. Some of the most insightful essays and books about the magazine as a whole have tended to be written by people who were associated with it in some way. For instance, one of the best overviews of its history and significance is by its last editor, David Travers. See: "About Arts & Architecture." *Arts & Architecture* (2012). <http://www.artsandarchitecture.com/about.html> And Esther McCoy, an architectural historian and critic who wrote regularly for *Arts & Architecture*, contributed two books: *Case Study Houses: 1945-1962* 2nd ed. (Santa Monica, CA: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1977) and Barbara Goldsmith, ed. and Esther McCoy, *Arts & Architecture: The Entenza Years* (Santa Monica, CA: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1998).

little architecture magazine studies, in which there has been a clear emphasis on the conscious creation and circulation of the object for and within a specific audience community. The fact that Time Inc.'s *Forum* was based on challenging preconceived notions about professional journalism also recalls the experimentalism that scholars have attributed to little magazines as a type. That said, although an *avant-garde* sensibility occasionally infused episodes in *Forum*'s life as a Time Inc. publication, many of the little architecture magazines that have been studied so far routinely and easily fit that label.

A common motif across thematic and little architecture magazine studies has been to treat the journals' creators as the people or group of people whose relationship with their media is key. In this sense my project is different because I also attempt to describe and analyze subscribers/readers - not just who *Forum*'s creators wanted them to be but the kinds of people they actually were and where they actually lived. For this I have used circulation data that Time Inc. reported to independent non-profit auditing agencies, and which the publishers of *Record* and *Pencil Points-P/A* also reported. This is information that historians of nineteenth century architectural journalism cannot use because it was not collected in an organized fashion before the 1910s. It is also not

available to scholars of little magazines because the business operations of those publications occurred outside the space of conventional journalism.¹⁸ My in-depth look at the professional and geographic complexion of *Forum's* audience has been vital to a study which took the magazine's "active milieu" as a major theme.

B. *Forum* in Context, Part II: Luce and Time Inc.

Forum's audience made this magazine was as different from its sister Time Inc. periodicals as it was from the building-oriented journals routinely considered its direct competitors - but for the opposite reason. In this case, the same constituency that was conspicuously heterogeneous when compared to architectural journalism's tradition of profession specificity appeared very restricted when *Forum's* single-industry concentration was compared with the broadly-conceived "popular" or "mass market" publishing on which the Time Inc. corporate brand was based. Even in its broadest horizontal form *Forum* simply did not align with what was generally considered the company's key market or publishing strength. Elements of *Forum's* Time Inc. existence that could be quantified, such as its

¹⁸ It should be noted here that the publishers of *Arts & Architecture* did not report their magazine's circulation data. This excluded A&A from the group of nationally-circulated architectural journals, both in actual operational fact and in the imaginations of the creators of *Forum*, *Record* and *Pencil Points-P/A*.

extremely low circulation and chronic lack of profit, seemed to support the notion that *Forum* was a bad fit. The fact that it only took about eight people to produce this magazine in any given month, as opposed to the legions of staff assigned to the company's other periodicals, also highlighted the extent of *Forum's* difference. And it was hard for many Time Inc. decision-makers to understand how a publication with such thematically limited content and small potential readership could contribute to Luce's and Time Inc.'s mission to influence the future direction of American society overall. *Forum's* internal reputation suffered as a result, which in turn impacted some crucial operating decisions and eventually led to its closure.

Importantly, *Forum's* relatively narrow scope was part of what Luce liked about this magazine when he acquired it for Time Inc. in 1932. He championed the concept of broadening *Forum* from a vertical to a horizontal journal, but the entire endeavor was still meant to remain securely within the confines of the architecture and building universe. Later, he repeatedly protected *Forum* from other Time Inc. executives that would use the magazine's marginal status inside the company as justification for selling or shuttering it, even (or, perhaps, especially) when *Forum* was actively losing money. And when those same executives stopping publishing it immediately after Luce retired, Luce saw that the magazine's key staff remain on Time

Inc.'s payroll until he could arrange for *Forum* to be established at a new publishing house. In today's parlance, the whole *Forum* episode would probably be called a Luce "pet project," a kind of indulgence, an experiment he supported with his own financial and personal capital as well as with the profits from his company's larger and more consistently lucrative ventures.

Outside of journalism history, Luce is not generally associated with risk-taking. In fact, due mostly to his active public participation in the Republican Party and the relatively conventional view of American society promulgated in his magazines, he is often associated with the more conservative side of twentieth century American politics and culture. Luce came by his conservatism honestly and in his formative years. He was born in China in 1898 to Protestant American missionaries, and spent the majority of his childhood in an isolated compound of like-minded Westerners. As a young person he traveled in Europe, where his agenda included visiting canonical art museums and works of architecture. After that, in the United States, he first attended private boarding school and then Yale University; he would have had more freedom to meet new people within both of

these settings than he had had in China, but neither were inclined toward radicalism.¹⁹

That said, noted biographers and media historians such as Alan Brinkley, James Baughman and Robert Herzstein agree that Luce was quite forward-thinking and original in his Time Inc. decision-making and ultimately exercised more influence in journalism than any other.²⁰ Luce had already taken some of what proved his most significant and successful risks by the time he acquired *Forum* in 1932 – not the least of which was the establishment of the company itself in 1923, when he was in his mid-twenties and still had relatively little journalism experience.²¹ He also took a considerable risk founding a new business-focused magazine, *Fortune*, in February 1930, less than four months after the most clamorous stock market crash in American history. This was especially true considering the

¹⁹ The most comprehensive biography of Luce is Alan Brinkley's *The Publisher: Henry Luce and His American Century*. Brinkley's narrative openly undermines the increasingly outdated "great man" approach by attending as much to Luce's failures as to his achievements. It served as an important model for me given Luce's highly ambiguous relationship to *Forum*. Alan Brinkley, *The Publisher: Henry Luce and His American Century* (New York: Knopf, 2010). See also my review of this book for a more detailed overview of its content and arguments: Sarah M. Dreiller, "Henry R. Luce: The Personal and the Professional," review of *The Publisher: Henry Luce and His American Century*, by Alan Brinkley, Jhistory, H-Net Reviews (February 2011). <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=32197>

²⁰ Brinkley, *The Publisher*, 458–9. James Baughman, *Henry R. Luce and the Rise of the American News Media* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002) and Robert Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce: A Political Portrait of the Man Who Created the American Century* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994). Baughman summarizes his main argument at the beginning, especially on page 5, while Herzstein's is at its most concise on page 419.

²¹ Luce founded Time Inc. with Briton Hadden, a Yale classmate. When Hadden died suddenly in 1929 at the age of 31, Luce continued running the company on his own.

unusually high \$1.00 per issue cover price (over \$14.00 adjusted for inflation to 2014 dollars) made *Fortune* prohibitively expensive for a vast segment of the American reading public.²²

Beyond the business of Time Inc., Luce challenged accepted or inherited ideas when envisioning his company's publications and choosing people to produce them. Conceptually, neither of the two magazines Luce started in the years before *Forum* were intended to uphold a status quo. *Time*, his first, was organized around an imminently modern concept, in fact: that the world was increasingly fast-paced, and that thriving in this time-scarce environment meant absorbing the most important news information in short, memorable bursts. And *Fortune*, as historians Michael Ausgpurger and John Stomberg have observed in their scholarship about this particular periodical, pushed the unique agenda of combining art with business to encourage the development of a new type of enlightened businessman appropriate to what Luce viewed as new interconnected industrial-social paradigms.²³ When hiring editorial staff for both magazines, Robert Vanderlan has noted in his book, *Intellectuals Incorporated: Politics, Art, and Ideas Inside Henry Luce's Media Empire*, that Luce surrounded

²² CPI Inflation Calculator, Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Labor: http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm (hereafter cited as CPI Inflation Calculator).

²³ Michael Ausgpurger, *An Economy of Abundant Beauty: Fortune Magazine and Depression America* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2004) and John Stomberg, "Art and *Fortune*: Machine-Age Discourse and the Visual Culture of Industrial Modernity," Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1999.

himself with genuine thinkers - like future Pritzker Prize-winning playwright Archibald MacLeish - rather than people who were necessarily disposed to agree with him.²⁴ Similarly, instead of taking a staid attitude toward illustrations he hired actual artists - notably photographer Margaret Bourke-White - to create visually significant images that worked in combination with the thoughtfully-written text to advance his magazines' editorial missions.²⁵

I would argue that *Forum* should be viewed as a subsequent episode, with *Time* and *Fortune* as predecessors, in Luce's trajectory of journalistic risk-taking. Considered from a business perspective, he ushered *Forum*, with its small potential readership, into his publishing house only two years after having stretched Time Inc.'s resources thin starting *Fortune* and at a time when the Depression was continuing to destabilize the entire United States economy generally. Then he followed that by spearheading a fundamental change to how the audience for this kind of reader-oriented magazine was constituted, which upended expectations enough to require various campaigns explaining and

²⁴ Robert Vanderlan, *Intellectuals Incorporated: Politics, Art, and Ideas Inside Henry Luce's Media Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

²⁵ Luce declared photography "the most important instrument of journalism which has been developed since the printing press." Henry Luce, "The Photograph and Good News," in *The Ideas of Henry Luce*, ed. John K. Jessup, (New York: Atheneum, 1969): 45. For more information about Margaret Bourke-White's life and career, see especially: Vicki Goldberg, *Margaret Bourke-White: A Biography* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1986).

marketing the so-called "new *Forum*" concept. And his hiring decisions for this magazine serve as a particularly effective measure of Luce's willingness to extend himself since as he was more reliant on *Forum*'s staff as a result of being less qualified to judge the architecture-specific content. His choice for lead publisher/editor was a telling one: charismatic architectural journalist Howard Myers, who brought studio art training, an unapologetic modernist bent and an eagerness to push American architecture in a progressive direction.

Luce went on to found other magazines after he acquired *Forum* for Time Inc., publications which continued on the path he laid with *Time*, *Fortune* and *Forum* by also challenging preconceived ideas about what the fourth estate could or should offer the American public.²⁶ Two of these, *Life* (begun 1936) and *Sports Illustrated* (*SI*, begun 1954), ultimately achieved so-called "household name" status within their popular audience markets akin to the brand reach that *Time* and *Fortune* had solidified earlier and were similarly successful financially as well. *Forum* enjoyed comparable national recognition throughout

²⁶ In his famous essay entitled "Giving the People What They Want," Luce justified his approach to journalism on ideological grounds. He wrote:

Unless the facts, the significant facts, the difficult, complicated facts of industry and finance and politics and technology are put before the people, the people cannot govern themselves in an industrial society.

Henry Luce, "Giving the People What They Want," in "Public Opinion in a Democracy," special supplement, *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 2:1 (January 1938): 64.

these years, although only within its much more narrowly-delineated universe of American architecture and without the corresponding profits that its sister Time Inc. publications returned.

Today, *Time*, *Fortune*, *Life* and *SI* together constitute a kind of legacy suite in the imaginations of Luce biographers and media historians while *Forum's* 32-year history as a Time Inc. publication has been largely overlooked. The most comprehensive treatment of *Forum's* Time Inc. history can be found in the company's own administrative history, *The World of Time Inc.*, which devotes about 10 of its roughly 1500 total pages to describing what its authors call an "Adventure in Architecture."²⁷ Brinkley allocates about one page to summarizing *The World of Time Inc.'s* chapter in his otherwise quite comprehensive biography of Luce, *The Publisher: Henry Luce and His American Century*.²⁸ And, studies of the place of art in *Fortune* and *Life*, such as John Stomberg's Ph.D. dissertation "Art and *Fortune*: Machine-Age Discourse and the Visual Culture of Industrial Modernity" and Melissa Renn's Ph.D. dissertation

²⁷ Robert T. Elson, *Time Inc.: The Intimate History of a Publishing Enterprise, 1923-1941*, edited by Duncan Norton-Taylor (New York: Antheneum, 1968): 186-195. This is actually the first of three volumes typically considered part of the *World of Time Inc.* series. The other two are: *The World of Time Inc.: The Intimate History of a Publishing Enterprise, 1941-1960*. Edited by Duncan Norton-Taylor. New York: Antheneum, 1973 and Prendergast, Curtis, with Geoffrey Colvin and Robert Lubar, ed. *The World of Time Inc.: The Intimate History of a Changing Enterprise, 1960-1980*. New York: Antheneum, 1986.

²⁸ Brinkley, *The Publisher*, 179-180.

"*Life in the Art World, 1936-1972*," for instance, do not discuss Luce's own attempt at publishing a specialty art magazine.²⁹ None of this is surprising; just as *Forum* was not an especially good match for Time Inc. during the mid-twentieth century decades the company was actively publishing it, this magazine also does not fit well within the narrative of conceptually innovative, universally known and fiscally stable mass market periodicals that late-twentieth and early-twenty-first century scholars have rightly attributed to the Luce period.

Now, as then, one of the biggest impediments to a nuanced appreciation of *Forum's* Time Inc. situation has been a lack of familiarity with this magazine's particular content and audience. Understandably, only a small number of mid-twentieth century Time Inc. executives possessed any meaningful knowledge of the history, practice or culture of architecture and building in this country. And, equally understandably, until now the scholarly expertise of those who have written about Luce and Time Inc. have focused on the history of American media, politics and society. My study is the first attempt to fold architecture into the Luce/Time Inc. story and vice versa. My desire has been to produce a hybridized accounting of why and how a group of people who were not themselves of architecture

²⁹ Melissa Renn, "*Life in the Art World, 1936-1972*," Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 2011 and Melissa Renn, e-mail communication with the author, 2 May 2012.

nonetheless invested so much in it, and to likewise explore the wider intentional and unintentional implications of Luce's and Time Inc.'s intervention into architecture. Although I give equal attention to the *Forum* experiment's major successes and failures, the confusions on which its failures were founded occupy an especially important position in my project; these, I suggest, were arguably the moments in *Forum*'s Time Inc. arc that best illuminated the intersections of journalism with architecture and of lay perspective with practiced reality.

The Luce/Time Inc. aspects of this study are not meant to elevate *Forum* to the pantheon of famous Time Inc. magazines. Rather, they are an attempt to objectively reconstitute the relative situation of architecture in Luce's career and at Time Inc., and to also open a place for Luce and Time Inc. in our evolving understanding of twentieth-century American architecture. For 32 years *Forum* was an object fully embedded in two creative and eminently public practices simultaneously. Discovering the extent of that interconnectedness has been a key aim of my work.

C. Organization of the Study

In this dissertation I explore how the unusual editorial identity of Time Inc.'s *Forum* came to be the way it was - conceptually, physically, socially, financially - and what

happened when it intersected its constituency's expectations. That story encompasses roughly 76,500 published pages of *Forum*, various and sometimes unknown creators, the full spectrum of different kinds of audience members and some of the most character-defining episodes in American social, economic, political and art history. I begin this wide-ranging story by offering a chronological history of *Forum* as a Time Inc. publication. I detail why and how Luce acquired the magazine in 1932, and go on to narrate the key characteristics of each major phase of *Forum's* development, outline the circumstances that led to its closure and summarize the efforts of Luce and other Time Inc. staff in 1964 to secure its future with a different publisher. This chapter is primarily intended to support Chapters 3-6 by providing a coherent general framework for the specific historical episodes detailed elsewhere and, whenever possible, by giving substance to the Time Inc. people and personalities most involved with *Forum's* creation.

Chapters 3-5 work together as a suite of thematic chapters exploring the constituencies within which and against which the magazine itself operated. Highly simplified, these are: the building industry community (Chapter 3); the publishing universe of Time Inc. (Chapter 4); and American society broadly-defined (Chapter 5). The first third, roughly, of each of these chapters consists of a conceptual discussion while the remaining two-

thirds of each are devoted to a chronological review of the various ways the given theme manifested in or around *Forum* during the 1932-64 period. The order in which these three chapters are presented in the dissertation generally correlates to the phase of *Forum's* Time Inc. historical arc within which each theme was most relevant. The magazine's identity as a foray into the country's building industry culture dominated the Depression and World War II years, for instance, while its expanded reach through the Time Inc. association achieved full potency in the 1950s. And in the last years, when company executives finally acknowledged that *Forum's* chronic fiscal problems were effectively unsolvable, its perceived contribution to Luce's larger American nation-building project served as justification for continuing its publication at a loss.

As a group Chapters 3-5 are intended to demonstrate *Forum's* simultaneity, one of the fundamental qualities that differentiated this particular magazine during its own time and across the history of American architectural journalism as well. Disentangling the various social contexts and their associated potential meanings highlights the fullness of each's specific character; considering these separate narratives in combination gives some sense of how Time Inc.'s *Forum* could have provoked so many different kinds of people into engagement.

Chapter 6 shifts the dissertation from a generally creator-centric focus to one that attempts to investigate the nature of the audience's interaction with *Forum*. The chapter uses measurable circulation data, just as architectural journalists did historically, to approach what can otherwise be a quite ephemeral aspect of media history. This chapter is crucial to appreciating *Forum*, in particular, since creating a sense of like-minded community for its heterogeneous audience on the page was only part of the magazine's editorial mission. Another *Forum* goal, even more important, was formulating and nurturing an actual community of enlightened American building industry professionals and client-owners around *Forum* - individuals who would in turn make decisions about the country's built landscape with the group's Time Inc.-inflected priorities in mind. By trying to determine the extent to which *Forum* did or did not stimulate an "active milieu," Chapter 6 serves as a conclusion of sorts for the dissertation as a whole.

D. Seeing Beyond the "Look"

Despite the qualities that made *Forum* different from the kinds of magazines its creators and audience already knew, one thing was quite familiar: its general "look." To the casual observer, *Forum* would have appeared to be an especially well-produced architectural trade journal that served mostly

architects. There was a reason why it was created this way, as Chapter 3 details. And, of course the Time Inc. staff that created *Forum*, regular readers, advertisers, other architectural journalists and so on would have recognized the magazine as embedded in a broadly-defined building industry community rather than as ancillary support to a narrowly-defined subset of building professionals. But today, because of this idiosyncrasy, anyone who occasionally consults *Forum* to support some other historical inquiry can easily mistake this magazine for something else - and as a result lose the kinds of significant insights that come from fully comprehending the nature of a primary source. It is my hope, then, that my project to revivify *Forum* can itself live multiple lives, not only as a valid stand-alone contribution to our shared understanding of American architecture but also as part of the historiographic infrastructure my own community of thinkers, writers and makers uses for individual critical work.

II. A BRIEF HISTORY OF TIME INC.'S ARCHITECTURAL FORUM

A. 1932: Time Inc. Acquires Forum

Luce first invested Time Inc. in the notion of an architecture trade publication in 1931. While preparing a series of articles on the state of American housing for *Fortune*, the company's new monthly business publication, editors found that the majority of this country's homes were inadequately constructed and placed blame for the problem squarely on the building industry's chaotic self-serving culture.³⁰ In response, Luce became frustrated not only by the clear lack of social responsibility among home-builders which his editors had uncovered but also by his own inability to create enough space in *Fortune* for architecture-related articles of national importance.³¹ At about this same time Luce started receiving a

³⁰ The research for the *Fortune* housing articles was eventually published as a book, which can be viewed in its entirety via the Hathi Trust Digital Library website. In typical Time Inc. fashion, the book's official authorship was attributed simply to the editors of *Fortune* at the time. Sixteen years later the author was officially changed to Archibald MacLeish, the editor at *Fortune* who happened to be assigned this project. MacLeish is best known for having won three Pulitzer Prizes for his poetry and plays, and for serving as Librarian of Congress under President Roosevelt. The Editors of *Fortune* [Archibald MacLeish], *Housing America* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1932); Hathi Trust record with link to digitized book: <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006737773>

³¹ Luce's frustration with the lack of social responsibility among the designers, builders and promoters of houses at this time would ultimately be codified privately in the internal Time Inc. prospectus he wrote in late-1934/early-1935 for "the new *Forum*." Publicly, the situation was referenced with in much more diplomatic terms. As one of *Forum*'s editors put it in a speech in 1936: "...as an editorial by-product [of the *Fortune* housing series] TIME INC.'s management got a new appreciation of the significance of the building industry in America." Ruth Goodhue, manuscript of speech

considerable number of letters-to-the-editor from *Fortune* readers asking for more building news. In later years many people would question if a small, industry-specific magazine like *Architectural Forum* was a good fit for a large media corporation like Time Inc. But in 1931, when the company was less than a decade old and had only one well-established magazine, the fact that Luce's desire to devote more resources to architectural matters aligned with readers' requests made investigating the idea for a new narrowly-focused publication seem like a logical step.³²

Fortune itself had originated within similar circumstances. After *Time*, a weekly news magazine, was founded in 1923, Luce eventually became unsatisfied with how little page space that periodical's general news mandate left its editorial staff for business-specific information. His solution was to start a monthly magazine with an editorial emphasis dedicated to just

delivered to the Poor Richard Club, Fall 1936, page 2, "ARCH FORUM 1936-1937" Subject File, TIA.

³² Around late-January 1932, Luce described the situation in this way: "I have been deluged during the past few months, and the rain does not seem to let up in the slightest, with letters, plans, prospectuses on the construction problem, buildings, housing, architecture of the future, real estate financing, building materials, etc. ad infinitum. All tending to confirm what I have been increasingly conscious of for some time - that the next great industrial effort which this country will witness will be in building and all affiliated trades. I have received many suggestions to participate from a publisher's standpoint in this coming push, and I have been casting about seriously to see where and how we could best fit into the picture. None of the proposed magazines quite hit the mark, and most of the suggestions made were merely duplications of what already existed with the fond hope expressed that TIME, Inc. would do the job a little better than had already been done." Henry Luce, untitled manuscript regarding *Skyline*, hand-dated "date 1931, around 1/29/32," page 1 "ARCH FORUM 1932-1934" Subject File, TIA.

the subjects important to American business and businessmen. Luce was prohibited from acting on the idea when it initially occurred to him in the 1920s because Briton Hadden, his Time Inc. co-founder, strongly objected to creating this kind of offshoot publication. Hadden died suddenly in 1929, however, and Luce more-or-less immediately turned his attention to starting *Fortune*.

Little more than a year after started *Fortune*, then, Luce recognized that publication's limited ability to cover architectural topics. The spirit of liberated enthusiasm for the notion of establishing a narrow offshoot of an existing more generalized periodical was still relatively fresh - not just for Luce but also with others in Time Inc. who were directly engaged with making *Fortune* a success. Considered within that context, solving *Fortune's* building industry page space problem by creating some sort of new building industry-oriented publication was actually the most obvious option.

The first iteration of the idea for a Time Inc. architecture publication was a weekly newspaper called *Skyline*.³³

³³ Luce described *Skyline* as a "novel and good idea," and noted that although there were architectural magazines published monthly with national circulation, there was a need for a "national weekly newspaper for the architectural profession." He outlined it in this way: "The plan calls for a newspaper format, tabloid in size, containing twelve pages and up, about evenly divided between advertising and editorial. The editorial news matter would be derived from several sources; newspaper clippings of interest to architects which are generally lost in the mass of a large daily paper; news items sent in by the secretaries of the different chapters of the American

The concept was to deliver pertinent breaking news just to architects at first as a way to build circulation, and then expand the newspaper to include engineers, contractors, mortgage brokers and other industry-wide professionals. The core of *Skyline* was apparently suggested to Luce by George Shutt, a former salesman with *Forum* who eventually joined Time Inc. after the company acquired *Forum*.³⁴ Luce put his friend C.D. Jackson in charge of elaborating on the idea since Jackson had grown up in a marble importing family, and to prepare the *Skyline* dummy he assigned one of *Time*'s business writers, Washington Dodge II. Both Shutt and Jackson went on to spend decades as members of *Forum*'s Time Inc. sales and publishing staffs. Dodge only worked for *Forum* for a few years after the acquisition, but as the original editor of Time Inc.'s ground-breaking "Building Money" section he helped formulate the professional industry-wide tone so closely associated with *Forum* later. [Fig. 4]

At some point early in the *Skyline* visioning process, Luce was approached with the idea of purchasing *Forum* rather than starting his own publication from scratch. Like with *Skyline*, a *Forum* staff member took the initiative - this time it was Ruth

Institute of Architects...accurate and intelligent reporting of new materials and methods of construction, new equipment, new ideas; real estate news of vital interest to architects all over the United States...There will be no lack of good material." Luce, untitled manuscript regarding *Skyline*, pages 1-2, TIA.

³⁴ Robert T. Elson, *Time Inc.: The Intimate History of a Publishing Enterprise, 1923-1941*, edited by Duncan Norton-Taylor (New York: Antheneum, 1968): 187.

BUILDING MONEY

A new monthly section devoted to reporting the news and activities in building finance, real estate, management and construction.



Howard T. Fisher

His General House has pressed steel walls, air conditioning, soundproofing throughout



Ruth Page

Sister-in-law of Archibald Fisher. She owns General House No. 1



Robert W. McLaughlin

His American House has asbestos walls hung on a steel frame and a rolled steel roof

Steel Houses

can now be seen and bought. A review of who is making them, wherein they differ, what they cost, and how they are built.

I BELIEVE in giving them what they like," says C. M. Gross, president of successful Laurelton Homes, Inc., "And I think they would start squawking if we tried to sell them Ford homes."

Unmindful of potential squawks, the makers of prefabricated steel houses have gone ahead preparing a product which the public certainly does not want right now, may not want for many years. Since last July, when *The Architectural Forum* and *Fortune* announced the formation of General Houses, Inc., it has been apparent that the steel house, object of much theorizing for a decade, was about to become a reality. Since then steel homes have been erected: people have dined and slept and worked within steel homes. With the opening of the Century of Progress Exposition this new development in the housing business will make its first major bid for business. If a potential market exists, ready for exploitation, it will quickly be known.

The depression has both aided and hurt the prefabricated home market. It has helped because of the decline in land values. And it has hurt in the

way it has enabled competitors to lower their prices. Sears, Roebuck's *Crafton*, its best-selling four-room model, can be had now for \$3,400 compared to a former \$6,000. Developers such as the Harmon National Real Estate Corporation are offering a four-room house and a quarter-acre for \$4,400, content to profit from the land part of the transaction alone. Asked about prefabrication, William Burke Harmon says "I am opposed to it. I am opposed to it from the practical interest of the customer. The average architect puts the cart before the horse in thinking about small homes. The completed merchandise as it affects the sale is the thing. The architect does not have his mind on the sale."

Against the competition of subdividers and the deeply entrenched likes and dislikes of the American Public, prefabricators a year ago argued: "The average house for the average U. S. income (\$2,000) costs from \$6,000 to \$7,000. We can with mass production methods supply a house twice as good for one-half the price. Against such advantages no

Fig. 4. First Building Money section, *Architectural Forum* (April 1933): 327

Goodhue, the magazine's current managing editor. Goodhue and Hadden had had a loose connection, so the meeting was not entirely arbitrary. And, her job coordinating the day-to-day content production tasks meant she could expound on many of the operational details Luce needed to make a genuinely informed decision.

Goodhue came to Time Inc. with *Forum* in 1932 and stayed through the mid-1940s. She had lived and studied in Vienna and Munich before her publishing career in the United States, which translated into her most obvious contribution to *Forum*: the "International Section" series, a group of twelve nation-specific portfolios created by the featured designers without Time Inc. editorial interference, printed using European inks and techniques on presses in Vienna and published in *Forum* for Americans at periodic intervals across a three-year timespan. [Fig. 5] Goodhue even moved to Vienna for a while to oversee the printing and transatlantic shipping logistics. Internally, she was also one of the biggest supporters of Luce's no-byline policy, which highlighted *Forum*'s team-oriented editorial concept by projecting the magazine itself as a model of successful team-based creative work.³⁵

³⁵ During the periods in which Luce was physically absent from *Forum*'s offices, his presence was felt partly through the magazine's staff's fidelity to Time Inc. standards of operation that had originated with him or were directly associated with his publishing philosophies. One of these was the



Fig. 5. Representative International Section covers:
 France, *The Architectural Forum* (April 1993): 291
 and Czechoslovakia, *The Architectural Forum* (March
 1934): 201

expectation that articles were to be staff-written and, importantly, that no staff-written articles were to include bylines. By the time *Forum* was acquired, in fact, the company had already become quite well-known for the image of journalistic objectivity that its magazines' anonymity projected, and this continued to be a Time Inc. hallmark for many decades.

Luce's meeting with Goodhue in late 1931 or early 1932 may have also been how he came to understand *Forum's* fragile financial situation, a narrative that probably played a large role in his decision to purchase *Forum*. Briefly, in 1928 a new publisher called National Trade Journals had started acquiring a wide variety of discipline-specific magazines, which initially included several building industry titles such as *Building Age* and *National Builder* and *Cement, Mill and Quarry* alongside others that had nothing to do with architecture, like *Butchers Advocate* and *Market Journal* and *The Sporting Goods Journal*.³⁶ National Trade Journals purchased *Forum* in November of that year with four other magazines at a total cost of \$2,800,000 (approximately \$39 million when adjusted for inflation to 2014 value).³⁷ According to rumor, *Forum* alone accounted for \$1,000,000 of that particular sale – an important detail since a building materials manufacturer acquired *Forum* for only \$75,000 when National Trade Journals went bankrupt three years later (adjusted for 2014 values, the 1928 and 1931 prices were approximately \$14 million and \$1.2 million, respectively).³⁸

³⁶ "To Merge Trade Journals." *New York Times* (8 February 1929): 36.

³⁷ "Acquires 5 Publications," *New York Times* (19 November 1928): 30; "Bond Flotations," *New York Times* (21 November 1928): 46; CPI Inflation Calculator.

³⁸ *Forum's* \$1 million sale price in 1928 was repeated in various internal Time Inc. memoranda over the years and essentially accepted as fact. Even though National Trade Journals was a public company and was therefore obligated to announce bond issuances, stock offerings and so on, I have not been able to independently verify the individual purchase price for *Forum* because National Trade Journals always bought magazines in groups. The 1931 purchase price is

Forum was for sale again when Goodhue approached Luce, its most recent owner having decided not to remain in the publishing business long-term. Luce and his wife eventually purchased *Forum* for Time Inc. in April 1932 for \$110,000 (\$1,900,000 adjusted for 2014 value).³⁹

For Luce, the key to these ups and downs was that acquiring *Forum* made good business sense in addition to solving an on-going editorial problem for *Fortune*. The logic was that the \$1,000,000 sale in 1928 had already demonstrated the magazine could be a financial success, and that all it needed was a new publisher with the imagination and resources to resurrect it. A roughly 86% drop in price could certainly have been real given the vastly different economic circumstances under which the purchases he was comparing were made. At the very least, it should not surprise us today that Luce either personally believed a de-valuation of this magnitude had occurred between 1928 and 1932, and/or thought others would whenever he used it to help justify the acquisition.⁴⁰

Luce had three other reasons to imagine *Forum* as a good fit for Time Inc. at that moment. One was that the magazine was

recorded in the official Time Inc. administrative history. See Elson, *Time Inc.: The Intimate History*, 188.

³⁹ "To the Stockholders of Rogers & Mason, Inc.," "Arch *Forum* - Purchase" Subject File, TIA.

⁴⁰ For instance, in a letter to Howard Myers in 1933, Luce wrote: "The *Forum* was once worth \$1,000,000. I believe it can be worth that again - and on a much sounder basis." Henry Luce to Howard Myers, 1 August 1933, "ARCH FORUM 1932-1934" Subject File, TIA.

already well-known for overtly exploring beyond architecture's identity as a form of art to include its business and scientific/engineering aspects as well. This broader vision of what building practice really constituted aligned rather neatly with the long-term concept Time Inc. had already formulated for *Skyline*, which involved eventually expanding the newspaper into an industry-wide publication.⁴¹ Within that, *Forum's* pre-existing penchant for in-depth architecture business reporting would have been especially appealing since the idea of a building industry-specific periodical had grown out of a dilemma with *Fortune* to begin with.

Secondly, under National Trade Journals' masthead *Forum* had also started developing a reputation for high-quality physical production value - it was published as two conceptually interconnected volumes, its graphic design included a large number of photographs and drawings and so on. Of course no other publisher could hope to reach the standards that Time Inc. had set with *Fortune*, particularly in the case of a much less ambitious profession-specific magazine and in an era of such severe economic travails. But *Forum's* higher-end "look," the expense of which may have contributed to financial problems at

⁴¹ Elson, *Time Inc.: The Intimate History*, 188.

National Trade Journals, would have helped the magazine seem to slide more easily into place at Time Inc.

Finally, Goodhue was not the only *Forum* staff member who came into Time Inc.'s employ with the *Forum* acquisition. Among them was Kenneth Stowell, a Harvard-trained architect who had been a professor for three years before starting his journalism career with *Forum* in 1927, and Howard Myers, whose academic background was in fine arts but who had served as president and general manager of National Trade Journals.⁴² Since Stowell's responsibilities as head editor covered content and Myers' position as publisher put him in charge of actually running the magazine, together these two men essentially made *Forum* self-sufficient for Time Inc. from the moment the sale was finalized. In fact, there was no pause in publication at all between the April and May 1932 issues. This gave Luce and his advisors ample opportunity to observe what publishing a professional journal really meant so that they could make good choices about what Time Inc.'s version of it should eventually be.

B. 1932-1941: The Early Years of Time Inc.'s "new *Forum*"

Time Inc. made a small number of important changes to *Forum's* content and physical format during its first few years.

⁴² "Kenneth Stowell, Architect, Editor," *New York Times* (24 January 1969): 47; "Howard Myers Elected," *New York Times* (30 July 1929): 28.

For instance, the magazine was collapsed into a single volume again rather than continuing the previous publisher's two-volume separation between the art of architecture and its business and engineering/scientific qualities. [Figs. 6 & 7] This was followed shortly thereafter by a new binding methodology, which entailed using a spiral metal comb instead of traditional glues or stitching in order to allow *Forum* to lay open completely flat on a drafting board or conference table. [Fig. 8] Time Inc. also added the Building Money section as well as the first of the International Sections during this time, and began a clever but unusual marketing campaign in *Fortune* and *Time* that advertised *Forum* subscriptions by promoting the benefits of hiring architects more generally.

As significant as each of these immediate post-acquisition changes were individually, when the first decade of Time Inc.'s *Forum* is considered as a whole the really pivotal moment clearly falls in the period between about mid-1934 and mid-1935. This was when the company began transitioning the older-style *Forum* into what became known as "the new *Forum*," Time Inc.'s distinctive variation on the concept of a building trade journal.

Internally, the most important aspect of this transition was Luce's completion of his prospectus for "the new *Forum*," which defined the need he perceived for a broadly-conceived

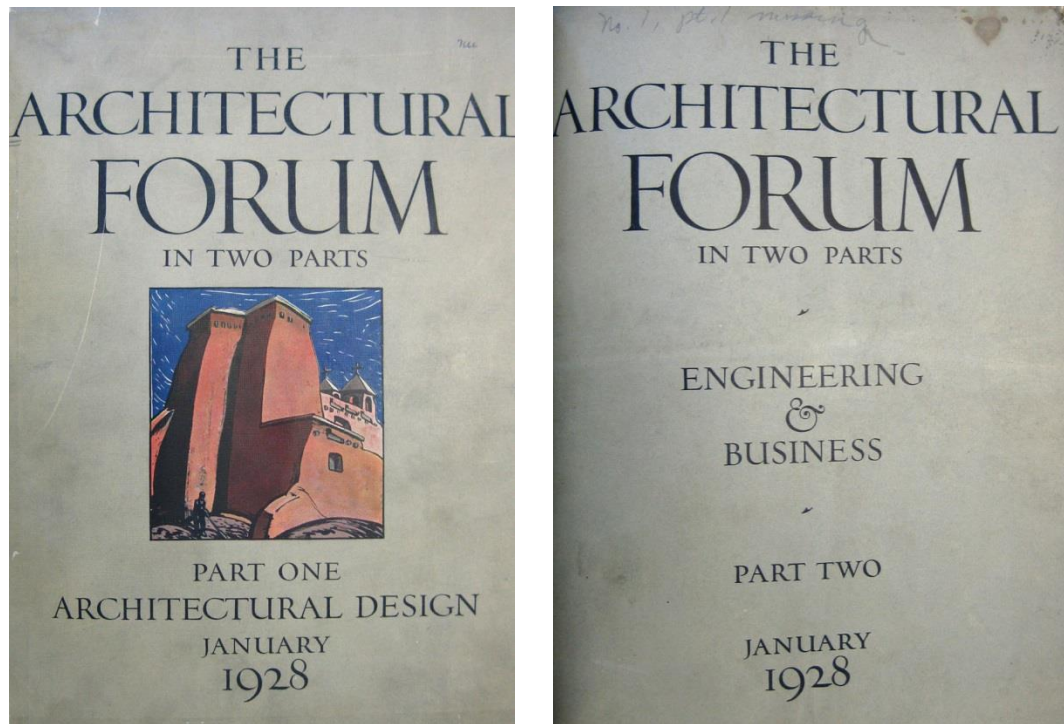


Fig. 6. Covers, first two-volume set, *The Architectural Forum* (January 1928)

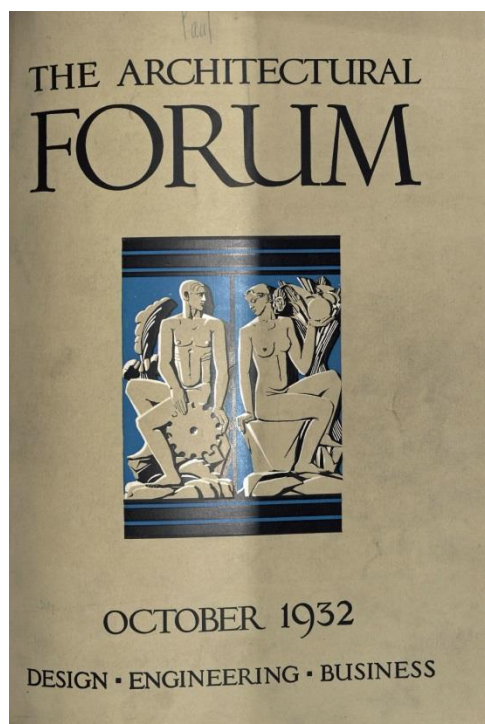


Fig. 7. Cover, single volume, *The Architectural Forum* (October 1932)

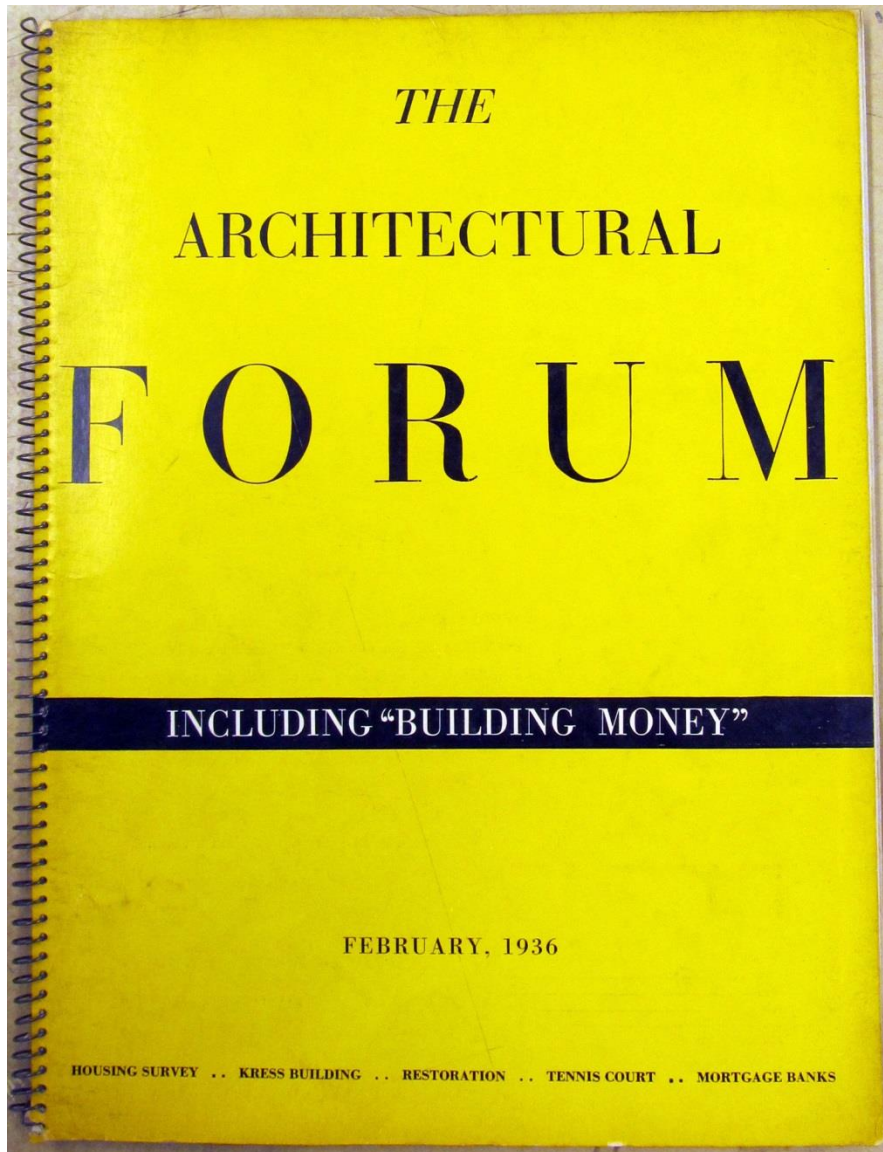


Fig. 8. Representative original (not library-bound) issue with redesigned cover, spiral comb binding and Building Money announcement banding. *The Architectural Forum*, (February 1936) Courtesy of Time Inc.

professional architecture magazine and outlined some of the steps needed to make that happen. Although much of the document is as practical about the details of production and distribution as we might expect, the introductory pages evidence genuine passion for improving America through its man-made landscape. Luce chose to begin the prospectus with the unambiguous declaration, "to influence architecture is to influence life," for example, and then continued on to paraphrase Le Corbusier's famous "Architecture or Revolution" aphorism when describing the stakes involved and blaming American architects' lack of social responsibility for some of the country's problems.

Today, knowing how *Forum* eventually evolved out of the prospectus' ideas and plans, it is clear that the most conceptually significant element in this document was Luce's insistence that "the planners of structures" were going to be very important to America's future strength as a nation - and that the definition of "planners of structures" was not limited to just people trained as architects.⁴³ This much more open attitude toward who should be considered *bone fide* participants in the process of designing, constructing and interpreting buildings came to be *Forum's* most distinguishing feature. And

⁴³ Luce wrote: "Some of the planners of structures will be men who now hold architectural diplomas. Some will not be. But whether or not they have degrees, those planners of structures are the architects of the next decades." Emphasis is original. Luce, "A Long Preface to The New *Forum*," pages III-IV, TIA.

although it gained the magazine many supporters, it also challenged enough of the architecture community's long-held assumptions and expectations to result in myriad problems for Luce and the magazine's creators over the years.

The most openly symbolic manifestation of Time Inc.'s commitment to moving forward with its *Forum* project at this time was the company's decision to finally put its name and logo in the magazine's masthead. This unequivocally proclaimed *Forum* as a full member of Time Inc.'s suite of publications, with all the prestige and influence the association was expected to endow. Until then Time Inc. executives and *Forum* staff had not exactly kept the relationship a secret, but they had arranged for the previous publisher's name and logo to remain in the masthead - probably as a kind of precaution in case anyone questioned the wisdom of the *Forum* experiment.

Major staffing changes during this moment also profoundly altered the course of *Forum's* history. One was the hiring of a permanent art director in 1934. Before this point, Luce had relied heavily on a consultant, architect and graphic designer Ernest Born, for insights into how the magazine's physicality might help it achieve the company's larger goals. As far as can be determined, in fact, Born was the only architectural professional asked to formally review and report on the private

prospectus Luce wrote for "the new *Forum*" during this period.⁴⁴ He had studied and traveled extensively in Europe before moving to New York City in the late-1920s; this exposure to international trends made him a good fit working with the well-traveled Luce and forwarding-thinking Myers. Born continued to serve as a consultant for *Forum* until 1937, when he returned to his native San Francisco to establish a successful regional practice with his architectural photographer wife, Esther.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Born shared Luce's passionate aspiration that *Forum* could be used to bring about genuine and meaningful change within American society generally. For instance, in his comments on Luce's prospectus, under the heading "The *Architectural Forum* as a Service Institution," Born wrote:

The function of the *Forum* in the next few years should be to focus the minds of the people, architects, builders, laymen, bankers, real-estate men, school-board, town planning commissions, little mothers' Wednesday afternoon clubs, parent-teachers' organizations, manufacturers, and consumers, and everybody else - on the fundamental matters of existence in a dramatic and exciting way.

I do not mean missionary work of a pedagogical character, but a dust clearing, fact-sifting, screen lifting, non-alarmist, straight to the point exposition and picturization of the principles and technique of solving these problems. With the active, intelligent, creative help of a powerful, non-partisan force like the *Forum*, the American people can be made to think - think about living, think about building - as they have never known how, or had the courage to think before - and the results become amazing.

Ernest Born, "TO MR. HENRY LUCE, Some remarks concerning a new *Forum*," c. April 1935, "ARCH FORUM 1935 JAN-APRIL" Subject File, TIA.

⁴⁵ In 1943 Howard Myers penned a public appreciation of Born and Born's contribution:

[Born] arrived here in the early 1930s with a brilliant talent, some wonderful handwoven neckties, a complete world philosophy and a firm conviction that the layout business was ripe for revolution. There were plenty of letters about magazine design when the Born layouts began to appear, but new subscriptions gradually outpulled the indignant cancellations.

The person hired as art director was Paul Grotz, a young German-born and -trained architect who was one of Born's employees at the time. Grotz immigrated to the United States in 1931 and was especially inclined to pay more attention to *Forum* as a result of International Sections program.⁴⁶ Grotz was a full member of *Forum*'s staff from the beginning, not a consultant as Born had been, and he remained connected to the magazine for the rest of his professional life. Even after 1964, when Time Inc. shut *Forum* down, he moved with the magazine to its new publishing house and worked as its art director, managing editor and editor-at-large until his retirement in 1975.

By all accounts Grotz especially thrived in the fluid collaborative working environment that characterized Time Inc.'s *Forum* office. In fact, although it is clear that as art director he was trusted with all the major decisions about the magazine's graphic layout, typography and physical attributes (paper, ink, binding and so on), his preference for direct personal interaction left no memoranda or other internal records evidencing the specifics of what must have been a very

Howard Myers, "A Letter from the Publisher," *Architectural Forum* (October 1943): 36. For more information on Born, see: www.docomomo-noca.org/architects/born-ernest/

⁴⁶ Paul Grotz, interview by Celia Sugarman, 7 January and 4 February 1960, transcript and Sugarman notes dated 26 March 1965, "GROTZ, PAUL" Bio File, TIA.

significant contribution.⁴⁷ Toward the end of his career the American Institute of Architects awarded Grotz an honorary membership in recognition his decades of service to *Forum* and the broader American architectural community.

The Born association brought Grotz to *Forum* but it proved problematic for Stowell, whose attitude toward architecture tended toward the more conservative end of the aesthetic spectrum.⁴⁸ As a result, he left *Forum* in 1935 to become editor of *The American Architect and Architecture*. He eventually moved on to hold similar positions at *House Beautiful* in the later 1930s and at *Architectural Record* for most of the 1940s.

Time Inc. did not replace Stowell. Instead, Myers was given the newly-created position of "Editor and Publisher," which gave him operational control over both the editorial content decisions and the business aspects of *Forum's* existence. He used this power liberally to impress upon *Forum* his own personal sensibilities as an activist for socially responsible Modernism. As Luce's attention became more focused on the founding of *Life* in 1936 and then the enormity of world war in the later 1930s and 1940s, Myers evolved into one of Luce's most trusted advisors on *Forum* matters. His naturally charismatic personality

⁴⁷ Ann Wilson (former secretary to Douglas Haskell and former Managing Editor of *Forum* under post-Time Inc. publishers), in discussion with the author, April 2010.

⁴⁸ Grotz, interview.

also endeared him to many of his readers, some of whom even credited him with materially progressing their professional careers.⁴⁹ Myers held the "Editor and Publisher" position until his unexpected death in 1947.

Finally, the other major component of the "new *Forum*" transition came when Time Inc. took steps aimed at encouraging more people to engage directly with *Forum*. This included overtly courting architecture-related professionals who were not designers to subscribe, an effort that Luce claimed had added "5,000 men of influence who never before read an architectural publication" to *Forum's* circulation.⁵⁰ Another was that the company dramatically reduced the cost of subscriptions and individual issues in the hopes of increasing and diversifying circulation. Even though this move meant breaking with the

⁴⁹ For instance, when Florence Knoll was sorting through her personal and professional records before donating them to the Smithsonian in 1999, she annotated a photograph of a party hosted by Myers and his wife in which she indicated that these sorts of gatherings had helped her career tremendously. Photograph, Item 24, Box 4, Folder 2, Series 6: Letters (1930s-40s), Florence Knoll Bassett Papers, 1932-2000, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; Erin Kinhart (Archivist, Archives of American Art), e-mail communication with the author, 28 March 2013. I am indebted to Hicks Stone for bringing this item to my attention.

⁵⁰ The full passage is the following:

Last year, the *Forum* took an extraordinary step. It actually invited a banker to make a regular habit of reading an architectural journal. It also invited a realtor. And a contractor. And a manufacturer. And an insurance man. With the unique result that the *Forum* is now read by 5,000 men of influence who never before read an architectural publication. How many more businessmen ought to, or will, make the *Forum* part of their regular mental equipment, remains to be seen.

Henry Luce, letter to *Forum* advertisers, 25 September 1935, page 2, "ARCH FORUM 1935 MAY-DEC" Subject File, TIA.

Fortune concept of price-based prestige, it made *Forum* competitive by definitively bring the magazine into line with what consumers paid for other American professional architecture journals.

All of these events combined together to encourage the single largest one-year spike in overall circulation in *Forum's* entire history - and it occurred just as the country was experiencing the worst of the Depression and then beginning to ease back into economic conditions that could again support architectural commissions. [Fig. 9] By the time Luce turned his entire attention to founding *Life* in 1936, Time Inc.'s "new *Forum*" had jettisoned from the middle of the American architectural journalism community to its definitive leader.

Forum's circulation continued to increase steadily throughout the rest of the 1930s. It was undoubtedly bolstered by the reflected glow off *Life*, as well, since that magazine immediately projected the Time Inc. brand into millions of American homes and businesses. What did not really grow during the mid- and late-1930s, much to everyone's surprise and regret, was the overall net profit *Forum* generated for Time Inc. Part of this was because in 1937 the company decided to establish a small weekly *Skyline*-style architectural newspaper after all, entitled *The Building Reporter*, which routinely lost money and was often connected to *Forum* for Time Inc.'s year-end accounting

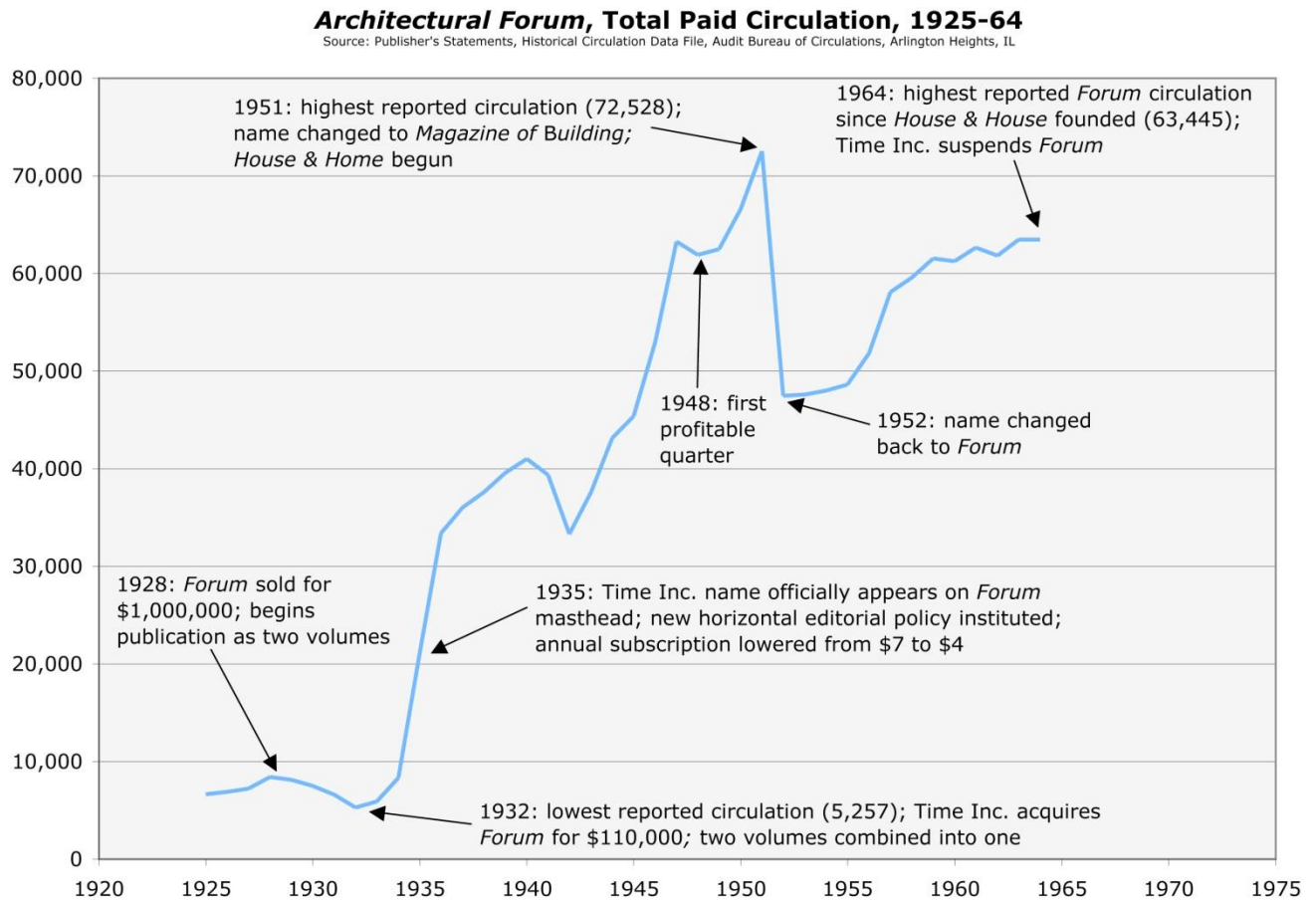


Fig. 9. *Architectural Forum*, Annotated Total Paid Circulation, 1925-64

purposes because of the two publications' shared building industry focus. But at the time most people who knew *Forum's* publishing details recognized that the big problem was lack of advertiser buy-in, in both literal and figurative terms. Product manufacturers ended up showing very little interest in advertising in the kind of magazine *Forum* had become at Time

Inc., despite the much-expanded overall circulation, because they perceived their customers as mainly architects. Their business model, in other words, did not align with *Forum's* diverse professional complexion - and the magazine's salesmen were simply not able to convince them otherwise. Not surprisingly, in addition to the financial problems this situation caused, an awkward tension began to develop between *Forum's* editorial and sales staffs that remained until the company shuttered the magazine entirely in 1964.⁵¹

In later years *Forum's* chronic inability to attract advertisers was widely recognized among supporters and detractors inside Time Inc. as the magazine's biggest problem. But the late-1930s was when Luce, Myers and others experienced their first substantial inkling that a professional journal for "planners of structures" - instead of just architects - could be simultaneously an editorial success and a financial failure. The initial response from Time Inc.'s management was to consider selling *Forum* to a less ambitious publisher that did not have to expect such high fiscal returns.⁵² Myers, in the meantime,

⁵¹ Howard Myers memorandum to advertising staff, 2 April 1940, "ARCH FORUM 1940-1943" Subject File, TIA; John Morris Dixon (former *Forum*/Time Inc. assistant editor and former Editor-in-Chief of *Progressive Architecture*), in discussion with the author March-May 2010.

⁵² In an especially candid memorandum written to Luce in October 1939, one of his closest advisors described the situation in this way:

I simply think that the FORUM does not belong to TIME INC. and that its main trouble is that it does belong to TIME INC. If it

offered to find financial backing and take *Forum* on himself.⁵³ And by late-1941, after several years of on-off discussions, a tentative plan was formulated for Time Inc. to purchase *Record* from F.W.Dodge, combine it with *Forum* and then allow a small group of committed staff (including Myers and Goodhue) to acquire the newly-merged magazine.⁵⁴ None of this came to pass, however; F.W.Dodge withdrew their offer and the Pearl Harbor attack turned Time Inc.'s collective energies toward other more immediately pressing matters.

C. 1942-1952: The Confused Middle Years

The confusion and self-reflection that accompanied the near-sale/merger/employee acquisition during the 1938-41 period

was on 10th Avenue where it belongs and was run by a hard-fisted owner with a couple of sturdy helpers, on a bonus arrangement, the FORUM might have a chance to make some money. But with the handicaps which TIME INC. puts on it in the way of rent, salaries, wage scales, circulation operation in Chicago, etc. etc., I think it is unlikely that the FORUM will make any respectable money (i.e. \$100,000 net per annum) unless the whole U.S.A. has a 'Florida Boom'...Therefore I say the Building Industry is allergic to TIME INC. publishing and we had better admit it.

Allen Grover memorandum to Henry Luce, 25 October 1939, "ARCH FORUM 1939," Subject File, TIA.

⁵³ It merits remembering that Myers had been president and general manager of National Trade Journals a decade earlier, so the idea that a *Forum* staff member would offer to establish his own publishing house is not as far-fetched as it would seem. Allen Grover memorandum to Henry Luce (cc Stillman and Ingersoll), 12 January 1938, "ARCH FORUM 1940-1943" Subject File, TIA.

⁵⁴ An internal memorandum about this unusual arrangement noted: "F.W. Dodge, publishers of the competing *Record*, prove to be even more anxious to sell their property to us than we are to sell ours to them." Charles Stillman memorandum to Board of Directors of *Forum*, 29 August 1941, "ARCH FORUM 1940-1943" Subject File, TIA.

carried over into the 1940s, laying a distinctly unsettled foundation for the magazine's second decade at Time Inc. This, in turn, manifested as a series of relatively disjointed experiments aimed at resolving the advertising problem, on the one hand, and solidifying *Forum's* identity as a building industry-wide journal, on the other. By the early-1950s, Time Inc. was more committed to publishing a professionally diverse magazine than ever. And since that left intact the editorial characteristic advertisers objected to most, the company was also still operating *Forum* at a loss, as well.

World War II would have frustrated any attempts at stabilizing *Forum* even if those attempts had not been as mixed as they were, but the coincidental timing of the United States' entry into the conflict complicated the situation further. Time Inc. as a whole had to scramble to accommodate staffing changes as employees joined the military and then left for Europe or Asia. Editors had to determine how to cover the multi-theater war in ways that were appropriate to the personality of their particular publication. And Luce, after having called on the nation to accept its global leadership responsibilities in his famous "The American Century" essay of February 1941, turned his attention toward embodying his own ideology in his publishing work and in his capacity as an occasional advisor to the

President and other politicians.⁵⁵ At *Forum*, keeping up with the myriad impacts the war was having on architectural thinking and production created enough work to keep everyone preoccupied.

Still, the company commissioned various studies over the years to figure how best to handle the continuing advertising revenue problem. This mostly resulted in a combination of more advertising pages per issue and a reduction in the amount of money product manufacturers actually paid for advertising page space. However, offering ultra-competitive rates and then compensating with more advertisements did not end up helping very much. And readers began complaining about the extra non-content bulk, as well.

Time Inc. also tried to offset *Forum's* low revenue by reducing the magazine's production costs, especially because executives understood they were holding *Forum* to higher standards than it would have experienced at a one of the more modest professional journal publishing houses. They discontinued *The Building Reporter* in 1942, for instance, and around the same time also reduced the width and length of the actual magazine to save money on paper. Both of these provided some relief. In fact, during the first quarter of 1948 *Forum's* accumulated net profits finally paid Time Inc. back for its initial \$110,000

⁵⁵ Henry Luce, "The American Century," *Life* (17 February 1941): 61-65.

investment.⁵⁶ That figure was not adjusted for the inflation that had occurred in the 16 years since the acquisition, though, and *Forum* never reported a significant net annual profit in the remaining 16 years Time Inc. published it.

In the midst of these financial machinations, *Forum's* editorial staff refined their approach to content during the 1940s in ways that confirmed and enhanced the magazine's identity as a forward-thinking building industry-wide publication. The most widely-known to us today is the series of so-called "194X" articles in which *Forum* commissioned new ideas for the postwar American built landscape whenever World War II was over.⁵⁷ For instance, in "The New House 194X", a 90-page feature published in September 1942, selected designers were invited to offer postwar home concepts that directly engaged with the modern industrial concepts of prefabrication, standardization and mass production which Myers and his colleagues had been promoting in *Forum* since well before the war.⁵⁸ Creatively and meaningfully solving what editors described as the "problem of variety within standardization" necessarily combined the art, science and business of architecture together

⁵⁶ Vernon Hitchcock memorandum to George Shutt, 12 April 1948, "ARCH FORUM 1944-48" Subject File, TIA.

⁵⁷ "The New House 194X," *Architectural Forum* (September 1942): 65-152. The other major installment in the series was: "Planned Neighborhoods for 194X," *Architectural Forum* (October 1943): 65-141.

⁵⁸ "New Houses of 194X," *Architecture Forum* (September 1942): 65-152.

- and if/when eventually built would also require precisely the kind of efficient collaboration between architecture's various sub-disciplines that *Forum's* core mission was supposed to foster.⁵⁹

Perhaps more impactful in terms of *Forum's* overall history was its editors' decision in mid-1944 to reduce jargon-heavy text and rely instead on images, typography and layout to communicate big ideas. Toning down *Forum's* densely specialized nature in favor of a quicker- and easier-to-grasp graphicness demonstrated renewed commitment to making content as accessible as possible to the broad spectrum of building industry professionals who subscribed. This move also activated key Time Inc. strengths already familiar to readers of the company's other three magazines: the time-saving "at a glance" quality of *Time*; the thoughtful use of high-quality images in *Life*; and the artful attitude toward magazine design embodied by *Fortune*.⁶⁰ Not surprisingly, *Forum* experienced another surge in circulation soon thereafter. And although there were always multiple factors underlying these sorts of dramatic circulation fluctuations, the fact that the magazine's presentation approach had so recently

⁵⁹ "The New House of 194X," *Architectural Forum* (September 1942): 66.

⁶⁰ The "at a glance" notion, in particular, is quoted directly from the memorandum that inspired this shift toward more graphic communication. Henry Wright, memorandum to unspecified recipient hand-labeled "Re-Prospectus," September 1944, pages 3 and 11-12, "ARCH FORUM" Subject Files, TIA.

shifted in an overtly inclusive and Time Inc.-relevant direction was certainly not a coincidence.

The unexpected death of Howard Myers in late-1947 dealt a significant blow to *Forum's* editorial momentum. Since he was still fulfilling the role of "Editor and Publisher" with as much gusto as ever, the sudden loss of his charismatic leadership, extensive personal-professional connections across the building industry audience community and relatively unencumbered liaison relationship with Luce created a situation for *Forum* that was as unstable as - or potentially even worse than - what had occurred in the late-1930s and early-1940s.

Unlike that earlier episode, however, the coincidental timing of important events around the time of Myers' death happened to be on *Forum's* side. One was the net profit return for the first quarter of 1948 which, as previously noted, proved the magazine had repaid Time Inc.'s initial investment. Although quite a modest achievement in itself, this good financial news may have encouraged Time Inc.'s executives not to give up on *Forum* even though they could no longer rely on Myers' unique combination of architectural instinct and publishing business acumen to keep the magazine going. The other event, which culminated in 1948 according to *Fortune* historian Michael Augspurger, was a shift in *Fortune's* editorial mission away from overtly promoting the non-investment value of art to

businessmen.⁶¹ This left Luce with only one periodical - *Forum* - in which the content explicitly emphasized the relationship between art and business that had been so important to his worldview for so long. Like the quarterly report, this may have increased *Forum's* relative appeal to Luce at precisely the moment when the magazine might have otherwise seemed expendable.⁶²

It was 1949 before Time Inc. officially replaced Myers. The person who took on the "Editor and Publisher" title was Pierrie Prentice, a decades-long Time Inc. employee who was very enthusiastic about building industry-related issues and had plenty of general publishing experience. However, he lacked the two other qualities that had really made Myers effective, at least in the editorial sense: artistic training/instinct and

⁶¹ Augspurger writes: "After the war ended the critique of an unthinking mass culture returned in force, as did the social and professional boundaries that made high art as exclusionary as ever...By 1948 *Fortune* had largely withdrawn from the struggle over the culture field, and its corporate liberal artistic ideals, like those of a wide range of political and social artists, disappeared from literary and artistic history...And along with the disappearance of the thriving artistic and political movements of the thirties came the withering of *Fortune's* vision of a harmonious and mutual beneficial relationship between business and art." Michael Augspurger, *An Economy of Abundant Beauty: Fortune Magazine and Depression America* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2004): 13.

⁶² *Forum's* fidelity to some of Time Inc.'s Lucean journalistic standards, such as the no-byline policy, may have also helped save the magazine from being sold away from Time Inc. in 1948. Per an internal memorandum by a long-time company executive: "...And while I still think it is important to make the FORUM substantially better, it is very clear to me that the FORUM has editorial standards which are very seldom met at any magazine on which Harry Luce has not somehow impressed his personality. And somehow or other, I feel a bit squeamish about selling down the river any magazine which has come to have any of Harry's personality in it, even if it had to pick up that personality by osmosis." P. Prentice memorandum to A. Gates, 13 December 1948, "ARCH FORUM 1944-48" Subject File, TIA.

abundant personal charisma. To compensate, Time Inc. persuaded Douglas Haskell to join *Forum* as the lead editor under Prentice. Haskell was one of *Record's* most energetic editors at the time, and also had a very distinguished record as an architecture critic extending back to the early-1930s as well as some professional architecture training and design experience. He stayed with *Forum* until Time Inc. closed the magazine in 1964, and since Haskell happened to turn 65 that same year he was forced into retirement along with *Forum*.

Prentice was especially eager to strike a slightly different path for architectural coverage at Time Inc., one which defined the focus on architecture's social responsibility as less about modernity *per se* and more specifically about the burgeoning postwar speculative home building market.⁶³ And, he

⁶³ Prentice was also eager to let his audience know that a shift in *Forum's* tone toward that of a more traditional professional journal was imminent. This did not really come to pass, but the rhetorical phrasing of this part of the speech elucidates the internal Time Inc. something of the urgency of *Forum's* mission:

Under Howard [Myers] the FORUM was a crusading magazine, and you can be sure that the FORUM always will be a crusading magazine - crusading, as we always have, for better design, better architecture, better buildings; crusading as we have since 1934 for a better integrated industry, for an industry where better mutual understanding will make possible better teamwork between architects, builders, lenders, manufacturers, dealers and laborers to give America better homes, better offices, better workshops. But I must tell you honestly that crusading will not be the FORUM's primary task. The FORUM's primary task is to help you keep well informed, to help you keep abreast of the tremendous, almost kaleidoscopic changes that are taking place from month to month in your profession and in your industry. Our real job is to do for your profession what the A.M.A Journal does for the medical profession...And the real test of our success

was one of several people at the company who thought that publishing *Forum* as two separate volumes - one for houses and one for everything else - was an appropriate way to add more content about the so-called "boom" in building that was accompanying postwar America's rising birthrate.

A similar idea for publishing *Forum* as two volumes had been floated internally years earlier, in the brief moment when the Depression appeared to be coming to an end but war had not yet re-arranged the country's building-related priorities. The difference between the late-1930s and early-1950s was that Prentice, with Myers' old title as combined "Editor and Publisher" rather than the much more typical either-editor-or-publisher situation, was in a position to make that change occur very quickly - so much so that even Luce reportedly admitted not really knowing what was being done with *Forum* in his name.⁶⁴

will be, not that you say, I like your crusade for this, or I like your stand on that, but, quite simply, 'I could not afford to be without the news and information that the FORUM brings me.'

Pierrie Prentice, manuscript of speech delivered in Chicago, 1 June 1949, "ARCH FORUM 1949-1950" Subject File, TIA. Although the manuscript is dated 1 June 1949, the speech itself was probably delivered at the annual meeting of the Chicago Chapter of the American Institute of Architects on 14 June 1949.
⁶⁴ According to Time Inc.'s administrative history, Luce reportedly wrote the following memorandum around this time expressing his clear frustration about the *Building* split and name change:

Will you please kindly tell me, once and for all, the correct names of all the magazines I am theoretically connected with in the building and/or architecture and/or home field? Have it any way you want. Or let Prentice have it any way he wants...But, please, in the interest of minimum sanity, have it some way. Or,

The basic idea was to use what had been *Forum's* subtitle, "The Magazine of Building," as the main title for both halves, with the volume dedicated to single-family residential design and construction to be called *House & Home* and the other volume to use *Architectural Forum* as its new subtitle. The doubled magazine would have the shortened moniker of just *Building*, which Time Inc. promoted as a better reflection of its industry-wide character than the more ambiguous "*Forum*."⁶⁵ [Fig. 10]

Building was officially launched in September 1950 but only lasted a little over one year as a two-volume initiative. After that, "The Magazine of Building" was demoted back to its original position as *Forum's* subtitle more-or-less as if the *Building* had not occurred and *House & Home* became a separate Time Inc. magazine. *Forum's* editorial staff, working under Haskell's direct supervision, attempted to treat American

if you prefer, give me full and absolute authority to settle the matter. And, by God, I will.

Elson, *The World of Time Inc., 1941-1960*, 323.

⁶⁵ In a letter to readers explaining the name change, Luce wrote:

...we have at last completed the difficult 15-year transition from a publication addressed only to architects to a publication addressed to every one working for better building...There remains only to bring our logotype more in line with the editorial program the magazine has so long been following...Consequently, without changing the name, we are changing the typographical emphasis in the logotype on our next issue, to show that FORUM is now concerned with the whole interplay of creative architecture, with building construction, building technology, building economy, and building economics.

Henry Luce, letter to readers in name-change special supplement, *Architectural Forum* (August 1950): 16c.



Fig. 10. Typography change associated with *Architectural Forum/House & Home* split: last issue with "forum" Title (August 1950) and first issue with "Building" title (September 1950)

architecture as they always had - but with the crucial exception that they were now not allowed to include single-family homes since that was supposed to be House & Home's jurisdiction. House & Home, meanwhile, became Prentice's special project. It soon evolved into an extremely specialized business journal for large-scale speculative homebuilders, leaving Time Inc. essentially without coverage of custom-designed single-family homes, which was the one building type that happened to be of primary interest to many of *Forum's* subscribers. Not surprisingly, *Forum* ended 1952 having experienced the most precipitous single-year circulation drop in its entire Time Inc. history.⁶⁶ And building product manufacturers, still unimpressed with Time Inc.'s industry-wide concept, gave their advertising budgets to *Forum's* competitors with as much zeal as ever.

It was not just *Forum's* prewar format that was considered ill-equipped to handle the new postwar America. Time Inc. itself was undergoing a rapid period of expansion in the early-1950s as well - a response to the country's new-found "global superpower" confidence, the incipient "baby boom" with all its attendant implications, the more conservative domestic political landscape and so on. As the company's official administrative history, *The World of Time Inc.*, so aptly points out, many large changes

⁶⁶ Roll #P-10, Publisher's Statements, Historical Circulation Data File, ABC.

occurred within Time Inc. simultaneously in the first half of the 1950s, not the least of which included Time Inc.'s move into television, the decision to building a new corporate headquarters building somewhere in the New York City area and the eventual founding of Sports Illustrated, the last major magazine directly associated with the Luce era.⁶⁷ This, then, was the context within which the *Building* episode transpired; re-committing to the broader American architectural community by developing a second building industry magazine aligned with the Time Inc. *zeitgeist*, and yet the resulting complications got lost amidst the company's myriad other larger priorities.

D. 1953-1964: The Demise of Time Inc.'s *Forum*

The last decade of Time Inc.'s 32-year *Forum* experiment was characterized by an extension and exaggeration of its underlying problems alongside the development of some equally spectacular successes. The combination put Luce in the position of justifying the magazine entirely on conceptual grounds. Indeed, he eventually personally and unambiguously authorized *Forum* to operate at a loss, citing the magazine as a worthy contribution to the company's "American Century" aspirations. Luce's successors were not as committed to the idea of *Forum*, though,

⁶⁷ Elson, *The World of Time Inc.*, 322.

preferring instead to decide the magazine's fate based more on its demonstrated inability to turn a profit. Within weeks of Luce's official retirement in 1964, *House & Home* was sold to a competing publishing house and *Forum* was shut down entirely.

Toward the end Haskell blamed many of *Forum's* later problems on the *Forum-House & Home* split. To a certain extent, he was probably right. *Forum's* overall circulation never really recovered, despite the fact that Haskell and his staff started occasionally acknowledging custom single-family house designs again. [Fig. 9] The extra promotion that the split enabled had no significant impact on product manufacturers' attitude toward the industry-wide concept at the magazine's editorial core; they continued to prove as uninterested as always in spending their advertising budgets on *Forum* page space. And because *House & Home* was also chronically unprofitable, the combined red ink for Time Inc.'s two architecture-related publications drew even more negative attention from company's accountants.

In the mid-1950s Time Inc. eliminated the position of "Editor and Publisher," originally created specifically for Myers decades earlier. This entirely removed *Forum* from Prentice's purview, which enabled him to focus all his energy on *House & Home*. It also opened up *Forum's* head editor position for Haskell, who had more-or-less already been functioning in that

capacity anyway. The business of actually publishing *Forum* moved under the auspices of *Fortune*, foreshadowing things to come.

This was the kind of major realignment of *Forum's* managerial organization that might have made a difference under other circumstances. But *Forum's* staff encountered other serious obstacles during the magazine's last Time Inc. decade that could not be solved through internal corporate restructuring. One of the biggest was that editors experienced increasing difficulty negotiating "first right of publication" arrangements. These so-called "gentlemen's agreements" had played a crucial role in Myers' and Haskell's professional arsenal as journalists, enabling both men to leverage *Forum's* prestige Time Inc. brand into guarantees of story exclusives from building owners and architects. Of course, many years' worth of reliably providing "scoops" had endowed the magazine with an aura of dominance and specialness among its readers - which in turn had made building owners and architects more likely to acquiesce to "first right of publication" arrangements in whatever form Myers and Haskell offered them. Beginning in the mid-1950s, however, *Forum's* editors found themselves having to compete more aggressively for the most sought-after stories.

Confusion over what the post-Building *Forum* was supposed to be probably dulled the magazine's shine enough to hasten the breakdown of the "gentlemen's agreement" system. Larger forces

were at play in the 1950s, however, that probably contributed as much or more to what was probably Haskell's most pressing day-to-day operational problem. One of these was the rise in prominence of marketing in postwar American culture overall, which brought with it a corresponding savviness among building owners and industry professionals about the value of organized publicity. Architects, whose discipline's ethical standards had always prohibited them from engaging in anything remotely self-promotional, began receiving pamphlets from the AIA outlining officially-sanctioned marketing tactics; some even hired public relations firms to strategize on their behalf, in fact.

All of this was coupled with the other major reason why Haskell could no longer assume his "gentlemen's agreements" would be so easily negotiated. By the 1950s *Forum's* two major competitors had started paying closer attention to their own image quality, graphic design, etc. - and as a result had more to offer anyone actively "shopping around" an exclusivity opportunity. This emphasis on the journals' physicality was a lesson *Forum's* competitors seemed to have learned directly from Time Inc.; by so thoroughly demonstrating what a robust building trade magazine really looked like, Time Inc. may have helped raise everyone's expectations about what architectural journalism in this country should be or could aspire to achieve. The eventual result was a subtle shift in the power dynamics

between journalists and the people they depended on for their magazines' content. In other words, with more parity between the magazines, building owners and architects came to control more about how their property (actual and intellectual) was portrayed.⁶⁸ A great irony of the entire Time Inc. *Forum* experiment, in fact, is that one of its biggest potential legacies in the field of American architecture actively eroded its own dominance and contributed to its own demise.

The 1950s and early-60s were not entirely without successes. One publishing practice Time Inc. managed to fully exploit during this period was supporting *Forum* by choreographing the release of major articles in that magazine with that of similar stories in the company's other magazines. This kind of cross-publication could take the form of an article about a given building's client in *Fortune*, for instance, which would then appear on newsstands in the same month or in the month preceding or following a corresponding *Forum* article about the building itself. In a handful of extreme cases, this practice consisted of the organized publication of an article in *Forum* with parallel articles in all three of Time's other major

⁶⁸ In an editorial, *Architectural Record's* long-time Editor-in-Chief, Mildred Schmertz, observed that professional journals rely on architects for access, photographs, etc. - and as a result editors are effectively obliged to print mostly laudatory comments. She notes that architects would not openly cooperate with journals if they thought the end product was going to be severely critical, and she says that anyone who thinks otherwise is "naïve." Mildred Schmertz, "The Cost of Criticism," *Harvard GSD News* (July 1996):36-37.

periodicals - *Time*, *Fortune* and *Life* - and usually included a portrait on *Time*'s cover, which in itself was considered a major publicity coup among a certain subset of marketing-oriented designers. [Fig. 11] As far as can be determined, *Forum*'s editorial staff never habitually and openly promised cross-publication as a way to secure "first right of publication" exclusivities from building owners and architects, although of course the vague promise of that sort of Time Inc.-specific extended exposure hovered in the background of their negotiations.

Forum's major editorial success during this period, as identified by the numerous references in letters-to-the-editor sent to Time Inc. after the magazine's closure announcement, was the magazine's turn toward overt criticism. Haskell and his staff began replacing the more subtle critique-by-omission model in the late-1950s, but *Forum*'s reputation as a serious critical professional journal was most fully realized in the last few years of the magazine's Time Inc. life.

This new emphasis combined a number of different editorial and graphic strategies. Among them, one is especially notable given *Forum*'s specific identity as a Time Inc. publication: every essay intended as an obvious critique of a building or architectural trend unambiguously identified the essay's author. This undermined the distinctive no-byline policy that had



Fig. 11. Representative *Time* covers: Richard Neutra, *Time* (15 August 1949) and Eero Saarinen, *Time* (2 July 1956)

characterized the company's Luce-inflected journalism for decades. The point of the no-byline policy was to reinforce an overall tone of journalistic objectivity although for *Forum*, specifically, it also supported a perception of the magazine as having resulted from collaborative creative work.⁶⁹ Including a

⁶⁹ Importantly, conspicuous credit for photographers and producers of other kinds of images, also a standard among all Time Inc. publications, helped balance the implied collaboration by adding back some recognition of individual artistic achievement.

byline for critiques emphasized the reverse - that critical architectural journalism was inherently subjective and that *Forum's* creators were recognizing thoughtful independent voices even as they promoted the value of team-based decision-making in other sections of the magazine.

The more emphatically critical editorial tone more-or-less corresponded with those managerial changes that had brought Haskell into a securely prominent position as *Forum's* head editor. He had been a noted freelance architectural critic throughout a substantial portion of his earlier publishing career, so it is not surprising that he supported incorporating more criticism into *Forum* when he finally exercised enough control. With the prestige the new title added to his decades of distinguished journalism, however, Haskell also started engaging in more public service than ever before, such as teaching, advisory panels and so on. He was out of the office more than he had been previously, in other words, and other editors took over more of the day-to-day decision-making as a result. This was especially true after John F. Kennedy personally invited Haskell to serve on the President's Council on Pennsylvania Avenue in 1961, which required frequent travel to Washington D.C over the next three years.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Dixon, discussion.

In terms of influencing *Forum's* move toward overt criticism, Haskell's absence opened the most opportunity to his key associate editor, Peter Blake. Originally from Germany, Blake immigrated first to England when the National Socialists came to power and then the United States during the war. He attended architecture school in Pennsylvania, worked for a short time as a designer under Louis Kahn and subsequently came into routine contact with Modern artists and architects as a curator at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Blake started at *Forum* in 1950 and was named managing editor in 1961, reflecting his additional responsibilities. At about that same time he was also in the process of writing *God's Own Junkyard: The Planned Deterioration of America's Landscape*, which was published just as Time Inc. was shutting *Forum* down in 1964.⁷¹ This book revealed Blake to be a stridently unapologetic critic in a way that was more openly public than his work with *Forum* had allowed.

Forum's turn toward overt criticism happened to be the most recent and most obvious editorial improvement when the magazine's closure was announced, which may account for some of the vigorous praise in letters-to-the-editor sent at that time.

⁷¹ Robin Pogrebin, "Peter Blake, Architect, 86, Is Dead; Designed Houses in Hamptons," *New York Times* (6 December 2006); Peter Blake, *God's Own Junkyard: The Planned Deterioration of America's Landscape* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964).

That said, from its very beginning as a Time Inc. publication *Forum's* core identity had always emphasized the value of thoughtful, productive dialogue. The decision to retain the name "*Forum*" when the magazine was first acquired in 1932, for instance, signaled the strong commitment to professional discourse that underlay Luce's earliest ambitions. And, the tenacity the name "*Forum*" displayed when it was briefly demoted to the position of subtitle in the early-1950s reinforced the continued importance of the ideal of "forum" for both the magazine's creators and audience. The problem for *Forum* had always been the way in which Time Inc. had defined who the participants in that dialogue ought to be - that is, not just architects but also leaders of all the various building industry sub-disciplines combined. The kind of straightforward, signed critical essays *Forum* published beginning in the late-1950s effectively circumvented this problem by contributing to the evolution of American architectural discourse without directly addressing the question of who might engage with them. These essays' popularity, in that sense, is not really very surprising; they were delivered with all the resources an international media corporation like Time Inc. could offer but without forcing the message of collaboration that some audience members still found hard to accept.

Of course, *Forum's* emphasis on criticism in its last Time Inc. years coincided with the beginning of 1960s American counterculture, in general, and of Postmodernism in architecture, specifically - both of which welcomed the sort of alternative viewpoints and independent thinking that critical essays projected. That Time Inc. executives actually shut *Forum* down in 1964 - precisely when the magazine's historical insistence on dialogue seemed to be especially aligned with the country's emerging *zeitgeist* - came as an enormous surprise to many people, not just committed readers but also competitors and even some of *Forum's* own staff. The ensuing clamor over the loss inspired Luce to search out options for how the magazine could continue to be published by a different company or organization, even though his successors at Time Inc. had promised the public that a new architecture-focused section in *Fortune* would continue covering building industry-wide issues.

These efforts led Luce to personally deliver a proposal to the president of his *alma mater*, Yale, in which Time Inc. offered a transitional funding grant if the university were to publish *Forum* thereafter. His proposal was declined, as it was at several other academic institutions as well, but in early-1965 Urban America Inc. agreed to take *Forum* on. Known as the American Planning and Civic Association for most of its century-long existence, Urban America Inc. was a non-profit coalition of

groups specifically dedicated to improving the country's cities.⁷² Although weighted toward only one aspect of American architecture, this emphasis seemed to fit with the editorial focus on urban architectural issues that had become a *Forum* specialty by default when coverage of single-family residential design and postwar suburban development shifted to *House & Home* during the Building split.

Urban America Inc. received the same transitional funding assistance that had been offered to others. Moreover, Luce had arranged for Time Inc. to keep a skeletal group of key staff temporarily on the company's payroll in expectation of a future *Forum* elsewhere, so the magazine also came with the basic compliment of journalists necessary to begin publishing right away. Blake was head editor and Grotz was in charge of the art department, as always. The group also included Larry Mester, a business-minded Time Inc. veteran, as publisher, Ann Wilson, who had served as long-time secretary to Haskell but was now in the managing editor role given Haskell's retirement, and John Morris Dixon, an energetic young associate editor who eventually went

⁷² C. Rate, F. Lauman, and N. Dean. "Guide to the American Planning and Civic Association Records, 1909-1970" (December 1981), Collection #2777, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library, Ithaca, New York.

on to serve as Editor-in-Chief of *Progressive Architecture* for decades.⁷³

E. Forum After 1964

Forum's future seemed relatively settled; issues appeared again beginning with April 1965, albeit noticeably more modest in nearly every way. Urban American Inc.'s two biggest donors died together in a plane crash shortly thereafter, however. And, as part of the process of reassessing priorities the non-profit's leadership decided *Forum* was not valuable enough to merit the continued investment of time and resources.⁷⁴ Blake took the magazine on himself after that with some critical acclaim but no real financial success. *Forum* finally shut down for good in 1974, nearly 10 years to the month after Time Inc.'s new post-Luce management had announced it was closing the magazine.

As for Time Inc., despite the company's fanfare in 1964 about honoring a version of *Forum's* commitment to architectural journalism in *Fortune*, the actual result of those efforts was quite limited. *Fortune* did, in fact, inaugurate a new section as promised in the form of a four-page spread called "Structure and Design" that first appeared in October 1964, two months after

⁷³ Elson, *The World of Time Inc.*, 325; Dixon, discussion; Wilson, discussion.

⁷⁴ Dixon, discussion.

Time Inc.'s last *Forum*. But Ralph Paine, who had served as *Fortune*'s publisher during *Forum*'s final Time Inc. phase and had been one of the biggest internal supporters of Luce's architecture-oriented decisions over the years, left *Fortune* in late-1964. And the former *Life* publisher who replaced Paine had neither the background nor the interest to continue with the building industry focus.⁷⁵ The American Institute of Architects had once distinguished *Fortune* with one of its coveted annual medals for outstanding architectural journalism; *Fortune* now gave the organization no reason to consider a second award.⁷⁶ With Luce's retirement and the end of *Forum* also came the effective end of Time Inc.'s 32-year experimental campaign for better American architecture.

⁷⁵ Curtis Prendergast with Geoffrey Colvin, *The World of Time Inc.: The Intimate History of a Changing Enterprise, 1960-1980*, edited by Robert Lubar (New York: Antheneum, 1986): 186.

⁷⁶ *Fortune* received the American Institute of Architects' Award for Outstanding Service to Architecture (by Non-Architectural Group, Society, or Business) in 1956. This award was simultaneously created and given to *Fortune* "for its series of stories on architecture over a period of many years" at the same committee meeting; *Fortune* ended up being the only entity to ever receive this award. Items 89-B-3-56 and 90-B-3-56, Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors of the American Institute of Architects, page 61, 27 February - 1 March 1956, Archive of the American Institute of Architects, Washington, D.C.

III. "ARCHITECTURAL" AND "FORUM" REDEFINED

A. Key Concepts

1. Fortune and the Irresponsible Architect

Unlike the relationship between *Time* and *Fortune*, in which the latter originated as an offshoot of the former but had relatively little in common with its predecessor otherwise, *Forum's* link to *Fortune* as an offshoot publication reached well beyond initial historical circumstances. *Forum* remained connected to *Fortune* internally for years, in fact, both as a jointly-administered division of Time Inc. for several extended periods and in terms of shared staff and projects.⁷⁷ Moreover, when Time Inc. closed *Forum* in 1964, subscribers were assured that *Fortune* - not *Time* or *Life* - would pick up where *Forum* had left off.⁷⁸ Most importantly, though, *Forum's* Time Inc. editorial

⁷⁷ George Nelson and Howard Myers were particularly apt to be shared between *Forum* and *Fortune*. In fact, in Nelson's later years as a Time Inc. employee, he was officially attached to the *Fortune* editorial staff and then shared back to *Forum* as needed.

⁷⁸ In a memorandum to Time Inc. employees, Luce's successor as Editor-in-Chief of Time Inc.'s publications, Hedley Donovan, explained *Fortune's* role in the closure of *Forum*:

To capitalize of Time Inc.'s long term investment in architectural journalism and to broaden still further the appreciation of architectural excellence, Time Inc. has decided to transfer *Architectural Forum's* editorial mission to a magazine which enjoys an even wider readership among the men who influence the shape of America's buildings and the direction of the 27 billion building construction industry - a magazine with a 400,000 circulation among the managers of the nation's commerce and industry. That magazine, of course, is *Fortune*.

Hedley Donovan, memorandum to "The Staff," 27 May 1964, page 2, "ARCH FORUM/HOUSE & HOME 1963 & LATER" Subject File, TIA.

personality shared some of its core conceptual underpinnings with *Fortune*.

One of these was the set of assumptions about art's relationship to business that Luce brought to both projects. Historians have already studied this in relation to *Fortune*, where Luce's idea was to enlighten American businessmen about the virtues of art in order to improve the functioning of American business. In *An Economy of Abundant Beauty: Fortune Magazine and Depression America*, Michael Augspurger summarizes the justification for the unexpected pairing:

Business and art, *Fortune* argued, were not only compatible but were also symbiotic: the failure of a business society to cultivate an advanced art would indicate crucial flaws in the priorities of its artists and its business people, and even its economic system.⁷⁹

Fortune's role, to use Augspurger's phrasing here, was to help "business society to cultivate an advance art." To achieve this goal the magazine's editors combined the kind of business-oriented content its audience needed with high quality paper, ink, etc. and conspicuously-placed fine art photographs and reproductions of famous paintings as illustrations. *Fortune*, in a sense, treated business journalism like a form of art as a way to make art seem more organic to the lives and careers of its readers.

⁷⁹ Augspurger, *An Economy of Abundant Beauty*, 7.

Architecture, already commonly acknowledged as an art-business practice by definition, held a unique position within this milieu: the process of designing and constructing buildings not only provided editorial content and artful imagery for *Fortune* but could also demonstrate how Luce's idea of seamlessly integrating art with business worked in reality. It is hardly surprising, then, that he was provoked into taking extreme action when an investigative series about the low quality of American housing revealed glaring weaknesses - both in the building industry that had produced such bad architecture and in his own company's inability to devote adequate page space to the problem. To borrow Augspurger's phrasing again, the episode evidenced "the failure of a business society to cultivate an advanced art." Publishing an architectural journal offered Luce a way to rectify Time Inc.'s shortcomings and extend *Fortune's* mission toward a specific "business society" simultaneously.

Another component of Luce's vision for *Fortune* that eventually also formed a key part of *Forum's* editorial personality was an emphasis on leadership. *Fortune* was not meant to be read by all American businessmen, only the upper-most tier of real decision makers. The rationale was that by focusing on the people who led their respective industries, Time Inc. could directly influence the trajectory of change and indirectly influence what the rest of society thought about that change.

Fortune's high production value suggested its status as a publication for people who had achieved a certain elevated professional status while the famously steep price created prestige around being able to afford such a luxury in the midst of the Depression.

Augspurger's adroit scholarship can again help illuminate this part of *Fortune's* editorial formula. In "Henry Luce, *Fortune*, and the Attraction of Italian Fascism," he argues that the magazine's emphasis on leadership was connected to Luce's fascination with José Ortega y Gasset's treatise *The Revolt of the Masses*, which was written and translated into English at the same time Luce was starting *Fortune*.⁸⁰ Since his interest in the book is not well known outside the literature of journalism history, Augspurger's description of the great extent to which Luce aligned his thinking with Ortega y Gasset is worth quoting here at some length:

It is not difficult to see why Ortega y Gasset's ideas were attractive to Luce. In Ortega y Gasset's belief that a new 'programme of human activity' could contain the masses and allow a talented leadership to act unhindered by the masses' irrationality, Luce imagined ways to unify and control the behavior of the crowd: the women consumers, labor forces, and 'money-grubbing' businessmen who made the marketplace so unstable. Just as Ortega y Gasset's 'selected

⁸⁰ Michael Augspurger, "Henry Luce, *Fortune*, and the Attraction of Italian Fascism," *American Studies* 41:1 (Spring 2000): 115-139; José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1932), authorized translation anonymous at translator's request, Spanish original published as *La Rebelión de las Masas* in 1930.

minority' followed a 'higher moral code' but expected the masses to follow the minority, Luce's 'aristocracy of businessmen' considered themselves beholden to the code of 'gentlemen' but felt the consumers and labor should fall into place behind them. Just as Ortega y Gasset imagined the creation of a European state as a moral and honorable cause, Luce looked to business to provide opportunity for glory and ambition. And just as Ortega y Gasset insisted that the masses - 'by definition' - could not rule themselves, and so civilization as a whole benefitted when they submitted to the trained and talented 'select minority,' Luce and *Fortune* argued that modernization and progress would be served if the crowd would allow the managers - those who have suffered a 'careful education and rigorous apprenticeship,' in the words of Luce - to create an efficient, rational business market.⁸¹

Augspurger's use of the term "aristocracy" in this passage is especially appropriate since Luce used it liberally himself.⁸²

The Ortega y Gasset-influenced idea was to create a kind of new American social stratum made up of the nation's most successful and socially-responsible businessmen - people who would then lead everyone else into a productive new modern era. And, of course, in the context of *Fortune* specifically, these were

⁸¹ Augspurger, "Henry Luce, *Fortune*, and the Attraction of Italian Fascism," 132-133.

⁸² For instance, in a speech delivered to the Fortnightly Club in Chicago in late-1930, entitled "Aristocracy and Motives," Luce noted:

...business will never be run on a democratic basis. Business need not be autocratic. But certainly business must be aristocratic. There must be a top and, if possible, the best men must get there...America is a civilization in search of an aristocracy...what we lack and what we look for is an aristocratic principle to support an aristocracy which, as Disraeli says, can absorb all our insignificant snobberies and, above all, give purpose to the lives of those whose nature it is to aspire and to excel.

Henry Luce, "Aristocracy and Motives," speech, in *The Ideas of Henry Luce*, ed. John K. Jessup (New York: Atheneum, 1969): 99-100.

precisely the people who were best suited intellectually to appreciate "an advanced art" and positioned financially to support it.

This emphasis on leadership and the role decision-makers could play in fomenting progress continued into the Time Inc. version of *Forum*. The challenge for that magazine, as Luce saw it, was that the process of designing and constructing buildings in this country did not have adequately community-minded leaders. Indeed, the *Fortune* housing series had demonstrated that the professionals who were supposed to be in charge, architects, did not reliably act like "gentlemen." Under their watch, plenty of architecture had been created and yet many American families were suffering in poorly-made homes. From the perspective of someone like Luce, whose parents had been missionaries and who felt more inclined to work toward change as his professional success and personal wealth increased, holding a position of authority but acting without regard for society's needs was hard to fathom.

There is no evidence that Luce was anything other than diplomatic when dealing with architects publicly, and when asked to explain his decision to acquire and re-envision *Forum* he offered perfectly valid explanations based on cost-benefit investment analyses, the hope for advertiser interest given architecture's status as America's biggest single industry and

so on. Privately, he did not try to hide his animosity toward the group who would constitute a key segment of *Forum's* readership and would also serve as gate-keeper for access to feature content. A confidential internal memorandum he wrote to *Forum's* long-time editor in 1947, in fact, evidenced just how unambiguous his feelings were on the matter: "As you have known for 15 years, I consider architects among the most irresponsible members of modern society."⁸³

2. Prospectus for a "New Forum"

These *Fortune*-inflected dynamics and frustrations combined to form the foundation of Luce's vision for a different kind of professional architectural journal - one which was ostensibly created for architects but did not necessarily treat their centrality within the architectural process as a given despite how counter-intuitive that might initially seem. The prospectus he wrote, especially its long philosophical preface, is the best single record of his complicated thought processes. Penned in 1935, three years after he acquired a majority stake in *Forum* for Time Inc., it reflected actual publishing experience rather than just impressions about architects and architecture filtered through *Fortune*. The prospectus was a

⁸³ Henry Luce to Howard Myers, memorandum dated 31 March 1947, "ARCH FORUM 1944-48" Folder, *Architectural Forum* Subject Files, TIA.

working document, intended to be circulated internally to the people he trusted for guidance and eventually to the Time Inc. staff that would use it to realize his vision in physical form. Only after Luce's death was it released publicly, in fact, and then only in excerpted form.⁸⁴ But it was by no means confidential; he was not entirely free to articulate everything he really felt. Rather, Luce had a very specific task with the "new *Forum*" prospectus: to expound on what was at stake with this experiment as clearly as possible and to give a publication type that did not yet exist in reality some semblance of corporeal substance in the imaginations of his Time Inc. colleagues.

Not surprisingly, Luce's prospectus continually referenced architecture's nature as a special form of art and architects' inability to acknowledge the obligation to society inherent to their vocation. The unequivocal statement below is representative of the whole. The emphasis here, importantly, was Luce's:

To influence architecture is to influence life. The most widely accepted concept about architecture is that architecture is above all other arts the social art...In recent decades, not only has no publication served architects in any significant or influential manner, but architects have not served society in any significant or influential manner...Architects have had almost nothing to do with what is new and

⁸⁴ Henry Luce, "The Social Art," in *The Ideas of Henry Luce*, ed. John K. Jessup, 262-266 (New York: Atheneum, 1969).

characteristic and disruptive or hopeful in our times.⁸⁵

The clear implication here, that architects were serving themselves rather than society, was harsh indeed. That the profession's trade press was somehow enabling architects' irresponsibility - or at least not trying to help them change - was a more subtle underlying accusation but probably meant to be interpreted as equally problematic within the context of Luce's inclination toward activist journalism. The fact that he declared architecture and life to be so directly connected communicated the urgency he felt the "new *Forum*" experiment warranted.

If Luce thought architects had consciously hidden behind their profession's ideal of artistic autonomy in order to disregard what he considered their duty to the nation, he certainly stopped short of actually saying it on the record in 1935 - even if that record was a relatively private one. Importantly, he instead laid the blame for architects' social disengagement on the vicissitudes of history and on the lack of available information and guidance:

The fact seems inescapable that in the twenties there occurred in America one of those unnecessary misfortunes of mis-timing which often occur in history. The nation had the will and the power to build. But when it went to the planners of buildings,

⁸⁵ Emphasis is original. Henry Luce, "A Long Preface to The New *Forum*," pages II-III, TIA.

the mental and spiritual cupboards of those planners were bare. The men who should have had the convictions as to what ought to be built and how, had neither ideas nor convictions. This was not because of any particular moral turpitude on their part. It was because the ideas which lay implicit in the rising tide of technology and the ideas which lay implicit in the new social trends and mores - these ideas had not anywhere been clarified or crystalized to any useful extent. With all the doubt and confusion which exist in the world today, these ideas or some of them are clearer today than a few years ago. They are clearer at least in this sense - that we feel the inevitability of their emergence even if we cannot see their shape or color.⁸⁶

It was this logic that moved Luce from vexed observer to missionary publisher mode - the argument that history proved that outdated ways of processing new ideas restricted America's ability to realize its full potential. It was a Lucean leitmotif, in fact. It formed part of the justification for founding *Time* and *Fortune* the way he had and, later, for founding *Life* and *Sports Illustrated* the way he did. And although mapped specifically onto American architecture in this prospectus, much of his rhetoric treated "the new *Forum*" as journalism generally rather than differentiating it into the relatively narrow sub-field of professional architectural journalism. "The magazine needed today," he noted,

is one with sufficient courage, enterprise and elbow-grease to instruct itself - to discover and correlate the facts where there are facts, and to attempt bold,

⁸⁶ Luce, "A Long Preface to The New *Forum*," pages IV-V, TIA.

if tentative conclusions where the needs of the hour call loudly for conclusions of one sort of another.⁸⁷

This attitude is no surprise, of course. In addition to the suggestion here that there none of the existing architectural magazines possessed "sufficient courage, enterprise and elbow-grease" to be what the building industry really needed, Luce had no reason to limit himself to the boundaries and assumptions that had evolved over time in the American building trade press. His relationship to architecture was in the form of interested client-owner, after all, not as a building-oriented practitioner *per se*. He especially had no stake in maintaining the integrity of the various professional niches around which many of the journals had been organized. If anything, the fact that the members of each building sub-profession had institutionalized ways to look out for their own interests would have evidenced outdated thinking to Luce rather than a virtue of architectural journalism to be sustained.

Without the constraints of tradition Luce was free to imagine a *Forum*-specific variation on the notion that the new era called for new questions about previously unassailable concepts. And he did this in relatively spectacular fashion, actually, taking direct aim at the definition of the architect itself. Luce wrote:

⁸⁷ Luce, "A Long Preface to The New *Forum*," page V, TIA.

...if the architect played no influential part in recent decades, is there any reason to suppose that he will play a part in the coming decade? The answer is that - barring chaos and perhaps not even barring that - several thousand planners of structures will play, cannot help but play a vital and even a determining part in our immediate future. Some of the planners of structures will be men who now hold architectural diplomas. Some will not be. But whether or not they have degrees, those planners of structures are the architects of the next decades. And the big point is that these new architects cannot help being conscious planners to a vastly greater degree than were the architectural decorators of the recent past.⁸⁸

The repeated emphasis on the term "planners of structures" here was Luce's, and it was the most concentrated of its type in the entire document. Clearly what he was proposing, a much more fluid notion of the architectural process's social make-up, constituted a key idea in the overall vision for Time Inc.'s *Forum* transformation. According to this definition, "these new architects" could be anyone whose decisions contributed to the design and construction of buildings. "Planners of structures" could even potentially be client-owners like himself, who had no architectural training but whose position as the originator of commissions and the controller of budgets put them in the way of genuinely influencing the shape of America's built landscape. A telling aside later in the prospectus evidenced just how much Luce was invested in the broader "planner of structures" notion as opposed to the relatively self-contained "architect." After

⁸⁸ Emphasis is original. Luce, "A Long Preface to The New *Forum*," pages III-IV, TIA.

predicting the future importance of "large-scale, collectivist building," he continued:

(If the architect-with-a-degree does not get into this field, he will not survive, but that need not concern us here because the planner of structures will..."⁸⁹

None of this is to say that Luce or *Forum's* editors did not care about architects at all. In fact, the prospectus emphatically confirmed that Time Inc.'s magazine would be "directed at architects" in terms of its look and content, even while in the very next sentence Luce openly noted that "Doubt exists as to the relative importance of the architectural profession in the future."⁹⁰ The idea was to educate so-called "planners of structures" with the same knowledge architects needed so that they were ready whenever their work called on them to make building-oriented decisions. Perhaps the most significant individual statement in the entire prospectus hinged on precisely this. Luce wrote:

...we make a magazine for architects, and we conceive that all others who are dynamically concerned with structure will look over the architect's shoulder or, indeed, themselves become for a moment architects.⁹¹

Here he had arrived at the core of his vision for Time Inc.'s *Forum*. This endeavor would not be about ignoring architects.

⁸⁹ Emphasis is original. Luce, "A Long Preface to The New *Forum*," page VII, TIA.

⁹⁰ Henry Luce, "The New *Forum*," manuscript c. April 1935, page b, "ARCH FORUM 1935 JAN-APRIL" Folder, *Architectural Forum* Subject Files, TIA.

⁹¹ Ibid.

Rather, it would be about making a publication that would attract everyone else who was important in some way to the architectural process. And for them Time Inc. would craft a rich reading experience that not only informed them but also helped validate their contributions.

3. Interpreting Luce's Ideas

Although full of sweeping observations and big ideas, Luce's "new *Forum*" prospectus offered relatively little guidance on how to create an architectural magazine that non-architects would find really meaningful. There were suggestions on what kinds of lead feature articles should be prioritized, the proportions of technical- and finance-related content and so on, but generally speaking the pragmatic details were left to the magazine's editors to determine.

This distance between Luce and the actual production of *Forum* was present almost from the beginning of Time Inc.'s acquisition of the magazine and grew wider as the years passed. It can initially seem hard to understand since Luce is well-known today in large measure for his personal involvement with the running of the company and four magazines he founded. And based on the passionate tone of the prospectus he wrote for *Forum*, it would also be logical to assume that he brought the same kind of commitment to *Forum* as he did to everything else.

But that was simply not the case. Instead, he provided a kind of ideological grounding for "the new *Forum*," and essentially trusted the *Forum* editorial team to see it through in physical form.

There were probably a number of reasons why Luce willingly shared creative authorship of *Forum* with others. One of these was undoubtedly because he had genuinely more pressing issues to attend to. *Forum* had joined the Time Inc. family of publications with key staff already in place, for instance, while founding *Fortune* and *Life* from scratch within only a few years of each other required a much greater volume of decisions. Similarly, Luce's "American Century" essay in early 1941 definitively pushed him into the universe of national and international politicians and politicking, especially during active wartime. This meant that the amount of attention he could give to any of his publishing activities decreased considerably, but he still viewed himself as an active citizen of the United States and the world, so *Time* and *Life* were always relevant, and he also defined himself as a businessman, so *Fortune* spoke to his everyday experiences as well. *Forum*'s editorial identity was not as obviously linked to Luce's expanded sphere.

Perry Prentice chronicled the erosion of Luce's engagement with *Forum* in a particularly candid internal memorandum in 1948, shortly after Myers' unexpected death. After observing how other

Time Inc. responsibilities had increasingly limited Luce's ability to focus on *Forum*, Prentice continued:

I seriously question whether [Luce] will ever again give much of his time to the editorial side of the FORUM...It is perhaps significant that when I checked with [Luce] this spring, to get his editorial feel of the FORUM, he referred me to a memorandum he wrote in the fall of 1934 and said that today he very seldom even reads the FORUM and has no real idea what the editors have been up to.⁹²

The remainder of *Forum's* history at Time Inc. proved Prentice's predictive skills essentially correct; although still interested in architecture's role in America's twentieth century transformation generally, Luce did not devote very much energy to this magazine specifically. And, in the weeks immediately following his retirement in early 1964, his successors decided

⁹² The following longer excerpt provides some expanded context for this observation. The fact that Prentice refers to Henry Luce as "Harry" in this memorandum here indicates the close personal relationship between Prentice and Luce:

...In those early days of the FORUM, Harry was able to take quite a considerable interest in its editorial progress. He met once a week with the Managing Editor...

But when LIFE came over the horizon in 1936, it made such demands on Harry's time and interest that the FORUM had to take a back seat. The weekly conferences with the managing editor became less and less frequent and then stopped entirely, and when the war came along Harry was too busy with more important editorial problems to take an interest [in *Forum*].

...frankly I think Harry time is so valuable to LIFE, to TIME, to FORTUNE and to the whole outlook of our publications in world affairs, that I doubt whether it would be to the best interests of this company that Harry should take away any considerable amount of his time and interest from the other publications to devote to the editorial plans of the FORUM...

that is was not in anyone's best interest at Time Inc. to continue publishing *Forum* at all. Tellingly, at that point - when the magazine existed again mostly as an idea - Luce inserted himself more actively in directing its future.

The point, then, is that Luce absolutely played a crucial role in determining key elements of *Forum's* character during the Time Inc. years but much of what eventually distinguished this particular magazine evolved out of the collaborative work of the early editors. Because of the company's unusual no-byline policy and the conspicuous lack of memorandum-style communication, there is no real way to know exactly who was responsible for what. The two people who were most in charge of content were Howard Myers and Ruth Goodhue, with Ernst Born and then Paul Grotz as the men in charge of the look and physical design. As far as can be determined, all of these people were either enthusiastic or not unenthusiastic about *Forum's* acquisition by Luce and the conceptual shift toward "planners of structures" their new publisher desired.

B. Key Concepts as Developed In and Through *Forum*

1. Reconceiving *Forum's* Physicality: Two Early Changes

If Luce's contribution to "the new *Forum*" constituted a direct and relatively provocative challenge to the "architectural" part of the magazine's title, the editors seem

to have found inspiration for their own tasks in the term "forum." In particular, although it was the late-1930s before Time Inc. publicly referred to the magazine as "a forum in fact as well as in name," the dialogue-based editorial scheme *Forum* became known for seems to have been a very early goal.⁹³ From our vantage point today, the rationale is quite clear: a magazine that routinely gives its readers copious opportunities to engage with it and each other ought to have a greater chance of appealing to more and different kinds of people. The reading experience of such a professional architectural journal would be more participatory than passive - and this was just the sort of catalytic dynamic that would help non-architect readers "become for a moment architects."

Some of the most tangible "forum"-oriented changes were instituted in the 1932-35 period, that is, before Time Inc. owned enough of *Forum* to place its name and logo on its masthead. One of these was the decision, made almost immediately after the initial acquisition, to produce a single monthly issue that encompassed all of its content as a physically- and conceptually-unified whole. This was strikingly different from how *Forum's* previous publisher had responded to the promise made

⁹³ The most high-profile instance of the "forum in fact as well as in name" language occurred within the context of a full-page advertisement for *Forum*, designed in part by Herbert Matter, which appeared in *Life* in 1939. Advertisement for "plus: orientations in contemporary architecture" insert in *Architectural Forum, Life* (16 January 1939): 69.

to readers when the name changed from *The Brickbuilder* to *The Architectural Forum* in 1917: to cover architecture as an art, a science and a business. [Fig. 3] In that case, after a decade of struggling for balance, *Forum* began to be published as a two-volume set with the first focusing on architecture and the second on engineering and business. Each set was tied together by at least one pair of feature articles about the same building project, one of which emphasized the building's artistic qualities while the other was typically written by the project's lead engineer or someone intimately involved with its financing. Even the individual volume cover designs for each set often reflected this kind of "related though distinct" editorial attitude: the Volume 1 cover image representing the featured project would often be printed with the complicated lushness of color while the Volume 2 cover would display the same image reproduced in straightforward and stark black-and-white or no image at all. [Fig. 6]

Collapsing what had been *Forum's* hallmark two-volume arrangement into a single volume made an immediate and obvious statement: thereafter the magazine would blend - literally and figuratively - the interests of its artistic, technical and business readers together into one consolidated whole. At first the only change was physical; although there was only one issue of *Forum* each month, the two sections were essentially presented

separately within it. [Fig. 12] Within only a few months, however, the contents page began to reflect a more sophisticated melding of architecture's three modalities in terms of integrated article arrangement overall as well as expanded individual building project feature articles. [Fig. 13] And, like the previous *Forum's* two-volume coordinated cover design, the new cover template for the re-organized magazine also expressed the editorial attitude behind its internal structure: a single, highly-saturated full-bleed background color, different each month, replaced the comparatively fussy customized images; the enlarged letters of just the title's "FORUM" marched dramatically across the center of the page; and a reflective film laid atop the cover stock added an exciting glamorous sheen. [Fig. 8]

Another obvious physical change Time Inc. made to *Forum* soon after the acquisition was to replace the traditional sewn binding with a spiral metal comb. [Fig. 8] This was an expensive investment, even for a publisher that could negotiate volume discounts with specialty vendors. However, the benefits of allowing every two-page interior spread to lay completely flat were numerous - including the possibilities it created for readers to leave it open on a studio drafting table so that its contents could be shared or on a conference table to be reviewed by more than one member of a project team simultaneously during

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Fig. 12. Representative Contents page, single volume with separate "Architectural Design" and "Engineering and Business" sections, *The Architectural Forum* (October 1932)

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KENNETH KINGSLEY STOWELL, A.I.A.
Editor

JOHN CUSHMAN FISTERE

RUTH GOODHUE

WASHINGTON DODGE, II
Building Money

MAX FORESTER

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Fig. 13. Representative integrated Contents page, *The Architectural Forum* (July 1933)

meetings. In other words, Time Inc.'s spiral comb essentially transformed the actual reading experience from an exclusively solitary activity requiring both hands for holding the magazine open to one which not only facilitated working while reading but also enabled and encouraged that work to occur within a group setting. Like the move from two volumes to one, this change - in and of itself - would not have been enough to promote *Forum's* "forum" character. However, in concert with other strategic design choices this spiral binding certainly added to the overall effect. Time Inc. continued the spiral comb binding throughout the Depression and into the early 1940s, when war-related metal shortages finally made it untenable.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ In a c.1937 internal report about the magazine's Time Inc.-initiated transformation, *Forum's* editors labeled the spiral metal comb binding "perhaps the most important" physical change they had implemented. This assessment took into consideration all the various benefits the special binding afforded, of course, especially the fact that it drew immediate attention to *Forum* when shelved alongside its competitors' traditionally-bound journals. Considered specifically within the context of encouraging a sense of community in and around the magazine, however, the editors' decision to produce a single unified issue each month probably made a more immediate impact. Regarding the dating, since library re-binding protocols called for the comb to be removed and for the individual leaves of each issue to be gathered together in three- or six-month cloth-covered volumes, the distinctive row of small closely-spaced holes can rarely be seen in these large library-bound volumes. Exact dating is nearly impossible as a result; the earliest issue available with its original spiral comb binding intact was published in September 1934 and the latest reference to it internal Time Inc. documents suggests the last spiral binding appeared on the April 1941 spine. Finally, regarding the special glue-based binding technique that replaced the spiral metal comb in the early 1940s, this was supposed to have allowed the magazine to lay open nearly as flat as the spiral comb but it is not clear if it actually achieved that goal. There is no archival record of any substantive response and age has made the glued bindings too fragile today to test. It appears to have been promoted much less than the spiral comb had once been so it is probably safe to assume that it was not entirely satisfactory from a variety of perspectives. Between the library re-binding protocols, which essentially destroyed the comb's physical trace on most

2. Reconceiving *Forum's* Content: Three Early Changes

Forum's editors recognized early on that successfully transforming the magazine's editorial character into a "forum" for "architectural" people required more than physical changes. The content needed overhauling, too, since the previous editors had let the now-jettisoned two-volume arrangement do yeoman's work toward balancing *Forum's* range of art, science and business features.

Reconceiving content consisted of three related elements. First, the majority of each issue had to appeal to the majority of readers. A reader interested in the artistic aspects of architecture, for instance, had to be convinced that most of the science- and business-oriented articles were also worth his time. Readers interested in engineering had to want to read some of the art- and business-oriented articles. And so on. Of course this was partly an existential issue; Time Inc.'s *Forum* would not survive long if readers routinely perceived that only part of what they had purchased each month was relevant to their work at any given time. However, it was also important to helping

remaining *Forum* copies, and the fact that the substitute glue binding probably did not support the same kind of shared/group reading experience, this distinctive phase of *Forum's* physical history as a created object has been virtually forgotten today. "Report for National Industrial Advertisers Association Prepared By The *Architectural Forum*," c.1937, "ARCH FORUM 1938" Subject File, TIA; September 1934 issue as originally bound, unprocessed *Architectural Forum* files, TIA; Howard Myers to Andrew Heiskell, 12 April 1941, "ARCH FORUM 1940-1943" Subject Files, TIA; News items regarding glue binding, *fyi* (19 July 1943): 1, "ARCH FORUM 1940-1943" Subject File, TIA.

Forum readers start feeling like they were part of a special group - that was how the Time Inc.-supported "forum" itself would thrive. Readers, in other words, needed to believe they shared a relatively open mind about what was relevant to their work, that they knew that learning about what other building industry professionals were doing was in their own best interest and that around the country other similarly-enlightened men were getting their information from the same place.

The Building Money section is perhaps the most obvious early example of how *Forum's* editors attempted to generate excitement among all their readers for finance-related content, which they considered crucial to their magazine's personality but that editors of other professional journals typically treated as ancillary. [Fig. 4] Inaugurated with much fanfare in the April 1933 issue, Building Money was the only regular feature always announced on the otherwise quite minimalist redesigned cover. [Fig. 8] Building Money usually contained approximately seven different articles, which offered enough variation to tempt most readers in some way. Its layout, too, was usually carefully-conceived so as to reduce density with a mixture of text with charts, drawings, photographs and white space. And, its tone was not always laudatory, giving Building Money some credibility as a source of serious financial analysis. One memorable episode, in fact, consisted of a

relatively unflattering financial portrait of Rockefeller Center - precisely where Time Inc.'s own headquarters were housed.⁹⁵

A second way editors highlighted *Forum's* new mission was by tangibly demonstrating what could actually be achieved when various types of building industry-related people worked together rather than allowing their professional prejudices to undermine each other's efforts. The company regularly commissioned jointly-authored special inserts, for instance. This resulted in collaborative "paper architecture" that readers would not find in the pages of competing trade journals, which in turn encouraged readers to feel as though they might miss something important or interesting if they skipped a month or two. Since these special inserts effectively provided employment during the most economically-challenged Depression years, the entire initiative also demonstrated a certain corporate benevolence toward the professionally diverse community Time Inc. was attempting to bring into existence in, through and around *Forum*.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ John Cushman Fistere with Todd, Robertson and Todd, "ROCKEFELLER CENTER, RED OR BLACK? The Promotion of Realty's Behemoth," *Building Money in The Architectural Forum* (October 1934): 292-298.

⁹⁶ Much of that benevolence was channeled through Howard Myers, who was repeatedly praised over the years for using all of the resources available to him to help designers receive exposure for their work generally and to negotiate the difficult Depression years in particular. In *Evolution of an Architect*, Edward Durell Stone described Myers' efforts in the 1930s:

Howard was sympathetic with our problems and tried to find work for us. In effect, he established his own architectural WPA. To

The biggest investment of time, money and effort toward this end resulted in the International Sections, a series of 12 distinct booklets bound into *Forum* between December 1932 and December 1936. [Fig. 5] Each International Section profiled the contemporary architectural scene in a different foreign country; along with the expected so-called "Old World" countries Americans historically admired - France, Italy and so on - came surprises such as Czechoslovakia, Poland and Palestine. Importantly, although the designers whose architectural work was portrayed in these booklets received appropriate credit, the people that had decided which buildings best represented their own country and how those buildings should be presented in print remained anonymous. Like Time Inc.'s policy of restricting bylines for its own staff writers, asking the International Section series' creators to suppress their individual egos was supposed to yield more objective - and therefore more valuable - two-dimensional work. In return they were granted complete artistic freedom, making this particular campaign so expensive that it was essentially abandoned by the end of the 1930s.

provide us with bread and butter, he arranged competitions, got us jobs designing houses for advertising campaigns and other projects...He was a great catalyst and brought architects together socially from all parts of the country, who were interested in modern design...

Edward Durell Stone, *Evolution of an Architect* (New York: Horizon Press, 1962): 31-32. I am indebted to Hicks Stone for drawing my attention to this passage in his father's memoir.

The other major early content change was the addition of a "Correspondence" section, later called "Letters." This was the most literal interpretation of the notion of turning *Forum* into an actual "forum," since it both encouraged reader engagement and served as the site of that community interaction itself. More subtly, though, it also gave editors curatorial freedom to exhibit letters from a range of building industry professionals, which highlighted Time Inc.'s unusually loose interpretation of what qualified as "architectural" by appearing to prove how diverse the magazine's reader community had become. Although new sections like Building Money and inserts like the International Sections were more immediately spectacular, *Forum's* new focus on letters-to-the-editor was perhaps the most substantial early manifestation of the magazine's Time Inc. editorial character overall.

All of the company's publications offered a Correspondence or Letters section of some sort, a policy that arose out of the community-building missions they shared. The significance *Forum's* editors attached to correspondence was unprecedented within the very different context of architectural journalism, however, in which letters-to-the-editor sections were not at all the norm.⁹⁷ Indeed, maintaining a vigorous Correspondence section

⁹⁷ From 1934 until 1937, Time Inc. published a magazine called *Letters* consisting entirely of overflow *Time* correspondence. By contrast, one of

required so much effort from editorial staff that none of the other nationally-circulated professional architecture magazines were ever able to offer anything comparable, essentially making aspect of its "architectural forum" distinctive to Time Inc.'s *Forum* by default.

The magazine's first Correspondence section appeared in the October 1932 issue, six months after the initial acquisition.⁹⁸ But it was not until a school design-themed special issue published in January 1935 that editors discovered letters had the potential to yield more than just one-way communication from individual readers to the magazine's creators. In particular, they learned that different kinds of building industry professionals would respond to each other when properly provoked, and that the resulting letters could be used as raw material for constructing a relatively open-ended *Forum*-moderated debate, or at least the appearance of one. *Forum*'s editorial team also learned that, if done right, they could extend this reader-to-reader "exchange" into subsequent months,

Forum's closest rivals within the context of architectural journalism, *Architectural Record*, did not even possess a Correspondence section at all until the late 1950s.

⁹⁸ The first letter in the first Correspondence section, from Herbert Hoover's official secretary, described action the President had taken in response to something he had seen in *Forum*. This was a relatively auspicious start; decades later, toward the end of *Forum*'s Time Inc. life, President Kennedy was said to have personally annotated an issue of *Forum* that dealt with plans for re-building parts of Washington, D.C. Theodore G. Joslin, Secretary to the President, in "Correspondence," *Architectural Forum* (October 1932): 6; Reyner Banham, "A designers' Pugwash?" *The Listener* (August 1964): 301.

allowing it to take on qualities of a feature article in its own right.

In the case of the January 1935 special issue, *Forum's* editors received such an immediate and strong reaction - much of it negative - to the schematic school design proposals and the issue itself that they chose one especially critical letter and circulated it among subscribers explicitly inviting response. The result of that effort was a 16-page special advertising-free section bound into the March 1935 issue, which included the significant parts of the original letter, a lengthy commentary by the editors and readers' opinions on matters ranging from how parts of the catalyst letter had been phrased all the way to the larger value of *Forum's* changing editorial character. The editors' willingness to offer up their own creative decision-making for critique no doubt played an important early role in setting a welcoming tone; it likely encouraging readers to believe their feedback about the editorial attitudes that had shaped the schools issue might be taken into account in the future, making them feel invested in the magazine and the semblance of community it fostered.

3. Completing the "New *Forum*" Transformation

The January 1935 special issue, the layered debate around it and the attention *Forum* attracted as a result happened

to coincide with the two major internal corporate machinations that enabled the so-called "new *Forum*" to come into official existence. One of these was Time Inc.'s full ownership acquisition of the magazine, which guaranteed complete creative and financial control going forward. The company immediately replaced the previous publisher's name and logo in the masthead with its own, a move that probably brought a substantial number of new readers to *Forum* in and of itself given Time Inc.'s cachet by that point via *Time* and *Fortune*. The official ownership also allowed the company to cut the annual subscription price by almost half, which probably also accounted for much of the dramatic 250% increase in the number of official subscribers that particular year.⁹⁹

The spring of 1935 was also when Luce finally prepared the actual prospectus document, already discussed in detail above, which gave the magazine's editors a coherent reference touchstone. The editors' response at that time - to both the influx of new readers and the prospectus - was to consciously take more risks in their attempts to transform *Forum* into the site of, and impetus for, a professionally diverse mediated community. They especially combined their ability to commission

⁹⁹ In 1935 the annual subscription cost was lowered from \$7 to \$4 (\$118 and \$68, respectively, in 2013 dollars). The total circulation increased from 8,312 in late 1934 to 21,071 when measured again in late 1935. CPI Inflation Calculator; Roll #P-5 and P-7, Publisher's Statements, Historical Circulation Data File, ABC.

content with a desire to provoke critical response for the magazine's Correspondence section. For instance, for a series of high-concept special inserts called "plus," which were produced by an independent group of international designers and bound into *Forum* beginning in December 1938, the editors invited readers to use letters-to-the-editor to essentially vote on whether *Forum* should continue being the vehicle through which "plus" was circulated. [Fig. 14] The response was overwhelmingly negative and, as promised, Time Inc. stopped supporting it after only three issues.¹⁰⁰

The final stage of *Forum's* transformation into a professionally diverse community-based publication occurred during the first years of World War II, when the editors stopped addressing the interests their different reader types through the use of distinctly-targeted articles or sections. This policy, they realized, was ghettoizing the magazine rather than making it seem like a coherent whole and as a result was actually working against the idea of creating a single "architectural forum" around *Forum*. Rather than replace specialized articles and sections with different content,

¹⁰⁰ "Plus" was bound into the December 1938, February 1939 and May 1939 issues of *Forum*. After receiving a large number of responses to the December 1938 issue, both positive and negative, the *Forum's* editors put forth the following formal request and promise: "THE FORUM invites further opinion, from it will determine the size and frequency of PLUS." "Letters," *Architectural Forum* (February 1939): 30.



Fig. 14. Representative design/layout by Herbert Matter, cover, "plus" (December 1938)

Forum's editors decided to make the entire magazine more accessible to everyone by reducing jargon-heavy text throughout and relying more heavily on images, typography and layout to communicate big ideas. They assumed people were now more likely to look at *Forum* than actually read it - that the whole thing would be more appealing if it were more clearly understandable "at a glance."¹⁰¹ Although the goal was to make the magazine easier and faster for everyone to digest, readers' perception that they were all consuming the same content simultaneously would have also contributed to the magazine's sense of community.

The older editorial model was most conspicuously represented by "Building Money." Although this section had played an early important role in overtly indicating the company's new direction, over the years it had evolved into essentially the only part of the magazine for contractors, realtors, bankers and others whose day-to-day professional lives followed the building industry's property acquisition and project financing branches. Building Money continued as a delineated feature item until the March 1942 issue, when it was folded into the magazine's News section. It remained part of

¹⁰¹ Henry Wright, memorandum to unspecified recipient hand-labeled "Re-Prospectus," September 1944, pages 3 and 11-12, "ARCH FORUM" Subject Files, TIA.

News, albeit in residual form, for almost the entire remainder of the magazine's Time Inc. life.

The Linda Vista Shopping Center feature in the September 1944 issue constituted the first real attempt at bringing together specific "at a glance" strategies into a coherent whole.¹⁰² That the project being profiled was a shopping center may not have been coincidental. After all, this happened to be a type of architecture that required input from many different building industry disciplines, essentially guaranteeing interest from a relatively large portion of *Forum's* diverse readership. And, it was also a type of architecture that aimed at creating a particular sense of community among the people who used it, which conveniently hinted at a parallel in physical space to the kind of shared conceptual space *Forum's* editors were trying to foster with their magazine.

The feature's title, "'Grass on Main Street' Becomes a Reality," as well as its very first photograph, which situates the buildings conspicuously in the background while in the foreground two women and child sat on a bench admiring a kitten, are neither subtle nor complicated. [Fig. 15] Indeed, they communicate nothing that might make any individual group of readers feel particularly unwelcome. The rest of the feature

¹⁰² "'Grass on Main Street' Becomes a Reality: Shopping Center, Linda Vista, California," *Architectural Forum* (September 1944): 81-93 & 178.



Fig. 15. Image of woman and child with kitten, "'Grass on Main Street' Becomes a Reality," *Architectural Forum* (September 1944): 81

displays a series of mainly graphic devices in varying combinations that highlighted key ideas in the text and demystified the images. For instance, on some pages condensed design statements in bolded typeface were placed over wide gray bands; layered in this way they drew attention to their content more than if bold text and gray banding had been used individually. [Fig. 16] Similarly, the biggest image in the feature was an ink wash aerial perspective positioned across two facing pages and annotated by hand. [Fig. 17] Devoting a two-page spread to an important image was nothing new, but making the information it presented seem less intimidating by replacing crisp typed text with flowing cursive handwriting and a drafted line-drawing with softer-looking ink wash was extremely unusual within the context of an otherwise serious professional journal. A third strategy, in which a photograph of part of a particular architectural feature sat immediately adjacent to a technical drawing of part of the same feature, made *Forum* seem as though it was offering a kind of x-ray or interior/exterior view; the drawing, in other words, visually explained the photograph and vice-versa. [Fig. 18]

4. Three Later Variations on the *Forum* Editorial Formula

By the time *Forum's* first editor, Howard Myers, passed away in 1947, the idea for an architectural journal that created

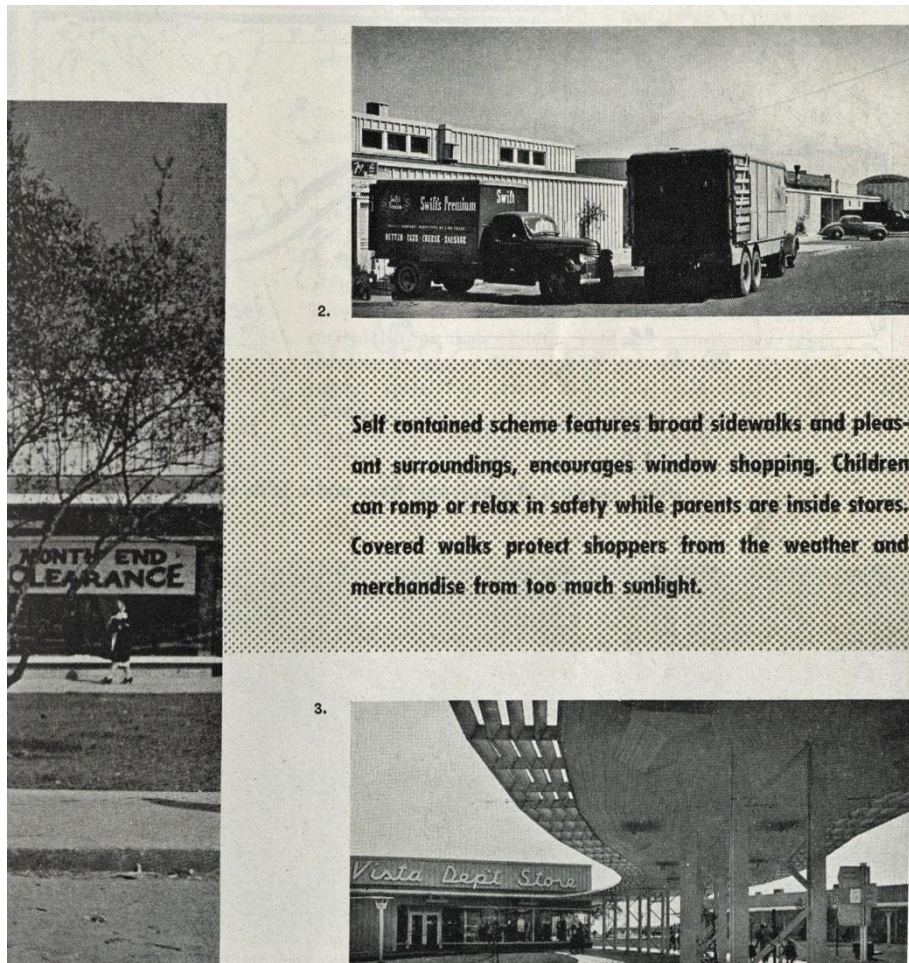


Fig. 16. Detail of gray band with bold typeface, "'Grass on Main Street' Becomes a Reality," *Architectural Forum* (September 1944): 91

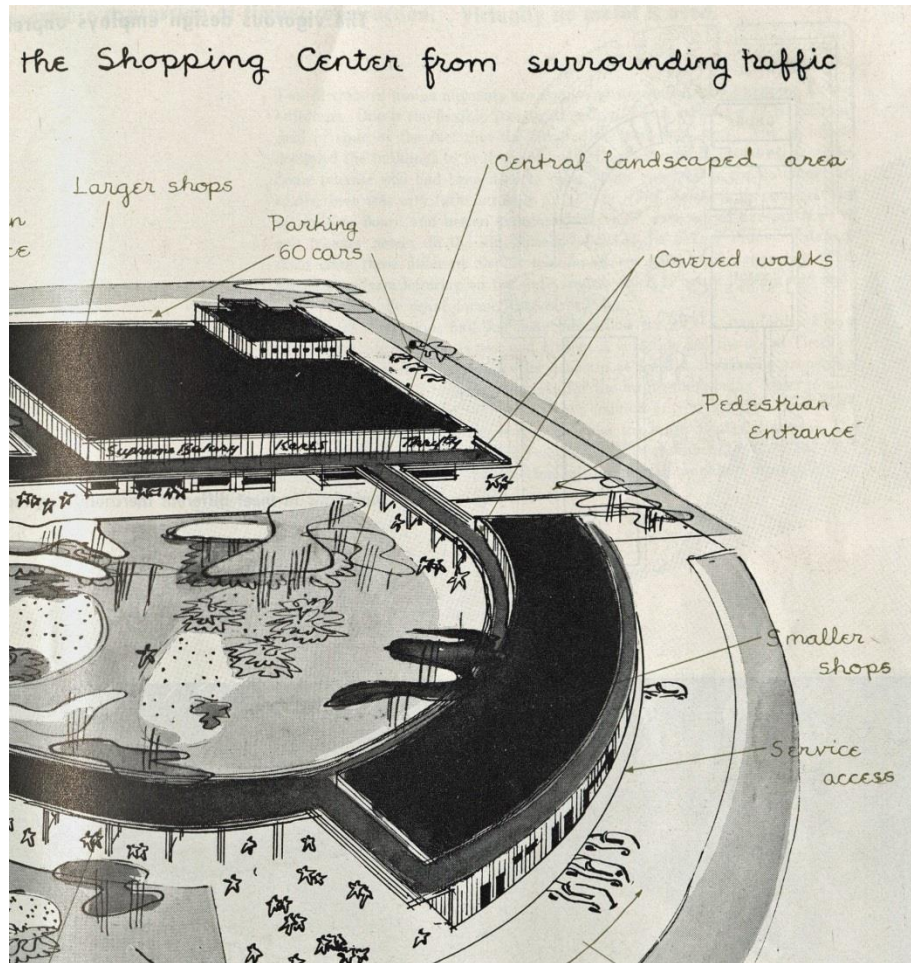


Fig. 17. Detail of ink wash perspective with handwritten annotations, "'Grass on Main Street' Becomes a Reality," *Architectural Forum* (September 1944): 87

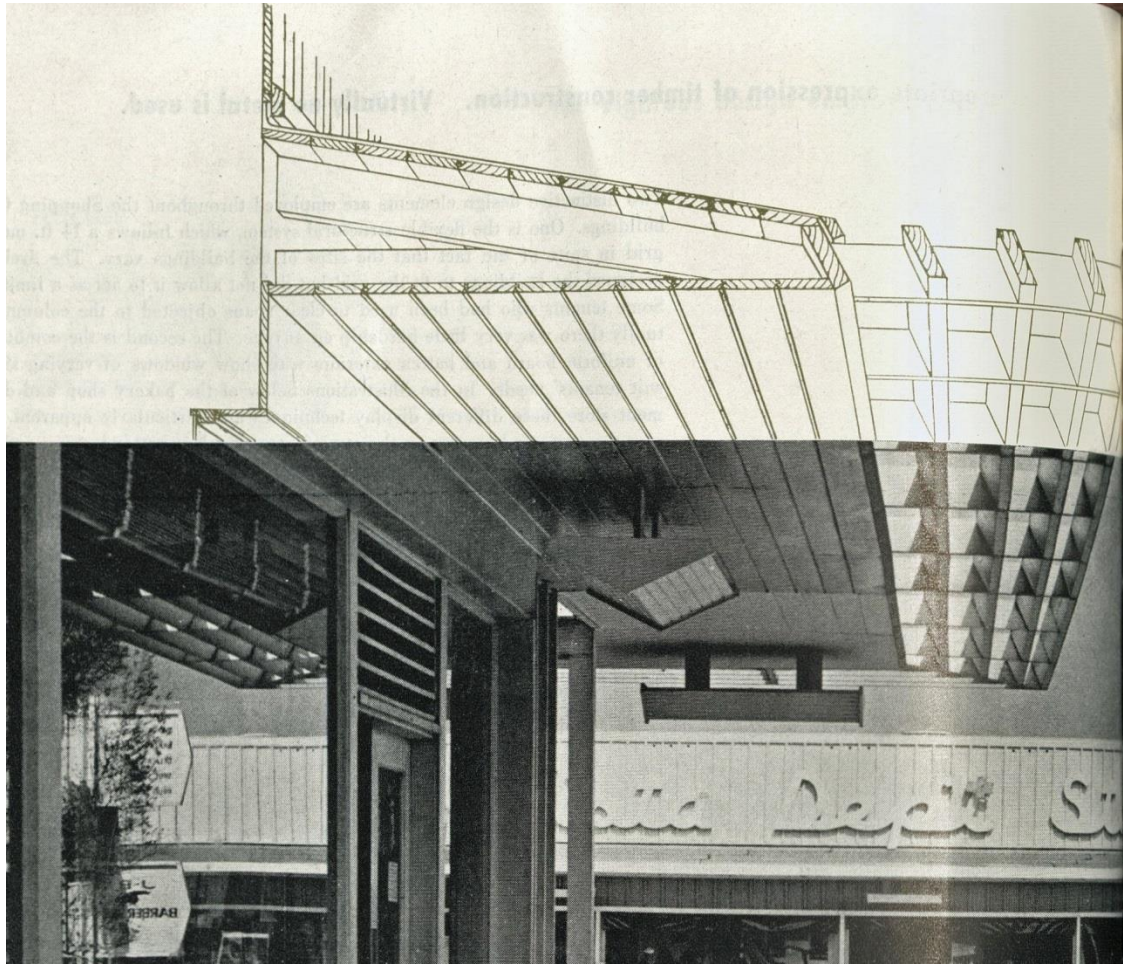


Fig. 18. Detail of drawing-and-photography collage, "'Grass on Main Street' Becomes a Reality," *Architectural Forum* (September 1944): 90

a broad sense of building industry community had essentially coalesced into an editorial formula with two interrelated components. On the one hand, editors intentionally provoked response as a way to maintain the community's vitality and sense of self. And, on the other, they presented content in ways that appealed to different kinds of architectural professionals simultaneously in order to create actual, or at least perceived, shared reading experiences. Of course *Forum* itself evolved over the years as its second editor, Douglas Haskell, and his staff interpreted the magazine's mission in their own ways, but the core of what had been dubbed "the new *Forum*" in the earlier period remained.

One later iteration entailed phasing jointly-authored special inserts out in favor of feature articles describing buildings whose design or construction had relied on successful partnerships between various project team members. Time Inc. commissioned "paper architecture" during and immediately after the Depression, when relatively little actual architecture was being produced by anyone. Once building activity resumed in earnest after the war, though, *Forum's* editors had actual projects to use as examples. The promise of team-wide coverage invited the magazine's non-architect readers to engage with stories they might have otherwise skipped. And, importantly, since this approach was often employed when readers might have

expected articles to highlight individual architects, the element of surprise amplified the effect and encouraged letters as a result.

The feature article announcing Frank Lloyd Wright's Morris Store in San Francisco, which appeared in the February 1950 issue, is one such example.¹⁰³ By this point in Wright's life, many readers would have certainly expected the article to allocate plenty of page space to the architect himself. Instead, it is structured as a series of first-person project member testimonials, the briefest of which belonged to Wright.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, much of the substance *Forum* actually presented in these commentaries highlighted Wright's success not as an individual artist *per se* but as the group's guiding force, implying the building's virtuosity rested as much on his ability to navigate the interpersonal requirements of his job as it did on the design's expressive qualities. This message - that an integral part of being a successful architect meant inspiring others to work together toward a common goal - directly

¹⁰³ "China and Gift Shop by FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT For V.C. Morris, Maiden Lane, San Francisco, California," *Architectural Forum* 92:2 (February 1950), issue cover and 79-85.

¹⁰⁴ The editorial approach was justified in the article's introduction as a way to express the building's "many-sided impact." This would presumably have been enough however it is entirely possible that the editors were also referencing the design's unique geometry, which was dominated by a Guggenheim Museum-style spiral ramp. All of the article's drawings and photographs, as well as some of the commentary, certainly emphasized Wright's circular theme; indeed, the full-bleed photograph directly opposite the article's introduction offered a view of the interior through one of the wall's distinctive porthole openings. "China and Gift Shop," 80-81.

reflected the emphasis that Luce had placed on the architectural process's social qualities in his "new *Forum*" prospectus 15 years earlier. Indeed, the constancy with which *Forum*'s editors repeated this fundamental theme throughout the magazine's three Time Inc. decades cannot be overstated.

The Letters section, which had occupied a central position in the strategy for constructing a sense of a distinctive *Forum* reader community in the early Time Inc. years, took on significance later as evidence of continued engaged commitment to the values the magazine espoused. One of the most notable ways in which editors highlighted the confirmational aspects of the Letters section was curating the professional heterogeneity of the correspondents whose letters they printed in order to reinforce the image of a diverse readership. While this was routine policy for every month's correspondence, it was most evident in the special supplement bound into the August 1950 issue in which Time Inc. announced the establishment of its new "light construction" architecture journal *House and Home*, *Forum*'s name change to *The Magazine of Building* and the re-orientation of *Forum* toward larger building types in order to allow residential design and construction to fall under *House and Home*'s new jurisdiction.

Rather than simply issuing a press release, this 16-page advertising-free insert began with a two-page letter to readers

from Luce himself and then offered thirteen examples of correspondence from contractors, bankers, engineers, building materials manufacturers, various types of government officials and so on, all of which endorsed Time Inc.'s new plans for *Forum*. Importantly, only one of these reader-authored letters was written by an architect, Nathaniel Owings, whose firm with Louis Skidmore and John Merrill was itself one of the best-known examples of a multi-partner business structure. Owings' letter appeared as the last in the insert, bookending its contents with Luce's opening statement as if to highlight its relative importance, but the fact that a single letter represented the entire contingent of readers who were actually architects constituted a detail too obvious for most readers to miss. Clearly, this publisher took a much more liberal approach toward defining who qualified as "architectural" for the purposes of their journal's "forum" community.

A third later iteration of the *Forum* editorial formula consisted of reporting, in cleverly-designed ways, on actual business meetings between different kinds of building industry professionals. This confirmed and validated the continued existence of the magazine's broader building industry community by literally demonstrating it in action. This became such a central vehicle of manifesting *Forum's* editorial mission that

nearly every issue published after the late-1940s contained some sort of meeting report.

A feature entitled "Modernizing Main Street," published in the February 1956 issue, was conceptually and physically typical of this approach.¹⁰⁵ It covered a so-called "roundtable," one popular type of conference format in which the maximum number of participants was based on the size of a large conference table. These sorts of meeting report articles in the more traditional architectural journals treated the summaries of proceedings as the most important part; emphasis was on efficiently delivering crucial information of use to the professional reader, in other words. In the case of *Forum*, however, the significance of the summary of proceedings was balanced and even sometimes overwhelmed by news-style photographs of the participants actively debating each other during the meeting itself. [Fig. 19] Individual statements by each participant were then laid out around the article's body text simulating marginalia, as if attendees were offering *Forum's* readers exclusive behind-the-scenes commentary on their own participatory experiences. [Fig. 20] As a result, readers finished the article in *Forum* with the impression that the social aspect of meeting - who was involved in the discussion and the respectful, engaged manner in which

¹⁰⁵ "Modernizing Main Street," *Architectural Forum* (February 1956): 127-133.

To put the small independent merchant and his Main Street neighbors back in business calls for some new solutions to some old problems. A panel of experts probes the reasons behind today's meager modernization activity and suggests ways to raise the pace

MODERNIZING MAIN STREET

A ROUND TABLE REPORT

There are almost 2 million small stores in the US. Most of them are strung out in ragged rows along the narrow, crowded Main Streets of our cities, towns and suburbs. Most of them are as out of date in appearance and equipment as the old buildings they occupy. Yet these stores are trying to compete with the new chain stores which have taken the best sites in the middle of the town, and with the attractive new shopping centers which have sprung up on the fringes. Unless these stores are updated inside and out, they can never meet this new competition and, in turn, Main Streets everywhere and whole downtown areas are doomed to deterioration.

In the current drive to rejuvenate the commercial districts of our communities, small independent stores—

because there are so many of them—are just as important as any of the biggest downtown interests: banks, office buildings, department stores, utility companies and transit companies, and the others. Any plan for rebuilding our communities downtown which does not reckon with the small retailer is not likely to succeed.

It was with these thoughts in mind that 20 experts in all phases of store modernization assembled six weeks ago in New York at the FORUM's invitation to define the problem, to discuss existing solutions and to explore for new ones. This report, based on the transcript of their eight-hour meeting, reflects the joint opinion of retailers, wholesalers, manufacturers, financiers, realtors, architects and economists who participated in the Round Table.



Architecture

ARTHUR MAISEN
DANIEL SCHWARTZMAN
store architects

Building materials production

WILLIAM GILLET, vice president
Detroit Steel Products Co.
president, Producers Council
WALTER HOADLEY, treasurer
Armstrong Cork Co.
DAVID S. MILLER
vice president for sales
The Kawneer Co.

Commerce

JAMES P. STEINER,
assistant manager
Construction and Civic
Development Dept.
Chamber of Commerce of the US

Economics

MILES L. COLEMAN
construction economist

Finance

GEORGE BENDER, vice president
Brooklyn Savings Bank
WILLIAM T. CONROY,
vice president
The Franklin National Bank
JOHN JEWETT, vice president
Prudential Insurance Co. of America
C. HARRY MINNEES, president
Bankers Federal Savings & Loan Assn.

Government

WENDELL B. BARNES,
administrator
Small Business Administration

Merchandise retailing

SYDNEY ATKINSON
past president, New York State
Retail Hardware Assn.
GEORGE W. FENNELL, president
George Fennell & Co.
director, National Retail
Furniture Assn.
PAUL REITZ
The S. V. Corp.
owner and operator of
Riverside Markets

Merchandise wholesaling

RUDOLPH L. TREUFELFELS
food marketing economist
National-American Wholesale
Grocers Assn.

Merchandise production

BRADBURY FRANKLIN,
assistant manager
Retail Trade Promotion Dept.
McKesson & Robbins, Inc.

Real Estate

NELSON E. FINCH, president
Harry Thomas Co.

Redevelopment

ROBERT WRIGHT
American Council To Improve
Our Neighborhoods (A.C.T.I.O.N.)
Chairman
JOSEPH C. HAZEN JR.
managing editor
ARCHITECTURAL FORUM

* Although absent from the Round Table meeting, he endorses its findings.

Fig. 19. Photograph of roundtable participants sitting at a large conference table, "Modernizing Main Street," Architectural Forum (February 1956): 127

THE PROBLEM:

It is not a lack of financing—not for the present. It will come as a surprise to some that there is apparently no serious shortage of funds available for lending to qualified retailers to help finance their modernization programs. To wit: these highlights from a recent survey by the Dept. of Commerce's Office of Business Economics:

- ▶ Of the retail businesses queried, 60% felt no need for external financing. This figure compares with 50% in other industries.
- ▶ Of the firms that had wanted to borrow, almost three-fourths obtained what they wanted. (Of these loans, 61% were for one year's duration or less, indicating that most of them are used for inventory financing rather than modernization.)
- ▶ Of these loans, 77% were made by banks.
- ▶ 39% carried an interest rate of 3% to 5.9% and 46% carried a flat 6% rate. Roughly 5% cost less than 3% interest; 10% cost more than 6%.
- ▶ No collateral was required by 65%.

At first glance, these statistics might indicate that the store modernization problem is not a money problem. But in actuality, they merely show that there is enough money available to finance today's very inadequate modernization program. There is already an indication that new sources of financing may be required to float the greatly increased modernization program which everyone agrees is essential. This is hinted in a footnote to the Dept. of Commerce survey: loans wanted by retailers but not obtained were more than twice as big as those obtained (\$10,000 median vs. \$4,000) and 50% of them were to be of more than three years' duration (compared with 8% of those obtained). As Kawner's Vice President Miller put it in the Round Table: "Today's need for money is being met, but nothing is being done to stimulate the need."

THE PROBLEM IS THE IGNORANCE, INDIFFERENCE OR INELIGIBILITY OF THE RETAILER

Stimulating modernization along Main Street will be no small task, for it will require some radical changes in the personal habits and beliefs of the independent merchant and in his way of doing business. The Round Table agreed that half of the problems of store modernization are to be found inside the store itself; the others were found scattered in the offices of the federal tax collector, the local banker and the landlord:

- ▶ The retailer does not have the desire to modernize. The oft-told story, "It pays to modernize," is well known but not yet accepted.
- ▶ Most retailers are conservative members of the old school which believes that it is not good business to extend or accept credit. Consequently they will not undertake a big modernization program until it can be financed from slowly accumulated cash reserves. They lose sight of the fact that most successful businesses have grown successful on credit, and that the paying off of a loan is frequently an incentive to harder work and, in turn, better business.
- ▶ The retailer's bookkeeping, if any, is usually inadequate—not the kind of evidence that is apt to convince a banker that the store is a good risk for a modernization loan.
- ▶ The retailer is inclined to play his cards close to his chest instead of inviting his banker to look over his shoulder and offer advice. The average merchant, is not a good finance man and, if he is not a good friend of his banker, he can get into a lot of trouble very quickly.
- ▶ The retailer does not see beyond his own store. Although he knows that the success of new outlying shopping centers is based in large part on group planning, group promotion and group spirit, he still ignores the need for group thinking and group action in the modernization of Main Street.

SOME SOLUTIONS:

Far from discouraged by these unhappy facts, the Round Table made sound proposals for stimulating store modernization and then suggested several new ways to provide the needed funds

A central bookkeeping agency for the retailer. Because he has neither the time, personnel nor the training necessary for proper bookkeeping, the small merchant would be well advised to entrust this chore to someone else. The service could be provided by wholesalers, distributors, trade associations or, in certain fields, by manufacturers. Some two dozen wholesale grocers in the Midwest are already doing central bookkeeping for their retailers. Equipped with modern business machines, these wholesalers perform the bookkeeping service promptly, accurately and economically. The small fee (½ of 1%) is less than the retailer would spend if he tried to do the job with his own staff. Needless to say, when a retailer is looking for modernization money, a set of these professionally kept books looks much more impressive to a banker than some scribbles on the back of an envelope.

A higher surtax notch for all small businessmen. The most frequently voiced complaint of small businessmen against present tax laws is the low level of net profit (\$25,000) at which the heavy surtax starts to take effect. Administrator Wendell Barnes of the Small Business Administration told the Round Table the raising of this so-called "tax notch" would probably be considered the next time tax laws are liberalized. SBA will make strong recommendations that this be done. This would increase retailers' profit margins and cash reserves and give them more to spend on modernization.

A graded lease to favor the merchant while he is paying for a modernization job. To help a retailer set himself up in a new location or to

ATKINSON (hardware retailer): The National Retail Hardware Assn. has about 25,000 members in the U.S. and Canada. The average sales per store for 1946 was \$72,370, and in 1954 it was \$86,225. Costs increased 53% from 18% of sales in 1946 to 27% in 1954. There was an 80% drop in profit, from 9.9% of sales in 1946 to 1.9% in 1954. And there was only a 1½% increase in margin, from 27.5% of sales in 1946 to 29.4% in 1954. Ours is largely a credit problem. It is difficult for us to raise capital for store improvements.

FENNEL (furniture retailer): The National Retail Furniture Assn. is composed of about 7,000 small furniture stores. The furniture retailer's No. 1 problem is profit. The average profit in our industry runs 2% to 3% of sales. A good furniture store will make perhaps 6%. The current tax laws hit retailers very hard—particularly the stores that have a profit between \$25,000 and \$100,000 because our tax rate goes into the 35% bracket at \$25,000, and that is the point at which many stores would think of modernizing. Taxes are the prime reason why it is so difficult for furniture stores to accumulate money for remodeling.

FRANKLIN (drug wholesaler): These gentlemen sound very much like a group of druggists talking. The druggist of today is averaging better than \$80,000 in volume. But that is a deceptive figure. His net profit is only about 4%. He too is waiting until he can modernize on cash, and that, I think, constitutes a serious problem. While he is waiting to accumulate the cash, the chain drug store or supermarket is modernizing and is doing an aggressive job of merchandising.

THEUNFELS (wholesale food economist): Independent retailers in improving their premises today—apart from financial support—get a great deal of store engineering help from individual wholesale grocers. A recent report from one company operating in Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma bears this out. Their exact count for last year was 31 new stores, 35 complete remodelings, 44 partial remodelings, 25 store enlargements—a total of 134 jobs by a single company with a total of about 700 affiliated retail merchants. While all major jobs were in outlying areas, this would change under concerted rehabilitation efforts to rehabilitate Main Street.

REITZ (food retailer): Unfortunately, most food merchants don't keep adequate records to get the financing they need for expansion. Moreover, the average small businessman doesn't properly confide in his local banking institutions, and this, in my opinion, is the first step toward successful financing. Invariably he hates to tell the truth about his business. He says, "I am doing pretty good; I don't want to let the news out and have somebody else move in on me." We will have to stimulate some new thinking on the part of these individuals. After they have been in business 10 to 20 years, these merchants become self-satisfied, and it is hard to get them to want to borrow money to expand.

GILLET (building materials manufacturer): We are dealing with a very inexact science. Instead of finding one answer to solve all problems, we must look for a group of many answers that can be put together to exert pressure on the problem. The material producers are anxious to help.

Fig. 20. Two-page spread with report text toward the fold and participant images/commentary resembling marginalia, "Modernizing Main Street," *Architectural Forum* (February 1956): 128-129

the dialogue had occurred – was equally as important as whatever conclusions had been drawn about the topic at hand.

As with so many of the other meetings *Forum* reported on in the later Time Inc. years, the magazine's staff had organized "Modernizing Main Street" and hosted it at Time Inc.'s mid-town Manhattan headquarters. With these sorts of events *Forum's*

editors conspicuously bestowed their publication with inside agent status - as opposed to that of outside observer in the traditional journalistic sense of a relatively un-invested reporter sitting in the back simply describing what he/she witnessed. Like the way in which commissioning jointly-authored special inserts had provided employment during the lean Depression years, Time Inc.'s repeated hosting of these sorts of industry-wide meetings positioned the corporation as a kind of patron, albeit of an aspect of mid-twentieth century American architectural culture rather than a specific tangible building. That so many important industry people agreed to participate in these gatherings over the years may have, in itself, lent additional credibility to the perception of a *Forum*-style "architectural forum" sensibility existed in, through and around the magazine. Like the Linda Vista Shopping Center feature in the September 1944 issue, the fact that the "Modernizing Main Street" meeting report emphasized an architectural problem directly concerned with the larger themes of community and community-building was also both strategic and typical.

5. The Last Five Years: Old and New

Toward the end of the 1950s there developed a feeling among some of *Forum*'s editors - especially Haskell - that readers needed to be overtly reminded that *Forum*'s function as a

true "forum" for a wide range of "architectural" people was what made the magazine really distinctive among the nationally-circulated professional architecture journals.¹⁰⁶ The most conspicuous manifestation of this idea, beginning with the February 1959 issue, was a new organizational strategy that sorted content under three main headings: "Art of Architecture," "Business of Building" and "Technology." [Fig. 21] By then nearly 27 years had elapsed since *Forum's* earliest Time Inc. staff had worked so hard to eliminate the pre-Time Inc. tripartite "art-science-business" arrangement and the separation it implied. Editors had more leeway to exploit the approach's advantages in 1959, though, since by then *Forum's* heterogeneous character was well-established.

¹⁰⁶ In 1958, Haskell wrote an unusually long and passionate memorandum directly to Luce in which he described *Forum* in the following manner:

Our challenge is unusual: we have to meld the goldangdest [sic] motley of businesses, professions, and occupations into an effective audience...What is actually new about FORUM is that we are helping to initiate them all into a group scene, so they can play better together in a manner to which they are not yet all accustomed. The business reader should be made especially thankful to FORUM for making sense to him of esthetics, and the architect for making sense to him of economics, and both must absorb a broader notion of their own jobs. I'm not talking generalities, Harry. The fact that after four years most architects still think of FORUM as 'one of three' is an almost disastrous indication of our failure to see, edit, and put across our unique value to the architect...this is a new play FORUM is writing, and it is incomparably important that the theme be held steady despite its almost infinite possibilities of ramification.

Emphasis is original. Douglas Haskell, memorandum to Henry Luce, 19 November 1958, pages 1-3, folder 79:10 Henry R. Luce 1954-1964, DPH.

Architectural Forum / the magazine of building / February 1959	
<p>5 News</p> <p>45 Projects</p> <p>55 People</p> <p>63 Forum</p> <p>75 Editorial</p> <p>134 Ideas A new department devoted to ingenuity in building</p> <p>137 Products</p> <p>155 Books</p> <p>159 Excerpts</p> <p>197 Abroad</p>	
<p>Cover: Drawing of proposed Bacardi office building, Mies van der Rohe, architect (story, page 94).</p> <p>79 Editorial, subscription, and advertising data.</p> <p>202 Advertising index.</p> <p>VOLUME 110, NUMBER 2</p> <p>Published monthly by TIME Inc. 9 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N.Y. Entered as second-class matter at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices. Subscription price \$5.00 a year. © 1959 TIME Inc. All rights reserved.</p>	<p>ART OF ARCHITECTURE</p> <p>The school board that dared 78 <i>Sarasota County, Florida, has built the most exciting and varied group of new schools in the U.S. and has commissioned still more.</i></p> <p>Mies's one-office office building 94 <i>The champion of steel favors concrete and glass for Cuba's Bacardi building.</i></p> <p>Off-tune on Broadway 102 <i>A skeptical look at the first modern speculative office building to go up amid Manhattan's stately old downtown skyscrapers—a FORUM criticism.</i></p> <p>Corbu's island of beauty 108 <i>The sculptured forms and subtle colors of Mykonos overwhelmed the modern shaper of architecture when he visited this Aegean island—a gallery.</i></p> <p>Engineered for thinking 116 <i>The new headquarters for International Minerals & Chemical Corporation in Chicago demonstrates the multiple benefits of careful planning.</i></p> <p>Four noteworthy buildings 122 <i>A factory for atom smashers... a low-cost luxury apartment... an expandable electronics plant... and a church in modern Byzantine dress.</i></p> <p>BUSINESS OF BUILDING</p> <p>Closed to traffic 88 <i>Nearly 100 U.S. cities are planning to turn Main Street over to pedestrians.</i></p> <p>The sad state of subdivision planning 98 <i>Are codes and regulations—or architects—to blame for the lack of progress in land-planning techniques during the past century?</i></p> <p>How today's clients pick architects 114 <i>Most big building clients now carefully canvass the field before they choose a designer. Some, in fact, may be a little too careful.</i></p> <p>TECHNOLOGY</p> <p>Concrete block fashion show 106 <i>Nine top architects bring high style to one of the industry's lowliest materials.</i></p> <p>Are we still designing firetraps? 126 <i>The place to cut the nation's mounting fire losses is at the drafting board.</i></p> <p>Building with plywood and paper 132 <i>International Paper Company's new plant in Auburndale, Florida uses old materials in new ways to cut building weight, time, and cost.</i></p>

Fig. 21. Representative Contents page with new tripartite Organizational strategy, *Architectural Forum* (February 1959): 1

For instance, switching the order in which non-art content was presented so that business-oriented articles immediately followed art and engineering-oriented material was last very obviously emphasized the fact that *Forum* considered clients and professionals engaged in the financial aspects of the building process to be important contributing members of the broader "architectural" community. *Forum's* status as the businessman's architecture journal had always been part of Luce's vision for the magazine, and its close historical and administrative relationship with Time Inc.'s *Fortune* had underscored that over the years. But the new organization refreshed this aspect of the magazine's editorial identity in reader's minds, in case they had begun to take for granted how unique this made Time Inc.'s *Forum*.

Organizing content under specific headings was easy for the magazine's creators to undertake and for readers to understand. This practice only lasted about two years, though. By contrast, at about this same time *Forum's* editors embarked on a more complicated but also more long-lived change aimed at amplifying the vitality of the magazine's "architectural forum:" they took a more seriously critical stance toward contemporary work. In a series of internal memoranda to his staff, Haskell called this new campaign "our act in restoring 'architectural criticism'." He explained that it was meant to help readers, especially of

the client-owner type, understand how to "get better, more coherent buildings by pointing out incoherencies in an objective and graphic manner."¹⁰⁷ This was more than just a way to stimulate response from and/or between readers, although it certainly generated many letters for the Correspondence section in the spirit of *Forum's* now-established tradition of provocation. Critical essays also offered *Forum's* editors the opportunity to justify actively and openly participating in the community they had fostered in a relatively behind-the-scenes manner for years.

This was the first concerted effort to incorporate building- or project-specific critique on a regular basis in *Forum*. Until then, these sorts of essays had certainly been included but only sporadically. To overtly add criticism was no small step for a professional architecture journal in this country. The major American periodicals, *Forum* included, had historically adopted an overall laudatory tone toward their subject. Generally speaking there seems to have been a kind of unwritten understanding among the nationally circulated for-profit trade magazines that coverage would essentially deliver a constructive, vaguely emotionally-uplifting message. Within this milieu, critique was most often achieved through omission.

¹⁰⁷ Douglas Haskell, memorandum to "Writers," 17 November 1958, and Douglas Haskell, memorandum to "Staff," 12 August 1958, Folder 83:1 Memos-Staff 1958 (folder 4 of 5), DPH.

At a conference about architectural publishing in 1996, adherents of the more historically critically-inclined European magazines challenged American editors to explain their journalism's conspicuous lack of criticism.¹⁰⁸ Mildred Schmertz, the long-time editor of *Record*, responded pragmatically, noting that the American way of producing a big nationally-circulation periodical required designers' buy-in for access and information and that architects would only provide this freely if they were confident the resulting article would cast a positive light on their work.¹⁰⁹ In addition, I suspect that the country's vast size and cultural diversity in comparison to most European countries complicated American editors' task. With so much architecture to sift through, so many different stakeholders to attend and so little "middle-of-the-book" space in each issue, picking the absolute best designs was probably viewed as the most straightforward way to create a magazine out of so many options. Along these same lines, too, I suspect that until the national highway system American magazines were probably expected to simply report on architectural developments since the long distances between major cities reduced readers' ability to visit new buildings personally. This was unlike the situation

¹⁰⁸ "On Design Publishing, Periodicals: Roundtable Discussion in Boston," *GSD News* (Summer 1996): 5-11; Alan Balfour, "Cultured Weakness: U.S. Design Publications," *GSD News* (Summer 1996): 21.

¹⁰⁹ Schmertz, "The Cost of Criticism," 36.

in much of Europe, where culture tended to be more concentrated and distances between major cities were usually considerably shorter than those in the United States. European audiences, in other words, had more opportunities to observe architectural trends for themselves, which in turn probably enabled their journals' editors to fill pages with critique rather than analytical description.¹¹⁰

Having said all this, *Forum's* new emphasis on criticism was less obviously jarring than it might have been in a more traditionally-oriented architectural trade journal because the magazine's program to encourage community discussion had already been making a virtue out of voicing dissenting professional opinions and progressing debate for over 25 years. The really noticeable difference in the late-1950s, apart from the fact that the editors were actively joining the "forum" rather than just serving as its hosts and supporters, was that the new critical essays were signed. This openly dispensed with the no-

¹¹⁰ Additionally, during the archival research phase of this project I encountered a series of internal Time Inc. memoranda and letters in 1937 and again in 1951 about the legalities of publishing criticism in *Forum* under what was called at the time "the doctrine of fair comment." This suggests that there may have been some concern among American architectural journal editors that incorporating regular criticism opened their publishers up to potential litigation. Of course, the extent to which architectural journal editors generally allowed the details of the American legal system to impact their decision-making about critical editorial content cannot really be known. Albert Connolly to Howard Myers, 26 April 1937, Douglas Haskell to Joseph Hazen, 16 November 1951, Joseph Hazen to Jack Dowd, 19 November 1951, and Howard Medina to John Dowd, 27 November 1951, 80:8 Memos-Miscellaneous-Time, Inc. 1949, 1951, 1953--57 (folder 4 of 4), DPH.

byline policy that dated to the beginning of Time Inc. decades earlier, contributed to the company's hallmark style and which *Forum's* editors embraced after their magazine's acquisition in 1932. Folding critical essays into the existing editorial framework may have been a relatively straight-forward affair from a conceptual perspective, in other words, but the fact that the editors broke with one of Time Inc.'s distinctive company-wide policies to do it evidences how important they considered these essays to be as a component of their overall publishing mission.

Forum's "act in restoring 'architectural criticism'" began with an essay, provocatively entitled "Temple on a Hilltop - Almost," in October 1958 and was still on-gong when Time Inc. stopped publishing the magazine in mid-1964.¹¹¹ Much of the editors' critical energy during this nearly six year period was directed toward specific buildings or architectural trends. Among the most typical of these was the April 1959 feature entitled "The Glittering Slum on Main St."¹¹² This essay was signed by Richard Miller, the same associate *Forum* editor who had written the first essay six months earlier and who also wrote others over the next few years as well. That Miller and

¹¹¹ Richard Miller, "Temple on a Hilltop - Almost," *Architectural Forum* (October 1958): 114.

¹¹² Richard Miller, "The Glittering Slum on Main St.," *Architectural Forum* (April 1959): 104-108.

his colleagues chose to highlight another "Main St." was, as before, probably not coincidental; the fact that the low quality of the so-called "glittering slum" was supposedly going to impact the surrounding community played into long-standing *Forum* themes and lent additional urgency to the problem. Conversely, the article summary's critique of the area as "a real estate success, but a planning disaster" implied a conclusion that was relatively unexpected for a publication that so frequently highlighted the business of architecture: that the financial aspects of the featured work had been allowed to eclipse everything else with deleterious effects. Although an editorial risk, since this stance potentially alienated an important segment of *Forum's* readership, it offered essentially the same kind of unequivocal strongly-worded public statements that the magazine had been asking from its readers for nearly three decades.

One of the biggest tests of the editors' resolve on the editorial significance of including criticism in *Forum* occurred in 1960, when they had to craft an official response to what they viewed as the relatively uninspired design of their publishing house's new headquarters building in midtown Manhattan. On the one hand, Haskell wrote in one of several memoranda to his staff on this subject, they were "on orders from Mr. Luce" to write an article about the *Time & Life*

Building that was "as accurate and unflinching as we can make it."¹¹³ On the other, though, an aggressively negative stance could be interpreted as an attack on the Time Inc. executives who were involved with the building's design, potentially making *Forum's* already-precarious future at the company even more uncertain. The actual title of the *Time & Life* Building feature, "Two-Purpose Tower," communicated the route they eventually chose: avoiding explicit discussion of the design's artistic qualities, they emphasized the ways in which the building did or did not function properly instead.¹¹⁴ In a speech four years later, the executive in charge of day-to-day publishing decisions for *Forum* described the article as having "enough candor to upset the Company brass and to delight the readers."¹¹⁵

In addition to critiquing specific buildings, *Forum's* editors also eventually extended their observations toward specific building industry professional groups as the need

¹¹³ Douglas Haskell, memorandum to "Staff," 18 April 1960, folder 82:6 Memos—Staff 1960 (folder 2 of 5), DPH.

¹¹⁴ "Two-purpose tower: the new *Time* and *Life* Building," *Architectural Forum* (August 1960): 75-81.

¹¹⁵ Joseph Hazen, Jr., "The Hot Story," manuscript of speech delivered to Associated Business Publications Winter Conference, 30 January 1964, page 6, "ARCH FORUM/HOUSE & HOME 1963 & LATER" Subject File, TIA. Since Luce sat on the Board of Directors of the 1964 New York World's Fair and Time Inc. had been tapped as the event's official publisher, responding critically to its on-going planning and voluminous architecture was also precarious. In this case, editors generally elected a more overtly critical-objective tone, offering articles such as "The arrested development of the New York Fair," "New York's Fair, progress and problems" and "N.Y. Fair opens: drizzles, fizzles and drama by night." "The arrested development of the New York Fair," *Architectural Forum* (December 1960): 63; "New York's Fair, progress and problems," *Architectural Forum* (June 1963): 10; and "N.Y. Fair opens: drizzles, fizzles and drama by night," *Architectural Forum* (May 1964): 12-15.

arose. For instance, although business-related topics were crucial to *Forum's* character at Time Inc., the editors spoke out in 1960 when they felt clay products manufacturers had ventured beyond the boundaries of appropriate lobbying during the planning of the United States Air Force Academy Chapel.¹¹⁶

Similarly, architects always constituted an important segment of any architectural journal's audience, and yet *Forum* published an essay entitled "The Architect and the Superman Myth" by Edmund Purves in March 1962 that criticized the AIA. Indeed, Purves scolded his fellow architects for not recognizing precisely the notion that *Forum* had been advocating for years: that the architect was "one of the leaders of the construction industry" rather than "*the* leader."¹¹⁷ Purves warned:

A belief in oneself is not a crime, but group assumption of superiority can lead to derision, even to disaster. And a profession which seeks to extend its prerogatives by fiat may find its progress set backward rather than advanced.¹¹⁸

The fact that *Forum's* "act in restoring 'architectural criticism'" evolved in this direction - that it encompassed not only buildings but also the architectural process's various people and tasks - fit the magazine's editorial personality as a publication concerned with the social nature of architecture as

¹¹⁶ "News," *Architectural Forum* (November 1960): 20.

¹¹⁷ Emphasis is original. Edmund Purves, "The Architect and the Superman Myth," *Architectural Forum* (March 1962): 103.

¹¹⁸ Purves, "The Architect," 102.

much as its tangible results. In its attitude toward architects, in particular, *Forum's* later years echoed some of Luce's initial frustrations as well as his hope for a system of strong but broadly-held building industry leadership. And, all of this occurred within the context of the "forum" established early on by the magazine's editors and nurtured for over three decades, that adaptability in itself a testament to their success. If these had been the only measures against which *Forum* had been assessed, the experiment might have survived even longer.

IV. *FORUM*'S PUBLIC RELATIONS CHARACTER

A. Key Concept: Big Public Relations for a Small Community

Inherent to *Forum*'s distinctive "architectural forum," a combination of Luce's aspirations for a more efficient and broadly-defined building industry and his editors' dedication to hosting and nurturing a discourse-based sense of community, was the notion that we now think of as public relations. Neither Luce nor his editors explicitly set out to serve a public relations function for the building industry with *Forum*. Yet they were obligated to perform some public relations-type tasks in the process of achieving their own goals, and they also actively exploited the vast resources of Time Inc. to cast an even wider public relations net for architecture and for *Forum*. Moreover, any mention in *Forum* could potentially lead to new business since the audience was professionally diverse and included potential client-owners, which imbued the entire undertaking with a subtle promotional air. In sum, the more successful the editors were, the more they also simultaneously transformed *Forum* - albeit relatively inadvertently - into a vehicle of public relations that no other professional architectural journal at the time could challenge.

There are three aspects of public relations and its connection to *Forum* that need to be understood in order to fully

appreciate the magazine's public relations character. First, public relations is definitively not advertising - and the difference between the two was crucial to this magazine's trajectory. Although the goal of both is to influence reaction to a good or service, advertising approaches this as a single-sided statement from producer to consumer while genuine public relations takes discourse as a given element of the process as a whole. Kirk Hazlett, a professor of public relations at Curry College, recently summarized it this way:

Advertising is a controlled, one-direction (push) means of communicating information about products, services, etc. The advertiser pays the medium through which the message is to be conveyed, and the medium is obligated to communicate that message exactly as the advertiser stipulates. On the other hand, public relations is an uncontrolled, two-way means of communicating information about products, services, etc. The public relations professional provides information to target media with the hope that they will perceive the message as valid and pertinent to their audiences. However, the media is not obligated to relay the message as provided...they can, if circumstances dictate, change the message and thereby alter its intended effect.¹¹⁹

Hazlett's description of public relations as "an uncontrolled, two-way means of communicating information" and his emphasis on the media's autonomy in determining a response highlight the fundamental commitment to free agency that is organic to public relations by definition and not at all relevant to advertising.

¹¹⁹ Kirk Hazlett (Associate Professor of Communication/Coordinator of the Public Relations Concentration, Curry College), email communication with the author, 26 June 2013.

One especially articulate critic's reaction to a provocative 2010 article in *The Economist* called "Rise of the Image Men" extended the idea even further, noting:

The emergence of public relations is grounded in the birth of democracies in which communication is the only legitimate and ethical means of securing cooperation from others.¹²⁰

This statement could not have been more appropriate to *Forum* if the magazine's editors had authored it themselves. The way in which public relations activated dialogue as a means of "securing cooperation from others" aligned it with the larger *Forum* project to help its readers communicate effectively with each other in order to then facilitate more and better collaborations. And the reference here to public relations' origins in democracy applied almost as well since another core mission of this Time Inc. experiment was to empower a much broader spectrum of building industry people to become full participants in the *Forum*-sponsored dialogue.

All of this is to say that the relationship between this particular magazine and public relations occurred because the spirit of *Forum*'s editorial personality shared some of public relations' character-defining qualities - not because it was a professional journal *per se*. Indeed, the more traditionally-

¹²⁰ Comment posted by "PRDOC48," dated 21 December 2010 at 02:24, in response to online version of "Rise of the Image Men," *The Economist* (16 December 2010), URL: <http://www.economist.com/node/17722733>

oriented trade press was not naturally suited to public relations because of precisely those qualities that differentiated *Forum*: the audience was typically too narrowly-demarcated to constitute much of a "public" and there was not necessarily a core emphasis on two-way communicative "relations." Of course, those same reasons made the trade press a much more effective medium for advertising; *Forum's* chronic problems with advertising hardly seem surprising when considered from this perspective.

Second, nurturing goodwill and cooperation among the various participants in the architectural process was a key element of the *Forum* editorial mission, and as such anyone who engaged with the magazine's "architectural forum" could conceivably benefit from this kind of public relations environment in some way. Most obvious was the possibility that the client-owner audience members might select from among the architects, builders, engineers, realtors, etc. they had read about in *Forum* for their next building project. Enlightening everyone on the details of each others' professional responsibilities could also make working together much easier, which certainly had value in itself.

Nonetheless, the group that potentially stood to gain most from *Forum's* public relations character was architects. This was partly because the editors followed Luce's emphatic instruction

in the prospectus that the magazine be "directed at architects," which naturally positioned that particular building industry profession toward the center of the underlying public relations narrative.¹²¹ But it was also because American architects had a particularly tension-filled historical relationship with the concept of self-promotion, a malaise which the other building industry professions did not suffer to the same extent and which made any public relations on architects' behalf more valuable. This so-called "taboo" arose out of the specific circumstances of architects' professionalization.¹²² According to Magali Sarfatti Larson, part of architects' strategy for gaining respect was to develop "networks of 'gentlemen' who shared not only a calling, but social status and social conventions, modeled after those of their most desirable clients."¹²³ Within this social milieu, one of the hallmarks of a gentleman-like

¹²¹ Emphasis is original. Luce, "The New Forum," page b, TIA.

¹²² No one yet has studied the complicated details of American architecture's engagement with public relations ideals and practices. The best scholarship on the institutionalization of the cultural aversion to advertising has been by Andrew Shanken. See: "Breaking the Taboo: Architects and Advertising in Depression and War," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 69:3 (September 2010): 406-429 and the chapter on advertising in *194X: Architecture, Planning, and Consumer Culture on the American Home Front*, Architecture, Landscape, and American Culture Series (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009). That said, although Shanken attempts to differentiate between advertising and public relations in some ways, in other ways he treats these approaches as if they are somewhat interchangeable. It should also be noted that Shanken does not consider the differences in readership between the various magazines; his emphasis is on the creation of the advertisement, in other words, rather than the conditions of its consumption.

¹²³ Magali Sarfatti Larson, "Emblem and Exception: The Historical Definition of the Architect's Professional Role," in Judith Blau, Mark La Gory and John Pipkin, eds., *Professionals and Urban Form* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1983): 63.

architect was that his work stood for itself. That is, he did not have to resort to self-promotion as a way to explain himself to other gentlemen or compete with other architects because only those individuals who could sustain their practices passively through word-of-mouth would be considered worthy of group membership anyway.¹²⁴

The perception of promotion as essentially an affront to architects' professional self-identity continued even while socio-economic changes in America gave more people outside the gentleman class the resources they needed to hire architects. But as the definition of the profession's "public" expanded and morphed, a certain amount of public relations pragmatism was necessary to successfully navigate a business culture that still relied so crucially on word-of-mouth. This situation led to moments of intense, often divisive, intra-professional debate about where certain kinds of self-promotional activities fell on the spectrum between pure advertising and genuine public

¹²⁴ An editorial in the *Octagon* in 1940 observed that this idea dated all the way back to Vitruvius. As part of a close reading of the preface to Book 6 of Vitruvius' *De Architectura*, Mark Masterson has translated the relevant passage as the following:

Nor is it to be wondered why I am unknown to many. The other architects ask and petition to practice architecture. My teachers, however, told me that it is proper to undertake work having been requested to do so, not asking for it, because a freeborn blush comes to the cheek from the shame of seeking a thing that excites mistrust.

Edwin Burgstrum, "Personal Publicity of the Architect," *The Octagon* (March 1940): 5; Mark Masterson, "Status, Pay and Pleasure in the *De Architectura* of Vitruvius," *American Journal of Philology* 125 (2004): 398.

relations.¹²⁵ In 1927, to clarify its policies on the issue and protect the word-of-mouth system, the AIA added a new ethical standard about self-promotion to its code of professional conduct:

An architect will not advertise for the purpose of self-laudatory publicity, but publicity of the standards, aims and progress of the profession is to be commended. He will not take part or give any assistance in obtaining advertisements or other support toward meeting the expense of any publication illustrating his work.¹²⁶

On the one hand, this new standard meant that an architect was officially prohibited from speaking highly of himself or actively helping someone else to do so. On the other hand, though, it also specifically encouraged participating in activities that might create goodwill for the profession generally. The former's emphasis on the individual "self-" in self-promotion was advertising while the latter redefined "self-" in communal terms and encouraged what came to be known as public relations. Together, these two directives created a niche for the kind of magazine that *Forum* eventually became under the Time Inc. masthead.

¹²⁵ Howard Myers participated in the debate, writing a feature story for *Architectural Forum* in 1920 which advocated the positive attributes of manufacturers using specific architects and/or buildings in advertisements for their products. Howard Myers, "'Selling' Architecture to the Man on the Street," *Architectural Forum* (November 1920): 192-193.

¹²⁶ "Architects Draft New Code of Ethics," *The New York Times* (4 September 1927): E2.

This was true in a conceptual sense; *Forum's* emphasis on actively fomenting a sense of community echoed the spirit of the AIA's officially articulated position. But more importantly, perhaps, it was also true in terms of some of the practical details. For instance, unlike the publishing houses of other professional journals, Time Inc. staff had the budget and desire to hire their own photographers and produce their own drawings, which meant that architects did not assist in the publication of their own work when a feature article about them appeared in *Forum*. Similarly, because the editors' program to create "a forum in fact as well as in name" asked readers to write letters, attend symposia and so on, savvy architects could use that opportunity to participate in ways that displayed their professional acumen without fear of being accused of self-promotion. And so on. Myers and his editorial team must have understood that the Time Inc. variation on architectural journalism occupied this special position. They may have even used the implications of the new standard to their advantage, in fact. There is no evidence that Luce knew or cared. Indeed, one of the many ironies of *Forum's* Time Inc. history was that his involvement in architectural journalism originated in frustration with architects and then ultimately yielded a magazine that engaged in public relations on their behalf.

The other component of American architecture's historical self-promotion "taboo" that is relevant to understanding *Forum's* public relations character centers on this history's chronology. In particular, although the new AIA ethical standard in 1927 encouraged profession-wide promotional activities in a general sense, it was not until 1953 that public relations was recognized as crucial enough to merit meaningful organized debate and specific action. In other words, most of *Forum's* Time Inc. years transpired during a period in which the architectural community still harbored strong suspicions toward any promotional activities that seemed to venture too far into the realm of self-promotion. This was long enough for the magazine's public relations character to have become fully established - and to have potentially inspired as many negative reactions as positive ones as a result. An internal memoranda, written by Haskell in 1951 after he returned from an AIA convention, offers insight into both the extent of the derision that some architects continued to direct toward their publicity-minded peers and how that might reflected back on *Forum*:

Incidentally, the other architects hate the guts of Graham because he is a 'promoter.' Apparently his father was one before him. I was asked pointed questions about [*Forum's*] policy toward architects acting as promoters, hence unprofessionally...¹²⁷

¹²⁷ Douglas Haskell, memorandum to Pierrie Prentice, 1 January 1951, folder 57:2 1951, DPH.

That "promoter" and "unprofessional" were treated as synonymous is part of what this note helps illuminate, but the fact that Haskell included this observation as a casual aside suggests that the attitude he described was a kind of cultural given for this group at this time. And, the "pointed questions" implied that *Forum's* version of architectural journalism could enable this kind of behavior - or even be complicit in it. There may well have been many architects who did not subscribe to *Forum* because of this, in fact.

In 1953 the AIA retained public relations consulting services, established a public relations committee to formulate and guide national campaigns and began publishing a regular newsletter to share public relations case studies and announcements with its membership.¹²⁸ It was the profession's first organized attempts at defining the importance and boundaries of acceptable public relations. A statement on the matter, disseminated by the AIA in 1954, articulated the main rationale:

The problem facing the Architect in relationship to his public is no conglomeration of small professional bothers or client-Architect frustrations; it casts a broader shadow of national proportion. The nation is growing fast and its people are constantly being hit with a barrage of propaganda and sales material from a thousand sources. The Architect - a valuable member of

¹²⁸ American Institute of Architects Public Relations Committee meeting minutes, dated 28-29 October 1954, folder 66:6 "Clippings, speeches, transcripts, etc. 1954," DPH.

any community in which these pressures operate - has too often found himself lost behind his own professionalism, unwittingly allowing himself and his profession to be misconstrued, if not forgotten by the community he serves. The Architect cannot expect an ever-changing public to respect his profession or understand his services unless he makes a concentrated and well planned national effort to bring about this understanding.¹²⁹

The observation here that the architect "too often found himself lost behind his own professionalism" acknowledged the historical roots of the group's inaction. Most of this statement, however, emphasized the fact that architects needed to evolve along with society, and in that sense the suggested offensive - "a concentrated and well planned national effort" - positioned the passive word-of-mouth system squarely in the past.

Again, the timing of this vis-à-vis *Forum's* Time Inc. history was significant. On the one hand, by then the magazine's staff had accumulated considerable public relations experience, putting them in a position to take a leadership role. In fact, not only did Douglas Haskell sit on the AIA's new committee, but *Forum* was chosen as the professional journal to publish the new official public relations handbook when the "pocket summary" was released the following year.¹³⁰ On the other hand, public relations' discursive quality slowed the ability to measure its

¹²⁹ American Institute of Architects, "Public Relations for the Architect" (c. spring 1954): 1, folder 26:3 "AIA Public Relations Committee," DPH.

¹³⁰ American Institute of Architects, "AIA Public Relations Newsletter," no. 14 (24 May 1954): 4 and "Public Relations for the Architect," *Architectural Forum* (April 1954): np.

benefits - and since Time Inc.'s *Forum* only lasted one more decade, it is hard to actually quantify the magazine's public relations contribution to the profession's organized efforts.

B. Key Concept as Developed In and Through *Forum*

1. At the Beginning: Cross-Marketing

Although *Forum*'s public relations potency achieved its greatest extent in the immediate post-World War II period, the evolution toward this part of the magazine's mature character began within less than one year of the initial Time Inc. acquisition. From December 1932 until March 1934, the company leveraged itself in support of its newest publication by running a clever and unprecedented cross-marketing campaign to raise awareness and excitement about *Forum* among the readers of the other two Time Inc. magazines. Rather than using straightforward advertisements for *Forum*, however, what appeared in nearly every issue of *Fortune* and some issues of *Time* were full-page lay-outs extolling the virtues of hiring architects.¹³¹ With striking before-and-after juxtaposed photographs and titles such as "Before the I-told-you-so's *start chirping see your*

¹³¹ I have identified at least 17 distinct examples of these lay-outs so far, not including those that were reproduced in *Forum* as evidence to its readers of the sincerity of Time Inc.'s commitment to the magazine and its audience. Given this large number, footnotes will provide bibliographic data only for those directly referenced in the text. See this dissertation's bibliography for complete source information for all the lay-outs that were part of this cross-marketing campaign.

architect...NOW!" and "OUT OF THE RED...*thanks to the Architect,*" the overt message directed toward the majority of *Fortune's* and *Time's* readers was unambiguous: hiring an architect was not a luxury to be postponed until after the Depression but a smart investment that could yield financial benefits immediately.¹³²

The crucial twist was that *Forum* had ostensibly sponsored these "advertisements" for the architectural profession. Indeed, discretely placed at the bottom of each page, and separated from the rest of the lay-outs' content with smaller typeface and a quieter tone as well as physical distance, was an additional paragraph explaining the origin of the campaign:

The *Architectural Forum* is publishing these advertisements in the interests of America's trained architects. For 40 years The *Architectural Forum* has been serving architects. And architects have shown their appreciation. For many years every survey, no matter how conducted or by whom, has shown The *Architectural Forum* first choice magazine of leading architects.

Of course, this was actually promoting *Forum* to the group of *Time* and *Fortune* readers who needed or wanted to discover what the country's "leading architects" already knew. But the message here was also more layered than whatever appeared above it. In other words, that the company had chosen to advertise *Forum* in

¹³² "Before the I-told-you-so's *start chirping see your architect...NOW!*," *Fortune* (August 1933): 126 and "OUT OF THE RED...*thanks to the Architect,*" *Fortune* (December 1932): 129.

this way - by creating goodwill for architects among a larger public - also had the potential to create goodwill for Time Inc. within the architectural community. [Fig. 22] Not surprisingly, to make sure *Forum's* readers fully appreciated Time Inc.'s efforts the company reproduced some of the lay-outs full-scale in *Forum* with explanatory prefaces - and then the magazine's editors curated several months' Correspondence sections to emphasize the large numbers of complimentary letters and wires they had received.¹³³

2. Overt Cross-Publishing: the *Life* Houses Example of 1938

This early cross-marketing soon gave way to cross-publication, a more sophisticated method of making readers of other Time Inc. magazines aware of *Forum* and architectural trends that involved publishing related building-oriented articles roughly simultaneously. By far the most common type of cross-publication involved *Forum* and just one other Time Inc. magazine. Early on the second periodical was most often *Fortune*, since the idea for journal like *Forum* at Time Inc. had originated with a *Fortune* housing exposé. After *Life* was

¹³³ So far I have identified six separate instances in which *Forum* advertisements that appeared originally in *Fortune* or *Time* were then reproduced in *Forum*. Most were accompanied by the following explanatory text on the facing page: "The Publishers of The Architectural *Forum* invite your attention the Advertisement on the opposite page, one of a series published in behalf of the Architectural Profession in *Time* and in *Fortune*." For an example, see *Forum* (May 1933): 10-11.

**Before the I-told-you-so's start chirping
see your architect . . . NOW!**



If you are postponing building plans, you are destined in years to come to encounter I-told-you-so's, those irritating people who in 1933 warned you that building costs were at a low ebb. All evidence shows that their predictions are correct. *Now* is the time to build.

And here is straight advice. Go at once to a good architect. His services extend far beyond designing. He will advise you on the most economical way to build. Because he is so thoroughly schooled in labor and materials of today, he will see to it that you get full value for every dollar you invest in this time of all times for economical building.

Remember, a good architect actually costs you *nothing*.

Indeed—whether you are building a new home, remodelling, or planning a factory—it may cost you quite a sizeable sum if you *don't* engage him.



It has been said that architecture is frozen music. But this Oyster Bay, Long Island house in its original state looked more like a frozen asset—bleak and cheerless at any season. Along came architect G. Harmon Gurney and transformed it into a beautiful estate for Livingston Short. Economically, too, with today's low building costs. (Other remodelling jobs have been featured in almost every recent issue of *The Architectural Forum*.)

The Architectural Forum

• The Architectural Forum is publishing these advertisements in the interests of America's trained architects. For 40 years The Architectural Forum has been serving architects. And architects have shown their appreciation. For many years every survey has shown The Architectural Forum first choice magazine of leading architects.

• 126 •

Fig. 22. Representative example of Time Inc.'s *Architectural Forum* advertisements in *Fortune*: "Before the I-told-you-so's start chirping," *Fortune* (August 1933): 126

established in 1936, that magazine tended to cross-publish with *Forum* more. There were likely multiple reasons for this, part of which may have been the dwindling emphasis on art in *Fortune* at the time.

Some of Time Inc.'s two-magazine cross-publication efforts were pre-arranged joint ventures. Among them, perhaps the most conspicuously promoted as such was the first "Life Houses" program, published in the September 26, 1938 issue of *Life* and then the November 1938 issue of *Forum*.¹³⁴ The basic idea of "Life Houses" was to show Americans the latest ideas for new houses in a range of style, budget and space options. To that end *Life* commissioned eight architects, including regular *Forum* contributors such as Edward Durrell Stone, Frank Lloyd Wright and Wallace Harrison, to design a total of eight homes for four representative families. The families had relatively modest incomes and were located across the country, and they each received two home designs - one of which was supposed to be in the so-called "traditional" mode and the other was labeled "modern."

An integral component of the "Life Houses" project was that the differences between the *Life* and *Forum* feature spreads complemented each other, purposefully reflecting these

¹³⁴ "Life HOUSES," *Life* (26 September 1938): 45-67 and "Life Houses," *Architectural Forum* 69 (November 1938): 312-348.

magazines' very distinctive publics and editorial personalities. *Life* offered the kind of "exciting, human interest presentation," such as impressionistic sketches and architect biographies, which its tens of millions of regular American readers would enjoy. And, *Forum* provided the kind of "full, detailed, technical presentation," such as in-depth plans and construction drawings, which its tens of thousands of building professional readers expected.¹³⁵ [Figs. 23 & 24] As one key Time Inc. publishing executive put it in a memorandum:

Crux of the whole idea: the LIFE and FORUM jobs tie together - LIFE doing the consumer merchandising for the FORUM and the FORUM doing the professional merchandising for LIFE. Thus, the FORUM will fit directly into LIFE's merchandising and promotion plans, aid and be aided through direct mention, etc., and vice versa.¹³⁶

Time Inc.'s spectacular marketing campaign for "*Life Houses*" included everything from full-page advertising in all the sister magazines and direct mail kinds of promotional materials to discussion during a "*March of Time*" broadcast and the orchestrated exhibition of scale models in department stores across the country. Of course this dramatically amplified the quantity and intensity of the publicity that the "*Life Houses*"

¹³⁵ "LIFE-FORUM HOUSES: The 8 most talked-about houses in the U.S.," memorandum dated September 1938, page 1, "LIFE, 1938, EDIT, HOUSING SERIES" Folder, *Architectural Forum* Subject Files, TIA.

¹³⁶ Robert W. Chasteney, Jr. to FORUM Sales Staff, memorandum hand dated c. 23 September 1938, pages 1-2, "LIFE, 1938, EDIT, HOUSING SERIES" Folder, *Architectural Forum* Subject Files, TIA.

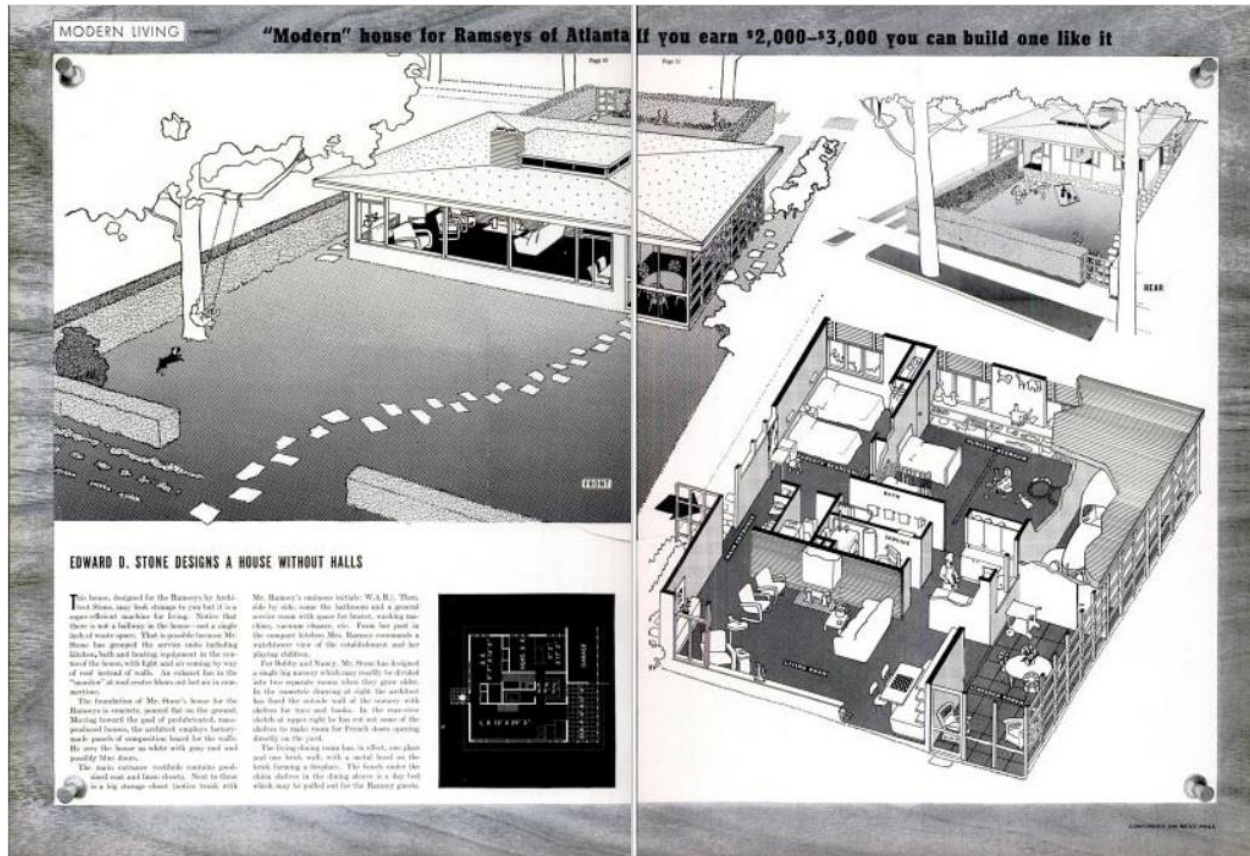


Fig. 23. Representative example of Edward D. Stone's modern house design for *Life Houses*: "The Ramseys of Atlanta: \$2,000-\$3,000 Income," *Life* (26 September 1938): 48-49

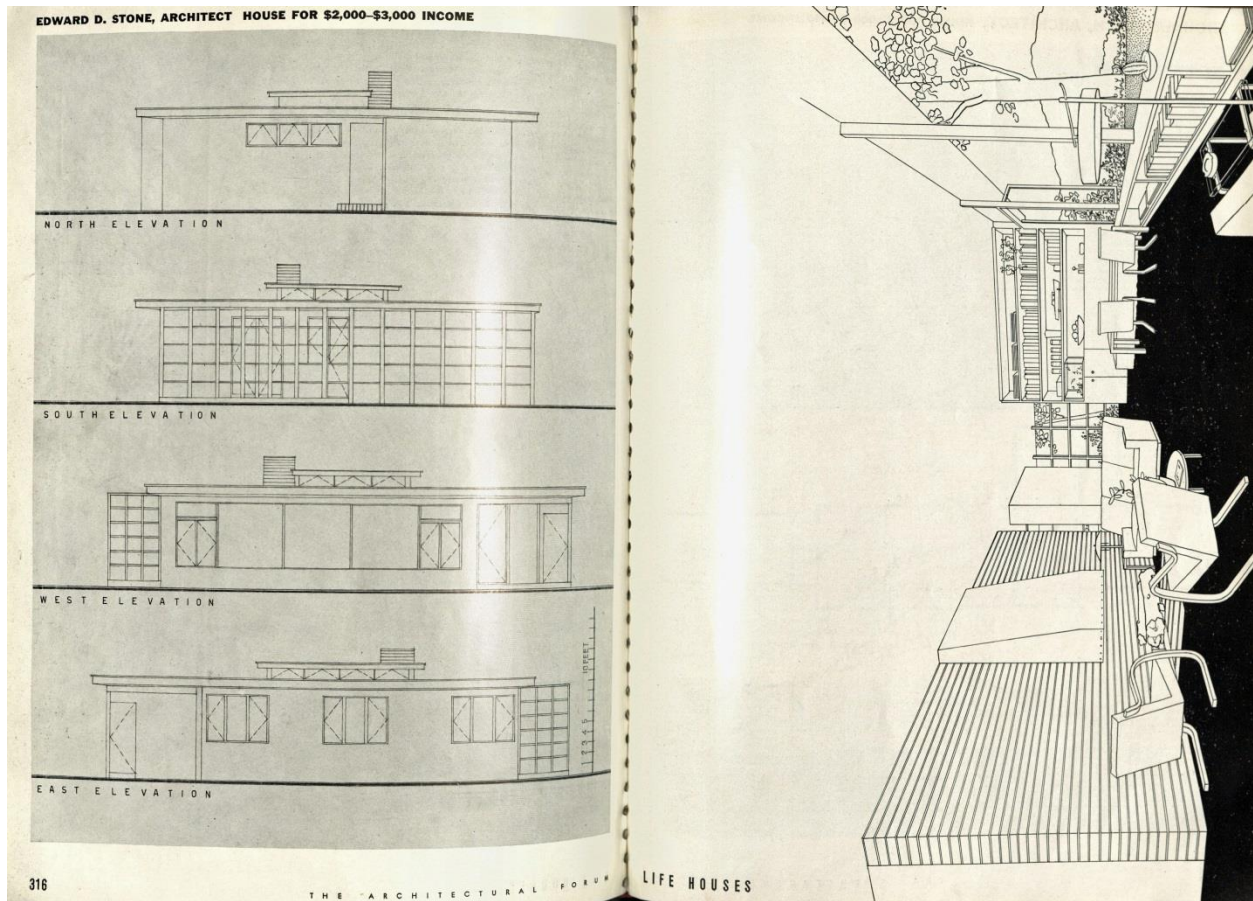


Fig. 24. Representative example of Edward D. Stone's modern house design for *Life Houses*: "Houses for \$2,000-\$3,000 Income," *Architectural Forum* (November 1938): 316-17

architects gained through their association with this *Life-Forum* project. But the larger aim, as one memorandum put it, was to transform the designs into "the 8 most talked-about houses in the U.S."¹³⁷ Beyond the objective of just selling copies of *Life* and *forum*, the conceptual emphasis on creating a national conversation around architecture - and around the "traditional" vs. "modern" debate, especially - was a form of public relations. And with the full momentum and vested interest of Time Inc. pushing it forward, it was potentially more wide-reaching and effective than anything the architectural profession could accomplish on its own.

This dialogue-provoking objective reflected an important public relations-oriented facet of "*Life Houses*" itself: the company's refusal to provide individual house plans to people wanting to actually build one of the "*Life Houses*" designs. Even though it would have been relatively easy and possibly also quite profitable to sell plans, Time Inc. obliged readers to purchase the November *Forum* issue in order to have detailed information about any of the designs - and after reviewing *Forum* readers would then have to hire a professional to translate what was in *Forum* into built form. This dynamic was openly discussed

¹³⁷ "LIFE-FORUM HOUSES: The 8 most talked-about houses in the U.S.," TIA.

and purposefully implemented, as this internal Time Inc. memorandum demonstrates:

LIFE will avoid like grim death the usual magazine practice of selling stock plans. Instead, LIFE will tell prospective home builders to see their local architect and building men for further, more complete information about building a home. Thus LIFE will directly turn the tide of consumer demand which is created by the LIFE HOUSE program toward active building professionals. These building professionals will, in turn, receive the full impact of the LIFE HOUSE program through THE ARCHITECTURAL FORUM's NOVEMBER LIFE HOUSE ISSUE.¹³⁸

By "full impact," the author of this memorandum meant not only the additional business the American architectural community would receive but also the fact that the communication between home owners and the architectural professionals they hired would be made easier, more productive and more satisfying for everyone as a result of the "*Life Houses*" intervention.

Time Inc. went so far as to tout this ramification of their unwillingness to provide ready-to-construct plans as a positive attribute of the "*Life Houses*" program. A representative advertisement in *Life* for *Forum's* November 1938 issue gives a sense of rhetoric that was employed around this notion of confident and meaningful discussion:

The LIFE HOUSES are completely and minutely examined in the November issue of THE ARCHITECTURAL FORUM - the professional journal which guides more building professionals than any other magazine...we are

¹³⁸ "LIFE-FORUM HOUSES: The 8 most talked-about houses in the U.S.," page 3.

printing extra copies of the November LIFE HOUSES issue of THE ARCHITECTURAL FORUM. This issue is not a substitute for your architect, builder and realtor. But it will - help you visualize the home you desire; help you discuss your needs more intelligently with your architect, builder and realtor; tell you all about the most talked-about houses in the U.S. - LIFE HOUSES.¹³⁹ [Fig. 25]

The emphasis on dialogue here, especially including different kinds of building professionals and client-owners in addition to just architects, was a leitmotif in *Forum* - here extended into *Life* and therefore toward millions of potential homeowners. Whether or not "Life Houses" improved enough actual conversations or created enough actual new business to have really resulted in a tangible contribution to American architecture, the "Life Houses" undertaking demonstrated the kinds of content-based connections that could be created and exploited between *Forum* and its sister periodicals.

3. Mature Cross-Publishing: Postwar *Time* Cover Stories

The public relations potential of Time Inc.'s two-magazine cross-publication policy for architects and the national conversation around architecture could be tremendous by virtue of the company's subscriber reach and commitment to marketing in a way that expanded the business of building. The addition of a *Time* magazine cover catapulted that potential into

¹³⁹ Advertisement for "LIFE Houses" issue of *Architectural Forum*, *Life* (17 October 1938): front cover verso.

Explore the 8 LIFE HOUSES with the Architects who created them

Join us in a behind-the-scenes tour of the 8 most talked-about houses in the U.S. Personally conducted by the architects who created them, you will see how these houses grew, — learn the technical details which architects, builders, realtors and other building professionals are studying in order to give you a better house, — see exactly how the architects planned these houses for better living.

The LIFE HOUSES are completely and minutely examined in the November issue of THE ARCHITECTURAL FORUM, — the professional journal which guides more building professionals than any other magazine.

For people who are now seriously interested in building or buying a house; for people who are interested in improving their present home; for people who wish to study the LIFE HOUSES from A to Z; for men and women who want to dig into the more technical side of the Small House; we are printing extra copies of the November LIFE HOUSES issue of THE ARCHITECTURAL FORUM.

This issue is not a substitute for your architect, builder and realtor. But it will — help you visualize the home you desire; help you discuss your needs more intelligently with your architect, builder and realtor; tell you all about the most talked-about houses in the U.S. — LIFE HOUSES.

Since we plan to print only sufficient copies to fill all orders received by October 29th, use the coupon today or (if you wish to keep this copy of LIFE intact) post your letter, with \$1 enclosed, to us immediately.

THE NOVEMBER LIFE HOUSE ISSUE OF THE ARCHITECTURAL FORUM CONTAINS:

40 pages of technical data on LIFE HOUSES; critical details, floor plans, exteriors, interiors, plot plans.

The How and Why and Why-not of each house as told by the Architect himself. Progress reports and pictures of LIFE HOUSES now being built; in other words, — the complete inside technical story of LIFE HOUSES.

plus

24 more outstanding houses which cost \$10,000 or less;

complete case studies of these never-before-published examples of the Small House ... the statement of the problem, cost estimates, plate and text.

in all

more than 90 provocative editorial pages prepared by the leading professional journal of Building as another landmark in its series devoted to the Small House.

THE ARCHITECTURAL FORUM

PUBLISHED BY TIME INC. • TIME & LIFE BLDG. • ROCKEFELLER CENTER • NEW YORK

I enclose \$1

Print for me one advance copy of the November LIFE HOUSE issue of THE ARCHITECTURAL FORUM
TIME & LIFE BLDG. ROCKEFELLER CENTER, NEW YORK, N. Y.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____



\$2-3,000 income house, Edward D. Stearn, Arch.



\$2-3,000 income house, Richard Ruch, Arch.



\$2-4,000 income house, William W. Wurster, Arch.



\$2-4,000 income house, H. Ray Kelley, Arch.



\$3-4,000 income house, Frank Lloyd Wright, Arch.



\$5-6,000 income house, Royal Barry Wills, Arch.



\$12,000 income house, Harrison & Fowlhouse, Arch.



\$12,000 income house, J. Edgar Smith, Arch.

Fig. 25. Advertisement for Life Houses issue of Architectural Forum, Life (17 October 1938): front cover verso

a completely different stratum of conversation-provoking exposure. Although not overtly brought to readers' attention like the "*Life Houses*" series, the tendency to build on *Time* cover stories was probably the most evolved and spectacular variation on Time Inc.'s cross-publication policy.¹⁴⁰ This was in large measure due to the prestige associated with *Time* cover profiles, in and of themselves. The significance attached to *Time's* covers within mid-20th century American culture generally is outside the scope of this study; if the following description of the role Richard Neutra's *Time* profile in 1949 served in his life is any indication, though, covers could at least operate for architects as potent evidence of professional success:

Dione Neutra recounts how Neutra would show a copy of the *Time* cover to garner respectful treatment, for example, from the airplane crew during long flights in the fifties. She says, 'And Mr. Neutra always had his *Time* cover along; so he would show them the *Time* cover, and they would be very excited and show it to the pilots, you know, and then we would be treated very especially.' By 1969, Neutra had laminated a copy of the cover and kept it in his wallet; he was observed by Norman Cousins using it to get a better table at a restaurant.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Between *Time's* founding in 1923 and mid-2013 there have been 15 architecture-oriented *Time* cover stories, 11 of which appeared between 1932 and 1964. The following are all of the architecture-themed *Time* covers published between March 1923 and September 2013: Ralph Adams Cram, 1926; William Delano, 1930; Frank Lloyd Wright, 1938; Lewis Mumford, 1938; Charles Luckman, 1948; Richard Neutra, 1949; Wallace Harrison, 1952; Eero Saarinen, 1956; Edward Durell Stone, 1958; Le Corbusier, 1961; Minoru Yamasaki, 1963; William Pereira, 1963; Buckminster Fuller, 1964; Philip Johnson, 1979; "Inside the New American Home," 2002. [Source: *Time* magazine's online cover database: <http://content.time.com/time/coversearch>]

¹⁴¹ Simon Niedenthal, "'Glamourized Houses': Neutra, Photography, and the Kaufmann House," *Journal of Architectural Education* 47:2 (November 1993):

The Neutra example is relevant here also because his Time Inc. treatment encompassed an article about the Kaufmann Palm Springs residence in *Forum* and another about Julius Shulman's photography of the building in *Life* - in addition, of course, to the story about Neutra that was associated with the *Time* cover he displayed enough to merit its lamination.¹⁴² [Fig. 11] This cross-publication in three of the sister magazines did not exploit the full extent of the company's resources, either. Indeed, as part of Time Inc.'s strategy to turn *Time* covers into full-scale national media events, the cross-publication could sometimes include multiple articles in three or even four of the sister magazines simultaneously.

This is precisely what occurred around three of the 11 architecture-themed stories that appeared on *Time* covers during *Forum*'s Time Inc. ownership period: in 1952 with Wallace Harrison and the completion of the General Assembly building at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City; in 1956 with Eero Saarinen's General Motors Technical Center; and in 1958 with Edward Durell Stone's U.S. Pavilion at the Brussels World's

109. Niedenthal quotes from Dione Neutra, *To Tell the Truth*, oral history project, UCLA Special Collections, 466 and the Norman Cousins observation is from Richard Neutra, *Nature Near: Late Essays of Richard Neutra* (Santa Barbara, CA: Capra, 1989): xiv.

¹⁴² "Glamourized Houses," *Life* (11 April 1949): 146-148; "House in the desert," *Architectural Forum* (June 1949): cover and 90-96; "New Shells," *Time* (15 August 1949): cover and 58-62 & 65-66.

Fair.¹⁴³ Of these, Stone's work was featured in largest number of total articles - six across three magazines - while the work of Harrison and Saarinen appeared in *Fortune* and *Life* as well as in *Forum* and as a cover story in *Time*. The fact that all of these cross-publication episodes occurred within a span of just six post-World War II years highlights the intensification of Time Inc.'s commitment to architecture during this particular period; it paralleled the establishment of Time Inc.'s other architectural trade magazine, *House & Home*, in 1950 and took advantage of the nationwide focus on building design and construction that had occurred as a result of the so-called "postwar housing boom."

The cross-publication of Saarinen's GM Tech Center in 1956 demonstrates the operation of Time Inc.'s strategy at its most efficient. The project appeared in five articles across four Time Inc. magazines between March and July of that year. The first was a two-page spread introducing GM Tech Center as part of *Fortune's* ten-page March cover story.¹⁴⁴ [Fig. 26] Titled

¹⁴³ In *Fallingwater Rising*, Franklin Toker claims that Frank Lloyd Wright's January 1938 special insert in *Forum* was accompanied by associated articles in all three of Time Inc.'s other magazines. Wright was on the cover of *Time* that month, but I have been unable to find anything relevant in *Fortune* and *Life* for the three months preceding and six months following January 1938. Franklin Toker, *Fallingwater Rising: Frank Lloyd Wright, E.J. Kaufmann, and America's Most Extraordinary House* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003): 270-271.

¹⁴⁴ "Architecture's New Technology," *Fortune* (March 1956): cover and 128-137. The GM Tech Center pages are 132-133.



Fig. 26. General Motors Technical Center as presented in "Architecture's New Technology," *Fortune* (March 1956): 132

"Architecture's New Technology," the feature offered various examples of forward-thinking design, suggesting that it was both reflective of and sustenance for good business. Anyone familiar with what has since become the accepted historical narrative of Saarinen's GM Tech Center design will recognize this idea as a leitmotif today.

The first article dedicated entirely to the complex was an eight-page spread in *Forum's* May issue, which would have arrived in subscribers' mailboxes in late April.¹⁴⁵ [Fig. 27] Entitled "GM's Industrial Versailles," it was the first time the term "industrial Versailles" was applied to this particular complex in print - a practice that is now relatively commonplace in scholarly literature and popular histories alike. The article's combination of artful professional photographs, laudatory descriptive analysis and thoughtful juxtapositions were hallmarks of a major middle-of-the-book feature presentation in *Forum* at this time. *Record* also published an eight-page spread about GM Tech Center in its May 1956 issue, but it was entirely focused on the buildings' interior design and decoration.¹⁴⁶ [Fig. 28] Some aspects of that article could actually be considered more immediately informative than *Forum's*, especially the way cleverly composed groups of detail images emphasized the

¹⁴⁵ "GM's Industrial Versailles," *Architectural Forum* (May 1956): 122-129.

¹⁴⁶ "A tour of the GM Technical Center interiors," *Architectural Record* (May 1956): 151-158.

A color portfolio on the completed Technical Center by Photographer Ezra Stoller

GM's INDUSTRIAL VERSAILLES

In the fact-sheet describing its magnificent Technical Center outside Detroit, General Motors Corp. makes this nice understatement: "The well-made look . . . is a proud characteristic of America and a source of pleasure to its citizens."

And another statement of simple fact: "In the 22-acre artificial lake, with its four islands of weeping willow trees and the tall, shining water tower, are two fountains. . . . Together these two fountains pump more water than all the great fountains at Versailles. The water is recirculated."

This is GM in its actual factual glory. Finally viewed in completion, the inspired architecture of the 25 buildings is a historic symbol of today's industrial progress, also of tomorrow's ambition. It is immense, yet beautifully precise. On these eight pages,* FORUM reproduces some of the sensory witchery of the brilliant colors Architect Eero Saarinen inserted into the proud, well-made GM buildings, crowned finally by the serene, glistening dome of the Styling Center auditorium.

* See also AF, July '49, Nov. '51, Nov. '54, Nov. '55.



Fig. 27. Title page of "GM's Industrial Versailles,"
Architectural Forum (May 1956): 123



Fig. 28. Representative page, "A tour of the GM Technical Center interiors," *Architectural Record* (May 1956): 158

interiors' sleek consistency. However, appearing in the same month as *Forum's* all-encompassing spread, *Record's* extreme emphasis on interiors clearly deferred to *Forum's* exclusive publication rights on the project as a whole.

The third in this cross-publication suite also focused entirely on GM Tech Center. It appeared as a six-page spread in the May 21st issue of *Life*, putting it on newsstands only a few weeks after the release of *Forum's* May issue.¹⁴⁷ [Fig. 29] This timing was important because the *Life* article, entitled "Architecture for the future: GM Constructs a 'Versailles of Industry'," overtly referenced *Forum's* "industrial Versailles" label as if the expert opinion that had just appeared in *Forum* was current news worth reporting to the wider public. Like the *Forum* and *Fortune* spreads, *Life's* feature was not particularly unique when considered independently; it consisted of the magazine's typically handsome combination of striking color photographs and minimal text but did not otherwise draw attention to itself. This quality may have actually worked in its favor, though, since its potency as public relations would have derived - at least in part - from giving the appearance of various spontaneous articles in dialogue with each other

¹⁴⁷ "Architecture for the future: GM Constructs a 'Versailles of Industry'," *Life* (21 May 1956): 102-107.



Fig. 29. Representative page, "Architecture for the future: GM Constructs a 'Versailles of Industry'," *Life* (21 May 1956): 105

rather than as an orchestrated campaign pushed toward Time Inc.'s readers.

Although neither of the other two articles, a four-page spread in *Fortune's* June 1956 issue and the eight-page July 2nd *Time* cover story, focused exclusively on GM Tech Center, they both conspicuously treated the significance of Saarinen's architecture as essentially a given.¹⁴⁸ [Figs. 11 & 30] For instance, the *Fortune* feature about GM's cutting-edge approach to research contained photographs of company executives in which iconic design features like the wire staircases appear as literal and figurative backdrops. Similarly, the *Time* cover itself consisted of a painted portrait of Saarinen laid over a color-blocked plan of GM Tech Center so diagrammatic as to resemble high-concept abstract art.

Importantly, the content of the *Time* cover story, entitled "The Maturing Modern," presented designs and designers that exemplified the highest level of grace and sophistication that modern architecture had achieved to date. "Best of"-type narratives were part of what made these kinds of articles relatively easily digestible for the readers of Time Inc.'s popular periodicals; here the company contextualized Saarinen within a list of notable 20th designers the company called "Form

¹⁴⁸ "How strong is G.M. research?" *Fortune* (June 1956): 138-141 and "The Maturing Modern." *Time* (2 July 1956): cover and 50-57.

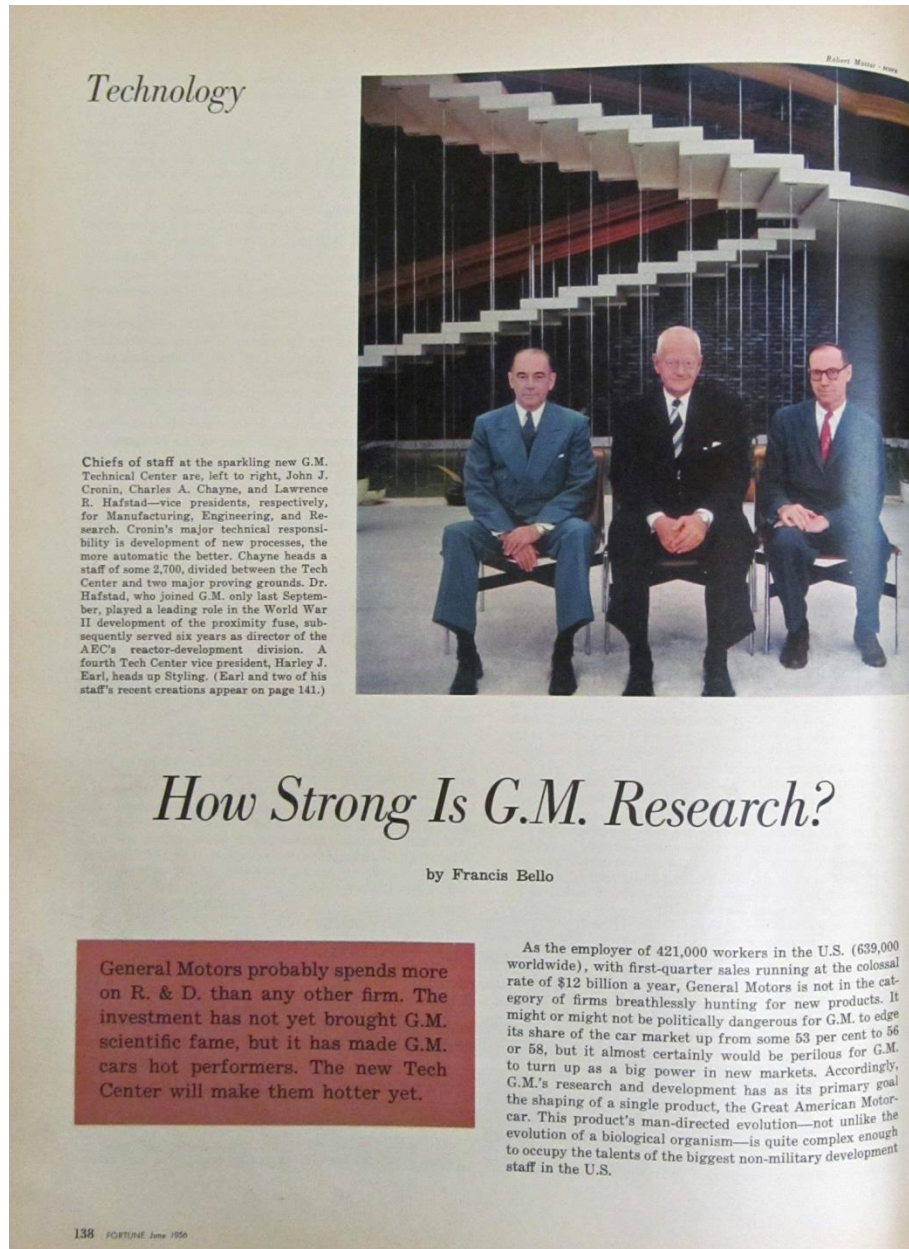


Fig. 30. First page showing GM executives sitting in front of Saarinen's iconic open staircase, Francis Bellow, "How Strong is G.M. Research?" *Fortune* (June 1956): 138

Givers" and GM Tech Center within a relatively simplified story of artistic and technological progress that *Time's* audience would understand well enough to re-articulate in their own personal conversations with friends, family, work colleagues and so on later.¹⁴⁹ By default, the cover implied Saarinen's and GM Tech Center's status at the top of the hierarchy Time Inc. was proposing.

The emphasis on the achievements of individual architects in this and other *Time* cover-oriented cross-publications also aligned conceptually with Luce's *Revolt of the Masses*-inflected notion that focusing on upper-rank building professionals' good decisions would guide the rest of the industry. In fact, because Luce was so much more involved in the editorial production of

¹⁴⁹ This article's "20th Century Form Givers" inset eventually gave rise to an exhibition, "Form Givers at Mid-Century," which was organized jointly by a *Time* editor and the American Federation of Arts in the late-1950s and traveled to some of the country's most prestigious museums rather than to department stores as had been the case with previous Time Inc.-supported shows. The publisher of *Time*, James Linen, explained the connection in his "Letter from the Publisher" section when "Form Givers" debuted in 1959:

THREE years ago Harris Prior, director of The American Federation of Arts, was looking for a major show to mark the A.F.A.'s 50th anniversary celebration in 1959. Reading TIME'S cover story on Eero Saarinen (July 2, 1956), he noticed a box headed "The 20th Century Form Givers," was struck by the possibilities of making it the theme of a comprehensive and definitive exhibition of 20th century architecture. Prior went to TIME, asked it to tap its research and picture resources to assemble the show. Organized by Associate Editor Cranston Jones, who has won two American Institute of Architects' awards (*Saarinen* cover; *Edward D. Stone* cover, March 31, 1958), and designed by Gyorgy Kepes, M.I.T.'s Professor of Visual Design, *Form Givers at Mid-Century* opens this week at Washington's Corcoran Gallery, first stop on a nationwide tour.

James Linen, "A Letter from The Publisher," *Time* (27 April 1959): 7.

his other magazines, it is possible that the increased intensity of the cross-publishing in the 1950s may have reflected a deeper personal commitment to the idea of leadership - even as *Forum's* editors continued to support their mission's focus on a team-based architectural working model.

That said, it is worth noting that Luce actually had some kind of personal connection with at least seven out of the 11 men who were profiled on *Time's* cover during *Forum's* Time Inc. years. In two cases - Lewis Mumford and Buckminster Fuller - they were past Time Inc. employees, and in at least three cases - Edward Durell Stone, Wallace Harrison and Eero Saarinen - Luce had either commissioned them or otherwise worked with them in an architect-client context. Harrison and Saarinen provided architectural design services for Time Inc.'s headquarters at one point or another, in fact. In the 1930s Harrison had contributed to Rockefeller Center, where the company's main offices were located for most of the *Forum* period, and Saarinen had provided schematic designs for a brand new headquarters complex when the company was considering moving to rural New York state in the early 1950s.¹⁵⁰ Some *Forum* readers probably recognized the relationship between Harrison and Time Inc. when

¹⁵⁰ Francis Brennan to Allen Grover, 18 February 1952, "OFFICES - NEW YORK, 1949-55, PROPOSED NEW SITES (INCL. NON-NYC: RYE & PHILLY-WIL)" Subject Files, TIA; Alexandra Lange, "Corporate Headquarters, Saarinen in Suburbia," in Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen and Donald Albrecht *Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future*, ed. (New York: Finnish Cultural Institute, 2006): 276-281.

his cover story was published in 1952 but when Harrison designed the *Time & Life* Building across from Rockefeller Center later in the decade, he would likely have appeared very much a Time Inc. favored son. In other words, this kind of lavish cross-publication of architects and architectural ideas associated with Time Inc. and Luce was clearly one way the company went about creating cache for itself - in addition to casting a wider public relations net for *Forum* and its readership, that is.

Considered from this perspective, one question is whether the people and building projects *Forum's* editors wanted to feature in their magazine absorbed and re-emitted some of the reflected glow off Time Inc.'s own version of self-promotion. If so, the other question would be whether that additional publicity effect would have been welcome given the architectural profession's continued suspicion of activities akin to advertising. As Hazlett noted, being "uncontrolled" is part of what differentiates public relations from advertising; it is not hard to imagine that some architects in the 1950s might have felt the choreographed nature of Time Inc.'s extra attention on specific members of their profession went too far.

C. The Vanishing "Gentlemen's Agreement"

In the mid-1950s, roughly when the Saarinen cross-publication episode occurred, *Forum's* editors started having

difficulty negotiating exclusive or even priority publishing rights for feature content material. This was a very serious problem in the universe *Forum's* editors inhabited; by then the so-called "gentlemen's agreement" system had been a cornerstone of their business model for decades, in fact. Public relations practice generally, and *Forum's* public relations-related qualities specifically, played key roles in this development.

The basic idea of a "gentlemen's agreement" was to create what some journalists casually call "a scoop" - to inform on "breaking news" before anyone else - within the context of architecture, where the relatively slow pace of design and construction gave everyone the opportunity to fight over who would eventually present an important finished building in print. Within the context of *Forum*, more often than not the magazine's relationship with Time Inc. had subtly worked to its advantage, giving editors plenty of leverage when organizing first publication rights. And, over time *Forum's* tendency to contain more and better "scoops" than its rivals lent an aura of exclusivity to *Forum* generally, which in turn enabled editors to insist on "gentlemen's agreements" even more rigorously. At times the system even had the power to essentially force the most stubborn architects or client-owners to acquiesce. Frank Lloyd Wright observed as such to Myers in 1936, for instance, noting that he was agreeing to let *Forum* publish the Johnson Wax

Company building exclusively mainly because his "clients have intimated that they prefer the *Forum*," despite the fact that he not only knew little about the magazine but was also going to have to break the standing agreement he had had for many years with *Record*.¹⁵¹

Journal editors were not the only people who benefited from "gentlemen's agreements;" they could also serve architects, client-owners and anyone else who controlled access to the buildings that editors wanted to feature. One reason was because these agreements essentially guaranteed favorable coverage. In an internal Time Inc. memorandum, Haskell explained this dynamic:

...if an editor is spending a pile of dough on a feature story he is likely to give it a better break if he has a clear priority than if he is sure every other magazine will be in the bath tub with him.¹⁵²

His specific reference here to "spending a pile of dough" was not insignificant to the decision-making calculus, since *Forum's* Time Inc.-subsidized editorial budget was widely believed to be higher than what other magazines' publishers could afford.¹⁵³ A second reason, perhaps also a more important one, was that since a feature in *Forum* would circulate within a different kind of

¹⁵¹ Frank Lloyd Wright to Howard Myers, letter dated 9 December 1936, folder 84:2 "Frank Lloyd Wright - DH/FLW correspondence," DPH.

¹⁵² Douglas Haskell to "FORUM's Writing and Research Staff," memorandum dated 27 July 1956, folder 83:2 "Memos-Staff 1949-57 (folder 5 of 5)," DPH.

¹⁵³ Dixon, discussion.

building industry audience than that of the typical professional journal, anyone who could authorize first publishing rights was positioned to use these agreements to match certain building projects with certain publics. For architects, especially, it was important that this was arguably not self-promotion per se; it did not attempt to entirely control the message nor did it create competition with other architects. It just hinted at the possibility that there was a way for savvy people to gently guide the evolution of their careers/legacies by strategically inserting a given building into the general discourse of American architecture according to the kinds of readers who might best appreciate its narrative. In the Saarinen cross-publication discussed above, for instance, *Time Inc.* had the priority rights to the complex as a whole but *Record* was afforded the opportunity to focus on the interiors. Balancing the magazines against each other was also routine practice for Mies van der Rohe, Philip Johnson and probably many others as well.¹⁵⁴ In this sense, *Forum* operated as a kind of agent of

¹⁵⁴ For instance, Philip Johnson negotiated a complicated first publication rights arrangement for the set of museums he completed around 1960. Haskell described the situation to an assistant in an internal memorandum, noting: "What Johnson says about Utica museum is that [Ezra] Stoller is to have pictures by the 16th and that Stoller is instructed 'to see FORUM first.' *Record* is on file already with a request to do all the museums in a group next year when the Houston one gets finished." The result was a five-page building-specific feature presentation of the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, NY, in in the December 1960 issue of *Forum*. A major feature reviewing all of Johnson's recent museums never materialized at that time in *Record*. Douglas Haskell, memorandum to Mary Jan Lightbown, 27 September 1960,

public relations; in offering its unusual "architectural forum" as a genuine alternative, architects' or client-owners' decisions about which journal to trust with first publishing rights took on much greater meaning.

Within the context of *Forum*, we do not know exactly what was promised in exchange for an exclusive or priority publishing agreement. This is because the details of these agreements were negotiated almost entirely verbally with only the barest framework of them confirmed in writing; the term "gentlemen's agreement" is probably derived from that aspect of the system's historical development, in fact. Haskell justified this practice in a memorandum in 1956, noting that the implication of favorable coverage "can be said orally with better effect."¹⁵⁵

With the exception of the obviously pre-organized ventures like "*Life Houses*," though, we can assume that *Forum's* editors could not honestly tempt architects and client-owners by overtly guaranteeing cross-publication in other Time Inc. magazines. Part of this was because the editors of each sister publication were generally expected to operate more-or-less independently, sharing photographs and information whenever appropriate but otherwise not attempting to exert too much control over each

folder 79:9 "Memos-Mary Jane Lightbown 1957-64," DPH; "The perfect, professional museum," *Architectural Forum* (December 1960): 90-95.

¹⁵⁵ Douglas Haskell to "FORUM's Writing and Research Staff," memorandum dated 27 July 1956, folder 83:2 "Memos-Staff 1949-57 (folder 5 of 5)," DPH.

others' editorial decisions. It was also partly a function of *Forum's* specific position at the bottom of the internal corporate hierarchy; this particular magazine's inherent smallness simply did not bestow its editors with sufficient influence over their peers at Time Inc.'s much bigger popular periodicals.

Still, it is clear that Douglas Haskell, at least, certainly attempted to leverage his proximity - institutional if nothing else - to the editors of *Time*, *Life* and *Fortune* to generate cross-publication for some of the projects or people his magazine profiled. It is also likely that Haskell occasionally reminded people in subtle ways about this potential for expanded recognition as a way to help bring about first publication rights agreements. He tended to use tentative or self-deprecating language in his internal Time Inc. memoranda on these subjects, though, acknowledging *Forum's* distinction. When he forwarded information and photographs of a specific project to *Life's* John Jessup, for instance, Haskell wrote,

My hope is that the fascinating illustrations, many of them historic, could make this a very interesting story - of course my own writing would be nothing but a guide since I don't know how to write for the big audience.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Douglas Haskell to John Jessup, memorandum dated 26 June 1958, folder 79:8 "LIFE Magazine 1957-64," DPH.

And, similarly, to the end of a wire asking a staff reporter at Time Inc.'s Los Angeles bureau to meet in person with a local architect, Haskell added, "If conscience permits your faintly suggesting *Time* or *Life* interest this would not hurt. Of course I cannot ask it."¹⁵⁷ A tactic that accomplished both goals simultaneously was to invite the editors of other Time Inc. magazines to sit in on meetings with architects, client-owners and other building industry people who stopped into *Forum's* Manhattan offices.¹⁵⁸ This kind of public relations brought specific individuals to the attention of Haskell's fellow Time Inc. journalists in a way that allowed his colleagues to form their own opinions, while also putting his corporate association on particularly conspicuous display for visitors inclined to appreciate it.

With so many potential benefits to everyone involved with the "gentlemen's agreement" system, there is no simple explanation for why *Forum's* editors' dominance started to erode in the mid-1950s. The various facets of public relations

¹⁵⁷ Douglas Haskell to Ben Williamson, memorandum dated 21 June 1951, folder 8:7 "Pending Victor Gruen, LA-NY-Detroit folder #2," DPH.

¹⁵⁸ Douglas Haskell to Ed Kern, memorandum dated 24 November 1959, folder 79:8 "LIFE Magazine 1957-64," DPH. *Forum's* editors routinely invited all kinds of building industry people to visit their editorial offices. Stopping in unannounced was also a common practice during this period. There are many passing references to these sorts of casual/professional visits throughout the archival materials. The frequency with which editors of Time Inc.'s other magazines were invited to join *Forum's* editors in meeting someone was lower but still considered standard practice. Obviously, this was something that no other professional architectural journal publish could offer to the same extent.

practice were certainly central to this development, however. For instance, around the same time the AIA started actively encouraging its members to participate in public relations specifically and to think in more promotional terms generally, the editors of *Forum's* rivals became more aggressive about pursuing first publication rights.¹⁵⁹ In an effort to offer architects and client-owners a more competitively handsome presentation environment within which their buildings would appear, those magazines' publishers also embarked on cover-to-cover graphic re-designs.¹⁶⁰ And, as already noted, this was when Time Inc. - partly for its own public relations purposes -

¹⁵⁹ For instance, a letter from the editor of *P/A* to Mies van der Rohe in 1953 evidences the lengths to which some journal editors went in order to secure a "gentlemen's agreement" from well-known architects:

I continue to feel very badly about the fact that PROGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURE does not seem to get any work of yours to publish. As your influence in the United States continues to grow, this becomes increasingly embarrassing for the magazine which now reaches more architects than any other in the world. I have just had a press release about the new Student Commons and Shopping Center which you are doing for Illinois Tech. Have you preliminary drawings of this which we might show before the building is completed and have you made any publication commitments in our field for the final publication after completion? I am very anxious to work with you on a story for our architectural audience.

Mies responded in a brief telegram the following month: "Final design for student commons not completed. First publication rights reserved for you." The result of this communication was a two-page feature spread in *P/A* nearly two years later. Thomas Creighton to Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 26 March 1953 and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe to Thomas Creighton, 23 April 1953, telegram, folder "*Progressive Architecture* 1943-55," container 49, file "General Office File, 1923-1969, n.d., Papers of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as MvdR); "Student Commons," *Progressive Architecture* (July 1955): 104-106.

¹⁶⁰ Mildred Schmertz (former graphic designer and then former Editor-in-Chief of *Architectural Record*), in discussion with the author, April 2010.

increased the intensity and frequency of its architecture-themes cross-publication efforts. The combination of expanded public relations savviness among the architects who controlled building access, perceived better alternatives to *Forum* and perhaps some trepidation about associating with the Time Inc. publicity machine could have helped create the circumstances Haskell and his colleagues found themselves in during these last Time Inc. years.

Equally as important, if not more so, was the fact that the restrictive nature of these "gentlemen's agreements" began to be viewed as anathema to the democratic ideal of true public relations practice. Public relations was supposed to be relatively "uncontrolled," in other words, so voluntarily limiting the promotional energy embodied by a particular building simply did not make as much sense as it had in the past. Some people even began sending press releases and photographs to every magazine because they believed they would derive more benefits from the talk this would probably start than whatever attention an exclusive or priority publishing agreement with an individual magazine could conceivably draw.

The AIA's public relations campaigns in the 1950s reflected a burgeoning awareness of public relations throughout American society generally, and as such client-owners became especially prone to ignoring the building trade press's first publishing

rights expectations. Like Luce in the early-1930s, savvy client-owners in the 1950s did not feel obligated to the architectural community's traditions; their stakes in that community's discursive infrastructure were much lower than for the architects and other professionals responsible for actually carrying out their commissions. For instance, journal editors struggled to cope for nearly the entire time Mies van der Rohe was associated with the Illinois Institute of Technology because the university's Public Relations Department staff openly and routinely disregarded the priority agreements Mies had arranged with his profession's major national journals.¹⁶¹ Haskell's inability to secure at least priority publishing rights for the

¹⁶¹ Archival materials demonstrate that Mies and his staff struggled with IIT's aggressive public relations attitude as well. For instance, a letter from the architect's office to one of the university's public relations administrators in 1953 suggests some confusion over jurisdiction vis-à-vis architecture's professional magazines:

In a telephone conversation with Mr. Spaeth this morning, there seems to be a certain amount of misunderstanding concerning publicity releases for the Architecture and Institute of Design building, and the Commons building. We have never had the intention at any time of suppressing any publicity work with regard to fund-raising campaigns, brochures or other local publicity. Our commitments have generally been with architectural magazines of nation-wide circulation and any form of publicity which does not conflict with that level of professional interest could be, in our opinion, freely utilized. As you know, we have promised the Architecture and Institute of Design building to ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE, and the Commons building to PROGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURE.

Emphasis is original. Joseph Fujikawa to Bob Fitzgibbons, 10 June 1953, folder "Illinois Institute of Technology, Public Relation 1947-66," container 34, file "General Office File, 1923-1969, n.d.," Mvdr.

completion of Crown Hall was egregious enough, in fact, to prompt him to write a lengthy internal memorandum to his entire editorial staff in which he urged his team to be more "zealous" and to be mindful that "(e)specially in the case of public relations directors today there is a reluctance to hand out any kind of an exclusive. The idea has to be sold."¹⁶²

Ironically, a case could be made that this particular factor in the erosion of *Forum's* "gentlemen's agreement" dominance was partly of Time Inc.'s own making. After all, an important element in Luce's "new *Forum*" vision had been replacing the traditionally narrow notion of the "architect" *per se* with a new and much broader "planner of structures" concept - a move that recognized the contributions of non-architects, including client-owners, within the building project team. In the 1930s this reflected on the page what working architects already knew from the reality of practice, which was that client-owners exercised an enormous amount of control over the final building by virtue of the budget if nothing else. A generation later, in the 1950s, it made sense for the impact of client-owner agency to have progressed beyond the creation of the actual three-dimensional building and into the re-creation of the building in two-dimensional print. This would have been

¹⁶² Douglas Haskell to "FORUM's Writing and Research Staff," DPH.

true for all the magazines; *Record's* feature story on Crown Hall had been negotiated with IIT's Public Relations Department, in fact. But it was probably especially true for *Forum's* editors, who had spent years purposefully creating content that openly invited client-owners to participate. Haskell acknowledged the new paradigm in his internal memorandum about the Crown Hall publishing rights fiasco, noting:

Where ever possible we will ourselves still operate on the priority system. To do this properly we must make every preliminary approach in duplicate – not only to the architect but to the owner...Beyond asking the architect to use his influence we should make our own direct approach.¹⁶³

Here, Haskell made it clear that "asking the architect to use his influence" was simply not enough anymore, that how *Forum's* editorial staff carried out their work as the creators a professional architectural journal would thereafter reflect the fact that client-owners had as much power as architects over building-related public relations decisions. With "the new *Forum*" Luce had set out to use media to undermine and then re-stabilize American architecture; although he certainly understood that striving for such a goal would take a lot of effort, fully doubling his editors' work had not been part of that plan.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

D. Public Relations in Action

Since public relations is supposed to create discussion around a particular subject that then results in goodwill-induced action, one measure of *Forum's* public relations effectiveness would be whether discussion was created and another would be whether action was taken as a result. The former is a relatively straightforward matter if considered in terms of *Forum's* perceived newsworthiness; during the magazine's Time Inc. years, its content was republished in newspapers around the country much more than that of its rivals. For instance, a survey of newspapers in New York City, Washington, D.C., Chicago and Los Angeles between 1932 and 1964 finds that Time Inc.'s *Forum* was more than three times more likely to be treated as a source for architecture-focused articles and editorials than F.W. Dodge's *Record* and more than five times more likely to be quoted than Reinhold International's *Pencil Points-P/A*. These ratios hold for the relative quantity of articles overall as well as for feature articles, specifically, but the difference between *Forum* and its competitors in terms of the number of opinion-based editorials they inspired is particularly striking: while there were 20 editorials mentioning *Forum* in these newspapers during *Forum's* Time Inc. years, there were only two mentioning *Pencil Points*, one for *Record* and none

at all for *P/A*.¹⁶⁴ In other words, although an article in *Forum* was likely to overtly spur this kind of public dialogue outside the realm of professional architectural journalism less than once per year, it was essentially not possible at all with *Record* or *Pencil Points-P/A*.

Forum's content also extended into newspapers in more subtle ways other than just overt quotation. The Saarinen cross-publication episode offers some sense of how this dynamic could operate. In 1962, for instance, the Washington Post ran a story about Saarinen's posthumous AIA Gold Medal award that included a brief overview of the architect's career, and as part of that the story's author noted that GM Tech Center "has been called an 'Industrial Versailles.'" Similarly, in 1964 an editorial in the New York Times about GM's plans to build a Manhattan headquarters building reminded readers that the company's suburban research campus in Michigan was "acclaimed as an 'industrial Versailles.'" *Forum*, which was where the "industrial Versailles" label first appeared in print in 1956, was not directly mentioned in either of these newspaper articles.

¹⁶⁴ The survey was conducted using the ProQuest Historical Newspapers Database. The specific newspapers were: *Chicago Defender*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Los Angeles Sentinel*, *New York Times*, *New York Tribune/Herald Tribune* and *Washington Post*. The search was limited to the years Time Inc. published *Forum* (1932-64) and only included the following document types: feature articles, news, front page/cover story and commentary/editorial. The search yielded 1014 total results for *Architectural Forum*, 313 total results for *Architectural Record* and 195 total results for *Pencil Points-Progressive Architecture*. Feature articles results were 875 for *Architectural Forum*, 278 for *Architectural Record* and 176 for *Pencil Points-Progressive Architecture*.

Perhaps the origin of the term had been lost over time or the reporters had been too pressed for time to care. However, another potential explanation is that it was so universally considered valid by the early 1960s that the stories' authors simply did not think justifying their use of the term was necessary.¹⁶⁵

Determining whether *Forum's* and Time Inc.'s public relations activity, or the discussion it stimulated, actually resulted in new commissions for architects and other building professionals is a more complicated affair than measuring newsworthiness. With 32 years of continuous publication, *Forum's* public relations character must have played some sort of role in the origin of some actual buildings. But how often this happened is almost impossible to gage. The influence public relations might have exercised over hiring decisions was simply not the kind of dynamic that large numbers of people routinely recorded in any historically meaningful way. I suspect, in fact, that it was so unconscious, so ephemeral, so obviously a given that it probably did not occur to most people to write it down.

We do have some representative anecdotal evidence, though, which suggests that *Forum*- and Time Inc.-supported public relations had some impact on the mid-twentieth century American

¹⁶⁵ Wolf Von Eckardt, "An Architect's Courage Rewarded," *The Washington Post, Times Herald* (28 January 1962): E2 and "Down with the Savoy Plaza," *New York Times* (24 August 1964): 26.

built landscape. For example, in *Evolution of an Architect*, Edward Durell Stone observed:

In 1938 Howard [Myers] published an entire issue on the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, the first significant attention focused on his work in many years. Mr. Wright was grateful and frequently said: 'Howard Myers took me out of mothballs and put me in circulation again.' That was the beginning of a renaissance, he received many commissions, his reputation skyrocketed - all poetic justice.¹⁶⁶

Stone's comment here that Wright's career recovered specifically as a result of the exposure that Time Inc. enabled Myers to offer may be true. In his book, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Florida Southern College*, Dale Gyure notes that the first documented correspondence between Frank Lloyd Wright and Florida Southern University administrators occurred shortly after January 1938, the month when Wright appeared on the cover of *Time* and the Wright-themed special insert was published in *Forum*.¹⁶⁷ Gyure stops short of conclusively linking Time Inc.'s cross-publication with Florida Southern's choice to commission Wright for their new campus. However, the situation certainly had that potential since the circulation of both *Time* and *Forum* included the kinds of people who would have been in decision-making positions at institutions like Florida Southern.

¹⁶⁶ Stone, *Evolution of an Architect*, 31.

¹⁶⁷ Dale Allen Gyure, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Florida Southern College* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2010): 26.

Similarly, when Eliot Noyes, IBM's Director of Design beginning in 1956, was asked how his company had decided on an architect for their Rochester, Minnesota campus, he replied, "Eero Saarinen appeared on the cover of *Time*. To acquaint him with IBM, we asked him to lunch, and he was our man for the job."¹⁶⁸ Whether *Forum's* authoritative support of the Saarinen and his work was discussed and considered over their meal cannot be known, but this tells us definitively that the attention Time Inc. gave to him and to the GM Tech Center design had - literally and figuratively - brought everyone to the table.

¹⁶⁸ Eliot Noyes, quoted in Edward R. Pierce, "The Brick and Mortar of IBM," *THINK* (November/December 1975): 31, Box F46, IBM Corporate Archives, Somers, New York, quoted in Alexandra Lange, "Saarinen in Suburbia," 281.

V. ADVANCING AN AMERICAN AGENDA

A. Key Concept: Luce's American Agenda

All of the major professional architecture journals published in mid-twentieth century America focused on American buildings and architectural themes. But the fact that *Forum* was a Time Inc. publication positioned this particular magazine's emphasis on the United States within a larger nation-building project that none of its competitors could claim or desire. Historians have thoroughly studied the extent to which Time Inc. and Luce went beyond just reporting to actually contribute to the evolution of the era's American worldview, but Robert Vanderlan's concise summary in *Intellectuals Incorporated: Politics, Art and Ideas Inside Henry Luce's Media Empire* is worth repeating here:

...the mid-century decades were crucial years in the emergence of America as the preeminent world power and in the restructuring of American capitalism. Responding to the Depression, the rise of fascism, the Second World War, and the postwar conflict with the Soviet Union, Luce's magazines played an important role in formulating and articulating the key components of American international activism and domestic corporate liberalism.¹⁶⁹

By "Luce's magazines," of course, Vanderlan means *Time*, *Fortune* and *Life*. To appreciate *Forum's* place in the milieu he

¹⁶⁹ Robert Vanderlan, *Intellectuals Incorporated: Politics, Art and Ideas Inside Henry Luce's Media Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010): 13.

describes, the most noteworthy aspect of this passage is his conspicuous separation, though still linked, of "world power" and "international activism" on the one hand and "American capitalism" and "domestic corporate liberalism" on the other. This construction reflects the two-pronged nature of Luce's Time Inc. undertaking, with the included implication that each half informed the other. *Forum's* editorial emphasis on American architectural themes meant it clearly operated in the domestic side of the equation - the magazine's industry reform mission was essentially a way to help get the country's "house" in order. But this was not just because Luce believed the business of building needed to be transformed for its own sake. It was also because he hoped better architecture would emerge as a result, architecture that would provide inspiring environments for American families and businesses while visually reinforcing the United States' mid-20th century elevation to geopolitical leadership. This is why, I think, *Forum's* America-centricity became more important to Luce during the magazine's last years, a period in which both the United States and Time Inc. were becoming ever more enmeshed in world affairs.

Crucial to Luce's faith in the role *Forum* played at the company was his tendency to view the quality of the buildings Americans produced as indicative of the strengths or weaknesses of American society. In the *Forum* prospectus, for instance, he

argued that the emphasis on architectural style in the 1920s evidenced widespread confusion about the broader – and to him more important – technological and social implications of modernity. “The nation had the will and the power to build,” Luce wrote, “but when it went to the planners of buildings, the mental and spiritual cupboards of those planners were bare.”¹⁷⁰ Penned in 1935, as the Depression entered its darkest years, the prospectus’ negative attitude toward American architecture and architects reflected era’s pessimism about what Americans had or had not done to bring about such dire economic circumstances. Likewise, in a speech to the AIA two decades later Luce declared that architecture in post-World War II America had essentially surpassed that of Europe and the rest of the world: “...the 20th Century revolution in architecture has been accomplished. And it has been accomplished mainly in America – no matter how great our debt to European genius.”¹⁷¹ Although this statement,

¹⁷⁰ The key passages in the prospectus are the following:

...The architect did nothing except to provide out of past ages a decorative costume for those who could afford it and who know what they wanted...The fact seems inescapable that in the twenties there occurred in America one of those unnecessary misfortunes of mis-timing which often occur in history. The nation had the will and the power to build. But when it went to the planners of buildings, the mental and spiritual cupboards of those planners were bare...because the ideas which lay implicit in the rising tide of technology and the ideas which lay implicit in the new social trends and mores – these ideas had not anywhere been clarified or crystalized to any useful extent.

Luce, “The New *Forum*,” pages III-IV, TIA.

¹⁷¹ The speech continues:

assuming he genuinely believed what he was espousing in public, represented a major change of heart toward American architecture and architects since he wrote the prospectus, it was consistent with the notion that buildings could serve as indicators of societal progress. The United States of the late-1950s was a different place than that of the mid-1930s, after all; Luce's enthusiasm for postwar architecture in this case reflected that era's confidence as the country settled into a position of global political, economic and cultural leadership.

Although interpreting buildings through a filter of societal progress or lack thereof may have been relatively commonplace within in the community of people he employed to create *Forum*, Luce did not really inhabit the world of architectural thinkers and practitioners. Instead, I suspect he learned to appreciate buildings' symbolic potency in a very different way: as the child of American missionaries in China, where he lived in a compound with a distinctive mission-specific

The founding fathers of the revolution in architecture, the great and the colleagues of the great - many of them are in this room tonight. I salute you...I will explain to [my grandchildren] that, here, on this occasion, I shook hands with the men who gave the shape to their America, the men who raised the towers toward the sky, who stretched the roofs across the land, who formed the façade - the face - that their America presents to all the world. And I am sure I will be able to add - these were the men who, in the fullness of time, made God's country a splendid habitation for His most fortunate children.

Henry Luce, "The Architecture of a Democracy," (speech, American Institute of Architects Centennial Celebration, Washington, D.C., 16 May 1957) in *Journal of the AIA* (June 1957): 149-150.

architectural character. Historians routinely note the impacts his unique upbringing had on Luce as an adult, especially the role his parents' values of religious faith and hard work played in his personal and professional decisions, his lifelong passion for all things Chinese and his character-defining belief that it was possible to change people's minds for the better. To that, Alan Brinkley, author of the most recent and also most comprehensive Luce biography, has added lessons Luce learned from the juxtaposition between his family's Western-style living arrangements and the rural Chinese way of life. Brinkley's deft description of this dynamic is worth quoting in full:

In China, Luce lived with his family inside walled missionary compounds, where he encountered virtually no Chinese people (except domestic servants) and instead spent his youth almost entirely in the company of like-minded missionary families from America and England. Outside the compounds were the fetid villages and ravaged countryside of a desperately poor nation. Inside were the pleasant houses, carefully tended gardens, and stable communities of the Victorian Anglo-American bourgeois world. The contrast between the ordered world of the missionary compound and the harsh social and physical landscape outside it reinforced the assumptions driving the Protestant missionary project in China: the unquestioned belief in the moral superiority of Christianity and in the cultural superiority of American (and western) culture; the commitment to showing the way not just to the love of Christ, but to a modern, scientific social order based on the American model.¹⁷²

¹⁷² Alan Brinkley, "The Idea of an American Century," (lecture, Cold War Studies Centre - America as Another Country Series, London School of Economics, 7 February 2006): 5.

Of course, Brinkley's comments here attempt to understand the origin of Luce's belief not only in America's cultural superiority but also in the sense of obligation to everyone else's welfare Luce thought accompanied that elevated social status - two notions that pervaded so much of what he did later in life. Brinkley's logic is just as sound when considered through the lens of environmental design, though. In childhood, a particularly sense-receptive life phase, the extreme difference between the pleasing qualities of his own built universe and the correspondingly dreadful ones of the surrounding countryside could have amplified Luce's perception of architecture's persuasive potential and imprinted on him profoundly enough to sustain that conviction over his entire life.

Brinkley has also convincingly argued that Luce's deep commitment to the ideal of a globally-engaged America originated in the specific national character of Luce's self-identity in China:

His effort to articulate the meaning of America had begun in China, when, as a young boy, he attempted to construct an image of a nation he had passionately embraced but had never seen, a nation he associated with the good that he believed his own father was doing in the world.¹⁷³

¹⁷³ Brinkley, *The Publisher*, 266-267.

Brinkley's use of the word "image" in the phrasing here is mostly meant to be understood conceptually although it seems particularly appropriate to describe the life of a man who spent much of his professional career creating and disseminating actual images for others to consume. Again, the logic of the argument applies equally well within the context of architecture, since it was the compound he lived in that provided the initial raw material for building the physical aspects of the America of his mind's eye. And, it also applies especially to *Forum*, which was the Time Inc. magazine whose subject naturally offered copious raw material to using in constructing a new idealized America on the page each month.

Importantly, if Brinkley is right in observing that the Luce family's orderly compound expressed their superiority, the obverse logic could also hold: any breakdown of the architectural order could endanger the mission by spurring doubt in the compounds' inhabitants. In other words, the success of the elder Luces' endeavors in early-twentieth-century China partly depended on them dutifully and conspicuously tending their buildings and gardens. Likewise, their son hoped his media empire would impact mid-twentieth-century America's political, economic and cultural evolution - that was his mission, sort to speak - and the façade the American built environment presented played an integral role in his ambitions. Of course a small

portion of *Forum's* attention had to be directed toward the architecture of other nations, if for no other reason than to contextualize the domestic building scene. But Luce's childhood-inflected America-centric agenda informed the majority of *Forum*, whether it displayed the best buildings as a kind of proof of the country's strength or actively guided building professionals toward practices that would make American architecture worthy of the country's expanding global "superpower" status.

B. Key Concept Developed In and Through *Forum*

1. *Forum's* American Geography

Considered purely from the perspective of overall geographic inclination, the extent to which *Forum* concentrated on American themes and readers was typical of professional building journals in this country.¹⁷⁴ In terms of content on the page, for instance, from the 1930s to the early-60s the focus of feature articles in any given issue of all three nationally

¹⁷⁴ The analysis presented in this section is based on a combination of December circulation data for *Forum*, *Record*, and *Pencil Points-P/A* for 1932, 1935, 1940, 1945, 1950, 1955, 1960 and 1964 and a detailed review of the "middle-of-the-book" feature content for all of the issues corresponding to that circulation data set. As a check on the accuracy of the averages using only the selected years, I compared the calculated averages from the selected years for *Forum* to all of *Forum's* December geographic circulation data as well as all of its "middle-of-the-book" feature content for every December issue throughout the entire 1932-64 period. In terms of circulation, there was no difference whatsoever in American vs. international subscribership; for both the comprehensive data and the selective data, the average percentages for Americans were 84% and for international subscribers was 16%. In terms of content, the difference was essentially negligible: 88% American vs. 12% international across the entire 1932-64 period and 91% American vs. 9% international for the selected years only.

circulated professional journals averaged roughly 90% American architecture and 10% international.¹⁷⁵ By way of comparison, this differed from two of the major European architectural magazines, *Architectural Review* and *Casabella*, in which the domestic-to-foreign ratio for the same period was closer to 25%-75%.¹⁷⁶ Additionally, at 16%, *Forum's* average international subscriber rate while it was published by Time Inc. was also roughly the same as that of its two main American competitors.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Additionally, for all three magazines, the average proportion of international coverage tended to be higher after World War II than before. This probably partly corresponds to the broadening of Americans' geopolitical sensibilities generally after 1945 and probably also partly reflects the interests of an architectural community made more cultural diverse as a result of wartime immigration. Although a detailed study of the pre- and post-war difference in the American professional architectural journals is outside the scope of this project, it is important to note that this difference highlights a problem with the increasingly anachronistic narrative of the so-called "triumph of Modernism" in which news of European architectural trends "arrived" in the United States in the 1930s and then Americans focused inward on developing their own leadership after the war. For that to have been the case, insofar as it could have been reflected in the country's professional journals, there ought to have been significant coverage of international architecture and architectural themes before the war and less - or at least not more - afterward.

¹⁷⁶ This observation is based on a review of what would have been considered "middle-of-the-book" features in *Architectural Review* and *Casabella* for *Forum's* Time Inc. period. I considered anything located within the United Kingdom as "domestic" for *Review* and anything located within Italy as "domestic" for *Casabella*. For both publications, my definition of "foreign" refers to everything else, including territories, colonies, Commonwealth countries and so on.

¹⁷⁷ International subscriber rate averages: *Forum*, 16%; *Record*, 22%; and *Pencil Points-P/A*, 20%. For the purposes of this study, "international" circulation includes any subscriber locations outside whatever happened to be the political boundaries of the United States in North America at the time. So, for instance, Hawaii and Alaska were included in "international" before they official statehood and then included in "domestic" afterward. Similarly, places that remained U.S. Territories throughout the 1932-64 period were counted as "international," such as Guam, Puerto Rico and so on. Rolls #P-5 through P-15 and Addendum Roll #4, Publisher's Statements, Historical Circulation Data File, ABC.

The difference between *Forum* and *Record* and *Pencil Points-P/A* was that *Forum's* decision-makers limited themselves to largely American themes and readers by choice. After all, theirs was a company with the resources to produce a much more globally-oriented magazine or even a separate international edition, like what was done with some of its sister publications after World War II. Taking advantage of either of those two options would have made *Forum* even more unique as compared to its competitors. The magazine was specifically targeted at improving the built environment of the United States, though, and the fact that *Forum* remained so America-centric for all of its 32 Time Inc. years suggests the great extent to which this aspect of its editorial mission mattered to Luce and his *Forum* editorial group.

Perhaps more importantly, at first glance *Forum's* editors also seemed to follow American architectural journalism's established pattern of regional emphasis within the country. This was especially true in terms of the journals' obvious preference for architecture of the Northeast; *Forum* and *Record* devoted about one-third of any given issue to contemporary work from this particular area of the country while it constituted about half of any given issue of *Pencil Points-P/A*. This focus on the Northeast did not reflect higher subscribership from people living and working there. In fact, the average percentage

of Northeast-focused content was considerably higher than the average percentage of Northeast-focused circulation for all three magazines.¹⁷⁸ Rather, this emphasis on the Northeast was presumably partly based in long-standing beliefs about that region's relative cultural sophistication and partly in the much more pragmatic fact that American architecture's professional periodical press was headquartered there. *Forum's* Time Inc. association placed it firmly in the intellectual milieu of the former since Luce himself was embedded in the Northeastern/Yale mentality and also tended to hire people for executive positions who had similar "Ivy League" backgrounds. As for the latter, Time Inc. had well-established satellite editorial offices across the country as well as the ability to send its headquarters-based staff more-or-less wherever they needed to go, which liberated *Forum's* editors from being confined to

¹⁷⁸ The average percentages of Northeast-focused content vs. circulation were: *Forum*: 34% vs. 25%; *Record*: 29% vs. 23%; and *Pencil Points-P/A*: 48% vs. 26%. Meanwhile, for *Forum* the Northeast did not even represent its highest average regional circulation numbers - that honor went to the Midwest. And, this was the case even though Midwestern architecture accounted for only 16% of any given *Forum* issue's content, which effectively meant these subscribers had a much lower chance of seeing their work in print than their Northeastern peers. The difference between regional emphasis of content and regional concentrations of circulation merits further study - across all the magazines and individually as well. In particular, it would be interesting to calculate and compare the relative statistical likelihood that readers from different regions would see their work in print and then to hypothesize from that about various motivations for reading the magazine in the first place. For instance, just based on the analysis undertaking for this dissertation, it can be supposed that people in the Northeast may have wanted to read their professional journals partly, at least, because they recognized the people and architecture represented in them whereas people in the Midwest, for whom the possibility of reading about people and architecture immediately familiar to them was much lower, may have read their magazines for more aspirational purposes. Etc.

buildings they could conveniently visit within a certain range of the company's midtown Manhattan offices. As such the content *Forum's* editors produced could have reflected a more geographically-balanced approach. Indeed, they could have even justified that by treating the country's various regions as constituent "voices" within the larger "forum" of America similar to the way in which they encouraged a diverse range of building industry professionals to engage with the magazine's broadly-defined "architectural forum."

Like the clear focus on domestic rather than international architecture, in other words, *Forum's* emphasis on the Northeast seems on the page to be simply a continuation of historically-established patterns within American architectural journalism but was actually an ideological choice. It originated, I think, in the Lucean policy of promoting the *Revolt of the Masses*-style aristocratic gentleman, which in this case was conceptually mapped onto the landscape of American culture and cultural prejudices. That gentleman, it will be recalled, was meant to be recognized as a natural leader who then guided everyone else toward a less chaotic and more beautiful future. In the *Forum* variation on that idea, the Northeast served as the place where the rest of the country could look for guidance. Time Inc.'s satellite bureaus and generous travel budgets may have freed the magazine's editors from having to always rely on featured

individuals or firms to send drawings, photographs, information and impressions of architecture located elsewhere in the United States. But, committing a large percentage of every issue's "middle-of-the-book" to the region that the diverse professional audience already acknowledged as a leader of the American architectural scene confirmed the group's perceived hierarchy back to itself - and solidified *Forum's* status as the conduit through which that benevolent leadership could be enacted.

2. The First Decades: the Modern American Home Mortgage

In addition to defining *Forum's* American emphasis in geographic terms, Luce and his editors also adopted a more conceptual attitude. For almost all of the first two Time Inc. decades this meant advocating ways to improve the quality and accessibility of the type of building within which Americans learned to be responsible citizens: the family home.¹⁷⁹ That Time

¹⁷⁹ In one especially rhetorically-dense episode, Ruth Goodhue referenced Herbert Hoover's 1932 so-called "Nation of Homes" radio address in a public speech she delivered about Time Inc.'s "new *Forum*" editorial concept. Goodhue said: "The creation of shelter or more prosaically, this business of building...moved Herbert Hoover to rhapsodize about a 'Nation of homes'...Every man, woman and child lives and works in its products. Here literally is the one industry that sets the stage for American life." The relevant passage from Hoover's radio address is: "We are a nation of homes from which the accomplishment of individuals is nurtured by the maximum freedom in an ordered liberty. The ultimate goal of our progress is to build for security and happiness in these homes where the inspiration of our religious faiths will implant in our children those principles of social order and idealism, and where our Government will contribute in safeguarding their future opportunity for them." Goodhue, Poor Richard Club speech, page 3, TIA; Herbert Hoover, "Radio Address to the Nation From Elko, Nevada.,"

Inc. turned "the new *Forum*" in the direction of housing early on is not a surprise, of course. Luce's introduction to the potency of architectural symbolism had occurred through the unique circumstances of his childhood home, after all, and he had been catalyzed to publish his own building journal as a direct result of a series of *Fortune* investigative articles about the poor state of American housing. In later years, when some of the major changes the magazine's editors had promoted before 1945 helped enable the postwar suburban "building boom," *Forum*'s efforts seemed to justify themselves. The magazine's special attention to housing continued until 1951, when the establishment of *House & Home* shifted residential architecture away from *Forum*'s editorial jurisdiction.

Like other architectural journals, *Forum* regularly presented affordable home plan ideas in portfolio-style layouts. While this content was of interest mainly to architects, though, many of the other housing-related articles in *Forum* encouraged mortgage brokers, bank officials, contractors, engineers, manufacturers and so on to actively participate in making American homes better and more plentiful. *Forum*'s editors did this by approaching the problem from perspectives that pushed beyond basic issues of building design, and by emphasizing the

importance of these articles through careful placement with the "middle-of-the-book" features rather than alongside announcements in secondary sections of the magazine. The professional mix of *Forum's* target audience for this material not only reflected the building industry-wide editorial character generally but, importantly, the sense of community that diversity was supposed to foster widened in scope within the housing campaign's specifically American context. Here, the hoped-for collaboration had a distinctly civic complexion, suggesting that to work together to elevate the state of the family home in this country was, in itself, a performance of citizenship.

One of the aspects of housing that *Forum's* editors promoted most aggressively was creative financing, specifically the notion that lowering the overall cost of good homes could expand the real possibility of ownership to more Americans. An episode in mid-1936 exemplifies *Forum's* approach. In May of that year, *Record* ran a four-page news item, compiled by the publisher's in-house statistician, which reported on building trends that had resulted from the Federal Housing Administration's new policies such as subsidized mortgages. Meanwhile, an 11-page feature article in *Forum's* September 1936 issue investigated why the British building industry was flourishing despite difficult economic conditions, including an emphasis on open-minded

attitudes toward mortgage lending. The scientific nature of *Record's* coverage followed that journal's information-oriented sensibility, offering readers a kind of overview snapshot of their current situation, treating the steps the FHA had taken as facts of progressive but unchangeable past. *Forum's* more expansive piece, on the other hand, implied that successes elsewhere could serve as lessons for how Americans could do better, tapping into readers' hopes for a better future and providing some potential starting-points for improvements.¹⁸⁰

P/A's drafting room-focused predecessor, *Pencil Points*, published no substantive news or feature articles about mortgages in 1936 at all.

In the early 1940s, *Forum's* editors turned toward promoting a particular type of new mortgage, the "package mortgage," which Time Inc. claimed to have developed in-house.¹⁸¹ Package mortgages, in which the cost of all of a home's mechanical equipment and appliances are folded into a single 30-year fixed

¹⁸⁰ L. Seth Schnitman, "Liberalized FHA Financing," *Architectural Record* (May 1936): 3-6; "Britain's Building Boom," *Architectural Forum* (September 1936): 222-232.

¹⁸¹ There is a possibility that the entire idea of the "packaged mortgage" was formulated at Time Inc. According to the company's employee newsletter, Arthur Goldman, *Forum's* Director of Marketing and Research, first came up with the idea. I have not been able to independently verify this, but Goldman appears to have had the expected kind of qualifications and experiences. In particular, Goldman held a master's degree in economics from the London School of Economics and, in addition to the work he did for *Forum*, he had his own construction company and served as a consultant on real estate law for various state and federal governmental agencies. "FORUM's Real Estate Revolution," *f.y.i.* (22 July 1949): 2.

loan, are universal practice today. However, when World War II ended home buyers still routinely took out a long-term mortgage with a relatively low interest rate on just the house envelope and then bought the necessary equipment and appliances with very unfavorable, short-term loans. This made the up-front cost of purchasing a home prohibitive for a whole segment of American middle-class society, people who might have been able to save a down-payment and cope with a monthly mortgage payment but would not have been able to also afford the high costs associated with short-term loans. "Packaging" everything together as a single loan created a path to home ownership for many more Americans by dramatically reducing initial costs since home buyers just needed was a slightly larger down payment, and by lowering monthly payments since the favorable 30-year fixed terms also covered the furnace, refrigerator, dishwasher and so on.

As straight-forward as a package mortgage may seem now, actually offering this type of loan was quite a complicated matter. In one sense, it was inherently philosophical - what constituted the necessities of modern American life? and, shouldn't every family in a country as globally powerful as the United States have the most advanced appliances at home? But, it was also an eminently prosaic undertaking. Laws at every level of government had to be revised to allow items that depreciate in value to be legally joined to a building whose monetary value

is supposed to increase over time, while designers, manufacturers and contractors had to coordinate construction details in order to make the fully-equipped house a physical reality. The layered complexity of this type of mortgage was not problematic for *Forum*, however. It suited the magazine especially well, in fact, since the concept naturally appealed to several different kinds of building industry professionals simultaneously and slid easily into Time Inc.'s mid-twentieth century narrative of a better and more modern American future. Even without Time Inc.'s claim to have come up with the idea, the package mortgage seems almost to have been custom-designed for this particular journal at this particular moment in the country's history.

Forum's editors built their argument for package mortgages by doing more than simply describing how the idea might operate in reality or how improving housing for individual families was good for America as a whole. More often than not, they explored a specific aspect of the package mortgage issue in a way that made these loans appear to be in everyone's best interest, with the assumption that the magazine's readers were most likely to help the country if they expected to benefit from the necessary business practice changes themselves.

A February 1941 article entitled "The Case for High Quality Equipment" is especially demonstrative of this approach.¹⁸² Based on the notion that package mortgages emphasized monthly rather than initial costs, *Forum's* editors presented calculations comparing how much money good mechanical equipment and appliances cost home owners over time as opposed to similar lower-quality options. They argued that the better items ended up being less expensive - despite their higher price tags - because they were more efficient, required less maintenance and had to be replaced less often. The message was that high-quality equipment and appliances were the best long-term choice for home owners, but editors also noted that "alert speculative builders" would be more successful if they were to "erect better houses more completely equipped."¹⁸³ Moreover, although the article was not overtly geared toward lenders, the implication was that package mortgages which included high-quality equipment and appliances represented a lower financial risk even though the loans themselves were valued for more money.

Forum's advocacy continued through the mid-1940s, and when package mortgages became more widely available after World War II the editors focused on the specific ways in which this kind of loan made good business sense while also helping fulfill the

¹⁸² "The Case for High Quality Equipment," *Architectural Forum* (February 1941): 139-140.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, 139.

promise of better homes for more Americans. For instance, a May 1947 article entitled "A Complete House for \$6,990" tied the Levitt family's success in Long Island directly to the fact that their proprietary package mortgage made their fully-equipped homes eminently affordable.¹⁸⁴ As the following passage demonstrates, *Forum's* editors described the Levitt mortgage's contribution with a combination of detail and confidence that could have persuaded others to do the same:

House and equipment are financed together with \$490 cash and a \$6,500 packaged mortgage by Washington Irving Trust Co. Interest at 4 per cent and 25 year amortization require less than \$35 per month. Taxes are \$13; insurance, about \$1. Of the \$49 total, only \$3.82 represents the monthly cost of the \$720-worth of extra conveniences which help make Levitts' houses by far the most salable of any put on the local market this year. Their sales appeal was gauged last month when a test group of 30 houses was sold the day it was opened to the public - without benefit of advertising.¹⁸⁵

That the Levitts did not have to advertise is especially noteworthy; the point was that the so-called "complete house," with its modern amenities and reasonable monthly payment, was so obviously superior that it essentially sold itself. The editors were similarly clear about which kinds of people the Levitt home and package mortgage program benefited most; the article's subtitle declared that the "complete house" was "equipped to the

¹⁸⁴ "A Complete House for \$6,990," *Architectural Forum* (May 1947): 70-72.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 70.

hilt to attract the value-conscious veteran."¹⁸⁶ On the one hand this was a reference to the G.I. loan program's cost limitations, which obligated speculative developers like Levitt and Sons to find creative ways to situate their homes within returning soldiers' government-determined purchasing range. But mentioning veterans in this context also cast an unmistakably patriotic light over the entire undertaking. After all, these were the homes where men who had fought for democracy were going to raise the next generation of American citizens. Giving them the best they afford was how building industry leaders could show appreciation and support the larger cause - and Time Inc.'s *Forum* was in the middle of it all, suggesting ideas, giving people reasons to do things differently and reporting on successes.

Forum's connection to the postwar housing "boom" effectively ended in 1951, when Time Inc. moved all of *Forum's* housing-related editorial emphasis into its newest journal, *House & Home*. The extent to which *Forum* actually contributed to the package mortgage's acceptance up to that point is hard to quantify, made harder still by the fact that *Forum's* editors themselves stopped attempting to track their influence in that arena as their attention shifted in other directions. Evidence

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 70-71.

of recognition of *Forum's* status as an early supporter of creative financing can be found in relatively unexpected places, however; a January 1952 study of the legal nuances of the "package mortgage" in the *Harvard Law Review*, for example, cited *Forum* as their earliest source.¹⁸⁷

Looking back over the entire package mortgage episode, I suspect one of things that made it especially appealing to *Forum's* editors was its collective nature. In other words, its emphasis on gathering previously separate components into a larger coherent whole reflected, in architectural terms, the magazine's editorial emphasis on promoting collaboration within an industry often characterized by adversarial professional relationships. The message - in both cases - was that everyone could benefit if disparate items or people were brought together in the kind of thoughtful ways promoted in the magazine. And with creatively-financing good-quality housing, as with *Forum* itself, the positive results not only impacted the specific individuals involved but the country overall as well.

3. *Forum* and the "The American Century"

In the years immediately following World War II, *Forum's* editors began outwardly engaging the international

¹⁸⁷ "The Package Mortgage and Optional Future Advances," *Harvard Law Review* 65:3 (January 52): 478-489.

architectural community, putting their magazine in the position of a kind of self-appointed representative of the newly confident American building scene. Unlike the International Sections program of the 1930s, in which *Forum* enabled foreign designers to communicate directly to an American audience, the postwar efforts narrated the country's architectural history and ideas abroad. This outward-directed manifestation of the magazine's American identity existed initially in the shadow of *Forum*'s campaign to help more Americans own better homes and, in the later 1940s, as a reflection of Time Inc.'s expanded international corporate presence. Its significance as an outlet for advancing the magazine's American agenda increased, though, when housing was shifted to House & Home's editorial jurisdiction in 1951. The situation remained as such until the later 1950s, when *Forum*'s editors turned a more critical eye inward on the American built environment.

Although Luce had long since ended his involvement in day-to-day editorial decision-making at *Forum*, the guiding principle of this facet of the magazine's America-centric history again originated with him - here in the form of a published essay, "The American Century," which appeared first in the February 17, 1941 issue of *Life* and was reproduced shortly thereafter in

other publications world-wide.¹⁸⁸ Central to what has been described as Luce's "most influential article" was the assertion that Americans already exercised influence in world affairs but would not achieve great things until they could fully accept the responsibilities associated with their global position.¹⁸⁹ In Brinkley's words, the essay "was designed to rouse Americans out of what Luce considered their slothful indifference and inspire them to undertake a great mission on behalf of what he considered the nation's core values."¹⁹⁰

Similar logic had given structure to Luce's original vision for Time Inc.'s *Forum* in the previous decade. In that case, the scope of his frustration had been limited specifically to architects and the building industry. But the failing he accused them of in the early-1930s - being unwilling to fulfill the leadership role their vocation demanded - was basically the same as what bothered him about the nation overall in 1941. This is not to say that "the new *Forum*" concept ought to be considered a direct precedent for "The American Century." Though not pure coincidence, Luce did, said and wrote many things during the pre-World War II period, any of which could be interrupted

¹⁸⁸ Brinkley, *The Publisher*, 271.

¹⁸⁹ Brinkley, *The Publisher*, 267. In terms of the essay's extended influence, Robert Vanderlan has noted that "The American Century" was eventually familiar to enough people that it could take on representative qualities in itself. He writes: "Luce's essay - especially its title - became a key shorthand for America's expansive postwar role." Vanderlan, *Intellectuals Incorporated*, 13.

¹⁹⁰ Brinkley, *The Publisher*, 271.

through the lens of this significant statement of mid-twentieth century Americanism. Instead, I suspect the analogous reasoning made "The American Century" seem more obviously relevant to *Forum* than it might otherwise have appeared, suggesting a national context within which *Forum's* "great mission" to guide the evolution of American architecture could be more fully justified. Indeed, at Time Inc. in the 1950s there were many internal conversations about *Forum's* role in the company and it was not entirely unusual for people to invoke the essay's key ideas and even the rhetoric itself in their memoranda. In 1958, for instance, an especially influential Time Inc. executive, arguing in favor of shifting funds from House & Home to *Forum*, unambiguously described *Forum* as "part of our stake in the American Century; put another way, it is part of our stake in the important cultural, social, and economic unfolding of America."¹⁹¹

Of course, in 1941 the focus of "The American Century" was whether or not the United States should officially enter the war. After the country's elevation to geo-political leadership in the immediate postwar years, however, the cultural facets of Luce's argument remained just as relevant as they had been earlier - perhaps even more so to anyone inclined to view the

¹⁹¹ C.D. Jackson to Roy Larsen, memorandum dated 10 June 1958, "ARCH FORUM/HOUSE & HOME 1958" Subject File, TIA.

country's role in the Allied victory as confirmation of America's hegemonic destiny. This is the specific context within which *Forum's* connection to the essay resonated; the most relevant passage about the type and reach of American cultural influence abroad is worth repeating:

Once we cease to distract ourselves with lifeless arguments about isolationism, we shall be amazed to discover that there is already an immense American internationalism. American jazz, Hollywood movies, American slang, American machines and patented products are in fact the only things that every community in the world, from Zanzibar to Hamburg, recognizes in common. Blindly, unintentionally, accidentally and really in spite of ourselves, we are already a world power in all the trivial ways - in very human ways. But there is a great deal more than that. America is already the intellectual, scientific and artistic capital of the world....there is a picture of an America which will send out through the world its technical and artistic skills. Engineers, scientists, doctors, movie men, makers of entertainment, developers of airlines, builders of roads, teachers, educators. Throughout the world, these skills, this training, this leadership are needed and will be eagerly welcomed, if only we have the imagination to see it and the sincerity and good will to create the world of the 20th century."¹⁹²

Here, the fact that Luce felt that the nation's "technical and artistic skills" had contributed so greatly to its global influence was particularly significant to *Forum* since architecture's inherent combination of creativity and engineering meant the magazine organically embodied the breadth of American cultural achievement. Emphasizing the wide range of

¹⁹² Luce, "The American Century," 65.

intellectual and physical tasks that constituted building was, in fact, one of the magazine's core editorial themes. However, Luce's logic also obligated *Forum's* creators to heed his call to action, to be more purposeful not only when encouraging readers to produce architecture worthy of the country's geopolitical position but also when constructing "a picture of an America" that was worthy of being sent "out through the world." Head editor Douglas Haskell concisely articulated this connected set of responsibilities in an internal memorandum in 1956; *Forum*, he wrote, had "the mission of completely rebuilding America in the image of its own greatness."¹⁹³

4. Postwar *Forum*, Part I: "The American Century" Turned Outward

Part of the magazine's credibility as a postwar global voice for American architecture came from the fact that *Forum* and its publisher were invited to participate in the federal government's international cultural relations campaigns. For instance, in 1945 the Inter-American Office of the National Gallery of Art, using a grant-in-aid from the U.S. Department of State, asked Time Inc. to produce an exhibition entitled "History of American Architecture" that could travel to and

¹⁹³ Douglas Haskell, manuscript entitled "Gist of speech for FORUM Salesmen," 9 May 1956, page 9, Folder "83:2 Memos—Staff 1949-57 (folder 5 of 5)," Box 83, "Memos" File, DHP.

around Brazil.¹⁹⁴ In a report about the grant-in-aid program, the Inter-American Office's chief noted that Time Inc. had been commissioned because of the extensive *Life* and *Forum* photography archives and because the company could deliver "the services and the photographers of both magazines."¹⁹⁵ *Forum* and Time Inc. were in good company; among those the National Gallery of Art also commissioned with its State Department grant-in-aid were the Museum of Modern Art, the Walker Art Center and Barbara Morgan, a respected photographer specializing in images of dancers and dancing. And, although "History of American Architecture" was not the only architecture-related exhibition the program funded, *Record*, *P/A* and their publishers were conspicuously absent from the participants list. Moreover, the large show, which consisted of over 100 photographs mounted on 47 aluminum panels, also circulated within the United States for several years.¹⁹⁶ While for the National Gallery of Art and the State Department the domestic tour was meant to encourage support for this particular version of international diplomacy, for *Forum* the publicity and

¹⁹⁴ Margaret Garret, *Report of the Inter-American Office, National Gallery of Art: January 1944 - May 1946* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946): 1, 4 and 6.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 6.

¹⁹⁶ "To Illustrate Housing Trends," *The New York Times* (6 April 1947): R2. The latest reference to the show's domestic travel schedule is: "Straight Art Committee to Feature Pictorial Exhibition of 'Houses USA,'" *Cornell Daily Sun* (28 October 1950): 6.

exposure reminded its audience of Time Inc.'s reach and stature.¹⁹⁷

Importantly, *Forum's* contribution to the company's efforts to "send out through the world" examples of American cultural achievement did not extend only to political allies like Brazil, where they were reasonably assured of positive reception. Despite Luce's avowed Cold Warrior stance, or perhaps because of it, the "American Century" mission to share "technical and artistic skills" abroad even included Russia. *Forum's* editors and graphic designers participated in two different exhibitions there, in fact.¹⁹⁸ [Fig. 31]

Another variation of *Forum's* service as a self-appointed representative of American architecture was its defense, in April 1951, of the country's cultural landscape and its makers in response to a provocatively unflattering special issue of London-based *Architectural Review* (*Review*) entitled "Man Made

¹⁹⁷ Garret, *Report of the Inter-American Office*, 5.

¹⁹⁸ *Forum's* editors contributed two recent cover designs to an exhibit in Russia on American graphic design that was sponsored by the State Department in 1963. *Forum's* other exhibit in Russia, scheduled for 1964 and sponsored by the United States Information Agency, consisted of 10 posters entitled "Great Architecture of the Sixties." Over 500 institutions across the United States, including museums, libraries, banks and department stores, had already purchased the poster set from Time Inc. by the time the U.S.I.A. ordered it for their purposes abroad. Joseph Hazen, Jr., "Publisher's Note," *Architectural Forum* (December 1963): 1.

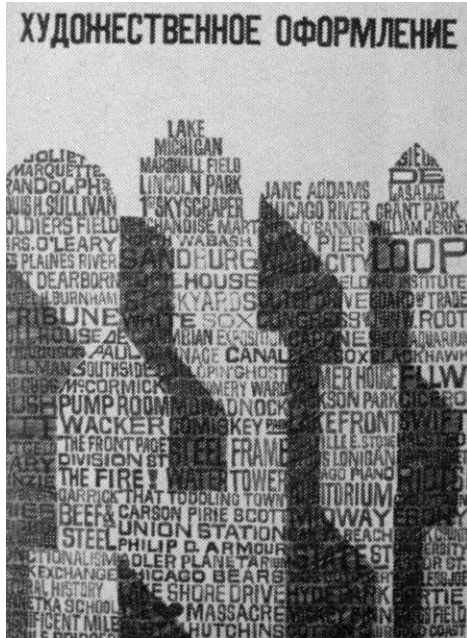


Fig. 31. Representative example of poster developed by Architectural Forum staff for exhibition in Russia, "Publisher's Note," *Architectural Forum* (December 1963): 1

America."¹⁹⁹ The introduction to *Forum's* answering editorial is worth quoting here in full:

For some years the more recondite among U.S. architects had been quietly enjoying their subscriptions to the ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW of London. Its attitude was civilized and its view world-wide. But late January these dotting Americans received a heavy jolt. The REVIEW had set forth on the war path directly against them; its special December issue had been intended, so the REVIEW said, 'to investigate the mess that is America, to attempt to discover why it has happened, and what, if anything, is to be done about it.' From there on out these stunned U.S. readers were to experience how an innocent savage feels when set upon by an outraged and consecrated

¹⁹⁹ "Man Made America," *The Architectural Review* (December 1950): 338-418; "A Reply To: 'Man Made America,'" *Architectural Forum* (April 1951): 158-159.

missionary. But the ultimate outcome was the realization that the art of creating a visually decent America calls for a new declaration of independence, a fresh use of uniquely American dynamics.²⁰⁰

By invoking America's colonial past and its associated implication of cultural immaturity, *Forum's* editors attempted to turn the British publication's critique back on itself, cleverly exploiting a specific historic relationship to situate the special issue's approach as elitist and archaic. Perhaps more noteworthy, however, is the fact that *Forum's* editors did not directly contradict *Review's* basic findings – by omission they seem to suggest that some of "Man Made America" was correct, even – and by the end of the introduction transformed the message into an "American Century"-style plea for renewed commitment from their constituency.

Forum's editors were not obligated to take a stance for or against *Review*. Indeed, neither *Record* nor *P/A* contained an acknowledgment of the existence of "Man Made America," much less a multi-page feature section response. That *Forum's* creators directly engaged British journalists implied their membership in the larger international community of architectural thinkers and writers, an assumption that simultaneously reflected their publishing house's status as a world-wide media corporation and their own confidence as postwar Americans. Moreover, *Forum's*

²⁰⁰ Emphasis is original. "A Reply To: 'Man Made America,'" 158.

active participation in the world's global architecture conversation carried more respect rather than less, at least as evidenced by the passionately supportive statements which British architectural journalists made when Time Inc. shuttered *Forum* in 1964. For instance, Reyner Banham, who was an editor at *Review* during the "Man Made America" episode, described *Forum* in an editorial about the magazine's closure as having "been, for decades, the main vehicle for thoughtful and responsible architectural opinion in America."²⁰¹ Similarly, in a private letter to Haskell the executive editor of *Review's* sister publication, *The Architect's Journal*, described *Forum* as "the major American architectural journal" and complained about the international architectural journalism community's loss, saying, "now we feel just that little bit more lonely and more vulnerable."²⁰²

Forum's competitors' lack of response also essentially freed *Forum's* editors to act in whatever manner suited their purposes best, which means that the "American Century" logic of their response evolved naturally from the internal Time Inc. context rather than as a result of pressure to differentiate themselves from outside rivals. As noted earlier, the Luce essay's core had been based on the notion that Americans already

²⁰¹ Banham, "A designers' Pugwash?" 300.

²⁰² Colin Boyne to Douglas Haskell, 3 July 1964, folder 43:1 "Personal--general, july-august 1964 (including forum demise) (folder 1 of 2)," DHP.

possessed the innate ability to achieve greatness and only required that fact to be pointed out to them in the proper manner. In this variation on that particular theme, *Forum's* editors took advantage of the opportunity to shove back against *Review's* overt snobbery on behalf of its American readership in order to also gently push those same readers to aspire to be worthy of their own potential.

Elsewhere in the same issue, *Forum's* editors underscored the point using a different strategy - this time openly acknowledging their use of photography to arouse a specifically America-centric response:

If you look only at the pictures in this issue of FORUM you will learn that there is much to stir your pride in the progress of American architecture...But when you read the type that goes with these pictures - including some of the small type too - you will find other things that will not only stir your pride but also, perhaps, help you solve some of your own design and building problems.²⁰³

Here, in a literal twist on Luce's "picture of an America," *Forum's* editors linked images, patriotism and action in a way that challenged their readers to create a better American built landscape. That this appeared alongside the "Man Made America" response suggested a direct relationship between what readers did thereafter and how the country would be perceived abroad - as if the magazine was not tasking readers with just improving

²⁰³ Editor's foreword to "Man Made America," *Architectural Forum* (April 1951): 83.

the country's architecture but, rather, encouraging them to make decisions that would be worthy of praise from magazines like *Review* in the future instead of censure.

5. Postwar *Forum*, Part II: "The American Century" and Democracy

While *Forum*'s outward-directed "American Century" efforts continued until the end of the magazine's association with Time Inc., in the late 1950s the editors also turned a critical eye inward on the country's built landscape. This occurred about the same time that Luce's attention refocused on architecture, first with the realization of a signature Time Inc. headquarters building in midtown Manhattan from 1956 until 1960 and then with his membership on the New York World's Fair planning board from about 1960 until the event ended in 1965.²⁰⁴ Within the context of those personal experiences came

²⁰⁴ The *Time* and *Life* Building is located on the west side of Sixth Avenue, between 50th and 51st Streets. It was designed by Wallace Harrison, of Harrison & Abramowitz & Harris, and built between 1956 and 1960. It sits directly across the street from the back of Rockefeller Center, that Harrison was also associated with and – not coincidentally – was also the location of Time Inc.'s headquarters offices before the *Time* and *Life* Building was constructed. The World's Fair was held in Queens in 1964 and 1965 but the planning started years earlier. Other members of the planning board with Luce included local businessmen, government representatives and so on. The former directly engaged him in the challenges of conceiving and executing an individual work of meaningful high-profile architecture, while the latter situated Luce inside conversations about the fair's large-scale design as well as about planning goals for the entire greater New York City area more generally. Together, these two projects offered him direct personal insights into various aspects of postwar building practice in this country that, despite the lack of documentary evidence, must have informed his attitudes toward architecture in some way.

clarification on what he thought the value of good building design could be to the emerging "American Century" and the place of *Forum* within that. Luce especially emphasized the connection between high-quality architecture and a stable democracy, which served as a kind of conceptual touchstone for the editors as they implemented *Forum's* American agenda in the magazine's last Time Inc. years.

Luce delivered his most complete public statement on American architecture during this period: a keynote address at the AIA's centennial celebrations in 1957, alternatively called "The Architecture of a Democracy" or "Good Architecture is Good Government."²⁰⁵ The fundamental question of his speech was whether democracy and good architecture could coexist. He asked, "Is real political freedom incompatible with pervasive beauty?"²⁰⁶ Luce based this on two observations which he feared might be connected: what he called "the appalling of ugliness in

²⁰⁵ The *Journal of the AIA's Centennial Celebration* special issue published Luce's speech in its entirety as "The Architecture of a Democracy." When an excerpt was published 12 years later as part of a posthumous anthology of Luce's writings, it was offered under the name "Good Architecture is Good Government." As a title, "The Architecture of a Democracy" has a slightly loftier rhetoric quality than "Good Architecture is Good Government," but the newer title repeats a sentence verbatim from the speech itself. Although the anthology's editor offers no explanation for the change, it may have actually been based on common usage at the time. For instance, the journal of a Pennsylvania-based architectural organization pointedly referred to the speech as "Good Architecture is Good Government" several times throughout its summary of the AIA's centennial meeting. Luce, "The Architecture of a Democracy;" John K. Jessup, introduction to "Good Architecture is Good Government," by Henry Luce, in *The Ideas of Henry Luce*, ed. John K. Jessup, 273-280 (New York: Antheneum, 1969); *The Charette: Tri-State Journal of Architecture & Building*, (June 1957): 22 and 27.

²⁰⁶ Luce, "The Architecture of a Democracy," 150.

the American scene and the degradation of democratic taste," on the one hand, and on the other the fact that the vast majority of history's great architectural works had been accomplished under imperial or otherwise non-democratic socio-political circumstances.²⁰⁷ His response was cautious optimism, not only in the possibility that Americans might eventually recognize architecture's importance but also in the people who already understood and who dedicated energy to inculcating the nation. "It's up to us to send the word out more vigorously," he declared in a statement that reused key wording from the "picture of an America" passage in "The American Century." But unlike the 1941 essay, his call-to-action in 1957 came with a more expansive justification of his belief that the country could lift itself out of its architectural morass:

...millions of Americans, not only the professionals, have begun to see that in our 20th Century, architecture is more than a building here and there, vitally important though each *good* building is. Architecture is a plaza, a civic center, a great redevelopment area. Architecture is a whole city. Architecture is the whole sweep of the continent. That is my answer to the nightmare doubts about the derby hat and the candy-striped motel. Not that all ugliness will be abolished...we do not have, we will not have any 'State' to decree our morals, our religion, our culture, our taste. But we do work at these things - and they work on us. The ideal will not leave us be. It nags us, prods us, inspires us. The vision of the good, the true and, yes, the beautiful, is like our conscience - it catches up with us sooner or later.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Emphasis is original. Luce, "The Architecture of a Democracy," 152.

Relating a "vision of the good, the true, and yes, the beautiful" to the human conscience was one of the most revealing turns of phrase in the whole speech. It implied a moral underpinning to the effort to "send the word out more vigorously" that echoed Luce's duty-oriented Protestant missionary personal background, suffused his professional self-identity as the founder of a successful publishing house and gave urgency to his "American Century" ideology. He held journalists and informed Americans, including himself, to this high standard, noting that it was up to "editors and enlightened citizens to make known the news" that architecture was a way to "build a better America."²⁰⁹ But Luce also urged the designers in his audience to actively contribute by expressing the American twentieth-century aspiration toward creating "the first modern, technological, humane, prosperous and reverent civilization" in

²⁰⁹ Additionally, Luce noted that the phrase "to build a better America" had a different connotation inside the architectural community than among the lay public - and that this was one of hurdles to materially improving the country's built landscape. He said:

...we are challenged to build a civilization. In the American idiom: we must build a *better* America! A curious fact strikes one at this stage. When an American today hears the words 'build a better America' he will understand it more readily in a figurative than in a literal sense. 'Let's have better education,' he will say, 'more pay for teachers, more scholarships - but let's don't spend too much money on 'bricks and mortar'!

the government buildings they created.²¹⁰ And he ended with a similarly high-rhetoric reminder of the larger stakes, saying:

I salute you in faith and in hope. In reasoned faith in our own fellow-Americans. In confident hope that the divine discontent which had led us to this hour will abide with us now and forever.²¹¹

In formulating the key components of *Forum's* inward turn, the editors seemed to have taken their cue from Luce and the ideas he proposed in his AIA speech. For instance, in a literal interpretation of his appeal to "send the word out more vigorously," the staff embarked on a public education campaign beyond the pages of the magazine to bring more Americans into the community of people who understood the basic differences between good and bad design. In typical Time Inc. fashion, the point was less about simply offering information and more about influencing the building-related choices regular folks would make in the future so that the country's built landscape as a whole would eventually benefit. And, like Luce's justification for acquiring *Forum* in 1932, his "American Century" logic in 1941 and the shape of the 1957 speech itself, this undertaking began from critique but the solution implied an underlying confidence in Americans' fundamental capacity for enlightenment. A message from the managing editor in the March 1962 issue offered this explanation, notable not only for its conceptual

²¹⁰ Luce, "The Architecture of a Democracy," 153.

²¹¹ Ibid.

fidelity to its Luce-inflected lineage but also its reiterative language:

Forum's ultimate purpose is to contribute significantly to a better America – better architecturally, better in terms of planning, and better to live in. To serve this purpose, FORUM long ago broadened its scope to interest not only architects but all those who participate in the building of buildings, including client-owners of all kinds. Today FORUM's audience is 62,000 subscribers, which conservatively means 200,000 readers with an interest in building. This is big by the standards of industry publications, but small compared with the number of people who need to learn about architecture if America is to be rescued from the man-made ugliness which is engulfing it.²¹²

Forum's editors interpreted the concept of a public education program from a variety of angles. Some tasks, like lecturing to various civic organizations, were things that architectural journalists at other publishing houses could and did do. But others were specific to *Forum's* Time Inc. situation, such as the editors' collaborations with their peers at *Time*, *Fortune* and *Life*, which was meant to improve those magazines' architectural reporting and sometimes resulted in the kind of especially high-visibility cross-publications discussed in Chapter 4.²¹³

²¹² Joseph Hazen, Jr., "Publisher's Note," *Architectural Forum* (March 1962): 1.

²¹³ Hazen claimed that *Forum's* assistance had helped all three of the sister publications win AIA awards. I could only find evidence of one AIA award, however: *Fortune's* Award for Outstanding Service to Architecture (by Non-Architectural Group, Society, or Business), bestowed in 1956. This award was simultaneously created and given to *Fortune* "for its series of stories on architecture over a period of many years" at the same committee meeting; *Fortune* ended up being the only entity to ever receive this award.

Forum's editors also exploited different kinds of media in order to reach an even larger proportion of the American population. In 1958, for instance, they produced a Time Inc.-sponsored film, entitled *The New Age of Architecture*, in which 16 high-profile building-oriented Americans discussed modern architecture.²¹⁴ Among the interviewees were the expected big-name architects such as Eero Saarinen, Frank Lloyd Wright, Buckminster Fuller, Wallace Harrison, Edward Durell Stone and so on. But there were also individuals who could bring other perspectives on the architectural process and the complexities of large-scale urban planning, such as Edmund Bacon, Robert Moses and Chicago real estate developer Herbert Greenwald.²¹⁵ This corresponded to the magazine's emphasis on the various kinds of people who valued building knowledge. With its emphasis on technological and economic commentaries as well as aesthetic

Additionally, Hazen suggested that Luce's honorary AIA membership in 1959 was also connected to the fact that *Forum's* editors had helped improve the quality of architectural reporting in *Time*, *Fortune* and *Life*. This is entirely possible, although I found no actual documentary evidence one way or the other. Hazen, "Publisher's Note," (March 1962): 1; Items 89-B-3-56 and 90-B-3-56, Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors of the American Institute of Architects, page 61, 27 February - 1 March 1956, Archive of the American Institute of Architects, Washington, D.C.; "Institute Awards," *Memo, a newsletter* (1 June 1959): 1.

²¹⁴ Joseph Krumboltz, *The New Age of Architecture* (New York: Time Inc. and Transfilm, 1958). *The New Age of Architecture* may have been the completed version of a very incomplete film entitled "Architecture 1977," which was screened at the AIA's centennial convention in 1957. The idea behind "Architecture 1977," to allow various well-known people to talk freely about architecture, was relatively well-received. However, the film itself was so roughly edited that the audience apparently struggled to follow its content. "'Architecture, 1977' by Time, May Not Win Oscar," *The Charette: Tri-State Journal of Architecture & Building*, (June 1957): 22.

²¹⁵ Transcript, *The New Age of Architecture*, Miscellaneous File, Box 94, no folder, DPH.

ones, the film also reflected *Forum's* thematic range. And, importantly, the official description of *The New Age of Architecture* stressed the moral aspects of architectural decision-making, which spoke directly of its Luce/Time Inc. origins.²¹⁶ The film reportedly premiered in Moscow and was presented in other international cities too, but was distributed widely in the United States by the AIA.²¹⁷ In the first four years, in fact, *Forum's* editors claimed it had been shown on television five times and at approximately 5,000 libraries and other such venues across the country.²¹⁸

A second important manifestation of *Forum's* inward-turned American agenda was the consistent critique of architectural developments in Washington, D.C. Indeed, feature articles about that city increased by about 35% per year after the introduction of overtly articulated criticism in the magazine in 1958.²¹⁹ Inasmuch as this functioned as a check on how designers had heeded Luce's call, it was almost as literal an interpretation of the AIA speech as the editors' public education campaign.

²¹⁶ The full official description is: "Architects, builders, and city planners discuss the esthetic, moral and economic implications of architectural design, and touch upon the problems of urban and suburban development, construction and traffic. Participants include Mies Van der Rohe, Eero Saarinen and Frank Lloyd Wright."

²¹⁷ "Magazine Notes," *New York Herald Tribune* (23 September 1958): B5.

²¹⁸ Hazen, "Publisher's Note," (March 1962): 1; "Ideas in Art Subject of Library Film Series," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (3 January 1961): B10.

²¹⁹ *Forum* presented about 35 feature articles about Washington, D. C. between 1932 and 1957, or about 1.35 per year on average. By contrast, in and after 1958 there were 13 feature articles, which averages to about 1.85 per year.

Haskell, in particular, was like-minded in this. He believed strongly that the symbolic stakes were higher in Washington, D.C. if the United States was really going to create world of "The American Century;" in the nation's capital, the center of domestic and international political power, architectural design had to enable the American democratic system to function smoothly while also drawing attention to the qualities that made the system's functioning special. For instance, in a feature commentary on the new Senate Office Building in 1959, entitled "Saying Nothing, Going Nowhere," Haskell took aim at the lack of visual drama in the two-story hearing rooms, where so much of the day-to-day work of an American-style compromise-based government takes place. He wrote:

As students of government well know, the very heart of the American legislative process lies in the committee system. These committees are where the senators meet constituents face to face in the heat of action. Here is the arena where advocates and opponents of bills fight out their sanguinary battles. Here is the laboratory where the legislators aided by hard-workings staff prepare and pursue their relentless fact-finding investigations...Yet the building where these arenas are concentrated, this veritable center of the government's performing arts, was treated by Architects Eggers & Higgins as a mere 'office building' in an illiterate classical shell!...The egalitarianism of American democracy is less of a marvel now than the capacity of free people in voluntary association to carry out complicated jobs. This triumph is just what a government building such

as the new Senate Office Building was fitted to celebrate. The chance is now gone.²²⁰

This considerable ire was not just directed toward new buildings or trends in Washington, D.C. either. Haskell and his editorial team also unambiguously criticized the Architect of the Capitol himself, J. George Stewart, for not actually being an architect and the politicians in Congress for allowing themselves to be swayed by people who were not really qualified to give disinterested architectural advice.²²¹ Within this context, Haskell was especially Lucean; with reform in mind, he accepted John F. Kenney's invitation to join the President's Council on Pennsylvania Avenue in 1962.²²² As the only architectural journalist who served on the Council, his presence brought *Forum's* critical positions on Washington, D.C.'s architectural fabric to the president's particular attention. Banham reported that Kennedy personally annotated the magazine's

²²⁰ Douglas Haskell, "Saying Nothing, Going Nowhere," *Architectural Forum* (August 1959): 137 & 198.

²²¹ "News," *Architectural Forum* (January 1959): 5.

²²² "The members of the Council," in *Report of The President's Council on Pennsylvania Avenue* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1964): n.p. Given Haskell's connection, it is not surprising that *Forum* published a summary of the President's Council report right after the document's release in early 1964. Whereas Haskell served as the Council's group editor in creating their report, he authored the introduction and conclusion himself for the *Forum* version. And, also not surprisingly, Haskell's remarks are quite a bit less diplomatic than what was delivered to the president. For instance, whereas the Council's report describes Pennsylvania's retail section as "drab," Haskell declared in *Forum* that its "low-lying business slums" were "a national disgrace." *Report of The President's Council*, 1; Douglas Haskell, "Pennsylvania Avenue," *Architectural Forum* (July 1964): 65.

special January 1963 issue on the topic "from cover to cover," in fact.²²³

Forum's new late-1950s emphasis on overtly articulated criticism had a clear community-building function, as discussed in Chapter 3, but viewed through the lens of the magazine's American agenda it also organically highlighted core national values such as freedom of speech and individual empowerment. The editors' role in this sense was not about telling readers what to think from on high - that would have been un-American. Rather, they contributed to a conversation they had nurtured for decades, a discourse whose continued good health reflected and helped sustain the strength of the American democratic process. The Washington D.C. focus amplified the symbolic qualities of all of this since the subject of the critique was the extent to which the city's built landscape embodied quintessentially American principles. And, as active participants in the community, *Forum's* editors were not just conscientious professionals but good citizens too. The magazine's head editor himself set the example.

²²³ Banham, "A designers' Pugwash?" 301.

6. The American Agenda as Justification, 1958 (and 1964)

Of course *Forum's* editors had no way of knowing that they were presiding over the last phase of the magazine's American agenda. From our perspective today, though, the targeted criticism in particular seems an appropriate terminus for a periodical that had started its life at Time Inc. from a similar place of frustration and with a similarly hopeful expectation that smart architectural journalism could provide a solution. The major difference was in the degree to which Luce and his colleagues assumed that creating "a better America" would be monetarily as well as aesthetically and morally satisfying; in the early years *Forum* appeared to be on track to turn a profit while by the late-1950s everyone, including Luce, had given up all hope that the business of the experiment would succeed.

The complicated reasons for *Forum's* meager financial performance, so essential to understanding the fullness of the magazine's history, are discussed in the next chapter. Here, the important point is that Luce justified continuing to publish *Forum* under the Time Inc. banner - for years after accepting the venture's red ink as permanent - not really because the magazine created a different kind of "architectural forum" and certainly not because of the public relations role it played but, rather, because of the contribution he thought it made to his larger

project to guide twentieth-century America's social-economic and cultural transformations. In fact, when *Forum's* business executives reported a \$100,000 loss (the equivalent to \$820,000 per year in 2014 dollars) to Luce at the end of the 1958 fiscal year, his response was to unambiguously re-commit. Using now-familiar language in his memorandum, he declared:

ARCHITECTURAL FORUM being truly a magazine of distinction and being truly a contribution to our stake in America, it can easily be justified if it only breaks even or loses up to \$100,000 a year for the next several years.²²⁴

To be sure, the amount *Forum* cost Time Inc. each year was probably very little when compared to the total amount the rest of the company's varied media endeavors earned. But Luce was a savvy businessman in addition to everything else - and frank opinion mattered in internal conversations about the financial sustainability of Time Inc.'s core periodicals. If Luce had not genuinely believed that *Forum's* "American Century" significance adequately compensated the company in lieu of monetary rewards, he would have shut the entire operation down. After publishing

²²⁴ Henry Luce to C.D. Jackson, memorandum dated 12 June 1958, "ARCH FORUM/HOUSE & HOME 1958" Subject File, TIA. It should be noted here that the following year Luce reiterated the importance of quality over profit, even as his thoughts about the amount Time Inc. ought to lose each year shifted a bit. In a memorandum to various Time Inc. executives involved with *Forum* and *House & Home*, he wrote: "The important thing about the FORUM is that it is a really good magazine...Financially the objective of the FORUM is not to 'make money' but to break even." Henry Luce, memorandum to Ralph Paine, 5 February 1959, "ARCH FORUM/HOUSE & HOME 1959 JAN-MAY" folder, Subject Files, TIA.

Forum for more than 25 years, no one would have accused Luce of not trying to make *Forum* work.

As with so many aspects of *Forum's* relationship with its publishing house, Luce's emphasis on the American agenda for this particular publication functioned as a strength in one sense but was also detrimental within other circumstances. It provided a rationale for the magazine's continued existence at Time Inc. that internal naysayers could not argue against since it was largely rooted in Luce's personal and long-standing faith in architecture's symbolic significance. This left with him when he retired in 1964, however, and there was simply no one in a position of power during the immediate post-Luce moment who believed in *Forum* enough to overlook its chronic financial problems. Most high-ranking executives had actually viewed the magazine as a liability for some time, in fact, and welcomed its closure. Even Luce's namesake son, born and raised in the United States and involved in Time Inc. management decisions since the mid-1950s, saw no meaningful reason to intervene when the decision was made to shut *Forum* down mere weeks after his father's departure.

VI: ON *FORUM'S* AUDIENCE: SUCCESSES AND FAILURES

A. Architectural Journalism in the Age of Audited Circulation Reporting

Although there had been efforts to collect official subscribership and advertising rate information in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, non-profit clearinghouses were eventually formed to assemble definitive, objective audited data. Independently-verified circulation reporting gave advertisers confidence that the information was correct, which eliminated the kind of questions about manipulation that have been leveled at Le Corbusier, for instance. And, this new practice also enabled advertisers to directly compare the data from similar publications before choosing where to spend their marketing budgets. One of the most important of these clearinghouses was the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC), formed in 1914. ABC separated periodical reporting into three classifications: magazines, farm publications and business publications. Each of these had their own internal logic; magazines collected their subscribers' geographic data in detail, business publications focused on their subscribers' occupational divisions and so on.²²⁵

²²⁵ To celebrate company's 100th anniversary in 2014, timeline and some scanned artifacts were added to its website:
<http://www.auditedmedia.com/centennial.aspx>

Time, *Fortune*, *Life* and similar mass-market periodicals created by other publishers reported circulation to ABC as magazines while *Record*, *Pencil Points-P/A* and other single-profession journals were categorized as business publications. *Forum* slid relatively easily under the business publications heading alongside its rivals before Time Inc. acquired it. As far as I can determine, no one ever seriously considered re-classifying *Forum* with magazines after its Luce-inflected transformation widened its scope beyond architects to encompass all of the American building industry's constituent professions.

The fact that Time Inc.'s *Forum* challenged the definition of the trade press but remained within it can seem a little counterintuitive from today's perspective. But of course the people involved in making those choices in the 1930s did not have the benefit of hindsight to know just how dramatically their assumptions and actions would impact the entire arc of *Forum's* future. What they knew was that the magazine's content emphasized a specific product and its audience was mostly people involved in making that product, two of the most basic criteria for trade publications. They knew there was no separate classification for reporting circulation as a mass-audience design-focused magazine, which would have provided an obvious second option. They also knew that Luce's vision for a Time Inc. architectural periodical had originated in frustration with

Fortune's inability to tackle building industry-specific issues in-depth, and *Forum* probably appeared decidedly less "mass-market" when compared with *Fortune* in that context. I suspect, too, they recognized that operating from within architectural journalism, which had largely served to reinforce the American building industry's inter-professional boundaries, could give the *Forum* challenge to those boundaries a real chance at influencing long-term change. And, for Luce, who observed in his "new *Forum*" prospectus that "the genius of our age is specialization," publishing a professional magazine that was appropriate to the era in which he lived.²²⁶ Some of the early *Forum* decision-makers at Time Inc. must have understood how difficult it was going to be to create and sustain a journal that appealed to many professions when the editors of competing magazines only had to really focus on one. But whether anyone anticipated the kinds of problems that eventually came from *Forum's* continued classification as a business publication cannot really be known.

The impact that audited circulation reporting had on the practice of architectural journalism in this country generally has not been studied at all. Looking specifically at *Forum's* history, however, it is clear that the fact that circulation

²²⁶ Luce, "The New *Forum*," page g, TIA.

could be tracked and confidently compared played an absolutely crucial role in *Forum's* Time Inc. life. That story begins with Luce, as is often the case with this magazine in particular and this company overall. Having started Time Inc. in 1923, less than a decade after the establishment of ABC, Luce was a member of the first generation of young journalist-entrepreneurs whose entire professional careers transpired within the era of audited circulation reporting. This placed a new obligation of transparency on men like him. For someone with Luce's youth, passion, creativity and business savvy, however, it also hinted at the possibility of new ways to formulate audiences.

I would argue that the core idea for Time Inc.'s *Forum*, which fused strategic editorial content together with cultivated circulation, rose out of this moment of experimentation. And it was not just about dreaming up a big idea for a new kind of journal - it was also about giving the editors responsible for implementing that vision the tools they needed to monitor their progress. ABC's data could be used as evidence, in other words, that the community that Time Inc. was nurturing with *Forum* really constituted something fundamentally different in real life as well as on the page. Over time, audited circulation reporting demonstrated that *Forum* was, indeed, expanding the definition of who the audience could be for an architectural journal. Ironically, though, when it eventually became clear

that advertisers did not view the unusual nature of this journal's subscribership as a positive attribute when considered against other architecture-oriented business publications, ABC's easily-compared data became an enormous problem. The same factor that had contributed so crucially to the origin of *Forum's* distinctive Time Inc. personality also helped accelerate its demise.

B. What *Forum's* Circulation Was - and Was Not

In late 1933, Howard Myers produced an internal report for Luce on the progress that had been made transforming *Forum* from a professional journal targeted mainly toward architects to one that would command building industry-wide attention. Myers and his staff relied on custom-created graphs, collages and drawings to deliver their mostly positive news. For the section outlining the professional diversity of *Forum's* expanded audience, the report offered Luce a two-page spread entitled "Get Between the Covers with the Men who Make the Building Market," which featured a drawing of a bed with the new cover design of *Forum* as its duvet.²²⁷ [Figs. 8 & 32] In a clever twist on the idea of being "between the covers," the upper half of 11 human figures lined the head of the bed where the pillows would be, the bottom

²²⁷ Howard Myers, et al, "Get Between the Covers with the Men who Make the Building Market," in *The Architectural Forum*, New York, 38-39 (October 1933), unprocessed *Architectural Forum* files, TIA.

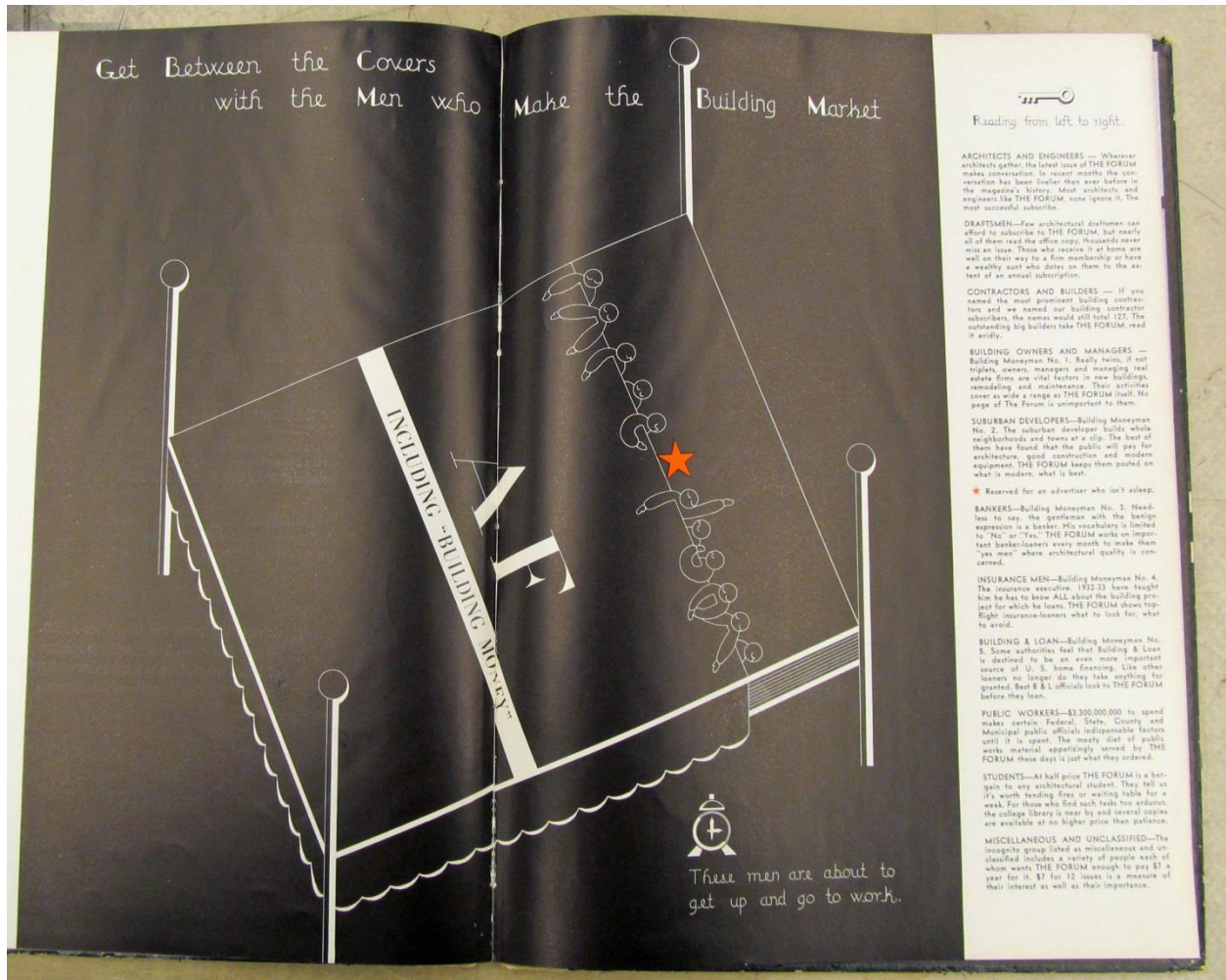


Fig. 32. Howard Myers, et al, "Get Between the Covers with the Men who Make the Building Market," *The Architectural Forum*, New York (October 1933): 38-39

half of their bodies ostensibly tucked under the bed's *Forum*-inspired duvet. An alarm clock sat nearby, annotated to inform Luce that these men were "about to get up and go to work." The drawing's extensive caption identified each of the figures individually by his profession - architects, draftsmen, builders, owners and building managers, bankers and so on. The caption also described each profession's relationship to *Forum*'s circulation, noting, for instance, that the "most successful" architects purchased the magazine themselves while draftsmen might have "a wealthy aunt who dotes on them to extent of an annual subscription."

Considered together, all of this spread's elements suggested that the new Time Inc. version of *Forum* was something more than a just magazine which disseminated architecture-related information. Instead, the report seemed to imply that *Forum* helped bring members of these allied professions together - meaningfully and in reality as well as in print. The number of figures in the bed hinted at quantity and breadth while the caption emphasized the fact that *Forum*'s subscribership was constituted by industry leaders and decision-makers.

Roughly 18 months later, the financial section of the "new *Forum*" prospectus attached numeric predictions to the idea of cultivating a professionally diverse subscribership. Luce wrote:

Circulation will consist of not less than 5,000 architects, between 10 and 15,000 building-money-men, city-planners and other specialists, and balance of 5,000 "laymen"...Importance, impact, outstandingness is what we lay our whole bet on. But if it's that good, 5,000 or more laymen cannot help coming along as sightseers...²²⁸

Importantly, this demonstrates that Time Inc.'s version of *Forum* was never really imagined to attract more than about 25% of its circulation from the country's community of actual architects - even as it was produced as a professional architectural magazine. And the emphasis on journalistic excellence - "Importance, impact, outstandingness" - implies a direct correlation with circulation. The question here, today, is whether the quantitative and/or qualitative nature of *Forum's* actual circulation ever reflected these claims and aspirations. The answer, generally speaking, is yes.

In June 1964, the last month circulation was reported before *Forum's* closure, the magazine's total paid circulation consisted of about 63,500 subscribers.²²⁹ [Fig. 9] The only time the magazine had achieved a higher circulation since the advent of audited circulation reporting was in late 1951, when *Forum*

²²⁸ Henry Luce, "Financial Prospectus of The New *Forum*," manuscript c. April 1935, page 2, "ARCH FORUM 1935 JAN-APRIL" Folder, *Architectural Forum* Subject Files, TIA.

²²⁹ Total paid circulation in June 1964: 63,445. Roll # P-15, Publisher's Statements, Historical Circulation Data File, ABC.

hit about 72,500 subscribers.²³⁰ Not surprisingly, its lowest-ever total paid circulation was reported in 1932, the year Luce acquired the magazine for Time Inc. in a bankruptcy sale. At that moment in its history, *Forum* had dropped to only about 5,200 subscribers.²³¹ The percentage increase, in other words, between how many people were paying for the magazine when Time Inc. announced its closure and how many people had paid for it in its first Time Inc. year was tremendous: roughly 1200%.²³² And, this percentage was even greater when calculated between *Forum*'s best and worst circulation years, which were also not coincidentally contained within the Time Inc. ownership period: nearly 1400%.²³³

Of course, the total paid circulation for the magazine's two major competitors, *Record* and *P/A*, also increased between 1932 and 1964. [Fig. 33] That said, both *Record* and *P/A* reported higher subscribership than *Forum* in 1932 and lower circulation totals than *Forum* in 1964, making their overall percentage increases significantly less substantial: about 460% for *Record* and 330% for *P/A*.²³⁴

²³⁰ Total paid circulation in December 1951: 72,528. Roll # P-10, Publisher's Statements, Historical Circulation Data File, ABC.

²³¹ Total paid circulation in December 1932: 5,257. Roll # P-5, Publisher's Statements, Historical Circulation Data File, ABC.

²³² Percentage increase between 1932 and 1964: 1206.86%.

²³³ Percentage increase between 1932 and 1951: 1379.65%.

²³⁴ Total paid circulation in December 1932: *Record* 8,793 and *P/A* 14,800. Total paid circulation in June 1964: *Record* 40,500 and *P/A* 49,035. Percentage increase between 1932 and 1964: *Record* 460.59% and *P/A* 331.32%. Due to damage

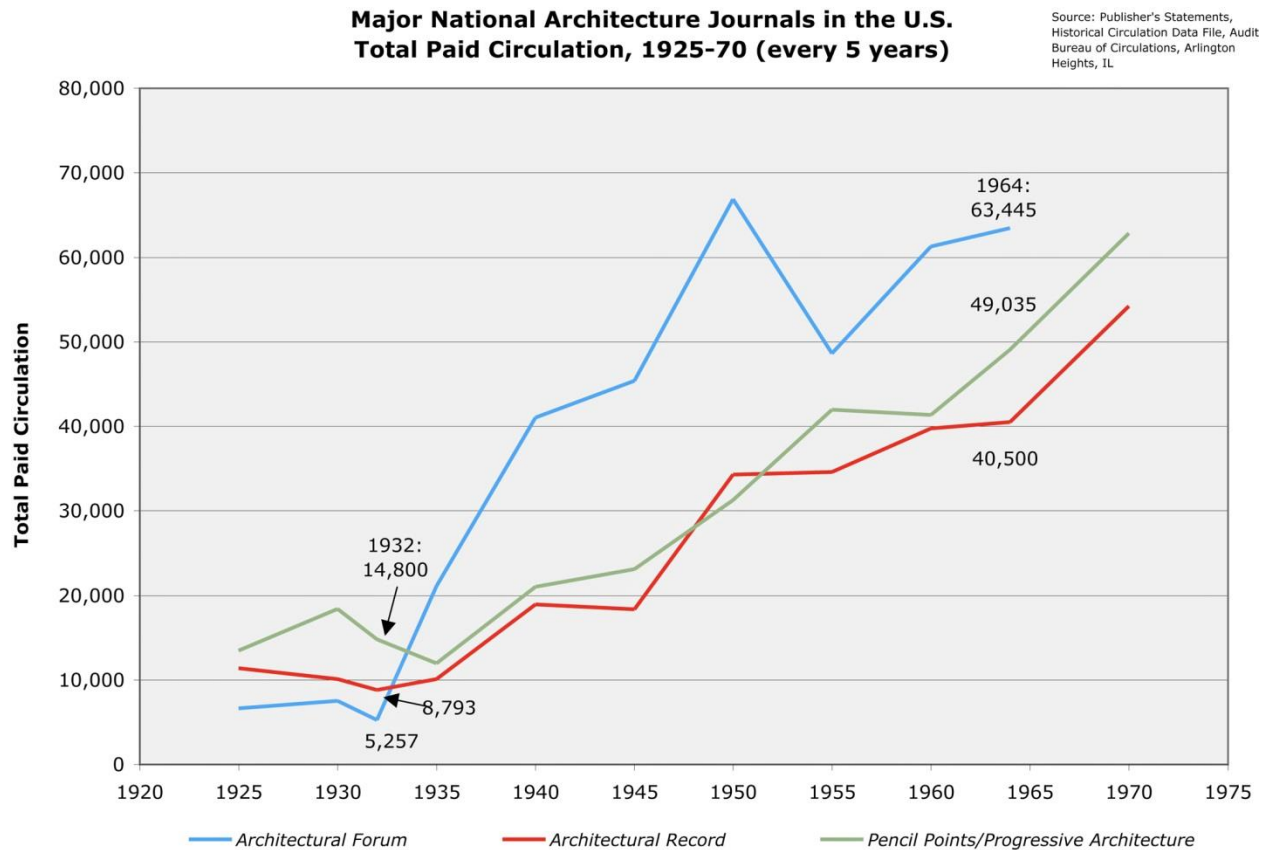


Fig. 33. Major National Architecture Journals in the U.S.
Total Paid Circulation, 1925-70 (every 5 years)

No one at any of the three magazines ever publicly disputed these numbers or their implication. When judged in terms of paid subscriptions it was clear that the Time Inc. version of *Forum* dominated professional architectural journalism in this country during virtually all of the 1932-64 period. This is not

on the P/A 1932 Publisher's Statement, the total paid circulation was not legible after the "8" in the "14,8xx" number. The total has been listed as "14,800" here as a result, which is sufficient for the purposes of the current comparative study. Rolls # P-5 and P-15, Publisher's Statements, Historical Circulation Data File, ABC.

surprising. *Forum's* much wider-ranging editorial task attempted to engage whole groups of people involved with building that had never really been courted before by professional architecture journals, which gave it a much larger potential audience than its more narrowly-focused rivals. And, Time Inc. easily pitched *Forum* directly to the millions of American who subscribed to its other magazines. Figuratively - and sometimes also literally - *Forum* promised many more people a seat at the table.

It is important to note that *Forum's* dominance in terms of number of subscribers developed in spite of the fact that this magazine's annual subscriptions consistently cost about 20% more than those for *Record* and *P/A*. With cheaper options easily available, in other words, many thousands of people still seemed to think their *Forum* purchase came with added value.²³⁵ Moreover, the higher *Forum* rate would have presumably encouraged more subscription sharing - the so-called "pass-along" effect - making it entirely likely that *Forum's* total readership was larger than its total paid subscribership by an even greater

²³⁵ The Publisher's Statements these magazines submitted to ABC included single-copy prices as well as one- and two-year annual subscription rates. Although *Forum* was consistently more expensive than *Record* and *P/A* in all of these price categories, a direct comparison of the one-year annual subscription rates was the most relevant for this study. In this case, a one-year subscription to *Forum* cost an average of \$1 more than its rivals in any given year, or roughly 20% more. For instance, an annual subscription in 1940 cost: *Forum*, \$4; *Record* and *Pencil Points*, \$3. In 1950: *Forum*, \$5.50; *Record*, \$4.50; and *P/A*, \$4. In 1960: *Forum*, \$6.50; *Record*, \$5.50; and *P/A*, \$5. Rolls #7, 9, 13 and addendum #4, Publisher's Statements, Historical Circulation Data File, ABC.

percentage than the in-house multipliers its rivals used for their own subscriber-to-reader calculations.²³⁶

When considered qualitatively, *Forum's* circulation was obviously different from its more traditionally-defined competitors in several crucial ways. Professional heterogeneity was one of these; compared to *Record* and *Pencil Points-P/A*, the *Forum* experiment's redefined "architectural forum" succeeded in attracting a genuinely diverse subscribership. For instance, whereas over half the total number of *Record* and *P/A* subscribers identified themselves as architects, draftsmen or designers, at *Forum* the same category never rose above one-third of the magazine's total paid circulation after the "forum" editorial mission was officially announced in 1935.²³⁷ [Fig. 34] In many years, in fact, that percentage came closer to one-quarter and at its lowest point, in 1945, self-identified design-oriented professionals only accounted for 13% of *Forum's* total

²³⁶ There was no standard "pass-along" multiplier for architectural journalism; anything between about 2.5 and 4 was considered reasonable. Magazine sales staff attempted to use "pass-along" calculation for selling advertising because it seemed better than circulation data at informing potential advertiser about roughly how many actual readers might really see their advertisements. Unlike the circulation data these magazines reported to ABC, though, "pass-along" calculations were not audited. This, along with the lack of standardization, makes meaningful comparisons of readership - as opposed to subscribership - essentially impossible for a study like this one. [John Morris Dixon, email communication with the author, 25 May 2013.]

²³⁷ Total number of architects, designers and draftsmen reported as subscribers in December 1935: 7,062. Total paid circulation in December 1935: 21,071. Correction Roll #4, Publisher's Statements, Historical Circulation Data File, ABC.

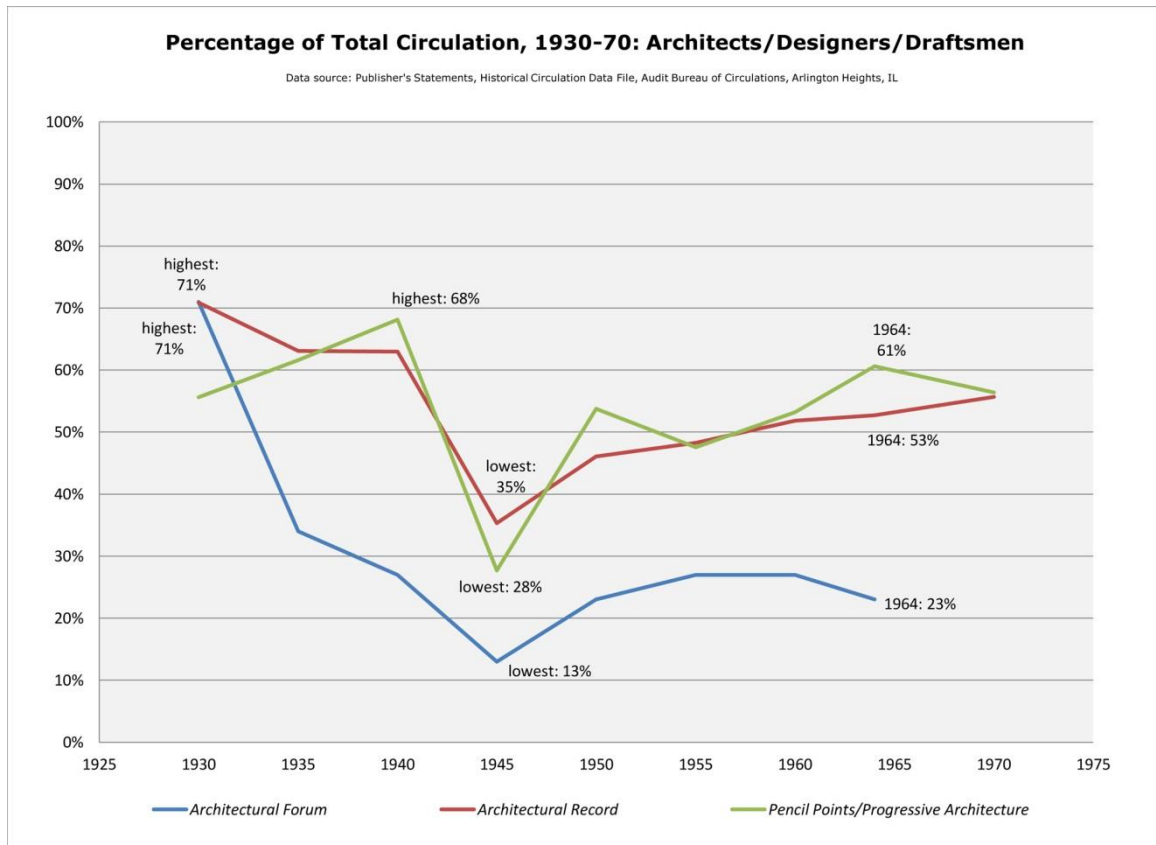


Fig. 34. Percentage of Total Circulation, 1930-70:
Architects/Designers/Draftsmen

subscribership.²³⁸ This meant that even though *Forum's* overall circulation was always much higher than that of its direct competitors, the actual number of design-oriented professionals who purchased *Forum* was much lower than for the more

²³⁸ Total number of architects, designers and draftsmen reported as subscribers in December 1945: 5,761. Total paid circulation in December 1945: 45,359. Additionally, it is important to note that the number of subscribers in these and most other categories fell for all the architectural magazines during World War II. This is likely to have been a function partly of reporting, though, since the number of subscribers self-identifying as armed forces personnel increased. It is also likely that some people stopped subscribing to their professional magazines altogether during the war. Roll #P-8, Publisher's Statements, Historical Circulation Data File, ABC.

traditionally-oriented professional journals. In June 1964, for instance, *Forum's* design category of subscribers totaled about 14,500 (23%) while *Record's* was about 21,300 (53%) and *P/A's* about 29,700 (61%).²³⁹ Even if there were any way to accurately adjust all three magazines' data for their respective "pass-along" effects, it is hard to imagine enough architects, draftsmen and designers sharing their *Forum* subscriptions to close such a significant gap.

Engineers did not subscribe to professional architectural journals in large numbers during the mid-twentieth century. Among those, however, *Forum's* percentages were clearly the lowest of the three major national magazines and in obvious decline at the end of its Time Inc. years. The best *Forum's* sales staff had done was 7%, in 1940, while the number of engineers subscribing to *Forum* was at only 2% of the total in June 1964.²⁴⁰ *Record*, which was editorially geared toward engineers more than any other professional except architects, had an average engineer subscriber rate of about 10% during the 1932-64 period, and was at 13.5% in June 1964. *Pencil Points-*

²³⁹ Total number of architects, designers and draftsmen reported as subscribers in June 1964: *Forum* 14,504, *Record* 21,339 and *P/A* 29,713. Roll #P-15, Publisher's Statements, Historical Circulation Data File, ABC.

²⁴⁰ Total number of engineers reported as subscribers in December 1940: 2,797. Total number of engineers reported as subscribers in June 1964: 1,166. Rolls #P-7 and P-15, Publisher's Statements, Historical Circulation Data File, ABC.

P/A, meanwhile, had an average engineer subscriber rate of about 7% and was at 9% in June 1964.²⁴¹

Like engineers, people associated in some manner with the business of architecture did not typically subscribe to professional architectural magazines in substantial amounts. However, the percentage of subscribers in those categories was always relatively high for *Forum* - routinely much more so than designers. This was a type of subscriber that Time Inc. courted explicitly, in fact, especially at first via *Fortune*. At its best the percentage of subscribers self-identifying as contractors, realtors, bankers, building products manufacturers, institutional clients and so on reached 48%, in 1940. In June 1964 it was about 35%.²⁴² *Record*, by contrast, averaged about 14% subscribership in these categories and was at 16% in June 1964;

²⁴¹ Total number of engineers reported as subscribers of *Record* in June 1964: 5475. Total number of engineers reported as subscribers of *P/A* in June 1964: 4408. Roll P-15, Publisher's Statements, Historical Circulation Data File, ABC. Also, it should be noted that the fact that engineers did not subscribe to professional architectural journals was not based on the fact that they did not subscribe to any magazines. Indeed, *Engineering News Record*, the major nationally-circulated engineering trade journal during this period, had an average circulation of about 53,000 during *Forum's* Time Inc. years. Correction Roll #4 and Rolls #P-7, P-8, P-10, P-11, P-13 and P-15, Publisher's Statements, Historical Circulation Data File, ABC.

²⁴² The "individuals planning to building" group was not always separated into its own category so it cannot be included here as part of the comparative calculation. Total number of builders and contractors, realtors, bankers, corporations and institutions, and building materials manufacturers, distributors and dealers in December 1940: 19,835. Total number of subscribers in the same categories in June 1964: 22,512. Rolls #P-7 and P-15, Publisher's Statements, Historical Circulation Data File, ABC.

Pencil Points-P/A averaged about 10% in these categories and was at about 14% in June 1964.²⁴³

Luce and his *Forum* staff did not aspire to just high circulation numbers or broad professional diversity; they also imagined this magazine as the American architectural journal that especially attracted building industry leaders and upper-rank decision-makers. Their claims to have actually achieved that goal went unsubstantiated until 1945, when circulation data auditors began requiring publishers to break down individual subscriber type totals by position in their respective corporate or institutional hierarchies. This led to a much more complex circulation data matrix, including subfields such as "General Managers," "Supervisory Staff" and so on. Unfortunately, the subfield that corresponded to the kind of building industry leaders *Forum* really wanted to engage, "Owners & Corporate Executives," also included subscriptions that were purchased

²⁴³ Total number of builders and contractors, realtors, bankers, corporations and institutions, and building materials manufacturers, distributors and dealers for *Record* in June 1964: 6,449. Total number of subscribers in the same categories for *P/A* in June 1964: 6,754. Roll #P-15, Publisher's Statements, Historical Circulation Data File, ABC. Like engineers, these individuals also had their own narrowly-defined nationally-circulated trade journals, which also reported relatively robust circulation. The major periodicals associated with the business of architecture in mid-twentieth century America included *American Builder*, *Building Supply News*, *Buildings and Buildings' Management*, *National Real Estate and Building Journal* and *Banking*. The average total number of subscribers for all these publications combined during the 1932-64 period was about 150,000. In other words, there was a trade press culture among these professions, just as there was among architects and engineers; these business-oriented individuals simply did purchase *Record* and *Pencil Points-P/A* in meaningful quantities. Correction Roll #4 and Rolls #P-7, P-8, P-10, P-11, P-13 and P-15, Publisher's Statements, Historical Circulation Data File, ABC.

under a company name generally. This makes drawing definitive conclusions from these numbers more complicated; although any subscriber could "pass along" his copy to anyone else, purchasing a subscription under just a company's name strongly suggests sharing as a major intention.

Still, even if *Forum's* higher annual subscription price made its ratio of "Company Name" shared subscriptions slightly higher than its rivals', the circulation data suggests some general conclusions. First, as a percentage of total circulation, the number of *Forum* subscribers who self-identified under "Company Name" or as owners, corporate executives, general managers and managers was not exceptional at all; it was roughly the same as that of *Record* and only a little more than *P/A*. [Fig. 35] In 1945, for instance, *Forum's* percentage was 56% as opposed to *Record's* 53% and *P/A's* 38%. By June 1964, its percentage was essentially the same while *Record's* and *P/A's* had both risen a bit.²⁴⁴ The point here is that *Forum* was essentially an average professional architecture journal when measured in this way: roughly half of all subscribers held important decision-making professional positions. Any additional respect *Forum* was afforded was based on other factors.

²⁴⁴ *Forum*: 55%; *Record*: 64%; and *P/A*: 44%

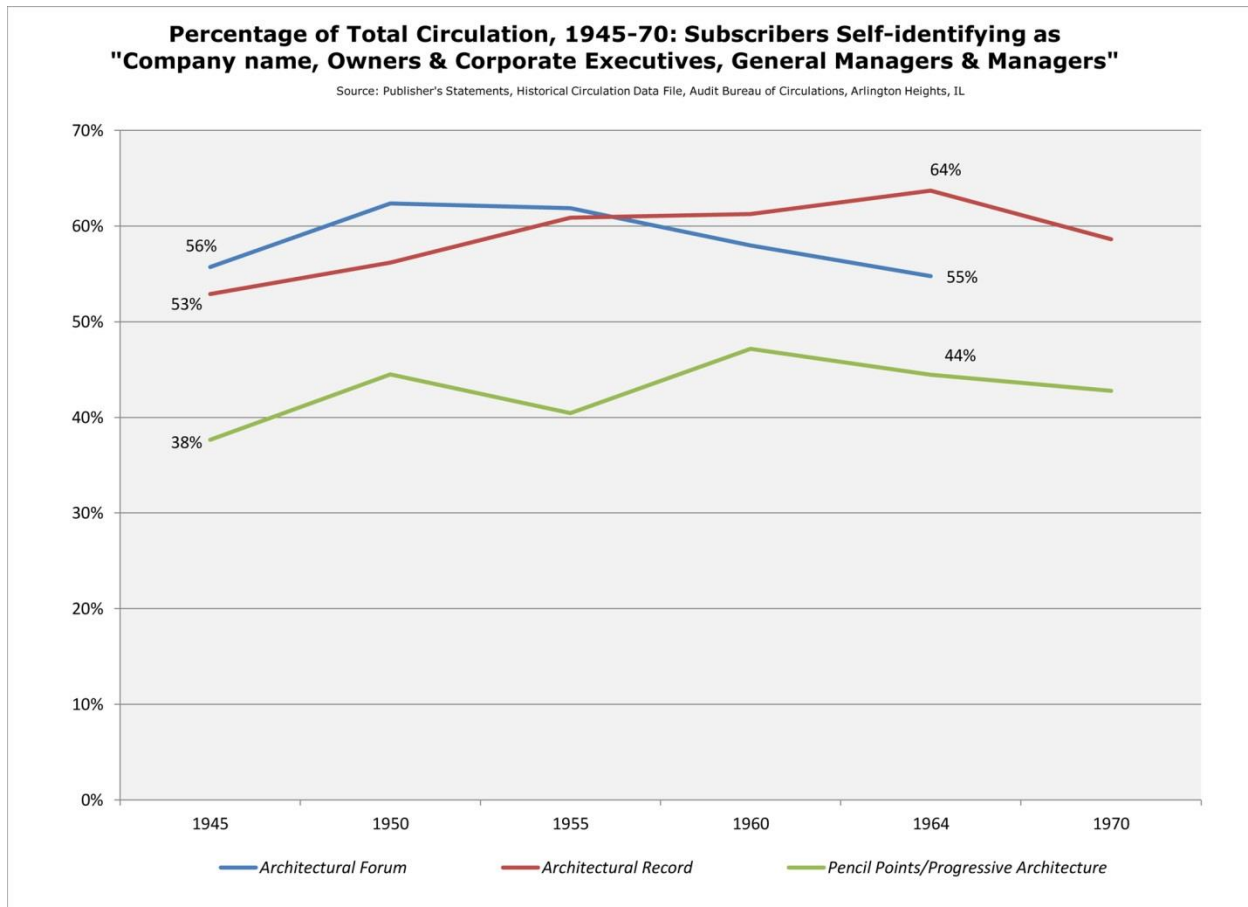


Fig. 35. Percentage of Total Circulation, 1945-70: Subscribers Self-identifying as "Company name, Owners & Corporate Executives, General Managers & Managers"

Next, the situation was almost exactly the same when the number of subscribers in upper-level professional positions was measured only as a percentage of the architects, designers and draftsmen who subscribed rather than as a percentage of total overall circulation. [Fig. 36] In this case, when publishers first started reporting data according to these subfields in

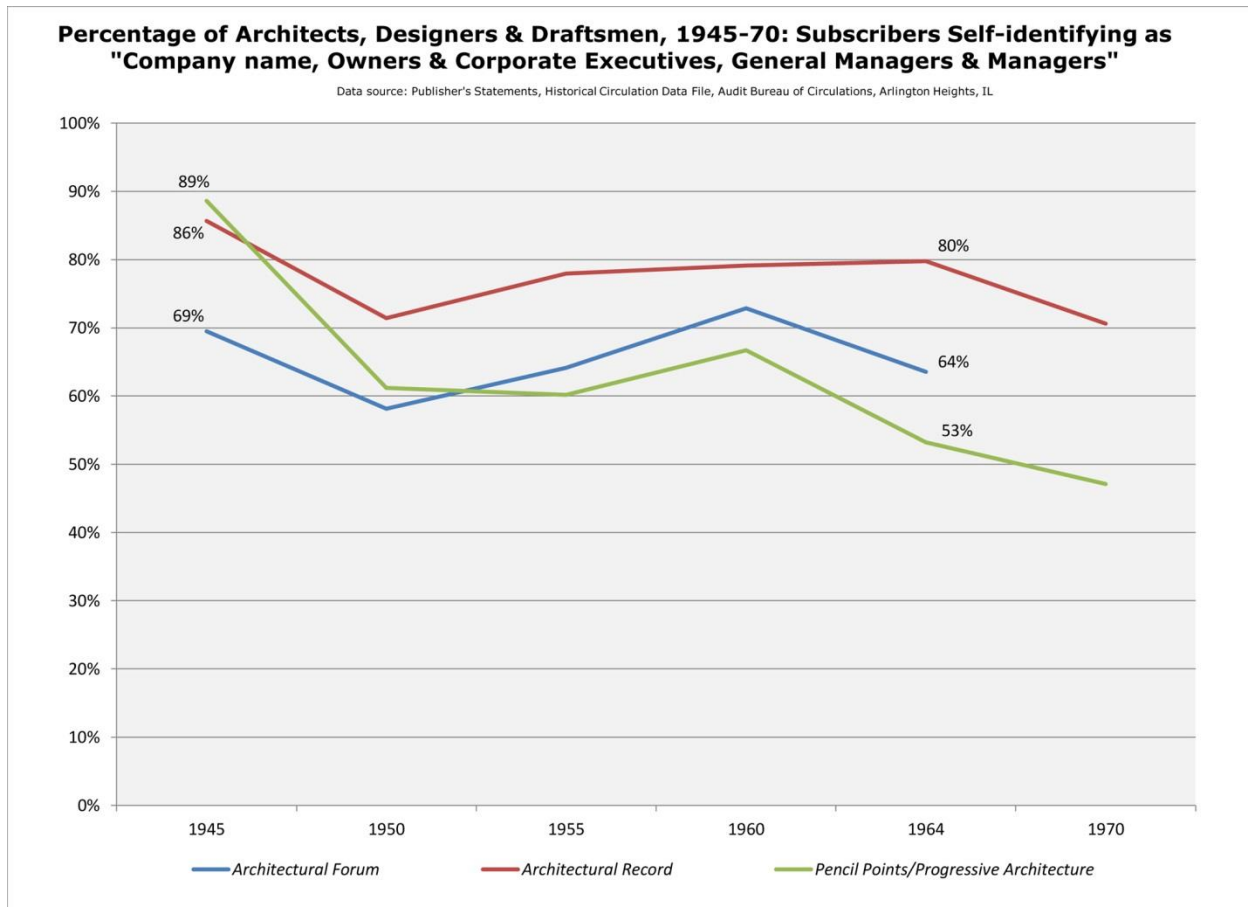


Fig. 36. Percentage of Architects, Designers & Draftsmen, 1945-70: Subscribers Self-identifying as "Company name, Owners & Corporate Executives, General Managers & Managers"

1945, *Forum's* percentage was the lowest, at 69%, while *Record's* and *P/A's* were roughly equivalent, at 86% and 89% respectively. But by 1964, *Forum's* percentage was again in the middle and almost unchanged, while *Record's* percentage was again

the highest and *P/A*'s was still the lowest.²⁴⁵ As a result, the general conclusions would be the same as before: there was a typical average percentage for architectural journals and *Forum*'s circulation data placed it solidly within that milieu when measured in this way.

The difference between *Forum* and its two nearest competitors is spectacular, however, when the circulation data for "Company Name" and upper-rank professionals among the kinds of subscribers that were likely be major or repeat clients is compared. [Fig. 37] In ABC's nomenclature, these were the commercial, industrial and institutional data fields. The relative percentages among the three magazines started out at their closest in 1945, with *Forum* at 36%, *Record* at 20% and *P/A* at 10%. By 1964 the gap between them, already dramatic, widened even more to 60% for *Forum* as opposed to just 9% for *Record* and 2% for *P/A*. Since *Forum* also had so many more commercial, industrial and institutional subscribers than *Record* or *P/A*, the raw numbers behind the 1964 percentages are worth noting here: about 5000 for *Forum* in contrast to about 400 for *Record* and only about 100 for *P/A*.²⁴⁶ This was the part of *Forum*'s circulation that mattered most to Luce - that his magazines were chosen by the business leaders of American society - and for the

²⁴⁵ *Forum*: 64%; *Record*: 80%; and *P/A*: 53%

²⁴⁶ The actual numbers are: 5058 for *Forum*; 387 for *Record*; and 95 for *P/A*.

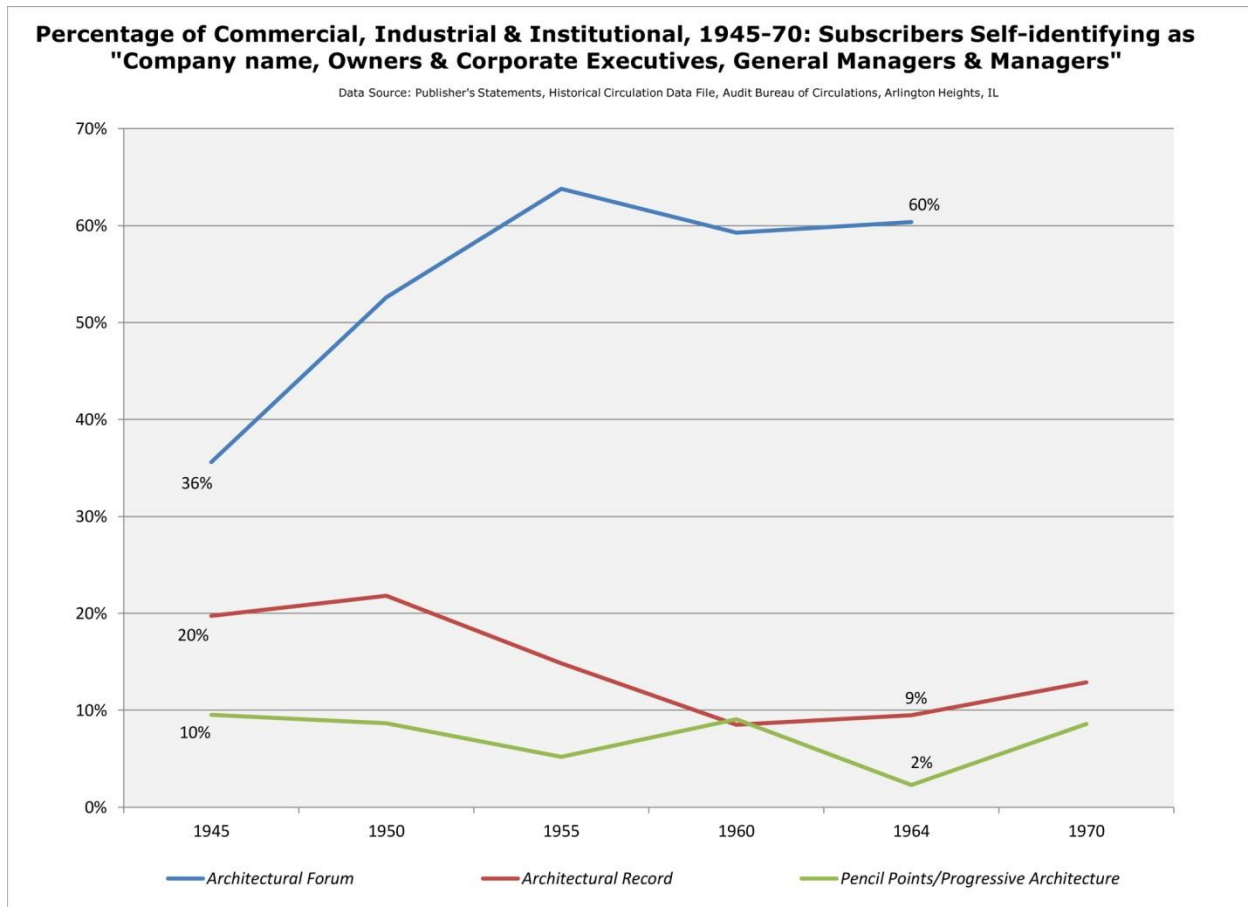


Fig. 37. Percentage of Commercial, Industrial & Institutional, 1945-70: Subscribers Self-identifying as "Company name, Owners & Corporate Executives, General Managers & Managers"

same reason it was also likely to have been the part which benefited most from *Forum's* connection to *Fortune*.

In sum, *Forum* had significantly more total subscribers than its competitors, the number of actual readers was possibly even higher than what *Record* and *P/A* could reasonably claim, the overall professional complexion of the group that associated

themselves with *Forum* was also much more mixed and as a group the subscribers who were potential clients tended to be of higher professional rank than the *Record* or *P/A* subscribers reported in those categories. Time Inc. was not able to capture a large portion of the audiences for other kinds of building industry journals, such as the major periodicals for builders and engineers, but within the context of architectural journalism in this country *Forum's* subscription sales staff had managed to nurture the kind of relatively large, relatively diverse and relatively influential community around the magazine that had been envisioned early on.

C. Why *Forum's* Circulation Really Matterred

Forum's distinctive circulation was important in both pragmatic and conceptual ways, sometimes simultaneously. For instance, the magazine's dominance in terms of total overall circulation was significant to *Forum's* editors on a day-to-day basis because it gave them the leverage they needed to routinely insist on coveted exclusive publication agreements. These agreements, in turn, cultivated *Forum's* reputation as only profiling the best contemporary work, which then made people even more amenable to exclusivity when it was offered; as John Morris Dixon has observed, "It was every architect's ambition to

have work published in *Forum*."²⁴⁷ From a conceptual perspective these agreements also underscored the ideal of leadership characteristic of *Forum*'s community spirit, which was one of the major goals for the entire endeavor.

The most important reason why the distinctive character of *Forum*'s circulation mattered, though, was the expectation that it would translate into a real and productive sense of community - that it was possible for this magazine to nurture the kind of inter-professional collegiality which would eventually yield better and more meaningful American architecture. This idea formed the core of Luce's *Forum* vision from the very beginning, and the fact that the magazine's circulation continued to expand and diversify over time sustained his and others' commitment to it. Community was more-or-less a given at magazines like *Record* and *P/A*, where its narrowly-defined target audience did not need a journal to create shared experiences because they already had enough in common to feel connected. Community - in reality as well as on the page - was an existential matter for *Forum*'s editors, though, since the point was to alter architectural decision-making in this country by fostering dialogue.

It is not surprising that Myers observed in his 1933 report to Luce that "the latest issue of THE FORUM makes

²⁴⁷ Dixon, "Paul Rudolph & the Press."

conversation."²⁴⁸ Similar claims were made throughout *Forum's* Time Inc. life, in fact, and it is clearly true in the sense that the company regularly hosted roundtables, symposia, luncheons and the like, bringing together representatives of various building-related field and sometimes resulting in workable solutions to complicated problems. As significant as these high-profile collaborations might have been, however, they were few and far between in comparison with the much smaller-scale inter-professional encounters an actively working architect would have negotiated on any given day: talking to an engineer on the phone; meeting a client over lunch; reviewing permit requirements at the local city planning department; preparing presentation drawings for a loan submittal book; answering a contractor's questions about a particular specification. Whether *Forum* helped facilitate those interactions is much harder to know, perhaps even impossible. The potential was certainly there, partly because the magazine was specifically edited to provoke dialogue but mostly because the subscribership was so wide and varied that the chances of coming across other *Forum* subscribers through the typical daily practice of architecture was relatively high. And in the moment the magazine provided that common ground - if that ever happened - *Forum* might have

²⁴⁸ "Get Between the Covers....," 39, TIA.

actually achieved its creators' and readers' larger "forum" aspirations.

There is one study whose findings suggest that *Forum* may have positively insinuated itself into the relationship between architect and client, in particular.²⁴⁹ Conducted jointly by Columbia University's School of Architecture and Graduate School of Business in 1955, it suggests that reading *Forum* was associated with slightly more expensive and more visible architectural work. The study polled architects that self-identified as regular readers of *Forum*, *Record* and *P/A* and, among many other things, asked for representative project costs for 19 different types of buildings.²⁵⁰ In response, *Forum* readers reported the highest median project values for 11 out of those building types and values that were either mid-range or tied in the remaining eight building type categories. By contrast, *Record's* readers reported the highest values for two building types and the lowest values for six building types.

²⁴⁹ Columbia University, Time Inc., and Erdos & Morgan Research Consultants, *A Report on Registered Architects in the U.S., 1955*, 45-63. It should be noted here that Time Inc. and the research firm of Erdos & Morgan technically share authorship of this study - Time Inc. because this was the funding source and Erdos & Morgan because this was the group that actually sent out the survey forms and compiled the data. However, professors in Columbia's School of Architecture and Graduate School of Business were responsible for developing the study and analyzing its results, and the report's authors emphatically point out that the surveyed architects were not informed of who was undertaking or funding the study. There is no mention of the study in *Forum*, either, which might have otherwise hinted at Time Inc.'s involvement and therefore skewed the results.

²⁵⁰ Columbia University, et al, *A Report on Registered Architects*, 45-63.

And, *P/A*'s readers reported the highest values for two building types and the lowest values for 11 of the 19 surveyed building types. [Fig. 38] Since the study also confirmed what the magazine's ABC circulation data had always implied - that *Forum* had fewer regular architect readers than *Record* and *P/A* - the average median project value per *Forum* reader was even higher than that of its competitors.²⁵¹

According to the Columbia University study, *Forum* readers also tended to have more visible projects, especially in terms of building types related to the postwar housing boom. In particular, *Forum*'s readers reported the highest comparative values for nearly all of the types associated with the daily life of regular Americans: houses and housing projects; apartments; churches; educational buildings; recreation buildings; stores and shopping centers; public and government buildings; factories; and office buildings. Indeed, banks were essentially the only building type Americans would have encountered routinely in which *Forum* readers did not report the highest median project value.

By contrast, *Record*'s readers reported the highest values for hospitals and theaters, which were building types appropriate to an editorial personality that emphasized the more

²⁵¹ My own calculations, based on the study's published project medians, yield a per reader average of \$60.79 for *Forum*, \$55.63 for *Record* and \$57.49 for *P/A*.

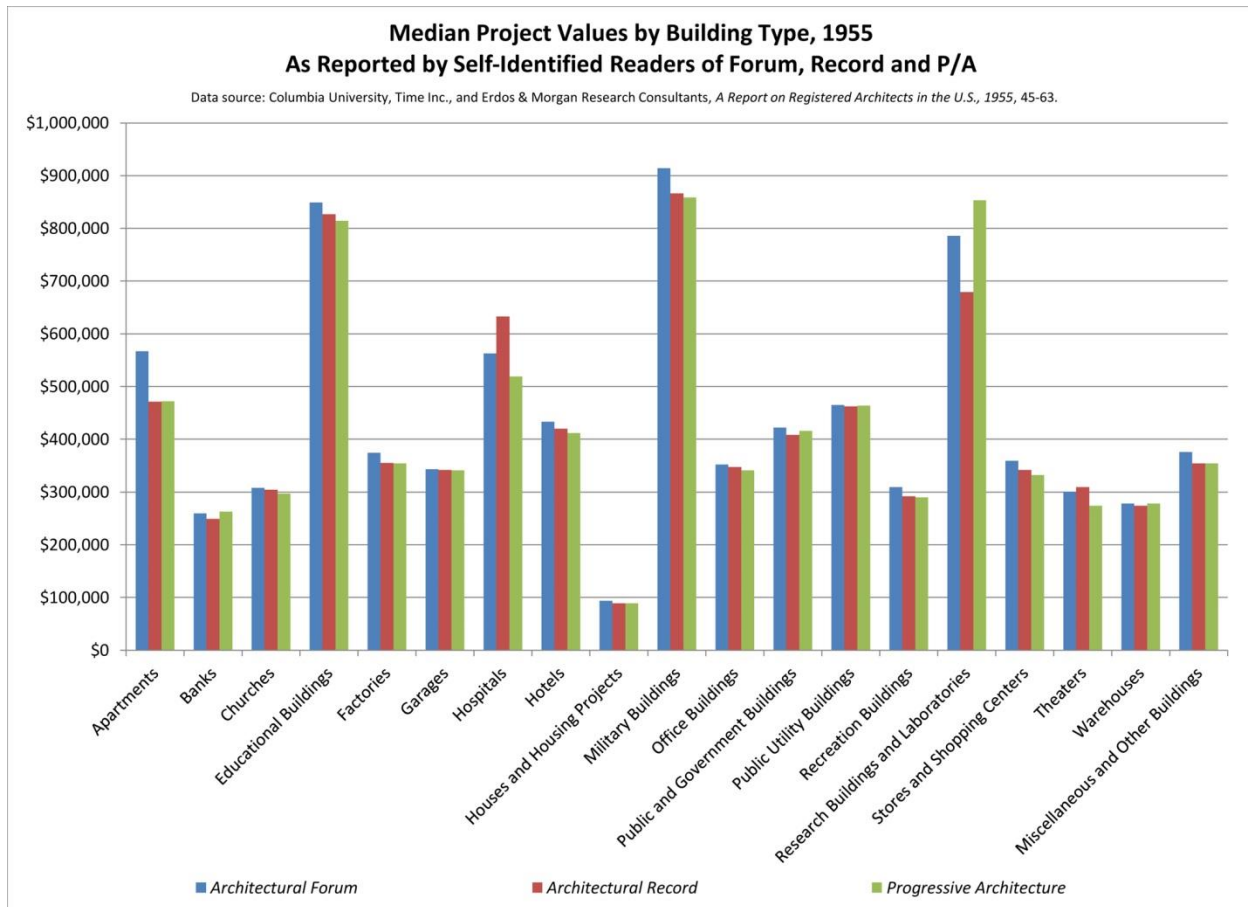


Fig. 38. Median Project Values by Building Type, 1955, As Reported by Self-identified Readers of *Forum*, *Record*, and *P/A*

technical aspects of architecture and engineering but not necessarily daily-use building types for most Americans. And, although *P/A* readers reported the highest value for banks they also reported the highest value for the research buildings and laboratories category, which tended to be particularly expensive and followed *P/A*'s editorial focus on artistic experimentalism but were used much less frequently by regular Americans than the

kinds of buildings that *Forum's* readers were commissioned to create. Importantly, "use" and "visibility" often energized each other. The most dramatic example of this among *Forum's* readers would have been houses, the most common building type in terms of direct personal spatial experience and in terms of appearing in advertisements, newspaper and popular magazine articles, television shows and so on.

None of this is to say that the quality of the buildings that *Forum's* architect readers produced was higher than that of equivalent readers of *Record* or *P/A*. Rather, the point here is that - at least around the time this single study was completed - there was something intangible about *Forum* that correlated to architectural commissions with the potential to tangibly impact the postwar American built landscape. What that "something" about *Forum* might have been is admittedly so ephemeral as to be essentially invisible to historians looking back on the period today. That said, I suspect that the dynamic documented in the Columbia University study was somehow connected to *Forum's* much greater number of commercial, industrial and institutional subscribers. Since these subscribers amplified *Forum's* perception as the American businessman's architectural journal, for instance, perhaps the architects who read *Forum* regularly were either naturally more business-savvy themselves or purposefully set out to become adroit at navigating the business

aspects of their profession. Or, perhaps the welcoming environment Time Inc. created for potential clients helped these people feel more confident engaging with the architects they hired, and they authorized higher budgets and/or more visible projects as a result. The latter, in particular, is probably what the creators of *Forum* would have preferred since it could have been interpreted as precisely the kind of productive actual collaboration that they were trying to encourage through the magazine.²⁵²

There was only one aspect of how *Forum's* circulation was not defined that can be viewed in a positive light: the nature of the magazine's professionally heterogeneous circulation did not really reflect the image of contemporary American architecture culture that editors constructed on the page. The imbalance was especially true in terms of architecture's artistic qualities, which were emphasized in feature content more than would be expected given the relatively low proportion

²⁵² This single study offers only a kind of "snapshot" of how architects read their professional journals at the moment it was conducted. There is no way to know if the spread of project values or associated building types would have been different in other years, or if including other reader groups might have skewed the data in other ways. It is also not possible to base any long-range conclusions about *Forum's* entire 32-year history as a Time Inc. publication on one individual study. Still, it is the only study of its type from the period and much of the data just confirmed what was already understood about the magazine; the lower overall total of *Forum* readers and the types of buildings associated with each magazine are just the examples relevant here but there were more scattered throughout the report. Additionally, by 1955, when the study was done, the postwar boom was well enough underway to have created its own momentum, which means that the likelihood the data would have been extremely different if the study had been conducted a few years earlier or later is probably relatively low.

of subscribers that self-identified as architects, draftsmen or designers. Roughly half the magazine's "middle of the book" typically focused on design-related topics, in fact, while in any given year only about 25% of *Forum's* total circulation went to design-oriented subscribers. The amount of engineering and business content also did not reflect circulation under those categories; while each of these aspects of architectural work accounted for roughly 25% of *Forum's* feature articles, engineering-related subscribers never exceeded about 7% of the total circulation and business-related subscribers hovered around 40%.

These proportions of content and subscriber occupation did not need to directly align; they are offered here only to give a general sense of the asymmetrical relationship between what *Forum's* audience saw on the page and who the audience actually was. One would expect, for instance, that with so few engineers subscribing to *Forum*, the magazine's editors would not have felt obligated to regularly offer information of interest to members of that profession. And, similarly, with so many subscribers associated with the business of architecture, it would have been perfectly logical to expect more page space devoted to that topic.

This situation, though, was entirely consistent with the *Forum* concept - even crucial to it. Exposing a wide range of

building industry professionals to the essence of each others' interests was a fundamental tenet of the larger mission to "build a better America," in fact. The idea went all the way back to the Luce prospectus of 1935, when "the new *Forum*" was envisioned as a magazine designed for architects with the expectation that "planners of structures" would "look over the architect's shoulder or, indeed, themselves become for a moment architects."²⁵³ It was part of how the editors provided common ground to different people with different responsibilities. It was part of what individuals deeply committed to the *Forum* concept hoped would facilitate dialogue in reality. Creating this magazine was not about offering the information editors thought their audience wanted, in other words. It was about offering the information they thought their audience ought to want, and doing so with a ratio of art, engineering and business articles that reflected the editors' ideal American building industry aspirations.

This dynamic was not at all unusual at Time Inc. Luce was well-known, in fact, for abhorring what he called "the department-store theory" of publishing, in which decisions about what to print were based purely on what readers were interested in consuming. In a 1938 essay entitled "Giving the People What

²⁵³ Luce, "The New *Forum*," manuscript, page b, TIA

They Want," which appeared in a special issue on democracy in *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Luce warned that "the danger of sensationalism and the danger of mediocrity" were "inherent in the press-that-gives-the-people-what-they-want" mentality. Worse than that, he argued, was the threat this kind of journalism posed to democracy itself. He continued:

But there is another and a greater danger: the danger that such a press will not give the people what they must have - what they will perish without...In more than half of Europe, journalism has been destroyed; in the other half it is mostly venal and emasculated. Here in American the press is free - economically free to engage all the talent in the world, free to commit moral and intellectual suicide, free to pander to the people and by pandering to seduce them to their own enslavement. This is the true poison of our time...Unless the facts, the significant facts, the difficult, complicated facts of industry and finance and politics and technology are put before the people, the people cannot govern themselves in an industrial society. And if they cannot govern themselves the inevitable consequence will be dictatorship and slavery.²⁵⁴

Public Opinion Quarterly identified Luce as the publisher of *Time*, *Fortune* and *Life* but there is no reason why these same general ideas did not also apply to *Forum*. This was especially true since the magazine's core idea was based on acknowledging architecture as a multi-faceted endeavor, which involved "industry and finance and politics and technology" in addition to just art. And it was also true in terms of seducing the

²⁵⁴ Luce, "Giving the People What They Want," 64.

audience; it would have been easier for the editors of an architectural journal to produce a relatively shallow publication full of eye-pleasing drawings and photographs rather than one that presented the "complicated facts" of daily practice, especially with the *Life* photograph archive and other such Time Inc. resources so readily at hand. Circulation data gave the editors a detailed description of the kinds of people who felt strongly enough about the magazine to purchase a subscription, and yet the editors responded year after year with a representation of an ideal.

If *Forum* qualified as a quintessential Luce publication in this sense, it also differentiated *Forum* significantly in other ways. In particular, while its total circulation made *Forum* the big magazine in a small journalistic sub-field, it was never destined to account for more than a fraction of the vast audiences that *Time*, *Fortune* and *Life* claimed. *Forum's* specific building industry editorial emphasis and America-centric geographic range were simply too narrow. This fact might have ended up as a footnote in *Forum's* history if its publisher had not happened to specialize in targeting popular audiences worldwide. But company executives regularly compared *Forum's* circulation against the much more robust situations of the other three magazines, and doubt about its appropriateness as a Time

Inc. property not only developed early but continued to fester throughout *Forum's* entire Time Inc. life.

Luce saved *Forum* more than once by personally authorizing cost overruns, moving editorial staff around and so on. However, his otherwise tenuous connection to *Forum* - so obvious given the copious personal attention he showed his other periodicals - underscored the second-class status that came with being a small single-industry journal inside a company utterly defined by its big popular magazines. *Forum's* position at the bottom of the Time Inc. hierarchy impacted the magazine's operations in a variety of ways. One example is particularly representative: if rumors are to be believed, Time Inc. executives felt empowered to transfer their least accomplished salesmen to *Forum* from *Time*, *Fortune* or *Life*. Being assigned to *Forum* was perceived as an internal demotion, which in turn made the salesmen less motivated and reduced the efficacy of their pitches to advertisers.²⁵⁵ Not surprisingly, this compounded the sales

²⁵⁵ Dixon discussion; John Morris Dixon, email communication with the author, 23 October 2013. Dixon has repeatedly emphasized how enraged Peter Blake, in particular, had been by Time Inc.'s tendency to "demote" salesmen to *Forum* rather than jettisoning them altogether. According to Dixon, in fact, Blake openly pointed to this as the main reason why *Forum* "failed" at Time Inc. Dixon also noted several times that moving staff, rather than firing them, was the preferred method of dealing with employee problems at Time Inc. and that this stemmed from Luce's perception of the company as a family that took care of its own as much as possible. Here, in other words, was a case in which loyalty to a Luce operating principle hurt *Forum* more than helped. Additionally, although ineffectual salesmen are never quite openly admonished in existing *Forum* staff memoranda from the period, it is possible that the relatively large number of philosophical-conceptual memoranda head editor Douglas Haskell wrote to his magazine's salesmen in the late-1950s and early-

difficulties *Forum* already had as a result of other factors. Indeed, under such complicated conditions what *Forum* really needed from Time Inc. was the company's best salesmen, not its worst. But that was not going to happen for a magazine that seemed to fit so poorly with what the rest of its publishing house was producing; the perceived deficiencies of *Forum's* circulation seemed to evidence this in measurable black-and-white substance.

Time Inc.'s biggest single difficulty with *Forum*, certainly in terms of circulation and perhaps also overall, was the fact that the magazine's subscribership did not include very many architects relative to what *Record* and *Pencil Points-P/A* reported. Again, this condition might not have been particularly important if *Forum's* historical circumstances at the time had been different. If *Forum* had been categorized as a mass-market periodical, for instance, geographic data would have mattered more. But *Forum* was created and promoted as a professional architectural journal - albeit an unusual one - and for this kind of publication, never reporting a substantial number of professional architect subscribers turned out to be a fatal flaw. Simply put, advertisers wanted information about the

60s was probably intended to educate and inspire them to do a better job. Whether any of these efforts made a difference cannot really be known - although of course these particular documents are especially helpful to historians today since they record Haskell's larger thoughts about what *Forum* was supposed to be about.

building products they represented to be seen by as many architects as possible and while *Record* and *Pencil Points-P/A* delivered those eyes, Time Inc.'s *Forum* did not.

There were three major factors that combined to make this chronic problem impossible for Time Inc. to overcome. First, and most obvious, *Forum's* core editorial personality was based on creating a professionally heterogeneous community around the magazine. By definition, in other words, achieving success in that sense essentially ensured a lower ratio of architect subscribers. Despite repeated internal discussions over the years, no one ever figured out how to attract substantially more architects as a percentage of overall circulation while simultaneously maintaining *Forum's* non-traditional emphasis on diversity. And since that part of the magazine's character was such a central component of Time Inc.'s commitment to the entire endeavor, changing it was never considered a real option.

Second, the low quantity of architects who purchased subscriptions suggests that the *Forum* concept of shared decision-making never resonated well within the specific building-related profession that imagined itself wholly in charge of architectural decisions. Indeed, the magazine's editorial emphasis on collaboration among the industry's diverse participants effectively turned *Forum* into an attempt at reconciling what Larson has called the architectural

profession's "permanent contradiction" between "the autonomous pursuit of architecture and the heteronomous conditions of its making."²⁵⁶ Larson notes that it was during the professionalization of architecture in late-nineteenth century America when architects claimed the aesthetic aspects of their work as a way to distinguish themselves from the services builders and engineers were marketing - even as the increasingly technical character of architecture required everyone to work together more closely. Thus a "permanent contradiction" developed between the fantasy of the independent architect-as-artist and the messy truth that creating an actual building obligated architects to yield some control over the process to others.²⁵⁷

This conflict continued into the twentieth-century and, given its associations with professionalization, was especially palpable in the discipline's trade press. Of course, Time Inc.'s challenge to it may well have occurred even if *Forum* had existed in the more fluid popular universe of other Time Inc. periodicals. With the magazine's undiluted professional American building industry audience, though, the message of self-interested collaboration contested it directly.

²⁵⁶ Magali Sarfatti Larson, *Behind the Postmodern Façade: Architectural Change in late Twentieth-Century America* (University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1993), 14.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

What *Forum* offered instead was as a kind of complicated hybridization of the dialectic Larson has articulated - an idealized reality, perhaps - in which key participants in the heteronomous architectural process would be so in sync that they could act autonomously and still expect their individual decisions to result in collective progress rather than struggles for control that would force compromise. The fact that Time Inc. explicitly geared *Forum* toward building industry leaders was crucial to the idea, since these were the only people capable of true autonomy (to the extent that this was possible in the commission- and consultant-dependent world of architecture) if/when the right circumstances presented themselves. And, by proposing the audience's common purpose and then providing a venue within which everyone could debate and refine that purpose, *Forum* would develop a readership extraordinarily personally invested and therefore more likely to align decision-making organically. In the Time Inc. version of modern enlightened architectural culture, working together liberated creative thought rather than obstructing it.

It is not hard to imagine the appeal this promise was supposed to hold for everyone involved. If collaboration conducted the *Forum* way theoretically helped make independence possible, readers could design better, build more and be happier. Meanwhile, the magazine's creators could justifiably

take credit for reforming the building industry, materially enabling progress in architectural design and helping re-fashion the America's physical façade into something more worthy of the country's evolving global superpower status. That, in essence, was the *Forum* ideal.

In reality, Time Inc.'s success with this magazine required a substantial portion of the American building industry, particularly architects, to simply have faith that autonomy and heteronomy could actually co-exist even when day-to-day practice often reinforced the veracity of architecture's "permanent contradiction." This is the nature of the collaborative process, after all; everyone has to be equally committed to the concept despite contraindicatory experience.

The problem with that reality is that among *Forum's* subscriber groups, architects had the most to lose if Time Inc.'s experimental variation on heteronomy ended up having a detrimental effect on their perceived autonomy. Their reticence about *Forum*, in that general sense, is not surprising. In addition, Time Inc.'s attempts at co-opting the desire for free creative thought may have deterred those architects for whom autonomy in itself was especially important. *Forum's* creators were relatively transparent about this part of its magazine's persuasive approach - it did not, for instance, engage in the kind of covert trickery that Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer

described in "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception."²⁵⁸ However, while a major goal of the profession's other journals was to help architects feel as autonomous as possible, one of the key ideas behind *Forum* was to use architects' desire for autonomy in ways that would ultimately accomplish Time Inc.'s goal of more collaboration. Conceptually, architects would achieve a measure of authentic artistic liberation within both editorial scenarios, but some of these potential subscribers doubtless found the *Forum* manipulation of it distasteful.

Forum's distinctive emphasis on leadership may have also aggravated the low architect subscriber numbers. In this case, the problem centered on Time Inc.'s expectation that the kind of leader-centric productive heteronomy *Forum* advocated would naturally create an aspirational dynamic among lower-rank professionals. The concept was that people who had not yet achieved decision-making career status would subscribe to *Forum* in order to know more about what their own objectives ought to be - that they would voluntarily allow themselves to be led by their industry's leaders, in other words. Over time *Forum's* circulation details only reflected the magazine's spectacular success at attracting leaders, however. These were people whose

²⁵⁸ Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 1944.

day-to-day practices already proved the viability of self-interested collaboration, people who recognized aspects of their own actual experiences described on the page. Everyone else may certainly have read borrowed copies of *Forum*, but with their subscription dollars they consistently "voted" for narrowly-focused professional architecture journals like *Record* and *Pencil Points-P/A*.

These people may have also preferred the architect-centric sense of community that *Record* and *Pencil Points-P/A* fostered. Pierre Bourdieu has argued that when "the audience aimed at is only other producers," what results is "the most perfectly autonomous sector of the field of cultural production."²⁵⁹ Of course, that community was an illusion which only really existed during the actual performance of reading more traditionally narrow journals, but it existed nonetheless and could be re-performed at will whenever readers needed to compensate for their lack of control in reality. The creators of *Forum*, by actively and overtly developing a magazine that was definitively not for "only other producers," offered an entirely different

²⁵⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, "The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed," in *The Field of Cultural Production: Essay on Art and Literature*, by Pierre Bourdieu, edited and introduced by Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993): 39, previously published by Elsevier Science Publishers B.V., 1983. It should be noted that Bourdieu goes on to accuse publishers of making money through trickery. In this case he is talking specifically about publishers who sell creative works to the public, though, rather than the kind of publishers (like those of *Record* and *Pencil Points-P/A*) who circulate representations of creative works among other like-minded creative people.

kind of community sensibility: one that seemed to appeal mostly to people who had always participated in the architectural process in reality but that were overlooked in architects' autonomous vision.

The final major factor that contributed to the tenacity and severity of advertising problem concerned the advertisers themselves. Myers and his editorial team presaged the advertising sales challenge in the "Get Between the Covers" drawing included with their 1933 report to Luce; among the 11 figures ostensibly tucked into bed was an orange star indicating a spot "reserved for an advertiser who isn't asleep."²⁶⁰ [Fig. 32] Like architects, in other words, as a group advertisers of building products were unimpressed by the hybridized heteronomous ideal *Forum* promoted. In this context, the idea was that some product choices would shift from architects to clients, engineers and other non-architect building project team members - precisely those kinds of subscribers that *Forum's* broader circulation represented much better than its rivals. Instead, twentieth century advertisers continued to be guided by the historical decision-making jurisdictions that the building professions had carved out for themselves in the nineteenth century; materiality was treated as primarily an artistic

²⁶⁰ Howard Myers, et al, "Get Between the Covers...", TIA.

concern and therefore viewed as falling under architects' purview. Advertisers, as a result, routinely purchased space in *Record* and *Pencil Points-P/A* rather than in *Forum* even though *Forum's* total overall circulation was always higher.

Time Inc. tried reducing *Forum's* advertising rates but that made no appreciable difference. Lower subscription rates also did not manage to attract many more architects. The reason for both phenomena was the same: the stakes in throwing aside the architecture's underlying professional assumptions and ideals were high enough to resist the company's considerable charms. *Forum* was produced as a professional architecture journal in part because that was how the supposedly outdated and unproductive tension between autonomy and heteronomy could be most efficiently replaced with a new, modern collaborative way of working. Rather than upend architecture's "permanent contradiction," the Time Inc. *Forum* episode may have ultimately proved how entrenched it actually was.

Of course, the typical subscriber/reader would have had no working knowledge of the complicated dynamic around circulation data reporting and its implications. As such, it is not surprising that the magazine's revenue problem was the main topic of many letters to the editorial staff after the news of *Forum's* closure was announced in May 1964 - and that these notes usually contained a mixture of incredulity and anger about the

fact that *Forum's* future had been decided on the basis of profit-and-loss calculations. One representative letter read:

What right have they, to whom the magazine's value was measured in dollars, to kill it? I never knew I should be sorry to see Mr. Luce's departure! Such are the rewards of Capitalism. Are we to be left with the *Record's* dullness and P.A.'s childishness?²⁶¹

To these kinds of sentiments Haskell sent a standard response in which he explained the basic dilemma in relatively cut-and-dried terms. He began, "To the 'trade paper' advertising men to whom the agencies always refer *Forum* only registered architects seem to count." His emphasis here on the word "only" was significant since it was precisely that exclusivity which lay at the heart of the matter. He continued:

...these advertising men considered *Forum* actually 'short,' despite our tremendous circulation among those most influential in setting up building programs and owning the buildings. It was these advertising men who killed us...²⁶²

Haskell's emphasis on the word "tremendous" was similarly significant. A very careful writer, his choices in this case revealed a palpable preoccupation with the way in which *Forum's* circulation data could be interpreted from multiple angles simultaneously - and with very different results.

²⁶¹ Thomas Killian to Douglas Haskell, 1 June 1964, Folder 43:1, "Personal--general, july-august 1964 (including forum demise) (folder 1 of 2)," DPH.

²⁶² Douglas Haskell to John Makris, 31 July 1964, Folder 43:1, "Personal--general, july-august 1964 (including forum demise) (folder 1 of 2)," DPH.

In the end, it was Banham's summary the situation that best demonstrated the shock of discovering that the giant of mid-century American architectural journalism had been brought down by such prosaism. In his editorial about the end of *Forum*, after observing that President Kennedy had personally "annotated from cover to cover" the special January 1963 issue, Banham expounded derisively:

...And *Forum* died precisely because it was read by opinion makers and legislators. Since these people were neither architects nor building contractors, the *Forum* was of reduced interest to the small-minded men who sell plastic stonework, instant wrought iron, and aluminum sheet folded and faked to look like planking; and since it is the advertising of such products that keeps architectural magazines solvent, every increase in *Forum's* prestige readership has hastened the day of its death.²⁶³

The "loss leader" narrative that accompanied *Forum's* closure must have offered some small comfort for the magazine's staff and loyal readers. However, the question remains whether Time Inc.'s transparency and the public outrage that attended it may also have exercised a kind of subtle unintended discouraging influence over future prospects for experimental architectural journalism. After all, if Time Inc. - with its vast corporate resources and deep reach into American society - could not manage to operate the business of *Forum* at even the most modest

²⁶³ Banham, "A Designer's Pugwash?" 301.

of profits, how could another publisher with much less at hand begin to hope? Indeed, in September 1967, exactly three years after the last issue of Time Inc.'s *Forum*, a circulation-related lack of advertising at *Arts & Architecture* also caused its closure.²⁶⁴ And in the remaining years of the pre-digital age, while forward-thinking architecture found a home on the pages of designer-centric *P/A* and a plethora of "little architecture magazines" challenged boundaries of the small-scale *avant-garde* press, there were no attempts at publishing a really different type of major nationally-circulated professional architecture magazine that lasted for a meaningfully long time. The advent of independently audited circulation data encouraged new ways of thinking about journalism a century ago; perhaps the advent of the internet has changed the business model enough to do the same today.

²⁶⁴ Travers, "About *Arts & Architecture*."

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