HUMANISM AND THE CLASSICAL: THE EXPANSION OF
THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

A Thesis

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by

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Abstract

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Classicism is a language of architecture that comprehends human intuition of the built environment. It also reflects the cumulative history of place and culture. Classicism expresses itself by means of the orders, proportion, and ornament. Classical architecture tells a history of itself, tying together the past with the present and speaking of the future.

The intention of this thesis is to demonstrate the relevance of Classical architecture to a modern institutional program in an urban setting. Additionally, this thesis defines humanism and what is to be a humanist. Humanism is the intellectual framework within which a Classical design can achieve validity and meaning within a contemporary context. According to David Mayernik, “To be humanist is to acknowledge our capacity for the good and the beautiful, and to intervene positively in the world, while at the same time recognizing our need for self-imposed limits.”¹ This project synthesizes the interrelationship of Humanism and the Classical.

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CHAPTER 1
PROJECT INTENTION

The Art Institute of Chicago (AIC) is currently in the process of expanding its museum and educational facilities. The modernist addition of project architect Renzo Piano officially broke ground in May 2005. Piano’s proposal is characterized by a series of shifting vertical planes which organize the plan and section. The building’s roof is described by the architect as a “flying carpet,” a louvered shading device that diffuses northern light into the third floor galleries. The building’s envelope of glass and steel pays homage to the “Miesian legacy of the second school of Chicago architecture.” (Fig. 1.1) While the original structure is a late 19th century Neo-Classical building (Referred to as the Allerton building; designed by Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge; 1893), the museum and school are comprised of a number of additions that illustrate a range of stylistic interpretations. (Fig. 1.2) Whether or not these additions sought to reflect the direction

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3 Cuno and Thorne, Zero Gravity: The Art Institute, Renzo Piano, and Building for a New Century, 18.

4 The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the AIC share the same site.
of the AIC at the time of their inception remains ambiguous. As they appear today, these additions, for the most part, are only loosely connected to one another in their physical forms (Fig.s 1.3-1.8).
The intentions of this thesis are twofold: First, to propose an alternative design for the proposed Piano scheme that will not only reflect the significance of the Art Institute but will be sympathetic to the architecture of the original museum structure (the Allerton Building). The alternative design seeks to use the Classical language to meet the programmatic needs set forth by the museum. At the same time, the alternative seeks to invoke the humanistic values and meanings associated with Classical architecture, but not available to us in the language of Modernism.

The second goal is to create a master plan for the museum campus. The numerous additions made so far appear to have been built without a comprehensive plan. As a result, the current state of the AIC buildings displays little coherent thought as to how the Art Institute wishes to project an identity to the public, or how to maximize the possibilities of its central, urban site. The intention of the thesis is to create a new master plan which is compositionally sensitive to its site and allows the occupants of the museum to have an enriching and educational experience. Such an experience requires a sequence of spaces that not only fulfills pragmatic necessities, such as the organization of gallery spaces, but also elevates the objects it houses.

However, the architecture of the museum need not be a mere canvas or a backdrop to the artwork but can encompass beauty in its own right in support of the beautiful objects within it. Representational artwork, for example, can be complemented by its
Classical surroundings, while even abstract art can be appropriately housed in such an environment. A Classical interior does not discriminate based on the style of the items within the space, but elevates and honors whatever is exhibited there.
Architecture and building are interrelated experiences, one focusing on the experience of art, the other on the experience of craft. The Greek *oekodomike*, building, refers to the *techne* of constructing shelter. Building is the body of knowledge that accounts for structure, construction, service, and functional disposition. Architecture is the art of building, *l’art de bâtir*. Architecture is the result of artistic intention, while building is the result of necessity. ⁵

The canonic system of classical design is a prescriptive method, in that the canonical system provides the framework for design methodology (e.g. procedures and materials). Many modernist architects have criticized classicism because they argue that it dictates the shape of a building. However, “By constraining rather than directing, the classical canon allows for a certain degree of freedom and invention in responding to those forces of change that lie outside the world of forms.” ⁶ The three formal devices of this system—*taxis*, *genera*, and *symmetry*—allow the inventive nature of classical design to


reveal itself. *Taxis* is that ‘which divides architectural works into parts.’ *Genera* describes ‘the individual elements that populate the parts as divided by taxis.’ *Symmetry* is ‘the relations between individual elements.’ These devices define a system of design that permits versatile architecture while simultaneously remaining sensitive to a specific environment.

Building derives its forms from the needs of creating shelter. The artistic aspect of building is introduced when a greater understanding of the relationship of structural elements is expressed and articulated - a celebration of building given value and symbolic form. Many of the forms of classical architecture are derived from nature, imitated in expressions that reflect their importance. The Greek *mimesis* (imitation), as described by Aristotle, does not entail the duplication of forms or ‘simulation of the physical world that surrounds us.’ Rather, *mimesis* should represent something in order for it to be understood at a familiar level. For example, in his *A Treatise on Human Nature* (II, I, iii) David Hume reveals that ‘the rules of architecture require that the top of a pillar should be more slender than its base… because such a figure conveys the idea of security.’ The form of the column is derived from a tree but does not replicate it. The swelling of the column from top to bottom gives the column visual stability and provides rationality for its form.

Human beings recognize an underlying connection between their buildings and the ways in which nature operates to create form and space. Scale and proportion are derived from our understanding of human bodily form. As outlined by Geoffrey Scott,

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“The whole of architecture is, in fact, unconsciously invested by us with human movement and human moods…we transcribe architecture in terms of ourselves.”

However, the physical aspect of the human body plays a small role relative to the “intellectual and spiritual satisfaction” that gives us conscious enjoyment of architecture. Classicism conveys and reflects our understanding of how we relate to both the built and natural environment.

The inherent order of Classical architecture serves its functional purposes while also allowing us to explore our spiritual connection to nature. Classicism is able to speak of a specific time, place, and embodiment of ideas because “Syntax, grammar, and the vocabulary of a language continue to evolve so long as it is spoken.” The rhetoric, or language of Classical architecture continues this evolution and allows us to bring meaning and order to our world.

The idea that architecture reflects the connection of human reason to our built and natural environments resonates in Vitruvius’ treatise (30 B.C.). Vitruvius writes about six terms of architecture in Book I, Chapter II that are of particular value in understanding Classicism: ordinatio, dispositio, eurythmia, symmetry, decor, and distributio. “Ordinatio is the measured suitability of the parts of a work considered individually, and the providing of proportion to achieve symmetria with regard to the

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10 Scott, 160.

whole.” 12 This first element describes the proportional relationship necessary between the individual parts and the whole building.

*Dispositio* is described as “the suitable arrangement of elements and the refined effect of the composition of the work in accord with its essential nature.” 13 *Dispositio* or design, is the correlation of composed elements relative to the nature of the work. This element is expressed through the ground plan, elevation, and perspective which are derived from reflection and invention. Reflection seeks the successful fruition of a project’s construction while invention resolves the idiosyncrasies that inevitably present themselves in the design and construction process. 14

*Eurythmia*, refers to the composition of a building’s elements. Vitruvius says that, “It is achieved when the elements of the project are proportionate in height to width, length to breadth, and every element corresponds in its dimensions to the total measure of the whole.” 15 Again, the scale and proportion of a building’s individual elements must correlate with the whole of the building.

The fourth term, *symmetria*, is referred to as “the proportioned correspondence of the elements of the work itself, a response, in any given part, of the separate parts to the appearance of the entire figure as a whole.” 16 None of the parts is truly independent or self-referential; each part has to relate in some way to the other parts of the composition.

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Vitruvius elaborates on this point by saying, “Just as in the human body there is a harmonious quality of shapeliness expressed in terms of the cubit, foot, palm, digit, and other small units, so it is in completing works of architecture”\textsuperscript{17} The individual elements defining the human body can be interpreted as less meaningful (or dysfunctional) when they no longer compose a harmonious or unified whole. Similarly in architecture: if any element of an Order is misused or removed from a composition, the whole may suffer and lose its meaning.

The fifth term, \textit{decor}, is defined by Vitruvius as, “the refined appearance of a project that has been composed of proven elements and with authority.”\textsuperscript{18} In order to achieve \textit{decor} (or decorum), it is necessary to satisfy the three criteria that shape it: \textit{function}, \textit{tradition}, and \textit{nature}. Functional decor establishes the appropriateness for the design of each building element with respect to its programmatic purpose. For example, the articulation of a church’s Order should be greater than that of a donut shop (of course, it is debatable if a donut shop should have one at all). The decorum of tradition can best be explained as the need for consistent expression throughout a building or series of related spaces. An example where tradition has not been achieved is when a Doric column is used to hold a Corinthian entablature. Finally, natural decorum is reached when a healthy site is chosen and a building maximizes the potential of the surrounding environmental conditions in order for occupants to be comfortable. Examples of natural decorum would include choosing to not construct a building in a

\textsuperscript{17} Rowland and Howe, \textit{Vitruvius: Ten Books on Architecture}, 25.

\textsuperscript{18} Rowland and Howe, \textit{Vitruvius: Ten Books on Architecture}, 25.
flood plain and siting a building so that it can be heated and cooled according to the orientation of the sun.¹⁹

The final element, *distributio*, is defined as “the proper management of materials and site as well as the thrifty balancing of expense by means of calculation in the construction of works.”²⁰ There are two primary considerations with regards to *distributio* (i.e., economy). The first aspect is that the architect needs to take into consideration the resources and materials for a given site within a given context. Alternative methods of construction must be explored if it is unreasonable to apply those methods which are normally available. The second aspect of *distributio* is that the arrangement and articulation of a building should reflect appropriately those that reside within a dwelling. Similarly, the spaces formed in a given dwelling should also reflect the roles of those who occupy it.²¹

Essentially, Vitruvius’ treatise defines the elements that compose a work of architecture. These elements provide a basis upon which the physical form of this thesis proposal can be informed by humanism, the theoretical disposition that allows Classicism to have relevance within our contemporary context. Humanism or humanist architecture is a form of Classicism. Classicism is the formal technique for creating architecture. Humanism informs the architecture (Classicism) by giving it meaning.

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²⁰ Smith, *Vitruvius on Architecture*, 71.

²¹ Smith, *Vitruvius on Architecture*, 72.
There are many different meanings attached to the words humanism and humanist. Even within the same historical period these words have had different meanings for people in different parts of the world. We owe much of our understanding of humanism to 15th and 16th century Italian Renaissance humanists in Rome and Florence. While a great deal of credit is due to the Florentine Leon Battista Alberti for the flourishing of Renaissance humanist thought, other thinkers such as Pope Pius II had a great deal of influence on architecture and the urban realm.22

Humanism is the intellectual framework within which Classical design most fully achieves validity and meaning. Classicism transcends style when it brings forth meaning to its user as well as to its context. As pointed out in David Mayernik’s *Timeless Cities*, “Alberti thought buildings should say something-about their owner, their city, their culture, their patron saint-and he was especially concerned about saying whatever it was 

22 This pope redesigned the town of Corsignano (near Siena) and renamed it Pienza. It is considered a model of early Renaissance urban design.
well.” Alberti’s architectural treatise *On the Art of Building in Ten Books* epitomizes the quintessential relationship between building and the city. Architecture informs the city and the city informs the architecture. The conversation or rhetoric that exists between the building and the city stems from Alberti’s thorough studies in the humanities or liberal arts. “Humanism gave them (people schooled in the humanities) a broad-based interest in everything that touched human life, a confidence in the potential of human achievement derived from an appreciation of the canon of past achievements and a common mythic-narrative repertoire that could sustain a rich, accessible allegorical tradition.” Here, we begin to understand that a humanist viewpoint is an all-encompassing knowledge of different disciplines that draws upon the past in order to succeed in the future.

Charles Stinger describes Roman humanist thought as enveloping “enduring stability and eternity.” The thought reflects the need to look towards the future by creating an intellectual framework that is permanent. In a later passage, Stinger discusses “The Roman humanist emphasis on human dignity, freedom, and a reconciled universe…” The humanist concern for the well being of individuals is reflective of the sensitivity that humanist art and architecture embodies.

The humanists of the papal court, instead, looked to the civilizing achievements of capitals and empires—to the vast Hellenistic world created in the wake of Alexander the Great’s conquests…Within this court-dominated Roman culture, the intellectual’s task was correspondingly

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Roman humanism was steeped in the Eternal City’s greatness and presumed endurance because this city was (and still is, of course) the location of the papal seat (technically, the papal seat is in Vatican City which is enveloped by the city of Rome). Pope Nicholas V (fifteenth-century), for example, realized urban planning in Rome. “Nicholas dreamt of the Borgo as a kind of mini-New Jerusalem…a vision of an ideal, celestial urban architecture: Augustine’s heavenly city counterpoised to the all too earthly city across the Ponte Sant’ Angelo.”28 A later product of this vision is St. Peter’s colonnaded piazza designed by Gianlorenzo Bernini. As described by Bernini, “[T]he colonnades [are as the] arms of the Church ‘which embrace Catholics to reinforce their belief, heretics to reunite them with the Church, and agnostics to enlighten them with the true faith.’”29 In addition, Roman humanists such as Pope Nicholas V, thought Rome’s greatness and endurance derived from the mysticism of Roman life that descended from Imperial Roman society.

However, the epicenter of humanist thought in fifteenth-century Italy was Florence, where humanism was viewed differently than in Rome.

Florentine civic humanism found inspiration in the recovered ideals of the Roman Republic and of the Athenian polis. From this ancient republican thought-world, Leonardo Bruni and his Florentine contemporaries acquired the intellectual resources by which to assess in more pragmatic,


28 Mayernik, *Timeless Cities*, 76.

realistic terms the political and historical forces shaping the secular existences of autonomous city-state polities. They also affirmed anew the Periclean ideal of the individual as citizen, morally and intellectually committed to the civic life of the polis.30

The Florentine humanists were concerned about the dignity of the individual but were equally-if not more-concerned about the good of civic life. They built upon this thinking by making connections with the histories of ancient Rome and Athens in order to shape their philosophical ideals. Florentine humanist thought was committed to the study of the humanities as well as ancient philosophers such as Cicero and Aristotle.

Humanism derived from ancient Greek philosophy and flourished in Renaissance Florence, but has now matured in our contemporary context to mean something more important and vital than ever in the history of creating architecture and cities.

Humanism, for the purposes of this thesis may be most succinctly described as follows:

Humanist art is the only mode of artistic expression that both addresses the full range of human nature and experience, and responsibly intervenes in our human context, the natural world. It wisely acknowledges our role as stewards of our environment, whose greatest achievement lies in leaving that environment better than we found it. It recognizes that human intervention in nature, while inevitably altering it, will potentially enrich the natural world with positive beauty; consider the impact on the landscape of the European hill town, the monastery or the working traditional farm and villa. To live in equilibrium with our environment means neither naively reverting to a state of nature (which is both dishonest to our rational/animal human condition, and today quite impossible) nor reserving untouched nature in shrinking pockets surrounded by careless development. To be humanist is to acknowledge our capacity for the good and the beautiful, and to intervene positively in the world, while at the same time recognizing our need for self-imposed limits.31

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30 Stinger, The Renaissance in Rome, 335.

The primary distinction between humanism and classicism is that humanism is concerned about the possible meanings of art extending beyond stylistic refinements. “An overarching concern for the rendering of the dignity of human experience by empathy with the idealized human figure is the form of the classical language of art that is specifically humanist.” A building, for example, can be well-composed and be seen by many as beautiful; but humanism seeks to understand the underlying motives that may have led the designer to articulate its façade in some particular manner. For the humanist architect, it is simply not enough to create forms merely for the sake of their attractive shapes; it is necessary to understand the derivation of a form and the infused meaning that has been revealed through the history of its use. First it has to be comprehended and then applied to architecture. Also, humanism seeks to relate buildings to a larger framework of ideas, and, simultaneously understand the “underlying motives.”

This proposal draws upon precedents, both local and found throughout Western civilization, that reflect the hierarchy of spaces that compose this building. The massing, forms, and articulation are derived from architectural examples that achieved the pinnacle of design. As a formal technique, Classicism seeks to achieve the ideal. Similarly, humanism pursues the same goal. Classicism searches for the ideal in architectural form while humanism seeks the ideal in human culture and society. However, Classicism is the larger category into which humanism fits. Classicism is the language with which humanism is articulated. The massing and forms, for instance, provoke meaning drawn from historical examples but reflect the contemporary context in which the architecture is

created. Some of this meaning is conveyed intrinsically and some of it is formulated by an association of ideas.

Mayernik points out that

The difference between the architecture of humanism and religion (of the Italian renaissance)…and the architecture of politics and business of twenty-first century America is that the former, even when the religion was corrupt or the learning narrow, sought to represent aspirations rather than reality. This allowed those cities to be always better than the people who made them, whereas business and politics rarely provide built contexts that transcend their immediate contingent reality and just as rarely equal the merits of the best people who made them. So we have the paradox today of being a generally more equitable society than, say, fourteenth century Siena, but we have built for ourselves a far less human environment.33

The AIC has long been a cultural and educational symbol to the city of Chicago which aspires to achieve the best of ideals. The actions of an institution, at their best, demonstrate why it is a cultural and educational symbol. At the same time, its physical form can become an icon which can be associated with these symbolic meanings. If the AIC is to fulfill its role as a humanist institution, culturally enriching its citizens as well as educating its citizens, then its architecture needs to reflect those virtues that “affect social change.”34 It needs not only to be a leader in education for its students, but also to aspire to be a place that enriches the individual while contributing to the greater good of society.

33 Mayernik, *Timeless Cities*, 228.

Classicism, as a language of architecture, is inherently tied to the creation of the urban realm. This architecture allows for variation in the texture of the city, creating a hierarchy of buildings through typology as well as due to the differentiation in “foreground” and “background” structures.\(^{35}\) Vitruvius’ writings on decor describe the appropriateness of building articulation in relation to its use and/or the occupant’s social status. Decor is an aspect of architecture that allows us to distinguish foreground and background buildings as a reflection of a hierarchy of importance in the social and economic activities of the city.

True urbanity is best supported by the assemblage of Classical and traditional architecture because, unlike a modernist disposition, this architecture respects the syntax which exists between building design and the urban realm. As defined by Leon Krier,

Urbanism is essentially a matter of public spaces, plot sizes, plot ratios, and numbers of floors. There are specific types, dimensions, ratios, and numbers which allow us to build harmonious cities and others that

\(^{35}\) “Foreground” buildings being those structures that bear greater importance in the Classical and civic realm (e.g. government buildings, churches, schools, etc.). “Background” buildings are, conversely, those buildings that are considered less important in their architectural elaboration (e.g. apartment buildings, shops, etc.).
inevitably lead to suburban sprawl, commercial strips and/or metropolitan congestion. There are forms of high risk mega-developments which produce mega-profits and mega-failures. There are others based on individual talent and enterprise which stimulate civilized competition, and lead to humane and agreeable towns. The traditional city performs the miracle of allowing contrasting and competing ambitions, the most modest and greatest of talents to strive and thrive as neighbours; to build in harmony.36

An important aspect of creating such a successful urban environment is the execution of the Classical and traditional buildings that comprise such a place. The notion of traditional architecture or building refers to the established methods of construction before World War II.37

Book 1, Chapter 9 of Leon Battista Alberti’s On the Art of Building in Ten Books posits:

If (as the philosophers maintain) the city is like some large house, and the house is in turn like some small city, cannot the various parts of the house—atria, xysti, dining rooms, porticoes, and so on—be considered miniature buildings? Could anything be omitted from any of these, through inattention and neglect, without detracting from the dignity and worth of the work? The greatest care and attention, then, should be paid to studying these elements, which contribute to the whole work, so as to ensure that even the most insignificant parts appear to have been formed according to the rules of art.38

This passage resonates with Vitruvius’ writings on symmetry in that the parts are essential in defining the whole and his notion of decor, giving to each building its most appropriate

36 Leon Krier, Architecture Choice or Fate, (Windsor, UK: Papadakis, 1998), 86.

37 While there are modern methods and materials that can and should be used in construction, some of these practices and applications do not adhere to sustainable building which are prevalent and common in traditional architecture and the traditional city. Concrete, for example, is a material that is quite useful in many aspects of construction; however, its application as an exposed building material in a climate such as Chicago is irresponsible since it is vulnerable to the freeze-thaw cycles of such an environment.

form and expansion. Alberti illustrates the inseparable entities that are architecture and urbanism. One cannot exist without the other.

A prime example of the city and house metaphor is the Palazzo Farnese and its relationship to its context. (Fig. 4.1) The front façade of the palazzo creates and formalizes its piazza. The central axis, piercing Campo di Fiori and extending towards the Palazzo Massimo, certainly has a major physical impact on the spaces, streets, and buildings on the “ground” level; but the axis reaches even further. The main façade is on axis with the cupola of Francesco Borromini’s S. Ivo della Sapienza (Northeast of the palazzo, toward the central abitato), as well as with the Villa Farnesina across the Tiber River. There are political and socio-cultural meanings that extend beyond the scope of this thesis, but this example is indicative of the possibility that the architecture of the Art Institute can have infused meaning that extends beyond its immediate physical context. An example of this idea is that architectural forms of the Art Institute proposal can derive from the Museum of Science and Industry (Charles B. Atwood, architect; 1893) in Jackson Park. (Fig. 4.2) It was originally the Palace of the Fine Arts for the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition. The Art Institute can have physical and poetic connections to the city and its history that bring together a series of parts in order to make a whole.
Classicism is an appropriate language for an urban context because it clearly defines both the private and public realms. Traditional European and American cities are successful urbanistically because the buildings, monuments, and public spaces within a city are not conceived individually but recognize and address their greater responsibilities to the whole ensemble of buildings and surrounding environment. These responsibilities entail the demands of users as well as context and the relationship to the exterior spaces buildings inhabit and create. These cities are pedestrian-oriented and rely upon mixed-use structures. There is an overlapping of spaces (both literally and figuratively) over time that conveys information about a place: the tensions, harmonies, and incidences between and amongst built forms that are telling of history and illustrative of cultural development.

While this thesis proposal addresses and responds to the adjacencies and contextual characteristics of its site, its ultimate form demonstrates how this collection of buildings creates a poetic composition. This composition not only reveals how an
institute exists within a prominent park, adjacent to dense urban fabric, but also how this relatively large building expansion can be understood as both separate entities and a harmonious whole. Just as the parts must be able to exist separately as well as collectively, this proposal for the Art Institute of Chicago will demonstrate how the individual elements of this institution create a poetic composition that complements and enriches the museum campus and the hierarchy of cultural and educational institutions that are vital to the city’s identity.

The AIC will fill its role as a humanist institution through multiple means. The curriculum of the school will focus and be based upon the study of nature and the human figure (i.e., representational rather than abstract art). Students will engage in greater study of the art that the museum houses. The installation of artwork will include the many Greek, Roman, and Renaissance plaster casts and sculpture as well as casts of architectural elements that were displayed until the early 1950s. The architecture of the museum and school will derive from classical models, primarily those of great civic importance. The idea is that this proposal and masterplan not only contribute to the experience of a visitor and the student learning from its artwork, but that the building itself embodies the ideals of a city that strives to be better than its own citizens.
The Renaissance-revival palazzo typology\textsuperscript{39} that the original building of the AIC is modeled after, according to former Director James N. Wood, is “Italian.” He further describes the Allerton building and the Rice buildings, stating, “They combine civic scale and importance with modest and welcoming size. They succeed in making us comfortable as individuals in a monumental context that gives added importance and seriousness to the works of art on exhibition…today’s museum can move beyond a strict adherence to modernism without sacrificing idealistic, or even utopian, aspirations.”\textsuperscript{40}

These statements resonate with the ideal that this new addition and masterplan seek to achieve. The palazzo typology, defines formal properties that give order to both the building itself and its surrounding context, as in the case of the Palazzo Farnese in Rome, cited earlier. Simultaneously, this building type also proves to be adaptable as a museum. Palazzi such as the Farnese were buildings with complex building programs that insisted on a clear hierarchy of spaces with a varying range of public uses.

\textsuperscript{39} Analysis or classification of building type.

\textsuperscript{40} Wood, The Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies, 5.
Schinkel’s Altes Museum in Berlin, for instance, is an example of the early-mid 19th century proliferation of museum construction that grew out of the palazzo type.

The present location of the Allerton building was due to the World’s Fair of 1893. The fair’s committee agreed to subsidize a portion of the construction costs if the building could be used by the fair for meetings. When the fair was over, the Art Institute occupied the building permanently. Wood described the atmosphere of the AIC at that time as follows: “The building was first and foremost an expression of the belief that architecture could affect social change by symbolizing and focusing the city’s cultural ambitions.”

The Art Institute was proclaiming its cultural importance to the community; within a city that was relatively new and optimistic for the future. The Grant Park location of the AIC symbolized a cultural emergence in the city which included other nearby intellectual nuclei, such as the Auditorium Building and the Chicago Public Library. The center of the city on the lakefront became the primary node of Daniel Burnham and Edward Bennett’s Plan of Chicago (1909), modeled after European precedents such as Paris, Vienna, and Rome. This plan illustrated what the city could be and the World’s Fair was the springboard for Burnham, who demonstrated to the American public that-despite the condition of most cities in the U.S. (and especially Chicago)-the speculation-driven, poverty stricken industrial city could be a beautiful and enriching place. European cities demonstrated that the city was not something to be feared as a demonic entity. Not only did the World’s Fair exemplify this ideal through the use of Classical buildings and Beaux-Arts planning, but it also incorporated many of the most advanced sanitation and traffic technologies of the time.

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The origin of the AIC and the context of its conception resonate with the humanist ideals that this thesis outlines and the proposal seeks to achieve. The expansion of the Art Institute should be a continuation of this story. From its typological origins through its role in the World’s Fair to its central location in Chicago, the growth of the AIC should embody and pass along the ambitions of its founding members.
The AIC is located along South Michigan Avenue within Grant Park. Grant Park is a landscaped space between Chicago’s Loop and the shoreline of Lake Michigan. (Fig. 6.1) An important characteristic of the block within which the museum campus is situated is the transportation (road and rail lines) right of way that runs North-South through (approximately) the middle of the site. The transit ways are located at a subterranean elevation, below the main floor of the museum. The west end of the site faces the Loop, with the main entrance to the Allerton building on axis with East Adams Street. The block north of the site is the newly developed Millennium Park (partially constructed over existing railroad tracks), which features Frank Gehry’s Pritzker Pavilion, the Crown Fountain by Jaume Plensa, and Anish Kapoor’s Cloud Gate sculpture. East of the site is the Petrillo Music Shell within Grant Park. Lake Shore Drive, the Lake Michigan shoreline, and Monroe Harbor lie just beyond this portion of the park. Finally, south of the museum campus are the Buckingham Fountain and the formal Beaux-Arts inspired park paths designed by Edward Bennett. Further south from Grant Park are the Field Museum, Shedd Aquarium, Adler Planetarium, and Soldier Field.
Fig. 6.1
Map of Chicago with site highlighted
The Art Institute is a cultural institution of great importance to Chicago. While it needs to be typologically identifiable as a museum (as well as a school) it simultaneously needs to be sensitive to its adjacent park spaces. The location of the Art Institute within the context of Grant Park demands that the designer or planner address the juxtaposition of its buildings and the park, while also recognizing their adjacency to the dense mostly high-rise building fabric of the Loop. (Fig.s 6.1, 6.2) Although by law there are not supposed to be any permanent structures within the park, the Art Institute has been an exception to that rule. Since its first building opened in 1893, it has continued to grow within the block bounded by Monroe and Jackson Streets to the North and South, respectively, and between Michigan Avenue and Columbus Drive to the East and West, respectively.

Fig. 6.2 Southeast aerial view of Chicago’s lakefront, Grant Park, and Loop
While the primary development of the museum proposed here respects the building area in the Northeast corner of the block (at Monroe and Columbus Drive) designated by the Art Institute for the Piano addition, the possibility of covering the railroad tracks (following the example of Millennium Park to the north) makes the proposed masterplan possible.\textsuperscript{42} (Fig. 6.4) Architectural changes to existing buildings and outdoor spaces that allow the Art Institute campus to be better understood as a larger entity are proposed as well. This thesis posits that the whole campus of the AIC is a multitude of parts which read as separate entities but are also constitutive of a greater composition. This composition seeks to convey the vision of the Art Institute as a humanist institution to visitors and the city beyond.

\textsuperscript{42} Due to Chicago’s hosting of the 1893 World’s Fair, special permission was granted for the building to be constructed within the park.
Fig. 6.4
Designated buildable portions of the site. The proposal is rendered tan and the masterplan is rendered blue.

By unifying the western and eastern portions of the site through the bridging of the museum and the school, the idea is to dignify the institution as a whole. Classical architecture is a language that allows the designer to create a harmonious environment. As a humanist institution, the AIC with both its existing and proposed interior spaces, as well as its sequence of outdoor spaces, will be a poetic means of celebrating art and architecture within the same facility. It will be a journey of man’s creativity with respect to art and architecture. More importantly, the AIC is first and foremost an institution of learning, and, therefore, the interaction between the artwork that the museum houses and the students of the School of the Art Institute needs to be greater. There needs to be a
stronger relationship outlined in the curriculum whereby the students actually learn from the collection which the museum houses. As a humanist institution of art, the AIC should focus on learning representational rather than abstract art, because the former encompasses the vast experience of human nature. It is also the most responsible means of perpetuating art in a period where art has become so introverted that it proves to be meaningless to all but the few.

The architectural program was determined by combining the spaces the Piano proposal fulfills and additional program which, in part, was a catalyst for creating the masterplan.
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<th>Ground Floor</th>
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<th>Total Area</th>
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Fig. 6.5 Ground floor and first floor program
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<td>Toilet Facilities</td>
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Fig. 6.6 Second floor and outdoor space program
Pl. 1 Site and existing program analysis
PIANO PROPOSAL

Pl. 2 Piano proposal images
Pl. 3 Piano scheme analysis
ANALYSIS AND SCHEMATICS

Pl. 4 Analysis and schematics
Pl. 5 First floor and second floor plans
Pl. 6 Transverse section facing North, roof plan, ground floor plan, and Allerton Building elevation
Pl. 7 North-South section facing east
Pl. 11 Watercolor of Columbus Drive main entrance

Pl. 12 Photograph of model from the northeast

Pl. 13 Aerial Photograph of model from the southeast
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This project is humanist because it elevates the artwork it houses as well as educates those who occupy it. Consequently, the architecture is not sacrificed for the sake of modernist pedagogy. It is civic in scale and monumentality but also inviting. The proposal for the AIC does not ignore its responsibility to its user or the environment for which it is engaged. It does not objectify itself, but rather, unifies its constituent pieces in order to create a harmonious architecture. This proposal complements the existing collection of building fabric and artwork by injecting new programmatic elements as well as expanding upon the themes that exist. This artwork ranges from a collection that encompasses international through local work. There exists a humanist concern for the well being of the individual but an equal-if not more-concern for the civic realm. These ideas are reflective both in the building’s formal character as well as its underlying meaning as an institution of education.

One of the overall goals of this proposal is to improve the existing condition of the block which the AIC occupies. This improvement is achieved by providing architectural coherence to the proposal drawn upon the Allerton building’s Classical roots. Classicism lends itself to creating urban environments by giving hierarchy to the
building as well as defining the public and private realms (that are presently underutilized and ambiguous). The proposal aims at creating an urban condition that serves the greater good of the civic arena.

The new entrance on Columbus Drive is on axis with the Michigan Avenue entrance of the Allerton building, recognizing the inherent formality. The pedimented façade and raised porch derive from historical precedent of marking the primary access to a building. Sir William Chambers’ Somerset House and John Russell Pope’s National Gallery of Art were inspirations for this façade. (Fig.s 7.1, 7.2) These buildings are fundamentally important civic icons and therefore, are appropriate examples by which to articulate an institute of art. At the corners of Monroe Street and Columbus Drive as well as Jackson Boulevard and Columbus Drive are the buildings which anchor the corner conditions of this long façade. These buildings are connected to the pedimented center entrance building by “hyphens.” The “hyphen” of the museum portion of the façade has a covered entrance for tour groups. Since it shelters people from the elements but is also relatively transparent, this portion of the façade is a poetic variation of a porch in relation to Grant Park. The idea of flanking the center massing with two anchor buildings at opposite ends was inspired by McKim, Mead, and White’s (and Richard Morris Hunt’s) Metropolitan Museum of Art. (Fig. 7.3) The massing and articulation of these facades were also inspired by John Soane’s Bank of England as well as the Chateau de Versailles by Louis Le Vau, Charles Le Brun, Claude Perrault, and Jules Hardouin-Mansart. (Fig.s 7.4, 7.5)
Fig. 7.1
Sir William Chambers
Somerset House

Fig. 7.2
John Russell Pope
National Gallery of Art

Fig. 7.3
Richard Morris Hunt and McKim, Mead, and White
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Fig. 7.4
Sir John Soane
Bank of England
On axis with the Columbus Drive entrance is a dome which is situated between the entrance to the museum and McKinlock Court. Due to its typological association with civic structures, this element elevates the significance of the building and acts as a visual marker for the AIC in the context of Grant Park and the Loop. Charles Atwood’s Museum of Science and Industry (Fig. 4.2) and McKim, Mead, and White’s Law Library of Columbia University are precedents for the creation of this portion of the museum which houses the fresco gallery. Just beyond they dome of the fresco gallery is McKinlock Court which is now a three story enclosed garden and sculpture court.

The primary portion of the proposal lies on the North side of the site, bounded by Monroe Street and Columbus Drive. The majority of the program is centered around a main lobby which is connected to Howard Van Doren Shaw’s reconstructed Goodman Theatre (which is demolished under the Renzo Piano proposal). The Goodman Theatre is an internationally recognized not-for-profit group that recently vacated the property for larger facilities. The idea is that this classical revival space be preserved and continued to be used for museum and school related assemblies as well as an annex for smaller theater performances. The theater and lobby are flanked by classrooms (for school fieldtrips) and gallery spaces. The second floor is primarily comprised of more gallery spaces as well as a restaurant located above the entrance, facing Grant Park and Lake Michigan.
The primary goal of the masterplan is to connect the eastern half of the site with the western half of the site which is bisected by the railroad track air rights. The masterplan proposes building over the railway lines, adding additional gallery spaces which will link the new museum to the Ferguson Building and the other gallery connecting the Rice Building with the Morton Wing. These links are similar to Gunsaulus Hall, but these buildings are more transparent, being inspired by Donato Bramante di Lazzari’s Belvedere at the Vatican. In conjunction with the four outdoor spaces defined by bridging across the tracks, the gallery spaces and outdoor gardens will be programmed to contain and display the work resulting from the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition as well as the City Beautiful movement. Architectural fragments, reconstructed buildings, plaster casts and sculpture will be displayed and housed in order to celebrate the cultural significance of this period of history for both Chicago and the world. In addition to the westward expansion, the masterplan includes a new academic building for the School of the Art Institute which is to be located at its present site, the corner of Jackson Boulevard and Columbus Drive.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


