

Jefferson Improves on Palladio

Travis McDonald

Among his many accolades Thomas Jefferson can count the *terras* roof, a most overlooked architectural feature as his invention and improvement on a Palladian device. Jefferson was thus the father of American decks and “flat” roofs well before their common use.

After decades of studying Thomas Jefferson’s architecture, both at Poplar Forest and in general, I conclude the *terras* roof was his one architectural invention: He used this design tenaciously for more than 20 years in several places, always tweaking it for greater performance. The *terras* roof provided a usable “flat” roof above an attached service wing, making it closely related to Jefferson’s other designs as a New World Palladian architect. It is also the most unacknowledged Jeffersonian invention, one that was exclusive to his own work.

Jefferson’s precocious design of the first Monticello in the 1760s included attached Palladian wings. These were not the *barchesse* wings for the agricultural functions seen on Palladio’s villas but a place to group the typical enslaved service spaces of a plantation house, thereby reserving the immediate grounds near the house for landscape architecture and gardens.

President Jefferson had moved into the unfinished shell of the President’s House in 1801. He immediately planned to redesign its Irish Georgian interior plan with a more modern Parisian “apartment” plan. This didn’t happen. Nor did his landscape designs for the grounds. What he did build were two 100-foot service wings on each side of the President’s House, similar but smaller than those at Monticello.¹ By this time Jefferson had figured out how to use the top of his Palladian service wings for sitting or strolling.

This entailed a labor-intensive hidden roof structure he called his *terras* roof, his “serrated” or “zig-zag” roof.

Around the same period in 1805, he altered the pitched roofs of his Monticello wings for the flat deck which rested on the hidden ridge and valley rooflets below. Benjamin Henry Latrobe, hired to work on the President’s House and the U.S. Capitol, stated that this was Jefferson’s own design. Using government funds at the President’s House, Jefferson lined the wooden ridges and valleys with sheet metal and collected the water for cisterns, as he did at

Monticello where the water supply was at a premium. The only other possible place where Jefferson saw some type of flat roof was

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North side, East Wing
 Photograph by Travis McDonald

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CPSA News

New Staff and Trips

JOHN J. ZEUGNER, AICP, PRESIDENT



John J. Zeugner

I'm pleased to let you know about recent developments and upcoming events. First, Kay Slaughter, our administrator for the past six years, has stepped down from that position. She will continue to work with Calder Loth on editing *Palladiana*. The Board is extremely grateful for her invaluable service in keeping the CPSA running smoothly and focused on the future. We hope she will join us on upcoming CPSA trips.



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Westend, Louisa County, Virginia

Yet, CPSA plans seem to fall into place. At our Barboursville meeting two years ago, Dale Hilton, a long-time CPSA member, expressed interest in how she might help as a volunteer. A retired museum director, Dale is a preservationist who writes on architecture history and preservation. She joined the Board of Directors in January. In addition to bringing new vision to CPSA, she has been assisting Bucci with deposits and mailing books. May Palladio bless her!

Her neighbor, Mark Hoerath, also asked how he might help. Also retired, Mark has extensive corporate management experience. Moreover, he has the computer savvy that can help us reach a new level in communication and promotion.

When we asked Mark if he would be interested in the administrator's position, he jumped at the opportunity. The CPSA Executive

Committee interviewed him, were impressed by his qualifications and enthusiasm, and subsequently endorsed his employment.

Thank you, Mario up above, for these two.

The CPSA travel committee is assembling a tour of historic homes on Maryland's Eastern Shore for April, and is engaged in planning one or two day trips closer to home. It is also planning our annual Members Meeting to be held this summer. In addition, we are planning our trip abroad to tour London and Anglo-Palladian estates in northern England, the second half of our 2019 England trip. During our long COVID quarantine, Martin Randall Travel morphed into Heritage Travel, but the English trip is on for Sept 18–27. For more information, please contact Julia Henley ASAP.



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Loggia del Capitaniato

We will be sending notices to advertise our spring and summer get-togethers, including a lecture and reception enhanced with Barboursville wine at Richmond's Branch Museum of Architecture and Design.

If you are associated with academics, practicing architectural historians or preservationists, please suggest that our biannual journal *Palladiana* welcomes articles on Palladio and related subjects for publication. And if you know people who might consider serving on our CPSA Board, please let us know their names and contact information, and we will invite them to our events, next few trips, and get-togethers. All contacts made through palladianstudies@gmail.com will be forwarded to the correct person.

Please join us on these trips, and stay well!



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Andre Grospe, UVA Student Abroad

As we go to press, we are saddened to learn that Joseph F. Johnston, Jr. died Jan. 3, 2023, at the age of 89. Joe, a lawyer living in Alexandria, was a former CPSA Board member and a longtime supporter of the organization. He and his wife Rhonda, owners of Joe's ancestral home, Bremo Plantation in Fluvanna County, were most generous in allowing CPSA to tour the property as part of our mission to educate about Palladianism in the United States. We extend our sympathy to his family.

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Submissions

Have you got research or an article about Palladio and the influence of his work on American architecture? Have you read a book about the subject you'd like to review? Do you know about new exhibits or symposia on Palladian architecture? Please write to us about submitting articles to *Palladiana*.

Our deadline for the fall 2023 issue is August 1, and we appreciate early submittal of potential articles of no more than 1000 words. Please contact Kay Slaughter at katherineslaughter61@gmail.com if you have a piece you might submit.

Louisa County Palladianism

Calder Loth

One delight of Palladianism is observing how Andrea Palladio's designs permeate the character of much of our native architecture. We see this in Westend, a relatively compact plantation residence in Louisa County, VA. Dominated by its Tuscan portico, the house exemplifies Palladio's use of the classical architectural language to lend a dignity of appearance to otherwise unpretentious works.

The ancient Romans reserved use of the classical portico for temples and special public buildings. We owe it to Palladio for popularizing the practice of applying classical porticos to domestic structures. Porticos of one form or another front the facades of the majority of the villa designs that Palladio illustrated in Book II of his 1570 treatise *The Four Books on Architecture*. He was the first to publish the designs of his own built works, and his villa designs have influenced the appearance of countless dwellings, great and small, ever since.

Westend also reflects Thomas Jefferson's vision of a prosperous agrarian republic with landowners occupying modest but architecturally sophisticated classical villas, as fostered by Jefferson's own Monticello. Westend was built for Susan Dabney Morris Watson, widow of Dr. James Watson. Westend's contractor,

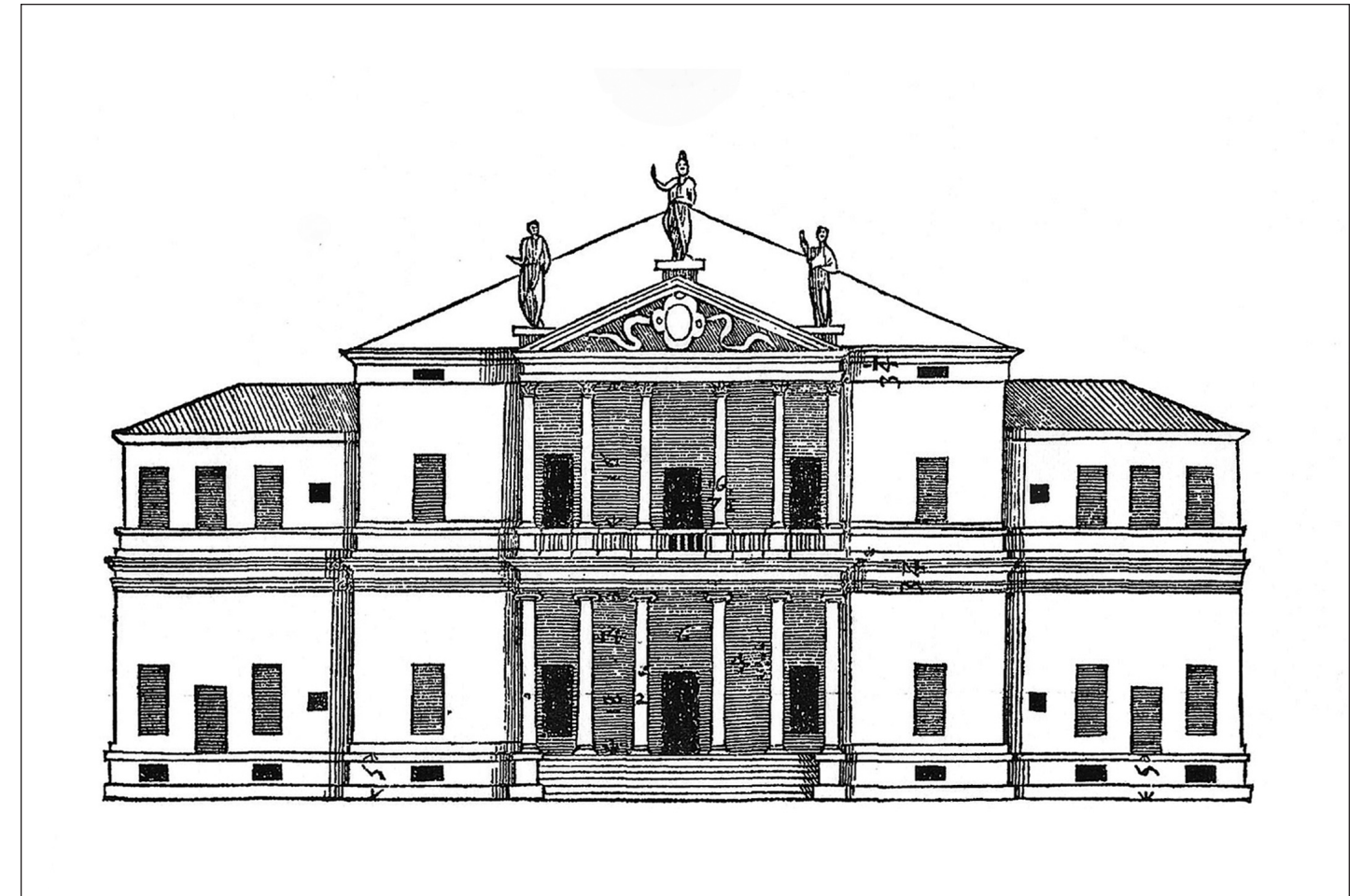
James Magruder was assisted by Malcolm F. Crawford, a master carpenter who became literate in the classical architectural orders and details while employed in the building of the University of Virginia. The university complex was designed, of course, by Jefferson who also oversaw its construction.

Since Jefferson derived much of his knowledge of classical architecture from Palladio's treatise, it is highly likely that he shared access to the treatise with his principal builders, including Crawford. With its tetrastyle Tuscan portico, Westend has much the character of Palladio's Villa Emo. Its three-part format of monumental center section and lower hipped-roof wings echoes Palladio's Villa Cornaro. We also can note Crawford's hand in various other Jeffersonian-Palladian buildings ascribed to him, among which are Charlottesville's John A.J. Davis house and the courthouses of Madison, Page, Rappahannock, and Spotsylvania counties. ■

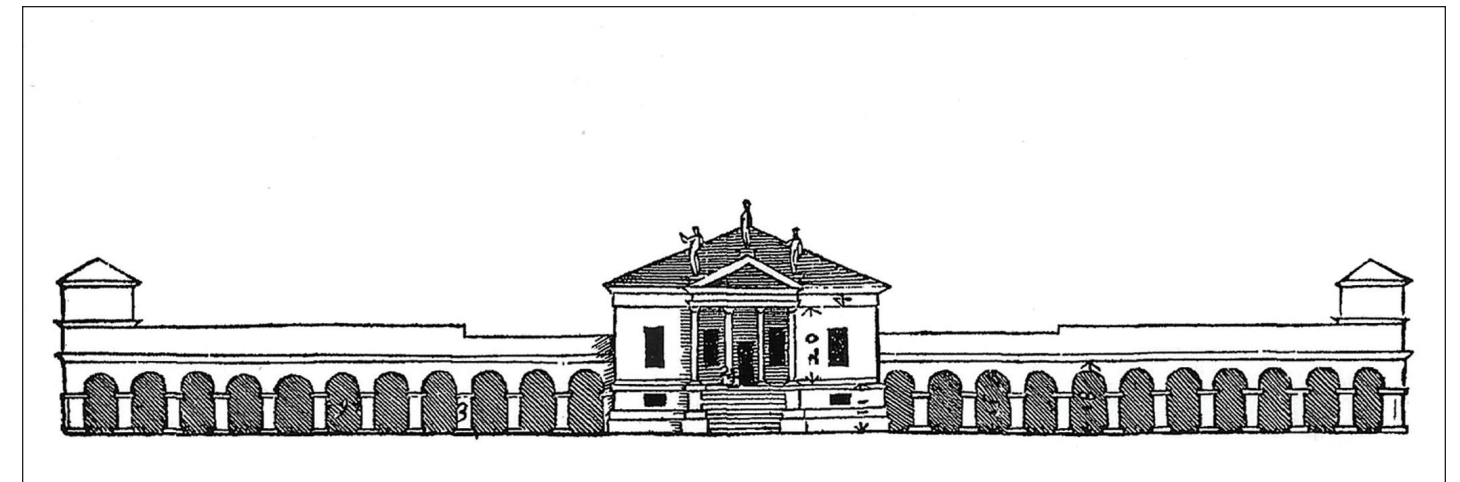
Calder Loth is a frequent lecturer, writer, and commentator on classical architecture and the work of Palladio. He retired from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.



Westend, Louisa County, Virginia
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
Elizabeth Lipford photographer



Villa Cornaro
Book 2, Andrea Palladio, *The Four Books on Architecture*



Villa Emo
Book 2, Andrea Palladio, *The Four Books on Architecture*

Palladian Might-Have-Beens

Loggia del Capitaniato and Palazzo Porto Breganze

Calder Loth

Two prominent Palladian works in Vicenza might have been more imposing if one had been expanded as likely intended, and construction of the other had not suddenly halted. The façades of both works, the Loggia del Capitaniato and the Palazzo Porto Breganze, are distinguished by their full-height Composite-order engaged columns, the only such treatment given to any of Palladio's Vicentine projects.¹ However, documentation for Palladio's intended appearance for both buildings is sketchy since neither work was included in his treatise, *The Four Books on Architecture*.² Both projects were begun after the book's 1570 publication.

Even in its present state, Palladio's Loggia del Capitaniato is a conspicuous landmark on the Piazza dei Signori, Vicenza's main square. It stands opposite the medieval Vicenza Basilica, which Palladio wrapped with two tiers of arcades, resulting in one of his most famous works. The Loggia del Capitaniato was built to serve as the seat of the city council of the Municipality of Vicenza, and continues to do so. Its massive engaged columns frame the arches of the ground-level loggia or arcade, a traditional feature of many Renaissance and later governmental buildings.

Various scholars have maintained that the three-bay Loggia del Capitaniato was intended to have a façade of five or even seven bays, making it a robust architectural competitor to the Basilica. We are fortunate that an expanded scheme was given graphic reality with a conceptual engraving by Ottavio Bertotti Scamozzi, published in his *Le Fabbriche e i Disegni di Andrea Palladio* (1776–83).³ The engaging image of this and many other Palladio-designed works in Bertotti Scamozzi's publication were his interpretations of how these buildings and structures were intended to look.⁴ Bertotti Scamozzi (1719–90) was part of the 18th-century Palladian Revival, a movement that promoted Palladian-style compositions in Italy and especially England.

Bertotti Scamozzi's conjectural depiction of a completed Loggia del Capitaniato has a seven-bay façade. This expanded elevation may indeed have been intended since, in 1565, the Vicenza City Council purchased the buildings that stood left of the loggia and subsequently removed them. Nevertheless, any notion of an addition was shelved until 1928, when a two-bay expansion, also repeating the façade's original elements, was formally considered. This too came to



Loggia del Capitaniato
Photograph by Calder Loth

naught.⁵ The adjacent property, long cleared of buildings, currently serves as a café plaza. Though a two-bay expansion would create an undeniably imposing five-bay composition, the Loggia del Capitaniato's original stand-alone form is yet a testament to Palladio's architectural mastery.

By contrast, the Palazzo Porto Breganze, dating from the 1570s, is clearly an unintentionally unfinished structure. It is speculated that the death of its patron, Count Alessandro Porto, brought a halt to its construction.⁶ Because the palazzo is not included in Book II of Palladio's *The Four Books*, documentation firmly linking Palladio to the project is lacking. Hence, Palladio's

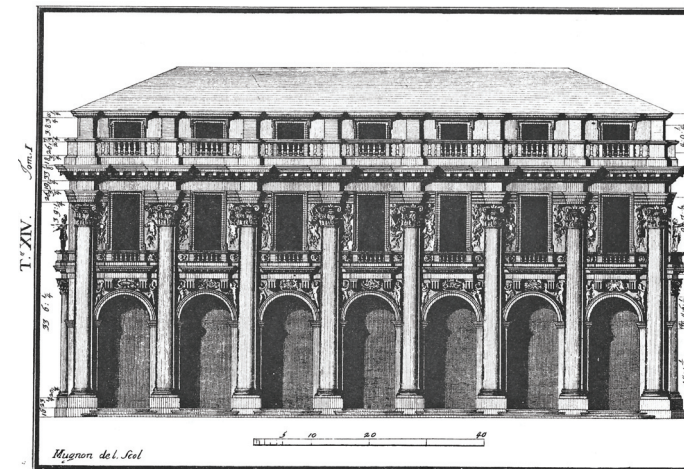
authorship of the design has been questioned. Nevertheless, the design's assertive classicism makes a Palladian attribution credible.⁷ No one else in Vicenza at the time could have conceived a scheme of such confident bravura. In addition, the huge Composite columns supported on story-tall pedestals echo the near-identical treatment of Palladio's façade for San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice, begun in 1564, several years before construction of the Palazzo Porto Breganze. Yet again, we are indebted to Bertotti Scamozzi for producing a credible image of a completed palazzo, one of seven bays. Such a cliff of classicism would be a fitting backdrop for Vicenza's picturesque Piazza Castello.

Sadly, only a fragment of such a stunning work was ever realized. Is it wrong to hope that some sentient individual of unlimited resources might someday undertake completion of the design? Or is it best to let the mind's eye visualize what might have been when gazing at this provocative architectural anomaly? ■

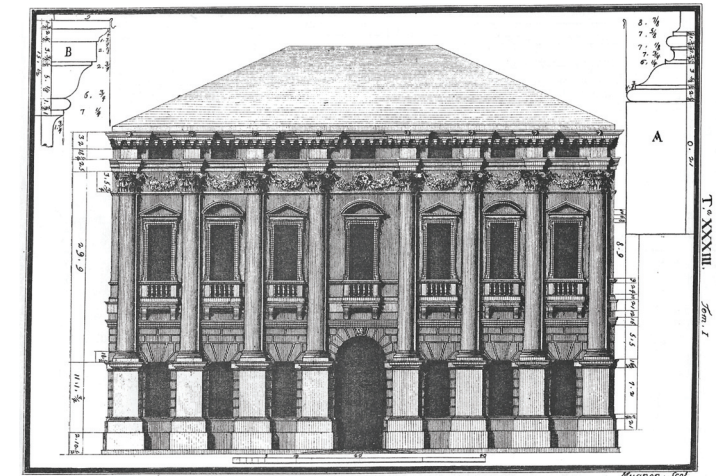
- 1 The full-height Composite order on Palladio's Palazzo Valmarana in Vicenza employs pilasters rather than engaged columns.
- 2 Andrea Palladio. *The Four Books on Architecture*, Translated by Robert Tavenor and Richard Schofield. MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1997.
- 3 Ottavio Bertotti Scamozzi (1719-90) was an architect in his own right. He added Scamozzi as a second surname out of recognition that he was a recipient of a financial bequest from a legacy established in the will of architect Vincenzo Scamozzi (1552-1616) to support an architectural student.
- 4 An English language edition of Bertotti Scamozzi's treatise, *The Buildings and Designs of Andrea Palladio*, was published by the Princeton Press in 2015.
- 5 Caroline Constant: *The Palladio Guide*, Princeton Architectural Press (1993), pp. 110-112.
- 6 Ibid, p. 134.
- 7 Ibid.



Palazzo Porto Breganze
Photograph by Calder Loth



Loggia del Capitaniato
As conceptualized by Ottavio Bertotti Scamozzi
Le Fabbriche E I Disegni Di Andrea Palladio, Tomo 1, Tavolo XIV



Palazzo Porto Breganze, as completed
Concept by Ottavio Bertotti Scamozzi,
Le Fabbriche E I Disegni Di Andrea Palladio, Tomo 1, Tavolo XXXIII

New Members

Dale Hilton and Gibson Worsham, recently elected members to the CPSA Board of Directors, have diverse backgrounds in museum and arts education, architecture, and historic preservation.



Dale, who lives in Barboursville, retired from The Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA) as Director of Adult Learning after more than 28 years. She is a CPSA volunteer, mailing books to members and assisting treasurer Bucci Zeugner.

She holds a Master's degree in Art History from The University of Chicago and a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Virginia Commonwealth

University and completed course work in interior design at the University of Akron. Dale's publications include co-authored chapters in *The Caring Museum: New Models of Engagement with Ageing*, and *Professional Development in Art Museums: Strategies of Engagement through Contemporary Art*.

Dale also serves on the boards of Cleveland Decorative Arts, The Art Center in Orange, VA, and Wilton House Museum, Richmond, and is an occasional contributor to the magazine *Early American Life*.



Gibson Worsham, an associate at Glavé & Holmes in Richmond, has more than 35 years of experience in historic preservation, historic research, and new traditional architecture. He earned his Bachelor's degree in Architecture from Virginia Tech and Master's in Architectural History from the University of Virginia. He has managed many historic preservation tax credit

projects, historic building surveys, and National Register nominations.

Gibson's passion for preservation and architectural history is evident in his work on many significant projects including the restoration of Bremo Plantation in Fluvanna County, Solitude House at Virginia Tech, Waterford Mill, the Goochland Courthouse Green and Goochland County Jail, and projects at Colonial Williamsburg. ■

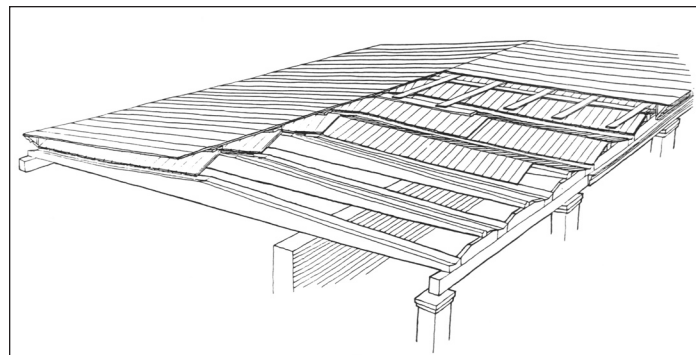
Continued from page 1.

on Samuel Smith's Montebello house outside of Baltimore, which he asked Latrobe to stop and see. Latrobe obviously made his report in person without documenting what the roof design might have been. That house is documented only in exterior drawings. Nevertheless, Jefferson never copied any prototypical design wholly without making it his own.

At about the same time, 1805, Jefferson was designing his Bedford County retirement retreat while he sat in the President's House. The octagonal retreat house he began building in 1806, and using in 1809, when he left public office, did not have service wings initially. What it had instead was even more Palladian: a five-part composition of two flanking mounds planted with three rows of trees, standing in as pavilions and connected to the house by a double row of trees substituting as hyphens. This mimicked the British Palladian and early Virginia compositional five-part compositions like those at various homes: Battersea, Bremo, Soldier's Joy, Castlewood, Woodlawn, and Belmont.

In 1814, the eastern hyphen row of trees was replaced by a 100-foot four-room service wing that connected the house and mound. This wing had a kitchen, smokehouse, laundry, and possibly a room for spinning. A balanced western wing was never built, most likely because it was not needed for the simple and intimate life at the retreat.

Jefferson instructed his workmen to forget lining the ridges and gutters with metal because it was expensive and did not last any longer than the wood. The ridges were composed of two layers of wood shingles, the top layer having grooves running down their face on each side to facilitate water run-off. Each shingle was planed on all sides for size with an angle cut on top for the ridge cap. At Poplar Forest, the gutters delivered the water to the ground rather than being collected.



Poplar Forest, East Service Wing and terras roof system
Drawing by Mesick Cohen Wilson Baker Architects



South side, East Wing
Photograph by Travis McDonald

Jefferson remarked that he strolled on the wing's deck in the evening with the bats and the owls. It was another way for him to engage nature. In 1819, Jefferson replaced the "rafter" roof over the central cubistic dining room with a *terras* design and skylight, from which he could observe the near distant Blue Ridge Mountains. Later when his grandson Francis Eppes was living at Poplar Forest, he informed his grandfather that the gutters of the wing were rotten and needed to be replaced. Jefferson characteristically replied that he had an improved design that would make future repairs easier.

Jefferson's final use of the *terras* system was at the University of Virginia where he argued for it against the advice of friends and officials. Typically, he used not one but several different methods of his system there for the roofs over student rooms and on a couple of pavilions. His friends were eventually vindicated and the roofs were replaced by low-pitched slate roofs. Jefferson had also influenced his friend John Hartwell Cocke to use the design on Bremo, where it was eventually replaced due to leaks. James Madison also used the design for the roofs over the one-story

domestic wings at Montpelier. Jefferson advocated for the same roof design on the Buckingham Courthouse wings, but the building's destruction by fire prevents confirmation of this. A private house across the street from the courthouse, the Dr. Tucker House, has the only other example of a Jeffersonian *terras* roof. Jefferson's idiosyncratic roof design was so characteristic of him. He used a design from the past but improved upon it; he tweaked it for many years to make its performance better; in two instances he used the design for double duty collecting water; and he went to all the time and trouble to enjoy his favorite things: gardens, nature, and the company of good friends and family. ■

Travis McDonald is director of architectural restoration at Jefferson's Poplar Forest and the author of the forthcoming *Poplar Forest: Thomas Jefferson's Villa Retreat*.

¹ The various Jeffersonian *terras* roof designs and their evolution are found in the Mesick Cohen Wilson Baker reports for both Monticello and University of Virginia. The President's House wings are documented in Travis McDonald's article on that subject in the White House History Quarterly in 2011.

UVA Students Abroad

Palladianism and Regionalism



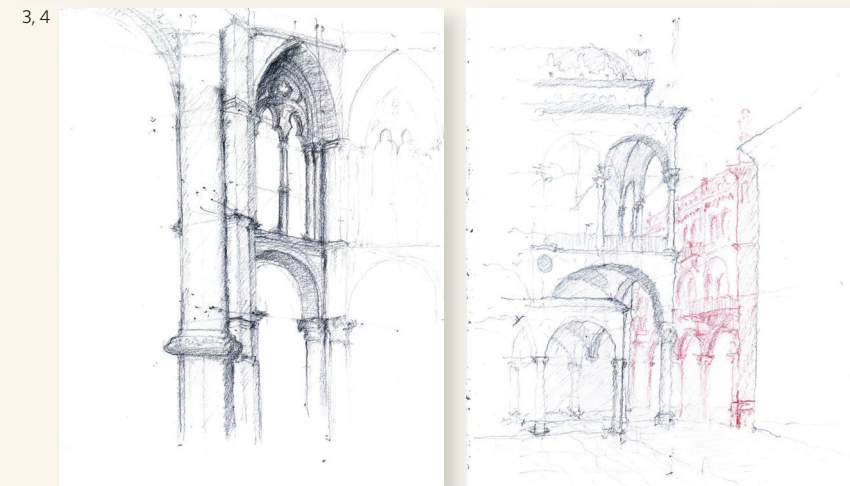
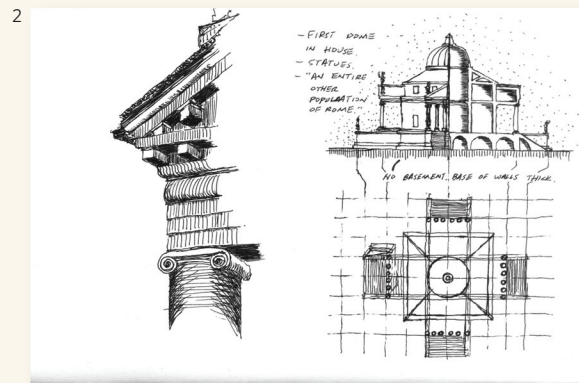
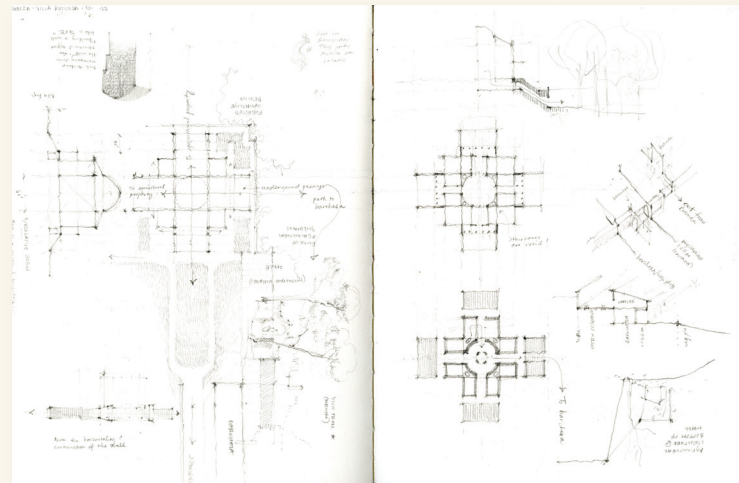
Venice Students with Giorgio Berto, plaster craftsman, and Alexandra di Valmarana.

Photograph by Bill Sherman

Following a two-year hiatus, the University of Virginia School of Architecture resumed its study abroad program in Venice and the Veneto in the Fall of 2022. Founded in the mid-1970s by Mario di Valmarana, the program continues to provide an extraordinary opportunity for an immersive education.

A group of 15 graduate and undergraduate students from architecture, landscape architecture, and urban planning lived, studied, and toured for six weeks from mid-September through the end of October. Led by Professor Bill Sherman, Assistant Professor Ali Fard, and Architectural Historian Monica Shenouda, the students participated in a number of conversations with local Venetian architects and planners, in addition to getting behind the scenes with Alexandra and Francesco di Valmarana and many family and friends.

This year's program was built around a research focus on the connections between Venice and its larger region, both historically and as a contemporary city. While Venice is often considered in isolation as a city that is becoming museum, the program instead framed it as the center of a thriving metropolitan region, including both the lagoon and the urban growth on the mainland. The structure of the relationship is rooted historically in its deep ties to the cities, villas, and landscapes of the Veneto, as well as centuries of engineering of the lagoon. —Bill Sherman



1 Villa Rotonda, Ailsa Thai, BS Arch 2020, MlanArch 2023
 2 Vicenza, Haoran Zhang, BS Arch 2023
 3 & 4 Venice sketchbook pages, Andre Gospe, BS Arch 2020, MlanArch 2023

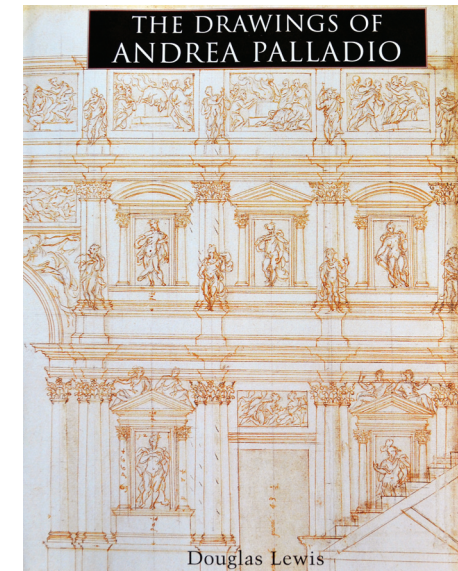
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* PALLADIANA is published twice each year and is mailed to all current CPSA members.

Additional copies are available for circulation; please contact palladianstudies@gmail.com

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