Architecture, Buildings, and Political Ends

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Abstract: It is not infrequently heard in architectural circles that architecture is an inherently political enterprise and pursuit, such that built structures are, correspondingly, inherently political objects. But does architecture, by its nature as practice or artifact, universally serve political ends? Taking ends of some x to be political iff x serves the projection of authority by state or government, or advances policy-making, ideologies, or the body politic, it may be thought that

- AP1. Architecture, via its products, always serves political ends.

on the grounds that, roughly speaking, wherever one looks, one finds cases providing evidence that

- AP2. Buildings (built structures, generally) always serve political ends, and
- AP3. Buildings (built structures) are the only products of architecture.

On the supposition that this fairly tracks the common view, I take for granted that the argument goes through, if the premises are defensible, I propose, though, that neither AP2 nor AP3 are defensible, at least in the grand, universal fashion that they are presented.

I. RECONSIDERING ARCHITECTURE'S INHERENTLY POLITICAL ENDS

It is not infrequently heard in architectural circles that architecture is an inherently political enterprise and pursuit, such that built structures are, correspondingly, inherently political objects. But does architecture, by its nature as practice or artefact, universally serve political ends? Taking ends of some x to be political iff x serves the projection of authority by state or government, or advances policy-making, ideologies, or the body politic, it may be thought that:

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We may look to tighten the reasoning here. But on the supposition that this fairly tracks the common view, I will take it for granted that if the premises are defensible, the argument goes through. I propose, though, that neither AP2 nor AP3 are defensible, at least in the grand, universal fashion that they are presented.

At the outset, and for purposes that will be clearer along the way, I flag the notion that as we consider political ends, we should be cognisant of political intentions; that is, intentions among political agents to attain political ends. The class of political intentions that inform the design and realization of architectural objects is, indisputably, a subset of the broader class of all intentions that inform architectural designs and the realization of structures. One of my aims here is to highlight an important distinction among such intentions. To wit, whereas aesthetic intentions, and perhaps functional intentions, are close to if not exactly, essential to architectural design as an intentional pursuit—producing artefacts informed by such intentions—no such claim may be made about political intentions. This is so, despite the pervasive political engagements of architectural practice and its creations.

My account here focuses on architectural creations, rather than architectural practice *per se*. I refer to 'architectural objects' to distinguish buildings or other built structures from the total universe of objects designed in architectural creation. My attention to architectural objects-as-political contrasts with those who identify the architectural practice as being political. First, among the various views regarding how architectural practice can be political we find something of a common denominator. Consider the suggestion of Albena Yaneva, who draws on Actor-Network Theory to frame architectural practice's political power in virtue of its being part of a politically-engaged network of various sorts of agents, which possibly includes the architectural objects themselves.[1] On her view, architects' participation in such networks integrates politics into the design process and so shapes how people work together to realise architects' built products. Moreover, such networked engagements shape the way architects participate in coordinated activities, primarily in design practices. By way of a common denominator with other such theories: a stripped-down version of this sort of readily articulated social analysis might simply state that architects like all other persons, and like

professionals in particular are political animals who behave accordingly, given the opportunity or benefits of doing so.

This prompts a second point about the architecture-as-political view in relation to architectural practice; that is, if true, it is trivially so. If architecture serves political ends in virtue of architects being political animals, which drives their practices to take on a political cast, then pointing to architecture as inherently political is no different than pointing to any other coordinated human pursuit (especially among professionals) as political. Either we all do it or we don't all do it. If architects are somehow special in this regard, which on the face of it seems unlikely, explaining how this is so is well beyond this essay's scope.

II. THREE ARCHITECTURE-AS-POLITICAL SCHEMES

Turning to architectural objects—and in particular, built structures—we find in the literature various candidate modalities in which they are taken to serve political ends. Each such modality represents a possible way in which AP2, such that 'Buildings always serve political ends' turns out to be true. Thus, for example:

1. Architectural objects are purposely expressive of, or embody, political ideology;

2. Architectural objects, whatever architects' level of awareness, force a choice, each option advancing one political value (or weighting) or else its alternative; and

3. Architectural objects are individual interventions designed to promote a given political end.

A fourth modality, which addresses whether architectural objects can be crafted so as to serve political ends, is best understood relative to their 'meaning' through the lens of political ideology. Examples of this view include Manfredo Tafuri's proposal for a Marxist interpretation of architecture, Roger Scruton's critique of Tafuri, and Scruton's own conservative interpretative lens.[2]

As these views locate the political nature or ends of architectural objects in our interpretation or understanding of them, I set this fourth candidate aside, in keeping with my focus on the objects themselves serving political ends, independent of some interpretation. Let's take a closer look at the three modalities that fall under this last description.

First, there is the 'embodiment of ideology' view. On this view, which is typically associated with Marxist and Foucauldian traditions, built structures must reflect the ideology of the dominant political framework.[3] So, we might take Russian Constructivism to be the architectural embodiment of Soviet ideology, or the American suburban tract to reflect the ideology of

late-stage capitalism. Otherwise, this view goes, we would see other possible structures that such political cultures do not permit. A strong version suggests that there is architectural (or broader) censorship and iron-clad rules; a weak version suggests only a politically-driven conformism. There are many contingent instances of either version: from zoning or landmark or natural preservation codes to dictated architectural styles in countries with repressive political regimes, and many other actual scenarios still. Yet, for a Marxist or other similarly determinist analysis notwithstanding, these are contingent scenarios.

Consider that typical suburban tract design, which is pervasive in the US and elsewhere, follows zoning codes, financial constraints, and transportation needs. All this reflects influences of capital, commodification, and industrialization on patterns of land use in suburban developments. For all that, however, suburbs across the US have very different visual appearances and spatial sensibilities, owing to differences in regional styles, design fads of distinct eras, or income levels of the target consumers for a given suburban development.[4] Along such lines, it is unclear how, for the non-determinist, these or other 'embodiment of ideology' scenarios might be realised as necessary—logically, conceptually, historically or materially. That works fine if the case studies all align properly, but the universal claim of service to political ends is unlikely if the best we can offer is the high frequency of contingently compliant cases.

Second, there is the 'forced choice' scenario. On this view, the choice of any design approach x in architecture (by architects, developers, clients, etc.) bears ideological or distributive dimensions, and in choosing x we are automatically ruling out $\neg x$. That forced choice (x vs. $\neg x$) is thus political given the stakes. Ergo all design approaches as we might choose are inherently political, whichever way we go, regardless of whether we seek to make a politically-inspired choice or not. To be an architect—to make architecture—is to follow or embrace one dogmatic path versus a designated alternative. Some such absolutist ideological reasoning—though not always as political—is common in architectural modernism and in some subsequent style, or ethos-driven movements. An early, non-political example is Loos 2019, who argues that all ornament in design makes use of materials in ways associated with abundance, whereas avoidance of ornament detaches design from degeneracy or fraud. The choice to deploy or avoid ornament in architectural design is a morally weighted, in either direction. Similarly dichotomous thinking, of more political stripe, is found among the Soviet architects, such as Ginzburg 1970, and Soviet sympathizers, such as Meyer 1980; or among the Weimar and Nazi architects, advocating for political or socially-charged architecture at opposite political extremes (see Lane 1985; Forgács 1995). The primary problem with this sort of reasoning is the assumption that we (architects, developers, clients, etc.) need to make rigidly-bounded design choices. There are endless ways to parse distributive choices, and even ideological choices may be nuanced, subject to compromise or otherwise non-exclusive.

Thus, the mere presence of distributive or ideological stakes does not entail 'forced choice', and so does not entail ever-present politics as characteristic of architectural objects.

Finally, there is the 'built intervention' thesis, according to which the structuring of space, programmed activities and choices of movement are inherently political. In its varied forms, this view, which is associated with Raymond Geuss, Frances Sparshott, and Noam Chomsky among others, claims that architecture inevitably orders (Chomsky 2018), coordinates (Geuss 2014) or delimits (Sparshott 1994) social activity. Sparshott remarks,

Architecture. . . is concerned with big and important buildings. Such buildings, because they are big, are sources of social dislocation. They take up much space, which is accordingly unavailable for other purposes. In contending that they are important, we are recognising that they affect the lives of many people, or the lives of a few people who are important because they themselves affect the lives of many people, facilitating, or obstructing or channelling activities. That is to say, architecture is above all about the politics of space. Architects provide space for some persons and activities, and exclude others. In the spaces that architects delimit, some movements are encouraged and others discouraged.[5]

According to such views, whatever factors order, coordinate, or delimit social activities are political, given that politics is an ordering, coordinating, or delimiting of society. In a similar vein, Montaner and Muxí 2011 give a review of the long history of architectural engagement with politics which adopts the starting point that architecture represents built interventions with broad social impact and therefore is never politically neutral. This makes architecture inherently political.

The proposed reason for the inevitability of ordering, coordinating or delimiting is the spatial structuring role of architecture and the resulting direction in choices of activity among users of architectural objects, by application of force. The force in question is the lack of choice that structures impose (cf. Chomsky, Geuss, Sparshott, etc.). Our behaviours in interacting with our environments are shaped by built structures throughout these environments, which limits what we can do and how we may do it, which is a form of political control. Extreme examples include prisons and military installations. Less extreme but prospectively political all the same are schools, shopping malls, and planned neighbourhoods.[6] This thesis, in short, suggests that it is definitely in the nature of architectural objects to be political, given their forceful structuring of experience, though this is not necessarily tied to particular ideologies, distributive schema, notions of justice or equality, etc.

I thus suggest that the 'built intervention' thesis faces significant problems: For one, there's force, and then there's force. In most instances of architectural objects (built structures), there is no violence or physical im-

position on users or spectators, though various sorts of constraints are often imposed. In response (per Geuss and Sparshott), it may be observed that we don't need violence or outward force to direct activity: constraints organised in the right way will do. And, on Henri Lefebvre's notion of political rights to space, the direction or designation of particular activities through urban design is rejected in favour of flexibility of spatial organisation. That said, not all constrained activities are political, in Geuss' sense of coordinated social activity. A day care centre is, we hope, fitted out with all manner of constraints, none of which serve political ends. Built structures designed for older populations may have constraints on experience with more social or political ramifications, yet it is unclear that they are always designed to produce this or that specified coordinated social activity. Further, such coordination of social activities in architectural objects may be more a matter of crafting disposition than shaping actual behaviours. Berendzen highlights as special those instances where architectural objects succeed at coordinating desirable social behaviours. Their success at coordination might turn out to be a rare accomplishment.[7]

An obvious problem with Geuss' version of the 'built interventions' view is that not all coordinated social activities, such as built structures, give rise to the political. Consider the rural highway, running through under-populated natural resources. Transportation routes are coordinated but there is no apparent engagement with, or impact on, a polity or community. The design simply works to conduct drivers safely from point A to point B. Or, consider architectural objects that often have no social function at all, such as a private garden shed, or an individual, single-occupancy cabin in the woods. No social function means no social coordination. The more removed from society a built structure is, the more likely this is true.

Finally, a word on Sparshott's version of the 'built intervention' view, whose focus is the delimiting function of architectural objects. The borders of built structures contain agents and activities within—and so delimit the public and private spheres for a given structure. Such borders indicate that such-and-such space is ours, not yours—and possibly signal conditions of entry. This is entirely common, particularly in developed nations where property rights are at a premium. But is this always the case? Not all built structures are fully or thoroughly bordered in ways that are exclusive. On the outer limit of inclusive spaces, such as public parks, such borders that exist are typically porous and only closed for safety considerations (as at night). Moreover, built structures that are fully bordered, are not necessarily bordered in political ways. If we admit without controversy small-scale private property, then many, if not most, small-scale private houses seem to fit this bordered, non-political category.

In brief, the possible modalities of architecture that serve political ends or are intended as such are various, given the ways in which architecture takes shape. The complaints against these different possible modalities vary ac-

cordingly. Looking beyond the particulars of these different views or grounds for their rejection, I suggest no such modalities of architecture-as-political are necessary. Instead, I propose that the political nature of architecture, wherever we find it is entirely contingent, accidental, and detachable from architectural practice and architectural objects.

One reason to reject outright all such architecture-as-political theses is the falsity of AP3, the constituent claim that built structures are the only product of architecture. The full domain of architectural objects includes not only built structures, but also data objects, design studies (including models and diagrams), paper architecture, and fantasy architecture. The problem is not simply that all architectural objects that are built structures lack political intentions or ends as may be served. After all, they *might* have such intentions or ends. Rather, the problem for claiming the necessity of architectural objects as political (per AP1) is this: assuming common bonds among architectural objects that (a) are not built structures and (b) are built structures, those bonds are entirely orthogonal to architecture serving political ends (or not). What joins all architectural objects—whether or not built structures, motivated by design or artistic considerations (or intentions of any kind)—are distinctive formal features. Such features include simple dimensions of shape, size or density as well as more complex concepts such as compositional unity, symmetry or proportion, and even more complex properties that characterise organisational programmes or are constituent components of an architectural object (for structural integrity, ventilation, traffic, etc.). Other sorts of dimensions that are characteristic of built structures—stylistic or historical context, or social or psychological fit—fall out of the set of common features shared by all architectural objects.

III. IMPLICATIONS FOR INDISCERNIBLE BUILDINGS ON INTENTIONALITY

Against this background, it is contingently possible that architectural objects serve political ends—where political intentions and preferences are complementary to central formal features in all such objects. However, even for built structures, the formal core of architecture doesn't require political ends. Indeed, if we take the key features of an architectural object to be captured by a formal core, the propriety of architectural objects serving political ends should already be suspect, let alone its necessity. One formalist motivation for focusing on formal features is the advancement and optimisation of operations such as replicability, component transformability, and medium-to-long-term adaptability—to attain design success and maximise utility. The pursuit of political goals in architectural design can only detract from such optimisation. However, this line of argument casts doubt on AP3 by leaning heavily on a particularly expansive ontology of architectural objects. Every view is not so expansive, yet rejecting AP3 does not require an ontology that includes the

fullest domain of architectural objects.

To address instead a general form of AP2, consider the following range of cases within the domain of built structures:

S1. The same structure α is built in two places, or replicated or transplanted. Let's assume that α serves political end p_1 when built in location l_1, not necessarily as a function of being built in l_1, but simply as an accompanying feature of α as instantiated in l_1. It does not follow that building α in some non-identical l_2 will be accompanied by α serving political end p_1 again, or if so, in quite the same way. Thus, if we take the London Bridge of Lake Havasu City, Arizona to have served some p_1 as initially built in 1830s London (for example, per a Geussian view, facilitating or directing traffic across the river, so as to build commerce and strengthen the commercial class), we will likely see a very different end p_2 or perhaps no p at all, served in its Arizona instantiation.

S2. We find the same built structure α at t_1 and t_2, with 100 or perhaps 1000 years in between. Let's assume again that α serves some p_1—here our focus is on the identification of that political end when α is constructed at t_1. There need be no transformation or transplantation of α over time in order that, at some significantly later t_2, we find that α no longer serves p_1—that it perhaps serves some non-identical p_2 or no p at all. Ready-to-hand instances in recent history include the Palais du Louvre, repurposed from a royal residence and bureaucratic offices to serve as the Musée du Louvre, or Nazi government buildings repurposed under the various German governments that followed the Nazi era.

These cases may seem improbable in a practical sense. It's not typical that built structures are transplanted or replicated elsewhere. And it's the rare built structure that survives across centuries as dramatically repurposed to differing political ends. A more familiar and practical case is where the same design is re-used, in each instance to distinct political ends:

S3. Two structures, α and β, are formally, and functionally, identical or nearly so but serve differing political ends. In this case, α and β have roughly the same appearance, are made of the same materials and according to the same engineering principles, and are designed by the same architect (whether firm or individual). Moreover, they are intended to serve the same function—for example, as apartment buildings priced for middle-income occupants. However, α and β differ in that α is designed and built under and for a government the principal tenets of which, relative to housing, public works, urban planning and so forth, may be summarised as p, whereas β has been designed and built (in something like cookie-cutter fashion) under and for a government the principal relevant tenets of which

may be summarised as not-p. In short, same buildings but 'different' political attachments, environment, endorsements, funding motives and schemes, or declared ends.

In this last regard, one might complain that declared ends of political agents are not trustworthy or reliable indicators of actual political intentions. That's fair enough, though as Younès 2004 has suggested relative to the history of architecture, this sort of scenario has occurred frequently, with similar architectural styles attaching to official buildings of drastically distinctive political natures and ideological bent. Thus, pre-World War II government buildings of Italy and the United States engage roughly the same neo-classicist styles taken by those governments to express, respectively, contrasting Fascist and democratic political ideals.[8]

The general point stands: architects create designs in at least quasi-autonomous fashion relative to the political environments or actors with whom they engage. They can adjust levels to which they invest in those political environments or agents, and incorporate such greater investment in their design thinking. Yet nothing—shy of political oppression or economic pressure—makes that necessary. Indeed, even where economic pressures influence market dynamics for development, construction, and sales of private buildings, the aesthetic and artistic aspects of architectural design typically remain at some remove from those pressures. They may be swayed by those pressures but generally as a matter of attractors (e.g., profit motives) and less as a matter of constraints or proscriptions.[9] Consequently, architects' designs enjoy a neutrality that allows their being realised as built structures in varying political or economic environments and by or with political or economic agents of varying stripes.[10]

In sum, I suggest that AP1 fails because AP2 cannot be true, owing to the detachable nature of political ends from architectural objects. Even where we impute political ends to architectural objects, they cannot be fixed 'rigidly' to those objects, as multiply-instantiated, across time, or even by changing their location or context. Unlike formal or functional features of architectural objects, political ends or the underlying intentions are only weakly and contingently attached, if at all.

IV.   SOLVING THE ARCHITECTURE-AS-POLITICAL PUZZLE

As against this view, two prospective counterexamples come to mind.

First, consider that a designed, structured space that did not exist prior to architectural intervention can create, through such intervention, a space of civic discourse or like political function.[11] Louis Kahn's National Assembly Building of Bangladesh (1962-1982), built during Pakistan's civil war, is a classic example. But even a modest cobblestone plaza, as was created in Paris'

Beaubourg district, offers such a case.[12] Where the design and creation of newly structured spaces have such an effect, the architectural object is directly and 'essentially' tied to or intended as political intervention.

Note, however, that this sort of case is also an instance of temporally-bound, detachable political ends served as it is not determinative going forward. Its political function requires that the space does not cease to be a public place or bear a social function.

Second, consider that some sorts of architectural designs—types, as architects say relative to built structures in a given functional category—appear to divide territories in ways that are inevitably political. Prominent examples include highways and other forms of basic civic infrastructure, such as mass transit, waterways, waste removal systems, and the like. These kinds of territorial marking go far beyond Sparshott's sense of structured experiences or Chomsky's notion of restrictive boundary making. Even though such infrastructural divisions of territories are more pervasive and ostensibly more constraining than the aforementioned restrictive cases, their outcomes are indeed political—separating populations (e.g. by ethnicity) or contributing to selective economic development or decline. However, such territorial division by architectural objects need not serve political ends. For example, a berm (a rounded mound of soil) is an architectural object that carves a territory into distinct areas to meet geological, cultural, folkloric, or yet other non-political motivations.

These are but two counterexamples. Yet, taken together, the ease with which they may be defeated suggests that it may be difficult to even identify an architectural type for which AP1 holds, much less the entire domain of architectural objects.

V.   CONCLUSION

It might be complained that what I have shown here—the strong view of AP1, that architecture universally serves political ends—is trivially false. Of course, not every architectural object or architectural act or pursuit is political, though many are. Rejecting the strong view is unimpressive, this complaint goes, because the architectural, political, and philosophical interests lie in gauging how, why, and with what moral justification or political mandate architecture may serve political ends when it does or could do so. In this I concur: *those* are the philosophically interesting questions we should ask relative to instances where architecture and politics interact.

However, this does not render rejection of the strong claim trivial. For one, the falsity of the strong claim provides blanket grounds on which to dismiss special versions of AP2, such as 'forced choice' theories. Our architectural choices do not serve one political end at the expense of others given the lack of guarantee that they serve any political end at all. For another, falsity of the strong view strips away a descriptive basis for the prescriptive claim that

architecture should serve political ends. There may be other grounds for an engaged architecture, but it cannot be because architecture inevitably serves political ends anyway, such that it ought to at least serve the right political ends. Given the currency and attractiveness of such views and the way they fail, the falsity of the strong view merits our attention.

A further question is whether, and in what respect, the strong view—whether upheld or rejected—is related to a strong moralism in architectural aesthetics; that is, to the view that moral and aesthetic values are intimately related, such that architectural choices or architectural objects themselves bear ethical characters, obligations, or consequences. To address this possibility, I return to a point I made at the outset: political ends—whether in architecture or other domains—are fruitfully understood relative to their root political intentions. In their absence, we would not be talking about ends, but merely events as they occur in a causal nexus. By focusing on political intentions, we can draw out a pertinent contrast between the strong view and architectural moralism, such that it is possible to hold one, but not the other view. It is in the nature of political intentions that they are (a) politically-focused, that is, aimed at decisions regarding the polity (or substantial sub-polity) as a unity, and (b) politically-arrived at, whether by way of social or group decision-making or negotiation (e.g., democratically, collaboratively, or at least in consensus-oriented fashion) or by way of imposition on a group. These are, in brief, entirely independent of the motors and gears of moralism, however often their differing mechanics produce similar results. Our rejecting the strong view—and instead establishing the non-necessity of political engagements, ends, or intentions in architecture—tells us little, if anything, about the standing of architectural moralism.

Finally, let me suggest how my argument for contingency of the political in architecture differs from prior arguments, notably as offered by Scruton. He specifically predicates dismissal of the political-as-necessary (he focuses on Marxist claims to necessity) on an insistence that our experience of architecture is primarily and ineluctably of the aesthetic properties of the built environment. Yet a necessarily and exclusively political understanding of architecture misses or misconstrues the aesthetic and so fails to do justice to our experience of architecture. It may be that Scruton's scepticism of far-reaching political critique as framing our experience of the built environment is his means of smuggling in his own political framework for architectural appreciation. At all events, insofar his defence of contingency of the political rests on the best account of our experience of architecture, it is susceptible to the difficulty that such experience may well be shaped by non-aesthetic factors as includes the political. Perhaps the more significant difference in my account is that I do not take contingency of the political in architecture to rest on the nature of our experience of the built environment. It should matter what contributions are made by the intentions or goals among those creating

architecture (architects, developers, clients, etc.), and as I have suggested, those are not immutable and may be detached from architectural objects. They are, in short, contingent.

Having turned away from the necessity of architecture-as-political, we still have this question: what is the philosophical import of architecture-as-political in its contingent sense? Some conceptual puzzles here concern: (1) why do some architectural objects serve political ends, given that they need not? (2) Relative to specific cases of architectural objects that do serve political ends by structuring our experiences, where do we find the mark of the political? And (3) what constitutes compelling defence of engaged architecture given this contingency? It's all the more imperative that we address these questions given that attaching political ends to built structures is something we can choose to do.[13]

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NOTES

[1]Yaneva 2017.

[2]Tafuri 1976. See Scruton 1995. The Marxist aesthetics of architecture says that we best understand aesthetic properties of a building relative to the underlying political ideology of the day, as attendant to the dominant economic framework (see discussion of S1, below). This can run in one of two ways. Either the aesthetic properties reflect and express that ideology or else they mask the underlying ideology, in deceitful fashion. In either case, Marxist analyses generally suggest, we grasp the nature of the building and its aesthetic properties by seeing them in the context of, and as causally related to, that ideology. The classic complaint about such analyses is that they cover all possible cases and strain credulity as 'just-so' or *ex post facto* stories.

Following an alternate path, Scruton's critique of Marxist aesthetics of architecture responds to Tafuri's notion that Marxist ideology is the proper tool for assessing built structures, even if it is not embodied in built structures. This leads Scruton to a different criticism, pointing out that ideological assessment of architecture fails because it is not as compelling relative to aesthetic properties, whose assessment is rooted in the aesthetic itself. The reason to think this, he suggests, is that ideologically-rooted assessments of aesthetically compelling architectural objects do not meaningfully differentiate them from ideologically-rooted assessments of architectural objects that are not aesthetically compelling, thus the ideological assessment is not doing the explanatory work, aesthetically speaking (155).

[3]Kaminer 2017 is one recent proponent of this sort of determinism.

[4]Thanks to Paul Guyer for pointing out the design diversity among American suburbs.

[5]Sparshott 1994, 4.

[6]The hardest case for this line of thinking is likely the private home, wherein individual owners have the greatest self-determination to shape their own environments, even when they have acquired a house built for a different owner or rent a home in a pre-built structure. Any political capacity to influence behaviours environmentally is much attenuated in such cases due to the indirect nature of any connections back to originating political ideologies. I thank Paul Guyer for this point.

[7]Berendzen 2008.

[8]Moreover, classicist styles are not, at

core, fundamentally expressive in either such political direction. I thank Paul Guyer for this point.

[9]The distinction to be drawn here, per Paul Guyer (private correspondence), is between whatever political conditions govern what gets built and how (e.g., logistical parameters); and what influence, if any, such political conditions have over stylistic or other aesthetically-rich design choices.

[10]This observation echoes a line of reasoning pursued by Jencks 1973 against the fixity of political associations in architectural design. Whereas Jencks saw the mutability of political ends across identical design as evidence for the necessity of architecture being apolitical, I see such as evidence against the necessity of architecture serving political ends. We live in a world of architectural objects contingently in service of politics.

[11]Klinenberg 2018.

[12]Jarrigeon 2007.

[13]A version of this essay was presented at the Fourth Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Philosophy of Architecture, Colorado Springs, Colorado, July, 2018. My thanks to audience members for their questions, observations, and feedback. Thanks as well to Paul Guyer and Sue Spaid for their most helpful remarks and suggestions.

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