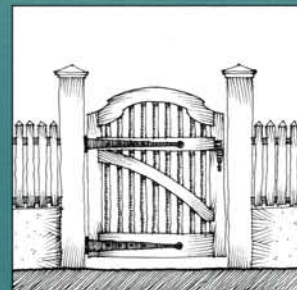
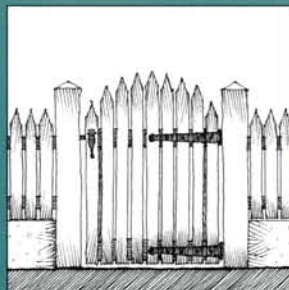
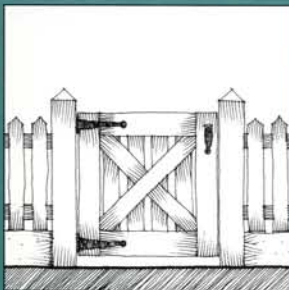


A
★LIVING TRADITION★
[Architecture of the Bahamas]



STEPHEN A. MOUZON
THE NEW URBAN GUILD FOUNDATION
MIAMI



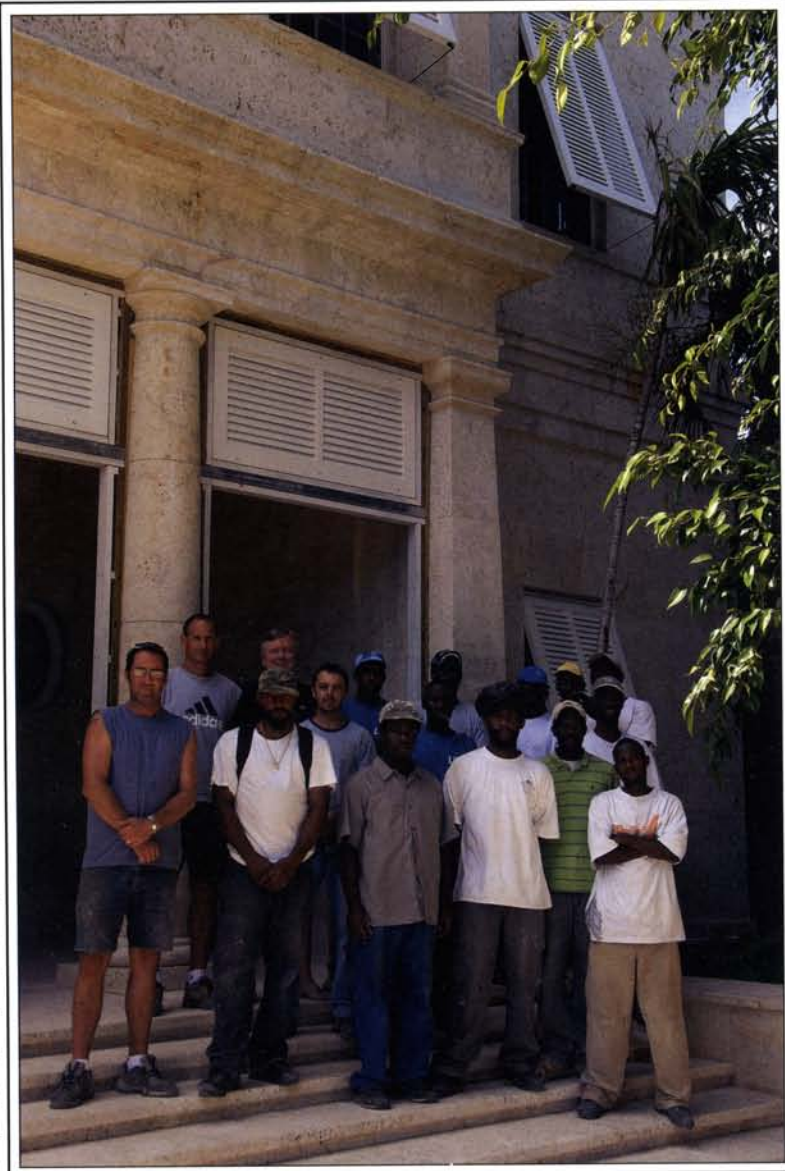
WHAT IS TO COME

THE BEGINNINGS OF NEW BAHAMIAN TRADITIONS

This book repeatedly talks about the need to start new living traditions in architecture in the Bahamas. But the fact is that some have been quietly starting already over the past ten years or so. As with most traditions, these are beginning with only a handful of people. It is the hope of the author that this book may assist and promote their work, and help transform it from the way a select few buildings are built to the normal way that buildings are built in the Bahamas again.

That handful of people include the Patrons of this book, and a few other like-minded colleagues. For a decade now, they have been bringing in some of the world's best traditional design talent. These include Driehaus Award-winning architects and planners Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, Teofilo Victoria, who

was the first Town Architect of the modern era, and several architects of the New Urban Guild, including Arthur Ross Award-winning Michael Imber.



Some say that this cannot be done, but these men did it: Read about their accomplishment in the Classical part of this article.

These budding new traditions are not just happening in one type of architecture. Rather, they span the entire Classical/Vernacular Spectrum. This article highlights one project at each of the major settings of Vernacular, Median, and Classical. But the Classical/Vernacular Spectrum is continuous, so we anticipate work in the near future that may be at any point between these major settings.

As living traditions are re-born, and we re-learn how to build as well

as our great-grandparents did, a couple things become obvious: The work at the most classical end of the Spectrum is done to a higher

degree of excellence at an earlier date because many great books have existed for centuries that detail the proper ways to design a classical building. Work at the vernacular end, however, is much more regionally-based, and normally does not have comparable resources. This book aspires to begin to fill that need for regional knowledge.

VERNACULAR

LYFORD CAY COTTAGE COMPOUND



This compound of cottages is tucked around and behind a large home in Lyford Cay on New Providence.



One therefore must get beyond two gates to see it: the community gate and the owner's gate. It is curious that the most vernacular project highlighted here is the most difficult to see, because the normal assumption is that the most vernacular buildings are the most commonplace, and therefore most accessible. But at the beginnings of a new living tradition, the most vernacular architecture is normally treasured first by the wealthy. The working classes remember the old vernacular houses as those that they moved out of when they became

more prosperous, and initially want no association with the new vernacular buildings.



But the new vernacular buildings are not decrepit like the ones they moved out of. Rather, they are beautiful. With most new traditions, it is the first time anyone has seen that particular vernacular architecture with a good roof and a fresh coat of paint in a hundred years or more. And so people realize over time how resonant this architecture is with them and with their region, and then they begin to see it with new eyes, and then they love it.



This precise turn of events took place along the Design Coast of Florida, beginning at Seaside. At first, most people reacted to the tin-roofed cottages with shock and dismay, as in "I would never have one of those. It has *barn roofing* on it." But over time, the charm of the beautifully built cottages won them over, and now this architecture is becoming the regional standard.

MEDIAN CLUB VILLAS

The Club Villas are located in Old Fort Bay, just down the coast from Lyford Cay on New

RESOURCES

~
What Is To Come

~
The Beginnings
of New Bahamian
Traditions

Providence. They follow the ancient Bahamian formula of surrounding a central masonry building with a wrap-around verandah.

RESOURCES

~
What Is To Come

~
The Beginnings
of New Bahamian
Traditions



The louvers swing out for a shaded view, or close between the chamfered posts for a more weather-tight condition in a storm. In either case, air flows freely through the verandah, allowing comfortable living there without the need for air conditioning most of the time. Interestingly, in a mild climate



such as exists throughout most of the Bahamas, if an outdoor room is beautiful enough



to entice you out of the air conditioning often enough, you actually become acclimated to the local environment well enough that you might decide you do not need air conditioning at all. So

spending time on the verandah leads to more and more of the same as you discover how pleasant it is.



CLASSICAL CA'LIZA



moonrise over Ca'Liza

This likely is the best classical house built in the Bahamas in a very long time. It is the home of Eliza Lindroth... and also her parents, Orjan and Amanda. It is located on what once was considered a narrow, difficult lot in Old Fort Bay that

many considered unbuildable. But under the skilled hand of architect Teofilo Victoria, and with Orjan's vision, Ca'Liza transformed the previously



unwanted lot into something truly exceptional.



the ocean-side verandah at sunset

The house is built to last a very long time, being built entirely of concrete and sheathed in stone. But it is not just durable, but also lov-



nearly-completed entry portico at evening

able. So much so that it is easy to imagine her still being here in a thousand years. So while it clearly took a lot of effort and resources to build, if the life of the building extends over several centuries, then the



nearly-completed entry portico by morning

cost per year over its entire life cycle is substantially less than the throw-away buildings we have been building everywhere since World War II.

There is another important story here, too. Remember the

men pictured on page 292? People often assume that if you want to build to the highest quality as seen in Ca'Liza, you must bring in workmen from outside the Bahamas. Because nobody in the Bahamas has built in this manner in a hundred years. The curious thing, however, is the fact that almost no one outside the Bahamas has built in that manner or that well in a hundred years, either.

So rather than looking for foreign workmen, Orjan set about working with this Bahamian crew, all of whom live on New Providence, to re-learn how to build for the ages. And these men, because they believed that they could build as well as their great-grandfathers, and because they worked very hard at it, were actually able to pull it off.



stone walls inside as well as out

RESOURCES

~
What Is To Come

~
The Beginnings
of New Bahamian
Traditions



last light of sunset on the ocean-side verandah