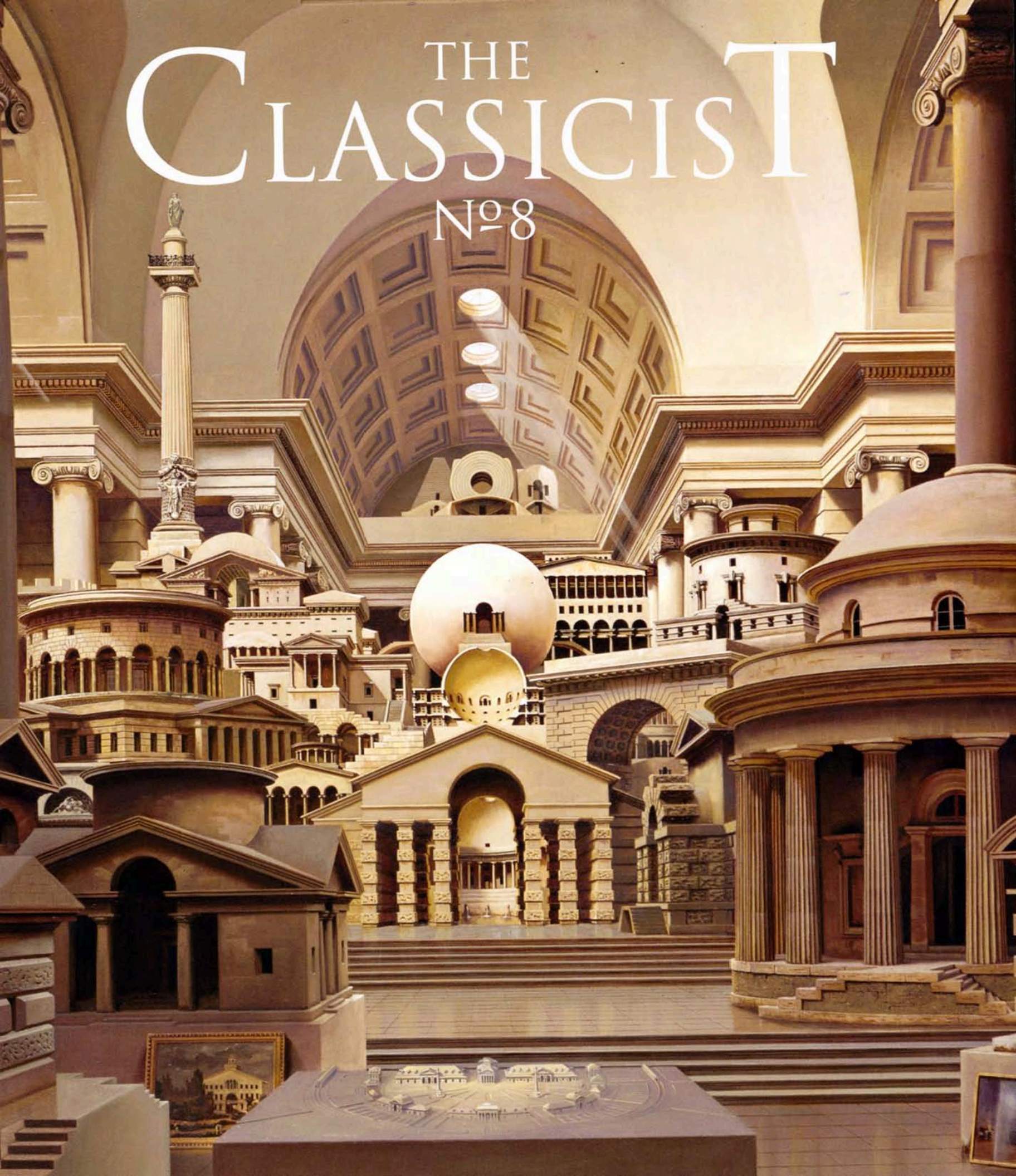


THE CLASSICIST

Nº8



CA'LIZA
New Providence, Bahamas

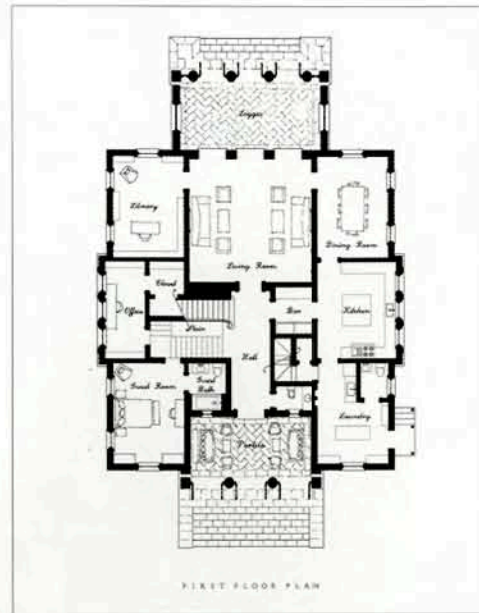
PROJECT TEAM:
Maria de la Guardia and Teófilo Victoria, Principals;
Anne Finch, Ricardo Lopez, Josh Arcurio,
Elizabeth Pereiro, Jose Venegas.

CA'LIZA, NAMED AFTER THE NEW BORN DAUGHTER OF THE PATRONS, is a single-family residence built on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean on the northern coast of the island of New Providence in The Bahamas. The site is approximately ten miles west of the capital city of Nassau. The design of the house was begun in the summer of 2005 and construction was completed in the spring of 2008.

The location and program of the project is consistent with the guidelines established by a regional master plan that promotes the preservation of the existing rural character of the western side of the island by relying on a traditional Bahamian urban pattern of concentrated building in villages and towns, allowing for large extensions of green open space to remain between the urban areas. The master plan relies on vernacular and colloquial building types to maintain architectural consistency and continuity not only in New Providence but also with the neighboring Family Islands.

In The Bahamas, architecture traditions in vernacular building as well as in works of civic significance have been greatly influenced by Palladianism. In Nassau, the Parliament buildings, the Supreme Court, and Governor's House, for instance, are neo-Palladian schemes, but Palladian influences are evident as well in the homes, large and small, along George and Queen Streets. This building tradition was first brought to Nassau by Loyalists from the Carolinas, but eventually it would become prevalent throughout the country, imbuing the laconic landscape of sand and brush of The Bahamas with a classical and enduring beauty.

Ca'Liza adheres to this tradition, typologically and stylistically, and pursues a familiar pictorial frame of architecture and landscape. The house, surrounded by a subtropical hammock of sea grape, palm, ficus, silk cotton, and gumbo limbo, sits on a



ridge overlooking the sea. It is approximately 6,000 square feet plus an attic floor. The public functions are housed in the first floor and the private rooms are in the second story with several more guest rooms in the attic. In addition, two carriage houses provide for a garage and staff quarters. The main house and carriage house are aligned along a central axis, which runs the entire length of the site and connects the deep green of the landscape with the turquoise hue of the sea.

The main house, clad in coralina limestone, has two fronts, one to the ocean and the other towards the hammock and the street. The ocean side is dominated by a two-tiered loggia composed of the Tuscan order at grade and the Doric order above. The portico on the land side is open below and enclosed above. Due to an enlightened zoning code, which measures building heights in terms of stories rather than dimensions, the house is cubic in volume, approximating the proportions and scale of a Palladian villa from the Veneto. Despite the vernacular character of the limestone and the shuttered loggias, the building nonetheless recovers an essential quality of the architecture of Andrea Palladio and inspires the name of the house in the Venetian manner, Ca'Liza.

DESIGN CHALLENGES

Even though Palladianism has been a prevalent building tradition in the history of The Bahamas, today knowledge of classical architecture has practically disappeared from building standards. For this project building crews had to be trained in classical composition and detailing, and the level of craftsmanship had to be improved. The owner of the house, Orjan Lindroth, a builder with a long-standing interest in recovering Bahamian traditions in the building arts, has jointly with his wife Amanda sponsored books, symposia, and conferences on preservation and traditional building and urbanism in The Bahamas.

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Coral Gables, Florida

ALMERIA ROW
Coral Gables, Florida

PROJECT TEAM:
Maria de la Guardia and Teófilo Victoria, Principals;
and Elizabeth Pereira.

ALMERIA ROW IS A MULTI-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT project built in Coral Gables, Florida. Design work started in 2004 and construction for the first phase of the project was completed in 2007.

The project consists of ten townhouses built on ten fee-simple parcels measuring on average 23' x 120'. The townhouses are each two stories high and range in size between 2,840 square feet and 3,037 square feet. The development introduces a new residential type to the city of Coral Gables. In a rare collaboration between city, owner, and architect the zoning code was changed to accommodate the characteristics of the "classic" townhouse common in London and New York. Because it is a fee-simple scheme each unit is built on its own parcel and shares a common wall. Almeria Row is neither a condominium unit nor a detached housing unit, but rather an attached single-family residence. The size of the parcel establishes a new minimum size parcel in the zoning code and allows for higher densities without relying on oversized apartment blocks. The proportion of width to height characteristic of the townhouse type, the repetition of the unit, and the proximity of the stoop to the sidewalk results in a street elevation which is at once familiar and out of the ordinary.

The townhouse is composed of two volumes connected by a courtyard. The first floor of the main volume consists of the public program of the house including the living room and dining room, kitchen and family room. The private functions of the residence, master bedroom and master bath, as well as a



second bedroom and bathroom are housed on the second floor. The second volume houses a two-car garage on the first floor with access to an alley behind the property. There are two additional bedrooms and bathrooms on the second floor. The bedrooms above the garage can be accessed from the courtyard by means of a separate set of stairs. This project recalls the traditional town home all while meeting the requirements of modern day living.

The constructive participation and collaboration among the patron, municipality, and architect were elemental in the success of the project. The importance and value of the commitment of these different parties to a common goal was, in fact, the most important lesson learned over the course of the project. Better and more sustainable housing options for the city and its urban residents are now achievable as a result of this mutual effort.

Prior to Almeria Row, fee-simple townhouses in Coral Gables were not included in the zoning code. As a result, the revision to the zoning code readdressed the front and rear setbacks for single-family residences and reduced the minimum size lot required for residential units by half.

The incorporation of townhouse zoning guidelines to the existing zoning resolution occurred at a time when the municipal government was under pressure to limit development and enlighten developers eager to introduce a residential type to the home market that offered a higher standard of urban living. The architects assisted in the revisions to the existing code and, with the incorporation of new legislation, worked to promote the building of a housing type that for decades and no apparent reason, had been excluded from the zoning resolution. Not only in Miami-Dade County, but throughout the country the townhouse had practically disappeared as a housing option despite the many excellent examples of townhouse neighborhoods in American as well as European cities. In Coral Gables the townhouse as an integral type of the urban fabric is in fact recovered from the original master plan designed by George E. Merrick and his architects. The master plan included entire residential districts where the townhouse was the prevalent housing type. Blocks were traversed by alleyways designated for utilities and service and were composed of 25' x 100' lots.

Almeria Row recovers a housing option which is as old and universal as the city itself. It reconsiders, as is common in traditional building, the type in new and contemporary circumstances. The incorporation of a courtyard, unusual to the townhouse, is an attempt to adapt northern European models to better suited Mediterranean examples. The work of the architect Mott Schmidt was an inspiration for Almeria Row. Other cultural sources such as the houses in the Moorish districts of Seville, Spain, offered an interesting evolution of the townhouse type due to their small but charming and luminous courtyards.

The project is characterized primarily by a traditional conception of composition and style in architecture. The use of a classical syntax built in cut stone imbues the building and the civic realm with a serene and elegant quality.

