

# CITY

Autumn 2000

\$ 6.50

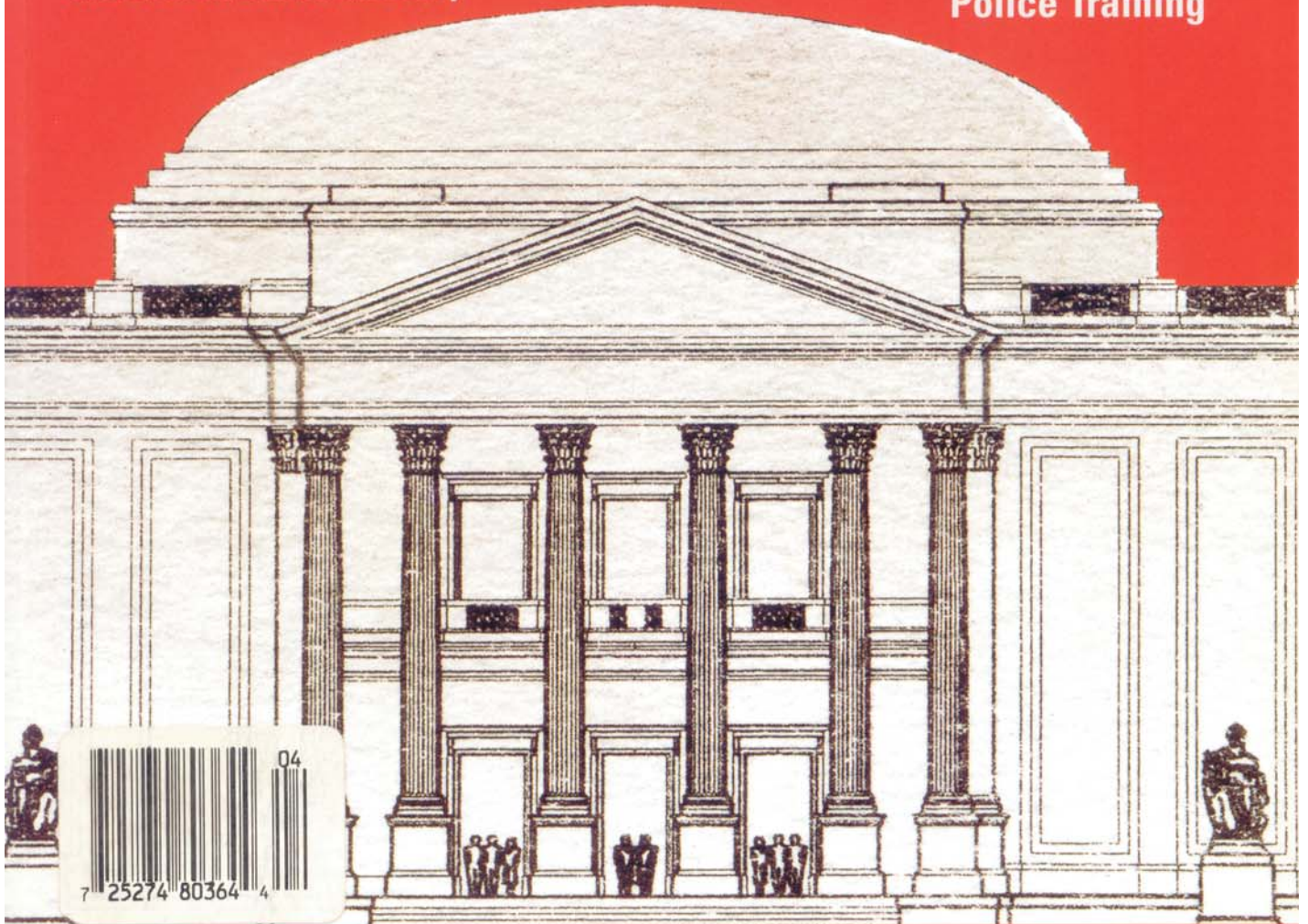
JOURNAL

## A New Lincoln Center

Plans by Quinlan Terry, Robert Adam,  
and Franck Lohsen McCrery

## What Is Public Education?

Lisa Graham Keegan  
Heather Mac Donald  
Police Training





## THE NEW LIN

**Michael M. Franck, Arthur C. Lohsen, James C. McCrery II**

Lincoln Center was built at a time when architects believed that the present was so vastly different from the past that the past no longer had meaning. The atom had been split, polio cured: no problem seemed too great for the application of cold, scientific reasoning. Modern architecture was an expression of that attitude, and Lincoln Center was a collaborative effort of the most notable modernist architects of a generation.

While it was noble that the designers loosely followed the urban form of Michelangelo's Campidoglio in Rome, Michelangelo's subtleties make Lincoln Center pale in comparison. Our proposal builds upon the legacy of Lincoln Center—or at least upon the Campidoglio model that inspired it.

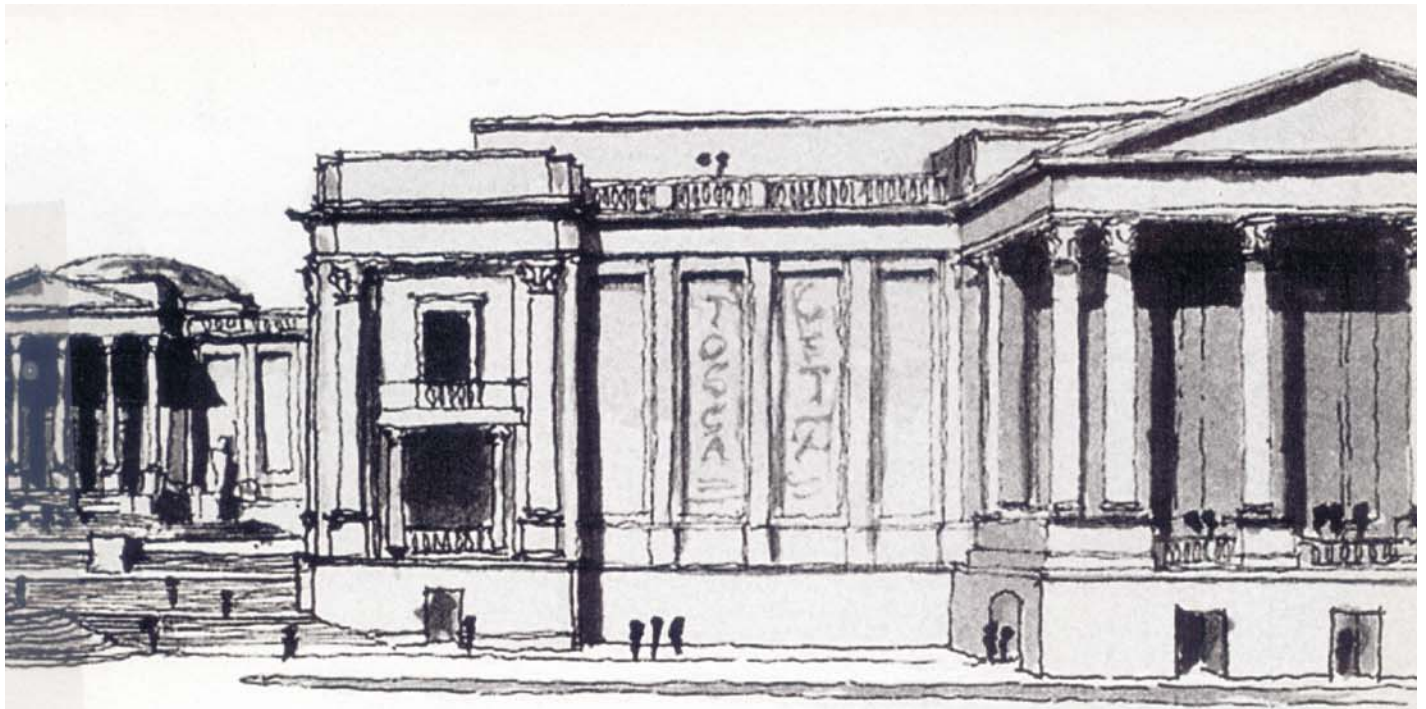
Our buildings come out to Columbus Avenue. Their facades hold to the street edges; their great porticos embrace the street and sidewalk approaches. The difference in elevation from the street level to the courtyard level enabled us to create a grand staircase that spills onto Columbus Avenue, connecting the entire complex to the city. The New York State Theater and Avery Fisher Hall, twins, define and contain the plaza. The plaza facade of the twins follows more closely the Campidoglio example through the simple gesture of angling the facades—a device that further defines and contains

the plaza. The main halls of each of these buildings open onto the plaza, and two-story arcades along the north and south sides of the plaza shelter small cafés, which enhance the celebratory character of a quintessentially urban space.

The Metropolitan Opera House, both central and removed, sits upon its pedestal above the plaza but is also a full participant in the formation of that space. The composition of the facade brings scale to the building and to the plaza. Large panels on the front facade, similar to those on the Columbus Avenue facades of the twins, will frame banners promoting current and forthcoming events, and a temple-like front portico serves as the ceremonial entry. The friezes and panels on all the buildings invite inscriptions commemorating great composers or conductors.

The plaza—its character and shape defined by the architecture of the three buildings that contain it—is unlike any other urban space in New York. Arcades and stairs ensure a pedestrian flow in and around it, making people central to its drama, and the obelisks, statues, fountains, pedestals, and flagpoles that enliven the space provide places for people to gather.

The complex along Amsterdam Avenue again holds to the avenue's edge, participating in the



# COLN CENTER

endeavor of all great urban architecture: making good streets. The buildings house retail spaces along their Amsterdam Avenue side, with offices above. To the north of the Opera House, the new home to the Vivian Beaumont Theater and Library is arranged in a manner that encloses an exterior garden intended for outdoor musical performances. The south facade of the Opera House incorporates the proscenium and stage for a new outdoor amphitheater.

The new Lincoln Center would be much easier to visit. A three-lane drop-off at grade would be sheltered by the porticos at the New York State Theater and Avery Fisher Hall. Four entrances lead down into a parking structure beneath the entire site. Loading docks are likewise below ground, removing such eyesores from the pedestrian's realm. A smaller, graceful bridge replaces the virtually unused brutal concrete structure that now connects the plaza to the Juilliard School, opening 65th Street to light and air.

The architecture of the new Lincoln Center is classical—an architectural language shared by all of Western society, developing over thousands of years and capable of dynamic development in the present and future. It is founded on the human form and has human scale, even in the largest of

buildings. It is an architecture of curves, of shifting shadows, of subtlety. It seeks, unashamedly, to be harmonious and beautiful.

Classical architecture is physically and stylistically durable. Most buildings today are built to last 25 years before major renovation or replacement. Classical architecture employs solid materials and construction methods that have been developed and improved over millennia to shed water and hold buildings together. That means that our children will not have to rebuild what we leave them. Fifty years from now, our grandchildren will be evaluating our decisions, as we are now evaluating the original Lincoln Center. Should we not leave behind us an embodiment of the timeless values of humanity?

