

C. F. A. Voysey— To and From America

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CHARLES F. A. VOYSEY has long been acknowledged as one of the major figures in the development of modern architecture. Early in his career, in the 1890s, his work already was recognized and well published on the Continent. He, along with Charles Rennie Mackintosh and M. H. Baillie Scott, helped set the stage for the new school of architecture which was to emerge in Austria and Germany in the 'nineties and the early 1900s. Two fascinating questions (among several others) have not been answered, however, in regard to Voysey's work before 1900. Is there a possibility that Voysey (as well as several of his less illustrious London colleagues) may have been affected by what was going on in the United States, especially American architecture of the 'eighties and early 'nineties? And is there any concrete evidence that Voysey directly affected the American scene prior to 1900—in particular, was his work known to the Middle and Far Western progressives, for example, Frank Lloyd Wright?

Satisfactory answers to those questions hinge on the depth and the intensity of communication between England and the United States during the decades of the 'eighties and 'nineties, and also, of course, on the personal awareness and receptivity of the individuals involved. What sources of information about American architecture were available to a London practitioner such as Voysey; and how well known was this architect's work in the United States? In both England and America there were three active modes of communication: publications (especially, professional and popular art and architectural journals), exhibitions (of drawings and photographs of buildings and actual examples of furniture, wallpaper, etc.), and occasional visits and lectures by Englishmen in America and by Americans in England.

Let us first examine the question of Voysey's possible effect on United States architecture. In glancing through the pages of American publications of the 'eighties, 'nineties, and 1900s, it is surprising to discover that Voysey's architectural and other designs were not at all as well published on this side of the Atlantic as one might have thought. His first design in an American journal, a perspective drawing for the Cazalet house (Malvern, 1890), came out in the *American Architect and Building News* (Fig. 1).¹ He exhibited a presentation drawing at the first annual exhibition of the



Fig. 1. Cazalet house, Castle Morton, 1890 (from the *American Architect*).



Fig. 2. Cazalet house, Castle Morton, 1890 (from *House Beautiful*).

Boston Architectural Club in 1891.² In 1899, two photographs of his country houses were displayed at the T-Square Club exhibition in Philadelphia, and were listed in the *Catalogue* of the exhibition.³ In the same year, one of his houses was illustrated and discussed in an article, "A House for a Man with a Hobby," in the popular magazine *House Beautiful* (Fig. 2).⁴ This article was followed by two pieces devoted to his furniture and wallpaper in the obscure New York trade journals, *The Furnisher* of 1899 and *The Upholstery Dealer and Decorative Furnisher* of 1905.⁵ In 1904, his work was discussed in an article, "Recent Domestic Architecture in England," published in *The Architectural Review* (Boston).⁶ In that article, H. Langford Warren wrote of Voysey, "His work is well considered and not without attractiveness, but the sloping buttress-like terminations to the gable ends of his stucco covered houses, the exaggerated

2. Mention is made of Voysey's exhibition in 1891 in Boston (Boston Society of Architects) in the Voysey notes housed at the Drawing Collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects, London. In an unpublished manuscript, "The Value of Hidden Influences as Disclosed in the Life of One Ordinary Man" (dated London, 7 June 1931; Collection R.I.B.A., London), Voysey wrote: "And two 'one-man shows' were held in Boston, U.S.A. . . ." (p. 5). The author has not been able to locate information pertaining to these one-man shows.

3. *Catalogue of the Annual Architectural Exhibition of the T-Square Club, for 1899-1900*, xxxvii (Philadelphia, 1899), nos. 481, 482.

4. *House Beautiful*, vii (Dec. 1899), 24-27.

5. *The Furnisher* (New York, 1899), n.p.; *The Upholstery Dealer and Decorative Furnisher* (New York, 1905), n.p.

6. *The Architectural Review* (Boston), xi (Jan. 1904), 5-12.

1. *American Architect and Building News*, xxx (Nov. 1890), 71, pl. 774.

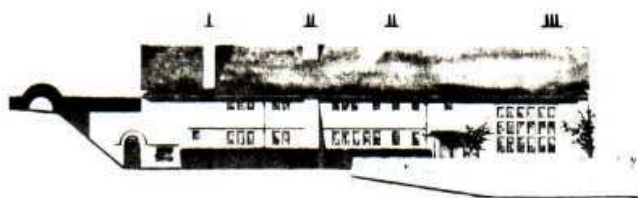


Fig. 3. Chester house, Fernhurst, 1897 (from *House and Garden*).

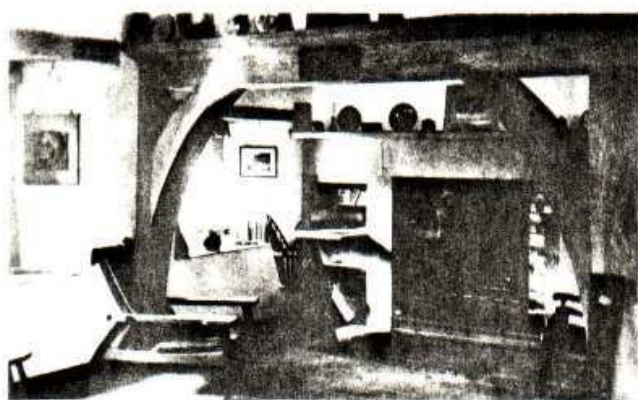


Fig. 4. Simpson house, Kendal, 1909 (from *The Craftsman*).

forms of overhanging gables, are notes of affectation which mar otherwise pleasant compositions."⁷ A more appreciative note was sounded in the same periodical in its issue of August 1904, where it was noted that "Of Mr. Voysey it is perhaps enough to say that every work of his deserves the careful attention of architects and visibly influences the designs of many lesser men."⁸ Although issues of *The Architectural Review* in 1906 and 1907, in their sections on foreign publications, did illustrate two more houses of Voysey,⁹ it was not until 1909 that he was discussed again in a professional journal, in a somewhat critical article by H. W. Frohne, entitled "Recent English Domestic Architecture," published in the April 1909 issue of *The Architectural Record*.¹⁰

Voysey fared better in the popular press, for his buildings and several of his pieces of furniture were illustrated and discussed in the April 1903 issue of *House and Garden*, as "Some Recent Work of C. F. A. Voysey, an English Architect" (Fig. 3), and in Edward W. Gregory's "The Seventh Exhibition of Arts and Crafts in London."¹¹ The first article was at best lukewarm, the second was quite enthusiastic: "Mr. Voysey occupies a position in decorative arts entirely to himself. He has had many followers and is unquestionably a designer of singular originality and power."¹²

7. *The Architectural Review* (Boston), XI, 12.

8. *The Architectural Review* (Boston), XI (Aug. 1904), 196.

9. *The Architectural Review* (Boston), XIII (June 1906), 92; *The Architectural Review* (Boston), XIV (Dec. 1907), 248.

10. *The Architectural Record*, XXV (April 1909), 259-270.

11. *House and Garden*, III (April 1903), 255-260; 208-213.

Another sympathetic treatment of Voysey's work occurred in two issues of *The Craftsman* magazine, one an article on his furniture and interiors in August 1911 (Fig. 4) and the other an article by the architect himself, accompanied by a number of illustrations of his work, in November 1912.¹³

If those few publications were the whole story one hardly could argue that Americans were very much aware of Voysey, let alone that he may have affected the United States scene. But it is interesting to note that all of those United States articles, and particularly those published after 1900, assumed that Voysey's architecture and designs were naturally well known to their readers. How? The answer, of course, is that his work was well published in the professional English architectural journals, in numerous popular books on the British house (most of which came out during the years 1900-1912), and above all, through the pages of *The Studio*.

Voysey's first published designs came out as early as 1886 in *The Building News* (later *The Architect and Building News*) and in the same year in *The British Architect*.¹⁴ Those journals together with *The Builder*, *The Architect and Contract Report*, *The Builder's Journal*, the *Journal of the R.I.B.A.*, the *Journal of the Architectural Association*, *Academy Architecture*, and *The Architectural Review* (London) presented a continual running comment on the architect, his work, and ideas through the 'nineties and early 1900s.¹⁵

Even more impressive was the coverage the architect received in the English art and home magazines. Voysey's architecture, designs, and ideas were an integral ingredient of *The Studio* (and of the version which most Americans received, *The International Studio*) from its first issue (of 1893), for which he designed the cover, through the next two decades of its publication.¹⁶ Articles by and about him

12. *House and Garden*, III, 211.

13. *The Craftsman*, XX (Aug. 1911), 276-286; *The Craftsman*, XXIII (Nov. 1912), 174-182.

14. *Building News*, LI (Nov. 1886), 686, 746; *The British Architect*, XXV (May 1886), 522.

15. The earliest of Voysey's published designs were presented via elevational drawings usually accompanied by small-scale floor plans; by the mid-1890s he presented his work through perspective drawings and floor plans; by 1900 his work was being presented almost exclusively by photographic halftones accompanied by line drawings of the floor plans.

16. "An Interview with Mr. Charles F. Annesley Voysey, Architect and Designer," *Studio*, I (1893), 231-237. Other issues which presented Voysey are: "Some Recent Designs by C. F. A. Voysey," *Studio*, VII (1896), 209-219; "The Work of Mr. C. F. A. Voysey," *Studio*, XI (1897), 16-25; Horace Townsend, "Notes on Country and Suburban Houses Designed by C. F. A. Voysey," *Studio*, XVI (1889), 157-164; Aymer Vallance, "Some Recent Work by Mr. C. F. A. Voysey," *Studio*, XXII (1904), 127-134; M. H. Baillie Scott, "On the Characteristics of Mr. C. F. A. Voysey's Architecture," *International Studio*, XXXIII (1907), 19-24.

occurred as well in *The Magazine of Art*, *The Magazine of Fine Arts*, the *Journal of Decorative Arts*, and even in the socially respectable *Country Life*.¹⁷

In addition to the publications of his work, Voysey was represented in several exhibitions in the United States: besides the annual exhibition of the Boston Architectural Club in 1891, where drawings for several of his buildings were displayed, he exhibited at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, in Chicago.¹⁸ At the Chicago exposition he was represented not by architectural drawings but by an "anaglyph" frieze and by several of his designs for wallpapers. Voysey did receive one commission in the United States—a courtyard house for a Mrs. Titus at Tyingham, Massachusetts, of 1904 (Fig. 5).¹⁹ While much of the scheme of this house is pure Voysey, he felt it necessary (or perhaps his client did) to wrap the volumes in pseudo half-timber to enhance its English imagery. He also provided a plan that was far more open than was usual with his English houses.

17. T. Raffles Davidson, "The Recent Advance in Architecture, III, Country Houses," *The Magazine of Art*, I (1903), 477-482; C. F. A. Voysey, "The Aims and Conditions of the Modern Decorator," *The Journal of Decorative Arts*, xv (April 1895), 82-90; A. B. Daryll, "The Architecture of Charles Francis Annesley Voysey," *Magazine of Fine Art*, II (1906), 191-195; "Country Cottages," *Country Life*, III (Feb. 1898), 195-197.

18. Lewis E. Day, "Some British Industries at Chicago," *The Art Journal*, LV (1893), v-viii; "Furniture and Ornamental Iron at Chicago," *The Builder*, LXV (Oct. 1893), 296-298.

19. Published in *The British Architect*, XLV (April 1906), 274.

Could Voysey's work have been made available through the visits of Englishmen to Chicago and the Midwest? Perhaps! Walter Crane came in 1891-1892, visited the Fair then under construction, stayed at the new Auditorium Hotel, and lectured. C. R. Ashbee, who knew Voysey's designs quite well, came first in 1896, then in 1900-1901, and again in 1908-1909. His visits certainly encouraged the Arts and Crafts Movement and, after 1900, Wright, the Prairie School, and Greene and Greene in California. If he affected Chicago and Wright before 1900, it must have been in an indirect fashion, i.e., through the Arts and Crafts.

Another possible connective link—that is, the visit of American avant-garde architects and their apologists to England—is not, at least on the surface, as impressive as one might have thought. Elbert Hubbard had visited England in 1894 and again in 1896. During his first visit he had met William Morris, but there is no indication that he met any English architects or for that matter showed much of an interest in architecture. The second great exponent of the American Arts and Crafts Movement, Gustav Stickley, travelled to England in 1898 where it is said he met Voysey along with other avant-garde British architects.²⁰ Since Stickley's intent at this time was almost exclusively turned toward furniture and interior design, it is not known whether he visited any of Voysey's houses. Even William Gray Purcell, one of the major exponents of the Prairie

20. John Crosby Freeman, *The Forgotten Rebel, Gustav Stickley and His Craftsman Mission Furniture* (Watkins Glen, N.Y., 1966), p. 44.

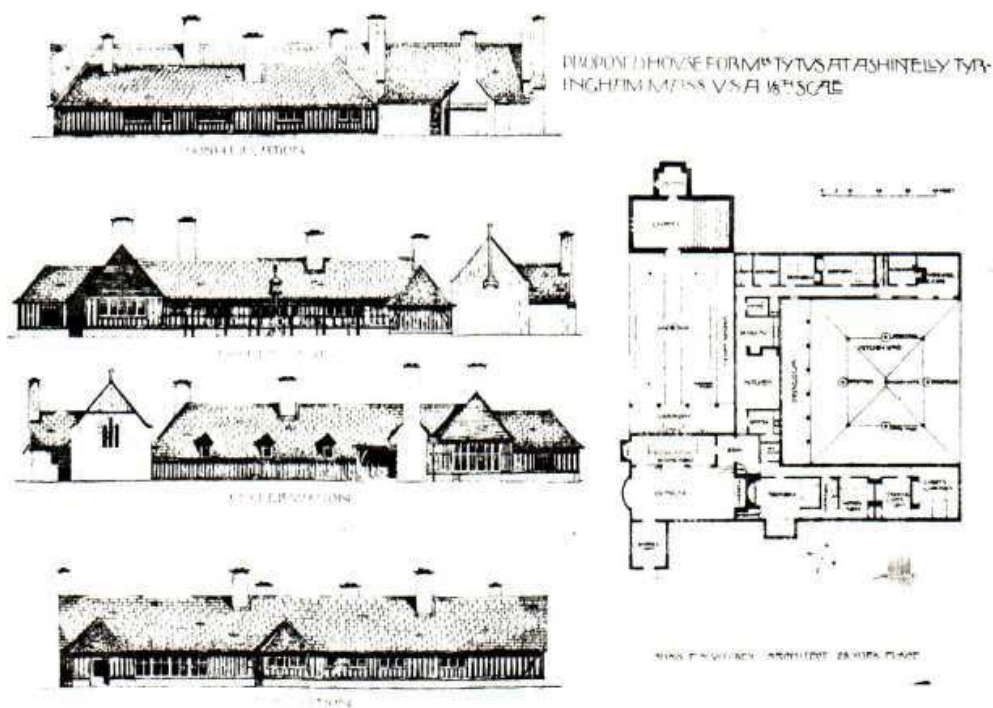


Fig. 5. Mrs. Titus house, Tyingham, Mass., 1904 (courtesy Royal Institute of British Architects).

School, who was always sympathetic and appreciative of Voysey's work, did not see him or visit any of his buildings during a 1906 trip to Europe.²¹

While Wright and others could have seen Voysey's decorative designs at the Chicago exposition and in the pages of several journals, there is no direct evidence in their own work that they were specifically affected by it. All that one can say is that the Midwestern Prairie architect did feel a strong kinship with the English Arts and Crafts Movement and its exponents, as opposed to Paris and the Beaux Arts, and certainly did keep abreast of what was published in the English art and architectural magazines. George Grant Elmslie, who worked closely with Sullivan for many years, once remarked that while Adler and Sullivan (and later Sullivan alone) received *The British Architect*, it was seldom looked at, while on the other hand, *The Studio* (or its American version, *International Studio*) was received with enthusiasm.²² *The Studio*, then, unquestionably provides the major link between England and America.

After 1901, the presentation of the ideas and products of the English Arts and Crafts Movement was supplemented by the United States publication, *The Craftsman* (1901–1917), edited by Gustav Stickley.

Voysey's work was illustrated in *The Studio*, but neither as extensively nor as often as one would have thought; for while his furniture and decorative arts were well presented, it was not until 1894 that one of his architectural designs was published. It was not until 1897 that his architecture received any extensive coverage, and no other buildings of his were illustrated in *The Studio* until 1905.

Without going into great detail, it is apparent that the basic rectangular, low, hovering architectural forms and the open plan, etc., of the Prairie house owe little directly to Voysey or to his contemporaries (the roots of the Prairie house are to be found in the 1880s American version of the Queen Anne Revival and above all in the Shingle Style). But it could be argued, perhaps, that several specific elements, developed much earlier by Voysey, could have been borrowed by Wright and others. Three elements might be cited: the low horizontal interior spaces in the work of Wright and other Prairie architects, i.e., the "cottagey" feeling of small compact volumes and spatial enclosures; the snug, low scale and the playing-down of entrances as a major architectural element; and the semi-open wall screens composed of rows of vertical pieces of rectangular uprights, which suggest both separation and the unity of internal spaces. It might be argued, too, that the design of high back

chairs which Wright was so fond of using both before and during his Prairie period (1898–1914) conceivably could have been derived from Voysey; but this is debatable, because Wright began using such designs in the opening years of the 'nineties and little of Voysey's furniture was published until the mid to late 'nineties. Then, too, Voysey's furniture, in contrast to Wright's, was conceived of as furniture in a usable traditional sense, not as a small-scale variation on an architectural theme. When one looks into the Anglo-American Arts and Crafts scene of the 'nineties and early 1900s, it seems more likely that the English influence on America came via other English architects and designs: M. H. Baillie Scott was represented in *The Studio* and elsewhere, and during the 'nineties and after 1900, the furniture and architecture of Barry Parker were far better known than that of Voysey.

Now what do we find on the other side of the coin—is there any reasonable evidence that American architecture influenced England? The British view of American architecture (from the 1860s to the present) could best be described as a continual love-hate affair, with more of the latter than the former. At least as expressed in their professional journals, the British architects were more fascinated with what was going on in America during the 'seventies, 'eighties, and 'nineties than with what was happening on the Continent.

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With the image of America as a nation passionately involved in technology and above all in business, it should not be surprising to find that the British journals from the 1870s on contain numerous articles on America's use of iron and, later, steel construction; on the development of the skyscraper; on America's approach to heating and plumbing, and on the size and practical business operations of the American architectural office. Side by side, though, with this curiosity about American technology and business was an equal interest in the visual content of American architecture. The American architect W. R. Ware, in speaking at the R.I.B.A. in 1887, said the American "Shingle Palace" had at least one advantage, namely that "When it does burn, it burns up clean . . .," and his remarks seem to have been warmly received by the audience.²³ A writer in *The Architect* of 1870 lamented that Americans approached architecture with a view that "There is nothing venerable," and he went on to say that "On the whole, it must appear probable that no original treatment of architectural design

21. W. G. Purcell, *Parabiography for 1906* (unpublished, 1940), p. 6.

22. Interview by the author with G. G. Elmslie, Chicago, 21 Jan. 1952.

23. W. R. Ware, "On the Present Condition of Architecture and of Architectural Education in the United States," *Papers for 1866–1867 Session, R.I.B.A.* (1867), pp. 81–90.

is to be looked for in the United States during the present century at least."²⁴

This negative view was superseded by a much more sympathetic response in the 1880s, expressed in several ways: in the more friendly editorial view of the professional journals, in the publication of illustrations of a surprising number of American buildings, and even in the serious consideration (which apparently would have been realized except for his untimely death) of presenting the R.I.B.A. Gold Medal to an American, H. H. Richardson.²⁵

This shift in opinion in the 'eighties is not to be accounted for by any mellowing of the English critical sense, but by the changes which were occurring in American architecture—the emergence of the Richardsonian Romanesque and especially the domestic Shingle Style. It is quite apparent that the British sensed in the American Shingle Style, with its primitive direct forms, its thin shingled surfaces, its open plan, and in its general woodsy quality a close visual and spiritual kinship with what they were seeking in the Arts and Crafts withdrawal to their own vernacular and rural cottage tradition.

Examples of this response can be found in the comments which accompanied the publication of American drawings. In the 6 March 1885 issue of *The British Architect*, the editor noted in discussing the work of E. W. Wheelwright of Boston that "For our own part, we would rather be the author of this design than all the rank and file of 'Queen Anne' revivals here. So with Mr. Emerson's church at Rockland, a print of which appeared the other day in *Scribner's*. There is a flavour of quaintness and strength about the design which is almost wholly wanting in our modern English."²⁶ Such descriptive phrases as "simplicity" and "breadth" were often used to describe these examples of American Shingle Style. The 18 January 1889 number of *The British Architect* asserted that "There is a vitality about the work of the best American architects which makes it very interesting, while the effort of the profession to be original appears to be by no means limited to one place or set, but is most determined and widespread."²⁷ In the 6 December issue of the same year, Herbert W. Wills wrote, "... the best work (especially in the direction of country houses) of leading American architects ... has in it a quality of freshness and 'go,' and a simplicity of outline and massing which one would like to see more of in this country." He went on to note that "Much of the revival of Seventeenth and Eighteenth century work known under the name of 'Old Colonial' and of a style corresponding

broadly to our Queen Anne work, but carried out in wood, is thoroughly good in taste and feeling. . . ."²⁸

A perusal of the pages of *The British Architect*, *The Building News*, *The Builder*, and the *Journal of Proceedings* of the R.I.B.A. published before 1890 reveals these and many other articles, illustrations, and references to American architecture.²⁹ The roster of those whose work was illustrated encompassed almost all the major American practitioners of the period: H. H. Richardson, Peabody and Stearns, E. W. Wheelwright, W. R. Emerson, Bruce Price, John Calvin Stevens, L. S. Buffington (or Harvey Ellis), E. A. Coxhead, A. Page Brown, and many others.

In addition to the publication and discussion of American designs in British journals, both the R.I.B.A. library and the Architectural Association library received the major national and regional American architectural periodicals, ranging from *The American Architect and Building News* to the more regional journal, *The California Architect and Building News*. It was noted in the 1889 *Journal of Proceedings* of the R.I.B.A. that "The seven journals from America, as all who come to the Institute may read, are not mere 'specimens' of Colonial or Western enterprise, but are journals where managers conduct them as of the manner born, and many of the illustrations in most of them surpass those of the British."³⁰

A surprising episode in this contact between England and the United States was the construction of a Shingle Style cottage designed by P. M. Smith of New York at the 1887 exhibition at Earls Court: "In the grounds may be seen a full-sized model 'frame' house of two stories, designed in the Queen Anne Style, with a spacious verandah around three sides, the whole being of stud work, covered with pine shingles."³¹ Two years later, an exhibition of work from America was held at the Johnstone, Norman and Co. Galleries on New Bond Street. It did not include architecture specifically, but it did contain decorative designs of John La Farge and specimens of Rockwood faience.³²

This interest in American work continued on through the early 1890s. When Robert Kerr revised James Fergus-

24. *The Architect*, iv (July 1870), 58.

25. *Journal of Proceedings*, R.I.B.A., v (March 1889), 217.

26. *The British Architect*, xxiv (March 1885), 114.

27. *The British Architect*, xxxi (Jan. 1889), 47.

28. Herbert W. Wills, "Types of American Architecture," *The British Architect*, xxii (Dec. 1889), 402.

29. "Modern American Architecture," *The British Architect*, xix (March 1883), 154-155; Walter Aston, "Notes in America," *The British Architect*, xxviii (Sept. 1887), 227; *The Building News*, 111 (March 1887), 432; Alexander Graham, "Architecture in the United States," *Journal of Proceedings*, R.I.B.A., iv (March 1888), 193-196; "American Architecture," *The British Architect*, xxxi (Jan. 1889), 47; Herbert W. Wills, "Types of American Architecture," *The British Architect*, xxxii (Dec. 1889), 402.

30. *Journal of Proceedings*, R.I.B.A., v (Oct. 1889), 316.

31. *The Building News*, 111 (June 1887), 862-863.

32. "American Decorative Arts," *The Building News*, 111 (May 1889), 705.

son's classic *History of Modern Styles of Architecture* in 1891, he felt it necessary to throw out Fergusson's negative comments about American architecture and to substitute an entire new chapter entitled "Recent Architecture in America."³³ In this he wrote, "... it cannot be denied that there is to be discovered the backbone of a novel national style altogether superior in vitality to the inveterate commonplace of which in England, and indeed elsewhere, we see so much."³⁴ Horace Townsend, who had worked several years in America, reiterated a similar theme when he wrote in *The Art Journal*, "Not since my return to London some 18 months ago have I seen aught which would incline me to the belief that even our most notable living English architects can ... be placed upon a level with their American cousins."³⁵

This sympathetic involvement with American architecture began to wane later in the 1890s, when it became apparent that American architects were turning more and more to Paris for the new classical stylistic packaging of their buildings. As the designs of C. Harrison Townsend and of Dunbar Smith and Cecil Brewer indicate, the attachment of the avant-garde English to American architecture was to the Shingle Style and to the Richardsonian Romanesque. The Arts and Crafts proponents of the English rural-cottage tradition soon found themselves embroiled in the same conflict as their American counterparts—a fight against the increased popularity of Roman-Renaissance classical packaging with its more open programmatic declaration of order.

With this background evidence in mind, let us turn to Voysey's work. The crucial years for him were those from 1885 to 1893. Voysey's early architectural designs, such as his Crematorium at Sundrum of 1884 and a "Cottage for C. F. A. Voysey," perhaps designed as early as 1885, are adequate but not particularly distinguished works (Fig. 6). The imagery of these early designs is loosely vernacular and occasionally coupled with a slight Gothic twinge. The most distinguishing characteristics are the directness of the plans and the relative simplicity of their interior and exterior surfaces. In these and other designs of 1886 through 1889 there is already a decided predilection to reduce the number of functional and expressive parts to a minimum, to gather them into as few groupings as possible, and to organize these groups into an overall pattern. In addition to the manipulation of surface, he steadily reduced the number of

volumetric projections so that, eventually, he could encompass the whole design in one or two basic volumes.

There are, though, two or three designs of Voysey's produced in the late 1880s that reveal features which point more than casually to America. In "An Artist's Cottage" of 1889 (Fig. 7) we are presented with a perfect American Shingle Style tower with its curved conical roof and rows of band windows, and in a "Verandah house" (Fig. 8) de-



Fig. 6. Cottage for C. F. A. Voysey, 1885 (from *The Architect*, xi [Aug. 1888]).



Fig. 7. Artist's Cottage, 1889 (from *The British Architect*, xxxi [Feb. 1889]).

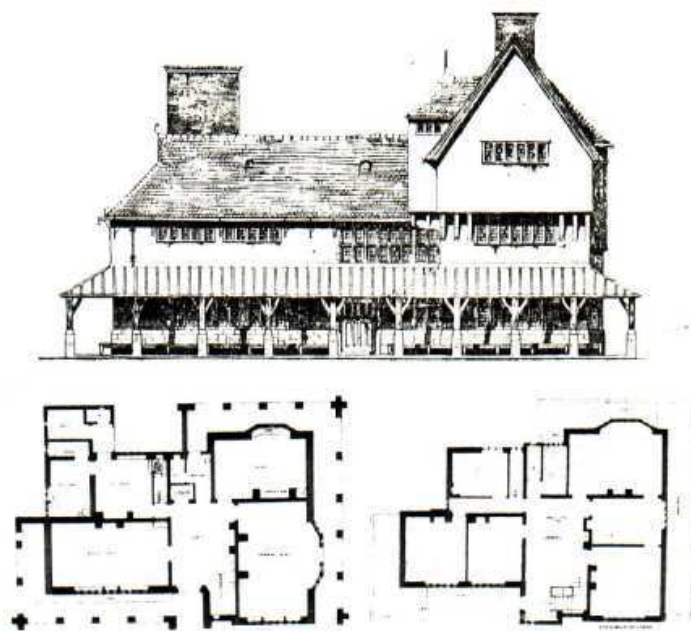


Fig. 8. Verandah house, 1889 (from *The British Architect*, xxxi [Feb. 1889]).

33. James Fergusson, *History of Modern Styles of Architecture*, ed. Robert Kerr (London, 1891), pp. 343-374.

34. Fergusson, *History*, p. 374.

35. Horace Townsend, "English and American Architecture . . . A Comparison and a Prophecy," *The Art Journal*, XLIV (1892), 294-300.



Fig. 9. Project for a Lodge, 1890 (courtesy Royal Institute of British Architects).



Fig. 10. Artist's Cottage, 1891 (courtesy Royal Institute of British Architects).

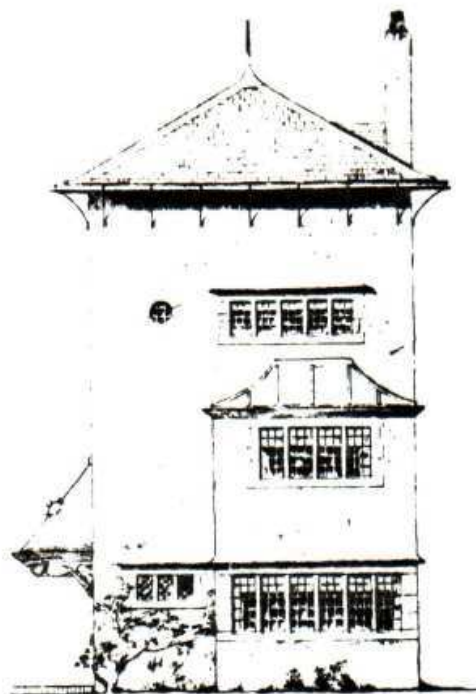


Fig. 11. Forster house, Bedford Park, 1891 (from *The British Architect*, xxxvii [Sept. 1891]).



Fig. 12. Studio for Britten, West Kensington, 1891 (photo: author).

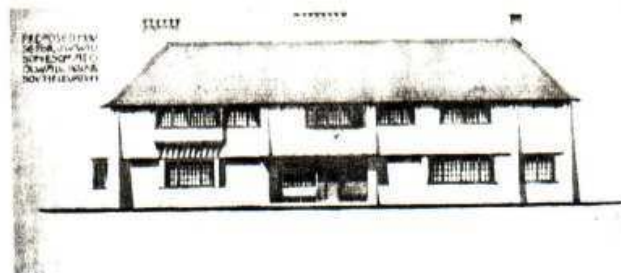


Fig. 13. Wilson house, Colwell, 1893 (courtesy Royal Institute of British Architects).



Fig. 14. Horniman house, near Frensham, 1894 (photo: author).



Fig. 15. Burke house, Beaconsfield, 1905–1906 (photo: author).

signed in the same year we see Voysey using a long front porch in a highly un-English manner.³⁶

But he did not continue such open and specific borrowings for long, and in his work from 1889 to 1893 he continued his earlier simplifying and abstracting process. The project for a "Lodge" of 1890 (Fig. 9), "An Artist's Cottage" of 1891 (Fig. 10), and the well-known Forster house in Bedford Park of 1891 (Fig. 11), all utilize a single volume, established by broad and unbroken white rough-cast surfaces, interrupted by carefully scaled and studied patterns of windows, chimneys, and buttresses. If his Studio for Britten in West Kensington of 1891 (Fig. 12) were clothed in shingles it would, except for its chimney, easily pass as a modish American Shingle Style cottage of the late 'eighties or early 'nineties. The same is true for at least the garden façade of his Wilson house of 1893–1894 at Colwall (Fig. 13); for if it were sheathed in clapboards or shingles it would, with no difficulty, fit perfectly into an American suburban street scene.

After 1893, Voysey slowly turned inward and sought an imagery even richer in the visual and literary symbols of the rural-cottage vernacular. But in this process of realizing

a new imagery Voysey in no way abandoned his intense concern for abstractly organizing all the elements of his design, nor did he ever abandon his desire to contain all the interior spatial divisions within a single rectangular volume. This can be seen in numerous buildings of his: "Lowicks" of 1894 at Frensham (Fig. 14), "Annesley Lodge" in Hampstead (1895), his own house "The Orchard" at Chorley Wood (1899), and on into the 1900s in such characteristic suburban work as the Burke house of 1905 at Beaconsfield (Fig. 15). This involvement with visual organization was even stronger in his few nondomestic designs—well illustrated by the single rectangular volume and highly organized surfaces of his factory for Sanderson and Sons at Chiswick of 1902.

What conclusion, if any, can be reasonably drawn from all this? Can a case be made for Voysey's possible awareness of American architecture of the 'eighties? And if a case can be made, did such awareness in any way affect his work? On the surface, it would appear that Voysey would be the most unlikely of individuals to be affected by outside influences, particularly from America; for he was purposefully and self-consciously insular in his view that England should never go outside herself for her architectural garb. The picture which has been handed down to us of Voysey is not of a bookish man who would pour over the latest architectural journals, or of a congenial joiner (he refused to join the R.I.B.A. because of what he felt to be its adherence to the Roman-Renaissance style). Though Voysey cultivated the image of himself as highly individualistic and reticent, he was at the same time quite sophisticated about the need of an architect to sell himself and his wares not only to potential clients but to his professional peers. He made sure that his work was well published in the English professional journals, he was receptive to his works being published on the Continent, and he continually participated in the major London exhibitions, at the R.I.B.A. and of the London Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society.

In the 'eighties, before Voysey had perfected and sold his public image (and in turn been contained by it), he was obviously abreast of the new and current on the London scene—this is forcibly conveyed by his wallpaper and other two-dimensional designs, which were as fresh and way-out as anyone could ask for. That such a personality should be ignorant and unaware of the general admiration for American architecture during these years is highly unlikely. If one is willing to grant his awareness (conscious and unconscious) of the Shingle Style and of the Richardsonian Romanesque, what if anything did he take from them? The question of sources and influence is almost always much more complex than conventionally made out to be. In the case of Voysey the answer would seem to be that in the

36. John Brandon-Jones, in a letter to the author (30 May 1970), writes, "Some of these schemes certainly have a marked resemblance to the 'Shingle Style,' but such features as the Circular Tower and the Octagonal Hall can be found in Seddon's work with which Voysey was familiar as a pupil. The Verandah House . . . is very close to some of Devey's work in Kent, not published at the time but certainly known to Voysey."