H.H. Richardson - Table of Contents

The William Dorsheimer House: A Reflection of French Suburban Architecture in the Early Work of H. H. Richardson

by Francis R. Kowsky
(Home page)

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T

Henry Hobson Richardson

William Dorsheimer

Dorsheimer house - northeast view showing Delaware Avenue

Dorsheimer house - northeast view showing Delaware Avenue

The Dorsheimer house was commissioned three years after Richardson's return to America from Paris and study at the **Ecole des Beaux-Arts.**

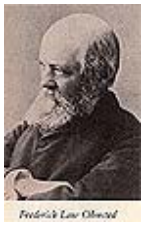
Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 2000

Today the Dorsheimer house is a small office building. The transformation has all but obliterated the original interior, where only the **staircase** remains from Richardson's time.

Dorsheimer House - ocher-colored brick and pale gray sandstone

walls and the dark gray slate mansard roof, relieved by a band of red tiles near the crestline, 2000

Dorsheimer House - dark gray slate mansard roof, relieved by a band of red tiles near the crestline, 2000



At Dorsheimer's request, Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903) visited the city in August, 1868, to determine a site for a large public park, an event that confirmed an enduring friendship.

Olmsted landscaped the Dorsheimer's property on Telegraph Hill in Newport, RI, before Dorsheimer commissioned **Richard Morris Hunt** to design a house in 1885-86.

Calvert Vaux was Olmsted's partner when they designed the landscaping for Buffalo State Hospital

Monument to the distinguished scientist Alexander Dallas Bache

In 1877, as Lieutenant-Governor of New York and a member of the Capitol Commission, Dorsheimer was responsible for replacing Thomas Fuller as architect of the unfinished capitol at Albany with Richardson and **Leopold Eidlitz**, assisted by Olmsted.

Richardson's **Gratwick house** of 1886 stood three blocks north of the Dorsheimer house on Delaware

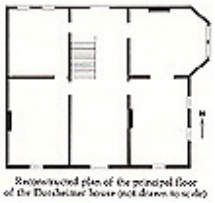
Block plans from the 1872 city atlas and from 1889 insurance map

Dorsheimer house - **northwest** corner. A two-story wing was added at the northwest corner of the building in the 1870's or early 1880's

Dorsheimer house - detail of dormers, **southwest** angle.

Dorsheimer house - The awkward meeting of dormers at the **southwest** corner

Buffalo State Hospital,, one of Richardson's masterpieces



Reconstructed plan of the principal floor of the Dorsheimer house

The Dorsheimer house's two-story projecting bay with windows in the center portion, which stands at the north side of the street facade, finds a close parallel in the house shown in **Petit's plate 19**.

Dorsheimer House - **northeast** view, 2000

Dorsheimer House - **northern** view, 2000

Dorsheimer House - **northern** view. Detail

of side entrance, 2000

Dorsheimer House - **southwestern** view.

Dorsheimer House - **southwestern** view.

Place des Vosges ... [was] distinguished by gray slate mansard roofs and walls of red brick relieved with light-colored stone trim...

Place des Vosges, 2000

Petit, plate 1, labeled "Maison de campagne," represents the more formal dwellings

Petit's plate 24 is, I believe, most instructive for visualizing how the garden facade of Richardson's building originally looked

... overall articulation of the wall by means of horizontal and vertical bands appears ... on the seventeenth-century **Chateau de Montalivet-La-Grange**

Dorsheimer house - ... **saw-tooth courses of brick** (below the eaves), by long channels that mark the angles, and by **austere incized ornaments** recalling **rosettes** and **triglyphs**,

Dorsheimer house

... austere incized ornaments recalling **rosettes** and **triglyphs**

he city of Buffalo, which is best known to architectural historians for its buildings by Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan, also occupies an important place in the career of **Henry Hobson Richardson** (1838-1886). The house Richardson agreed in October, 1868, to design for **William Dorsheimer** (1832-1888) was once one of Buffalo's principal residences.

Note 1 - Van Rensselaer in her "List of Henry Hobson Richardson's Works," appendix I, 139, cited the Dorsheimer house as the third commission the Gambrill and Richardson firm received The B. W. Crowninshield house in Boston commissioned in April, 1868, and the North Congregational Church at Springfield of May, 1868, preceded it. Mrs. Van Rensselaer indicates that her list was "carefully compiled from Richardson's office books" and that the Dorsheimer house was among those commissions that were "practically Richardson's own work:" According to the most recent deed search made by the Abstract Title Division of the Title Guarantee Company, Dorsheimer purchased the ground in his wife Isabella's name from Antoinette Le Couteulx de Caumont on May 5, 1868.

It may be assumed that construction of the dwelling began during the building season of 1869. In October, 1869, Richardson noted in his sketchbook that he was "working on the Dorsheimer piazza," which may have been the porch for the north entrance (See O'Gorman, 211, 3r.) The house apparently was unfinished by the time that the 1870 city directory was published in May of that year, for Dorsheimer was still listed at his old address. He first appeared at 438 Delaware Avenue in the next edition of the directory which came out in July, 1871. Therefore, in all probability, the house, of which Dorsheimer took occupancy after May, 1870, but before July, 1871, required approximately two years to construct.

Plans in the Richardson collection at Houghton Library, Harvard University, have been identified by Henry-Russell Hitchcock as for a second house for Dorsheimer, possibly dating from the mid-1870s and destined for a site in Albany (See Hitchcock, 309, n. v-11.) Vincent Scully, Jr., in "The Shingle Style and the Stick Style: Architectural Theory and Design from Richardson to the Origins of Wright," rev ed., New Haven, 1971, 5, n .12, compares this plan to the Maison Imbert des Mottelettes by Mortier, which he regards as an example of a similar type of Parisian town house.

A work of the architect's little-studied early period, it was erected on then newly fashionable Delaware Avenue for a man who was to play a major role in Richardson's career. Commissioned three years after his return to America from Paris and study at the **Ecole des Beaux-Arts**, the Dorsheimer house, which was ready for occupancy by the summer of 1871, reveals significantly Richardson's understanding of French architectural ideas.

Note 2 - This article is based upon a paper read at the 1978 Annual Convention of the Society of Architectural Historians. Research has been supported by a grant from the State University of New York Research Foundation. I wish to thank Robert C Sanborn, present owner of the Dorsheimer house for allowing me to study the building and O. William Shelgren Jr., AIA, for his assistance and advice. I also wish to acknowledge the assistance of Nancy Goeschel and Susan Stein Ganelin, who are working on **Richard Morris Hunt**, and Charles Beveridge, editor of the Frederick Law Olmsted Papers. Finally, I am indebted to John Coolidge and Henry- Russell Hitchcock for many valuable suggestions and comments.

Today the Dorsheimer house is a small office building. The transformation has all but obliterated the original interior, where only the **staircase** remains from Richardson's time. The exterior, however, exists mainly intact.

Note 3 - The house is now used as offices for Percival B. Bixby and Company, Certified Public Accountants. Richardson's drawings for the building have not survived, and the city of Buffalo has destroyed building permits from before 1900. The house was entered in "The Historic American Buildings Survey" in 1965, but measured drawings were not made. The building has recently been nominated for the National Register of Historic Places.

The exterior, with wood and metal trim painted ivory white, now lacks the iron cresting that originally ran along the roofline, the scroll designs that flanked each dormer window and the cornices and clay-pot flues on the chimneys which have been reduced to the roofline. The small window in the second floor of the Delaware Avenue facade does not appear in the earliest surviving photograph of the house.

The **ocher-colored brick** and **pale gray sandstone** walls and the **dark gray slate mansard roof**, relieved by a ban**d of red tiles** near the crestline, are well preserved.

It **is the purpose of this article,**

- **first, to propose a theory of how Richardson came to work for Dorsheimer;**
- **second, to establish the original ground plan of the house;**
- **third, to correct the mistaken impression that has arisen concerning which side of the building is the principal facade; and**
- **last, to suggest the French sources from which the design derives.**

A theory of how Richardson came to work for Dorsheimer

William Dorsheimer, a prominent lawyer, politician, and journalist who was close to Fillmore, Tilden, and Cleveland, was the chief promoter of the park movement in Buffalo..

Note 4 - During the Civil War, Dorsheimer, who was born in Lyons, New York, in 1832, served with Fremont during his controversial Missouri campaign. After the war, President Johnson appointed him United States District Attorney for Northern New York. By 1874, after the liberal Republican movement headed by Greeley had failed, Dorsheimer had switched political parties and was elected Lieutenant-Governor under Samuel Tilden whose reform-minded notions he shared. Dorsheimer held this position until 1880 when he moved to New York City and assumed the editorship of "The New York Star." Two years later he won election to the United States Congress from New York City and in 1882 he published a campaign biography of Grover Cleveland, an old friend from his Buffalo days. Dorsheimer died in 1888 and was buried in Forest Lawn Cemetery in Buffalo.

Further biographical material can be found in M. L. Bonham, Jr.'s article in "The Dictionary of American Biography," New York, 1936, v. 387-88; "Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography," 1889, II, 208; and "Geschichte der Deutschen in Buffalo," Buffalo, 1898, 24. Obituaries appear in The New York Times, March 28, 1888, 4; The Buffalo Daily Courier, March 28, 1888, 2; and The Buffalo Commercial Advertiser, March 27, 1888, 2. "The Report of the Harvard Class of 1853," Cambridge, Mass., 1913, 78-81, provides the best biographical sketch.

Unfortunately, little is known about Dorsheimer beyond what these scant sources yield. No collection of papers or personal documents is known to exist.

At Dorsheimer's request, **Frederick Law Olmsted** (1822-1903) visited the city in August, 1868, to determine a site for a large public park, an event that confirmed an enduring friendship.

Note 5 - Correspondence in the Frederick Law Olmsted Papers in the Library of Congress between Olmsted and Dorsheimer dates as early as 1866. Dorsheimer invited Olmsted to Buffalo to discuss publicly a park plan in 1868, by which time Dorsheimer and his associates had apparently singled out several areas as suitable for park development. In a letter dated August 6, 1868, Olmsted reveals his intention to visit Buffalo later in the month. Stevenson, 301, suggests that Dorsheimer, who was "a leader . . . in the voluntary work in Buffalo for the United States Sanitary Commission," had come to know Olmsted through this organization. Olmsted was the commission's national secretary from 1861 until the summer of 1863.

In his public career Dorsheimer proved Olmsted's loyal advocate; in his private life he became his valued client. Against considerable opposition, Dorsheimer promoted the ambitious program of separate parks linked together by parkways that Olmsted proposed for Buffalo, the first such urban park system in the country. In Albany, Dorsheimer sponsored Olmsted's appointment to the New York State Capitol project and championed his proposal that the State of New York preserve Niagara Falls as a scenic reservation, a campaign that was first envisioned in August, 1869, when Olmsted, Dorsheimer, and Richardson visited the Falls together (See Roper 379.) Dorsheimer also asked Olmsted to landscape the grounds of two residential properties he purchased for himself after leaving Buffalo. One was at Dosoris near Glen Cove, Long Island where Olmsted worked in 1886, and the other was at Newport where Olmsted landscaped Dorsheimer's property on Telegraph Hill in 1885-86. This was prior to the erection there of the house that Dorsheimer commissioned from **Richard Morris Hunt**. The Newport Daily News of October 13, 1885, described the grounds as "one of the most sightly locations on the island and one that can hardly be surpassed for beauty the world over," The estate passed into the hands of the Busk family after Dorsheimer's death in 1888, before construction had begun on Hunt's rambling stone and shingle residence. Busk

erected the dwelling in 1891 and called it lndian Spring. There are no records at Fairsted, the Olmsted office in Brookline, to indicate that Olmsted designed the grounds around Dorsheimer's Buffalo home. (I am indebted to Susan Stein Ganelin, who is presently cataloguing the Hunt drawings owned by the American Institute of Architects Foundation, for identifying the Busk house as originally planned for Dorsheimer.)

Shortly before this time, Olmsted had come to know Richardson, who, like Olmsted, was part of the circle of progressive Victorian architects in New York City and a resident of Staten Island.

Note 6 - Alfred Janson Bloor (1828-1917), who worked in the office of **Calvert Vaux** (See also the first chapter of the author's book on Vaux)(1824-1895) and Frederick Clarke Withers (1828-1901), Olmsted's associates, was well acquainted with Olmsted. The fastidiously detailed diary Bloor kept during these years is now at the New York Historical Society. Bloor mentioned meeting Richardson as early as April 11, 1867. It is therefore probable that by that date Olmsted had been introduced to Richardson as well. Olmsted had lived on Staten Island since the spring of 1866.

Correspondence between Julia Hayden, Richardson's bride, and her mother beginning January 5, 1867, just after Julia's marriage, indicates that the couple moved to Staten Island immediately after their wedding. Letters discuss the shipment of furniture and wedding presents from the Hayden home in Cambridge to Staten Island where the Richardsons had rented "Luling Cottage" by February 10, 1867, when Julia wrote her mother that they were installed in their new quarters. Prior to that time they had lived in a hotel on the island. In a letter of March 22, 1867, Julia describes the dining room of this house and mentions a sideboard that Richardson had designed and which was much admired.

Two years later the family moved into Arrochar, the house Richardson built for himself at Clifton on Staten Island. On January 31, 1869, Julia wrote her mother that "I trust that another week will finish our work, although it may not entirely -- everyone is charmed with our house and my room particularly . . ." Richardson's father-in-law, who visited them in March, 1869, wrote on the 21st that "the new house is very handsome and it is now in perfect order, nothing out of place -- without purchasing anything new, it seems sufficiently full, so that it is rather surprising that so many articles could have been accommodated in the Cottage. Hal has introduced every convenience, excepting gas, and the pipes are all prepared for it whenever it is carried through the street." His enthusiasm aside, Dr. Hayden confided to his wife on April 18, 1869, that "the building of the house was premature and a mistake decidedly -- it cost too much -- if he [Richardson] escapes without a loss, it will be a good lessen to him. With the income he has a right to expect from engagements already made, he can with great prudence meet the expenses of his family and the interest of the cost . . . ! (correspondence in the Archives of American Art).

In order to have been ready for occupancy by March, 1869, Arrochar must have been under construction, at the latest, during the building season of 1868 and have been substantially completed by October, 1868, when Richardson received the Dorsheimer commission. Therefore, the plans for Arrochar must have been drawn either in 1867 or early in 1868.

By October, 1868, Olmsted had already consulted Richardson for a commission, a **monument to the distinguished scientist Alexander Dallas Bache**

(1806-1867), a wartime colleague of Olmsted's on the Sanitary commission.

Note 7 - On November 8, 1867, C. P. Patterson of the Coast Survey Office in Washington wrote to Olmsted to request his assistance in preparing a monument to Bache, Patterson's former superior. Patterson wrote again on December 7, 1867, to inform Olmsted that "$5000 may be safely depended upon," but that sum was reduced to $2000 by July 13, 1868, when Patterson told Olmsted that "something simple, permanent and severe" was desired and offered a sketch for a suitable design. Probably soon after that date Olmsted contacted Richardson to ask him to prepare a design based upon Patterson's sketch, which is close in general conception to the existing monument. In a letter dated October 13, 1868, from Richardson to Olmsted (transcribed in O'Gorman, 36, n. 79), Richardson mentioned the monument to "Mr. Bache" in a manner that implies previous discussion of the commission between the two men. An elevation and perspective drawing (now lost) for the monument, which was estimated to cost $2800, was forwarded to Olmsted on November 14, 1868. On December 8, 1868, Patterson acknowledged receipt from Olmsted of the design, which he praised as "remarkably fine and effective" and indicated that it "was adopted after repeated trimming." The granite and marble memorial was erected over Bache's grave in Congressional Cemetery in Washington. From remarks in this last letter, as well as that of July 13, 1868, it appears that a second, public monument was also contemplated for a location in Philadelphia and this fact may have accounted for the reduction in the allotment for the private memorial. I do not know if Richardson or Olmsted was involved in this second scheme or if it was ever carried out. (All correspondence mentioned above is in the Frederick Law Olmsted Papers, Library of Congress.)

At the time the Dorsheimer house was commissioned, Olmsted was professionally associated with Vaux and Withers. One would assume that he should have recommended them for architectural work. While Vaux was in England in the summer of 1868, however, Olmsted had asked Bloor, then independent, to work with him. This suggests that despite his legal connection with Vaux, Olmsted was willing to 1ook elsewhere for assistance. Withers was busy with a number of projects; especially the Hudson River State Hospital, and may not have been able to work for Dorsheimer. (For Bloor's comments to Olmsted, see the 1etter from Bloor to him dated August 31, 1868, in the Olmsted Papers.)

In addition to Richardson, Olmsted appears to have directly or indirectly promoted in Buffalo the careers of several architect friends. Vaux, as his partner in the firm of Olmsted, Vaux and Company, designed a number of important structures for the parks, including an elaborate wooden refectory building that recalled similar pavilions in the Bois de Boulogne. (Unfortunately , all of Vaux's work in the city has been destroyed.) Bloor formed with Alexander F. Oakey (d. 1916), another Olmsted friend, the firm of Oakey and Bloor which operated in the city during the mid-1870's. One of their most interesting projects was that for the see house of the Episcopal diocese which was designed to be erected on the unused foundations of Arthur Gilman's Christ Episcopal Church (see n. 17) but which never got beyond that level. Finally, George Kent Radford (dates unknown), an English immigrant who claimed association with Pugin, was named engineer of the Buffalo park system on Olmsted's personal recommendation.

It
can be assumed that Olmsted also recommended Richardson to Dorsheimer, who must have expressed to Olmsted his desire to build a house. The three men may have become acquainted with each other even before Olmsted's trip to Buffalo, for by 1866 all held membership in the Century Club in New York City.

Note 8 - Olmsted was elected to the Century Club In 1859, having been proposed for membership with his father-in-law Dr. Parmly, by Thomas P. Rossiter, the well-known landscape painter and client of Richard Morris Hunt. Dorsheimer, whose reformist political views and New England education Olmsted would have found congenial attributes, was elected to the club in 1864 upon the recommendation of two prominent jurists from New York City, Thomas Hitchcock and James C. Carter. Richardson became a member in 1866 under the sponsorship of Albert C Haseltine perhaps a member of the Philadelphia family of artists and art dealers, and John Priestley, who had been editor of "The American Whig Review." Priestley, who was possibly a relative of Richardson's from his mother's side of the family, could have provided an introduction to Olmsted, with whom he had had dealing, In the 1850's Priestley and Olmsted had been among a small group of men who had joined together to aid Free Soil settlers in Kansas. (I am indebted to Andrew Zaremba, librarian of the Century Association, for the dates of election and names of sponsors cited above.)

The fact that Dorsheimer and Richardson had both attended Harvard would also have fostered rapport between them.

Note 9 - Dorsheimer had attended Harvard from 1849 to 1852 when he left due to poor health. He did not take a degree. In 1854, he became a lawyer in Buffalo; two years later Harvard awarded him an honorary MA. Richardson studied at Harvard between 1854 and 1859 after which he left for Paris. Therefore, the two men were not on campus at the same time. According to records in the Harvard University Archives, Dorsheimer was not a member of the Porcellian Club or the Pierian Sodality, organizations to which Richardson belonged.

Regardless of how Richardson acquired it, the Dorsheimer commission proved to be a notable event in his professional life. On several later occasions Dorsheimer used his influence to Richardson's advantage, In 1877, as Lieutenant-Govemor of New York and a member of the Capitol Commission, he was responsible for replacing Thomas Fuller as architect of the unfinished capitol at Albany with Richardson and **Leopold Eidlitz**, assisted by Olmsted. Later, as editor of "The New York Star," Dorsheimer eulogized Richardson, who had named a son after him, by comparing the importance of the architect's career to "the influence Dryden had upon the poets of the Georgian period and the spell which Byron threw over the imagination of England at the beginning of our century."

Note 10 - [William Dorsheimer], "Henry H Richardson," "The New York Star," April 29, 1886, 2.

In 1868, the Dorsheimer property stood at the leading edge of the tide of improvement that was moving northward along Delaware Avenue from Niagara Square, near to where the street began.

Note 11 - The thoroughfare was known at the time as Delaware Street. The name was changed to Delaware Avenue in 1881.

In the area, elegant residences stood interspersed with older, more modest dwellings, and one block north of Dorsheimer's new house a large lead works still operated. A short distance further north was an ill-kept cemetery which inspired Samuel Clemens, Dorsheimer's neighbor at 472 Delaware, to write "The Discontented Graveyard." The change in character of Delaware Avenue reflected

the rapid accumulation of wealth that took place after the Civil War when, as Dorsheimer himself noted, "the city had begun a new career" as a major center of grain elevators, heavy industry, and water and rail transportation.

> Note 12 - William Dorsheimer, "Life and Public Services of Honorable Grover Cleveland," Philadelphia, 1884, 37.

Delaware Avenue had originally been projected in Joseph Ellicott's 1799 map of Buffalo as a residential street. With the enactment into law in August, 1869, of Olmsted's plan for a park system for the city, Delaware Avenue acquired new prestige. According to Olmsted's plan, it was to become the major thoroughfare from Niagara Square, the city's municipal center, to The Park (now known as Delaware Park) three miles north. He proposed to erect Richardson's Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch at the point from which Delaware Avenue left the north side of Niagara Square and to line the street for its entire length with double rows of elm trees. Since Dorsheimer was aware of Olmsted's scheme from its earliest stages, he must have decided to build his house on Delaware Avenue with full understanding of the role Olmsted envisioned for the street. Endowed with keen business sense in addition to his other talents, Dorsheimer realized that in those areas touched by Olmsted's improvements real estate values would rise sharply.

> Note 13 - "The Real Estate and Builders Monthly, II, 1886, 5, revealed that at the time of the creation of the park system, Dorsheimer purchased a large tract of land on Delaware Avenue adjoining The Park. Years later, after The Park had become a reality and the neighborhood surrounding it a desirable place to build, he sold the property and realized a handsome profit.

By World War I, Delaware Avenue was a gracious, tree-shaded boulevard that possessed mansions designed by leading national architects, including Carrere and Hastings, McKim, Mead and White, Charles Platt, and Richardson (his **Gratwick house**
of 1886 stood three blocks north of the Dorsheimer house), as well as works by such noted local architects as Green and Wicks and George Cary. The decline began in 1930 when the stately elms were cut down and the roadway widened -- a desecration Charles Burchfield decried in his painting "Civic Improvement." But when Dorsheimer took up residence there, he was secure in the knowledge that his dwelling was the most elegant yet built on the avenue.

Previous notices of the Dorsheimer house have neglected to point out that when completed in 1871 the dwelling was smaller than at present, A **block plan from the 1872 city atlas**

> Note 14 - "Atlas of the City of Buffalo, Erie County, New York," Philadelphia, 1872, pl. 80.

confirms the fact that initially the building was a simple rectangle (approximately fifty-two by forty-six feet), except for the projecting bay facing Delaware Avenue. A
two-story wing was added at the northwest corner of the building in the

1870's or early 1880's, but definitely by 1889 when it was recorded (along with an adjoining stable at the back of the lot) on a Sanborn insurance map.

Note 15 - " Insurance Maps of Buffalo, New York," New York 1889, I, pl. 29.

The **awkward meeting of dormers at the southwest corner** and discontinuous mortar joints and water tables attest to the fact that, although close in style to the main body of the house, this portion was annexed to the earlier structure. Also apparently lacking on the original building was the veranda on the south side shown on the 1889 plan in yellow, indicating that it was constructed of wood.

Dorsheimer moved to Albany after 1874 when he was elected Lieutenant-Governor. A local newspaper publisher was living in the house by 1876 and in 1881 he purchased the property from Dorsheimer.

Note 16 - Beginning with the 1876 city directory, Charles W. McCune, president of the Courier, Company, which published "The Courier" and "The Express," was listed at 438 Delaware. Apparently McCune, who having recently lived in Paris must have found the house particularly attractive, occupied the dwelling as a tenant for several years before purchasing it. According to the deed search, Isabella Dorsheimer sold the property to him on January 3, 1881.

If not already constructed, the back wing and the veranda, together with other changes, may have been built by the new owner around this time. Richardson himself could have provided the designs for these alterations, for other commissions brought him periodically to Buffalo in the 1870's and 1880's. Most important was the **Buffalo State Hospital**, begun in 1870 and completed after Richardson's death. Additional projects were Christ Episcopal Church, 1869; the Asher P. Nichols house, possibly ca. 1870; Trinity Episcopal Church, ca. 1871; the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch, 1874; the Young Men's Association Library, 1884; and the William Gratwick house, 1886.

Note 17 - With the exception of the asylum and the Gratwick house, none of the other structures listed was ever erected. The work at the Buffalo State Hospital (presently known as the Buffalo Psychiatric Center), which Hitchcock discusses, 117-23, is fully recorded in the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Managers, as well as in the institution's annual reports. There are also 62 sheets of plans and elevation drawings in the Houghton Library.

Richardson's involvement with the plan to erect a new church for the parish of Christ Episcopal Church is documented in the minutes of the vestry. On August 2, 1869, he was paid $250 for his plans (now lost) which were rejected in favor of those submitted by Arthur Gilman. Floor plans for the Asher P. Nichols house are in the Houghton Library They bear neither date nor location (other than Buffalo), but appear to be from the early years of Richardson's career. Nichols, who was a member of the board of managers of the state hospital, owned the lot adjacent to the Dorsheimer property on the south and may have intended to erect his house there. Richardson's scheme for Trinity Episcopal Church, to which Dorsheimer belonged, was published in "The Architectural Sketch-book," IV, 1873, pl. XVI; however. the parish history suggests a date of two years earlier for the project.

The proposal for the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch in Niagara Square was fostered by Olmsted who included it as part of his plan prepared in 1874

for the improvement of the square Two drawings for the arch, which may have advanced as far as the laying of the foundations, are in the Houghton Library. O'Gorman reproduces one of these, 189-90, together with a rough sketch for the project found in folio 31, recto, of the architect's sketchbook, which is also in the Houghton Library.

For a brief account of Richardson's competition proposal for the Young Men's Association Library (another project to which Dorsheimer's name is linked) and Richardson's recently discovered description of the work, see my article "H. H. Richardson's Project for the Young Men's Association Library in Buffalo," in "Niagara Frontier, Journal of the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, xxxv, 1978, 29-35. The Houghton Library possesses 49 sheets of drawings for this project, as well as 44 plans, elevations, and cross-sections of the Gratwick house, which according to Van Rensselaer, 140, was commissioned in March, 1886. The last commission of Richardson's career, it was completed by Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge in 1888 and demolished shortly after World War I.

Although no documentary evidence exists to support the view, it is possible that while visiting the city on other business, Richardson became involved with remodeling the Dorsheimer house.

Original ground plan of the house

Consulting the plans of architect Stanley Podd, who converted the Dorsheimer house into offices in the 1950's.

Note 18 - Stanley Podd's plans are in the possession of Robert C. Sanborn.

one can discover the main features of the former ground plan There are no surprises. The house possessed a **traditional center hall layout**. Two rooms on the east, separated by sliding doors and overlooking the avenue, were undoubtedly double parlors or a parlor and a library. A large room on the west of the hall, looking onto the garden, must have been the dining room, with the kitchen beyond it on the north, or perhaps beneath it in the basement.

Note 19 - The central hall plan is evident from the portions Podd indicated to be removed in his remodeling. The only area that is difficult to reconstruct is that behind the dining room, at the northwest corner of the building, where there may have been a room (probably the kitchen, if it was not located in the basement) or a hall for a back stairs. The basement, which has rubble walls, has been remodeled for conference rooms and in its pre- sent form provides few clues to its original use or to the location of fireplaces in the upper floors. Apparently, from the evidence of the chimneys, all of the main rooms were equipped with fireplaces, and I have so indicated on the plan. Central heating was, undoubtedly, also provided, for Richardson had it installed in his own home which was built slightly earlier.

Although neither plans nor drawings for the Dorsheimer house are known to have survived, page 49, recto, of Richardson's sketchbook shows several ground plans that share affinities with the reconstructed first floor of the Buffalo

residence. The study at the upper right of the page especially resembles the **block plan**, whereas the uses assigned to the rooms in the plan at the lower right of the page more closely correspond to the supposed arrangement of the Dorsheimer house. The sketches may well have been preliminary studies for the Dorsheimer commission, for one should not regard the Harvard class-day ticket glued to the page as necessarily indicative of the date of the drawings. They may also represent Richardson's return to the Dorsheimer scheme, which he may have used as a point of departure to develop a new plan, perhaps that of the Watts-Sherman house (1874), as James O'Gorman has suggested.

Note 20 - O'Gorman, 215, 49r.

The presence at the left of freer variations on the tightly composed configurations elsewhere on the page put in mind this possibility.

Mistaken impression that has arisen concerning which side of the building is the principal facade

Uncertainty over the original ground plan of the Dorsheimer house has been matched by misunderstanding of the exterior. [One view] shows the handsome **Delaware Avenue facade**, which is the eastern flank of the building. The entrances are off the street, on the northern side (at the right), which was the **formal entrance**.

Note 21- The north doorway bears the number 438 Delaware, the address by which the house was listed in the city directory in the 19th century. Today the building is cited as 434 Delaware Avenue, for, the principal modem entrance is through a plate-glass foyer on the south side.

and on the **southern**
side, which faced a garden now replaced by a parking lot. Usually photographed from the north

Note 22 - See Hitchcock, 1966, fig 10, and idem, 1967, fig. 7, as well as, the photograph of the house that appeared in the exhibition "Buffalo Architecture," 1816-1940 held at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Jan-Feb, 1940.

the house was, in fact, conceived with the southern or garden elevation as its principal facade. Here was also an entrance approached by a pathway from the street, and one supposes that even though it was on the garden side of the house, it must have been frequented as much as the northern entrance which bore the legal address. When the veranda overlooking the garden was turned into an enclosed sun porch (probably in the early twentieth century) and the southern entrance was no longer accessible, the northern side of the house came to be regarded as the main facade.

Note 23 - A photograph in the collection of the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society shows an open veranda where the sun porch was later added. In the same picture appears the stable indicated on the 1889 map (and which was entered from the alley behind the house) It would seem that this early veranda was later enclosed to form a sun porch (see Fig. 10) which had an outside entrance toward Delaware Avenue. A photograph of the building in the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society taken when the house was sold in the 1950's shows a new sun porch (which an earlier photograph of the adjacent house reveals to have been in place by 1925) that dispensed with an entrance from the front yard.

The importance of the southern elevation was forgotten. Yet the fact that the house is situated much closer to the northern edge of the property than it is to the southern boundary.

Note 24 - The dwelling was actually erected within four feet of the original northern property line. This would have placed the building, which was approximately 46 feet wide, 25 feet distant from the southern edge of the lot. (According to the 1889 city atlas, the north wall of the back wing addition abutted the original boundary.) The deed search reveals that at the time the house was commissioned, the frontage on Delaware Avenue was 75 feet. (The depth of the lot, which has remained unchanged, was 130 feet.) On May 1, 1871, Dorsheimer acquired from Asher P. Nichols a additional 15 feet on the south (see n. 17). Undoubtedly, an easement was negotiated with the northern neighbor for the use of supplemental space on that side of the building for a suitable walkway. After the death of Charles McCune, the second owner, in 1685, 15 feet of land were added to the lot on the north, making it 105 feet on Delaware Avenue, its present dimension. This acquisition must have confirmed a longstanding agreement, for the schematic plan of the house and property in the 1872 city atlas (Fig. 4) already shows such a space on the north.

indicates that the architect wished the southern elevation to be seen more fully than the northern one. Furthermore, a look at the two sides clearly reveals that the southern front was designed as the more imposing of the two. The **ornamental banding** of the Delaware Avenue facade continues on the south but not on the north, which, by comparison, is thoroughly undistinguished. Likewise, the studied symmetry of the southern elevation, where the doorway would have been in the central bay, proclaims its greater importance.

Note 25 - The paneled decoration of the east and south facades is built with slabs of sandstone several inches thick and stretcher courses of face bricks laid with thin mortar joints. The north elevation, which has only the stone architrave of the other two facades, is also composed of face bricks. The west or back elevation is constructed of common bricks and is devoid of all ornamental, stone banding.

French sources from which the design derive

More than any other building, the Dorsheimer house demonstrates the degree to which Richardson had become familiar with contemporary French architecture during his years in Paris, from 1859 to 1865. By 1868, of course, it was not uncommon for an American house to be designed in the Second Empire style.

"The taste of America," Anthony Trollope observed shortly before this time, "is becoming French in its conversation, French in its comforts, and French in its discomforts, French in its eating, and French in its dress, French in its manners, and will become French in its arts."

Note 26 - Anthony Trollope, "North America," London, 1862, quoted in Ellen Kramer, "The Domestic Architecture of Detlief Lienau, A Conservative Victorian," Ph. D. diss., New York University, 1958, 88.

The allurements of French taste were particularly attractive to newly rich and socially ambitious Americans for whom Parisian fashion signified sophistication: and worldly attainment. A well-to-do immigrant's son who had attended Phillips Academy and Harvard University before entering upon a political career in his early twenties, Dorsheimer was certainly representative of this class. He surely was thinking of himself when he wrote that a "group of young men with more education than their elders had become active in affairs" in Buffalo in the 1860's and that they had "felt a desire for higher civilization."

Note 27 - Dorsheimer, 37.

An avid reader of Hugo and an enthusiastic supporter of Bartholdi's "Statue of Liberty" project, Dorsheimer maintained ardent admiration for French culture. "There is no department of human activity," he professed, "in which France is not honorably distinguished. In the highest departments she holds the highest places."

Note 28 - William Dorsheimer, "Address to the Brooklyn Academy of Music, November 28, 1880," New York, 6.

By precept and example, such patrons encouraged the popularity of the revived Baroque style, which by the close of the Civil War had become firmly established in the field of American domestic architecture. As is well known, the example of the court of Napoleon III spawned this movement, Henry-Russell Hitchcock, in his definitive book on Richardson, offers Visconti's Hotel de Pontalba (before 1853) in the Rue du Faubourg St. Honore in Paris as exemplary of the many "hotels particuliers" which, he says, "wished to imitate the splendors of Eugenie's Louis Seize Imperatrice apartments at the Tuileries and Saint-Cloud."

Note 29 - Hitchcock, 1966, 34-35.

But there was another category of Second Empire domestic architecture that followed this pattern more cautiously. Compared to the costly "hotels," the smaller French middle-class detached house was modest in size and detail. It is to this simpler rank of "habitation bourgeoise" which corresponded more closely to American requirements, that the Dorsheimer house properly belongs.

Since the,mid-nineteenth century, the outskirts of Paris had experienced an influx of middle class dwellers, who, benefiting from increased prosperity, were now able to acquire private homes. Calling this movement "a new opportunity

for developing an old taste . . . [that] will shortly effect great changes in the country about Paris," the British trade journal "The Builder" noted in 1861 that " 'une jolie maison de campagne' is the frequent heading of advertisements."

Note 30 - "Paris and French Architecture," "The Builder," XIX, 1861, 695. "The Builder" devoted considerable attention to architectural developments in Paris in its volume for 1861.

The expansion of the city resulted from the revitalization of Paris undertaken by Napoleon III and carried out by Baron Georges Haussmann.

Note 31 - The best survey of this monumental undertaking, which Richards was fortunate to witness, is Pinkney. Chap. VII, "The City Grows," discusses the extension of Paris into the suburbs.

"Non seulement nous faisons des squares, des jardins anglais et des parcs publics dans nos villes," wrote Cesar Daly, the editor of the "Revue generale," in 1862, "mais nous cherchons de plus en plus a diviser notre existence entre la ville et la campagne; aussi a-t-on fractionne les grandes proprietes boisees des environs de Paris en une multitude de petits lots."

Note 32 - Daly, 1862, col. 182.

This growth of residential suburbs, which was greatly aided by new railways, tramways, and omnibus service, constituted part of what was an international phenomenon that had earlier and more broadly affected the industrial and commercial cities of England and America. At Neuilly, Auteuil, Passy, which an English guide called "in a small way the Richmond of Paris,"

Note 33 - Thomas Forester, ed., "Paris and its Environs," London, 1859, 247.

Billancourt, Enghien, Livry, Saint-Gratien, Chevreuse, Magny, Bercy, Villers-sur-Marne, Bellevue, Raincy, Versailles, and especially Le Vesinet, the first planned suburban residential community in France,

Note 34 - The development of Le Vesinet, which is located on the Seine near Saint-Germain-en-Laye on land that was described as "si aride et si abandonnee" before 1andscaping began in 1858, was financed entirely by private capital. The transformation into a park-like setting for houses was completed by 1860 when the architect L.-F. Poubelle wrote in the "Revue general," XVIII, 1860, col. 91, that "aujourd'hui, routes, allees, parterres, gazons, pelouses, lacs, rivieres, ruisseaux, cascades, etalent leurs merveilles, repandent la fraicheur et font leur murmure. . . . Un village entier, avec ses rues, ses places et son eglise, s'eleve au centre du parc du Vesinet; des" villas elegantes et d'agrestes cottages se sont dissemines en differents endroits." In his forthcoming article on Le Vesinet in "Nineteenth Century," Theodore Turak suggests that the French suburb, which was created in 1856, influenced Olmsted and Vaux's plan for Riverside, Illinois, begun in 1868. For a brief history of the French suburb which contains the best representative sampling of French 19th century suburban architecture, see Fred Robida, "Un 'primitif' de l'urbanisme francais," "Gazette des beaux-arts," LXXIII, 1969, 185-92.

large numbers of detached houses were erected in the 1850's and 1860's. By 1864, "The Builder" found the building activity in the suburbs of the French capital so important that it advised its readers that "the English architect who

desires to know what is being done, architecturally speaking, in and about Paris, should not omit to visit them.

Note 35 - "The Architecture of Paris," 199. The article, which was a review of Daly, 1864, subscribed to the French author's interpretation of the social change that had brought about this new demand for housing outside the city. "It is no longer the nobility only which has town-house and country-house; it is not, even more; the banking and upper 'bourgeois' class," quoted "The Builder," "it is the entire 'bourgeoisie' that wishes to divide its existence between town and country, noise and calm, activity and restorative repose."

As a young aspiring architect living in Paris, Richardson could not have failed to have been aware of these suburbs and the type of housing common to them.

Note 36 - The theme of one of Richardson's "esquisse" projects at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts was a "habitation bourgeoisie," although neither the class of the dwelling not the hypothetical location (urban or suburban) is known. See Chafee, 187.

To Cesar Daly, the dwellings erected in these places constituted a "nouvelle branche de notre art. une . . . veritable architecture suburbaine."

Note 37- Daly, 1864f., 10. In an article dealing with a house by Charles Brouty, Daly again alluded to the suburban house as a significant modern development in French architecture. "La maison de campagne (villa, cottage, etc.) ou l'on peut, sans abandonner completement 1a ville et ses affaires, sans renoncer au confort du *'chez-soi,'* trouver le calme et le repos, un air pur, de la verdure et des fleurs et dont on a construit, depuis une vingtaine d'annees, tant de charmants et aussi de laids modeles," wrote Daly, "constitue la forme architecturale la plus recherchee, nonseulement dans les environs de nos grandes cites, mais encore dans les villes de bains et dans 1es stations d'hiver, qui ont pris aujourd'hui en France une si grande et si favorable extension. C'est un sujet interessant d'etudes pour l'architecte, un probleme souvent complexe dont la resolution exige des connaissances variees, du tact et du gout." "Maison de campagne a Chevreuse," "Revue generale, XXV, 1867, col. 240.

and they bear closer examination than they have heretofore been given. In the earlier days of this movement, most of the houses in and around Paris were generally the products of speculative builders who for plans often enlisted the help of students from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts.

Note 38 - Daly, 1862, col. 183.

By the 1860's, however, architects had entered the field, which proved to be a lucrative one. Most of the men who designed suburban houses are little known today, but among those whose work appeared in publications were J. Rolland, Achille Hue, Victor Francois Hugelin, Achille Hermant, Henri Duphot, Charles Brouty, Theodore Charpentier, the younger, who did much work at Auteuil, and the architect Olive, who advised Alphonse Pallu and Le Comte de Choulot, the creators of Le Vesinet.

The styles of the buildings these men erected varied considerably, but one of the most common was that identified with the reigns of Henri IV and Louis XIII and

exemplified by the older portions of the Palace of Versailles and the town houses in the **Place des Vosges**
and the Place Dauphine. These buildings were distinguished by gray slate mansard roofs and walls of red brick relieved with light-colored stone trim, the "style tricolor," as Victor Hugo called it. The Hotel Fould (1858) in Paris by Henri Labrouste and the Chateau du Duc de Trevise (1858-1862) at Sceaux by Lesoufache were two of the first and most elaborate examples of the mode.

Note 39 - The Hotel Fould was included in Theodore Vacquer, "Maisons les plus remarquables de Paris construites pendant les trois dernieres annees," Paris, 1863, 22, and pls. 12-15, where It was noted that "si la cause de l'architecture Louis XIII n'etait maintenant gagnee, nous mettrions cet hotel au nombre de ceux qui plaident le plus eloquemment en faveur de cette architecture." See also Edmond Bailly, "Hotel de M. Fould, rue de Berri, a Paris par M. H. Labrouste," "Revue generale, XVI, 1858, cols. 37-42. Cesar Daly discussed the Chateau du Duc de Trevise in the "Revue generale," XXII, 1864, cols. 277-78.

In reference to the former residence, the architect Edmond Bailly wrote: "le style Louis XIII a des qualites precieuses: simplicite et grandeur dans les dispositions, franchise dans l'emploi de la matiere."

Note 40 - Bailly, "Revue generale," 1858, col. 39.

Speaking of a house designed by Hugelin in this manner at Versailles, Bailly expressed the opinion that "il est difficile de ne pas se laiser prendre au charme de cette architecture coquette, pleine de mouvement et de couleur."

Note 41 - Edmond Bailly, "Maison d'habitation a Versailles par M. Huguelin [sic], architecte," "Revue generale," XIV, 1856, cols. 324-25.

The appropriateness of the style for domestic architecture rested upon the economy of its brick construction and, as Bailly indicated, the attraction of its picturesque charm.

A number of French works that treated domestic architecture would have been available to Richardson, both in Paris and America. In addition to periodical publications such as the "Revue generale," "L 'Encyclopedie d'architecture," "Gazette des architectes et du batiment," and "Croquis d'architecture," all of which, from time to time, illustrated contemporary domestic buildings. Victor Cailliat's "Parallele des maisons" (1850), Theodore Vacquer's "Maisons les plus remarquables de Paris construites pendant les trois dernieres annees" (1863), Louis Marie Normand's "Paris moderne" (1850), as well as Aymar Verdier and F P Cottais's "Architecture civile et domestique" (1855) and Charles Sauvageot's "Palais, chateaux, hotels, et maisons de France" (1867), were important books dealing with the subject.

Note 42 - Hitchcock, 1975, 31, states that Richardson owned copies of Verdier and Cottais, and Savageot.

Cesar Daly's "L'Architecture privee au XIXieme siecle . . . Nouvelles maisons de Paris et des environs" (1864)

Note 43 - Daly published two additional series of this work in 1868-1872 and 1877.

was the major survey of domestic architecture during the reign of Napoleon III, to whom it was dedicated. In Volume III, "Villas suburbaines," Daly illustrated a number of houses and plans in his third category of villa which generally correspond to the type of house Richardson built for Dorsheimer. The villa by Tronquois at La Varenne and that by Haquette at Passy are particularly apt comparisons Nonetheless, dwellings of the class to which the Dorsheimer house belongs normally went unnoticed in these publications which concerned themselves primarily with more expensive and ornate buildings. The most complete record of the smaller French suburban house of the mid-nineteenth century is Victor Petit's "Maisons de campagne des environs de Paris" (published in the 1850's),

Note 44 - See bibliog. The precise date of publication in the 1850's is not known. The date appears as cited in "A Catalog of Books Represented by Library of Congress Printed Cards, Issued to July 31, 1942, Patterson, NJ, 1963, CXVI, 632.

which is a series of colored plates illustrating fifty houses, the designers of which, unfortunately, are unidentified Although there is no record of Richardson owning a copy of **Petit's**
book, he must have been acquainted with it and may have even consulted it as an aid in developing the design of the Buffalo house. **Plate 1**, labeled "Maison de campagne," represents the more formal dwellings found in Petit. Compact, with horizontal divisions strongly marked, two stories high with the "rez-de-chaussee" elevated on a low basement, roofed with a straight-sided mansard that serves as the third horizontal element of the elevation,

Note 45 - "The Builder," 1864, 200, singled out as especially characteristic of the French suburban house the fact that the height of the, mansard roof in relation to the total height of the building was generally "near to a third."

and possessed of a garden facade of three bays symmetrically disposed, the dwelling, despite a considerably different treatment of the wall, immediately calls to mind Richardson's building. Termed Louis XIII by the French compiler, the paneled exterior was composed of red brick and light-colored stone trim.

This system of overall articulation of the wall by means of horizontal and vertical bands appears in a form closer to that of the Dorsheimer house on the seventeenth-century **Chateau de Montalivet-La-Grange** which Petit published in his "Chateaux de la va//ee de la Loire des XVieme, XVlieme, et XVllieme siecles" (1861),

Note 46 - Petit, I, pl. 23.

a copy of which is known to have been in Richardson's library.

Note 47 - Hitchcock, 1975, 31.

Apparently Richardson was intrigued by this method of unifying exterior surfaces. Banding of a similar type appeared on his own house, Arrochar, on

Staten Island, of a somewhat earlier date than the Dorsheimer house.

Note 48 -See n. 6.

There the material, however, was wood and, as in the French example, the strips stood out in relief from the walls. On the Buffalo building the stonework is level with the brick facade.

Other houses illustrated in "Maisons de campagne" share elements with the Dorsheimer house. The two-story projecting bay with windows in the center portion, which stands at the north side of the street facade, finds a close parallel in the house shown in **Petit's plate 19**. The ground plan of the house indicates that the plan of the Dorsheimer house -- four main rooms grouped around a central hall containing the staircase toward the entrance -- was by the 1850's identified with this type of dwelling in France. (Similar layouts also appear in the group of plans for third-class villas that Daly published in Volume III of "L'Architecture privee.") The perspective view of the house in **Petit's plate 24** is, I believe, most instructive for visualizing how the garden facade of Richardson's building originally looked With three symmetrically arranged window bays and a masonry stoop with lateral steps leading to the doorway, it undoubtedly approximates the appearance of the southern elevation of the Dorsheimer house in 1871.

Note 49 - It is possible that Richardson covered the entrance stoop with a wooden porch which may have been the veranda mentioned in n. 23 or the "piazza" referred to in n. 1, which, I believe, was intended for the north entrance. Beneath the modern portion of the southern side there is evidence, in the central area of the foundations for a masonry stoop. There is also a basement window once exposed to the outside, in line with those of the upper floors of the western bay. Stone trim like that of the base course on the Delaware Avenue facade is also to be seen extending from the southwest corner of the building to beyond the basement window. All of this is further evidence that the original garden facade of the Dorsheimer house resembled the facade of the house in **Petit's plate 24**. That building has a window in the base course where the flight of steps rises to the entrance stoop.

One of the most characteristically French aspects of the Dorsheimer house is the formal garden facade on the southern side of the building.

Note 50 - "The Builder," XXII, 1864, 200, made special mention of the revival of interest in landscape gardening that had accompanied the development of suburban domestic architecture in France. Frequently, due to its informal arrangement, the garden immediately attached to a suburban villa was termed "a jardin anglais."

Following French tradition, Richardson designed the Buffalo house as if it were situated "entre cour et jardin." In France, suburban dwellings of this type were normally entered from a small court or carriage drive (whereas the north entrance of the Dorsheimer house was approached only by a narrow walkway) and were open to a landscaped garden on the opposite side of the building. Most French publications, such as Petit, took pains to illustrate both the "facade de l'entree" and the "facade sur le jardin." The entrance facade, however, was not always designed to be the virtual counterpart of the garden facade, especially if the

entrance did not face the street. In such cases, the garden elevation (as well as the street side) was provided with a more symmetrical and imposing facade than the entrance wall, which, as in the instance of the Dorsheimer house, might not be seen to full advantage. Thus, in treating the southern facade of the Dorsheimer house more monumentally than the entrance side, Richardson adhered to French precedent which valued the garden facade as the foremost elevation of domestic architecture.

Typologically, the Dorsheimer house belongs to the tradition recorded in "Maisons de campagne," which Richardson carefully adapted to the site available to him; the extreme simplicity of the exterior, however, reflects Neo-Grec rigorousness which Richardson had come to know first-hand in Paris in the atelier of Jules-Louis Andre and as well in the office of Theodore Labrouste, who was revered for his knowledge of Etruscan architecture.

> Note 51 - For a discussion of Richardson's relationship with these two men, see Chafe, 175-78, and Hitchcock, 1966, 40ff.

Architectonic, planar, and sparsely relieved by **saw-tooth courses of brick** (below the eaves), by long channels that mark the angles, and by austere **incized ornaments recalling rosettes and triglyphs**, the main facades of the Dorsheimer house echo the structural and rational biases of the Neo-Grec esthetic. By these means Richardson reduced the comfortable eclecticism of the French Louis XIII style to an elegant minimum.

> Note 52 - The east elevation reveals the degree to which Richardson had absorbed French rationalist notions of discipline. Narrower than the simple three-part south facade and possessing the projecting bay which is slightly I,s, than half the width of the facade, it displays carefully controlled variations on the theme of rigorous symmetry that governed the south elevation. Here the pattern of windows and dormers which recalls that of the house in Petit plate 19, creates a syncopated rhythm of solid and voids that is marked off by the vertical strips. From left to right on each level, a succession of wide panels, window bays, and narrow panels (one half the width of the large frames) results in a cadence of a-b-c-b-c-a-b-b-a.

The stone bands that organize the exterior give the impression, also experienced with the houses in Petit, that the articulation has been neatly drawn on the building. By setting the bands flush with the brick paneling, the two-dimensional sense is reinforced. This abstract, severely planar treatment of the wall stresses the flat and continuous nature of the surface and suggests a certain affinity with contemporary High Victorian Gothic
design, as well as with French architectural tradition. Moreover, the overriding emphasis that Richardson assigns to the character of the wall is the chief quality of the Dorsheimer house that forecasts his subsequent development.

Linearity and restraint, qualities present in Richardson's later architecture in a very different form, set the Dorsheimer house apart from mainstream Second Empire
taste in America. Decorative exuberance was, more often than not, the most

attractive feature of the French style to the eyes of Richardson's countrymen. James Renwick's art gallery (1859) for W. W. Corcoran in Washington, D.C., built after Renwick had visited Paris in 1855, and Samuel Sloan's design for a house in the Parisian style, which he published in his book "City and Suburban Architecture" (1867),

> Note 53 - Samuel Sloan, "City and Suburban Architecture," Philadelphia, 1867, design XXIX.

shortly after he had been in the French capital, are more typical in this regard. Likewise, in "Principles and Practices of Architecture" (1869), Sanford Loring and William Le Baron Jenney, who had studied engineering in Paris, praised the French style because it was "grand and elegant. . . delights in sculpture and offers many advantages for its display."

> Note 54 - Sanford Loring and William Le Baron Jenney, "Principles and Practices of Architecture," Chicago, 1869, 43.

The Dorsheimer house can, however, be related to the early work of Richard Morris Hunt (1827-1895) who had preceded Richardson at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and whose perception of French architecture was similar to Richardson's. Hunt's Studio Building of 1857, perhaps the best-known example of Neo-Grec in America, was, like the Dorsheimer house, flat, paneled, and dressed with bands of brickwork.

> Note 55- I wish to thank John Coolidge for pointing out to me that the cross-shaped design in raised brick that Richardson used on the chimneys of the Dorsheimer house was a motive Hunt had also employed on the Studio Building.

Hunt's Rossiter house in New York City of 1855-56, despite its richer surface and costlier materials, also showed that Hunt, in the same manner as Richardson, immediately after his return from France practiced a "serious" version of the fashionable Parisian style, tempering the flamboyance of the New Louvre with the austerity of the Neo-Grec tradition. Hunt's Marshall Field house in Chicago, the plans for which are dated May, 1871, provides an especially instructive comparison with the Dorsheimer house. In spite of its grander scale and other differences, the Field house shares with the Buffalo dwelling similarity in materials and ornamentation and clearly derives from the same tradition of the French Louis XIII maison bourgeoise. Even more closely related to the Dorsheimer house in terms of type, size, and general articulation is Hunt's brick and stucco J C Bancroft Davis house, which was erected at Cedar Cliff, near Newburgh, New York, in 1868.

> Note 56 - Hunt's drawings for the Davis house are illustrated in Susan Stein Ganelin's "The Drawings of Richard Morris Hunt" American Preservation," IV, 1979, 24.

The resemblance between the Davis house and the Dorsheimer house strongly suggests that Hunt and Richardson were aware of one another's work Their colleague Alfred Janson Bloor indicated in his diary that both men moved in the

same professional company.

Note 57 - See n. 6.

Certainly they knew each other; perhaps they had even met in Paris, for Hunt, simultaneously with Richardson, had spent part of the war years there.

Note 58 - According to his wife, Hunt and she sailed for Europe in the spring of 1861 and returned to America in the fall of 1862. Much of their time abroad was spent in Paris, where Richardson had lived since 1859. Richard Chafee has determined that Richardson was gone from the city between September, 1861, and March, 1862, when he made trips to England and Boston. (See Chafee, 184-85.) This would still have left seven months during which Hunt could have met Richardson in Paris. Richardson returned permanently to America in October 1865. Hunt, as a member of the Committee of Fine Arts to the Paris Exposition of 1867, visited France during the spring and summer of that year. (See Catherine Clinton Howland Hunt, "The R. M. Hunt Papers, 1828-1895," ed. Alan Burnham, MS, Avery Library, Columbia University, 69-70, 104.) For an informed account of American life in Paris during the 1850's and 1860's (but one that mentions neither Hunt nor Richardson), see Edward A. Crane, ed., "Memoirs of Dr. Thomas W. Evans; The Second French Empire," New York, 1905, esp. chap. IV, "The Imperial Court -- The War of the Rebellion."

In October, 1867, Richardson teamed up with Charles Gambrill (d. 1880), a pupil from Hunt's famous atelier. It seems highly plausible that Hunt and Richardson, alike in background, would have been on friendly terms and may have even drawn inspiration from each other's designs.

Note 59 - In 1898 Montgomery Schuyler compared Hunt and Richardson in his essay "Field of Art" (repr. in William Jordy and Ralph Coe, eds., "American Architecture and Other Writings by Montgomery Schuyler," Cambridge, Mass., 1961, II, 576-77). Calling them "earlier Pilgrims" from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Schuyler said that they maintained their individuality in spite of their academic training. It is also true that both men moved away from the Classical mainstream of French tradition and adopted Romantic esthetics based on the forms of French Renaissance and Romanesque architecture, in Richardson's case often combining the two. Richardson kept alive his contact with the Continent through his work with the sculptor Bartholdi, as Hunt did through his relationship with the painter Oudinot.

At this stage in their careers, America's first French-trained architects shared ideals more closely than has generally been realized In works such as the Dorsheimer, Field, and Davis houses, one encounters those qualities which the French commonly found lacking in American domestic architecture namely, "harmony of parts, refined proportions, and discreet and scholarly ornament."

Note 60 - Arnold Lewis in the intro. to "American Victorian Architecture," New York, 1975, 2.

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  Dozens of terms with definitions and illustrations from Buffalo architecture
- **Virtual Tours of Architecture**
  Hundreds of photos and commentary from Greece, France, US cities like Chicago and towns like St. Albans, Vt.

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