



The Architecture of McKim, Mead, and White: 1879-1915

Allan Greenberg, Michael George

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For forty years (1880–1920), the now-legendary architectural firm led by Charles Follen McKim, William Rutherford Mead and Stanford White was responsible for many of the finest buildings in America. The Boston Public Library, Pennsylvania Station in New York, and the campus of Columbia University are among the national landmarks designed by these men and their partners, Bert Fenner and William Mitchell Kendall.

This anthology of plans, elevations, and details of major works of McKim, Mead, and White is an invaluable reference source and inspiration for the student of architecture. As Allan Greenberg writes in his introduction: “The legacy of [McKim, Mead, and White] is so vast that . . . both its outer boundaries and its inner characteristics are only barely discernible. As architects of some of the most important buildings in the history of American architecture, the work of the office of McKim, Mead, and White reached a level of quality which has never been equaled by any large office before or after.”

Charles Follen McKim cofounded the firm with William Rutherford Mead in 1878, along with his brother-in-law William B. Bigelow. One year later, Bigelow left the firm and was replaced by young Stanford White. Among the commissions that McKim worked on were the Villard Houses, the Boston Public Library, the Chicago World’s Fair Columbian Exposition and the Agriculture Building, the Columbia University campus, Symphony Hall in Boston, alterations to the White House, the Pierpont Morgan Library, Pennsylvania Station, and the University Club in New York.

Stanford White, who, ironically, had replaced Charles McKim at the firm of Gambrell and Richardson in New York, joined the partnership in September 1879. A young, enthusiastic man who could “draw like a house afire,” in the words of McKim, White was responsible for many of the firm’s great architectural projects, including Madison Square Garden; the Washington Arch; the Judson Memorial Church; what is now Bronx Community College, and the accompanying Hall of Fame of Great Americans; the Tiffany Building, and the Gorham Building. His life and career ended abruptly at the age of fifty-three, when he was murdered on the roof of Madison Square Garden in a well-publicized shooting incident in 1906.

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