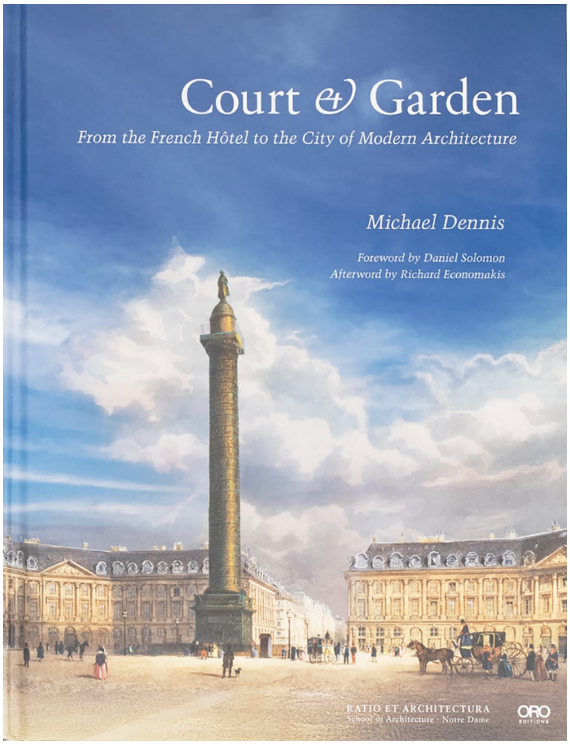
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Court & Garden

From the French Hôtel to the City of Modern Architecture

Michael Dennis

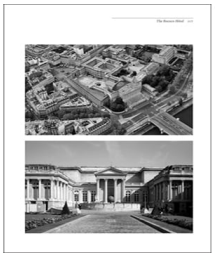
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- The book explores the art and typology of the French Hôtel, not only as a high point of architectural literacy and achievement, but as a potentially useful contemporary stimulant

The French Hôtel, an aristocratic Paris townhouse, is to the art of the plan as the Venetian Palace is to the art of the facade—the quintessential level of architectural achievement. The development of the hôtel between approximately 1550 and 1800 chronicles the formal transformation from an embedded urban building type to a free-standing suburban building type; it also illuminates the social transformation from total emphasis on the public realm under Louis XIV, to the dominance of private life in our time. In contrast to the principles of continuity and regularity of classical buildings, the design principles of the hôtels were based on discontinuity and irregularity, allowing freer, more adaptable architectural compositions. The French Hôtel is a direct ancestor of the modern "free-plan," thus enabling a rich contemporary architectural vocabulary.

Michael Dennis is an architect in Boston and Emeritus Professor of Architecture at MIT. He was the 1986 Thomas Jefferson Professor of Architecture at the University of Virginia, the 1988 Eero Saarinen Professor of Architecture at Yale University, and the 2006 Charles Moore Professor of Architecture at the University of Michigan. In 2011, he was awarded the CNU Athena Medal for his contributions to urbanism.







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