SAH/SCC EVENT TICKETS

Welter on Tremaine—Saturday, September 26, 2020
_____ reservation(s) at $5 each = $______

Lautman on Stepwells—Saturday, October 10, 2020
_____ reservation(s) at $5 each = $______

☐ check enclosed (Make checks payable to SAH/SCC)
☐ charge my credit card: □ VISA □ MC

SAH National’s Stand on Confederate Monuments

On June 19th (“Juneteenth”), the National organization of Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) issued a statement signed by the SAH Heritage Conservation Committee. Below are excerpts; the full statement can be read here.

“The Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) supports and encourages the removal of Confederate monuments from public spaces. In its 80-year history, SAH has never before advocated for the direct removal of any historic resource, let alone listed monuments. As architectural historians committed to preserving significant elements of the built environment and cultural heritage, we have vigorously championed the preservation of difficult aspects of our nation’s history such as Wounded Knee, Manzanar, and the Stonewall Inn. From those painful examples, we can gain perspectives about ourselves as Americans, and learn from our past mistakes. In contrast, Confederate monuments do not serve as catalysts for a cleansing public conversation, but rather express white supremacy and dominance, causing discomfort and distress to African-American citizens who utilize the public spaces these monuments occupy. Our inaction gives these monuments power. By leaving them in place, we allow the dead hand of the past to direct some Americans away from which belongs to all of us. History has proven that progress is possible, but also that the persistent racial schism in our society will not be conquered without radical, sustained action. The removal of Confederate monuments is a necessary and important step in this process, and one that cannot wait any longer. ...

“Because scholarly consensus indicates that the original intent of monuments to the Confederacy was to reinforce racist ideals, a concept that should be abhorrent to all Americans, SAH supports and encourages the removal of Confederate monuments from public spaces. Their existence can no longer be justified based on aesthetics, as works of art or public sculpture. These monuments, especially the ones erected between the 1890s and the 1920s, are not so much objects of public art as proclamations of white supremacy rendered in granite and bronze. Their meaning was clearly understood both by those who erected them and by the Black community. ... Their presence is a reminder of a racist societal structure that led to a nation divided against itself, followed by an era of Reconstruction that began with the promise of equality but soon retreated to race-based social and economic disparity. Nearly sixty years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act—and 155 years after the end of the Civil War—we are still wrestling with these issues, and are left questioning why a nation founded on the principle of equality continues to fall so far short of that noble and essential ideal. ...

“As students of architectural history, we have been taught to look as objectively as possible at historic events, and to place them in context. When contextualized properly, symbols of oppression and societal evil can be understood in terms of what these objects meant to their creators as separate from what they might mean to us. Removing monuments that have stood for decades is decried by some as ‘erasing history,’ but we cannot change the events of the past. What changes is our understanding and our interpretation of the past events. People made choices to erect these monuments in public spaces, and people can decide to take them down. ...”

Adopted June 19, 2020, by SAH Heritage Conservation Committee.
Chair: Bryan Clark Green, Ph.D., LEED AP BD+C; Members: Kenneth Breisach, Ph.D.; Jeffrey Cody, Ph.D.; Anthony Cohn, AIA; PhyllisEllin; David Fixler, FAIA; Victoria Young, Ph.D.; Theodore H. Prudon, Ph.D., FAIA; Pauline Saliga; Deborah Slaton.