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Extract from an article entitled
"The Esthetics of the Skyscraper Reconsidered"
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"Into this void slipped the Post Modernists with their categorical denunciation of functionalism and their refusal to admit any connection between function and form. Of course, even with them, someone had to do the functionalist dirty work: calculating windloads, heat loss, illumination and the like. These tasks, which were essential if their buildings were to be habitable, they delegated to engineers. Having thus rid themselves of such mundane responsibilities, the Post Modernists are free to design skyscrapers with all the freedom of a hairdresser or couturier. And having cleared the design field of intellectual and ideological restraints, they have managed to return the field of architectural theory to the same state of chaos against which Sullivan and Wright were fighting at the beginning of this century.

The esthetic consequences of this reactionary "philosophy" of design are now taking concrete form in skyscrapers all across the country. Here in Manhattan we can see how far this has already taken us. The field is full of candidates for the most idiosyncratic design of the Eighties but two recently-unveiled projects seem likely to win hands down. One is the 24-story ziggurat planned for the roof of the New York Historical Society's home on Central Park West.

The primary flaw in the project to erect a tower on top the classic Historical Society building is the proposal itself. No interven-

tion at all in the life of this handsome old (1902) structure would be incomparably the wisest policy. But if such an addition did indeed prove to be financially ineluctable, then this current proposal - a 24-story pile of Beaux Arts fragments, stacked one upon another like a rajah's howdah on the back of an Indian elephant - is a bone-crushing disaster. If tower there must be, then a recessive, low-keyed and ornament-free glass curtain wall would be esthetically the least destructive."