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Better Holmes and Gardens:

Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle and Architectural Design "Down Under"



An Exhibit of Architectural Design & Practice
Based on Stories and Characters From the Doyle/Holmes Canon
May-July 2000
University of Minnesota, Wilson Library

Created by
Professor Derham Groves
and the
Students of Architectural Design & Practice 2B
University of Melbourne
Curated by Tim Johnson
Edited and designed by Tim Johnson

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Some Architectural References From *The Universal Sherlock Holmes*

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Among the Architects

Derham Groves

'I thought it as well,' said Holmes, as we climbed the stile, 'that this fellow should think we had come here as architects ... It may stop his gossip.'

'The Speckled Band' (1892)

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of the world's first consulting detective, Sherlock Holmes, was certainly aware of – if not influenced by – architecture. To begin with, Doyle's father, Charles Altamont Doyle (1832 – 1893), was an architect in the Scottish Office of Works. Very little is known about Charles' architectural career, but he is credited with designing the fountain at Holyrood Palace in Edinburgh, and one of the windows in Glasgow Cathedral. Unfortunately, he was an alcoholic, and spent his last years in several institutions. A book of sketches Charles did at one of these places, ironically named Sunnyside, (which was published in 1978) indicates that he was a skilled draughtsman with a vivid imagination. While Sir Arthur was much closer to his mother than his father, Charles was nonetheless a figure of influence: For example, the 1888 edition of the first Sherlock Holmes story, *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), was illustrated by Charles; in 'A Day with Dr. [later Sir Arthur] Conan Doyle' (1892), journalist Harry How reported that on the walls of Sir Arthur's study were 'many remarkable pictures by Dr. Doyle's father'; and in 'His Last Bow' (1917), Sherlock Holmes posed as an Irish-American agent named 'Altamont' (Charles' middle name).

Due perhaps to his father's influence, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle seemed to have a close affinity with architects throughout his life: For example, in *The Adventures of Conan Doyle* (1976), biographer Charles Higham described how effortlessly Doyle briefed an architect to design 'Undershaw,' his house at Hindhead in Surrey: '[Doyle] took a train to Hindhead, made exhaustive inquiries, and bought some acreage with a wonderful view across purple heather and gorse. He rushed across to Southsea to hire an architect – a spiritualist, William Ball, whom he had known during his struggling days there – took him back to Hindhead, [and] enthusiastically drew up a complete set of sketches and plans on the spot ...'

But far more significantly, in his autobiography, *Memories and Adventures* (1924), Sir Arthur Conan Doyle movingly described his own literary output in architectural terms: 'When an author is in failing health and has passed his seventieth year he feels, as he surveys the line of his works, like some architect or builder who, having laboured long to complete his edifice, finally stands back to survey it in its entirety. I can only hope to add some little attic or cupola here or there. It is a modest enough structure, no doubt, and yet as I survey it I feel that I could do no better and that any powers which Providence has given me have found their full expression.'

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was brilliant at inventing houses which truly reflected the personalities of the characters who inhabited them: In the Sherlock Holmes adventure, 'The Speckled Band,' for example, where else but in a house 'of lichen-blotched stone, with ... two curving wings, like the claws of a crab' would somebody as wicked as Dr. Grimesby Roylott live? What's more, Doyle succeeded in hitting the mark like this time and again. In light of Sherlock Holmes' comment in 'The Greek Interpreter' (1893), 'Art in the blood is liable to take the strangest forms,' one wonders to what extent was Doyle's architectural ability – albeit expressed in words instead of bricks and mortar – due to the fact that his father was an architect?

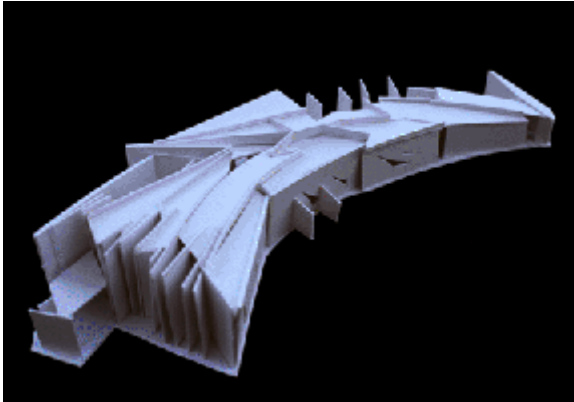
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's 'virtual architecture' was often inspired by real places familiar to the author. A good example is the nautical-style retreat which belonged to Peter Carey, the drunken and violent retired captain of the steam-sealer, 'Sea Unicorn,' who was brutally stabbed to death with a harpoon by a former shipmate in the Sherlock Holmes adventure, 'Black Peter' (1904). Stanley Hopkins, 'a young police inspector

for whose future Holmes had high hopes,' described the unusual building to Holmes' faithful companion, Dr. Watson: '[Carey] had built himself a wooden outhouse – he always called it "the cabin" – a few hundred yards from his house, and it was here that he slept every night. It was a little, single-roomed hut, sixteen feet by ten. He kept the key in his pocket, made his own bed, cleaned it himself, and allowed no other foot to cross the threshold ... He had called it a cabin, and a cabin it was, sure enough, for you would have thought that you were in a ship. There was a bunk at one end, a sea-chest, maps and charts, a picture of the "Sea Unicorn," a line of log-books on a shelf, all exactly as one would expect to find it in a captain's room.'

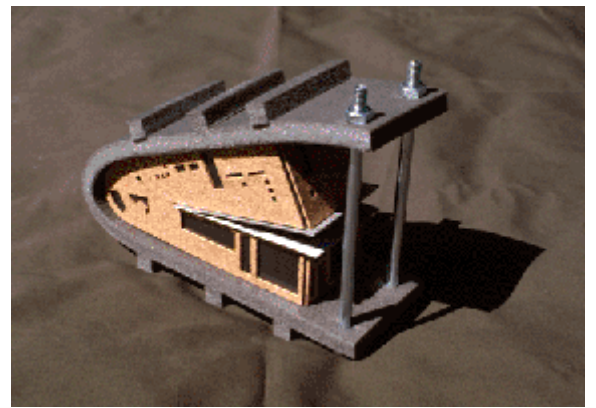
Carey's cabin was most likely based on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's memories of the captain's cabin on board the steam-whaler, 'Hope.' For seven months in 1880, Doyle served as the ship's surgeon, and it appears that much of his time was spent conversing with the captain, John Gray, in the captain's cabin. In his autobiography Doyle wrote: 'I speedily found that the chief duty of the surgeon was to be the companion of the captain, who is cut off by the etiquette of the trade from anything but very brief and technical talks with his other officers.' Interestingly, three years after the publication of 'Black Peter' in *The Strand Magazine*, Doyle bought 'Windlesham,' a handsome estate in Sussex, and in the pursuit of some peace and quiet in which to write, it seems that he took a leaf out of Peter Carey's book: In *A Baker Street Dozen* (1987), Dame Jean Conan Doyle, the author's daughter, stated that Sir Arthur 'always wrote in his study *or in a small hut he built in a field at our Sussex home, where he was never disturbed.*' [My italics.]

A truly successful building, at least in my view, not only works well, but also tells stories. Typically, these stories might be about people or places or events. Thus I wanted the students in the second year of the architecture course at the University of Melbourne, where I teach, to design buildings which were not merely functional, but also rich in meaning. To encourage this, in 1999 I challenged each student to design a contemporary, ie. a late 20th century, house for one of the following characters from the Sherlock Holmes stories: Irene Adler, the American-born opera singer with a fondness for cross-dressing, who completely captivated Holmes in 'A Scandal in Bohemia' (1891); Peter Carey, described above; Nathan Garrideb, the eccentric and reclusive collector with the unusual surname, who was tricked into believing he was in line to inherit a large fortune in 'The Three Garridebs' (1924); and Jonas Oldacre, the cruel and vindictive retired builder, who faked his own murder to frame the son of his former sweetheart in 'The Norwood Builder' (1903). As architect's clients go, Adler, Carey, Garrideb and Oldacre are colourful characters to say the least. The house was to be located in Murchison Square, a 'handkerchief' of parkland surrounded on four sides by terrace houses in North Carlton, a quiet, inner suburb of Melbourne. Following is a selection of some of the students' work.

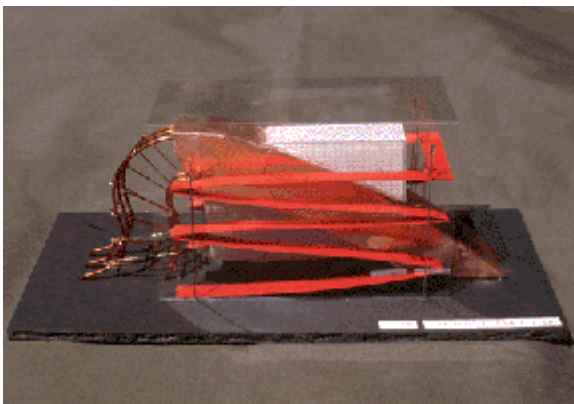
Selections of Student Work



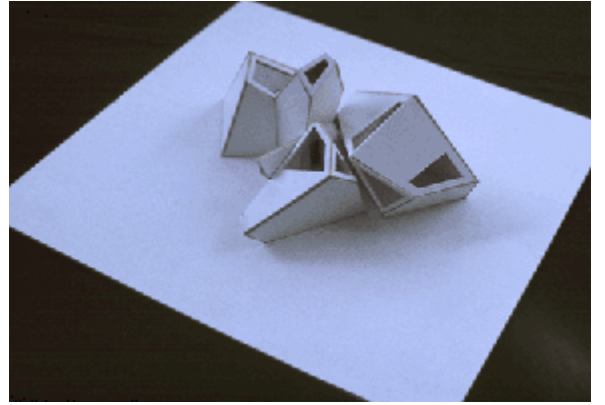
Slide 1 House for Jonas Oldacre Designed by Tarna Schmidt



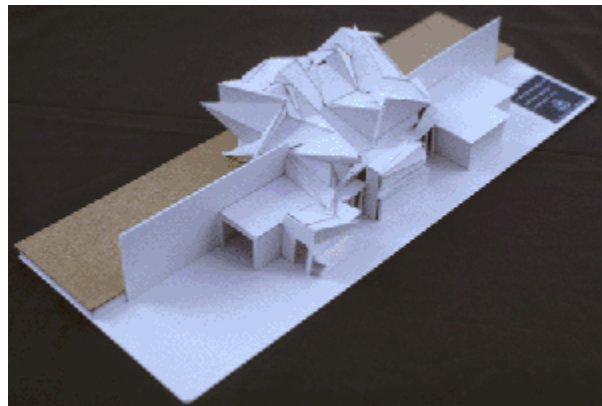
Slide 2 House for Irene Adler Designed by Katie Shinkfield



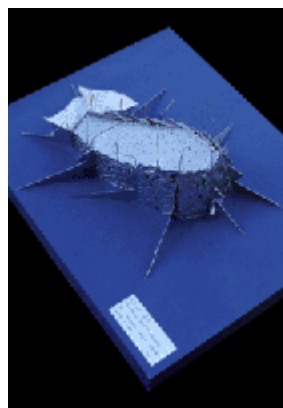
Slide 3 House for Nathan Garrideb Designed by Martin Kluger



Slide 4 House for Peter Carey Designed by Geoffrey Wong

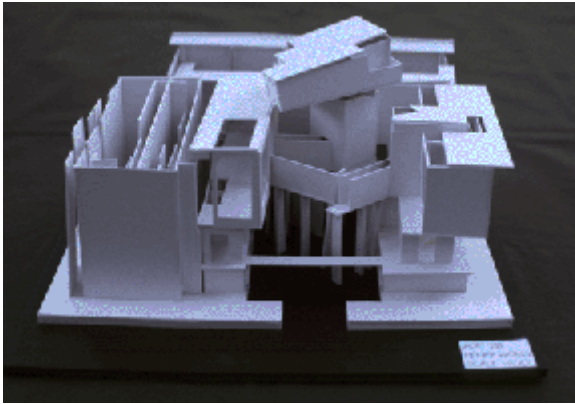


Slide 5 House for Peter Carey Designed by Josephine Fu

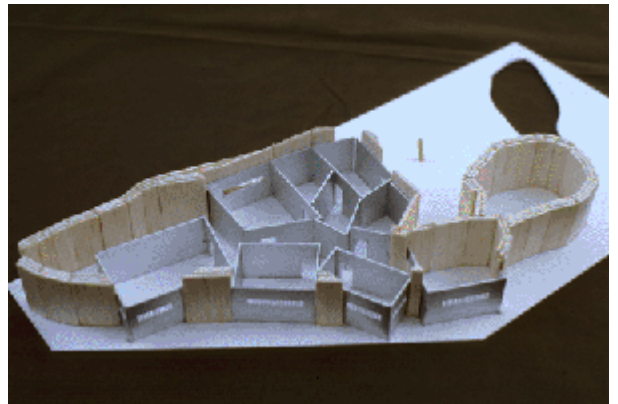


Slide 6 House for Peter Carey

Designed by Yvonne Yuen



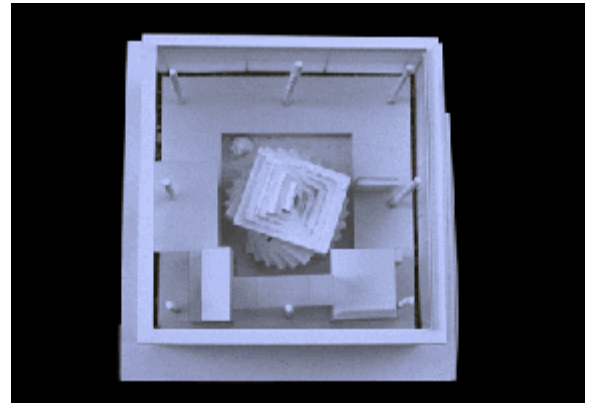
Slide 7 House for Jonas Oldacre Designed by Henry Wong



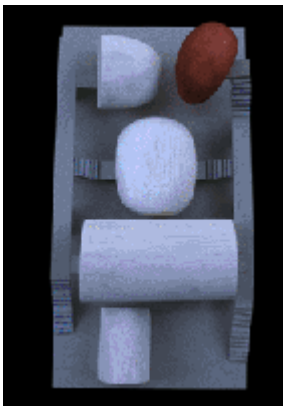
Slide 8 House for Peter Carey Designed by Noha Khalaf



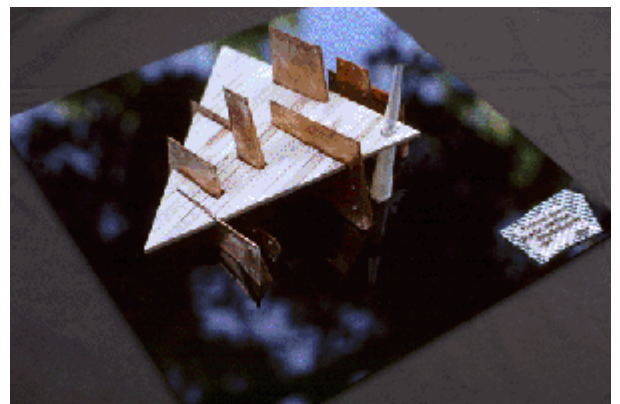
Slide 9 House for Jonas Oldacre Designed by Jackson Hung



Slide 10 House for Peter Carey Designed by Jimmy Thongthai



Slide 11 House for Irene Adler Designed by Tom Mckenzie



Slide 12 House for Peter Carey Designed by Michael Roper

Students and Staff

Students

Adams, Chloe	Anderson, Louisa	Acharya, Dinesh
Berry, Roanna	Blazey, Matilda	Bartak, Erika
Bysouth, Lisa	Caffin, Jessica	Bong, Joanna
Chadderton, Clare	Chai Kow Cheang	Castles, Anna
Chen, Erwin	Cheung, Jason	Chan Tak Tin
Chia Loy Theng	Chin Ching Yee	Chia Wei Wenn
Chiu Pui Yan	Chiu, Alice	Chiong, Jennifer
Choi, Peggy	Chou, Peter	Choi, Sonia
Cutler, Victoria	Dai Yuan Yuan	Chung, Jason
Dewi, Mertha	Doukakaros, Anastasia	Dang, Trang Ngoc Tran
Eshraghi, May	Ewert, Toby	Drews, Jonathan
Fan, Colin	Ferris, Caroline	Facciolo, Phillip
Fraid, Tamar	Fu Chau Mui	Florez, Diana
Fung, Jason	Garth, Anita	Fukuda, Kenji
Gill, Meena	Glenn, Edward	Gilhome, Rhys
Gooi, David	Gross, Sara	Goodwin, Aimee
Gunawan, Lili	Hart, Melinda	Guild, Penelope
Hechtman, Rachel	Henry, Sarah	Hayden, Mark
Ho Yu Tung	Hodgson, Kevin	Henry, James
Howe, Kylie	Hsu, Angel	Hon, Simon
Hung, Henry	Hung, Jackson	Hui, Carlos
Johnston, Anna	Juric, Marina	James, Nicholas
Kavvadias, Lisa	Khalaf, Noha	Kairouz, Chahid
King, Valda	Kitayama, Katsura	Kiernan, Chantal
		Kluger, Martin

Knapp, Louise	Koo, Sabrina	Kovac, Ksenija
Kuoh Chang Wei	Kuruville, Ajith	Kwong, Raymond
Lai, Achilles	Latreille, Andrew	Lau Chin Keong
Lau Jia Xinn	Lau, Sam	Launonen, Laura
Lee, Louise	Lees, Sarah	LeNepveu, Simon
Lettia, Anna	Leuner, Michael	Lim Na Yeon
Lim Chaik Wee	Lim Yee Harn	Lim, John
Lin, Justin	Low Shu Shiung	Lu Yu-Cheng
MacKenzie, Louise	Macleod, Catriona	Mak, Jason
Malone, Daniel	Manopsakulpon,	Eakcawin
Marks, Catherine	Martel, Arthur	Mckenzie, Thomas
Merrylees, Jane	Mitchell, Bradley	Muhlebach, Catherine
Nguyen, Nin Thu	O'Loughlin, Penelope	Ong, Charmian
Or, Catherine	Oro, Giacomina	Parker, Shae
Patti, Natalina	Phoon Wai Yee	Piccolo, Dominic
Pinto, Gerard	Pok, Sophon	Poon, Teresa
Quinn, Georgiana	Rattavong, Sam	Renehan, Janet
Roach, Kate	Rokahr, Karen	Roper, Michael
Rowe, Andrew	Sak Ei Quan	Samuel, Brett
Schmidt, Tarna	Sheng, Robert	Shinkfield, Katie
Siah, Jason	Singharasa, Shyama	Skopelianos, Adassa
Spring, Elliot	Strack, Joan	Su, Angela
Tan Dor Win	Tan, Tulip	Tan, Derek
Tang, Kevin	Tank Choon Jin	Tay Hui-Ping
Teng Pe Khai	Thongthai, Sobhon	Tolbize, Jean
Tso Chi Ho	Tuckett, Julian	Tuncer, Ilker
White, Elizabeth	Williams, Jorja	Wong, Geoffrey
Wong, Henry	Wong, Edith	Wu, Jenny
Xu Zhi Fan	Yang, Gordon	Yong, Jean

Yu, Eric

Yuen, Yvonne

Staff

Ashton-Lomax, Anita

Brott, Simone

Chase, Gary

Colla, Cathi

Gomes, Jennifer

Groves, Derham

Lincolne, Ralph

Mackley, Rina

McLean, Fiona

O'Dwyer, Mark

Pickford, Jason

Selenitsch, Alex

Some Architectural References

From *The Universal Sherlock Holmes*

Listed by De Waal Number

Compiled by Tim Johnson

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Light yellow paper covers lettered black; ad for Palliser's American Architecture on back cover.

C2099. Sherlock Holmes Detective Stories. New York: J.H. Sears & Co., [c.1923]. iii, 239 p. (The Reader's Library. Edited by Lucas Lexow)

Ruby cloth with shield and architectural design in gilt on cover; architectural design on endpapers. Also published without copyright date on verso of title page. Contents as above.

C3199. -- B447. A második folt. A norwoodi építész. (Detektívtörténetek) [The Second Stain. The Norwood Architect.] Fordította Milton Oszkér. Budapest: Vass, Révai és Salamon ny, 1905. 112 p.

----- 2. kiad. Budapest: Gyözö, Révai és Salamon ny, 1907. 112 p.

C7035. Rosier, Carol. "A Scottish Lineage for the Hound?" *BSN*, 5, No. 3 (Michaelmas Term 1988), 2-3; 7, No. 1 (Hilary Term 1990), 3-4.

"Some thoughts prompted by a consideration of the architecture of Baskerville Hall."

C7239. -- B1104. Merrill, Edward A. "Hurlstone Revisited," *BSJ*, 24, No. 4 (December 1974), 221-231. illus.

A history of the Musgraves and their Manor House, from their establishment in Sussex in the 16th century to the events related by Holmes in the 19th. From an interpretation of such clues as Holmes's language affords, using inferences as well as references, Hurlstone, with its additions, is reconstructed and the story of the family is correlated with British political, social, and architectural history. The hypotheses eliminate the impossible but invite discussion on the improbable. Includes five illustrations by the author.

C8895. Thomalen, Robert E. "Queen Anne? Or Georgian?" *PP*, 4, No. 3 (September 1982), 32-35.

Holmes's question about the style of Nathan Garrideb's house may indicate that he was exhibiting a superior knowledge of architecture.

C10294. -- A3631. Gill, William H. "Some Notable Sherlockian Buildings," *SHJ*, 4, No. 4 (Spring 1960), 124-126.

C10295. -- A3632. Van Liere, Edward J. "The Architectural Sherlock Holmes," *BSJ*, 13, No. 3 (September 1963), 156-163.

-----, -----, *Medical and Other Essays*. Morgantown: West Virginia University Library, 1966. p. 143-152.

"Many interesting references to architecture may be found in the novels. This indicates that Dr. Watson and Sherlock Holmes both had more than a passing interest in architecture. The references are especially pleasing, because they are seldom detailed or technical, and as a consequence may be enjoyed by all."

C10350. Lindsley, Mary F. "Hansom to Baker Street," *BSJ*, 34, No. 4 (December 1985), 197.

"We leave Temple Bar, / Westminster, Soho, our daily sightseeing done, / To turn into an ordinary street / Where an invisible house outwatched the Blitz, / Armoured in non-existence. It is sweet / To trust its architecture to our wits."

C10366. -- A3664. McCullam, William. "The Problem of the Veiled Lodgings," *BSJ*, 19, No. 2 (June 1969), 101-108.

An architect's view of the location and interior.

C10866. -- B1773. Gray, Barry. "Is It a Scene from Star Wars ... or the New Metro Library?" *The Toronto Sun* (August 31, 1977), 41.

Photographs of the five-storey "architectural beauty," including one of Cameron Hollyer in the Arthur Conan Doyle Room.

C10896. Vastokas, Joan M. "Architecture, Meaning and Values: Raymond Moriyama and the New Metropolitan Toronto Library," *Artscanada*, 35, No. 1 (February-March 1978), 18-31. illus.

The article mentions the Arthur Conan Doyle Room, "the pride of the Library," and includes a photograph of the Room.

C11529. -- A3891. Butler, Maida. "Genesis of a Watson," *SHJ*, 1, No. 2 (September 1952), 22-24.

Just as the illustrator's brother "Wal" Paget served as his model for Holmes, so did he take as his model for Watson the noted architect Alfred Morris Butler.

C12938. Groves, Derham. *The Sherlock Holmes Centre*. [Pahran, Victoria, Australia: Privately Printed, 1982.] 1 v. illus.

Master's thesis -- Deakin University.

Text and architectural plans for a Sherlock Holmes Centre that would include a library, museum, theater, and cinema. "A combination of these facilities would create an environment where each branch reinforced the other, and the totality of the experience would become an event in its own right."

Review: *SHJ*, 16, No. 1 (Winter 1982), 4-5 (Nicholas Utechin).

C12941. Merrill, Edward A. "The Sherlock Holmes Centre: A Critique," *BSM*, No. 41 (Spring 1985), 30-32.

The author, a retired architect and knowledgeable Sherlockian, offers some helpful suggestions on Groves's proposal for a Sherlock Holmes Research Center, to be located, perhaps, on the Minneapolis campus of the University of Minnesota.

C13037. Hammer, David L. "The Semiotic Watson," *BSJ*, 34, No. 1 (March 1984), 22-24.

A satirical approach to semiotics by analyzing Watson's personification of houses not only as faces but as women through the Watsonian use of unintended sexual references. One example is from *SixN*: "Number 31 was one of a row, all flat-chested, respectable and most unromantic dwellings." Hammer concludes that Watson "may have been a secret subscriber to the *Architectural Digest* -- delivered, of course, in a plain brown wrapper.

C14039. Andrews, Malcolm. "Elementary, My Dear Derham: Clued-up Architect Joins Sherlock's Irregulars," *Daily Telegraph* [Melbourne] (May 29, 1985), 4. illus.

Australian Holmes buff, Derham Groves, has designed a special Sherlock Holmes Center for the University of Minnesota. The design formed part of a thesis for his degree in architecture. It is envisioned that the center will house the world's largest collection of Holmes memorabilia.

C16087. Zuberry Associates/The Clermont Co. "But, I say, Holmes, how did you know this was the condo for you?" "The details, Watson, the details. Obviously what we have here is an architect who savors the craft," *The New York Times Magazine* (July 26, 1987).

Holmes and Watson comment on The Petersfield condominium apartments.

C17131. -- B3627. "Ripley's Believe It or Not!" *Albuquerque Journal* (September 25, 1977).

"Gillette Castle ... was built by actor William Gillette, who acted as his own architect, designer and decorator."

C17144. Mosier, Alan S. "The Adventure of the Architect Actor," *Q&A*, 2, No. 4 (November 19, 1981), 45-46.

A brief account of a visit to the castle.

C17167. Wiggins, Elizabeth. "Museum Architect Dies Suddenly at Holiday Home," *SHG*, No. 5 (Summer 1992), 16. illus.

An obituary for John Reid.
