

From My Hotel Window

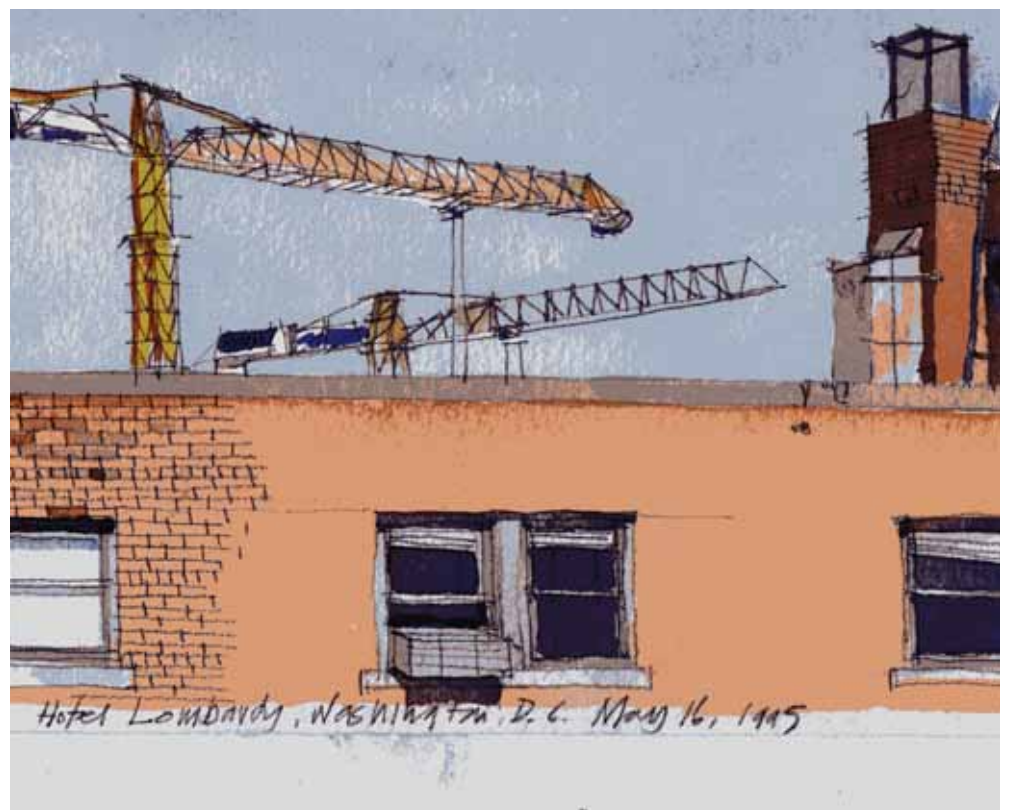
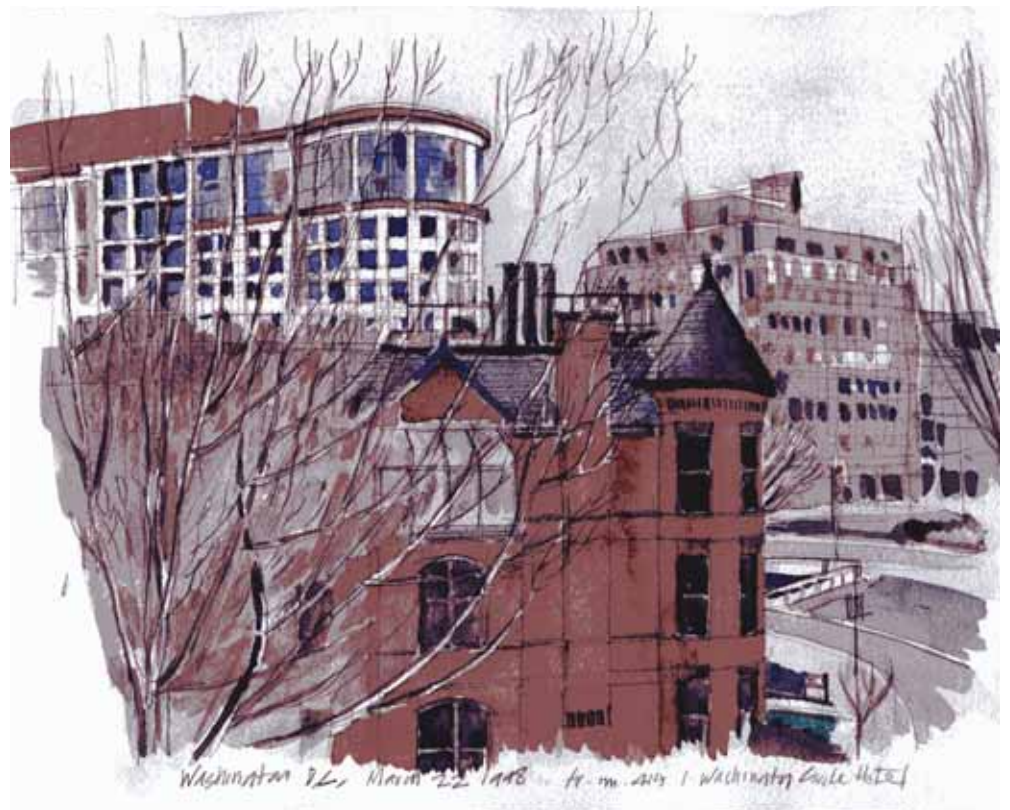


Chris Arnold, FAIA, RIBA

I was brought up to sketch using traditional water color—no erasures, no second chances, no overpainting, and the paper white. Over many years of practice, other things took precedence, except for creating a yearly Christmas card, but I resumed about ten years ago and added an interesting limitation.

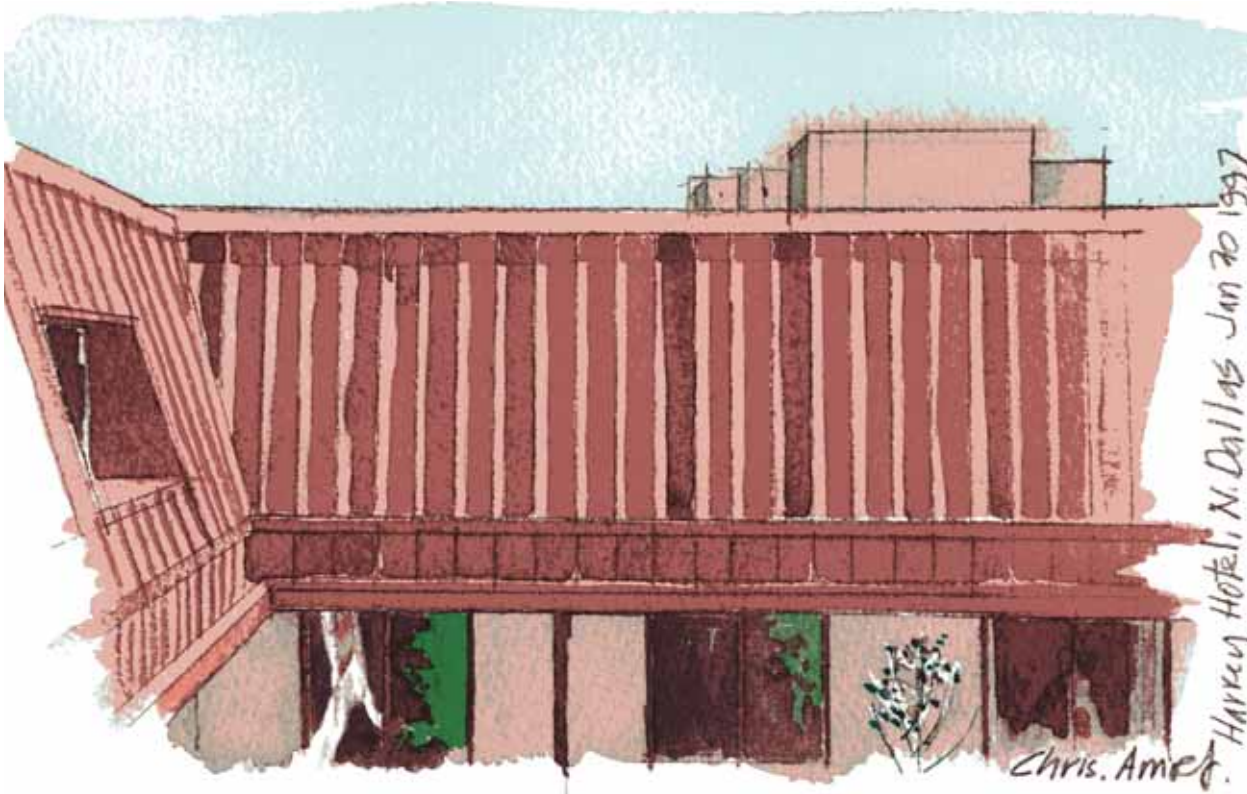
During this period, I was doing a lot of traveling, which involved periodic waiting around in hotels. I decided that on every trip I would execute a watercolor sketch through my hotel window, regardless of the merits of the view. I did not cheat by asking for a room with a view or changing rooms to improve the vista, so a fair percentage of sketches were views of parking lots, light wells, and roofs. The sketches took about 30 to 45 minutes, although some of the larger, more architectural ones took longer, but it was not hard to find this amount of time. Most pictures are about 5 x 8 inches, but some of the later, more panoramic ones are 8-1/2 x 11.

I found that this activity added an element of excitement to the otherwise often drab prospect of opening the shades upon entering a room: the first view of the outside and a quick assessment of possibilities.





CHICAGO, Congress Hotel. June 20 1993



Harvey Hotel, N. Dallas Jan 70 1997

Chris. Amet.

