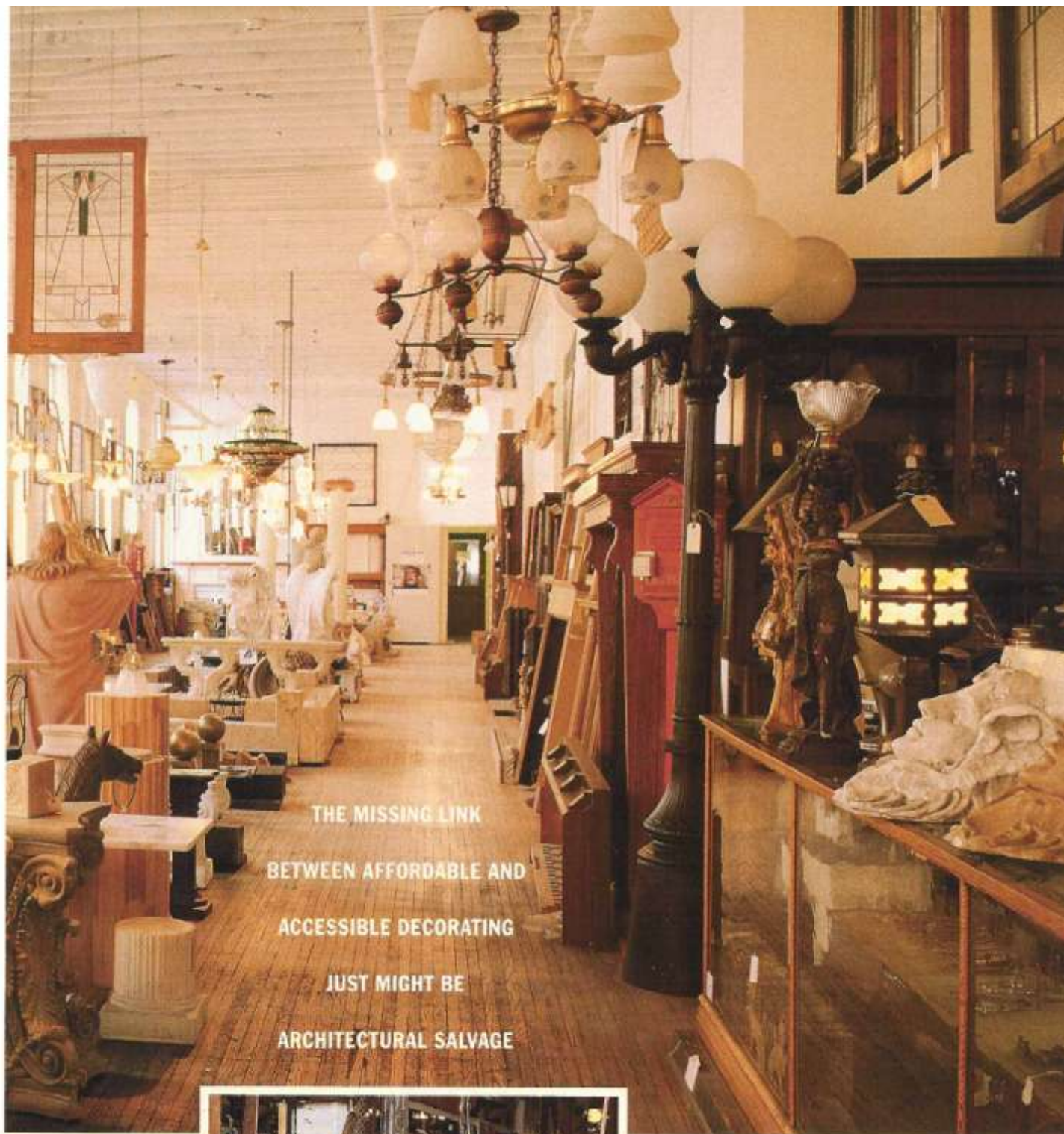




Collecting the Past



THE MISSING LINK
BETWEEN AFFORDABLE AND
ACCESSIBLE DECORATING
JUST MIGHT BE
ARCHITECTURAL SALVAGE



By **LISA PALAS**

That's me inspecting the complexion of a sturdy, but small, 4½-ft.-long claw-foot bathtub

I found tucked away in the back of Architectural Antiques (above), a salvage house in Minneapolis.



● As anyone who has grown up with the smell of “Zip-Strip” will tell you, the bug for antique items and found objects either bites you or it doesn’t. In my case, the sting has been considerable. I dismiss anything made after the debut of the gramophone, clutch an old willow fish creel instead of a purse, and have yet to exhaust the decorating possibilities of white-on-white linen tablecloths, circa 1912. My mother, ever the avid collector and patient restorer of “neat old stuff,”

is directly responsible for this. For twenty-odd years, she festooned the walls, halls, ceilings, (and yes, closets) of several of our homes with the delectable gleanings of a career well spent as... a scavenger. I, too, am a scavenger. Like Mom, I have a good, keen eye for value and don’t mind foraging for hidden treasures.

If you’re like me and enjoy buying old or “recycled” things for your home but wonder just how much prices vary between the old and new,

here’s a chance to find out. I recently took a cross-country look at several architectural salvage stores, traveling from New York City to Stamford, Connecticut, then to Berkeley, California, and Minneapolis to learn more about buying “delectable debris.”

Salvage houses bid on buildings and houses fated for rubble. Before demolition, all the interior and exterior items of interest are removed and resold, usually with minimal restoration. Such surgical extrac- ▷



If you're willing to dig a bit, an impressive array of low-cost door hardware (above) awaits collectors at places like Architectural Antiques, in Minneapolis.



Part of the delight in shopping for architectural salvage is that you never know what you'll find next. After looking at hundreds of lamp shades and globes living on shelves, I started to think of them as lamp hats! And why limit antique brass doorplates to their intended purpose? Framed or grouped together on a wall they can make an appealing decorative statement. Of the (thousands of door-knobs I saw, most were in a ready-to-use condition and tagged with ready-to-buy prices.