

# Journal of The American Institute of ARCHITECTS



ANDREA PALLADIO

April, 1947

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Man's Physical Environment

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The Lighthouse Haven

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On to Grand Rapids

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The Octagon

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The Beaux-Arts in 1900—III

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The Student and The Journal

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A Frank Letter and Its Answer

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT THE OCTAGON, WASHINGTON, D. C.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
SMALL HOMES COUNCIL  
MEMPHIS HOUSE

# JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

APRIL, 1947

VOL. VII, No. 4

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The *Journal of The American Institute of Architects*, official organ of The Institute, is published monthly at The Octagon, 1741 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington 6, D. C. Editor: Henry H. Saylor. Subscription in the United States, its possessions and Canada, \$3 a year in advance; elsewhere, \$4 a year. Single copies 35c. Copyright, 1947, by The American Institute of Architects. Entered as second-class matter February 9, 1929, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C.



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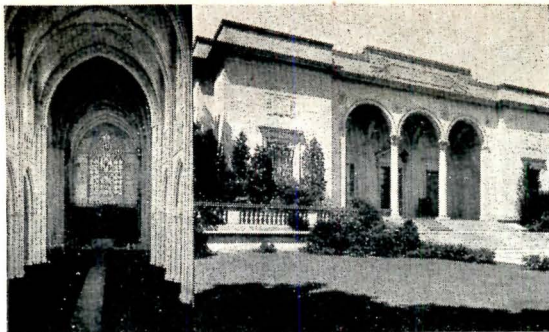
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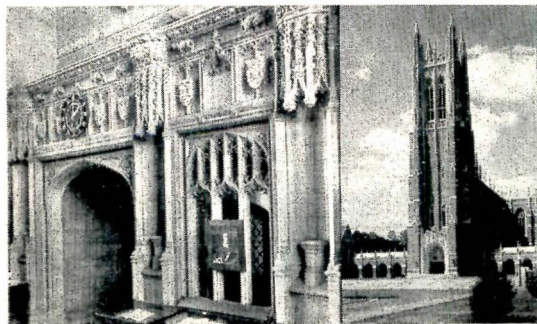
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**Nancy does  
the dishes . . . . while Mother  
starts the laundry**



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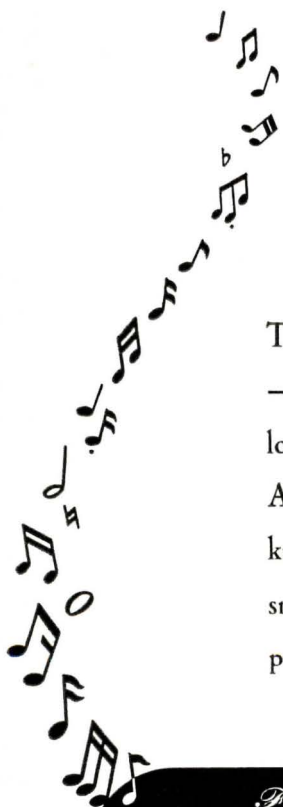
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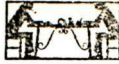


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## Man's Physical Environment

THOUGHTFUL WORDS OF THOUGHTFUL MEN SPOKEN AS INTRODUCTORY REMARKS OPENING VARIOUS SESSIONS OF THE PRINCETON BICENTENNIAL CONFERENCE ON PLANNING MAN'S PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT, MARCH 5 AND 6, 1947

**T**HE GREAT DISTINCTION of today is that we ask that more classes of people be well served by our buildings; we demand for every building a degree of specialization hitherto unknown. It is presumptuous for any architect now to build a terminus, a hospital, a school, a merchandise mart, without sober consideration of the technical requirements; presumptuous for him to think that he knows more about them than the technician who uses them.

So today the architect is designer at the end and not at the beginning. He must first of all be an interviewer, an objective recorder of needs, an understanding examiner of techniques. This process may well take longer than the final synthesis, the space arrangement, which is the design.

There is risk that modern architecture does not follow its own precepts. It is no more noble to

preconceive a building with a cantilever, a spiral, or an exo-skeleton and then force everything to fit, than it is to preconceive it in the mold of St. Trophime. Flexibility as a fetish can lead to amorphism. It is childish to play with science and to talk of insulation, sound, light, in terms which a freshman physicist would reject as untrue. These things are not emotions, and pseudo-scientific treatment of them as emotions simply will not do. We shall be found out, and quickly.

—JOHN E. BURCHARD, M. I. T.,  
Cambridge, Mass.

**I**N THE PAST, man's environmental needs were met and satisfied very simply because his life was simple and his needs were few. He was sturdier and he lived more slowly. His day and his night were longer than ours. Biologically he lived better. He seldom improved upon nature because the beauty of

nature as he found it and as he saw it satisfied him.

Now—almost always—we try to improve upon nature and we are not always successful. . . .

Let us then PLAN to live more simply; to live more slowly. Let us give of what we have to satisfy the needs of others and let us—above all—live in harmony with our neighbors and specially, very specially, with ourselves.

—CARLOS CONTRERAS,  
Architect, Mexico City.

IN ITS ORIGINS architecture was the servant of royalty, nobility and power. Its earlier uses were commonly to give expression to power, prestige and pride. The impressions sought to be conveyed were grandeur, dominance, and power. Somewhat as beautiful etchings on a fine sword might give it distinction without interfering with its chief use, so sheer beauty in architecture may have been subordinate to expression of power and prestige. . . .

Full acceptance of the democratic spirit in architecture, as in other phases of life, would have revolutionary results. Architecture and the related arts would be refined and ennobled by such a liberation. Prestige, as a competitive

status, would be displaced. Friends do not seek prestige as among themselves. Domestic architecture will be modest. It will seek integration with its environment, not dominance over it.

—ARTHUR E. MORGAN (formerly of TVA), Community Service, Inc., Yellow Springs, O.

A GREAT DETERRENT to large-scale rebuilding operations has been and is the high price of land. Land assembly can now be achieved, under many urban redevelopment laws by eminent domain, but the obstacle of price has not yet been surmounted. The crux of the problem is that centrally located but blighted land commands a much higher price than its economic re-use value.

—THEODORE T. McCROSKY, Director, Greater Boston Development Committee, Inc.

THE OLD PLANET is pleasing today because of the local color and customs. The clustered tile-roofed houses overhanging the shores of the Mediterranean are totally and fascinatingly different from the dwellings of Marblehead, and these again from Rotterdam; and that is salvation. It means local pride, and gives to each com-

munity a soul or ethos of its own.

This is an age of experimentation. Let each community insist on its own quest for a visual basis of charm and delight.

There is enough ennui from infinite repetition of the same auto, the same fedora, the same standard store front.

—WILLIAM ROGER GREELEY,  
F.A.I.A., Boston.

**L**ABOR is still largely divided on an individual craft union basis, rigidly compartmentised. Many restraints have been placed on product and assembly development. As trend increases towards off-site fabrication there is evident a great need for a new classification—the skilled assembly mechanic, not restricted to any one material. This may require a vertical union with the economic incentive of a guaranteed annual wage.

—A. GORDON LORIMER, architect,  
Douglaston, L. I.

**I**S IT NOT POSSIBLE that we should deliberately devise a procedure that facilitates large-scale planning for those features—and only those features—that require a unified approach; while, simultaneously, facilitating decentralized planning and a maximum

variety of solutions where variety is permissible? It is perhaps time that we, as planners, should learn to plan our work so that it will stimulate the creative ability of the individual where this is possible, and yet stimulate the spirit of cooperation and collaboration where this is necessary. The gregarious and yet individualistic modern man will not be happy if one-half of his nature is thwarted for the benefit of the other.

—LOUIS JUSTEMENT, F.A.I.A.,  
Washington, D. C.

**E**NVIRONMENT can be molded so that it creates or stimulates a mood. It may be formal or informal; intimate or austere; it may be romantic; or it may follow the modern tendency to be dramatic.

—ARTHUR C. HOLDEN, F.A.I.A.,  
New York.

**L**EGISLATIVE REGULATION of buildings as contained in building codes, zoning and other ordinances designed to protect the health, safety and general welfare of society are one of the severest limitations under which design must operate. The severity lies in their rigidity and not in their legitimate purposes. The hope for relief lies in the possibility of phrasing

these standards in terms of performance or function. It lies further in the selection of administrators who are capable of interpretation of performance standards.

—HOWARD P. VERMILYA (formerly of FHA), American Houses, Inc., New York.

**P**LANNING in a democracy involves effective citizen participation. The planner is only one of many technicians. In one sense he is no more important than members of a planning commission or a city council. A comprehensive plan is not the creation of a master mind, but a collaborative effort. It is the social ideas of a community or region which are to be expressed in the physical pattern, not the ideas of the technician. City plans should not be identified too much with an individual planner and the latter should consider himself as an interpreter rather than a dictator.

—FREDERICK J. ADAMS, M. I. T.,  
Cambridge, Mass.

**N**OR DO I THINK that it is of much importance, here, whether we have this, that, or the other kind of implementing legislation. What we should try to do is to clarify what kind of a city, what sort of environment, would

we build for ourselves and the few people we know and the millions we don't know, if we had our way and could find understanding of their way. We must always remember that this city we wish to create must be lived in, worked in, played in by all the kinds of people there are. If we do so we will not, I am sure, go too far towards Utopia—which was, I believe, a mirror of dictatorship.

—HENRY S. CHURCHILL, architect, New York.

**T**HE ART OF BUILDING is generally said to be a visual art. Yet the most significant element of a building is invisible, namely space, with all its extended derivations, implications, and connotations. Only if a building, as the limiting element of space, succeed in conveying a sense of the invisible can one say, in contemplating it inside or out, "It seems to me there is more here than meets the eye."

—GEORGE HOWE, F.A.I.A., Philadelphia.

**O**N THE POSITIVE SIDE OF THE LEDGER is the fact that technological ingenuity has reached the point where, in a balanced and quieted-down economy, most prod-

ucts can be produced at costs that will permit the great majority of people to build adequate frames for their lives. Thus, the majority of people could have an environment that would not only satisfy them but benefit them socially, intellectually, and emotionally. We believe that we can see signs on the distant horizon that a clear evaluation of these problems is beginning to take hold.

—WALTER BAERMANN, associate,  
Norman Bel Geddes, New York

**A**RCHITECTURE MUST transcend engineering because the human activities which it houses are not merely physical and utili-

tarian in the narrower sense, but also, and significantly, cultural and spiritual. Family life, the processes of government, education and research, religious worship, and even business and industry as responsible and dignified human activities, all involve human relationships, human values and evaluations, cultural traditions and standards, spiritual aspirations. To ignore these is to reduce man to his merely physical components and acts; to recognize and promote them is the distinctive task of architecture as an art.

—THEODORE M. GREENE, Department of Fellows, Yale University.

## On to Grand Rapids

*By Roger Allen*

**M**R. HENRY SAYLOR, editor of the *JOURNAL*, is a man of unbridled optimism; he thinks if I wrote an article extolling Grand Rapids, then hundreds and hundreds of architects from all over will rush to the Convention of The A.I.A. in this city on April 29 and 30 and May 1.

Oh, they will, huh?

Don't get the idea I don't *want* you to come to Grand Rapids. I

don't mind, particularly. In fact, I am in favor of it; pay no attention to what my wife says. My wife says I promised to take her to Bermuda to the A.I.A. Convention and I end up taking her downtown to the Pantlind Hotel. As she points out with flawless logic, she has never been to Bermuda, but she has been to the Pantlind Hotel.

Nothing can be done about this.

Naturally, it will improve my standing in the community to have you come. It could stand some improving, too. There are certain men in the Chamber of Commerce who are still rather dubious about me, and keep listening to detect a slight Russian accent in my practically incessant conversation; and why? Just because four years ago last Christmas I am making a speech to the Dunkers of America (doughnut dunkers, that is; not the kind of people who wear hooks-and-eyes on their clothes, if that is what I am thinking about, or perhaps I mean Mennonites. Things are confused all over.) and I merely said that you could tell whether or not we were going to have a hard winter in Grand Rapids by seeing how thick the moss was on the north side of the Chamber of Commerce. Just for that (and I stole the gag in the first place) they got mad at me and I had to serve three years on the vestry of the Episcopal Cathedral before they were convinced I was not a Dangerous Radical.

Since then I have been careful never to be as funny as I can be.

Grand Rapids is situated on Grand River. Sounds logical, doesn't it? Well, not exactly *on*

Grand River; you don't have to hail a Yellow gondola to go from place to place. Before they built the flood wall it used to be *under* Grand River every spring, or at least parts of it did. This was way back in 1904, before you were born, and the floods were not so much of a hardship as they might have been, because if you were still addicted to al fresco plumbing, then you could be sure of having it flushed out but good at least once a year.

(Henry, maybe you better take that out. I am not sure it is refined.)

Right where I live in Ottawa Hills there was once a big battle between the Pottawottamie and the Ottawa tribes of Indians, and some people say they have dug up arrowheads in their gardens, but I regard this as a big lie, and in any event I do not have any time to stay around the house digging up gardens as I am too busy downtown digging up my income taxes.

"The residents of Grand Rapids are a gay people, fond of dancing and light wines." Oh, is that so? Most of the people I know would sooner lose eight clients than dance a step, and I never saw any of them weighing their Manhattans to make sure they weren't too

heavy. This goes to prove you should take all that stuff in the back of the geography with a grain of salt.

One reason you should come to Grand Rapids is because we have delicious Lake Michigan water piped thirty miles direct from the Lake. If you happen to be the kind of person who goes around smacking your lips over a brimming dipper-full of water, this is just the place for you. Frankly, I regard this as the poorest selling point you could use on an architect.

Grand Rapids has a lot of furniture around the town, for some reason or other, and a large number of plants where they make pieces of automobiles. They then take the pieces of automobiles down to Detroit and throw them in the St. Mary River, I assume, as nobody has seen any of the completed automobiles around here lately, and my theory is they take the wheels off and sell them to Buckminster Fuller to make houses of, although this is ridiculous, as his own houses are much better.

Grand Rapids also has a house in it designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, but it was during his conservative phase when he was put-

ting roofs on them and there is not even a river running under the porch. I am a great fancier of that house he did in Connecticut that hangs over a river; I regard it as a marvelous reversal; as usually it is the owner and not the house that has the hangover, in any building operation. I regard Frank Lloyd Wright with warm affection, as he once publicly stated that I was a wit. Persons who write in to say they never believe more than half Mr. Wright says will have to answer to both of us. With Wright and Allen both mad at you, life in this country could be intolerable.

Well, this about explains why you should come to Grand Rapids. There is, of course, the added fact that the Grand Rapids Chapter would love to have you, as they like you. They also like Eliel Saarinen, who is to receive the Gold Medal of The Institute and who richly deserves it. He is a great architect, a charming and friendly man, and the meals the Saarinens put out are superb. I never trust artists who don't like good food. It is very appropriate that Mr. Saarinen should receive The Institute's highest honor in the state in which he has done so much fine work, and

the architects of Michigan rejoice that this is so.

Confidentially, and just between you and me, PLEASE come.

## The Student and the Journal

*By Wells I. Bennett*

DEAN, COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

SENIORS in architectural school today are relatively mature. They are likely to have been in the War, and a majority have worked for an architect. A class of these seniors is to consider professional attitudes and standards. Since month by month the JOURNAL officially mirrors articulate professional thought, it should provide a partial view for the student. In the JOURNAL thoughtful men moved to expression have, with the blessing of the Editor, commented on the world of architecture. How does this picture look to the student emerging from five intermittent years of training, preparing finally to really begin his career? Over a period of four months, serving as a kind of control for other assignments and discussions, the class, provided with half-year subscriptions, refers to current professional actions and reactions in the pages of the JOURNAL.

With discussions of design by

progressive practitioners students are quite at ease. This phase of initiation to architecture is very comfortable and involves no jolts. The suggestion that there be public criticism of new works of architecture as they appear meets warm approval and, in the freedom of the classroom, the principle is put into immediate effect. This and that building is crossed off the list of respectable architecture, with an occasional example just as staunchly defended. Certain works, of course, stand out as sound and good. More architectural reputations are ruined than made, but certainly the technique of criticism is well exercised. The current scene is eagerly scanned though it may be through a glass darkly.

The unity of all design is readily recognized and supporting arguments are ably put forward. The increasing integration of architecture and industrial design is almost taken for granted, though we are not continuously in agreement as



to which title will have top billing in the years ahead. Nor do we care so much. Some of the men have worked in one type of shop, some in another. In any case it is not from these young men that Richard Bennett need fear isolationism in architecture.

"Today's Draftsman" is digested as solid and by no means unpalatable information. The facts of office life underlying the more conspicuous excitements of designing a job are understood. If architects consciously or otherwise adopt a screening procedure in admitting new men to the office, and in retaining them, probably most of these newcomers, once they have qualified, will differently but as critically screen the field to find the office in which they will seek employment. A lively office producing good work is the natural goal, but even more significant, *most of these men and women want a place where the head is a real architect, encouraging his staff to learn the game and to advance. The young individualist does not gladly suffer an anonymous grind. He is a willing draftsman but a yearning architect.*

Then there are cheerful periods of consideration of specialties—the accomplishments of TVA, and the

responsibilities for the architect in the promising perspectives of the Hospital Survey and Construction Act. These underline the professional admonition that the architect must be the complete citizen informed on social problems, able through research and special training to advance professional and the public good whether by doing powerhouses or veterans' hospitals.

Louis Sullivan comes dimly to life through recent professional awards. Like Brunelleschi, he is safe in his niche and to us almost as remote. That he is termed an Ornamentalist lowers him several cuts and requires considerable explaining. Recalling his philosophy and vicissitudes, however, it is concluded that Sullivan belongs to contemporary architecture.



Leading to a resounding climax and finale appears "A Center for United Nations." Lewis Mumford usually has the favor of students. Unfettered by the ties that restrain if not bind the seasoned architect, he challenges too ready opinions and probes for sources and aims. The class begins to ponder the structure of Mumford's thesis on housing world peace. We reach the

program for a world capital and for a series of world capitals. Suddenly there comes a violent disruption of the academic calm. The decision for East Side New York has just been announced on the radio and in the newspapers. Here, we say, is a slap in the face for real planning and for Mumford as its symbol. More deeply, it casts a chill shadow on the integrity and capacity of United Nations as a hope for civilization.

The long view, the noble idea, even human dignity, we think, have been tossed aside by UN in a snap decision. In the class too the long-term view is almost lost in the spate of strongly felt opinions against the seventeen-acre site. That such a nucleus might expand to approach Mumford's plan for the re-creation of New York City is repudiated. How can good come

from such a miserable beginning. Disillusionment is complete.

And on this note ends our gallery stroll through the JOURNAL. Mr. Editor, there is no moral to this sketchy report. Young architects are keenly curious as they enter the profession. Considering the brief exposure, the JOURNAL has been extremely helpful in satisfying this curiosity.

Good work in the office, respect for professional standards so long as they represent competence and a social conscience; modern problems such as land planning, and public health; these have, with the help of the JOURNAL, become more real. Your presentation of such broad issues as those involved in a Capital for United Nations appealed to our group. We think such questions would have the interest of most young architects today.

## The Maiden Speech of An Architect Congressman

*The Congressional Record* of March 6, 1947, records the following remarks of Frederick A. Muhlenberg, A.I.A., who represents in Congress the Thirteenth District of Pennsylvania.

**M**R. MUHLENBERG: Mr. Speaker, it is perhaps somewhat presumptuous for a new Member to rise to express a view- point on national and international affairs at some variance with remarks made on Monday last by two outstanding and often-quoted

Members of the Republican majority—one to the effect that we were “dragged into this war,” the other to state flatly that he is an “isolationist.” These lead the general public, as I have already discovered, to the impression of a party position already taken. May I be permitted to state that many of the men who have just entered the Congress hold no such views; and that perhaps the viewpoint which deserves more the label of majority Republican opinion is one that believes the safety and security of the world is indeed our problem, and the solution of that problem our real safety; that succor of starving and enslaved peoples is indeed our obligation, an obligation much greater and in the long view

much sounder for our preservation than the immediate reduction either of debt or taxes.

We, close to the people, elected in many districts by the confidence of many Democrats who have lost faith in the glittering generalities and empty words of the New Deal, but who have faith in our knowledge and judgment of world affairs shall speak for ourselves and are bound by no man. We shall use our experience to judge matters for the good of the Nation in a co-operative world where we are in truth today, and perhaps for our own selfish interests, our brother's keeper.

THE SPEAKER: The time of the gentleman from Pennsylvania has expired.

## Dinocrates Gets a Job

VITRUVIUS POINTS OUT, SOMEWHAT POSTHUMOUSLY, THAT THOUGH TECHNIQUES MAY VARY THROUGH THE AGES, THE ARCHITECT'S FIRST TASK IS TO WIN A CLIENT

Reprinted by permission of Harvard University Press, publishers of “Vitruvius: The Ten Books of Architecture”—Morris Hicky Morgan Translation.

**D**INOCRATES, an architect who was full of confidence in his own ideas and skill, set out from Macedonia, in the reign of Alexander, to go to the army, being eager to win the approbation of

the king. He took with him from his country letters from relatives and friends to the principal military men and officers of the court, in order to gain access to them more readily. Being politely re-

ceived by them, he asked to be presented to Alexander as soon as possible. They promised, but were rather slow, waiting for a suitable opportunity. So Dinocrates, thinking that they were playing with him, had recourse to his own efforts. He was of very lofty stature and pleasing countenance, finely formed, and extremely dignified. Trusting, therefore, to these natural gifts, he undressed himself in his inn, anointed his body with oil, set a chaplet of poplar leaves on his head, draped his left shoulder with a lion's skin, and holding a club in his right hand stalked forth to a place in front of the tribunal where the king was administering justice.

His strange appearance made the people turn round, and this led Alexander to look at him. In astonishment he gave orders to make way for him to draw near, and asked who he was. "Dinocrates," quoth he, "a Macedonian architect, who brings thee ideas and designs worthy of thy renown. I have made a design for the shaping of Mount Athos into the statue of a man, in whose left hand I have represented a very spacious fortified city, and in his right a bowl to receive the water of all the streams which are

in that mountain, so that it may pour from the bowl into the sea."

Alexander, delighted with the idea of his design, immediately inquired whether there were any fields in the neighbourhood that could maintain the city in corn. On finding that this was impossible without transport from beyond the sea, "Dinocrates," quoth he, "I appreciate your design as excellent in composition, and I am delighted with it, but I apprehend that anybody who should found a city in that spot would be censured for bad judgment. For as a newborn babe cannot be nourished without the nurse's milk, nor conducted to the approaches that lead to growth in life, so a city cannot thrive without fields and the fruits thereof pouring into its walls, nor have a large population without plenty of food, nor maintain its population without a supply of it. Therefore, while thinking that your design is commendable, I consider the site as not commendable; but I would have you stay with me, because I mean to make use of your services."

From that time, Dinocrates did not leave the king, but followed him into Egypt. There Alexander, observing a harbour rendered safe by nature, an excellent centre for

trade, cornfields throughout all Egypt, and the great usefulness of the mighty river Nile, ordered him to build the city of Alexandria,

named after the king. This was how Dinocrates, recommended only by his good looks and dignified carriage, came to be so famous.

## The Lighthouse Haven

*By Daniel Paul Higgins*

WHAT IS IT in a painting of a naked lighthouse which has made me pause? I have stopped time and again to look at the stone shaft, crowned with a beam of light, piercing the darkness. With a mere shake of the head, I passed on, yet the thought lingered, the picture remained, the beam of light focused on my faculties with no response. And yet there was something in the painting which spoke to me, carried a message to my subconsciousness. I did not know whether it was fear or consolation that resulted.

Today, I know. I'm happy that I have learned. Now it is my lighthouse; it's mine because I am a part of it. It is my retreat. The blistering distortions of modern existence no longer taunt me; the evils of the world, bulking so large over the good, worry me less. The questions of tomorrow, so threatening today, seem less portentous

when I return from my haven, the lighthouse.

We architects worry. Worry is wrong, it is true, but we do worry because we have for years been caught within gigantic swings of international and national forces, not alone beyond our controls but beyond our comprehension.

For our clients we deal in money because money is part of the material force which comprises the project we must deliver. The fact that no architect is wealthy is proof that we do not use money as a personal yardstick but rather for the achievement of a result satisfactory to us, to our client and to the betterment of our community.

Since we possess no reassuring financial assets, and since we have seemed to float and bobble over chaotic economic conditions since 1929, we are wearing thin and our eyes look hopefully at the prevailing mist. We are not pessimistic. In fact, we are natural optimists,

as we start with pencil and paper, confident that we can fashion the tools for men regardless of the intricacies involved. Few realize how many and how difficult are the problems which must be solved before a new building is ready for use. We know, but our friends around us know little of how optimistic we must be as we face, daily, one new problem after another.

Could we but return to something we knew that resembled normalcy! Could we but see our offices on a stable footing for just a few weeks; not a few more men today, a few less tomorrow! Could we but see ahead far enough to assure a client he will be able to finance his project within a fixed budget! Could we but know that our fees, standard for years, will cover our future operations! Could we but be relieved of governmental regulations fixing as a fee a single lump-sum dollar amount; we gulp as we name it, praying that hazardous pitfalls and personality complexes will leave us unscathed. Could we but plan what we know is proper, and not change daily because materials are not available or in such small quantities that deliveries are impossible! Could we but find the remedy or magic for-

mula which would drive away the specter of devastating strikes!

Our pardonable pride expands, as our plans progressively develop in the actual construction operations, and we even establish a hope for date of completion; then a strike suddenly deflates us.

Our men stand idly by in the office, on the payroll, awaiting the shop drawings from the fabricator; his plant is closed due to the strike. Our men cannot be penalized; they are not on strike; they know our client's job. It would be unjust to employ new men later on to check shop drawings for a job with which they are not familiar.

And the days pass, the uncertainties vary but continue and intensify. Normalcy is more remote. Uncertainty, tinged with fear, becomes constant, and perhaps that is what is now normal.

We expand for work which must be executed quickly. Unexpected other projects come our way. And still the specter of uncertainty walks before us. The quick projects slow down as the rise of costs increases. Some projects do proceed, but others must go forward more slowly and cautiously. Non-profit institutions and individuals cannot increase income in the same ratio as costs have increased.

Will this condition reverse itself if costs recede? Then probably everyone will want plans finished at once, and building to proceed almost simultaneously.

In the words of the little boy looking helplessly at the teacher, "I don't know."

And so I retreat. I withdraw to my lighthouse. There it stands on jagged, forbidding rocks of economic uncertainties. I climb the rounding stairs joyfully as I rise above and away from the raging waves of propaganda and the shrieks of man crying against man. I stand looking over the sea, not man-made, beautiful in its unchanging naturalness, responsive if respected but cruel and devastating when whipped by the winds of intolerance and injustice. Above, the heavens pour out beauty no painter ever has captured. The world seems real, it is natural, it is normal. Here, as I flash on the beam which signals across the skies, I can broadcast my hopes and recharge the batteries of my natural

optimism. He who tends the light, in humility and devotion, serving his fellow man to the best of his ability, can receive from the heavens the heart-warming message of "Well done."

In my lighthouse I am important; what I think, what I do, is important. Here I can return to a truer perspective of life safe above the swirling tides beneath. The horizon as I look out from my lighthouse is unlimited and unobstructed. The dignity of man returns. The objective of life itself is clearer. Breathing the air of introspection banishes the materialistic clashes of the outer world.

Yet to this world of materialism I return, but encouraged and refreshed. We can never quit the battle, but we fight harder and more effectively when we know for what we fight.

And so to you, my brother architect, I extend a cordial invitation to visit my lighthouse when you will. Or perhaps you have discovered one for yourself.

## News of the Educational Field

THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS announces the sixteenth annual consideration of candidates for the Kate Neal Kinley Memorial Fel-

lowship, which yields \$1,000 toward the expenses of a year's advanced study of the Fine Arts in America or abroad. Details as to

the requirements and application blanks may be had from Dean Rexford Newcomb, F.A.I.A., Architecture Building, University of Illinois, Urbana, Ill. Applications are due not later than May 1, 1947.

FONTAINEBLEAU SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS resumes its summer school for advanced American students in the visual arts. July 1st

to September 1st will find the architectural branch under the guidance of Prof. Jean Labatut, assisted by Prof. Georges Legendre. Tuition, board and lodging, \$325; registration fee, \$10. The School is recognized under the G.I. Bill of Rights. Further information may be had from Fontainebleau School of Fine Arts, 206 E. 62nd St., New York 21, N. Y.

## The Octagon

SOME FACTS, PRESENT AND HISTORICAL, OF WHICH  
INSTITUTE MEMBERS WILL WANT TO BE INFORMED

**I**T IS A FACT, frequently overlooked, that The Octagon—national headquarters of The A.I.A.—is unknown to a majority of Institute members. It was not so a quarter century ago. The established custom of holding every third Convention in Washington brought here a constantly changing body of delegates from the chapters. These men gained a sense of personal ownership of The Octagon; they knew the fine old house well and were proud of its close ties with the founders of the republic.

Then our Conventions went elsewhere—all of them, instead of two out of three. Our member-

ship grew by leaps and bounds. For twenty years prior to 1942 the average membership was 3,018. Now, as of March 1, it is 6,656. It must be inferred that today there are many more members of The Institute who have not seen and do not know The Octagon than there are members familiar with it.

If this be true of the historic landmark itself, it is a decided understatement with regard to the Administration Building. This, it will be recalled, was built on the east portion of The Octagon plot about seven years ago, but it was barely completed when the State Department urgently requested it

APRIL, 1947

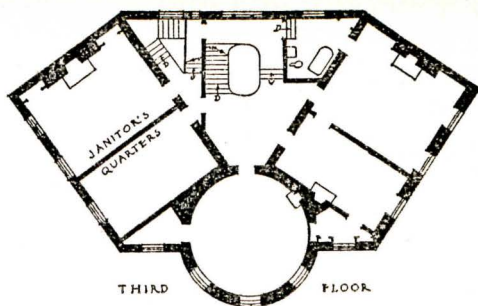




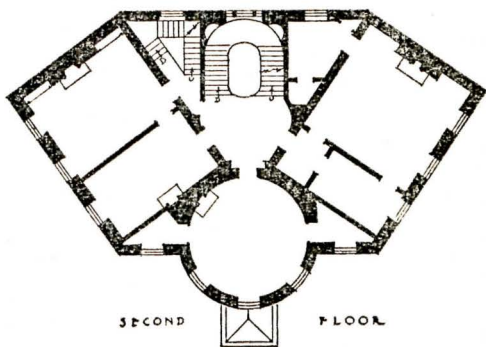
ENTRANCE TO THE OCTAGON GARDEN FROM 18TH STREET  
The entrance of the Administration Building appears beyond



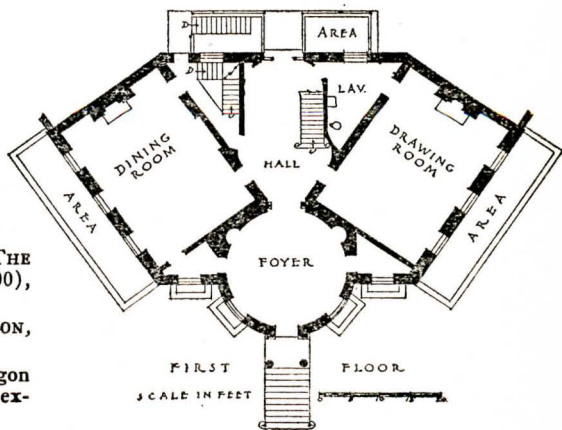
LOOKING ACROSS THE OCTAGON GARDEN TOWARD THE SMOKE-HOUSE  
The boxwood was planted after The Institute had acquired the property



THIRD FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

FLOOR PLANS OF THE  
OCTAGON (1798-1800),  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

DR. WILLIAM THORNTON,  
ARCHITECT

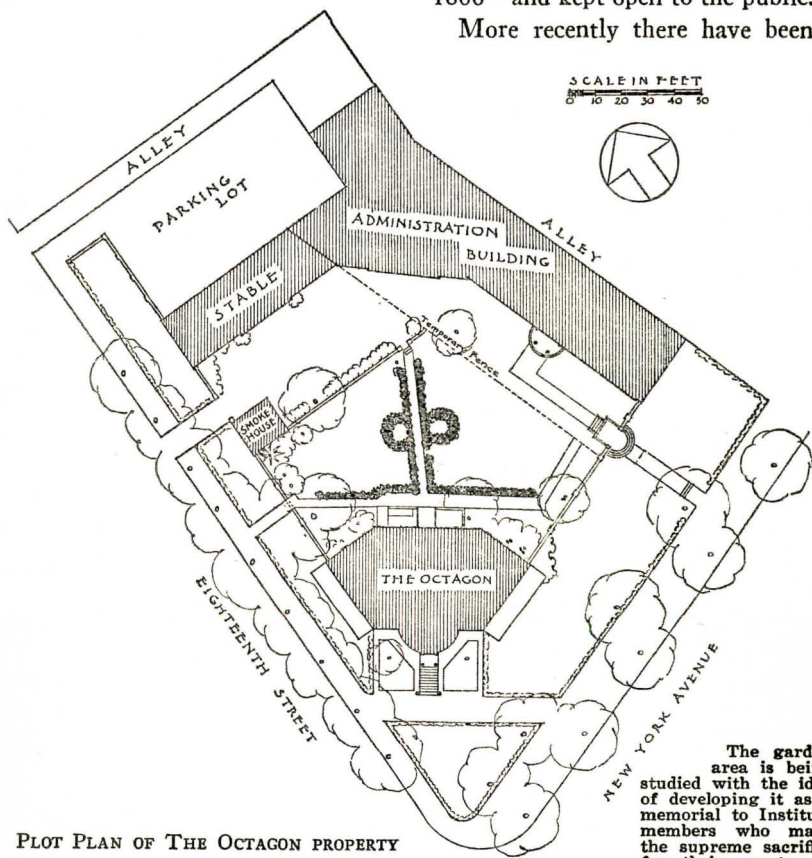
Just how The Octagon  
got its name is not ex-  
plained by the plan.

for their emergency use, and the building has been under lease to the Government ever since. It now seems probable that the building will be returned to The Institute in the early summer of 1948.

At the coming Convention in Grand Rapids there is likely to arise the question as to just how

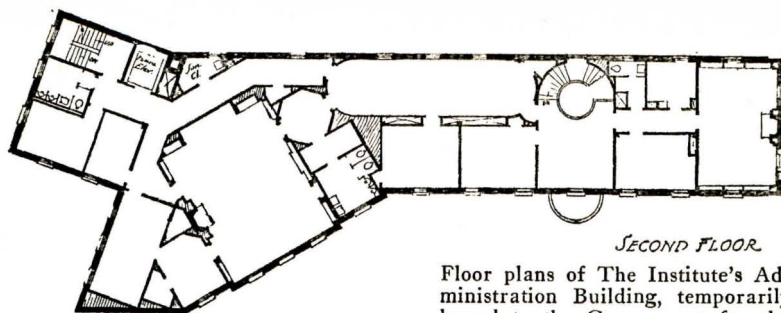
this entire headquarters property had best be used. When the Administration Building was contemplated it was with the idea that it might house The Institute's headquarters staff and that The Octagon itself might be furnished in keeping with its original purpose—the town house of a gentleman of 1800—and kept open to the public.

More recently there have been



PLOT PLAN OF THE OCTAGON PROPERTY

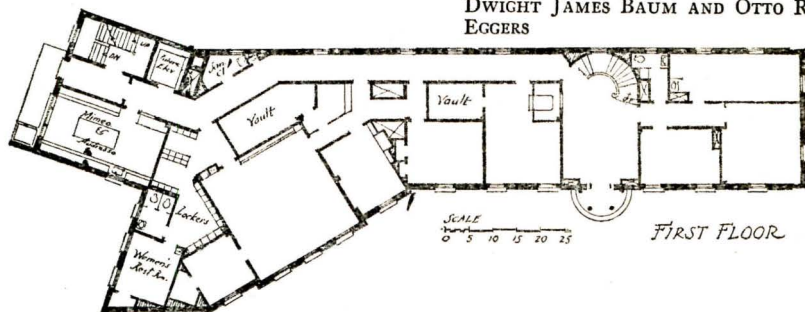
The garden area is being studied with the idea of developing it as a memorial to Institute members who made the supreme sacrifice for their country.



SECOND FLOOR.

Floor plans of The Institute's Administration Building, temporarily leased to the Government for the use of the State Department.

ARCHITECTS: D. EVERETT WAID,  
DWIGHT JAMES BAUM AND OTTO R. EGGERS



FIRST FLOOR

some doubts expressed as to the propriety of The Institute's withdrawing from the more important of the two buildings on the plot and taking up its official residence behind and in the shadow of what would then become an historic monument.

Leaving this matter of broad policy to the Convention, where it belongs, the JOURNAL merely puts before the membership the plot plan of the property, the floor plans

of the two major buildings and, below, an outline of the mansion's historical significance. Excerpts in quotation marks are the words of the late Glenn Brown, F.A.I.A., for many years The Institute's Secretary, lifted from his monograph on The Octagon.

"In the early part of 1797, Colonel John Tayloe of Mount Airy, Virginia, determined to erect a winter residence in one of the large cities. He first thought of

Philadelphia as a most suitable place for his home but, upon the suggestion of General George Washington, who was at that time very much interested in the new city which was fast taking form on the Potomac, he changed his mind and determined to make his winter home in the new Federal Capital. The first step toward this end was the purchase of ground at the corner of New York Avenue and Eighteenth Street in Washington (lot 8, square 170, from Gustavus W. Scott, April 19, 1797), for which he paid one thousand dollars. Mr. Scott was one of the original purchasers from the Government, November 21, 1796. The next step was the selection of Dr. William Thornton, architect, to make the plans of the new residence. Work was commenced in 1798, and General Washington took a lively interest in the building as it progressed, visiting it during his journeys to Washington during 1798 and 1799. He died before its completion in 1800."

According to Mr. John Clagett Proctor, an authoritative historian of Washington, Colonel Tayloe died in 1828. The French Minister, M. Surier, occupied the house at the time of the British invasion

of Washington, perhaps at the suggestion of Dolly Madison. Under Surier's diplomatic protection, the old mansion was not harmed when the White House was burned on August 24, 1814. Mr. Proctor believes that the invitation to President Madison, urging him to use The Octagon as a temporary Executive Mansion, came from M. Surier. The President and Dolly Madison moved into The Octagon on September 8, 1814, and occupied it for more than a year.

"While the members of the Tayloe family were not great statesmen or men of prominence in the learned or literary professions, they were, by reason of their wealth, culture and connection by marriage with the prominent families of Virginia and Maryland, a great factor in the life of the early days of the Republic." . . .

"The Memoirs of Benjamin Ogle Tayloe, son of John Tayloe of The Octagon, furnish a most interesting description of the society of that time, and recount many anecdotes of prominent men of the period. Until the death of Colonel Tayloe, The Octagon was noted for its entertainments, which were given in a most generous manner to distinguished Americans and foreigners who visited Washington

in those days, including such men as Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Adams, Jackson, Decatur, Porter, Webster, Clay, Calhoun, Randolph, Lafayette, Steuben, General Van Rensselaer, Doctor Thornton, and many others of less distinction. . . .

"The Treaty of Peace with Great Britain, ending the War of 1812, was drawn up and signed by the authorized contracting parties in Ghent, Belgium, the 24th day of December, 1814. This treaty did not become effective until its ratification by the President of the United States. James Madison wrote his ratification on the back of the Treaty, in the circular second-story room of The Octagon, February 17, 1815, on the table which is now in the same room. This table has an interesting history. On its removal from The Octagon, it passed into the possession of John Ogle Tayloe, of Ferneaux, King George County, Virginia, and remained in his possession until October 30, 1897, when it was sold to Mrs. A. H. Voorhies, and sent by Mr. Tayloe to her residence at 2011 California Street, San Francisco, California, where it remained until the great fire and earthquake in 1906. When the fire approached, and it was

foreseen that the house was doomed, the table was hastily taken away. In describing its removal, Mrs. Voorhies says, 'We wrapped sheets around the circular part of the table, and a part of its journey it went turning around as a wheel to a place of safety.' The San Francisco Chapter of The American Institute of Architects purchased the table from Mrs. Voorhies for one thousand dollars, and sent it to Washington, December 1, 1911." . . .



During the Civil War the property was confiscated. Later tenants included a Catholic school for girls and a Government department. Still later the old house seems to have fallen upon evil days.

"I recollect visiting the building in 1886, when it was in this condition, and of making drawings of it for the *American Architect* of Boston. Again I recollect going into the building just before The Institute gained possession of it. It was occupied by eight or ten colored families living in the various rooms. The mantels were masses of dirt, and the house, to those who did not appreciate its beauty, might have been considered a wreck. But, curiously as it may

appear, the only material damage to the house was the incrustated dirt on the mantels and a few missing plaster ornaments."

Frank Miles Day, Robert Stead and Wilson Eyre were appointed by George B. Post, then The Institute's president, to negotiate a lease of The Octagon and issue bonds to put it in order. In November of 1896 the 32nd Convention of The Institute met in Washington and held a meeting in what was to be its new home after January 1, 1899. That date found Henry Van Brunt president and Glenn Brown secretary of The Institute.

"The desirability of purchasing The Octagon before the lease expired was constantly before The Institute, but nothing was accomplished until the administration of President McKim (1902-1903). He immediately authorized the Secretary to make an offer for the purchase of the property for thirty thousand dollars, one-third of which was to be paid in cash. When I informed him that we had only five hundred dollars in the treasury, he said, 'If I cannot get others to join with me, I will send you my own check for the cash payment.' With that understand-

ing I made the offer, which was accepted, and the result is explained in the report of the Board of Directors to the Convention of 1902:

"The Octagon House, in which the interest of the architectural profession has been centered for the past four years, both because of its architectural qualities and as the offices of The Institute, has, after four years of effort and negotiations, passed into the ownership of our Society. To accomplish this end, the Board has agreed to pay thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) for the property, consisting of 22,322 square feet of ground, being 174 feet on New York Avenue, and 181 feet on 18th Street; containing dwelling, stable, and smoke-house. In the purchase of the property several members of The Institute have been generous enough to contribute a portion and underwrite the balance of the first payment of ten thousand dollars. The Board feels assured that the members of The Institute will appreciate the importance to the architectural profession of the possession of a permanent home. The minutes of the various meetings of the Board of Directors, from 1857 to the present time, show that the importance of such a possession has



been a subject of almost yearly discussion, and we feel that the body is to be congratulated upon attaining the accomplishment of this desire and need, which has been felt by The Institute during the past forty-six years.'

"It is worthy of mention that President McKim and myself, as Trustees, signed the deferred notes in the private office in the White

House. McKim, Mead & White were restoring the White House at the time, and I was acting as local superintendent.

"Subscriptions came in satisfactorily, and in the administration of President Cass Gilbert, and largely through his exertions, the final debt of fifteen thousand dollars was cleared off and the property was free."

## The Beaux-Arts in 1900

IN THREE PARTS—PART III

By *Charles Collens, F.A.I.A.*

THERE WAS an American in our atelier, who after several years of residence had acquired the French language to perfection. During the New Year's holidays, he volunteered to conduct a party of the *camarades* on a trip to London, with the intention of returning himself thence to America. The party arrived at Dieppe and boarded the boat for Newhaven. Being tired, they all turned in and were rewarded with a peaceful and dreamless sleep. Coming on deck the next morning, they found their horizon curtailed by a dense fog, which left only a few patches of smooth water as their first glimpse of England. They shook hands all

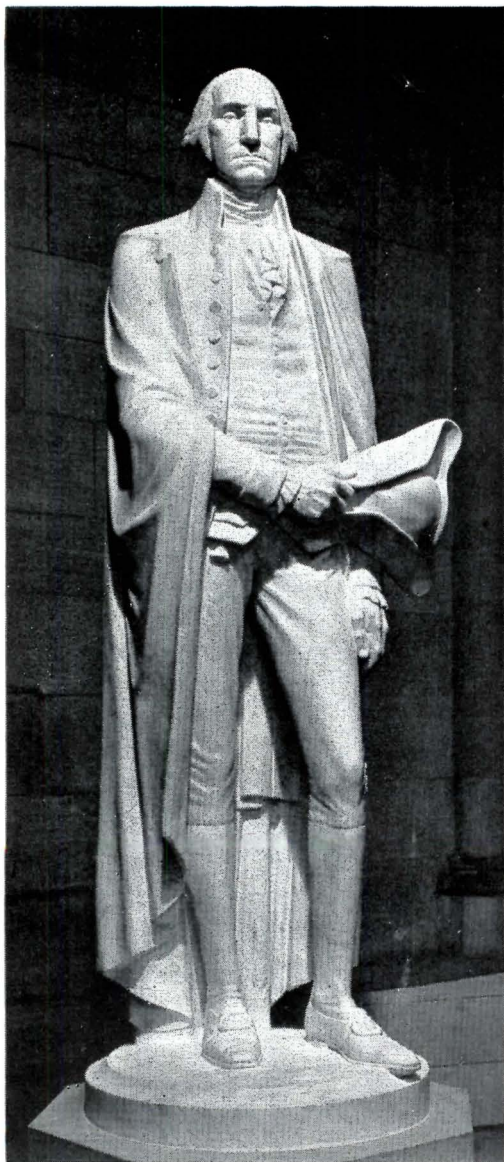
around and congratulated themselves both on their wonderfully smooth passage and that no one had been seasick. Our American, who was wiser than they, regaled them with wonderful tales of what they were soon to see on shore. Coming again on deck after packing up, they found the fog lifting and before them still the old town of Dieppe! The steamer had not sailed, owing to the fog.

Eventually, however, they reached England and spent a famous week, disregarding the necessity of when in Rome doing as the Romans do, and seriously shocked staid old London in an attempt to feel completely at home. Our

American then bade them all a sad farewell, rendered quite touching by the fact that they had all been together for a matter of five years, and ostensibly left for America. He obtained a steamer postcard, wrote a touching tribute to his *camarades* of the atelier, and then betook himself back to France. The following day the postal arrived at the atelier and a somber sacredness hung over this last memento of a student friendship. The next day after, a visitor called at the atelier. He was dressed in black, with the badge of the Legion of Honor in his buttonhole. His hair was white and he had a great white moustache. He was passing through Paris on his way from the South of France, where he held a government position as architect of a province. Great respect was evinced. The *massier* himself took the stranger in charge, who further asserted that he was an ancient graduate of the atelier and would like nothing better than to look over the work of the men and see how it compared with the work of his day. Starting, he began to criticize the problems, and such a raking as he gave them would have caused the patron himself a shrug of surprise. Having ceremoniously taken leave and been thanked for

his kindness in calling, the stranger departed, to return in a few minutes, shorn of his disguise, and none other than our American friend.

I remember an occasion when a Frenchman rendered a project called "A Palace for the National American Presidential Convention," and he wisely thought that a few English notes on his plan would add to the effect. He, accordingly, impressed some of us niggers, and knowing no English himself, entrusted to us the labeling of his work of art. It forthwith appeared in the Exhibition, the elevation flying flags advertising "Mellin's Food," "Sterilized Milk," etc. The different services on the plan were appropriately designated as "Offices of Lydia Pinkham," "The Confidence Man," "Gold Bricks for Sale," "Elevator to Hell," "Stair to Heaven," etc., while ample space was allotted to a grand buffet billed with every known beverage from a "Manhattan Cocktail" to "Mumm's Extra Dry". It may have been due to the foresight in making this ample provision for thirsty American delegates, or the sight of such profound knowledge of the English language that led to the *projet* being "mentioned" by the jury. At any rate, those versed in the mys-



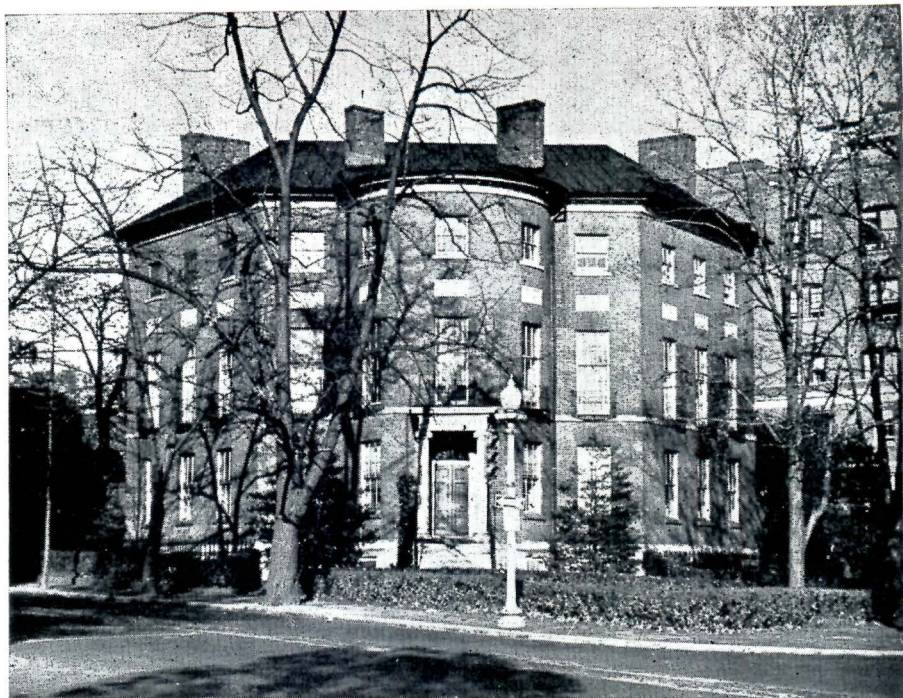
STATUE OF  
GEORGE WASHINGTON  
AS A CHURCHMAN

PRESENTED TO  
WASHINGTON CATHEDRAL,  
FEBRUARY, 1947

LEE LAWRIE,  
SCULPTOR

"I have tried to  
show not the soldier,  
nor the President,  
but the man, Washington,  
coming into church and  
pausing a moment before  
going down the aisle  
to his pew."

*Photograph by Horydczak*



*Do you know this building?*

THE OCTAGON (1798-1800), WASHINGTON, D. C.  
DR. WILLIAM THORNTON, ARCHITECT

teries accorded it unusual inspection, much to the satisfaction of its French author, who, however, probably never understood his success.

It is related that at the Atelier Deglane there was an old lady living down below who had a little garden in which the center of attraction was a bowl containing a miniature turtle. This turtle became an object of great interest to the atelier above. After many parleys about the denizen of the bowl, a plot was finally evolved, and all the *nouveaux* were sent about Paris to bargain for every turtle that could be found. These were then carefully graded for size. Every day when the old lady was absent doing her marketing, the atelier would angle for the turtle and, having hauled him up, would lower in his place the next larger size turtle. Thus, a creature which takes decades to mature increased in a few weeks' time from a few inches in diameter to about a foot, much to the amazement of the entire neighborhood. Having reached its maximum, this famous turtle now began to decrease daily in size until it finally regained its former status, to the increased bewilderment of owner and neighborhood. It was also rumored that some

famous French savants were interested in this remarkable case, but that is a part of the tale which I cannot substantiate.

Our annual atelier dinner was always the occasion of a general frolic. These dinners usually occurred at Montmartre, as far away as possible from the scene of daily work, so that any damage incurred was not too inconveniently near afterward. The dinner started with all seriousness, many of the men never tasting a table d'hote except in this wise. When all available food and drink had been disposed of, it was customary to tie all the napkins together around the table, dampen down the knots, and retire precipitately, leaving the waiters problems to unravel, which may have occupied several days. Then ensued a visit to all of the attractions on Montmartre, including such well known places as "Heaven," "Hell," the "End of the World," etc., at each of which the *massier* bargained for the crowd, and the atelier proceeded to raise particular Cain. After being ejected from these places in turn, we wended our way toward the Moulin Rouge, where we joined hands, swept the floor of all dancers, assumed the center of attraction, and proceeded to show off.

The longest and shortest men delighted the audience with wonderful contortions, and were joined by the thinnest and fattest men, to the increased wonderment. After incensing the orchestra by dropping oranges and cigarettes down the big horns, and performing a few other feats contrary to the established rules of the management, the Garde Republicain awakened to a sense of duty and gave us the alternative of a night in the lock-up or a precipitous exit. Choosing the latter, a series of cavalry charges and other military pursuits served to pass the time in transit to the Opera House where we duly paid reverence to the memory of Charles Garnier. Next in order came a redeeming bath to as many *nouveaux* as could be rendered *a poil* and submerged in the fountains at the foot of the Avenue de l'Opera before the advent of the police. Little by little, the crowd dwindled after it crossed the Seine, and the weary *camarades*, having celebrated according to their lights, turned each his own way and the Quartier slept.

Christmas, as you probably know, isn't much of a feast in France, but New Year's is quite an occasion; and to mark the day with especial ceremony, the whole atelier

always made their annual call upon the patron. About three in the afternoon, the *anciens* arrived at the atelier arrayed in top hats and other very unusual garments, looking fairly clean for once. Thereupon we set out *en masse* for the National Library, where the patron always sat in state for this occasion. Our progress as far as the other side of the river was fairly decorous; but someone about this time remarked about the new escalator which had just been placed in the Grands Magazins du Louvre as a great novelty. Our course was accordingly changed and the whole procession filed into the great department store and were mechanically transported to the top and down again at least three times, whereupon the management appeared and requested us to move on. By a series of cavalry charges and aided by the spirited songs of the Quartier, we finally reached the Sacred Presence. M. Pascal had recently lost his wife, and made a very pathetic speech, which sent us all back in a much less jovial mood; but it was decided to correct this later, and a *nouveau* paid the customary *a boire* at the atelier to the complete rehabilitation of the usual Gallic spirits.

In February was rendered by the first-class men what was called the *Concour Rougevin*, a problem for which a special prize was given. This was a two weeks' *projet* instead of the usual two months' allowance, and the national exuberance, which had been bottled up during most of that time *en loge* was accorded an opportunity of being vented in the annual *Rougevin Parade*. All of the *nouveaux*, who were not directly attached to the person of some *ancien* as his nigger were delegated to the decoration of the atelier *charrette*. Poles were erected at the four corners of the cart, covered with canvas, and this in turn adorned with all the art available on so limited a surface. Every atelier attempted to surpass both its former achievements and those of other ateliers.

Once, an atelier appeared in line with plain white cloth covering the four sides of its *charrette*, thus causing the general scorn of the other ateliers, until darkness enabled a calcium light to illuminate the gyrations of an amateur hula dance, thrown against the white surface, which far eclipsed all other efforts and made that atelier the center of attraction.

The *nouveaux* were all dressed

in raiment befitting a carnival of this nature, and the processions from the different ateliers moved toward the Ecole yard to await the first-class men as they emerged from their last day in the *loges*. Our atelier, at some time, had a *camarade* who had been in the Garde Republicain, and had somehow purloined from the government the entire uniform, sword and all. Owing to possible difficulty with the government, should the wearer of this gorgeousness be discovered, an American *nouveau* usually had the honor of leading our atelier, and the parade, in this attire. It happened that my shape suggested to the *anciens* that the uniform would be a good fit, and so I was ruthlessly delegated to don the outfit and march ahead of the rabble.

After all the ateliers were assembled, and a few itinerant musicians corraled from some unknown quarter, the procession started, passing through the rue de Seine to the Boulevard St. Germain, with the light of many colored torches and Chopin's Funeral March or the Dead March from Saul arising in mournful tones from the band. Slowly and solemnly, we passed to the corner of the

Boulevard St. Michel and the rue Soufflot opposite the gaily lighted Cafe du Pantheon, where, by time-honored custom, a wonderful metamorphosis occurred. I was instructed to draw my sword and order the cavalry charge, and so the whole parade with streaming gowns and flying banners stampeded for the Pantheon. The first time I did this my great scabbard got between my legs, and I went sprawling over the cobblestones. We got there before the police, and a big bonfire, composed of all the decorations of the parade, suddenly illuminated the stately portico of the Hall of Fame, and the shades of the worthies therein reposing were treated to the sight of ring within ring of shouting, bloused students, dancing wildly about the light. The police of the arrondissement now took a hand and sallied from the neighboring station with buckets of water. This sorte was heralded with cries of "Bal des Quatz Arts! Bal des Quatz Arts!" and an attempt to douse the brave guardians of the law with their own buckets, until the melee became of such proportion as to make a general retreat toward the neighborhood of the rue Bonaparte a matter of strategic importance.

The mystic cry above recorded is a gentle reminder to the police of a futile attempt on their part several years before to break up the Bal des Quatz Arts, an attempt which assumed the gigantic importance of a street riot. The



Ball was not only for the architects but all ateliers of the "Four Arts," painters, sculptors and engravers, and occurred in our day in April at the Moulin Rouge. The preparations for this grand blague were of the greatest importance, involving meetings of the *anciens* to decide on the costumes of the atelier, the nature of the decorations of the booth, and the float for the Grand Parade. *Nouveaux* were set to work weeks in



advance to create wonderful scenery, and a great deal of the usual time given for the school problems was devoted to sketches for costumes and color effects. In fact, the preparations for this Ball were of such importance that the time spent by the *nouveaux* in conscientious work on the "Charrette des Quatz Arts," so-called, counted as double in the reckoning of their service. After much deliberation the atelier decided to go as decadent Romans, and as such we all appeared.

The Ball itself was a sight never to be forgotten, such a sight as could only occur in Paris and in the atmosphere of an artist community. The booths were gorgeous, each atelier striving to draw the attention of the restless mass of students to admire its own peculiar attraction. In one, decked in oriental splendor and flanked by frowning sphinxes, lithe dancers from Egypt twisted and writhed to the barbaric music. In another, the strains of a soft Italian song lent a charm to the representation of a Venetian palace scene, and so on and on. Everywhere the eye met color, ever-changing like a huge kaleidoscope, and the ear was stunned by the myriad sounds of a great babel. In and out, up and

down, the restless crowd twisted and turned, attracted now here, now there, until, in the early morning, danced out and tired out, it melted away in the ghostly light. Next day, the *nouveau*, returning early to recover the atelier effects, could but think that he had dreamed some great and wonderful dream, and that the desolate, dismantled hall, given over to scavengers and cleaners, could never have been the setting for the weird, unreal picture which his imagination must have conjured up during the small hours of yesternight.

To read of such a life of blague and fun, one does wrong to ignore the underlying seriousness of the architects' student life. It was withal an uphill road paved with many hours of hard work each day and on into the night, with bitter disappointments and failures, and with continual struggle after a facility of solution and expression which at times seemed unattainable. I think that, on the whole, I have never been thrown with a more serious and hard-working body of men than my American associates in Paris. Here, in America, when a company of architects get together, it isn't considered good form to discuss the various pieces of work in which they may

be interested, but in Paris, whenever or wherever men met—in the cafe, in their rooms, or on a day's sketching tour, the one subject of conversation was Architecture, largely personal, the different problems we were working on, or the relative strength of the men whom we knew. Don't think that the stray bits of fun which I have gathered together constitute the whole end and aim of atelier life. We took our work there very seriously in spite of the atmosphere that we had to work in. Perhaps,

after all, we should be much better off if we could completely relax as the Frenchmen do and sandwich in our fun with our work.

As France recovered after previous wars, so she will recover again, but the Beaux-Arts will never again be the sole birthplace of the greatest achievements in contemporary architecture, as our own schools have acquired a superior standing, and the Beaux-Arts graduate is no longer the demi-god that he was before the First World War.

## Honors

ROBERT B. O'CONNOR, born on Long Island, educated at Trinity College and Princeton; for many years a partner in the firm of Morris & O'Connor and now of O'Connor & Kilham, has been given the Medal of Honor of the New York Chapter, A.I.A., for 1946.

GEORGE A. BOEHM, of the New York Chapter, has prepared for the City of Mount Vernon, New York, its new Building Code.

E. WARREN HOAK has been appointed one of seven citizens making up South Pasadena's first Planning Commission.

## News of the Chapters and Other Architectural Organizations

CHICAGO CHAPTER recently held a panel discussion on the subject of Airport Terminal Buildings. Nor did Chicago hide its de-

liberations under a bushel—in attendance were members of the following Chapters: Detroit, St. Louis, St. Paul, Cleveland, New

York, Denver, Philadelphia, Central Illinois, Indiana, and Virginia.

CLEVELAND CHAPTER has taken over the Cleveland Museum's largest gallery for an exhibition of architectural development begun since the War—commercial, residential, industrial, recreational, health, religious, educational and safety.

NEW YORK CHAPTER'S Frederick J. Woodbridge and Harold R. Sleeper are giving a practical course for the home builder in ten sessions of the Institute of Arts and Sciences at Columbia University.

CALIFORNIA COUNCIL OF ARCHITECTS has adopted a legislative program providing for more representative direction of the State Department of Public Works. The Council is also striving for uniformity of building ordinances, better state and city governments, the abolition of overlapping codes and the coordination of the entire construction industry.

WASHINGTON, D. C. CHAPTER has resumed its War-interrupted program of publicly recognizing

merit in local buildings with the aid of the Washington Board of Trade. A Committee awards certificates of merit to the owners, builders and architects of new buildings, remodeled buildings, and signs. A jury of three well-known architects makes the selections.



ROCHESTER SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTS has developed two programs to be used with an application for "training-on-the-job" approval. One is for the veteran applicant with no college experience, with the objective job title of "junior architectural draftsman." The other is for the veteran applicant with college experience, with the objective job title of "architectural draftsman."



THE ARCHITECTURAL LEAGUE OF NEW YORK is preparing an unusual type of exhibition. It will show current work of its members, both resident and non-resident, all in the planning or construction stage, rather than as executed work. The exhibition will continue from April 3rd to September 15th, and the material shown will be changed from time to time at each exhibitor's discretion.

## A Frank Letter and Its Answer

By *Walter Gropius and Joseph D. Leland, F.A.I.A.*

**D**EAR MR. LELAND: When you came to see me in my office the other day I promised to write down, at your request and in time for your meeting in Washington, some comments on the position of our profession today and on what steps might be advisable for improvements.

I should like to start with the appraisal of the weight and valuation given to our profession by the average people and by authorities according to evidence collected in recent years.

Everywhere we have encountered a similar erroneous and naive conviction that the architect belongs to a luxurious gentleman profession of the adorners whose task it is to beautify buildings which are constructed by builders and engineers. Whereas the builders and engineers are considered as the practitioners to be indispensable with, though his work is considered as a desirable esthetic surplus. But worse than that, many of us have been shocked by the opinion of Army and Navy authorities expressed in letters during the War, who did not see fit to make use of architects as competent technicians for the war effort.

This was a warning signal which has caused us to recognize that our profession has obviously failed so far to form a proper public opinion about the potential useful service

which the architect can offer to his community when he has been properly trained. You, Mr. Leland, must have felt similarly when you started your excellent, successful campaign for better public relations.

If I venture to make some further suggestions, I do this because I believe that this very complex problem of how to clarify public opinion has to be attacked at various angles simultaneously; simultaneously in the fields of information, of education and of organization within our own ranks.

### INFORMATION:

a. I would like to see in the hands of each architect a clear statement of the desirable aims of our profession, expressed in terms of high standards which would challenge the new generation of architects. It should outline the architect as a coordinator and team leader whose business it is to unify the various social, technical, economic and formal problems that arise in connection with building, as well as to unify the many individuals connected with a building job.

b. A well-written, illustrated pamphlet, outlining the architect's services to his client and describing the advantages he has to offer him could be a useful weapon in breaking down the false conceptions of potential clients—private and pub-

lic. It should point out the trustee-character of the architect's activity giving the client protection against technical deficiencies and against over-charging which alone will amply balance the cost for his service.

c. Organized information of Representatives and Senators—Federal and State—as well as of other influential personalities, will be of basic importance (this being well on the way, thanks to your initiative).

#### EDUCATION:

If we put our professional aims on a high level, we must of course be sure that the educational training is built up around these very aims, and that it will also provide the potential future architect with experience and knowledge broad enough to live up to these aims.

At present the professional training is very uneven throughout the States and needs better synchronization as to requirements as well as to the methods of approach. Intelligent integration of the social, technical, economic and formal problems of design into a consistent entity—so indispensable for the betterment of our physical surroundings — is rarely taught, though it seems to be of so much greater importance than the training of any special skill or knowledge.

The greatest deficiency, however, is the utter lack of field experience. For instance, of the many mature students coming into my Master course at Harvard, the

great majority had never seen a building being built. All the training they received was at the platonic drafting-board only. But flashing and roofing, of course, as well as methods to straighten out the usual frictions between subcontractors working together on a job, can be learned in the field only. At Harvard, evidence has shown that a young architect who has had opportunity to work at least for a summer as an assistant to a foreman or a supervisor in the field, during the first or second year at school, is able to absorb further training faster, since he is now in a position to relate it to actual experiences of his own.

I enclose an article which I have written for the *Bay State Builder* in 1945 which gives more details about this desirable addition to our professional curriculum. Since that time I have built up an organization with the Associated General Contractors of Massachusetts to place our Harvard students regularly on summer jobs in the field (see enclosed sheets giving the conditions). Last summer twenty-seven students passed their field experience, which is obligatory for anybody applying for a degree in our Harvard Department of Architecture. The favorable experiences made with this field practice during the last six years urges me to strongly advise that The A.I.A. make a campaign to have field experience made obligatory for all the architectural schools throughout the country.

## REORGANIZATION OF OUR OWN RANKS:

This point in question is no doubt the most difficult one. As I have the desire to make these comments more specific, I had arranged discussions with various groups of younger colleagues in our region. Since you have asked me to be frank in my letter to you, I shall try to give you a true picture of what the typical criticisms of the present trend of The A.I.A. are.

First of all they feel that the cleavage between the so-called "traditionalist" and the so-called "modernist" must be bridged with good-will from both sides under the heading, "Let's strive to give the best possible service and to respect the other fellow's approach."

There are complaints, however, about the "condescending" attitude of the traditionalist and about much "sniping" in public and in private at the modern architect's philosophy and work (I have to admit that I too have personally experienced this aplenty around Boston).

Several architects—men with respectable records—told me that they do not feel to be welcome within The A.I.A., as they do not see that the modern architect is given an opportunity to make his opinion known among their older colleagues, that in spite of the growing recognition of the modern approach and of its representatives by public opinion, hardly any responsible position in The A.I.A.

organization is filled by one of them; nor that the general policy of The A.I.A. indicates that the Board wants them actively and responsibly to participate, but at the most would tolerate them only. It was further stated that a public interest in the modern approach to architectural design, built up with the help of private magazines—*Forum, Record, Pencil Points*—is not being supported by The A.I.A. magazine, which hardly ever opens its pages to one of the many brilliant young colleagues who won many nation-wide competitions during the recent years. The A.I.A. magazine is considered "stuffy" and "uninspiring," and not giving any boost or stimulation to the younger generation.

For all these reasons there seems to be a widespread apprehension that a roster might not further, but restrict, their chances for commissions unless they would be represented themselves within the boards making decisions, thus being able to protect their interests. This, however, is not a point of doubting the honesty of the older colleagues handling these affairs, but rather one of doubting their understanding the modernists' point of view and ability. As a rather sweeping example of the possible disadvantages of a roster, the one made by the American Hospital Association, Chicago (Mr. John Bugbee) has been cited. Their requirements to get a job are perpetuating a status quo, not leaving any chances to younger men. They require that

the competitor has designed at least three hospitals, one of which must have been executed.

Such a roster creates monopolies in favor of a small group of recognized "experts" (about 50 only in the whole nation; 4 in Massachusetts). This method must lead to stagnation and is definitely against the interests of the profession as a whole. It has made a bad impression that The A.I.A. did not launch a vigorous protest against so one-sided a plan of selecting hospital designers. Here is the opportunity for The A.I.A. to protect the chances of the whole membership and to give also the younger generation a break. The A.I.A. should stand for the sound principle that an architect, well versatile in design and construction, will keep a greater resourcefulness through a variety of tasks given him than by specializing in a narrow field. He needs not to be a specialist himself, as an expert adviser can be placed on his side in each case, be it for a school, a hospital, a factory or a housing scheme. The most valuable contribution an architect can offer his client, namely a fresh point of view, for the solution of his building problem, is too easily lost through frequent repetition of the specialist's formulas.

Doubts have been further expressed regarding the method of qualifications in the roster according to the dollar value of jobs handled. This is considered an obstacle which might exclude the

younger colleagues altogether when they compete for public buildings, for authorities are expected to push automatically aside all those competitors whose record does not show the required volume of former activities. The question remains entirely open by what magic the younger architect might one day be considered mature enough to be then accepted as a designer for a larger job.

I cannot help feeling that a roster will create a grade B architect within our own organization. And that, as careful as we may be to find an honest and just system of classification, this will ever remain a ticklish and delicate job subject to human inadequacies.

I think The A.I.A. should support *all* its members and should better not accept those colleagues as members at all who have not shown sufficient ability to handle jobs in practice. The state examination is a good safeguard and The A.I.A. should therefore do away with any roster or like discrimination among those who have acquired the rights of full membership.

TO SUM UP THIS REPORT:

I see an open crisis within The A.I.A. and a real danger of splitting if we should not find the means to eliminate the causes of well-substantiated grievances of the younger generation.

I appreciate it much that you, Mr. Leland, have taken the initiative to exchange views. I, therefore, have felt that I should take

pains upon this subject in order to be able to contribute some relevant comments. I have tried to give you an unvarnished picture of the murmurs going on in a rather large group of practising modern architects. I am largely in agreement with them, but so far I have repeatedly taken a stand against a split as I believe this would have had consequences for the profession as a whole which has to fight first of all, as we have seen, to gain a more favorable public opinion. I am,

Sincerely yours,  
(Signed) WALTER GROPIUS.



DEAR MR. GROPIUS:

I am more than grateful to you for your sincere interest and co-operation, and for the very enlightening comments contained in your letter of November 25. Only through the expressions of the members of The Institute, themselves, can there come a broader understanding and better feeling of professional fellowship. Without a cooperative spirit between young and old, modernist and traditionalist, no progressive or constructive work can be accomplished. It is the duty of every member of The Institute to work for the best interests of his profession as a whole. Only in this way can worth-while results accrue to its membership.

With your permission I should like to refer to certain paragraphs in your letter and comment on them as follows:

#### INFORMATION:

If you have not already seen them, I should like to procure for you, two booklets:

(1) "Architecture—A Profession and a Career," which was published by The A.I.A. through its Committee on Education.

(2) Another booklet with the same title published by the Rochester Society of Architects a short time ago, which version is much more specific and more concerned with the client's point of view and questions.

#### EDUCATION:

You will recall that the July, 1945 issue of the *Bay State Builder* published an article by you under the title, "Practical Field Experience in Building to be an Integral Part of an Architect's Training." This article was, with your permission, reprinted in the *JOURNAL* of The A.I.A. in November, 1945 under the title, "Field Experience and the Making of an Architect."

#### REORGANIZATION OF OUR OWN RANKS:

"Let's strive to give the best possible service and to respect the other fellow's approach" is an excellent motto. The Institute wants help on how best to put it over to the profession.

"Sniping" between traditionalists and modernists, I think you will agree, is by no means confined to either side. The Institute is open for suggestions as how best to go about stopping it.

APRIL, 1947



Personally, I can not understand why there should be any feeling of unwelcomeness, and The A.I.A., I am sure, would be grateful for suggestions from Institute members on how to eradicate any sense of unfriendliness and how to stimulate a feeling of cordiality instead.

There are modernists on Institute committees, and there shall be more. Have you any suggestions for the coming Institute Convention? Shall there be a forum? Or round table? What subjects should be included in the program?

I am sure you will agree that the modernist has had every opportunity to present his views in the JOURNAL. I, personally, for example, urged Dean Hudnut to write for the JOURNAL, without success. And in the three years the JOURNAL has been published, not one single contributed article from a modernist has been declined. The appeals for opinions from the younger men have been made in vain.

If the younger men consider the JOURNAL "stuffy," I would venture to promise that their suggestions and help in an effort to make it "less stuffy" would be welcomed. Here again, "Let us strive to respect the other fellow's approach—modernist and traditionalist."

AMERICAN HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION:

The A.I.A. Executive Committee in August, 1945 urged the American Hospital Association to drop the three-hospital require-

ment as being manifestly unfair and confining the list to a steadily dwindling roster. This requirement of the A.H.A. was continued in spite of A.I.A. recommendation, and published without the knowledge of The A.I.A.

"ROSTER" AND "REGISTER OF ARCHITECTS QUALIFIED FOR FEDERAL PUBLIC WORKS":

Due to the many pros and cons registered in regard to the "Roster" and "Register of Architects Qualified for Federal Public Works," as Chairman of The Institute's Committee on the Architect and Governmental Relations, I am making an effort to reconcile all points of view—difficult as it may be.

I should like to ask you again for your considered specific suggestions. You have the questionnaire and the letter that accompanied it. Would you review both and give me your group's specific suggestions?

At The A.I.A. Directors' meeting in New Orleans in December the Board directed that the "Register of Architects Qualified for Federal Public Works" be *not* made available for use by Federal authorities until after the 1947 Convention.

Thank you for your continued assistance and giving of your time.

With kind personal regards,

Sincerely,

(Signed) JOSEPH D. LELAND  
Director, New England District



# Architects Read and Write

Letters from readers—discussion, argumentative, corrective, even vituperative.



## ECCLECTICISM RAMPANT

BY DELOS H. SMITH, Washington, D. C.

IN Paxton's Directory of Philadelphia, 1819, there appears the following advertisement of William Grinnell, American plane manufacturer:

"Bench planes . . . Grooving and Sash planes, Regular and Quirked mouldings, of Roman, Grecian and Gothic taste. . . ."

For the architect, this echoes the plaintive note of early Victorian eclecticism, out of the dead past, when Mr. Grinnell was the stream-

line craftsman. Today, truly, he would be likened to Mr. Five by Five unless his repertoire of "taste" included those of Cram, Pope, and Corbusier. And so, times change. Or, do they?

Would it be crude to suggest that eclecticism is still rampant, or is this fairly One-of-the-Things-That-Editors-Ought-to-Know?

After all, we have learned on good authority that, It's Better to Be Wright than Precedent.

## "THE BEAUX-ARTS IN 1900"

BY JOHN J. KLABER, Huntington, N. Y.

MAY I BE PERMITTED to call your attention to a few minor errors which mar Mr. Colens' very excellent article in the JOURNAL? I was at Pascal's a little later than he was, but the place had not changed.

Colerosi should, I think, be Colarossi.

Daumet and Esquié were two successive patrons of the same atelier. Among others that were prominent at the time, Redon and Bernier should be mentioned.

Théâtre Nationale should (grammatically) be Théâtre National; but there is no theater of that name; could it have been the Theatre Francais?

Ateliers were not so secret as all that. I have often visited friends in other ateliers, and was never molested.

An *en loge* should be an *esquisse*.

*Hors de concours* should be *hors concours*.

Military medals were not awarded in the Ecole.

Rue Mazarin should be Rue Mazarine. [Small r, please.—Ed.]

*Les petites camarades* should be *les petits camarades*. The comrades were male, not female.

*Susmassier* should be *sous-massier*.

*Le poiteau* should be *le poteau*.

Perhaps I have missed a few. But it's a good story, just the same.

APRIL, 1947

## The Editor's Asides

PRINCETON'S Bicentennial Conference on Mankind's Physical Environment has come and gone. Some of the formal statements made by conferees are excerpted on another page. Shaken together and tasted as a mixture they may give a faint sense of the direction of architectural thinking today. No one thought expressed during the two days is likely to swerve the course of architectural development by an appreciable degree.

You cannot, however, bring face to face a group of men such as Alvar Aalto, Hugh Ferriss, Robert Moses, Frank Lloyd Wright, Gordon Lorimer, Roland Wank, Richard Neutra, Ralph Walker, John Burchard, Aymar Embury, Serge Chermayeff, Roger Greeley, Carlos Contreras, Louis Justement, Fred Keck, Joseph Hudnut, Howard Vermilya, Talbot Hamlin, Walter Gropius, Kenneth Johnstone, George Howe, Siegfried Giedion, Richard Bennett, Leopold Arnaud, Roy Jones, José Sert, Mies van der Rohe, Jean Labatut—to mention less than half of the distinguished group—without some powerful reaction,

whether chemical, electrical, physical or psychological. Sparks are expected to fly—and they do.

It will be no surprise to anyone with experience in conferences of this type, though of a lesser voltage in glamor and fame, to hear again this common impression: memories of the participants record not the weighty, carefully prepared opinions contributed in the formal sessions. Rather does one treasure in his memory, for later re-tasting, the impromptu quip, the pat anecdote, the impertinent question and devastating retort, heard at grill room table or bar. Surprising, delightful and memorable incidents occur when the formality of stated meetings has been put aside. A host of such memories comes to mind. Someone, apropos of nothing, weighs the comparative emotional appeals, to men, of woman's low heels as against high. Another paints a realistic picture of the vodka capacity of Russian construction engineers. Frank Lloyd Wright tells a small group that he knows something of unions—the C.I.O. and A.F. of L. for in-

stance, but just what is this A.I.A. union? George Howe returns the barbed shaft dexterously, putting an end to that train of thought. Robert Moses tells of coming, begrimed, from a tunnel inspection and worming himself and friends past the vast outlying defenses—receptionists, secretaries and uniformed guards—to inform Grover Whalen, then the New York World's Fair chief, that they had come to lunch with him in his state dining-room. To Moses' comment to the steward upon the excellence of the steaks, the steward replied, "They *ought* to be good; they were flown here this morning from Chicago."

And so the informal hours of the conference quickly sped. One heard few words relating to the serious problems of Mankind's Physical Environment. Occasionally one might find two or three educators talking of education. Seldom if ever did one find architects talking of architecture. Perhaps we have reached that moment in architectural development when the actions, needs and desires of human beings are of more importance to architects than the forms and materials of the ages—including our own. Amen.

IN THE RECENT COMPETITION for Charleston's (S. C.) Municipal Airport, the firm of Simons & Lapham offered two entries, one in the name of one partner and one in the name of the other. The Jury awarded the two entries first and third places. That seems to come under the head of calling one's shots.

ONE HEARS FREQUENT COMMENT that a large part of the advertising directed at architects does not speak their language, either in words or in layout. In that connection it is interesting to note that two of the advertisements in this issue were prepared by architects: the page facing Contents, by Romer Shawhan; and the page facing first page of text, by Ernest Born.

TO BUSINESS AND CIVIC LEADERS attending a February luncheon in Los Angeles was revealed a well-kept secret—that a twenty-three-acre downtown site had been set aside for an auditorium and an opera house. Two streets of the gridiron plan will have to be tunneled under the site. The auditorium, with a seating capacity of 30,000, is expected to make of Los Angeles a principal convention city.



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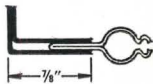
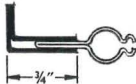
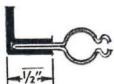
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## FRICTION ANGLES

(Detail 50)



These angles hold Rolscreen guides frictionally and come in  $\frac{1}{2}$ ",  $\frac{5}{8}$ ",  $\frac{3}{4}$ ",  $\frac{7}{8}$ " depths to allow use of stock size Rolscreens. Friction angles are screwed to stop or jamb. No fitting or cutting necessary. Very easy to apply to existing windows. Cap at top of angle supports Rolscreen housing. Give width and height of window and correct size friction angles will be furnished.



## DIRECT ATTACHMENT (Detail 908)

Rolscreen guide leg fastens directly to face of steel window frame. Guide leg is notched to fit around sash lock. Cap welded to top of guide leg supports Rolscreen housing. Rolscreen need not lower all the way to sill. It can cover just the daylight opening of open sash.

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Rolscreen box rests on top of the stops with the back of the housing flush with the inside edge of the parting bead at the head jamb.

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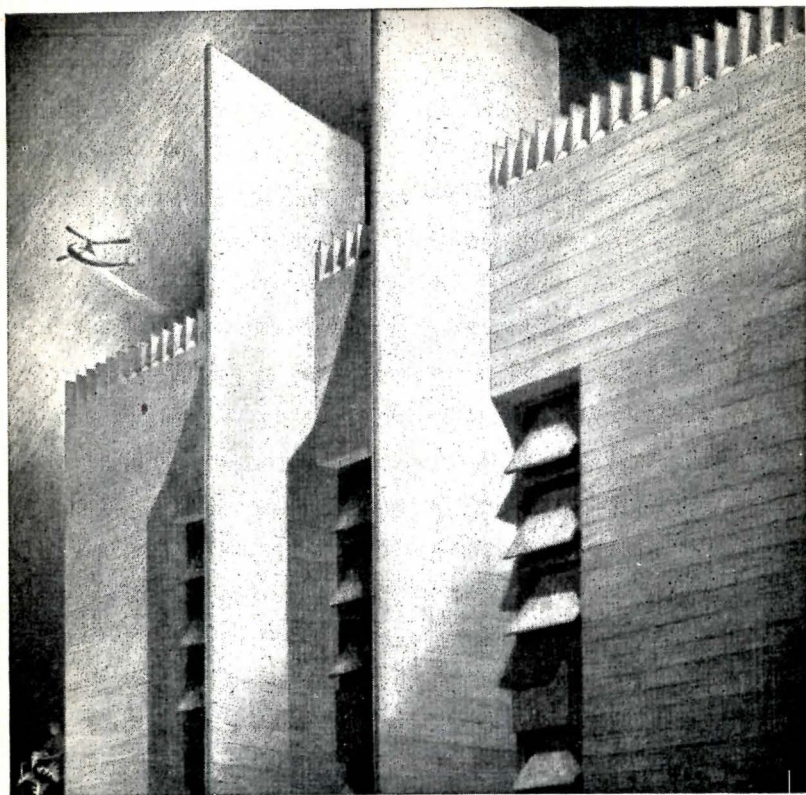


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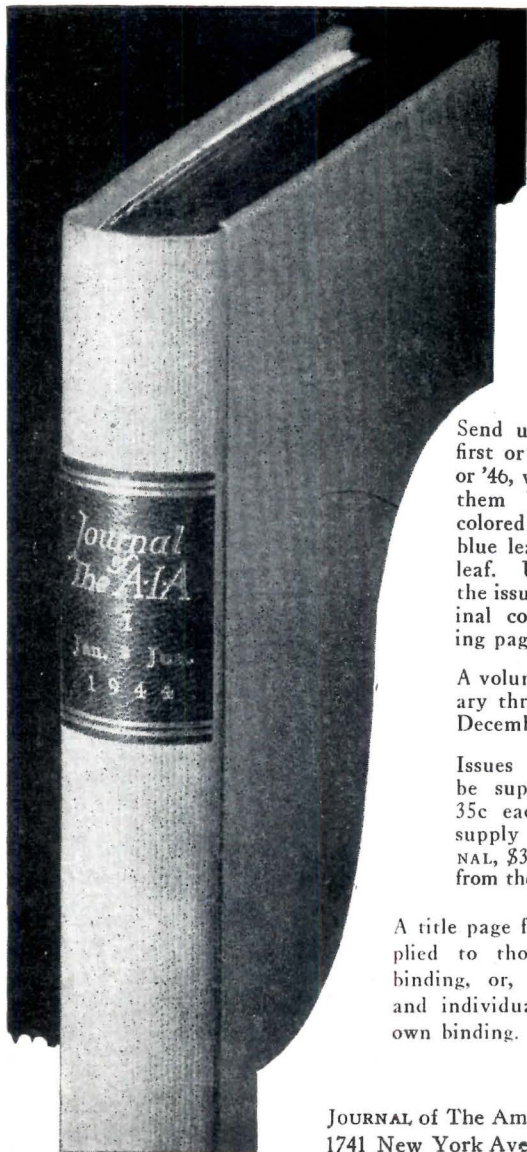
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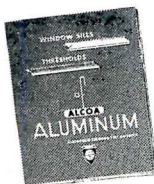
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