

Journal of The American Institute of  
**ARCHITECTS**



AUGUSTUS PUGIN

January, 1949

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Guest Editorial by Walter T. Rolfe, F.A.I.A.

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The National Trust for Historic Preservation

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A Journalist Looks at Education—I

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Tax-relief for Architects

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Doric Interlude—I

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The Engineers' Ethics

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The "New Look" in Public Buildings

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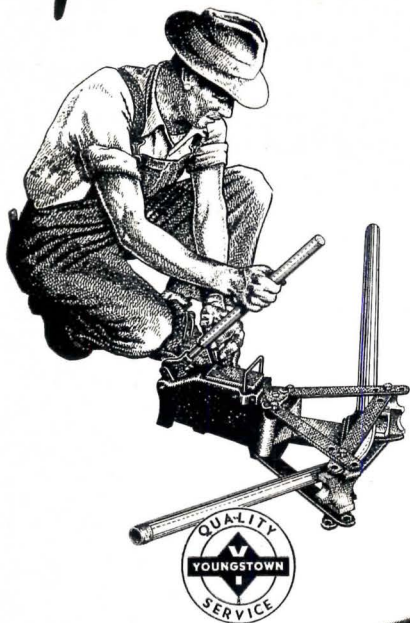
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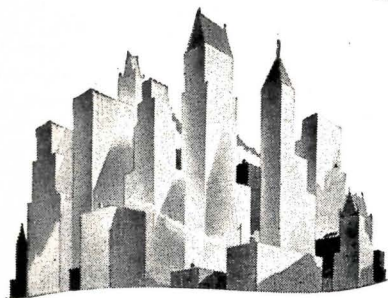
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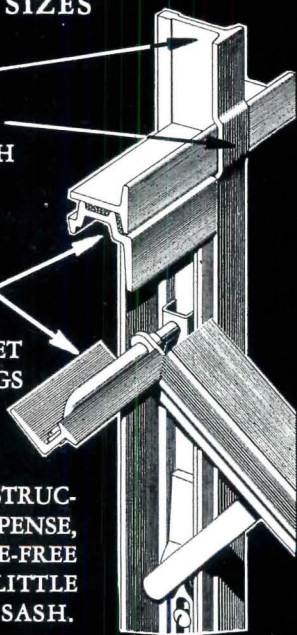
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*In this sixth in our series, the Guest Editor balks at the tradition that has been jelling in these few months. The previous Guest Editors, he thinks, have been very informative, thoughtful, even Shakespearian in their splendid writings. In contrast, somewhat reminiscent of the man who, in a quiet pause in a funeral service, said that he would like to say a few words for Los Angeles, the present Guest feels moved to speak in the role of host for the forthcoming Convention at Houston. Gentlemen,*

*Walter T. Rolfe, F.A.I.A.*

**B**REAKING all conventional rules, this editorial will assume the first person familiar, because any other kind would not convey the warmth, the interest, and, I hope, the kindly humor the situation inspires.

Houston is Houston. It has been referred to (by a noted Houston reporter) as a "whiskey & trombone" city. My friends tell me, however, this is not quite true. They have found it difficult to find trombones. Of course, we wouldn't know.

Houston and its environs are a dramatic and adventuresome enigma even to us natives. It is growing so fast that what was a rolling virgin prairie only yesterday, today is the fore-garden of McCarthy's

Shramrock Hotel. Over the mysterious lowlands where once there was nothing higher than a crayfish hole and nothing lower than a surface flounder, now stand great industrial installations which extract magnesium from sea water and refine high-octane gasoline from crude oil. Not one, but many, of these vast industrial enterprises have been added in the current few years.

Houston spreads over many acres and miles of space. It is absolutely flat. Its greatest mountain is perhaps ten feet high, and if it had a hill of one hundred feet, it could be sold for five million dollars, or more. Oil is everywhere and commonplace. An irate citizen vented his spleen over finding oil in his

water well. He wanted water. Only the people from outside get excited over thousands of oil derricks. In the main, they are a nuisance because aviators and wild geese fly into them (once in a while). However, they are convenient because oil means money and apparently lots of it. We wouldn't know.

Speaking of money, we rather like the complete indifference to it that Texans have acquired. They spend lots of it for almost anything that occurs to them and are completely indifferent as to what anyone else may think about it. Money is a convenience, a commodity—apparently oh so pleasant—and plentiful in places.

Our humorous writers have developed a firm philosophy on such important topics as "crawdad" holes, and whether the "dad" comes in from the top and drills downward, or whether he comes in from the bottom and drills upward. To men and women who like to hunt and fish and tell big lies, this information is important.

The summer has been dry in Houston up to this minute. Some twenty-five inches of rainfall are needed to bring the weather and us natives back to normal. Of course,

we may be back to normal before you get this so-called editorial. If less than five inches of rain falls in twenty minutes, we arch our eyebrows and allow that things are slipping. We get used to seeing water everywhere, including the rice paddies where the heron stands with one foot lifted and his weather eye cocked toward the most beautiful sunset on this earth.

Houston has its symphony, its museum, a few universities and the prerequisite number of schools. It has tall buildings and flat ones. It has a few outstanding ones that provoke architects to come down for a look-over. Houston also has bayous and pine trees. It has live-oaks and timber. Down the river a ways, it has a monument erected to the Anglo-Saxons and Latins who held a musket debate as to whether carpenters or masons were preferable — unfortunately, they shot the masons and our carpentry has never been the same since then.

On this same battleground, the old battleship *Texas* is tied up forever. Most states only christen their battleships and let them go out and fight until they die (or we sell them as scrap to our future enemies.) We bring ours back home and sell hamburgers on it.



Of course, we also feel moments of deep appreciation and tenderness while viewing the old battlewagon that has fought so many battles and so well. The hamburgers are not bad either.

The port of Houston ships to all ports in the world. To see a tanker riding up the prairie through the channel is enough to make us take up the trombone as the safer procedure.

All this, of course, is apropos of

The Institute's coming to Houston next March. This editorial is completely unofficial, unorthodox, unnecessary and probably unwise.

We do hope you will come, for if you see azaleas and camellias under the tall pine forest with the clear blue sky overhead you will understand why we put up with the hurricanes, the "crawdads," the mosquitoes and the flatlands, for our paradise, frankly speaking, has as many unusual features as do the other paradises.

**A studied answer to the question: How can we make sure that our national treasures—historical, scenic, recreational or architectural—are preserved for us and for our children?**

## The National Council for Historic Sites and Buildings and the National Trust for Historic Preservation

*By David E. Finley*

DIRECTOR, NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

An address by one who is also Chairman of the Executive Board, National Council for Historic Sites and Buildings, at the Council's annual meeting in Washington, November 4, 1948

THE Executive Board of this organization held a meeting about two weeks ago at which we had a short but profitable discussion of the subject I have been asked to talk about today—namely, the present and future role of the

National Council for Historic Sites and Buildings.

At the Board meeting the discussion arose in connection with consideration of plans for seeking from Congress a charter for the proposed National Trust for His-

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toric Preservation, of which the details have been worked out by Mr. Alexander Smith, Jr. and his committee. The members of the Board felt that we should all give serious consideration to the role which the Trust can play in carrying out the purposes of its parent organization—the National Council for Historic Sites and Buildings. They also felt that, in order to justify our own existence and certainly to justify to Congress the creation of a new, subsidiary organization, we must be quite clear in our own minds as to just what our opportunities for usefulness will be and how we propose to meet those opportunities.

In the back of all our minds probably is the thought of the British National Trust and the long list of achievements that stands to its credit in the field of historic preservation. In connection with that Trust, we should also remember the splendid achievements of its American godparent, a more ancient organization known as The Trustees of Public Reservations of the State of Massachusetts. The bylaws of the Massachusetts association were substantially adopted by the British Trust when the latter was organ-

ized in 1895, and I understand the Massachusetts body has the right to nominate a member of the Council of the British Trust.

Both of these organizations were early pioneers in the field and to them we are all indebted for what they have been able to accomplish in preserving historic monuments and scenic areas. We would do well to model ourselves on them in some respects but not entirely, for the situation that confronts us today is very different from that existing in 1895.

Since that time, thanks to the vigorous championship of Theodore Roosevelt, Stephen Mather, Gifford Pinchot, and others, there has been a great awakening in this country to the necessity of safeguarding our natural resources and especially our outstanding scenic areas.

Dr. Mather's great contribution was the organization of our National Park System which is so ably directed by Dr. Drury. What the National Park Service has already accomplished and what it is doing now and is equipped to do in the future fills us all with justifiable pride. It was said of Dr. Mather after his death: "There will never come an end to the good that he has done." I will

add that the same can also be said of the Park Service which he founded.

In view, therefore, of what is being done to safeguard scenic areas, both by the Federal Government and also, to some extent at least, by some of the States, we do not need to shoulder so much responsibility for the preservation of these areas as in the case of England with their National Trust.

Here in this country our National Park Service is doing splendid work not only in scenic preservation but also in acquiring and opening to the public a few of our outstanding houses of architectural or historical importance—such houses as Arlington, Hampton and others.

But the role of the Park Services, is after all limited in this field and circumscribed, as in the case of all Government agencies, and properly so, by limitations imposed by Congress and by the Bureau of the Budget. We must, however, not lean too heavily on the Park Service.

We, in turn, should not be content to fill merely the role of clearing-house for those older societies such as the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society,

the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, and other organizations which have such long and distinguished records and so many achievements to their credit in the field of historic preservation. These and other organizations, which came together in the spring of 1947 to form the National Council for Historic Sites and Buildings, did so because they realized that there was, at that time, a no-man's land in the field of historic preservation which was not filled by any organization, governmental, regional or private, and would seem to be indicated as the field in which the National Council and its proposed subsidiary, the National Trust, could do useful and important work.

First of all, the National Trust, when organized, will provide a legal entity which can assume title to such properties as may be donated to it and can be operated either by the Trust itself, or by some qualified organization to which this responsibility can be delegated. The National Council has now the authority to accept legal title to property, if anyone will be kind enough to make us a gift. But the Council is too large

and unwieldy a body to operate such properties as efficiently as would a smaller and more compact agency, such as we hope the National Trust will be.

We should recognize, however, that neither the National Council nor the National Trust is likely to be given important properties very often on a silver platter, so to speak. "The Lord helps those who help themselves," as most of us have found to be only too true in our own experience.

A case in point is Woodlawn. Last summer, in August, when most of those interested in historic preservation appeared to be happily engaged by the sea or in the mountains in conserving their own natural resources, Woodlawn came on the market. It was bought, for what seems quite a reasonable sum, by a mission society whose plans for its use did not contemplate that it would be opened to the public. A three months' stay of the sale was secured, with the kind cooperation of the mission society, and through the untiring efforts of a few individuals, headed by Mr. George Morris and Mr. Armistead Rood. This group has formed the Woodlawn Memorial Public Foundation, which is now endeavoring to raise more than \$175,000,

so that Woodlawn can be opened to the public as a national monument and operated in the same manner as the neighboring property of Mount Vernon.

This is merely one example of the difficulties that will confront us in taking quick and effective action to preserve important properties for the public. What can we do in such situations? Certainly we cannot expect to provide the Trust with funds sufficient to buy and operate all the desirable properties that may be offered to us. Nor do I think that we can expect, as in England, that the owners will often be in a position to give us title to the property free of incumbrance. There are, however, certain things we can do.

First of all, we must set up criteria as to what properties should be classified as historic or architectural monuments; second, we should list the properties that conform to these requirements; and third, we should try to induce Congress and the various States to pass legislation that will minimize the hardships of owners in continuing to live in such properties and passing them on to the next generation, provided these properties are opened at stated times to the public, as is done in England.

There is a limited number of houses and other buildings of architectural or historic importance in this country that will meet the criteria we shall set up. Among them, there will be only a few of really primary importance. Today the public has access to such shrines as Independence Hall, Mount Vernon, Monticello, Arlington, Kenmore, Stratford, the Adams Mansion at Quincy, and others which are operated as historic house museums. From them the public carries away a renewed feeling of patriotism and a stronger belief in our own American way of life. They understand George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Robert E. Lee and the Adamses better because they have some knowledge of the surroundings in which these great men lived and some appreciation of the tangible objects that filled their homes and were part of their lives.

These great historic houses and others which will be opened to the public in the future correspond to our art and science museums and, like them, they preserve, under glass as it were, the finest specimens of a civilization that is not passing but merely changing and on which we are trying to graft new ways of living that, in some

respects at least, will be not inferior to the old.

But how, may I ask, are future generations to educate themselves and acquire a taste for what is best, not only in architecture and gardens, in pictures and prints, in furniture and textiles, in porcelain and crystal, but also in the amenities that were part of a civilized existence in the past and should be carried into the life we are building for future generations in this country?

In the art museums our people are brought into direct contact with the greatest works of art. In the historical field, however, much still remains to be done. Mr. Rockefeller has provided at Williamsburg an object lesson for all of us as to how it should be done; and this is true also in the case of many other architectural and historical monuments that have been preserved and opened to the public throughout this country. But these monuments are few and far apart, while Americans in fast-moving motorcars, with time on their hands and nowhere to go, crowd the roads and look eagerly for instruction as well as entertainment.

It is not only our business, it is

also their business, to provide objectives which they can visit and enjoy and from which they can take home new ideas for the decoration of their houses and, more important still, a better understanding of history. Somehow, we must induce the average man, woman and child to become interested in these things and conscious of their value. We must make them aware that the National Council for Historic Sites and Buildings and the National Trust for Historic Preservation are their agencies and their clubs to which all can belong and to which all can contribute in saving the important monuments of our American civilization.

We must also enlist the interest and cooperation of powerful and public-spirited bodies throughout the country, such as the Chambers of Commerce, the Rotary Clubs, and others. We should leave nothing undone to bring about a realization of the fact that an important historical or architectural monument, well-preserved and properly shown, can be a source of revenue to a city, as witness Washington, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston, not to speak of London, Paris, Rome, and Florence. Mexico has learned

this lesson, as all of you know who have visited that interesting country. Part of our battle will have been won if we can convince the Chambers of Commerce and other local organizations that their city can acquire greater fame and perhaps more lasting prosperity by maintaining intact a famous and important building, rather than by replacing it with a new skyscraper, such as one may see in any American city.

All this is a long-range program and requires intelligent planning and constant activity by an adequate staff at the headquarters of the National Council and the National Trust. Even a small staff, such as we now have, requires a steady revenue for their salaries and to carry out the work assigned to them. A steady revenue cannot be based on a few sporadic gifts but must be derived from many modest dues, such as would appeal to the average man and woman, provided they are given a quid pro quo that they deem adequate—and by that I mean, such privileges as free access to historic monuments, frequent reports of current and contemplated activities, and lectures with slides and movies in schools and clubs throughout the country.

We cannot expect at first to have large capital funds with which to finance emergency rescue parties. But certainly we should start to build up a revolving fund, by means of gifts and bequests, so that the National Trust will some day have the means to help in cases where quick action is necessary.

Perhaps our most important role will be that of educating people to value and enjoy our own American heritage. It is a positive, active role and one, it seems to me, which we are peculiarly fitted to carry on. We have come into existence at a time when the country has need of us. And certainly we could ask for no more important task than that of helping to preserve intact our own heritage of freedom and culture. This is especially true at this time when America and everything she stands for is under attack by ruthless, militant nations that do not believe in our American way of life or the institutions that produced the fabric we are trying to preserve.

Here in America, since the earliest days, a man has had freedom to choose what is most worthwhile in the cultural life of his time. But freedom to choose, unfortunately, is not a universal privilege

in this strange and uncomfortable world in which we live, divided as it is into two parts; one based on democracy and freedom and the dignity of the individual; the other based on the harsh realities of the police state, the concentration camp, and the forced submission to uniformity in order that all men shall think and see and act alike. Such submission is the absolute negation of human liberty and will eventually warp, if it does not destroy, whatever is left of individual initiative in the totalitarian countries in things that have to do with the mind where spiritual and artistic impulses find their outlet.

In many parts of the world where totalitarian rule extends and the police state lays its heavy hand, the artist, the musician, the architect, is told what to do. His work is judged not by its excellence according to world standards but by its value in building up a consuming nationalism that admits of no equality elsewhere.

Certainly we want no such nationalistic point of view here in our arts or in our architecture. In this happier and more tolerant country a man may choose a design for his house derived from Palla-

dio or Thomas Jefferson or Eliel Saarinen, or from Spain or England or France or Pennsylvania or Cape Cod or the Pueblo Indians. He may be as derivative or as original or as modern as he pleases; and while the result may be a fairly inharmonious landscape, in any event, a man may choose what he wants; and that is very important and in line with American tradition, as taught not only in our histories but in our architecture.

We shall defend a man's right to choose, even to choose badly. But we also owe it to him and to

all Americans to give them criteria on which, in time, they can base an informed judgment. To do this, we must preserve not only our great monuments of the past, but also those built in our own time and that will be built tomorrow and the day after.

Historic preservation is no cloistered, unimportant activity. It is part of the battle we are fighting in America today for the only kind of world that is fit to live in—the kind that generations of Americans have paid with their lives to preserve for us and for those who will come after us.

## Honors

DOUGLAS WILLIAM ORR, F.A.-I.A., President of The A.I.A. has been elected an Honorary Corresponding Member of The Royal Institute of British Architects.

CLAIR W. DITCHY, F.A.I.A. has been appointed by Michigan's incoming Governor to membership on an advisory committee to study and report on the state's housing needs and rent problems.

DANIEL PAUL HIGGINS of Eggers & Higgins, New York, is being presented on January 5, by

Cardinal Spellman, with the 1948 Catholic Youth Organization Club of Champions Award. This is the highest form of recognition given by the Catholic Youth Organization for outstanding and meritorious service to youth. Among the previous recipients of the honor were J. Edgar Hoover, Admiral Nimitz and Cardinal Spellman.

F. RAY LEIMKUEHLER has been appointed to the newly created post of Chief Architect of the St. Louis Board of Education.

JANUARY, 1949



One of the two great certainties can be—and in justice should be—made easier for the professional man

## Tax-relief for Architects

*By Louis Justement, F.A.I.A.*

ARCHITECTS have been enabled to survive the vicissitudes of prosperity and depression because, in the past, the more prudent among them have been able to save, in good years, enough to last through the bad years. But that was before the era of high income taxes.

High income taxes are here to stay for many years, and prudence requires us to adjust ourselves to this condition. It is reasonable, however, to expect a more equitable distribution of the income tax burden. Individuals whose income is subject to excessive fluctuations are now penalized as compared with those whose income is relatively stable. Since there is a certainty of continued income taxes at a high level, it is reasonable to ask for a change in the law so that taxes will not bear more heavily on individuals with fluctuating incomes than on individuals with relatively stable incomes.

When I made the above comments to the Board of Directors' meeting at the Grand Rapids con-

vention of The A.I.A. I was promptly made chairman of a special A.I.A. Committee on Federal Income Tax Legislation.

Our committee first discussed proposals seeking to average income over five-year periods. This direct approach at a solution involved administrative difficulties, however, and the committee then considered the so-called "Silverson plan" which had been called to its attention by Ralph Walker.

Harry Silverson, a partner in the firm of J. K. Lasser & Company, tax consultants, of New York City, has devised a plan which overcomes some of the tax inequities which affect professional men. The Silverson plan, although not primarily designed to overcome inequities growing out of fluctuations in income, can be used for that purpose to a large extent. It has, in addition, the very great merit of appealing to other large professional groups such as the American Bar Association, the American Medical Association, the American Dental Association, the American

Society of Civil Engineers, etc. Our committee, therefore, recommended to the Board of The Institute that the Silverson plan be endorsed. The Board, at its meeting in December 1947, accepted our recommendation and the committee was instructed to work for the adoption of the plan by the Congress. The purpose of this article is to explain the Silverson plan and to seek support for its adoption on the part of our profession.

A very glaring injustice in our income tax structure is the method of taxing so-called earned income, i. e., income derived from salaries, wages, professional fees, and all other forms of remuneration attributable to personal services.

The present method and rate of taxation make it well-nigh impossible for taxpayers whose income is derived primarily from these sources to achieve a modest degree of security. This result is inconsistent with our national policy to encourage the establishment of social security.

In the years prior to the war, the successful doctor, lawyer, architect, accountant, etc, could set aside enough in his peak years of earnings to take care of later years of decreased earnings and eventual retirement. He knew that the in-

creased period of preparation for his profession or vocation, together with the quickened tempo of modern life, cut down the span of his best income-producing years. Therefore the wiser among those groups would lay aside some of their earnings in the fat years for the foreseeable lean years. This building up of a nest egg was possible in those days because the income tax rates left enough in the pocket of the professional or salaried taxpayer.

We started with an income tax law which said that we had to pay taxes in accordance with our ability to pay—which meant the higher the earnings, the higher the percentage payable to the tax collector. No quarrel! The Government also said it had to have taxes from us at least once a year. Again, no quarrel! Graduated rates, even in combination with an annual measurement of ability to pay, produced no shocking results in those years when the surtax rates were modest.

Today, with sharply graduated surtax rates, the result is catastrophic. No longer can the professional or salaried taxpayer plan for his inevitable lean years, and particularly for his retired years. This result is unnecessary.

Because the Treasury needs revenue at least once every twelve months, it does not follow that the taxpayer's ability to pay should be measured arbitrarily by reference to income received over any particular twelve-month period. The injustice of such a measurement is demonstrated even more graphically when we consider the plight of such persons as the author, the actor, the baseball player, the boxer, the screen star or radio personality—all of whom usually enjoy a very intense but short-lived popularity. The bulk of the lifetime earnings of any one of these taxpayers may well be concentrated into a period running from five to fifteen years. Thereafter, their annual incomes may drop precipitately to a small percentage of their earnings in their heyday. To subject the high-income yearly earnings to the kind of surtax rates now on the statute books is inequitable and unjust. Their working lifetime is short, and their age-income progression is steep.

The unfortunate lot of the professional or salaried taxpayer is the result of an unfair and discriminatory scheme of taxation. This becomes obvious if we compare his position with that of the

taxpayer who operates an incorporated business.

Despite the present steep surtax rates, it is still possible for the business man who operates an incorporated business to set aside enough in his years of productive activity to meet his requirements in the closing years of life. In most cases, he need only draw enough from the business to cover his personal living expenses plus personal income tax. The rest of the business earnings are subject to a corporate tax rate ranging from 21% to 38%, depending upon the amount of earnings. There is, of course, the personal tax on dividends to the stockholder. This fairly modest tax is to be contrasted with individual income taxes which are payable under graduated rates attaining approximately 33% at \$10,000, 42% at \$15,000, 49% at \$20,000 and 55% at \$26,000. When the taxpayer is married and his wife has comparatively little income, the effective rates are lower than those indicated, but are still high in comparison with the corporate tax rate.

If the business is successful, it can expand and increase in net worth over the years. When he is ready to retire, the corporation

owner can turn the responsibility of management over to others and content himself with dividends. If he wishes to reduce somewhat the impact of the personal tax on dividends, he can make gifts of some of his stock to members of his family who are in relatively low income-tax brackets. If he sells his business, any profit (including appreciation in good will or in other corporate asset values) is subject to a maximum tax of 25%. When he dies, his family can continue to operate the business or sell it, re-investing the proceeds.

Furthermore, during his productive period, he can establish a pension trust for all the employees of the corporation including himself. As the corporation pays money for it into the pension fund each year, it receives a tax deduction. Neither he nor any other employee need include such amounts in their taxable income at that time. When he retires and begins to draw down his pension money, only then does he report his drawings, which are the income of former years, as taxable income. And at that time his income usually will have fallen into more modest brackets. Irrespective of the bracket, however, he has the income when he needs it most—when he is no longer such an active

income-producer, when he is ill or advanced in years. These measures of security available to the business man, professional or otherwise, doing business in corporate form are denied to taxpayers doing business as partners or as individuals.

To the extent that a corporate owner of a business who is also an employee of the corporation may cover himself in a pension plan established by the corporation for its employees, there is a discrimination against persons doing business as partners or as individual proprietors. For under the present law, partners and individual proprietors may not be included in pension plans.

It is proposed that these discriminations and injustices be rectified as soon as Congress can be persuaded to do so, by the following change in the tax law:

The adoption of a personal individual retirement plan. Under such a plan every person with earned income (whether partner, self-employed, or employee) would be permitted to set aside some of his income for his old age. This he would do by purchasing from current earned income a limited amount of special, non-negotiable Government bonds, the cost of

which would be excluded from his income in the year of purchase for tax purposes. The suggested limit is 15% of earned income or \$10,000, whichever is less. In later life, when he cashes any of the bonds, the proceeds thereof become taxable as income in the year in which cashed.

The preceding paragraph is a brief description of the proposal referred to above as the "Silver-son plan." It will be seen that this plan, although intended primarily to permit the accumulation of reserves for old age, will also tend to solve the special problem faced by architects; inequities in taxation caused by excessive fluctuations in

income. For there is nothing in the proposal that would prevent the taxpayer from cashing his bonds in a bad year instead of waiting until his old age.

We expect to have a bill on this subject introduced early in the next session of Congress. The members will be informed, through the JOURNAL and the BULLETIN, concerning the author of the bill and its number as soon as this information is available. We hope that we may count on your active support for a measure that is not merely in our own interests but is a matter of simple justice in distributing fairly the tax burdens that must be imposed.

## The Hammond-Harwood House

THE HAMMOND-HARWOOD HOUSE in Annapolis, Maryland, owned and operated by the Hammond-Harwood House Association Inc. for the public, is one of the outstanding examples of Colonial American architecture of the second half of the eighteenth century in America. It has been closed for some months for redecoration and refurnishing. The house is now reopened to the public. A considerable amount of contemporary furniture has been

recently acquired and a new set of curtains for the entire house has been copied from old documents by Franco Scalamandre and designed by Mrs. Lounsberry. The house today gives very much the impression of what it must have looked like when first built in 1770.

The hours are 10 A. M.—4 P. M. (1-4 on Sundays) in winter and 10 A. M.—5 P. M. in summer (1-5 on Sundays).

Reasserting the thesis that architecture is more than buildings, and it should be taught accordingly

## A Journalist Looks at Education

IN TWO PARTS—PART I

*By Douglas Haskell*

ASSOCIATE EDITOR, ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

A paper read at the Thirty-fourth Annual Convention of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture, Salt Lake City, June 1948

THOSE WHO CAN, teach; those who cannot, tell the teachers how to teach. Or else they edit something.

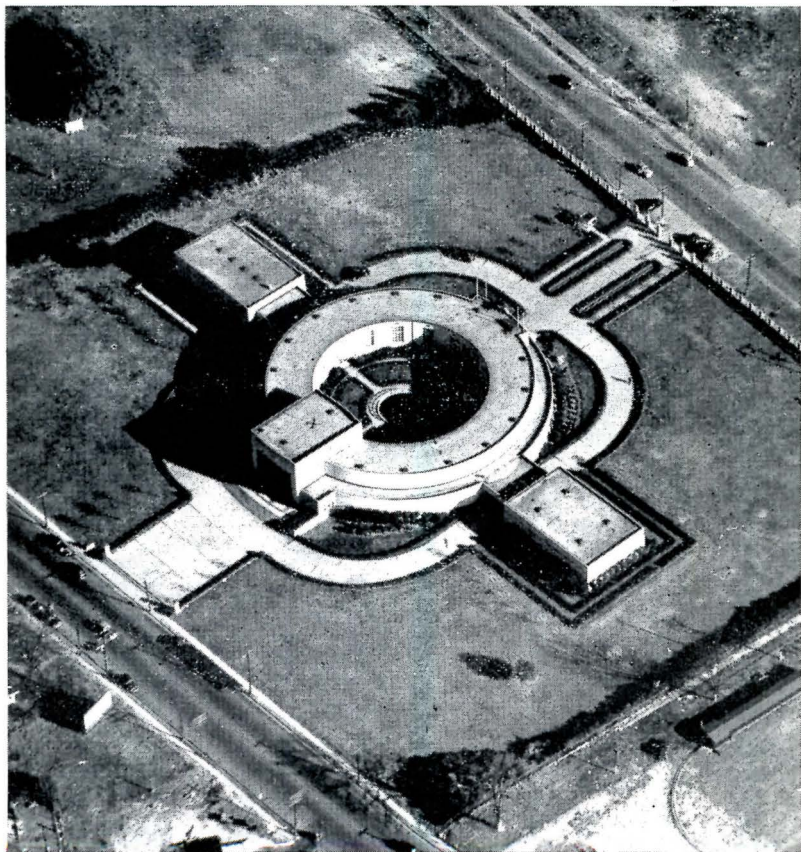
There may be some interest, nevertheless, in a different perspective. Some educators have been expressing concern lest we "ignore the teaching of the past." A journalist is more concerned lest we be drenched in it. Any action in the field seems to spring more than nine-tenths out of some past, and to depend on inherited means of execution. It is all but impossible *not* to fall into some tradition good or bad. We would shift the emphasis. We would say that the fresh contribution anyone can make is small at best. The part of his work which represents new adaptation is the part most easily thwarted, most difficult to establish. Let's maintain the tough old stalk, but let's specially cultivate this tender bud, so easily frosted.

Two words are frequently

switched: convention is mistaken for tradition. Convention is merely the habitual way of doing things. But the highest tradition of architecture is the imaginative way of doing things. Cathedrals such as Chartres did not exist before they existed. After they had been completed, against the desires of the self-styled traditionalists of the day, it was found that they belonged to the great Tradition. It is convention which demands that we carry the past on our backs. A greater act of assimilation is required to digest past experience and carry the essence in the blood, as living tradition, to feed imagination.

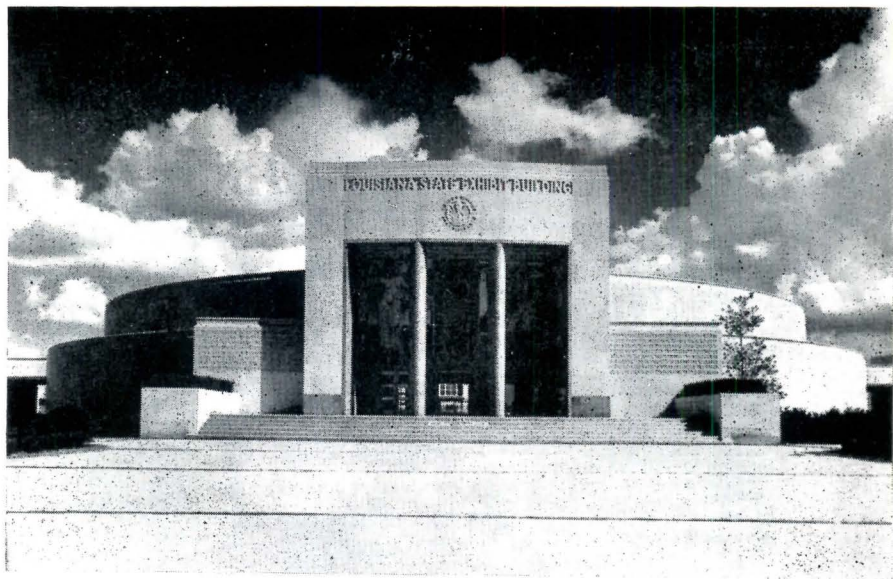
An imaginative act is one guided by true seeing; and important events seem to be moving today almost faster than we can follow them. We are now probably at a major turning point in the history of our country and consequently in the history of our architecture.

JANUARY, 1949



LOUISIANA STATE EXHIBIT BUILDING  
SHREVEPORT, LA.  
EDWARD F. NEILD, F.A.I.A., ARCHITECT

*Photograph by J. E. Hampson*



MAIN ENTRANCE, LOUISIANA STATE EXHIBIT BUILDING  
SHREVEPORT, LA.  
EDWARD F. NEILD, F.A.I.A., ARCHITECT

*Photograph by Le Doux*



Our achitectural press does none too well, reporting this change, because we are absorbed in routine. Perhaps the schools adjust none too well to the change, again because of routine. The architects are up against it in the field; they cannot escape; and they are bewildered, especially the younger men. They come in telling us they are sick of drawing plans four or five times for projects that are never built. There is major frustration for them in the growing gap between what we can see should be done and what we can do.

On the side of theory it is possible today to formulate a program for architecture which is broader, more comprehensive, and cleaner than the one you find in the history books and encyclopedias. It might be stated this way:

*Architecture acts to convert the physical environment into an effective, expressive, and harmonious setting for human life.*

In other words, to the degree that our surroundings, natural or man-made, are modified by human effort in such a manner as to create a more beautiful and worthy human setting, there is architecture in the undertaking.

One reason for revising definitions of architecture is that science is in process of giving us new implements that go so far beyond anything understood hitherto by "building." All conventional definitions of architecture either grow out of "building" or tie architecture to "building," which is a mere expedient of architecture and is now turning out to be merely *one of the expedients*. ("Effects of Technological Change"—*JOURNAL OF THE A.I.A.*, June 1947; "Beauty for Us,"—*Architectural Record*, June 1948; same author.)

So we speak simply of "converting environment" and this leaves the mind free to encompass any process—structural, mechanical, electrical, chemical, atomic, horticultural, or what not; indoors or outdoors; in conjunction with building or not. So long as the aim is to provide a noble setting for whatever people do, architecture is the result.

I wish to dwell not on the radical implications of this doctrine but on the strictly conservative ones.

As long as the supply of raw materials appeared to be unlimited, we could freely think of ourselves as "creating" buildings, and "creating" architecture, once for all.

Today every thinking man has to be concerned with the husbanding of resources on a world-wide scale, converting and reconverting with great care. Let no one fool himself into believing that the present shortages represent a passing phase. The situation is growing and will continue to grow unless there are major changes of attitude. In the next generation, the architects may look back to us as people who lolled in the luxury of Cockaigne.

The evidence is found in new volumes such as "Our Plundered Planet," and "Road to Survival." The first represents the stock-taking of a scientist, not a banker, and should be prerequisite reading. It points out that in recent decades mankind as a species has become a major geological force, and one of incredible destructiveness. From being a minority animal on the earth, which man was two short centuries ago, he has multiplied and developed irresistibly. He produces more erosion than water, more devastation than any natural force. His squandering of natural resources has become so alarming that Osborne, the author, says of the recent war: "The real war was not between nations but a war of mankind as a whole

against the earth, his mother." In very careful measured terms, we are told that "man must learn to cooperate with Nature."

Now that America has a major responsibility around the world to help prevent utter chaos, this thought is sobering. America "feeding the world" or America "winning the war through incredible production" is nonsense. Only Nature produces; we convert. And from here on out our conversion must be planned and rationed and carefully conserved. Mr. Osborne goes on to say that present trends, if continued, will shortly end in a globe as dead and uninhabitable as the moon.

On the surface this may seem to have little to do with classes next Monday. Actually, teaching must be suffused with this awareness.

The first bearing is on the teaching of architecture as geography. We can scarcely afford to waste time, for example, on grandiloquent planning techniques which would move the business center of a metropolis over into its park and move its park over to its waterfront. The enormous expenditure of time and resources which went underground to produce the water-mains, sewers, conduits and trans-

portation network of the present pattern must be carefully conserved and converted, not wasted.

Alvar Aalto, on returning from reconstruction work in Finland, reported that, even after almost total "destruction," existing cities could not be uprooted and moved altogether. They have to be converted, and only in the newer parts can the pattern be radically altered.

In city planning, among our own idealists there has been a horror of our existing gridiron plans, supposedly deadly. But the real stagnation has been in our own imaginations. Such a thing as a gridiron street pattern under our feet is no more deadly, of itself, than the grid pattern of a factory ceiling, or the grid on the drawing-board over which we draw a house, or the grid of a modular wall. By imaginative planning and design we can subordinate the existing grid mechanism, and produce a human setting of a very superior kind, without criminal waste, and not at all gridlike. But imagination it does take. A teacher tells me that his planning students are more realistic about all this than his architectural students are.

The definition spoke of converting environment into a *setting*. Once we realize the degree to

which our own efforts produce a mere bump on environment as a whole, the thought of environment must lead far beyond any building, and indeed beyond any group of buildings.

We have to think beyond buildings, beyond cities, about the natural surroundings. In this sense, meeting in Salt Lake City, we realize that Brigham Young, in his day, was a major though unacknowledged American architect. Standing on the site of the present Capitol, he scanned the entire valley in his vision. So the city is well placed. Even today there persists the big scale and sense of order, and the virtue of cleanly, loving maintenance that he established, no matter how inferior are some of the individual buildings, or some of the devices of city planning.

Our architectural publications are horribly culpable, destroying the day-by-day impression of environment as a whole, of that human setting which extends beyond building. Architects generally demand that we publish their building achievements with none of that nasty environment around them. One of the publications found in the course of a survey of opinion

that the chief demand of readers, too, was for the glamour photograph.

If I were an educator I would hammer instead on that big geography that occupied Brigham Young. I would try to sort out students according to those who saw things big and those who saw them fine, and set separate tasks. The "fine" boys could pursue that perfection of detail which has been the great gift to us, as an ideal, of those fine architects who have come to us from Europe, the continent of smaller scale and longer established history. The "big" boys would be set at something else.

Let's be frank with ourselves and admit that this country of ours is supremely ugly in its human setting taken as a whole. If you will confess it, all of you traveling here by ground transportation had the same experience; you wanted to close your eyes to the road signs, the quonset huts with false fronts, the tourist cabin slums, the abrupt eruptions of slag and industrial waste, the eroded farms, hacked forests, and all the rest; and you are anxious now to get back to your medieval campus and look at architecture again in an architectural magazine, with its careful screen-

ing of this environment through the glamour photograph.

We can attack architecture on this bigger scale, on the only scale that can affect the human setting as a whole, by saturating the minds of a more rugged and less perfectionist type of architectural student with awareness that environment *is* our goal, environment converted into human setting, and not just buildings.

Already our students are tiring of the narrower concepts that have been grasped so avidly by architectural teachers—the concepts of "modern" design as applied to buildings. They are tiring of simplicity and directness. They are tired of them because so many of the "solutions" have already appeared—if not on the street then at least in published drawings, so that the freshness is out of them, and it is no longer possible to experience the thrill of creating really anew. It has lost the novelty which is the wine of youth.

So, thinking of building design, and building design only, the youngsters are reaching out for a fresh crop of tricks, fussing around and preparing to serve a butter-and-egg culture with batter-and-eggcrate architecture. If the concept is expanded, however, to take

in more than just the building—if it takes in the ground and the trees and the store next door, and the wild and woolly parking lot, then the problem becomes so big in scope that there is need for every ounce of efficiency, simplicity, honesty, directness—all those virtues with which modern architecture made its wonderful start—and some gaiety, too. Instead of deserting the honesty and directness of the initial start, in the effort to pump “interest” and what is called “human quality” into the narrow framework of the old design prob-

lem, let's stick to the honesty and directness but widen the problem out, and it will be “plenty interesting,” to say the least.

It is only by reaching farther and deeper, still keeping the direct approach, still keeping sanity and largeness, that we can keep the best of our youngsters keenly interested. Furthermore, it is the only way we are going to reach the American people. They don't know a brise-soleil from a suntan lotion, but they will always love and appreciate a house under a tree.

## The “New Look” in Public Buildings

*By Clarence J. Derrick*

COMMISSIONER, BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS, CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Excerpts from an address before the annual joint meeting of the Southern California Chapter, A.I.A., and the Structural Engineers' Association of Southern California, September 14, 1948

**T**HE BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS has adopted a policy of engaging private consulting architects and structural engineers for the design of what we term “non-recurrent” building work, that is, new structures not considered part of the regular maintenance work of the Department of Public Works. We justify this policy on the basis of three economies: (1)

It relieves our payroll of a certain number of employees required for peak load whom we would have to carry during the slack time between jobs; (2) It gives us the advantage of having working personnel supervised by independent contractors accustomed to meeting a payroll, and hence anxious to operate with maximum design economy, thus tending to reduce

the cost of producing drawings and specifications; and (3) It gives us the professional services of highly skilled consultants who are in the habit of meeting design competition, and tends to reduce waste due to over-liberality in use of materials, excessive space allocations and unnecessary refinements.

We believe that this policy is saving the taxpayers considerable money and that it has been entirely justified by the operations of the past year.

This policy places the Board in the role of middleman between the technicians, architects and engineers, and the non-technical representatives of the people, the Mayor and the City Council, together with the department heads who actually will use the buildings we construct. In effect the Board acts as salesman for the technicians, selling their professional services to the non-technical personnel of government, who, in many instances, neither understand nor appreciate the nature and value of the skills involved. Most people outside our professions have no conception of our work. Architecture is considered as skill in making a rendering, and engineering something required by the building department. I have been told by one

department head, whom I consider highly intelligent and most competent in his own work, that we could save a great deal of money by dealing directly with contractors. He felt that the architect received an enormous fee for making a picture of the finished structure, and his attitude toward engineers could not be discussed in mixed company.

I feel that both of our professions have been extremely remiss in not actively "selling" our work to the public. We have kept in our corners, thinking lofty thoughts, and occasionally talking about ethics and lack of public appreciation but we have done little to sell our services, on merit, to the layman. The services of architects and engineers are measurable in dollars and cents. These services are not something that the building public may buy or ought to buy; they are something that the public *must* buy if maximum value is to be realized from the construction dollar.

The Board of Public Works has been compelled to act as your salesman and I feel that we have done a good job.

However, as middlemen, we have another job of selling and I am not sure that we have done so

well in this respect. This is the job I want to talk about tonight, the job of selling an understanding of city government to you, the professional men, who are creating buildings for us to use. I want to sell you an idea of our government, as it now exists, and particularly some of the peculiarities of government that affect the architecture of our buildings.

The most serious immediate problem in construction is its fantastic cost. The Board of Public Works is particularly sensitive to construction costs because it is expected to see that public funds are expended, not only honestly, but also wisely. We do not consider ourselves a super-government empowered to dictate to a department head the space or arrangement requirements of his building, because we realize that he understands his operations better than any outsider. On the other hand, we make every effort toward economies not only in initial expenditure but also in future maintenance costs.

We must continually remember that every penny spent upon construction in this city is taken from the pocket of some taxpayer who, like you and me, is fighting the battle of inflation. The money we spend at these tremendously inflated

prices is placing a debt upon the people of Los Angeles that will run beyond the lives of practically everyone sitting in this room. Our bond issues are for forty years and it is our business to buy something that will give value for forty years. That is why we must not cheapen construction at the expense of useful life nor beyond the point of practical maintenance, nor may we reduce the facilities or useful space below the limit of economical operation. So we are trying to steer a narrow course between spending too much money in capital investment and wasting too much money in future operation and maintenance. We have to compromise each time we build a structure, and this compromise has a tremendous effect upon the architectural solution of each building. Basically, the architectural solution of a building problem is a function of use. The buildings we are now erecting are for the use of government, and people are at last beginning to realize that the notion of government is undergoing profound changes. For a long time, government was in the flag-waving stage, accepted as a sacred institution, something handed down from the fathers like a religion, and we put robes on our judges and stained

glass in our council chambers, to create an atmosphere of awe. Everything was done in accordance with prescribed procedure and ritual. We are getting away from that.

This changing concept of government has a positive influence upon our building program. If you will look at our Civic Center, you will see in the architectural record there displayed a faithful following of the change in political thinking. Our City Hall, for example, is a monument. The floor arrangement, the allocation of space, the entirety of its composition and detail is a monument to government as it existed in 1925. It is fixed, inflexible, frozen like a tomb. You can't expand it, you can't change it, you can't even move organizations around in it. That building is not bad architecture; it is merely an architectural record of something that existed in 1925. It is a monument, and monuments should be erected to the unchanging dead, not the evolving living.

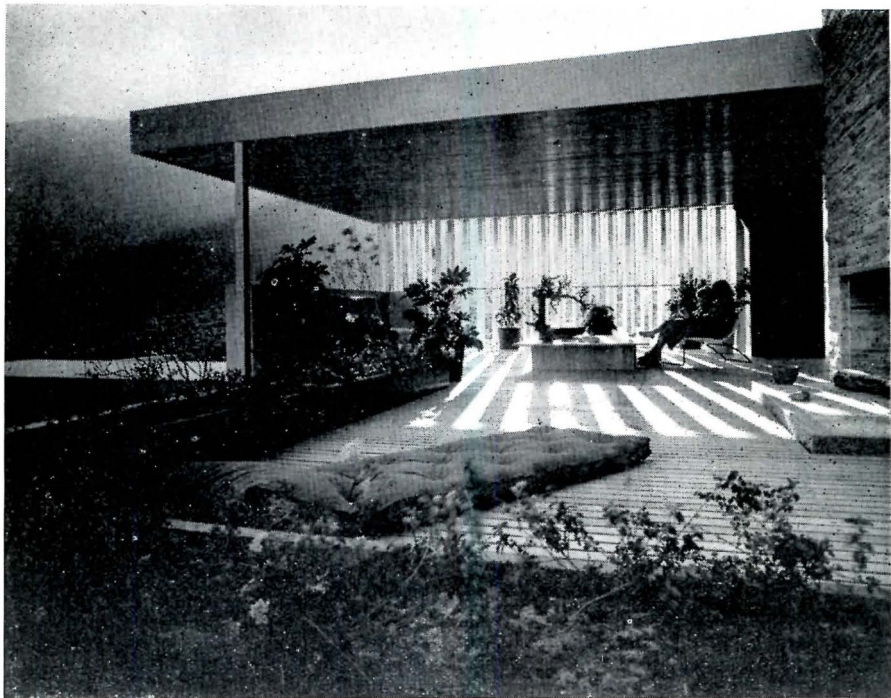
It would seem that we are creating an architectural museum in the Civic Center. As we add buildings, with the changing conditions, new types will appear and one hundred fifty years from now, small children

probably will be led about this quadrangle learning from architecture the political history of Los Angeles. It may be that such a historical record will be more valuable to posterity than the esthetic harmony that would result from uniform treatment. One thing is certain, if our buildings are to be of maximum value to the taxpayers, if they are to justify the creation of a forty-year debt, if we are going to be honest with ourselves as well as the public, we must strike out boldly, basing our design upon the idea of usefulness.

So when we discuss the "new look" we move beyond the narrow limits of mere architectural treatment or structural design. The real nature of the "new look" is a function of usefulness. In the case of municipal buildings, it is a function of the nature of municipal government, and that is even now undergoing further change. We are faced with a concept of government as a service organization rather than as a sacred institution handed down from the fathers.

Practically all attempts at the so-called modern architecture have been justified on the ground of functionalism. A great deal of this work is merely a revolt against traditionalism, unreasonable and



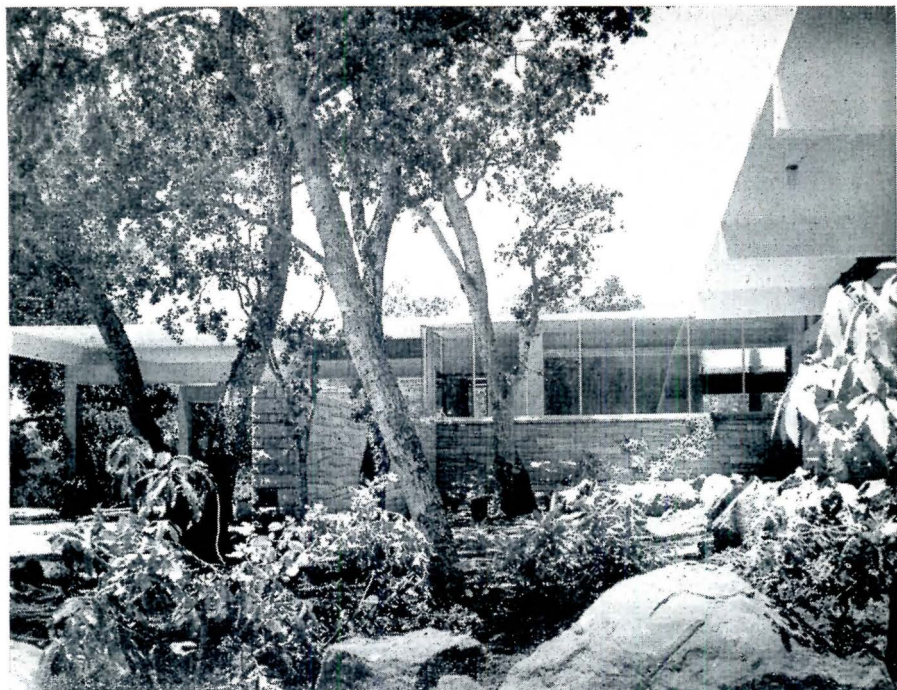


RESIDENCE IN THE COLORADO DESERT  
RICHARD J. NEUTRA, F.A.I.A., ARCHITECT

*Photograph by Julius Shulman*

Movable vertical blinds of aluminum give protection against wind, desert sandstorms and sun. Closed, they form a completely protected room; open, they allow air movement and reveal view of the mountains.

In the series of  
architects' favorite details



LAKESIDE HOUSE, LOS ANGELES, CALIF.  
RICHARD J. NEUTRA, F.A.I.A., ARCHITECT

*Photograph by Julius Shulman*

View into breakfast garden and toward porte-cochère. Cross-beams are uniformly shaped for simplicity of workmanship, but steel-reinforced according to their cantilever function.

In the series of  
architects' favorite details

illogical ; some of it has been merely stylistic, with uselessness run horizontally instead of vertically.

The use-function depends upon the future of government. Even now we hear about proposed combinations of city and county government, of the borough system, of a new charter for the City and this factor, purely architectural, seems to be changing so fast that one needs a crystal ball to follow it. So far as materials are concerned, most engineers will admit that their designs are apt to be obsolescent, if not actually obsolete, when they are made. Loadings are in the same predicament ; both vertical and horizontal allowances probably will suffer changes in the next forty years. Certainly most structural engineers are not satisfied with our present understanding of the earthquake problem.

In my opinion modern architecture, the "new look," is now in the primitive stage of its development. We are only now standing upon the threshold of that which Louis Sullivan saw a half-century ago. Sullivan understood our problem and reasoned to a logical solution even though he never had the materials he needed for the actuality of construction. Even the

work of the Baltic architects subsequent to World War I must be considered as the first germination, the pre-primitive beginning.

The primitive stage of every architectural development is characterized by over-emphasis of engineering caution. Structural sections are heavy ; the general appearance is coarse and crude. This has been called bold but actually it stems from caution ; the designer isn't sure what he can safely accomplish. Then refinement starts ; one designer after another commences to lighten the members, to thin the stress-carrying elements, to open up the structure until the ultimate is reached, either a building falls down or the engineers refuse to sign the drawings. The architects remain unsatisfied. When they no longer actually reduce the sizes of columns and lintels, they create the illusion of reduction by decoration and end by getting the buildings so loaded with acanthus leaves that no one wants to occupy them. This is the final or completely civilized state of an architectural mode.

I feel that both architects and engineers ought to get better acquainted with Louis Sullivan's philosophy because, in this primitive stage of development, we can-

not create satisfactorily without integration of architecture and engineering. That is the history of all architectural development. From whence has proportion come, in all ages? From the capacity of the materials and the loading to which the members were subjected, as well as from use. Here, in the practicality of engineering, is good taste, and until minima are established the engineer is a partner in design. Functionalism is not merely a matter of floor arrangement and fenestration; it is the whole practicality of construction. It is more than horizontalism or the use of I-beams; it is a matter of usefulness. Can we afford to saddle the taxpayers of the future with the fantastic prices of today unless we make this building so it can be used throughout its lifetime?

Out of all this confusion of apparent impossibility comes a hint of the solution. First of all, monumentalism is neither desirable nor logical. Government is a living, useful business. There is no more reason for erecting a monument to a governmental function than there is to building a tomb for a living person. In the second place, the concept of government and its working organization is changing

so fast that predictions of future requirements are impossible. Our buildings must be planned so they can be altered with changing uses; they must be capable of profound rearrangement within the outer shell and also of logical additions when required. We do not know whether government will become bigger in proportion to population or whether population will continue to grow at the same or a different rate. But we do know that if the buildings we build today are to be useful for forty years, they must be sufficiently flexible to endure a reasonable amount of changing with the passing years.

The tendency of so-called "modern" architects to cut all of the corner walls out of buildings, to carry their hatred for traditionalism to the point of reducing vertical members to window-glass and pipe columns, to force unsymmetrical shapes to a constipated straining for sensationalistic relief, is responsible for some of the additional cost of buildings. The City of Los Angeles cannot afford it. We want all of the natural symmetry that good planning will afford because of the better distribution of the earthquake load. We want plastic designs done in plastic material and not in materials that

require expensive construction to achieve a dishonest form.

Is the "new look" architecture or engineering? I feel that it is both and I believe that either the architectural designer must have an intimate understanding of structural engineering, together with a thorough knowledge of both materials and local loading conditions, or he should have a competent structural engineer at his elbow checking the design as it takes shape.

The Board of Public Works wants buildings rather than monu-

ments. We want buildings we can use, not only immediately but throughout the life of the debt we are incurring for their construction. We want honest buildings and we expect an honest expression of the uncertainties, not only of the age in which we live, but also of the primitive stage of our new architecture. Above all, we would like to have both the architects and engineers feel that so far they have done us a good job and that we believe they are going to continue to do as well or better in the future.

An escape from current community and housing problems—to a Maine town of 1840

## Doric Interlude

IN TWO PARTS—PART I

By *Wells Bennett*, F.A.I.A.

DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

ESCAPES are today an admitted, even a vaunted, necessity. A favorite is non-productive physical activity such as tennis, golf or fishing, to be taken weekends, or to make vacation tolerable. Short-time forms, though insidious, are the sedatives—novels, detective stories and bridge. There is the escape de luxe through travel, or a hobby such as collecting this or

that. This is a note on an architect's brief retreat from reality. The reality to which I refer is the current community and housing problem. The vehicle for my escape was the chance discovery of a town of the 1840's serenely intact and vigorously alive on the coast of Maine.

Tired and bothered, we had arrived in the night at this down-

JOURNAL OF THE A. I. A.

east village. Waking next morning in a fine, rather austere bedroom graced with a pilastered mantel of Italian marble, one came through the spacious upper hall, down the elegant spiral stair with its great carved roeswood newel, out to the front door, one's progress warmed by the subtle flattery with which an old, dignified house sustains its occupants. But this feeling of elegance was mainly a matter of degree, since we are accustomed to see fine Greek Revival houses as far west as Michigan. Passing through the wide doorway, one found oneself on a great granite floor-slab between the wooden Doric columns of the entrance portico. It was only as I looked out on the placid sunny-shady street that I realized suddenly, and with no sense of fantasy, that the clock had been turned back one hundred years and I had escaped from 1948. In reality this was an August morning of last summer.

Everyone knows our north-eastern coast. East of Portland some dozens of villages, ghostlike in the fogs, white and shining in the sunshine, testify to Maine's earlier prosperity. Successive activities of an enterprising people have come and gone, leaving their valiant record in architecture. Of the earlier

and simpler days, the changes admirably rung on Colonial, Federal, and Greek Revival themes stand interspersed with Maine versions of Queen Anne, "modernistic," and more lately, a neo-Cape-Cod as unconvincing in Maine as in Denver. In most of these seaside towns the older dwellings have been roughly shouldered aside by diners and filling stations. A vigorous, growing western town with no vestige of order or trace of architecture is less depressing than one of these old streets gone to seed.

But Belfast has not gone to seed. High Street on U. S. Route 1 has indeed compromised with the automobile and the passing summer visitor, yet it has not surrendered. The five streets, Church, Court, Cedar, Charles and Congress, which like High Street parallel the shoreline of the bay and run along the contours of the hillside, retain their original character. The essence of the town of about six thousand people is architecturally intact. Looking at Church Street from the Greek portico, I count thirty-two houses between the Wilson house, an Ionic mansion complete with central cupola and garden gazebo at the south end, and the correct Federal-period custom

house at the north end. Twenty-four of these houses are of the Federal or Greek Revival period, most of them with the inevitable appurtenances of kitchen, woodshed and barn. A few even retain their fences. All are distinguished pieces of architecture of their period, as is the green-shuttered Congregational Meeting House with its delicate belfry of the Federal period. It is, therefore, no strain on my imagination to find that Captain Alden, the builder and one-time owner of the temporary home, stands beside me in the portico on this morning of 1948.\* He sees all but eight of the houses standing on Church Street a century later. Before his death in 1875 he will have seen the eight completed. In his time the elms were small, perhaps thirty feet high, hanging a pleasant light-tempering screen before the façades. Now the trees tower one hundred feet above us, their unbroken boles alone as high as the houses, marking off the street in rectangles, obscuring parts of some of the buildings. Captain Alden cannot see the canopy the great trees spread over us nor, of

\* While Captain Alden was a citizen of Belfast at the period named, details of his attitudes are wholly imaginary.



The west side of Church Street

course, can he see the occasional automobile that glides past. Though last night a man of the twentieth century, I am this morning pleased that the noble trees and the reserved dwellings cut the automobile down to scale.

Church Street is the prize exhibit of Belfast, but the five C's in parallel, successively rising terrace-like behind it, are hardly less complete—and perfect. Captain Alden knows all the streets. Some of the houses on Congress Street were built before his. Only a few of the elms are younger than those on Church Street.

The unusual unity of character of the houses we can credit to the town's rapid growth after the War of 1812. There was little building before 1820, little after 1850. Fortunately for Belfast, her fulfilment matched a stylistic period that had the surpassing merits of variety only within unity, of simplicity, and of taste. Even the re-

modeling so characteristic of the American genius where buildings are concerned seems not to have infected this town. To be sure, there was an epidemic of southern bay-windows, but they are in quiet taste, appropriately geometrical in form, often in pairs horizontally for symmetry, sometimes running through the second floor vertically. Rarely have other architectural liberties been taken.

A further unity is that of color. The façade of the west side of the length of Church Street is white except the red-brick terminations provided by a house at the south end, and the Custom House at the north end. The façade of each street is in general a horizontal white line, or, rather, a white dash-line broken regularly by the spacious gardens. The line is relieved now and then by triangles of gables on the street, by a few red areas among the white and green. The ubiquitous green-black blinds set up an over-pattern tying together red brick and white clapboard, velvet front lawns and over-arching trees. Back of the hill on which Belfast stands, the evergreen forest, though several times lumbered over, each time renews itself and remains the enduring background. Captain Alden looks upon

his town and finds it good. At least for this morning, I see eye to eye with him.

As the reader will surmise, the physical completeness and beauty of Belfast creates an immediate and haunting impression. Serene, contained, ordered, it is a perfect escape. The 1948 battle for housing in my home city seems more than nine hundred miles away in this, an accomplished and well-seasoned community. Family insecurity, inflation, material and labor shortages, building codes and building costs, fall into a kind of perspective. Such housing projects as come to mind in a flash-back seem tawdry and essentially artificial and cheap, of dubious community character and community beauty.

Though the houses of Belfast are, some large and grandiose, some modest in the extreme, there is no economic segregation and all have completeness and dignity. Even Church Street has some one-and-a-half-story houses. The phrase "great houses" can be used but sparingly. The range is not from palace to hovel. None is as large as General Knox's mansion at Thomastown and no shanties exist. If Belfast is not classless, neither is it a one-man town. No country seat



of a squire—or admiral—dominates the scene. There are at least six places in Belfast which, in the Greek Revival vernacular, would hold their own in Salem. A few house blocks of two lofty stories with central cupola challenge the temple types with monumental prostyle or peripteral colonnades. These houses are the local flowering of the Greek Revival in spirit



The range is not from palace to hovel as in form. Such examples of the preceding Federal period as remain are relatively reserved, though several are impressive and all have good scale. Of the other fine houses a little more than half are of good size, eight or ten rooms in the main block, plus the dependencies—kitchen, servants' quarters and barns. Less stately, their porticos often one-story, doorways more delicately detailed, they bespeak the well-to-do, socially assured American family. They achieve a quality of quiet elegance.

The smaller dwellings are story-and-a-half with fairly steep gables, a gesture to the Greek temple in their heavy corner pilasters, and the almost standardized, deceptively naive pilaster and cornice entrance motif. At one with the whole setting, they testify to self respect without presumption, the warmly homelike dwellings of people who know where they stand. There are perhaps four rooms on the ground floor and two in the roof, together with relatively modest dependencies.

A nineteenth-century architect from Castine is credited with some of the houses, and others are seemingly influenced by Bulfinch, but the handbooks of the time were widely available to competent craftsmen-builders, and laymen prided themselves on their taste. The combination could produce architecture of distinction.

Let us look again at Belfast, this time not so much at the streets and houses as at the society that created and maintained the town we see. In what environment did Captain Alden and his neighbors thrive? On what economic base did the life of the town rest? To what does Belfast owe its continuity, and how staunch is the body politic occupying the

town today? More interesting yet, though taken for granted by the Captain, how has this little cosmos, neither appreciably larger nor smaller, survived its hundred years?

Not unlike other English colonies, the pre-Revolutionary group settling here on Penobscot Bay were self-selective, homogeneous in social attitudes. Largely of Scotch and Irish background, there was relatively little of the ethnic, clan,



Plus dependencies

or language variety apparent in the later migrations westward from the seaboard settlements and from abroad. The group remained conservative and industrious when the town was refounded after the Revolution. Citizens were required to be "of good moral character" and individuals had to be formally approved. Only men of integrity, industry, and thrift were desired as landholders and citizens.

Belfast has never been a melting-pot. That the origins so simple, so

moral, and so limited in range have persisted is apparent today. In the high school senior class of 1949 of thirty students, the names are all those of New England. On the streets of Belfast the proportion of blondes and red heads, men as well as women, whether adults or children, is noticeably high. The character of the personnel of the town—a Maine town is a township—has remained substantially unchanged.

Standing on tide water, backed by the pine forests, the economic history of Belfast has run the course of many small Maine ports. Given the appropriate natural resources, the early export of lumber followed by shipbuilding was the inevitable result of an inclination to industry and the demand for masts, boards and timbers, first from England, then from lower New England. The aggressive Yankee merchants and captains were a secondary but most important product of these towns. Even now the population of Belfast includes two admirals and an indeterminate number of captains.

The first ship was built in Belfast in 1774, before the town was abandoned to the British. Resumed more actively after the Revolution, the high point was reached in

1846 and 1847, when for each year nineteen ships were built in Belfast. The British embargo in the War of 1812-15 practically stopped shipbuilding, and the period of the Civil War was equally disastrous, but the town rallied each time. Fifteen ships left the ways in 1873, and 337 ships were owned in Belfast that year. After 1874, activity in the little port declined rapidly with the coming of steam, steel ships and British tramp steamers. In 1900 one ship was built in Belfast. Captain Alden is thus riding the full tide when we see him.

For the first half of the nineteenth century, the lumbering of the forests was the vital industry. Lumber shipped to Boston or Salem was the one merchantable commodity, the exploitable natural resource. For most people it, rather than money, was the medium of exchange in the purchase of groceries, clothing, tools and livestock. Maine was the first lumber state

until 1850, and Waldo County one of the six important shipbuilding counties. In 1849, 50,000,000 board feet of lumber were shipped to California from Bangor alone. Belfast's high prosperity ended with the panic of 1857, and the Civil War terminated any boom hopes. So rapidly was the prime resource exhausted that in the revival of the 'seventies Maine imported lumber from New Hampshire, Canada and Michigan. The town is the majority bondholder in the Belfast and Moosehead Lake Railroad built in the late 'sixties, connecting thirty-five miles away with the Maine Central. That Belfast, the loser when Maine Central won out in a state railroad war, had to build her own outlet was fatal to her growth in competition with Bangor where the Maine Central has its own tide-water terminal. Such status is, of course, only one of degree when one considers the New England coast.

## News from the Educational Field

TAU SIGMA DELTA, national honor fraternity in Architecture and Allied Arts, has had its application approved for membership in the Association of College

Honor Societies. The acceptance of Tau Sigma Delta in the ACHS gives the architectural profession in this field of collegiate endeavor a place parallel with the other col-

legiate honor societies in the professions of law, medicine, engineering, the sciences, etc. An attempt will be made to appoint a Tau Sigma Delta member who is a member of The A.I.A. as representative on the national Council of the ACHS.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, School of Architecture, again announces the Lowell M. Palmer Fellowship in Architecture. Its purpose is to enable a student of unusual promise to undertake the advanced study of architecture at Princeton. The Palmer Fellow is exempt from tuition fees, and will receive a stipend of \$700 during his year of residence in the Graduate College buildings.

All applicants must hold a Bachelor's degree, must be citizens of the United States, and less than 27 years of age on October 1, 1949. Applications, with supporting documents, must be received not later than March 25, 1949, and the award will be announced on April 1, 1949. Application blanks and further details can be had by addressing the Secretary of the

School of Architecture, Princeton University, Princeton, N. J.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, under its Institute of Arts and Sciences, announces continuation of the evening course by Harold R. Sleeper. Beginning in early February under the title "Your House: Building, Buying or Remodeling," the course will consist of weekly meetings for ten weeks.

THE NEW YORK CHAPTER, A.I.A., administering the annual LeBrun Traveling Scholarship with its award of \$2,800, announces that the last date for nominations is January 21st. Each applicant must be nominated by a member of The A.I.A. certifying to specified qualifications: that the candidate is a citizen and resident of the U. S. A., is not under 23 or over 33 years of age, has had at least 1½ years of office practice, and has not been the beneficiary of any other traveling scholarship. Further details may be had from The LeBrun Scholarship Committee, 115 East 40th St., New York 16, N. Y.

By the time a business executive attains to the status where he can take a couple of hours for luncheon, without question, his doctor limits him to two graham crackers and a glass of milk—*Business Action*

While we are thinking of our own code,  
here is what the engineers have adopted

## The Engineers' Ethics

**I**N THESE DAYS when codes of ethics are in somewhat of a state of flux, adapting themselves to rapidly changing conditions of practice, it is interesting and instructive to learn of what the engineers are doing. Through the Engineers' Council for Professional Development there has been written and adopted (Oct. 25, 1947) the following Canons of Ethics for Engineers. Already more than 25 engineering societies and councils have incorporated the canons as part of their constitutions.

### FOREWORD

Honesty, justice, and courtesy form a moral philosophy which, associated with mutual interest among men, constitutes the foundation of ethics. The engineer should recognize such a standard, not in passive observance, but as a set of dynamic principles guiding his conduct and way of life. It is his duty to practice his profession according to these Canons of Ethics.

As the keystone of professional conduct is integrity, the engineer

will discharge his duties with fidelity to the public, his employers, and clients, and with fairness and impartiality to all. It is his duty to interest himself in public welfare, and to be ready to apply his special knowledge for the benefit of mankind. He should uphold the honor and dignity of his profession and also avoid association with any enterprise of questionable character. In his dealings with fellow engineers he should be fair and tolerant.

### PROFESSIONAL LIFE

Sec. 1. The engineer will cooperate in extending the effectiveness of the engineering profession by interchanging information and experience with other engineers and students and by contributing to the work of engineering societies, schools and the scientific and engineering press.

Sec. 2. He will not advertise his work or merit in a self-laudatory manner, and he will avoid all conduct or practice likely to discredit or do injury to the dignity and honor of his profession.

## RELATIONS WITH THE PUBLIC

Sec. 3. The engineer will endeavor to extend public knowledge of engineering, and will discourage the spreading of untrue, unfair, and exaggerated statements regarding engineering.

Sec. 4. He will have due regard for the safety of life and health of the public and employees who may be affected by the work for which he is responsible.

Sec. 5. He will express an opinion only when it is founded on adequate knowledge and honest conviction while he is serving as a witness before a court, commission, or other tribunal.

Sec. 6. He will not issue ex parte statements, criticisms, or arguments on matters connected with public policy which are inspired or paid for by private interests, unless he indicates on whose behalf he is making the statement.

Sec. 7. He will refrain from expressing publicly an opinion on an engineering subject unless he is informed as to the facts relating thereto.

## RELATIONS WITH CLIENTS AND EMPLOYERS

Sec. 8. The engineer will act in professional matters for each client

or employer as a faithful agent or trustee.

Sec. 9. He will act with fairness and justice between his client or employer and the contractor when dealing with contracts.

Sec. 10. He will make his status clear to his client or employer before undertaking an engagement if he may be called upon to decide on the use of inventions, apparatus, or any other thing in which he may have a financial interest.

Sec. 11. He will guard against conditions that are dangerous or threatening to life, limb, or property on work for which he is responsible, or if he is not responsible, will promptly call such conditions to the attention of those who are responsible.

Sec. 12. He will present clearly the consequences to be expected from deviations proposed if his engineering judgment is overruled by nontechnical authority in cases where he is responsible for the technical adequacy of engineering work.

Sec. 13. He will engage, or advise his client or employer to engage, and he will co-operate with, other experts and specialists whenever the client's or employer's interests are best served by such service.

Sec. 14. He will disclose no information concerning the business affairs or technical processes of clients or employers without their consent.

Sec. 15. He will not accept compensation, financial or otherwise, from more than one interested party for the same service, or for services pertaining to the same work, without the consent of all interested parties.

Sec. 16. He will not accept commissions or allowances, directly or indirectly, from contractors or other parties dealing with his client or employer in connection with work for which he is responsible.

Sec. 17. He will not be financially interested in the bids as or of a contractor on competitive work for which he is employed as an engineer unless he has the consent of his client or employer.

Sec. 18. He will promptly disclose to his client or employer any interest in a business which may compete with or affect the business of his client or employer. He will not allow an interest in any business to affect his decision regarding engineering work for which he is employed, or which he may be called upon to perform.

## RELATIONS WITH ENGINEERS

Sec. 19. The engineer will endeavor to protect the engineering profession collectively and individually from misrepresentation and misunderstanding.

Sec. 20. He will take care that credit for engineering work is given to those to whom credit is properly due.

Sec. 21. He will uphold the principle of appropriate and adequate compensation for those engaged in engineering work, including those in subordinate capacities, as being in the public interest and maintaining the standards of the profession.

Sec. 22. He will endeavor to provide opportunity for the professional development and advancement of engineers in his employ.

Sec. 23. He will not directly or indirectly injure the professional reputation, prospects, or practice of another engineer. However, if he considers that an engineer is guilty of unethical, illegal or unfair practice, he will present the information to the proper authority for action.

Sec. 24. He will exercise due restraint in criticizing another engineer's work in public, recog-

nizing the fact that the engineering societies and the engineering press provide the proper forum for technical discussions and criticism.

Sec. 25. He will not try to supplant another engineer in a particular employment after becoming aware that definite steps have been taken toward the other's employment.

Sec. 26. He will not compete with another engineer on the basis

of charges for work by underbidding, through reducing his normal fees after having been informed of the charges named by the other.

Sec. 27. He will not use the advantages of a salaried position to compete unfairly with another engineer.

Sec. 28. He will not become associated in responsibility for work with engineers who do not conform to ethical practices.



## Architects Read and Write

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



HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURE

By SIR BANISTER FLETCHER, London

As one of the Honorary Members of The American Institute of Architects I receive your JOURNAL from time to time, for which I thank you.

I have been very much interested by a remarkable article by Mr. Leopold Arnaud on teaching history of architecture, the article being headed "History and Architecture" (October 1948 JOURNAL).

I should like you to convey to Mr. Arnaud my appreciation of his article which sets forth in a

very clear way the reason for the inclusion of the History of Architecture by the modern architect. I do not think I have ever seen the reason for the study of the past and its application to the present better put than by Mr. Arnaud.

If I were to write any more to you it would simply be a repetition of some of the points made by Mr. Arnaud, but I think you would like to know that, as a life-long student of the history of architecture, he does bring before us in a very pleasant and suitable way

JANUARY, 1949



the fact that "our contemporary architecture has its foundations grounded in the bed-rock of the past."



## The Editor's Asides

IF YOU AREN'T FED UP with polls and what they really mean, here is one taken by no less authority than the New York Chapter, A.I.A. In the "Tomorrow's World" exhibit, sponsored by the Chapter and the Museum of Science and Industry, there were shown two model houses—one Traditional, one Modern. Visitors voted 72% in favor of the Modern.

A FAVORITE TOPIC of discussion among architects is the big house of a generation back. Will its like ever be built again? What is happening to those that have seemed the architectural plums of residential architecture in the first quarter of the century? Remember the Herbert L. Pratt house in Glen Cove, Long Island, with its fine old paneling brought over from England? It is now the Webb Institute of Naval Architecture

and Marine Engineering. Also in Long Island, the Walter P. Chrysler house in Kings Point is now the U. S. Merchant Marine Academy. The William R. Coe house and gardens in Oyster Bay has been given to the State Agricultural College, Mr. and Mrs. Coe retaining the privilege of using the house during the summers. Hillwood, the Joseph E. Davies estate in Roslyn, if a zoning exception be approved, will be occupied by Long Island University. Delano & Aldrich's 80-room chateau built for the late Otto H. Kahn is now the home of the Eastern Military Academy of New York. Winfield, the mansion of the late Frank W. Woolworth, is now used by Reynolds Research as a laboratory. The Larz Anderson palatial town house in Washington, D. C. is now the home of the Society of the Cincinnati. If I were looking for a subject to write

upon for a Doctor of Architecture thesis, I'd seek no further.

DON'T OVERLOOK the aims and efforts of the National Capital Sesquicentennial Commission. Their "objective is to portray 150 years of the glamorous, inspiring history of the nation since Washington became the National Capital." And here in Washington is to be held The Institute's 82nd Convention. If in connection with that gathering we could give the Capital as much of vision and inspiration as did our predecessors in The Institute fifty years ago we should do well.

NEW YORK CITY'S 1948 revision in its Building Code abandons the requirement that structural steel be backed with the same thickness of masonry as would be required if the metal were not used. The Code no longer requires masonry walls in fireproof buildings, nor does it specify a minimal wall thickness. The ability to withstand a two-hour fire test, and a 30-pound per square foot wind load without undue deflection, are the new criteria. Economic pressure will undoubtedly soon show itself in this 4-inch saving in wall thickness—

a metal-faced sandwich of lightweight non-combustible insulation, four or five inches thick instead of the former heavy 9-inch minimum. Additional rentable area at \$5 to \$7 per square foot per year is beckoning imperiously, backed by savings in the structural frame that has to carry a far lighter weight.

IT HAS TAKEN 30 years of effort between the U.S.A., Canada and the United Kingdom to reach an accord on standard screw threads. But it is now an accomplished fact, and surely but the forerunner of countless unifying standards in engineering practice. Credit with an assist the obvious desirability of uniform standards in war materiel as revealed in two global wars.

A DOLLAR A MONTH will pay a wage-earner's rent in Paris. That's fine for the wage-earner that now has a place to live. It's not so good for the property owner nor for the capitalist who might build new dwellings, nor for the wage-earner without a roof over his head. The situation is a sad commentary upon what happens with rent control if you let it get out of hand.

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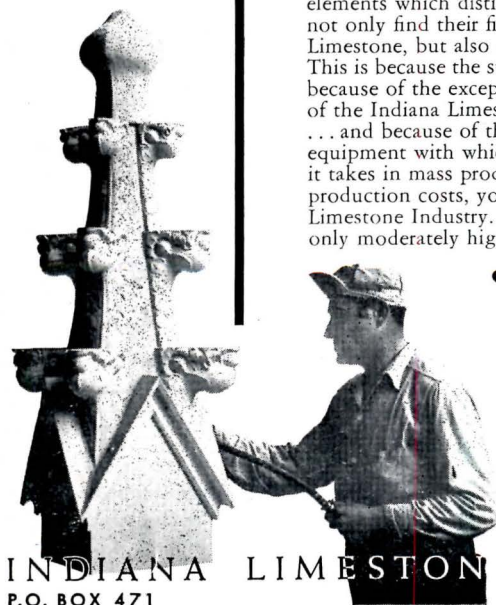
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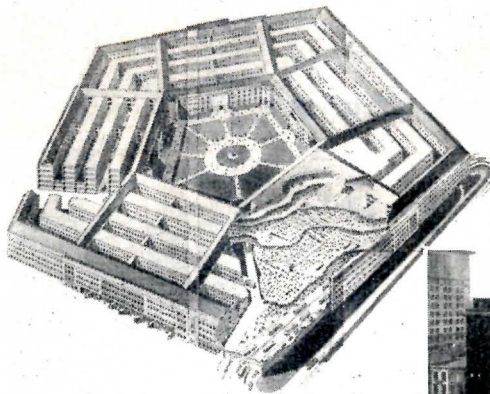
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