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Journal of The American Institute of ARCHITECTS



HENRY WRIGHT

April, 1951

Architecture Now

The Cosmic Architect

The Architectress—II

Selective Service and Deferment

Frank Lloyd Wright in Philadelphia

Hugh Ferriss • Talbot Hamlin

Joseph Hudnut • Robert Moses

35c

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WITH THE AIM OF AMPLIFYING
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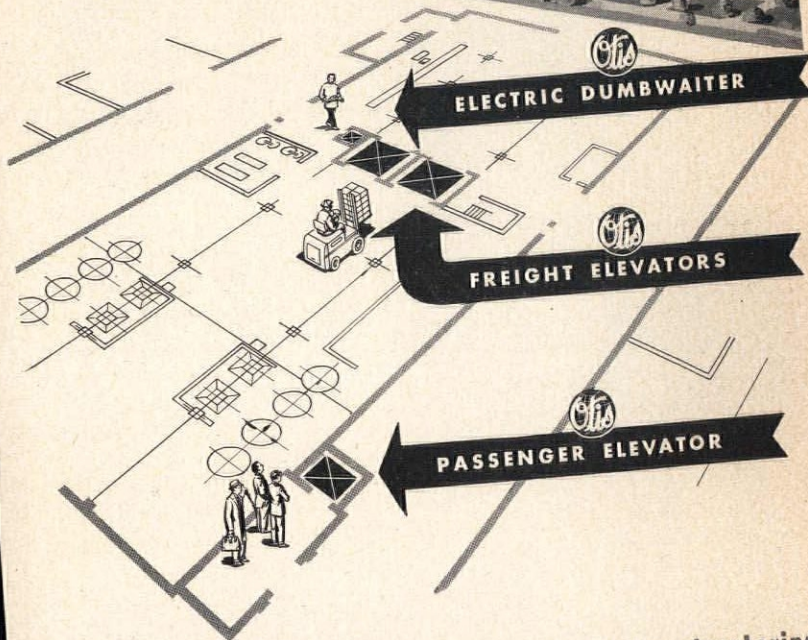
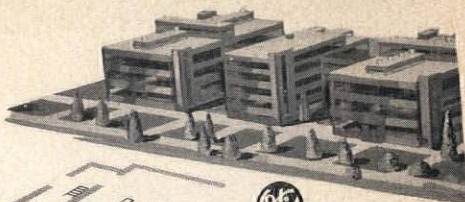
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The Cosmic Architect

By *Walter Scott Roberts*

Excerpts from an address before the Kentucky Chapter, A.I.A.,
at Owensboro, Ky., September 30, 1948

THIRTY YEARS AGO our country felt it had the understanding to lead the world into peace and security. Although we have sacrificed untold lives and wealth, we must admit the results are not flattering. Today we are not so sure. Due to our lack of understanding we do not know what is best for the world. We are forced to use money and power as temporary expedients. Many actually fear that Communism will overthrow Democracy. We have lost faith in our cause. We are in danger of holding a great system responsible for weakness that is ours as individuals rather than that of the system. This is because we as individuals have placed our material well-being above honesty and truth. We have accepted inherited freedom but have not assumed its responsibilities. We have permitted our society to lose old virtues in a quest for glamor. Industry, in-

tegrity and truth have been lost in ingenuity, intrigue and ballyhoo. Man has lost his self-respect in seeking his self-satisfaction. But name calling is not enough; we must have understanding if we are to lead man into peace and a better way of life.

We have tried force of arms, wealth and organization but have failed to bring peace and security to the world. The marvels of science have brought the nations of the world closer together only to cause more friction. We have sought truth through universal education, but it has not set us free from hatred and suspicion. Like The A.I.A., Democracy is no stronger than the character of its people. This is particularly true of its successful people.

It is the character of the individual that sets the pattern of history. The founding fathers of this nation recognized that fact and it

was the fervor of individuals that laid the foundations of our greatness. Will it be the indifference of the individual that will sacrifice that greatness? Today we have lost that fervor and in our sophistication we say that it is the fault of others and there is nothing that one can do about human nature. On the other hand, we have seen Hitler and Stalin create great forces by playing on the lower sides of man's nature. It could be that we have not tried sensibly to develop the higher side of that nature. Have we forgotten that such a side exists?

The problem of human nature requires an evolutionary perspective. For countless ages some force has pushed mankind forward in a quest for a higher and better way of life. From the dawn of history man has made great progress. At times it seemed that this progress was halted and reversed, but over the long period the improvement has been surprisingly steady. Compare the Stone Age with today and it is not difficult to believe that there is some great pattern of cosmic law controlling this development. It could be that we have paid too little attention to this pattern of the cosmic while Science has been charting the pattern of natural laws. In this age

of speed, it is difficult to wait for anything, but you will find that time is a secondary element in this pattern of human development. Time tends to confuse the issue. If man makes mistakes, time can stand still until he is forced to see his error. Ultimately man always returns to truth and starts upward again.



In the past this pattern of human progress might have been referred to as the plan of God. Today, reference to God is like the use of the Doric Order, something to cover up a deficiency in ability. We are inclined to apologize. We would not appear old-fashioned. Yet the fact remains that man, despite all of his mistakes, has steadily moved upward and onward. Some mysterious force seems to have brought man back to real truth when he wandered too far away in his ignorance. If we look again at history we will see that man has made the greatest progress during periods when there was a sincere faith in a higher power. Such a faith, even if a bit intolerant, provided firm convictions as a basis for united action. In recent years we have glorified tolerance and lost convictions. We

must regain the latter and try to hold the former.

It is unfortunate that our forefathers cast God in such a tight mold. They were correct when they held that God is unchangeable but absolutely wrong to expect man's conception of God to be unchangeable. Some fifty years ago when Science began to have a widespread influence on society, the protectors of the Faith withdrew from life and an iron curtain was dropped between the traditional God and the life of modern man. This inflexible conception of God was not consistent with man's natural urge toward progress, and millions of intelligent people lost interest in God and went ahead without the controlling influence of a great faith. As a result the world today has no firm basis for decisions except the satisfaction of selfish desires, and that can lead only to confusion and wars.

Man today has gained great knowledge of natural truth, but our lack of interest in supernatural truth is rapidly bringing chaos. To save the great political and economic freedom which we have inherited, this generation must regain a religious faith. If our faith in God and in the dignity of man is not greater than the faith of the

atheistic disciples of Karl Marx, even the atom bomb will not save our systems. Such a faith cannot be based on sentiment alone. It cannot hope to capture modern man with dreams and miracles. It must be consistent with scientific truth and still lead man to God.

Like any big problem on first sight, this seems difficult. First we must overcome our inclination to condemn the whole because some of the parts are not so good. Don't give up a good *parti* because a minor detail fails to work.

In the past much religion has been based on the fear of death. Today man fears life more than he does death. His sense of insecurity is a major cause of unrest. Man must be shown that there is a real reason for his being. He must be convinced that each person is the product of countless ages of progress which came as a result of endless sacrifices. He not only inherits great individual characteristics, he is also dependent on society as a whole. No matter how insignificant he may be, he must project and try to improve that society.

We must also recognize that although man has inherited much that is good, his character still contains such traits as greed, fear and hatred. Under primitive con-

ditions such traits were necessary for survival, but today these are not so important. In fact if these traits, sometimes called sins, are uncontrolled and turned against his fellowman they could cause self-destruction. In order to control these sins, man has been given a conception of love and an example of the highest form of that love. As each individual uses this love to control these animal instincts, he makes it that much easier for the world to find peace and security. Each individual is on this earth a comparatively short time, but while he is here he is the custodian of all history, the result of the past and the cause of the future. His material possessions, even his physique, are only temporarily his own. At death they vanish from him but something of him goes on into the future. Call it eternal life if you like.

We in this country have made much of freedom, but we do not like to consider the limits of freedom. Man has been given great freedom to make mistakes but even that freedom is not unlimited. If he wanders too far away from reason and truth, he is brought back eventually to the center of truth by the operation of cosmic law. There is great hope in this fact when

we realize that man is eventually going to do right. He is protected from himself by the laws of the Cosmos, which is the opposite of Chaos.

There is a pattern of truth which runs through human nature as well as through physical nature. Man is part of a Cosmos. Human progress can be measured only by man's increasing knowledge of this Cosmos. Strange as it may seem, we are gradually coming closer to such an understanding. In viewing the results of recent wars and atomic research, it is not so difficult to see how "the meek shall inherit the earth." Mutual understanding and the brotherhood of man are the only basis for peace and security. The Kingdom of God could be another way of describing such a state.

Now, who will re-establish this faith that is so greatly needed? Please don't set up a Chapter Committee. I fear it will not be done by any organization. It will come through honest and intelligent men expressing themselves fearlessly at every opportunity. As architects we must give more thought to real truth. We must not only avoid untruth in our work and lives, we must seek the truth and express it at all times. We must learn that

the love and respect of our fellow men is the only ambition worthy of the struggle. It may sound old-fashioned but there is still much merit in the traditional.

Well, there is my *esquisse-esquisse*. The details are endless and your final rendering will be different from mine, but I hope we don't all get an HC.

Architecture Now

By *Hugh Ferriss, F.A.I.A.*

Remarks at the opening of the 1951 Gold Medal Exhibition of
The Architectural League of New York

ONCE MORE the task before us is to build up a huge war plant. This time we must plan correspondingly huge hideouts underground. If there is time we can build the New Towns mentioned in the A.I.A. JOURNAL. With the days thus occupied, after-dinner talks about the quality of architectural design seem like fiddling while Rome is burning.

The fact remains that whatever buildings, here or in enemy countries, may be earmarked for the burning (if there is to be a burning), whatever builders, here or abroad, may go out with the buildings, a practice of architecture will no doubt somehow survive. And as future designers must take up where we leave off (and as Rome is not yet actually burning), maybe we can spare a few moments for appraisals of architecture now.

I am not qualified to make the

appraisals, and I don't know who is. But I recall an incident when a friend of mine, caught in circumstances beyond his control and faced with issues beyond his grasp, was somehow prompted, before signing off entirely, to state a simple and personal belief. It may have been a mistaken belief. It may have been of value to no one but himself. But it was his belief and it was all he could offer under the circumstances.

I believe that the words "Traditionalist" and "Modernist" have become meaningless. That all architects now practising make up one procession that is actively moving along with the times. That the total output of all registered architects now in practice is what really constitutes "modern architecture." And that this modern architecture is the first stage—the

necessarily crude and experimental stage—of one of the few so-called “grand epochs” of architectural history: a creative movement which we should feel privileged to witness, to discuss, to record and if possible to assist.

I can state how I came by this belief. When I was a boy, someone gave me a picture of the Parthenon. I tacked it on the wall and thought about it often. It seemed to be a stone structure; the columns seemed to be working, holding up a roof; and it looked like a temple. I learned, later on, that it *was* a stone structure, the columns *did* hold up the roof and it *was* a temple. So I got the childhood impression that architecture must be something where the real materials, methods and purposes for building were clearly stated in the visible form. But along with the integrity, I got another impression: *the Parthenon was strangely beautiful.*

So I figured that the ancient masterbuilders must have faced the technologies of their own day as a matter of course—faced them not reluctantly but enthusiastically; and then, by grace of whatever it is that makes some builders masterbuilders, must have so disposed, simplified or enlivened the bare

facts as to produce buildings which the world, sooner or later, called beautiful.

Thus my high-school picture of the bonafide architect was that of a rational scientist and an inspired artist all rolled into one—a man of both sense and sensibility! I still know of no other vocation where the dual role is so clearly mandatory.

It wasn't until years later that I began to see the dilemma. Architecture is a science and art, all right; but what about the age in which it must now be practised? Is this popularly called “The Age of Science and Art”?—I never heard it so called. Is it *ever* called “The Age of Art”?—*never*. It is popularly, universally and accurately called “The Age of Science.”

The effects of this phenomenon are of course not limited to the field of architecture. In all fields, no point is more often underscored by our clearer thinkers than a certain present danger—and we now sense that danger all too clearly: not danger in scientific advance as such, since there could hardly be too much knowledge, but danger in the lack of any corresponding and compensating advance in gen-

eral education—in human relations, therefore in international relations; in spiritual growth; in ethics.

We may add, *in esthetics*. If architecture is an art as well as a science, but must now be practised in an age which feeds scientific research and starves artistic inspiration, what course is open to the practising architect, what are his likely reactions? I think there are three; I think that all architects I know lean toward one or another of them, and I will give the remaining moments to identifying them.

One reaction was exemplified by a busy architect I met many miles from here. He knew the dictionary definition about "the science and art of building," but he saw, above all, that this is an age of science, so he said, "To hell with Art!" Stating that he was bored by the sentimentality of his elder confreres, he threw overboard all true sentiment to boot. He assumed that the word "function" meant physical function solely, and talked as though mankind had no psychological functions whatever.

He explained that he was not an individualist and that his buildings were not individual; he was a member of a team, aiming at mass pro-

duction. The other members of his team were technical researchers. Not only were there no painters or sculptors on his team; he had never seen a painter or sculptor at work. He had been in many laboratories but had never set foot in a studio.

The day I met him he was designing a building on a typewriter. When I asked how it was going to look, he not only didn't know but didn't care; what he was after was a "package" that "worked." I borrowed a carbon copy of his design, and, that night, sketched out what it would look like if built. Next day he said, "I guess that's it. Swell, isn't it?" I thought it was lousy. I thought that here was a clever technician, ignorant of psychology, producing an architecture without a soul.

In contrast, there was a prominent architect I knew many years ago. He, too, knew about "the science and art of building." He, too, realized that this was The Age of Science. So *he* said, "To hell with The Age of Science!"

He turned his back on the age he lived in, and designed as though he were in the age he loved, the Renaissance. I want to say a word for him. Among those who have lived abroad with the *real* Renais-

sance (or Gothic or Classic) buildings, lived with them in their native lands and climates, is there anyone so dull that he does not feel a pang of admiration for all fortunate periods when the science and the art of building were at one, when engineers and artists worked enthusiastically together, and when the populace warmly appreciated and applauded their creative alliance? The slightly modified version of those lovely Renaissance façades, made by the architect referred to, were scholarly, skillful and "in good taste." He was faithful to architectural tradition—in respect to appearances.

But after drawing a score of his designs, I began to wonder if he was faithful to tradition *in respect to architectural principles*; if what he had learned from history wasn't just how certain buildings looked, rather than the clear logic and creative flair that made them look that way. For example, one of his façades recalled the Parthenon. It, too, appeared to be a stone structure, the columns seemed to be supporting the roof, and it looked like a temple. But it was a steel structure, the columns supported nothing, and it was a bank. So in all three essentials—material, method and purpose for building—his de-

sign was not an affirmation of architectural principles but a sweeping denial of them.

I came to believe that when an architect, to gain surface beauty, robs his design of structural integrity—when he rises at conventions to damn the whole age he lives in, the only age he has in which to live and work—he drives a nail into a coffin for his profession, and offers leadership of the national building field to alien hands, for example those of the hard-boiled technologist mentioned previously.

I wish my elder acquaintance had chosen to leave the stage with his bright Renaissance cloak composed about him, rather than with the invective he hurled at the younger architects waiting to play their parts.

I have mentioned two extremists, one giving us workable packages devoid of beauty; the other, beautiful façades which no longer work. I say, a plague on both their houses! But their influence has passed, or is passing; there is a third way to take. It is not a compromise between the previous two; the generality of architects is now taking it, and it may be expressed thus: if, in this age, the scientist

has run so far ahead, let the artist now catch up! If architecture is an art as well as a science, and this is an age of science, we will create an art that will serve and express this age.

The dubious words, there, are "we will create." For we can have skillful and scholarly artists, popular and busy artists, without having creative artists. And creation on any broad front takes a long, long time. And it is bound to be a time of endless experiment and therefore of frequent failures. And you cannot judge that which has had a few years of growth as you can that which has been mature for centuries. And any fresh movement attracts camp followers in the way of imitators, fashion experts and plain fakes. But the gap now existing between the requirements and facilities of this age *versus* the forms evolved in previous ages is simply too great to be bridged by further borrowings, refinements or modifications of those forms. Technology has in our lifetime evolved so swiftly as to seem a revolution, and this technological revolution simply forces architecture to be a creative art.

But in its best ancient days, that is what it always was! Architects today are asked simply to revive an

ancient tradition—to face the technologies of their own day as a matter of course, face them not reluctantly but enthusiastically; and then, by grace of whatever it is that makes some builders master-builders, to so dispose, simplify or enliven the bare facts as to produce buildings which the world, sooner or later, will call beautiful.

Hung on these walls, and shortly to be discussed by the Jury, are some examples of what I am talking about. But travel across the country and see, at the actual sites, the full exemplification. Let me say that, much as I admire the designs of Corbusier and love the buildings of Wright, I quite reject the conceited or sycophant notion that modern architecture was initiated by any individual. It was initiated through the posing, by an entire age, of unique questions plus a rising to answer them on the part of an entire creative profession. It was initiated, and developed, by ten thousand incidents. To speak at random: by such incidents as Goodhue's turning his eyes from Gothic, west to the plains of Nebraska; by Eliel Saarinen's designing (though they did not build) his Tribune Tower; by Hood's building (not his Tribune Tower)

his Daily News Building; by Robert Kohn's designing (though I think they never fully carried out) a meaningful theme for the New York World's Fair; by seven members¹ of The Architectural League getting together to design the three Rockefeller blocks as one unit.

Later, it was helped on by housing projects such as Fresh Meadows²; by Clarence Stein's conceptions of new forms; or, to note individual buildings, by Tony Raymond's exquisite dormitory in India, and by the difference you see in a residence designed by a hard-boiled technologist and one designed, say, by Ed Stone.

Referring to incidents not yet published: by the new approach shown in plans recently submitted to the New York City Art Commission for new recreation centers³ and a new court house⁴; and in plans still on the boards for new buildings at Syracuse University⁵ and at the Harrisburg State Capitol.⁶

Every foreign architect, here

for the U.N. project, spoke up in the daily conferences, for artistic as well as utilitarian values and anticipated the collaboration of painters and sculptors, especially their firm U. S. leader, Wally Harrison. In Miami, at this moment, a gifted board of design⁷ is at work on the Interamerican Center, aimed exactly at showing American Science and American Art in their joint effect on American industry.

Other incidents could be mentioned as readily. But out there around the lakes, the valley and the gulf—the plains, the mountains and the coast—in hundreds of recent buildings, stands the basis for my stated belief: that the architecture of today is the first, experimental stage of a creative movement which we should feel privileged to witness, to discuss, to record and if possible to assist.

That is, I so believe unless all creative work is to be blasted off this earth. You recall French's bas-relief at the Metropolitan: a

¹ Andrew Reinhard, Henry Hofmeister, Harvey Corbett, Wallace Harrison, William McMurray, Raymond Hood, André Fouilhoux.

² Voorhees, Walker, Foley & Smith.

³ Eggers & Higgins.

⁴ Shreve, Lamb & Harmon.

⁵ Lorimer Rich.

⁶ William Gehron.

⁷ Robert Fitch Smith, chairman; Russell Pancoast, Alfred B. Parker, John E. Petersen, Robert Law Weed, William K. Jackson, Archie Gale Parish, James Gamble Rogers II, associates.

youth, intent on some design, is standing with upraised mallet about to strike chisel into stone; a shrouded form arrests the creative stroke. If some modern, shrouded form, some atomic shroud, is to arrest all creative strokes, I am not the one to say that we will all serve with whatever tools, familiar or strange, our hands could still grasp.

But I believe this, and you can too: architecture has never been called a destructive art. Among designers such as are in this room tonight, our works, poor as they may be, are our ways of serving a creative, not a destructive, principle; *that*, I believe, is our real interest, our underlying motive and our particular bond.

Frank Lloyd Wright in Philadelphia

By *Talbot Hamlin*, F.A.I.A.

Reprinted from *The Nation* of February 10, 1951, by permission of the Editors

GIMBEL'S has brought together in its Philadelphia store a remarkably effective exhibition of the life work of America's greatest architect. The show (on view through February 24) was designed by Oskar Stonorov and is itself a superb experience; it was a beautiful idea to have it climaxed, at its farther end, with a full-size portion of a Wright house—living-room, bedroom, and kitchen—so that the visitor can get the actual feeling of what such a house is like. Some time ago Gimbel's put on the magnificent Better Philadelphia exhibition; this Wright show is a logical and worthy carrying out of the same idea. Wright's work is

perhaps well known to the few; it is the idea of Gimbel's, as they say, "to bring Wright to the people." Let us hope that these two examples will be followed by similar establishments the country over.

To the visitor the show offers the most complete—as well as the best-presented—record of the work of an American architect that has ever been prepared. And since the architect so signally honored is one of the world's greatest living creators, the show is deeply significant and worthy of the most careful study. Here, almost for the first time, we can see what are perhaps the basic drives that have made Wright what he is.

A great consistency permeates the exhibition. It is at once evident that it is the expression of a single personality large enough to absorb all the currents of half a century, strong enough to direct them and not be swept away by them, imaginative enough to embody them in forms that express not only their power and importance but also, and this is even more valuable, the qualities of the human spirit—its dreams, its emotional needs. Like a great well-rooted tree, Wright has been nourished by the storms of life and not destroyed; he has turned wind and rain—even gales and floods—into new beauty for our enlargement and delight. To be an artist, the work shows, one must be first of all a man.

Thus Wright at all times and in all his work is "of his times," modern of the moderns, yet never dominated by the times, never their slave. This is the essence of what he calls democracy; it is the quality of being individual—even what the world calls "eccentric," if need be—come what may.

Thus Wright is always seeking the enlargement and the enrichment of human life by means of an environment achieved by the daring use of many techniques, new and old.

Thus Wright is always working to increase the form-consciousness and the form-sensitiveness of the world—never seeking to restrict it.

And thus his entire life—he is now eighty-two—has been devoted to making economic forces and technological inventions and discoveries, by himself as well as by others, serve the human imagination rather than letting them, as they so frequently do, dictate to it.

It must be this consistent single-minded aim that accounts for the fact that the esthetic content of his design, instead of becoming poorer and more conventional as he grows older, has gone on growing ever richer yet ever more consistent in its variety.

Another quality leaps from his work—the fact that in it are merged the truest and most forceful elements of the American architectural tradition. For ever since the Revolution, American architecture at its best has been dominated by two major trends often considered hostile to each other. One is the search for abstract beauty and perfection in form and harmonious detail—the quality often called "classic"—reflected in the best work of the Classic Revival and in all the eclectic work that is still significant. The other is the rest-

less search for what is new, emotionally expressive, dynamic—the quality usually termed “romantic.” Wright, through various accidents of his career, hates the term “classic”; yet the fact is that he, above all others, has achieved in his own work a magnificent unification of these two trends. What a controlling sense of *shape* is seen in his rectangles, his circles; what extraordinary harmony of shape controls each creation! And who else in the field of architecture has that sense of axes, of balanced views, of fastidious interior orchestration, or has a similar skill in evolving harmonious detail? Then, on the other side, almost every major job has breached the walls of architectural convention, has dared the unknown both structurally and esthetically, has sought, in a word, all the “romantic” aims. Combining these classic and romantic drives into a new integration, Wright is dominantly and completely American, and his work falls today into the position of climax and of key block for the architectural tradition of this country up to the present time.

In an exhibition as large and as complete as this any particularization of individual works must be to a large extent an expression of

the critic's own personal taste. Other visitors will undoubtedly make other choices; that is itself an evidence of the wide scope of Wright's achievement. As for me, I find myself continually interested in the simpler, even the more obvious, expressions of shape or structure. I think of the suave curves of the design for the San Francisco Bay Crossing, so eloquent of its material (concrete), so effortless in its strong grace. I think of the daring project for a resort building for Hollywood, with its bowl-like forms (terraces and restaurants) cantilevered from a raking pyramidal core. I remember the exquisite directness of the Schabert house (shown in model) and the plans so quiet yet full of rich variety in a series of houses projected for Kalamazoo. I think of the semicircle of the second Jacobs house or the stone cylinders of the Friedman house, and I cannot forget the Walter house, so beautifully poised over the river. And the smaller houses, too—the Pew house in Madison, so rich in effect and yet so economical in plan; the Willey house on its gentle slope; the Winkler-Goetsch house, where true grandeur without “swank” or exhibitionism is incorporated in a small space; and

the earlier "La Miniatura," the Millard house in Pasadena, with its rich textile-block walls so exquisitely placed in a tiny glen. And of course I think of Taliesin and its quiet roofs and yellow stone walls, of Taliesin West in Phoenix, where the desert set the theme and a great composition was written upon it.

At the banquet that opened the show much was made of the fact that here was human genius at work in construction, not destruction; on human life, not on death. It is, I hope, prophetic and signifi-

cant that this show is to go later to Italy, where it will be installed in the Strozzi Palace in Florence, and from there to various other European cities. It is good to know that in these days when hate is considered a virtue and destruction an admirable way of life, in these days of McCarran acts and McCarthyism and hysteria in the newspapers, America is at last to be represented abroad by such an eloquent voice to tell Europe that American exports are not limited to cannon. For the Wright show is the record of a life devoted to art and love, not to killing and hate.

Selective Service and Deferment

AT THE RECENT MEETING of the Board of Directors, Col. Percival S. Moses of the Selective Service System explained the thinking behind our draft policies, with particular reference to the question of deferment. The following is Col. Moses' statement, which should be of great help to those architects concerned with the possibility of having key employees deferred:

Selective Service Regulations provide local boards with ample authority to defer an employee

whose employment is found to be necessary to the maintenance of the national health, safety, or interest.

The Selective Service Act of 1948, as amended, prohibits deferments by groups or categories and requires that each deferment granted must be given on the basis of the individual status of each registrant. Responsibility for the classification of registrants lies initially with the local board. Rules and regulations as prescribed by the President and under which local boards operate are broad.

They are not complicated nor do they confuse the issue by attempting to spell out the case of any person or group of persons.

Any employer of civilian manpower may present to the local board in detail all he may wish to offer in support of any request for deferment of any individual liable under the Act. The employer may present his request in writing in any manner he deems appropriate, inasmuch as no special form is provided or required in this instance. If a request for occupational deferment is denied by the local board, the registrant or his employer, if he filed a request for deferment prior to the classification from which he desires to appeal, has the right to appeal as set forth in the Selective Service Regulations. If the appeal board upholds the classification given by the local board, but, if in doing so, one or more members of the appeal board dissents, then the appellant has re-

course to the National Selective Service Appeal Board, which has adequate power to act in all cases coming before it.

It is to be observed from the information outlined above, that either the registrant or his employer may request occupational deferment, and in support of such request they are at liberty to set forth any information which they believe should be considered as indicating that the registrant's activity in the above-mentioned employment is necessary to the maintenance of the national health, safety, or interest.

It is suggested that in all cases complete information should be provided to a registrant's local board, and it should normally be submitted with the registrant's questionnaire or at least prior to the classification action of the local board. This is necessary to vest in the employer his right of appeal.

The Fontainebleau Schools

THIS SUMMER the Schools of Music and of Fine Arts are celebrating their thirtieth anniversary.

A brief historical sketch is in

order: At the end of the first World War, the American army in France, with General Pershing's approval, sought to give the soldiers the opportunity of study and

development while they were awaiting their return to the United States.

In accordance with this purpose, two schools were founded, one for music at Chaumont, organized by Dr. Walter Damrosch and directed by Francis Casadesus; the other at Bellevue for architects and painters, organized and directed by Lloyd Warren, F.A.I.A. Both schools were staffed by French professors, among whom were Jacques Carlu and Jean-Paul Alaux, architects, and M. Gorguet, painter.



The schools met with such a measure of appreciation that when the Expeditionary Force left France it was felt that these two schools should not be abandoned. Following negotiations with the French Government, the schools were re-established in the Palace of Fontainebleau and were put under the direction of committees formed in both countries. Among the American protagonists were Whitney Warren and his brother Lloyd Warren, architects, and Ernest Peixotto, the painter.

The official inauguration of the Music School occurred on June 25, 1921, opening under the patronage of the composer, Camille

Saint Saëns, and under the direction of Francis Casadesus.

Two years later the Art School was organized on the same basis and housed in another wing of the Palace. Jacques Carlu (1923-37) and J.-J. Haffner with Victor Laloux, the noted French architect and one-time recipient of The Institute's Gold Medal, directed the School.

In 1925 Mr. John D. Rockefeller's generous gift made it possible to restore the upper story and roof of the Art School wing of Fontainebleau, which had formerly been damaged by fire. The restoration made possible the building of spacious studios.

The second World War interrupted the Schools' activities for six years. In the period of reorganization, Jean Labatut, now of Princeton, directed the Art School, with M. Formigé as General Director.

This year's summer school for advanced American students will be held from July 1 to September 1. Details of the requirements, costs, and the like, may be had from the Fontainebleau Association, 122 East 58th St., New York, N. Y.



ENTRANCE DETAIL. NEW JERSEY MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION BUILDING
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY

ADAMS & WOODBRIDGE, ARCHITECTS
Photograph by Gottscho-Schleisner

Favorite Features of
recently elected Fellows:
Frederick J. Woodbridge, F.A.I.A.

*Journal
of
The AIA*



LOBBY DETAIL
NEW JERSEY MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION BUILDING
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY
ADAMS & WOODBRIDGE, ARCHITECTS
Photograph by Gottscho-Schleisner

Our Job Today

By Robert Moses

HEAD OF NEW YORK CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

Remarks on receiving the 1950 Medal of Honor of the Société des Architectes Diplômés par le Gouvernement Français, New York, January 25, 1951, "for the advancement of art and architecture."

I AM HAPPY to accept this token of your recognition. It places the imprimatur of high authority upon our works—I say "our" because it is a group of public officials you honor, not merely an individual, a group which is doing much to change the physical appearance of this City and State, we hope for the better.

In a land where every draftsman is a regional planner and public housing expert, we are flattered to be cited for plodding, middle-of-the-road services to art and architecture.

Napoleon boasted that every soldier in his armies carried a marshal's baton in his knapsack. We go much farther here. It is one of the most charming, naïve and irrepressible assumptions of our American democracy that any inhabitant who can read, write and figure, can fill any public office, no matter how exacting, and plan and direct public improvements of great scope. Mere appointment or election instantly adds the necessary

cubits to his stature and automatically stretches him to just the right size. The trouble with this pleasing legend, as Woodrow Wilson caustically remarked years ago, is that some grow and others swell.

Another native superstition, almost as widely and fiercely held, is that if a man is really and genuinely good at something, he must perforce be a pundit and authority on everything else. That is why we encourage a great aviator to air his views on politics, listen respectfully to the droolings of a distinguished sculptor on the subject of Marxism, egg a famous astronomer to expatiate on socialism, and profoundly believe that the local taxi driver is the modern augur who views the entrails and has the gift of prophecy. The minute a channel-swimming seal slithers ashore on the beaches of France, a horde of eager reporters surround him. Do they ask if he is buoyant or tired, squeamish or exultant? Not on your life. They demand his thoughts on marine vegetation

as a future source of the world's food supply. Those of us who try to learn a little about our jobs and stick to them are reminded daily that our plans are not farsighted and comprehensive, and that without vision the people perish.

My group of builders may be tough, but we have no illusions of grandeur or indispensability. We realize that we are "drest in a little brief authority," and we take advantage of this limited grant of power only to get things done in our time. We try in the process to avoid the insolence of office. We are sufficiently humble to know that we have no right to revolutionize, to spend huge sums of public money on works which may not endure, or to assume that everything done before our time is obsolete and that our personal tastes will necessarily be those of the next generation.

We have been called eclectics in the field of public construction, and this word, innocent enough in itself, is hurled at us as if it were an epithet. It is, however, fairly descriptive if used to imply wide interests, boldness in meeting genuinely new problems, a philosophical approach, selection of the best of the past, and aloofness from

furios innovation. We accept the fact that our age is stamped with steel, and that the next will also produce new materials and with them new methods. We do not, however, concede that new agents dictate freakish designs and the abandonment of the rhythm and harmony of old principles.

The average ultramodernist is unstable because he is contemptuous of his origin, unhappy in his surroundings and overconfident of the future. The eclectic, on the other hand, is likely to be a well-balanced fellow who is at ease and of age in every century but the twenty-first.

In recent years we have been accustomed to the idea that the sights we see and the sounds we hear may be centuries old when, warped in transmission, they reach us from distant planets. What astonishes me, however, is the claim of the Wrights, Niemeyers, Gropiuses, Hudnuts, Mumfords and Corbusiers, that they see clearly the events of the year 3000, and hear distinctly the applause of posterity.

The jargon of the modern school is well illustrated by the phrase, "form follows function." At first blush, this cliché sounds deep and significant. On reflection it is just plain silly. Igloo and cathedral

are both old respected forms which follow function. Both antedate the modernists. The function of an igloo is to warm Eskimos by the ingenious use of the only effective local material. The function of a cathedral is to lift the heart of man through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault to the heavens which declare the glory of God and the firmament which showeth his handiwork. One is literally, the other figuratively a form of frozen music.

And what is function as applied

to landscaping a parkway? Is the aim merely to hide outhouses, dog-stands, billboards and other neighboring ugliness? Obviously this flowering has an esthetic purpose of its own, something very different from what the iconoclasts call "a machine for living."

Again my thanks for your award, which will enable me to boast to my grandchildren that, whatever else may be said, I have been admitted to the Fellowship of Fine Arts by the wisest of my contemporaries.

The Political Influence of The Institute

By *Edmund R. Purves, F.A.I.A.*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

Excerpts from the reply to a letter urging that The Institute staff demand of Congress legislative action on some question of interest to the architectural profession

THE CONFIDENCE expressed by some of our members in our power and influence is flattering, and I can report that we do not entirely lack those assets. However, I venture some observation and advice based on six years or more experience in the Washington scene, and in dealing with the Federal Government and the construction industry and the architectural profession.

The architectural profession is

relatively small compared with other professions. It enjoys no political significance whatsoever. It would be ridiculous for us to attempt to operate along the lines followed by the big trade associations and the pressure groups.

We do, however, enjoy considerable prestige and our opinions carry a great deal of weight. This is because of the general high standards of the profession and our honorable history and the intelli-

gent and mainly disinterested consideration we give to questions in which the issue lies within our province. I think I can also state that our prestige can be attributed in part to the calibre, ability and conduct of the headquarters' staff.

The architects are also looked upon by the construction industry as natural leaders, and consequently The Institute, as the national organization of the profession, plays a prominent and leading part in the industry. Our position is one which we must always strive to maintain and enhance. A wanton exercise of our position would certainly derogate it. We must also restrict ourselves to issues that come properly within our scope.

We have on occasion played quite a part in the shaping of national policies. This has not been accomplished through pressure (except on one or two extraordinary occasions), but through skill, logic, know-how and professional prestige.



In other words, the adoption of resonant resolutions and pronouncements, though often music to our ears, is of small avail unless they are germane to our appropriate concern and can then be made to tell. Incidentally, there is no reason why we should not continually broaden the area of our concern.

This Summer's European Trips

TWO EUROPEAN TRIPS have been planned by the United States Travel Agency, Inc., which organization has conducted several postconvention tours of The Institute. These 1951 trips are not specifically sponsored by The Institute, but the leaders are given letters from President Walker to serve as introduction to the architectural societies of England, Sweden, Switzerland, Italy and France, extending the greetings of

The Institute to these professional neighbors.

The spring trip, under the leadership of Harold R. Sleeper, F.A.I.A., will leave New York by plane May 20, returning June 24, visiting London, Stockholm, Zurich, Lucerne, Florence, Rome, Nice, Paris and the chateau country.

The fall trip, under the leadership of Clair W. Ditchy, F.A.I.A., is scheduled to leave New York by

plane September 1 and, after following the same itinerary, it is due back in New York October 6.

Further details have been outlined in a folder sent by the agency

to the membership, and further inquiries should be addressed to the United States Travel Agency, Inc., 807 15th St., N. W., Washington 5, D. C.

The Architectress

IN TWO PARTS—PART II

By *Joseph Hudnut*

ANOTHER VARIATION in the pattern of marriage, also put into practice by our graduates, is a husband-and-wife partnership in architecture. Preposterous as it may appear, architects do sometimes love each other; and then they may form partnerships with a difference.

The case of Miss van M. of New York City and her architect-husband, for example. Quick to apprehend those social handicaps which seem to be inevitable to woman in all professions, and much too pretty to be credited with practical sense by anyone about to build a house, Miss van M. made use of that intuitive art with which nature had endowed her to bring under the spell of her lustrous eyes the most attractive, dumb, and ancestor-endowed man in her class; married him; and formed with him, after

preliminaries, a partnership for the practice of architecture. As it fell out, her husband has developed into the most magnificent of stuffed-shirts, utterly devastating to building committees and to junior-executives-in-charge-of-planning, while clever Miss van M., an inexhaustible reservoir of ideas, sits in an inner office, like Mansart's celebrated *architecte-sur-chef*, and creates, undisturbed by the melancholy business of snaring a client, the art which is bringing fame to both—and joyously defeats the conspiracy of society against the woman-architect.

Miss van M. has not as yet taken time out for children, but I suppose that she could do so by supplying substitutes now and then, following the example of those great merchant-architects who have reserves of designers ready at a moment's notice to fill any gaps

which may develop in their battalions of hired genius.

Still a third device by which women-architects have escaped some of the oppressions unjustly laid upon their sex is the "collaborative" mode of practice. A number of architects may agree to pool their talents and some, or all, of them may be women. A collaborator, in such an event, may reserve the right, at certain times and under specified conditions, to be absent from the office; and since such absences would be anticipated and provided for, they might be of little consequence in the welfare of the partnership as a whole.

Such a scheme seems to be at this moment the most promising of any yet proposed against the ironies of marriage, but, since the ability of artists to collaborate is here taken for granted, it would seem to be somewhat perilously founded. Collaboration is a beautiful word; but there are still in human nature impulses towards power and selfish promotion, basic stupidities and jealousies, and even honest, inevitable misunderstandings.

Collaboration will succeed best, I think, where only one of the collaborators is gifted with a truly creative imagination. I can conceive several musicians taking their

parts in an orchestra, each with his special command of harmony; but I find distinctly discouraging the thought of seven sculptors at work on a Venus.

Perhaps the greatest barrier to woman's progress in architecture is neither our patterns of prejudice nor our patterns of marriage, but those less mutable prejudices which are formed and continued by economic circumstances. I mean, of course, prejudices concerned with employment, promotion, opportunity, salesmanship. Architects do not like to employ women in their offices; contractors do not like to build from their plans; people with money to spend do not like to entrust its expenditure to a woman.

The real bottleneck here is the architect's office in which the beginner in architecture must serve his apprenticeship after graduation. Following their very ancient tradition, architects who are established in practice take newly fledged architects under their wings and help them to grow wings of their own. Women, I am sorry to say, often receive a somewhat cold welcome in such offices.

And why, indeed, should a busy architect spend his time on the education of a young person whose

chances of independent practice are almost negligible and who will certainly leave his office for marriage as soon as he has made her of value to him? Besides, a woman is bound to be a disquieting element in a drafting-room. A woman cannot endure the long hours; she is emotionally unstable (so we think); the office manager is certain to fall in love with her; and she may even appear in close-fitting slacks and a white sweater. It takes a very persistent young lady to crash the gate of this masculine cocktail party and to stay there until the doors are thrown open for supper.

Women, as a matter of fact, make excellent draftsmen; and, for my part, I shall defend the notion that, in the higher realm of the creative process which we call *design*, woman will also prove the equal of man. In design, the usual reproach addressed to woman is concerned with an alleged lack of practical sense; but practical sense, I think, is something more than a talent for accounting and the market; and if the phrase includes an aptitude in sensing human relations—in the architectural world an understanding or intuition of a client's requirements and tastes—I shouldn't be surprised if this should

turn out to be woman's special and restricted sphere.

In architectural competitions—which are usually won by those who excel in that art of inductive reasoning through which architects divine the predispositions of juries—women should be exceptionally successful. They are successful in school competitions; why not then where a professional commission is at stake?

My first experience in teaching women—many years ago at the Columbia School of Architecture—furnished me with a good example of woman's inductive reasoning applied to human relations. I was called upon to take over a class in archaeological design in the midst of a competition, and among a score of men at work on "A Norman Castle of the Tenth Century" was my first woman student, Miss P., a graduate of Ann Arbor. Miss P. had already completed the main outlines of her design, a stone donjon of formidable strength surrounded by massive crenelated walls also of stone. Of formidable strength but not more dangerous to an instructor inexperienced in these matters than the long eyelashes of Miss P. I took shelter behind professorial dignity.

"The composition is excellent," said I. "The presentation good, but some improvement in historical accuracy is advisable . . . The Normans of the tenth century built their castles of wood."

The light beneath the eyelashes of Miss P. grew just a shade brighter as she replied:

"Hell, Dean, the jury won't know that."

It couldn't have been the eyelashes, but the fact is that the jury gave Miss P. the first prize. Nor did the talent of Miss P. in human relations end there. Her skill in persuading upper classmen to do her work for her amounted to genius; her assessment of faculty complacencies was accurate in the extreme.

In her fourth year I had to rebuke Miss P. for having cut my class not less than three times in one fortnight. "I had tea," she said, "with the bishop."

"The excuse is clearly unacceptable," said I.

"Have a heart, Dean," replied Miss P. "The bishop is going to build a church."

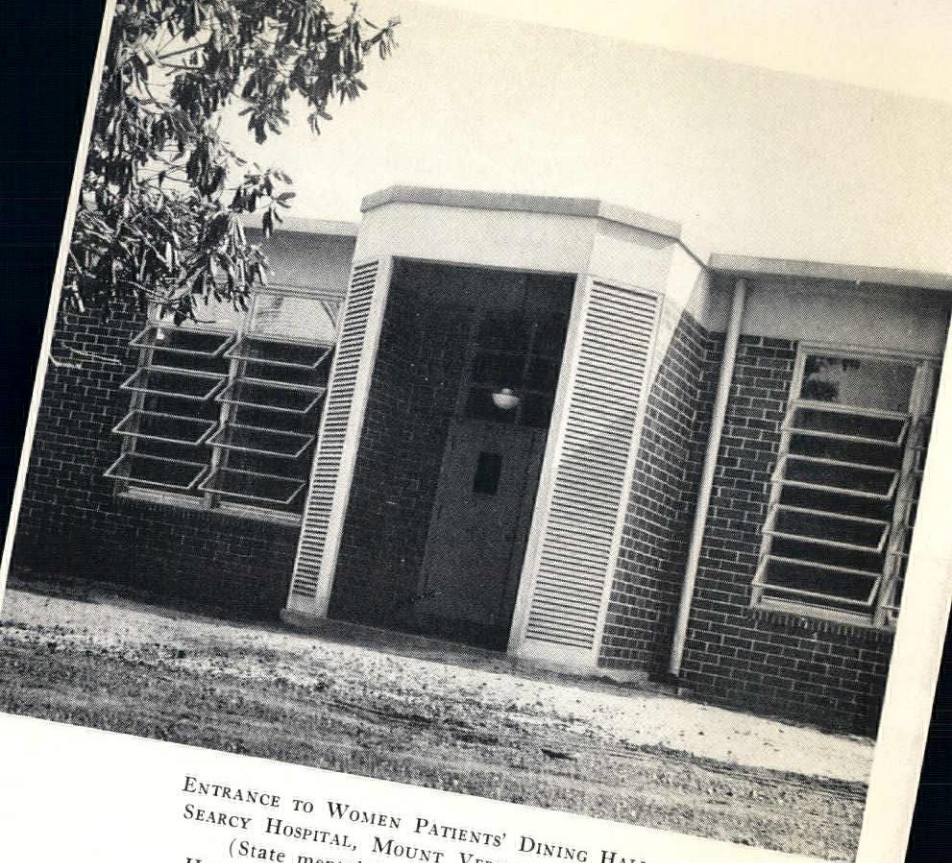
The bishop, I regret to say, proved invulnerable to eyelashes; but the idea is not lacking in possibilities.

The practice of Miss P., which

began immediately after college, survived two world wars and four babies, although there were periods when her office had to be closed. Today, the wars being ended, the children educated and safely married, the husband's struggle for security fought and won, Miss P. has returned to the practice of the twin arts, architecture and human relations. She will not join those unfortunate battalions of American women who at the youthful age of forty-five have nothing to put into their lives but bridge, cocktail parties and Florida.

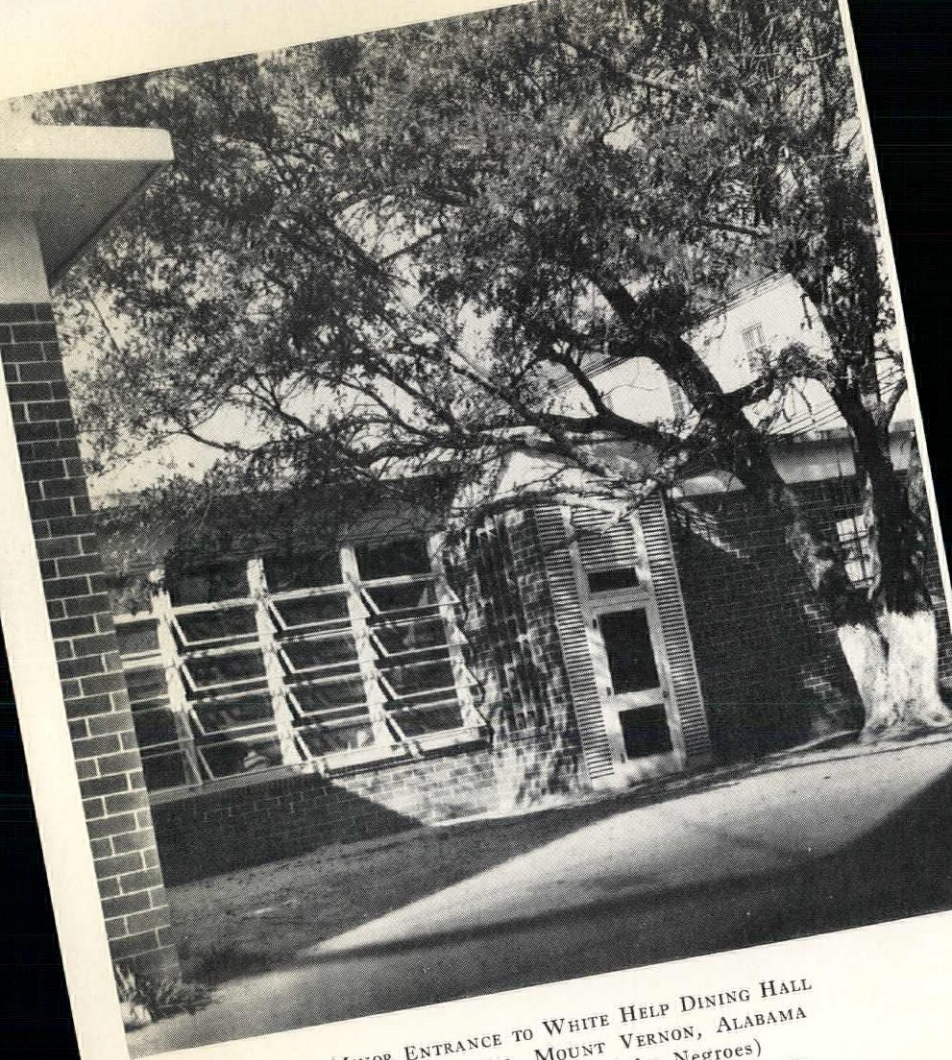
In some ways architecture is peculiarly fitted to be a refuge and solace for such women, provided, of course, they are trained for the practice of that art in their youth. Perhaps they will some day plan it that way. The best architecture is nearly always the work of architects fifty years old. The talent and competence of architects mature, it appears, with age. They are not, like poets and mathematicians, at their best at twenty. Except in "The Fountainhead" architecture has no infant prodigies dashing off cathedrals at three years of age.

Miss P., who was recently awarded the Gold Medal of the Boston Society of Architects for



ENTRANCE TO WOMEN PATIENTS' DINING HALL
SEARCY HOSPITAL, MOUNT VERNON, ALABAMA
(State mental hospital for Negroes)
HARRY INGE JOHNSTONE, F.A.I.A., ARCHITECT
Photograph by Architect

Favorite Features of
Recently elected Fellows



MINOR ENTRANCE TO WHITE HELP DINING HALL
SEARCY HOSPITAL, MOUNT VERNON, ALABAMA
(State mental hospital for Negroes)
HARRY INGE JOHNSTONE, F.A.I.A., ARCHITECT
Photograph by Thigpen Photography

Favorite Feature
recently elected Fel

her new ranch houses at Newton Upper Falls, has demonstrated the ability of woman to overcome both prejudice and economic circumstance—and to bend to her will also the stubborn pattern of marriage.

I must not end my essay without a brief notice of still another of my women students—if only to show that Harvard is not too far behind Columbia in enterprise. The example of Miss B., who came to Harvard from Oklahoma and who graduated in architecture only last year, ought to end forever the absurd notion that women are not the equals of men in salesmanship and promotion.

Her diploma in her hand, Miss B. happened to see in a vacant lot on Boylston Street a sign announcing the construction of a new garage by a subsidiary of the Buick Sales Corporation. Miss B. was in the office of the manager of that company before the day's end. "In planning your garage," inquired Miss B., after some introductory remarks, "have you considered the advantages of a module system?"

It was necessary to tell the manager about modules; and from that Miss B. went on to the economies

inherent in the lattice truss, the efficiency of hydraulic elevators when great power is to be applied slowly, the specific nature of display techniques when these are to overcome sales resistance in motor accessories, the effective and ineffective uses of neon-lights, and ways of by-passing the building code in such matters as ground coverage and fire protection.

"You have some ideas," said the manager, "but as yet you have said nothing about art."

"Oh, that!" said Miss B.

Automobile people, as we know, have passionate thoughts about art. They cannot speak of an automobile without some reference to distinctive beauty in flowing lines, of dramatic colors that make each ride a festive occasion, of regal roominess that cradles you close to the companionship of mother earth, of the honeyed magic of Superflow, the liquid silkiness of Arrowdyne, of sweetness and grace in styling, of the sunshine gleams to which these lead along the byways of America, amid saffron clouds edged with silver, and the joyous freedom of . . .

It is true that automobile men are like that. It is true also that Miss B. built that garage on Boylston Street.

"Your garage," said I, in my best graduation-day manner, "is exceptionally well planned and excellent in technique. You have served

your client well. Moreover, your garage is beautiful."

"Oh, shucks," said little Miss B., " 'Taint nothing."

The League's Gold Medal Award

Reprinted from the February, 1951
Oculus of the New York Chapter, A.I.A.

THE 1951 Gold Medal for Architecture of the Architectural League of New York was awarded January 18 for the design of the Harvard Graduate Center to the Architects Collaborative of Cambridge, Mass., a group consisting of Jean Bodman Fletcher, Norman Fletcher, Walter Gropius, Sarah Harkness, John Harkness, Robert S. McMillan, Louis A. McMillen and Benjamin Thompson.

Members of the Jury acting in this decision were Harold R. Sleeper, F.A.I.A., Frederick J. Woodbridge, F.A.I.A., Daniel Schwartzman and Benjamin Lane Smith, chairman, and it was their opinion that the Harvard Dormitories constitute an outstanding example of projects of that type, with an excellent general plan and consistently good design in all the parts. It was felt that this work might well, and should, influence

the solution of similar problems in the future.

Instructions to the Jury had stated that its members were to examine with care the work submitted, to determine which, if any, was intrinsically of high quality and likely to have influence upon the general trend of architectural design. Several of the projects submitted were executed with limited budgets as regards available building funds, and the Jury noted a number of designs in which the architects had exhibited much skill in producing pleasing results under that handicap.

In addition to the Harvard Graduate Center, eleven entries were cited as good examples of one or more of the foregoing criteria. Members of this Chapter receiving commendations were Ketchum, Gina & Sharp for St. Barnabas House, an institutional building

exemplifying a high standard of design achieved on a limited budget; Olindo Grossi for a modest, but distinguished private house; Robert B. O'Connor, F.A.I.A., and Walter H. Kilham, Jr., for a school at Wilton, Conn., economically but carefully planned on an irregular site; Kahn & Jacobs

for the office building at 147 Broadway, showing skillful and creative handling of masses; Carson & Lundin for the Esso Building, a dignified and harmonious addition to the group at Rockefeller Center; and Kelley & Gruzen for a school building at Passaic, N. J.

An English Visitor Looks Us Over

EXCERPTS FROM AN UNINHIBITED LETTER WRITTEN TO HIS PRINCIPAL BY PETER NEWNHAM, EX-STUDENT, WHO CAME OVER TO SEE AND WORK IN OUR ARCHITECTURAL OFFICES. REPRINTED FROM *A.A. JOURNAL* BY COURTESY OF THE EDITORS.

I ALSO SAW Milliron's, the new department store with the double ramps leading the cars to the roof. The planning is extremely logical and the interiors are simple to the point of bareness: the exterior has been decked out to provide the maximum visual road block to the speeding motorist. There is one feature of these big stores that is often interesting: the escalators are not enclosed in fire-proof wells, but penetrate the main shopping floors, one incline usually being opposed against the other. Being side by side, the left-over shapes are extremely stimulating, as you pass up or down; and some of the designers have capitalised this with strong colour. Other

walls are often neutral so that they do not compete with the merchandise. Small city shops are quite different and, like cheesecake, stud the lushness with glitter to eclipse their neighbours.

In Los Angeles you see the grossest examples of America's biggest danger—lack of self-discipline—in a situation where everything is possible. I think of one cinema that is the most disgusting assemblage of every modern cliché; I think of a house which is so dramatic that you would have to wear grease-paint the whole time; I remember a furniture shop, where the largest element was a wooden maypole-cum-tent-cum-umbrella skeleton in redwood about thirty-five feet high,

and all this junk stuck in front of a simple concrete hut, which was the shop proper.

By contrast, there are some excellent examples of restraint. There is, for instance, one terrace housing project, called Baldwin Hills Village, where a series of 2-storeyed stuccoed blocks have been differentiated merely by colours and unified by good landscaping that keeps all cars on the periphery of the development.

There was a small area where Neutra and Eames had built themselves houses. Eames had worked within the discipline of the steel cage and had produced a Piet Mondrian in three dimensions, the panels of varying sizes being either glass or brilliantly painted in primary colours. His studio was two-storey, and inside could be seen hanging vertically a two-storey red fish. Set casually on the ground behind a screen of eucalyptus trees, his rectilinear cages had the abstract charm of any ivory tower. En masse, they would be horrible. Neutra's house uses the traditional Californian redwood and glass with a restraint that its author learnt in Europe. The restraint is valuable, for Neutra also searches for that richness that Loewy achieves on a lower plane. Neutra's most

typical trick is to contrive unnecessarily heavy eaves (sometimes with the boards running vertically) which gives his houses the same assurance as the plain but heavy Edwardian watch-chain.

The last leg of my journey brought me to San Francisco and next morning I started earning once more. This time it was for one of the most interesting firms in the country. There was a time-clock and a public relations man—both almost unknown in architects' offices. The boss was possibly forty. Most of the draftsmen had been out of school less than two years. There were two Turks, one Cuban, a Panamanian, several Chinese, a Negro (for whom I at present work), a girl born in Holland, another from Greece, and an Estonian arrived last week.

The architect-engineer partnership was turning out schools exclusively. A month later the partnership had broken up and Kump (the architect) had set up an expensive new office. Design is based on analysis and deduction rather than magnificent conceptions, and the system (on paper at least) would flabbergast even a Ventris. A book has been prepared and circulated to "job-captains" showing

exactly in what sequence the various drawings should be prepared and information added to them; and certainly with the schools, the preliminary "client drawings" progressively become the final working drawings, with no tracing or re-drawing. Modular design is accepted unquestionably, and all sheets of paper are overprinted with a modular grid—the different scales used tie in with it. Kump, who has energy enough to make his firm the biggest in the country, is usually on a plane between here and there—while his associates run the office. The associates are exuberant young men, all firmly disciplined in the boss's belief that a modular logic must run through the unseen depths of the building. The draftsmen are also interesting; they come from the various colleges, including Harvard, the M.I.T., and the I.I.T. Some have not been to college, like the chap I work with, who says he can make far more money as a diesel mechanic than as a draftsman, but that he doesn't like the smell of oil.

Apart from the schools, the most interesting work here is private houses, a la Bay Region. These are difficult to come across, but I have seen some. Their common characteristic of an honest, shed-

like wood structure is very attractive. Adrian Malone has built himself one where teco connectors, unpolished wood and concrete block are allowed to show honestly. Mario Corbett builds wooden things that have the spidery quality of a Klee experience. There are also the super-esoterics, like Jack Hilmer, who have found super-rich clients. At the moment he is engaged on a one-bedroom house that may cost £25,000: the hand-basins are to be carved from *lignum vitae*, and the house is glued rather than nailed together. In Europe such a structure would be almost anti-social; in California, where bus drivers and bricklayers own large cars, it is exciting if unruly. Cantilevers wend to and fro amongst the trees and out to sea, and the granite fireback weighs twelve tons.

At Frank Lloyd Wright's new shop here, with the entry piercing the blank facade with a recess that is half-tunnel, half-greenhouse, one is tempted to grind one's teeth because it is so successful. The ramp inside is a delight; less successful is the bubbly plastic ceiling. The photographs in the *Forum* do not do the interior justice. It is extraordinary how

Wright can add circle to sphere, and sphere to cylinder, and cylinder to dome, and dome to spiral, and spiral to segment, and get away with it.

At the moment I am thinking in terms of coming home this autumn; if I stay longer I shall never come; and recently I have

been spending some evenings boosting my capital worth by working overtime—in preparation for my next move. I may stay in San Francisco until I come home, but I am toying with the idea of trying to work in Seattle or Portland, where interesting things are happening.

News from the Educational Field

RENSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE, starting in July, will adopt the year-round quarter system, admitting students four times each year, and permitting them to graduate in three years. At the same time, those who wish to do so may continue at the normal pace.

MIAMI UNIVERSITY'S School of Fine Arts at Oxford, Ohio, announces the appointment of Dr. Leicester B. Holland, F.A.I.A., as head of the Department of Architecture. Robert W. Modaff, now assistant professor of architecture,

will serve Dr. Holland as executive assistant. Since 1948 Dr. Holland has been professor of architecture under the late William Dunbar as head of the department.

Before his death, Mr. Dunbar secured the services of two European architects as design critics for the department: Rudolf Frankel, a British subject specializing in theater, factory and civic design; and Willem de Moor, who was born in Italy, studied in Paris and has been practising in Sweden.

Rome Prize Fellowships Awarded

ROME PRIZE FELLOWSHIPS beginning October 1 have been announced by the American Academy in Rome. Two painters were given fellowships: James Hanes, Philadelphia, Pa., and Norman J. Rubington, New Haven, Conn. A fellowship in sculpture was given

to Elbert Weinberg, Hartford, Conn., and Richard C. Bell, Pittsburgh, Pa., received a fellowship in landscape architecture. Richard E. Baringer, Elkhart, Ind., at present attending Harvard's Graduate School of Design, was awarded a fellowship in architecture.

German Housing

IMPRESSIONS OF WHAT THE GERMAN PEOPLE WOULD LIKE AND ALSO OF WHAT THEY ARE NOW ABLE TO BUILD

ON September 18, 1950, Bernard Wagner of the Housing and Home Finance Agency arrived in Berlin to work on the prefabricated house which was a part of the United States' exhibit at the Berlin Industrial Exhibition. Upon his return to this country Mr. Wagner wrote a report of his activities in Germany and mentioned some of his impressions. Portions of his report appear below.

In spite of all the difficulties encountered, the house, inside as well as outside, turned out to be quite nice. A little trellis over the entrance with a flower-box, a flagstone terrace with planting strip and flower bed in front of the picture window, gave the house an appearance of permanence rather than the temporary exhibit-house look. Fortunately, there were a number of existing trees at both sides and rear of the house.

As far as the German public was concerned, the house was a complete success. An average of 3,000 people went through it each day. As we expected, the kitchen was the most admired room. However, the living-room and bedrooms

also caused many favorable comments. Built-in closets with sliding door and Venetian blinds caused some excitement and seemed to be quite uncommon in Germany. The sliding plastic cabinet doors in the bathroom, and indirect lighting behind them, presented a feature admired by men and women alike. The bathtub was generally criticised as being too short; Germans are used to longer bathtubs. Architects, engineers and laymen asked many questions about the construction system, insulations, heating and plumbing.

The question most asked, however, was the one of price. The detached, single-family house is also the dream of the average German family. It is disheartening to see the people's faces drop when they hear the \$10,000 figure. Many times it was explained that this was not a house for export to Germany, but only a model home to show how the average American lives.

The fact that this house was prefabricated was also a point of great interest. In Germany, prefabrication has not made much

progress, due mainly to three factors: lack of capital; opposition by local officials; and tendency of local politics to favor small entrepreneurs rather than large-scale builders.

Through talking with Germans, Mr. Wagner learned that there is almost no money available for private housing. What funds are available carry interest rates of from 6% to 10%, and most of it is going into industrial or commercial building, of which there is a great deal. However, construction methods, with few exceptions, are the way they were a hundred years ago, and organization of building sites is inefficient. Local politics dictate that there are often four or five different general contractors on small projects of 100 or so dwelling units.

As to new building materials

and construction methods, there appear to be two systems that are used successfully. One system is called "Scheutbreton-Bauweise" and is similar to the Swedish Ytong system. A very coarse aggregate is used with no fines; forms are of wire mesh in standard steel frames of various sizes. The other system uses lightweight concrete slabs or blocks as non-bearing filler material in reinforced concrete apartment structures. The latter system uses gas concrete or foam concrete, of which there are ten or more variations in Germany. It is believed that these systems reduce the cost of the shell of the house only, which, after a certain point (even with the use of labor-saving devices and good site organization), cannot be reduced any further. It still takes just as long to finish the inside of the buildings, a cost item which is much larger.

The Herzl Memorial Competition

THE CHAIRMAN of the Competitions Committee of The American Institute of Architects calls the attention of members to the fact that, in accordance with a ruling of the Executive Committee governing such matters, it does not approve nor disapprove of the in-

ternational architectural competition now in progress for the Herzl Memorial to be erected in Israel. The Chairman calls the attention of the members to the fact that, while they are permitted to enter this competition, it does not fulfill the requirements necessary for the

approval of an architectural competition within the jurisdiction of The Institute. Members are, there-

fore, urged to read the program carefully before deciding to enter the competition.



Architects Read and Write

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



WITHOUT BENEFIT OF BEAUTY

BY JOHN GRAHAM, JR., Falls Church, Va.

A GLANCE at the Stewardson Winning Design of 1950 in the March issue of the JOURNAL, showing a memorial to Johann Sebastian Bach, brings to mind, for some strange reason, the playful words of an old song, ". . . and my dear mother always said, speak not unkindly of the dead . . ." Well, it seems to me that unkind words have been spoken through the medium of an architectural design, or to put it more gently, no complimentary word has been said. Shades of Bach! What a sorry attempt has been made to pay tribute to the character and works of a great composer. When the peace and quiet of the grave should be the just reward for departed souls, why introduce a discordant note in the shape of a memorial which can only serve to disturb a good man's rest!

The word appropriateness is still current in the English language and in certain arts we take its application for granted. For instance, in sculpture no artist in his right mind (Ah! but that is the

catch!) would fashion a likeness of, say, Will Rogers with knitted brows, deep sunken eyes and an ugly scowl, giving the impression that the man was a sullen misanthrope and not a warm-hearted humorist. Such a likeness would be false to the man's character as we know it. Neither on the stage would a producer clothe King Lear in the trappings of a court jester; the character misrepresentation would be absurd. Why then, if appropriateness is essential in the other arts, should it be grossly violated in the greatest of all arts? Why should not the architecture of this memorial bear a visible relationship to the character and works of Bach? Surely the question is important.

It is recorded that Johann Sebastian Bach's creativeness as a musical composer early marked him as a genius. His deep and pervading influence on other great composers was enormous. It is said that no one could escape this influence. Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Wagner and Brahms

studied Bach's work to their great advantage. Yet Bach's genius was so ingrained and marked by independence that he had no imitators. Turning to the great volume of Bach's executed work, we know that in addition to his secular vocal music and his instrumental music he composed some hundred and ninety church cantatas of spiritual beauty.

Viewing this background of Bach, his genius ranging from the secular to sublime ecclesiastical compositions, it is somewhat difficult to imagine a memorial to him which, in its presented form (body and tail), resembles so closely what is commonly known along our eastern seaboard as the horseshoe or king crab! In the search for new forms today, if inspiration must be found in the commonplace, by all means let us employ some degree of selectivity. Instead of the horseshoe crab as a model, let us look at the possibilities of the conch shell with its pleasing curves, la-la! or seek inspiration from the geometrical form of the star fish (for plan), or the dainty beauty of the seahorse (for elevation). Since the Greeks used the dolphin in decoration rather well, this classical form is automatically ruled out by "modern" dictates. There remain, however, the depths of the ocean for profitable research.

When the well-defined requirements of the program are examined it is baffling to comprehend why the essential ones were not taken seri-

ously by the successful competitor. Why the judges, who had the duty of selecting the winner, overlooked these "musts" (emphasizing appropriateness) is an enigma wrapped in a roll of tracings, lost in a filing case! For those who may like to read and wonder, here is a list of the more important requirements in condensed form: "the memorial shall be appropriate in character to the dignity of Bach" . . . "to serve as a lasting memorial to him" . . . "to be an ornament to the parkway of the city" . . . "music to be heard under the most appropriate conditions" . . . "to be used as a center for an annual Bach Festival" . . . "structure to be on a grand scale symbolic of the monumental qualities of his music." Consider this last requirement: in any stretch of the imagination, and reason, is it possible to say with a straight face and no reddening that this engineering curiosity is "on a grand scale"? Certainly "grand" implies in architecture something more than a successful solution to the problems of strains and stresses. Secondly, and even more strongly, if this memorial is "symbolic of the monumental qualities of Bach's music" then symbolism has lost its meaning.

Yes, we can look at the Stewardson design of 1915 and smile. No one would wish to return to the deplorable expression of that period when we were adorning ourselves with second-hand clothes of Paris

and liking the effect. But, in all truth, there *were* compensations. Some honest thought was given to the quality of dignity where dignity was appropriate. And there was always the *search* for beauty in the architectural sense which down through the ages has been the legitimate quest of the architect and (before it is forgotten) differentiates his work from the work

of the engineer. If the architect relinquishes his priceless birthright—this search for beauty in line and form—then there is no excuse for his being, because the engineer is better equipped to function in an all-functional society. Perhaps society will come to this mechanistic end, but should the architect assure his own demise by hastening the process?

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

BY ROBERT INGLE HOYT, Santa Barbara, Calif.

A RECENT meeting of the Executive Committee of the California Council of Architects was graced by the good company of President Ralph Walker. During a luncheon interlude he spoke of a client who had mentioned the "secrets" of the firm in a specialized field of practice. Mr. Walker replied that the real secrets of the firm were really in its collective and developed ability to *ask the right questions*.

This was a very simple statement, but it more than adequately covers what may be the major factor of successful architectural practice. In this field where analysis is as important as synthesis, and diagnosis as important as prescription, we find much comment, publication and educational stress on design and little discussion of programming.

It is often said that it is more difficult to ask a good question than to answer one, since the question

delimits the scope of the answer. It thus behooves the architect to ask good questions of people generally unaccustomed to giving answers in the construction field. It would appear that the ultimate usefulness of the structure would thus depend primarily upon the architect's ability to ask good questions, as well as upon his ability to plan and design.

Those, who like myself were trained in the production rooms of large offices, have felt the truth of this attitude when we finally got our own offices operating, when we discovered with perhaps something of a shock that the conference table was fully as important as the drafting table.

It is possible that the ability to ask good questions is even more needed by the small practitioner than by the larger offices, for the limited number of questioners puts all the burden on one man. His clients are usually less skilled in

question answering as will frequently be seen in residential work. Even the size of town in which one works or the business success of the client would appear to affect these abilities.

Our schools are preparing their graduates primarily for smaller practices in smaller towns. The principal subject of building de-

sign is taught largely by the system of prepared programs which provide excellent training in synthesis or prescription preparation. It occurs to me that some thought has been given to training in the analysis or diagnostic stages and I wonder if the *JOURNAL* might report progress or discussion in this direction.

MODERN ARCHITECTURE NEEDS A FRAME OF REFERENCE

BY HUGO LEIPZIGER-PEARCE, Austin, Tex.

CHAIRMAN, GRADUATE STUDIES IN COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING,
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS

ABOUT A YEAR AGO, the Southeastern Art Association invited me to participate in a panel keynote address, starting off its annual convention in New Orleans. The large group consisted mostly of artists, architects, art teachers and museum directors from Mississippi to North Carolina, Florida and Louisiana. A most enlightened and enlightening discussion developed around "Social Dynamics and Modern Art and Architecture." Modern design for schools, housing, prefabrication and the whole range of organic versus functional architecture filled the introductory morning session, keeping the controversial issues on a very high professional plane of argumentation. For this reason, I would like to restate certain passages of my paper relating to "Architecture and Social Dynamics." The arguments over the so-called functional and organic approaches in modern architectural design have not been

settled so far, but I contend that the two are by no means antagonistic to each other. I would rather say that although both concepts have been wrongly implemented at times (as I will state below), their historic mission seems to be firmly established.

"The loss of architectural identity today should be considered as temporary only . . . Architecture as a dynamic phenomenon has influenced the fluctuations of social change in every culture. The question arises if the esthetic impact of architecture is preceding the material developments as guiding directives, or if it is simply an immaterial reflection of material culture. This issue is rather controversial, of course. Nevertheless, if we endeavor to assign a functionally justifiable role to architecture from a contemporary standpoint, everything will depend on the answer to this question . . . Any effort in the direction of archi-

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tectural dynamics must, of necessity, aim at symbolic expression. Because 'symbolization is realization, it is the materialization of an idea in a medium . . . whether employed by science or poetry or philosophy, the symbol has the same function: to appropriate a region of experience' . . . The architectonic quality of Frank Lloyd Wright's work has demonstrated unquestionably that a common esthetic experience can still be provided by architecture. It expresses symbolically the independence, vitality, and nature-consciousness of American democracy . . . leading to closer community cooperation, thereby making architectural dynamics an indispensable instrument for the fullest realization of social dynamics . . . In spite of the danger of oversimplification, inherent in any classification . . . the

following is ventured: It seems that two basic expressions can be established for contemporary architecture. *First*, strictly therapeutic-functional forms for home and work environment (Le Corbusier's School of Thought); *second*, symbolic-functional forms for all structures and spaces of social significance. The symbolic form-language must be able to communicate to all the ideals of democracy, and it must do so intelligibly (Frank Lloyd Wright's Organic School of Thought, into which the former integrates); a *third* type, of subordinate nature, could deal with the design for commerce, entertainment, and the like, which can easily be imagined as having all the characteristics of 'psychology in advertising.' In any event, it would not exclude playful impulses of design."

Calendar

April 11-15: Annual Meeting, American Planning and Civic Association, McAllister Hotel, Miami, Fla.

April 12: Architectural League of New York's Gold Medal for Landscape Architecture; Opening of Exhibition and Dinner, 7:30 P.M.

April 15-19: Sixth Annual Conference of the Association of State Planning and Development Agencies, Sherry-Frontenac Hotel, Miami Beach, Fla.

May 3: Architectural League of

New York's Gold Medal for Mural Painting; Opening of Exhibition and Dinner, 7:30 P.M.

May 8-11: 83rd Convention of The A.I.A. and Building Products Exhibit, Edgewater Beach Hotel, Chicago.

May 11: Meeting of the Acoustical Society of America, Washington, D. C. A symposium on architectural acoustics sponsored jointly by the Society and The A.I.A.

May 20-24: Annual Convention of the National Association of

Building Owners and Managers, Rice Hotel, Houston, Tex.

May 20-June 24: Architects' Spring Trek to Europe under leadership of Harold R. Sleeper, F.A.I.A.

July 1-September 1: Fontainebleau Schools of Fine Arts and Music. Requests for full information should be addressed to Fontainebleau Association, 122 East 58th St., New York, N. Y.

July 21-August 4: Oxford Summer School on Architectural History and Measured Drawing, in connection with the Festival of Britain, 1951. Further details from J. Brosgall, Shire Hall, Reading, England.

August 13-25: Special Summer Course on Swedish Decorative Arts and Architecture, Swedish Institute, Kungsgatan 34, Stockholm 3.

September 1-October 6: Archi-

itects' Fall Trek to Europe under leadership of Clair W. Ditchy, F.A.I.A.

September 11-20: Building Research Congress, centering at the Institution of Civil Engineers, London.

September 17-20: 53rd Annual Convention of the American Hospital Association, Jefferson, Lennox, Sheraton, Statler and De Soto Hotels, St. Louis, Mo.

September 23-30: The second congress of the Union Internationale des Architectes, to be held at Rabat, Morocco.

October 17-19: Annual Convention of the Architects Society of Ohio, Hotel Deshler, Columbus, Ohio.

November 14-28: Building Exhibition, Olympia, London. For further details address the Managing Director, 4 Vernon Place, London, W. C. 1.

The Editor's Asides

IT WOULD BE HARD to find any architectural innovation of recent years that finds fewer opponents than the storage wall. The surprising fact is that it is not more universally in evidence. Probably it will be, after the Small Homes Council of the University of Illinois gets through with the projected research into its adaptability to the lower-cost market. Fortunately the recommendations being devel-

oped are on a modular basis and in connection with that other widely favored innovation—the roof truss for the small dwelling.

LIKE THAT OF MANY INDIVIDUALISTS, Frank Lloyd Wright's dress is usually eye-catching. At the recent dinner in his honor, opening the exhibition of his work (see Talbot Hamlin's article, p. 169) Wright was flanked by the

predominating black not only of masculine evening dress but by black-gowned women. Hung casually over his shoulders was a large shawl of silky, white angora. A rigidly focused spotlight would have been no more efficient and far less effective.

Hung about his neck was the Gold Medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects. One fascinated observer ventured to ask Mr. Wright whether this was his favorite of all the medals given him. "Hell, no," he replied, "It's the only one with a ribbon."

ADD TO THE LIST of efforts toward better building codes the work of the New York State Building Code Commission. In the absence on military leave of Chairman Edward J. McGrew, Jr., the vice chairman—our own George Bain Cummings, F.A.I.A., of Binghamton—is at the helm, and we may confidently expect results.

TO DEAN HOLLISTER of Cornell's College of Engineering the present outlook for an adequate national supply of engineers is dark. There are not enough students with engineering aptitudes entering the colleges, largely due to

the widespread impression in the post-war years that engineers were in over-supply at a dime a dozen. In addition to acquainting high-school students, guidance counselors and the public with the need for engineers in all categories, the dean urges industry to use supporting personnel, requiring less training and experience, to spread the effectiveness of each engineer that we now have on the job.

Dean Bannister of Illinois, a year or two ago, was studying the parallel problem of the oncoming architect and his relationship to national needs. Our ears are cocked to hear his findings

THE ENGINEERING FOUNDATION, after research study for several years, concludes that we are wasting millions of dollars in riveting. High-tensile-strength bolts, properly tightened, will serve as well, more cheaply, at a saving of time *and noise*.

JOHN IHLDER, that indefatigable Washington houser, pointed out recently that the National Capital Housing Authority, in lieu of taxes, and at the rate of 10% of shelter rent, pays the District more dollars than did the owners of the slums it demolished.

WESTERN MICHIGAN CHAPTER, A.I.A., is one of the latest converts to the belief that The Institute's National Honor Awards activity offers an unparalleled opportunity for a preliminary judgment for the Chapter area. Entries in a competition for the "Best Building of 1945-50" are sought, the only condition imposed being that the building be located in the Chapter area, or the architect be a Chapter member. The submissions will be judged under the three A.I.A. 1951 categories—Residential, Commercial and Industrial, Institutional—and the winning en-

tries forwarded to the national judgment preceding the A.I.A. Chicago Convention. The newspaper man's traditional lament that "architecture isn't news" fades away in the face of that set-up.

WILLIAM LESCAZE, that doughty modernist of New York, called at The Octagon recently, but we had to look again to identify him. He was wearing what Vitruvius and others have called a bowler, derby or hard hat—a traditional headpiece that we thought had gone the way of the egg-and-dart.

Drawn by
George Morrow

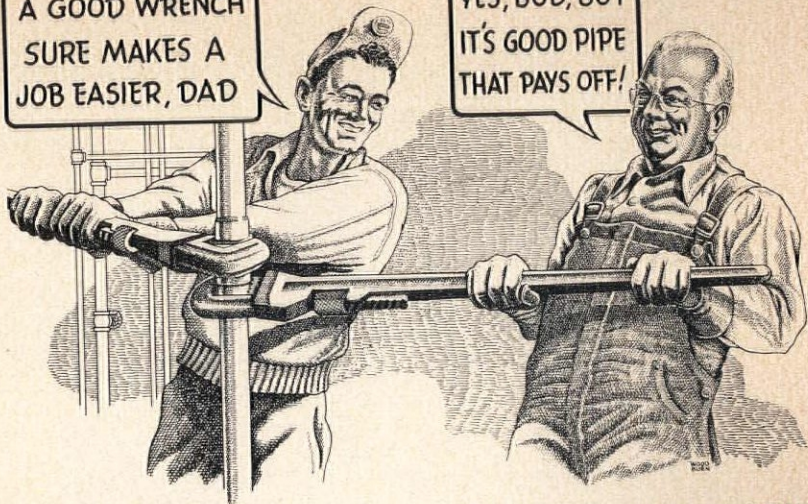


"Typical of Government planning! With all Athens to choose from they have to stick their confounded Parthenon on the tallest hill for miles."
Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.

APRIL, 1951

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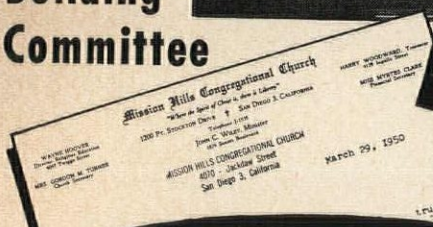
Newly completed Youth Education and Recreational Center, Mission Hills Congregational Church, San Diego, Calif.

Architect—
Walter C. See



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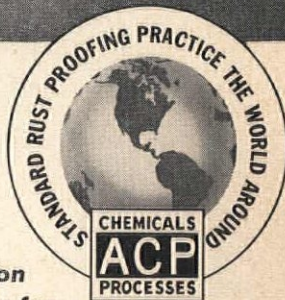
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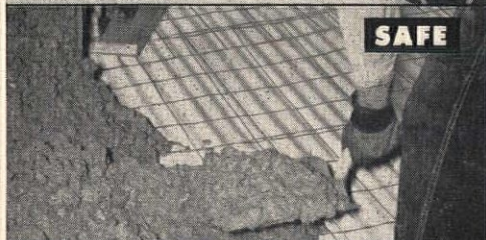
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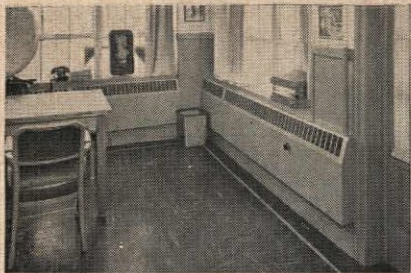
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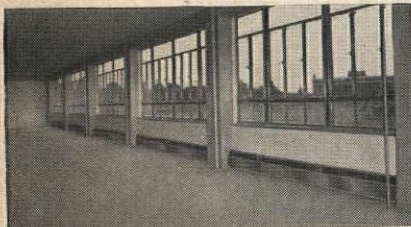
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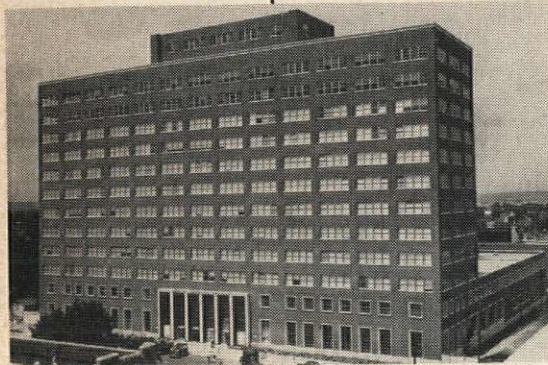


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