

Journal of The American Institute of  
**ARCHITECTS**



SIR BANISTER FLETCHER

July, 1947

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The Contemporary Architect & His Education-I

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Are Specifications Understandable?

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Design and Techniques—II

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Is the Public Interested?

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Robert Maillart's Bridges

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N. A. A. B. Report for 1947

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Rotch and Lloyd Warren Scholarships

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# JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

JULY, 1947

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## Contents

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Is the Public Interested in Architecture? . . . . . 3<br><i>By Edwin Bateman Morris</i>             | Architects Read and Write:<br>Reward for Carl Koch . . . . . 39<br><i>By Edgar I. Williams, F.A.I.A.</i> |
| Are Specifications Understandable? 8<br><i>By R. D. Sannit</i>                                      | Let Architecture Speak for Itself. 40<br><i>By Hubert Hammond Crane</i>                                  |
| The Contemporary Architect and His Education—Part I. . . . . 15<br><i>By Ralph Walker, F.A.I.A.</i> | The March of Professional Ethics. . . . . 41<br><i>By R. Clipston Sturgis, F.A.I.A.</i>                  |
| The Rotch and the Lloyd Warren Traveling Scholarships. . . . . 23                                   | News of Chapters and Other Architectural Organizations. . . . . 42                                       |
| The National Architectural Accrediting Board Report for 1947. 26<br><i>By Roy Jones, F.A.I.A.</i>   | Site Planning . . . . . 44<br><i>By Marcus Polio Vitruvius</i>   |
| Design and Techniques—Part II . 33<br><i>By Richard H. Sheppard,<br/>F.R.I.B.A.</i>                 | Se Habla Español. . . . . 44   |
|   | The Editor's Asides . . . . . 45   |

## ILLUSTRATIONS

- Reinforced Concrete Bridges by Robert Maillart  
(1872-1940).....19, 20, 29
- Do you know this building?..... 30

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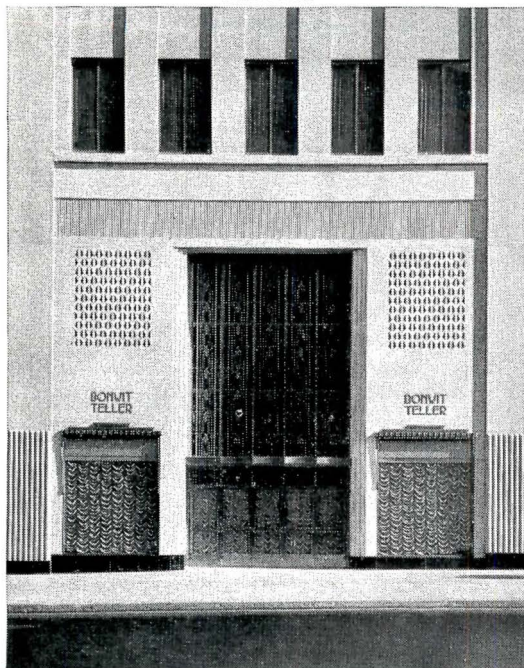
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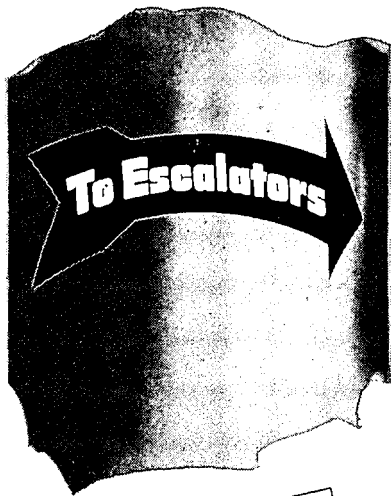
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## Is the Public Interested in Architecture?

*By Edwin Bateman Morris*

THERE WAS the State of Maine man who said, "I am going down to Bangor to get drunk, and Cripes, how I dread it!" Most architects (and I among them, though I like the sound of my own voice well enough) have a similar reluctance to discuss architectural design and trends in public, knowing that their own particular viewpoint may meet with more disapproval than cheers.

I therefore enjoyed the oral architectural discussion at the Grand Rapids Convention, which was forthright and courageous, and showed less of the usual dread of possible thumbs-down. There were two points that this discussion did not definitely touch upon, and I could have wished that I had been born with a better epiglottis and pair of tonsils so as to cope with the difficult acoustics of the Hotel Pantlind ballroom.

I am therefore making a late comment. I mention first the minor, perhaps, of the two points: the fact, at least fleetingly touched

upon, that at the moment contemporary architecture is somewhat over-simplified. That is not an esthetic criticism. It is to point out that any art does not thrive upon too great a scarcity of expression motives. For the top-inspired geniuses of the art, yes. For the fine, highly-regarded middle strata of the art, no. The hundred-proof inspiration does not come to everyone to produce new and brilliant results out of the few possible combinations of the few available elements of our art.

There has thus grown up a Contemporary Eclecticism in which many architects elect, not from the styles of the past, but from the motives and forms of their brother architects of the present. Thus one often hears: "There is a piece of modern architecture, but it has no personal spontaneity." Perhaps it would be difficult to suggest any practical elixir to cure this, but the matter could absorb some thought.

The second point I have had in mind is the general conviction that

architecture awaits no verdict from the public. The architect decrees, the public accepts. I mean in so far as visual architecture is concerned. There is the planning side of architecture where the public and his dollar decree the type and extent of air-conditioning, lighting, elevator service, etc., and the architect and his engineers perform in broad concurrence. On the other hand, in the matter of visual architecture, it is the architect who decrees and there is no veto.

Some years ago Fred Murphy of Washington told me he thought the public was not interested in the visual side of architecture, a point of view which depressed me. I do not like to think of an art without an audience. If I were a playwright, I should not like to have the seats unoccupied. If a writer of books, I should not like to have my books unsold. If a musician, my music unheard.

Yet that condition exists in architecture. After many thousand miles of Pullman-car conversation, I have reluctantly come to the conclusion that Fred Murphy's comment was well taken. The public does have an intellectual gap, becoming more and more pronounced, for the appearance side of architecture.

I have come to be architectural adviser to the tile industry, whose life to an extent depends upon visual appreciation, and it seemed advisable to take a poll as to how great or how small was this so-called appreciation of architecture and construction surfaces by the public.

The essence of the poll (which by reason of time and funds could not be as far-reaching as might be wished) was to count the number of persons passing certain given architectural points, and to discover how many were interested in the architecture.

The counting was done at relaxed locations and at times when the public was relaxed. In Washington I picked the Longfellow Building on Connecticut Avenue, a parade street; the Statler Hotel on 16th Street, and the Federal Loan Agency Building on Vermont Avenue as it emerges from Lafayette Square. In Philadelphia I was able to get a count at the Philadelphia Savings Fund Building, on a busy street but a conspicuous monument; in Pittsburgh at the Grant Building.

I got one of these Veeder counters which you could keep in your pocket and make the count by pressing with your thumb. The crite-



tion of architectural interest was as to whether the person looked at the building—not horizontally but raising his eyes to it. If he looked horizontally there would be question as to whether he were interested in well-proportioned pylons or well-proportioned nylons, so that it would be in a sense sex of one and half-a-dozen of the other.

In some twenty-five counting episodes, I clocked 1,870 people. I could have wished it were eighteen thousand or one hundred and eighty thousand, but it takes a long while carefully to count a hundred persons. And there is the old thought that one sip gives an idea of the flavor of the whole barrel.

At any rate, after 1,870 shots I made two bull's-eyes. One man was intently interested, to the point of eagerness, in the Federal Loan Agency Building, unable to take his eyes off it. I wanted to talk to him and find out just why he was thus intrigued, but that was not part of the endeavor. The second interested man was one standing on a street-car loading-platform before the Longfellow Building on Easter Sunday. I got as many readings as I could on Easter, as people then were relaxed and leisurely. This man stood on the platform for some minutes looking at

nothing and then raised his eyes to the top of the building and lowered them again, thus putting himself in the preferred class.

I thought, also, that I was about to get two others for the book. In Pittsburgh, two attractive, intelligent-looking girls gazed eagerly and excitedly up at the Grant Building and I was sure I was getting two positive examples. But they began to wave at a couple of boys in an upper story and I was then compelled to list them as interested in love rather than architecture.

The count thus stood at two out of 1,870, about a thousandth of one per cent. Some of my architect friends sought to be optimistic about it, saying that people were busy with other thoughts or had seen the buildings before. John Harbeson said he thought that only a very small percentage of the public was ever eagerly interested in architecture; but I still believe the Acropolis was one of the top recreational features for everyone in the Periclean Age.

As a side check, I stood before Independence Hall in Philadelphia one afternoon at five-fifteen, when the Curtis Publishing Company and other offices were closing. This

throng was intent on subways and street-cars; but out of 180 persons who passed, 19—more than 10%—looked at the building with friendly interest. Their concern was obviously sentimental, but showed that, if they had an interest in a building, they would, no matter how preoccupied, take pleasure in looking at it.

Some of the younger architects were rather elated, when I spoke of these counting episodes, that architecture was over the heads of the public. They were somewhat like the man who, having spanked his son, demanded "Now what you think?" The boy did not reply. "You thinks damn; I do it again." These architects seemed to feel that if the public thought damn about architecture, the procedure should be to hit them again in the same place.

If it is true that the public is losing interest in architecture, it is a serious, indeed a bitter, thing; indicating movement toward a *reductio ad absurdum* where architects design architecture for architects alone.

What is the cure for that one? I have been thinking several years about it, and I see no easy remedy. Active disapproval by the public

we could cope with. But inattention, boredom! It is hard to talk to them; they are not listening.

One of the great difficulties is that in general we don't think about public interest in architecture. "If they don't like it now, they will later. It will educate them." But the public doesn't look, they fail to like it, they are not educated.

I suggest a little Insurance Thinking, of which in Grand Rapids I saw evidences. We are on the verge, within a generation, of moving slowly out of Modern, to a point where Modern will blend into the whole fabric of architecture. Many architects are terrified by it, looking upon the Future as the mere horrendous repetition of the Past.

There need be no terror. It is not a question of blending Modern with the superficials of the Past. It is not a question of the Outward and Visible Sign; it is the Thinking, the Inward and Spiritual Grace. The profession of medicine, new in much of its therapeutics and diagnostic reasoning, still saves many, many lives by following the earnest thinking of the past. Law and jurisprudence go back to historic precedent cases, not because they approve of the living

of the past, but of the thinking of the past.

I suggest therefore, more Insurgence Thinking—to make certain of progress when the logic of the Present blends with the inspired philosophy of the Past, as ere long it must. We need more expressive elements, so we can regain our eloquence. We need to blend with Past thinking more closely parallel thinking of the world, so we may possibly endear ourselves more and more to the world, make architecture an influence for happiness.

I am probably too didactic. George Howe, in his winning and pleasant way, said to me the other night, "Eddie, I love to read what you write about architecture, but I don't agree with you." I was interested in that. George Howe is a clear thinker, perhaps putting in proper place my worryings.

At any rate it isn't necessary for anyone to agree with me for twenty years. Meanwhile, may I suggest that we keep away from this Isolationism in architecture. Let's not adopt a monastic point of view, re-

tiring in cloistered seclusion behind walls which shut us in with only the theorems of Modernism. Let us reach out a little to broaden ourselves as to expressive forms, so all architects may have more eloquence. Let us be more cosmic in our thinking to endear ourselves to our public. Art is wide-angled, with the purpose of appealing to a multitude, not just to ourselves.

If being a Modernist means looking inward, talking to ourselves, not seeking to let the voice carry far, the blending of Modernism with other thinking cannot come too soon. Architecture should be for the wide world.

I think what I have to say was best covered by a gentleman at the Grand Rapids Convention who asked, "What is all this talk about Modernism or Traditionalism? There are only two kinds of architecture—good and bad."

If we consider good architecture as architecture which appeals, which stirs the emotions, which inspires, then the two sentences quoted above say everything.

"Architecture is to me the most social of all the arts; more than any other, I think, it reflects the life and ideas of the community."—Prime Minister CLEMENT R. ATLEE.

# Are Specifications Understandable?

By R. D. Sannit\*

**D**O YOU UNDERSTAND your own specifications? No contractor in his right mind would dare put that question to an architect. And that may be why specifications have become such a mumbo-jumbo of meaningless phrases and just plain hokum.

All around us we hear architects bemoaning today's high building costs. They blame it, self-righteously, on greedy contractors and gouging labor alike. But they do not see how much they themselves contribute with confused specifications, written in an outdated form.

Let's take a sample from a set of current specifications:

"The Owner shall not nor shall any department or officer thereof be precluded or estopped by any return or certificate made or given by the Board, the Engineer or other officer, agent or appointee thereof under any provision of this contract from at any time either before or after the final completion and acceptance of the work and payment therefor pursuant to any such return or certificate, showing the true and correct classification, amount, quality and character of

the work done and materials furnished by the Contractor or any other person under this contract or the reasonable value of work done under ITEM XXX of this contract or from showing at any time that any such return or certificate is untrue and incorrect or improperly made in any particular or that the work and materials or any part thereof do not in fact conform to the requirements of this contract; and the Owner shall not be precluded or estopped, notwithstanding any such return or certificate and payment in accordance therewith, from demanding and recovering from the Contractor such damages as it may sustain by reason of his failure to comply with this contract or the specifications." (196 words; 8 punctuation marks; one sentence.)

Do you, at first reading, know what it means?

The wording was probably passed down from specification to specification for years. We find the same expressions reappearing with almost every present-day building project.

No architect would put out plans like those drawn in 1907. But we

\* The author is chief estimator for a large general contracting organization in New York. His experience in quantity survey work and contracting procedure was gained in Southern California, the Gulf States, Colorado and the Middle Atlantic States.

still see specifications written in 1907 style. Everyday English has progressed since then. It is less stilted, more to the point, and certainly clearer. But not specification English.

You say the sample is taken from the General Conditions—which form the legal part of the specs? Well, here's some more from the Concrete section of the same book. It deals with lining for forms:

“Material, other than metal, shall be of an approved heavy-body specially prepared material, of a type used primarily for the lining of concrete forms to produce a smooth finished concrete. The material shall be non-staining and shall be fastened to and completely cover the wood forms. The material shall be secured to the forms in such manner as to prevent it from buckling while the concrete is being placed. Material shall be in one piece except that where the form to be covered is larger than the largest size of the material manufactured, then the material shall be joined with a butt joint. Material which has become damaged or torn will not be permitted to be used. Material shall not be reused except where specifically permitted by the Engineer.”

Now let's see how they came to write like that. It must be a state

of mind; the main point being to say nothing directly.

The legal department writes the Form of Contract, Instructions to Bidders, and General Conditions. Their wordiness—an occupational disease — takes over completely; and you get plenty of “it-shall-be-constructed,” “it-shall-be-deemed-necessary,” plus, of course, the “stopped.”

This would not be too bad were it confined to the legal part of the specs. Many contractors let their lawyers wade through all that. But the wording becomes contagious, and you find it carried over into the detailed specifications.

It's hard to know what goes on in the mind of the specification writer, himself. From what he comes up with, however, we can assume he starts out with the following ideas:

- 1) Block all possible ways of getting-around-the-contract.
- 2) Do not stick out the neck on anything.
- 3) Say everything in Official Businessese.
- 4) Explain what is required on the job—but only so far as the first three rules are not broken.

Apply this formula to specification writing and you get what is prevalent today—fine exhibitions

of legal phraseology. It looks impressive when shown to the owner, or to anyone uninitiated. But it means very little when used with drawings.

Contractors are so awed by the heavy legal writing and by the authoritative manner in which it is presented, that they are reluctant to ask for clarification when necessary. They don't want to risk being called stupid.

So, nothing prevents the specification writer from outdoing himself in complexity on each successive project.

Public agencies are supposed to be the last word in efficient handling of building contracts—they have so much experience at it. In many ways, they are efficient. But their specifications are a mess; and the faults are not corrected. They simply multiply as they are passed down from job to job.

What about the men who write the specifications for private architects and engineers? Well, with few exceptions, they follow the pattern set by the public writers. Since public construction — city, state, and federal—accounts for so large a percentage of all building work, you can understand why it should set the style for the rest of the field.

The private writers not only imitate the government specifications, they usually copy them outright—word for empty word.

The public writers like to use "Standard Specifications." They pile up a section on Concrete, or Glazing, or Painting, with all the possibilities they can think of, and put them in the most general terms.

Each project that the agency issues for bids starts with the Standard Specifications. They must then write up a set of Amendments to cover the job for which the specs are intended. The Amendments are usually just as wordy (sometimes more so).

Occasionally an Amendment will delete an entire section of the Standard Specifications. But, no matter; the whole thing—deleted section and all—is bound in book form and issued as the Project Specifications.

After a few days, the contractors who are bidding on the work find the more important errors and ask for corrections. These come out as Addenda. They are supposed to clarify the Amendments which alter the Standard Specifications.

It often happens that the Addenda need correcting. So a new Addendum is issued to change a

previous Addendum that changes the Amendments to the Standard Specifications.

Sounds complicated doesn't it? Well, it is—very.

And the contractors think that's the way it must be; since it's never been any better. So they add to their price to protect themselves, and say nothing.

Another favorite trick is to use "canned" specifications. The writers must think Congress will investigate if they mention a trade name. Or, at least, that they'll be fired for favoritism. The manufacturers realize this, so their catalogs carry instructions on "How to Specify" their products. They go into great detail on the manufacture, the properties, and the appearance of the product.

True, they do describe the product without actually naming it—which is the purpose—but they include certain characteristics peculiar to their brand alone. It may be only a minor variant, but it is enough to prevent other manufacturers from meeting the specifications.

The specification writer lifts the whole thing and inserts it, verbatim, in his book.

Some writers go this one better. They call in the manufacturer's

representative and ask him to write the specifications on an item. No trade names are mentioned, but the result is usually as pretty a piece of closed specifications as you can find. The man called in is not working for the glory of his competitors. He leaves them out in the cold.

This happens most frequently with hardware. Perhaps the great number of items required overwhelms the specification writer. Or else he can't spare the time to work out the Hardware List himself. Whatever the reason for bringing in the salesman, the outcome is the same. He lists a few items that only his firm makes, and the specification is closed up tight.

Another trait common to most specification writers—especially on large jobs—is that they assume no responsibility for what is on the drawings. This suggests that the architect himself is not familiar with the job. It runs like this:

"Steel windows, if any, shall be .....,," or "Granite, where shown, shall be....."

That is noncommittal. The contractor must determine for himself whether any steel sash are required, and where granite is used.

But it puts the architect in a bad light. He designed the building, and he should know whether he is using steel sash, wood sash, or no sash. And it should not be too difficult for him to tell the specification writer where granite, or any other work, will be required.

The "Scope of Work" section that heads each trade in the specifications is always qualified by a statement like this:

"Except as otherwise noted under 'work not included' the work under this division includes all labor, materials, equipment and appliances necessary for the complete execution of all of 'Miscellaneous and Ornamental Iron Work' in accordance with the drawings and specifications.

"Without restricting the generality of the foregoing, the following items are included: ....."

The writers think they can protect the architect (and themselves) by being vague and all inclusive. Actually, they only succeed in confusing the contractor.

What does all this add up to? Higher construction costs, of course.

When a contractor figures a job in which the specifications are hazy, he has only one choice. He must protect himself by adding on for contingency. If a clause can be

taken two or more ways, he must provide for the more costly interpretation. Thus, though he may be low among the contractors figuring the job, his bid is not necessarily the lowest price at which the work can be done. It may reflect improper interpretation of the specifications.

We might say a contractor cannot afford to add for contingencies because of competition. He must get the architect to clarify all questionable items and correct all errors and discrepancies before the bid goes in. That is the proper course of action—the specifications generally say so:

"Should any errors, omissions, inconsistencies or obscurity in wording appear or occur on the drawings or in the specifications, or should there be any discrepancies between drawings and specifications, the Contractor shall, before submitting his bid, apply to the Superintendent, in writing, for an interpretation and determination of the intent of the drawings and specifications. Any interpretation made by the Superintendent previous to the receipt of bids shall be a part of the contract."

When the specifications are well written, the contractor does not ask the architect about the small questions. He does not want to be petty.



When, however, the specifications are poor—and that is more often the case—you run into an entirely different problem. For some unknown reason, an architect hates to clarify specifications—or plans. He will answer one or two questions graciously. But, when confronted with a long list, he gets his back up. He calls the contractor “too fussy,” and takes the attitude that the contractor doesn’t know his business, or he wouldn’t be asking all those damned-fool questions.

You can take this for granted: the more questions that arise from a set of specifications because of errors and discrepancies, the less the architect will cooperate in clearing them up.

For the contractor, it boils down to a matter of judgment: when to ask the architect; when to gamble; and when to add on for the uncertain items.

One thing is clear, he cannot risk taking a big loss on any of the specifications’ uncertainties. Competition forces him to figure so closely he does not leave any margin for general odds and ends.

Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that a contractor chooses to gamble on the interpretation of a vague clause. He doesn’t add

anything to his price for it. He is low bidder, and is awarded the job. So far, no added expense for the owner. Now what happens?

The contractor, naturally, builds the job at the lowest price consistent with the plans and specifications. When, in the course of construction, he comes to the part open to question, he will pick the least costly method. This may not be what the architect had intended—and it usually isn’t. If the architect persists, the contractor asks for an extra.

Extras are costly whether or not they are granted. There is the investigation, the time consumed in discussion and argument, and the delay—all of which is expensive to the owner, the architect and the contractor. Legitimate extras, not allowed, give the contractor license to “make-it-up” elsewhere on the project. If he can’t do this, the spirit of hostility that is sure to develop will prove costly to the owner.

Should the contractor be given the extra, it is at a non-competitive price. Everyone knows, and even the contractor himself will admit, that such a price is higher than it would be if he had included it in his original bid—when he was figuring against competitors.

All these difficulties arise from vague specifications. Big, meaningless words, empty legal phrases, and just plain ignorance is generally the cause.



What is the remedy? Clear English, of course. But this entails a lot.

To write clearly and concisely, a specification writer must know his business thoroughly. He should:

1) remember he is writing directions for field men, not a thesis for a Ph.D. degree;

2) realize a contract (and the specifications which are a part of it) is just as binding if he writes in simple, direct language as when he uses fancy legal phrases;

3) not try to write one-sided documents in which the contractor is made liable for the architect's mistakes;

4) know his materials, how they are made, what the stock sizes are, how they are sold (by the square foot, cubic yard, piece, etc.), and how they are installed;

5) know his local subcontractor policies, and current union practices—as to who does each part of the building work;

6) be willing to accept some responsibility for what he writes;

7) be more than just casually acquainted with the plans of the job he is writing for;

8) write up each project individually.

Specification writing is a science. It is as much a specialized part of the architectural field as structural engineering. And it should be done by men equally trained.

Such training involves much study and years of field work. No professional course is now set up for this vocation exclusively. The practice is to touch upon it in other courses of study—architecture, engineering—and to let it develop on its own from there. You have seen what that results in.

Public agencies and private firms handling a large volume of construction projects will find it highly profitable to train men to write lucid specifications.

But the great majority of architectural offices cannot support full-time men just to do that work. For them, there should be consulting firms of qualified men. They could be called in, just as architects now call in consulting engineers to prepare the structural and mechanical parts of their projects. And, it could be done with equal benefit.

Clear specifications would thus be written economically—with

great saving in ultimate construction costs. Only then could we

ignore the question, "Do you understand your own specifications?"

## The Contemporary Architect and His Education

IN TWO PARTS—PART I

By *Ralph Walker*, F. A. I. A.

A talk given before the architectural students in the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, on January 15, 1947.

THE OTHER DAY a young man, recently back from the wars, asked my opinion as to what his education should be if he were to become an architect. Later, in thinking about the subject of my talk to you, I came to the conclusion that the best way to approach the discussion of contemporary architecture was through a consideration of the architect's education. Those of you who are beginners may as well try to understand the subject as seen by a still active practitioner; those of you who are well on the way toward reminiscence will, I am sure, follow with philosophic understanding and with appreciation the developed thought that an architect's true education is within the hands of his clients.

There is almost universal concern with the chaos existing in our modern social life. It ranges in extent from little hope to much

despair. We are increasingly aware that with all our great technical skill in accomplishing physical comfort, we are still unable to find peaceful and just answers to men's mental and spiritual needs, and especially in conjunction with his hopes of economic security. There is a growing and insistent agreement that there must be a more specific and intensive understanding of the nature of man himself.

This concern is much in evidence in the widespread search into the vital reasons for education and into its possibilities and, lately and more especially, as it pertains to the cultural background necessary to the technical civilization we are all too hastily developing. There is thoughtful acknowledgment on the part of educators that the technical schools have trained many skilled workers but very few world leaders. A well-known scientist told me

recently that while the technical schools in America had trained many more men, he believed the University of Cambridge alone had developed more top-flight scientists.

There is a growing library of discontent: reports on educational lack from Harvard and Columbia, for example; the demand for a return to the wisdom of the ages found in the great books of the long past. All are deeply concerned with the lack of spiritual contentment and the failure of an ideal for a good life to develop, one which gives direction to our world.

I, too, have come to believe that there has grown, internationally, in architectural thinking a crushing pall of monotony, one crushing not only native imaginations but also the understandings of native needs. And while I know you cannot stop a flood by merely saying there is a leak, it is at the level of education where the first indications are to be found and possible corrections initiated.

I would like to look at the field of architectural education, discussing its needs and ideals. I have taken a modest position in recent developments for I have served on several visiting committees to architectural schools — one of which committees had a Carnegie grant

to study the qualities of architectural education—and I have been of minor assistance in the selection of the deans of two architectural schools. I appreciate that the job of being an educator is not one lightly pursued, that it too has its traditions, its politics, its successes.

I also look at architectural education from another angle, for I have been the employer of some thousand or more men and women — graduates of the many universities. I have watched them with great interest and so have some idea of their few virtues and their many lacks. Their greatest asset, and it is a persistent one, is the great enthusiasm which blossoms up so hopefully through their large but little acknowledged inexperience. In the newer men, especially, there is a strident arrogance in a belief, almost fanatical, that Corbusier is not only a prophet but Allah as well. This youthful arrogance is not unnatural. I remember being fired by "Pooper" Warren, then head of the Architectural School at Harvard, because, while working for him, I redesigned the old Fogg Museum, stating it to be, as I thought, a bad piece of design. However, he seemingly did not appreciate my own *arrogantly* proposed improvements.

JULY, 1947

Again, however, I have sympathy for their viewpoint in that Corbusier has made a clear, ringing statement of what he believes contemporary architecture should be, and with an easy flow of seeming reason he has created a striking philosophy, which to my mind, however, leaves out all recognition of human emotions. He apparently believes that if the technological solution is sound all human relations will fall into line and find automatic perfection.

Before discussing education I would state my definition of architecture. I believe it to be a precise art and a social science, both of which are limited through our understanding of human values.

It is a precise art because all the imagination and all the ensuing esthetics are contained within mathematical limitations (That this does not limit the creation of great variety the history of architecture well shows). To build any architectural design, to lift it off the paper, accurate clear statements are necessary to transfer the design-thinking into building accomplishment. There is, therefore, always a need for a most straightforward expression of the desired result. A modern set of working drawings,

especially here in America, with all the complexities of structure and mechanics, is nothing that can be drawn with a stick of charcoal on a smudged sheet of paper. In this sense architecture parallels and is in part engineering.

The architectural student will find moreover that unless, fundamentally, he is a neat and precise draftsman, a careful and thoughtful user of the English language, a considerate and efficient trustee of his client's funds, and above all a shrewd critic of the need of the increasing structural and mechanical comfort aids in building, he will find himself in constant hot water. Most of the difficulties which the architectural profession has faced in the immediate past are due to the lack of appreciation that architecture is a precise art; that it is not practised with the tools of either the painter or sculptor—nor on the other hand with only a slide rule.

For architecture is not alone rational—it touches deep wells of emotion. It must be rich enough in experience to be remembered.

It is a social science because it deals with the aspirations of human beings as well as with their physical needs. Man, the animal, not only has invented a physical existence but he has also created a spiritual

world; he not only has sought stronger power to his hands but at the same time he has tuned a finer perception within his mind. In this sense architecture more nearly parallels the practice of medicine than engineering, in that the understanding of the human need is more important than the immediate solution. To properly solve any architectural problem is to comprehend fully social relationships. A constant phrase of mine is: "For whom do we build and for what purpose?"

To the architect there can be no distinction between designing a building and designing a city. These are both manifestations of man's social needs, and they add up to the indoors and the outdoors of his life. The indoors represent his rights as an individual, the outdoors his responsibilities as a citizen.

The professional training of an architect should, moreover, assume some goal other than that of making mere technicians—other than that of making just superior village carpenters. It should be a goal which seeks to develop a leadership in forming society. It is toward this idea that my thoughts tend, because it is apparently easy, although seldom thoroughly accomplished in

most schools, to teach all the requirements of the precise art; whereas there has been little if any attention given to architecture as a social science. I know there has been much talk of planning and housing and all that, but actually very little approach to the human beings themselves who are to occupy the architectural solutions. These are too often withdrawn into the easy abstraction of the average for whom the minimum is good enough. I know of only one architectural school which has actually made social investigations.

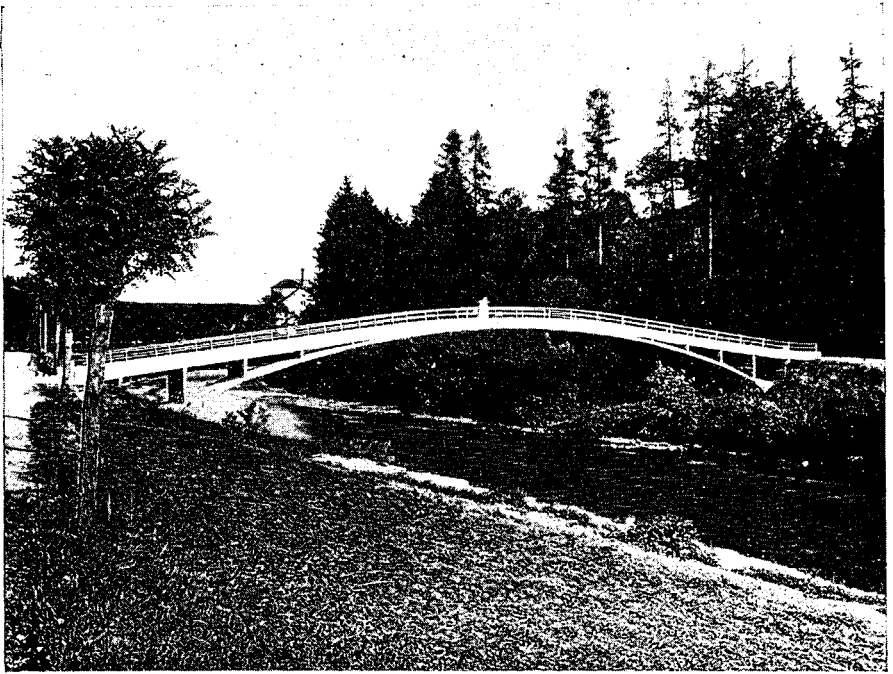


Corbusier can, with great show of indignation, proclaim against the inhabitants of St. Dié and say—"Here is a town that has been so completely destroyed that nothing remains of it but the ruins. This is a clear-cut case where we can build an entire town as it should be built. But the inhabitants do not want a new, clean, modern town; they just want to rebuild their same old hovels on the same old spots where their grandfathers built them, and they are fighting me tooth and nail."\*

It is so easy to agree with Cor-

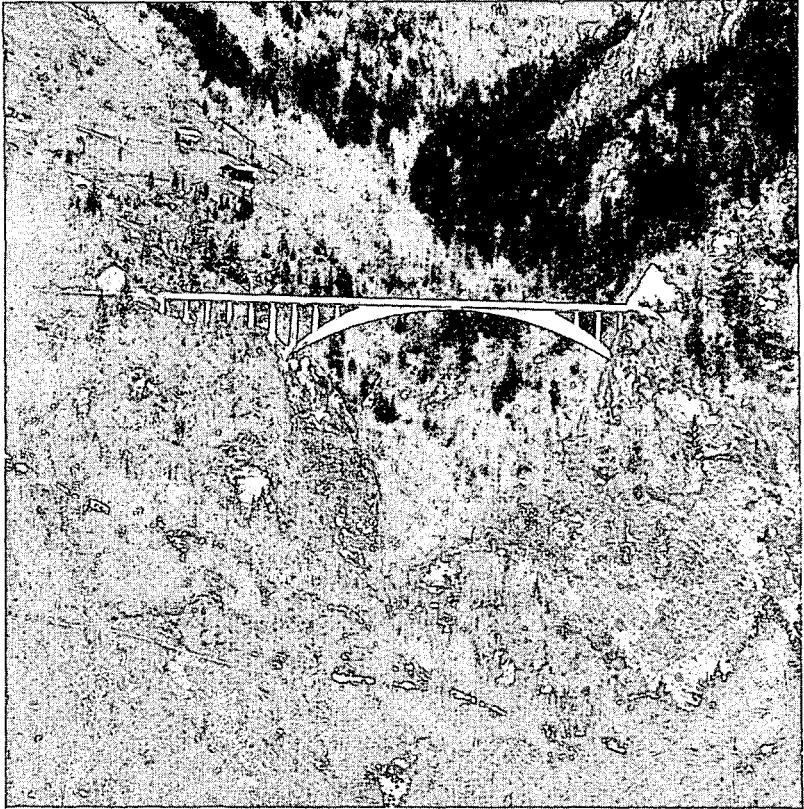
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\* New York *Herald-Tribune*, Apr. 26, 1946.



FOOTBRIDGE NEAR WUELFFLINGEN, SWITZERLAND  
ERECTED IN 1933  
ROBERT MAILLART, ENGINEER  
*Photograph by Lenscraft*

Robert Maillart (1872-1940), a Swiss engineer, left us a new conception of reinforced concrete. Working at the site rather than in a distant office, many details were developed during construction.



SALGINA BRIDGE, NEAR SCHIERS, CANTON GRISONS, SWITZERLAND  
ERECTED IN 1930  
ROBERT MAILLART, ENGINEER  
*Photograph by Lenscraft*



busier and say that the inhabitants' point of view is nonsensical, but for whom and for what purpose was the restored St. Dié to be built?—for the gratification of a materialistic philosophy, no matter how splendid; or for what the inhabitants rightly or wrongly would like? Perhaps the hovels mean a certain individual freedom, a certain pleasant kind of privacy in this uncertain world, whereas the perfect city means controlled life in cellular blocks. But, moreover, the inhabitants may have been justly concerned with the physical sterility which naturally accompanies the exaggerated city form.

In the consideration of some thinkers, the commercial honeycomb, the "cellular prism carrying its own integrity," is the architectural end of man—a regimented architecture related to the ant and the bee. These two are nature's greatest warnings of the inadequacy of security alone, for they should by now have subdued the more individualistic man. He, however, has developed in contrast his own philosophy, a great saving concept, i. e.: *The free opportunity of an individual, intimate life in a willingly coordinated society.*

And then again, the inhabitants of St. Dié may believe in their own

timid evolution toward "the perfect city," realizing that revolutions too often destroy the symbol of lasting life, i. e. beauty, without truly affecting the root cause. (The plans for St. Dié can be found in the *Architectural Record* of October, 1946.)

There has been of late an increasing demand on the part of our engineer clients to create in their buildings better social relationships, more amenities, and a kind of esthetics a little less modernistically brittle in character. There has been growing an appreciation that human efficiency is tempered largely by forces other than the practical or the mechanical. It is increasingly obvious that man's surroundings must be designed so as not to affect him disagreeably, either physically or subconsciously through his senses—so that he can have no joy in his work—or socially so that his life does not possess a larger purpose than a daily wage.

One of the most interesting books recently published is "The Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization," by Alton Mayo. After a thoughtful story of many working conditions, he remarks: "We have undertaken to transform an economy of security into an economy of abundance and the

technicians are showing us the way. We are committed to the development of a higher human adaptability that has not characterized any human society in the past, and it is our present failure in this respect that finds reflection in the social chaos which is destroying civilized society" (page 15); and again, "Under the influences of economic theory we have a system of education which trains young men to technical skill. We do nothing to develop social skill or to impart social skill." (page 150)

It should be apparent that no enlightened teacher, fully aware of the social problems of his time, can ever take the position that any building could attain distinction unless it was in the direction of social good; that a mere technical distinction achieved through an esthetic built upon abstractions and in negation of human needs can ever replace the prime necessity that architecture must succeed in achieving social competency. A competency developed in a search for understanding directly obtained in contact with the people who are concerned. It is no longer sufficient to say of any building—and here I quote a recent issue of the *Architectural Record*—"When not another single line may be removed,

when no part can be more simplified in form or more generalized in use, when nothing can be more accurately placed." It is here that a question may be raised concerning fundamentals, because it is here that a wider knowledge of human need might well step in to say that much must be added to make it fit into the psychological enjoyments of man. This quotation reminds me of a poem by Roy Campbell:

"You praise the firm restraint  
with which they write;  
"I'm with you, there, of course;  
"They use the snaffle and the  
curb all right;  
"But where's the bloody  
Horse?"

One of the difficulties we face in our modern concept of life is in attempting to force individuals into the mold of a "common man," only to find the unfortunate result to be a "mass man"; one who all too readily falls to the leadership of the Hitlers and other totalitarians and, so, finally lands into self-frustration. What contemporary architecture needs to develop is not the present fashionable cellular structure, but a way of life expressed in building which will finally offer each individual the widest possible choice within that life. It is here

that the whole Corbusier concept of modern life fails, for it cannot achieve the opportunities offered in the constantly changing scientific developments of our time, or in modern scientific thinking, because it offers a hard, fixed standardization in a world of flux and, moreover, a standardization which has neither the possibilities inherent and visible in the future or, in contrast, in the well-worn homely securities of the past. No wonder the inhabitants of St. Dié were concerned because the new heaven offered by this new Allah is one of a future regimented life within the limited doctrinaire concepts of the present.

The stressing of the individual is no surprise to me, for even in modern industry itself the requirements are rarely alike. They become widely divergent in the design of seemingly similar-purposed laboratories—a type of building of

which our firm has designed a great many. I am not distressed to find no two of them having the same needs or that, if permitted, no two Ph.D.'s will desire laboratory arrangements exactly alike. I do find, however, that if I stress too strongly my own expertness I miss the boat completely; so that I now approach every laboratory problem with a mind open to subtle differences; and I offer my own experiences which have come of designing for many purposes, and from many purposes, and from the careful analysis of other laboratory buildings and, further, from long and pointed discussions with many users, with both modesty and assurance, but without complacency. I will not claim for our designs that they possess any unusual distinction except that they are truly functional, because they are developed to meet preciseness, human relationships, and with ample flexibility to meet future thinking.

## The Rotch and the Lloyd Warren Traveling Scholarships

**A**NNOUNCEMENTS of this year's procedure for the selection of a Rotch Scholar and a Lloyd Warren Scholar reached us too late to be of help to potential can-

didates, a fact that is regretted by the JOURNAL as much as by the committees in charge.

These Scholarships, with the announcements of requirements of

candidates, and the later selection of the winners, have slipped into a routine in which the value of the additional education and the practical results of that education are likely to pass almost unnoticed. Perhaps it is time for a recapitulation, and a calling of the roll of winners.

The Rotch Traveling Scholarship was founded in 1883 by the children of the late Benjamin S. Rotch of Boston. Trustees of the fund have given the general direction of the Scholarship to the Boston Society of Architects, a Chapter of The A.I.A., and that organization directs the management through a special committee.

Announcement is now made that the Rotch Traveling Scholarship for 1947 has been awarded to Dale C. Byrd, of Anadarko, Oklahoma. Mr. Byrd holds the degree of Master in Architecture from Harvard, and is at present with the firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in New York City.

Briefly, the candidates must be citizens of the United States, under 30 years of age; and holders of a degree from an approved school of architecture in Massachusetts, with at least one year of office experience; or holders of a degree from

an approved school of architecture outside of Massachusetts, with at least three years of experience in a Massachusetts office; or "special students" with one year of professional work in Massachusetts and who have satisfactorily passed the two last years of an approved school of architecture in Massachusetts; or draftsmen with at least six years of professional experience, of which at least half has been in Massachusetts offices, who can, on the basis of preliminary examinations, give satisfactory evidence of an adequate knowledge of history, construction and freehand drawing. Final selection is made by *en loge* competitive examination.

The winner is to remain abroad for not less than fifteen months and will receive \$2,500. He submits a monthly and a final report, with sketches and measured drawings.

Rotch Scholars, from the founding, have been:

- 1884 CLARENCE HOWARD BLACKALL\*
- 1885 SAMUEL WALKER MEAD
- 1886 GEORGE FREDERICK NEWTON\*
- 1887 EDGAR A. JOSSELYN\*
- 1888 AUSTIN WILLARD LORD\*
- 1889 HENRY BACON\*
- 1890 WILLIAM THOMAS PARTRIDGE
- 1891 ROBERT CLOSON SPENCER
- 1892 JOHN WATROUS CASE\*
- 1893 WALTER HARRINGTON KILHAM
- 1894 HAROLD VAN BUREN MAGONIGLE\*
- 1895 WILL STEIN ALDRICH
- 1896 LOUIS HOLMES BOYNTON\*
- 1897 HENRY BODGE PENNELL

- 1898 LOUIS CHAPELL NEWHALL\*  
 1899 LOUIS WARREN PULSIFER\*  
 1900 WILLIAM LESLIE WELTON\*  
 1901 WILLIAM LUTHER MOWLL  
 1902 JAMES FORD CLAPP  
 1903 EDWARD T. FOULKES  
 1904 FREDERICK CHARLES HIRONS\*  
 1905 WILLIAM DE FORREST CROWELL  
 1906 LEROY PEARL BURNHAM  
 1907 OTTO FAELTEN\*  
 1908 ISRAEL P. LORD  
 1909 HORACE G. SIMPSON  
 1910 JOSEPH MCGINNIS\*  
 1911 NIELS HJALMAR LARSEN  
 1912 CHARLES CAMERON CLARK  
 1913 WILLIAM LEO SMITH  
 1914 RALPH JOHNSON BATCHELDER  
 1915 FREDERICK ROY WITTON  
 1916 RALPH THOMAS WALKER  
 1917 JAMES NEWHALL HOLDEN  
 1918, 1919 Scholarship not awarded  
 on account of War.  
 1920 ROBERT MURRAY BLACKALL  
 1921 FRANK SOMERVILLE CARSON  
 1922 WALLACE KIRKMAN HARRISON  
 1923 ISIDOR RICHMOND  
 1924 EUGENE FRANCIS KENNEDY, JR.  
 1925 WALTER F. BOGNER  
 1926 LOUIS SKIDMORE  
 1927 EDWARD D. STONE  
 1928 RALPH E. WINSLOW  
 1929 CHARLES ST. GEORGE POPE  
 1930 BARNETT SUMNER GRUZEN  
 1931 CARNEY GOLDBERG  
 1932 CARROLL COLETTI  
 1933 GEORGE STEPHEN LEWIS  
 1934 NEMBHARD N. CULIN  
 1935 GORDON BUNSHAFT  
 1936 LEON HYZEN  
 1937 JOHN A. VALTZ  
 1938 MALCOLM C. ROBB

\* Deceased.



The Paris Prize competitions were inaugurated in 1904 by the Society of Beaux-Arts Architects, to permit the selection of a student who, through a decree of the Min-

ister of Public Instruction and Fine Arts of Paris, would be permitted to enter and study with the first class of the Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts, though ineligible to receive its diploma. Supported in its early years by the members of the Society, the Paris Prize was endowed in 1926 in memory of its founder, Lloyd Warren. In 1942 the Society of Beaux-Arts Architects was dissolved, and subsequently the Paris Prize, or Lloyd Warren Scholarship, has been administered by the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design, New York.

The winner of the Lloyd Warren Scholarship (34th Paris Prize) is John E. Barthel, now completing his course in architecture at the University of Illinois after a lapse of three years during which he served in the Armed Services. The alternate named is William B. Sayre, also a senior at the University of Illinois, and also a veteran of the last War.

Originally the Paris Prize Scholar spent two and a half years at the Ecole and in European travel. Due to the War and present unsettled conditions, a special program was formulated for the 1947 resumption, after the lapse of 1941-1946. Over a period of 18 months, the Scholar is expected to

spend approximately a year in France and other European countries, and the remainder of his time in a survey of important architectural and engineering projects and research centers in the United States.

Any citizen of the United States, under 30 years of age, is eligible, provided he has completed or is completing architectural design of senior grade standard. A preliminary competition and a final *en loge* competition among ten contestants, serve to determine a winner. The Lloyd Warren Scholar receives \$5,000.

Since its inauguration the following men have held the Scholarship:

1904 GEORGE A. LICHT  
 1905 JOHN WYNKOOP\*  
 1906 FREDERIC C. HIRONS\*

1907 W. S. WAGNER\*  
 1908 WILLIAM VAN ALEN  
 1909 M. J. SCHIAVONI  
 1910 A. F. ADAMS  
 1911 D. D. ELLINGTON  
 1912 D. M. KIRKPATRICK  
 1913 GRANT M. SIMON  
 1914 HARRY STERNFELD  
 1915-1918 No competition held  
 1919 ERNEST E. WEIHE  
 1920 DUNCAN McLACHLAN, JR.\*  
 1921 LLOYD MORGAN  
 1922 ROGER BAILEY  
 1923 LEE ROMBOTIS  
 1924 HARRY K. BIEG  
 1925 PERCIVAL GOODMAN  
 1926 CARL E. LANDEFELD  
 1927 DONALD S. NELSON  
 1928 THOMAS H. LOCRAFT  
 1929 JOSEPH D. MURPHY  
 1930 LAWRENCE B. ANDERSON  
 1931 CARL F. GUENTHER  
 1832 RICHARD H. GRANELLI  
 1933 GEORGE M. FREI  
 1934 MAURICE W. KLEINMAN  
 1935 PAUL M. HEFFERNAN  
 1936 FRANK MONTANA  
 1937 HENRY A. JANDL  
 1938 S. THOMAS STATHES  
 1939 GEORGE A. DOWNS  
 1940 EUGENE WASSERMAN

\* Deceased.

## The National Architectural Accrediting Board Report for 1947

By Roy Jones, F.A.I.A.

PRESIDENT OF THE N.A.A.B.

**D**URING the past year, the Accrediting Board has completed the task of appraising or reappraising sixteen schools. All sixteen have been accredited for varying lengths of time. Some of them

were new applicants. Others had been accredited in 1945 with the provision that they were to be reconsidered this year, in order to give them time to correct certain "more easily remedied deficiencies,

JULY, 1947

or to allow certain transitional conditions to prove themselves.”

One of the “more easily remedied deficiencies” was, or so the Board assumed it to be, the lack of a five-year curriculum. The Board feels itself to be on solid ground in taking such a stand. The Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture has endorsed and promoted the minimum five-year curriculum by a number of official actions over a long period of time. A preponderant majority of teachers and practitioners appear to consider that five years of post-high-school education are essential to professional architectural education on a nationally acceptable basis. The Board recognizes the need—indeed, it has invited consideration of the need—for local and special schools which may not find the longer curriculum necessary. It has, however, assumed that all schools aspiring to meet national rather than local standards should follow within a reasonable time the clear mandate of prevailing opinion.

At its 1947 Annual Meeting, the Board took action to the effect that, beginning with the publication of the 1949-50 List, no school will be accredited the completion of whose curriculum involves less than

five years of post-high-school education. Notice of this action was to be included on the 1947-48 List, and those schools now offering four-year courses were to be so designated.

Eleven of the sixteen schools appraised this year had four-year curricula in 1945. Of these eleven, five already have five-year curricula in operation, and three more have indicated that they will institute them next year.

It may not be amiss to report on some of the trends which this year's appraisals have revealed. In general, the Board's and the visitors' findings merely bear out and define the obvious—namely, that the post-war period, far from being a return to any so-called and fondly hoped-for “normal,” is actually even more drastically “abnormal” than anything heretofore experienced. Schools everywhere are manfully struggling to keep their footing in the flood of students that has poured in upon them. The new student bodies are, on the average, more serious, harder working, more mature and, everyone assumes, more able than ever before. All of which constitutes at once an extraordinary challenge and a grave danger to the schools. It will take

extraordinary efforts on their part to meet the challenge without a lowering of standards. The difficulties involved are the more serious, because, as the Board's 1945 Report emphasized, the resources of so many of the schools were inadequate even for their pre-war job. Nor had many of the schools developed effective methods to select the really qualified students for admission and to exclude the unqualified. Some schools even now have no defense whatever against a student flood which, despite their most heroic efforts, is completely beyond their means to cope with, and which there is little indication that the profession can absorb.

All of which raises many and critical questions concerning objectives, means, and methods to which the A.C.S.A. and the Education Committee of The A.I.A. will undoubtedly want to give early and serious study.

It happens that the Board has complete data by which to compare pre-war and post-war conditions in thirteen of the sixteen schools appraised this year. What has happened in these thirteen schools may perhaps be considered representative of the changes that have taken place in all the schools. Just a few examples of the data on the factual

side may be quoted, if only to define and objectify what is painfully obvious to everyone. Specifically, the comparison is between the academic years ending in 1947 and 1939.

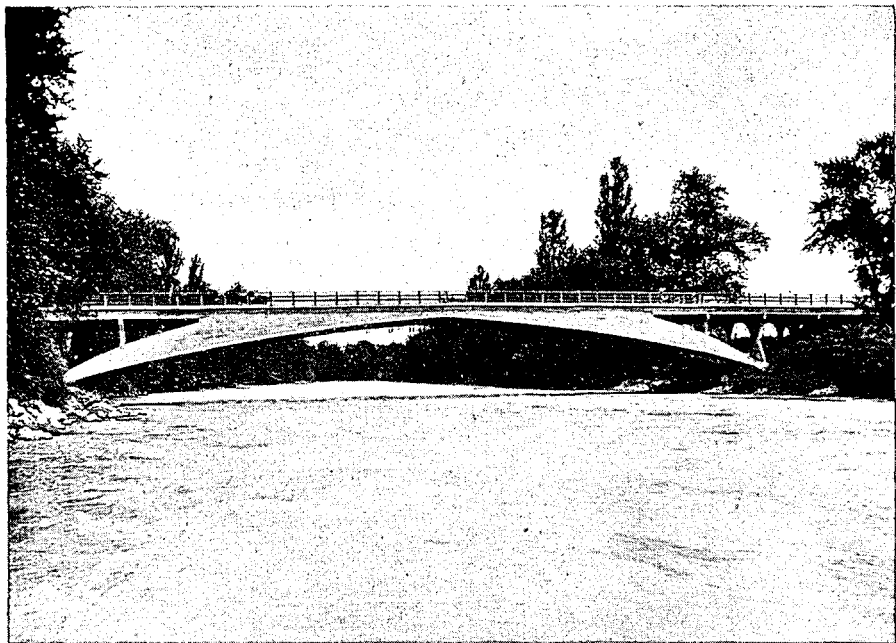
In these thirteen schools, the average number of entering and enrolled students has nearly tripled, and the average teaching budget has doubled. Faculties are half again as large. But drafting space, graduated students, individual faculty salaries, and faculties' practice experience show comparatively slight increases; while faculties' teaching experience shows a definite decrease. The precise figures are:

|                                   | Increase |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Teaching Budgets.....             | 104%     |
| Average Teachers' Salaries.....   | 36%      |
| Drafting Space.....               | 23%      |
| Entering Students.....            | 168%     |
| Enrolled Students.....            | 136%     |
| Graduated Students.....           | 23%      |
| Teachers .....                    | 47%      |
| Teachers' Practice Experience.... | 25%      |
|                                   | Decrease |
| Teachers' Teaching Experience.... | 26%      |

The obvious meaning of these figures is that architectural school enrollments have increased far beyond the work space and instructional facilities needed to take care of them.

It may be recalled that the Board's Charter requires periodic examinations of all accredited



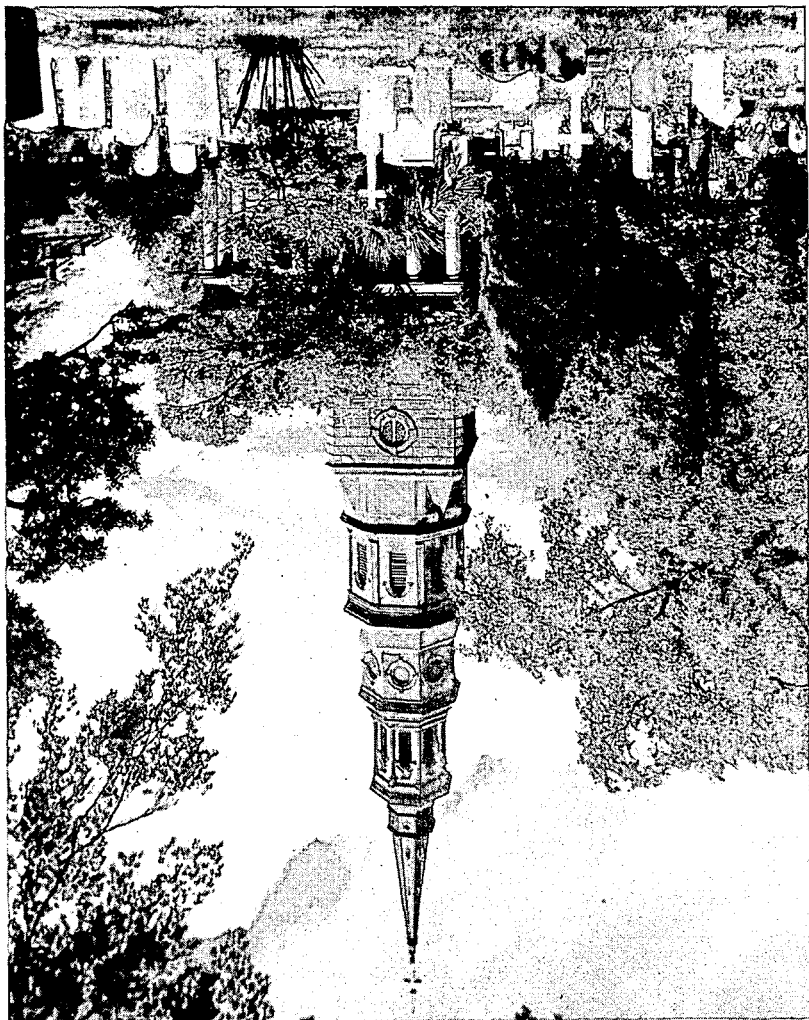


BRIDGE OVER THE ARVE, NEAR GENEVA, SWITZERLAND  
ERECTED IN 1937  
ROBERT MAILLART, ENGINEER  
*Photograph by Lenscraft*

ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH (1848-50) CHARLESTON, S. C.  
E. B. WHITE, ARCHITECT

*Photograph by Carl Julien, by courtesy  
of the Carolina Art Association*

*Do you know this building?*



schools approximately every five years. One of the Board's prospective duties is to make plans for the next periodic examination, which has been tentatively scheduled for 1949, 1950 and 1951, to bracket the precise five-year date from the publication of the first list of Accredited Schools in 1945. This will be no small task. It will require careful planning and more funds than the Board now has in sight. The A.I.A. has been most generous and cooperative in providing the major share of the Board's finances. A certain amount has come from the fees paid by applicant schools. One of the Board's immediate concerns is that a long-term financing plan can be worked out with the cooperation of all the groups concerned. So far the Board has had no paid assistance of any kind other than for routine clerical work. Practically all of the detailed study and analysis necessary has been done by the Board members themselves. It is questionable if they can continue indefinitely to give the large amount of time needed to do this, and it may well be that paid expert assistance should be included in future budgets.

This report should not close without recording the deep sense of loss, both personal and profes-

sional, which the Board feels in the death last Fall of Sy Marston of California. He was appointed as one of the two A.I.A. members. It is no mere conventional form of words to say that his enthusiasm, wise counsel, and devoted effort helped the Board immeasurably in its first efforts. Above all, he became a personal friend whom the individual members of the Board will sorely miss.

His term would have expired at the end of this year. To replace him, President Edmunds appointed Mr. Louis J. Gill, also of California, with whose long service to the profession and The Institute everyone is familiar. The Board takes this opportunity to welcome Mr. Gill to its membership.

In this year's inspections, it has been possible to send three-man teams to visit the applicant schools, instead of the two-man teams used in 1945. This in turn made it possible to follow the intent of the Board's Charter to have each team of visitors include a representative of each of the sponsoring groups—the profession, the registration boards and the schools. Some twenty teachers and practitioners from outside the Board's own membership gave generously of their

time and effort as members of the visiting teams. They have the sincere gratitude of the Board for their much-valued contribution.

The last word should be one of sincere appreciation and thanks from the Board to the school faculties who cooperated so hospitably and effectively with its visiting teams to make this year's accrediting program effective.

LIST OF ARCHITECTS WHO ASSISTED N.A.A.B. AS MEMBERS OF VISITING TEAMS FOR 1947 INSPECTIONS

Leopold Arnaud, Dean, School of Architecture, Columbia University.

Herbert L. Beckwith, Professor, School of Architecture, Mass. Institute of Technology.

George H. Bond, Atlanta, Ga.  
Charles F. Cellarius, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Louis J. Gill, San Diego, Calif.  
Louis Justement, Washington, D. C.

H. Roy Kelley, Los Angeles, Calif.  
Roger Kirchoff, Madison, Wisc.  
John E. Miller, Cleveland, Ohio.  
Ralph E. Myers, Kansas City, Mo.  
David R. Shotwell, Harrisburg, Pa.

Winsor Soule, Santa Barbara, Calif.

Charles R. Strong, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Walter A. Taylor, Director of Education and Research, A.I.A., Washington, D. C.

Edwin T. Turner, Seattle, Wash.  
Raymond L. Voskamp, Kansas City, Mo.

Samuel G. Wiener, Shreveport, La.

Philip Will, Jr., Chicago, Ill.



## Fall Conference on City and Regional Planning

THE MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY announces that its tenth annual Conference on City and Regional Planning will be held from September 15 to 27, 1947. Sponsored jointly by the Institute and the American Society of Planning Officials, it will be open to men and women who

have had practical experience in planning or in a related professional field, including planning technicians, members of state or municipal planning commissions and housing authorities, and staff members of engineering or public works departments.

Seminars will be held each morning and afternoon, beginning Monday, September 15, and will cover

JULY, 1947

principles and techniques of planning and planning legislation and administration. Emphasis will be placed on technical and administrative procedures and the application of approved planning standards rather than on a generalized discussion of the various planning problems for which solutions are needed.

The staff for the Conference will again consist of Professor Frederick J. Adams, Head of the Department of City and Regional Planning, and Mr. Flavel Shurt-

leff, Lecturer on Planning Legislation and Administration at M.I.T. and Counsel to the American Planning and Civic Association. Visiting lecturers on special topics will assist in the conduct of the seminars.

Applications should be sent to Professor F. J. Adams, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge 39, Massachusetts, not later than September 2, 1947. The fee for the entire Conference is \$50, payable on the first day of participation.

## Design and Techniques

IN TWO PARTS—PART II (Part I appeared in the May JOURNAL)

*By Richard H. Sheppard, F. R. I. B. A.*

Excerpts from a paper entitled "Aspects of Post-War Building Technique" read before the R.I.B.A. on November 26, 1946, as published in the *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* for January, 1947.

I BELIEVE the most important contribution in this epoch will prove to be the development of the building board or sheet. This will have a potential effect upon building technique and design greater than any other introduction in the last hundred years. The board is not only important in itself, as a means of construction and as establishing a rhythm of design, but it

sets off a chain of other materials and releases a whole field of techniques. Boards are already in manufacture or projected which can perform almost every demand made upon them physically, of strength and insulation. And they can be moulded, reinforced, armoured and transparent. These boards may eventually prove to have a greater significance in building technique

JOURNAL OF THE A. I. A.

than reinforced concrete. They have not yet been developed for building and their field is strictly limited at the present time. They are precision materials—of predetermined strength and performance, and belong perhaps to the more precise standards which seem likely to govern building technique in the future. . . .

It is difficult to assess the effect of these materials upon architectural design during this period. Although concrete became a kind of popular anathema and became associated in the public mind with what it believed to be modern architecture, these superficial effects can be discounted since they only affected the fringes of the profession and appeared in a tattered form among the jerry builders.

When applied to building structures rather than engineering, these materials were sometimes used in distorted and exaggerated forms. The application of reinforced concrete, for instance, to housing often resulted in the imposition of arbitrary shapes and patterns upon a traditional form and bore no relation to the life of the occupants; and since the form was irrelevant it was very seldom appreciated. Indeed, in some cases it was hard to know whether the tenant was de-

signed for the building or the building for the tenant. Such forms were therefore abstract in the sense that they represented conceptions of design which appealed only to the designer and the initiates. It was a design for a limited school and a limited public. Indeed, to put my point shortly, our best architects were often designing at a long distance from popular taste. Far from giving their work an expression which could be understood at large, they were forced, not so much by their own wishes as by the general trends of art forms, to create an architecture distant in its appeal to the everyday emotions. I believe this to be one reason why so many crude and simplified slogans like "Fitness for purpose," "Functionalism" and so on were adopted. It was a desperate effort on the part of the designer to get himself understood. The result was a romantic attitude towards materials or towards functions and services which were exploited for their own sake and which were often unnecessary. Services, planning and structure were often exaggerated to provide an excuse and a justification for the manner desired by the designer, and style was dominant.

As Lethaby says, "Nothing looks well that has been done for 'look.'"

It appears right at first but quickly the doing becomes diseased. Only by being intensely real can we get back wonder into building once more." . . .

Architectural science has a compelling and comprehensive function—but one which can be exaggerated as easily and as dangerously as it can be ignored or minimised. The architect has always used scientific methods, so far as these methods could be used, in dealing with his problems of spatial enclosure. The Mediæval building, the architecture of the Renaissance, were both concerned with problems affecting the stability of masonry, but they were forced to rely on experience and craft traditions where we refer to statical methods of determination. This may account for the superiority of craftsmanship in previous epochs and for its decline in our own. . . .

I suppose the most direct contribution made by scientific investigation has been the study of the characteristics of materials and their behavior. On the whole, such research has tended most happily for all concerned to verify the rule-of-thumb methods followed by tradition, and to bring out certain chemical or physical principles gov-

erning the uses of materials in traditional building practice. . . .

But the total effect or influence of science upon architectural forms is as yet small. For one thing, such standards are necessarily concerned with the consumer, with convenience rather than with beauty. The scientist is primarily concerned with matters of fact and not of opinion, to measure rather than to suggest. In the last few years building science has begun to make great strides, and although this development is limited in its objective, it has reached a point where it will enrich and diversify architecture, and give a sure and certain background to imagination. To take one instance, the work which is now being done in day-lighting, in the effect of light contrasts and intensity, must clearly have an enormous effect upon design, in the proportion and arrangement of windows as well as wall surfaces and textures. We are badly in need of such guidance, and I believe that the scientist will help us to find and replace that intellectual and emotional content which has been so sadly lacking in architecture. But these in themselves we may be sure do not make architecture, and we must beware of the confusions of the functionalist approach, or ex-

tend the definition of this term to include those emotions which we have found in the architecture of the past. We may design a classroom, for instance, . . . and it will probably be a very good classroom in a physical sense, but it will not necessarily be a human and livable room. The different and unrelated factors must be integrated by the designer.

The special conditions which we face at the present time favour a more experimental approach, and as our problems are communal in pattern rather than individual, the greatest task which we have to face is of relating the prejudices and desires of the individual to a coherent esthetic pattern for the community as a whole. At the lowest level the desire for the semidetached house may be set against the social utility of the terrace, and at the highest are the problems of town and country planning, of creating that balance between the individual and society, between opportunism and method, between flexibility and control, which is the central problem of government.

I have mentioned housing as an instance of that continuity in form which is the result of a continuity of function, but housing is also an

excellent instance of the way in which the emergence of new material and new techniques will modify our ideas on a given building type, although often without affecting its essential form. It is my contention that such alterations will only be brought about by modifications in the demand and by the social conditions in which they operate. The architect, working solely from within, so to speak, is seldom successful in effecting such modifications, which live as aberrations peculiar to him or his client.

Laws of supply and demand operate in the building industry as in any other field, although they are mysteriously affected by fashion, by the force of example, by the predilection of a gifted designer for one material or another. It is high time that somebody studied in some detail the conditions affecting the introduction of new materials into design. We still need, as Lethaby once remarked, a new science of building morphology.

With this in mind let me turn to some of the factors which are likely to develop in the next few years on the technical side. It is clear, however, that the circumstances of our civilisation and the immediate expansion of the building industry will lead to an increased use of



factory-made materials, to materials having a precise performance and definite physical characteristics: steel, asbestos, and all those mysterious mixtures and sandwiches which result in the ubiquitous board.

Before the last War there were just two categories of structures, sheds and buildings, but we now have an exhaustive and complicated nomenclature which is in itself an indication of our developing attitude towards building technique. We talk about buildings under names like semi-permanent, temporary prefabricated, permanent prefabricated, light frame, and the list could be multiplied. If you regard architecture as the sum total of buildings which the community uses and by which it expresses itself, rather than as a series of isolated monuments in a wilderness of shacks, a condition which very accurately describes many of our towns today, you will see the difference created by changes in building technique in our attitude to architecture.

A greater precision in the use of materials is also coming about. This is produced partly by temporary conditions which demand economy in means, in both labour and materials, but is part of the in-

creased control of the physical conditions governing building. There is no need to waste material because the factor of safety is unknown. Precision in the selection of materials with a greater range, leads to a greater diversity, a wider range of effect, to more subtle and complex rhythm and definitions.

Related to this is the development of factory-made components and assemblies and to the complete standardisation which must be developed if these are to assume their full importance. Factory-made assemblies for service and plumbing, for partitions and wall panels, are by now familiar objects to most of us. . . .

This certainty in the use of materials will avoid those intellectual fripperies, those stylised clichés of the inter-War period and will give us a solid basis on which to evolve a new grammar of style—to an extent they will relieve much of the drudgery of design and enable us to concentrate on the architects' real task.

A further factor which we cannot neglect for its social importance alone, is the decline of the craftsman. This, I am afraid, is a positive and absolute factor whose importance in building we have not

yet assessed. It may, of course, be corrected in years to come when the immediate drive for production is less urgent, but craftsmanship in the sense that we have known in the building industry, in elaborate forms of brickwork, masonry, plasterwork and joinery, will not, I think, be revived for many years to come. It must, however, be replaced by other qualities, by surface texture, and patterns, which are potentially as rich as those which we are losing, even though they are of an entirely different character. In architectural design in the inter-War years the craftsman was largely eliminated and we concentrated on the rediscovery of shapes and planes in forms which were unfamiliar to the general public. The process was necessary but much was lost in the course of it. We have an opportunity in these coming years of redressing the balance by substituting for the elaborate craftsmanship of the past an appreciation of surface and texture, of rhythm and colour. We have scarcely begun to exploit the possibilities of modern technology, and we have all been cheered in this respect by the course of architecture in Sweden and Switzerland. Here we begin to find an appreciation, which is their special contribu-

tion to peace, of those enduring factors in architecture, of form, proportion, rhythm, contrast, modulations of mood and expressions welded into a contemporary form and exploiting the resources of modern technology, structurally and decoratively. Here we find an endeavour towards perfect structural efficiency coupled with a recognition of the decorative possibilities involved. . . .

We must also consider to a far greater extent than we did before the War, the emotional contact offered by our buildings. Much of the best modern work must now appear arid, and we are in danger of forgetting the associations which man has with certain types of building. He looks at a building to express many of the emotions and loyalties he feels. Almost every writer, from Lethaby to Giedion, has reminded us that people seek from architecture, as from all the arts, "an expression of their aspirations—joy, excitement, even luxury." . . .

So we come back to the beginning. We must understand ourselves and our work and that means the comprehension of the means we have of building today, their potentialities and their limitations, in

precise terms. We must revise some of those concepts which governed architectural thought in the '20s and '30s and which, as I have tried to show, resulted in forms which were often irrelevant, and of hopes which were evanescent. We must also take into our account the

feelings of our client, increasingly the public at large, and relate them to an evolving technique of building so that we may create what we have needed for nearly two centuries—a style of architecture understood and accepted by all and not by the few.



## Architects Read and Write

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



REWARD FOR CARL KOCH

BY EDGAR I. WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A., New York

I HAVE JUST REREAD Carl Koch's article in the June JOURNAL. It leaves me smarting, just as the presentation of the paper did at Grand Rapids. There is a type of unfairness about it that cannot fail to stir resentment in the heart of any Institute member who has labored to make The Institute an instrument of good for the profession. Just when a man stops being young and becomes old is not necessarily a matter of years. In my opinion it is where he leaves the big jobs to others and wonders why something is not done to solve them in a manner to please him. Carl Koch's article indicates a bit of that spirit. He speaks of The A.I.A.'s "negative attitude toward the younger or more progressive members of the profession," he suggests that The A.I.A. is "obstruct-

ing government policy," that "the Institute governmental relations policy is operating as any other private pressure group, on a basis of self-interest only."

There are many of us perhaps less brilliant than Carl Koch but who believe they see more clearly.

Some will admit that the world belongs to the young—but only when they by character, spirit and magnanimity find they have assumed responsibility for it.

About eleven years ago a group of younger (?) Institute members got together and called themselves the "National Competitions Committee." The object was to stimulate the use of competitions for the selection of architects. It is interesting to recall that among the group were Henry Churchill and Richard Hudnut. We had other

JOURNAL OF THE A. I. A.

ideas. We did not like the old *Octagon*, and we wanted a publication that would print the ideas of professional men young and old.

We wanted The Institute to be a democratic society, not a select society most of whose members were "stuffed shirts." (It is too easy to fall into such an erroneous state of mind as that!) There were some other ideas also.

The Board did look at us with some suspicion, but we had a hearing. I remember that we made Pierre Blouke our spokesman at the Convention in Williamsburg. The argument did not shake the rafters nor did all the old men go out and jump off a dock.

Now here we are in 1947 with all of what we—shall I use Carl Koch's words—"younger or more progressive members of the profession" wanted except more competitions. The Institute's mission of the future is *always* in the hands of those who will think and toil. For those who snarl and pout be-

cause the world isn't just the way they like it, let me retell the story of the careless Spartan doughboy in Robert Emmett Sherwood's "The Road to Rome," which, briefly paraphrased, runs about as follows:

One doughboy says to another, "Careful, Buddy—watch it; if his Nibs catches you you're likely to be doin' a turn wid de elephants."

"Not me, I'm de Boss' favorite. But so what; what will dat do to me?"

"Listen, Son! Once I was wid de elephants. We was quartered on de Rhone. There was some funny business among de elephants and a lady elephant got in trouble. She was delicate; a expectant mother. Dey couldn't hold up de army to wait for her."

"Well—was dat so bad?"

"Bad! Say! do you know how long it takes a elephant to come across?—seven years!"

Look out, Carl! They may put you with the elephants, but come on in, we want you.

## LET ARCHITECTURE SPEAK FOR ITSELF

BY HUBERT HAMMOND CRANE, Fort Worth, Tex.

**I** SEE BY THE JOURNAL that there is some discord in the ranks of the mighty over the relative merits of traditional and contemporary design. It seems sad that men who use a pencil so beautifully should become so hysterical with a pen.

So many architects seem to forget

that architecture is a medium of expression complete in itself, and that it is never necessary to write an essay to explain a really beautiful building. We disagree violently over our words yet we remain in accord in our final opinion of the results.

Design is a matter of the mind,

JULY, 1947

the eye and the hand. When these are content the mouth should remain silent, for fear of spoiling delight in a product in whose creation it has no part.

Each of us works for the joy of working and none of us can hope to satisfy another to an extent equal to our own. This difference in opinion permits many women to marry who could never hope to win beauty contests but who frequently produce children who do.

I have always found Sir Henry Wooten's definition of Architecture completely satisfying. If it be in fact the art of building with strength, commodity and delight, what words can define or change delight? Delight is an emotion of instant realization and without contemplation, and criticism is but an afterthought.

Why not confine our arguments to photographs of our work? Why muddle our minds with theories and styles and whys, when the final

result is so much more expressive of what we think than any words we may string across paper?

Have you ever noticed how few books have been written by great architects of the past? Could it be that architecture was in itself sufficiently satisfying as a medium to content them? It would seem that writing and expounding of theories becomes necessary only when there is some doubt in the architect's mind that his own delight in his work will be shared by others. Why should he care? Is it a desire for fame and fortune? Few fortunes can survive an inheritance tax, and fame in a man's lifetime is notoriety unless it is accepted by the generations which follow.

I have no hope of either fame or fortune, for I have never done a building with which I could be content six months after its completion. If and when I do such a building, I shall be content to let it speak for me.

## THE MARCH OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

BY R. CLIPSTON STURGIS, F.A.I.A., Portsmouth, N. H.

I AM somewhat concerned to find that by the Standards of Behavior I was guilty of unprofessional conduct in the early 1900's (about 1906, I think), as I was professional adviser in a competition and later was the architect.

The circumstances were as follows: I went to see Jim Storrow on a matter connected with the schools. He was chairman of the School

Committee and I chairman of the Schoolhouse Commission. He happened to be at a meeting of the Board of the First National Bank, and when we had settled the school matter, he asked me to come in and advise the Board.

I found they were considering a competition for a building for the bank, and had five firms in mind as competitors. I urged them not to

have a competition, but to select one of the five on the basis of their records, and with him study the problem. I said they would save (1) expense of a professional adviser, (2) expense of the competition, (3) a delay of three or four months, (4) expense of a jury, and (5) the chance that after the award they would have to restudy the whole plan.

I then left them, and when they called me back they said they were unable to agree on my plan and offered me the position of professional adviser. I accepted.

After a month of careful study I presented the program based on their answers to my questions as to certain controlling factors. To draw the program I was forced to make a plan, and they requested me to show them the plan. I did so, and they asked if I had any design for the exterior in mind. I said I had made no design, but that the plan forced a consideration of the exterior. They asked me to make a design of the exterior. I did so, and they then stated that both the

plan and the design were what they wanted and that they would notify the five firms that the competition was given up and that I was selected as the architect. One of the competitors, Cass Gilbert, wrote me to say the Board had acted wisely in giving up the competition. I did not feel then, and I do not feel now, that my action should be condemned as unprofessional, and yet the provision as stated in the "Standards" sounds right and reasonable. My case was, I think, exceptional. I was called in by accident, I urged them not to have a competition, as it was not, in my judgment, a proper subject for a competition. It was not a question of pure design, but of study of a very complex problem, difficult even to embody in a program. When they acted against my advice I drew the program, and never had any idea except that the competition would take place.

If you think this letter is of any use or value to the profession you may publish it. I welcome anything that discourages competitions.

## News of Chapters and Other Architectural Organizations

GEORGIA CHAPTER has recently streamlined its monthly meeting program, due to its boom growth in membership. Preceded by a refreshment hour and supper, the meeting is confined to reading of

minutes of previous meeting, executive committee's report, brief committee reports and announcements. The balance of evening is allocated to a speech by a selected guest speaker on a topic of interest to the

membership. At the May meeting Charles F. Palmer showed his color films of blitzed London and its rebuilding.

The Chapter has adopted and issued to its members a pamphlet, "Customary Services and Schedules of Proper Charges in Architectural Practice," together with a "Schedule of Recommended Minimum Normal Architectural Fees."

NEW ORLEANS CHAPTER is launching a Woman's Auxiliary, through which it is hoped that wives and other relatives will become better acquainted with the profession, and, conversely, that the social side of programs for meetings will be improved through the ladies' efforts.

EDITORS of organization bulletins from Portland, Me., to Portland, Ore., will understand this wail from the editor of the quarterly published by the Massachusetts State Association of Architects:

Some of our more keen-eyed readers may have observed that the date on the front page of the *Bay State Architect* does not necessarily correspond with the current month. This is not due to any attachment of ours to an archaic system of time reckoning—we have not renounced the Gregorian cal-

endar; we are in favor of it, but just can't keep up with it.

This issue will appear one month late. We regret it, but in view of the almost complete refusal of the membership to cooperate, do not feel too apologetic. We are busy too. The time lag is due to the near impossibility of obtaining suitable material.

NEW YORK CHAPTER held its annual meeting for the election of officers on June 4th. Harold R. Sleeper succeeds Perry Coke Smith as president. Other officers elected were: Daniel Schwartzman, vice president; Francis W. Roudebush, secretary; and William Potter, treasurer.

THE ARCHITECTURAL LEAGUE OF NEW YORK seems to have a hard time making up its collective mind. The JOURNAL'S April issue announced an unusual type of exhibition, "Tomorrow's Buildings," for April 3-September 15; in the May issue came a cancellation in favor of an exhibition of the works of the United Nations Planning Group. And now comes this word: "Lest you become confused, this exhibition is going to take place after all." The exhibition is confined to projects in the planning or construction stage, and material

will be changed from time to time by the exhibitors at their discretion. Opening May 22, it will continue until Sept. 15. At least, that's what The League now says.

PITTSBURGH ARCHITECTURAL CLUB celebrated its fiftieth anniversary recently — the March *Charette* doesn't say just when— with a five-phase Golden Jubilee. After an exhibition of architectural work from 1889 on, the Club's own Golden Jubilee Operetta Company presented "The Queen Anne Front and the Mary Anne Behind," by Robert W. Schmertz. The sad history of a North Side house was interrupted after each stanza by the chorus:

And if you'll look in Godey's Ladies  
Book,  
I know you'll surely find  
That self-same house, that jolly little  
house,  
With a Queen Anne front and a Mary  
Anne behind!

## Site Planning

By *Marcus Polio Vitruvius*

I CANNOT TOO STRONGLY insist upon the needs of a return to the method of old times. Our ancestors, when about to build a town or an army post, sacrificed some of the cattle that were wont to feed

on the site proposed and examined their livers. If the livers of the first victims were dark-coloured or abnormal, they sacrificed others, to see whether the fault was due to a disease or their food. They never began to build defensive works in a place until after they had made many such trials and satisfied themselves that good water and food had made the liver sound and firm. If they continued to find it abnormal, they argued from this that the food and water supply found in such a place would be just as unhealthy for man, and so they moved away and changed to another neighborhood, healthfulness being their chief object.—Reprinted by permission of the publishers from "The Ten Books on Architecture" (M. H. Morgan, translator.)

## Se Habla Espagnol

A WRITER who signs himself "Westcreek Puddler," writing in the *Bulletin* of the Southern California Chapter, prefaces the following story with a few words as to the accommodation difficulties experienced in Grand Rapids by several delegates from Los Angeles:

They were housed in an alley just vacated by the lady bowlers,

JULY, 1947



furnished with an assortment of various-size beds. This large area became by acclamation, the "smoke-filled room" for pre-meeting caucuses. Here gathered not only all of the Californians but also an occasional straggler from Gotham who mistook it for the Pennsylvania Station. One such befuddled character, in a burst of camaraderie, confided that he was thinking of opening a branch office in Los

Angeles; just then Al Martin and John Bolles started an animated conversation in Castilian. This prompted the New Yorker to ask if a speaking knowledge of Spanish was essential to a California practice.

"By all means," Al told him. "At least half our draftsmen don't speak any English."

That's one danged furriner that won't come out to compete with us.

## The Editor's Asides

IN THE MAY ISSUE, among the portraits of the newly-elected Fellows, the printer intimated that Charles Frederick Owsley, F.A.I.A., is from Youngstown, Pa. The Keystone State has enough claim to fame without being made to borrow Youngstown from its rightful home in Ohio.



THERE IS AN ARTICLE in the *Magazine of Art* for March, 1947, which will interest many architects. It is "Louis Sullivan's Architectural Ornament," by Henry R. Hope. Although the name of Sullivan is revered, we have been inclined to ignore a part of his work that Sullivan himself consid-

ered highly important—his ornament.

MR. C. C. ZANTZINGER, now called to Washington more frequently as a member of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, was a recent welcome caller at The Octagon. Now that The Institute is growing so fast and the enlarged staff is taking over many activities previously carried on as voluntary committee work, the old days present a vivid contrast. Mr. Zantzinger recalled the publication of "The Significance of the Fine Arts" in 1923. The book was brought out under the sponsorship of The Institute's Committee on Education. Not only did

the members of that committee pay for the publication out of their own pockets; they even paid contributors of the text, as well as their traveling expenses in meeting together. I shudder to think of the impact on our treasury if these benefactors should now acquire any new thoughts inspired by the Supreme Court's "portal-to-portal" decision.

A STRAW IN THE WIND: the Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization has resolved to adopt the metric system in air-ground communications, despite the strenuous objections of U.S.A., the British Empire and Mexico, who would prefer their familiar foot and pound units.

VINCENT PALMER, one of the California Council's delegates to Grand Rapids, says in the *Bulletin* of the Southern California Chapter: "The outstanding delegation to the recent A.I.A. Convention was from California." Those wishing to challenge his statement will please take their places in a single-file queue.

IN BUILDING AN ADDITION to the John Hancock Insurance building in Boston, some thought was given

the comfort of the "sidewalk superintendent." The builder put up a grandstand for his convenience—and incidentally to keep him out of the way. For eleven months the public could view at will the bulldozers, steam-shovels and pile drivers in action. A count reveals that 135,000 persons, from four continents, took in the show. Are people as deeply interested in architecture as they are in construction?

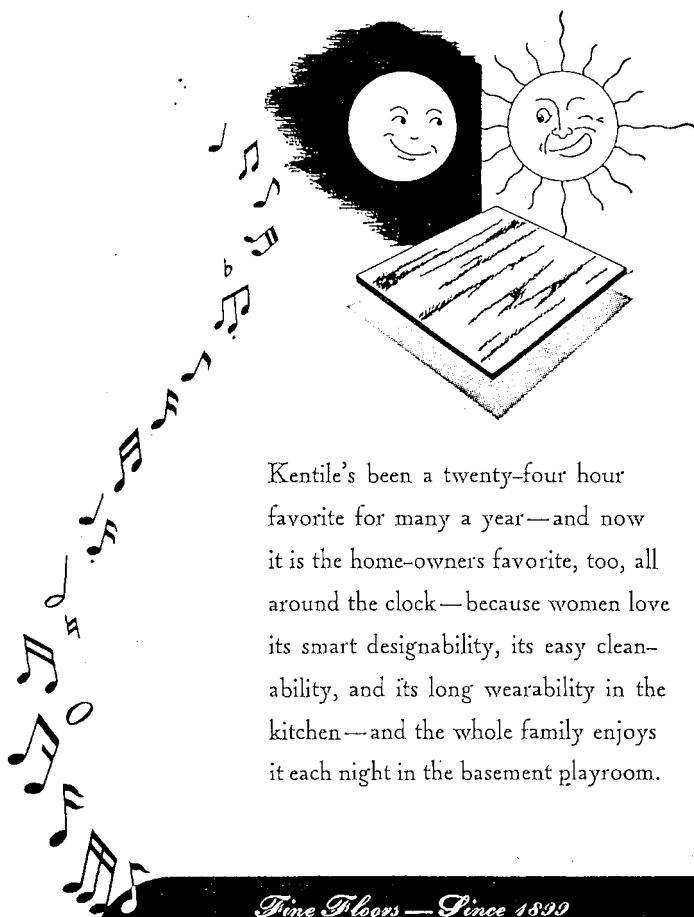
ADD THIS TESTIMONY to the facts relating to Tal Hughes' contention that architects don't read and can't write:

"I have received the JOURNAL for some time but did not appreciate that the articles were so very fine and of such intrinsic value. In fact I did not read the JOURNAL at all. I now find that the reading matter contains the thoughts of our leading architects on very important phases of the modern trend to adopt the principles of architectural design to modern materials and requirements."

THE UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH, perhaps more sensitive to subtle needs than the great body of the public, set aside a week at the end of January as "Pray-for-the-Press Week." We feel slightly better already.

JULY, 1947

# NIGHT AND DAY



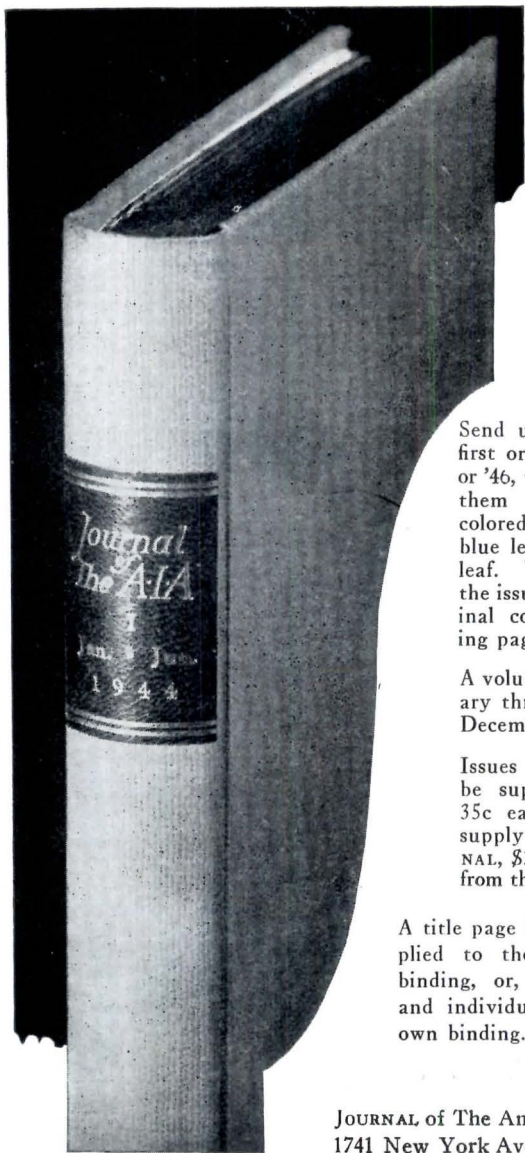
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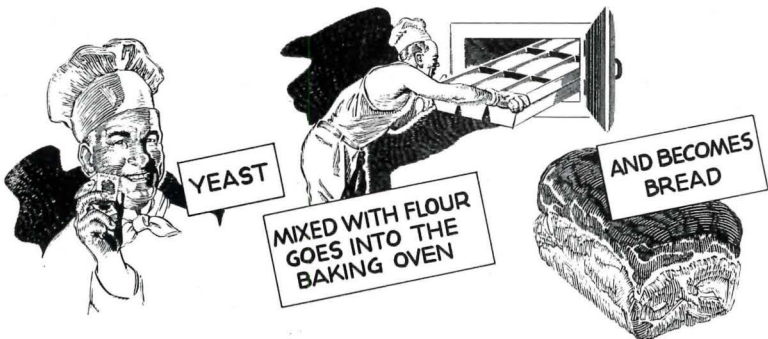
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